

**E** FISHING

# Rowland urges fishers to speak out

**STAFF REPORTER**  
RECFISHWEST CEO Dr Andrew Rowland fishes in Esperance this week.

"We have heard growing concerns from the fishing community about the marine park planning process and the impact of potentially heavy restrictions on the south coast way of life," he said.

Dr Rowland urged south coast fishers to strongly make their views heard when plans for the proposed South Coast Marine Park were expected to be released for public comment next month.

A RecFishWest spokesman said fishing was a key part of the south coast coastal lifestyle bringing enormous social, well-being and economic benefits to those who lived there and the tens of thou-



● RecFishWest chief executive Dr Andrew Rowland takes time out to fish on the south coast.

sands who visited to fish there every year.

"Subsequently, Recfishwest has heard widespread concerns from south coast fishers and wider community members about the potential impact of the marine park and being ignored in the planning process," he said.

"Many people we have

spoken to are worried about their freedom to drive along beaches to access their favourite fishing spots or take the tinny out from a boat ramp close to town to catch a feed of fish for the family.

"There has also been growing chorus of voices across the south coast community and



from members of the marine park's Community Reference Committee publicly criticising the direction of the planning process."

Dr Andrew Rowland said there was mounting concern that the freedom to fish beaches and offshore areas prized by generations of south coast residents

and visitors was on the line.

"With our own experiences of it to date, we share the community's concerns that the planning process for the marine park has gone sideways," he said.

"The establishment of a marine park along the south coast must be balanced and should



● Fishing on the south coast.

not deprive local communities from accessing popular fishing locations and beaches and all the well-being, family, social and economic benefits they provide to the local community.

"To achieve this balance, the Government must genuinely listen to and taken on board the concerns and aspira-

tions of the recreational fishing community and of the wider south coast community as a whole."

Dr Rowland said this also made it critical for south coast fishers to make clear what is important to them, when details of the proposed marine park were released for public comment.



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