



Fishing Lockouts Overshadow Election Announcements

Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF), the recognised national peak body for all Australian recreational fishers, while encouraged by the positive election policies announced by both major parties this past week, is disheartened by Labor's threat to dismantle the zoning and management plans for the Commonwealth network of marine parks legislated through parliament last year and to revert back to the Tony Burke draft plan of 2012.

ARFF Chair Brett Cleary said, "Labor's plan to turn back the clock to a set of Marine Park plans will draw a heated response from Australia's estimated 5 million recreational fishers."

"Those 2012 plan were unscientific and unworkable and the prospect of reverting back to them is extremely disrespectful of the consultation process and to the recreational fishers who consider themselves as some of the greatest marine conservation advocates."

"Recreational fishers have continuously supported and endorsed a network of Commonwealth Marine Parks and we believe the zoning and management plans agreed to over 2018 achieve the right balance between conservation and an evidence-based approach to the sustainable use of our aquatic resources."

"We had hoped Federal Labor had learnt from the marine park plan disaster in NSW which erupted in community outrage leading to that plan being dumped."

On a positive note, ARFF praises pledged investment into recreational fishing related infrastructure and restoring fish habitats to grow and improve recreational fishing experiences.

Labor has pledged a recreational fishing package to establish a \$45 million Recreational Fishing fund, a \$10 million program to replenish native freshwater fish stocks and \$0.5 million towards a Give Back to Habitat campaign.

A re-elected Coalition Government has pledged \$20 million towards infrastructure in a Fishing and Camping program, an \$8 million investment in fisheries habitat restoration and \$0.4 million for capacity building for recreational fisher representatives.

"We estimate recreational fishers spend around \$10 billion annually, so this level of pledged investment is still only a drop in the ocean of what's required to grow our sector."

"Investment in recreational fishing is still nowhere near what other sports and recreational activities receive to support, develop and grow their sectors."

ARFF is disappointed that neither of the major parties have recognised the need to adequately resource the national peak body to enable it to effectively carry on its vital role as the official voice for all Australian recreational fishers.

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ARFF MEMBERS

