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Nelson Seafood Company, FinestKind, Announces New Owner

Iconic Nelson seafood provider FinestKind will have a new owner at the helm, as Donna Wells hands over her leadership role.

Dan Martin (Ngāti Rarua, Ngāti Maniapoto) has stepped into the role of Chief Executive of FinestKind, effective 1 May 2024.

Donna, who is a well known personality in seafood circles, says the decision to sell the business was a personal one.

"I'm handing over the company to free up some time and focus on some things that have been on the back burner. There aren't enough hours to do everything I want to do!

"It wasn't an easy decision for me, but it was a necessary one. I am delighted to have found someone of Dan's calibre to take over FinestKind. Dan has the skills and the vision to take the business forward in these changing times and business environment we are facing in the fishing industry."

Donna believes Dan's 20 years of industry experience gained from his time with Fishserve and background in economics will serve him well as he steps into his new role. Dan has Whānau in Blenheim, Motueka and Golden Bay and an extensive background in IT, leading programs on both sides of the Tasman.

Dan says "the opportunity to re-enter the fishing industry and acquire an established independent company like FinestKind was too good to overlook. Donna's notable achievements across the industry speak volumes, and I'm eager to build upon her foundation by introducing fresh perspectives. I'm committed to steering Finestkind towards continued growth and success."

FinestKind grew from a concept Donna and Ken Wells had in the 1990's around exporting their own fish to Sydney Fish Market.

Today its customer base sits at around 270, with export volumes reaching up to 100 tonnes per year. As Gus Dannoun from the Sydney Fish Market reflects, "from humble beginnings, Donna has built an enduring business based on her commitment to her fishers, supporting local packing houses, and delivering to market the best seafood products available."

Donna says Dan's arrival signals a new era for FinestKind.

"I will continue to be involved with Dan to ensure a successful transition and support its continued growth and success. I'm also planning to continue various industry memberships.

"I want to thank everyone for welcoming Dan as we transition into FinestKind NZ Limited trading as FinestKind.

"Creating the business has been a long rewarding journey. I am proud to have worked across the industry, supporting, and promoting independent fishers and the amazing people who work in it and to make a difference.

"I don't see myself as retiring yet, but I do have a bucket list that needs some attention."

As well as thanking Donna for her expertise and support, Dan has a thank you to extend to the wider FinestKind Whānau. "I want to express my gratitude to our customers and fishers. Your support is invaluable, and I'm committed to upholding FinestKind's reputation for quality and service excellence. I look forward to working with you and continuing to meet your needs as we embark on this new chapter together."

After a recent visit to the Sydney Fish Market awards held on Sydney Harbour, Gus also likes what he sees.

"Although Donna is stepping down and moving on to the next chapter in her life, we're confident that with Dan at the helm, FinestKind, Sydney Fish Market, and its buyers, can look forward to working together for another successful 25 years, and beyond."

Meantime Dan and Donna can reassure customers that it is very much business as usual at FinestKind and the work of fishing, quota trading, exporting and seafood promotion will continue as it always has.

ENDS

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Image: Donna Wells and new Finestkind owner Dan Martin. More images are available on request.