

21 February 2025

The Hon. Bob Baldwin  
Independent Chair  
Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA)  
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Dear Bob

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Nationals WA response to the Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA) Policy Submission on Recreational Fishing in WA.

I am please to provide you with our response as stated below.

1. Will your party commit to forming a Minister for Outdoor Recreation & Lifestyle portfolio?

*Response: The Nationals WA believe the existing Minister for Fisheries has neglected his role as representative for recreational fishing. The Nationals WA recognise the importance of recreational fishing to West Australian communities and, in government, commit to ensuring the recreational fishing sector is properly considered and represented at the cabinet table.*

2. Cost of Living Relief:

- a. Will your party commit to a restructuring of Recreational Fishing Licences and reduce licence fees to bring downward pressure on the costs of participation?

*Response: The Nationals WA certainly recognise the impact that cost of living is having on our communities and are keen to ensure measures are put in place that reduces the pressure to families. A review of these charges is warranted, and this is something the Nationals WA are prepared to address.*

3. Advisory Committees:

- a. Will your party commit to appointing a Fisheries Management Advisory Committee with members from the recreational, commercial, fishing tourism, and indigenous traditional fishing sectors to oversee the planning and implementation of all Fishery Management Frameworks and Harvest Strategies?

*Response: The Nationals WA are committed to ensuring all voices are heard and respected – we need all members of the community and wider industry to be involved to ensure all affected parties are working together.*

- b. Will your party commit to establishing a Ministerial Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee to report directly to the Minister on specific issues related to the recreational fishing sector?

*Response: The Nationals WA are committed to ensuring all voices are heard and respected – we need all members of the community and wider industry to be involved to ensure all affected parties are working together.*

4. Harvest Strategies:

- a. Will your party develop and implement a program of licence buyouts and reduce closures for recreational fishers commensurate with the stock level acquired back into the system?

*Response: The Nationals WA commit to conducting a detailed and comprehensive scientific study, in collaboration with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).*

5. Seasonal Species Closures:

- a. Will your party commit to conducting a detailed and comprehensive scientific study, in collaboration with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), on the aggregation, breeding patterns (triggers), and locations of Snapper and Dhufish to ensure that future decisions are based on sound scientific evidence?

*Response: What we have seen with the Cook Labor government is a complete disregard for scientific evidence in favour of evidence which supports already formulated political decisions, while the fishing industry and recreational fishers are left to pick up the pieces. These factors should be constantly under review. We know, for instance, the changing climate has affected currents, driving species south, so an overall and comprehensive review is required.*

- b. Will your party review the species closures with a view to increasing recreational fishing participation?

*Response: This would form part of the review to the above.*

6. Netting Closures:

- a. Will your party commit to the fair and just buyout of commercial net licenses from our sheltered rivers and estuaries?
- b. Will your party commit to increasing departmental effort in engagement and observation to support recovery of these climate change – commercial fishery impacted regions?

*Response: The Nationals WA in government commit to ensuring a renewed Department of Fisheries is operating optimally, including proper monitoring of stocks. We know the failed amalgamation of the Department of Fisheries into the mega-department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has had deleterious effects for all those agencies operations and that is also something the Nationals WA will seek to address.*

7. Fish Restocking:

- a. Will your party commit to \$12million in funding for restocking?
- b. Will your party commit to establishing new hatcheries?

*Response: The Nationals WA are committed to thoroughly investigating fish restocking as part of a broader marine management strategy. Our approach will be guided by the best available science, ensuring that any intervention delivers long term benefits to our marine environments and communities.*

8. LGA restrictions on fishing:

- a. Will your party commit to removing LGA restrictions on fishing access and protect the public's right to access our waterways and coast?

*Response: The Nationals WA believe local governments should not be involved in fishing decisions – this is a state issue which involves the entire coast.*

9. Marine Parks:

- a. Will your party commit to proactive engagement through a Ministerial Advisory Committee or a Ministerial Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee?
- b. As a part of the process will your party commit to the Triple Bottom Line assessment of Environmental, Economic and Social impacts?

*Response: The Nationals WA have been united with the fishing industry and broader community on marine parks in Western Australia and the shambolic nature of marine park creation consultations conducted by the Labor government.*

*The Nationals in Government will go back to the drawing board on the South Coast Marine Park and undertake a Special Inquiry into the selection of all new Marine Parks in WA.*

10. Funding:

- a. Will your party commit to the \$170m Recfishwest funding proposal?
- b. Will you party commit to increasing, not only direct funding to the Dhufish Forever Program, but additional departmental resources to reduce the demands on volunteers?

*Response: The Nationals WA is proud to support Recfishwest's \$70 million funding proposal to build resilient environments and secure abundant fish stocks for our future. Additionally, when in government, we will:*

- *Initiate comprehensive consultations with the view to upgrade and modernise our existing fishing jetties and platforms, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of our communities.*
- *Invest \$2 million to double the Statewide Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) program to 80 FADs, further enhancing sustainable fishing practices.*
- *Commit \$3 million to implement a statewide community stewardship program, empowering local communities to take an active role in protecting our marine resources.*

*These measures reflect our commitment to sustainable fisheries, vibrant coastal communities, and a robust marine environment across our state.*

*Finally, the Nationals WA is proud to announce that, once in government, we will re-establish the Department of Fisheries as an independent agency. This essential move will ensure that resources and expertise are strategically focused where they're needed most, empowering us to deliver stronger, more effective stewardship of our marine environments.*

11. Biosecurity Issues -White Spot Disease:

- a. Will your party commit to phasing out the sale of uncooked, imported crustaceans in WA?

*Response: The Nationals WA believe that the continued sale of uncooked, imported crustaceans presents an unacceptable risk to our fisheries. To safeguard our marine resources, we are committed to phasing out these products.*

12. Sharks:

- a. Will your party commit to reviewing the restrictions on wire traces?
- b. Will your party commit to reviewing and increasing the maximum "inter-dorsal fin" measurement of 700mm?

*Response: The Nationals WA are committed to ensuring commonsense measures are in place when considering shark fishing in Western Australia.*

13. Offshore Windfarms:

a. Will your party reject the application for Offshore Windfarms where the passage is through State controlled waters/lands?

*Response: The Nationals WA remain steadfast in our opposition to the development of offshore windfarms in Western Australia, consistently prioritising the protection of our marine environments and support for coastal communities.*

Thank you for your considered engagement. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these policy questions and clarify our positions.

Kind regards,



**Shane Love MLA**  
Leader of The Nationals WA