



- Position Statement -

Recognising the Values of Recreational Fishing

When any decision is undertaken which may result in the loss of availability, accessibility or quality of a recreational fishing resource, Recfishwest believes the proponent should undertake a social impact assessment to quantify the social, economic and cultural impact on the recreational fishing sector. Once these impacts have been quantified, the proponent should take action to appease any loss by means of avoidance, mitigation, or as a last resort, offset.

Background

The right to fish recreationally is entrenched in Australian society and cultural heritage. The continued access to fishing grounds and the health and amenity of those grounds is directly related to the social, economic and cultural value of those grounds. Any action or decision which threatens to compromise these values must be adequately avoided, mitigated or offset.

Recreational fishing social impact assessments can be defined as the process of assessing or estimating, in advance, the consequence that is likely to follow from a specific policy action or development which has the potential to compromise the social, cultural or economic values of the recreational fishing resource. Such an assessment can be conducted in the context of national, state, or regional legislation.

There are substantial benefits to be gained from exploring mitigation and management measures by governments, communities, and developers. If however mitigation and management measures are not feasible then an offset may be considered. These offsets however will only be considered where significant benefit exists to the recreational fishing resource and its stakeholders.

Definitions

Social impacts - means consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society.

Cultural impacts – means changes to the norms, values, and beliefs of individuals that guide and rationalise their cognition of themselves and their society.

Economic impacts – means changes in the financial value the act of recreational fishing brings to the community, region and state.