



Seabed Minerals Authority
Runanga Takere Moana
COOK ISLANDS

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021 | Issue 2

Kia Orana!

Welcome to the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority's quarterly online newsletter for June 2021, sharing relevant Seabed Minerals (**SBM**) updates and information.

Who are we?

The Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority (**Authority**) is the key regulator of seabed minerals activities under Cook Islands jurisdiction. The Authority administers the Seabed Minerals Act 2019 (**Act**) on behalf of the Cook Islands Government.

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Commissioner's Welcome

We are in a pivotal moment of our country's SBM journey. For the first time, the Cook Islands will manage licensed **exploration** activities in our waters. This exploration research and data gathered will provide us with valuable knowledge on our Marae Moana, and help pave the way for our future. This was the message shared by Prime Minister Mark Brown in Parliament last week.

Globally, we are already seeing a major shift away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy, and that will only increase over the coming decades. This concerted effort is a response to the effects of climate change. Strategic minerals such as cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earth elements will be required to fuel the global transition. Our country's polymetallic nodule resource, estimated to be around 12 billion tonnes, contains these minerals.

For the Cook Islands, it is vital that the development of our SBM sector and the role we play in this global transition is well planned and managed, and importantly does not leave our people behind. Auraka i tetai uatu tangata i runga i te vaka kia akarukena ia.



Reflecting on our journey, early key steps include passing our first seabed legislation in 2009, and establishing the Authority in 2013. The previous ten years has been marked by the slow and steady development of the SBM sector, and the preparatory work to put in place laws, processes and systems.

Currently, the Authority is processing the four exploration licence applications we received. We will provide public updates on progress shortly.

Looking ahead, once exploration licences are granted we will transition into monitoring exploration activities and ensuring compliance with our laws and licence conditions.

The Authority has four priority areas that guide and drive our actions:

- **Well-regulated Industry** underpinned by a robust regulatory regime to responsibly and sustainably develop our SBM sector
- **Community Engagement** with our people and with stakeholders on what we are doing in the SBM sector
- **Capacity Development** of our people in the skillsets required for both the current and future needs of this industry
- **Cooperation and Collaboration** with our partners to efficiently and effectively develop the SBM sector

It is essential that development of the SBM sector respects our Marae Moana, cultural, environmental, social and economic values. I am confident that by working together with our people and stakeholders, we will be able to achieve this. Kia Manuia.

Ms Alex Herman
Seabed Minerals Commissioner


Prime Minister Brown addresses Cobalt Conference



“At a time when the world is searching for sustainable solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow, the Cook Islands, I am proud to say, has an opportunity to play a significant role in not only transforming our future, but also contributing to global transformation through access to strategic metals critical to the global energy transition” said Prime Minister Brown at an international cobalt conference recently.

The Prime Minister delivered his speech at the 26th Cobalt Conference, hosted virtually by the Cobalt Institute from May 18-19, 2021. The conference is an annual event that brings together the international cobalt industry. This year, the focus is on the role of cobalt in ensuring a sustainable future.


Prime Minister Brown emphasised “**We will proceed with a precautionary approach, making decisions based on the best available science, to manage our seabed minerals resources and protect our marine biodiversity**”. For more, click [here](#).



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Cook Islands Seabed Minerals

Cobalt Conference 2021
Session 2: Cobalt Supply
18 May 2021



Honourable Mark Brown
Prime Minister of the Cook Islands

A promotional graphic for the Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority. It features the authority's logo on the left, which includes the national emblem and the text 'Seabed Minerals Authority Runanga Takere Moana COOK ISLANDS'. The main text reads 'Cook Islands Seabed Minerals' in large, bold letters, with a play button icon overlaid. Below this, it specifies 'Cobalt Conference 2021 Session 2: Cobalt Supply 18 May 2021'. On the right, there is a photograph of Prime Minister Mark Brown wearing a green lei, with the text 'Honourable Mark Brown Prime Minister of the Cook Islands' underneath. The background is white with a red and blue patterned border at the bottom.

Community Engagement



Pa Marie Upokotini Ariki during SBM consultation at House of Ariki, April 2021

We are continuing in our efforts to engage with our people and communities on both Rarotonga and the Pa Enuā. This is to ensure that they receive accurate information and have a greater understanding of SBM and the issues involved.

Recent consultations include with the House of Ariki and on Mitiaro. We plan to step up our engagement in the second half of this year, and look forward to talking to our people about the work Government is doing in the SBM sector.



Consultations held in Mitiaro, April 2021

World Ocean Day



Government Agencies: Seabed Minerals Authority / Marae Moana / Ministry of Marine Resources National Environment Services / Ministry of Transport / Office of the Prime Minister / Cook Islands Climate Change / Infrastructure Cook Islands / Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration

For this year's World Ocean Day, the Authority teamed up with other government agencies involved in the ocean sector to host a public event at the Maire Nui Grounds.

Held on 8 June, the event featured information booths by the agencies highlighting their work in the ocean space, educational videos, a live band and food vendors. Avarua Primary School students and members of the public attended the event and got to learn more about the work that government agencies are doing to ensure that our Marae Moana is healthy and will continue to sustain the lives and livelihoods of Cook Islanders in the future.

Meitaki maata to everyone who took part in the celebration and supported the event. For more, read the [joint release](#). Click here for our [photo gallery](#)



**Communications Officer Dede Mingi & GIS Specialist Rima Browne
Seabed Minerals Authority Booth**

Careers Expo Day 2021



Licensing & Compliance Officer Te-Ara Henderson with Tereora College students

This year's Careers Expo brought together over 20 organisations presenting to college students ranging from Years 11 to 13. The annual Careers Expo provides students with an opportunity to learn more about the various jobs and careers available in the workplace and education pathways to consider.

The Authority took the opportunity to talk about potential training and employment opportunities expected to develop in the SBM sector. Careers of most interest were Marine Biology and Engineering.

The Expo, which was open to the public, was well received with over 400 students attending from Rarotonga and the Pa Enua. [Click here to view our photo gallery.](#)



Internship Programme



Seth Solomona



Nauma Marsters

The Authority has established an Internship Programme for college and university students. The purpose of the Internship Programme is to introduce young Cook Islanders to potential career pathways and provide them with valuable work experience within the Authority.

Our most recent interns are:

- Seth Solomona, a University of Auckland student studying Marine Biology
- Nauma Marsters (pictured), a Year 13 Tereora College student from Palmerston

Keep an eye on our website for future [internships](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page.

Join our team!



The Authority is hiring.

We are looking for capable and passionate people to help support the responsible and sustainable development of the Cook Islands SBM sector.

We have opportunities in the following areas:

- Technical Director
- Marine Geologist
- Marine Biologist

To find out more, and to view job descriptions, check out our [Vacancies](#).

Queries on this Newsletter may be directed to Dede Mingi: dede.mingi@cookislands.gov.ck

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