



MEDIA RELEASE

Recfishwest warns greens groups are set to hijack Federal marine parks plan

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Western Australia's recreational fishing peak body is calling on the Federal Government to consider carefully its zoning plans in establishing large Marine Parks covering up to 50 per cent of West Australian waters, saying our coastline is already adequately protected and the decision threatens an iconic way of life for some 600,000 West Australians.

Recfishwest Acting Executive Director Kane Moyle says well funded and highly organised environmental groups such as the Pew Environment Group and the World Wildlife Fund are applying significant pressure to Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke to establish more "no-go" sanctuary zones.

"These groups openly advocate for up to half of all Australian waters to be declared sanctuary zones, but this is going way too far and there is no hard evidence to suggest it will have any impact on fish stocks." Mr Moyle said.

"In particular, Recfishwest is concerned about an imminent decision on Commonwealth bioregional marine planning in waters between South Australia's Kangaroo Island and along the west coast as far north as Western Australia's Abrolhos Islands. The area is of vital importance to not just the recreational fishing industry, but also WA's commercial fishers and tourism." Mr Moyle said.

"Recreational fishers are also some of the strongest conservationists at heart. It is in everyone's interests to fish responsibly for the future, and it's time for some balance to be brought back into the debate."

"These organisations take an "anti-fishing" approach and purport to be the voice of marine conservation. This is neither realistic nor necessary.

"WA's recreational fishers need to know that a pastime they consider to be a way of life is under serious threat."

"What these environmental groups fail to recognise is that WA waters are already heavily controlled in terms of where, when and what type of fishing can occur. The State Government has already flexed its legislative muscle on marine conservation, with almost 40 per cent of our waters currently designated or proposed to be designated as Marine Parks.

"To add weight to their claims, these environmental groups are presenting data from severely over-exploited tropical systems in developing countries that bear little resemblance to Australia's marine environment."

Mr Moyle and several high profile recreational fishers are calling on the Federal Minister to ensure that recreational fishing interests, which are so much a way of life for many West Australians, are well considered before any decisions are made.

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