

## Cockburn Sound

Critical spawning habitat must be protected!

Family fishing fun must not be compromised!

Recfishwest have ALWAYS been there to defend this special place and we  
ALWAYS will be!

The aquatic environment of Cockburn Sound and adjacent waters provide great fishing and are critically important for Pink snapper spawning. Cockburn Sound is under enormous cumulative pressure from a whole range of sources and any new development proposals that reduce fish habitats and abundances or proposals that restrict people's right to access this great fishery will be opposed. The Sound is worth fighting for, it always has been and it always will be.

### **Background**

Recfishwest are very aware of the important role Cockburn Sound plays in providing great fishing experiences for recreational fishers. In addition to hosting the largest spawning aggregations of Pink Snapper in the West Coast Bioregion, Cockburn Sound is also an important nursery area for a number of other fish species who rely on the seagrass meadows for their survival.

The Sound also provides oceanic fishing experiences for small boats and kayaks thanks to the protection given to it by Garden Island. Places such as the D9, Pinnacles, Parmelia bank, coat hanger and numerous other iconic locations are great accessible family fishing spots. With good drop-offs to the North, East and South of the Sound there is usually a location that supports fishing whatever the weather conditions.

Recfishwest have a long history of fighting to protect Cockburn Sound, we were a driving force behind the creation of the Cockburn Sound Management Council and have been a foundation member on the council since its inception. We were pivotal in getting the spawning closure for Pink Snapper (against the advice of Fisheries) and we were the driving force behind the Snapper Guardians program which saw over 400 people reach into their own pocket and has seen over 100,000 snapper stocked into the Sound.

Recfishwest have been advocating on behalf of Cockburn Sound for decades. From Cockburn Cement's dredging program, the proposed livestock holding facility, James Point, fish kills and a series of port proposals over the years, Recfishwest has been there defending the Sound to protect the fishing we cherish.

*Proposals that reduce fish habitats and abundances or developments that restrict people's right to access this great fishery will be opposed. The Sound is worth fighting for, it always has been and it always will be.*



## Recfishwest's Position on the Cockburn Sound Outer Harbour

### **The Outer Harbour Issue:**

Over the years there have been a number of outer harbor proposals in the Sound. There have been proposals for floating platforms, land backed ports and ocean reclaimed ports. There have been ports proposed in the North and South of the Sound and for each of these proposals Recfishwest have been there to ensure pink snapper stocks remain protected. Despite what you may have seen on social media there is NOT currently any proposal for a port in Cockburn Sound however there is a Westport taskforce that you may have heard about.

The Westport taskforce's aim is to *provide the Government with advice on the planning, development and growth of the Port of Fremantle at the Inner and Outer Harbours, the required rail and road networks, and the potential for the Port of Bunbury to contribute to the handling of the growing trade task*. Basically it has been set up to tell the government what the future transport needs of Western Australia will be and the best way to achieve these needs.

The taskforce is looking at all the old port proposals and at the capacity of existing ports. They are talking to a whole range of stakeholders to make sure they are aware of all the issues. This taskforce is scheduled to deliver a report to government in September 2019. If that report recommends a port in Cockburn Sound then a port proposal will be developed and we will then have a proposal to assess and comment on. Until that happens Recfishwest will be providing the taskforce with as much information about the social, economic, recreational and environmental value Cockburn Sound provides for recreational fishing in order to help the government make the right decision.

Recfishwest have secured a position on the environmental work group for the Westport task force and the importance of Pink Snapper breeding grounds, seagrass nursery meadows, iconic wrecks and a number of other factors that make the Sound so important for fishing have been recognised.

Here is where you can help – please engage in the Westport process, attend the public information sessions and tell decision makers why you value Cockburn Sound and what you want protected.

If the government in their wisdom choose to disregard input from Recfishwest and the fishing community then we will change our approach but as the old saying goes “decisions are made by those who attend the meetings” and we are making sure that we attend every meeting. Recfishwest has already provided a submission on the preparation of the Westport Strategy and we will provide submissions at every stage of the process until the final report is released.

When a preferred plan is announced in September 2019 we will look at that plan on its merits but until then there is no current proposal despite what some industry, union, fishing or environmental groups may be saying. The conversation is all about where would the state put a new or expanded harbour if and when WA needs it? Will the answer lie in expanding Fremantle port, building a new port in Kwinana, expanding Bunbury port or will the answer be a mixture of all three options? The report could also say no new infrastructure will be needed for decades.

While we do not know what the final recommendation of the Westport taskforce will be we do know that Recfishwest will continue to fight to protect Pink Snapper and the great fishing provided by Cockburn Sound.