

Orange Roughy MSC Launch April 2017

George Clement CEO, Deepwater Group

Good evening, welcome and thank you all for coming along to help us celebrate this major milestone in New Zealand's sustainable seafood story.

We aim to be recognised as the best managed fisheries in the world and we are delivering on this promise.

Today we celebrate 220,000 GWT of premium seafood from New Zealand's unspoilt waters as being MSC certified – one of the top performing countries in the world.

Seventy percent of our orange roughy catch is now MSC certified with further two fisheries improving to a level they will also meet the very high standards – one possibly as soon as later this year.

Buckminster Fuller once said, "The most important thing about Spaceship Earth - an instruction book didn't come with it."

And so it was with orange roughy - we didn't get an instruction manual. We have had to learn by doing.

For the first 20 years we tried things that had worked in the northern hemisphere – they didn't work here. By the late 1990s we had to stop, rethink and start all over again. We had to rebuild these stocks – a process that is now all but completed.

During the last 20 years we have set things in place that have now proven to work - the results of which are recognised in these three orange roughy fisheries meeting the very high MSC standards.

The orange roughy story more often brings out emotions than facts. There is no question that we in the industry have a continuing passion for orange roughy and a determination to succeed but we are doing so on the facts.

Four of the most powerfully motivating words in the English language are, "It can't be done".

Few other words inspire challenge in the determined.

How many times did we in industry hear these words: from scientists ("Acoustics won't work"); from managers ("Why don't you admit orange roughy fisheries cannot be managed and close the fisheries?"); and from our friends in the eNGO community ("Bottom trawling is unsustainable"). When the ORH7A fishery was closed in 2000 and we asked MFish for their monitoring strategy to determine when to open it, their reply was, "There is none. It will take 100 years".

Forget “It can’t be done”. Our motto is simply “Make it Happen!”.

This is the pivot point in a journey of sustainable seafood, during which industry has directly invested some \$35 million into science and technology to develop new ways of measuring and observing orange roughy 1 kilometre below the surface, to rethink harvest strategies, and to improve the science that underpins sustainable fisheries. The details are all well rehearsed elsewhere.

Tonight I’d simply like to thank all of the quota owners. Without their dedicated commitment to conservation and to sustainable utilisation we would have no orange roughy fisheries today and the New Zealand economy would be poorer for it. They have closed fisheries themselves, they have exhibited patience while these rebuilt, and they have had enough faith in the science to fund these new developments without certainty of success – but all along with belief that this is the right way to proceed. This is a real testament to the incentives within the QMS at work. This is their success.

I’d also like to thank all of the scientists whose dedication, passion and commitment to succeed has made this possible: especially to the acoustics team in CSIRO (lead by Rudy Kloster and Tim Ryan); to those in MPI who have worked so hard to ensure the science and management was available to meet MPI’s standards, and their unstinting assistance with the information we required to meet MSC’s standards (in particular Geoff Tingley, Aoife Martin, Tiffany Bock and Pamela Mace); to Patrick Cordue for finding a way through the modelling maze; to Sealord and to Graham Patchell for their development of the AOS technology; and to NIWA for their on-going commitment to fisheries science.

When looking forward to this day, we had the vision of capturing the orange roughy story in a book about the people who have given so much of their lives, passion and enthusiasm for orange roughy. I’d like to thank Tim Pankhurst for undertaking this task and commend to you his story of New Zealand’s orange roughy fisheries. Perhaps over a drink you might tease out from him some of the many tales that didn’t make the editor’s cut!

I invite you all to relax and enjoy this evening, enjoy the wonderful MSC certified seafood that has been prepared by one of the best seafood chefs in New Zealand and celebrate this successful achievement with us.

I now welcome Patrick Caleo, the Asia Pacific Regional Director for MSC. Patrick is a resident of the Western Island, based in Sydney. We would rather he was based in the centre of MSC activities in this part of the world – New Zealand, but that is for the future. Patrick is a long-term champion for those fisheries that meet the challenges posed by the MSC standards and I suspect will remain busy for some time yet with orange roughy.

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