

Annual Report 22/23

Our purpose is great fishing experiences
for all in the WA community, forever.



Chairman
Liam Surridge

Chief Executive Officer
Dr Andrew Rowland

Operations Manager
Leyland Campbell

Partnerships & Business Development Manager
Tim Grose

Operations Lead
Matt Gillett

Communications Lead
Ben Carlish

Communications Coordinator
Jarrad Lawford

Digital & Systems Coordinator
Sedin Hasanovic

Programs Manager
James Florisson

Senior Operations Officer
Sam Russell

Operations Team Member
Levi De Boni

Research & Development Lead
Sam Bock

Policy and Approvals Officer
Danielle Hartshorn

Artificial Reefs Approvals Officer
Eligh Quigley

Research Officer
Domenic Holland

Corporate Services Officer
Kim Wood

Finance Manager
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Accounts Assistant
Linda Rose

Auditor
In Focus Accounting



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Department of
Primary Industries and
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Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries





















Photo: Al McGlashan

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Acknowledgment of Country

Recfishwest acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and sea, and we pay our respect to Elders past, present and future. We recognise the strength, resilience, and capacity of traditional custodians in managing and caring for the land and sea. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to life in Western Australia.

Letter from the Minister

‘Hon. Don Punch MLA - Minister for Regional Development, Disability Services, Fisheries, Seniors and Ageing, Volunteering’



Fishing continues to be a hugely important part of Western Australia’s culture and lifestyle, supporting nearly 10,000 jobs in WA and providing a significant contribution to our regional and metropolitan economies.

As a Government, we are committed to protecting and managing the sustainability of our State’s valuable fisheries to make sure there are plenty of fish for the future.

By continuing to manage our fisheries in a sustainable way we have seen great outcomes for the recreational fishing community this year.

The strong recovery of herring allowed us to raise the bag limit to 20 for this popular eating fish enjoyed by families.

We have also seen Gascoyne pink snapper stocks on the road to recovery following the introduction of new management arrangements for both sectors in 2018.

The latest West Australian salmon stock assessment showed this iconic southern species being the healthiest it has been in decades. This will provide even more opportunity to create exciting fishing experiences for Western Australians.

We also worked with Recfishwest and the broader recreational sector on the important and necessary management changes for the west coast demersal scalefish fishery.

These management decisions were not taken lightly, but they were vital to ensure our stocks of pink snapper, dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod can recover.

To support the recreational sector and relieve pressure on demersal fish, the Cook Government invested more than \$10 million into a recovery support package which included the expansion of the State-wide Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) program, initiatives to improve collection of recreational fishing information and improve community education and engagement.

We continue to work together with Recfishwest on the development of WA’s artificial reef network to provide more alternative fishing opportunities in regional WA, with three new reefs, funded by the State Government, underway for Albany, Kalbarri, and Broome.

Our freshwater fish restocking programs are also vital, with more than 180,000 trout released this past

financial year into freshwater dams and rivers around the South-West. This provides exciting opportunities for anglers and injects more than \$37 million annually into regional economies.

Our Government has also provided a boost for recreational fishing by funding stock enhancement programs for yellowtail kingfish, pink snapper and over one million barramundi into Lake Kununurra.

We are looking forward to continuing to work closely with Recfishwest to protect the sustainability of WA’s valuable fisheries and to provide more programs and opportunities for Western Australia’s recreational fishers into the future.

– Hon. Don Punch Fisheries Minister



“Derby Jetty is my peace. It’s where I go to get away from it all.”

– **Katlyn Yeeda** The Derby Jetty Queen

Board of Management



Chairman’s Report

Welcome to the Recfishwest Annual Report for 2022/23. On behalf of the Board and staff I am pleased to present a report reflecting a successful, yet testing year for Recfishwest and WA fishing.

Our organisation has once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the cause of recreational fishing and the countless benefits it bestows upon our society. Throughout the past year, we have seen the profound impact of recreational fishing on our communities, emphasising its vital role in our well-being, social cohesion, and way of life.

The ABARES national recreational fishing survey underscored the immense value that recreational fishing contributes to our community. Beyond being a pastime, fishing is a source of well-being, social connection, family bonding, and a means to maintain physical and mental health while fostering a deep-rooted connection with nature. In a modern and uncertain world, these benefits serve as a remedy for the challenges faced by us and future generations.

In a world where burn-out and screen addiction are prevalent issues, recreational fishing emerges as a healthy alternative, providing an oasis of calm and recuperation. It plays a crucial role in fostering community and family cohesion, as evidenced by the overwhelming participation in events like the Apex

Barra Bash – this year being WA’s biggest ever fishing competition with 1,125 entrants of all ages and a diverse range of backgrounds.

The economic contribution of recreational fishing is substantial, with West Australians spending \$2.4 billion annually, thus significantly enhancing our state’s GDP. Moreover, this investment supports over 9,830 full-time jobs, particularly benefitting regional communities. Recreational fishing is not merely an activity – it is a fundamental aspect of our identity as West Australians, influencing our values and our way of life.

We strongly call on our decision-makers to recognise the multifaceted value of recreational fishing and incorporate it boldly into policymaking. When fisheries are managed considering the social value of fishing, sustainability and positive outcomes flourish, good examples of this being the abundant enjoyment of herring and salmon by West Aussie families. Conversely, neglecting these values may lead to discord and societal unrest.

There continues to be challenges for recreational fishing access in the formation of new marine parks, resource sharing restraints and threats from new sectors for access to marine environments. Recfishwest will continue to strongly advocate



Photo: Blue Media Exmouth

for adequate and for fair and sustainable access to our publicly owned resources. Pressing for a more balanced demersal management approach to support stock recovery has also been a key pillar of strategy towards which Recfishwest has applied substantial effort and resources. A significant focus for us has also been continued scrutiny of the Westport process to ensure that the value of the Cockburn Sound is adequately captured and protected and maintained for the future.

The fast adoption of green energy targets and wind energy on the radar produces opportunities and threats and Recfishwest will continue to advocate in this space and look to increase access to new infrastructure and fishing opportunities.

The reefing activities at Recfishwest have grown from strength to strength with some exciting projects in the pipeline and the organisation establishing a satellite office in Karratha which has been well received by stakeholders and members alike. There is plenty of potential in this space and I am excited to see the future developments and creation of fish supporting habitat and increased fish recruitment. King Reef, in Exmouth, has been on the seabed for five years now and is a pillar of a successful creation of habitat and recruitment of fish species to help ensure great fishing forever.

In pursuit of a unified voice and greater advocacy, we launched the Cast of Thousands campaign. This initiative aims to unite the broader fishing community

from a grassroots level, raising awareness about Recfishwest and celebrating our collective passion for fishing. By standing united, we strengthen our sector and enhance our engagement with the grassroots fishing community. This places us in an even stronger position to represent our sector with authority and provide robust advice to the Government, ensuring that our voices are heard and recreational fishing's legacy is safeguarded.

The achievements of Recfishwest would not be possible without the tireless efforts and dedication of our staff, volunteers, working group members and Board. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to them for their unwavering commitment. Equally, our members, partners, and business supporters have

played a pivotal role in our success. Your continued support is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

As we navigate the challenges on the horizon, I am optimistic about the future of recreational fishing.

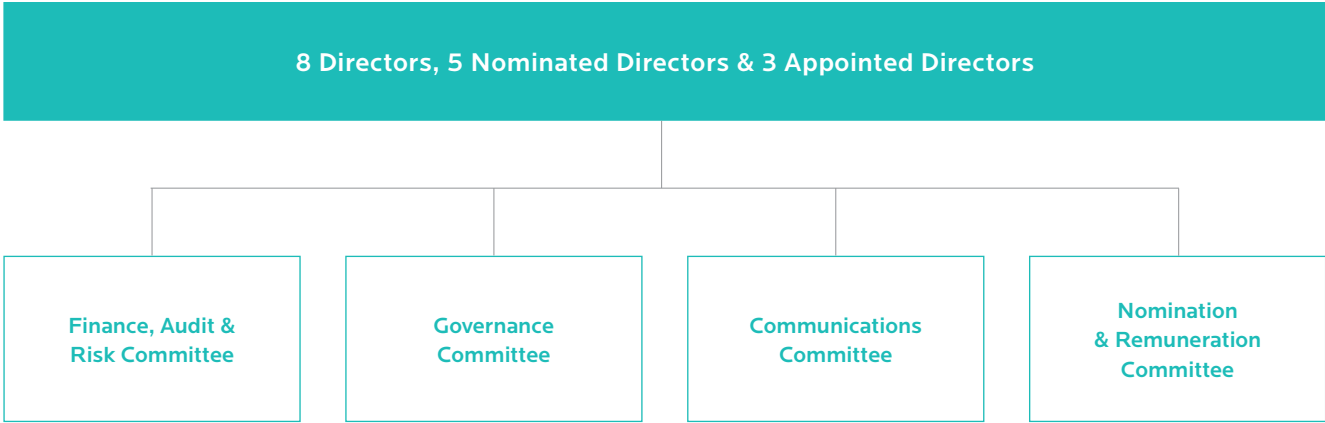
Our new approach and the Cast of Thousands campaign positions us to embrace exciting opportunities and advocate for all recreational fishers more effectively. Together, we shall overcome hurdles and continue championing recreational fishing for generations to come.

– Liam Surridge Recfishwest Chairman

The Board

The Recfishwest Board contains eight directors, comprising five nominated directors elected by the Recfishwest membership and three appointed directors.

Board structure



Committees

Recfishwest Committee meetings are generally held prior to Recfishwest Board meetings, allowing recommendations and outcomes of committee meetings to be tabled at each Board meeting.

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee	Governance Committee	Nomination & Remuneration Committee	Communications Committee
Geoff Ellis <i>(Chair)</i> Liam Surridge Dean Thorburn Christine Lovitt Carla Shearman	Ian Sampson <i>(Chair)</i> Simon McLernon Dean Thorburn Christine Lovitt	Liam Surridge <i>(Chair)</i> Geoff Ellis Emma George	Carla Shearman <i>(Chair)</i> Simon McLernon Emma George

At the 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM) the number of director nominations equaled the number of director vacancies to be filled. In accordance with Section 9.9 of the Recfishwest Constitution, the director nominations received were deemed to be elected for a term of two years with effect from the conclusion of the AGM. The three directors deemed to be elected were incumbent directors Dean Thorburn, Simon McLernon and Ian Sampson.

Board Members



Liam Surridge

Non-Executive Director, Chairman, Chair of Nomination and Remuneration Committee, Finance Audit and Risk Committee

An active member and treasurer of the Saltwater Flyrodders of Western Australia, Liam is the treasurer of the WA chapter of the Australian Trout Foundation and a member of the WA Trout and Freshwater Angling Association. A qualified chartered accountant and member of various committees, Liam has strong financial management and negotiation expertise.



Geoff Ellis

Non-Executive Director, Deputy Chair, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Nominations and Renumeration Committee

Geoff represents Recfishwest on the Recreational Boating Facilities Scheme. Currently semi-retired, Geoff has been a Director of Supernova Motor Yachts trading at Offshore Marine for the past 25-years and has managed several retail boat and caravan sales businesses in WA. He has also served as President and Finance Director of the Boating Industry Association.



Carla Shearman

Non-Executive Director, Chair of the Communications Committee, Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Carla has extensive strategic PR experience derived from many years in the industry and provides authoritative communications counsel to the Recfishwest Board and communications team. As the Managing Director of her own agency, The PR Collaborative, and as a PR lecturer at Edith Cowan University, her expertise supports Recfishwest in its strategic communication approach and in achieving great outcomes for WA's recreational fishers.



Ian Sampson

Non-Executive Director, Chair of Governance Committee

Ian is a sailmaker by trade and his tertiary qualifications include Master of Business Management (MBA), Post Graduate Certificate of Investigation of Commercial Crime and Juris Doctor (JD). He is also a qualified arbitrator and mediator and practices law at Roundhouse Legal.

Board Members



Emma George

Non-Executive Director, Communications Committee, Nomination & Remuneration Committee

Emma is a former Olympian, Commonwealth Games pole vault gold medallist and world-record holder. Emma also holds a Graduate Diploma in Communications (Journalism) and a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) and Arts (Language). An avid fisher, Emma is currently a freelance journalist and has worked across multiple media platforms.



Simon McLernon

Non-Executive Director, Communications Committee & Governance Committee

Simon has 15 years of engineering experience and currently works as a subsea engineer and is a co-founder of technology company, Underwater Focus. Simon was also the events coordinator and Vice President for Bluewater Freedivers of WA for over two years.



Christine Lovitt

Non-Executive Director, Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, Governance Committee

Christine is an experienced mining lawyer specialising in the native title and Aboriginal heritage aspects of project development in WA. Christine has an honours degree in law, and a Bachelor of Law (BA Mod and LLB). She has climbed the WA legal ranks and joined Hewett and Lovitt as special counsel in 2014, managing her own native title practice. She is a member of the Law Society of WA.



Dr Dean Thorburn

Non-Executive Director, Governance Committee, Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Dean has 15 years of marine and aquatic studies experience, specialising in fish biology and ecological waterway investigations. Dean has been Director and Principal Scientist of an environmental consulting company since 2006 and is a member of the Bluewater Freedivers of WA.



CEO's Report

It's been an intensive year for Recfishwest with several issues and developments requiring concerted advocacy efforts to achieve better outcomes for WA's 700,000-plus strong fishing community.

The biggest issue impacting on a large proportion of the fishing community was of course the Government's proposals to introduce an eight to nine-month ban on west coast demersal fishing.

We shared the dismay of fishers at this proposal and were not surprised to see the huge backlash it prompted.

We strongly advised the Government that a ban of this length would have a devastating impact on our fishing way of life and all the benefits derived from time on the water shared with mums, dads, kids and mates and the opportunity to catch a quality bottom fish for dinner.

Furthermore, it was clear a hefty ban of this size would be a wrecking ball through many of the coastal family businesses reliant on fishing tourism in towns like Jurien Bay.

Advocating for a better way for demersals

On one thing we emphatically agree with the Government, though, is the sustainability of these treasured West Aussie fish must come first. Our sector has a strong-track record in putting the fish first – no one cares more about these fish than we do. This was evidenced by the strong appetite articulated by the near to 6,000 fishers who took our west coast demersal survey for a cross sector closure for dhufish coinciding with the fish's peak spawning period.



The alternative package we put forward to DPIRD with the input of our expert working group would have met sustainability targets, provided spawning protection for dhufish while keeping fishing families on the water for longer throughout the year.

Although disappointed by the final outcome, we were able to get the Government to roll back the closure of the fishery to six months and commit to a \$10 million fishing support package, which included funding an extensive education program and to funding the Statewide FADs program for the next three years.

We welcomed these commitments – having a Government-backed Statewide FADs program following the successful pilot program we ran with clubs and the community funded by fishing licence money, is undoubtedly a good result for the medium to large boat fishers.

Critically, in the support package, \$2.5 million of public money was earmarked for a Voluntary Fisheries Adjustment Scheme (VFAS), which will offer commercial operators fair and reasonable compensation to voluntarily exit the fishery.

This is a golden opportunity to set right a broken fisheries policy as it could potentially pave the way for a fairer and more equitable sharing of overall

sustainable catch between recreational, charter and commercial fishing sectors. Subsequently, we are keenly awaiting the VFAS outcome later this year.

Highlighting the value of fishing

The debate around managing these community-owned fish stocks, and other challenges such as the proposed new marine park on the south coast and the extension to Marmion Marine Park, has highlighted to us that decision-makers do not often understand or take into account the importance and value of fishing to the WA lifestyle and culture.

The objective of fisheries management is to optimise the social and economic benefits from our publicly-owned fish stocks – this is enshrined in law within the State's Fisheries Act.

Recent experiences, however, suggest the social and economic value that fishing provides is not adequately considered when it comes to important fisheries management decisions.

That is why we have launched our Cast of Thousands Campaign to celebrate and elevate the recognition of the importance of fishing to the WA lifestyle and

culture into the awareness of decision-makers and the broader WA community.

Working with our creative partners Lateral Aspect, we developed three advertisements featuring three fishing personalities – Western Angler editor Scott Coghlan, former pole-vaulting world champion, fishing presenter and Recfishwest Board member Emma George and Katlyn Yeeda – aka 'the Derby Jetty Queen.'

You've probably seen them already, but each ad being rolled out through multiple media platforms across the State highlights how fishing gives hundreds of thousands of West Australians the opportunity to relax, enjoy enhanced well-being and mental health, social interaction with family and friends, connection with nature and ultimately have a lot of fun!

We're also reaching a broader audience through the campaign explaining Recfishwest's role in championing the rights and interests of 700,000 West Aussie recfishers, sustainability, fishing safety, research and the environment, as well as most importantly keeping the fun in fishing.

The overarching purpose of the campaign is a rallying cry to the grassroots of our hugely diverse community to unite under one banner to continue to protect what's most important to all of us as fishers.

Great community outcomes through successful fisheries management

When decision-makers factor in the huge benefits fishing brings to our community, the results are dramatic. Not only beneficial to enhancing fishing experiences, but also to ensuring abundant and resilient fish stocks as well as healthy habitats and environment.

In this vein, it's been really pleasing to see the strong recovery of herring – the people's fish – resulting in the increase of the bag limit of 12 to 20 fish for these great accessible fish enjoyed by fishers of all ages and abilities.

More than 4,000 fishers provided Recfishwest their views through our bag limit survey showing how passionately people care about herring.

Crucially, being in a position to substantially increase the bag limit without any threat to the future abundance of herring stocks followed the Government's commitment to prioritise herring for recreation and consumption purposes in line with ensuring the highest and best use of the fishery under the Fisheries Act.



Similarly, we were pleased with the results of the latest salmon stock assessment which showed salmon are bigger, more abundant and resistant to environmental change that they have been in decades.

The stock assessment showed that individual salmon are older, larger and around in much higher numbers now than they were 10 to 15 years ago because of a reduction in commercial fishing pressure.

The science confirmed what we have been seeing in recent seasons coming through in catches with 90-cm plus fish to near metre-long fish caught on a more regular basis.

Furthermore, such a healthy population of salmon results in a stock that is much more resilient to environmental change and future predictions of greater fluctuations in oceanographic conditions.

This is a management success story. We have abundant stocks that are continuing to flourish, full of large adult fish, well prepared for a changing climate and a fishery that is enjoyed by a cast of thousands creating more than \$330 million of economic activity annually throughout the southern coastal regions of WA.

If that doesn't highlight the massive value derived by our community from fish stocks managed to optimise social and economic benefits, then I don't know what does!

A big Recfishwest thanks for your ongoing support

Our purpose as the peak sector body is to ensure more great outcomes like this. Our ability to advocate on behalf of West Australian fishers is amplified by the massive support we receive from passionate members, partners and business supporters and to you, on behalf of my team and Board, I give my heartfelt thanks.

However, as I have written in this report – there are many challenges on the horizon, so I encourage all of you to continue to rally alongside us under the fishing banner, get your family and mates on board too and stand up for this way of life we all love.

– **Dr Andrew Rowland** Recfishwest CEO

Investing in infrastructure to put the fun in fishing

Just as healthy fish stocks are critical to the quality of fishing we are able to enjoy in WA, so too is maintaining and enhancing fishing access – structures like jetties provide fishing platforms for coastal towns like Busselton and are hugely popular with community members and visitors alike.

You only need to look at the popularity of Katlyn Yeeda's Derby Jetty Queen Facebook page to see how these structures become a centre point for passionate fishing communities like Derby.

That is why we will be working intensively over the next year to develop recommendations, in line with the Fishing Development Plan the Government committed to, to upgrade and expand the State's fishing infrastructure including jetties and boat ramps.

We are also working as hard as ever in the creation of new enhanced habitat in the form of artificial reefs to support safe and accessible fishing as well as more productive fisheries. The details of these efforts are covered within the following pages which involves more than 10 new reef proposals currently being progressed for coastal communities including Albany, Kalbarri, Carnarvon, Karratha/Dampier, Port Hedland and Broome.



“There’s 700,000 people who fish in WA every year – it’s a huge percentage of the population. If we didn’t have Recfishwest, we’d have no one to fight the fight for recfishers.”

– **Scott Coghlan** Western Angler Magazine Editor

Highlights of the Year



Photo: Marco Frascchetti

Cast of Thousands campaign

Recfishwest launched our Cast of Thousands campaign aiming to bring the grassroots fishing community together to support what Recfishwest stands for, celebrate fishing and help us protect the rights and interests of WA's 700,000+ fishers. The campaign is also highlighting the huge value of fishing to key decision-makers and how integral it is to the West Australian way of life. With an enhanced connection with grassroots fishers, our capacity to provide robust and even better informed advice to the Government will be enhanced as well.

The faces of our Cast of Thousands campaign includes Katlyn Yeeda, aka the 'Derby Jetty Queen', Western Angler Magazine Editor Scott Coghlan and champion pole vaulter, Olympian and Recfishwest Board member, Emma George. This TV and social media campaign was developed and designed in conjunction with our creative partners Lateral Aspect, who produced three high quality short films depicting the connection and importance of fishing to them and the wider Western Australian community.

The campaign will continue to run into 2024.

Representation and consultation

Recfishwest engages and consults directly with the fishing community of WA in order to represent their views, rights and interests.

We engage with recreational fishers and stakeholders through surveys, meetings, regional consultation activities, correspondence, reference groups, association and industry working groups along with selected workshops and events.

We use this direct contact to collectively gauge the attitudes, drivers, beliefs and aspirations of WA's 700,000+ recreational fishers.

This engagement allows Recfishwest to provide the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the Fisheries Minister (along with other decision-makers) with qualified, consolidated advice on a range of recreational fishing-related issues.

In line with the objects of our constitution Recfishwest continues to:

- be recognised as a major stakeholder in aquatic ecosystem management;
- participate in fisheries management to ensure the sustainability of fish and their habitats;
- promote and advocate responsible recreational fishing;
- assist with the education of fishers;
- represent and advocate the interests and rights of all Western Australian recreational fishers on issues affecting the participation, development and sustainability of recreational fishing;
- ensure an adequate and reasonable share of the available resources;
- optimise the social and economic benefits provided by recreational fishing;
- actively engage in activities which will assist recreational fishing.





Photo: Fishin Wishin Life



West coast demersal fishery management changes

Thousands of passionate WA fishers and members of our expert working group gave their input into the State Government's proposals for management changes to the west coast demersal fishery, which included a nine-month closure.

The proposals were met with widespread concerns around Western Australia with the impacts on family fishing experiences, family-run fishing businesses and coastal tourism prompting a record-breaking 18,000+ signature petition opposing the proposed nine-month ban.

Putting the fish first, Recfishwest put forward an alternative balanced package of measures that could reduce catches by 50 per cent, meet sustainability targets and allow people to spend more time fishing with families and friends.

We were disappointed by the Fisheries Minister's

final decision to impose a six-month ban on west coast demersal fishing – particularly when the lion's share of the fishery was given to a small number of commercial operators.

However, we have pressed on the State Government the "golden opportunity" presented by its \$10 million west coast demersal support package to redress the inequity in the way the valuable resource is shared, plug significant knowledge gaps leading to better fishery management and to promote better fishing behaviours to speed up the recovery.

We look forward to seeing the outcome of the west coast demersal Voluntary Fisheries Adjustment Scheme (VFAS) to allow commercial operators fair and reasonable compensation to voluntarily exit the fishery.

This could see a better return for the recreational fishing community and restore a more equitable share of demersal catches from the end of 2023 and potentially free up some of the restrictions imposed on our community by these latest management changes.

Working with the Bureau of Meteorology to keep fishers safe

Keeping safe while fishing comes down to making better decisions about where, when and how to fish from improved alerts, communication and awareness. That is why Recfishwest in partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology launched a new alert informing fishers about high-risk rock fishing conditions which could potentially save lives.

As part of the State-wide safe fishing program, funded through the Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund, Recfishwest sent out hazardous rock fishing warnings through our channels, triggered by alerts provided to us by the Bureau detailing the timing, duration and locations of forecast dangerous swell conditions.

Sending out these alerts arms fishers with the information they need to make an informed decision before deciding whether to set out for a day's fishing – because no fish is worth risking your life for.

National fishing survey highlights fishing is in our cultural DNA

A national recreational fishing survey proved what all West Aussie fishers already knew – that fishing is highly beneficial for well-being and health as well as our State and national economies!

The National Social and Economic Survey of Recreational Fishers undertaken by ABARES, the University of Canberra and the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation shone a light on the well-being, social and family benefits of fishing, showing it contributes \$11 billion to the national economy each year, creates 9,380 jobs for West Aussies and proved fishers have higher levels of well-being than non-fishers.

The survey results demonstrated beyond debate how important fishing is to our way of life and how it is intrinsically in the social and cultural DNA of WA and the nation.



Harvey dam marron stocking unblocking

After a three-year long stocking hiatus, WA fishers were excited to hear that Harvey Dam will finally see 100,000 marron make a splash into the South-West waterway in the future. The 2022 announcement by the Fisheries Minister fixed a decision by DPIRD that prevented marron being stocked into Harvey Dam as part of a stocking program funded by the Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund and launched by then Premier Mark McGowan in 2019.

With marroning being a hugely popular pastime in the South-West and Harvey Dam being the most popular marroning location, Recfishwest was pleased to see the Government set this right. The stocking will benefit more than 10,000 licensed marron fishers in WA, who help inject millions of dollars back into our regional tourism economies.



Photo: Marco Frascchetti

Abrolhos Islands pelagic bag limit reinstated by Government

The Mid-West fishing community was relieved to hear that, following Recfishwest's constructive discussions with the Fisheries Minister, the original bag limit for popular large pelagic species like mackerel and tuna was reinstated back to three fish around the Abrolhos Islands.

Initially, the Government revised the daily bag limit down to one large pelagic fish, which left many fishers disappointed given there are no sustainability concerns around these highly abundant species throughout the Abrolhos. Recfishwest was pleased to see common sense prevail so fishers can rightfully enjoy the full pelagic sportfishing opportunities throughout the Abrolhos Islands.

Marine park planning processes off the rails - highlighting community concerns

At the time of writing this annual report, the State Government was yet to release draft plans for extending the Marmion Marine Park and creating the South Coast Marine Park for public consultation.

Since the initial announcement about the marine parks by the Environment and Fisheries Ministers, Recfishwest has been working closely with both the north metro and south coast fishing communities to make sure important areas for fishing were identified and made clear to marine park planners.

We held numerous community meetings with fishers to hear their views and provide information about the marine park process, along with wider community stakeholders, as well as coordinating the recreational fishing Sector Advisory Groups (SAG) which provided direct input into the planning process.

Throughout the planning process Recfishwest has called on the State Government for genuinely representative and transparent marine park planning processes involving fishers from the start.

We highlighted in the media and on our own channels, the south coast fishing community's concerns around the consultation process and impacts on shore and boat-based fishing access and the south coast way of life.

Recfishwest supports marine parks – but they must balance conservation with enhancing recreation and visitor experiences.

Sinking our teeth into reducing shark bite-off

Shark bite-off continues to have a significant impact on our sector. Recfishwest has presented a definitive position to the Fisheries Minister proposing a dedicated evidence-based program focused on development, adoption and promotion of deterrent technology, education and investment in science. Our proposal requested a multi-year funding commitment from the WA Government aimed at better understanding mitigation processes, promoting positive behaviour changes among fishers, normalising the use of shark deterrents and improving their effectiveness. At the time of writing this report – we were awaiting a response from the Government on this proposal.

Recfishwest has been helping fishers reduce their odds of experiencing shark bite-off on fishing trips by collating and sharing information, advice and tips from experienced fishing experts, charter operators and top sportfishers. This includes advanced fishing tactics, advice and educating fishers on contemporary shark deterrent technology and how to use them at peak efficiency.

All around WA and particularly heading north of Geraldton, many fishers know the frustration of losing prized fish to sharks. While this issue will never be completely eradicated, losing high volumes of high-value species to shark bite-off is avoidable.



Photo: Michael Renton





Photo: Colby James



Photo: Peter Fullarton

Cockburn Sound's future on the line

The safe, accessible, family-friendly and fantastic fishing Cockburn Sound provides makes it arguably the most important fishing location in the Perth metro area.

Recfishwest continues to demand answers from decision-makers to critical questions about the future of the Sound's precious environment and the fish it supports in the face of a glut of planned industrial developments with the main one being the Government's plan to build an international container port in Kwinana by 2032 to replace Fremantle Port.

We went on record criticising the poor level of communication coming from Westport, leaving large information gaps around how the project will impact on the environment particularly around the dredging of millions of tons of sand required to build a new shipping channel through the sound.

We are also closely monitoring the progress and outcomes of the \$14 million Cockburn Sound Science Program the Government committed to and the results of which Westport claims will help form its business case, mitigation strategy and environmental impact assessment.

We will be closely scrutinising the science program's results, to ensure they stack up, are made publicly available and adequately inform the port design.

Bag limit increase for 'the people's fish'

In a great outcome for WA anglers, the herring bag limit was increased from 12 to 20 on 1 October 2022 following Recfishwest's recommendations based on the scientific stock assessment that showed herring stocks had made a strong recovery following management changes implemented in early 2015.

The recommendation to increase the bag limit to 20 was based on a fishing community survey that prompted more than 4,000 responses from fishers reflecting how herring continues to be the number one recreational fishing species in WA.

The bag limit increase is great news for families and kids who enjoy catching this abundant species throughout our southern waters on land or by boat and take them home for a delicious feed without impacting the stock growth.

The enormous social and economic value herring provide arguably makes herring WA's most important finfish. It is vital future management ensures these values are protected and herring stocks continue to grow.



2023 Snapper Guardians kicks off 'super-stocking' weekend

The biggest crowd in Snapper Guardians history helped us kick off a huge week of fish stocking in metro waters in February 2023, which saw the release of 40,000 juvenile pink snapper and 15,000 juvenile yellowtail kingfish into Cockburn Sound.

The fantastic response we had to Snapper Guardians 2023 showed the community's care and passion for Cockburn Sound and the safe, accessible and enjoyable fishery it supports.





Making Fishing Better for West Aussies


Recreational fishing in WA is enjoyed by 700,000+ West Aussies each year and our partnerships with community groups and organisations helps us to direct recreational fishing licence money back into community projects that significantly enhance recreational fishing experiences.


Here are some of the 2022/23 projects making fishing better for the WA community:

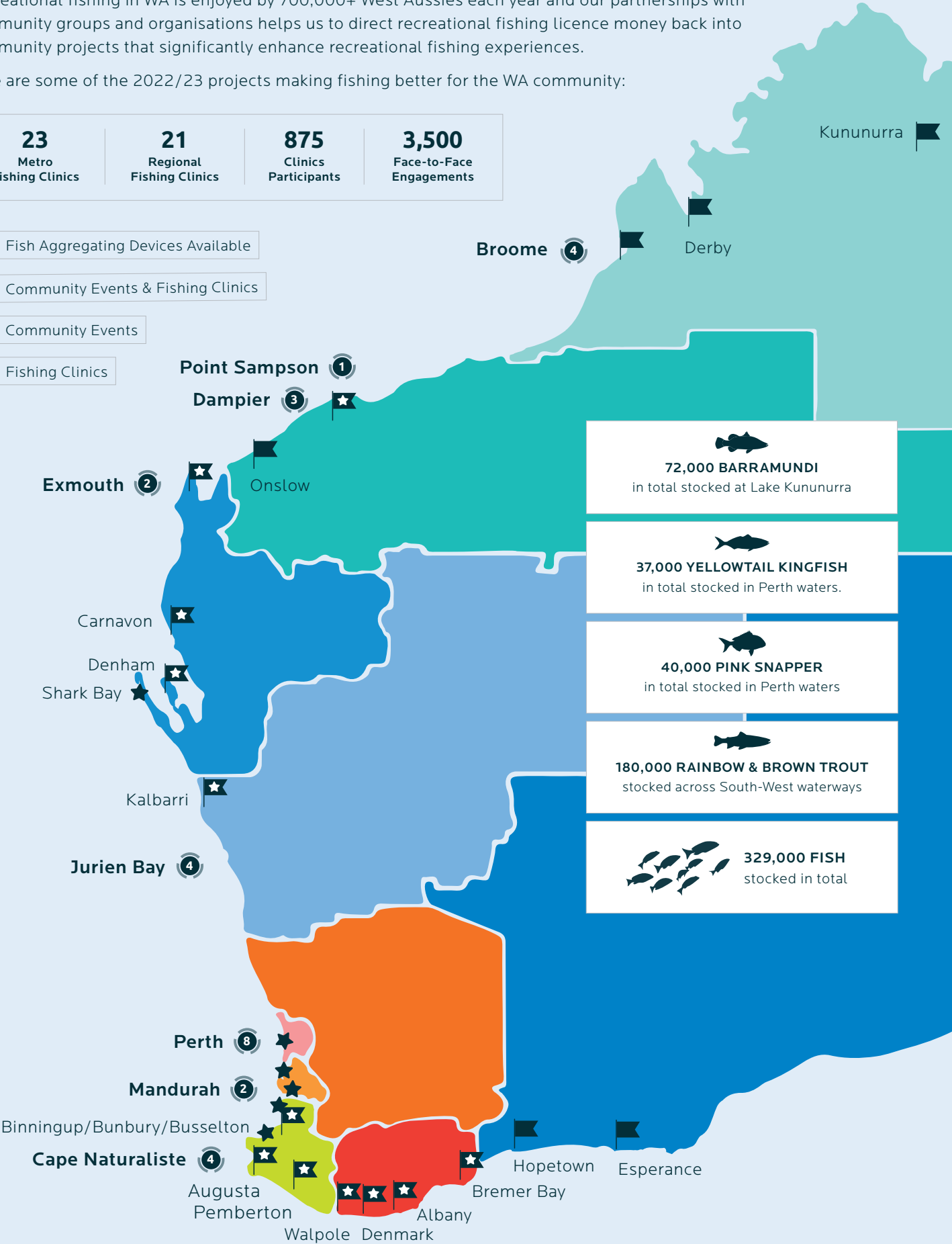
23 Metro Fishing Clinics	21 Regional Fishing Clinics	875 Clinics Participants	3,500 Face-to-Face Engagements
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 Fish Aggregating Devices Available

 Community Events & Fishing Clinics

 Community Events

 Fishing Clinics



More fish to catch

Recfishwest continues to drive WA's fish stocking programs by improving fish abundance, stocks and fishing experiences in a changing environment, run in partnership with DPIRD's aquaculture centres and thanks to RFIF funding and support from our community fish stocking partner, Daiwa.

The past year saw over 329,000 fish stocked around WA's waterways in total, including:

- **40,000 juvenile pink snapper** were released into metro waters over seven days in February at Cockburn Power Boats Club and Fremantle Sailing Club, with help from members of these clubs. This continues the ongoing legacy of Snapper Guardians, which has now seen hundreds of thousands of juvenile pink snapper released into the Sound since the inaugural event in 2016.
- **37,000 juvenile yellowtail kingfish** were also released at the above fishing clubs. These yellowtail kingfish had their otoliths (ear bones) stained, allowing them to be identified when caught for future analysis. We continue to test the efficacy of boosting metro stocks of this fast-growing and hard-fighting species.
- **180,000 brown and rainbow trout** of varying sizes were stocked, thanks to Recfishwest's Freshwater Reference Group and DPIRD's Pemberton Freshwater Research Centre – which celebrated its 50-year milestone of the hatchery being run and operated by the State Government in 2022. This fishery brings huge enjoyment to WA's 10,000+ licensed freshwater fishers who inject more than \$20 million annually into the regional economy. We continue to work closely with DPIRD to recommend stocking values and locations and there is massive potential for expanding the trout stocking program and fishery in the future.
- **72,000 juvenile barramundi** were stocked into Lake Kununurra in the East Kimberley, strengthening this world-class sport fishery where huge 1m+ barra are regularly caught.



Recfishwest fishing app - giving confidence to WA's fishers

Our comprehensive fishing rules app continues to be the go-to technology for fishers across WA. Fishers can practice sustainable fishing behaviour and good stewardship by keeping up to date with a huge source of information about the fishing rules, species ID, marine park boundaries, safe fishing infrastructure, FADs and artificial reef locations and general fishing information available at their fingertips anytime, anywhere.

The Recfishwest app in a wrap!

- Ranked #133 worldwide for most-downloaded sporting app
- 300,000+ downloads in total since app creation
- 25,000+ unique users per month
- 60,000+ opens each month
- 85,000+ downloads since last update
- Includes information, bag and size limits, eating quality, fish ID and more on 250+ WA species
- Real-time marine park, sanctuary zone and FADs coordinates

We would like to thank Shimano in supporting the app and our weekly members' fishing reports.

**300,000+
downloads
in total since
the app's
creation**

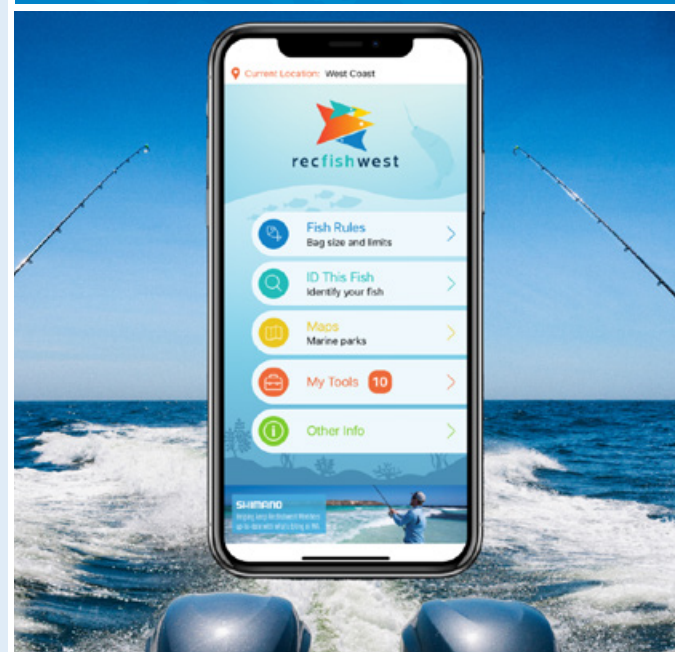


Photo: Chris Webster

Helping create better places to fish

Our three-year RFIF-funded FADs program concluded in 2022 and was an overwhelming success. It resulted in **DPIRD funding and coordinating a full-time, State-wide FADs program** until at least 2026. It is fantastic news for medium to large-sized boat fishers keen to target hard-fighting pelagics such as dolphinfish, tuna, billfish, mackerel and wahoo around WA.

2023 also saw FADs deployed for the first time in waters off Mandurah, Dampier and Point Samson. All the FADs real-time deployment statuses and coordinates can be found on the FADs webpage and our Recfishwest app.

A first glimpse of an innovative and **multi-level jetty in Port Hedland** was revealed, which will allow fishers to wet a line during the ever-changing tidal conditions in early 2024. What's more, the Pilbara Ports Authority liaised with Recfishwest to draw on our artificial reef expertise in the configuration and placement of reef balls under the landmark to maximise the effectiveness of the reef modules, providing the best habitat for fish species.

Jetties provide fun, safe and accessible fishing for all members of the community – every coastal town should have one and Recfishwest will be working closely with Government in the next year to identify opportunities for expanding and improving WA's network of land-based fishing platforms.



Photo: Pilbara Ports Authority



Photo: Paul Cunningham



Photo: Blue Media Exmouth

Recfishwest continues to enhance WA's marine habitats with a range of **artificial reef projects** for recreational fishing currently under development. Recfishwest has successfully coordinated the approvals for a number of new artificial reefs and have several new developments currently under assessment by Commonwealth and State government agencies. We expect to have multiple new fishing playgrounds on the seafloor in 2023/24.

2023 also saw the tenth anniversary celebration of the Bunbury and Dunsborough artificial reef module deployments and the fifth anniversary of the King Reef module deployments. All three of these artificial reef locations have since flourished into thriving marine habitats and continue to provide enhanced fishing experiences for boat fishers in these regions.

As leaders in the artificial reef field, Recfishwest continues to investigate new opportunities to retain end-of-life marine infrastructure, informed by best scientific, engineering and environmental practices, to provide positive environmental outcomes and new fishing opportunities for our community. Watch this space!

The past year saw **Lake Kununurra** showcase its world-class barramundi sport fishery in a safe, saltwater croc-free, accessible and stunning setting, with Recfishwest working closely in partnership with the Lake Kununurra Barramundi Stocking Group (LKBSC), North Regional TAFE, DPIRD and DBCA.

With 720 anglers competing at the 2022 Apex Kununurra Barra Bash and 72,000 barramundi being stocked into the lake this past financial year, it is clear that the stocking program coordinated through the Broome Aquaculture Centre has done a brilliant job over the past 10 years. The program gave rise to this top-class sport fishery having released more than 1.5 million barramundi into these pristine waters since its launch.



"Recfishwest looks after anglers, but also the fish and the environment so there's abundance. That's important because my children and future generations should be able to go and fish and enjoy the environment that we do today."

– **Emma George** Recfishwest Board Member, Former Olympian and Fishing Mum



Vale Ruth Sprague – a warm-hearted, much-loved member of the Recfishwest family

It was with great sadness that Recfishwest received the news that much-loved former Recfishwest Events and Membership Officer Ruth Sprague passed away after a battle with cancer. Ruth joined the Recfishwest team in mid-2014 as an Admin and Membership Officer and was the cheery voice on the other end of the phone dealing with Recfishwest members, clubs and community members.

Ruth thrived in the events and membership space and played a key role in the Halco lure colouring-in competition and Purple Flyfishing initiative as a passionate advocate for the work of Breast Cancer Care WA, helping women with breast cancer experience the well-being benefits from flyfishing.

Her upbeat, infectious attitude and legendary cake-baking skills helped keep Recfishwest team morale high and she will be missed dearly by staff, Board members, Recfishwest members and supporters, as well as her friends and family.



Events & Community



Recfishwest attended and hosted numerous community events throughout the year. Whether it be fish stocking, supporting regional fishing tournaments or introducing families to fishing, we're always striving to protect, promote and develop sustainable, accessible, enjoyable and safe fishing for the benefit of the community.

Here are some of the face-to-face fishing engagement activities we have been involved in during 2022/23:

Awesome Autumn of Salmon

We once again ran our Awesome Autumn of Salmon celebration with nearly 1,000 anglers participating in our app-driven, two-month long Salmon Slam 2023 event supported this year by Shimano and Western Angler as well as a host of other sponsors from the fishing tackle and outdoors industry. This event highlighted the fantastic family fishing experiences this southern iconic fish provides for tens of thousands of fishers, who inject \$331 million into the regional economy each year fishing for salmon.

2022 Troutfest

More than 300 people attended the 2022 Troutfest event at Drakesbrook Weir and helped release more than 350 yearling and ex-broodstock rainbow and brown trout. This much-loved community event run in partnership with the Shire of Waroona and Alcoa is a celebration of the South-West's fantastic freshwater fishery stocked by DPIRD in close consultation with Recfishwest's Freshwater Reference Group.

Fishing for Science

Fishing for Science is a community engagement program that enables local communities to better understand scientifically the fish species that underpin prized fishing experiences by donating samples of these species for scientific research. Our Fishing for Science program run in partnership with Woodside Energy continues to expand across more northern regions of WA and received strong support by local fishers. Recfishwest staff were given access to hundreds of captured fish to allow scientific data to be collected at several regional fishing tournaments, including GAMEX, MACK10K and the Dampier Classic.

Pemberton Trout Festival

Our inaugural Pemberton Trout Festival was a huge hit with South-West locals, with more than 400 people making the picturesque journey to Big Brook Dam to help us hand-release hundreds of rainbow and brown trout. The overwhelming success of this event which celebrated 50 years of DPIRD's management of the Pemberton Hatchery will see it return to the region in November, 2023.

'Super-Stocking Week'

In what was dubbed our 'super-stocking week' – our 2023 Snapper Guardians event made a triumphant return to Cockburn Sound which saw more than 300 people help us release 5,000 juvenile pink snapper into the sheltered waters of the Sound. This was followed by 15,000 yellowtail kingfish making a splash into metro waters through our yellowtail kingfish stocking cannon and another 35,000 juvenile pink snapper stocked between Fremantle Sailing Club and the Cockburn Power Boats Club!

2022 Perth Boat Show

The entire Recfishwest team actively engaged with thousands of fishing enthusiasts at the 2022 Perth Boat Show to garner support for our alternative west coast demersal recovery package to the Government's proposed nine-month west coast demersal fishing closure. More than 18,000 petition signatures were collected for an online petition against the proposed ban, shattering the WA record for a petition of this kind. The high-profile news media this generated – much of it featuring Recfishwest CEO Dr Andrew Rowland and the Recfishwest crew at the show – played an important role in ultimately persuading the Government to reduce its proposed nine-month ban to six-months.

2022 Fishability Awards

Recfishwest proudly honoured 23 volunteers at the 2022 Fishability Awards night who are excelling at delivering fishing programs and activities for people with disabilities across WA. Recfishwest strongly believes everyone should have access to the health benefits fishing provides and we are proud our recreational fishing licence fees are able to help Fishability do their great work.



Safe Fishing



Photo: Gideon Mettam

Promoting and facilitating safe fishing remains a top priority for Recfishwest in our role of driving the State-wide Safe Fishing Strategy. Recfishwest continues to work tirelessly to promote the need for safe fishing to be part of every fishing experience, drive behaviour change towards safe fishing, model safe fishing experiences and invest in safety infrastructure across WA.

In 2022/23 as part of our State-wide Safe Fishing Strategy, funded through the Recreational fishing Initiatives Fund, Recfishwest:

- Partnered with the Bureau of Meteorology and shared their alerts for dangerous rock fishing conditions and forecasts. Through this collaboration, the Bureau's dangerous rock fishing conditions alerts were issued via our social media platforms to warn tens of thousands of fishers, allowing them to make informed decisions about fishing;
- Undertook an extensive salmon fishing season safety campaign through our own communication channels and in partnership with Western Angler, DPIRD and DBCA promoting 'keep the sand between your toes' including a two-month safe fishing digital campaign featuring Recfishwest's safe fishing ambassador and YouTuber, Gideon Mettam;
- Continued to provide the State's recfishers with free loan lifejackets across WA along with community partners and tackle shops. There are now 177 loan lifejackets available between Quobba and Esperance;
- Ran a safe abalone fishing campaign in association with Surf Life Saving WA;
- Promoted safe boat and rock fishing messages via numerous media interviews with Channel Seven, Channel Nine, the ABC, 6PR and various other print and digital platforms;



Photo: Liam Wesson

- Continued the 'Snag It, Tag It' safety initiative alongside Western Rock Lobster Council to combat the dangers of snagged fishing gear on rock lobster pots by encouraging fishers to grab Snag It, Tag It tags from more than 50 tackle shops across WA;
- Extended the reach of messages to CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups) through increased multilingual advertising of safe fishing in collaboration with Chinese newspaper Perth Epoch Times. This included a two-month digital safe fishing campaign broadcast to more than 80,000 people of various ethnicities during the peak of the salmon fishing season; and
- Worked alongside community partners and continued to monitor and maintain our State-wide angel ring program, providing 78 rings to numerous high risk rock fishing locations and encouraged fishers to recommend new angel ring deployment locations across WA.

Our heartfelt thanks to local communities, land managers, Government agencies, emergency services, marine volunteer groups and our ambassadors in their continued efforts to bring fishers home safely as part of the State-wide Safe Fishing Strategy.



SunSmart Fishing Clinics



This financial year, 44 fishing clinics were held across WA from Bremer Bay to Dampier, with more clinics and events held than the previous financial year. The success of the clinics is a testament of our volunteers and fishing clinic instructors' hard-work.

From the Cossack community in our northern Pilbara region, to at-risk young people in the Perth metro region – Recfishwest ensured people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences were able to fully enjoy the social, mental, well-being and physical net benefits that fishing has to offer. The clinics also teach young people how to be SunSmart, fish sustainably and look after the environment among many other important lessons.

A big Recfishwest thanks to our amazing fishing clinic volunteers who do a fantastic job and we look forward to coordinating more fishing clinics across more WA locations in future.



44

fishing clinics



875+

participants

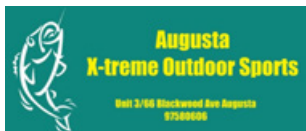
To our volunteers and instructors who gave up hundreds of hours to help conduct this year's fishing clinics – thank you!

Fishing clinic partners



Our Partners

Recfishwest recognises our official business supporters. Together we are making fishing better.



Contact Recfishwest to find out how your logo could be here!

Recfishwest would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support we receive from our members, project partners, business supporters, fishing clubs, volunteers and the WA fishing community.

Recfishwest recognises the following contributions from our official supporting partners.



Supporting many of our initiatives making fishing better in WA and in our delivery of representative advice to Government on behalf of 700,000 recfishers.



Supporting sustainable fishing in WA through our fishing rules app. Shimano also supports our fishing community through our weekly fishing report publication, our SunSmart Community Fishing Clinics and the Awesome Autumn of Salmon.



Supporting our Fishing for Science Program, Community Fishing Clinics and building our capacity to better engage with Traditional Owners of land and sea country in Exmouth, Onslow, Dampier and Cossack.



Supporting recreational fishing priorities and guidance for the recfishing sector.



Supporting the monitoring and promotion of Port Hedland FADs and artificial reef support.



Supporting our capacity and enhanced engagement activities in the Pilbara.



Supporting our work to enhance recreational fishing participation as a peak body organisation.



Supporting our Troutfest community fish stocking event.



Supporting our State-wide SunSmart Community Fishing Clinic Program.



Supporting our State-wide Community Fish Stocking events.

Thanks for the ongoing support from our fishing association partners:



Community Grants

Recfishwest administers the Recfishwest Community Grants Program, which makes RFIF funding available to community-driven projects aimed at enhancing recreational fishing in WA. This program invests in community projects which deliver valuable outcomes for fishing communities and engender wider community support for fishing.



Photo: Life's Short, Stay Moist

Since 2011, Recfishwest’s Community Grants Program has provided \$700,000 in funding for more than 230 community grant projects. In 2022/23, a total of 21 projects were funded, including:

Applicant & Project Summary

Albany Boating & Fishing Club
Track My Fish App and Southern Ocean Spectacular fishing competition

Apex Club of Kununurra
Barra Bash fishing competition

Ashburton Anglers
Catch and release fishing competition

Australian Trout Foundation Inc
Trout fishing guide at Collie River and Wellington Dam, angler access stiles and club marquee

Exmouth Game Fishing Club
GAMEX 2023 community engagement package

Fremantle Sailing Club
Kids fishing clinics and first aid training course

Kimberley Free Diving Club
Purchase of safety and training equipment

Kalbarri Offshore & Angling Club
2023 Kids Whiting Competition

Lancelin Angling & Aquatic Club
John Bray Junior Fishing Classic

Life’s Short, Stay Moist
Women in Spearfishing series and charter

Mandalay Holiday Resort
Family Fishing Competition

Nicol Bay Sports Fishing Club
Shade structure

Perth Game Fishing Club
Metro-based FADs, Al McGlashan photographer promotion, Jurien Bay Open, Ladies and Junior Day

Youth Futures Community School
Fishing clinic for at risk youth

Shark Bay Community Resource Centre
Support for Fishing Fiesta

Communications



Partnering Associations



Photo: Bluewater Freedivers WA

Boating Industry Association of WA

biawa.asn.au

First formed in 1971, the Boating Industry Association of WA (BIAWA) is an incorporated industry group that is the voice of the West Australian recreational boating industry. Their main purpose is to promote and encourage safe boating and other aquatic sports and pastimes within the state.

– Sheryl Swarbric President

Australian National Sportfishing Association WA

ansa.com.au

The Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA) is considered the peak body of sportfishing in Australia, encompassing the needs of beginner to experienced anglers. They represent the recreational fishing industry and recreational sportfisher through various branches and affiliated clubs across Australia.

– Steve Wiseman President

Marine Tourism WA

marinetourismwa.com.au

The Marine Tourism WA (MTWA) is a non-for-profit member-based association made up of charter industry owners and operators aiming to assist individual members and the industry to be more profitable, safer and able to provide quality experiences for clients. MTWA is the only recognised charter industry association in WA with peak body status representing the charter sector to all relevant government departments.

– Matt Howard President

WA Game Fishing Association

www.wagfa.asn.au

The WA Game Fishing Association (WAGFA) is a member of the Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA), the longest established national fishing association in the world. WAGFA helps promote the voices and representation of game fisherman across 10 Western Australian affiliated clubs, from Broome up north to Busselton in the south-west.

– Tim Carson President

Western Australian Trout and Freshwater Angling Association

watfaa.org.au

The Western Australian Trout and Freshwater Angling Association (WATFAA) was founded in 1928 in a concerted effort to establish trout in the Pemberton area. Since then, they have spearheaded the propagation of trout in the south-west region in collaboration with various Government bodies and are an association dedicated to the pastime of freshwater angling in all its wonderful forms.

– Stewart King President

Bluewater Freedivers of WA

bluewaterfreediversofwa.com.au

The Bluewater Freedivers of Western Australia is a spearfishing club made up of amateur divers through to competitive spearfisherman across Western Australia.

– Barry Paxman President

West Australian Undersea Club

waundersea.com

The West Australian Undersea Club (WAUC) is the oldest sportfishing club based in Perth, with a rich history dating back to 1964. Their current member demographics range from young novice divers in their teens, through to highly experienced veterans. WAUC is Australia's biggest spearfishing club, with 300+ financial members.

– Jonty Fidge President

Saltwater Flyrodders of WA

saltwaterflyrodders.com.au

Formed in 2001, the Saltwater Flyrodders of WA club has gone from strength to strength and was designed to give people with a keen interest in saltwater fly fishing the opportunity to get together, share valuable information and provide tips to other fishers.

– Steve Bradbury President

Reference Groups

Recfishwest Reference Groups are comprised of passionate and dedicated fishers who are interested in contributing to the management of fishing in WA. The Reference Groups provide advice to the Recfishwest Board on issues associated with specific fisheries. Members apply through an expression of interest process and sit for a three-year term.



Photo: Matt Barnes

Positions on Recfishwest’s Reference Groups are voluntary, and these members should be recognised and congratulated for giving their time to make fishing better.

In addition to our reference groups, Recfishwest also coordinates working groups to deal with important issues on an ongoing or ad-hoc basis. For 2022-23 we acknowledge the significant contributions made by the:

- **West Coast Demersal Expert Working Group**
Providing crucial input into Recfishwest’s advice to Government for the ongoing management of the west coast demersal fishery.
- **Spearfishing Equity Working Group**
Removing impediments to ensuring equitable management arrangements for spearfishers in areas such as marine parks.

Recfishwest thanks the members of these groups for their commitment and input into ensuring fishers’ interests are protected in relation to these issues.



Photo: Matt Barnes

Freshwater Reference Group

Advice on fish stocking locations and Marron fishery management.

Ian Sewell <i>(Chair)</i>	Liam Surridge	Stewart King	Russell Hanley
Peter Fragomeni	Glenn Edwards	Stuart Bowman	

Western Rock Lobster Reference Group

Six recreational rock lobster licence holders provide advice on all aspects of rock lobster management.

Bob Urquhart <i>(Chair)</i>	Norman Halse	Brian Snook	Michael Heslewood
Ross George	Brody Laroux		



Photo: Angus Line



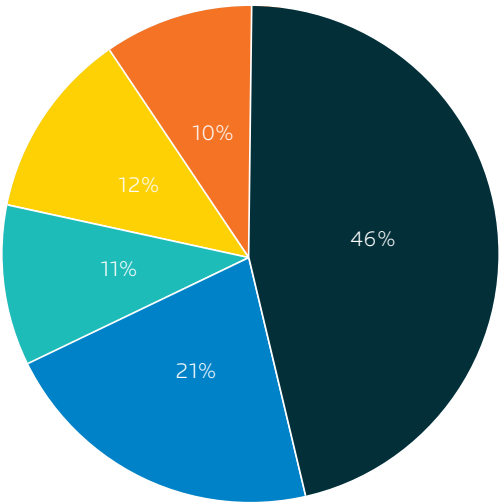
Financial Statements & Governance



Recfishwest’s Board of Directors is committed to excellence in corporate governance and enhancing the interest of the association’s members.

The Recfishwest Board, supported by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, sets and monitors annual expenditure to ensure organisational resources are deployed to best meet the needs of our members, our constitutional purpose, our strategy as well as obligations to our partners across a range of program areas.

The Recfishwest Board maintains a strong focus on financial security and long-term sustainability of our organisation in delivering against our purpose. This includes maintaining an operating reserve equivalent to six months of average operating costs which is intended to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses.



Allocation of 2022/23 expenditure

- Advocacy & Representation
- Habitat Enhancement – inc. Reefs, FADs, R&D support
- Community – Clinics, Small Grants, Safe Fishing, Stocking Events
- Communications
- Business Development



Financial Report

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
ABN 77 922 817 608
For the year ended 30 June 2023

Prepared by In Focus Accounting Pty Ltd



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9	Statement by Members of the Board
10	Auditor’s Report

Income and Expenditure Statement

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	NOTES	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Income			
Fisheries Grants Received		1,491,148	1,389,974
Other Grants		1,523,225	1,444,582
Interest Income		15,612	423
Memberships		6,646	5,951
Other Income		30,360	13,761
Sales		3,998	8,649
Profit on Sale of Fixed Assets		-	36,951
Total Income		3,070,989	2,900,291
Expenditure			
Depreciation		29,513	35,224
Motor Vehicles	2	23,625	21,345
Cost of Sales		3,664	6,887
Administration Expenses		368,444	331,562
Communication Expenses		369,526	253,098
Project Expenses		491,659	417,870
Salary and on cost Expenses		1,929,847	1,808,681
Inventory write-down		10,582	-
Total Expenditure		3,226,860	2,874,667
Current Year (Deficit)/Surplus		(155,871)	25,624

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Balance Sheet

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
As at 30 June 2023

	NOTES	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents		1,220,553	1,536,818
Trade and Other Receivables	3	479,791	949,111
Inventories		2,482	16,386
Other Current Assets		4,977	14,176
Total Current Assets		1,707,803	2,516,491
Non-Current Assets			
Plant, Equipment and Vehicles	4	161,228	171,313
Total Non-Current Assets		161,228	171,313
Total Assets		1,869,031	2,687,804
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Payables	5	45,899	39,664
GST Payable		35,247	94,111
Payroll Liabilities	6	298,849	316,885
Total Current Liabilities		379,995	450,660
Other Current Liabilities			
Accrued Expenses		75,184	59,943
Contract Liability		468,363	380,841
Grants in Advance	3	-	695,000
Total Other Current Liabilities		543,547	1,135,784
Total Liabilities		923,542	1,586,444
Net Assets		945,489	1,101,360
Reserves			
Retained Surplus		945,489	1,101,360
Total Reserves		945,489	1,101,360

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements
WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
For the year ended 30 June 2023

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements are prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Western Australia 2015. The Board have determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

Income Tax

The Council is exempt from Income Tax.

Trade and Other Receivables

Trade receivables and other receivables are recognised at the nominal transaction value without taking into account the time value of money. If required a provision for doubtful debts has been created.

Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

PPE is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Employee Provisions

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee provisions have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Long service leave is calculated at current rates based upon 13 weeks leave after 10 years.

Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result, and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash.

Notes to the Financial Statements
WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
For the year ended 30 June 2023

Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is recognised when the Council is entitled to it and is stated net of the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST). Grant income is recognised when the association obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt. If conditions are attached to a grant that must be satisfied before the association is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue is deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

Interest revenue is recognised on receipt.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

Accounts Payable and Other Payables

Accounts payable and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period that remain unpaid.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
2. Motor Vehicle Expenses		
Fuel & Parking	18,211	14,349
Registrations & 3rd party Insurance	2,939	325
Repairs & Maintenance	2,475	6,671
Total Motor Vehicle Expenses	23,625	21,345
3. Trade and Other Receivables		
Trade Debtors	431,042	900,644
Sundry Debtors	750	551
Prepayments	47,999	47,916
Total Trade and Other Receivables	479,791	949,111

The 2022 Trade Debtors included \$764,500 regarding Fisheries Grant billed in advance, which was also reflected as a current liability in Grants in Advance (\$695,000 net of GST). The Grant was not billed in advance in 2023.

Notes to the Financial Statements

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
4. Plant, Equipment and Vehicles		
Plant and Equipment		
Plant and Equipment at cost	159,304	139,876
Accumulated Depreciation of Plant and Equipment	(132,371)	(119,078)
Total Plant and Equipment	26,933	20,798
Motor Vehicles		
Motor Vehicles at cost	167,586	178,950
Accumulated Depreciation of Motor Vehicles	(33,291)	(28,435)
Total Motor Vehicles	134,295	150,515
Total Plant, Equipment and Vehicles	161,228	171,313
5. Trade and Other Payables		
Trade Creditors	26,533	21,149
Credit Cards	13,966	13,969
Income Received in Advance	5,400	4,546
Total Trade and Other Payables	45,899	39,664
6. Payroll Liabilities		
PAYG Withholding Payable	33,423	45,266
Provision for Annual Leave	48,461	58,976
Provision for Long Service Leave	216,965	212,643
Total Payroll Liabilities	298,849	316,885

Movements in Reserves

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council
For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Retained Reserves		
Retained Earnings brought forward	1,101,360	1,075,736
Current Year (Deficit)/Surplus	(155,871)	25,624
Total Retained Reserves carried forward	945,489	1,101,360

Statement by Members of the Board

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Annual Statements Give True and Fair View of Financial Position and Performance of the Association

The Board of WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council, certify that –

The Statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2023.

Signed:



Dated: 18 October 2023

Chairman

Signed:



Dated: 18 October 2023

CEO



In Focus Accounting Pty Ltd

ABN: 16 009 252 019

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS, AUDITORS & BUSINESS ADVISORS

DIRECTORS:
ANDREW LOWRY CA
LEONARD TEBBUTT CA

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT WA RECREATIONAL AND SPORTSFISHING COUNCIL INC A.B.N: 77922817608

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of WA RECREATIONAL AND SPORTSFISHING COUNCIL INC which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2023, the income statement, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory information and the statement by members of the Board.

Auditors' Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of WA RECREATIONAL AND SPORTSFISHING COUNCIL INC present fairly, in all material respects the financial position of WA RECREATIONAL AND SPORTSFISHING COUNCIL INC as of 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Associations Incorporation Act Western Australia 2015.

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Association Act Western Australia 2015. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Board of WA RECREATIONAL AND SPORTSFISHING COUNCIL INC is responsible for the preparation of the financial report and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act of Western Australia and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The Board's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

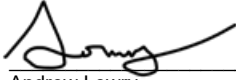
Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditors consider internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Name of Firm: In Focus Accounting Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants & Auditors

Name of Partner: 
Andrew Lowry

Address: U9, 176 Main Street, Osborne Park, WA 6017

Dated this 28th day of September 2023



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Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation



Corporate Governance Information

The Board of Directors of Recfishwest is committed to excellence in corporate governance and enhancing the interests of the association’s members. Each year the Board provides a Corporate Governance Statement which reflects both the 4th edition of the ASX Corporate Governance Council’s *Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations (ASX Principles and Recommendations)*, and the 2nd edition of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) *Not-For-Profit Governance Principles*.

Although applicable to listed entities, the ASX Principles and Recommendations provide a benchmark for corporate governance practices and Recfishwest is committed to reporting against them in so far as they are relevant to a non-listed entity.

The Board

The Board is responsible for the overall corporate governance of Recfishwest. Its powers are described in the Recfishwest Constitution. The objectives and responsibilities of the Board are set out in the Board Charter. The adoption of any proposed changes to the Constitution is subject to the approval of the membership at a general meeting. The Constitution and the Board Charter are available on our website.

Board Committees

The Board has established numerous committees to assist it to discharge its responsibilities, particularly in relation to top-shelf governance. The objectives, responsibilities and composition of each committee are set out within individual committee charters available on the Recfishwest website. The Board approves the committee charters and reviews their membership annually.

Remuneration & Nomination Committee

The Remuneration and Nomination Committee assists the Board to fulfil its responsibilities on matters in relation to the remuneration policy for Recfishwest and the composition, skills and performance of the Board.

The committee is responsible for Board succession planning generally; Director induction and professional development; processes for recruitment, appointment and re-election of directors; and ensuring plans are in place to manage the succession of the CEO and senior executives.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee reviews and monitors the risk management, compliance program and financial systems within Recfishwest. The Committee reviews and monitors procedures to safeguard Recfishwest assets and interests, including accounting and financial reporting, compliance with applicable laws, regulations, standards, and best practice guidelines.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee ensures that Recfishwest, to the greatest extent possible, complies with the principles and recommendations espoused by the ASX and AICD. The Recfishwest Governance Committee regularly reviews its corporate governance systems to ensure that Recfishwest continues its commitment to good corporate governance within a dynamic and changing operating environment.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee assists the Board in supervising the external communications of Recfishwest to all stakeholders. The committee oversees the Recfishwest Communication and Engagement Strategy, the development and operation of effective and efficient communication and engagement policies and practices, and membership services.

The Recfishwest Corporate Governance Statement, as well as information on policies approved and adopted by the Board, is publicly available on the Recfishwest website: [recfishwest.org.au](https://www.recfishwest.org.au)





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