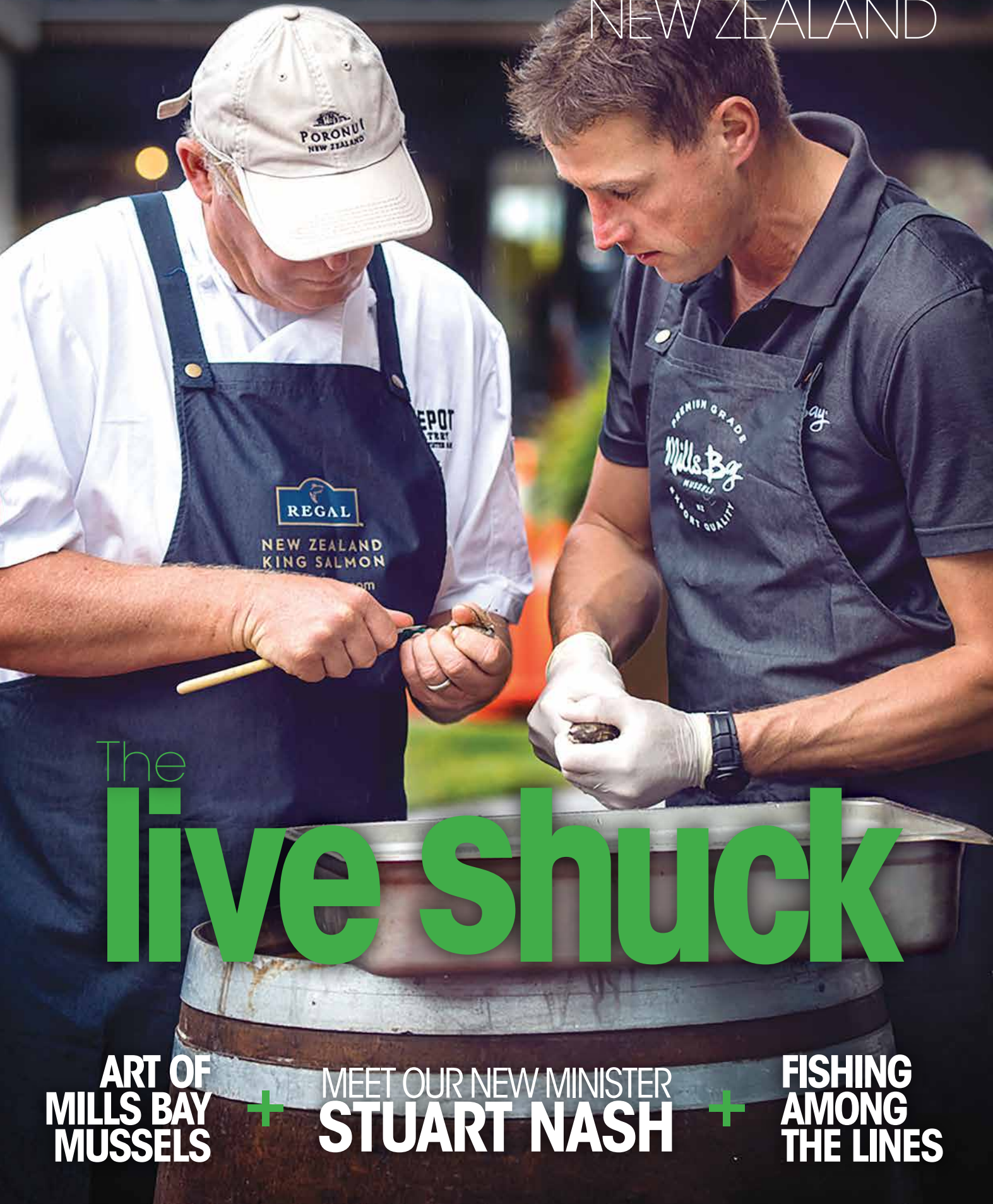


JUNE 2018

# AQUACULTURE

NEW ZEALAND



## The live shuck

ART OF  
MILLS BAY  
MUSSELS



MEET OUR NEW MINISTER  
**STUART NASH**



FISHING  
AMONG  
THE LINES



PUBLISHED BY  
**Aquaculture**  
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## Sanford stingers

Marine farmers are helping put the sting on  
invasive wasps in the Marlborough Sounds.

Rapidly growing numbers of German  
wasps are decimating local insect  
populations and have become a danger  
to the Sounds' birdlife – as well as local  
people and tourists.

But their spread is being halted, thanks  
to the local Sanford team who've joined  
the fight alongside the Department of  
Conservation, to help stop the foreign  
invaders.

Sanford provided vessels and a team  
of volunteers to deploy a wasp control  
programme at five different sites.

Grant Boyd, Sanford's Floating and  
Farm Development Manager, who was  
one of the volunteers, says "at each site  
we erected warning signs, then every  
50m along the track we attached a bait  
station to a suitable looking tree, taking  
into account any water ways which we  
had to stay clear of. In the bait stations,  
a small amount of wasp bait was placed.  
Now the bait stations are in place, and  
our guys are trained, we will be able to re  
bait these in the future."



## New biofouling rules

New Zealand has become the first  
country in the world to roll out nationwide  
biofouling rules to stop dirty vessels from  
contaminating our waters, says Minister of  
Biosecurity Damien O'Connor.

"About 90 per cent of non-indigenous  
marine species in New Zealand, such  
as Mediterranean fanworm, Japanese  
kelp and Australian droplet tunicate,  
arrived on international vessels. These  
incursions harm our aquaculture  
industries, fisheries and native marine  
ecosystems," he said.

"Under the new biofouling rules,  
operators must prove they've taken  
appropriate steps to ensure international  
vessels arrive with a clean hull.

"Biosecurity New Zealand officers will  
take a hard line on vessels that can't  
provide evidence they meet the rules.  
Divers will carry out inspections of hulls.

"Officers will also have the power to  
direct vessels for cleaning and order the  
vessel to leave New Zealand if the fouling  
is severe.

"Vessel operators will meet the costs of  
any compliance order."



Aquaculture feast: Teams from Mills Bay Mussels and New Zealand King Salmon served up their best seafood to diners at Feast Marlborough. Above and cover images supplied by Feast Marlborough.

## So long, Steve

Steve Wells has stood down from the  
Aquaculture New Zealand Board,  
and his role as NIML Aquaculture  
Operations Manager, to pursue other  
business interests.

We welcome back Milan Talley  
to the Board.



## Welcome Matt

The Sanford Havelock team have  
welcomed Matt Loose as their new  
factory site manager.

Matt replaces outgoing manager  
Martin Austin, and brings with him  
a wealth of industry experience  
from previous roles including a stint  
as Talley's Marlborough branch  
manager.

"I think aquaculture has so much  
potential. We are the only country  
with Greenshell mussels and the  
potential is huge to do so much  
more with them. I love that we can  
bring them in from the sea and make  
something out of it for the world,"  
Matt said.

Based in Rarangi, outside  
Blenheim, Matt also brings valuable  
skills learned on the rugby field to  
the industry.

"I started my career with  
a degree in sport coaching  
from teachers' college in  
Canterbury. I love rugby and  
I used to play at Canterbury B  
level but I broke my sternum in  
a game in 2005 and that break  
popped my lung. I was out for  
18 months and the recovery  
was slow and painful.  
I kept coaching while I was  
out (for Dan Carter's old club,  
Southbridge), and then on  
my first game back from that  
injury, I broke my eye socket and  
cheekbone, at which point my  
wife said enough was enough.  
The good thing is, I have learned  
a lot from coaching that I can  
apply in my work and I'm already  
enjoying being part of the Sanford  
team and stepping up to the  
challenges of the role."



# 2018 New Zealand Aquaculture Conference New Zealand's Future

The 2018 New Zealand Aquaculture conference will be exploring what role  
the industry has to play in New Zealand's Future.

As one of the most sustainable and most efficient forms of protein  
production on the planet, aquaculture offers New Zealand a tremendous  
opportunity to create green jobs and stimulate growth in regional  
communities through the production of the world's best seafood.

We've invited a world-class range of presenters to help us unlock the  
opportunity, over two inspirational days, September 26-27, at the  
Marlborough Convention Centre, Blenheim.

*Registrations open soon!*

**2018 AQUACULTURE CALENDAR:**

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>June 11-13</b><br>Aquavision<br>Norway | <b>June 23</b><br>NZOIA AGM<br>Waitangi  | <b>August 1-2</b><br>Seafood NZ<br>conference<br>Wellington | <b>August 9</b><br>AQNZ and<br>NZMIC AGM<br>Nelson |
| <b>August 19</b><br>MFA AGM<br>Nelson     | <b>September 26&amp;27</b><br>New Zealand Aquaculture Conference<br>– Blenheim |   |  |

# Rachel honoured

Kono CE Rachel Taulelei has been named Māori Woman Business Leader for 2018 at the prestigious University of Auckland Aotearoa Māori Business Leaders Awards. The award recognises a Māori woman who has achieved significant success in her career to date.

"The award is a recognition of a momentous team effort, as we never get to these places alone," Ms Taulelei says.

"It's important to celebrate for a number of reasons – not least of which is that shining a light on Māori women in business ensures we are visible to young women, those just getting started in their careers. If we're visible and available, it makes it infinitely easier for young wāhine, and young Māori tāne, to identify themselves in future positions of leadership."

The annual Aotearoa Māori Business Leaders Awards, now in their 14th year, celebrate the success and achievements of Māori business leaders.

"It is an honour and a privilege to receive this award and to be in the company of other current and future leaders," Ms Taulelei says.

"I'm driven by ideas of Māori excellence and creating a space where our capability meets potential, by understanding what role I can play in supporting, advancing and celebrating Māori because as a friend of mine says, at the end of the day, what's good for Māori is great for the world."

Previous winners of the Māori Woman Business Leader award include Hinerangi Raumatī (2017) and Wakatū Incorporation board member Miriana Stephens (2016.)



## Seven weeks of study: not e-nuff

Aquaculture's first Nuffield Scholar, Andy Elliot, has brought back a wealth of information from his first study tour.

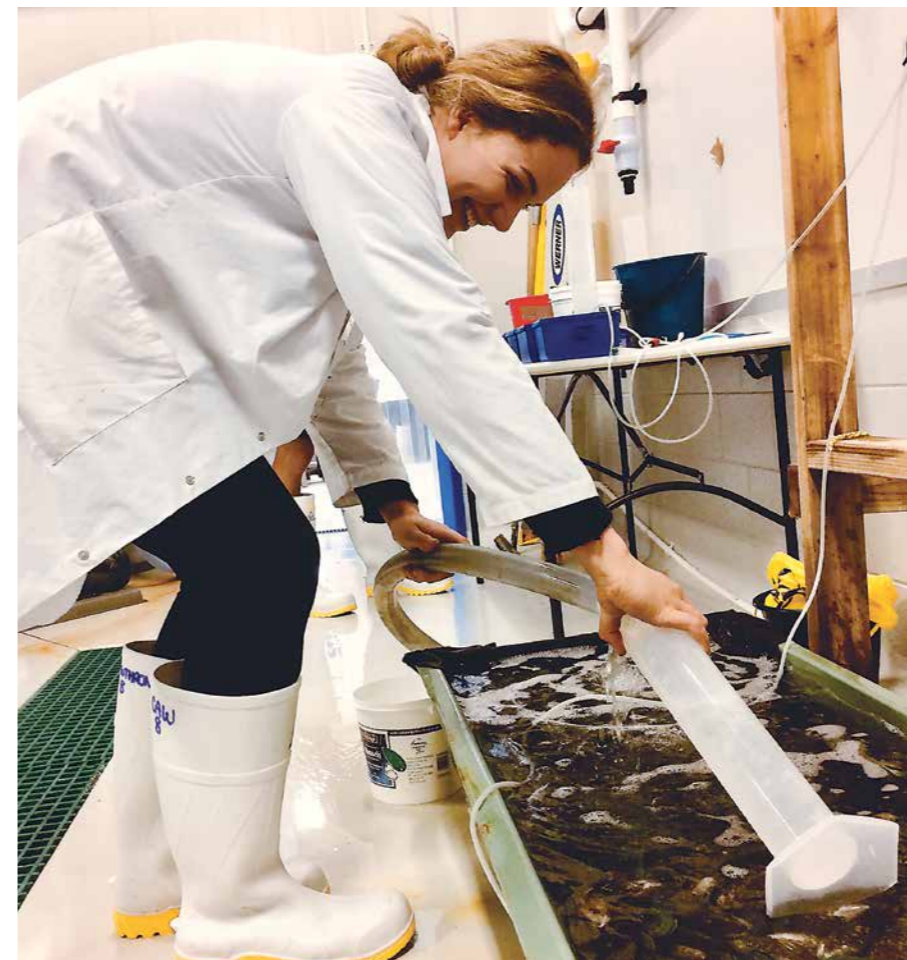
The Wakatū Research and Development Manager joined 75 other Nuffield scholars from around the world for a week-long conference in the Netherlands before embarking on a seven-week research programme, to gain insights from primary sector industries in seven different countries.

"A study tour such as this one is invaluable. The opportunity to learn from industry leaders in each country, as well as my fellow scholars was amazing. It also gave me an interesting perspective on how New Zealand is perceived. For some countries we are not really on their radar, but some of our Māori businesses are world-leading in terms of models of success for indigenous businesses, particularly in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors," Andy said.

"One of the insights I gained reinforced the value of storytelling and the integration of heritage and family tradition into products. The best and most innovative producers told stories that are authentic and inspiring. They engage you in more than just the product, they engage you in their culture."

The second aspect of the scholarship is an individual research project, which will see Andy heading back overseas for up to another ten weeks later this year, with a final report available on the Nuffield website early next year.

"My experience on the scholarship programme has been thought-provoking. Now that I'm back in New Zealand, I'm working my way through my notes and thinking about how we can apply the best of the overseas models to New Zealand industries, as well as highlighting what we are already leading the world in here. I'm looking forward to sharing my insights at the end of my research."



## Students' real-life aquaculture research

Testing the effect of caffeine on shellfish isn't a typical science lesson for most Year 13 students. But for 150 Nelson secondary biology students, experiments on mussels have been on the menu at workshops at the Cawthron Aquaculture Park.

The workshops, now in their seventh year, are the result of a successful collaboration between NMIT, SpatNZ, Otago University, and Cawthron Institute. This year they also have financial support from Port Nelson and Aquaculture New Zealand.

Students leave their classrooms and don lab coats to gain 'hands-on' science experience. The mussel biology workshops provide secondary school students access to state-of-the-art Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) laboratory facilities where they can gain NCEA credits by conducting self-led experiments with mussels. It is part of the NCEA

curriculum which requires students to do practical investigation in a biological context.

As part of the practical students brewed up coffee for the mussels to test the effect of caffeine on their heart rates and how it affects settlement.

"Across the board our students came up with really interesting experiments that could have real-life applications for the industry," said Cawthron educator Meagan Turner.

"They look at how pH affects feeding rates in adult mussels, how light affects the mussels' ability to attach, what effect adrenaline has on heart rates, which rope material has the best settlement rates and how temperature affects spat settlement.

"One student mixed up instant coffee and tested it on the mussels in different concentrations to explore how caffeine affects their heart rates."

Nayland College student Jess

Nicholson investigated how different concentrations of microplastics affect filtration rates and the amount of algae eaten by green-lipped mussels.

She found that even small concentrations will negatively impact mussels and their feeding.

"Being able to use the facilities at the aquaculture park was amazing... Seeing innovation first hand was very encouraging and I loved checking out all the cool equipment and systems," she said.

During their time at the Cawthron Aquaculture Park, students also visited SpatNZ's premises where they discover how the spat breeding programme works. They also learn how New Zealand's aquaculture value has increased through research and innovation.

Educators from Cawthron and the University of Otago facilitate the student learning and disseminate science in the broad environmental field.

Otago University's Nelson educator, Richard de Hamel, has been instrumental in the programme's success and has been involved since the programme started in 2012. "While the students enjoy the work, they find it challenging," says de Hamel. "It's real science in context."

"It's great for students who are making decisions around their careers to spend time in a working lab environment. During their two days here, students see firsthand that there are cool jobs in the aquaculture industry."

Ms Turner said the programme allowed students to hone their problem-solving skills and test their theories in a real laboratory setting.

"It is exciting to see the students getting inspired about real life science and building their confidence as potential future scientists."

"It's a unique opportunity due to the collaboration between organisations and we get to witness the 'lightbulb' moments that result from it. Students get to see the connection between their experiments and what other scientists are investigating in the aquaculture field. For some students, this experience may be the seed that grows into a career in science or as an educator, it's a privilege to be a part of that."



## Pure NZ Cuisine

Aspiring American chefs got a taste of working with our mussels and salmon thanks to the Pure New Zealand Cuisine programme.

Forty student chefs from the San Diego Culinary Institute and Cypress College of Culinary arts participated in 4-hour, hands-on workshops which saw them create their own dishes under the tutelage of renowned Kiwi chef Scott Murray.

The programme, which is supported by Aquaculture New Zealand, has been running for a number of years, and is designed to expand student's culinary imagination by pairing iconic New Zealand ingredients with, in this case, Asian and South American flavours and techniques.

## A+ for Talley's

Talley's have redesigned their half-shell mussel packaging to carry the A+ logo and highlight their commitment to the industry's sustainability programme.

The A+ programme sees New Zealand's marine farmers set world-leading environmental management standards and then measures their performance against them.

As strong advocates for sustainable farming, Talley's require all farmers who supply them product to be registered for the programme.

To date, about 90 per cent of the industry by hectares have subscribed to the programme.



## Coro seafood fest

Moana's oysters were a crowd favourite as 3000 people turned out to celebrate the Coromandel Seafood Festival.

With lines 10 deep at times and glowing comments on social media, the locally grown Pacific oysters were a stand out for seafood lovers.

## Mt Cook on the horizon

Mt Cook Alpine Salmon has been served up to a host of influential American foodies at the exclusive culinary event, MKA Horizons Symposium in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Symposium is a unique food, beverage, communications and design driven event and sees great chefs deliver edgy culinary concepts to highlight emerging trends styles and products.

The key speakers included Scott Murray, New Zealand chef and a stakeholder in Mount Cook Alpine Salmon who gave an excellent live presentation and sushi tasting of his exceptional salmon.

This was followed up by celebrity chef Jimmy Sneed, former chef de cuisine at the two-star Michelin Chef Jean Louis Paladin's

restaurant at the Watergate in Washington DC, who served skillet seared Mount Cook Alpine Salmon with a seasonal Virginia Ramp Sauce, Braised Ramp Greens, and a Ramp and Salmon Skin Cracking Garnish.



It's what's beneath the surface that counts and getting there is half the story.

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## Aquaculture Manager New Zealand – Fresh By Design

**THE COMPANY**  
Fresh by Design is a leading Aquaculture supplier providing System Design and Installation, Project Management and Equipment supply. We are expanding and are currently looking to grow our presence in the NZ Aquaculture market. The Aquaculture Manager NZ will be involved in all aspects of aquaculture sales, client relationship development and projects throughout NZ. This is a career building opportunity for an experienced candidate seeking progression.

**THE ROLE**  
Based in New Zealand, this position offers a great opportunity to join a rapidly expanding Australian owned company in a growing industry. It offers the ability to be involved with a wide variety of freshwater and marine clients to build lasting relationships, throughout New Zealand. There is likely to be flexibility to mould the position to suit the successful applicant depending on their range of skills and experience and full support will be given to ensure the position is a success.

- Develop and Manage Customer relationships
- Sales and marketing in NZ
- Develop local supplier networks.
- Deliver projects including hands on installation and commissioning
- Provide system and equipment technical support

**HOW TO APPLY**  
Please email your application including: a cover letter, a statement addressing the skills and experience above and resume to Ben Pope – [ben@freshbydesign.com.au](mailto:ben@freshbydesign.com.au)

For information regarding this opportunity please contact **Ben Pope**  
**PHONE** +61 (0) 419 288 712 or **EMAIL** [ben@freshbydesign.com.au](mailto:ben@freshbydesign.com.au).

**SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Proven experience in the Aquaculture Industry
- A strong understanding of aquaculture principals including: System Design, Aeration, Filtration (Biological & Mechanical), Feeding, Oxygen & Ozone, Sterilisation, Pumps, Waster Water Management, Water Hydro-Dynamics & Piping Systems, Sensors & Alarm Systems, Electrical Installations Water Quality Monitoring. Specialisation in one of these areas would be an advantage.
- Tertiary qualifications in Biology/Aquaculture/Applied Science/Engineering/Waste Water or similar
- Proven track record in client relationship management and sales.
- The ability to effectively prioritize and manage a wide variety of tasks independently and as part of a team.
- Demonstrated aptitude for problem-solving; ability to determine solutions for customers including troubleshooting services on-site and by phone.
- Project and budget management experience in the Aquaculture industry would be an advantage.
- Must have a current drivers licence, Passport and ability to travel both within NZ and internationally.



# Aquaculture and the new-look Fisheries New Zealand

**A** new government unit tasked with representing the aquaculture industry will focus on improving efficiency and certainty around planning and management, as well as biosecurity and innovation measures.

The Fisheries New Zealand unit announced recently, was created by Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash to oversee aquaculture, as well as wild-capture fishing, and in-part bring effect to the coalition agreement between Labour and New Zealand First to 'recognise the potential for aquaculture in promoting regional economic growth'.

The stand alone unit sits within the Ministry for Primary Industries, and is an acknowledgement that aquaculture makes a significant contribution to many communities, Mr Nash said.

"I am determined to see our aquaculture team build on the existing strong connections with industry players, Māori interests, local councils, environmental groups and other government agencies - especially the Department of Conservation and Ministry for the Environment," he said.

Staff are located in Nelson,

Whangarei and Wellington and will continue their busy work in these places and around the country. Nelson is the major regional hub for aquaculture and the staff want to remain well connected and accessible, he said.

"The Government's priority for aquaculture is to support the sustainable development of the industry and make sure its economic and social benefits are well understood," Mr Nash said.

"A key focus for officials is the National Environmental Standard for Marine Aquaculture (NES). This is a crucial piece of work to provide more guidance to councils and the industry on planning for and managing aquaculture around the country.

"The proposed NES aims to provide greater investment certainty by making the process for re-consenting existing marine farms more consistent and efficient. The uncertainty and cost associated with replacing existing resource consents reduces the industry's confidence to invest in innovation."

Mr Nash said he was looking forward to making decisions on the NES later in 2018, with a view to

having it in place in 2019.

"It will enable industry to continue to make a valuable contribution to the economy as well as build on its global brand."

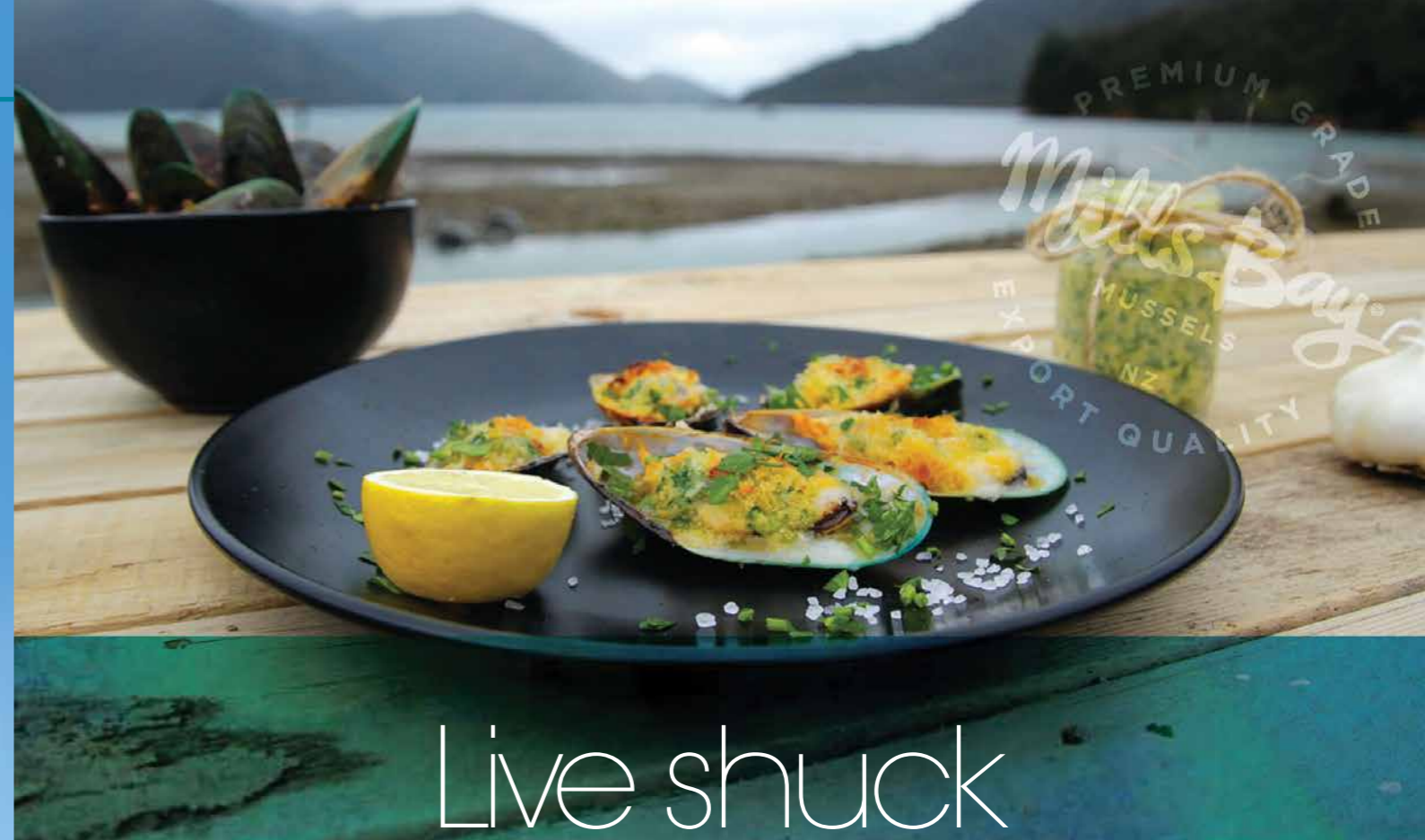
Biosecurity also remains a top priority.

"The aquaculture team in Fisheries New Zealand will work across MPI, with industry and councils, to improve biosecurity practices on and off farm," he said.

"Another focus is the need to encourage innovation to grow the value of aquaculture products, and to ensure an adaptable, resilient and future-focused industry. Research and trials into new farming systems, novel species, and selective breeding will help position the industry to face the challenges of the future.

"There are plenty of challenges too. Climate change, marine integrated management, market demands for transparency and environmental reporting will all require close attention. There will be increasing pressure on our shared resources. This may drive aquaculture growth in different directions, to novel products or technologies." ■

“The Government's priority for aquaculture is to support the sustainable development of the industry and make sure its economic and social benefits are well understood.”  
Stuart Nash



## Live shuck

# A mussel revolution

**F**orget what you think you know about mussels - this is the best recipe you've never tried. It's the brainchild of Art Blom and his team at Mills Bay Mussels and it all starts with the raw shuck.

"We set out to open a café that celebrates mussels and builds a buzz around them and helps change the way Kiwis look at them," Art said.

"We believe mussels are a delicacy that should be savoured.

"So we started by asking people who've worked with mussels for years, what was their favourite way to eat them.

"And what came back was that

a raw shucked mussel, lightly grilled or fried was a hidden favourite.

"So we tried it, and it was amazing so we're really going for it."

The secret is in the raw shuck.

"You don't boil an eye fillet before you grill it, so why would you do it with a mussel?" Art said.

"A lightly steamed mussel is a beautiful thing. But a live shucked mussel elevates it to something else. It's succulent. It's sweet. It's soft, and when you pair it with the right flavours, it is simply amazing."

Art is not the only one to agree.

Apex Marine's Bruce Hearn has been farming mussels for over 40 years

and is one of industry's biggest mussel lovers and most seasoned critics.

He'd tried the live shuck before, but was blown away when he tried Art's recipe.

"I was reluctant to try them at first, but then I had one and told him, 'This is the best mussel I've ever had. The combination of flavours between, the garlic butter, breadcrumbs and a touch of parsley - wow!'"

And Bruce is not alone.

"Pretty much everyone who tries them is blown away," Art said.

"Most people have never had them like this before and they absolutely love them." ■

### Mills Bay Grilled half shell Mussels with Lemon, Parmesan and Garlic Butter

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 dozen fresh live mussels
- 100 g butter, softened
- Zest of ½ lemon
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ¼c Panko breadcrumbs
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper

#### METHOD

Heat grill to 230°C.

To open the mussels; use a thin, blunt knife - firstly, remove the beard then over a bowl, hold the mussel firmly in your hand and insert the knife between the top shell and bottom shell. Work the knife around to cut through the hinge muscle. Slide the knife under the mussel to fully remove it from the shell.

Place the mussel on one shell on a grill tray.

Combine the butter, lemon zest, juice, parmesan, parsley, garlic and salt.

Spoon a generous knob of the butter mixture on to each mussel and sprinkle with the panko breadcrumbs.

Place under the hot grill for 4 - 5 min or until the topping turns golden brown.

Sprinkle with fresh parsley and serve hot with a slice of lemon.



Art Blom



Maegen Blom

Supplied by Feasi Marlborough

# The Art of Mills Bay Mussels

**A**rt and Helen Blom landed in New Zealand, with just their backpacks – and a dream. “We had a dream of owning 1000 cows and having six kids at the same school,” Art said.

They had finished agricultural studies in their native Holland and travelled to the Southland region to get hands-on dairy farming experience.

“We started working on a farm to learn the ropes. We worked our way up through the various stepping stones and eventually to farm ownership,” Art said.

“That was 17-18 years ago. Balfour, in Northern Southland, wasn’t a dairying area then, there weren’t many cows in that area and we saw an opportunity and went for it.

“We achieved 1000 cows well and truly, but only got to four kids.”

With children Nick 19, Maegen 17, Emma 16 and Art 13, the family built up their operation to run three farms before embarking on a journey that would ultimately lead them to the Marlborough Sounds and kick-start a quest to see mussels recognised as the pinnacle of New Zealand’s seafood basket.

“We were lucky enough that our dairy farm kept growing and growing

and it was fun, but we’d reached our limits,” Art said.

“Our kids were growing up fast but we were working all the time. We didn’t want to miss out on this time with our kids so we decided to take a year off and travel the world together as a family.

“In order to do that, we had to improve our business skills and develop a whole new system to be able to leave the business with our staff. It took two-and-a-half years to develop the system, but it worked.

“We went to Asia, South America, Canada, Europe and Africa.

“When we came back, we decided we wanted to live further North and we wanted more family time so we went looking for business opportunities that would allow that.”

That search led them to the Hairy Mussel Co, a Havelock-based mussel producer distributing high-quality mussels to local restaurants and retail stores.

“We knew we wanted to live in the

Marlborough Sounds, so we looked into forestry, vineyards and tourism, but the mussel industry interested me the most,” Art said.

“I love the dairy industry, and we still own two farms, but you’re a commodity producer. The milk gets picked up and that’s it. I was looking for a business with a value-added opportunity.

“I love mussels, they really excite us. They’re sustainable. They’re as organic as can be. They’re delicious and they’re healthy.

“Traditionally there has always been a lot of focus on exports but we saw an opportunity on the domestic market and we think we can differentiate ourselves.”

The first step was to develop a new brand, Mills Bay Mussels, to appeal to a broader market, celebrate the provenance of the produce and create a luxury feel.

“When the business was originally set up, the owners wanted to create a fun vibe and appeal to mussel

fans,” said daughter Maegen who spearheaded the re-brand while juggling year 13 studies at Marlborough Girls College.

“We wanted to reach out and appeal to all Kiwi seafood lovers and put a different focus on the mussels, because they are awesome.

“They are delicious, they’re healthy, and they’re sustainably farmed in the amazing environment of the Marlborough Sounds.

“There is so much going for them and we really wanted to celebrate that, and connect consumers to where they are grown.”

The next step was to make sure their product reflected their brand story.

“Our core business is the distribution of live mussels, and quality and service is our point of difference,” Art said.

“We focus on delivering the absolute best quality mussels and providing really personal service to our customers. If there is a problem,

it may not be our fault, but it’s our responsibility to fix it.”

Another key difference is in the way Art values mussels.

“Mussels are as good as salmon. Probably even better than salmon,” he says proudly.

“We just have to treat them like they’re an oyster or a scallop.”

And the best way to treat a luxury shellfish, is to live shuck them (see previous page).

“We have found, and our customers agree, that it is the best way to eat mussels,” Art said.

Such has been the reaction to the live shucking that Art believes it is the start of a revolution that will change the way Kiwis view mussels. To reach as many people as possible, he’s started a campaign to travel around the South Island, conducting in-store displays at Foodstuffs grocery stores.

“It’s all very ambitious and we’re just starting out, but the idea is to show as many people as possible how good they can be,” Art said.

“We’ve got a great team at Mills Bay, and it is a real team effort. Everyone from the guys who farm the mussels to those who pack them and everyone in between, loves the mussels as much as us and takes pride in their job.

“We’re visiting all the stores we supply and shucking on site and giving people a taste of them grilled or barbecued.

“It’s all low key, but the taste is so good, and it’s all so exciting for me that I feel like there should be music playing, and fireworks going off and someone walking around in a mussel suit – we should make a real party out of it.”

Underpinning the plan are the same approaches Art used in the dairy industry with farming, and business planning and goal setting.

“When I came to New Zealand I got stuck into dairy. I had a big dream, I followed it through and it happened,” he said.

“I had another big dream to travel with my family for a year, and we worked and planned and it happened.

“Now we have a new dream. We have a new home. We’ve found something that really excites us and we are going to make it happen – even if it’s one mussel at a time.” ■

# A matter with Nash

As the new Minister of Fisheries, Stuart Nash is the lead minister for aquaculture. We sat down to meet the man behind the Minister and get some insight into his vision for aquaculture.

## Q Tell us about your childhood and upbringing?

I had a wonderful childhood growing up in Napier. Dad was a local lawyer and mum was a school dental nurse (I have never had a filling in 47 years of owning teeth). When the four Nash children came along she became a fulltime mother. My earliest recollections are of long summer days playing rugby, tennis and cricket, being at the beach, and fun times at the Marine Parade pools with great mates. I am sure there must have been winters in Napier and sad times at home, but they have long disappeared from memory.

## Q How do you manage to combine the rigours of public office with raising a young family?

To be honest, I don't. There is very little work-life balance in government. Most MPs (and certainly ministers) will admit that families are silent victims of the political profession. I do have a wonderful, loving and extremely supportive wife, who understands that I have to follow my passion. I try and keep Saturdays for my children and their sport and company, with Sundays set aside for reading and preparation required for the coming week. It doesn't always work out that way, but it has to be important for me to miss this precious time. You just hope that your children grow up understanding that the reason dad is away all week is because he is working to ensure New Zealand can be a better place for all.

## Q You've previously stated you'd never try to compare yourself to your great grandfather Sir Walter Nash, the third Labour Prime Minister, but are there any of his values or his leadership approach that you have adopted in your roles with the government?

I am extremely proud of the Nash legacy in my party and our parliament and I always seek to uphold the values and principles that Sir Walter represented for so long. One thing I do believe in is the value of relationships with key stakeholders. It's my experience that New Zealanders respect politicians who make themselves available. This is

something that I strive for as both a local MP as well as a Minister. It is also a characteristic that Walter was renowned for.

## Q Do you feel any extra pressure in carrying on the name that is so famous in New Zealand politics?

A little extra pressure, but Walter was Prime Minister 60 years ago and died in parliament in 1968, so one has to either know their NZ history, be a political junkie or a superannuate to remember the fine gentleman.

## Q Napier is famous for its Art Deco and the Marlborough Sounds are famous for mussels and you're representing both of them through various roles. How important are local icons like these for a region and how can we maximise the opportunities they offer?

They are extremely important from a number of perspectives. First, from an economic perspective, iconic industries or events create jobs and community wealth. Secondly from a branding perspective, icons create a point of difference and often provide a reason for time-poor visitors to choose Napier or Marlborough over other destinations. Thirdly, it creates community pride when we celebrate something we excel at.

## Q You have an academic and business background in forestry - why have you taken on the Primary Industries portfolio of fisheries?

I have master's degrees in Law, Forestry Science and Management, so my interests; both academic and otherwise, are wide and varied. My portfolios of Police, Small Business, Revenue and Fisheries also cover a wider range of interests and activities. All, however, require change in order to better deliver for Kiwis and the country.

## Q What did working for a year in Japan in forestry and agriculture teach you that would benefit New Zealand's primary industries?

How resilience, diversity and an understanding of the value of primary industries - and those who work in them - matter to industrialised countries in the 21st century.

## Q You won the seat of Napier in the 2014 and 2017 elections - how much of your popularity do you attribute to your campaign fire engine?

Ha! The fire engine was - and still is - an integral part of my electorate campaign and personal political brand. It's about taking ones roles and responsibilities very seriously, but not oneself! It's my experience that winning an electorate seat requires hard work (when I arrived back in Napier the current National MP had



a personal majority of over 9,000 votes; my majority is now 5,220) and a combination of smart branding, extensive campaigning and serious fundraising. But holding the seat means that you have to prove that you can deliver on promises, work hard to understand, and then advocate, on the issues that are important to the local community and have significantly more depth than a slick brand.

## Q Napier is a long way from most aquaculture, is this a barrier for you?

Not at all. In fact I spend at least five days of the week away from the Bay. But I would argue that Napier is probably 'closer' to aquaculture than my parliamentary office in the Wellington ivory tower. Planes negate distance quite successfully.

## Q The collective industry's biggest immediate challenge is security of tenure - how can we work with you to resolve it?

Regular and constant engagement with both me and my officials at Fisheries NZ. If I know and understand the issues, then I can work hard to help the industry overcome them.

## Q In 2018, our industry conference theme is "New Zealand's future". What role do you see aquaculture playing in the future prosperity of the country?

Aquaculture will play a huge role. In my view the industry is under-developed and not particularly well understood. Both government and industry have important roles to play in ensuring those who invest, engage and work in aquaculture have the ability to optimise their potential. Technology is developing at a great rate of knots in value-added processing, smart marketing and global branding as well as in the growing and harvesting areas. Our challenge is to use this technology to grow the industry in a way that adds significant value whilst mitigating the factors that, to date, have limited growth.

## Q What's your favourite seafood?

I really don't have a favourite. I love it all and have, on numerous times at various events, willingly over-eaten calamari, salmon, mussels, oysters, crayfish, paua and nearly anything in between. The only seafood I have tasted that I wouldn't rush to try again is kina. ■

# Fishing among the lines

Tom Meyers' record catch is 100 Snapper in 45 minutes.

That was all it took for the 16 guests aboard his Coromandel Fishing Charters, 51-foot vessel Joint Venture, to catch their bag limits while fishing around mussel farms in the Hauraki Gulf.

"I was back at home having a cup of tea by 10am," he jokes.

"The fishing around the mussel farms is simply the best in the world – for the sheer numbers of fish, the variety of species and the amazing scenery – there is absolutely nothing like it," said Tom of Coromandel Fishing Charters.

"The mussel farms act as an artificial reef. They provide shelter for baby fish and are home to an abundance of marine life so they're the perfect hunting and breeding grounds for Snapper, Kawhai, Kingfish, John Dory and Trevally."

"Our skippers stay in constant contact with the farmers and we'll follow the harvesters and come through after them."

"We regularly get people on our charters catching snapper from 10 to 15lb, well up to 20lb."

"We'll do eight charters in a weekend and have everyone catch their limits – that's seven fish each."

"We have a boat minimum of 320mm, and we don't allow any throwbacks. You keep the first seven legal fish you catch. And once limits are reached, it's lines up."

So prolific is the fishing among the lines that people are travelling from all over the country to experience it and it's seeded a thriving spin-off industry that's proving a boon for the local community.

Tom moved to Coromandel about 6 years ago, to start a new chapter of his life after losing both legs in a road works accident on Norfolk Island.

Together with wife Lorraine, they bought one boat and built the business up from scratch.

Today, they are one of seven recreational fishing charter companies operating out of the Coromandel Harbour who target the fishing grounds around the local mussel farms.



Collectively the industry brings 20,000 tourists and millions in revenue to the Coromandel town each year, as well as providing 15 full time jobs. And that's not counting the thousands of recreational boaties who bring their own vessels to the area each year.

"Everyone knows the best place to go fishing is around a mussel farm, and that's bringing more and more people to town each year," he said.

"We have a lot of the same groups returning year after year. We've had some customers from Whakatane, who sold their boats and come out with us because the fishing is way better here – and that's because of the mussel farms."

"A basic study we did last year showed we collectively had over 20,000 guests which generated over \$1 million-plus in turnover alone. Of

that figure, 90% would go straight back into the town.

"I spend \$6,000 per month on fuel and about \$450 a week on bait, not to mention the costs of gear and maintenance. We buy everything we can from local suppliers."

"But that's just the tip of the iceberg because for every dollar our guests spend with us, they spend two dollars in the town."

"Guests come and stay for two nights in local accommodation, they eat at local restaurants, buy supplies from the local supermarket and bait shop."

"They're here for a good time and they're prepared to spend to get it."

"We're part of the lifeblood of this town."

Hank Codlin of Salty Towers has seen the expanding flow-on effects

first hand through his bait and tackle shop, set out on 5 acres on the outskirts of the Coromandel township.

"We have a process where the skippers will phone us up and say, 'I have 183 snapper coming in – can you fillet, bone, vacuum pack and ice them for us'. And we'll say 'yes, it will take us an hour and half,'" Hank said.

That's approximately 30 seconds per fish – but it has a lasting impact on the community.

"Coromandel has roughly 1500 permanent residents, so any industry that can provide permanent jobs, inject revenue into the economy and bring people to town is vitally important," Hank said.

"Our bait shop alone brings in \$1.2 million to the local economy and employs seven people."

"We've built that up over 25 years. We supply bait to all the local charter operators as well as recreational fishermen. We're producing two-tonne of ice per day."

"Everybody who's working around the fishing charter industry, is also working to enhance the value of the township. We're actively promoting the town, other local tourism and hospitality businesses."

"Fishermen come in and we pass on all the advice and knowledge they need to have a really happy stay."

Of course, what makes them happiest is a great day's fishing.

"I've travelled the world and I would say, by far that we have the world's best scenic, value for money fishing. Everything about it is top of the range. You just couldn't get better."

"There's no doubt that it's the mussel farms that make the fishing so great."

"And the mussel farmers work hand in hand with our charter operators. Everybody works together. That's the bottom line – we've got to work together. It would be a huge loss to the town if we ceased to exist."

Hank is also producing bait products derived from the by-products of mussel processing.

"About 25 years ago, there was no such thing as berley or mussel bait. So we started taking the mussels with broken shells and irregularities, and turned them into berley bombs to bring the fish on the bite, and baits."

"We're also using old stocking from the farms to put the berley in, and we have a range of products for wholesalers."

"Today we make about 180 tonnes of berley per year and supply 232 shops around the country. We're looking to build that up to 240-260 tonnes."

"And all our labelling says 'Keep the Coromandel clean and green. Take your rubbish back to shore and we'll all catch more.'"

It's all part of Hank's core business – making people happy.

"The amazing thing is everybody smiles. Everybody has fun, it's just incredible. It's an amazing business to be in." ■



Coromandel Fishing Charters owners Tom and Lorraine Meyers with Gone Fishin' host Graeme Sinclair.





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