

Media Release

Recreational Fishing Funding Onus on Gallop Government.

Recfishwest is disappointed that its call for debate on the introduction of a general recreational fishing licence has been met with such a blunt and negative response from the Gallop government.

Given the nature of the government response, Recfishwest Chairman Norman Halse advised that Recfishwest had determined that it would no longer pursue the licence proposal with the current Government.

Recfishwest believed that the responsibility to provide the additional funds, essential to ensure the sustainability of recreational fish species and recreational fishing in Western Australia, was now squarely on the shoulders of Government.

“Our call yesterday was driven by our concern that around \$5-7 million in additional funds annually was urgently required to ensure that the research and services necessary for sound recreational fisheries management could be carried out.” Mr Halse said.

Mr Halse explained that sound fisheries management was extremely complicated and a resource hungry activity. While current fish stock levels are reasonable in many cases the fact of the matter is that significant additional management is essential if Western Australians wanted to ensure the future of their recreational fishing lifestyle.

The numerous issues and services necessary for sound management include:

- Research directed at determining the stock status and appropriate fishing level for each of the recreational fish species,
- Resources to provide the appropriate number of inspectors that could ensure enforcement of management rules and regulations,
- Resources to quantify recreational catches and determine the extent of economic benefits of fishing,
- Community education programs to support responsible fishing
- Habitat rehabilitation or enhancement.

“The situation facing our prized dhufish is a typical example of the burning need for more funds” he said. “The combined level of fishing effort by the recreational, charter and commercial fishing sectors is continuing to increase, local depletions are becoming more apparent and the deeper water stocks are being targeted to a far greater extent than ever before.”



“Yet despite this, and the icon status of this species, our understanding of stock status and appropriate fishing levels is extremely poor. We must gain this knowledge and use it to implement appropriate management as soon as possible, otherwise we may run a very real risk of serious damage to dhufish stocks.” he said.

Mr Halse added that the imminent commencement of a process to achieve Integrated Fisheries Management in WA highlighted the need for reliable estimates of the recreational catch of all fish species. “This information is critical to the success of integrated management and can only be obtained if there are sufficient resources. Clearly it will be an expensive exercise and Recfishwest is very concerned that without the funds the introduction of Integrated Fisheries Management may founder.

Mr Halse called on the government to immediately pledge the additional \$5-7 million annually to ensure the continued quality of recreational fishing that Western Australian is famous for is maintained. “The Government must clearly accept responsibility for the provision of the necessary funds.

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