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SENATOR THE HON. ERIC ABETZ
Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation

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Recreational fishermen stock the toolbox on MPAs

Australia's 3.3 million recreational fishers are now better placed to contribute and be involved in the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) following a two day national workshop on MPAs entitled "Stocking the Tool Box".

Releasing the proceedings of the workshop today, Federal Fisheries and Conservation Minister Sen. Eric Abetz said "recreational fishing is not only one of Australia's favourite pastimes, it's a valuable contributor to the economies of many regional coastal communities."

"It's important when establishing MPAs, whether they be in Commonwealth or State waters, that a sensible balance is struck between biodiversity conservation and the need to maintain access for recreational fishers and other users."

"The results of this workshop provide recreational fishers with useful tools to engage in the development of MPAs and help shape their final outcome."

The workshop was an initiative of, and organised by, Recfish Australia, the peak body representing recreational fishers nationally, and funded by the Australian Government's Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and the Recreational Fishing Community Grants Programme.

Recfish Australia CEO John Harrison said: "Contrary to some myths, recreational fishermen are as keen on protecting and conserving our marine environment as anybody else is.

"This workshop has been immensely valuable in charting a course for the recreational fishing sector to positively engage with Government and the community when it comes to marine planning and Marine Protected Areas."

Copies of the workshop proceedings and presentations will be available at www.recfish.com.au

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Recfish Australia