



MARU MARINE LIMITED

Knowing fisheries biology, management and fisheries technicalities like the palm of his hand is the key to Maru Marine's successful business operation. Being a local from Western Province and knowing the way of life of his people and weather patterns makes life and business all the more easier for him.

Mr Maina, owner of Maru Marine Ltd was a former school of fisheries student and has also worked as fisheries technical officer in the late 1970s and early 1980s before becoming an entrepreneur. He was also a former employee of Western District Seafoods in Daru and later opted to start his own lobster fishing business on the 10th of May 1984 where he also ventured into barramundi fishing. Mr Maina just celebrated his company's 20 years of existence in May this year.

Mr Maina goes fishing for crayfish and barramundi or buys from local fishermen and then processes them for export as frozen lobster tails and as frozen fillets of barramundi. He employs a total of 45 staff at his seafood factory and fishing operation.

Mr Maina started off his business with only a 19foot fibreglass dinghy, a 25horse power outboard motor and a mobile two-metres high blast freezer. In 1995, he bought off a shed at the waterfront on Daru Island, which is now Maru Marine's current location, and that was when he also ventured into barramundi fishing business. In 1986, he bought his first boat with no freezer on board but was operating it with eskies of ice. He used to buy crayfish and barramundi from villagers and sell them to Western Province District Seafoods, a then business-arm of the Western Province Provincial Government.

Today, he has three prawn trawl boats, 24 dinghies and two barges. Three of the 24 dinghies are bigger and are used as support dinghies for supplying rations and fuel to fishermen at the fishing grounds. The two barges are used for carrying and holding petrol and water at fishing grounds. All three boats are the motherboats and engage in processing lobster and barramundi onboard. They usually go out fishing for seven days and also buy catches from local fishermen. During the operation, a total of 250 litres of fuel is burnt within the seven days.

Mr Maina exports his products every week to Australia via Thursday Island. The products are airfreighted by *Air Tropic*, an Australian company and costs about Aus\$1,600 per charter, "compared to a PNG charter quotation from a popular third level airline operator at an enormous amount of K20,000,"

Mr Maina said. Only one percent of his products are sold locally in Papua New Guinea.

"My business is doing well. I spend about K1,500 per day per boat during a seven day fishing operation and then make a return of K3,000 per day per boat. My business is open everyday from 8am to 8pm because there are always fishermen coming in to sell their catches or to purchase fuel. He said market price was very good in the 1980s and 1990s but dropped in the 2000s and has only

started to pick up again this year (2004). Catches were also very high in the 1980s and 1990s at an average of 48,000kgs – 50,000kgs per year and has dropped to 36,000kg per year in the 2000s.

On Daru Island, there are three companies doing lobster and barramundi business, which Mr Maina says, "competition is best for the industry." "I have about 80 percent of the fishermen here and I look after them well. I provide food and water to them while they are out fishing, using my dinghies and outboard motor. I also buy their catches or sometimes I exchange food items for their lobster and barramundi. My men and I go out in dinghies to buy crayfish/barramundi from local villagers/fishermen and the fishes are brought back to the motherboats for processing." He said.

Mr Maina said that while the company distributes nets for barramundi to villagers in Western Province, some miss out in getting these nets so they have invented a new way of fishing for barramundi and that is by using artificial lures, which are less expensive than the nets. A lure costs between K25 – K30 from The Netshop in Port Moresby, while nets costs about K1000.

While business is going well for Mr Maina, he also acknowledges that the availability of fish stocks in the water is too small to meet the growing demand of his customers.



• PNG 16, one of Maru Marine's prawn trawlers.



• MV Olinda, another one of the prawn trawlers.



• Crayfish is caught by using hooker diving, free diving and by coleman lamp lighting at night.

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Mr Meremi Maina
Managing Director



• Lobster being packed for export.

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• Barramundi being packed for export.

Main Business Activities

Lobster fishing, processing & marketing
Barramundi fishing, processing & marketing

Export Product

Fresh frozen tropical rock lobster tails
Frozen barramundi fillets

Current Production Capacity

36,000kgs per annum with an average export of 750kgs per week

Current Export Markets

Australia



• Mr Maina weighing a barramundi.

For further information on the activities of the National Fisheries Authority, please contact:



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