

Keep Australia Fishing



Report for the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia
Martin Salter April 2011



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*A Fresh Approach to the Challenges
Facing Recreational Fishing*



AMEC

Australia Marine Engine Council ...toward sustainable boating



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A Fresh Approach...



Foreword

My name is Martin Salter. I am a retired member of the British Parliament and a passionate recreational fisherman. I'm currently living and working in Sydney as an angling writer and policy and campaigns consultant. Like many anglers across the world, I have some grave fears about the future of our sport.

I've been asked by representatives from

angling bodies, the tackle and boating trade and the fishing media to pull together some ideas about how we can secure the future of recreational fishing and counter more effectively the threats to our sport, lifestyle and in some cases, our livelihoods.

Why me? Well, I provided a detailed submission to the recent NSW Recreational Fishing Inquiry that was circulated widely. In it I argued for a fresh approach to the planning and operation of marine parks, the issue which has come to dominate much political debate

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around angling in Australia. My political background in the UK included being the first ever Parliamentary spokesman for angling, preparing Labour's Charter for Angling and helping launch the Angling Trust, the new national governing body for recreational fishing in England. I was, for many years, the main interface between anglers in the UK and politicians in both government and in parliament.

What follows are the results of many hours of discussions with anglers themselves, with organisations representing our sport in Australia and around the world, with fisheries scientists and managers, with government ministers and MPs, with policy advisors and with some of the leading names in recreational fishing. Tight timescales and tight budgets have inevitably constrained the scope of consultation but I have endeavoured to get a flavour of the situation on the ground from every State and Territory and to collect useful and valuable examples of good practice from around the world, including Europe and the USA. My recommendations are my own and they seek to draw on the very best from these jurisdictions and suggest how they might be applied in the Australian context.

I am grateful to the very many people who have supplied me with reports and information, given me the benefit of their experience, opinions and expertise and, best of all, offered their time and their encouragement. In particular I must thank all the members of my long suffering Project Reference Group

who have been regularly bombarded with requests for information and explanation and who have been most helpful and supportive. They are John Dunphy and Doug Joyner from AFTA, fisheries scientist Dr Ben Diggles, Chair of RecFish Australia Russell Conway, Stan Konstantaras from ANSA , and Jim Harnwell and John Newbery from Fishing World - Australia's No 1 recreational fishing magazine. Lastly, thanks must go to my new Aussie fishing friends Phil, Greg, Evan, Benn, Gary, Stuart, Sami, Al, Steve, James, Warren, John, Ollie, Tom and Derek for showing me over the last year some of the weird, wonderful and highly effective ways in which you guys catch fish in the 'Lucky Country'.

Although I've enjoyed some great fishing trips in my time out here, not just in NSW but in Queensland, the ACT and the Northern Territory and I reckon that Australia can still claim to have some of the best recreational fishing opportunities in the world, the future does not look bright. It became clear to me that there is both a need and an appetite for a fresh approach. I hope some of the ideas and recommendations in the following pages will help point the way forward so that the next generation of Aussie anglers and visitors to this wonderful country can continue to enjoy access to great fisheries and some great, sustainable and enjoyable fishing.

Martin Salter
April 2011

Fishing in Australia...

1. Introduction

The report begins with a description of the brief agreed jointly by the Australian Fishing Trade Association and RecFish Australia working with the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia (BFCA), who have commissioned and funded this work. It then sets out some of the things necessary for the effective organisation and creation of a sustainable recreational fishing sector and the aquatic resources on which it depends. This is followed by some scene setting, looking at where we are now and some of the key issues we face. The recommendations on economic benefit, marine parks and the environment, funding and organisational structures and a specific recreational fishing policy prospectus have all been informed by an examination of the current situation, by discussion and consultation and by drawing on experiences from elsewhere.

For ease of reading, more detailed information is provided in the appendices and attachments at the end of this document. A broad summary in response to the brief is set out below. The report ends with some ideas and recommendations about where recreational fishing can go from here.

The Brief

The brief was to look at the five areas summarised in bold:

- 1 Formulate a range of policy demands...** the basis of a recreational



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fishing manifesto that can be put to politicians so we can start to pro-actively set agendas rather than simply reacting to the demands of others.

2 Develop a public narrative on the benefits of recreational fishing... there are no clear figures on the economic benefits of recreational fishing, which massively weakens our case. A new national process to address this is strongly recommended. The report quotes the questionable findings from past surveys and some of the latest state figures and seeks to extrapolate nationally.

3 Repositioning on environmental issues... looking to establish a network of conservation officers, highlighting existing habitat initiatives, building new partnerships with sensible environmental groups where there are common interests, and seeking a fresh approach to Marine Parks using the new UN guidelines and experience from elsewhere.

4 Better communication and engagement and improved accountability... of all the funding options, the report concludes that the licence fee structure delivers the best opportunity to create properly resourced and professionally staffed mass membership peak bodies and independent Recreational Fishery Trust Funds controlled by the anglers themselves.

5 Lessons and best practice from elsewhere... drawing in particular on the experiences from the US, UK, Holland, Norway and New Zealand.

SEE APPENDIX A
FOR A FULL COPY OF THE BRIEF

Fishing in Australia...

What do we need to secure a better future for recreational fishing?

Healthy fisheries

Healthy fisheries managed sustainably, pristine water quality, abundant habitat to aid successful fish recruitment and a population overwhelmingly committed to both enjoying and protecting the resource are some of the most important factors in ensuring a strong future for recreational fishing.

Stronger public and political support

We need to build greater resilience in the recreational fishing sector in Australia to counter some of the threats to our sport. Stronger support will come when more people are involved in fishing. It will also be boosted when the public and politicians understand the true economic, social, educational and environmental benefits of having a vibrant recreational fishing sector and healthy and sustainable fisheries. Political support is inevitably dependent on good public support.

Reliable funding and professional advocacy

The largest participatory sport in the country should have the ability to articulate and press its case in a powerful and professional manner. We need to build robust structures with reliable and appropriate funding streams. This is usually the case in other countries with a strong tradition of recreational fishing.



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Clear policies and a vision

We need to move away from simply reacting to situations and proposals and begin to start carving out a clear policy programme and a vision for our sport that will command support from across the recreational fishing sector, chime with public aspirations and is capable of professional presentation to both state and federal politicians.

Anglers engaged in the future of their sport

We need to be actively working with fisheries managers and land managers, with schools and youth groups and with the community at large. We need to be engaged in ways that are meaningful and effective. To do this we need a healthy network of clubs and associations, strong peak bodies at state and federal level and meaningful partnerships with groups that share our interests.

2. Setting the Scene

It's all about the fish...

The purpose of this report is to suggest strategies that can help the recreational fishing sector in Australia counter some of the threats to our sport and build greater political and public support. The starting point must be the condition of the resource itself. Without healthy and sustainable fish stocks there is very little future for recreational fishing.

A better than even chance of catching a few decent fish is a pre-requisite for ensuring that youngsters in particular continue to

want to go fishing. It has to be in the long term interests of both the trade and angling organisations to position themselves as the “guardians of the waterside environment” and for the public and politicians to see us as the protectors and defenders of the resource, not simply another bunch of exploiters.

Of course there are other threats to our sport, including hostile politicians, animal rights extremists, marine park lock outs, foreshore access restrictions, declining numbers, distractions such as computer games and a lack of participation projects to encourage youngsters to take up angling. However, there is nothing more guaranteed to hasten the decline of recreational fishing than a lack of fish.

State of World Fish Stocks

The global situation is frightening, with the latest United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO) reports revealing that 80% of the world's fish species are either fully or over exploited. With the global population projected to rise from the current 6.5 billion to nearly 10 billion by 2050 and with huge advances in space age technology making commercial fish capture easier and more efficient, the omens are not good.

Whilst the Western Pacific and Eastern Indian Ocean waters are not yet in the worst category, the advent of super trawlers which can fish and process their catch virtually anywhere in the world are now actively targeting the seas around Australia. The European Union (EU) fishing fleets have been particularly active

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in signing agreements with impoverished countries to exploit their fish stocks and are none too careful about sustainable fishing practices in their quest to meet the inexhaustible demands of the European markets. It was only recently that the EU signed its first commercial fishing agreement with the Solomon Islands, potentially one of the best recreational fishing venues for Australian anglers. More such agreements are in the pipeline.

The Australian Fishery

There is no doubt that some Australian fisheries are better managed than most in the world but we are not without our problems, some of them quite serious - , like the NSW mulloway and the Southern Bluefin Tuna, and certainly not immune from the impacts on fish stocks of the commercial over fishing of both pelagic and deep water species in Commonwealth waters. Furthermore we still allow commercial exploitation and long lining for valuable game fish such as striped marlin, tuna and swordfish - a practice which has been outlawed in countries as diverse as Panama, Costa Rica and the USA.

There are real issues about the management of the Commonwealth Fishery, including a lack of liaison and effective joint working with the State fisheries departments, the quality of the advice from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), which at times pays scant regard to sustainable catch levels or to the interests of the recreational sector.



Whilst standards obviously vary from state to state it's fair to say that the inshore fisheries are better managed, with bag and size limits and seasonal closures. The introduction of Recreational Fishing Havens (RFHs) and the buy out of the commercial fishers which followed the introduction of the saltwater licence in NSW, saw an improvement in fish stocks at these locations and is proof positive of the differing impact of the two sectors on the fishery.

In the Northern Territory the banning of commercial netting of many of the prime barramundi rivers has greatly increased both the quality and quantity of the recreational experience. In fact progressive fisheries management in NT has been crucial to sustaining an economically important recreational fishery, which is a major driver of tourism into the region.

State fisheries are not without their problems and issues however. Inshore netting can be destructive and indiscriminate. Hauling

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nets take huge quantities of travelling fish and often will target valuable recreational species such as pockets of large mulloway and permit. Bottom trawling damages reefs, sea-grass beds and other important habitat and still has serious by-catch issues, particularly juvenile fish. Gill and mesh netting can prove deadly to mobile species and indiscriminately catches important recreational species such as Australian bass and estuary perch.

Better and more conservation-minded fisheries management is achievable but it will require the recreational sector to lead the way. The commercials will usually resist and many Greens simply don't understand the

concept of well managed fisheries and resort to a 'preservationist' stance which solves virtually nothing. Sadly, the broad mass of the non-fishing public tend not to get overly concerned as long as there is fish in the shops.

Finally, one of the biggest issues of all is poor water quality and habitat degradation. It is the big, unpublicised issue and affects both fresh and saltwater anglers and the commercial sector. Many of the proponents of Marine Parks seem strangely reluctant to talk about it, perhaps because they can see no further than locking anglers out of swathes of the ocean as a 'solution' to the problem of declining or endangered fish stocks. In reality, estuarine

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pollution and habitat loss have a far greater impact on the health of a fishery than recreational fishing ever could in several lifetimes.

Where are we now ?

On the plus side, Australian waters still contain some of the best fishing in the world and angling is a significant part of the national lifestyle. It is enjoyed by upwards of 3 million people, a considerably higher proportion of the national population than in many comparable countries. Importantly, it is still seen as a family oriented activity which is a major strength. Perhaps because access to good water and plentiful fish stocks has been reasonably straightforward for a long time, Australian anglers have not seen a need to join or support their local clubs and associations - nor their peak bodies at either state or federal level.

Times are changing and the recreational sector needs to catch up. This will mean reform of organisations, institutions and structures to ensure that the country's largest participation sport is able to face the future with confidence and punch its weight commensurate with its numbers. Single issue parties are not the solution in the long term. They are symptomatic of a problem and an expression of frustration with the current levels of representation from all sides.



3. Our Economic Narrative... *What's the Story ?*

"Building stronger public support for angling with a clear narrative on wider societal, economic and environmental benefits"
(BFCA brief).

In the USA the American Sportsfishing Association (ASA) has a very clear narrative which is front and centre of its message to both politicians and the public.

Recreational fishing in America has 60 million anglers who spend \$45 billion dollars in retail sales benefiting the economy by \$125 billion and providing employment for over one million people.

They are assisted by the five year comprehensive survey carried out by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (UwSFWS)

Link here... http://library.fws.gov/pubs/nat_survey2006_final.pdf

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We don't know nearly enough in Australia about the numbers of people who go recreational fishing, how much they spend, how many jobs they create, the overall benefits to the economy, to health and well-being and to environmental education. We think there are around 3 million anglers nationwide and we know more accurately in some states than in others what their economic contribution might be. We are pretty sure that young people who take up recreational fishing are more environmentally aware and less likely to get caught up in drugs, crime and anti-social behaviour...but we don't know and can't measure it at the moment in a manner that would withstand critical examination and be of assistance in promoting our activities to the public at large and our case to the

politicians and decision makers.

However, it is not all bad news. The Northern Territory has probably led the way in Australia in recognising the economic opportunities of having a healthy and popular recreational fishery.

As a prominent NT angling figure said recently:

"We used to think there was money to be made in taking our fish to the people but luckily we realised there is more benefit in taking the people to our fish!"

In NSW there is no doubt that the rise of trailer boat fishing in the 1970's led to far more people visiting the Snowy Mountains lakes to fish for trout in the summer months. This provided much needed year round tourist income for places such as Jindabyne which, until then, had only the winter sports trade as a major income generator.

But in Bateman's Bay in NSW the figures seem to suggest that the ill-conceived Marine Park fishing restrictions have now damaged the local tourist economy as visitors stayed away.

Sadly, in many other parts of the country recreational fishing is under valued and plays a poor second place to commercial interests, despite providing greater benefit to the local economy and more employment opportunities.

This situation will not be resolved until a mechanism is established to measure, on a regular basis, participation levels, economic and other impacts and the number of jobs dependent on the sector as a whole.

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Recreational Only Species

There are some species designated as recreational only such as tailor in NSW. Federally, longtail tuna are supposed to be a recreational only species, but in reality they can be taken as by-catch by federal and state licensed commercial fishers.

Many sports fishing groups have long argued for iconic species such as striped marlin, queenfish, giant trevally and permit to be included in this category, along with all billfish. These claims would be greatly assisted by the production of data on economic value.

In the case of the striped marlin there was a study by Ernst & Young on the 'Economic Impact of the Striped Marlin Fishery on Coastal Communities in NSW' funded through the Recreational Trust. It demonstrated clearly that the recreational value to jobs and the economy exceeded that of the commercial fishery by a factor of nearly 30. The annual recreational value was put at \$112.4m and 903 jobs compared to a commercial value of \$4.6m and just 34 jobs.

In the US it is common to assess the value of individual sports fish by region. A recent study in just one Florida region, the Charlotte Harbour system, put the value of the recreational tarpon fishery at a staggering \$108.6m.

SEE APPENDIX C

What we think we know... Boating

Relatively recent surveys have demonstrated that the boating industry alone contributes

some \$5bn a year to the Australian economy and creates 74,000 jobs, but no similar figures appear to be available for angling. We know that one million boat licences are sold annually, 85% of boaters have indicated an intention to fish from their crafts and 65% of all outboard engines sold are for boats whose primary purpose is recreational fishing.

...Recreational fishing

We know that in NSW 512,000 adult licences were sold on average annually over last 5 years but that the total number of anglers is between 900,000 and 1 million, including pensioners and young people who do not need a licence. The last survey in 2002 estimated angling to be worth \$550m to NSW economy but the current figure would be nearer to \$900m. Other studies have revealed that angling-related income is worth \$70m to the Snowy Mountains region and \$25m each to Port Macquarie and Bermagui, whilst anglers in the Sydney area spent \$134m pursuing their sport back in 2002. More recent figures showed that the annual Port Stephens Inter Club Marlin Tournament is worth a staggering \$12 million to the local economy.

In Queensland in 2007, the Fisheries Research and Development Council (FRDC) funded a study out of James University in Townsville on the baseline socio-economic data on the South-East Queensland Inshore Rocky Reef and Finfish Fisheries. Amongst other things it showed that there were declin-

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ing numbers of recreational fishers, that they spent on average \$50 per 6 hour trip including fuel, tackle and bait and that there was strong support for conservation measures such as size and bag limits. What it didn't tell us is how much recreational fishing is worth to the Queensland economy. However, the Queensland government's Prospects for Primary Industries Report 2009/10 is more helpful, giving expenditure figures of \$400m with \$16m attributed to the 250 registered charter boats operating in the state.

In Victoria an Ernst & Young study came up with a figure in excess of \$2bn in economic benefit to a state of around 555,000 anglers. If this were extrapolated nationwide the Commonwealth figure would be in the order of \$12 billion, which most experts consider to be unre-

alistically high. This would appear to be borne out by a number of other surveys producing wildly differing results.

The last Commonwealth survey on recreational fishing expenditure and impact took place in 2001 and was published by Henry and Lyle in 2003. It estimated that there were 3.36m anglers nationally, generating an expenditure of \$1.85 billion at an average of \$552 per angler per year.

The Campbell Murphy study two years later came up with a figure of \$223m, less than half that of the AFTA survey of the same time.

The Dominion report for AFTA in 2005 produced retail figures of \$665m for recreational fishing tackle, including 12% expenditure on bait, and around 2,500 jobs. For wholesale the estimates were \$394m and

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1790 jobs. Neither category included boats or fuel and the sampling was very small, with only 4% of more than 1500 outlets responding.

Currently the available information on economic benefits is piecemeal and outdated and there is no sufficiently clear narrative that can be deployed to demonstrate the wider benefits of angling to the community.

New Development

Recfishing Research which is a joint initiative between RecFishing Australia and FRDC has recently published its business plan for 2011/12 which includes a priority study on the 'social, health and economic benefits of recreational fishing'. Whilst this is a welcome development, it is important that an agreed format and methodology is applied, that the findings are robust and credible and that the exercise is repeated at regular intervals.

Numbers of Recreational Fishers

Even though the last national survey was over ten years ago we are pretty safe in claiming a figure of around 3 million recreational fishers for Australia based on the trends over the last decade and a number of state surveys. Some of the wilder figures of 4 - 5 million lack credibility. At 3 million angling would still qualify as one of the nation's most popular participation sports.

Conclusions

The lack of an economic narrative in particular is a major failing and requires addressing urgently.

State	2000	2007
NT	43,932	57,871
QLD	785,045	733,000
NSW	998,501	955,088
VIC	549,803	433,948
SA	328,227	317,223
TAS	124,590	118,000
WA	479,425	500,737
ACT	53,467	48,396
Totals	3,362,990	3,164,263*

● Partial estimate based on some state surveys and general trends

Although the 3 million recreational fishers number looks reasonably accurate, the existing national expenditure, economic benefit and dependent jobs figures vary to the point of absurdity; e.g. from three or four hundred million in annual expenditure to over two billion. The lack of a common methodology and the failure to conduct surveys at regular intervals seeking the same information has seen considerable sums of money wasted on producing some fairly worthless statistics.

Aside from a national figure and a breakdown by states it would be extremely helpful to know the economic value of particular recreational fisheries. This would assist in campaigns to have particular high value species designated as recreational only.

There is also considerable merit in measuring separately but at the same time the numbers engaged in other activities dependent on a healthy aquatic environment, as happens in the USA.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the Commonwealth government,

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through FRDC and Recfishing research, be pressed to fund a five yearly comprehensive survey of participation rates in aquatic based wildlife activities, including recreational fishing, diving, whale and dolphin watching and wildfowling, along the lines of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This survey to also determine economic, social and other benefits together with a reliable estimate of employment generated.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Further research should also be carried out to determine the economic value of specific recreational fisheries such as striped marlin, kingfish, sailfish, permit, queenfish, giant trevally, barramundi and other sporting species to assist the case for some further recreational only designations.

4. A Charter for Recreational Fishing in Australia

“To formulate some clear policies that will command support from across the recreational fishing sector to be presented to elected representatives at both state and federal level. Effectively the basis for an Australian Charter for Angling” (BFCA project brief)

A strong and representative peak body should be able to work with both sides of politics and achieve regular and productive access to government ministers and senior officials. However, to be really effective the recreational fishing sector needs to develop clear policies of its own that would not only protect but enhance the future for anglers

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in Australia. Currently there is too much of a culture of reaction, complaint and protest rather than working jointly towards a shared vision on a common policy platform for the benefit of the sport.

The situation here bears some similarities with the UK in the late 1990s, when there were concerns that angling could be adversely affected as a result of the participation of some of its leading lights in campaigns in favour of retaining hunting with hounds. The newly elected Labour government was being accused, unjustly as it happens, of having angling as the next target in its sights. And the more sensible voices in the sport argued for dialogue and discussion with the new government and a process for jointly developing policy to take angling forward in the UK.

Following a series of Angling Summits in the House of Commons working groups were established and soon Labour's manifesto pledges were enhanced and the governing bodies were heavily involved in the drafting of the 2005 Charter for Angling. Many of the recommendations of the Charter flowed through into legislation. Similar processes began to take place across the political divide.

Manifesto for Angling

The success of the Charter for Angling was demonstrated in the 2010 UK general election when all the main political parties, except the Greens, signed a joint manifesto pledge drawn up by the new unified peak

body, the Angling Trust. This meant that the future of recreational fishing was removed from the party political fray and was simply not an issue in the election campaign. Whoever formed the government was obliged to continue to give strong backing to the sport. Indeed, the Angling Summits and policy development process has continued under the new Conservative led coalition government.

A new process

Without a properly functioning national peak body that can claim to represent the recreational fishing community as a whole rather than just regional, sectoral or commercial interests, it is going to be particularly difficult to develop a coherent policy process that has a reasonable chance of securing the long term support of either politicians or the fishing public.

Assuming that there is sufficient willingness for the various groups, interests and individuals to bury their differences and put past disagreements and disputes behind them, the Charter process is an excellent way of developing a shared future vision for the sport and in creating a strong platform to engage with the politicians and the public.

The Charter process has the advantage of being above party politics. It is rarely sensible for peak bodies or representative organisations to align themselves with one side of politics or the other or to only engage in policy discussions on a partisan basis.

With three million participants, recreational fishing in Australia should be capable

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of developing its own policies and demands, putting up its own spokespeople in the media to counter our opponents and critics and to start setting the agendas around water quality, habitat restoration, marine conservation and fisheries management. Currently, we seem to spend too much of our time reacting to what other groups throw our way.

A Recreational Fishing Policy Agenda

The development of coherent, national recreational fishing policies should be a key objective of any new peak recreational fishing body. The aim would be to have a set of policy proposals which will interest the respective disciplines. Proposals should be underpinned by work already done by existing bodies on Catch & Release, fish survival, tagging etc and by existing and new work on national economic and social benefits and angler attitude surveys.

What follows is by no means an exhaustive list but discussions with senior figures in the sport highlighted some specific policy areas:

- Development of a coherent, national policy on marine conservation measures, including rules for the establishment of marine parks and protected areas, with agreed objectives and consultation standards.
- A policy which requires the cessation of demonstrably non-sustainable commercial fishing practices. For example: no stock assessment = no commercial fishing for that species; species classified as overfished = no commercial targeting; no trawling at all on grounds classified as sensitive; no targeting of spawning aggregations of fish by beach haulers; restrictions on estuary netting.
- Endorsement of existing policies to enable sufficient funding of required fisheries

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research on stock status and sustainability, consistent with Federal environmental legislative requirements and state and territory fisheries management strategies and EISs (environmental impact statements), and currently not done.

- A standing Commonwealth/State/Territory government Recfishing Management & Policy Committee.

- A policy which moves towards the creation of standard national fishing licences, with cross-border fishing entitlements, with a set % of revenue going into a national pool.

- Legislative review and overhaul, as occurred in NSW as part of aquaculture industry development a few years back, where around 40 unnecessary /historical legislative impediments to the industry were repealed

or amended. Initial priorities could include: uniform rules for angler access to storage catchments; consistent access policies for public rivers and streams running through private property.

- Supportive policies for young angler development, through schools, sport and recreation agency programs, and provision of safe infrastructure such as San Diego-style public fishing piers.

- A policy for the election/appointment of members of representational bodies based on transparency and the involvement of all licensed anglers.

- A policy supporting the declaration of rec-only species. These may be a mix of high recreational/low commercial value species, such as longfin tuna (existing), tailor (existing

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in NSW), giant trevally (GTs), queenfish, and species with demonstrably higher recreation economic value, such as all billfish.

- The appointment of accountable Federal, State and Territory designated fisheries ministers with the remit to develop co-ordinated fisheries policies and programmes through the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) or its working party process.
- Co-ordinated management and enforcement of the marine environment with joint working between Maritime, Water Police and Fisheries and single departmental responsibility for Marine Parks, with a requirement to include in its management plan the promotion of recreational fishing.
- The closure of some inshore waters and reefs to commercial fishing effort adjacent to highly populated metropolitan areas in order to relieve pressure on stocks and retain a sustainable recreational fishery.
- The overhaul of existing legislation, including the Environmental Protection (EPA) and the EPBC Acts. New and more rigorous regulations governing discharges into watercourses and chemical spraying, better land management rules and a tougher penalties and fines for polluters.
- Opening up access to water supply dams on a special permit basis to recreational licence holders, to enhance freshwater recreational fishing opportunities and to create a regular and responsible presence at vulnerable sites.
- The creation of a statutory 'right to fish' with an obligation on all public bodies

to promote recreational fishing wherever possible and appropriate. (this would help prevent National Parks and other agencies from closing off access points to anglers).

- The recognition of angling as a sport, enabling it to access sport and recreation budgets.
- Recreational Fisheries Trust Funds to be established by law and free from political veto.
- Matching funding from state governments to support angler led and licence funded Fish Habitat Restoration Programmes.

Conclusion

There are many other areas of policy that could be included for revision or complete overhaul. The important point is that the recreational sector as a whole accepts the need for pro-active policy development as part of a professional and unified approach to dealing with future challenges.

There is a current process instigated in 2009 which aims through the Federal Ministerial Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee (RFAC) to produce a recreational fishing industry development strategy. This may well prove to be a useful, if somewhat bureaucratic, exercise but the final report will only have the status of advice to ministers. This is no substitute for recreational fishing developing its own vision and policies.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That an appropriate vehicle be identified to enable the commercial, voluntary, national,

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regional and specialist parts of the recreational fishing sector to come together to develop a vision for the sport and an Australian Charter for Recreational Fishing.

5. A Fresh Approach to Marine parks and the Environment

Marine Parks and Sanctuary Zones have become the defining issue of the moment and both sides of the Marine Park debate appear to be locked into some fairly entrenched positions. We need to find a way through that keeps anglers firmly in the environmental corner whilst challenging any false science that is used to unjustifiably restrict our activities.

Australia is a signatory to a number of international agreements which oblige it to take seriously its responsibility to manage and protect the marine environment. And where recreational fishing can be proven beyond doubt to be causing significant problems, then clearly we should be prepared to consider appropriate remedies. These could include seasonal closures, revised bag and size limits or even changes to allowable fishing practices in sensitive locations. But before recreational fishing lock outs are even contemplated there are two key questions that must first be answered:

What is it that Marine Parks are trying to protect and from what ?

If the prime concerns are the seabed, water

quality and habitat, then most forms of recreational fishing can have very little impact in these areas.

What species of fish in Australian waters are endangered solely by recreational fishing activities?

If the conservation of fish stocks is the prime justification for introducing Sanctuary Zones then there is very little that cannot be achieved with respect to recreational fishing through existing fishery management measures. In any case there are no fish species endangered solely by recreational fishing practices.

The failure to address these basic questions and the scapegoating of recreational fishers for the sins of others has led to an almost total breakdown of trust between our sector, the conservation movement and the Marine Parks agencies.

This is a shame, because properly managed Marine Reserves which limit damaging human impact are a good thing and an important management tool. However, they can only work by consent and, in particular, the consent and co-operation of those who regularly use, value and know about the areas covered by the Marine Park boundaries. It is clear that there will never be sufficient resources to properly police the boundaries and enforce the restrictions, which is why community consent is so important. Aside from the failure to address the basic questions there have been problems in

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three further specific areas: with the initial consultation processes; the use of questionable or non-existent scientific data to justify restrictions on angling in Sanctuary Zones; and the lack of comprehensive assessments of the restricted zones.

In the absence of firm evidence, there can be little justification for excluding all forms of angling in most of the Marine Park Sanctuary Zones. In fact, when it comes to either migratory fish species or highly mobile pelagic species it is a pretty pointless exercise and only increases pressure on other areas. Also, given that anglers are potentially the best enforcers of these zones against commercial abuse (if they were allowed access to them), the Marine Parks Authorities are losing valuable allies.

Of course there will be some areas worthy of highly protected status where no human activity should occur - these may include

fragile and endangered ecosystems such as rare corals or sensitive spawning grounds, which should be left entirely alone. By all means ban all incursions into these zones or impose seasonal closures at spawning times but do not simply ban angling whilst allowing diving or other activities to continue.

There is no doubt that suspect science has been deployed in support of both the introduction of marine parks in certain areas like Bateman's Bay and in pressing for extensions to existing sanctuary zones. The paper from Dr Bob Kearney, Emeritus Professor Fisheries at Canberra University, presented to the Australian Society of Fish Biology in Sept 2007, demolishes the 'Science Paper' used by NSW Marine Parks Authority to justify the restrictions imposed by the the Bateman's Marine Park. Dr Kearney, who has also given evidence to the recent NSW Parliamentary Inquiry and provided reports for ACoRF

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described the science that underpinned the marine park as 'fraudulent' and little more than 'badly biased advocacy'.

See Appendix E for details of a forthcoming paper from Dr Daryl McPhee on problems with the application of marine park science.

Marine parks will never gain public support without a clear and unambiguous scientific case being put forward for both their introduction and management regime. Simply trotting out flawed research from foreign organisations with their own agenda, like the Pew Environment Group, or latching onto global figures for 20% or 30% 'No Take Zones' from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and applying it to Australian waters with no regard to local environmental circumstances, is a poor substitute for intelligent and credible public policy making.

So who or what could be helpful in our efforts to rebalance the Marine Parks debate and how do we build support ?

1. The United Nations

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has released some early drafts of its forthcoming paper on technical guidelines for Marine Parks design and implementation. It looks like emerging as a highly significant document which will provide a strong evidence base from which to review and overhaul the operation of the existing

Marine Parks in Australia and to reform the currently flawed processes used to design and implement new Marine Parks.

Of particular relevance are the following extracts....

MPA design and implementation considerations

MPAs implemented in inshore areas where local coastal communities are the direct users of the resources generally require a different policy framework than MPAs in offshore areas where users tend to have greater mobility and be less dependent on specific resources. Experience shows that small-scale coastal MPAs need to give due attention to community rights and participation and the institutional and legal frameworks needed to enable this.

Policy, institutional and legal frameworks

At the national and local level, MPAs need to be embedded in policy and should not be used in isolation, but rather as part of a larger policy and management framework. This could be a fisheries policy, a general marine policy or a policy focused on some other marine use or development.

How much is enough? – the total area and scale of MPAs

Various people and organizations have advocated that specific percentages of the area of a fishery or ecosystem be protected by a MPA

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or a network of MPAs.However, there is not a percentage that is generally applicable. The amount of area that should be protected depends on the objectives of the MPAs, the nature of protection that applies outside of MPAs (i.e. other fishery management regulations), and the biology of the species that are to be protected. There is no “one size fits all” answer for the appropriate size or scale or number of MPAs.

What does stakeholder involvement mean in the context of MPAs?

Stakeholder involvement and participatory decision-making is important to the success of MPA implementation. Support and compliance are likely to increase if people, individually, and as a group feel they have been informed, have been part of the decision making process for the MPA, and have been able to actively participate in and influence the process. Disruptions to livelihoods can easier be minimised and mitigated if those concerned are part of the planning and implementation process.

What does a MPA monitoring system look like?

Carefully designed monitoring systems — which generally include robust performance indicators, baseline data, and control sites — can provide insights into the changes in social and environmental systems resulting from MPAs. Participatory MPA monitoring, which involves resource users and other



non-scientists in data collection and analysis, provides a mechanism for increasing awareness, improving resource management, and empowering communities.

SEE APPENDIX E

2. Prominent Conservationists supporting recreational fishing in Marine Parks

In fact there are a number of prominent conservationists who recognise the valuable role that anglers play in fisheries management and enforcement. Most prominent is none other than Charles Clover, author of the seminal work on the parlous state of global fish stocks and now Director of the Blue Marine Foundation. In his book ‘End of the Line’ whilst discussing public opposition to marine reserves, he states :

“It seemed to me that a few areas where commercial fishing was banned , but recreational fishing was not, could have bought crucial support for conservation.”

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It is significant that the largest and newest marine reserve in the world, promoted by the Blue Marine Foundation in the British waters around the Chagos Archipelago is to retain recreational fishing in the areas where it is currently practised.

Furthermore, research by the European Anglers' Alliance has identified a range of countries and jurisdictions including South Africa, USA, Kenya and the Western Indian Ocean where sport fishing has been allowed to continue in designated marine reserves, often on a catch and release basis.

3. Fisheries Scientists

One other group that is happy to use recreational fishers in the course of their work is the fishery scientists. In the Breton Marine Park off the NW corner of France, scientists are involving anglers in a new programme to tag the movements of sea bass from the Bay of Biscay up into the Irish sea.

Here in Australia, game and sport fishermen have been at the forefront of conservation angling and many thousands of anglers participate in important tagging programmes year on year, helping to collect information on migrations of fish such as tunas, sharks and billfish. In 2005 the CapReef community fisheries monitoring programme was launched in Queensland, involving local anglers from Rockhampton in gathering data about changes to fish populations on and around the Great Barrier Reef.

4. Other Marine Groups

The Boating Industry Australia Alliance recently produced a very thoughtful strategy and policy on the National Marine Planning Framework and on marine protected areas, which included six Marine Protection Design Principles which are of relevance to recreational fishers.

SEE APPENDIX F

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5. Mainstream Politicians

Both sides of politics in Australia are waking up to the fact that the Marine Parks issue needs some fresh thinking and a new approach. The Coalition, having originally signed up to the 2004 World Summit commitment to introduce a network of marine reserves and introduced the legislation to establish Marine Parks, have recently been producing some useful policies aimed at achieving.. “the right balance between protecting the marine environment and allowing recreational fishing.”

In NSW the Coalition are committed to maintaining the existing six marine parks and have declared a moratorium on further marine parks and fishing closures, pending a full and independent scientific review.

Federally, Labor’s Parliamentary Secretary for fisheries, Mike Kelly, has made it clear that recreational fishers will have little to fear from the current bio-regional planning process which is primarily focused on seabed protection and more likely to impact on commercial activities such as bottom trawling. Dr Kelly has committed, like the Coalition, to following the best available science in order to develop sustainable commercial and recreational fishing.

As long as the mainstream parties are confident that the recreational fishing sector in Australia is not hostile to scientifically justifiable measures to protect the marine environment, there is every prospect that we can lead and shape a full review of marine protection policy.

Conclusions

In addition to challenging the basis of many of the existing Sanctuary Zones within the Australian Marine Parks, there is both scope and precedent for arguing that the presence of recreational fishers aids enforcement and compliance and can provide an invaluable source of data and information which the lock outs currently prevent. We will not unscramble the current network of Marine Parks but we should be aiming to re-shape what occurs within them and to review the criteria for their introduction and implementation using best practice from elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the recreational fishing sector enter into partnerships with like-minded organisations, groups and prominent individuals to prepare a co-ordinated policy position on Marine Parks and their contribution to sustainable and effective fisheries management. This work to be informed by the emerging UN guidelines and experience from elsewhere and with the intention of re-building community support for scientifically justified marine protection measures and working with government to overhaul their current operation, management and structure.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That a code of conduct be established in respect of recreational fishing in remaining sanctuary zones or highly protected marine

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areas which would provide useful data and information, limit fishing methods, and, where appropriate, require total catch and release. If necessary consideration could be given to bringing in a special permit or advance notification to ensure tighter management and reduced impact.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That restrictions on trolling for pelagic species be lifted in Marine Park areas open to other boating activities.

6. *An Environmental Agenda for Recreational Fishers*

Anglers engaging others with an environmental message

The polarisation of the debate over Marine Parks and restrictions on recreational fishing has pushed many anglers into a position of hostility towards conservationists and environmental groups. This is not where we need to be nor where we should be.

Most anglers recognise and support genuine environmental action to reverse habitat destruction, protect threatened species and change unsustainable fisheries and land use practices. We need to have recreational fishers fully engaged in promoting policies and programmes that benefit the aquatic environment on which our sport depends.



Good Practice in NSW

There are some excellent examples of angling clubs and groups engaging positively with habitat restoration and fisheries protection. One of the most prominent is the licence funded 'Fishers for Habitat' programme operating successfully in NSW. Here recreational fishers are rolling up their sleeves and helping to replace damaged and degraded habitats, remove barriers to fish migration and replant the river edges to protect against erosion. The project has attracted international recognition and praise from leading US angler and conservationist Tom Sadler following his visit in 2009. He said:

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“It is incumbent upon people involved in hunting and fishing to be good stewards of the land. It is in fact the true measure of what makes a good sportsman. Not just going out for a fish, but making the fishing better for future generations.

“To be good stewards takes a lot of effort. It means giving time, money and energy to help restore the habitat that is vitally important. It means giving up something today so future generations can enjoy it, even if those who come later and enjoy the benefits of your sacrifice will never know it is you who deserves the thanks.”

SEE APPENDIX G

National Overview

There is currently a FRDC funded research project underway to identify the extent of recreational fishers' involvement with environmental projects of this kind. So far the researcher Matt Barwick has discovered that over \$25 million has been spent on the buy out of commercial licences to create recreational fishing havens. A further \$9 million of rec fishing licence monies has been invested in habitat, conservation and environmental education programmes by the fishers themselves.

SEE APPENDIX H

Water Quality

One of the greatest threats to both the marine environment and to healthy fish stocks is

estuarine pollution usually caused by human activity or agricultural run-off and the loss of vital nursery areas such as mangroves and seagrasses. Every year huge numbers of fish eggs and fry perish as a result of acidification, eutrophication, chemical pollution and sedimentation. Simply locking anglers out of more and more areas of the ocean does absolutely nothing to resolve the problems of habitat destruction and degradation.

There is a review of the water quality guidelines at the moment, with which the recreational fishing sector should seek to engage. There is also no doubt that the regulations applied by the chemicals regulator, APVMA, need a thorough review, as some of what is allowed to be discharged into Australian waters has been banned in Europe for 20 years. The fish kills after heavy rain on rivers such as the Richmond are little short of a national disgrace and a symptom of a lax approach to the aquatic environment.

Cleaning up our Act

Sadly, the behaviour of a small minority in the taking of undersized fish, killing more than they need and leaving litter on jetties and hooks in sea birds makes this vision harder to sell to the public. Cleaning up our act through education programmes and tougher enforcement, such as fines and licence suspensions, are important if we are to build the public support we need and convince people we are more than just fishmongers and truly care about the environment.

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Conclusions

The recreational fishing sector needs to re-position itself within the broader environmental agenda to highlight some of the existing good work that is already being led by anglers, particularly in respect of freshwater habitat restoration. It should devote more energy and resources to further such work including education programmes in schools and in the community. There is a need to actively promote our broader contribution to the environment and to make common cause with organisations such as WWF and even Greenpeace as we did over the recent campaign against commercial over fishing of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery and should be doing over land management practices, water quality and habitat degradation. There is no future in having recreational fishers in one corner and environmentalists in the other, for without a healthy aquatic environment and a sustainably managed fishery there will be no recreational fishing in the long term.

RECOMMENDATION 7

As part of the Charter process the recreational fishing sector should adopt a clear statement of environmental objectives, begin promoting habitat restoration projects, seek tougher controls on pollution and poor land management practices and seek to build partnerships with conservation and environmental groups on matters of common concern.

7. Funding and Structures

Having looked in some detail at both the current situation in Australia and at some of the better examples of robust funding and good governance from overseas, a number of things become evident.

Australian anglers need a strong national voice and effective representation, independent of political patronage and commercial influences, at both State and Federal levels.

Adequate and secure funding streams are crucial to building effective and resilient organisations to deliver advocacy and representation.

Funding peak bodies entirely from consolidated revenues is fundamentally flawed. Peak bodies can't work effectively if they are in thrall to a minister and ministers are reluctant to fund bodies that give them a hard time.

Of course, there are well functioning and well funded peak bodies such as in WA, to pick just one example. But even here their funding was threatened by political disagreements with a previous minister.

The tackle and boating organisations have important roles to play in addition to safeguarding their commercial interests but they cannot also be peak bodies for the ordinary angler.

User Pays - User Benefit

User pays is becoming an increasingly important concept and underpins the structures for delivering recreational fishing opportuni-

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ties in countries as far apart as New Zealand and the USA. With increasing pressure on government budgets a protected and dedicated funding source is vital.

Here in Australia the Queensland Special Impoundment Programme has been a great success and indicates an increasing willingness by anglers to make a financial contribution towards the costs of providing fishing opportunities and all that goes with it.

Recreational fishing must become proactive, organised and professional with a clear vision of where we hope to be in five, ten and fifty years' time.

Our future relies on retaining strong support across the political spectrum, encouraging parents and young people to take up angling in sufficient numbers, a healthy aquatic environment, sustainable fisheries and broad public acceptance that we do more good than bad

Australia is way behind similar countries in the development of the recreational fishing sector. For example:

In America

The USA has the benefit of funding of \$700m through tackle levy and marine fuel excise, another \$500m through State licences. A national Sportsfish Restoration Fund administered through the US Fish and Wildlife Service which surveys numbers of fishers, hunters and wildlife watchers and their economic impact every five years. **See more here:** (http://library.fws.gov/pubs/nat_survey2006_final.pdf) They have some powerful peak bodies such as Trout Unlimited and the American Sportsfishing Association and a separate campaigning organisation 'Keep America Fishing' - **see more at** <http://www.keepamericafishing.org/>

Economic narrative: 60 million anglers, \$45 billion in retail sales, \$125 billion in economic benefit, creating jobs for over 1 million people.

In Holland

All Dutch licence payers are automatically members of their national peak body, Sportvisserij Nederland. They have over 550,000 members in 1,000 clubs with 9 regional federations and 45 f/t employees. They deliver a range of services directly on behalf of the Dutch Fisheries Dept.

See more here: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/eifac/WGRecreat-Fish/2007/anglingNetherlands.pdf> and here: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0363e/i0363e00.pdf>

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Economic narrative: 2 million anglers (inc. 0.5m unlicensed saltwater), worth 700 million Euros and 3,000 jobs.

In Britain

Since 2009 there has been a single national peak body, The Angling Trust (AT), funded through individual and affiliated membership and some public and private sector grants and donations. The central purpose and role is defined as follows:

The Angling Trust is the single, representative organisation for all recreational anglers which promotes and protects fishing in a healthy water environment by lobbying & campaigning, taking legal action and by promoting and developing the sport of angling.

All freshwater anglers in Britain pay either a coarse only or a salmon and trout licence of £25 (\$40) or £60 (\$100) for two rods to the national fisheries organisation and statutory regulator - The Environment Agency.

Last year the AT had an income of £706,000 from 13,000 individual members and 350,000 affiliated club members. There are around 35 fulltime staff working in angling organisations in the UK.

In addition the AT operates a separate pollution fighting and legal advocacy organisation - Fish Legal (previously the Angling Conservation Association)- which, over the last 60 years, has won over 2,000 individual cases and recovered millions of pounds in damages and compensation for member clubs, to help restore and restock waters

affected by pollution and fish kills. See more here: <http://www.fishlegal.net/page.asp?section=165§ionTitle=Fish>

Economic narrative: 3 million anglers, £5 billion in economic benefit and over 25,000 jobs. £24 million in licence fee income.

In Norway

Combined association of hunters and anglers (NJFF) with 120,000 members in 570 clubs in 19 regional organisations. Central staff of 30 plus at least one f/t equivalent per region. See more here: http://www.njff.no/portal/page/portal/njff/artikkel?displaypage=true&element_id=63397

In New Zealand

NZ Fish and Game operates as a separate public entity and licenses all freshwater fishing and game bird hunting. They are the statutory managers of all sports fish and game resources with 12 regional councils and a national council elected from the regions. Each domestic licence holder is a voting member. Licence fees: Adult season \$113NZ, Family season \$147NZ, Junior season \$22NZ, Adult 24hrs \$22.50NZ.

- **Annual Budget:** \$6m
- **Staff:** 70
- **Rangers:** 300
- **Licences sold annually:**
Fishing 123,000. Hunting 34,000

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In Australia

No national licence, only NSW, Vic and WA with licence income and only NSW with a recreational fisheries trust fund. Only around 11 f/t equivalents working in representative bodies for over 3 million anglers. No properly functioning national peak body and much jockeying for position and influence with politicians. No relevant national economic narrative and poor communication and engagement with the average angler.

Other Issues

Through discussion and observation a number of potentially problematic issues have also become apparent.

Low participation in clubs and associations and little prospect of creating viable mass membership organisations. Poor communication and engagement with recreational fishers, even where a licence is in operation and records are in place.

Often weakly functioning fisheries management in larger more dominant departments, although with some good people but in structures that don't help deliver effective working. Lack of effective joint working between States and Commonwealth who are overly focused on the demands of commercial fishing.

Lack of accountability to licence payers, poor enforcement and duplication of agencies and strategies that rarely go anywhere.

A lack of volunteers coming forward to



serve on various consultative and disbursement committees and in some cases office holders remaining in position for far too long.

Often low mainstream media profile and poor public image.

Finally, there is the challenge of how to build mass membership and mass engagement amongst the three million Australian Recreational fishers and deliver accountability and transparency.

Structural Overhaul

Solving the funding issues and establishing effective structures to deliver members services, representation and advocacy, and, on occasion, engage in public campaigning on behalf of the recreational fishing sector is key to enabling the recreational fishing sector to start punching its true weight and having real influence.

Three Funding Options

There are three main funding options that

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can provide revenue for fisheries work and the running of peak bodies:

1 Consolidated revenue. - i.e. directly from government budgets

Very few other jurisdictions have considered it wise to be totally dependent on ministerial approval and patronage. This is currently the case in SA, WA, NT and QLD and has led to dissatisfaction and conflict in a number of instances, with funding withdrawal threats being made and occasionally carried out. The lack of a properly functioning national peak body is entirely down to a ministerial decision to withdraw financial support.

2 Private income through members' subscription or voluntary or compulsory levies on the boating and tackle trade

The lack of almost any requirement to pay for access to fishing in Australia has meant that there is very little incentive to become a member of a fishing club unless interested in competition fishing. Therefore there is little prospect of establishing large scale mass membership organisations generating revenue from subscriptions.

Whilst the famous Dingle-Johnson legislation has worked remarkably well in the US since the 1950s and now generates a massive \$700m a year for their National Sportsfish Restoration Fund, there is little prospect of securing either commercial or political support for a levy on either tackle or marine fuel.

3 Ring fenced licence income into recreational fisheries trust funds

If we accept the user pays/ user benefits

argument there can be no serious objection to the concept of recreational fishers paying for a licence to fish. After all, who else is the prime beneficiary of the creation of recreational fishing havens, fish habitat restoration programmes or regular fish stockings? Experience from Holland, New Zealand, USA and the UK has shown the value of having a separate ring fenced budget for fisheries work. The licence system works all the better if the revenue can't be diverted elsewhere and is retained in a dedicated trust fund.

Functions of various bodies in recreational fishing.

Before setting out proposals for reform of structures and funding it is worth recalling the various functions need to be delivered .

The list below illustrates some of the wide range of functions carried out by the peak bodies for recreational fishers as well as by the fishing tackle and boating trades. There will always be some overlap but there is good sense in having a logical separation of roles. The average angler isn't particularly concerned about import duties, company taxation and business regulation and similar issues of importance to the trade but they do want to have their voices heard when and where it matters.

In most jurisdictions examined there was

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a sense that clear distinctions remained in place between commercial and representative bodies but with overlapping committee memberships and good partnership working.

- a. **Representation**
- b. **Advocacy**
- c. **Policy development**
- d. **Campaigning and lobbying**
- e. **Member services and consultation**
- f. **Communication and media relations**
- g. **Conservation and restoration**
- h. **Engagement and information**
- i. **Commissioning research**
- j. **Government relations**
- k. **Participation programmes**
- l. **Fishing Competitions**
- m. **Public Education**
- n. **Liaison across the wider sector**
- o. **Business regulatory frameworks**
- p. **Taxation and infrastructure**
- q. **Partnership working**
- r. **Publications**
- s. **Import duties**
- t. **Fisheries grants**
- u. **Volunteer recruitment**
- v. **Product innovation**

The people who sell the recreational fishers their tackle or their boats can't also be the ones determining how their taxes or licence fees are spent on their sport. Of course the trade must be engaged through partnership and mutual co-operation but there is a clear role for effective and professionally run angler

led peak bodies at both state and federal level.

Likewise, clear distinction must be made between appropriate representation and advocacy using public resources and up front vigorous, and at times political, campaigning where it would be sensible to rely on wholly private funding.

Conflict and Disunity

What is apparent in Australia is that there is unnecessary overlap and confusion as various organisations seek to either go beyond their remit or simply engage in various turf wars in order to try and usurp a perceived rival for either funding or influence. In the middle of it all the average recreational fisher often feels they get no voice where it matters and no representation where it counts. They get no vote in the future of their sport and increasingly have turned towards single issue political parties in desperation.

There is no time to waste with anymore infighting, conflict or disunity. There is no perfect system but what is in place in much of Australia at the moment is simply not working as well as it needs to in order to counter the challenges we face. For all the time those who want to ban or severely restrict recreational fishing in this country are growing stronger and more influential with professionally run campaigning and media operations.

It is time for a fresh approach. Doing nothing is not an option.

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A Way Forward

Proposal on New Structures and Funding. Proposed outline of suggested structures and funding model designed to address some of the key problems identified above.

A. Promote Licence Funded Recreational Fishing Trusts in all States

Set a target of seeing a recreational fishing licence introduced in all six states within three years. (The opt out for the Territories could be to seek a pro rata contribution from their funding agencies for any central services delivered elsewhere via the enhanced licence fee income).

Recreational Fishing Trusts to be established in law with clear systems of governance, responsibility and ring fenced funding to prevent the siphoning off of resources into otherwise centrally funded services.

Both SARFAC in SA and SunFish in Queensland have indicated a willingness to accept a recreational fishing licence conditional on the establishment of ring- fenced Recreational Fishing Trusts.

Of the approximately 3.1 million recreational fishers only a third currently live in areas without some form of recreational fishing licence.

Mass Membership and Enhanced Funding

Peak state bodies to adopt democratic and accountable constitutions with elected

office holders.

The peak state bodies to be funded primarily via a small designated proportion of the recreational licence income.

All licence payers to be granted automatic voting membership of their peak state body, creating instant mass membership organisations along Dutch and New Zealand lines.

Recreational licence fee to move in stages over say three years towards a more realistic figure of around \$50 a year or a dollar a week and then to rise annually by the CPI.

If the million anglers in SA and QLD were to pay the current average of \$30 pa tomorrow at an eligibility rate of around 50% an extra \$15m would be generated for recreational fishing projects and representation on top of the approximately \$25 m plus already raised from the four licensed states. If the licence then rose in stages by another \$20 dollars very soon recreational fishing revenues could hit \$65 to \$70 million annually.

Total budgets of this order could deliver huge benefits in terms of habitat restoration, commercial buy-outs, recreational fishing havens, marine stewardship projects, artificial reefs, fish aggregation devices, new access routes to dams, youth participation projects, volunteer training, education and engagement, new boat ramps, cleaning stations and freshwater re-stocking programmes.

Transparency and Accountability

Licence revenues to be ring fenced into a Recreational Fisheries Trust Fund (RFTF)

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with project expenditure directly controlled by the grant disbursement committees.

The grant disbursement committees (i.e. ACoRF in NSW) to have term limits on office holders and appointment via one third open franchise to voting members, a third to the minister, a third to clubs and associations.

B. Providing funding for peak federal body

All states to nominate representatives to the Board of the new national peak body for recreational fishing in Australia.

Agreed proportion of recreational licence income, say around 5% to 8%, to fund the running of the respective peak state bodies with pro-rata portion of this income to be paid on to fund a slim but strong peak federal body. This to be dollar matched by federal government from consolidated revenues over the three year transition period to allow for

early incorporation.

Where direct services are provided on behalf of the state fisheries department as in WA then adjustments could be made.

Peak body budgets could be capped to avoid bloating and surplus to go into Federal Fisheries Trust Fund.

Ministerial Roundtable to continue twice yearly with detailed engagement in the interim.

RecFish Australia to be overhauled, renamed and re-constituted to enable a fresh start to be made.

C. Establish a parallel campaigning and lobbying organisation 'Keep Australia Fishing' (KAF)

To lobby for anglers' rights and take legal action where appropriate on behalf of recreational fishing interests against those whose actions damage the aquatic environment or

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who otherwise seek to harm or inappropriately restrict opportunities for Australians to enjoy recreational fishing.

To be modelled on the KeepAmericaFishing organisation as the professional campaigning and lobbying arm of the recreational fishing sector and on the UK's polluter prosecuting body Fish Legal.

To be controlled and funded by the tackle and boating trades, the recreational fishing media, corporate sponsorship and individual subscriptions.

To promote recreational fishing through publicity and participation programmes and to campaign on major angling and fisheries issues.

To work in partnership with the state and federal peak representative bodies.

SEE APPENDIX I

How would it work ?

Within three years this model could be injecting an additional \$40million annually into recreational fishing in Australia. The majority of which would flow into Recreational Fishing Trusts controlled largely by the anglers themselves. However, a proportion would help fund professional representation and advocacy at both state and federal levels independent of ministerial control.

Furthermore the establishment of the KeepAustraliaFishing (KAF) campaign, based on the highly successful American model, would deliver a powerful and inde-

pendent campaigning and lobbying vehicle utilising the resources and professionalism of the industry. KAF could also actively promote an Anglers' Rights agenda, take high profile action against polluters and be invaluable in helping deliver participation programmes and publicity aimed at encouraging people to take up fishing.

Wider liaison with the boating and tourism sectors could continue to take place through the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia operating as an industry liaison.

Advantages and Benefits

- gives anglers a real say
- creates a powerful campaigning vehicle
- significantly increases resources for recreational fishing
- delivers stronger representation at state and federal levels
- more independence and control
- clear and separate roles for organisations
- removes overlap, reduces duplication and potential for conflict
- increases engagement and accountability
- creates independent and secure funding streams
- removes dependency on constant ministerial approval
- creates the potential for a new professional proactive approach.
- enables the sector to become focused and influential.

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Disadvantages

- primary legislation to ring fence trust funding and create franchise.
- there will be resistance and a reluctance to embrace change by some.
- states will need convincing on taking a uniform approach.
- consumer resistance and political opportunism.
- will need strong advocates to go out and make the case for change.
- old habits die hard!

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Brief

1 Formulate a range of policy demands... the basis of a recreational fishing manifesto that can be put to politicians so we can start to pro-actively set agendas rather than simply reacting to the demands of others.

2 Develop a public narrative on the benefits of recreational fishing.... there are no clear figures on the economic benefits of recreational fishing, which massively weakens our case. A new national process to address this is strongly recommended. The report quotes the questionable findings from past surveys and some of the latest state figures and seeks to extrapolate nationally.

3 Repositioning on environmental issues... looking to establish a network of

conservation officers, highlighting existing habitat initiatives, building new partnerships with sensible environmental groups where there are common interests, and seeking a fresh approach to Marine Parks using the new UN guidelines and experience from elsewhere.

4 Better communication and engagement and improved accountability...

of all the funding options, the report concludes that the licence fee structure delivers the best opportunity to create properly resourced and professionally staffed mass membership peak bodies and independent Recreational Fishery Trust Funds controlled by the anglers themselves.

5 Lessons and best practice from elsewhere... drawing in particular on the experiences from the US, UK, Holland, Norway and New Zealand.

Economic Narrative

The lack of an economic narrative in particular is a major failing and requires addressing urgently.

Although the 3 million recreational fishers number looks reasonably accurate, the existing national expenditure, economic benefit and dependent jobs figures vary to the point of absurdity; e.g. from three or four hundred million in annual expenditure to over two billion. The lack of a common methodology and the failure to conduct surveys at regular intervals seeking the same information has seen considerable sums of money wasted on

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producing some fairly worthless statistics.

Aside from a national figure and a breakdown by states it would be extremely helpful to know the economic value of particular recreational fisheries. This would assist in campaigns to have particular high value species designated as recreational only.

There is also considerable merit in measuring separately but at the same time the numbers engaged in other activities dependent on a healthy aquatic environment, as happens in the USA.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the Commonwealth government, through FRDC and Recfishing research, be pressed to fund a five yearly comprehensive survey of participation rates in aquatic based wildlife activities, including recreational fishing, diving, whale and dolphin watching and wildfowling, along the lines of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This survey to also determine economic, social and other benefits together with a reliable estimate of employment generated.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Further research should also be carried out to determine the economic value of specific recreational fisheries such as striped marlin, kingfish, sailfish, permit, queenfish, giant trevally, barramundi and other sporting species to assist the case for some further recreational only designations.

A Charter for Recreational Fishing in Australia

RECOMMENDATION 3

That an appropriate vehicle be identified to enable the commercial, voluntary, national, regional and specialist parts of the recreational fishing sector to come together to develop a vision for the sport and an Australian Charter for Recreational Fishing.

A Fresh Approach to Marine parks and the Environment

In addition to challenging the basis of many of the existing Sanctuary Zones within the Australian Marine Parks, there is both scope and precedent for arguing that the presence of recreational fishers aids enforcement and compliance and can provide an invaluable source of data and information which the lock outs currently prevent. We will not unscramble the current network of Marine Parks but we should be aiming to re-shape what occurs within them and to review the criteria for their introduction and implementation using best practice from elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the recreational fishing sector enter into partnerships with like-minded organisations, groups and prominent individuals to prepare a co-ordinated policy position on Marine Parks and their contribution to sustainable and effective

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fisheries management. This work to be informed by the emerging UN guidelines and experience from elsewhere and with the intention of re-building community support for scientifically justified marine protection measures and working with government to overhaul their current operation, management and structure.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That a code of conduct be established in respect of recreational fishing in remaining sanctuary zones or highly protected marine areas which would provide useful data and information, limit fishing methods, and, where appropriate, require total catch and release. If necessary consideration could be given to bringing in a special permit or advance notification to ensure tighter management and reduced impact.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That restrictions on trolling for pelagic species be lifted in Marine Park areas open to other boating activities.

An Environmental Agenda for Recreational Fishers

The recreational fishing sector needs to re-position itself within the broader environmental agenda to highlight some of the existing good work that is already being led by anglers, particularly in respect of freshwater habitat restoration. It should devote more energy and resources to further such work including education programmes in schools and in the community. There is a need to actively promote our broader contribution to the environment and to make common cause with organisations such as WWF and even Greenpeace as we did over the recent campaign against commercial over fishing of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery and should be doing over land management practices, water quality and habitat degradation. There is no future in having recreational fishers in one corner and environmentalists in the other, for without a healthy aquatic environment and a sustainably managed fishery there will be no recreational fishing in the long term.

RECOMMENDATION 7

As part of the Charter process the recreational fishing sector should adopt a clear statement of environmental objectives,

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begin promoting habitat restoration projects, seek tougher controls on pollution and poor land management practices and seek to build partnerships with conservation and environmental groups on matters of common concern.

Funding and Structures

Australian anglers need a strong national voice and effective representation, independent of political patronage and commercial influences, at both State and Federal levels.

Adequate and secure funding streams are crucial to building effective and resilient organisations to deliver advocacy and representation. Funding peak bodies entirely from consolidated revenues is fundamentally flawed. Peak bodies can't work effectively if they are in thrall to a minister and ministers are reluctant to fund bodies that give them a hard time. The tackle and boating organisations have important roles to play in addition to safeguarding their commercial interests but they cannot also be peak bodies for the ordinary angler.

User Pays - User Benefit

User pays is becoming an increasingly important concept in delivering recreational fishing opportunities in countries as far apart as New Zealand and the USA. With increasing pressure on government budgets a protected and dedicated funding source is vital.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That discussions begin with all relevant bodies in the recreational fishing sector in Australia to draw up proposals on new representative and funding models to be put to government and that as a matter of priority AFTA and the BFCFA begin work to establish a new Australia wide campaigning organisation 'Keep Australia Fishing'.

9. Appendices and attachments

A. The Brief in Full

1 To formulate some clear policies that will command support from across the recreational fishing sector to be presented to elected representatives at both state and federal level. Effectively the basis for an Australian Charter for Angling.

2 To develop a public narrative on the benefits of recreational fishing to encourage greater participation and stronger public support. This to include the true economic, social, educational and environmental benefits of having a vibrant recreational fishing sector and healthy and sustainable fisheries.

3 To re-cast anglers as the true environmentalists and conservationists and promote policies and programmes to benefit the aquatic environment on which our sport depends. To challenge the false priorities of some of the 'green extremists' and to highlight the need for strong policies to reverse habitat destruction and unsustain-

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able fisheries and land use practices. To form an effective partnership with respected environmental groups in pursuit of our common goals which would include campaigning against long lining for striped marlin, inshore netting, commercial exploitation of estuaries and over fishing of endangered or vulnerable fish stocks.

4 To promote models of enhanced and meaningful engagement with anglers and to press for greater transparency and accountability in the expenditure of licence fee income and other sources of public funding for fisheries.

5 To examine best practice from other jurisdictions and consider that which could usefully be applied across Australia as a whole.

In addition it is intended to propose an effective implementation programme and to provide commentary on the current organisation of fisheries work and responsibilities within both state and federal governments.

B. Global Fish Stocks

Extract from UNFAO - SOFIA Report 2008

An overall review of the state of marine **fishery** resources confirms that the proportions of overexploited, depleted and recovering stocks have remained relatively stable in the last 10–15 years, after the noticeable increasing trends observed in the 1970s and 1980s with the expansion of fishing effort. In 2007,

about 28 percent of stocks were either over-exploited (19 percent), depleted (8 percent) or recovering from depletion (1 percent) and thus yielding less than their maximum potential owing to excess fishing pressure. A further 52 percent of stocks were fully exploited and, therefore, producing catches that were at or close to their maximum sustainable limits with no room for further expansion. Only about 20 percent of stocks were moderately exploited or underexploited with perhaps a possibility of producing more. Most of the stocks of the top ten species, which together account for about 30 percent of world marine capture fisheries production in terms of quantity, are fully exploited or overexploited. The areas showing the highest proportions of fully-exploited stocks are the Northeast Atlantic, the Western Indian Ocean and the Northwest Pacific. Overall, 80 percent of the world fish stocks for which assessment information is available are reported as fully exploited or overexploited and, thus, requiring effective and precautionary management. As stated before in *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture*, the maximum wild capture fisheries potential from the world's oceans has probably been reached, and a more closely controlled approach to fisheries management is required, particularly for some highly migratory, straddling and other fishery resources that are exploited solely or partially in the high seas.

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C. Value of Recreational Species and Fisheries

In Florida:

Tarpon

Study: Tarpon fishing adds \$108.6 million to just one region of Florida

news-press.com • January 31, 2011 11:01 A.M. — A recent study shows that tarpon fishing in Charlotte Harbor system has an annual economic impact of \$108.6 million. The study area includes Charlotte Harbor, Pine Island Sound and the Caloosahatchee River.

Link here... <http://www.news-press.com/article/20110131/GREEN/110131017/1075/Study--Tarpon-fishing-adds--108.6-million-to-region>

The Florida bonefish fishery by Dr Ben Diggles

*This fishery is based upon one species *Albula vulpes*, that occurs on shallow sand flats and dropoffs. A regular bonefish census has shown that the population of bonefish in Florida is only around 300,000 fish, however it underpins a sportfishery worth one billion US dollars to the Florida economy. That is the amount of money spent in Florida each year on fishing trips that just target bonefish, which works out at \$3500 per fish, per annum. However, sportfishers in Florida release 99% of their bonefish - they are no good to eat and there are size limits and a strict bag limit of one fish anyway, so it's essentially a catch and release fishery. Bonefish*

lives for around 20 years, which means over their lifetime, Ault et al. (2008) consider these fish to be worth around \$70,000 each to the Florida economy. Given bonefish average 3 kg or less, that's over \$23,000 per kg.

References:

Ault JS, Moret S, Luo J, Larkin MF, Zurcher N, Smith SG (2008). Florida keys bonefish population census. In: Ault JS (ed). *Biology and Management of the world Tarpon and Bonefish Fisheries*. pgs . 383-398. CRC press.

Striped Marlin NSW

See below for details of the 2004 study into the Economic Impact of the Striped Marlin fishery on Coastal Communities in NSW by Ernst & Young [PDF] Striped marlin Economic Survey http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/151944/striped-marlin-report.pdf

D. Lessons from Abroad

New Zealand

Fish and Game see here..

<http://www.fishandgame.org.nz/Site/Features/FeaturesaboutFG.aspx>

America

USA's Five Yearly Fish and Wildlife Surveys for Economic Impact

More here.. http://library.fws.gov/pubs/nat_survey2006_final.pdf

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And here..

<http://www.sportsmenslink.org/sites/sportsmenslink.org/files/Bright%20Stars%20of%20the%20Economy.pdf>

Article by leading US angler and conservationist Tom Sadler following his visit in 2009 to the 'Fishers for Habitat' project in NSW managed by Craig Copeland .

“Stocking catchable populations of fish is fine if you just want to get people fishing. However, stocking generally masks a problem with the habitat where healthy, self-sustaining populations of fish would reside. Stocking is at best a stopgap measure and in

reality is essentially pointless if you just stock fish raised in concrete troughs into increasingly poor habitat.

It is incumbent upon people involved in hunting and fishing to be good stewards of the land. It is in fact the true measure of what makes a good sportsman. Not just going out for a fish, but making the fishing better for future generations.

To be good stewards takes a lot effort. It means giving time, money and energy to help restore the habitat that is vitally important. It means giving up something today so future generations can enjoy it, even if those who come later and enjoy the benefits of your sacrifice will never know it is you who deserves the thanks.

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In the United States, conservation, especially habitat improvement, is a fundamental part of the national fishing organisations like Trout Unlimited, the Federation of Fly Fishers, BASS and the Coastal Conservation Organisation.

Fishing clubs in Australia appear to be at the stage where they mostly get together to fish and raise money for stocking. For many years clubs in the US did the same thing.

Today, however, most U.S. clubs have organised conservation projects and put a lot of time, energy and money into improving the places they fish.

The other thing these organisations do well is advocacy for fishing, fish and fish habitat. These national organisations and similar groups are championing federal programs like the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and legislation such as the National Fish Conservation Act.

What makes them successful is speaking with a single voice and a coordinated message. What gets the attention of the government and politicians is what the sport means economically on a local, state and national level. Not just from tackle sales but the multiplier effect that comes from things like food, lodging and fuel.

The other thing that works, and admittedly it has not been easy, is working with the environmental groups. There was an undercurrent of disdain from some at the forum for the so-called greenies. The US went through, and in some cases is still going through, the challenges of working with our environmental

colleagues.

While here in the US they don't always share the exact same goals as the recreational fishing community, much of what they focus on benefits recreational fishing. Land conservation, water quality, habitat funding, and similar issues are some of the large-scale challenges that both groups not only care deeply about but are working for similar if not identical outcomes.

It would be a mistake to ignore the opportunity to seek common ground with the environmental groups and look for the areas where the desired outcomes are in alignment and then work together to leverage each other's strengths.

After spending more than two weeks in Australia I came away with a wonderful sense of place from the people I met all over New South Wales. Australians are wonderful people with a bold sense of purpose and a refreshingly straightforward nature. The privilege to speak at the forum was especially rewarding for me. It was a great honour to have the opportunity to speak to so many recreational anglers and to applaud the good works they have begun.

Copeland and his team embody that sense of purpose and the work they are doing while critically important to the future of recreational fishing is also essential to health and wellbeing of all Australians. I hope that the fishing groups, the Government of NSW and the country recognise the importance of that work and increase their support for those efforts.

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Equally importantly, Australians across the country should look at the good works in NSW as a model and learn more about how they can help improve the quality of life in their part of the country. Good habitat also means that human health and the environment are also improved, often at a cost far below what it would cost to fix the problem after the fact.

The time has come to speak with one voice, act cooperatively and collaboratively and act now. “

Recreational fishing organisations in the US

There is a pretty stark contrast between fishing clubs in USA and Australia. Although there are many good ones, Trout Unlimited is one of the largest. TU has more than

150,000 members in about 400 chapters across the country. There is also a national office in Virginia and 30 local offices nationwide. TU has always believed that if we ‘take care of the fish, then the fishing will take care of itself’. Of course, TU members love to fish and most chapters organise fishing trips, especially ones that introduce new people to the sport. Those trips are designed to catch new members as well as fish. Most chapters have ongoing conservation projects and education programs. The conservation projects are usually local or regional and often involve cooperative efforts with other conservation groups. The projects range from tree planting to bank stabilisation to range wide protection of native fish species.

The signature education program is Trout in the Classroom. Primary school and high school students learn first hand the life cycle of trout. Starting from eggs the students raise the trout and then release them in to a river or stream. The students learn about clean water and healthy habitat and take a real interest in the health of the water where their fish went. Learn more about TU and the work they do at www.tu.org

LINKS TO US RESOURCES

- Trout Unlimited: www.tu.org
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
- Partnership: www.trcp.org
- Coastal Conservation Organisation: www.joincca.org

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- Federation of Fly Fishers:
www.fedflyfishers.org
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan:
www.fishhabitat.org
- US Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Program: www.fws.gov/fisheries
- US Forest Service Fisheries Program:
www.fs.fed.us/fishing
- National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries:
www.nmfs.noaa.gov
- US National Oceans Council: www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans

Chesapeake Bay, Maryland by Dr Ben Diggles

The recreational fishing industry is far more likely to support proper attempts to protect and restore marine habitats - consistent with the ecosystem restoration processes utilised in some parts of the world, such as in Chesapeake Bay

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/bayrestoration.aspx?menuitem=13989>

The recreational fishing industry will be right behind any initiatives that have set goals to

- reduce pollution
- restore habitats
- restore water quality
- properly manage fisheries (not just stop fishing)
- improve catchment areas and

- promote real stewardship

this site shows what we need..... Not just marine parks which are just bandaid solutions to a complex disease of varying environmental problems.

Feedback from the UK, Holland and Norway

- Dr Bruno Broughton. CEO Angling Trades Association (UK)
- Paul Knight CEO Salmon and trout Association

I asked for responses to 5 questions related to the brief.

Q1. Partnerships With Environmental Groups

There are numerous examples of how angling and environmental groups have linked in initiatives of common interest.

Thus, in 1987 the then National Association of Specialist Anglers linked with Friends of the Earth to create and promote the 'Charter for the Water Environment', which I helped launch (with Jonathon Porritt, David Bellamy & Barrie Rickards, among others).

The Moran Committee Joint Birds Group was another example of joint action that was initiated to defuse conflict over cormorant predation, resulting in the publication of 'Cormorants – The Facts' leaflet and the 'Protecting Your Fishery From Cormorants'

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booklet. Partners included all major angling organisations, including the ATA, RSPB, Environment Agency, English Nature (as was), etc. For ease of reference, a PDF of the booklet is attached.

In recent times, AT co-operated with the RSPB, WWF and the Association of Rivers Trusts to create the 'Our Rivers' campaign – details **are here**:

<http://www.ourrivers.org.uk/>

Yes, S&TA has now joined the Our Rivers Campaign as well, which has been reasonably successful.. However, the real breakthrough of a relationship between fisheries and environmental NGOs was the Blueprint for Water, first published in 2007 with 10 organisations, including S&TA and ACA + RSPB, WWF, National Trust, ART etc – and just rewritten and re-launched (by Richard Benyon) in the HoC for the new Govt. The great thing here was that, although fisheries had an input first time round, this was more commenting on text written by RSPB and WWF, whereas this time around, Janina Gray, our Head of Science, actually led on rewriting 2 of the 10 asks, which is some proof of how far fisheries has come in the overall environmental movement in the past four years or so.

Also, S&TA has become a full member of Wildlife & Countryside Link, now we are a charity, as has IFM, and AT/FL a partner member. So, along with ART, fisheries has a good say in Link matters and Janina has

just been appointed as Vice Chair of Link's Water Group – unthinkable for a fisheries organization 5 years ago.

Q2. Fish Legal & Angling Trust

NOTE: Fish Legal is the pollution fighting arm of the Angling Trust.

I think that some sort of legal activity really does put angling and fisheries up a few notches in the public's psyche, particularly as, in England recently, one or two of the payouts have led to the establishment of rivers trusts to look after the rivers – Eden being a prime example.

Q3. The Angling Trade and its relationship the Peak Angling Body

The ATA decided to remain as a separate body when the AT was formed, although it was part of the predecessor organisations (National Anglers' Alliance & FACT). This really reflected the trade's specific remit to serve its members in ways not necessarily of interest to other angling organisations – credit control, overseas trade missions, brand protection, etc.

The ATA's broader agenda is very similar to that of the AT, and it is happy to let the Trust lead on many issues. The trade's forte is the promotion of the sport – though Take A Friend Fishing (which is being revamped), National Fishing Week (now Month) and so on. This need to maintain and, if possible, increase angling participation is now widely recognised as important by most anglers' organisations (this

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was not always the case!), and in that respect the ATA's natural ally is the Environment Agency, supported by AT and others.

Links between the ATA and AT are largely informal, but the relationship is healthy and mutually supportive. It works because of the overarching goal of protecting and promoting angling. That said, both organisations are strapped for cash and could achieve a lot more if more of it was available.

Just to add that we work quite closely with Hardys and Orvis – Hardys give us (and Wild Trout Trust) a small grant every year for environmental projects, and Orvis are always giving away tackle for auctions etc. One way Orvis helped us last year was to provide, free of charge, their fishery on the Test, so that we could invite Charles Walker, John Crudas and 5 other MPs down for the day, to show some of them how to fish and then sit them down over a decent lunch to discuss issues. That will happen again this year and is a great way trade and NGOs can link up for not much investment but, potentially, some serious influence.

Q4. Best Practice In Other Countries

It strikes me that there are many angling similarities between the USA, Scandinavia & Australia, and I guess that these reflect the relatively young age of each of these developed countries. For example, angling and hunting (mostly shooting, of course) are linked in the US Fish & Wildlife Service – the

national agency – and in most of the state organisations (many of which are known as 'departments of natural resources').

In Norway, the Norwegian Hunters & Anglers Association (NJFF) is set up in a similar way. **Details can be found here:**

http://www.njff.no/portal/page/portal/njff/artikkel?displaypage=true&element_id=63397

In the US, there is no mass participation angling organisation as far as I am aware, and the trade takes the lead in many matters. For example, the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation organises the 'Take Me Fishing' and 'Angling Legacy' initiatives: - <http://www.takemefishing.org/fishing/overview>

and the Future Fisherman Foundation has a long record of initiatives, notably the 'Get Hooked On Fishing, Not Drugs' scheme – see here: <http://www.futurefisherman.org/about/index.html>

I am not sure of the ownership or funding links, but I think the RBFF is part of (or certainly heavily supported by) the American Sportfishing Association:

<http://www.asafishing.org/index.html>

In the USA, Trout Unlimited - <http://www.tu.org/> - is a big trout NGO with a firm focus on environmental issues – last I heard they had about 100,000 members. And, of course, angling is seen very much as an environmental movement in the USA, far more so than here. Take a look at TU's website – it is very good.

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Q5. Funding

The elephant in the room! If I had a model that I knew would work in the UK, I would have done something about it! You know the situation in the UK so I won't harp on about it here, and I think you will see how the NJFF is funded from its website. I know little about funding of the US bodies other than the trade money from members' subscription (similar to the ATA in the UK) and, of course, the 'tax on tackle' (the Dingell-Johnson Act, also known as the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act). <http://library.fws.gov/pubs9/sportsfish.pdf>

This funds restoration projects on a state-by-state basis, with some money ring-fenced for educational initiatives, but it cannot be spent on administering voluntary organisations!

The best fit with the UK is probably that in Holland, where the angling organisation has a contract with Government to undertake

statutory fisheries management duties. It receives rod licence fees and, hence, has a huge 'membership'. Details are best summarised in Joop Bongers, who heads the Sportvisserij Nederland organisation, in his presentation a few years ago when a group of us met to formulate the 'EIFAC World Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries'... **here:**
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/EIFAC/WGRecreatFish/2007/anglingNetherlands.pdf>

and here:

<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0363e/i0363e00.pdf>

Funding – the eternal problem!! Really not sure what to suggest on this. Like Bruno, we would have done it by now if we knew the answer. However, I am now convinced that the target for angling membership is very small indeed – the amount of people who could be convinced to join under any normal circumstances. What we have to do is look to funding particular projects by high networks. Our Aquaculture Project last year attracted £100k in funding from just 2 people! Whereas we asked 8,500 on our electronic database for donations and received £1000 from the lot of them! Targeting people with a direct interest in any particular project is the way forward for us, we feel, but I'm not sure whether that would work in Australia, where I doubt that fishing rights are worth so much as they are here.

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E. UN Guidelines on Marine Parks

MPA design and implementation considerations

- Policy, institutional and legal frameworks
- How much is enough? – the total area and scale of MPAs
- How can sustainable financing be addressed?
- What does stakeholder involvement mean in the context of MPAs?
- Are there special considerations when designing MPAs that affect communities struggling with food security?
- How can the management of an MPA be as effective as possible?
- What does a MPA monitoring system look like?

More details here.. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/topic/4410/en#2>

Marine Park Planning and Recreational Fishing. Is the Science Lost at Sea ? Case Studies from Australia.

By Dr Daryl McPhee. Associate Professor of Environmental Science Bond University, Queensland.

Introduction

An emerged paradigm for the management of marine ecosystems is spatial management through marine reserves, but it is highly contentious. The benefits for biodiversity conservation and fisheries management of “protection” through implementing marine reserves are often



claimed to be universal and unquestionable and these claims are often made through “scientific consensus statements”#. While benefits of marine reserves (however measured) for biodiversity conservation and fisheries management are plausible and have been documented empirically, they are not universal. Rather, the benefits of marine reserves are strongly influenced by: the biology and ecology of individual species and their interaction with habitat, the fisheries management regime in place including enforcement, and the overall anthropogenic impacts (including non-fishing impacts) on the marine environment (e.g. Boesch et al., 2001; Jones et al., 2004)

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Conclusion

Overall, there needs to be a significant rethink of how marine parks in Australia that incorporate marine reserves for biodiversity protection are developed and implemented. There needs to be a commitment to more participatory approaches in the design of marine park networks and a wider application of participatory partnerships between scientists, managers and the community in the monitoring of marine reserves. There needs to be consistent acknowledgement from government agencies that marine reserves have potential costs as well as possible benefits to the recreational fishery (and others), and a commitment to robustly assess these costs and benefits. Marine reserve implementation will also be aided by focusing on the potential biodiversity benefits within the marine reserve, rather than hypothesising significant and universal benefits through spillover that, depending on the species, habitats and size and location of the marine reserve, might not eventuate. There needs to be an understanding that marine reserves are not a panacea - they do not mitigate all important impacts on the marine environment. Management of marine biodiversity should be through mitigation of hazards and risks, while includes but is far from limited to, the implementation of marine reserves.

See here for a copy of the full report
<http://science-society.com/journal/>

F. BIAA Policy on Marine Protected Areas

The National Marine Planning Framework

- The national marine planning framework needs to deliver the following outcomes:
- A detailed description of the geography, biology and uses (existing and projected) of Australian waters;
- A detailed description of social and economic dependence by region of communities;
- The definition of features, species and ecosystems that require the establishment of protection measures;
- The assessment of options to ensure that protection measures will provide appropriate levels of protection from defined threats;
- The use of objective scientific evidence in assessing threats and protection measure options;
- Adopts a holistic approach to assessment, planning and management of marine environments that encompasses environmental, economic and social dimensions;
- Includes a coordinated and decentralized governance framework that addresses regional differences, accesses local knowledge and expertise and is able to develop and apply regional solutions to issues identified. The governance framework includes a co-managed approach including active participation by industry representatives in regional governance organizations;
- Provides for displaced effort compensa-

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tion as a last resort where displacement is identified as the only viable option to apply marine protection measures.

Marine Protection Measure

Design Principles

1 - Marine protection measures will address identifiable threats to marine environments.

Marine protection measures, where deemed necessary, will address objective threats to marine environments. Measures based on philosophy such as minimum percentages are not within the scope of this Principle.

2 – Marine protection measures must be viable and effective.

The marine environment is subject to ongoing stresses both natural and human induced. Protection measures that are viable and effective will facilitate increased levels of sustainability of marine environments and more likely to withstand and recover from any such impacts. Viability will depend on matters including:

- The nature of protection;
- The nature of actual and potential threats to marine environments for example extreme weather events, oil spills, etc.;
- The ability of any proposed protection measure to mitigate impacts.

Protection measures may be developed and administered at the industry level and may not necessarily only take the form of statutory regulation.

3 – National priorities for marine protection measures are subject to regular assessment and review.

National priorities for marine planning will be set in a national plan and subject to an annual review process to confirm priorities, effectiveness and emerging threats. National priorities will guide and inform regional planning processes. This process will be transparent and engage fully with industry, indigenous and other stakeholders at the regional level.

4 – Adverse impacts on existing users of the marine environment should be minimized.

Marine protection measures are more likely to be established in a timely and efficient manner where appropriate recognition is given to the rights and responsibilities of users of the marine environment. Marine protection measures should aim where ever possible to minimize adverse impacts on users. This will be undertaken within the contexts of appropriate management of foreseeable threats.

Where adverse impacts will result, appropriate displaced activity compensation will apply.

5 – An evaluation program will be undertaken.

The national policy framework will be subject to evaluation to assess its effectiveness in achieving its aims and objectives. The evaluation process will assess:

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- Progress in achieving progress in the implementation of the policy;
- Planning processes to ensure consistency with implementing principles across regions; A public report will be published annually on the outcomes of the evaluation.

6 – Research will be undertaken.

Research is important for a number of reasons. These include the need for objectivity in assessing marine environments, threats and potential impacts of protection measures in meeting threats.

In addition research into economic and social consequences of proposed measures is to be undertaken to ensure that unintended consequences do not result from marine protection measures. These assessments are to be undertaken from appropriate baseline assessments.

G. Fishers for Habitat Programme NSW

See more here.. <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/habitat/publications/education-resources-about-fish-habitat/recreational-fisher-educatin-project>

H. Conservation Initiatives Involving Recreational Fishers in Australia (FRDC project 2009/33)

“Review and extension of conservation and sustainability-focussed initiatives which have been funded, supported or undertaken by Australia’s recreational fishing sector”

Our project is still in its information gathering stage, but I have attached an output from a database we are developing which contains information on sustainability and conservation-focussed projects which have rec angler involvement. The list is not yet exhaustive, but provides an indication of the range of projects being undertaken, and exactly how active rec anglers are in this space.

You will see the recreational angling community have invested approximately \$25 million of their own money in projects which have a conservation and sustainability focus. By value the vast majority of this investment has been in reducing commercial fishing effort through buy-outs (grouped under the title “Management” in the figure below). An additional \$5 million has been spent in habitat enhancement activities (revegetation, re-snagging), and another \$5 million has been invested in research and development projects to increase understanding to enhance sustainability of our natural resources. Of these projects, roughly 36% (by number) have been habitat enhancement projects (revegetation, re-snagging), 15% have involved pest/weed control, with roughly 12% in Education, Management, and Sustainability R&D. Approximately 10% of projects/activities have involved restoration of fish passage (building of fishways, removing of barriers etc). Australian rec anglers aren’t afraid to get their hands dirty, either. The angling community have been actively involved in the delivery of over

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\$9 million worth of projects and activities around Australia which have a sustainability or conservation focus. Of these, roughly 22% have involved habitat enhancement (revegetation, re-snagging), 30% have been in research or development projects to understand and ensure sustainable interactions with our natural resources, and 25% have been projects to educate the community on the need for sustainable practices.

Matt Barwick
Project Manager
NPF Industry

I. KeepAmericaFishing

See here.. <http://www.keepamericafishing.org/>

Our Anglers' Bill of Rights

As the voice of the American angler, we believe that:

Every American has a right to sustainably fish on our nation's public waterways.

Our right to fish is being undermined. As one of our nation's most popular outdoor sports and a cornerstone of fisheries conservation, recreational fishing is worthy of protecting now and for generations to come.



I proudly support the following statements:

Anglers have the right to sustainably fish on our nation's public waterways.

Fisheries conservation management practices need to be based on sound scientific data that demonstrate clear benefits to the health of the fishery.

Anglers are our nation's most visible fisheries conservationists committed to preserving our nation's natural resources.

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Have your say...

Please send in your views and comments to

Australian Fishing Trades Association

www.afta.net.au

RecFish Australia

www.recfish.com.au

Boating Industries Alliance of Australia

www.biaa.com.au

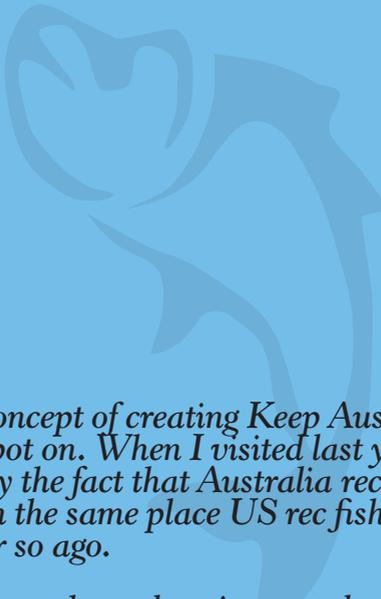
Australian Marine Engine Council

david.fieyes@brp.com

Outboard Engine Distributors Association

www.oeda.com.au

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“The concept of creating Keep Australia Fishing is spot on. When I visited last year I was taken by the fact that Australia rec fishers were in much the same place US rec fishers were 20 years or so ago.

What you have done is created a foundational document that provides a clear and compelling road map for moving Australia’s rec fishing community forward. Your document shows why good habitat leads to recreational fishing opportunity which leads to economic activity.

More importantly you show how that concept can keep fishing in Australia a proud traditions for many years to come.

My very best warm wishes for success.”

Tom Sadler

Managing Director, The Middle River Group, LLC
Board Member, American Fly Fishing Trade Association