

Aaron Cook  
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Dear Mr. Cook,

## **RECFISHWEST SUBMISSION ON SHIRE OF GINGIN COASTAL MANAGEMENT**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Shire of Gingin's coastal management documents produced as part of the 'Our Coast. Our Journey' project; namely:

- 'Shire of Gingin Coastal Management on the Gingin Coast – A Summary';
- 'Shire of Gingin Coastal Management Strategy'; and
- 'Shire of Gingin Coastal Hazard Risk Management Adaptation Plan'.

As the peak body for recreational fishing in Western Australia, Recfishwest's interest in commenting on these documents relates to their implications to recreational fishing. While the documents themselves do not specifically address actions to manage recreational fishing, it is noted that they do outline management actions which would impact recreational fishing access and amenity.

Fishing is a quintessential part of the lifestyle of regional towns, and beach driving is part and parcel of the fishing experience in towns such as Lancelin. The ability to drive along the beach to your favourite fishing spot is a major drawcard for visitors to these towns, and for many people is a major part of why they choose to live there. Beach driving is often a necessity for being able to access popular fishing locations, particularly for those people with mobility issues.

Any proposal to remove or restrict vehicle access to beaches, and therefore impact on fishing amenity, should clearly demonstrate that the activity is incompatible with the objectives of the area and that alternative management solutions have been considered before defaulting to heavy-handed restrictions.

Coastal erosion is a complex and challenging issue faced by many coastal towns throughout Western Australia; however, in this instance Recfishwest sees little evidence that responsible beach driving is the cause or exacerbates this issue within the areas highlighted by this proposal. Coastlines are dynamic environments and can be subject to drastic changes as a result of both natural and anthropomorphic processes; people familiar with this stretch of coastline can attest to the substantial reduction in beachfront that occurs with winter storms and redeposition over summer. Geoscience Australia's [data on coastline change](#) also highlights the variability of the coastline within the Shire of Gingin, both on a year-to-year basis and longer-term trends of both erosion on some beaches and accretion on others.

It is not apparent in the Shire of Gingin's coastal management documents that any solutions other than complete removal of vehicle access have been considered to manage perceived impacts of beach driving. In principle, Recfishwest supports (where appropriate) alternative measures such as speed restrictions, limiting beach access to capable vehicles only, and signage and education. It is also worth noting that Recfishwest does not object to the closure and rehabilitation of certain vehicle access tracks, in cases where there are redundant tracks (i.e. the beach is still accessible by nearby tracks) and closure of particular tracks does not make vehicle access to the beach more difficult. It is disappointing that it appears the Shire has defaulted to the most extreme option.

With regards to the specific management actions outlined in the *Shire of Gingin Coastal Management Strategy (CMS)*, Recfishwest makes the following comments:

### Lancelin

1. Access to and along North Point

The beach area adjacent to Lancelin Island (North Point) is a popular fishing location for species such as herring, whiting and mulloway. Access to the beach off Hinchcliffe Road, as well as the track that runs parallel to the beach, are important for fishers to be able to access this fishing location. Recfishwest does not support the removal of vehicle access and closure of the foreshore track in this area.

2. Access to the beach at Lancelin Jetty

Lancelin Jetty is the primary boat launching location in the town, owing to the relatively protected embayment and the access point to the beach. The beach area is important for vehicle and trailer parking for fishers launching their boat in this area. The proposal to restrict vehicle access in this area would reduce the space available to fishers to launch vessels, as well as the available area for parking. The proposal also does not appear to provide a solution for vehicle parking as a result of this reduction. For these reasons, Recfishwest does not support the reduction of vehicle access in this area.

3. Access to the beach between Bandy Ave and Hopkins Street

As with Lancelin Jetty, the area of Lancelin Bay between Bandy Ave and Hopkins Street is used by recreational fishers as a boat launching location. Access points to the beach at Hopkins Street, Bayliss Street and Timothy Street are important access points, and the beachfront between these areas are utilised for vehicle and boat trailer parking. Removal of beach access to this stretch of beach will impact on the ability for fishers to launch boats, particularly during peak periods where the boat launching area at the jetty is at capacity. There is a cumulative impact from the proposal to both remove access at this location and reduce access at Lancelin Jetty. Therefore, Recfishwest does not support this proposal.

4. Access to Edwards Island Point and Back Beach

The southern side of the Edwards Island Point (and start of Back Beach) is a popular fishing location for bread-and-butter species such as herring and whiting. This area is

particularly popular with visiting families and during holiday periods. Edwards Island Point undergoes significant changes due to natural coastal processes, often almost completely receding and re-accreting in the space of a few years. There is also no nearby parking between Grace Darling Park and the carpark at Back Beach, making vehicle access particularly important for accessibility for fishers with mobility issues. Recfishwest does not see the merit of removing vehicle access to this area, which would negatively impact fishing access.

### Ledge Point

1. Relocation of the boat launching area  
Recreational vessels are routinely launched from the area south of the groynes at Ledge Point; the bay at this location is relatively protected due to the nearshore reef system, making boat launching possible during times where other, less protected areas are not suitable. The beach area here is utilised by fishers for vehicle and trailer boat parking. The area to the north of town where the Shire of Gingin proposes to relocate boat launching is less protected and less suitable. This would negatively impact boat fishing accessibility around Ledge Point by requiring much calmer conditions to launch a boat than is currently required. Recfishwest does not support the relocation of this boat launching area.
2. Vehicle access south of Ledge Point  
The beach to the south of Ledge Point (from the boat launching area southwards) is, in addition to its use for launching recreational vessels and trailer parking, a popular fishing location for residents and visitors to Ledge Point. The Shire of Gingin's CMS suggests that vehicle access to this beach will be prohibited to at least south-east past the access track off Jones Street; it is not clear whether vehicles would be allowed or prohibited past the southern extent shown in Figure 22. In addition, removal of vehicle access to the extent shown in Figure 22 would force vehicles to use the access track off De Burgh St to access the beach, which is a single-lane sand track which winds over 2.5km through the coastal dunes before providing an access point down to the beach. Recfishwest does not support this proposal given the impacts to fishing access.

### Seabird

1. Boat launching  
Boat fishers in Seabird launch their vessels from the beach access track off Edwards St, using the adjacent beachfront as vehicle and boat trailer parking. The information provided in the Summary document states that the existing boat launching area will be relocated to "a suitable location for the new boat launching area just north of the townsite where tracks already exist". Figure 10 in this document suggests that this is adjacent to the Seabird Caravan Park. However, the CMS does not provide information on where the new boat launching area will be located and suggests that vehicle access to the beachfront adjacent to the caravan park will be prohibited. There is insufficient detail on the location and

accessibility of the proposed new boat launching area to accurately assess its suitability. In lieu of adequate information, Recfishwest cannot support this proposal.

2. Vehicle access

Likewise, there is a lack of clarity on the extent of vehicle closures proposed for Seabird. The CMS suggests that this will extend from at least ~500m south of McCormick St, north to approximately 250m north of Williams Way. It is not clear whether this is the extent of the proposed vehicle restrictions, or if they extend past the extent shown in Figures 25 and 26. Beaches to the north and south of Seabird are valued by recreational fishers for species such as tailor and mullet, and vehicle access to the beach is important for maintaining fishing opportunities. In lieu of adequate details on the relocation of the boat launching area, vehicle access to the beach north of the seawall is also important for recreational fishers. Recfishwest does not support the proposed vehicle restrictions given the lack of clarity in the information provided.

### Guilderton

1. Vehicle access and boat launching

Recfishwest's notes that the extent of vehicle prohibition shown in the CMS (Figures 29 and 30) aligns with the current vehicle prohibition in place, and the proposed track closures do not remove vehicle access to the beach or make it more difficult. It is also noted that there are no proposed changes to boat launching areas or facilities. Therefore, Recfishwest does not object to the proposed actions for Guilderton where recreational fishing is concerned.

Should you require any further information on the matters raised above, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9246 3366.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Rowland  
Chief Executive Officer  
Recfishwest

28 August 2023