



17 September 2009

New Changes To Recreational Fishing Licenses

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton welcomed the Fisheries Minister Norman Moore's announcement today of a modified package to manage Western Australia's recreational fishing sector.

"Like many other MPs, I was concerned with the initial package and have been contacted by many concerned constituents. I have related my concerns and those of my constituents to the Fisheries Minister and the Minister has listened and responded with a revised package."

"The new package protects fish stocks in a manner tailored to the diverse needs and concerns of Western Australian fishers. And I am very pleased to have played a part on behalf of my constituents in having these changes come about."

"The science on this issue is clear. There is a need to reduce the overall take of at-risk demersal species, including dhufish, baldchin groper and red emperors by 50 per cent in the West Coast Bio Region. There is also a need to better understand the biology and fishing effort targeting other targeted species including whiting, herring, tailor and skippy."

"The package is designed to achieve that aim. Doing nothing is not an option. The vast majority of the community supports the need to act and to achieve the scientific aims of the package."

Dr Nahan said a central part of the new package is the introduction of an annual \$30 Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) across the state.

"The new RFBL entitles the holder to fish from any recreational or charter boat. Other people can also fish from the same boat without a licence providing the number of fish caught does not exceed the total bag limits of the licenses or the boat limit for dhufish," said Dr Nahan.

"This addresses some of the real problems of the previous package, where everyone fishing from a boat would have needed separate licence."

"I am very pleased that the proposed \$150 fishing license for demersal scalefish has been dropped in favour of tougher new bag limits of two high risk demersal scalefish species of which only one can be a dhufish. Boats fishing for demersals will also have to carry a release weight to improve the survival rates for fish that need to be returned to the water."

"Bag limits will be reduced from 40 to 30 for lower risk species such as herring, sand whiting and garfish, and bag limits of medium risk species like tailor, skippy and King George whiting will be reduced from 16 to 12."

"Other fishing license fees will be standardized to \$40 for marron, lobster, abalone, rock lobster, net fishing and freshwater angling and 50 per cent discounts for seniors and people under 16 will still apply."

"It is estimated that \$2.8m will be spent on additional fisheries compliance and community education, \$3m for research, \$0.6m for management and a further \$0.5m for licensing."

"I believe these new measures, where recreational fishers contribute to the maintenance and protection of our fish stocks will be far more readily accepted by the fishing and boating public."

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