



**LEGASEA**  
FISH FOR THE PEOPLE

## **Media Release – for immediate release**

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### **The fight for our fish is far from over**

Serious accusations have been leveled at the fisheries Minister this week in parliament over the snapper proposals.

Nathan Guy was accused of breaking the cabinet manual that states a Minister must take all controversial matters to cabinet first before they become public. Despite the media uproar, Mr Guy is adamant the proposals are not controversial.

LegaSea reports that over 365,000 emails opposing the Ministry changes have been sent to MPs and officials in just four weeks, 3000 people around the region attended public meetings and around 48,000 people sent submissions to the Ministry opposing all of the snapper options.

Mandy Kupenga from LegaSea says "It's controversial because the proposal is a significant deviation from the way Fisheries law has been applied in the past. The law says that the people of New Zealand should have their fishing catch "allowed for" before the commercial catch limits are set."

"It's not OK that our legal rights will be undermined by bag limit regulations while our fish are reallocated to the commercial industry. Many New Zealanders feel the same way."

Recreational fishers are determined they will not be scapegoats for decades of commercial plunder.

Ms Kupenga from LegaSea also says, "There's a misconception, put out there by the commercial industry that the public is part of the Quota Management System with them, and need to be given a quota, but that's not true."

"Commercial fishing is managed within the quota system, but the public's interests are settled by the Minister."

Section 21 of the Fisheries Act and subsequent Supreme Court rulings support LegaSea's stance that the people of New Zealand are entitled to have a fair allowance made for their social, cultural and economic interests before commercial quota is set.

"According to law our recreational allowance should be set based on the best available information of our current catch estimate. We do not want fish taken from us and given to the commercial sector for export. We're not overfishing, we're being ripped off" continues Ms Kupenga.

A Horizon Research national survey finalised this week showed that 93% of people thought that reducing commercial waste was a conservation measure that should be used to rebuild the snapper 1 fishery.

Eric Barratt, CEO of Sanfords addressed a public meeting this week and stated that in eight weeks time an announcement would be made about new fishing technology that will reduce waste. Sounds good, but it could be another five or ten years before there are any benefits for the fishery and the taxpayers who have funded the research into this technology. Potentially that means another 10 million snapper being wasted. LegaSea wants to see changes implemented much earlier, to hasten the rebuild of this important fishery.

LegaSea, the group promoting the public's interests, say the situation with snapper is only one of many issues in the fisheries management system. Their focus is building sustainable fisheries guided by law, protecting the people of New Zealand.

Ms. Kupenga says "part of the problem is that the Ministry are attempting to sidestep the law with this snapper 1 proposal, treating the public as quota holders. This is unacceptable, unlawful and the Minister must be held accountable".

"The Horizon Research clearly shows that 28% of National's voter base fish for snapper in the snapper 1 region. There's an election next year, they also cast votes".

More details can be found on the LegaSea website or by calling 0800 LEGASEA (534 273).

**Ends**

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## Background information

Online video where celebrities combine to call for united action:

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BKaLhGwy6s>
2. Over 1 million Kiwis enjoy fishing every year. Protecting our marine environment, our fisheries and our access to these, is vital to the Kiwi way of life and our national well-being, now and in the future.
3. LegaSea was launched in February 2012 and is the public outreach brand for the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council. Our aim is to collectively protect our precious fishing resources for people, our communities and future generations of New Zealanders. LegaSea raises awareness facilitates people working together, promotes education initiatives and provides an opportunity for people to unite in action, to stand up for and protect our rights to better fisheries management.

[www.legasea.co.nz](http://www.legasea.co.nz)

4. All relevant information for the snapper 1 fishery including regular updates can be found here:

<http://www.legasea.co.nz/snapper1.php>