

Mr Danny Simpson  
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Dear Mr Simpson

I refer to your letter to ALP candidates regarding RecFish SA's priorities for the 2018 South Australian State Election, dated 23 November 2017. I thank RecFish SA for its submission 'Making SA a great place to fish again'.

Labor respects and supports RecFish SA as the peak body representing the interests of recreational fishers in SA and the critical role you play in representing and advocating on fishers' behalf.

The State Labor Government is committed to managing the State's aquatic resources for the benefit of the whole community. Recreational fishing is a significant contributor to our economy, particularly in our regional communities, as well as being a much-loved pastime for around 277,000 South Australians.

We recently announced a multi-million dollar structural reform package for the Marine Scalefish Fishery to protect the future sustainability of key fish stocks including King George Whiting, Garfish and Snapper. Key components of the plan include a \$20 million voluntary buy-back scheme, targeting the removal of 100 commercial net and longline licences, in addition to the introduction of new zoning and quota management regulations.

Further to this, the State Labor Government will undertake a comprehensive recreational fishing survey to improve estimates of recreational catch and effort across the state; and investigate more opportunities for stock enhancement programs – including in marine and metropolitan waterways.

A re-elected State Labor Government will fund recreational fishing grants for projects to boost recreational fishing experiences and tourism, including new or upgraded facilities, improving access, restocking and habitat restoration.

These measures aim to strike the right balance between the commercial and recreational sectors, whilst supporting great fishing opportunities and sustainable growth in regional recreational tourism. They follow the State Government's investment of \$3.25 million in the past three years directed at boosting recreational fishing and tourism opportunities, on top of \$9.3 million allocated in this year's budget to upgrade five jetties across South Australia.

The South Australian Labor Government has a bold and confident plan for the future, one that puts our state, our people, first. Building on our proud record of innovation and progressive reform, we will create new jobs and industries, and make this an even better place to live, work, visit, do business and raise a family. You can read our policies at [Standing Up For South Australia](#) and download our full [2018 Policy Document here](#).

We hope that you will continue to work with us to build upon everything we have achieved, making South Australia more prosperous and harmonious for all.

Please see **attached** the South Australian Labor Government's response to RecFish SA's key policy issues in 'Making SA a great place to fish again'.

Kind regards  
Stakeholder Response Team

23/02/18

## **1. Better Fisheries for All**

On 27 December 2017, the State Labor Government announced a multi-million dollar reform package for the Marine Scalefish Fishery. In addition to improving the economic viability of commercial fishers, the package will provide better fishing opportunities for recreational fishers and greater sustainability for the fishery overall.

The package was prepared following an extensive strategic review process with the commercial fishery as well as consideration of RecFish SA's first priority action 'Better Fisheries for All' in *Making SA a Great Place to Fish Again*.

The reform package aims to remove 100 commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery licences (80 longline licences and 20 net licences) with a \$20 million voluntary buy-back scheme. It will also introduce zones and quotas for the commercial fishery to improve economic viability and fish stock sustainability.

This will help to ensure key stocks including Snapper, King George Whiting and Southern Garfish are available for future generations of South Australians to catch and enjoy.

The State Labor Government is committed to managing the State's aquatic resources for the benefit of the whole community. Under formal provisions outlined in the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*, fishery management plans have been developed for each fishery, including for recreational fishing. These management plans include specific provisions relating to the allocation of access shares between fishing sectors, which apply to all key recreationally important species. The process for reviewing these allocated shares is set out in the State Government's Allocation Policy.

## **2. Havens for Recreational Fishing**

The State Labor Government recognises the importance of the recreational fishing sector to regional communities across South Australia. The preferred approach to managing fish stocks in this state is one which integrates commercial, recreational and traditional fishing activities in management arrangements.

In 2014 we committed \$3.25 million over three years to support recreational fishing and tourism opportunities in this state:

- \$2.25 million over three years for the Recreational Fishing Grants program
- \$600,000 for an artificial reef trial
- \$400,000 to investigate opening five offline reservoirs for recreational fishing access

In 2016, the State Labor Government implemented new arrangements to allow recreational fishers and visitors to the Limestone Coast to register and use recreational mesh nets in Lake George. This local initiative was supported in a move to reinvigorate recreational fishing in Lake George and provide new opportunities for people to enjoy this unique fishing experience, which is a major drawcard for visitors to the region.

The reform package developed for the Marine Scalefish Fishery represents a significant investment by the State Labor Government to help to ensure stocks of key fish species are available for future

generations of South Australians to catch and enjoy. It aims to protect sustainability and boost recreational fishing opportunities, while ensuring South Australians continue to have access to fresh, local seafood.

### **3. More Great Places to Fish**

We are committed to improving recreational fishing infrastructure. The State Labor Government allocated \$9.3 million over two years in the 2017-18 State Budget to upgrade five jetties around the State – Henley Beach, Semaphore, Port Noarlunga, Port Bonython and Whyalla – in addition to Cowell.

In 2016, we completed a major upgrade to the Solomontown boat ramp in Port Pirie - the \$1.5 million upgrade providing greater access to the Port River and Spencer Gulf. This was one of six projects to receive more than \$2 million in State and local government funding through the Boating Facilities Fund.

Labor will continue to watch for other marine infrastructure needing maintenance or improvements.

The State Labor Government has also recently purchased the North Haven boat ramp to ensure the popular launching facility remains open to the public for decades to come. The North Haven ramp was opened in 1977 and is the busiest in the State, with an estimated 15,000 boats using the ramp each year. The Cruising Yacht Club of SA currently owns the ramp, after the former Liberal Government sold it in 1994. A condition of the sale was that public access be maintained until 30 June 2019; less than 18 months away. The Cruising Yacht Club was planning to repurpose the land for development and no longer allow public access to the ramp. Under government ownership, public access will be maintained in perpetuity.

Labor will also investigate further opportunities for stock enhancement programs in marine and metropolitan waterways to improve recreational fishing in SA.

This follows the successful delivery of our 2014 election commitment to investigate the potential for recreational fishing access at up to five offline reservoirs to boost recreational fishing opportunities, particularly in the state's regional communities.

We have now approved opening the Warren Reservoir in the Barossa Valley, Bundaleer and Beetaloo Reservoirs in the Mid North, Tod Reservoir on Eyre Peninsula and Aroona Dam near Leigh Creek.

Working in partnership with SA Water, local Councils and RecFish SA, the State Labor Government has contributed \$600,000 towards this initiative. A further \$205,000 was allocated through the SA Recreational Fishing Grants Program to stock the reservoirs with suitable fish including Murray Cod, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Golden Perch and Silver Perch. The Australian Government contributed \$210,000 through the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Program.

The State Government, along with the Leigh Creek Futures Committee and Flinders Power also contributed \$80,000 to enhance Aroona Dam for recreational fishing. The Northern Areas and

Barossa Council have agreed to maintain the small recreational fishing infrastructure at the Bundaleer and Warren Reservoirs.

The total contribution to this initiative has now exceeded \$1 million to benefit recreational fishers across South Australia. RecFish SA's involvement has been critical to its success.

South Australia's new \$600,000 artificial reef trial - named 'Windara Reef' officially opened on 21 August 2017 following consultation with the local Narungga community. The State Labor Government built the native shellfish reef to attract marine life, increase fish production and improve recreational fishing opportunities in the region.

Further funding has been secured through the National Stronger Regions Fund with the Australian Government investing \$990,000 to support and expand the build of the reef, which builds on an existing commitment from The Nature Conservancy of \$1.4 million and funds from the Yorke Peninsula Council. The development of the larger oyster reef of up to 20 hectares of shellfish reef is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

The shellfish reef restoration work has been an exciting and important way forward for South Australia and we are proud of its recent success. This project clearly demonstrates how positive environmental outcomes can occur when organisations, in this case State Government, The Nature Conservancy, Yorke Peninsula Council, RecFish SA, the University of Adelaide and the Ian Potter Foundation, partner together.

We are keen to build on this success and are committed to exploring co-contribution opportunities to construct subsequent artificial reefs off the coast of South Australia on the proviso that partner organisations are able to leverage additional funding through partnerships.

#### **4. Recreational Fishers Working for the Environment**

The State Labor Government has supported efforts to restock Murray Cod, releasing 100,000 fingerlings at Kingston on Murray and Swan Reach in 2016 as part of a trial to boost the local population. In 2017 we supported the release of another 50,000 Murray Cod fingerlings in the River Murray between Paringa and Chowilla in the Riverland through the recreational fishing grant program. A third stocking event was also supported by the grants program in February 2018, when 145,000 Murray Cod fingerlings were released into six sites along the Murray in a partnership between regional councils, RecFish SA and the State Government.

The State Labor Government has also provided funding towards research for Murray Cod and worked with RecFish SA to develop a video demonstrating handling requirements. Labor has a strong recreational fishing policy and is committed to appropriate stock enhancement programs. If re-elected, we will facilitate future restocking and habitat restoration projects and programs through a Recreational Fishing Grants program.

Labor recognises our natural environment is our state's most important ongoing asset. Because the River Murray is the lifeblood of our state, we brought together irrigators, businesses, River Murray

communities and the broader South Australian community to fight for the health and future of our river – securing an additional commitment of 450 gigalitres and \$445 million for our future.

A healthy River Murray is vital for South Australia's native fish stocks and in turn supports our recreational fishers. Allegations of water theft in the eastern states put this important ecosystem at risk. Labor will continue to stand up for South Australia by holding the Federal Liberal Government to account, including through our Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission into allegations of water theft by upstream irrigators. Through this Royal Commission, we will ensure South Australia gets every drop of water we're entitled to receive.

## **5. An Investment in SA**

Labor supports RecFish SA as the peak body representing recreational fishers and providing a central point of contact for consultation on recreational fishing matters, including State Government funding of \$129,000 per annum.

The State Government has also made significant efforts to support the recreational fishing sector and RecFish SA as its peak representative body in other ways, including:

- Working with RecFish SA on initiatives to boost recreational fishing opportunities and experiences across the state and improve best fishing practices
- Investing in scientific research for key species such as King George Whiting, Snapper and Southern Garfish, including collaborating with recreational fishers on the King George Whiting frames project
- Providing education and awareness, deterrence and enforcement activities through the fisheries compliance program to protect our fisheries across the state
- Maintaining the Fishcare volunteer program to raise awareness among fishing communities of the need to preserve our fish stocks for future generations
- Partnering with the Australian Government, through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), to establish a recreational fishing co-management project to better understand what recreational fishing means to people and the future they want for their sector
- Partnering with the Australian Government through the FRDC to establish a recreational fishing Catfish project to support a better understanding of the stock status of Catfish, including community fishing surveys to collect biological and catch information
- Supporting National Gone Fishing Day

As part of the State Labor Government's multi-million dollar package of measures announced in December 2017 to restructure the Marine Scalefish Fishery, we committed to undertake a comprehensive recreational fishing survey to improve estimates of recreational catch and effort across the state. The survey will provide an understanding of participation levels and what, where and how many fish are being caught, and will update the three previous recreational fishing surveys undertaken in 2000-01, 2007-08 and 2013-14.

As part of the national Meeting of Fisheries Ministers, the State Labor Government supports exploring opportunities to harmonise and share recreational fishing information across jurisdictions, identifying management priorities and developing long-term data collection approaches. The

Australian Government will progress implementation of a national recreational fishing survey focussing on socio-economic data and we support this process.

#### **6. Recreational Fishing Grants Program**

The State Government's 2014 election commitment of \$3.25 million to support recreational fishing opportunities in this state included the \$2.25 million South Australian Recreational Fishing Grants program. The grants have supported projects across South Australia to improve recreational fishing experiences through stocking and habitat enhancement, family fishing days, educational materials and small infrastructure including fish cleaning stations, jetty shelters and capping of groynes. RecFish SA has approved 16 grants over three rounds of the program, totalling \$438,830 (including in-principle support).

A re-elected State Labor Government will continue to provide recreational fishing grants for projects to boost recreational fishing experiences and tourism, including new or upgraded facilities, improving access, restocking and habitat restoration.