



COVID cancels conference but let's celebrate helping others

It is easy, when you consider the hundreds of hours and hard work associated with organising a conference for 300 delegates, to be devastated at its cancellation.

We are. It was going to be one of the best.

But here we are, a victim of lockdown as are many others.

Unwinding something as big as the Seafood New Zealand conference is not easy. Flights and accommodation must be cancelled, venue security, audio visuals, photographer, media, and sponsors must all be dealt with.

And the food.

Feeding 300 people over two days with the best kaimoana and other produce requires some serious provisioning and planning.

Rutherford Hotel Nelson's chef, Jeff Scott Foster was excited to be preparing such a large array of sustainably sourced seafood and other produce to so many people over two days. His menu for the end of conference function was exceptional. We thank him, and Rutherford Hotel for the enthusiasm and dedication to the conference they showed us.

So, the food.

The decision to donate the bulk of the food to charity was the right one.

We would like to personally thank those of our companies that chose still to do so, even though seafood may have been returned to them safely.

With the help of Nelson's Economic Development Agency, and the support of Rutherford Hotel, who themselves were supplying some of the food, the decision was made to donate to *Kai Rescue*.

The *Kai Rescue* programme was established in 2017 by Nelson Environment Centre with the aim of minimising food waste in the community. They partner with more than 60 food recipient organisations from the Nelson Tasman region who distribute food to individuals and families in need.

We would also like to thank Nelson Mayor, Rachel Reese, who was to open the conference.

On hearing of our decision to donate the kaimoana, she wrote, "*First, I am not surprised about this message – it resonates with the values of Seafood NZ and your mission - respect for people and respect for ocean resources. I remember the last conference where the focus was on people, communities, innovation, and growing value from the catch and reducing waste. Thank you for making good out of a challenging situation and honouring the kai moana we treasure by gifting to people in need.*"

And, to all of you who were to receive Seafood Stars last night, for the very reasons Mayor Reese stated – respect for people and for ocean resources – we hope we can celebrate with you again in the future, and in person. In the meantime, a tribute to those winners and nominees is below this column.

We are being asked if we will reschedule the Seafood New Zealand conference. We are looking at options, but frankly, many things are out of our control. We would like to, and will let you know.

Thank you for wanting to be a delegate, or a speaker, or a sponsor, or a supplier.

We will do it again when it is safe to do so.

Seafood Stars celebrated

Yesterday, we were set to celebrate innovation in the seafood industry, and the people who, past and present make that possible.

Our Seafood Stars Awards have been judged, and while we cannot award them in person, we should celebrate them.

The winners in the Future Development Innovation Award are leading the way in replacing polystyrene packaging and revolutionising oyster farming.

Nelson company Talley's have introduced an innovative new packaging design which is removing 180,000 polystyrene boxes from the landfill every year. They have replaced the polystyrene boxes it used for transporting seafood to a product called TempGuard, which allows fish to be transported without refrigeration. The new packaging, made from cardboard, is 100 percent recyclable and will protect perishable goods from deteriorating, without refrigeration, for 48 hours.

And Aaron and Debbie Pannell of Marlborough have developed *FlipFarm*, which is the oyster version of a bottling plant. *FlipFarm* semi-automates almost all oyster farming tasks as well as providing an ideal growth environment, extremely efficient biofouling treatment, predator protection, and most importantly ease of use, wrapped up in a system that is fun to use and hard to break.

A long line of industry leaders who have been the backbone of the seafood industry over decades have been recognised – and a rising star has taken out the Young Achievers Award.

Seven people received Longstanding Service recognition.

Denver McGregor has worked for New Zealand King Salmon (NZKS) for 30 years, and during this time, ensured NZKS and its products and processes were at the forefront of innovation and technology when it comes to food safety. In 2018, Denver was the first in the seafood industry to pioneer a Listeria Strategy Programme, to better understand *Listeria monocytogenes*, its occurrence within the NZKS manufacturing environment and find proven methods to control it. This programme has allowed Denver and his team to identify 19 different strains of Listeria. Denver has been sharing his knowledge and findings with the wider industry in the hope other organisations can still benefit from the tools he has developed.

Andy Smith of Talley's has been a passionate advocate for the both the New Zealand and international Fishing Industry since he started his career back in the 1970s. He is well known to many as a staunch supporter of the industry and for his often-exercised inclination for standing up

for what he believes in and championing the little guy. His sincerity and willingness to lend a hand has been valued by all who have worked with him over the years.

Long game players, Richard and Jean Kibblewhite, are fishing legends, having been involved in the commercial fishing industry since 1987. Their company, Splashzone Ltd, currently owns seven vessels, covering wetfish and crayfishing operations. Richie has helped 12 young people in the industry obtain their tickets, has given freely of his time for many years, and done an outstanding job as Auctioneer for the Shipwreck Relief Society Fundraiser, this year raising \$54,000. Both Richard and Jean are positive, encouraging role models and make the industry a better place. They are very well deserving of a Longstanding Service Award.

Carol Scott is the CEO of Southern Inshore Fisheries Management Company, a company which represents the interests and rights of quota owners and fishers throughout the South Island and Taranaki. Carol has an extensive career in the commercial fishing industry in both Australia and New Zealand, with a background in Fisheries Management, Science and Research, Policy and Marine Planning, Environmental Management, fishing gear and flume tank technology. Carol is a member of a number of technical and community-based industry working groups. For 38 years she has been a highly respected representative of the seafood industry.

George Clement was instrumental in setting up the Deepwater Group 15 years ago, drawing together the vast majority of deepwater quota holders. He has been a relentless advocate for the fisheries. His achievements include overseeing science-based stock assessments, gaining MSC certification for major species including orange roughy, once a byword for overfishing, and having a diverse industry speaking with one voice on policy and interaction with Government and the regulators. The Deepwater Group is a success story and George is a key contributor to that.

Lesley Campbell has led FishServe since 1999 and has driven a relentless pursuit of efficiencies and modernisation over the past 22 years. Most recently, she has overseen the comprehensive re-build of the original IT systems that are the foundation of the QMS and the transition to electronic reporting. The result of these efforts are services that are both better and cheaper to the industry. From the implementation of the systems to support the introduction of the 1996 Fisheries Act, to setting up FishServe Innovations New Zealand, to implementing electronic reporting, she has led the organisation through significant change. Lesley is a focused and driven individual that has always had the best interests of the industry at heart and is very deserving of a Longstanding Service Award.

And the seventh deserving recipient of long service recognition is Tom Clark, who cut his teeth in the industry with the Seafood Industry Council and now shares his time between Fisheries Inshore New Zealand and Seafood NZ; proving invaluable to both. Tom has a great depth of knowledge a vast array of subjects to do with commercial fishing, can reel off facts and figures at any time, and convert complicated policy into comprehensible briefs quickly and accurately. He is a valuable asset to FINZ and the wider industry.

There was only one award presented in the Young Achiever category, and that was to Amy Moore, daughter of Craig and Penny Jones of North Beach Fishing in Greymouth. Amy has been instrumental in beginning a Seafood Academy with all high schools on the South Island's West Coast and working with the Federation of Commercial Fishermen to make a series of mini documentaries to entice more young people into the seafood industry. This year, Amy was

selected to represent the seafood industry on the newly formed MPI Food and Fibre Youth Network and in her role, will promote the positive side of the seafood sector.

Congratulations to all our winners.
