



# #GoFishing – It is great for you and our nation

An election platform by the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation



**AUSTRALIAN RECREATIONAL  
FISHING FOUNDATION**

# Australians love their fishing.



It has been estimated that around **5 million** Australians go fishing each year, spending around **\$10 billion** in doing so. This makes recreational fishing arguably one of the largest outdoor leisure/ sporting activities and makes recreational fishers the largest marine and riverine user stakeholder groups in Australia. The economic worth generated by recreational fishing in Australia is greater than that for many other sectors of the economy, including commercial fishing.

Australia's marine and riverine environment and the associated recreational fisheries are well managed. However, we want to make them better. We want to make them world class and the management of them – world leading. This will require a paradigm shift in the way we think about and manage our marine and riverine natural resources, through the genuine recognition of recreational fishing by the Federal Government.



Australia's recreational fishers are looking for a Government that understands recreational fishing and the significant economic, social and environmental benefits recreational fishing brings to our 5 million recreational fishers, and the broader Australian community.

The Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) and its members are proposing a number of initiatives. If implemented will significantly increase the triple bottom line benefits to all Australians for years to come. These initiatives will also enhance and protect our unique marine and riverine environments for generations to come. These initiatives will establish a new paradigm for developing and managing the experiences and opportunities of recreational fishing in Australia and with it the significant benefits that recreational fishing brings to our great nation.

ARFF proposes that these initiatives be implemented through a true partnership between the Government and the recreational fishing community.

## ARFF's 2016 Federal Election Initiatives

### Initiative 1:

A National Recreational Fishing Council

### Initiative 2:

Industrial Scale Fishing of the Small Pelagic Fishery

### Initiative 3:

National Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Fund

### Initiative 4:

Grass Roots Action to Improve Marine and Riverine Habitat

### Initiative 5:

Marine Parks are for Everyone - Don't Lock us Out!

### Initiative 6:

More Marine Habitat = More Fish

### Initiative 7:

Eradicating European Carp

### Initiative 8:

National Economic Study

### Initiative 9:

Enhanced Investment in Research

### Initiative 10:

Help Recreational Fishers Gather Scientific Data

### Initiative 11:

National Gone Fishing Day

### Initiative 12:

National Recreational Fishing Development Program



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# 1. Engaging with Government



Australia's 5 million recreational fishers are the largest user stakeholder group affected by Government policy in relation to marine and riverine environments and fisheries management. The return to the Australian community from access to our unique marine and riverine environment far exceeds the return from commercial fishing and other activities. Yet, recreational fishers are not recognised by the Government when it comes to the management of key fisheries that recreational fishers have right of access to, including the Southern Bluefin Fishery and the Small Pelagic Fishery.

**Recreational fishers want a recognised seat at the table and a genuine say when key decisions are made about access to and management of key recreational fisheries.**

## INITIATIVE 1: A NATIONAL RECREATIONAL FISHING COUNCIL

ARFF calls for the establishment of a recreational fishing council, chaired by the Fisheries Minister, with representatives from other key Government portfolios and from the recreational fishing community. The role of the Council will be to act as a point of engagement between the recreational fishing community and the Government. The Council will progress a joint work agenda aimed at building genuine legislative recognition of recreational fishing within Government and a recognised say in decisions about the development and management of key recreational fisheries, such as the Southern Bluefin Fishery and the Small Pelagic Fishery.

## 2. Increasing Value to Communities

Our natural marine and riverine resources provide a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits to the Australian community. It is important to ensure these natural resources are sustainably managed, used for their highest and best use and in the nations interest.

Key here is also recognising that recreational fishers are a large percentage of the community and are practical conservationists. Harnessing this power provides a great way to improving the habitat of marine and aquatic environment. One of the biggest obstacles to increasing benefits to the community is access to our marine and riverine environments. Increasing access can help realise these benefits and provide a sustainable use of these resources for future generations.

### INITIATIVE 2: INDUSTRIAL SCALE FISHING OF THE SMALL PELAGIC FISHERY

The industrial scale fishing of the small pelagic fishery has created more controversy than the commercial fishing of any other fishery in Australia. ARFF believes this activity is not the highest and best use of this important fish stock nor is it in the national interest. The fish stock provides greater value to the Australian community, now and for future generations by leaving them in the water. The Government has created this issue and should fix it.

### INITIATIVE 3: NATIONAL BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The ability for recreational fishers to get on or near the water is hampered by existing boating and infrastructure. In order to accommodate growth in the sector and the industry it supports, better boat ramps, marinas, piers, jetties and fishing platforms are desperately needed at a number of key locations around the nation. Greater funding in infrastructure has been shown to provide terrific return on investment and create regional jobs. ARFF calls for a national funding program aimed at improving safer access to the resource through better boating and fishing infrastructure. The program would leverage off initiatives at the State and community level providing high quality fishing experiences for future generations.



### INITIATIVE 4: GRASS ROOTS ACTION TO IMPROVE MARINE AND RIVERINE HABITAT

ARFF through its members is working to build capacity and know how within the recreational fishing community to undertake habitat restoration works at the community level. However, without projects and funds, this capacity cannot be effectively utilized or our know how developed further. ARFF seeks a partnership with Government to undertake on-ground habitat improvements and deliver citizen science projects.



### 3. Improving Our Marine and Riverine Environment for Future Generations

It's a simple equation:

**MORE HABITAT = MORE FISH = A HEALTHY AND ABUNDANT MARINE AND RIVERINE ENVIRONMENT**

This is the philosophy behind ARFF's environment initiatives. ARFF also believes that recreational fishers have a major role to play in protecting and increasing the knowledge about our marine and riverine environment – we have a vested interest in its healthy future.

These benefits cannot be achieved if recreational fishers are locked out of marine or terrestrial reserves. Recreational Fishers should be recognised for the benefits they can provide through citizen science and on ground capability.



#### **INITIATIVE 5: MARINE PARKS ARE FOR EVERYONE – DON'T LOCK US OUT!**

Lets get serious about protecting our marine environment. This means focusing on the big threats to our marine environment, global warming, pollution, and invasive species – not locking Australia's recreational fishers out of marine parks. ARFF calls for recreational fishers not to be locked out of any marine reserve unless there is a compelling scientific reason to do so.

ARFF calls for a review of the way access to marine reserves is determined, so future decisions are based on scientific risk based assessment, rather than archaic and unscientific terms such as 'no take '.

#### **INITIATIVE 6: MORE MARINE HABITAT = MORE FISH**

ARFF believes that marine reserves can be enhanced by creating new marine habitats, including the establishment of fish aggregation devices and artificial reefs. This will contribute to improved opportunities for recreational fishers, creating greater economic and social benefits for Australia and complement the conservation of our marine environment through marine reserves.

#### **INITIATIVE 7: ERADICATING EUROPEAN CARP**

European carp are our greatest invasive aquatic pest and are a threat to our precious inland riverine environment. ARFF supports the initiative to remove European carp from our inland waterways and replace them with Australia's own native fish species. This will create an environmental legacy for future generations. Australia's inland waterways will become healthier and the waters in them will flow clear again – a sight that hasn't been seen for over a generation.

## 4. Enhancing Research into Recreational Fishing



**Efficient and ongoing research investment into recreational fishing will benefit all Australians now and in the future. Australia's recreational fishing sector needs a level of investment in research and development commensurate to its social and economic value.**

### **INITIATIVE 8: NATIONAL ECONOMIC STUDY**

ARFF believes there should be a national study into the economic benefits of recreational fishing to the economy. This study should be maintained and repeated every 3 years to create a time series of contribution to the economy.

### **INITIATIVE 9: ENHANCED INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH**

As is done with other sectors, ARFF seeks a partnership model for investment with Government. We seek a model that allows recreational fishing investment on research to be complemented by Government investment in a similar approach used for the commercial fishing sector.

### **INITIATIVE 10: HELP RECREATIONAL FISHERS GATHER SCIENTIFIC DATA**

Australia's recreational fishers undertake scientific research through tagging of fish species in many of the proposed marine reserve areas, critical to the management and conservation of these areas. Recreational fishers provide catch and weight/effort records of captured fish which is broken down by individual species. Recreational fishers undertake this science without Government funding or recognition but this level of science could be enhanced through Government support. Locking recreational fishers out of marine reserves will see this critical research and the opportunity to enhance it lost. ARFF calls for Government support to enhance the science based activities of recreational fishers.



# 5. Promoting Australia's Greatest Leisure / Sport / Pastime



Evidence is emerging that recreational fishing is not only good for the economy and the environment – its good for you. The health benefits of recreational fishing have long been suspected but are now being proven. That said Governments have been slow in recognising the community benefits of recreational fishing. The Government spends almost \$300 million a year on developing sports programs in Australia but invests little in promoting recreational fishing or its economic, social or environmental benefits.

**ARFF believes recreational fishing should be supported to promote its benefits and continued development.**

## INITIATIVE 11: NATIONAL GONE FISHING DAY

With an estimated 5 million recreational fishers in Australia, contributing an estimated \$10 billion to the economy, isn't it time we had our own nationally recognised day? This will be a day to promote all the positive benefit of recreation fishing through community and club based programs to promote sustainable fishing practices and health and safety aspects of recreational fishing. The day will be a partnership between the Government and the recreational fishing community.



## INITIATIVE 12: NATIONAL RECREATIONAL FISHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Governments recognise the benefits that the promotion of sports bring to the community. However, recreational fishing that arguably delivers these benefits and more to the Australian economy, environment and communities receives very little support for promotion and ongoing development.

ARFF calls for a national program aimed at promoting recreational fishing and its broad range of benefits to the Australian community. The program would support initiatives at the national, state and community level that promote recreational fishing.



ARFF MEMBERS

