

A plan for the future of the fisheries

For Tony Craig it's all about balancing demand, supply and sustainability.

TONY CRAIG lives by the motto "you CAN teach an old dog new tricks".

With experience in business innovation and management in the primary sector, he has spent the last four years working as a sustainability adviser in his own business, Wellington sustainability consultancy Terra Moana.

The long-time recreational fisherman is also behind the Fish4All app designed to help

Q+A

QUICK QUESTIONS

NAME: Tony Craig. (Nicknamed Herb after a horse called Herbert I couldn't pronounce properly as a two year old)

BORN: Warkworth July 1956

FIRST JOB: Summer job carting hay as a 15 year old teenager in Martinborough saving for a car

FAVOURITE MOVIE: *Love Actually* – I spend so much time away I relate to airport greetings

FAVOURITE ALBUM: *Rumours* by Fleetwood Mac

FAVOURITE FOOD: Seafood (a crayfish lunch - paua entree and blue cod main at the bach at Ngawi)

gather the data needed to better manage recreational fisheries.

The creation of the recently launched app and his journey into sustainability stems from Craig's passion for healthy environments.

As a result, through Terra Moana, Craig and his business partner Katherine Short specialise in helping business do better sustainability-wise, with a strong focus on the relationship between land and marine systems.

"We are committed to supporting the creation of a different, better, more ethical world where business makes a meaningful contribution to the health of Planet Earth, nature and their communities," says Craig.

One of their main clients is Moana NZ (formerly Aotearoa Fisheries, the largest Maori-owned fisheries company in New Zealand), in which they support the company's sustainability journey to maximise all the natural capital (social, ecological, cultural and economic) for Maori.

That has included facilitating an Ecosystem Services Review process for the company, identifying issues facing production of wild paua in the marine environment. This has enabled the company to prioritise its ecosystem management and investment into areas where it is most dependent and/or has the most impact.

"We are now advising them on social licence-to-operate standards. We are developing a responsible fisher's awareness programme, supporting their integrated corporate reporting, and deepening community engagement on land and coasts, which is all fundamentally different from what industry has done in the last nearly 40 years."

Craig's own experiences have also influenced his drive to change behaviours.

"Growing up, I've fished on rivers whitebaiting with my Dad, I've watched the changes that have

occurred over the years, the water quality, clarity, all of those things, and how poor practices can impact on our river systems and the marine environment.

"It's so easy for people to assume the ocean is big enough, the 'we'll just dump stuff out there' attitude. But I've seen it first-hand as a fisher, our environment is changing, there's no question about it.

"The natural environment I've grown up in has been fantastic, the ability to catch a feed of fish or paua when I want to has been a privilege, but you can't take that for granted anymore.

"I look into my grandchildren's eyes and I think about what it is they will have in the future and what I can do to make sure that becomes a reality. I want them to have that same freedom and those same experiences I have had."

Most of Craig's days are spent looking at what changes need to be made in businesses, in regards to their social licence to operate, and that is usually about new initiatives and market challenges going forward.

"For me it's very much about demonstrating daily that old dogs can learn new tricks and having to explain to people, including many old dogs, why things are the way they are, where things are going in the future, why they need to get on board and what value it is to them.

"That's not an easy thing to do – a lot of people are resistant to change, and the older you get the less open you are to change, particularly technology advancement."

But Craig says those hurdles can be overcome.



"One of the best things you can do is use your children and grandchildren to keep you up to speed with technological changes, communicate in the way that they communicate."

That line of thinking prompted Craig, a grandfather himself, to create the Fish4All App, which allows recreational fishermen to record where, when and how many fish they catch, creating a greater insight into New Zealand's fish stocks.

"It's a tool to enhance the recreational fishing experience now and in the future, to better understand recreational interests in key inshore shared fishery stocks and help self-fund recreational representation," Craig explains.

Despite the app's benefits, he talks of the classic challenge of resistance when it was being developed.

"A lot of fishermen we spoke to out there, their age bracket was such that you could see their eyes

glaze over when we talked about technology, when in fact it's no different from pushing buttons on your TV remote!"

Yet the "social good" of the app is seeing it take off.

"As people begin to see what it can deliver in benefits, it's gaining momentum – it's there for the sector and for the individual who can get updates and information on what's happening around competitions, within fishing clubs.

"People have felt threatened because generally, information is used against you, but once people see that providing information is an opportunity and not a threat, they will become more engaged with it."

Craig has plenty of business nous to call on, having held business roles with major fishing industry bodies in the past.

Born in Warkworth and brought up in the Hawke's Bay and later Wairarapa, he started out working as a stock and station agent in Masterton.

He then moved on to New Zealand Post, but after becoming disheartened with processes within the public sector he changed course.

"I got into the private sector, into the seafood industry through a family contact, managing a small operation at Ngawi, Cape Palliser."

Craig knew the area well – his grandfather built a batch at Cape Palliser and he had spent much of his childhood there.

"It was where we'd always holiday, we'd fish off the beach, we dived, and when we were old enough we'd go out on the boat. I've always been recreational fishing, I love it."

Less than four years later he was headhunted to become chief executive of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, followed by a stint as business policy manager of Seafood New Zealand.

He then took on the foundation chief executive role of FishServe, a company that delivers statutory administrative and registry service on contract to the government.

"Convincing the industry and leading the initial charge to establish FishServe is a career highlight.

"It's an organisation that successfully designed and built new systems to administer the Quota Management System under contract to the government for a third of predicted costs and which provides substantially improved services to both government and industry at a 10th of the originally estimated cost."

His last role before forming his own company, Terra Moana, was as business innovation and quota manager at the former Aotearoa

Fisheries (now Moana New Zealand).

"That was another key achievement, being part of the team that oversaw the preliminary years of development and growth of Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, the wholly owned Maori fishing company, and in later years advising on its strategic sustainability journey, corporate reporting and social licence to operate requirements both now and into the future."

In fact within all of the various positions he's held, he views his 30-year contribution to the policy debate on New Zealand's world leading Quota Management System, fishing industry representative frameworks and innovative fisheries management approaches as major achievements too.

Not to mention setting up Terra Moana to provide a more open perspective on environmental consideration within fisheries management, wider marine management (ecosystem based) and the role of certification and market forces in incentivising behavioural change.

"It is all about coming up with solutions, sustainable best practices for businesses, simply doing the right thing, and it's a good feeling coming to work to focus on that each day.

"I'm trying to do my little bit, and if everyone did that we'd probably be a hell of a lot better off. You always think about your sphere of influence – we're not that big in the overall scheme of things, but we believe in what we're doing, we're playing our part and doing as much as we can."

Outside of work, he's now teaching his grandchildren to fish the waters he fished as a youngster.

"I still have a boat, I love it, I have always had a view that I only fish for fresh, not for freezing, and as every fisherman knows, a bad day in the water is better than a good day at work!"