

Summary of final MFish Fisheries 2030 proposals

For the non-commercial environmental and fishing interest Alliance.

By Trish Rea

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Executive summary

In mid to late 2008 the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) worked with fishing interest groups to develop a shared vision for fisheries to be achieved by the year 2030. Following the change of government, the advent of the economic downturn and a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) *Fisheries 2030 – Vision, result areas and action plan. Unlocking the potential of the New Zealand fisheries sector* (November 2008) the Ministry released the report in February 2009 as a draft proposal document [Fisheries 2030, 2030]. MFish then engaged with commercial, customary and amateur fishers to seek their views on the draft. Two multi sector meetings were held in Wellington in May 2009.

In response to concerns about the Ministry's focus on economic outcomes at the expense of social, economic and cultural well-being, an alliance was formed between environmental and non-commercial fishing interests to develop a collective response (the Alliance). Several submissions were made to MFish, the Minister of Fisheries (the Minister) and the Primary Production Select Committee.

In September 2009 the final Fisheries 2030 document was released along with the Minister's advice to the Cabinet Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee (Cabinet Paper, CP).

The 2030 initiative has changed from developing a long-term vision and action plan that is broadly supported by all stakeholders, to a strategic direction and goal as developed by the Ministry.

A comparison of the draft proposals and final 2030 document has been completed. There are minor changes to the original action points identified in the draft proposal, with some change in the area of delivering on the Crown's obligations to Maori.

The draft's original reference to developing alternatives to managing at maximum sustainable yield (MSY) has been deleted and replaced with the harvest strategy standards, which all reference back to BMSY. Aspirations for rebuilding depleted fisheries have been negated with these changes. Feedback from the Alliance has been largely ignored.

Substantial management and sector reforms are indicated in the Cabinet Paper. Implications of these reforms and legislative changes have not been fully considered, partly due to the lack of specific information provided. There is enough to suggest that there will be little public consultation, further effort to 'engage' with sector groups, build the representative capacity of the groups and ultimately make them responsible for their "share" of the fishery. MFish is due to report to the Minister on progress by June 2010.

Clearly the objective is to achieve implementation of the earlier MFish proposals in *Shared Fisheries*. Ongoing references to commercial fisheries, customary fisheries and amateur fisheries reinforce the Ministry's intention to achieve allocation amongst the interest groups and reduce the public's right to fish within their allocation.

Allocation would also strengthen quota rights by entitling the owner to a perpetual share of the total allowable catch (TAC), as opposed to the current right to a percentage of the total allowable commercial catch (TACC). Privatisation of New Zealand's fisheries would then be complete.

Goal –

- a. MFish - New Zealanders maximising benefits from the use of fisheries within environmental limits.
- b. Non-commercial Alliance vision – Healthy and abundant oceans with more fish in the water, providing all New Zealanders with access to kai moana and our future generations with the opportunity to enjoy a healthy ocean and sustainable fisheries.

2. Description of process

PwC Draft proposals	Non-commercial Alliance feedback	Fisheries 2030 final
Vision	Vision	Goal
		Five governance conditions
Three result areas		Two outcomes – use and environment
Fifteen objectives	Goal	Fifteen objectives
46 action points (achieve 5 years +)	Six long-term actions	45 strategic action points
	Three urgent actions	Short-term action plan

MFish Fisheries 2030

3. Objectives and action points are divided between the ‘Use Outcome’, the ‘Environment Outcome’ and ‘Governance Conditions’ as follows:
 - a. Use – Objective one to four, action points 1.1 to 4.4, [2030, p8]
 - b. Environment – Objective five to eight, action points 5.1 to 8.2, [2030, p9]
 - c. Governance conditions – Objective nine to 15, action points 9.1 to 15.2, [2030, p10]
4. There are eight values and 13 principles outlined in the document [2030, p11]. These values and principles apply to all actions and decisions made to achieve the goal.
5. MFish acknowledge Fisheries 2030 is a “start”. Monitoring and evaluation will be an ongoing process. MFish expect adjustments to be made as objectives are achieved. MFish advise tangata whenua and stakeholders “*will have the opportunity to provide input to the Ministry’s strategic planning processes*”. [2030, p13].
6. There are no specifics as to how progress will be monitored, what the performance indicators are or how reporting will occur.
7. A short-term action plan is mentioned in the Fisheries 2030 document but no specifics are provided. There is some detail about the plan in the Minister of Fisheries response to Alliance members, dated 11 September. The Minister’s August 18th paper to his Cabinet colleagues, *Increasing The Contribution of the Fisheries Sector to the New Zealand Economy (CP)*, provides specific details about the action plan and new actions that may require legislative reform.

Minister’s 2030 Advice

8. On 11 September the Minister wrote to Alliance members acknowledging the meeting held in Wellington on 3 August, and the concerns raised in various submissions. The Minister outlines a number of the 2030 action points that will be addressed over the next five years, these include:
 - a. Developing alternative stock management targets within environmental limits [action 1.2];
 - b. Supporting environmental certification and implement product traceability certification for NZ fisheries [action 3.2];
 - c. Setting and implement harvest strategy standards [action 5.1];

- d. Setting environmental standards, including for threatened and protected species and seabed impacts [action 6.2];
- e. Enhancing the framework for fisheries management planning, including the use of decision rules to adjust harvest levels over time [action 5.2];
- f. Determining the best options for information collection on catch from amateur fisheries, including the implementation of charter boat reporting [action 10.4]; and
- g. Seeking consensus on how to fully implement the Fisheries Deed of Settlement and historical Treaty settlements [action 12.2].

Minister's 2030 Advice to Cabinet

- 9. In late August the Minister provided his Cabinet colleagues with a report that “*sets out a strategy and recommended actions to enable the [fisheries] sector to make a significantly greater sustainable contribution to the New Zealand economy*”. [CP, page 1].
- 10. The Minister identified various aspects of the feedback received, the commercial sector’s preference is on improving economic performance, environmentalists want environmental performance, amateurs want abundance and customary interests seek full recognition of customary interests. [CP, p2]
- 11. Minister suggested the difference between sector views is more to do with sequence of change, the language used and priority “*rather than a fundamental opposition to the goal or outcomes*”. [CP, p2].
- 12. Minister identified a Plan of Action and advises that the Ministry and “*parts of the sector are already working on a number of the identified actions*”. The sector and actions are not specified. [CP, p3]
- 13. Objective-based fisheries management planning, government-set standards and sector responsibilities “*relevant to their share of the fishery*,” indicates a fairly wide programme of reform is anticipated. [CP, p3]
- 14. Minister indicates that commercial interests are most likely to take collective responsibility for management before other interest groups. In the Minister’s view, having management operate within government-set standards will mitigate environmentalist’s concerns. [CP, p3]
- 15. The Plan of Action is focused on seven aspects; some of those are priorities to be dealt with over the next five years. The Minister has identified new areas of work, some of which will require legislative reform. [CP, p4] The main points are:
 - a. Improving the management framework;
 - b. Supporting aquaculture and international objectives;
 - c. Ensuring sustainability of fish stocks;
 - d. Improving fisheries information;
 - e. Building sector leadership and capacity;
 - f. Meeting obligations to Maori; and
 - g. Enabling collective management responsibility.
- 16. Minister has identified that statutory amendment is required to:
 - a. Improve management planning by providing clarity and certainty about environmental limits and management objectives;
 - b. Specify the range within which stock management targets may be set; and
 - c. Enable collective management responsibility.

17. Minister assured his colleagues the changes are not radical and there is no need for urgent law change. [CP, p5]
18. MFish is due to report back to the Minister on progress by June 2010. [CP, p5]
19. Minister advises his colleagues that sector comments on the 2030 process were “*largely positive*”. [CP, p5]
20. Also, that reform options would be appropriately developed through focused engagement with the sector rather than having a public consultation process. [CP, p6]
21. Reform options will be developed through engagement with tangata whenua and take into account implementation of the Treaty Strategy. [CP, p6]

Contributors to Alliance

Contributors to the Alliance of environmental and non-commercial fishing interest groups include:

- ⇒ The Hokianga Accord;
- ⇒ Greenpeace New Zealand Aotearoa;
- ⇒ The Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand;
- ⇒ The Environment and Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa New Zealand (ECO);
- ⇒ The New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council (NZBGFC);
- ⇒ The New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council (NZRFC);
- ⇒ The Guardians of Hawke Bay Fisheries;
- ⇒ The New Zealand Angling and Casting Association (NZACA);
- ⇒ The Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ (CORANZ);
- ⇒ The Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association;
- ⇒ The Wellington Recreational Marine Fishers Association; and
- ⇒ option4.

Summary of Alliance feedback

Feedback from the Alliance submitted in response to the draft Fisheries 2030 proposals.

Date (2009)	Description
17 June	Alliance letter and alternative collective view to the Minister of Fisheries and MFish
17 June	Sustainable strategies for more fish in the water – joint fishing groups’ submission to Minister and MFish
31 July	More fish in the water II – Alliance submission, alternative strategies and recommendations to the Minister and MFish
3 Aug	Alliance meeting with the Minister of Fisheries
13 Aug	Alliance letter to the Minister of Fisheries
26 Aug	Alliance letter to the Primary Production Select Committee