

# A better future for Recreational Fishing in South Australia

Recreational Fishing Strategic Plan 2014-2018



Prepared by South Australia's  
Peak Recreational Fishing Body,  
RecFish SA in partnership with  
affiliated organisations.

## A fresh approach...

Recreational fishing provides significant benefits to South Australian communities, and is currently faced with considerable challenges. There is a need for change to enable South Australia's recreational fishing community to position themselves to respond to these challenges, and take advantages of opportunities to maximize the quality of their recreational fishing experiences.

This Strategic Plan captures the shared aspirations of South Australia's recreational fishing community, and identifies specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound actions as stepping-stones in a pathway towards a better future for recreational fishing in South Australia.

The shared vision and actions described within this plan have been established through an inclusive statewide workshop held in August 2013 by RecFish SA and attended by members of RecFish SA and affiliated organisations.

## Purpose

We believe that recreational fishing provides enormous social and economic benefit to South Australia. It offers participants enjoyment, adventure, and escape from daily stress. It helps with national food security, and keeps our community healthy and active. Fishing improves connectivity, with the natural environment and each other. And we believe that all South Australians should be able to enjoy these benefits.

## Vision

To enable all South Australians to derive maximum value and enjoyment from our sustainable, community-owned fish resources.

## Mission

- To engage, advocate and advise on behalf of South Australia's recreational fishing community;
- To ensure sustainable and equitable access for all;
- To ensure South Australia's recreational fishing community is well informed and respected; and,
- To ensure preservation of the culture and tradition associated with recreational fishing in South Australia

<sup>1</sup> Images courtesy of David Ciaravolo, Lubin Pfeiffer and Dean Norbiato.



# Benefits of fishing in South Australia

South Australia is home to some of the best fishing experiences available in Australia. Whether chasing big reds down at Arno Bay, monster cod in the mighty Murray, or garfish off the Grange Jetty, there is truly something for everyone. And the benefits from a day's fishing extend well beyond a simple feed of fish. Recent research has highlighted that recreational fishing provides a range of health and wellbeing benefits to people and communities, with particular areas of benefit including youth development, breast cancer recovery, positive mental health outcomes, and offering recreation for the disabled and participation as a sport<sup>1</sup>.

The link between fishing and wellbeing is not yet well understood, but may run deeper than we realize. Preliminary results of a recent survey of South Australians revealed that those who reported being happier with their fishing generally also reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Further, people who reported their happiness with fishing to have increased also reported higher wellbeing, and others who reported a decline in the amount they were fishing in recent times also reported lower levels of wellbeing<sup>2</sup>. Clearly it is in the interest of

the wellbeing of our communities to ensure that the factors which underpin satisfying fishing experiences of South Australia's fishers are understood, and met.

The thrill of the chase, coupled with the opportunity to spend time with friends and family relaxing outdoors, and the range of health and wellbeing benefits that fishing affords makes recreational fishing quite popular among South Australians; a survey conducted in 2007/08 found that more than 236,000 South Australians fish every year<sup>3</sup>, most of whom reside in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Such popularity translates to significant economic activity as well; the value of fishing in SA was estimated at \$148 million in 2011, and is likely to be considerably higher today. The economic impact of fishing is particularly pronounced within regional economies, for example recreational fishing was reported to account for more than half of the tourist dollar in Yorke Peninsula<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> McManus, A., Hunt W., Story J. & White J (2011). Identifying the health and wellbeing benefits of recreational fishing. FRDC project 2011/217.

<sup>2</sup> Schirmer, J (Unpublished data)

<sup>3</sup> Jones K. (2009). South Australian Recreational Fishing Survey. PIRSA Fisheries, Adelaide, South Australian Fisheries Management Series Paper No 54.

<sup>4</sup> Econsearch (2000). Regional branding research, South Australian Tourism Commission.



## Challenges

Despite its significant social and economic value, recreational fishing in South Australia is facing significant challenges. Waning popularity is a primary concern; participation rate was reported to decline by approximately 31.2% over a six-year period between 2000/01 and 2007/08<sup>3</sup>, with greatest declines occurring in younger age groups (5-29). Changing attitudes towards fishing among the broader public, coupled with perceptions of declining fishing access may be contributing factors, with a recent study revealing that younger South Australian fishers are more likely to think that fishing is perceived poorly by the public compared to older generations, are less likely to think they have fair access to fishing areas, are generally less satisfied with available fishing infrastructure, and are less likely to think that most recreational fishers comply with rules and regulations<sup>2</sup>.

The need to maintain/restore the sustainability of key fish resources, particularly Garfish, Snapper, King George Whiting and Blue Crab is also a key challenge facing recreational fishing in South Australia. Factors including declining ecosystem health, and unsustainable fishing pressure need to be addressed with urgency.

One of the most significant challenges facing recreational fishing in South Australia to date has been insufficient investment in fisheries enhancement, research, compliance, access and facilities, education and marketing/promotion to enable continued growth and vitality of this great leisure activity. Whilst recreational fishers in New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia enjoy benefit from annual investment of up to \$19 million into the above-described areas through recreational fishing license schemes and state government contributions, similar arrangements are not in place in South Australia at this time. And though the June 2014 State Budget commitment of some \$3.2 million to recreational fishing initiatives over the next three years is appreciated, one of the most significant challenges facing recreational fishing in South Australia continues to be securing sufficient ongoing investment in fisheries enhancement.



## **Securing the future of fishing in SA**

Given the significant benefits that recreational fishing provides to South Australian communities, and the significant challenges being faced there is an urgent need for change, to ensure that recreational fishing is able to thrive once again in SA. To be successful, this will require concerted effort by South Australia's recreational fishing community, in partnership with other key stakeholders, in five strategic areas:



1. Securing a sustainable, long-term resource-base to pursue the shared vision of the South Australian recreational fishing community.
2. Increasing unity through better engagement - both within the fishing community and with allied interests.
3. Increasing external stakeholder support/respect for recreational fishing in South Australia.
4. Maintaining and increasing recreational fisher access to healthy, sustainable and high-quality fishing experiences.
5. Building capacity within the recreational fishing community through learning and education.

# Strategic goal I: Securing a sustainable, long-term resource base to pursue the shared vision of South Australia's recreational fishing community.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1. Present case to both sides of government for need to fund recreational fishing in South Australia to a level commensurate to its social and economic contribution to South Australia (approximately \$3.4 million per annum) .	Sector Resourcing Working Group with leadership from RecFish SA Executive	a) Value proposition developed and case presented to both sides of government.	Completed, June 2014 with SA Government commitment of \$3.2 million over 3 years
2. Develop and implement an educational campaign showcasing positive outcomes delivered for recreational fishers around Australia through implementation of a recreational fishing licensing scheme.	Communications Working Group	a) Project scope developed, endorsed by RecFish SA's members and finalised.	September 2014
		b) Crowd-sourcing funding proposal published.	March 2015
		c) Financial target achieved (determined through scoping).	May 2015
		d) Key messages delivered to target audiences. Target reach achieved.	July 2015
3. Undertake a review of the advantages and disadvantages of different recreational fishing license funding models for South Australia.	Sector Resourcing Working Group, with input from external consultant as required	a) Relative merits of different structures evaluated, and optimal model for SA identified.	November 2014
4. Deliver survey of recreational fishers in South Australia to determine level of support for a recreational fishing license.	Research and monitoring working group, in partnership with social scientist , with oversight from RecFish SA Executive and funding from Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	a) Survey methodology developed and peer reviewed.	September 2014
		b) Survey implemented and completed by desired number of respondents	November 2014
5. Case presented to state government for implementation of preferred recreational fishing license model (supported by findings from 1,3 and 1,4 above).	RecFish SA Executive with support from Sector Resourcing Working Group	a) Case presented	May 2015

## Strategic goal 2: Increasing unity through increased engagement-both within the fishing community and with allied interests

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1. Establish working groups under RecFish SA to advance strategic issues. Working Groups to be established in the following areas: - Sector Resourcing - Communication & Education - Conservation - Fisheries Enhancement - Research and Monitoring - Access	RecFish SA Executive with input from all members and affiliated organisations	a) Working groups established, meeting schedules finalised and work plans developed.  b) Working groups meet in accordance with agreed schedule, work plan actions addressed in accordance with agreed timeframes.	September 2014  Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.
2. Develop and implement a communication strategy, identifying target audiences, key messages, and efficient and effective methods for delivery.	Communications & Education Working Group  RecFish SA Board, Executive and members, with leadership from Communications Working Group	a) Strategy developed and finalised in consultation with strategic planning workshop participants  b) Strategy implemented and actions undertaken in accordance with proposed timeframes	November 2014  Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.
3. Undertake state-wide bi-ennial online survey to establish and review needs and aspirations of recreational fishers in South Australia, and key issues.	Research and monitoring working group, in partnership with social scientist (TBD)	a) Survey developed and implemented. Target number of respondents achieved  b) Survey repeated successfully. Target number of respondents achieved	February 2015  February 2017

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
4. Develop and maintain matrix of strategic contacts (ie clubs, tackle stores, fishing media outlets, political representatives, government officials) and allocate strategic relationships.	Undertaken by all members and affiliated organisations	a) Matrix developed and contacts allocated.	December 2014
		b) Contact maintained in accordance with agreed frequency.	Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.
5. Commit to regular meetings for all peak body members	RecFish SA Council and Executive, and affiliated organisations	a) Meetings held in accordance with schedule.	Quarterly (3rd Wednesday of each third month)
6. Establish strong within-sector networks through membership to national representative bodies.	RecFish SA Council	a) Membership obtained and meeting participation	October 2013
	RecFish SA Executive	b) Participation in relevant member consultation processes	Ongoing
7. Review of RecFish SA constitution, governance, organisational structure and KPIs.	Project managed by RecFish SA Executive, involving consultation with RecFish SA members and affiliated organisations, and implemented by RecFish SA Council	a) Constitutional review undertaken, recommendations adopted.	October 2014
	Communications & Education working group established under guidance of RecFish SA Executive	b) New constitution communicated to recreational fishing community.	February 2015
	Independent consultant under direction of RecFish SA Board. To be delivered in consultation with RecFish SA members and affiliated organisations	c) Review of peak body governance and organisational structure complete and recommendations adopted.	February 2015
	Communications & Education working group	d) Revised governance arrangements and organisational structure communicated to recreational fishing community.	May 2015
8. Develop and communicate process for formulation and consultation on position papers on key issues.	RecFish SA Executive in consultation with RecFish SA members and affiliated organisations	a) Procedure for development of position papers and consultation process to assist with finalisations developed and agreed upon.	March 2015

## Strategic goal 3: Increase external stakeholder support/respect for recreational fishing in South Australia

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1. Maintain watching brief over research into the cultural and traditional value of recreational fishing and seek opportunities for transferability of relevant findings.	Recfishing Research to provide progress updates on relevant research through Research and Monitoring Working Group for dissemination to members of RecFish SA and affiliated organisations	a) Recfishing Research to provide updates on achievement of key milestones throughout project delivery.	Ongoing
2. Review and synthesise information relating to the cultural and traditional value of recreational fishing in South Australia.	Research and Monitoring Working Group , in partnership Recfishing Research and social scientist/historian	a) Project team and scope established	February 2015
	RecFish SA	b) Priority communicated through SA FRAB process	March 2015
	Research and Monitoring Working Group, in partnership with social scientist	c) Funding sought and obtained through FRDC	March 2015
	Project team in consultation with Research and Monitoring Working Group and Communications Working Group	d) Project implemented to compile information relating to culture and tradition associated with recreational fishing in SA, and communication to key audiences.	March 2017
3. Implement communication strategy	RecFish SA Council, Executive and members, with leadership from Communications & Education Working Group	a) Strategy implemented and actions undertaken in accordance with proposed timeframes	Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.
4. Establish Conservation Working Group	Conservation Working Group	a) Working Group established, Terms of Reference and work plan set.	May 2015
	Conservation Working Group	b) Actions undertaken in accordance with work plan.	Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
5. Develop and implement educational products and initiatives to communicate best practice in fish handling and fishing behaviour.	Education working group, under guidance of RecFish SA Executive	a) Priority areas/issues identified and communication products developed to address them.	Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.
6. Build strategic alliances with groups and bodies with shared interests, e.g. conservation groups, National Parks, South Australian Tourism Commission and others.	RecFish SA Council, Executive and members	a) Contacts allocated and relationships maintained in accordance with agreed frequency.	Ongoing with annual review at August meeting.
7. Build on Healthy Associations workshop outcomes to better engage with commercial fishing interests (particularly marine scale).	RecFish SA Council, Executive and members	Regular constructive contact with commercial fishing interests, seek agreement on issues of common interest.	October 2014, and ongoing.
8. Investigate at senior and ministerial level formal recognition of recreational fishing as a sport	RecFish SA Executive	Contact made with appropriate senior official to explore pathway towards recognition of fishing as a sport in South Australia	February 2015
9. Synthesise information on the economic value of recreational fishing in South Australia	Research and Monitoring Working Group	Short report prepared summarising current value of recreational fishing in South Australia. Provided to Communication Working Group for extension to key audiences.	November 2014
10. Synthesise available information on social benefits of recreational fishing and develop and implement methods (consistent with communication plan) for extending findings to key audience groups.	Research and Monitoring Working Group	a) Review of available information undertaken, findings synthesised.	November 2014
	Communications working group, under guidance of RecFish SA Executive	b) Key messages developed and communication activities undertaken to deliver messages to target audiences	Ongoing, with annual review at August meeting.

## Strategic goal 4: Maintaining and increasing recreational fisher access to healthy, sustainable and high-quality fishing experiences

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1. Seek assistance from parties delivering successful education programs targeting younger generations in other jurisdictions (e.g. VRFish/Sunfish QLD/ ANSA) to establish a similar education program in SA.	Recfishing Research through Research and Monitoring Working Groups for dissemination to RecFish SA members and affiliated organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Maintain watching brief over project funded under the National Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy (RFIDS) led by Professor Alistair McIlgorm, which is seeking to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to review and summarise education activities relating to recreational fishing in schools around Australia. Identify common themes, key messages, target audiences, success stories and gaps.</li> <li>- Examine pathways for recreational fishing to be included in the national curriculum including identification of relevant course materials (existing and new) for teaching and learning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	June 2015
	Education working group, with guidance from RecFish SA Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Program developed and resources acquired</li> </ul>	October 2015
	RecFish SA Council, Executive, members and affiliated organisations with oversight from Education working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Program implemented</li> </ul>	Ongoing
2. Implement stock enhancement program to improve the quality and social/economic value of recreational fisheries in SA.	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage with PIRSA to influence policy change regarding stocking activities</li> <li>b) Engage with water asset managers to identify suitable candidate waterbodies for enhancement</li> </ul>	October 2014 November, 2013
	RecFish SA with guidance from Fishery Enhancement Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) Present business case to PIRSA for delivery of two high priority, low risk stock enhancement projects</li> </ul>	October, 2014
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) Implement first stocking project in priority areas.</li> </ul>	30 June 2015
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e) Implement second stocking project in priority areas.</li> </ul>	30 June 2016

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
3. Implement artificial habitat enhancement program to improve the quality and social/economic value of recreational fisheries in SA.	Recfishing Research through Research and Monitoring Working Groups, for dissemination to RecFish SA members and affiliated organisations	a) Maintain watching brief on Western Australian artificial habitat program to identify key factors for optimising social and economic benefits.	Ongoing
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group.	b) Engage with PIRSA/DEWNR to influence policy change regarding installation of artificial habitat.	November 2014
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	c) Engage with PIRSA/DEWNR and other agencies to identify two candidate sites which would maximise social/economic return with minimal impact for pilot installations.	July 2014
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	d) Secure funding for a high priority, low risk habitat enhancement projects	June 2014
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	e) Implement first of two artificial habitat enhancement projects in priority areas.	June 2015
	Fishery Enhancement Working Group	f) Implement second artificial habitat enhancement projects in priority areas.	June 2016
4. In partnership with regional boards and local governments, implement fish habitat rehabilitation initiatives to enhance fish communities.	Conservation Working Group	a) Identify priority areas requiring rehabilitation.	Annually.
	Conservation Working Group in partnership with Fish Habitat Network	b) Assess issues requiring remediation in two highest priority areas	June 2015
	Conservation Working Group in partnership with Fish Habitat Network	c) Source funds to implement fish habitat rehabilitation at priority site 1. Implement project and communicate progress to broader public.	June 2015
	Conservation Working Group in partnership with Fish Habitat Network	d) Source funds to implement fish habitat rehabilitation at priority site 2. Implement project and communicate progress to broader public.	June 2017
5. Develop and maintain asset register (boat ramps, jetties, fishing pontoons, wharves etc) currently available to south Australian recreational fishers.	Access working group	Undertake consultation, and desk-top review to build asset register.	June 2015
	Access working group	Asset register reviewed and updated	Annually

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
6. Provide submissions on any developments	Access working group	Relevant activities identified and submissions developed and lodged.	Ongoing.
7. Develop jetty access and enhancement program to enhance access and utility of wharves, jetties and similar infrastructure, for example Port Stanvac Jetty.	Access working group	Priority sites identified and projects developed in collaboration with regional boards and local governments.	Ongoing
8. Clarify possible reasons for declining participation in South Australia, particularly in younger age groups, to inform implementation of appropriate actions.	Research and monitoring working group, in partnership with Canberra University	a) Maintain watching brief on work by Canberra University. Use findings, in combination with relevant literature from other jurisdictions to identify causal factors and develop actions to respond to them.	December 2014
9. Work closely with the Minister and PIRSA to ensure that our fish stocks are sustainably managed and if necessary, enhanced.	RecFish SA executive	Stock assessment reports and rec fisher feedback.	Ongoing with annual August review

## Strategic goal 5: Build capacity within the recreational fishing community through education and learning

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>KPIs</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1. Submit eligible nominees to participate in leadership program funded though the Federal government's Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy.	Education Working Group with input from RecFish SA Executive	Three participants nominated for involvement	September 2013
2. South Australian recreational fishers nominated for involvement in National Seafood Industry Leadership Program.	Education Working Group	Nominee submitted	November annually.
3. Senior member of peak body nominated for involvement in Australian Rural Leadership and Trailblazers Programs.	Education Working Group.	Nominee submitted	July annually.
4. Senior member of peak body nominated for involvement in emerging leader governance scholarship with the Australian Institute of Company Directors Program.	Education Working Group.	Nominee submitted	Annually
5. . RecFish SA members to attend national recreational fishing conferences.	RecFish SA	Participants attend	Late 2015 and 2017
6 Undertake annual scan of key issues that require external input, identify external expert and submit travel bursary application to enable them to present to RecFish SA and affiliated organisation members.	Education Working Group.	Annual review complete and priorities identified. External expert contacted and funding application submitted.	Annually