

Media Release

Recfishwest urges single marine resources portfolio

Recfishwest has today asked the government to deliver a single marine resources portfolio in the new Cabinet.

The Executive Director of Recfishwest, Mr Frank Prokop said that the previous system of confrontation and unfounded attacks by CALM and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority under previous Ministerial responsibilities had not worked.

The Department of Fisheries and the Fisheries portfolio have worked closely to ensure that the fish stocks are sustainable and the marine environment is protected.

“Recfishwest and the commercial fishing industries have taken their responsibilities seriously but continue to be attacked by a dogma that found it easier to ban fishing than address fundamental environmental problems and a more rational zoning strategy for Western Australia.” Mr Prokop said.

It is also opportune to amalgamate the at-sea compliance and education activities run by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

“Recfishwest cannot understand why the Department of Fisheries has joint responsibility for fisheries and safety compliance in the metropolitan region other than the Swan River. It is time that the arrangements were also expanded to regional areas which have been crying out for a greater fisheries presence for decades. Combining at sea fisheries compliance and safety makes good sense to us and the Department of Fisheries has a good record with the community.”

“To add to this confusion, we have the Tourism portfolio dabbling in marine planning. We believe that the Rottnest Island Authority plans to declare significant additional sanctuary zones at Rottnest Island without further consultation and in direct defiance of a Cabinet decision. The Premier stated that it had a snowball’s chance in hell – well the Premier hasn’t been gone more than a few days and a trumped up little Authority is trying to freeze hell over.”

“The community is looking to Acting Premier Eric Ripper to kybosh such a ludicrous proposal and hold to his stated principle that there will be no changes in policy until the new Cabinet and Premier are ready.”

The time is right with several years before the election to rid ourselves of the angst towards the lock-out mentality of the CALM marine branch and amalgamate them under the fisheries umbrella as part of an agency with wider marine environmental management.

Recfishwest believes that an enhanced marine resources portfolio centred around the Department of Fisheries will deliver a more transparent process and higher quality outcomes for Western Australia. Importantly, it will save tax payers money and simplify an extremely complex system.

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