



Recfish Australia  
PO Box 187  
Grange Qld 4051  
Phone/fax 07 3356 1111  
Email [ceo@recfish.com.au](mailto:ceo@recfish.com.au)  
ABN 87 547 561 663  
[www.recfish.com.au](http://www.recfish.com.au)

Secretary  
ECITA Reference Committee  
Parliament House  
Via email

Dear Secretary

When I appeared before the Senate committee on 21 April in Brisbane I took on notice a question from Senator Siewert regarding examples of consultation in the area of marine protected area declaration or implementation. The question was: *Do you have a lot of experience from around Australia about the level of consultation with rec fishers in each state when marine protected areas are implemented?*

I have canvassed our member organisations and the following is either excerpts from submissions they have made or comments they provided me in relation to this issue. Suffice to say, in many instances, the feeling is one of dissatisfaction with the consultative processes.

In addition to the poor or non-existent consultation many people are of the view that the genuineness of consultation is often questionable. A glaring example in the eyes of our Sunfish Qld member is the Sandy Straight Marine Park process. With Sunfish provided with the opportunity to consult they did so and in spite of their efforts to influence the outcome none of their suggestions or alternative solutions were considered in the final plan. This, in some eyes, will be seen as sour grapes or simply the inability to change plans or that not all submissions are successful. However in the eyes of those that are on the end of such outcomes it is seen as "claytons" consultation. Governments or its agencies simply going through the motions and at the end of the process claiming that we did consult.

**Recfishwest - Rowley Shoals Marine Park Draft Management Plan and Indicative Management Plan for Extensions to the Existing Marine Park 2004**

Recfishwest is disappointed by the review process, in particular the exclusion of proper recreational fishing representation that would have resulted in a more realistic draft plan had it been actively involved in the consultative process.

Recfishwest has not been consulted on this plan even though recreational fishers are a major stakeholder and once again the group most impacted by these proposals. The process has been biased because representatives of dive/ecotourism operations have been openly

antagonistic towards the future of recreational fishing at Rowley Shoals, for no other reason than to enhance their vested interest by excluding recreational angling from the Marine Park augmented in some cases by outright prejudice.

### **Recfishwest submission for the Ningaloo Marine Park Draft Management Plan**

In using the Coral Coast Parks Advisory Committee (CCPAC) as the principal community consultation mechanism for the Ningaloo Review, CALM has followed the impractical process described above. Recfishwest is concerned with the current membership of the CCPAC; particularly the conspicuous lack of recreational fishing representation. The MPRA is considering recommendations by the CCPAC without proper input of key stakeholders due to the unbalanced composition of the committee.

### **Recfishwest submission to the draft Rottneest Island Management Plan 2002 - 2007**

A major issue of concern to Recfishwest is that the process undertaken to develop the draft management plan, in particular its marine zoning proposals, did not include stakeholders or any of the sources of expertise available in WA on marine zoning.

The production of this draft Plan does not in itself constitute effective consultation. Rather it represents a very clumsy short cut that has only served to greatly alienate many of the Authority's customers and at the same time set back the cause of Rottneest Island marine conservation by years.

Recfishwest view this as an abject failure on behalf of the Rottneest Island Authority for which they must be taken to task.

We draw to the attention of the Rottneest Island Authority a document recently released by the WA Premier entitled 'Consulting Citizens: A Resource Guide'. As the Authority is probably not aware of this document we enclose a copy and recommend that each of your Board members read it.

### **Comments from the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT.**

Despite AFANT's involvement in the Ocean Planning process with NOO/DEH and our obvious interest in any MPAs development in the Northern Planning Area, we have still not been given any information on the process, timetable or regional MPA rationale (or possible locations) for NT waters. We are aware that DEH is attempting to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with the NT Government on MPAs but, despite requests to both DEH and NT Gov, AFANT has not been able to view and comment on the draft MOU. As far as we know, no other stakeholders have been consulted on the MOU.

Also, in January, we provided DEH with a document setting out our position on the process and suggesting some rationalisation. We have had no feedback from DEH on the paper.

We hope that DEH does not claim that the Oceans Planning Process was part of the MPA consultative process as they are very different activities with very different intended outcomes.

### **Australian Underwater Federation (AUF) submission on Lord Howe Island Marine Park**

At no stage have either of the government departments approached this group seeking expert opinion on a proposal to ban spearfishing from the entire marine park. Given the enormous potential implication of this proposal this is very poor consultation. This **MUST** be addressed and the AUF would like to be a member of the review committee and to have access to the submissions prior to any decisions that can negatively affect our stakeholders. And, if the unthinkable happens and we are excluded we will demand reconsideration under legal processes and may seek compensation.

### **A further comment from AUF**

The consultation in regard to Lord Howe Island Marine Park with the NSW MPA and NSW Minister was poor or non-existent. Recreational fishers (and particularly spearfishers) put in hundreds of submissions - and the Govt banned us because of minority local views. Normally, you would expect that the peak stakeholder group (AUF) would be consulted if there was a major change in access and the impacts discussed and negotiated for a "win-win" outcome

Attached separately is a letter from TARFish on the new SE plan and MPAs proposed. I ask that you refer these comments to the committee for further consideration.

Yours sincerely

John Harrison  
Chief Executive Officer  
18 May 2006