



Maori looking to flex their seafood muscles

Maori leaders are calling for greater collaboration to protect hard won resources and build dominance in the fishing sector.

It is 25 years since the Maori Fisheries Settlement (the Sealord deal) gave substance to the promise made in the Treaty of Waitangi over Maori rights to their fisheries.

The struggle over recognition of those rights has become a struggle to prevent their usurpation and removal by the Crown or others, Te Ohu Kaimoana chair Jamie Tuuta told last week's Maori Fisheries conference.

The allocation of those resources has been challenging and at times divisive. "We have to find ways of reversing the fragmentation that has occurred since the allocation process but in a way that respects the mana and identity of individual iwi," Te Ohu chief executive Dion Tuuta said.

Iwi rejected the option of keeping commercial fisheries assets together in a centrally managed Maori super-fishing company in which they would all be shareholders in favour of direct rangatiratanga over their assets.

The downside of direct ownership under the allocation model was the reduced and near uneconomic scale of many fisheries settlement packages.

Tuuta's own iwi, Ngati Mutunga in Taranaki, owned just 0.19 percent of all Maori quota.

"That's barely a rounding error," he said.

'We stand little or no chance on our own and we are by no means alone in that situation.'

A way of overcoming that was the example set by Port Nicholson Fisheries, a

crayfish collective of over 30 iwi.

The company had signed an agreement with Ngai Tahu Seafoods which would see them collectively market and export around 1000 tonnes of rock lobster, making it New Zealand's largest live exporter.

The largest participant in this collective had around 400 tonnes of lobster quota. The smallest has just 69 kgs.

"This was achieved in six years and if it can be done in crayfish, surely it can be done in other species," Tuuta said.

"The reality is that we all have to support one another and find co-operative models and courageous leadership which brings us all together if we truly wish to lead."

He said Maori had to value their own world view, insisting on concepts like kaitiakitanga and preserving natural resources.

Maori endorsed the Quota Management System because of its kaitiakitanga-like focus on using resources within suitable tolerances.

"The fundamental principle of the QMS is to only take from the ocean what can be sustained without negatively impacting on the environment's ability to provide for future generations - and without undue effects on supporting ecosystems."

Craig Ellison, chair of Seafood New Zealand and of Ngai Tahu Seafood, said Maori had great brands and a great brand story but had not realised their full value.

"Your role as managers, directors, participants in the sector is to lead and collaboration on the basis of shared values is the way forward."

Ngati Porou Seafood's chief executive Mark Ngata called for Maori domination of the seafood sector and a stronger voice in wider society.

He said he was not interested in polite argument for the future but was more interested in domination of a seafood industry in which Maori held 40 percent of the total quota.

"It's not about the fish, it's about us."

He quoted his great uncle Sir Apirana Ngata:

"It is our generation's turn to carry on the responsibility in our time and in accordance with our greater resources and higher standards."

As for the QMS, he said it had stopped overharvesting of the resource but felt it could benefit from review.

Moana Fisheries chair Whaimutu Dewes set some ambitious challenges.

They included Maori moving its 40 percent share to a majority, doubling current assets of around \$1.5 billion and lifting revenue from the current \$200 million to \$600 million.

Sealord, 50 percent owned by iwi, has demonstrated its confidence in the sector by commissioning the most modern, efficient and most expensive trawler to enter the New Zealand fleet.

The 82-metre factory freezer trawler, costing \$70 million, is due to arrive from Norway in June.



From left: Dion Tuuta, CEO of Te Ohu Kaimoana and chairman of Port Nicholson Fisheries; Craig Ellison, chairman of Seafood New Zealand and Ngai Tahu Seafood; Mark Ngata, CEO of Ngati Porou Seafoods.

Playbook launched for OpenSeas

OpenSeas, the number one source for New Zealand seafood information, has released a playbook on the programme.

The guide provides a general overview of OpenSeas and how it can be used to support local seafood businesses.

The opportunities for applying the programme are endless and the playbook is a great tool to get people started.

[Click here](#) to download the guide or learn more



News

The Government is being asked to step in and help Burkhart Fisheries after they were left in the lurch following an Environment Court ruling, The Marlborough Express reports.

The court ruled Burkhart Fisheries could not create a paper road along the Marlborough coastline to a new launch site for their vessels and banned them from

using heavy machinery on the beach.

New Zealand Rock Lobster Industry Council chief executive Mark Edwards said Government had helped a lot of companies recover post-earthquake.

"The company has expended a lot of resources, tried all available legal avenues, and provided all sorts of information to try to resolve this," Edwards said.

"I would like to see the Government help get a resolution to this, to find a way for them to launch."



Questions raised over oyster parasite probe

A *Newsroom* investigation has asked pointed questions as to whether the investigation into last year's bonamia ostreae outbreak at Stewart Island was flawed from the beginning.

Journalist David Williams looks at why the probe only chased potential illegal behaviour and did not focus on how the deadly parasite found its way into Big Glory Bay.

[Read the story here](#)

Ocean Bounty

This week Ocean Bounty visits Hawke's Bay to see how commercial and recreational fishers, along with iwi are working together for the betterment of a shared fishery. Add in some incredible trawl innovations, a few characters, a superb culinary creation, and you have a great story.

Tune in to Three at 11 am on Sunday to check it out.

