



Address by Des Eggelton, Director of Moana Minerals at the Exploration Licence Grant Ceremony 2022

*Dome, National Auditorium
23 February 2022*

Kia Orana and good afternoon to everybody gathered here for this event – one that may go down in the history of our nation as a remarkable achievement in the development of our moana, our ocean. To his Excellency, Sir Tom Masters and Lady Marsters, to the Prime Minister, Honourable Mark Brown and your good wife, Cabinet Ministers, Government caucus, from those of the Opposition, Heads of ministries and Crown servants, to the able Seabed Minerals Authority, and to those who served ably in various capacities of the Authority – Kia Orana to you all.

Kia Orana to the Aronga Mana of Rarotonga and throughout the Cook Islands, The President and members of the Religious Advisory Council, to our people scattered throughout our nation – to our Business sector – Kia Orana.



Like Mike and Garth I'm going to go back a few years. Some of you will remember the name of a gentleman Mr Tap Taylor Pryor, a marine biologist and former state of Hawaii Senator, who was heavily involved in aquaculture in Hawaii.

Tap is best remembered here in the Cook Islands for his work as Head of the 'Special Projects' Division in the Prime Minister's office of the late Sir Geoffrey Henry.

His particular interest, some would say obsession, was the potential benefits for the Cook Islands of the manganese nodule resource in the Exclusive Economic Zone of our country.

That was in the mid-1990s and about that time the United States trade and development agency funded USD 300,000 for Bechtel to look at the very issues that face licensees today – commercial viability and technical feasibility in the recovery and future use of the deep sea nodules.

Our thanks to those pioneers who came here, lived here for it is their groundwork which has brought us to the position we are in today with actual licenses being issued to licensees who firmly believe that the resource can be and will be utilised to the benefit of all Cook Islanders.



There is an important element which has evolved over the past 26 years and that is the environment, you've heard each and every speaker talk about it, mention it.

We hope, that we have shown by the brief introduction you have just seen, and by the terms of our licence which will be published, and by the laws and regulations of the Parliament of the Cook Islands and Government have enacted, that the seabed and aquatic environment will be in the forefront and foremost in the minds of those managing Moana Minerals.

The Seabed Minerals Authority is to be congratulated on the thorough and sometimes grueling scrutiny of applicants have gone through. Licences, I can assure you, that they are hard earned but the process followed is a credit and gives considerable credibility to the institutions involved in the decision making process.

Like the other licensees our principals wish now to come and live with you. We two of our major directors who will become residences of the Cook Islands once they get their business license. They want to live within our community and they want to engage with the stakeholders they will begin and we recognise the imperative of transparency as a tool for building trust. We have an ambitious programme over the next 5 years and we plan to involve and bring on that journey as many Cook Islanders as we can.



It's my privilege today to convey a special thanks from Moana Minerals on behalf of the directors and the company to thank the Seabed Minerals Authority and the Government of the Cook Islands for having the faith in awarding a license to not only ourselves but to the other two applicants as well.

Today marks the end of the rehearsals and the beginning of the show. We hope our performance meets up to the country's' and your expectations.

Kia Orana and Kia Manuia.