New Acting Managing Director for NFA

The National Fisheries Authority has a new Acting Managing Director. He is Dr Antony Lewis, originally from Brisbane, Australia. His last job was Oceanic Fisheries Manager with the Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC), where he had worked for the past 13 years.

Dr Lewis is currently on a nine months contract to NFA and is very happy to be back in PNG. He was appointed by the National Government on 5 June 2002 and formally commenced his duties with NFA on 22 July 2002.

He holds a Doctorate in Marine Science from the Australian National University and brings with him a wealth of experience in planning, management and implementation of oceanic fisheries programmes, a wide experience in national fisheries development in Pacific Island countries, and extensive experience in the tuna industry both within the Pacific and worldwide.

Dr Lewis is no newcomer to Papua New Guinea (PNG), having worked in the country from 1971 to 1977 as the Principal Biologist with what was known in the 1970s as the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries.

At that time, he was in-charge of tuna, baitfish research and monitoring when the tuna fishery was just developing in PNG. He was also involved with research on coastal finfisheries and management of those fisheries, and also participated in management advisory meetings for the tuna industry and international negotiations.

In 1988, he also spent four months in PNG working on a UNDP fisheries sector study.

Before coming to PNG for the third time, he has worked extensively within the Pacific region from Fiji to New Caledonia, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, and also in the USA, Oman, India, Sri Lanka, France and Belgium.

New Fishing Wharf to go up in Manus

A new fishing wharf similar to the one under construction in Kavieng will shortly be built in Manus Province. The wharf, costing K4.3 million, will be built at the Lombrum Naval base and is a joint funded project by the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The contract agreement for the construction of the wharf was signed on 15 July 2002 between NFA and the Nawae Construction Company of Belgium.

The contract signing comes after a long period of negotiation by NFA with tuna longliners, Manus Provincial Government, Papua New Guinea Harbours Board, landowners of Lombrum Naval Base.

The Manus wharf will cater for longline tuna fishing vessels to land their catches and resupply near their fishing grounds and may also provide opportunities for logistical support of purse-seine operations. It will also serve the local people of Manus in early August. Nawae Construction is currently working towards completing the Manus wharf in early August. Nawae Construction is expected to boost both commercial and small-scale fishing in the province.

Construction materials were expected in Manus in early August. Nawae Construction is also currently working towards completing the Kavieng fishing wharf in September.

Not only did the wharf cater for longline tuna fishing vessels to land their catches and resupply near their fishing grounds and may also provide opportunities for logistical support of purse-seine operations. It will also serve the local people of Manus Province who are using smaller vessels and banana boats to bring in their catches. The wharf is expected to boost both commercial and small-scale fishing in the province.

Fishing companies and individual local fishermen will benefit by having easy access to the province’s power generation and water treatment plants at Lombrum.

As we enter the second half of 2002, a period of considerable interest for NFA, whilst a range of important ongoing development and institutional reform activities continues. In late July, I took over the reins from Michael Batty as Acting Managing Director and shortly after, Honourable Ron Ganaaro, who had served with distinction as Minister for Fisheries, stepped down after unsuccessfully contesting his seat in the National Elections. These two people have provided great leadership to NFA and have left an enduring legacy - Mike in effectively defining the role of NFA over the last 12 months as an effective and efficient organization following a period of restructuring and institutional strengthening, and the Minister for his astute guidance of NFA and his committed constructive interventions in the fisheries sector. For my part, I am privileged to be taking up the baton from these men. I look forward to maintaining the momentum which they have generated, and hope to strengthen and reinforce the organization’s growing reputation. With a new Government being formed in early August, the Authority anticipates the appointment of a new Fisheries Minister, and the continuation of sound leadership and policy direction.

The months of July and August will see continuing progress in many areas. The completion of the Kavieng wharf is expected during October. In association with the lease and operation of the NFC fish processing facility adjacent to the wharf will be taken and construction commenced for the construction of the Lombrum wharf in Manus has been awarded, with completion due in March 2003. It is hoped that this will stimulate fisheries development for longline, purse seine and local artisanal vessels alike, in an area which sits adjacent to the main tuna fishing grounds and enjoys closer market proximity.

The tuna industry continues to hold out the main prospect for large scale development; new proposals or major commercial onshore projects are due before the end of the year, and several major existing proposals are awaiting final approval before commencement. Overall policy to guide further development is under consideration, with changes in regional arrangements for fisheries management in the wind. On the institutional side, the much needed revision of the existing Fisheries legislation has continued. This primarily involves the 1998 Fisheries Management Act and the 2000 Fisheries Regulations, and to a lesser extent, the 1978 National Salt Water Whaling Act of 1974. It is hoped that the Act and subsidiary legislation will be submitted for adoption by Government before the end of 2002. In addition, Fishery Regulations taking into account the needs of the sector are to be incorporated under the Merchant Shipping Regulations, and supported by the range of competency training now provided by the National Fisheries College.

At the provincial level, two major new complementary projects are expected to be underway, possibly before the end of the 2002. The EU Rural Community Fishing Project, a five year project which will contribute to sustainable improvement in the welfare of rural coastal communities by increasing family incomes through greater participation in sustainable harvesting and improved marketing of marine resources in selected provinces, awaits implementation following the award of a contract. The ADB Coastal Waters Fisheries Management and Development Project, which aims to strengthen market infrastructure development and income earning opportunities at provincial level, is to go tender mid-August. On completion of two pilot projects is now well advanced - the AusAID Institutional Strengthening and Training Project and the ADB Fisheries Management Project. A second meeting regarding Coastal Waters Fisheries Management, and to assist provinces with the planning of fisheries development, was held in mid-August, as the development of a provincial strategy and increased support for work at provincial level are put in place.

In all, in the months ahead will be a dynamic period for NFA, but I believe the restructured and streamlined organization is well placed to meet these challenges.

Dr Antony D. Lewis
Acting Managing Director

Calendar of Major Fisheries Projects and Progress to Date

- July 2000 – Submission of feasibility study for EU Rural Coastal Fisheries Development Program; report to Government and NEC.
- September 2000 – Feasibility study commissioned for EU Rural Coastal Fisheries Development Program.
- June 2001 – NFC Student support completed, 70% activities accomplished. Other project components are ongoing.
- 17 July 2001 – Prime Minister, Hon. Sir Mekere Morauta signed EU Rural Coastal Fisheries Development Project Financing Agreement.
- July - September 2001 – Consultants engaged in study of the ADB Coastal Waters Fisheries Management and Development Project.
- January 2002 – Infofish project implemented - consultations between NFC & participating companies.
- 07 February 2002 – Prequalification invitation closed for Manus Tuna Longline Fishing Wharf.
- 15 March 2002 – NFA lodged submission for Underwater Rights to Lands Department for Kavieng and Voco Point, Lae. PNG Harbours Board approved undersea activities.
- 20 March 2002 – ADB Appraisal Mission Wrap-up meeting regarding Coastal Waters Fisheries Management Development Project between NFA, ADB & Dept of National Planning and Monitoring.
- 31 May 2002 – Manus Fishing Wharf Tender closed.
- 01 - 14 June 2002 – Manus Fishing Wharf Tender evaluation period.
- 04 June 2002 – Contract for purchase of Voco Point site from Lae Yacht Club signed for NFA by Deputy Chairman of the Board.
- 13 June 2002 – EU Coastal Fisheries Development Project - Tender for technical assistance closed.
- 14 June 2002 – ADB Coastal Waters Fisheries Management & Development Project - Expression of interest for consultancy firms closes.
- 17 - 20 June 2002 – Loan negotiations for ADB Coastal Waters Fisheries Management and Development Project.
- 21 June 2002 – ADB Coastal Waters Fisheries Management & Development Project - NFA evaluation of expressions of interest from international consultancy firms.
- July - September 2002 – ADB Coastal Waters Fisheries Management & Development Project Invitation to short-listed consultancy firms for submission of technical and financial proposals and: Evaluation and selection of consultancy firms for the project implementation.
- 15 July 2002 – Contract Agreement signed - Manus Fishing Wharf

From the Managing Director’s Desk

Mr Polon is responsible for all fisheries matters relating to sedentary (sea bottom) resources, including beche-de-mer, trochus, giant clams etc. from Tawi village in the Manus Province. He attended Lomi Primary School and Manus High School and later went on to do Grades 11 & 12 at Passam National High School in East Sepik. From there he went on to study Fisheries Science at the University of Technology in Lae (UNITECH). In 1988, he graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in Fisheries Science from UNITECH and acquired a temporary job as a senior technician with the Biology Department at the University for nine months.

In October of 1989 he was recruited as a Scientific Officer Class 1 (One) with the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources (DFMR). He was posted to work at the Fisheries Research Station, Daru where he was promoted to OIC Class 2 (two) looking after one biologist, two technicians, one skipper and four casuals.

His research work in Daru involved gill net selectivity on barramundi, and the lobster and beche-de-mer fisheries, the latter; which was just starting in 1990. He was also involved in the monitoring of catches and commercial landings before it was introduced from Indonesia in 1976. He was also heavily involved in stock assessment work from 1991 - 1999, mainly on barramundi for West New Britain and Oro Provinces, and beche-de-mer and lobster for Western Province, and lobster around Torres Strait and the northern Great Barrier Reef. Stock assessment for Milne Bay was carried out in 2001. Still in Daru, he was further promoted to Class 3 (three) in 1994 and was heavily involved in collaborative lobster research around the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait areas with Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO).

In 1996, he decided that he had enough of Daru and needed a change of career. It was then that he made a self-transfer to DFMR in Port Moresby, which was largely due to funding problems for the research programs. From there on, Mr Polon has been in Port Moresby. It was this self-transfer to Port Moresby, which got him involved with the phyllosoma larvae cruise on board the RV Southern Survey, in collaboration with the CSIRO in 1997.

In 1998, he was appointed Acting Research Manager when the Department was being restructured to what is now known as the National Fisheries Agency (NFA). Midway through the reform in 2000, he was again appointed Acting Executive Manager until the change to his current substantive position. Mr Polon became Manager for Sedentary Fishery in 2001.

“I think in terms of fisheries management, there’s a lot more work to be done on biological issues within the Fisheries Management Plan as well as socio-economic problems in each fishery. We have to change to accommodate changes and new concepts of sustainability to effectively manage the fisheries in Papua New Guinea. NFA has got people involved throughout the reform that has got people working and getting things done. To me there is a real change in people’s working attitudes, which is showing that NFA now has a sense of direction.”

Staff Profile

Name: Philip Polon
Marital Status: Married with four children

Qualification: BSC. University of Technology, Lae

Current Position: Manager – Sedentary Fisheries
The beche-de-mer fishery, which is probably the largest of the revenue-earning fisheries in PNG in terms of local participation, with up to 200,000 people estimated to be involved in the fishery, at village level, in nearly all coastal provinces. Production peaked at 666t in 1998, with exports in recent years valued at around K20 million, behind only to tuna and prawns in value.

As a valuable sedentary resource, beche-de-mer is vulnerable to over exploitation and the boom-and-bust cycle which has been the case in most fisheries. To regulate this, management plans were introduced at provincial level from 1996 onwards, but following difficulties in implementation, a national management plan was established in 2001. Closures have been enforced following the attainment of prescribed harvest levels in several provinces, but difficulties remain with illegal exports, unregulated transport of product, and the costs of administration and management arrangements. NFA remains committed to the regulation of this important fishery and is currently focussing on raising awareness at all levels of the issues involved.

Beche-de-mer is the name for dried sea cucumber. It is commonly known in Papua New Guinea as Psilama. Sea cucumber is collected from the sea and goes through a boiling and drying process to become beche-de-mer.

They are found throughout PNG coastal provinces except the Gulf Province. Most commercial species are found in shallow waters, in depths down to 30m. Different species live and breed in different habitat types and depths. There are about 19 different species in the country. Mina Bay Province has the highest diversity with about 19 different species. Sea cucumbers are collected by wading on reef tops or by diving.

Collection of sea cucumber using hookah and scuba gear, and at night using lights is strictly prohibited because they spawn at night.

Commercial species of Beche-de-mer are grouped into categories of High Grade and Low Grade. Sea cucumbers (live sea animal) are greater in length than beche-de-mer (dried product). (See table below for their respective live & dry minimum sizes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Group H – High Grade Species</th>
<th>Trade Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Alternative Name</th>
<th>Minimum Live Length (cm)</th>
<th>Maximum Dry Length (cm)</th>
<th>Minimum Dry Weight (grams)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boil curryfish and greenfish for a short time only as some of them may disintegrate</td>
<td>Curryfish and Greenfish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do not slit or gut blackfish and greenfish.</td>
<td>Blackfish and Greenfish</td>
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<td>Next day, scrub the animal and boil the third time before smoke/dry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For sandfish, make a small cut across the anus to remove guts.</td>
<td>Sandfish</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>For white teat, blackteat and prickly red fish, place a short stick across the slit to allow drying.</td>
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<td>Place sea cucumbers into boiling water until they begin to swell.</td>
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| After the sea cucumber is collected, it goes through a process of becoming a beche-de-mer. The basic process involves gutting, boiling, scrubbing and sun-drying or smoking. Different procedures apply depending on the species being processed. Variations to the processing methods may also be made according to the requirements of the individual buyers and these will be reflected in the prices paid to the processor.

The processes of producing beche-de-mer are shown on Figures 1 & 2. The same basic processing steps are as follows:

1. Place sea cucumbers into boiling water until they begin to swell.
2. Remove them and allow to cool off.
3. Then slit them down one side and remove body content.
4. Boil again for about half hour until they are hard and rubbery. Do not over cook or under cook. It may result in having the product becoming too soft.
5. After boiling cool the sea cucumber in seawater, remove any remaining gut.
6. Place them with the gut side downward and dry under the sun/smoke.

White teat fish, blackteat fish and prickly red fish
1. For white teat, blackteat and prickly red fish, place a short stick across the slit to allow drying.
2. Half way through smoking, remove the stick and tie a string around the animal.

Sandfish (refer to Figure 2)
1. For sandfish, make a small cut across the anus to remove guts.
2. After second boil, bury the animal in clean sand overnight. This process will remove the chalky stuff on the body.
3. Next day, scrub the animal and boil the third time before smoke/dry.
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NFA Launches Website and Corporate Plan

The National Fisheries Authority has launched its website and corporate plan at a function on 27 June 2002, which also served to welcome the incoming Managing Director, Dr. Antony Lewis, and farewell the outgoing MD Michael Batty.

The NFA Website and its Corporate Plan for the triennium 2002-2004 were officially launched by the wife of the Prime Minister, Lady Roslyn Morauta.

Information on what is the National Fisheries Authority (NFA), its structure, activities and the role it plays in Papua New Guinea can now be accessed directly from the website on the address: www.fisheries.gov.pg. The site is in its developing stages and will continue to be developed and updated as we go along.

The Corporate Plan 2002 - 2004 is actually the Authority’s blueprint for the future also details the Authority’s mission statement, vision, goals and programmes.

The former Managing Director, Michael Batty left NFA for a fisheries post in Namibia. He served NFA for just over a year, commencing April 2001 and ending 2 July 2002.

New Manager for Aquaculture and Inland Fishery

The Inland and Aquaculture Fishery section now has a Manager following the recruitment of Mr Jacob Wani, a specialist on aquaculture in Papua New Guinea. He commenced work on 16 June 2002.

Mr Wani hails from Kumbu Pui village, Nebilyer District of the Western Highlands Province. He has just returned from the University of Hokkaido, Japan with a Masters Degree in Science. His main area of expertise is fish diseases in aquaculture.

Mr Wani first joined NFA in 1994, known at that time as the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources (DFMR) as a scientific officer with the joint UNDP FAC/DFMR sponsored FISHAID project that was involved in stocking the Sepik-Ramu catchments with exotic fish species for the purpose of supplementing native fish stocks.

He was in charge of the warm water fish hatchery in Yoroki, where eggs of snow trout, golden and chocolate mahseer and Tilapia rendalli were imported from Nepal, hatched and stocked into the rivers when they reached fingerling size. Another FISHAID project hatchery was based in Madang involving the importation and stocking of Colossoma (Pacu), Prochilodus (Emely’s fish) and Puntius (Java carp) from Brazil and Indonesia.

When the FISHAID project ceased in 1995, Mr Wani moved to the Highlands Aquaculture Development Center (HADC) in Aiyura, Eastern Highlands Province, where he was in charge of the joint NFA/JICA funded Highlands Aquaculture Development Project (HADP).

Under his leadership, a total of 37 fishponds, a large reservoir, an office building and installation of a large emergency water pump were constructed with funding from NFA and JICA. He also initiated training sessions on culture of common carp and rainbow trout for farmers, provincial DPI extension officers and NGOs such as Lutheran Development Services with assistance from JICA counterparts on the HADP.

PIL Manager Back from Studies

The Manager for the Provincial and Industry Liaison (PIL) Group Mr Norman Barnabas has returned from studies in Singapore and the United States of America. He officially commenced duty on 4 July 2002.

He has acquired a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and a Certificate in Executive Management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The latter paper is a second phase to his Masters degree.

The PIL Group was previously manned by Mr Bob Densley, the PIL Advisor. Mr Barnabas has now taken on all PIL responsibilities, with four officers working under his direction.

(Read his profile in Issue No. 7 & the Role of PIL Group.)

NFA Farewells Minister Ganarafo


Officials of key government departments, including Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General, which work along with Fisheries, were invited along with senior officials of NFA to say goodbye to the Minister and to say thank you for his many achievements as Minister over the past three years.

The latest of three different Acting Managing Directors during the time the Minister was in office, new Acting Managing Director, Dr Antony Lewis had high praise for him.

“Although I have been in office for just a short time, it has been my pleasure to work with the Minister, and I pay tribute to his achievements. He came into office during the early part of the privatisation of NFA. He is a man of stature, who rapidly acquired a good understanding and experience of fisheries matters. The Authority has grown under his guidance and we will surely miss him. On behalf of the staff of NFA, I thank the Minister for his assistance and support.” Dr. Lewis said.

Minister Ganarafo also thanked the Management and staff of NFA for working with him for the past three years.

“I thank you all for your support during the time that I have been the Minister. I think NFA and the industry can make a big difference in the country through the good management that you currently have, and I am very proud that I am leaving NFA on a very high note,” the Minister said.

Provincial Management and Planning Workshop on Motupore Island

The Provincial and Industry Liaison Division hosted a Fisheries Management & Planning Workshop on Motupore Island Research Station outside Port Moresby from 12-16 August 2002.

The workshop involved provincial fisheries managers and provincial planners from each maritime province throughout the country. The objective of this workshop was to enhance the capacity of provincial fisheries managers in management planning.

The National Fisheries Authority’s approach to the provinces is one that is geared towards capacity building and providing assistance to them, to make the environment conducive for sustainable fisheries development and management.

Provincial Liaison Officer, Oliver Teno had planned the workshop for two months. He undertook a round-the-country preparatory trip, met with provincial fisheries advisors, and gathered views and concerns. This information was used to design and prepare materials, which were then used at the workshop.

The workshop was a follow up of last year’s consultation meeting between NFA and Provincial Fisheries Officers in Port Moresby.

• Acting Managing Director Dr T. Lewis opening the Provincial Fisheries Workshop on Motupore Island.

• Minister Ganarafo is presented a gift by Dr. A. Lewis.