

Media Release

Federal Government Releases Marine Park allocations

The Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF), the peak national organisation representing Australia's 5 million strong recreational fishing community, cautiously welcomed the new Commonwealth Marine Reserve network plans released by the Director of National Parks Sally Barnes.

Mr Allan Hansard Managing Director of ARFF said "Though we are still working through the detail of the plans, we are pleased to note that these plans demonstrate a more balanced approach to the Commonwealth marine reserve system than we have seen in the past. The plans aim to deliver a world class marine reserve network while recognising the important contribution of key stakeholders, including Australian recreational fishers."

We think this plan goes a long way to achieving this objective.

"These plans are definitely a large improvement on the plans produced by the previous Government that would have seen recreational fishers locked out of over 1.3 million square kilometers of Australian seas, with out any scientific justification. Now we have access to 97% of waters within 100km of the coast, and 80% of the whole network."

"These plans maintain access to many of the iconic recreational fishing locations around Australia, with access to 76% of the Coral Sea compared to 46% in the previous plans meaning we have access to the world renowned Wreck, Marion, Shark and Osprey reefs in the Coral Sea and the Perth Trench and Geographe Bay in Western Australia. This will mean that Australians will still be able to sustainably fish these places for generations to come."

Obviously we have some issues that we would like to have addressed before these plans are finalised. We will be using the submission process to raise these issues with the Government. We are particularly interested in how we can work with the Government in the future management of the new marine reserve network to improve community engagement, obtain a better understanding of fishing and the environment, trial new information management technologies and establish moorings and other systems to improve visitor experiences and recreational opportunities.

"We look forward to constructively work with the Government on these plans to ensure a world leading marine reserve network." Mr Hansard concluded.