

ALLOCATION OF FISHERIES ASSETS HALF WAY THERE

TE OHU
KAIMOANA

Almost 12 months ago, the first assets from Te Ohu Kaimoana, the Maori Fisheries Trust, were transferred to iwi hands – 16 years after the initial fisheries settlement between Maori and the Crown in 1989 and the final Sealord Deal in 1992.

By the end of September this year, Te Ohu Kaimoana expects that more than half of all iwi organisations will have passed the Maori Fisheries Act requirements to have their fisheries assets transferred to their ownership.

It's an event that few would have believed possible so soon after resolution of the allocation debate.

In September 2005, Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi was the first Mandated Iwi Organisation (MIO) to pass through the Act's requirements and receive a significant proportion – just over \$60 million – of its share of the settlement. While not receiving all of its entitlement at that time, Ngapuhi will have the remaining assets transferred once neighbouring iwi have completed the Maori Fisheries Act requirements and inshore fisheries shares agreed between them.

Ngapuhi chief executive Teresa Tepania-Ashton says now that fisheries settlement assets are “in the hands of our iwi for our people”, it affords the country's largest iwi the opportunity to make a greater economic contribution to not only the surrounding district, but Aotearoa. The return of fisheries settlement assets has seen Ngapuhi enter into collaborative business ventures with other northern iwi clustering their fish quota to achieve larger returns.

“The fisheries settlement was very important for Ngapuhi,” Teresa says. “The assets have assisted us in building our equity stake and what we see as our overall contribution to the New Zealand economy. Ultimately, it will realise greater benefits for Ngapuhi.”



Peter Douglas, The Chief Executive, Te Ohu Kaimoana

Te Runanga A Iwi O Ngapuhi is looking towards further development with an emphasis on other resources, innovation and diversity. “By gaining better returns through better business practice and a wider understanding of the fishing industry, we are able to strategically invest in other areas and more importantly, our people”.

Te Ohu Kaimoana has been progressing allocation with pace since the passing of the Maori Fisheries Act and the first transfer of assets. To date, 22 iwi organisations have been approved as having implemented the required constitutional and management structures for fisheries assets to be transferred to them. A further 17 should have completed requirements before the end of 2006, taking the number of approvals to 39.

Chief Executive Peter Douglas says Te Ohu Kaimoana had planned to have 26 iwi organisations approved by the end of September this year, but the development of template constitutions and management structures for iwi had sped up the process.

“It is satisfying to see these developments. Iwi organisations are implementing robust and accountable structures, and our templates are assisting with this. It is our goal to put these assets into iwi hands in the shortest possible timeframe and in line with the Act's requirements, and the fact that we are ahead of schedule is encouraging,” he says.

IWI TO CHOOSE TE OHU KAIMOANA DIRECTORS

To the end of July 2006, 42 percent of the Maori fisheries settlement – or more than \$240 million – has been or is in the process of being allocated to iwi organisations. This will rise to 64 percent before the end of the year if the projected 17 iwi go through without any hitches.

“There is always the possibility that other issues will take precedence for those 17 iwi, but we certainly hope they will all be ready for approval by the board in time for the October fishing year,” Peter said. The remaining 36 percent of iwi are likely to be approved as Mandated Iwi Organisations and receive their assets during 2007.

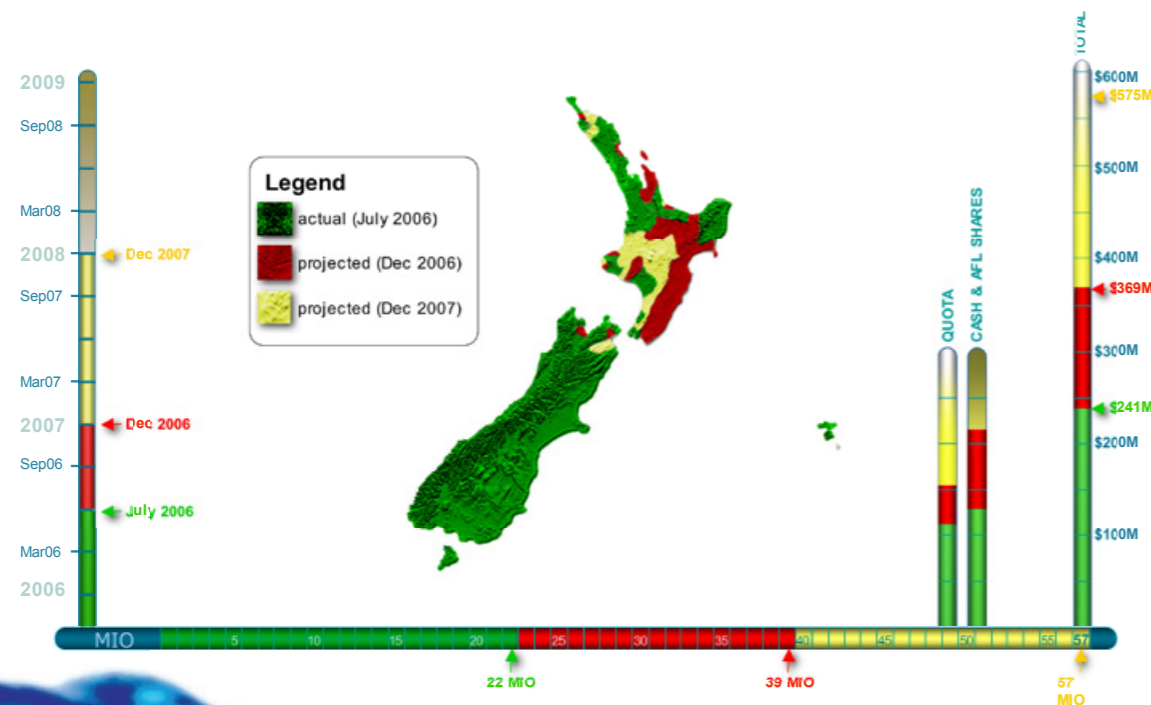
As Te Ohu Kaimoana passes the halfway point of allocating the fisheries settlement assets, the future role of the organisation will be realigned.

In developing the allocation formula, it was anticipated that Te Ohu Kaimoana would maintain a role of fisheries management and marine environment advice. In time, some of the resources spent on allocation will no longer be required as all iwi will have met the Act’s requirements. The organisation will, however, need to continue with an allocation role to meet ongoing needs.

Peter Douglas says it is envisaged that, eventually, the core role for Te Ohu Kaimoana will be providing policy, fisheries management and legal advisory services, along with meeting any ongoing allocation needs.

The graph below shows the value of the fisheries settlement that has been transferred to iwi, the value of the settlement expected to be transferred to iwi by December this year, and the remaining value to be transferred by December 2007.

MANDATED IWI ORGANISATIONS (MIO) AND ASSETS ALLOCATED



Iwi around the country are gearing up to select directors to the board of Te Ohu Kaimoana – the Maori Fisheries Trust – for the first time in the organisation’s history. Letters outlining the process for how the directors are to be selected have been sent to all iwi.

When Te Ohu Kaimoana’s predecessor, the Maori Fisheries Commission, was established in 1990, the Minister of Maori Affairs chose those who were to serve on the board and make the decisions on allocation. This requirement was carried over to the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission in 1992 following the completion of the Sealord Deal and continued until the passing of the Maori Fisheries Act 2004.

Now, it is up to iwi around the country to make the choice on who they want to have making decisions for the future direction of Maori involvement in many areas of the marine environment.

Te Kawai Taumata is the name given to the “Electoral College” whose primary function is to appoint and remove the directors

of Te Ohu Kai Moana Trustee Limited, the corporate trustee of Te Ohu Kaimoana.

The Electoral College is an important element of the settlement process. It ensures each iwi has the opportunity to participate in and influence the appointment of the directors of Te Ohu Kaimoana.

The allocation model agreed in 2003 created a process where 11 Electoral College groups were established from 10 groups of iwi and one group made up of representative Maori organisations.

The makeup of each particular iwi group, and those representative Maori organisations that are able to participate in the process, is outlined in the Maori Fisheries Act 2004. Each group will meet and appoint one person to Te Kawai Taumata, which in turn chooses the next directors.

Directors’ appointments will be made in time for them to take up their role on 29 November 2006. Te Kawai Taumata is to make four appointments. Existing directors can be reappointed for a further term.

A graph below shows the role of Te Kawai Taumata. For more information go to: <http://teohu.maori.nz/iwi/index.htm>

