



Hon. Dave Kelly MLA  
Minister for Fisheries

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## MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 15 August 2018

### **Recfishers can now cast a line at Exmouth's new artificial reef**

- More than 27,000 cubic metres of fish habitat has been established off Exmouth
- The \$1 million integrated artificial reef will create fishing and research opportunities
- This new, accessible and safe fishing option is partly funded through the State Government's Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund

Fishers now have access to a new and safe recreational fishing experience in one of Western Australia's most iconic fishing destinations, with the deployment of Exmouth's new Integrated Artificial Reef (EIAR).

The new reef has been named King Reef in honour of Marine Surveyor Lieutenant Phillip Parker King, who named Exmouth Gulf in 1818; and the late George King, a pioneer of charter fishing in Exmouth and Coral Bay in the 1960s and 1970s.

Concrete and steel structures laid out across two acres of ocean floor (at a depth of 17m) will provide a habitat volume equal to that of 11 Olympic-size swimming pools. These structures will provide important cavities and ledges for fish to take refuge in and under.

Inquisitive, large pelagic fish such as Spanish mackerel will almost immediately be attracted to the structure and, as nature takes over, the reef will host newly established sponges, corals and algae, offering a great habitat for reef fish species to produce and form a fully-fledged ecosystem.

For the fishers, the species that will attract them to the EIAR are likely to be various trevally and mackerel, as well as tusk fish, emperors, coral trout, cod species and tropical snappers.

Now deployed inside Exmouth Gulf, near the Exmouth Boat Harbour, the new reef's accessibility will be a significant benefit for both local and visiting fishers.

The local Exmouth fishing community will be involved in monitoring the reef, with underwater video tracking its development, as part of Recfishwest's Reef Vision Program, bringing in 'citizen science' opportunities that will be supported by Curtin University.

The State Government provided \$300,000 through the Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund, while BHP and National Energy Resources Australia (NERA) also made generous contributions to help support the innovative design and technology in this \$1 million project. The project was built and deployed under the guidance of WA company Subcon.

Video and pictures are available upon request.

#### **Comments attributed to Fisheries Minister Dave Kelly:**

"The deployment of this new artificial reef is great news for fishers, the local economy and jobs in the region.

"Exmouth now joins Mandurah, Bunbury and Dunsborough as the fourth regional town to benefit from an artificial reef, with Esperance on the South Coast next in line later this year.

“Artificial reefs are proven to provide great opportunities to local communities, and the Exmouth reef is designed to give families in small boats access to safe fishing in sheltered waters.

“The Exmouth reef is a unique design with six stabilised steel fish towers and 49 concrete structures creating a diverse marine ecosystem, which will attract a range of species that will either explore the new reef or make it a permanent home.

“This is another example of the State Government making good use of recreational fishing fees to enhance the reef fishing experience in WA.”

**Media contact: Alysha Anderson 0447 462 589 or 6552 6100**