

LegaSea Accountability Report

APRIL 2025



Image: Alex Stammers

Introduction



Over the past few months, we've been in the thick of one of the most important fights for our oceans we've ever seen. When the Government released its proposed Fisheries 'Reforms', it was clear they were anything but. These changes would have handed even more control to commercial interests, removed vital public safeguards, and locked us into the same broken system that's been stripping our seas bare for decades. So we pushed back. Hard. With your help, over 25,000 New Zealanders made submissions opposing these reforms – a tidal wave of public resistance that couldn't be ignored.

While this battle is far from over, we are able to focus on engaging and enraging the public thanks to your support. Your contribution came at an opportune time, and I can confidently state we invested it for every New Zealander who values the ocean and wants to see it thrive for generations to come.

In the immortal words of Matt Watson – *"Let's be the first generation to leave our kids a better coastal fishery than the one we inherited."*

Public Awareness

AUCKLAND BOAT SHOW

LegaSea was invited to participate in the [Auckland Boat Show](#) NZ Marine event at the Viaduct Event Centre from 6 to 9 March. Our presence was generously supported at no cost by [NZ Marine](#), providing a valuable platform to engage with the public. Throughout the four-day event, we promoted key initiatives including the Kai Ika Project, our incredible Toyota partnership, the Free Fish Heads app, and raised awareness around the Fisheries Reform Scam. The event offered high foot traffic and strong public engagement, helping to amplify our message and connect with new supporters.



The Auckland Boat Show set up

BAYLEYS FISHING CLASSIC

A big thank you to Bayleys for their generous support at this year's Bayleys Fishing Classic. We thoroughly enjoyed being part of the event, and we're especially grateful to Bayleys for matching the funds raised – an incredibly generous gesture that will go a long way in supporting our work.

As always, the event followed a catch, measure, photograph, and release format, which reflects the growing awareness around responsible fishing practices. It was great to see participants embracing this approach – keeping a few fish to share, and releasing the rest, particularly the larger ones.

We'd also like to acknowledge our event partners – Barkers, Victory Knives, Swordfish Mojo, Kōparepare, Hauraki Express, Kingi, and Black Magic Tackle – for contributing high-quality prizes, drinks, and raffle items.

The funds raised from the Bayleys Fishing Classic will directly support our mission to improve fisheries management and our ongoing campaigns. We appreciate the continued support and look forward to next year's event.



The Grand Prize winner

CHESTERS FANATICAL FISHOS

The Chesters Fanatical Fishos event returned in February and once again brought together a strong community of fishers and supporters. This long-running event, now in its 20+ year history, continues to impress with its organisation, turnout, and spirit.

All fish caught were auctioned to raise funds for CoastGuard, and we're especially grateful for the generous additional donation made by Chesters to LegaSea.

The LegaSea and Kai Ika teams were on site to provide filleting support, ensuring that every part of the fish was put to good use. All heads and frames were distributed to local communities.

Chesters has been a committed supporter of LegaSea for many years, and we sincerely appreciate their continued partnership and the impact this event has each year.

JAMES GROUP GOLF DAY

In March, our Platinum Partner James Group hosted their annual Golf Day, selecting LegaSea as the charity partner for the event.

To add a bit of fun, we ran a putting challenge where golfers aimed at “Salty Jim,” an inflatable fisherman set up in a blow-up boat. Those who landed a shot went in the draw to win a LegaSea lifejacket – with the added twist of putting with an oar instead of a club.

The day raised over \$3,000 through raffles and donations. We’re grateful to everyone who took part, donated, or helped make the day a success.

Thanks again to the James Group team for their ongoing support and for choosing to back LegaSea as part of this event.



Dave Ahoia in action at Chesters Fanatical Fishos

THE KAI IKA PROJECT & CANS FOR KAI: AUCKLAND

Christmas and the summer holidays traditionally bring a slowdown in fish filleting, and this year was no exception. The quieter period allowed staff to take some much-needed downtime, while kaimoana distributions paused through January and resumed in early February to strong demand.



Although fishing remained slow through February, this coincided with a busy summer of events. Kai Ika supported a range of club and partner competitions, including filleting at Piha Deep Sea Fishing Club’s annual comp and fish auction, supporting Counties SFC’s Classic with our event trailer and Cans for Kai receptacles. We also filleted fish for our partners JA Russell, Chesters, and Bayleys at their annual fishing competitions. A highlight of the season was CanFish, Canteen’s annual event for youth with cancer, held at the Maraetai Beach Boating Club. This was a day out in a boat fishing on the Hauraki Gulf and prizegiving back at the club, where everyone was a winner. A heartwarming day that left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

Distributions at Centre Park resumed in February, with queues of up to 150 cars highlighting the continued community demand for fish heads and frames. A new partnership with Ngāti Whātua has seen biweekly distributions begin at Ōrākei Marae, where kaimoana is shared alongside fruit and vegetables grown in the marae gardens.

The Auckland Cans for Kai initiative also gained momentum over the quarter, with monthly collections regularly exceeding 1,000kg and new partners continuing to come on board.

WELLINGTON

Summer marked the peak of our filleting season, with a dedicated local volunteer leading the charge. Our team delivered filleting services at six local fishing competitions, recovering and redistributing over a tonne of fish heads and frames that would have otherwise gone to waste. The response from the community was overwhelmingly positive, with strong engagement and insightful conversations with fishing club members. The Kai Ika Project received a warm reception, and there was widespread recognition of LegaSea's recent advocacy efforts.

The Cans for Kai initiative reached new heights over the summer, with increasing participation from key venues and major events including Sky Stadium, Homegrown, and Brewtown. In March alone, more than 3,000 kilograms of cans were collected and diverted for recycling – demonstrating both environmental and social impact.

The growth of these initiatives enabled us to hire a new team member – a former filleter – whose expertise and commitment have brought immense value to the project. Thanks to additional support from Rutherford and Bond Toyota, we've been able to extend his hours. This has directly led to the addition of three new community distribution points and four more volunteer redistributions. As a result, our weekly kaimoana (seafood) distributions are on track to double, reaching an estimated 1,000 kilograms per week.

We're seeing growing interest from a diverse range of stakeholders, including marae, fishing clubs, community groups, local councils, and food security networks. Demand continues to increase, and we remain committed to scaling our efforts to meet the needs of our communities.

FISH CARE / CHARTER BOAT CONDUCT

FishCare has been ticking along in the background over the past few months, but it's definitely taken a back seat while we put our energy into the Fisheries Reform campaign. That said, we've still made good progress where it counts. We're just putting the finishing touches on a new best practice guide for spearfishing and diving, along with updated guides for billfish and southern bluefin tuna. These will be shared with key groups like Spearfishing NZ, the Underwater Association, Dive New Zealand, Bluewater Marine, and the NZ Sport Fishing Council. Getting these organisations on board will give the guides more weight and help strengthen the FishCare message across the wider community.



The Charter Boat Code of Conduct is also just humming along with no new charters being targeted at the moment.

Supporter Engagement

Volunteering

Are you passionate about protecting our oceans and marine life? Legasea is looking for dedicated volunteers to help make a difference. Whether you're passionate about conservation, community outreach, or simply want to be part of a cause that matters, we'd love to have you on board. By volunteering with us, you'll play a key role in supporting our mission to safeguard marine ecosystems and create a lasting positive impact. [Sign up](#) today and become a part of the Legasea family – together, we can help ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for our oceans!

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH THE KAI IKA PROJECT?

The Kai Ika Project relies on volunteers to help our small team recover and share enough kaimoana to feed our growing community.

Our volunteers help with kaimoana collections, community distributions, fish handling and processing, assisting with POS transactions, community engagement, gardening at the Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, assisting at special events and in a number of behind the scene roles.

We have a range of [opportunities](#) available for individuals or groups of any size.

Social Media update

The first few months of 2025 saw LegaSea NZ shift gears fast. January was all about keeping a steady hand over summer – staying active without stirring anything up – and even with the team mostly offline, we still reached 109,000 people and grew the page by 68 new followers. February was when things really kicked off.

After the Government dropped its fisheries reform proposals, we pivoted straight into campaign mode, pushing hard for public submissions. Between organic posts, partner boosts, and targeted ads, we reached another 120,000 people and drove over 7,700 clicks, with some of our best ad performance yet.

By March, we were properly flying. Our content hit harder, reached deeper, and the results showed it – Facebook reach shot up 59% to nearly 300,000, interactions jumped 65%, and link clicks exploded by over 500%. Paid ads gave us extra firepower, but it was the straight-talking, visually punchy posts that really landed.

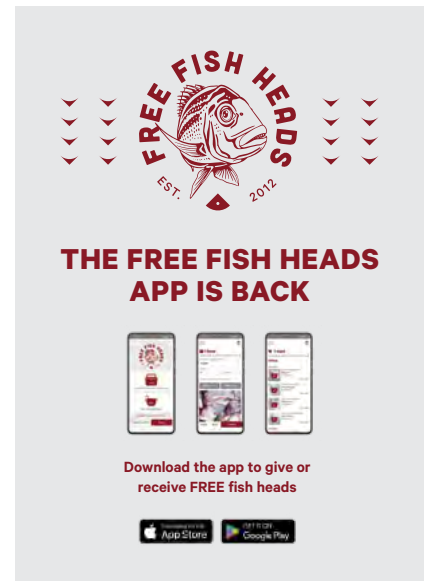
Calling out the dishonesty in the reforms proved to be the strongest message by a mile. Our community's still growing fast – and better yet, they're getting more engaged every week.

THE FREE FISH HEADS APP IS BACK!

This platform connects people who've caught fish and don't need the heads with those of us who love to cook and eat them.

Originally launched by Matt Watson in 2016, our team at The Kai Ika Project have recently dedicated a lot of time to rebuilding and improving the app. The new version is now live in beta on both the [Google Play Store](#) and the [Apple App Store](#) (under Fish Heads App on IOS). Feel free to download it, sign up, and explore its features – you'll be all set when fishers start offering their fish heads!

There might be a few hiccups as we fine-tune the app and work out any bugs. Initially, there may be more people looking for fish heads than those giving them away, so please be patient as the community grows and activity increases. Thank you for your support, and happy cooking!



LegaSea Fundraising

Grants

Woolworths Food For Good Grant – \$10,000

Hutt Mana Grant – \$3,500

Ngati Whatua Orakei – \$12,500 for Free Fish Heads

Fisheries Management update

It's been a demanding start to the year for our Fisheries Management team. On 12 February 2025, the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries Shane Jones [proposed changes to the Fisheries Act](#) that threaten to privatise our marine fisheries to allow for more fish to be caught and exported, while weakening environmental protections. If these changes become law, everyday Kiwis will find it harder to put fresh fish on the table.

In response, on 11 April 2025 LegaSea alongside the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, NZ Angling & Casting and NZ Underwater Association sent a [joint 60-page submission](#) to Fisheries NZ. Our submission dismantled the credibility of the proposed changes and outlined what real reform would look like. Some of our key concerns with the proposed changes include;

- 1. Deletion of the Minister's statutory duty** to ensure sustainability. Catch limits in depleted areas must be reduced by the Minister. The proposal to legitimise voluntary catch reductions by commercial fishers fails to meet this legal standard.
- 2. Reduced monitoring** by allowing monitoring cameras on commercial boats to be turned off at certain times while limiting public access to footage.
- 3. Increased wastage** by permitting more dead fish to be thrown overboard, discouraging the transition to using more selective fishing methods.

We encourage you to take the time to read [our submission](#) and support the work we are doing to protect the marine environment and rebuild the abundance of fish, for the benefit of all Kiwis.

As the public outreach arm of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, LegaSea developed an extensive public awareness campaign – [The Fisheries Reform Scam](#), to engage and enrage members of the public, encouraging them to make individual submissions opposing the proposed amendments. Our [online submission](#) form made it easy for Kiwis to have their say.

The Minister has signaled that these proposed amendments are just the start of the reforms. Now we wait to see if they will progress through Cabinet, Select Committee and Parliamentary processes. If successful, the changes could become legislation by the end of 2026.

Amidst dealing with the Minister's proposals, there has been some positive news. In March 2025 the [Minister's decision](#) on the management of crayfish (CRA 2) acknowledged the significant areas of depletion of crayfish within the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Plenty area. The Minister rejected Fisheries NZ's proposed Total Allowable Commercial Catch increase. A small win for our crayfish.

The NZ Sport Fishing Council has voiced concerns about the decline in crayfish numbers for decades. [Our January 2025 joint submission](#) supported the development of a recovery plan to restore crayfish abundance and contribute to the function of kelp forest ecosystems.

The significant decline in crayfish numbers and delay of effective management action led the Minister to close the inner Hauraki Gulf to recreational and commercial harvest from 1 April. The closure will be reviewed in three years time.

Crayfish numbers in east Northland (CRA 1) waters are also severely depleted. The lack of these natural predators has led to exploding numbers of kina which are decimating kelp forests and leaving behind barren seascapes.

[Our December 2024 submission](#) on the future management of CRA 1 included six key recommendations for the Minister. We're concerned that Fisheries NZ's proposed measures to address crayfish depletion on the east coast of Northland are inadequate. The Minister is working with Fisheries NZ to refine a set of management measures for public consultation in mid-2025. So if crayfish is a delicacy for you, keep an eye out for another round of debate later this year.

LegaSea continues to support the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council as they contribute to the development of the [Waikato Regional Council \(WRC\) Coastal Plan](#). This work has included attending Planning hearings in April 2025, providing expert witness statements and detailed submissions. Our team is grateful for the expert guidance from Brookfields Lawyers, particularly Rowan Ashton.

It's important we continue to be the voice of reason in the Coastal Plan as it will set out how the WRC will manage the marine waters around the Firth of Thames, Coromandel down to Waihi, and the west coast from Waiuku to Mokau over the next 10 years.

It's not even halfway through the year and our team has been run off their feet fighting for abundance and a fair go for all Kiwis. Given the available resources, it's a satisfactory start to the year. Additional resources would be helpful however, with more fisheries reviews and legislative processes ahead, we're sharpening our tools and preparing for the battles to come.

Partnerships

Partners

We are thrilled to enjoy the support of the following new Partners:

NEW GOLD PARTNERS

Pak n Save Porirua

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the products and services of these outstanding companies and brands.

Our Partners are our lifeblood

They help us with funding, communication, social engagement, materials support and motivation. Their ongoing support demonstrates a real commitment to the people of New Zealand. Restoring our inshore fisheries to an abundant level is now a shared vision.

Please [contact us](#) if you wish to join our growing list of outstanding Partners.

LegaSea Hawkes Bay

There's plenty happening in the Bay. One of the most exciting developments is a potential new home for LegaSea Hawke's Bay. We're currently exploring a collaboration with the Sustainable Hawke's Bay team to establish a shared community venue on a five-hectare piece of council-owned land near Splash Planet. The council has offered it on a \$1-a-year lease, and the vision is big – a physical hub that brings together education, sustainability, fishing, gardening, and local resilience. Think community garden, kai redistribution, meeting space, and collaboration central.

If you've got connections to local businesses or organisations that might be keen to get involved, we'd love to hear from you. This is a rare opportunity to co-create something really meaningful for the region. The buildings will need some construction work, the property will need a massive junk clear and there will be plenty of working bees in the works to get all that done!

Meanwhile, the Hawke's Bay arm of The Kai Ika Project continues to grow. Since launching, we've now redistributed over 5 tonnes of beautiful kaimoana that would've otherwise gone to waste. We're regularly getting fish to whānau and communities in Camberley, Flaxmere, Mahia, and Wairoa – with the demand and impact growing every week.

As for the Twofold Bay project, transforming the old trawler into an artificial reef is still very much in motion. It's a long process, and we're working closely with local iwi and stakeholders to get the necessary approvals and support. The proposed site has shifted slightly – we're now looking at a spot off the other end of Pania Reef, near where the original artificial reef was created.

Lots more to come – watch this space.

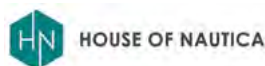


Image: Karena Kaihe-Woolston

PLATINUM



GOLD





LEGASEA SPONSOR/ BUILDING LEGASEA

The building industry of New Zealand have a common passion for fishing and if any group of businesses are going to help us rebuild our fisheries then the construction industry should be at the forefront. Subsequently, we developed a category of sponsorship ideally suited to them. Priced at \$2000 plus GST per annum it enables sponsors to help build up LegaSea and rebuild our fish stocks.

RALH Construction Limited	Martin & Riggall Engineering	Easy Energy Ltd
Avoca Group	Apex Roof 'n' Clad Ltd	Strait Construction Ltd
Robinson Asphalts	Blacklock Rose Ltd	Sansom Construction
Sulis Hot Tubs	RCC Construction	Arthurs Emporium
WashCo	DB & JF Holdings Ltd	Bayleaf Organics Ltd
Ziggy's Glass	Aotea Electric Auckland	Cert Systems Ltd
Waimea Orchard Ltd	Gateway Investments	Creative Landscaping & Design
Matakana Marine	Econode	Firstflex Cables
Deejannie Ltd	My Guy	Hubands Whangarei
Aqua designs	Centroform Ltd	Northland Parkcare Ltd
Busck Prestressed concrete	AJ Gidlow Engineering	Pan Pacific Auto Electronics
The Dream Trust	Synthetic Technologies	Waipukurau Construction
Blackdog cat	Development Construction	Warwick Fabrics
Our Projects Renovations + New Builds	Greenfingers Growing Mixes Ltd	Wilco Precast
Hayes Builders	Vantage Windows North Shore	Orange Door Music Video Ltd



LEGASEA WORKS

LegaSea Works is our entry level business sponsorship allowing any business large or small to show their support and receive recognition. LegaSea Works is priced at \$500 plus GST per annum with an automatic renewal, it is a simple way for a business to invest in the future health of New Zealand's fisheries for the benefit of their customers and community.

Fantail and Turtle Garden Bar and Eatery	Services	Topcat Bobcat Excavations
Auto Super Shoppe Albany	Blueprint Consulting	Reel Kitchens Ltd
Waipa Bricklayers	Engineers	Peter Campbell
Whangarei Drycleaning Company Ltd	GT Marine	A2Z Translate
Waiheke Truck Services	Adtrailer	BBS Timbers Ltd
Rogers Boat shop	Narellan Pools	Consilium Residential
Liquorland Snells Beach	Kerry & Carol Martin	Decoro Fishing Supplies
LCP Management Services	Exit Films	Davey Painters Ltd
Kitchen inspirations	Skye Carter Photography	Ecoefficient Solutions Nz Limited
Kahu Ridge	Acquire	Fishing Boats NZ Ltd
John Peterson Northland Financial Holdings	Pay Sauce	Golden Mile Fruitpackers Ltd
Height 4 Hire	SBA Hibiscus Coast	Lambly Builders Whangarei
Coast residential – Tim Scott	Growth Strategies Consulting Ltd	Martin & Riggall Engineering
Burkhart Farm Equipment	Browne Engineering Ltd	Parkit Management
BRUCE HOWARD Carpentry	Fiordland Charters	Sea Y Limited
	Okiwi Bay Holiday Park & Lodge	The Boat Shed & Autos
		True Kit Inflatables