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MEDIA RELEASE

Recfish Australia Joins the Alliance

Recfish Australia members unanimously agreed to join the Boating and Fishing Council of Australia (BCFA). The decision was made at the 26th Annual General Meeting held recently in Melbourne. Recfish Australia is the peak national body for Australia's more than 3 million recreational fishers and the decision to join an alliance of predominantly industry organisations will add a vital dimension to the council and ensure that the voice of recreational fishers is also considered.

"The council is a significant step in strengthening the partnerships within the recreational fishing sector and it will greatly assist us in presenting unified policy and position statements to government." said Len Olyott, CEO of Recfish Australia. "Recfish Australia brings direct contact with state and national peak bodies and their thousands of members ensuring that the council truly represents the views of the community".

The AGM also returned two new board members for Recfish Australia with Max Castle from the NSW Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (NSW ACoRF) and Frank Prokop from Recfishwest joining the board. Frank was also elected as chair replacing Bruce Schumacher. After 22 years of service to Recfish Australia, Bruce has decided to concentrate his efforts on the NSW recreational fishing community where he serves as ACoRF chair. Frank is no stranger to the top job, having served as president from 2003 to 2004. Russell Conway from VRFish in Victoria was nominated as deputy chair.

The AGM concluded with a workshop to identify the priority areas that Recfish needs to focus on in the next 12 months. Attendees included past members of Recfish Australia such as Sunfish Queensland, the South Australian Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee and Native Fish Australia as well as new members; the Professional Fishing Instructors and Guides Association, the Recreational Fishing Alliance of New South Wales and the New South Wales Council of Freshwater Anglers.

Newly elected chair, Frank Prokop believes that having groups like Sunfish, SARFAC and NFA present sends a clear signal that they are ready to engage with Recfish Australia. "Our challenge is to deliver an organisation that represents the views of all stakeholders. They have told us what we need to do to get them back; we now have to show them we are listening. With national issues such as marine park planning, climate change and promoting healthy outdoor activities like fishing, having a strong national voice for fishing has never been as important as it is now."

Over the next few months, Recfish Australia will revise its constitution to better reflect the needs of the recreational fishing sector. They will also be developing a business case to deliver to the Australian Government and the recreational fishing sector and will look at implementing suggestions for raising revenue contained in the Strategic Revenue Options report which was funded by the Australian Government.

Mr Olyott was looking forward to working with the alliance and our key stakeholders. "The alliance more clearly allows Recfish Australia to separate its leadership and representative roles which we will concentrate on, from the lobbying role of groups like the alliance where recreational fishing interests also need to be promoted."

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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). Affiliate Members: Recreational Fishing Alliance of New South Wales (RFA); Professional Fishing Instructor and Guides Association (PFIGA)
Our mission – One voice promoting sustainable fishing and representing recreational fishers at a national level



Caption: Frank Prokop returns to the helm as Recfish Australia Chair.

Photo: Recfish Australia