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MEDIA RELEASE

A new board for recreational fishing's peak body

Recfish Australia, the peak representative body for recreational fishers at a national level announced today the appointment of Bruce Schumacher (NSW Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing) as Chair of the board of directors. Bruce returns for his third term and Dr Adam Smith (Australian Underwater Federation – Spearfishing) has been nominated as Vice-Chair.

In a return to a representative board structure whereby each full member may nominate a board member, the board members for 2008-09 are: Chris Makepeace (Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory), John Burgess (Australian National Sportfishing Association), Des Wood (Recfishwest – Western Australia), Franz Grasser (VRFish – Victoria) and Tasmania (TARFish) are yet to nominate a representative.

Len Olyott, CEO of Recfish Australia said that he welcomed back existing board members and looked forward to working with the new members. Retiring board members, Malcolm Poole (NSW ACoRF) and John Cleary (TARFish) were thanked for the service that they provided Recfish Australia especially in the areas of policy development and financial administration.

On the subject of financial security, Mr Schumacher had this to say: "Recreational fishers need a united voice at the national level to have their concerns heard and their rights respected. The Australian Recreational and Sportfishing Industry Confederation (Recfish Australia) has been serving recreational anglers for the past 25 years but to continue providing a professional level of service, we require an ongoing commitment to funding. The federal government has a moral obligation to ensure that the 3.5 million Australians that go recreational fishing each year have a voice. The most cost effective and proven way to do this is through direct financial support of Recfish Australia."

Previous funding agreements with the Australian government saw \$100,000 a year allocated to Recfish Australia to employ a full time Executive Officer and part time office and project manager.

With these funds, Recfish Australia was able to contribute to government consultation processes through membership of 13 national committees and delivered well over a million dollars of project outcomes to the benefit of recreational fishers throughout the country.

Recfish Australia is the peak national body for recreational and sport fishing in Australia. Members: Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT (AFANT); Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA); Australian Underwater Federation – Spearfishing (AUF); New South Wales Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (NSW ACoRF); Western Australian Recreational & Sportfishing Council Inc (Recfishwest); Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing (TARFish); Victoria's Recreational Fishing Peak Body (VRFish)

Our mission – One voice promoting sustainable fishing and representing recreational fishers at a national level

Recfish Australia also developed:

- the world's first standard for the environmental assessment of fishing tournaments,
- a national code of practice for recreational fishing and
- hosted two national conferences on recreational fishing.

Recfish Australia has also identified priority areas for research, development and investment through its Recfishing Research initiative and invested considerably in the development of the next generation of fishing leaders through its national Next Generation of Leaders program and the highly successful regional offshoot in Western Australia – the Young Future Leaders. A similar project is scheduled for New South Wales early in 2009.

Recfish Australia is also the gazetted representative body to which the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation reports. Without funding for an office and paid professional staff, Recfish cannot operate to its full capacity and recreational fishers will suffer the consequences. To find out more about Recfish Australia and to find out how you can make a difference, visit www.recfish.com.au or email admin@recfish.com.au.

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