Recreational anglers have reason to celebrate

8 March 2015

The Country Liberals Government has delivered on another key election promise announcing it will host the inaugural Northern Territory Recreational Fishing Awards at Parliament House in 2015.

Chief Minister Adam Giles made the announcement at the Amateur Fishermen’s Association Northern Territory (AFANT) annual general meeting in Darwin today.

“AFANT has long wanted to hold an awards night recognising individuals and organisations for their contribution to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the Territory’s recreational fisheries and their habitat,” Mr Giles said.

“I am pleased to announce today that the Country Liberals Government will partner with AFANT to host a formal gala reception later this year at Parliament House.

“The Territory Government is proud to put its support behind this event which will bring key stakeholders together to celebrate and network every two years.

"We look forward to working with the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RFAC) as they plan this reception, which delivers on an election promise to recreational fishers.”

Nominations will be called for and RFAC will judge award winners in the following categories:

- Individual Award
- Youth (under 21)
- Fishing Tourism Operation (lodge, charter boat or guided fishing operation)
- Fishing Media / writer / personality or show
- Fishing Competition
- Territory’s Top Fishing Researcher
- Fishing Art Award

From these winners, an overall Recreational Fishing Gold Winner will be chosen.
Fisheries Minister Willem Westra van Holthe said the Government recognises that the recreational fishing industry is a huge part of the Territory’s economy.

“We have more than 32 000 recreational anglers in the Territory and the industry is worth more than $80 million to our economy every year,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“The Country Liberals Government has been working closely with AFANT to ensure recreational fishers are well represented and their voices heard.”

In consultation with AFANT and the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RFAC), the Government has identified and resourced a number of priority investments within the Recreational Fishing Development Plan.

These include:

- $4.5 million for fishing infrastructure, earmarked for the Dundee area
- $220,000 annually for ongoing recreational fishing surveys
- $50,000 in 2014-2015 to explore opportunities for new suburban ramps
- $30,000 annually to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee to provide strategic advice
- $20,000 for improved fishing and boating education

AFANT and RFAC were also widely consulted on proposed new measures aimed at rebuilding stocks of ‘at risk’ reef fish and improving the quality of NT fisheries into the future.

The Government’s proposed changes come after ongoing research and stock assessments by fisheries scientists, along with widespread consultation with Territorians.

The changes include:

- New management arrangements for the commercial and charter fishing sectors including restricted access to a designated area around Darwin.
- New recreational personal possession limits and vessel limits to reduce effort on the take of ‘at-risk’ reef fish and enhance fishing quality.
- A network of temporary reef fish protection areas designed to protect and recover golden snapper, black jewfish and other at risk reef species in key areas near to Darwin.
- A maximum size limit of 90cm for barramundi and king threadfin salmon will be trialled in the Daly and Mary River Fish Management zones to help maintain an abundance of large ‘trophy’ fish that are highly sought after by anglers.
- A new smart phone app to ensure all anglers ‘know their limits’.

The full package of proposed management arrangements can be found at www.fisheries.nt.gov.au

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