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## Media release

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### Keeping fish in the sea, and nets out

*New high-powered collab takes on bottom trawling – one chopping board at a time*

Three diverse groups have joined forces to fight against bottom trawling in New Zealand waters – and they're doing it with a chopping board made from fishing nets and post-consumer packaging and plastics.

The *kingi board* is a special collaboration between sustainable seafood restaurant *kingi*, green technology startup CRITICAL, and LegaSea.

Designed by Rui Peng, co-founder at CRITICAL and Tom Hishon, co-founder and chef at *kingi*, the *kingi board* is made using CRITICAL's proprietary technology which turns old commercial fishing nets and recycled post-consumer packaging and plastic wastes into a chef-grade chopping board.

Hishon says while they come from a diverse range of industries, the collaboration came about because they all had a common purpose and wanted to do something to help put an end to bottom trawling and begin to restore biomass and biodiversity to the ecosystem.

"There's something very powerful about how a simple chopping board made from fishing nets and other plastic waste can help to bring about change," says Hishon.

Bottom trawling is a fishing method used by commercial fishing boats. They drag fishing equipment and nets across the seafloor destroying valuable marine ecosystems and reef structures while capturing unwanted sea life and bycatch in its path.

LegaSea is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to see bottom trawling removed from New Zealand's coastal waters. All profits from the *kingi board* will be invested in LegaSea and restoring the abundance, biodiversity, and health of New Zealand's marine environment.

"For us," says Hishon, "the *kingi board* is a lasting, and very colourful reminder about the importance of looking after our oceans and protecting not just New Zealand's fisheries, but fisheries around the world."

Peng, who describes CRITICAL as a "clean tech" company, says it took his team over four years of research and development (R&D) to get to the point where its proprietary technology can now recycle almost all of the 24 types of plastic waste. New Zealand's current recycling infrastructure only recycles four of the 24 varieties of plastic waste.

"As a Māori company, CRITICAL exists to care for our natural world, so that we are good ancestors to our mokopuna (grandchildren)" he says.

"We're building the products and the technology platform to transform plastic waste into low carbon, recyclable materials that can build everything from next generation buildings to beautiful chef-grade, chopping boards."

A recent survey conducted by Horizon Research for LegaSea revealed significant public opposition to bottom trawling with 79% of Kiwis believing bottom trawling and dredging should be phased out of inshore fisheries and replaced with selective fishing techniques.



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Benn Winlove, from LegaSea, says the effects of bottom trawling are hugely damaging and long-lasting.

“It takes a minimum of seven years for a trawled seafloor area to recover. And other studies show some areas never recover. Bottom trawling has been happening in the Hauraki Gulf for over 100 years which is why this beautiful, and very valuable area of our ocean, is in a critical state.

“This type of fishing takes everything in its path which means large amounts of unwanted sea life, or bycatch, is caught in the net, brought to the surface, and has little chance of survival.”

Under the new Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan, currently in development, bottom trawling and scallop dredging will be allowed to continue in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park despite public opposition.

For Hishon, the *kingi board* is a natural extension of the restaurants’ values and vision.

"Kingi celebrates local seafood. We advocate for sustainable fishing methods that don't include bottom trawling, supporting fishermen and women who believe in these practices and care about ensuring the future abundance of fish stocks. They're our oceans' guardians, they're our kaitiaki.

“While the *kingi board* is helping to raise awareness, and discussion about an important issue, one chopping board at a time, it's also a really great product. It's made to chef-grade standard that can be used in the kitchen, boat or the bach. It's the perfect size for filleting too,” says Hishon.

**Go to shop [LegaSea.co.nz](https://LegaSea.co.nz) to buy a *kingi board*.**

**The *kingi board* is an ongoing initiative with the purchase of each board being invested in LegaSea and the continued production of more boards.**