



Fish Now, Fish Forever

A Vision for Recreational Fishing in SA

South Australia is a place that people are proud to call home, with world class fisheries and diverse angling opportunities.

RecFish SA is the peak community recreational fishing organisation in SA and since 1975 we have worked tirelessly to achieve better fishing for SA's 277,000 recreational fishers. And while the voice of fishers hasn't always been heard, this will not stop us from trying to engage with government to do what is best for our wonderful sector. In early 2022, we will have another state election and RecFish SA will again be working to ensure recreational fishers are given the acknowledgement and consideration they deserve.

Fish Now, Fish Forever, contains a number of initiatives and actions to improve the fishing experience for all South Australians and everyone who visits our state to explore our wonderful environments.

Fish Now, Fish Forever, fearlessly proposes a suite of innovative measures that will require hard decisions to be made. We understand that there are political and financial challenges in adopting our package but we believe that the results will put SA on the map as one of the worlds best fishing locations.



Achieving our Vision

The Tourism Boom

The post Covid era is expected to drive a boom in regional tourism in South Australia and with over 5 million Australians going fishing every year, many will cast their eyes to South Australia as a safe place to experience fantastic environments and some great fishing. This provides a generational opportunity to showcase our recreational fishing opportunities to the world and reap the rewards that a thriving tourism industry delivers.

SA has plenty to offer as a recreational fishing tourism destination; clean environments, plenty of space and some great fishing but we must capitalise on these strengths by investing in our infrastructure and communities, promoting stewardship of the resource and ensuring that our vital recreational fisheries are managed appropriately. Many people will be casting a line for the first time during this boom and it is critical that we invest in educating them about sustaining our fish stocks.

Participation, People and Communities

Going fishing with friends and family is a great way to spend a day. The physical and mental health benefits are enormous and that's why we believe that we should all be working together to increasing and diversifying participation in recreational fishing.

Regional towns and communities supported by healthy, vibrant recreational fisheries are great places to live and visit and we have plenty of opportunities to build more of these in SA. Creating new and better recreational fisheries will drive people to visit these locations to experience our wonderful environments and enjoy their lives with the people they love and care for.

Better Knowledge, Better Fisheries

With the ever-increasing flow of information, recreational fishers have unprecedented opportunities to build their knowledge and understanding of our fisheries and the people involved in them. The knowledge environment has propagated a new generation of fishers who are smart and motivated to further build their experience and lead the development of recreational fishing into the future. [Fish Now, Fish Forever](#) provides a wonderful opportunity to support our young people to develop careers and build prosperity, based on recreational fishing

Achieving our Vision

Resilient Environments, Abundant Fish Stocks, Fair Access and Allocations.

Without healthy fish stocks there can be no fishing and it is sad to see that several of our favourite recreational fishing species including Snapper, Murray cod and Garfish are suffering at the hands of human intervention. Clearly, the way we have managed our fish stocks hasn't worked well for these stocks or the recreational fishing sector and we are determined to do something about it.

Increasing our participation in recreational fishing will require hard decisions to be made about access and allocation of our fish stocks particularly, our popular marine scalefish species and the 277,000-person recreational fishing sector is ready to support a government who is smart enough and strong enough to do this. Creating a network of recreational fishing havens, which are largely free of commercial fishing, will provide better opportunities for recreational fishers, grow tourism and create employment in the local area.

Investing in aquatic environment protection and restoration is a no-brainer but doing it better by investing in community programs is critical. Leveraging the enormous capacity of the recreational fishing community to play a stronger and more meaningful role in delivering habitat recovery programs and driving data collection and knowledge transfer will provide community and environmental benefits that far exceed those of projects delivered solely by government.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Creating better recreational fishing opportunities means investing in the infrastructure and services that support access to our favourite fishing environments. One need only look at the incredible success that RecFish SA had in driving the government to open our reservoirs to recreational access to understand the vast array of opportunities on offer by smartly investing in recreational fishing.

There are many opportunities to enhance the reservoir fishing experience by opening and developing more of these wonderful community assets and supporting access to other great fishing locations. Re-opening and upgrading jetties and wharves, reinstating coastal and River Murray access and creating more and better camping facilities will allow people to experience more of what SA has to offer.

Taking Action

Issue

Government support for recreational fisher involvement in managing our aquatic resources is inadequate

Action

Commit to building the capacity and capability of the recreational fishing sector

Action 1

Deliver a River Murray recreational fishing co-management initiative which focuses on collaboration between government, business and the community for data collection, research, communications and management.

Action 2

Embed greater transparency in fisheries management by better communicating the science behind decision making to recreational fishers and the broader community.

Action 3

Support a junior fishers education program and kids fishing clinics to teach children about the aquatic environment and sustainable fishing practices.

Action 4

Re-establish government recognition and funding for RecFish SA as the peak body for recreational fishing.

Action 5

Fund a collaborative Citizen Science program as a means of growing community participation in fisheries data acquisition and management.

Action 6

Fund the delivery of the Recreational Fishing Champions and Snapper Stewards Program to 50 recreational fishers.

Action 7

Co-manage funds from recreational rock lobster pot and net registrations to address recreational fishing priorities.

Outcome

An educated and engaged recreational fishing community underpins better management of our fisheries



Taking Action

Issue

Inequitable allocations and access to fish stocks are impeding participation in recreational fishing and preventing opportunities for regional tourism, business development and jobs

Action

Fund and Implement the RecFish SA Better Fishing Stewardship Program

Action 6

The RecFish SA Better Fishing Stewardship Program includes;

- * increasing the allocation of key fish stocks for recreational fishing,
- * a fair and reasonable buyout of some commercial licences and quota in the Marine Scalefish fishery,
- * a fair and reasonable buy-out of commercial fishing licences in the Lakes & Coorong fishery,
- * removal of all netting from Area A of the Coorong,
- * introducing quota management in the Lakes and Coorong commercial fishery,
- * establishing recreational fishing havens in popular recreational fishing locations,
- * prioritising and protecting Australian salmon, Yellowtail kingfish, Blue groper, Samson fish, Black bream and Mulloway as key sportfishing and tourism resources,
- * prioritising the inshore Blue Swimmer crab fishery for recreational and tourism purposes and;

Outcome

Fair allocations and access support high quality recreational fishing opportunities and long term security for commercial fishers.

Taking Action

Issue

The lack of a coordinated government policy is holding back the development of recreational fishing

Action

Develop a whole of government recreational fishing policy

Action 7

Adopt the developmental objectives of the Recreational Fishing Strategy for South Australia 2021-2024

Action 8

Formally recognise recreational fishing as an active recreation to unlock development opportunities including;

- * establishing a women in fishing initiative;
- * promoting the health and well being benefits of recreational fishing,
- * increasing and diversifying community participation in recreational fishing,
- * delivering an aquatic environment and sustainable fishing education program to drive stewardship and build social licence,
- * growing participation in fishing clubs and;
- * encouraging more community fishing events and sportfishing tournaments.

Action 9

Recognise the recreational fishing sector as a key stakeholder in the SA tourism industry.

- * Develop an integrated recreational fishing tourism plan
- * Collect data on the economic contribution of recreational fishing tourism to SA.

Outcome

Recreational fishing supports a vibrant and diverse society which drives employment and growth.

Taking Action

Issue

Lack of investment by government in recreational fishing is failing the potential to unlock businesses and jobs

Action

Invest in infrastructure and facilities to build abundant fish stocks and better fishing

Action 10

Build a freshwater and a marine fish hatchery to support stocking programs for native freshwater fish, Yellowtail kingfish, Black bream, Mulloway and Snapper.

Action 11

Return the Reservoir Fishing permits scheme back to RecFish SA to maximise investment in the development of reservoir fisheries.

Action 12

Improve recreational fishing infrastructure to create diverse fishing experiences.

- * Invest in a statewide aquatic habitat program to protect and restore key habitats for aquatic species.
- * Build 3 more artificial fishing reefs and install a network of 10 FAD's in coastal waters.
- * Unlock the boating facilities fund to improve priority boat ramp facilities across the state.
- * Commit to a funded package of works to maintain our jetties in a safe condition and ensure they are accessible to people of all abilities.
- * Fund the construction of concrete decks on one metropolitan and one regional breakwater to facilitate better public access.

Action 13

Reinstate access to popular fishing locations.

- * Re-open recreational fishing access to the many wharves and jetties across the state, which have been closed to fishing.
- * Provide better facilities and access to public land on the coast and River Murray for fishing and camping.

Outcome

More abundant fish stocks and better facilities promote greater participation in recreational fishing and enhances the social, economic and well-being benefits for the community.

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