

Media Release

Funds sunk from recreational boating scheme.

Recfishwest has today asked the government for a full, independent review of the administration of the Recreational Boating Facilities Scheme after gross inconsistencies have been discovered.

The Executive Director of Recfishwest, Mr Frank Prokop said that at a recent meeting with relevant officers from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, it was revealed an amount of \$650,000 had been moved from the Recreational Boating Facilities Scheme into “other priority areas”.

The Recreational Boating Facility Scheme was established by Cabinet to be used for the provision of improved boating facilities. This was in response to anger from the boat owners of Western Australia at the significant increases in boat registration fees in 1997/98 and 1998/99.

“Boat owners should feel outraged that this amount of money should be re-allocated without consultation and apparently against the purpose for which the scheme was established.” Mr Prokop said.

“We believe that an independent review is required to determine the extent of this re-allocation and whether there have been any breaches of public sector guidelines.”

“The community has an expectation that moneys collected for a purpose will be used for that purpose. We have been trying to get answers from the department since February, but there seems to be no accountability in this area.”

Recfishwest is also concerned that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure do not intend to contribute to the costs of shark monitoring over the past summer even though Cabinet made a direction that the costs would be shared.

“Recfishwest was told that a consultant had recommended that the payment not be made as it wasn’t in the best interests of the department to make the contribution. Apparently a consultant’s report is valued more highly than a direction from Cabinet.” Mr Prokop stated.

“We appreciate the support of the Minister, Alannah MacTiernan so far and ask her to ensure that her department is accountable for its expenditure. Recfishwest believes that only an independent inquiry can get to the bottom of what is an extremely serious matter.”

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