



AUSTRALIAN ANGLERS ASSOCIATION (WA Division) Inc

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Minutes of Delegates' Meeting 20 June, 2006 at WA Sports Association, Stancliffe Street, Mt Lawley.

The Delegates' meeting was opened at 7:40 pm. Vice President Nick Allsworth chaired the meeting.

Present: Nick Allsworth Northern Districts AC Terry Fuller Surf Casting and Angling Club
 Jim Strong Denmark Angling Club George Holman Surf Casting and Angling Club
 Pat Shinnick. Boating Sub Committee Rick Cameron OSAC South Coastal
 Don Cox Melville Amateur AC Martin Humbert OSAC Mt Barker

Apologies:

Adam Eastman, Joe Horvath, Russell Bunce, Fremantle Amateur Angling Club

Notification of Proxies:

No new ones.

Visitors:

None.

Minutes of Previous Delegates' Meeting

Moved Jim Strong seconded Rick Cameron that the minutes of the previous month's Delegates' meeting are true and are an accurate record. Carried.

Business Arising from Minutes.

None.

Minutes of Executive Meeting

The June Executive Meeting had not been held due to lack of members for the executive.

Correspondence Inwards.

By Post	In From	Subject	Date	Action
Recfishwest		Notice of Special General Meeting 5 July to vote on Constitution changes.	June	## Discuss ##
Minister for Fisheries		Reply to AAA letter about signs and salmon fishing in Designated Fishing Zones.	22 May	## Discuss ##
Minister for Fisheries		Reply to AAA letter about Rottnest Island no Fishing Zones	1 Jun	## Discuss ##
Dept of Conservation and Land Management (CALM)		Amalgamation of Conservation and Land Management and Environment Departments.	May	Info
Westpac		Bank Account Statements for May.	Jun	Treasurer
Hillarys Yacht Club		Club newsletter	Jun	Info
Marmion Angling & Aquatic Club		Club newsletter	Jun	Info
Emails	In From:-	Subject	Date	Action
Various		Routine AAA Info	Various	None
Hotbite magazine		Fishing clinic article will be in July Hotbite magazine	7 Jun	Info supplied
FishingWA magazine		July FishingWA magazine already finalised	7 Jun	None
Richard Foo Fremantle AAC		AAA scoring system for fishing	7 Jun	Replied
Charles De Beer		Got One tackle offer for fishing clinic	15 Jun	Follow up
Pat Shinnick		Meeting 21 Jun for 2007 State Boating	17 Jun	Info
Shire of Capel via Dept of Fisheries via Recfishwest		Shire of Capel. Draft Discussion Paper Peppermint Grove Beach and Dalyellyup, Beach Access and Prohibited Beach Areas. see www.capel.wa.gov.au/beachaccess.pdf	19 Jun	Info or discuss?

Outgoing Correspondence.

Posted	Out To:-	Subject	Date	Action
AAA metro fishing clubs		Fishing clinic info and offer to include publicity in handouts	6 Jun	Waiting responses
Metro tackle stores		Fishing clinic info and offer to include publicity in handouts	6 Jun	Waiting responses
Ozflex and Mako Tackle		Thanks for sponsoring fishing clinics	6 Jun	None

Carnival Account Westpac Bank 20 June 2006	\$
Outstanding cheque	\$
Available in Carnival account	\$
Accounts for payment from Carnival account	\$
Balance Carnival Account at 20 June 2006	\$

Club Affiliations:- Total 26 clubs have paid 2005/6 affiliation fees, 1 club advised will not renew.

Paid:-

Esperance Surfcasters	Mandurah Offshore Fishing & Sailing Club	Geraldton Angling Club
Surf Casting and Angling Club	Cockburn Power Boat Association	Northampton Districts Angling Club
Quinns Rock Fishing Club	Fremantle Sailing Club	Fremantle Amateur Angling Club
Bunbury Angling Club	Offshore Angling (Club Beach)	Denmark Boating and Angling Club
Hillarys Yacht Club	Albany Angling Club	Geraldton Districts Offshore Fishing Club
Swan Yacht Club	Melville Amateur Angling Club	Northern Districts Angling Club
Ocean Reef Sea Sports Club	Rockingham Offshore Fishing Club	Marmion Angling and Aquatic Club
Lancelin Angling and Aquatic Club	Offshore Angling Club South Coast	Drifters Deepsea Angling Club
Offshore Angling Club Boat	Mount Barker Offshore Angling Club	

Advised will not renew:- Naturaliste Game & Sports Fishing Club To be contacted.

Business Arising from Treasurer’s Report.

Treasurer Terry Fuller obtained permission to send out accounts for club affiliation fees a little earlier than in previous years so these are sent out before the changeover of Treasurer. Amounts and other details are to be the same as recent years.

Moved Don Cox seconded Jim Strong that Treasurer’s report be accepted and accounts be passed for payment - carried.

Secretary’s Report. Plans for Secretary / Treasurer / Website Editor.

Detailed plans for activities by Secretary / Treasurer / Website Editor had been included in the minutes of the May Delegates Meeting. Terry Fuller had advised that he had been preparing for the handover of his three jobs, and looking at the things that need to be done before the August Annual General Meeting to allow this to happen. There is a significant amount to be done, plus similar activities for the three jobs he currently does for the Surf Casting and Angling Club.

He advised that he had had no comments and no response to anything raised in that report. He reminded people about that report which had included:-

“As advised to the February Delegates Meeting, I will not be volunteering for and will not accept any nomination to do the above jobs at the next elections at the August Annual General Meeting.

Due to a holiday at Exmouth planned quite some time ago, I will be leaving Perth on 10 or 11 August and will not be able to attend the August Annual General Meeting and will not return to Perth until the end of August.

If necessary or if the records and property are not collected by or delivered to someone after the August AGM, I will arrange to put them into storage rented in the Association’s name.”

Now that I have looked at everything I am committed to do during July, I repeat and I emphasise:-

The Association and Delegates have known since late February that I will not be doing any work for the Association in 2006/7.

The time I will be able to give to any handovers will be **very limited** right through July and particularly after the July Delegates Meeting. This means a proper detailed handover may not be possible if it is left until late July or August.

If any new people come forward early, I will be able to tell them things they need to know before I leave for Exmouth in early August before the Annual General Meeting. Otherwise this will have to wait until some time in September, and I have plenty of other things to do in September too.

2005/6 AAA Secretary / Treasurer / Website Editor, Terry Fuller.

Trophy Officer’s Report

No report.

Property Officer’s Report

A Property Officer is still needed.

Records Officer’s Report

No report.

Competition Officer's Report

Not present

Boating Report.

A meeting of the boating subcommittee will be held on Wednesday 21 June.

Estuary, Rock and Beach Report

There had not been a meeting recently. The next event is not until November. Still waiting for the results of the Rock and Beach event held at Jurien in March. Adam Eastman has these but has not provided them to anyone else.

Dry Casting Report.

State Dry Casting will be held in October. The Yokine Reserve needs to be booked.

National Championships.

George Holman advised that currently 24 people, 2 junior, 5 ladies, 8 veterans and 9 seniors had indicated they would go to the National Championships March 2007 in Victoria.

A meeting had been held 8 May, accommodation has been booked, and arrangements are firming up. Another meeting will be arranged in August

Fishing Clinics.

Hillarys Yacht Club has been booked for the fishing clinics on Mondays 3, 10, 17 July 2006. Copies of the program flyers and an invitation to promote clubs and businesses have been sent to the metro clubs and tackle stores.

The Sunday Times fishing column on 18 June had an item about the fishing clinics. The information has been given to Mike Roennfeldt for the West Australian paper, and to John Curtis for the radio show.

An article has been prepared for the July edition of Hotbite fishing magazine, due out late June. Terry Fuller will place messages on local Western Australian Internet fishing forums. Some fishing tackle shops have contacted us and will provide handouts, discount vouchers, prizes, etc. Fisheries publications have been received.

The clinics promote fishing and place great emphasis on the benefits of belonging to a fishing club. They are an opportunity for clubs to promote themselves to the participants. All that is required is for the clubs to provide some handouts which can be placed in the bags given to everyone who attends. If clubs want to do more promotion by presentations or displays on the night, please contact George Holman and discuss.

Terry Fuller offered to do a limited amount of photocopying of club information for placement in the bags – contact for details, but please don't leave to the last minute.

Rick Cameron and Martin Humbert offered to help with packing the handouts bags for the Clinics. Club members are needed to help with the running of the actual fishing clinics on the nights of Monday 3, 10 and 17 July. Contact George Holman.

AAA Web Page

It was expected that a report and results for the March 2005/6 State Rock and Beach Championships would have been placed on the website, but no information about the results has still not yet been received by the web site editor. See notes in minutes of the April Delegates' Meeting.

WARCO Report.

There has not been a WARCO meeting since the last delegates meeting. Meetings are now held every second month.

Notices of Motion.

None

Recfishwest Report.

These are some of the main points from the June 2006 Recfishwest Board Meeting, and some other recent activities.

Rottneest No Fishing Areas. The proposals for Rottneest no fishing zones had been released on 17 April. A great deal of work has been done on this recently by a number of Recfishwest people, because it is so important for recreational fishermen that this is done properly, and not by using the ideology that closed, no take, sanctuary zones are the cure for every "problem". Recfishwest considers that it is vital that poorly supported and poorly constructed proposals for closing areas and restricting fishing must be challenged at

every opportunity, because a win by ideology over reason and science sets precedents for even more closures.

One major problem with the Rottnest proposals is that the only activity affected is recreational fishing, without proper science, justification or consultation. Commercial fishing is also affected but we will leave it for the commercial fishing industry bodies to make their cases about this.

Some real threats such as anchoring on reefs and corals are not actually managed at all, yet it is very obvious that these are major risks and major causes of damage and have much more impact on the things they claim they want to protect than fishing for pelagic fish could ever have.

Ignoring the threats will not make them go away, but will only make it easier for the people who want to increase restrictions to win what they want. Those people will use the wins in some areas to "justify" more restrictions in other areas, and will get the confidence from the fact that they can win these restrictions without getting much resistance from the average recreational anglers or the clubs. **That is why it is so important to say what you think.**

A meeting was held between Recfishwest and some members of Rottnest Island Authority on 31 May. This was chaired by the person who will also chair the three person independent panel which will be reviewing the entire process by which these proposals were developed and the public consultation process and will report to the Rottnest Island Board. Recfishwest made many telling points about the very poor process.

Recfishwest did not just oppose the no take areas, in fact supported some, but gave detailed reasons why some areas were not supported by the science or ignored the realities of working on the risks and managing those risks and allowing activities which were not a risk to continue. Alternative boundaries and conditions were proposed for a number of the no take zones.

Terry Fuller advised that he was very familiar with all the details of the proposals and the background to many of the issues. He could write about one page on what was right with the proposals, but could write a large book on what was wrong with the proposals and everything associated with them. He handed out information which included three separate letters which could be used for clubs or members e-mails or letters, and also some sample answers to the questions on the public feedback form provided with the proposals. **See the attachment to these minutes for much more details.**

The real issue is that total fishing pressure in the West Coast region must be properly managed before there can be any significant improvement in fishing including at Rottnest. Any actions at Rottnest in isolation can only have minor very confined local impacts at best.

Check the Recfishwest website <http://www.recfishwest.org.au/> for more information in the next few weeks. Comments close on 15 July, 2006.

Refer also to the problems with these Rottnest proposals as outlined in information attached to the April Delegates minutes. The AAA letter to the Premier and Minister attached to the April Delegates Meeting minutes covers all this in detail, and people can extract and copy and use whatever they like out of that and the attachments to these June minutes to get this first message through to the Government. This message is the key to forcing the Rottnest Island Authority to properly consult with recreational anglers over Rottnest.

Recfishwest Constitution. Proposed changes have been approved by the Board and will be put to a special General Meeting on 5 July to be voted on by RFW members including AAA.

Swan River Forum. Shortly after the recent fish kills in the Swan River, the Swan River Trust held an international forum, which included a night session for members of the public. This was attended by four members of Recfishwest. The information provided was very interesting and shows that the issues are not simple, but it did not give any real indication of any major physical action to solve the problems with the Swan or Canning rivers or other rivers in the southwest. Members of the Swan River Trust appeared reluctant to answer questions about whether the money provided by the government or the actions were sufficient. More planning for the next Swan and Canning River cleanup program will start soon.

Review of Consultative Structures. A board meeting was held with Ross Winstanley, the consultant who is carrying out the review of consultative arrangements carried out by RFW and the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committees (RFAC). Ross is a very respected consultant with wide experience in many fisheries matters with a very good track record of investigations and successful and widely accepted recommendations. Ross Winstanley and Recfishwest representative Mark Pagano will travel to country areas for meetings with the Regional Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committees (RRFAC) which have branches from Kununurra to Esperance.

Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee held a planning day in Perth on Sunday 18 June. This was attended by six Recfishwest people, Frank Prokop, Des Wood, Norman Halse, Terry Fuller, Kane Moyle, and Craig Bibra.

Wetline Fishing Management Proposals. RFW has received a reply from the Minister for the Fisheries advising that a decision will be made on the recommendations and publicised during June 2006. It seems

recreational anglers have the most to gain from these. These changes will impact heavily on some other groups. Many commercial fishermen's activities will be restricted, and the Department of Fisheries will have a lot of work to implement and manage the changes.

Geographe Bay Fishing decisions. The Minister for the Fisheries has advised that a decision will be made on the arrangements for commercial fishing in Geographe Bay and will be made public during June 2006.

Capes Marine Park. It is understood the proposals for the Capes Marine Park and no fishing zones there are with the Ministers at present prior to the release for a public consultation period. This is expected within about one month.

Freshwater Fishing. A meeting has been held with the Minister for Water Resources, John Kobelke, to discuss the intransigent attitude of the Water Corporation on the issue of closing dams to recreational fishing, claiming that is essential for water quality. Recfishwest has supplied the Minister with a long list of water supply dams in Queensland and New South Wales which are open to recreational fishing and are also used to supply water to the community. The initiative from Recfishwest and information provided by them has been welcomed and has shot down the claims that Western Australian Water Corporation is using world's best practice and that recreational activities and a quality water supply are mutually exclusive. A community consultation about the recreational use of water supply dams is in progress from May to September.

Information from the Minister for Fisheries. The Minister spoke for about half an hour at the RRFAC planning meeting. He spoke very openly about many things. These included:-

The need for changes to fishing for sustainability purposes, particularly in heavily fished areas around population centres and access points. This needs to consider future growth and future pressure. The metropolitan area now extends well south of Mandurah and is rapidly spreading north towards Moore River. Any changes need to consider the future and not just handle current pressures.

Commercial fishing is suffering from cost and price pressures. Costs are increasing (fuel etc) and prices are decreasing due to competition from other countries. Many commercial fisheries are facing an impossible marketing situation of higher local prices and lower imported prices. Many overseas customers no longer care where their product comes from, price is much more important. The days are over of people buying Western Australian rock lobster no matter what its price. Now a lobster is a lobster and it does not matter to them where it comes from.

The price received for Australian salmon has not changed in 30 years, still between 30 and 40 cents a kilogram. The price for aquacultured fish is reducing all the time and is competing with the price for wild caught fish which has increasing costs to capture.

Pressure from people to look after the environment and fish and the need to do this properly so that the outcomes are what are really needed. The Kimberley 2015 proposal for fish habitat protected areas based on agreed community consultation is an attempt to pre-empt the closures based on the uninformed ideology of complete no take areas as the only tool used to protect the environment and biodiversity. The Government has learnt a lesson from the poorly handled Ningaloo Marine Park decisions and political pressures and the Minister is determined not to repeat those mistakes.

Report by Terry Fuller, Recfishwest Board Member.

Business Arising from RFW Report.

None.

General Business.

George Holman reported on a recent contact with Max Law.

Rick Cameron and Martin Humbert have started to do some boat fishing. Rick commented on the lack of information signs about fisheries regulations, species identification photos and other information for boat fishermen at the boat ramps. He pointed out this is an extremely important opportunity to educate and inform recreational fishermen, yet it is not being used.

Terry Fuller said that Recfishwest had repeatedly raised the poor information provided to recreational fishermen, particularly recently when many tackle shops had complained that they could not get copies of the updated brochures on the new fishing rules and new fishing rulers and fish identification guides. The cause of the problem was well known, and the Minister for Fisheries had issued strong directions to solve the problem. Something was being arranged and Terry would report when the details were finalised.

George Holman said that Ian Cook might be willing to do the AAA Recorders job. Ian is the Surf Casting and Angling Club recorder so he was very familiar with what was required and fish identification.

Terry Fuller said he was extremely disappointed at what he had been told about a club meeting at which some valid questions were asked about Recfishwest and his role in future. He was advised of the names of some people at that meeting, and was annoyed about the report that no one had answered the questions. This was despite so much information included in many of these Delegates Meeting minutes which are sent to the private addresses of at least two of the people who were at that meeting. Possible conclusions that can be drawn is that the minutes are not being read by these people, or that they are unwilling to pass on information.

Rick Cameron advised that the police had contacted the Offshore Beach Club about a missing boat, and asked for contact details of the Offshore Boat Club. Terry Fuller advised that he also had received a phone call and had referred the police to the phone number he had. The Offshore Boating Club was just one of a number of clubs which had not updated club or delegate contact details for a number of years, despite forms going out every year with the affiliation fees requesting such details.

Pat Shinnick said that the boating subcommittee had discussed the action taken by the Marmion Angling and Aquatic Club about the poor handling of some fish after the weigh in at the Jurien boating championships. The members had been disciplined, showing the support by the club for the importance of catch care and public image of club competition recreational fishermen. It was agreed that the Marmion club should be commended for their firm action. Details to be provided by Pat Shinnick.

Pat Shinnick showed an example of a sign which can be placed on a cray pot rope if fishing gear is tangled with it. These have been produced by FESA and are available free.

Pat Shinnick advised that he and his son now have interest in a commercial cray fishing boat, but that he personally will not be commercially fishing. He has advised the Association in case there is any question about a possible conflict of interest. Delegates expressed confidence in Pat's ability to be completely impartial in any matter to do with recreational and commercial fishing, and to keep these separated in all his dealings.

Future of AAA WA Division.

Vice President Nick Allsworth said that the write up about this subject in the minutes of the May Delegates Meeting had been very detailed and had presented the points extremely well. George Holman agreed. Disappointment was expressed that there had been no reaction to this.

Meeting closed at about 9:00 pm.

Notice of Future AAA Meetings.

Next Delegates' Meeting **7:30pm Tuesday 18 July 2006**, Sportsman's Association Clubhouse, Stancliffe Street, Mt. Lawley. Usually held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers **7:30pm Tuesday 15 August 2006**, Sportsman's Association Clubhouse, Stancliffe Street, Mt. Lawley. Held on the same night as the August Delegates' Meeting, usually the third Tuesday of August.

Coming AAA Events.

North of the River Fishing Clinics Hillarys Yacht Club 7:30 pm Mondays 3, 10, 17 July 2006

State Dry Casting Championships 2006/7, Yokine Reserve, Sunday 29 October 2006

State Estuary Championships 2006/7, Swan River, Saturday and Sunday 25/26 November 2006.

State Boating Championships 2006/7, Date to be advised in March 2007 at Whitfords.

State Rock & Beach Championships 2006/7, HQ Cheynes Beach, Reef Beach to Betty's Beach, Saturday and Sunday 3/4 March 2007.

AAA Fishing Clinics.

North of the River Hillarys Mondays 3, 10, 17 July 2006

Club and AAA Publicity.

AAA has a web site www.aaawa.iinet.net.au Member Clubs can have their news published on the website. Check out the information about the other clubs. Use the web pages to give prospective new members and people information about your Club - meeting dates- field days - membership fees - phone numbers - Club news - field days results - photos of great catches - invitation day dates - social events - ANYTHING of interest to anglers and web surfers.

It costs you nothing to tell prospective members about your Club - nothing but a little time to prepare and send the information. Email material to AAA Secretary Terry Fuller at aaawa@iinet.net.au or post to PO Box 2200, Marmion, 6020. AAA phone number is 9403 7383 for any enquiries.

Email.

Email makes it so quick and easy to distribute information like all the above to clubs and members. Clubs and Delegates please give the Secretary email addresses for people who wish to receive information. All emails will be sent so that the email address is not visible to anyone else on the address list, and will keep the email addresses private. AAA email is aaawa@iinet.net.au

Sponsors of AAA.

Club Marine

Club Marine is the major sponsor of the Australian Anglers Association and the 2005/6 AAA State Boat Angling Championships.
<http://www.clubmarine.com.au>

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2005/6 AAA State Boat Angling Championships sponsored by All Boat Business.
<http://www.allboatbusiness.com.au/>

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Ozflex Australia.

Suppliers of Ozflex rods and tackle, Superflex line, Jinkai leader, Schneider line, Ande line, Classic and Bomber Lures, Neptune Tackle, and Angler Advantage Rods.

Sponsor of the 2006 Fishing Clinics, 3 and 17 July 2006.

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Mako Tackle

Providers of all your tackle product needs.

Supports the 10 July 2006 Fishing Clinic.

<http://www.makotackle.com.au/>

Magic Nissan

supported the 2005/6 State Dry Casting Championships.

<http://www.magicnissan.com.au>

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Yallingup Beach Holiday Park

Are Principal Sponsors of the 2005/6 AAA State Rock and Beach Championships.

<http://www.yallingupbeach.com.au>

Rottnest Island No Fishing Zones.

If ever there was anything that would ever fit the saying “**if it is worth having, it is worth working and fighting for it**”, then I suggest fishing at Rottnest, particularly the West End, clearly falls into that category for this Surf Casting and Angling Club and its fishing members.

Well the time is now, comments close on 15 July, so what will **YOU** do to protect your fishing at West End??

This edition of Reel Talk has a lot about the Rottnest Island no fishing zones. I make no apologies for that.

I have given you the information. It is up to you to do something yourself and use it. Over to you.

Contact me for an electronic copy to save you lots of typing.

Surf Casting and Angling Club “Reel Talk” Magazine Editor, Terry Fuller.

Copies of the Rottnest Strategy and feedback form.

The Marine Management Strategy and feedback form are on the Rottnest Island website <http://www.rotnnestisland.com> Printed copies may also be obtained by contacting the Authority on 9432 9300.

Beware of the traps and don't be misled. There are two different documents of about 20 pages. One is the actual strategy, the other is a “have your say” explanatory document which look identical until you compare them and then realise that their contents are completely different. Then there is the feedback form - a folded double sided A3 sheet. The website has the strategy, but you have to read **all** of the extra web pages as well to get the full contents of the “have your say” document.

If you ask the Authority for a copy, you will probably get only the “have your say” explanatory document and the feedback form but not the actual strategy, which means you will not be fully informed about the details. Believe me, all the details are extremely important for making informed comments.

Surf Casting and Angling Club “Reel Talk” Magazine Editor, Terry Fuller.

Making Comments about Rottnest Proposals.

First. Send an email or letter to the Premier, Tourism Minister, Fisheries Minister and your own Member of Parliament letting them know what you think about bias and misleading information in the development of the strategy and in all the public consultation, and demanding proper consultation with recreational anglers before deciding the final strategy.

Make sure you say very clearly in any letter or email that you are sending it for the information or attention of and a response from the specific Minister or Member it is addressed to, and you don't want it to be referred to the Tourism Minister if/because you have already sent one to her.

Email and postal addresses are listed below for you to send your own emails or letters.

Second. Put in detailed comments on the draft strategy. The “official” written and electronic feedback forms are misleading and biased and designed to achieve a predetermined outcome from the public consultation process by asking loaded questions.

The online entry version severely limits your options for answers. The paper version gives you more freedom to answer and comment. Obtain a copy, or download the feedback form, print out a copy and answer the questions as you wish. See the sample answers later in this Reel Talk.

Send copies of your objections, comments and submissions to the Premier, Tourism Minister, Fisheries Minister, and your local members of Parliament and to the Rottnest Island Authority too.

Addresses for Government Ministers and comments.

Premier:- Hon Alan Carpenter MLA, 197 St George's Terrace, Perth 6000

email: wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Minister for Tourism, responsible for Rottnest:- Hon Sheila McHale MLA, 12th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth, 6005 email: sheila-mchale@dpc.wa.gov.au

Minister for Fisheries, responsible for management of fisheries:- Hon. Jon Ford MLC 9th Floor, Dumas House 2 Havelock Street, West Perth 6005 email: jon-ford@dpc.wa.gov.au

Rottnest Island Authority, E-Shed, Victoria Quay, Fremantle WA 6160 or PO Box 693 Fremantle WA 6959 Email: enquiries@rotnnestisland.com Telephone 9432 9300 Fax 9432 9301

Send the printed feedback/comment form to:- Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy, Synovate, PO Box 984 West Perth 6872

Article by Recfishwest Board Member for AAA, Terry Fuller.

Summary of Some of the Problems with Rottnest Proposals.

It would be easier to say what is right about these proposals and the way they were produced because that would barely fill one page. I could write a book about what is wrong with them.

Here is a heading summary of some of the problems with the Rottnest proposals. Check the Recfishwest website www.recfishwest.org.au in a week or two for a link to page which expands these out in much more detail, or give Terry Fuller a phone call and discuss them.

Emotive Presentation. The strategy has been presented in a emotive way which implies it is the only way our kids can have their own fish stories. There are other ways of achieving significant benefits for the fish and the environment. People may be discouraged from disagreeing with the methods or some details because that disagreement may be portrayed somehow as an irresponsible attitude to the preservation of the environmental and social values of Rottnest. They appear to want you to feel guilty, so be aware and don't react that way.

Development of the Strategy. The Marine Management Strategy Working Group had a clear bias towards creating a substantial number and area of "no-take" zones, areas closed to all fishing. This is using only one tool, where a whole set of tools should be used.

Consultation during development of strategy. Recfishwest, the peak recreational fishing body, was never formally consulted about the details of the proposals or plans as they were being developed, and had no opportunity to provide comments back or suggest alternatives which is an essential part of any consultation to achieve consensus. Despite this, the strategy talks of "extensive consultation," which is deliberately misleading. A proper outcome and true consensus was not and could never have been achieved.

Reliance on sanctuary (no take) Zones. Sanctuary zones do not allow anything to be taken out or caught, regardless of the impact or otherwise of that catch. "Catch and release" fishing or catching free roaming, non resident pelagic species is not allowed. There is a place for sanctuary zones as part of a total package of different measures to achieve environmental and fisheries management objectives. Sanctuary zones by themselves do not provide a suitable fish management strategy for Rottnest.

Fish Species at Rottnest. The strategy does not distinguish between free swimming migratory fish and resident bottom dwelling fish, which have very different protection requirements.

Measurement of Success or Failure of strategy. The strategy does not have any measurable objectives or outcomes which can be measured in the future to see if the strategy has achieved any objectives. It should have clearly defined success and failure criteria, expressed in terms of "if this outcome is achieved, then the strategy is a success" and "if this outcome is NOT achieved, then the strategy is a failure."

Poor science and anecdotal information. The science used has been selected to support sanctuary zones, or has alternative meanings. Some selective anecdotal information has been used in place of real science.

Users affected by the Strategy. Restrictions imposed by the Strategy fall on recreational fishing and on little else which can and does affect the environment. Some obvious risks are not managed.

Reallocation of areas to other users. Sanctuary zones is a re-allocation of some areas to underwater diving and sightseeing rather than fishing. Recreational anglers would not have any objection to the reservation of some areas for other users, but any reallocation should be negotiated openly and honestly, and not be misrepresented.

Distinguish between shore and boat fishing. Shore based fishing and boat based fishing are very different and target different species, but the "science" used and the strategy does not recognise this.

Misleading claims of impact on and benefits for anglers. There is nothing in the strategy which can deliver better fishing at Rottnest. The strategy suggests that sanctuary areas may provide excess fish available to be caught in other areas, but this cannot happen for the (pelagic) species commonly caught from shore.

Fisheries management in the greater metro area. Management of fishing needs to change in the entire metro area. These changes should include special attention to Rottnest which should be properly integrated into much wider and effective management of the real threats and delivers real benefits for the fish and the environment

Misleading and confusing information. The information about the strategy provided to the public so that they can comment on the proposals is confusing, biased, emotive and misleading.

Biased feedback forms and questions. Almost all the questions and information on the official feedback form are emotive, would be very difficult to answer with "no", and are deliberately designed to achieve "yes" responses leading to a predetermined outcome of majority support for the entire package of proposals.

Article by Recfishwest Board Member for AAA, Terry Fuller.

Sample Letters / Emails about Rottnest.

Here are three more different examples of letters/emails to the Ministers. The Australian Anglers Association letter was published in the May Reel Talk. That now gives members 4 different examples with plenty of ideas which can be used to prepare their own letters.

Dear Mr. Ford. Re: Management Of Fishing In Western Australia

As a land based recreational fisherman for many years I would agree that there is a need for a plan to be implemented to address the sustainability of our fishing stocks in Western Australia.

The government should conduct public meetings at various locations throughout the state, to hear the public voice of all interested parties in the fishing debate. Whilst appreciating that the government has made available questionnaires to various parties, and has recently released the Rottnest Marine Strategy in April 2006, it would appear at this early stage that the recreational fishing public sentiments are not being heard or recognized.

I would refer to the recent released Rottnest Marine Management Strategy in April 2006 in which Mr. Norman Halse was one of three people representing recreational fishing on this committee. From the information available to me, Mr. Halse was scathing in many aspects of the conduct of meetings held by the Working Group, the manner in which the outcomes and recommendations were achieved in the report and a general bias against recreational fishing on the island. He is also critical of the Strategy report and has stated, "it should be abandoned" and replaced by a strategy, which would properly protect and manage all aspects of fishing in the entire greater metropolitan area, which would include Rottnest.

Previous Fisheries Minister Mr. Kim Chance advised parliament that there is no evidence that recreational fisherman has compromised biodiversity. Yet it appears the Rottnest proposal is based on that of "closed no take areas" is the recommended solution.

It appears that the recreational fishing representatives would have agreed to give some concessions on some areas having limitations, but the manner to which these areas have been selected appears to have been made without proper consultation, "eg: Fisheries Department" or foundation.

Your Government gave a clear policy statement that "the Gallop Government will reaffirm its commitment not to support bans on fishing at Rottnest Island".

As many recreational land based fishing people are supporters of your Government, they would be currently disillusioned at the current position of their plight and likely outcome - especially at Rottnest.

I would respectfully recommend that the Government revisit this agenda with a strategy for a broader outlook and consultation on fishing and to include a little more consideration towards the land based recreational fishing public.

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Another set of comments that came to me in an email.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the creation of the extensive fishing closures proposed for the Rottnest Island Reserve, and to ask that this letter be counted as a submission to the Rottnest Island draft Marine Management Strategy.

Expanding marine sanctuaries at Rottnest is an illogical step in protecting the biodiversity of this island when the major in situ threats to the island's marine habitats are clearly indiscriminate anchoring, moorings, pollution from boats and the settlement itself - as well as increasing human use for a wide range of recreational activities.

Offsite threats that directly flow into Rottnest waters include pollution and sewerage outfall from the Perth Metropolitan area and the Swan-Canning Rivers.

Like other parts of the WA west coast, Rottnest's marine life is for the most part not directly exploited by recreational or commercial fishers - but may have possibly suffered from other harmful activities associated with development. However there is no scientific evidence to support any assertion that fishing - and recreational angling in particular - has had an impact on the biodiversity in this or any other area.

Fishing groups take a small number of specific species of finfish, crustaceans and molluscs - in the case of Rottnest anglers take only about 10 species of the 600 or more common to this large marine bioregion which extends from Kalbarri to Augusta.

All these species recruit into the small area of the reserve from breeding populations that are spread across thousands of kilometres of ocean. Many species caught are highly migratory or utilise ocean currents to distribute their eggs, larvae and juveniles. Research into the recruitment of tropical finfish by Barry Hutchins of the WA Museum clearly demonstrates the variable nature of recruitment and survival in this area.

Rottnest is also very small component in this much larger ecosystem - and comprises less than 0.08% of the 45,000 or so square kilometres that comprise the west coast continental shelf. Small "sanctuaries" at Rottnest have little meaning in an ecological or ecosystem sense, and socially they are highly divisive.

If the marine waters of the west coast need greater protection then this should be dealt with on an ecosystem scale, by the application of a range of strategies that actually address clearly identified issues, including a revision of fisheries management if necessary. It should not be done at a micro scale in a process which effectively discriminates against the 30 per cent of WA's adult population who enjoy fishing.

If we are to enjoy WA's marine environment into the future it is important that your Government shows that it understands the real issues and demonstrates that it is proceeding on a rational and properly assessed course, not just responding to the dogma and theory of an increasingly militant green movement and green bureaucracy.

Any comparisons with coral reef systems at Ningaloo Reef and the Great Barrier Reef are completely specious - and do not bear any level of scrutiny.

I urge you to give future generations a chance to enjoy the spectacular and diverse marine life of WA's favourite holiday destination in their own way - and ensure future widespread community support for good management at Rottnest

Please - for the sake of all Western Australians - keep Rottnest as the wonderful holiday destination it has always been - and put a stop to the unthinking ideologically driven policy that is disenfranchising the 30 per cent or more of WA's adult population who enjoy responsible conservation-minded fishing and all its social and health benefits, as well as disinheriting our children and their children from this valuable aspect of WA's culture and lifestyle.

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Another sample message to members of the Government and MPs.

I am writing to express my objection to the way the proposals for "no fishing zones" at Rottnest have been developed, and to the poor information provided to the public and to the very biased and misleading feedback forms.

I do not have any concerns about allocating some areas to other users such as divers, where they may see areas which are not fished.

I do not have objections to closing areas which are fish breeding grounds or fish nursery areas, or where fishing is shown to be a risk to biodiversity AND there is no other action possible except complete closure of some areas, but only for the minimum times this is necessary, not permanently.

I do support adaptive management for any species and for any places where fishing pressures are affecting fish stocks or biodiversity, in response to a clearly identified risk.

For example, protection of Blue Groper is almost certainly better approached as a Rottnest wide issue to promote stewardship of special species with smaller scale area exclusions. However the juvenile Blue Groper at Rottnest are already protected by a size limit, and are more vulnerable to the commercial demersal gill net and long line fishery which operates outside Rottnest waters.

None the less, Blue Groper are iconic species and further protection will increase community stewardship for Rottnest as a whole, if and only if groups such as recreational fishers feel that they can be part of the solution.

I believe that there are better mechanisms to ensure future quality fishing at Rottnest, using the approach of the cooperative management arrangements which have been developed in the recently completed and widely supported West Coast Recreational fishing review.

The closures proposed in the Rottnest strategy can not possibly improve the stocks of species such as herring, tailor, salmon, silver trevally, spanish mackerel, etc which are not resident and whose juveniles use nursery areas elsewhere. There are no objectives or performance measures against which the actual benefits of the Rottnest Island Authority proposals can be measured at any time in the future.

Rottnest is a special place and does need proper management, but management at Rottnest must be properly integrated into much wider and effective management of the West Coast region.

Urgent action should be taken to properly address the real threats in the entire West Coast region and must specifically and urgently address excessive fishing pressures and the depletion of some fish species.

I urge you to give everyone a chance to enjoy the marine life of WA's favourite holiday destination, by supporting proper marine and fisheries management of the entire West Coast region including the right management for Rottnest.

I will make a separate submission on the details of the Rottnest Island draft Marine Management Strategy.

Article by Recfishwest Board Member for AAA, Terry Fuller.

Sample Answers to Rottnest "Have Your Say" Questions.

The following answers are based on the requirements for shore based fishing and do not consider boat fishing, which is very different and can target or affect different species and need different management. Words in double brackets and italics ((*like this*)) are explanations for you, and are not part of the suggested answer.

There are many possible answers. These ones are just some prepared to meet the deadline for this edition of Reel Talk to give members some ideas. They are not necessarily the answers I will use or I recommend, because with time to consider them, I will edit or add more to these. Read through all the information on Rottnest and you will find plenty of other ideas.

Remember:- The way the questions are asked and information that is given make it very clear that the main aim of the questions is to get the maximum number of "yes or agree" answers which can be added up and counted as majority support for the majority of questions about the proposals. If you say you agree, there is a good chance any qualifying comments you make will not be considered or counted. Notice that many questions do not ask for comments when you agree, so ignore that bias and give your comments anyway.

Contact Details Q1) What activities do you undertake, and what interests do you have on Rottnest Island?
Answer:- Regular fishing trips for line fishing from the shore at West End since ((add your comments))

Contact Details Q2) *Do you want your submission to be treated as confidential?* **Answer:-** No. ((so that yours can be identified in any summary of the submissions.))

Contact Details Q3) *Have you read the Draft Rottneest Island Marine Management strategy?* **Answer:-** ((hope it is a Yes, but see the "Beware the traps" message above))

Marine Management Strategic Objectives Q) *Do you agree with the proposed strategic objectives for the management of the Rottneest Island Marine Reserve?* **Answer:-** This question should not demand either a yes or a no answer. I only partly agree. The objectives 1, 2 and 4 are just different ways of saying that "no take" sanctuary zones must be used. These demonstrate bias and failure to identify a set of key outcomes and measures, assess the risks, identify a range of alternative solutions, and pick solutions which deliver real and measurable outcomes.

Social Values Q1) *The marine environment lends itself to a range of users including swimmers, divers, snorkellers, boaters, fishers and surfers. It also has a significant amenity and visual value to land-based visitors.* **Answer:-** This statement/question has multiple parts which should have been asked separately so that separate answers can be given. Any agreement with this statement says only that there must be appropriate management, but it does not agree with any of the actual management proposals in the marine strategy.

Social Values Q2) *The marine reserve is maintained for recreational and tourism purposes.* **Answer:-** Agree. However, there are some tourism activities which can have significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, for example anchoring for divers, but there is no evidence in the strategy of any attempt to manage or restrict anything but fishing.

Social Values Q3) *Experience of the marine environment should be available for current and future generations.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. There is no definition or explanation of the term "experience", which obviously has a whole range of meanings for different people. So there is no way of knowing or measuring if the proposals in the strategy actually deliver this nebulous concept. This is a biased question which implies that the restrictions in the proposed strategy are essential to give "an experience", and is aimed at getting the maximum number of "agree" answers. I do not agree that the proposals in the strategy are necessary for or will have any significant overall effect on the Rottneest experience.

Ecological Values Q1) *Geological features such as reefs, seabed, shoreline, beaches and coastal dunes should not be significantly altered as a result of human activities.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. There is no definition or explanation of the term "significant", so there is no way to know what amount of impact is considered acceptable or not in designing the strategy. I am concerned that any support for this question would be used to "justify" restrictions which are not essential to adequately maintain these features. I am concerned that unnecessary restrictions might be imposed for ideological or convenience reasons rather than to manage the real risks which might be involved in allowing recreational line fishing from the shore for pelagic species which does not pose any significant threat to these features under existing regulations.

Ecological Values Q2) *The high quality of water and sediments at Rottneest Island are to be maintained throughout the Marine Reserve.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. This question should have been combined with Q3. Although this is a valid objective which I support in principle, this should not be used to "justify" restrictions which are not essential to maintain water quality. There is no evidence that responsible recreational line fishing from the shore for pelagic species poses any significant threat to water and sediment quality. Any issues with rubbish are social issues which should be handled by education, existing littering laws and penalties, and by a recreational fishing code of ethics.

Ecological Values Q3) *Seawater quality is to meet human health standards at all times.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. This is just another way of asking the previous question 2. This is an example where a topic is given two separate questions, yet really important questions which deserve separate answers are combined into one question or not asked at all. This appears to be bias aimed at getting the maximum number of "agreed" questions which can be aggregated as majority support for the majority of questions about the proposals. See my answer to Q2. There is no evidence that responsible recreational fishing poses any threat at all to seawater meeting human health standards. Appropriate rules should apply for human wastes from boats, but this is not justification for any restrictions on recreational fishing.

Ecological Values Q4) *There should be minimal damage to, or loss of coral reefs, as a result of human activities.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. This is just another way of asking the previous question Q1. This is another example where a topic is given 2 separate questions to manipulate the outcome. This appears to be bias aimed at getting the maximum number of "agreed" questions which can be aggregated as majority support for the majority of questions about the proposals.

There is no definition or explanation of the term "minimal", so there is no way to know what amount of impact is considered acceptable or not in designing the strategy. I am concerned that any support for this question could be used to "justify" restrictions which are not essential to maintain coral reefs. I am concerned that unnecessary restrictions might be imposed for ideological or convenience reasons rather than to manage the real risks. There is no evidence that responsible recreational line fishing from the shore for pelagic species poses any threat to these coral reefs.

Ecological Values Q5) *The diversity and abundance of marine animals are to be maintained at current levels or restored to 1950 conditions.* **Answer:-** Strongly disagree. This question has multiple parts which should have been

asked separately so that separate answers can be given. "Maintained at current levels" and "restored to 1950 conditions" are two very different objectives which would require very different management. This is a biased question which is aimed at getting a majority of "agree" answers from people who do not realise the implications.

I am extremely concerned that any support for maintaining current levels, which is a valid and commendable objective, would be used to "justify" quite severe and unnecessary restrictions in a vain attempt to restore 1950 conditions. 1950 conditions cannot possibly be achieved solely by any conceivable actions at Rottnest, and would require drastic changes and restrictions to all human activities in the entire metropolitan marine area and large parts of the West Coast.

Changes in fish abundance for many of the pelagic species caught by recreational line fishing from the shore are due to changes in the entire West Coast and are not due to fishing pressure at Rottnest. Closures of areas at Rottnest cannot possibly have any effect on the abundance of most of these pelagic species which breed and grow elsewhere, some species as far away as South Australia.

Ecological Values Q6) *Target fish species in the Marine Reserve are to only be harvested at levels that maintain marine biodiversity.* **Answer:-** Strongly Disagree, particularly with the implication that recreational catch of common pelagic fish species from the shore has any impact on biodiversity at Rottnest, and particularly not for the species mentioned in the Strategy as at risk. There is no measure of the current status of marine biodiversity at Rottnest, and there is no knowledge about any impact of captures of the pelagic fish species on biodiversity. See also the answer to Q5.

Management Strategy. *The Draft Marine Management Strategy recommends that the use of sanctuary zones is the most efficient and effective way to manage marine biodiversity. Do you agree with this recommendation?*

Answer:- Strongly disagree. This is a biased question, aimed at getting maximum support for the proposals. Sanctuary zones are appropriate where there are destructive fishing practices, overfishing, recognised breeding, aggregation or nursery areas, or special places where some human activities are simply not compatible with the physical characteristics of the area or the living creatures present.

There is no evidence presented that any of these apply to the areas proposed for sanctuary zones at Rottnest. This reliance on sanctuary zones as the only tool, instead of being just one tool and a whole suite, shows an ideology that sanctuary zones work in some places and therefore they must work and they must be essential and there are no alternatives in other places. The documentation of the strategy is blatantly misleading where it talks of using a suite of tools when in fact the only tool used is sanctuary zones and the only group of users affected are recreational fishermen.

Sanctuary Zones Q1) *Do you agree that sanctuary zones should be increased in size to protect marine biodiversity for future generations of Western Australians and visitors to Rottnest Island?* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. I do not disagree with sanctuary zones in the right places and for the right reasons, however I am not convinced of the "justifications" used for the proposed zones. I disagree with the need to increase the size of sanctuary zones to protect the ecological values which have been listed in the strategy.

Sanctuary Zones Q2) *Do you agree that sanctuary zones should be increased in number to protect marine biodiversity for future generations of Western Australians and visitors to Rottnest Island?* **Answer:-** See answer to Q1.

Sanctuary Zones Q3) *Do you agree/disagree with the amended Sanctuary Zone 1 – Kingston Reef.* **Answer:-** Agree. *((it is offshore so has no effect on shore fishing))*

Sanctuary Zones Q4) *Do you agree/disagree with the amended Sanctuary Zone 2 – Parker Point.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. The wording in the strategy about this zone is misleading. It says "this 1994 working group considered the special protection through zoning was both 'necessary and urgent'" However that paper also actually says (Part IV page 18) that these areas "should be managed for the purposes of scientific research and education". Note the word "managed" and that it does NOT say that the area needs to be closed completely or for biodiversity conservation. I have no objection to proper management where the real risks are assessed and managed. However there is no evidence offered that responsible recreational line fishing from the shore for pelagic species in this area poses any threat to the ecological values (corals) or biodiversity values identified in the area, and therefore there is no justification for banning it.

Tropical fish are aliens to this area and stocks are replenished from the tropics as a result of favourable ocean currents. They have no biodiversity conservation value, even though they might be nice to see for divers. These species are not targeted by fishermen and only small numbers of these are ever caught. Their presence does not justify fishing exclusion zones.

Sanctuary Zones Q5) *Do you agree/disagree with the new Sanctuary Zone 3 – Green Island.* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. The proposed area where fishing is allowed from the jetty is badly defined and illogical. The result would be that a person standing on the jetty could fish into some areas, but a person standing on the shore could not fish in exactly the same area of water. Shore based line fishermen do not catch or damage seagrass meadows, juvenile Western Rock Lobster (which are protected by Fisheries legislation anyway,) or macroalgae and rodoliths which are the species claimed to need protection in the area. Shore based rod and line fishing should be allowed in this zone because there is no valid reason to ban it to protect the named species.

Sanctuary Zones Q6) *Do you agree/disagree with the new Sanctuary Zone 4 – West End.* **Answer:-** Strongly disagree. Tropical fish are aliens to this area and stocks are replenished from the tropics as a result of favourable ocean currents. They have no biodiversity conservation value, even though they might be nice to see for divers. These species are not targeted by fishermen and only small numbers of these are ever caught. Their presence does not justify fishing exclusion zones.

Shore based fishermen try to catch pelagic species which travel from and breed elsewhere. Shore based fishermen have negligible impact on bottom dwelling fish compared to the potential impact of fishing from boats. Shore based line fishermen also do not catch or damage molluscs, invertebrates, coral or algae which are the species claimed to need protection in the area.

There are only a few shore access points, and the recreational fishing survey showed only a small percentage of fishermen fish from the shore in this area and only in favourable conditions, so any impact they might have is very small.

Shore based rod and line fishing should be allowed because there is no valid reason to ban it. There is nothing to be gained from taking away the opportunity for a unique fishing experience in this area.

Sanctuary Zones Q7) *Do you agree/disagree with the new Sanctuary Zone 5 – Armstrong / North Point* **Answer:-** Neither agree nor disagree. The wording in the strategy about this zone is misleading. It says “this 1994 working group considered the special protection through zoning of the areas identified by the EPA System 6 Report was both ‘necessary and urgent’. None of the additional areas which included Armstrong Point to Parakeet Bay...” However that paper actually quotes (Part IV page 18) EPA recommendation C45.2 which mentions Eagle Bay to Fish Hook Bay and from Salmon Point to Parker Point, but does not mention Armstrong Point.

Sanctuary Zones Q8) *Do you agree/disagree with the new Recreation Zone.* **Answer:-** I agree with the concept of a recreation zone. I disagree with the proposal because it still allows some commercial fishing and this conflicts with the concept of a recreation zone. If commercial fishing is allowed then by definition it is a General Use zone.

Sanctuary Zones Q9) *Do you have any further comments about the proposed zones?* **Answer:-** Neither recreational fishers nor the Department of Fisheries were properly involved in the process of deciding these zones or considering alternatives. I object to the quality and misrepresentation of findings of the shore based fishing survey, there is no risk assessment, there are no details of identified threats, no defined and measurable desired outcomes, no alternatives are offered, and the overwhelming impression is “trust us, we know what we are doing” and that is not acceptable as science.

Q10) *Are there any further comments you would like to make regarding the draft strategy?* **Answer:-** ((Should be plenty. Use anything from the sample comments provided in the earlier articles.))

Article by Recfishwest Board Member for AAA, Terry Fuller.

Check the Recfishwest website <http://www.recfishwest.org.au/> for more information in the next few weeks.

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Recfishwest article for Boating WA magazine Autumn 2006

See <http://www.recfishwest.org.au/ArticleRottnestKM.htm>

Recfishwest opposes Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy

When I think of boating in Western Australia one of the first things that comes to mind is relaxing in one of the many turquoise bays of Rottnest Island catching a few herring or casting lures for salmon. With the release of the Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy this favoured pastime of so many boaters will no longer be possible in a selection of bays around Rottnest Island.

The draft Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy proposes extensions to the two existing sanctuary zones and the creation of three new sanctuary zones at Rottnest Island. In total, sanctuary zones will cover 615 hectares or approximately 16% of the Reserve waters. The proposed sanctuary zones are at Green Island, Armstrong/North Point and West End, with extension to the existing sanctuary zones at Kingston Reef and Parker Point.

Recfishwest is not opposed to making parts of the Rottnest Island Reserve into marine observation areas, however, we are disappointed that the RIA has chosen to locate these areas in the most popular fishing spots, without talking to those who will be most affected.

We all recognise that Rottnest Island is a special place which needs more intensive management. However, many of the issues at Rottnest are much better dealt with in a wider context. Even though west coast management has been recently reviewed, many recreational fishers are asking for tighter restrictions for the whole metropolitan region.

The draft strategy implies that sanctuary zones provide the only way to restore fish abundance. Recfishwest is diametrically opposed to this view and believes that sanctuary zones merely work as marine observation areas that provide almost no direct benefits to overall fish stock abundance. Four of the most sought after fish species at Rottnest are herring, salmon, King George whiting and western rock lobster. It is hard to understand what benefits

a sanctuary zone will have for these species which all spend large portions of their life cycle outside of the Rottnest Island Marine Reserve.

West End, which is renowned for its aggregations of Spanish mackerel and tuna in the summer months, is to be closed to recreational fishers on the basis of protecting rare species of mollusc that are found there. The draft strategy seriously lacks scientific evidence for the need to ban fishing in these areas and reeks of a direct attack on recreational anglers.

The strategy is based loosely around anecdotal evidence and a barely minimal catch and catch effort study which has drawn the conclusion that people fishing at Rottnest do not reach their bag limits and hence there are no fish left at Rottnest. What they don't realise is that recreational fishers do not come anywhere near the bag limits because they limit their catch, they don't catch their limit.

If there is a problem with a species like blue groper, then let's look at solutions to the problem and address them. The concept of protection for blue groper in all waters of the Rottnest Island would have been considered but the goodwill of recreational fishers has been terribly eroded by the half-truths and biased material prepared by the Rottnest Island Authority.

Recfishwest was willing to work cooperatively on the development of a marine management strategy with the Rottnest Island Authority so that there could have been direct benefits back to the marine environment whilst having a minimal impact on recreational fishers. Instead they have chosen to work behind closed doors and develop a management plan that will have no direct benefits to fish stock sustainability whilst locking out recreational fishers from the most popular spots.

If the objective of these closures is for marine observation areas so that visiting people can snorkel and dive amongst an untouched environment then they are going about it in the wrong manner. The fact that the dive charters who make a profit from not having recreational fishers in the area can still drop their heavy anchors in the so-called sanctuary zones, implemented to protect benthic biota, makes a mockery of common sense.

What must be remembered is that former Premier Geoff Gallop, a leader who emphasised his green credentials, recognised the difficulties with justifying additional closures at Rottnest and said so in the Labor party policy launch at the most recent election campaign. It is clear in black and white that the Labour party will "Reaffirm its commitment not to support bans on fishing at Rottnest Island". The timing of the release of this draft strategy immediately following the departure of Geoff Gallop from the Premier's Office asks the question of Alan Carpenter - will he stand by his party policy or turn his back on the people that voted his party into power?

Recfishwest asks that all recreational fishers and boaters put in a submission rejecting the Marine Management Strategy on the basis that the process is seriously flawed and that sanctuary zones will have no benefits to metropolitan fisheries management. A process that has recreational fishers, boaters and the Department of Fisheries support will be infinitely superior to what has currently been developed by the Rottnest Island Authority.

Check out our Submissions and Letters and in particular Proposed Rottnest Island Sanctuary Zones

Kane Moyle, Policy Officer Recfishwest

Comments close on 15 July, 2006 - but letters and emails to Government can still go after that date.