



New Zealand not alone in fighting attacks on reputation

Three years after the New Zealand fishing industry began a campaign to improve public perception of the sector, there has been a plethora of other work emerge on the topic of social contract, or social license, in the seafood industry.

Most recently, the World Ocean Council (WOC), the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security and Wageningen University released a report called *Social License and the Blue Economy*.

Globally, the fishing industry face similar problems of public trust and perception, however in the New Zealand instance the divide between international perception and domestic perception is vast. While New Zealand's fisheries management system is regarded as top rate internationally, those claims are often greeted with sceptism at home.

Soon after the New Zealand industry launched its Promise campaign, the Australian sector quickly and unashamedly replicated the campaign with their own, which they called The Pledge. Australia too is under a constant battle to move the public's view from a social media-fuelled 'reality' to a science-based reality.

The Australian report, *Social License and the Blue Economy*, reinforces the need to keep talking globally about how to improve trust and reputation in the industry, saying there are likely to be significant benefits in sharing lessons learnt.

The report rightly illustrates, while the aim of building trust is worthy, it is a grenade strewn path and it points to the enormous scope and variety of stakeholders as the main issue. *'This was especially challenging in relation to special interest groups who are influenced in their concerns and opinions by values, beliefs or areas of interest, which may not be consistent with other communities with which the industry interacts'*.

In other words, science was often not the winner when pitted against firmly held values and ideologies.

However, that is not a reason to quit trying as the struggle is not New Zealand's alone.

Seafood New Zealand engages Nielsen Research to run public perception research into the industry and has done so for the past five years.

Australia's Fisheries Development and Research Corporation (FRDC) conduct similar research and their latest findings are worth noting.

Sustainability and overfishing are the two core concerns for the public on both sides of the Tasman.

Some 36 Percent of Australians surveyed believed their fisheries were sustainable, which is a drop from 41 percent in 2017. In New Zealand, 51 percent believe our fishery is sustainable, up from 44 percent last year.

And the more people know about the industry the higher their trust that sustainability and over-fishing are not issues.

Both countries share a small, but vocal group of opponents who believe commercial fishing will never be sustainable. The FRDC research says shifting these people's perceptions will be 'a hugely difficult challenge'.

In the '*Social License and the Blue Economy*' report New Zealand's strategy to improve its social license with the public through the Promise campaign is singled out as best practise by 'humanising the industry through story-telling and linking the consumer to the faces of the industry'.

We must continue doing that.



News

NZ's waters described as Maui dolphin 'killing fields'

Māui dolphin advocates say there's no time for more research - problematic fishing must be banned.

The Government is investing \$17 million to install cameras on up to 28 fishing boats for better monitoring.

"The final number requiring cameras will depend on whether they continue to fish in the area using trawl or set nets,"

Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash said on Friday. "The final number may be fewer as some of these vessels may choose to fish elsewhere."

- [Plan to protect Māui dolphin slammed by environmentalists, academics](#)
- [\\$17.1m to protect Māui dolphins with on-board vessel cameras](#)

But an advocate for the endangered species, Christine Rose, says that's an underwhelming first step.

"Those dolphins are dying now. They're dying on Labour's watch. The International Whaling Commission and scientists are calling consistently for better protection, and this does not deliver better protection."

It's estimated there are just 63 Māui adults left in New Zealand waters. There were approximately 2000 in 1971, [according to environmental watchdog Sea Shepherd](#), which estimates up to four are killed each year in bycatch.

Rose says the Government needs to remove set and trawl nets from Māui habitats completely.

"It does make us wonder why interim solutions haven't been provided, even though there are grounds to do that given the oceans are like the killing fields out there."

The 'killing fields' is a term generally used to describe places where the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime killed hundreds of

thousands of people in the late 1970s.

It's expected consultation will start on the Māui dolphin threat management plan in the coming months. Rose says there might not be time.

"The US National Oceanic Agency is currently considering [a petition by Sea Shepherd](#) to ban New Zealand fish imports into the US because of the unsustainable levels of bycatch in the Maui habitat."

The Green Party wants cameras "on all fishing boats as soon as possible".

Rose says taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for additional regulation

-Newshub



Letters reveal fishing companies' anti-conservation lobbying tactics

By Amy Williams of [rnz.co.nz](https://www.rnz.co.nz)

Official documents show fishing companies, including Talleys, threatened legal action against the government over proposed seabed protection in the South Pacific.

Forest & Bird obtained the letters sent to Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash and New Zealand First Ministers Winston Peters and Shane Jones through the Official Information Act.

The 2017 and 2018 letters from the High Seas Group, which represents fishing companies that operate vessels outside of New Zealand's economic zone, opposed what were then-proposed conservation rules.

The rules to reduce the impact of bottom trawling were agreed to earlier this year and are implemented by the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, an inter-governmental agency that manages the region's high seas.

The letters wanted the ministers to remove one of the conservation rules and threatened legal action against the government - the move-on rule, which requires trawlers to stop fishing in an area if they pull up too many corals, sponges and other long-lived ocean life.



Forest & Bird said ancient deep-sea coral is dying while fishing companies rake the ocean floor to catch fish found hundreds of metres underwater.

A spokesperson for the conservation group, Geoff Keey, said the letters showed the High Seas Group's persistent effort to prevent minor marine protections in the South Pacific over bottom trawling.

"New Zealanders really really care about their seas, about the oceans, and we care about our place in the Pacific and as a responsible country in the Pacific," Mr Keey said.

"What these letters show is that the industry was not taking care of the ocean - was doing the opposite - and was certainly encouraging the government to be anything other than a responsible player in the South Pacific."

Quotas are in place for fishing in New Zealand's offshore waters, where orange roughy can live for up to 130 years, and are caught using bottom trawling, a method that can damage marine life living on the seabed.

The Ministry of Primary Industries said more than 90 percent of New Zealand's offshore waters have never been bottom trawled.

Barry Weeber, who co-chairs the Environment and Conservation Organisation, has been a non-government representative at meetings of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, including at the Hague in January.

Mr Weeber said bottom trawling was the undersea equivalent to felling trees to catch birds and was destroying sea-life.

"It is actually really destructive and the biodiverse communities that occurred on the bottom in the past have been heavily impacted by bottom fishing. That's why we want to protect those areas that haven't been impacted in the past but also those areas that have been, so we have some potential for recovery in the future."

Mr Weeber said the fishing industry has been lobbying for years to reduce conservation measures, while claiming what it is doing is sustainable.

He said he was disappointed the industry was not acknowledging its impact on the seafloor.

"Clearly if you're running big trawl nets and destroying what's there, that's not a sustainable industry. That's what they want to continue, they want to continue doing that on those high-biodiverse areas but also on the long-lived fish they're catching, the orange roughy."

Stuart Nash said since he's been Minister of Fisheries, he's had over 1000 pieces of correspondence from all sectors with regard to fisheries.

Mr Nash said the government will not bow to pressure, and every decision they make will be based on evidence and science.

"I haven't had any pressure whatsoever put on me. There's a lot of work going on in the fisheries space at this point of time and everything has got to be based on the evidence."

Mr Nash said he planned to ask for a briefing on deep-sea bottom trawling.

The High Seas Group did not respond directly to RNZ, but in a statement Talley's deep sea manager Tony Hazlett said the group had been vocal in objections to aspects of conservation management measures.

He said permit conditions over the past decade had become increasingly onerous and Talley's supported the group's advocacy

Conference



New Zealand Seafood Industry
Conference and Technical Day

Registrations for the 2019 New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day are open and the [programme](#) has now been posted.

Seafood New Zealand has negotiated accommodation rates at the conference venue and neighbouring hotels. Please note, there are now a limited number of rooms available at the [Rydges hotel](#), so be in quick to secure remaining accommodation and flights. Bookings can be made through the [information](#) section on the conference webpage along with [links](#) to Air New Zealand for group flight bookings.

[Register now.](#)

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- Future Development and Innovation Award
- Young Achiever Award
- Longstanding Service Award

For more information on each category [visit our website](#), or [download the form](#) to nominate someone today.

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