



Recfishwest

Media Release

Strong reaction expected to Recreational fishing changes

Recfishwest has predicted a public outcry over the latest measures announced by Fisheries Minister Norman Moore.

Recfishwest executive director Frank Prokop said that despite recognising the benefit of a recreational fishing licence system, his organisation did not support Minister Moore's new fee structure.

"Fees for different activities such as fishing for rock lobster, abalone, marron and fresh water species have been raised and standardised to \$45 each," Mr Prokop said.

"The addition of two new licences - \$30 for anyone fishing from a boat and an additional demersal fishing licence costing between \$20 a day to \$150 annually – means that keen anglers who want the complete suite of fishing activities will have to pay \$405 per year.

"This is in stark contrast to the previous umbrella licence which cost \$81."

Mr Prokop said that despite flaws in the previous umbrella licence system, Recfishwest believes at the very least, that a discount for fishers who undertake multiple licensed fisheries must be included in the new management structure.

"We agree with the plan to quarantine funds raised through the new licence system into a recreational fishing trust account," he said.

Recfishwest will be steadfast on ensuring any revenue is managed by the recreational sector for enhancement and management needs of the fish resources we access.

"Our preferred licensing model would be for a much lower fee shared amongst all recreational fishers," Mr Prokop said.

Recfishwest supports a state wide boat fishing licence, but as a step towards a general angling licence. This would spread the financial cost, allow for the needs of all fishers to be met and provide data across all recreational fisheries.

"The extremely high fee structure is obviously aimed at helping to make the recreational West Coast Demersal fishery cost recovered and we are concerned this cost will act as a financial disincentive to fishers who wish to target these species."

The commercial West Coast Demersal fishery harvests 50% of the resource, but its fee structure is not even close to being cost recovered.

However, Mr Prokop believed that there are some good elements to the package.

We support the moves to introduce new bag limits on category 2 and 3 inshore species and to fund new research into the status of these stocks.



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Recfishwest strongly supported the change to the tailor slot limit to become two fish larger than 50 cm instead of two fish over 60 cm which will provide additional protection for larger tailor.

Recfishwest supports a two month closure as opposed to the four month closure proposed by the previous government.

We believe that it sends an important message to anglers that we have a part to play in managing stocks of species such as dhufish. Recfishwest believes that the government has seriously under-estimated the impact the closed season combined with extremely high demersal licence fees will have on reducing recreational participation and catch.

“The performance measures for the fishery must be developed such that they allow the recreational sector to benefit from a stock recovery. We also urge an independent assessment of the impact of these management reforms and ongoing review.” Mr Prokop said.

Recfishwest is also pleased that the government did not pander to the irresponsible demands for area closures from radical marine conservation groups.

“One of the benefits of licensing is that it allows the recreational sector to have greater influence on management reforms. Recfishwest is also calling on the government to apply the same risk and cost recovery principles to Marine Park management where proponents contribute nothing financially to management.”

Mr Prokop expected strong opposition to these proposals in a number of areas, especially given the extremely high cost of fishing and the contribution it already makes to the economy.

The money MUST be used responsibly with the benefits of management being returned to recreational fishing.

After all, this is a \$750 million industry and an essential component of the Western Australian way of life.” Mr Prokop concluded.

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