



2019 NSW ELECTION—POLITICAL PARTY COMMITMENTS

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW (RFA) is the trusted voice of recreational fishing in NSW and late in 2018 we put a call out for the recreational fishers of NSW to share with us their views on how we can guarantee the future of fishing and of the fish in NSW. Using that input, the RFA then launched an 8-point plan called the **8 R's** in the lead up to the NSW election on 23 March 2019. The plan was organised around 8 key platforms: Recognise, Review, Revitalise, Reform, Retain, Rehabilitate, Research and Resilience. The plan puts fish first and foremost, and outlines how recreational anglers intend to save and preserve the environment we fish in, retain and maintain fishing access, limit the threats to recreational and commercial fishing and **guarantee the future of fishing in NSW**.

How we collected responses

All the political parties listed in this document were contacted and asked if they supported or opposed the items in the 8 R's table. During February and March 2019, we held face-to-face meetings with leaders and/or chiefs-of-staff of Labor, Shooters Fishers & Farmers, Liberal Democrats and Pauline Hanson's One Nation. We were unable to organise a face-to-face meeting with the Christian Democrats or the Liberal/National Coalition—but both responded by phone and email. Responses were recorded in the table format provided to the parties by the RFA, except for the Coalition response, which was in the form of a letter (attached at the end of this document).

In many cases support or opposition to the issues raised was very clear, but in some cases, responses were conditional, which we think is quite reasonable.

In discussions with the parties we answered queries and clarified our views but we did not go out of our way to persuade or dissuade the parties from their opinions.

We recognise that recreational fishing is important to you, and we hope you will consider the following responses and make an informed vote on ALL issues important to you.

Stan Konstantaras

President

Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW.

Colour codes used in the table

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|------------|---|
| Green | Yes. Party has confirmed its support. |
| Pale green | Party has made a more detailed comment, or indicated conditional support, in-principle support, or needs further information or further discussion. |
| Orange | No. Party does not support. |
| Grey | Unable to get response from party in time for publication in the format provided to the party by the RFA. |

| The RFA calls on all State political parties to immediately commit to the following; | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Immediately place a moratorium on the creation of any more Marine Parks in NSW, especially in the Sydney and Twofold Bay Bioregions, until the Marine Estate Management Authority is disbanded and a new way is forged to manage recreational fishing across NSW in a way that is transparent and balanced. | Labor is committed to marine conservation and ensuring the sustainable management of NSW fish resource. We have no plans at this stage to make changes to the marine estate management agencies. With regard to a Marine Park at Sydney, we will consult widely and ensure decisions are made in accordance with science and evidence, including an assessment of what factors (such as sewerage, pollution) represent a threat to fish numbers and the severity of that impact. Labor will establish RecFishNSW as an independent statutory authority to tend to the recreational fishing industry in NSW. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately review all existing NSW Marine Park closures to ensure sound environmental outcomes are delivered, and consult with local communities and other stakeholders to open any closed areas to recreational fishing. | Labor will commence as a matter of priority a review of the Port Stephens Marine Park, which is overdue and has been ignored by the Berejiklian Government. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Secure \$24 million dollars in funding to fairly support the buy-out of the Southern Fish Trawl, to create a fish-trawl-free area from Sydney to Eden, from the beaches and headlands out to 3 nm (5.5 km). | Labor has held preliminary discussions and will seek urgent advice on this matter if elected. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Conduct independent reviews of the way fishing and boating licence fees are collected and expended across NSW, ensuring transparency, accountability and value for money. | Labor will establish an independent Statutory Authority, RecFishNSW, which will, amongst other things, improve transparency how rec fishing fees are allocated and spent. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Restore the government contribution to the management of recreational fishing (adjusted to today's dollars) to that agreed in 2001 when the general fishing licence was introduced. | Statutory Authority will undertake an audit and assess financial sustainability and appropriate contributions from fishers, industry and government. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Review the <i>Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016</i> . | Yes | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Declare Sydney Harbour a Recreational Fishing Haven, investing to improve recreational fishing and boating facilities, infrastructure, opportunities, services and environmental quality across the entire waterway. | Labor will consult with all stakeholders over the establishment of a Marine Park in Sydney. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |

1. RECOGNISE

| RECOGNISE the importance of recreational fishing to the NSW economy, the health and welfare of its citizens and the custodianship of the fisheries resources and the aquatic environment. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
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| Amend the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> to explicitly recognise the right to fish recreationally and provide in legislation for compensatable fishing rights for recreational fishers including loss of access in Recreational Fishing Havens or similar areas. | Matter for Statutory Authority | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Amend the <i>Marine Estate Management Act 2014</i> to explicitly recognise and reinstate the right to fish recreationally as under the previous <i>Marine Parks Act 1997</i> . | Investigate by Statutory Authority | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Support the formation of a dedicated Recreational Fishing Representative Body that is funded from the Recreational Fishing Trusts to provide adequate operating costs for a period of 5 years. | Labor will establish RecFishNSW as a statutory authority | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| The Recreational Fishing Representative Body should be constituted to provide advocacy on behalf of all fee-paying and non-fee-paying recreational fishers and be constituted to be able to deliver services and functions currently provided by government and others (excluding compliance and enforcement) with these capabilities to be phased in as capacities are demonstrated. | Labor will establish RecFishNSW as a statutory authority. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| The Recreational Fishing Representative Body will be empowered to promote the involvement of recreational fishers in research and monitoring projects. | A key role of RecFishNSW | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| The government contribution to the management of recreational fishing should be restored (adjusted to today's dollars) to that agreed in 2001 when the general fishing licence was introduced. | Labor will investigate | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| The Office of Sport in NSW should officially recognise recreational fishing as an activity or sport. | Labor will investigate | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Support the establishment of a fishing and diving museum to safeguard the history of the sport. | Labor will investigate | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |

2. REVIEW

| Partner with recreational fishers to REVIEW issues such as the recreational fishing access fee and redefine the way funds are spent, driving a new direction for recreational fishing in NSW and restructuring the way the NSW Government consults with fishers. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
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| One of the most infuriating issues since 2001 has been the cost shifting of core government responsibilities onto the NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts. Acceptance of the recreational fishing licence by anglers was predicated on the agreement that the government would maintain its level of service to recreational fishing. Cost shifting must stop, and the Trust Funds must revert to funding enhancements to recreational fishing, as was originally intended. | RecFishNSW aims to introduce greater transparency into the management of the rec fishing sector. The sustainable funding of rec fishing related matters will be a key task of RecFishNSW. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Cost shifting from the Department to the Trust Funds must cease, including funding for compliance and law enforcement, fisheries conservation, stock assessment and other basic research required to manage jointly fished stocks. | RecFishNSW aims to introduce greater transparency into the management of the rec fishing sector. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| An independent body, such as IPART, should be commissioned to determine the government's community service obligations to recreational fishing. | A matter for investigation by RecFishNSW. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| The cost of running all hatcheries including the Gaden Trout Hatchery be sourced from Consolidated Revenue. | Labor will investigate. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| The regulations governing recreational fishing should be reviewed and simplified to provide easily-remembered rules appropriate for casual fishers. | A matter for investigation by RecFishNSW. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Review all senior fishery management staff to ensure appropriate tertiary qualifications and fisheries management experience at a senior level. | Refer to Public Service Commissioner for review of senior management skill sets. | | Y | No opinion | Y | | Y |
| The <i>Rockfishing Safety Act 2016</i> must be amended to explicitly recognise other forms of rock fishing safety attire. | Labor will review the Government's failed <i>Rockfishing Safety Act 2016</i> . | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |

3.REVITALISE

| Partner with recreational fishers to REVITALISE recreational fishing and boating in NSW, to make NSW a premier recreational fishing destination and promote the health and wellbeing benefits of fishing for communities and families. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
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| Respond to the need to promote NSW as a premier tourist destination through the establishment of fishing trails in the salt and freshwater. | In the first instance Labor will give strategic corridors such as TSRs the protection of Parliament. We will also undertake a strategic review of the Crown road closing program. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Partner with Destination NSW to enhance fishing tourism by interstate and overseas visitors through targeted advertising campaigns. | Labor will investigate. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Value adding to licences must be investigated as a priority by the Department, to move from impost to a valued commodity. | RecFishNSW will seek to demonstrate value to the rec fishing sector. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Increase efficiencies in licence sales and distribution to deliver more revenue for enhancement projects. | Yes | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Better promote the contribution to improved fisheries and conservation of biodiversity achieved through fishing licence expenditure. | Yes | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Promote to state and local government, tourism bodies and stakeholder groups the contribution to rural and coastal economies from recreational fishing. | A central aim of RecFishNSW. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately investigate the option for infringement notices for non-compliance with the fishing fee to be replaced with a requirement to buy a licence (e.g. three years) as an appropriate penalty, plus an associated administration fee. | Labor will investigate. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Initiate an opt-in renewal subscription, to provide automatic renewal of 1- and 3-year recreational fishing fee receipts upon expiry. | Labor will investigate and sees merit in this. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Recognition of the social, health and family cohesion benefits of fishing be better documented and promoted. | A central aim of RecFishNSW. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Investigate a voluntary recreational fisher registration system operated through tackle shops and boating and marine suppliers for non-fee-paying fishers. | Labor will investigate. Voting rights for RecFishNSW will require a licence, even if it is \$0. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |

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From previous page...

| Partner with recreational fishers to REVITALISE recreational fishing and boating in NSW, to make NSW a premier recreational fishing destination and promote the health and wellbeing benefits of fishing for communities and families. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 100% return of recreational boating registration and licence fees to a trust account to build, maintain and improve NSW recreational boating infrastructure. | Labor will seek advice. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Implement a dredging plan to keep boat ramps and river entrances clear of obstructions, and remove red tape to make the process more efficient. | Labor will investigate a state-wide dredging plan. Labor has made several commitments to dredging key areas in the lead up to the election (e.g. Ettalong channel and Tuggerah Lakes). | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Support local councils to enhance facilities like jetties, boat ramps and fishing platforms. | Yes | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Repeal the <i>Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailer) Act 2015</i> that requires boat owners who legally park their boats on their streets to move them every 28 days. | Labor will seek Department advice. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |

4. REFORM

| Assist with the REFORM of commercial fishing to deliver an efficient, profitable and sustainable industry valued and respected by the community. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
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| Support funding for the dignified retirement of excess fishing effort. | Labor will undertake an independent review of the Berejiklian Government's commercial fishing reforms. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Need more information | Y | | Y |
| Negotiate for the removal of inefficient or unsustainable fishing methods, with fair compensation. | Labor will undertake an independent review of the Berejiklian Government's commercial fishing reforms. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Work with the commercial fishing industry to optimise the social and community benefits derived from sustainable fishing in every area of the state. | Labor will undertake an independent review of the Berejiklian Government's commercial fishing reforms. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Contribute to funding the reallocation of resources and access between sectors with fair compensation. | Labor will undertake an independent review of the Berejiklian Government's commercial fishing reforms | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Work with commercial fishers to better promote the health and wellbeing benefits of eating fresh fish. | Yes. Labor will also introduce a country of origin seafood labelling bill as a matter of priority. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Review all the offshore aquaculture leases and identified sites in NSW and independently investigate the Port Stephens kingfish sea cage trial before granting any new leases. | Yes – Labor notes the failure of the aquaculture site and its inappropriate location. Labor will undertake a strategic review of potential aquaculture sites. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |

5. RETAIN

| Partner with recreational fishers to RETAIN access to our current and potential fishable waters and fish stocks within NSW. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ensure our state waterways are better serviced by boat ramps, jetties, fishing platforms and, in conjunction with local councils, respond to the need for development of off-street permanent storage facilities for boats/boat trailers in high-density residential areas. | Yes. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately stop any further closures to any jetty, fishing platform, beach, rock platform or shore-based access point in both fresh and salt unless reasonable alternatives are negotiated including vehicular access. | Labor will investigate. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately open safe public fishing access points in areas like Crown reserves, national parks, marine parks and utilising the remaining Crown roads network. | Labor will review this. Labor will also place on hold the further sale of TSRs and Crown roads until we have a better idea of their current or potential future uses. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately fund the survey of roads and tracks to public fishing waterways obstructed by illegal and privately-controlled barriers on freehold and leased lands such as locked gates and misleading signage. | Labor is looking to increase funding for compliance in key public land agencies such as Crown Lands. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Respond to the need to maintain fishing recreational access rights to our current Recreational Fishing Havens and improve recreational fishing access to the Hunter, Macleay, Pittwater and Shoalhaven Rivers. | Matter for RecFishNSW. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately establish an independent arbitrator to rule on the hundreds of contentious access conflicts that are present between recreational anglers and land owners laying claim to legal access in the inland and are denying legitimate access to our waterways in areas like Talmalmo and Howlong on the Murray. | Labor will establish a Crown Lands Commissioner as a permanent standing role and will look at instances where public access along roads and TSRs etc are being impeded and assist with dispute resolution. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |

6. REHABILITATE

| Partner with recreational fishers and commercial to REHABILITATE and protect valuable fish habitat across NSW for our fishing future. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Respond to the need to protect, regenerate and enhance natural fish habitat to support diverse healthy fisheries and fish populations, and where appropriate enhance habitat and protect forage and baitfish stocks as part of the critical food web in the salt and freshwater. | This will be a key task of RecFishNSW | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Invest \$100 million annually into a habitat fund for on-ground fish habitat action benefiting our marine, estuarine and freshwater fisheries, including living shellfish reefs, riparian vegetation, in-stream habitat, water quality improvements, fish passage barrier removal, fish screening of pumps. | Not at this stage. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Invest \$100 million to follow a US-style model to provide for 100 new inshore artificial reefs to be installed over 20 years to enhance habitat and build resilience throughout our inshore waters. | Not at this stage. | | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Help build capacity of our recreational fishing sector to lead and participate in fish habitat activities. | RecFishNSW will seek to tap into the skills, passion and expertise of rec fishers and put strategies in place to build capacity in volunteers . | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |

7. RESEARCH

| Partner with recreational and commercial fishers to improve the outlook for fish across NSW and RESEARCH, assess and develop new fishing opportunities and fishing experiences across NSW. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Develop an easily-accessible on-water or foreshore-designed 'Fish Out' facility model that could readily be implemented and offer enhanced and highly successful fishing opportunities in places like Lake Macquarie, the Hawkesbury River, Botany Bay, Lake Illawarra or any other location across NSW. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Support the research to help understand the various existing coastal estuarine food web species like prawns and shellfish with the view to enhancing hand-gathering opportunities. | Labor will review research. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Support the stocking of Eastern King Prawns and Leader Prawns in ICOLS and Recreational Fishing Havens. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Need more information | Y | | Y |
| Support the study and development of intertidal shellfish breeding and stocking to support a controlled hand-gathering fishery for cockles, whelks, sea snails and other shellfish for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Develop and assist small fishing businesses to provide alternative recreational fresh and frozen bait fishery resources around important bait types like green weed, farmed disease-free prawns, yabbies, blood worms, etc. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Develop a recreational fishery citizen science research program. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Support the expansion of the 'Tuna Champions' program throughout NSW for Southern Bluefin Tuna. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Need more information | Y | | Y |

8. RESILIENCE

| Partner with recreational and commercial fishers to provide RESILIENCE to our valuable fish stocks across NSW for our fishing future. | <i>Labor</i> | <i>Liberal National Coalition</i> | <i>Shooters Fishers & Farmers</i> | <i>Liberal Democrats</i> | <i>Christian Democrats</i> | <i>Greens NSW</i> | <i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i> |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Immediately shut the Southern Fish Trawl and provide fair compensation to the 22 affected commercial operators who are seeking \$24 million dollars to fund a dignified exit from the industry, stopping inshore trawling between Sydney and Eden within 3 nm of the NSW coast. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | Refer to letter at end of this document | Y | Yes in principle | Y | | Y |
| Stop the proposed Cruise Ship Terminal in Botany Bay. | Support. | | Y | Subject to negotiation | Y | | Y |
| All size limits, including slot limits, must apply equally to commercial and recreational fishers. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Temporary area closures should be implemented to protect all spawning aggregations of fish from all forms of fishing. | Investigate by Statutory Authority. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |
| Immediately start the testing of important recreational and commercial fish species around sewage outfalls. This risk has been overlooked for many years and continues to be of concern with regards to the health of fish stocks for both human consumption and sustainability reasons. | A Labor government will be guided by evidence and science when it comes to decision making. That being the case, we will measure the impacts that pollution and sewerage is having on fish populations. | | Y | Y | Y | | Y |



The Hon Niall Blair MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

Mr Stan Konstantaras
President
Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW
PO Box 328
MATRAVILLE NSW 2036

Email: president@rfansw.com.au

Dear Mr Konstantaras

Thank you for your representations on behalf of the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW related to the NSW Liberals and Nationals' support for recreational fishing in NSW.

There's no doubt fishing has a place in the heart of local communities as a favourite pastime. It provides the chance to be with friends and family, to pass on knowledge to the next generation and get away from our busy lives.

Since the Liberals and Nationals came to Government in 2011, we have delivered more opportunities for fishing in partnership with the recreational fishing community. Some of the things I'm most proud of are the deployment of offshore artificial reefs (there are still another five in the pipeline), establishing the annual Gone Fishing Day and rolling out the Eco Huts program to provide discounted holiday accommodation near good fishing spots.

Recreational fishing in NSW creates around \$3.4 billion in economic activity and employs thousands of people, but there's always room to grow. I've had meetings with fishers and the Minister for Tourism about ways to capitalise on the fantastic fishing in NSW for visitors and as a result, there have been discussions between Destination NSW and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) regarding recreational fishing promotion. If re-elected, we will pick up those conversations and work towards developing a tourism strategy that promotes recreational fishing in NSW.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals support the formation of a peak body for recreational fishing. A tender was issued in 2018 and while the tender process was handled by the Department of Primary Industries, I have been advised that it was not awarded. Subsequently, I have asked the department to issue a new tender following the election.

I support your suggestion to have an opt-in renewal for one and three-year licences, as it will make it easier for fishers to renew their licences. I will ask DPI to look at this as a matter of priority.

We can all agree that there are too many deaths from rock fishing in NSW, which is an absolute tragedy. That's why when I had the opportunity, I took on the responsibility for rock fishing safety and brought it into the Department of Primary Industries. DPI had the existing relationships with stakeholders and has worked closely with the RFA for many years. Since then, conversations have begun with lifejacket manufacturers and we've seen the market

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respond by introducing more rock fishing appropriate lifejackets which comply with Australian standards. Going forward, we intend to establish a rock fishing safety group with key stakeholders to provide ongoing advice on rock fishing safety awareness.

During this term of Government, commercial fishing has undergone a \$16 million reform. The reform bought out latent effort, introduced quotas and raised minimum shareholdings. Reform was recommended by a number of independent reports and designed to create economic sustainability by reducing the risk to businesses and the resource. There are many other positive developments to come in commercial fishing including harvest strategies and independent setting of the Total Allowable Catch (quota), which will allow the recreational sector and other stakeholders to have input.

I note your comments about getting recreational fishing access at Lake Wallace. As you are aware, a risk assessment is nearing completion which will provide the framework for access to areas like this. There would be need to be a strict mitigation plan in place and those details would need to be worked out. We would be happy to explore this with you and the local council after the election.

As you are aware, the NSW Liberals and Nationals instituted the ocean beaches and headlands assessment. This was finalised in 2018 and there are now ten new locations in marine parks where line fishing is permitted. A scientific assessment and extensive community consultation was undertaken. Social and economic values, as well as environmental, were given consideration in order to achieve a balanced outcome for recreational fishers and the wider community.

We are also embarking on reviewing marine parks under existing legislative requirements by piloting this new triple bottom line approach. It is important to note that before undertaking any marine park reviews, a number of key pieces of legislation, regulation and policy needed to be developed first. Unfortunately, we did not have confidence in the methods of marine park planning undertaken by the previous Labor Government, which was confirmed as lacking by the independent scientific audit of marine parks the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government commissioned in 2011.

I am conscious that when all six marine parks in NSW were put in place under the previous Labor Government, fishers felt that their views were not fairly considered, let alone that the biggest threats and risks such as water quality were taken into account. The reforms we have undertaken seek to address these inadequacies and ensure that social and economic factors are given weight in decision making, as well as applying a threat and risk lens to marine park planning, rather than the principles of comprehensive, adequate and representative used previously in marine planning.

Now that we have established the new approach, the Liberals and Nationals have already begun reviewing Batemans marine park and will begin shortly on Solitary Islands.

If elected, we will also immediately review the Port Stephens – Great Lakes marine park. This will include extensive consultation involving fishers and the assistance of the marine park advisory committees.

In relation to the Southern Fish Trawl, not all commercial fishers want a compulsory buyout. There are recent representations from the industry body asking for a voluntary buyout and as such, the options are still being considered. However, there are only 23 fishing businesses in the fishery and I can confirm there will never be any more trawling licences given out, it's capped. Super trawlers will also continue to be banned in NSW waters. We need to find a solution that addresses the concerns of recreational fishers and we are committed to ongoing discussions with the sector.

I would like to note that Labor has announced their signature recreational fishing policy – a statutory authority called RecFish NSW, to oversee expenditure from the Recreational Fishing Trust Fund.

I am advised the cost of this body could be in excess of \$1 million per year or \$4 million over the next four years. Presumably, all of these costs are to be borne by the Recreational Fishing Trust Fund, which collects the money recreational fishers pay for their licence fees and is spent on initiatives to improve recreational fishing.

If Labor's commitment becomes a reality, recreational fishers would see a reduction in projects funded through the Recreational Fishing Trust Fund. Some examples of the types of projects that total around \$4 million each, are:

- Deploying 4 offshore artificial reefs;
- Building 80 fishing platforms;
- Building 133 fish cleaning tables;
- Doubling fish habitat restoration funding;
- Employing 7 new compliance officers.

I am sure your members are not too interested in creating more bureaucracy. If returned to Government, the NSW Liberals and Nationals will keep providing the infrastructure (such as reefs, fishing platforms, fish cleaning tables), restocking programs, education and research needed to make fishing better in NSW, which will see more opportunities for a diverse range of people to go fishing.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals will continue to engage with fishers so that their interests are well represented. We believe that fishers are the custodians of the marine environment and will be critical to helping manage fish stocks and ensure we have a healthy marine estate.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Niall Blair MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry