recfishwest

REEL NEWS

Issue 27 April 2011

Recfishwest's Commonwealth Marine Park Update.

With a draft plan for Commonwealth Marine Parks in the south-west expected in a few weeks, Recfishwest have been actively working to ensure that recreational fishing is given the consideration it deserves during the planning process. Last week, Recfishwest together with the Boating Industry Association WA (BIAWA) and the Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA) met with Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke to discuss issues related to the recreational fishing and boating sectors. As yet the draft plan has not been released and formal consultation with the recreational sector has not been started, but Recfishwest has been able to provide some early input prior to the release of the formal Draft Plan, which we trust will enable the Federal Government to make sensible and equitable decisions in relation to restricting recreational fishing in highly valued fisheries.

Recfishwest has had a series of meetings related to marine planning in the south-west with the Minister and his staff in the last few months. Recfishwest has raised concerns that the conservation objectives of these parks are not clearly defined and that the planning process should be founded on a risk based approach. In other words, any threats posed by recreational fishing towards the identified conservation values of an area should be adequately assessed rather than simply excluding recreational fishing.

Recfishwest expressed the high importance of recreational fishing to the WA community, particularly in regional areas. We have stated clearly that we would not like recreational fishing to be excluded without clear rationale. We have also urged the Minister to be cautious of strong well-funded lobbying from environmental groups who wish to lock away vast areas of the ocean for ideological reasons.

Recfishwest would also like to congratulate Scott Coghlan and the recreational fishing community for their initiative to organise a peaceful rally when Prime Minister Julia Gillard was in Perth last week holding the Government's Community Cabinet Meeting in South Fremantle. This protest demonstrated a strong unified recreational fishing sector in the face of uncertainty.

Recfishwest encourages all recreational fishers to pay attention to the imminent announcement from Canberra of the release of the Draft Marine Plan for the South-west of Australia. Once released, the public will have a 90 day period in which to provide comment to the government. It is important that fishers provide feedback, negative or positive, on the Draft Plan. Recfishwest will be seeking comments from stakeholders in formulating a submission on behalf to the recreational fishing sector.

Fish today for tomorrow

www.recfishwest.org.au

Western Australian Recreational and Sportfishing Council Inc Trading as Recfishwest **ABN** 77 922 817 608

T (08) 9246 3366 **F** (08) 9246 5955 **E** recfish@recfishwest.org.au **A** PO Box 34 North Beach WA 6920