

DRAFT JOHN GLAISTER SPEECH TO PAUA INDUSTRY CONFERENCE 2006

STARTS

The paua fishery is in a time of change. In this, you lie on the cusp of new opportunities. Some you have begun developing yourselves; some you will begin to develop with others.

Over the next two days you will hear of the many challenges and opportunities in paua fisheries today. I encourage you to listen to these, and keep open minds.

Our paua fishery is a national taonga. The shell is used in traditional and contemporary Maori art. And we see the patterns and colours of paua imitated in the wider world of NZ fashion and the arts.

But the fishery itself is equally iconic.

Paua are a valued kai moana. They are important to coastal hapu. And being able to provide paua at important cultural events like hui or blessings helps uphold the mana of the hosts.

Paua are an important food – being able to go down to the reef and catch a feed of paua is an important part of the way of life in some coastal communities.

Paua are also an important part of summer at the beach for many kiwis - paua steaks or fritters on the barbie.

All these traditional values form part of New Zealand's customary and amateur fishing heritage.

Our paua fisheries are also the basis of a valuable industry - last year we exported over \$50 million of paua meat.

During the past 20 years, the Ministry has focused on managing fisheries sustainably.

With the introduction of the QMS, we have limited the commercial catch. Quota shares give commercial fishers confidence that no other commercial fisher is going to catch 'their' share of the fish.

However, theft is a problem. People catch paua and sell it illegally in NZ and overseas.

To deal effectively with the challenges of paua management, we need a coordinated approach.

I know there are currently some concerns over Paua 5A and the sustainability of the current TAC.

We could address this problem solely by adjusting the TAC to a sustainable level. However, this is a 'business as usual' response.

To go beyond this, we need to know:

- what we want to achieve in a fishery – that is objectives;
- what our boundaries are – that is 'standards'; and
- how we are going to do this – that is a plan.

The government is committed to maximising the value of NZ fisheries. As 'guardian of the multitudes of Tangaroa', we at the Ministry want to make sure that New Zealand is getting the most from these 'multitudes' - now and into the future.

You – the paua industry – know what you need from the fishery to improve your returns. Amateur and customary fishers also know what they would like from the fishery.

To improve the value of fisheries for everyone, we must involve everyone in the process.

Sometimes, one course of action will benefit you all. But sometimes, improving value for one group may lessen it for another.

So groups must work together, to accommodate each others interests, and find areas of common ground. You may have to negotiate; you may have to compromise.

After working through all this, your combined goals will become the objectives of the management plan for your fishery – your Fisheries Plan.

Ultimately this may be a plan that incorporates reseedling an area as a key technique, or allow you to harvest using Underwater Breathing Apparatus - particularly where diver safety is an issue. There are many possibilities.

But there are no free lunches. The costs of any management measure must be weighed against the benefits.

Together you can decide as an industry what you want: what it will take to achieve it; whether you can work with others to do this; and whether you want to make the necessary investment.

With paua, we may be able to work towards developing these plans on a finer scale than we use to manage fisheries at present.

But whatever the scale, the objectives must fit within operating boundaries – or ‘standards’ – that the Ministry sets up around the fishery.

These boundaries will involve things like minimum stock size; environmental risks of harvesting or enhancement activities, and process standards around the use of information.

The standards must meet government obligations, and they must work; they need to be practical. So the Ministry will be involving you and all other stakeholders as we develop them.

With Objectives and Standards in place, we will be able to work with you to develop a plan that manages the fishery to best meet your Objectives within the Standards.

This is what Fisheries Plans are all about. And I believe they will improve the value of our fisheries.

I expect to see them deliver:

- more certainty
- better management
- more effective controls
- less conflict
- and an increased ability to plan your business

Ministry of Fisheries’ staff have been encouraged to work with you and other stakeholders in developing these Fisheries Plans. We are currently recruiting a number of people to help us provide you with this capacity over the next few years.

We need skilled people. So hopefully our advertising has already caught your eye – because we need to represent a career in fisheries management as an attractive option in this time of high employment.

The first group of Fisheries Plans in the paua fishery will essentially be a documentation of what we are currently doing.

This is because we need to know where we are today – the fishery; the objectives; the standards – as well as how we are deploying our resources to achieve our current goals. We need to do this before we can move forwards.

Beyond this, there will be some learning involved, and an opportunity to further improve our fisheries.

We have already developed proof-of-concept plans for three fisheries – Coromandel Scallops, Bluff Oysters, and Southern Blue Whiting.

I'm very pleased with the way these have come together.

I want to tell you about our work on a Fisheries Plan for the Foveaux Strait oyster fishery.

We have had recreational and customary fishers, skippers, quota owners and their stakeholder group, all involved in developing this.

I am disappointed environmental interests were unable to get involved here. But we are working to keep them informed, and will work to involve them more directly as the plan takes shape.

Everyone involved saw this as an opportunity to plan future research to meet the needs of the fishery.

They also saw the Fisheries Plan as an opportunity to bring more certainty about how this fishery is managed.

The process has taught us much about developing a fisheries plan, as well as giving us a better understanding of the parasite *Bonamia* and the impact of dredging on the seabed..

We have found:

- The process takes time;
- That the information we want is not always available;
- One size does not fit all when it comes to the way the develop fisheries plans;
- And that it is demanding of stakeholders. So it is important that stakeholders are able to see the value of being part of the process

With Fisheries Plans, it is particularly important that people work together. Without collaboration, we struggle to find solutions that reflect all of society's values and expectations.

So I am improving the way the Ministry works. Not just with stakeholders, but amongst ourselves too. Over the past 18 months we have improved the integration between different business units at the Ministry, and got them all working better together – and this integration is continuing.

In developing Fisheries Plans, I'm committed to them being inclusive and informed by scientific evidence. This best serves, and fairly balances, the interests of everyone with a stake in the fishery.

Because your fishery has such a strong amateur and customary component, I encourage you to get involved in the shared fisheries project being developed by government.

I hope that later this month, we will have a public discussion document on shared fisheries ready for release. My staff have been working on a range of options for this. And the work has involved talking with a range of stakeholders - including your representatives.

I anticipate some heated debate over the issues because some of us will rank our priorities differently. But I'm encouraged by the goodwill I have found in the paua industry to date in working through the issues.

Some of you have recently been working with my staff on a plan for the Paua 7 fishery.

The focus of this has been to work out what the industry can contribute to the management of this fishery.

I am encouraged with your progress in developing diver certification, formalising codes of practice, micro-management, and carefully planned reseeding initiatives.

I understand that the PAUAMAC 7 group is currently considering a full draft of the plan and I look forward to hearing what they think of it. I also understand that the reseeding component may be developed further as part of an industry-wide strategy.

I look forward to hearing more about this. I also look forward to seeing how we can work together in a combined approach to managing paua fisheries.

We will hear more about Fisheries Plans from both Ministry and stakeholder perspectives in the next session.

I began this address by saying that you are in a time of change.

Change can be scary. But change can also bring opportunity.

So again I remind you to keep an open mind.

Look for the opportunities.

And get involved.

ENDS