



**FRDC**

FISHERIES RESEARCH &  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



# Post Conference Report

**Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation**

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**2015 Recreational Fishing Conference – Post Conference Report  
FRDC 2014-500**

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**Researcher Contact Details**

Name: Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation  
Address: Unit 5 11 McKay Gardens Turner ACT 2910  
  
Phone: (02) 62828500  
Email: [enquiries@recreationalfishing.com.au](mailto:enquiries@recreationalfishing.com.au)

**FRDC Contact Details**

Address: 25 Geils Court  
Deakin ACT 2600  
  
Phone: 02 6285 0400  
Fax: 02 6285 0499  
Email: [frdc@frdc.com.au](mailto:frdc@frdc.com.au)  
Web: [www.frdc.com.au](http://www.frdc.com.au)

In submitting this report, the researcher has agreed to FRDC publishing this material in its edited form.

## 1. BACKGROUND

Following on from the success of the 2012 National Recreational Fishing Conference, the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation was successful in securing a funding grant from the FRDC to deliver a National Recreational Fishing Conference in 2015.

## 2. NEED

The last National Recreational Fishing Conference was held in 2012. It has been recognized by industry that there is a need for the recreational fishing sector to hold a national conference every two years. In 2015, it will have been three years since the last recreational fishing conference.

Key industry bodies, the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation and the Australian Fishing Trade Association recognized the need to maintain momentum and sector drive and together with FRDC determined it timely to hold a third National Recreational Fishing Conference.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

1. Deliver a National Recreational Fishing conference in 2015 that increases the level of meaningful engagement with the recreational fishing community in national issues of importance.
2. Engage with participants at the National Conference to identify priority actions to be progressed following the forum.
3. Acknowledgement of recreational fishing community achievements
4. Publication of extension products from the event.

## 4. METHODS

### 4.1 PRE- - - CONFERENCE RESEARCH

An in-depth post conference survey was conducted at the conclusion of the 2012 National Recreational Fishing Conference. It was determined that the results of this survey would be used as the basis for planning the 2015 Conference. Thorough feedback was provided on conference location, costs, duration and conference program that was all used make decisions for the 2015 event.

### 4.2 DELIVERING THE CONFERENCE

1. A steering committee was appointed to oversee the development of the conference program.
2. An event manager was appointed to manage the day-to-day operations of the conference.
3. Based on feedback received from the 2012 National Recreational Conference the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition was selected as the venue for the 2015 event.
4. The steering committee developed the conference program through regular teleconference meetings.
5. Keynote speakers were selected to set the scene for each of the conference session themes.
6. A Sponsorship Prospectus was distributed to obtain additional funding support for the event. The sponsorship prospectus can be found in Supporting Documentation: Item 4.
7. The Conference was promoted through:
  - a. Conference website: [www.recreationalfishingconference.com.au](http://www.recreationalfishingconference.com.au).
  - b. Facebook.
  - c. Twitter.
  - d. Television advertising through Southern Cross Media stations (Chanel 10, ONE and 11) across South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales regions.
  - e. Industry print media advertising in Queensland Fishing Monthly and Bush'n'Beach Fishing Magazine.
  - f. Email bulletins via the Keep Australia Fishing supporter database .
  - g. Email bulletins to all state based recreational fishing representative groups to be distributed to their members and supporters.
  - h. Media alerts.
8. An evaluation of the delegates views of the conference was obtained at the conclusion of the event via a Post-Conference Survey completed online.

#### 4.3 STRATEGIC ACTIONS POST CONFERENCE

The final session of the conference was dedicated to a plenary session to determine industry priorities to be addressed following the conference.

#### 4.4 RECREATIONAL FISHING AWARDS

The Recreational Fishing Awards Function was held at the conclusion of the Conference to recognise outstanding achievements of groups and individuals across several categories.

### 5. RESULTS

#### 5.1 PRE- - - CONFERENCE RESEARCH

A thorough review of recommendations and feedback from the 2012 Recreational Fishing Conference was undertaken. This report can be found in Supporting Documentation – Item 1.

It was determined from this information that there was a significant lack of representation from recreational fishers who were unaffiliated with industry through employment, clubs or associations at the 2012 event. To make this event more attractive to more diverse representation from the recreational fishing community it was determined to shorten the length of the 2015 Conference to a one-day event, down from two days in 2012.

Feedback recommended that the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre be maintained as the venue for another Conference.

Costs appeared to be a prohibiting factor to grass roots recreational fishers attending the previous conference. The Conference Committee determined that conference registration costs needed to be reduced significantly on the 2012 event.

When setting the conference theme and sessions the steering committee decided to build and further develop the themes from the 2012 Conference rather than create a new theme entirely.

## 5.2 DELIVERY OF THE CONFERENCE

The 2015 National Recreational Fishing Conference was held on Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> of July at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. The Conference was a joint project between the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, the Australian Fishing Trade Association and RecFishing Research.

The timing of the Conference meant that it coincided with the inaugural John Dunphy Memorial Fishing Tournament and the 2015 Australian Fishing Trade Association Trade Show.

The Conference was attended by 125 delegates from across Australia. A full delegate list can be found in Supporting Documentation – Item 2.

The theme for the Conference was ‘Managing Our Fishing Future’. The day was broken into five session themes, which were:

- Australian Fishers – A Shared Resource
- Improving the Quality of Fishing in Australia
- What Does the Future of Recreational Fishing in Australia Look Like?
- What is Social License and How Do We Maintain It?
- Creating Our Fishing Future

The Conference was delivered by Federal Fisheries Minister, the Hon. Richard Colbeck MP, who was able to attend the entire Conference program.

There were five keynote addresses during the Conference.

- Emerging Trends, New Generations and What this Means for Recreational Fishing in Australia, Mark McCrindle
- Overcoming Nature Deficit Disorder, Richard Louv
- What is Social License, How do We Maintain it and What Happens if we don't?, Leeora Black
- The Science and Ethics of Catch and Release, Dr Julian Pepperell

Across the day there were sixteen different presentations delivered by representatives from government, fisheries agencies, researchers and outside of industry experts. Presentations were made up of a combination of case studies, research studies and

thought provoking social ethics discussions. The full Conference Program can be found in Supporting Documentation: Item 3.

Several sponsorships were secured for the event from:

- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
- Australian Fishing Trade Association
- RecFishing Research
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, Victoria
- Fisheries Victoria
- ABT, Australian Bass Tournaments
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Fish Habitat Network
- Department of Agriculture
- VRFish
- Southern Cross Media

The following were used to promote the conference:

- Conference website: [www.recreationalfishingconference.com.au](http://www.recreationalfishingconference.com.au).
- Facebook.
- Twitter.
- Television advertising through Southern Cross Media stations (Chanel 10, ONE and 11) across South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales regions.
- Industry print media advertising in Queensland Fishing Monthly and Bush'n'Beach Fishing Magazine.
- Email bulletins via the Keep Australia Fishing supporter database.
- Email bulletins to all state based recreational fishing representative groups to be distributed to their members and supporters.
- Media alerts.

The final session of the Conference was the National Recreational Fishing Forum. Conference delegates identified key recreational fishing issues to build essential capacity and enhance constructive engagement with Government.

Following the Conference a survey was distributed to Conference Attendees to determine the perceived success of the event and feedback relating to operations, content and outcomes of the event. The Survey Results can be found in Supporting Documentation – Item 5.

### 5.3 KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

- Need to develop a national recreational fishing policy to cover how recreational fishing can be integrated into the policy development and fisheries management processes of Government
- Need to develop a funded and on going collection of key data on recreational fishing including economic contribution and participation
- Need to develop a sustainable way to fund key activities, including representation to government, engagement with government on policy and management issues, promotion activities, environment activities, research activities and education activities.
- Need to develop capacity and capability within peak and key recreational fishing organisations to allow constructive and effective engagement with Government and key industry, community and environmental organisations.

## 6. POST CONFERENCE ACTIONS / CONCLUSIONS

The key issues identified from the National Forum at the Conference have been adopted as key priority actions for the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation.

One of the objectives of the National Recreational Fishing Conference in 2015 was to increase the participation of recreational fishers – above the X who participated in the Conference in 2013. To achieve this the National Recreational Fishing Conference in 2015 sought to provide a lower cost to participants (\$ 25pp) than was charged for attendance at the National Recreational Fishing Conference in 2013 (\$250pp).

Both Conferences had similar advertising budgets and strategies. The attendance at the 2015 Conference was not that dissimilar to the attendance at the 2013 Conference, indicating a key outcome - the attendance at the Conference is largely inelastic to the price charged.



When reviewing the attendance lists for the two Conferences another key outcome was revealed. Both Conferences were dominated by participants from Federal and State Government agencies and from the National and State recreational fishing organisations. At both conferences there was very few attendees from what could be classified as a "grass roots" recreational fisher.

This result could indicate two things about the National Recreational Fishing Conferences.

- That the communication strategy is not targeting the grass roots recreational fisher, rather is reaching the recreational fishing participants from formal organisations; and
- That the Conference was not seen as sufficient value for grass roots recreational fishers to forgo other activities for the weekend to attend the conference.

These are valuable results that further we can learn from when organising future conferences for recreational fishers. .

By all measures the Conference was a success.