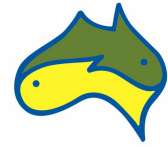


**RECFISH
AUSTRALIA**



PO Box 187
Grange Qld 4051
Phone/fax 07 3356 1111
Email ceo@recfish.com.au
ABN 87 547 561 663
www.recfish.com.au

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Media release

Minister applauded for decision on Freycinet

The decision to allow the continuation of recreational and charter fishing in a proposed marine protected area off Freycinet Peninsula has been welcomed with enthusiasm by the recreational fishing industry.

The area (see map) is vital to the local economy through its importance as a popular destination for recreational and sport fishing, particularly from the Coles Bay and Oyster Bay surrounds, was threatened under the Commonwealth marine planning process for the South East Region.

“It is extremely pleasing that the Minister for the Environment, Senator Ian Campbell, could see that low impact recreational fishing is not a threat to the ecosystem. By changing the classification to (IUCN 2) a small portion of the candidate area will now see the continuation of recreational and sport fishing” John Harrison CEO of Recfish Australia said today.

“This decision is heartening and the result of input through a public meeting and the collection of data to support the rationale for allowing the continuation. Whilst we felt segregated from the process earlier this year we now know that if we have a case it will be heard and importantly taken into consideration. We congratulate Minister Campbell on his decision and thank Fisheries Minister Eric Abetz for his support as well.”

Through this announcement Minister Campbell has ensured the following:

- Continuation of the important socio-economic role from recreational fishing in the region;
- elimination of the increased safety risk of the extra travel time involved in reaching alternative grounds to the north;
- allowed the continuation of low impact recreational fishing in the area;
- maintained the integrity of the protection provided to the area within the MPA &
- provided certainty for the future of the Coles Bay Game Fishing Classic;

The area that has been changed represents only 0.5% or 323 km² of the total Freycinet MPA (57,940 km²) and the vast majority of the Freycinet reserve will continue to be a strict nature zone (IUCN category 1a).

End

Media enquiries to John Harrison 0427 073356