

POSITIVES AT EVERY TURN



ROAN TAYLOR was 17 when he started work on a deep-sea fishing vessel with Sealord. He liked the idea of good amounts of time off between sailings and meeting new people. He had also heard that the money was pretty good. The information was from a good source – his parents, who'd both also worked on fishing crews.

"I love the physicality of the work," says Roan, who joined Sealord's freezer factory boat *Aukaha*. "It's really rewarding – you feel good about doing hard work and then getting the time off. I also really enjoy the people you meet and the crew become like your sea family."

His first sailing was a bit nerve-wracking, he says, but it didn't take him long to settle in and begin to feel at home. To start with, he was based in the factory – learning to work with the machinery used to cut the fish and skin it – and helping stow the boxes of product in the freezer.

After a couple of trips, he became a deckhand. This is his current role and involves working outside on the boat, shooting and hauling the nets, mending them, driving the crane and forklift to load stores at port, and helping in the factory, when needed, to fillet and pack fish.

"The work is really varied," he says. "A career at sea is definitely good if you want to learn lots of different skills."

Before joining Sealord, Roan – who's now 20 – had just begun Year 13 at Buller High School.

His subjects included Woodwork, Food Technology and Metal Work, so he knew his ideal job would involve practical, hands-on work.

As part of his training, he was supported by Sealord to attend Westport Deepsea Fishing School, where he's gained his Advanced Deckhand Ticket.

"I found it a lot easier learning there compared to school because it was something I was a lot more focused on and I'm really interested in."

On *Aukaha*, he generally works a roster of four weeks at sea, followed by the same amount of time at home, which is a great way to save money.

During Sealord's busy hoki season, voyage lengths are shorter and there are also opportunities to earn more by doing double-up trips, where instead of returning home, crew members can opt to head back out to sea with another crew, and then return to sea again with their own crew straight afterwards.

This means extra payments for the trip on and trip off, in addition to normal pay, so the money can stack up quite quickly.

His trips have taken him mainly down the east and west coasts of the South Island, and sometimes the vessel fishes near the Chatham Islands.

"You get some real good views back to land, especially of the Southern Alps," he says.

"We see whales and dolphins quite a bit and seals and birds too, it's really cool."

He recommends life at sea, saying, "It's good if you want to learn discipline, and it's quite good being able to get away from everything for a month at a time. It's pretty good money too, especially considering you only work six months a year, it's not too bad."

There's a good pathway for progression as well, he says. "I'd like to see myself as a first mate or skipper before I'm 40, but I'll just see how that goes."



KEY FACTS



- **ROAN TAYLOR** IS A **DECKHAND** FOR **SEALORD**, WORKING ON-BOARD THEIR FREEZER FACTORY BOAT **AUKAHA**.
- HE WAS SUPPORTED BY **SEALORD** TO ATTEND **WESTPORT DEEPSEA FISHING SCHOOL**, WHERE HE ACHIEVED HIS **ADVANCED DECKHAND TICKET** AS PART OF HIS TRAINING.
- **ROAN** RECOMMENDS A CAREER AT SEA FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS SAYING THAT THERE IS GOOD CAREER PROGRESSION, YOU EARN WELL AND THAT THE WORK IS REWARDING.



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