

**Hon Phil Heatley**  
**Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture**

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**Media Statement**

**Govt outlines plans for aquaculture reform**

The government today announced plans for the future shape of the country's aquaculture industry as it moves to support the industry's goal of reaching \$1 billion in sales by 2025.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Phil Heatley says Cabinet has agreed to a range of amendments that will help boost the sector's potential to generate sustainable economic growth for New Zealand.

"No new aquaculture space has been created under 2004 reform law and it could remain stalled for some time yet without significant improvement," he says.

"We want to free up the regulatory bottlenecks that have kept aquaculture planning in limbo. The industry has been stifled by inflexible rules stopping companies from investing in the sector."

Mr Heatley says the government fully supports the aquaculture industry's goal of generating annual sales of \$1 billion by 2025, a three-fold increase on the current sales level.

"We need to create the right platform for our aquaculture sector to realise its full potential. I'm confident this can be done while still protecting the environment and the interests of other users of our coastal areas," he says.

"This is about growing the economy, creating more jobs and getting more people into work, particularly in the regions."

The proposals include a range of measures to help aquaculture reach its potential, such as streamlining the Resource Management Act, encouraging investment by injecting certainty into the system, and a central government commitment to support industry growth and development.

Responsibility for the management of aquaculture will remain with regional councils. However, the reforms include agreement in principle to establish a power for the Minister to amend regional coastal plans in exceptional circumstances where it is in significant regional or national interest.

Mr Heatley says the creation of a business unit within the Ministry of Fisheries recognises the importance of aquaculture to New Zealand's future economic development.

"We will be working hard to help ensure aquaculture delivers on its potential for the benefit of all New Zealanders," he says.

For more information on aquaculture reform visit the Ministry of Fisheries' website at [www.fish.govt.nz](http://www.fish.govt.nz)

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