



# NZ ROCK LOBSTER INDUSTRY COUNCIL LTD

*Ka whakapai te kai o te moana*

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## NZ RLIC delivery to levy payers

July 2022

The NZ RLIC work programme is funded by the commodity levy which also supports the function of CRAMACs and their work with us. The close engagement keeps us grounded in the issues important to support the long-term interests of the rock lobster fisheries and all industry participants.

This document summarises the activities and services undertaken by the NZ RLIC to represent the interests of rock lobster quota share owners (QSOs), processors, exporters, Iwi, permit holders and ACE owners in the 2021/22 business year.

- 1) We advocated for the industry's commercial and policy interests in government process and decision making. Key elements of that were;
  - a. the preparation of submissions on government agency initiatives and processes. During the 2020/21 reporting period we provided 19 formal submissions and many other responses, letters, affidavits, evidence, and legal submissions;
  - b. participated at Select Committees hearings on legislative and public policy reviews that affect the interests of rock lobster QSOs and the wider industry;
- 2) Maintained constructive and collaborative relationship with government officials and other fisheries stakeholders through the many meetings and forums relevant to rock lobster fisheries management;
- 3) In all our engagements we apply a rational science and evidence based approach, and our advocacy is grounded in protecting and using the rights and incentives inherent in the Quota Management System;
- 4) A primary focus remains our efforts to protect commercial fishing access and use of inshore grounds where those are threatened by a range of Government and other agency initiatives including;
  - a. MPAs that are not based on actual risks to biodiversity, mechanisms under Part IX of the Fisheries Act (s186, mataitai) that are not consistent with the test and thresholds in the Act and regulations;
  - b. Local government and regional planning processes which seek to impose restrictions or closures that are unjustified or otherwise duplicate issues better addressed under the Fisheries Act (Northland and Marlborough were areas of particular focus during 2021/22); and
  - c. Applications under the Marine and Coastal Act which go beyond the recognition of non-commercial customary interests provided for in the Act;
- 5) Many regulatory processes under the Fisheries Act, including ER/GPR and Digital Monitoring, and their record keeping and reporting requirements, created issues and required adjustment to better deliver outcomes at reasonable costs of both industry time and money. Particular efforts were made to support the catching sector in adapting to the new complex reporting requirements;

- 6) We engaged in the annual review of rock lobster stocks, TACs, TACCs, allowances and regulatory controls, working with the relevant CRAMACs. We worked with the National Rock Lobster Management Group, including a focus on addressing the deficiency in measurement and management of recreational fishing, and were closely involved in all research considered in the Rock Lobster Fishery Assessment Working Group;
- 7) Where advocacy based on evidence and sound argument is not sufficient, we took steps to hold decision makers to account and challenge unsound decisions or process through legal challenge;
- 8) Developed mechanisms to alleviate impacts on the sector and facilitate and provide support for the industry during the 2020 COVID crisis including working with government to allow the return of lobsters to the sea; provide for the carry forward of un-caught ACE; and presented credible advocacy for the air freight support scheme;
- 9) The NZ RLIC worked through collaborative arrangements with other industry representative organisations, particularly through our facilitation and support for the Commercial Fisheries Forum which develops consistent and coherent positions on all policy and regulatory matters affecting the wild harvest seafood industry, and shares costs across the participating industry organisations;
- 10) We continued to advocate for progress in resolving problems with government cost recovered services including proper attribution of costs, recovery only where consistent with Act principles and increased accountability and transparency for MPI and DoC services.
- 11) Our media responses and a number of articles in fishing publications sought to improve community understanding about the rock lobster industry, address errors and imbalance and promote the responsible activities undertaken in the industry including the voluntary stock monitoring program;
- 12) The NZ RLIC ensured that, while minimising disruption to fishing, responses to biotoxin events were implemented in a timely and efficient manner to address the serious risks if the China market detected biotoxins in export shipments;
- 13) Elective research was commissioned, including on rock lobsters' ecological relationship to their habitat, so that our engagement with government is informed by best available science and we can be proactive in measures that are in the best interests of the fisheries;
- 14) The NZ RLIC delivered another sequence of rock lobster stock monitoring under contract to MPI. NZ RLIC personnel had oversight of observer catch sampling, voluntary logbook and tag, release and recapture programmes.
- 15) The NZ RLIC invested in research to support best practice management of rock lobster fisheries including developing a revised modelling approach to provide the basis for a new generation of management procedures, the relationship between stock recruitment and biomass, and analysis of the spatial distribution of fishing to inform submissions on all proposed losses of spatial access.
- 16) We coordinated responses to issues related to food safety, animal welfare, working closely with the Seafood Standards Council.