

In brief...

Greenpeace says tuna boat is illegal

Greenpeace says it has exposed an illegal tuna purse seiner, the *Queen Evelyn 168*, in international waters between Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The *Queen Evelyn 168* was about to transfer tuna to two other vessels when the Greenpeace boat *Esperanza* arrived. Their skippers immediately separated their vessels and fled, said a Greenpeace Australia Pacific campaigner, Lagi Toribau.

Transfers of fish at sea were well known to be facilitating pirate fishing around the world, said Toribau. The pockets of international waters between Pacific Island countries were especially prone to pirate activities and should be closed to all fishing, he said. Fish should only be allowed to be transferred in port.

Inland Revenue warns about income diversion

Inland Revenue has released an alert about people who divert personal services income in an effort to pay less tax.

Group tax counsel Graham Tubb said on April 17 that Inland Revenue was concerned about people who diverted some or all of the personal services income they earn or could earn into an entity, such as a trust or a company, to take advantage of lower income tax rates. "We acknowledge that there are legitimate business reasons for using such entities, and the use of such business structures does not necessarily amount to tax avoidance."

However, some cases contained features that could require closer attention, he said.

Quick response to piracy

The capture of the luxurious three-masted French commercial yacht *Le Ponant* by Somali pirates triggered a quick response from France, even though the pirates only wanted ransom money and were operating in accordance with a "good conduct" guide, says our United States correspondent, Hugh Ware.

The pirates were local militiamen who had borrowed two speedboats from local fishermen to defend the coast and do some fishing. First they captured a Yemeni trawler and made it their base ship. Then they captured *Le Ponant*, which has 32 staterooms. A ransom of US\$2 million was agreed upon, comprising \$50 for each villager and \$11,000 to \$20,000 per pirate, but French special forces swooped in and captured six men as they tried to escape in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. They are being detained in a Paris jail.

Magazine in good company

ON MAY 9 we fronted up to the Qantas Media Awards dinner, as we had been given a heads-up that we were finalists in the trade professional category.

We were in good company, as this category had a huge list of nominees. The finalists were NZ Farmers Weekly, Idealog, Consumer and *Professional Skipper*. Our congratulations go to Consumer magazine, which won this section. However, becoming a finalist is considerable recognition, given the high number of entries.

The judge said: "*Professional Skipper*, all about workboats, shows more scope than its title might suggest. The breezy bimonthly's salty stories about seagoing and waterfront characters penetrate even to letters to the editor and obituaries. Landlubbers, too, should enjoy its commendable coverage and sassy style".

So, well done to all of our contributors for your efforts over the years, as this recognition also recognises your contributions. You are now part of a salty, seagoing, sassy bunch of waterfront characters.

**FISHING INDUSTRY PUTS INTERESTS AHEAD OF DOLPHINS**

THE CONSERVATION GROUP Care for the Wild International says Hector's and Maui's dolphins will soon become extinct unless urgent action is taken to protect them from commercial and recreational fishing.

Gill netting and trawling had pushed the dolphins to the brink of extinction, said CWI's chief executive, Dr Barbara Maas. "Numerous sources support this view, including research, government reports and the World Conservation Union's International Red List of Endangered Species. It is a fact that Hector's and Maui's dolphins are not only the world's rarest, but one of the best studied cetaceans."

She said between 110 and 150 Hector's and Maui's dolphins died in commercial gillnets each year, but that did not include any deaths from trawling and recreational gillnetting.

Standing in the way was an intransigent fishing industry which denied that Hector's dolphins were endangered, that their populations were declining, that entanglement in set nets was the biggest threat to Maui's dolphins or that 60 percent of Hector's dolphins deaths were caused by fishing.

The industry also claimed that there was no justification for additional protection measures, Maas said. "The fishing industry is clearly putting its commercial interests first, despite the weight of scientific evidence to the contrary."

The New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council says further action is not necessary and that the set net ban along the west coast has worked. "Nothing has been scientifically proven to be a set net death



since then," says the council's spokesman, Keith Ingram.

But marine experts say recent research by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research proved there had been further deaths. They say there is also new scientific proof that the dolphins are active in harbours beyond the protected zone.

Some commercial fishers say any extension of the ban will damage their livelihood. But recreational fishers argue that stopping set net fishing in the harbours could have a more costly impact.

A mother and her six-year-old daughter recently drowned while floundering without set nets on the Manukau Harbour, and the council says more will drown if set nets are outlawed. "We're going to drive people back out at night with lanterns and spears to try and catch their fresh seafood," says Ingram.