



WA Recreational Fishing

2022-2025

THREE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DEVELOPMENT PLAN
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FOREWORD

MINISTER FOR FISHERIES



“This plan will help drive innovation and recreational fishing investment over the next several years.”

Western Australia is a beautiful place and home to some of the world’s best fishing experiences. Our northern regions have abundant threadfin salmon in Roebuck Bay, marlin and sailfish in Exmouth and meter-plus barramundi in Lake Kununurra. There are crayfish, abalone and dhufish on the doorstep of the Perth and Peel regions, and the salmon fishing in our southern regions see thousands of fishers flock to the world’s best beaches for world-class sportfishing every Autumn.

With one third of Western Australians casting a line every year, recreational fishing truly is a part of our social fabric. Recreational fishing is also a major economic driver for many rural and regional towns, injecting \$2.4 billion directly into our local economies each year. Recreational fishing has great potential to become a national and international tourism drawcard, encouraging more people to visit our great State in search of the perfect catch.

The McGowan Labor Government wants WA’s recreational fishing experience to get even better, building on our reputation for being one of the best places in the world to fish and for having the most sustainable and best managed fisheries on Earth.

Prior to the 2021 election, Premier McGowan committed to the creation of a recreational fishing development plan for WA. Recfishwest, with assistance from the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD), has been working on fulfilling this important government commitment. This plan will help drive innovation and lead recreational fishing investments over the next several years. It will help focus the activities of Recfishwest, provide direction to government planning processes and inform development opportunities with industry.

My challenge to Recfishwest is to understand and grow the economic, health, and social benefits that fishing provides while balancing the long-term sustainability of our publicly-owned fish resources. This will ultimately ensure we optimise the quality of recreational fishing for current and future generations while maximising the many benefits fishing provides. In fulfilling another election commitment, this Government’s strong ongoing commitment to the State’s estimated 750,000 fishers is clear.

HON. DONALD PUNCH MLA

CATCH THE STATS

FISHING IN WA

An annual \$2.4 billion direct economic injection into all areas of our economy.

Land travel - \$477 million

Accommodation - \$37 million

Boats - \$389 million

Boat fuel - \$418 million

Fishing gear - \$159 million

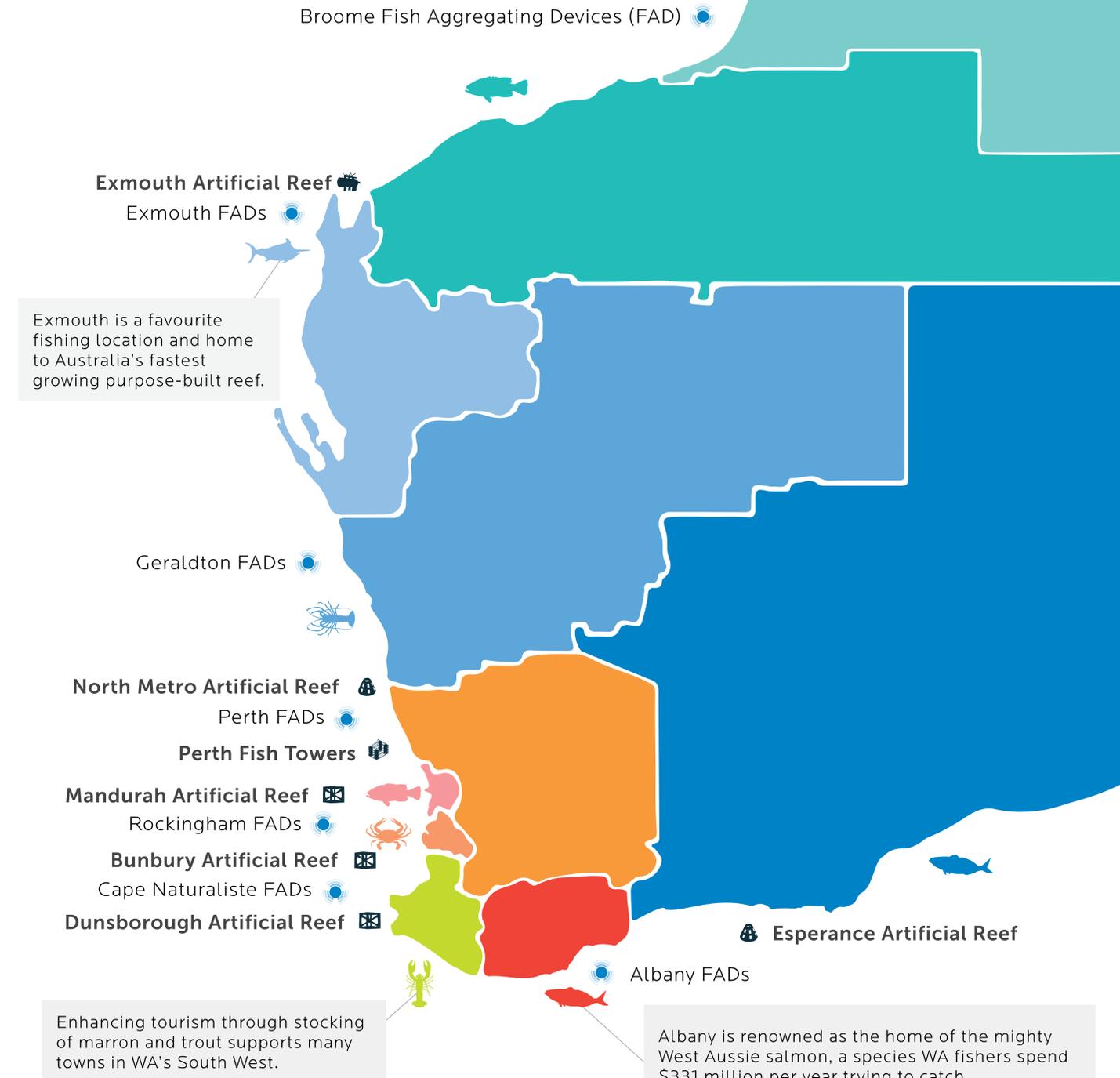
Bait and ice - \$244 million

Food and drinks - \$605 million

Regional spend / yr

- Kimberley - \$184.1 mil
- Pilbara - \$189.8 mil
- Gascoyne - \$27.5 mil
- Mid West - \$76 mil
- Goldfields - \$146.6 mil
- Wheatbelt - \$42.9 mil
- Metro - \$1.1 bil
- Peel - \$217.2 mil
- South West - \$305.6 mil
- Great Southern - \$45.8 mil

The ongoing Lake Kununurra Barramundi Stocking program has resulted in fishers spending about \$7.66 million annually in Kununurra, chasing 1m-plus trophy barra.



FOREWORD

RECFISHWEST CEO



“...more places to fish, more fish to catch and a management approach that maximises enjoyment.”

Like most West Australians, I believe our publicly-owned fisheries should be sustainably managed in a way that provides the best social, and economic return to WA. For me, this means protecting, improving, and developing the fishing experiences our great State offers.

I would like to see simple rules, better access, less restrictions and management focused on positive experiences. In short, I want there to be more places to fish, more fish to catch and a management approach that maximises enjoyment, all within the boundaries of sustainable management.

If we want to maintain and grow the fishing experiences WA has to offer, we need to rise to the challenge of a growing population, improved technology, changes in community expectations, environmental changes – and of course, finding the right balance with other stakeholders who often have different expectations about how our fish are best managed. This development plan has four key focus areas:

- **Better understanding, capturing and promoting all the benefits recreational fishing provides;**
- **Maintaining and improving fishing access for both land and boat-based fishers;**
- **Stewardship and leadership of recreational fishing;**
- **Utilising digital technology in an everchanging world.**

That said, the extent to which this plan will see artificial reefs installed, jetties built, or our freshwater fisheries developed will largely depend on the support we receive from our government and non-government partners who share our vision. The assistance provided by DPIRD in the development of this plan, combined with the support for the creation of the plan from the highest levels of government, fills me with confidence that everyone will work together to make fishing in WA better than ever.

DR ANDREW ROWLAND

THREE YEAR

DEVELOPMENT PLAN



OUR VISION

To optimise recreational fishing in Western Australian communities now and in the future



OUR PARTNERS

Collaboration with partners is vital to realise our vision for recreational fishing in WA

THE PLAN

OUR WAY FORWARD



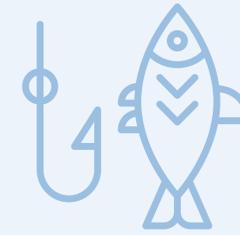
Our vision of optimising recreational fishing in WA can be achieved through focus in four key areas:

- 1. We will highlight the economic, health and social value proposition of fishing.**
- 2. We will provide access to better quality fishing through new facilities and by modernising ageing infrastructure.**
- 3. We will be the leader and steward of recreational fishing.**
- 4. We will embrace digital innovation.**

These four key areas will guide our efforts and resources for successful delivery of priorities.



WE WILL HIGHLIGHT THE ECONOMIC, HEALTH AND SOCIAL VALUE PROPOSITION OF FISHING.



1.1

Ensure the significant economic contribution recreational fishing provides to the State's economy is recognised and valued across the Government.

1.1.1 Strengthen recognition of economic contribution in State Government administrative, research and resource management reports and regional development planning.

Q1 2023

1.1.2 Continue to research and promote the economics of recreational fishing in WA.

ONGOING

1.2

Ensure the social, physical and mental health benefits of fishing are recognised and valued by all West Australians.

1.2.1 Conduct a comprehensive state-wide health and wellbeing investigation into the benefits and importance of recreational fishing benefits.

Q3 2023

1.2.2 Publish research on the recreational fishing value proposition – economic, social, physical and mental health benefits.

Q3 2024

1.3

Continuously celebrate our community's connection to recreational fishing.

1.3.1 Promote at the grass-roots level the positive fishing opportunities, events and experiences WA has to offer.

ONGOING

1.4

Establish recreational fishing as one of the key enablers of regional economic development.

1.4.1 Promote economic contribution of recreational fishing to Regional Development Commissions and regional councils to imbed fishing in planning and investment activities.

Q4 2023

1.4.2 Establish better connection and collaboration between Recfishwest and the Government to tap capability and capacity for sustainability and regional development.

Q3 2024

1.4.3 Develop business cases for fishing initiatives that provide a positive impact to regional areas with a particular focus on freshwater fisheries, infrastructure and other elements contained with this plan.

Q3 2023

1.5

Work closely with the tourism sector in providing better value and diverse fishing options.

1.5.1 Identify and develop tourism partnerships.

Q1 2024

1.5.2 Explore development of packaged recreational fishing experiences including cultural and wilderness area tourism.

Q3 2024

1.5.3 Support genuine charter operators who provide a valued fishing experience through sector reform and addressing latent effort within industry.

Q2 2023

WE WILL PROVIDE ACCESS TO BETTER QUALITY FISHING THROUGH NEW FACILITIES AND BY MODERNISING AGEING INFRASTRUCTURE.



2.1

Increase access for land-based fishing for fishers of all abilities to enjoy fishing.

2.1.1 Identify priority land-based access requirements for marine, estuarine and freshwater fisheries

Q1 2023

2.1.2 Create a new infrastructure program.

Q1 2025

2.1.3 Establish leveraging principles for future infrastructure planning and co-funding processes.

Q2 2023

2.1.4 Increase access for people with disabilities by strengthening partnership with the NFP sector, State and Local Government Agencies.

Q3 2024

2.1.5 Increase expertise in jetty technology and development of a program specifically aimed at improving accessibility.

Q4 2022

2.2

Modernise existing infrastructure to improve fishing experience and safety.

2.2.1 Identify infrastructure refurbishment and safety equipment needs.

Q1 2023

2.2.2 Develop and deliver funding strategies to modernise existing infrastructure and safety equipment needs.

Q3 2023

2.3

Continue introducing artificial reefs and Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) to support fishing experiences offshore.

2.3.1 Partner with government and the resources industry on artificial reef applications.

Q4 2022

2.3.2 Build on the successes in Esperance, Exmouth and the South West, by installing two new reefs each year.

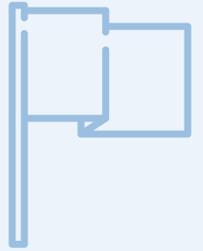
Q4 2024

2.3.3 Expand the State-wide FADs trial to more regional locations.

Q1 2023



WE WILL BE THE LEADER AND STEWARD OF RECREATIONAL FISHING.



<p>3.1</p> <p>Foster and promote stewardship of fishing and fishing habitats.</p>	<p>3.2</p> <p>Inspire responsible fishing.</p>	<p>3.3</p> <p>Increase community understanding about how sustainable management improves fishing experiences.</p>	<p>3.4</p> <p>Optimise investment of the Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund (RFIF) to provide the best return to the fishing community.</p>	<p>3.5</p> <p>Continuously develop and shape positive fishing policies that ensure intergenerational equity of fishing experiences.</p>
<p>3.1.1 Recfishwest to be recognised as a major stakeholder in co-designing recreational fishing management under the Aquatic Resources Management Act. Q4 2022</p>	<p>3.2.1 Review, update and promote WA's Fishing Code of Conduct. Q3 2022</p> <p>3.2.2 Educating fishers about responsible fishing including minimising shark interactions and discouraging demersal catch and release fishing. Q3 2022</p> <p>3.2.3 Invest in understanding the benefits of responsible fishing measures such as release weights, barbless and single hooks and shark deterrents. Q2 2023</p>	<p>3.3.1 Promote positive recreational fishing stories and partner with Government to improve communication of latest science and R&D to the public. Q3 2022</p> <p>3.3.2 Leverage funding to expand the Fishing for Science program through fishing events across the State. Q4 2022</p> <p>3.3.3 Champion clear, easily understood and fit-for-purpose rules (for species, region, seasons) based on realising the optimal value from our fish resources. ONGOING</p>	<p>3.4.1 Conduct regular surveys of fishers asking where they want their licence money invested BIENNIAL</p> <p>3.4.2 Develop and implement a five-year RFIF investment strategy and coordinate timely investment advice provided to the Minister each year against this strategy. Q3 2022</p> <p>3.4.3 Track progress of investments using recreational fishing licence fees through the RFIF and report on the delivery of these projects to fishers. ANNUAL</p>	<p>3.5.1 Partner with Government and/or academic institutions to research and publish the effects of marine parks, closed seasons, access fees and other controls on both fishing experiences and sustainability. Q1 2023</p> <p>3.5.2 Research how traditional knowledge can be applied to management frameworks that support fishing experiences. Q2 2023</p>



WE WILL EMBRACE DIGITAL INNOVATION



4.1

Strengthen engagement and information sharing with the community and related sectors through digital channels.

4.1.1. We will maximise the use of technology to be the credible pathway of communications with all fishers particularly when fishing in remote and regional areas.

Q1 2023

4.1.2. Support 'informed fishers' by providing reliable, relevant and timely digital information at their fingertips.

Q2 2024

4.2

Use appropriate technology to enable data collection from fishers to inform science-led decision-making.

4.2.1. Invest in digital platforms for data collection from fishers to inform fisheries management, such as quantifying shark depredation and validation of recreational catch estimates.

Q4 2023

4.3

Identify and develop appropriate technology to effectively listen to fishers' views and understand their interests.

4.3.1. Conduct regular surveys and provide various digital feedback channels.

ONGOING

4.3.2. Invest in providing the next generation of fishers with an understanding of fisheries management and the confidence to communicate their aspirations.

Q2 2024

4.4

Transform information to analytics for R&D, safety, sustainability, and management purposes.

4.4.1. Develop data intelligence platforms and capability within Recfishwest that can be shared with stakeholders.

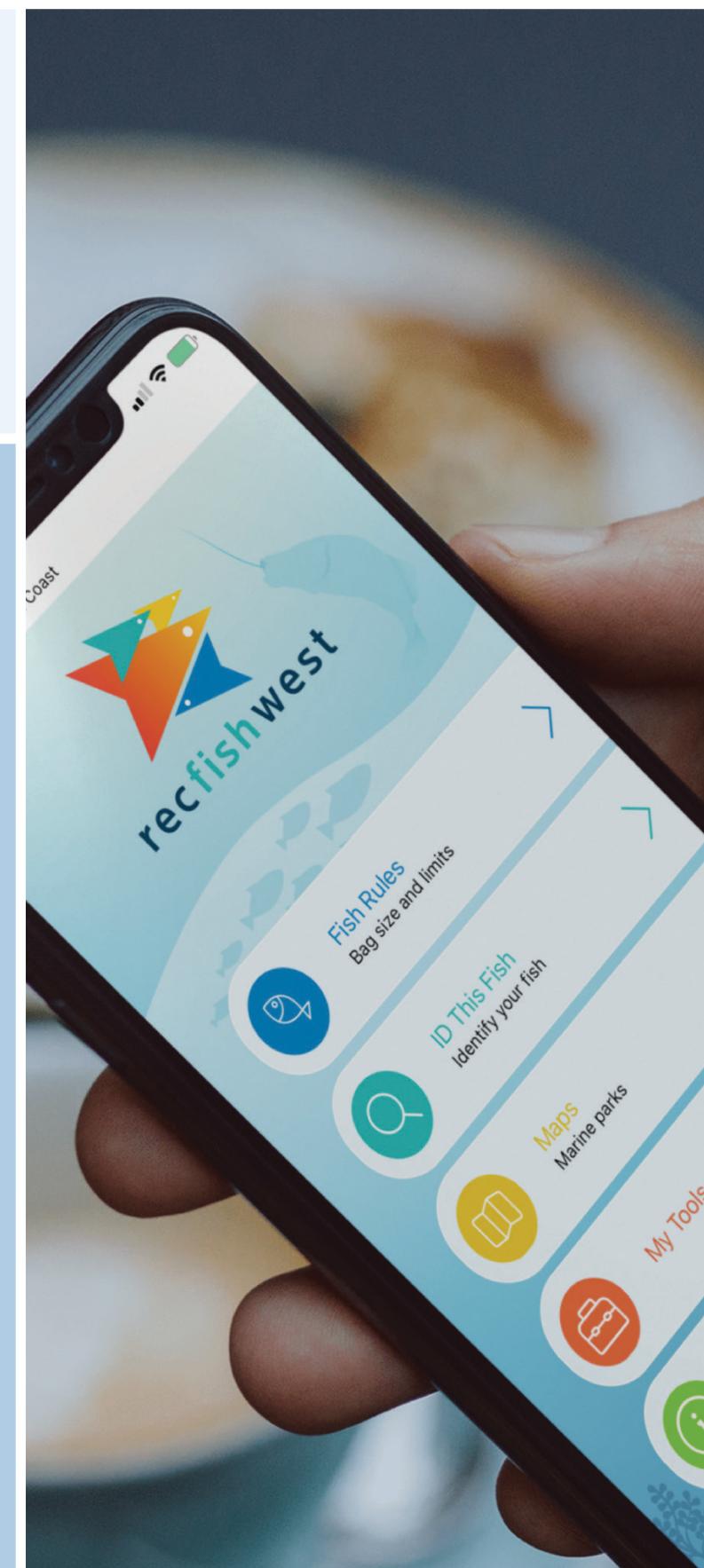
Q1 2025

4.4.2. Conduct an audit of appropriate data sources and sensor types for big data and its application to fisheries management.

Q2 2025

4.4.3. Build data warehouse and dashboards for timely reporting, visualisation and source of truth.

Q2 2025





This plan was created by Recfishwest with assistance from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.