

Media Release

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Fishing Leaders and Clinics programs launched in Western Australia

The Federal Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation Eric Abetz today announced funding for two programs to assist recreational fishing in Western Australia.

The first program is called “*Addicted to Fishing not Drugs*” and is a continuation of a highly successful program which was run in 2006. About 1500 students and young people from Esperance to Kununurra were taught the right ways to fish and to believe in themselves and their abilities. This further program will involve regional, aboriginal and youth at risk participants to promote fishing to today’s youth.

Senator Abetz said “The Australian government has made a commitment of \$15 million over three years to assist the development of recreational fishing through the Recreational Fishing Community Grants Programme. I am pleased to fund the continuation of the Recfishwest fishing clinics initiative.”

“The Recfishwest Addicted to Fishing Not Drugs project was one of the first programs we funded and it is exactly the sort of project that we hoped to attract. It encourages a healthy lifestyle and encourages kids to get out and fish with their families and friends. I recently presented Recfishwest with a national award for their fishing clinics supported by my government and the SunSmart program.” The Minister said.

“The ‘Addicted to Fishing not Drugs’ program simply encourages kids and their families to go fishing where they can enjoy a healthy outdoor activity and talk about things that are going on at school or with their friends. In this way, issues such as drug use, bullying and self image issues can be detected earlier to the benefit of the student and the family. The program also teaches kids that they can be good at some aspect of fishing which reinforces self belief.” Executive Director of Recfishwest Frank Prokop said.

Minister Abetz also announced an additional grant to develop young future recreational fishing leaders.

“The “*Western Australian Young Future Leaders in Recreational Fishing*” project will bring together the next generation of recreational fishing leaders in a workshop at the Abrolhos Islands. The selected participants will be educated and mentored by a group of experienced leaders in recreational fishing. This project will help to ensure that there is a well prepared group of people able to assist in the advocacy and leadership of recreational fishing for many years to come.” Mr Prokop said.

“As we move to ensure the sustainability of many fisheries important to recreational fishers, it is essential that we have trained younger people to have their voices heard. This project will work closely with a national leaders program that we have also funded that will be run in Darwin in September.” Mr Abetz said.

“Recfishwest is very grateful to Minister Abetz for making funds available to support recreational fishing in Western Australia. This funding complements the already successful SunSmart fishing clinics and other initiatives which have been supported by the State government.” Mr Prokop said.

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Recfishwest is supported by the Australian Government Community Recreational Fishing Grants Program, Healthway and the WA Government. Recfishwest encourages responsible, SunSmart behaviour at all times.