



**For immediate release**

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## **Top Kiwis backing Tip the Scales campaign**

Sir Graham Henry, former All Black Kees Meeuws, singer-song writer Jamie McDell and fishing guru Matt Watson have pledged their support to Tip the Scales, a pre-election campaign generating public support for rebuilding New Zealand's depleted inshore fisheries.

Recreational fishing advocacy group LegaSea is leading the charge to raise awareness of sustainable and well-managed fisheries among politicians leading up to the election on September 20.

LegaSea is urging the public to make the marine environment and the interests of future generations a priority when deciding how to vote. The organisation is rallying thousands of voters to show their support for five key principles that would lead to a sustainable fishing sector. The principles have been sent to all major political parties so they can include them in their manifesto and commit to delivering a public-friendly fisheries policy.

"Commercial fishing since the 1950s has reduced the abundance of our marine environment," LegaSea spokesperson Richard Baker said. "We need to rebuild these marine resources to make them more resilient.

"This election we would like to Tip the Scales to create positive changes to the way our fisheries and inshore waters are managed. As keen fishers, our ambassadors understand that dwindling fisheries and degraded inshore waters are major issues for many Kiwis."

Campaign co-ordinator Adam El-Agez, a keen diver and fisher from Mount Maunganui, has witnessed first-hand the depletion in our fish stocks.

"Ministers, ministry officials and fishing industry representatives are quick to say that we have a 'world-leading quota management system'," Mr El-Agez said. "However, the system doesn't benefit the New Zealand public and it doesn't actually constrain commercial fishing at all, across the majority of the inshore species. The benefits are being captured by a small group of shareholders, to the detriment of a lot of local commercial fishermen, recreational fishers and the public."

LegaSea is calling for a ban on trawling inside the 100m depth contour, to save millions of undersized fish from being unnecessarily caught and returned dead to the sea. It also aims to establish equality in size limits between the commercial and non-commercial sectors.

Other principles include establishing a resource royalty on commercial fishing, researching the economic value of recreational fishing, and implementing the international best practice standard of rebuilding fisheries to at least 40 per cent of their original size.

“It’s all common sense really. We’re not asking for anything besides fairness to all sectors, its’ legal, affordable and achievable – so what’s the hold up?” asks Mr El-Agez.

In September, LegaSea will be releasing a score card analysis on how each party rates against each of the 5 principles. This will help people make more informed decisions on how they cast their votes on election day.

An estimated one million people fish and share their catch with family and friends. These communities would benefit from more abundant fisheries. LegaSea is encouraging people who are concerned about having a healthy marine environment and protecting our national heritage to register their support at [www.legasea.co.nz/tipthescals](http://www.legasea.co.nz/tipthescals), and make their wishes known to politicians in the lead-up to the election.

## Ends

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### About LegaSea and Tip the Scales

LegaSea ([www.legasea.co.nz](http://www.legasea.co.nz)) promotes fisheries management practices that will allow for ‘more fish in the water’. LegaSea was launched in February 2012 to facilitate the people working together, raise public awareness, promote education, and to provide an opportunity for people to unite in action, to stand for and protect our precious marine resources for our people, our communities and for the future.

LegaSea’s Tip the Scales campaign is about gathering public support for five principles that will help us achieve our goals. <http://www.legasea.co.nz/tipthescals/>

Those principles are:

1. Let’s rebuild the fishery
2. Stop senseless waste
3. The public own the fishery
4. Equal size limits for all
5. Value recreational fishing

### Principle 5 video



<http://youtu.be/vXUS9IMMzy4>