



RECREATIONAL FISHING POLICY



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Recreational fishing is part of who we are.

It is families on the riverbank. It is kids learning patience and responsibility.

It is mates out on the water before sunrise. It is regional tourism, local tackle stores, boating businesses and country communities. It should be a fundamental right for Australians to fish for clean organic seafood to feed their family, or simply the enjoyment of the catch. Catch and release fishing is sustainable, scientifically valuable that is enjoyed by many.

But recreational fishers are constantly treated like an easy target by governments who see them as a revenue stream not stakeholders, and by activists who want exclusive access to areas at the expense of fishers.

Recreational fishers are being locked out of waterways, buried under regulation and ignored in decision-making while real environmental problems go unaddressed.

We as law-abiding recreational fishers are not the enemy. We are the people funding fisheries management through licences, volunteering for habitat restoration and helping protect our waterways for future generations.

Recreational fishers have lost faith in the licencing and trust scheme due to mismanagement and are choosing to abandon it with Recreational fishing fee receipts in freefall.

NSW should be backing recreational fishing, not regulating and managing it into decline.





OUR ACTION PLAN

- Legislate to dismantle the anti-fishing lockdown culture infecting NSW by reviewing marine parks, sanctuary zones and exclusion areas, and repealing restrictions that unnecessarily push everyday Australians off public waterways.
- Introduce a “No Science, No Closure” law banning Fisheries NSW from imposing new fishing restrictions unless independent scientific evidence, regional economic impact assessments and genuine public consultation are publicly released before any closure takes effect.
- Force full transparency in fisheries management by legislating mandatory public disclosure of all major fisheries decisions, advisory reports, modelling, submissions and departmental recommendations before access restrictions can be approved.
- Establish an independent review process to reopen unfairly closed fishing areas and restore public access to beaches, estuaries, riverbanks, breakwalls and jetties that local communities have traditionally used for generations.
- Legislate a Recreational Fishing Rights Charter that legally protects law-abiding fishers from politically motivated restrictions, activist-driven lockouts and unnecessary bureaucratic interference.
- Lock recreational fishing licence revenue into law so every dollar collected must be spent on fishing access, fish stocking, artificial reefs, habitat restoration and programs that directly benefit recreational fishers, and periodic forensic audits of trust accounts.
- Mandate an expanded statewide fish stocking program across inland rivers and dams by increasing hatchery capacity, restoring native fish populations and supporting regional tourism economies built around recreational fishing.



OUR ACTION PLAN - Continued

- Create a Regional Fishing Infrastructure Fund to fast-track the construction and upgrade of boat ramps, pontoons, jetties, fish-cleaning tables, trailer parking and shoreline access facilities across regional NSW.
- Fund and deploy fish habitat structures and practical river restoration projects to improve fish stocks, boost catch rates and strengthen both inland and coastal fishing economies.
- Establish a dedicated Fisheries Crime Taskforce targeting illegal commercial poaching operations, black market seafood trafficking and organised networks stripping local waterways of fish stocks.
- Increase penalties and mandatory seizure of assets through legislation for organised illegal fishing syndicates, unlawful netting operations and repeat offenders caught destroying fish stocks for commercial profit.
- Replace harassment-style fisheries policing with a legislated commonsense compliance model that prioritises organised poaching, repeat offenders and serious environmental crimes instead of targeting ordinary recreational fishers.
- Legislate mandatory public reporting requirements forcing water agencies and government departments to publicly explain every fish kill, cold water pollution event and environmental flow failure damaging NSW waterways.
- Strengthen fishery protection laws by increasing penalties for industrial polluters, negligent water managers and upstream operators responsible for destroying fish habitat and wiping out native fish populations.
- Fund aggressive statewide carp eradication, Redfin, Tilapia and other emerging noxious species and native habitat restoration programs to rebuild



OUR ACTION PLAN - Continued

healthy inland waterways and protect native fish populations.

- Legislate protections for beach driving access, shoreline fishing access and traditional camping areas to stop creeping green tape, unnecessary closures and anti-access activism locking Australians out of the outdoors.
- Expand disability-friendly fishing facilities, safer family fishing zones and affordable camping areas through targeted infrastructure funding so ordinary Australians are not priced or regulated out of outdoor recreation.
- Create a Regional Fishing Communities Grants Program to fund fishing clubs, junior fishing programs, local competitions and community fishing events that keep fishing culture alive and support regional businesses or support community driven infrastructure program.
- Mandate recreational fisher representation on fisheries advisory bodies and decision-making panels to stop activists and career bureaucrats posing on committees as recreational fishers.
- Introduce mandatory regional economic impact testing in legislation so no new fishing restriction can proceed unless independently impact assessment on local jobs, tourism operators, tackle stores and small businesses is completed.
- Ban the privatisation of public waterways, boat ramps and fishing access points through legislation that guarantees public ownership and protects community access from developers and government sell-offs.
- Legislate protections for outdoor family traditions by defending the right of parents and grandparents to teach the next generation to fish, camp and enjoy the outdoors without government interference or overregulation.