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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **The future of recreational fishing looks secure**

Seventy five of the country's most knowledgeable experts on recreational fishing recently met in Canberra to discuss the future of recreational fishing.

The national conference titled "Recreational Fishing 2020 – a shared vision", aimed to develop a consolidated vision for recreational fishing. Presentations from experts on climate change, social science research and community engagement were matched with views from state and national peak representative bodies, fisheries managers and conservation agencies.

A common theme to emerge was the issue of access to fishing opportunities and the realisation that there would be both threats to and opportunities for further access into the future.

The keynote address was provided by Frank Prokop, Executive Director of Recfishwest and long time campaigner for recreational fishing rights and recognition. In 1989, Frank became Australia's first full time recreational fisheries manager. Frank also provided insight into a twenty year journey which demonstrated that while recreational fisheries management has come a long way, there was still a great deal of work to do in order to achieve a shared vision.

The conference had a strong focus on capturing the thoughts and ideas of the next generation of recreational fishing leaders. Graduates from both the national Next Generation of Leaders program and Recfishwest's Young Future Leaders program attended the conference and had their travel and accommodation sponsored by FRDC. Speaking about the need for strong leadership into the future, Jo-Anne Ruscoe, FRDC People Development Project Manager, highlighted that the capacity for recreational fishers to better engage in fisheries management and research will be dependent on the quality of leadership in the sector. Communities rely on positive role models and the recreational fishing community is no different.

The conference concluded with a workshop session hosted by Recfishing Research (an initiative of Recfish Australia and FRDC) to discuss the direction and specific needs for research, development and investment for the recreational fishing sector for the next 5 years.

The outcomes of the conference will be published as a proceedings document and the research priorities will form the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Recfishing Research R,D&E Business Plan and will be available from [www.recfishingresearch.org](http://www.recfishingresearch.org). The conference and workshop were sponsored by the Australian government and reaffirmed the government's investment in recreational fishing.

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Recfish Australia is the peak national body for recreational and sport fishing in Australia. Members include: 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**