

**FOR A BETTER FISHING FUTURE**  
SURVEY RESULTS



*September 2020*

TASMANIAN  
**RECREATIONAL**  
SEA FISHING  
STRATEGY



## SUMMARY

The Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and the Environment sought public input into the future of recreational sea fishing in Tasmania through the *For a Better Fishing Future* (FaBFF) survey during June and July 2020.

The FaBFF survey sought public input on initiatives that had been suggested in an earlier process of direct stakeholder consultation. The FaBFF survey asked people to indicate their level of agreement and views on 32 potential initiatives.

A total of 3,208 surveys were completed. The results indicated general support for most initiatives with the three highest relating to learning responsible fishing behaviours, increasing community understanding about fisheries management and greater consideration of recreational fishing in management decisions.

The initiatives that received the most written feedback were:

1. Better recognising the importance of recreational fishing when managing fish stocks and areas.
2. Encouraging more people to go fishing.
3. Engaging and informing fishers from non-English speaking backgrounds.
4. Having a greater marine police presence on the water.
5. Assessing if high impact recreational fishing methods such as gillnetting should be allowed.
6. Investigating new ways of collecting recreational fishing catch information such as phone apps.
7. Involving fishers more in managing fisheries, including taking responsibility to protect them.

### Summary of Public Support for Initiatives

<b>OUTCOME AREA</b>	<b>STRATEGIC INITIATIVE</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
<b>Valuing recreational fishing</b>	More research into the social and economic contributions of recreational fishers	72	21	7
	Recognising the social and economic importance of recreational fishing	85	12	3
	Recognising the importance of emerging species to recreational fishers	84	13	3
	Better recognising the importance of recreational fishing when managing fish stocks and areas	89	8	2
<b>Involve the community in fisheries management, research and stewardship</b>	Involving fishers more in managing fisheries, including taking responsibility to protect them	84	12	4
	Involving fishers more in citizen science such as tagging and fish frame donation	75	22	5

<b>To make it easier for people to go fishing</b>	Encouraging more people to go fishing	42	41	16
	Encouraging more women and girls to go fishing	53	40	7
	Making it easier for people with mobility impairments to go fishing	76	21	3
	Promoting Tasmania as a destination for fishing tourism	44	26	30
	Better facilities including fishing platforms and toilets	75	17	7
	Improving shore-based fishing access by providing more platforms and jetties	71	21	9
	Providing or improving boating facilities including boat ramps and parking.	82	12	5
	Providing more site facilities such as fish cleaning stations and toilets	80	13	6
<b>Promoting responsible and lawful recreational fishing</b>	Making it easier for fishers to follow the rules	87	12	1
	Teaching children sustainable fishing practices at an early age	95	4	1
	Increasing community understanding about how and why fisheries are managed	91	8	1
	Engaging and informing fishers from non-English speaking backgrounds	83	13	5
	Having a greater marine police presence on the water	67	25	8
	Reviewing penalties for breaking fishing rules	72	23	5
<b>Ensuring the long-term sustainability of fisheries and habitats</b>	More research into popular recreational fish species	81	14	4
	More research into the marine environment	86	10	3
	Assessing whether high impact recreational fishing methods such as gillnetting should be allowed	66	16	17
	Reducing the impacts of recreational fishing on non-target species and the marine environment	64	25	10
<b>Improving capacity to support recreational fishing</b>	Investigating new ways of collecting recreational fishing catch information	68	22	9
	Identifying extra funding to improve programs and facilities that benefit recreational fishers	73	21	5
	Spreading costs more evenly among recreational fishers instead of only licensed fishers paying	53	26	19
	Improving services to fishers by working more closely with Inland Fisheries Service and Marine and Safety Tasmania	70	25	4
	Having a greater focus on managing charter boat operators and other fishing tourism businesses	59	31	8

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## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and the Environment (DPIPWE) sought public input into the future of recreational sea fishing in Tasmania through the *For a Better Fishing Future* (FaBFF) survey conducted in June and July 2020. The survey is part of a process to develop the *Tasmanian Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy* ('the Strategy') which will provide a strategic approach to marine recreational fisheries management over the next 10 years. This report should be read in conjunction with the Discussion Paper – *Towards a 10 Year Vision for Recreational Sea Fishing in Tasmania*.that has been informed by these survey results.

Input to the survey design was sought from a cross section of recreational fisheries stakeholders including fishers, community, businesses and government organisations during the first half of 2020. The FaBFF survey sought public input on broad initiatives that had been identified during the earlier consultation process and asked people to raise any new initiatives for consideration.

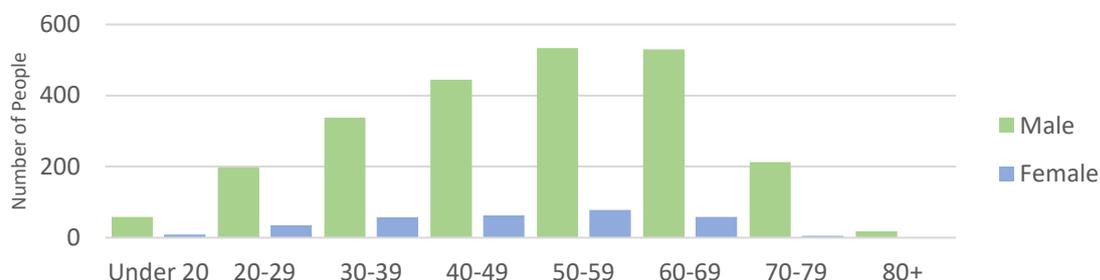
The survey was launched by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water and published on the Department's [Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy](#) web page on 28 June and it closed on 29 July 2020. An outline of the Strategy process including a timeline and information on survey participation was also published.

In addition to publication on the Department's website, the following engagement activities were undertaken to promote the survey:

- *Email*: Approximately 29,000 people were emailed notifications through the DPIPWE's *Fisheries Tasmania* email subscription service.
- *Social media*: Notifications were provided through direct and sponsored Facebook posts (with a reach of almost 60,000).
- *Direct contact*: The DPIPWE Recreational Fishing staff liaised with tackle shops and provided them with written materials about the survey and Strategy.
- *Letters*: Descriptions of the survey were sent to fishing peak bodies plus a range of relevant organisations and state government business units.
- *Media releases*: These were circulated to radio and newspaper networks including survey completion reminders during the active survey period.

## Survey Response and Respondent Profiles

### Age and Gender Profile of Survey Respondents



In total, 3208 people responded to the survey. Of these, 93% had gone fishing at least once over the past 2 years. Among the 7% of respondents that hadn't been fishing recently, 75% indicated that this was due to constraints rather than a lack of want. As the figure above indicates, most survey respondents were male and aged between 30 and 79 years. Also, most respondents were licensed fishers.

## FEEDBACK

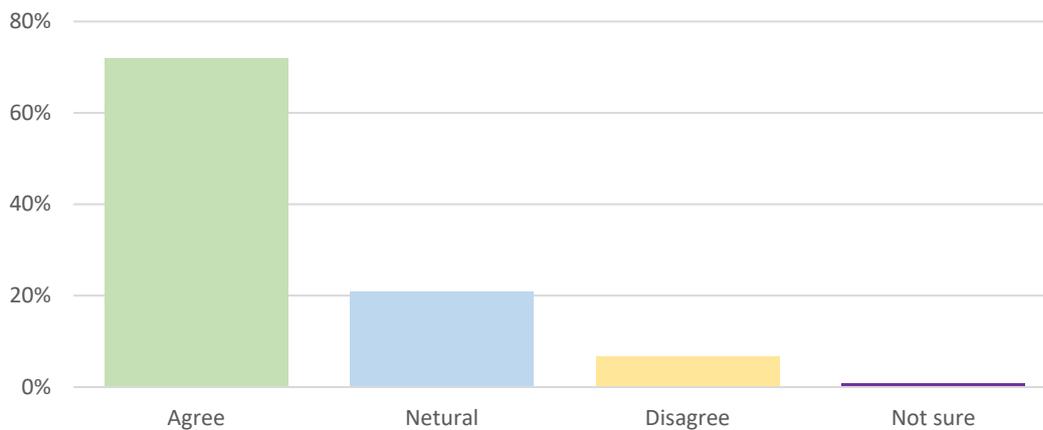
The presentation of feedback received via the survey is presented according to Outcome Areas. Most align with outcomes presented in the accompanying Discussion Paper, though there are a few corresponding changes that have been made due to information provided through the survey.

## OUTCOME I: VALUING RECREATIONAL FISHING

### *Ia. More research into the social and economic contributions of recreational fishers*

This initiative received 72% approval.

#### Level of Support for More Social and Economic Research



Comments on this initiative focused on the need for research to better understand the ‘true’ economic value of recreational fishing particularly in relation to resource sharing with the commercial sector for rock lobster and abalone fisheries. Studies to consider the economic benefits retained in Tasmania, and the relative values of catch being allocated to either sector were suggested as was the need to account for environmental degradation by both sectors in economic comparative analyses.

Other comments mainly focussed on a need to understand the social, cultural and psychological values associated with recreational fishing including how these values are affected by changes in resource conditions.

### *Ib. Recognising the social and economic importance of recreational fishing in management decisions*

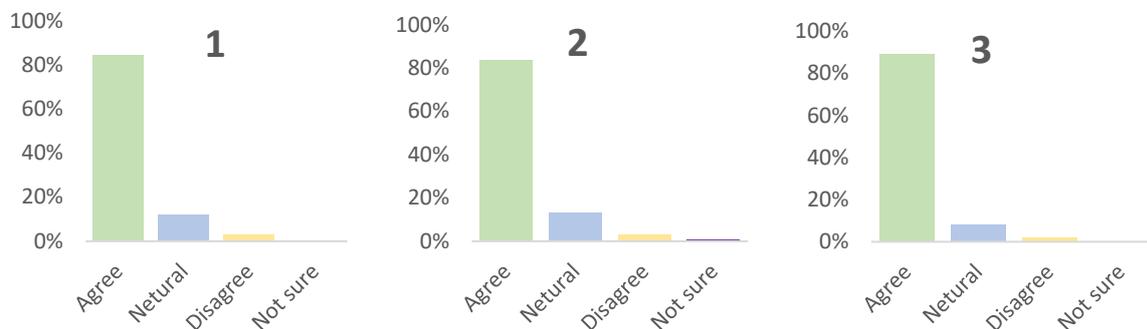
Three initiatives about recognising the social and economic importance of recreational sea fishing were proposed in the survey:

1. Recognising the social and economic importance of recreational fishing in management decisions
2. Recognising the importance of new species such as snapper, kingfish and King George whiting to recreational fishers
3. Better recognise the importance of recreational fishing when managing fish stocks and areas.

As indicated in the graph below, all three received a very high level of approval – from 84-89%. Due to the close relationship between the three initiatives and similarities in the written responses for each, feedback on them has been pooled. The overarching theme of comments on this initiative was a lack of satisfaction; respondents felt that the recreational sector was marginalised and undervalued.

Around half of the comments mentioned the role of economics in allocation decisions – some suggested that the true economic value of recreational fishing was poorly understood resulting in unfavourable decisions while others suggested that the management focus on economic criteria masked the social and cultural values of the recreational sector.

### Support for Initiatives recognising social/economic importance of recreational fishing



A few people suggested that Tasmania should adopt the ‘priority access’ rule for indigenous fishers that exists in some countries (e.g. New Zealand and Canada) where Indigenous peoples are provided an initial share of stock, followed by recreational fishers while commercial fishers are then allocated the balance of the recommended biological catch.

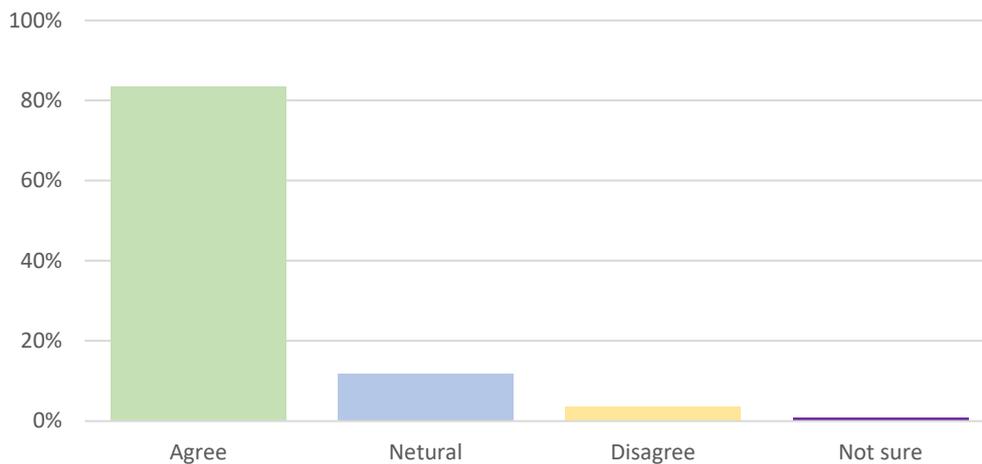
Many comments (126) recommended the implementation of recreational only fishing areas (ROFAs), primarily in inshore and sheltered areas, particularly close to population centres. Some suggested that ROFAs should be created for rock lobster and abalone though most comments in this regard were fishery non-specific.

Some respondents suggested that select species (including sand flathead, King George whiting, snapper and yellowtail kingfish) become ‘recreational only’ considering their importance to recreational fishers and perceptions of localised depletions from commercial fishing in some areas. Some people also urged for recreational controls to also be more restrictive for emerging species.

## OUTCOME 2: INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY IN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH AND STEWARDSHIP

### 2a. Involving fishers more in managing fisheries, including taking responsibility to protect them

#### Support for more fisher involvement in managing fisheries



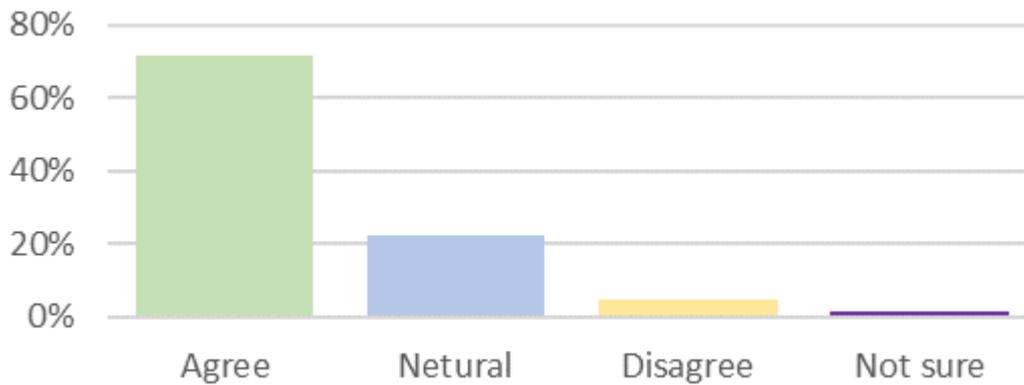
This initiative had 84% support. Of the comments received, the majority referred to the role of fishers, and the community more broadly, in providing management input. The two main themes were the ability of the public to communicate with fisheries managers and the role of fishers and other stakeholders in the decision-making process. These themes are discussed below:

1. *Communications between fisheries managers and fishers.* Almost 30% of responses were generalised concerns that the views of fishers were not properly considered in management decisions. There were some suggestions that commercial fishing interests are preferentially considered in cross-sectoral decisions and some comments questioned the ability of public consultation activities to adequately represent recreational fishing interests. To address this, there were suggestions to routinely solicit fishers' views through social media and at popular fishing locations such as boat ramps and jetties.
2. *Role of fishers and other stakeholders in the decision-making process.* Most comments were about this theme. Comments raised concerns about the adequacy of existing co-management arrangements to capture independent, unbiased and representative input of recreational fishers and, to a lesser extent, other non-fishing stakeholders. Additional comments were made about a lack of transparency and suggestions were provided for structural changes to co-management arrangements including the implementation of regional committees to provide regional management advice. Other comments noted that a greater management input from fishers, particularly at the expense of scientific advice, may not lead to better outcomes.

## 2b. Involving fishers more in citizen science

This initiative received 72% approval. There were few written comments on this issue. However, the overlap between this initiative and a related initiative under Outcome 6 to “investigate new ways of collecting rec fishing catch information such as phone apps”, indicates there is strong interest in fisher engagement in citizen science initiatives.

### Level of support for engagement in citizen science

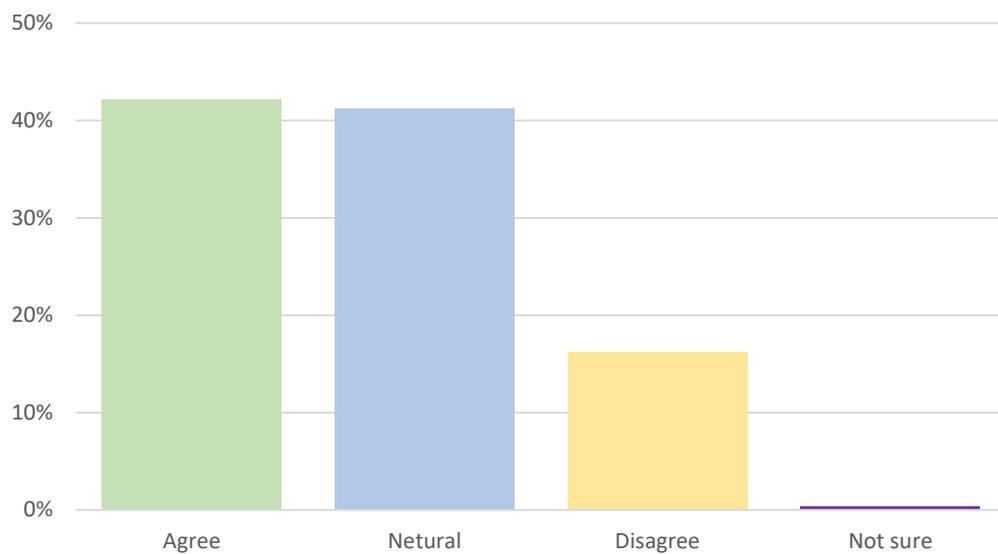


## OUTCOME 3: MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO GO FISHING

### 3a. Encouraging more people to go fishing

This initiative had mixed support as indicated in graph below; it also generated a large number of comments (225).

#### Support for more people to go fishing



Most written submissions opposed the initiative. The reasons provided for this included:

- added fishing pressure on stocks
- concerns that this initiative should not be within the remit of government
- additional pressure on facilities
- ethical considerations around promoting the killing of animals

Some respondents mentioned that while they opposed the general promotion of fishing, they supported the promotion of responsible fishing practices and environmental education.

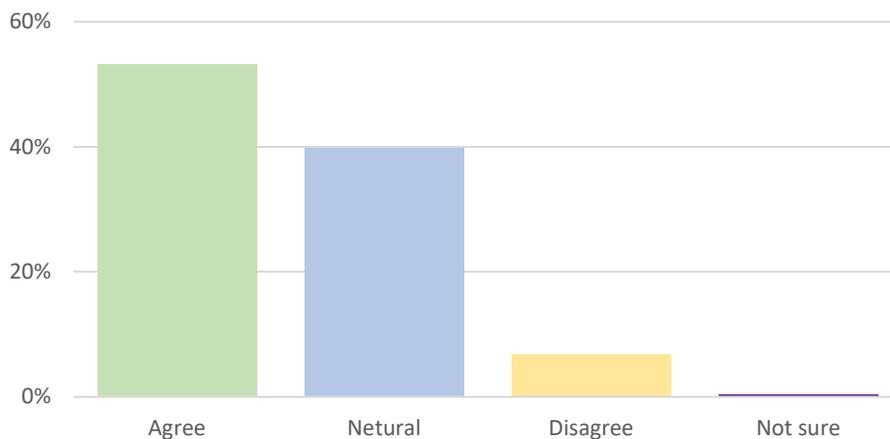
Most comments supporting the promotion of fishing mentioned the associated social, well-being and lifestyle aspects. Suggestions for promoting fishing included advertising (television and billboards), fishing competitions, 'learn to fish' days, forming partnerships with fishing clubs and tackle stores, and the use of citizen science programs.

There were some comments that suggested current fisheries management arrangements discourage fishing through restrictive regulations (particularly bag limits and season closures for rock lobster), poor stock health and costs associated with fishing (including licence fees).

### 3b. Encouraging more women and girls to go fishing

This initiative was supported by 53% of respondents.

### Support for more women and girls to fish



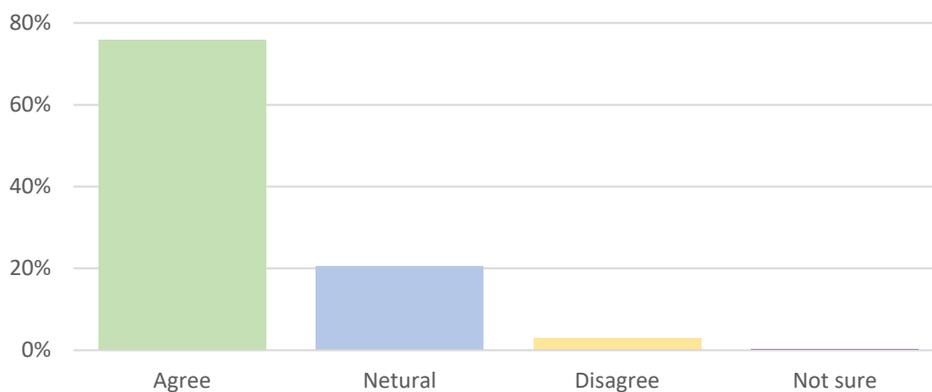
Written responses on this initiative received noted that:

- They didn't feel it was the responsibility of government to get involved.
- The positive role of toilets at boat ramps in encouraging female participation.
- 'Learn to fish' days could be promoted more.
- Online resources currently exist to encourage female fishing participation.

### 3c. Making it easier for people with mobility impairments to go fishing

This initiative was supported by 76% of respondents.

#### Support for making access easier for fishers with mobility impairments



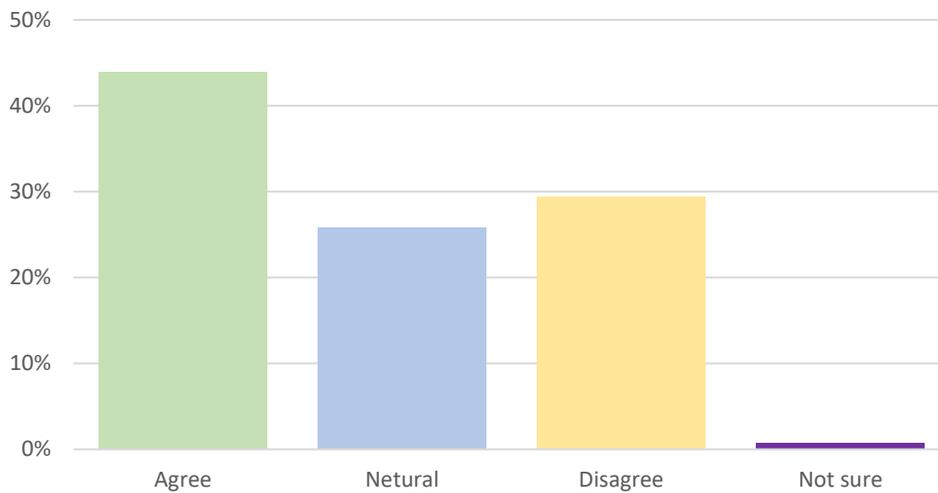
Comments raised the need for access and infrastructure catering for specific requirements of the mobility impaired. Other comments included the following suggestions:

- Programs could be developed to provide transport and mobility assistance to and from fishing locations.
- Some jetties and/or fishing platforms should be reserved for people with special needs to guarantee access when required.
- Government could form partnerships with councils, disability support agencies and non-profit organisations to develop programs to enhance fishing opportunities.

### 3d. Promoting Tasmania as a destination for fishing tourism

As indicated in the figure below, this initiative received mixed support.

#### Support for promotion of Tasmania as a fishing tourism destination



Respondents supporting this initiative recognised the economic benefits associated with fishing tourism, though some suggested that promotional efforts should be directed at fisheries able to sustain additional fishing pressure and regions in need of tourism income. King and Flinders Islands were mentioned as potential locations.

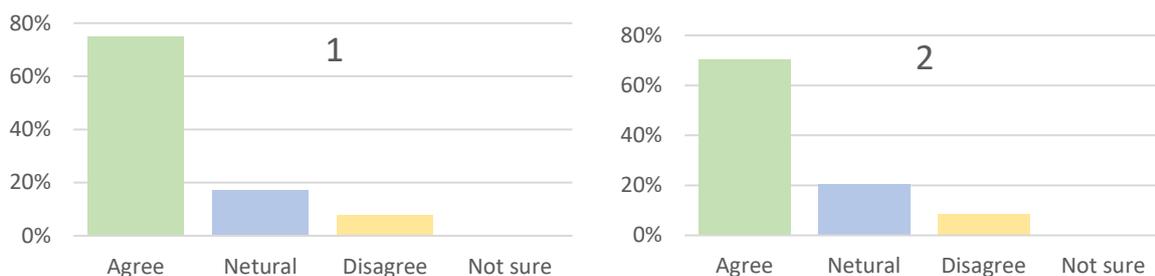
Those who disagreed with the initiative expressed concern about the additional fishing pressure and pressure on supporting infrastructure.

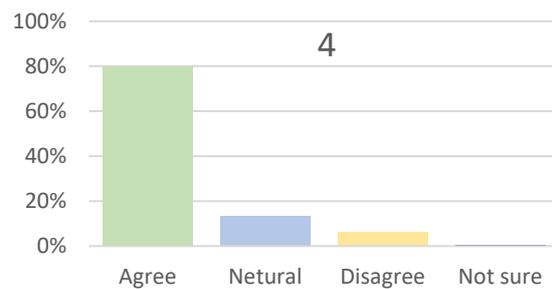
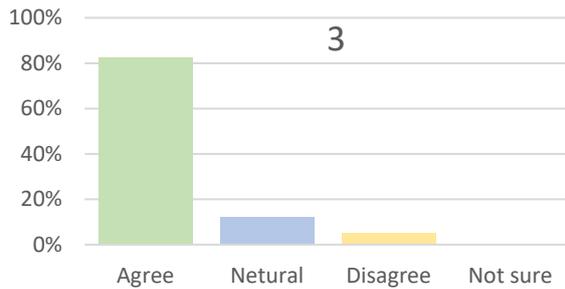
### 3e. Providing and/or improving boat-based and shore-based facilities

There were four Strategic Initiatives relating to the provision or improvement of boat and shore-based fishing facilities:

1. Better facilities including fishing platforms and toilets
2. Improving shore-based fishing access by providing more platforms and jetties
3. Providing or improving boating facilities including boat ramps and parking.
4. Providing more site facilities such as fish cleaning stations and toilets.

#### Support for boat and shore facilities





All initiatives were strongly supported. A large number (387) of written comments were received. Comments have been pooled and divided into two sections – shore-based and boat-based facilities.

### ***Shore-based facilities***

Comments indicated a need for more shore-based facilities, particularly for non-boat owners, children and the elderly. Some comments stated there used to be greater shore-based access, including access to now closed areas along Hobart’s waterfront. Recommendations for improving shore-based access included:

- Fishing platforms (including jetties and pontoons) should, where practicable, be accompanied with other facilities including rubbish bins, rod holders, fresh water, toilets, lighting, CCTV cameras, tables and fish cleaning facilities.
- Where possible, jetties should be sited in areas close to productive fishing grounds and/or deep water.
- Tasmania’s northern coast was especially in need of additional facilities.
- Many current jetties are small, congested and/or in a state of disrepair.
- Creating more access roads and tracks and permitting 4x4 traffic onto some beaches.

### ***Boat-based facilities***

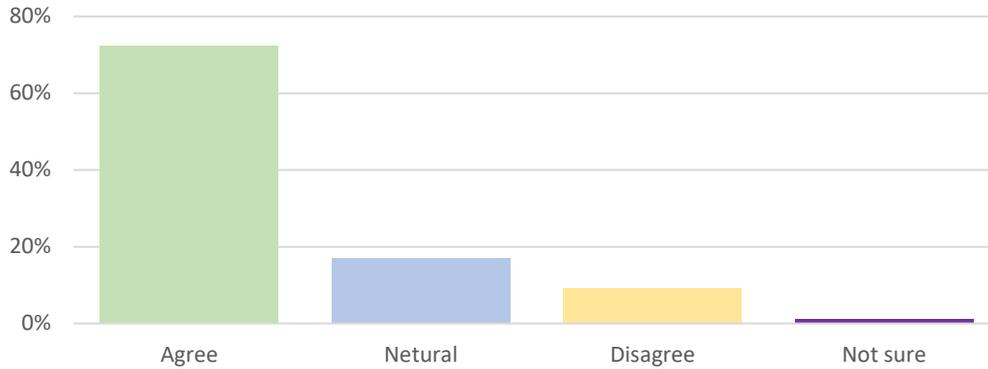
Providing and improving boat-based facilities was also strongly supported with some comments recognising the role of MAST in their efforts in recent decades. A large proportion focused on how facilities – particularly boat ramps – could be improved in specific locations, and locations where facilities are needed. More general comments include:

- Parking facilities are lacking at many ramps. As well as insufficient spaces, some respondents complained that spaces are often occupied by cars without boat trailers.
- Some ramps are inoperable at low tides.
- A perception that some regions have received disproportionate support.
- Support for the provision of toilets, rubbish bins, lighting, CCTV cameras and washdown facilities at boat ramps.

While there was overall support for cleaning stations, some respondents indicated that providing them could lead to congestion and hygiene issues. There was concern that providing fish waste disposal facilities and encouraging fishers to clean their catch near ramps could attract sharks and seabirds.

### 3f. Providing more fishing opportunities using artificial reefs and fishing aggregation devices (FADs)

This initiative received 72% support.



Some comments referred to the current program by the Tasmanian Government to provide funding to deploy artificial reefs and fish aggregation devices (FADs). Supporting statements focused on the potential success of these structures in attracting emerging species such as snapper and yellowtail kingfish and potential economic opportunities for regional areas.

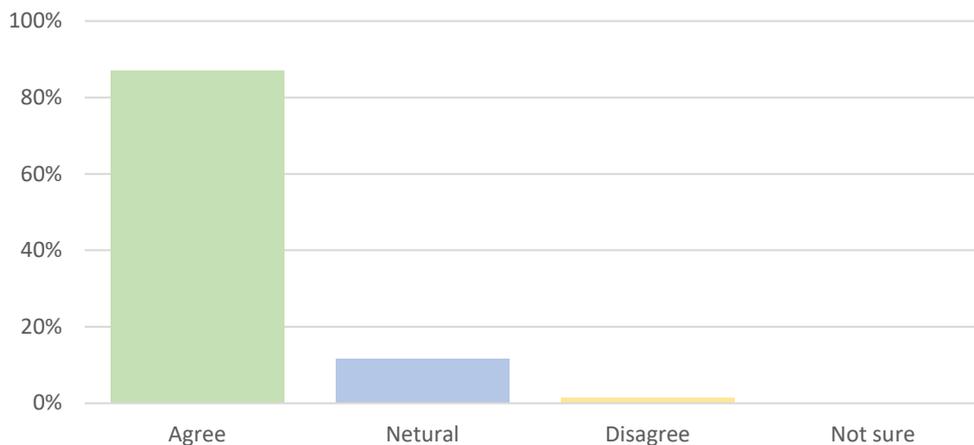
Others urged caution due to the potential for artificial reefs and FADs to deplete stocks by aggregating fish for easy capture from surrounding natural habitats. Some respondents suggested that resources should be diverted to restoring degraded natural habitats instead of introducing artificial ones.

## OUTCOME 4: PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE AND LAWFUL RECREATIONAL FISHING

### 4a. Making it easier for fishers to follow the rules

Most respondents supported this initiative.

#### Support for helping fishers follow the rules



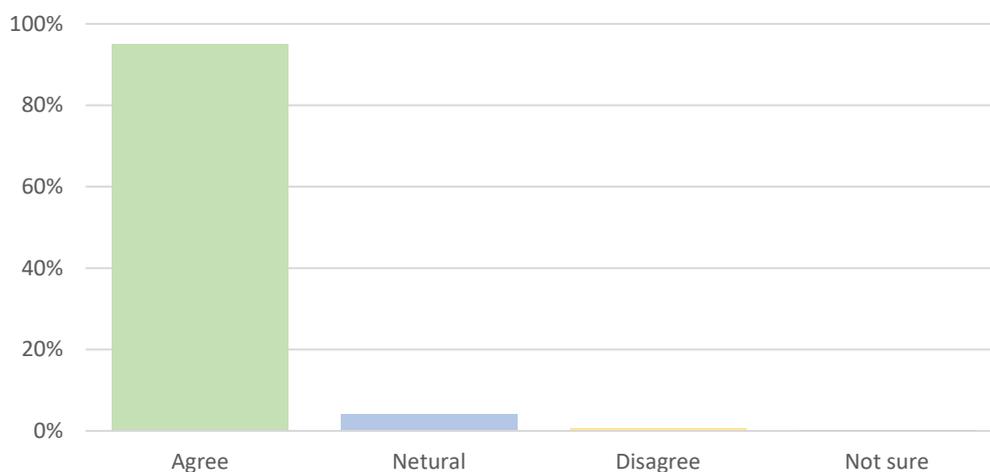
Comments received, included:

- Current means of promoting rules are effective.
- Information could be clarified about disposal of fish frames, definitions of 'boat limits' and 'person limits', and how catch limits work when on multi-day boat trips.
- A need for increased communications including webinars, more signage and providing fishing rules at points of entry such as airports and the Spirit of Tasmania terminal.

### 4b. Increasing awareness of sustainable fishing practices

There was an overwhelming level of support for this initiative.

#### Support for teaching children sustainable fishing practices



Across the survey, there were many comments relating to increasing sustainability awareness among fishers.

Of the comments relating to teaching children sustainable fishing practices, there were many suggestions of ways how it could be taught at schools. Ideas ranged from information sessions by fisheries officers to the formal incorporation of ecologically responsible fishing behavior in the science curriculum.

Comments were made on encouraging responsible fishing behaviors more broadly. They endorsed the importance of education including mention that education was preferable to enforcement. Suggestions on how this information could be better communicated included:

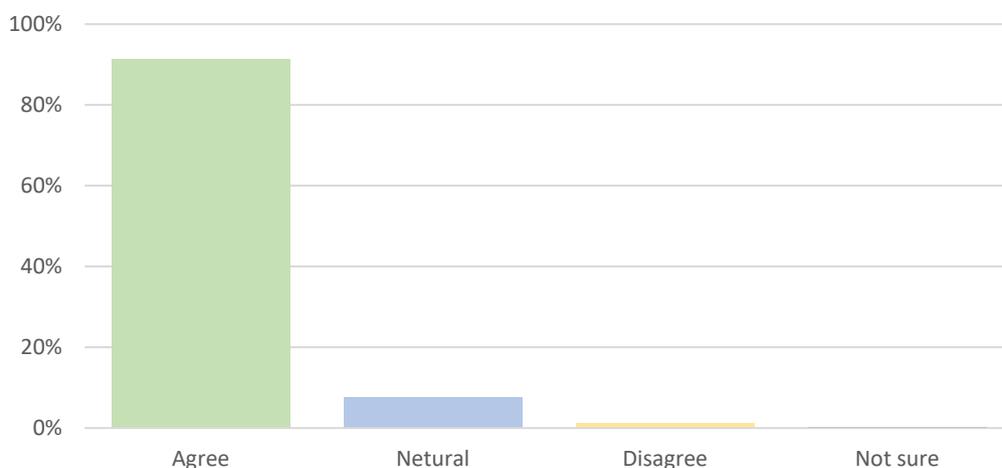
- Recreational fishing forums including scientist presenters to discuss introduce marine science and ecology with fishers
- Publishing more information about research findings to help fishers understand fishing impacts
- A greater presence on television, radio and social media

The remaining comments focused on topics to be considered in awareness raising efforts. In descending order of citation, these were littering and waste, minimizing catches, encouraging catch and release fishing, transferring fishing pressure to 'lesser' species, animal welfare, fish handling and fish identification. Regarding the latter, two respondents indicated that some fishers on the north coast are exceeding catch limits for blue-spotted flathead as they cannot distinguish the fish from sand flathead (which has higher catch limits).

#### **4c. Increasing community understanding about how and why fisheries are managed**

This initiative received 91% approval. The written responses received mostly reinforced the need for fishers to be better informed about the reasons behind changes to fishing rules and to improve their understanding of how and why fisheries are managed by tools such as bag limits, size limits, seasonal closures and protected areas.

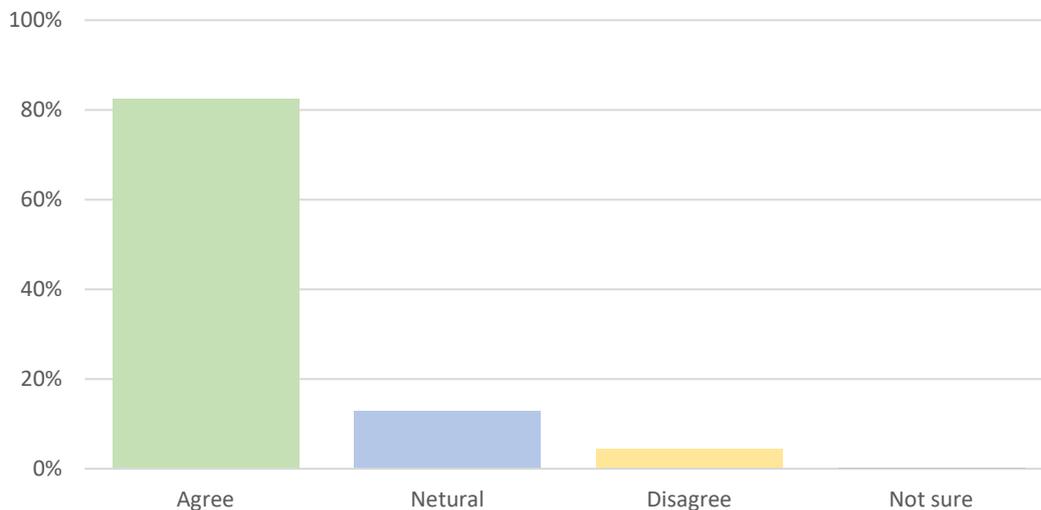
##### **Support for increased community understanding**



#### 4d. Engaging and informing fishers from non-English speaking backgrounds

This initiative received 83% approval.

##### Support for engaging/informing fishers from non-English language backgrounds



Most comments on this topic reported observations of illegal or irresponsible behaviour by multicultural fishers. Other comments supported the need for greater engagement with multicultural fishers while acknowledging the different cultural attitudes to resource harvesting. Other suggestions to progress this initiative included:

- More multi-lingual signage at popular fishing areas.
- Printing more materials in different languages.
- Producing fisheries apps in different languages.
- Fisheries officers, including multilingual officers to engage and inform multicultural fishers at shore-based locations.
- Workshops encouraging lawful and responsible fishing practices for multicultural fishers.
- Distributing multi-lingual information through migrant resource centres, UTAS and points of state entry i.e. airports and the Spirit of Tasmania terminal.

#### 4e. Having a more effective compliance presence

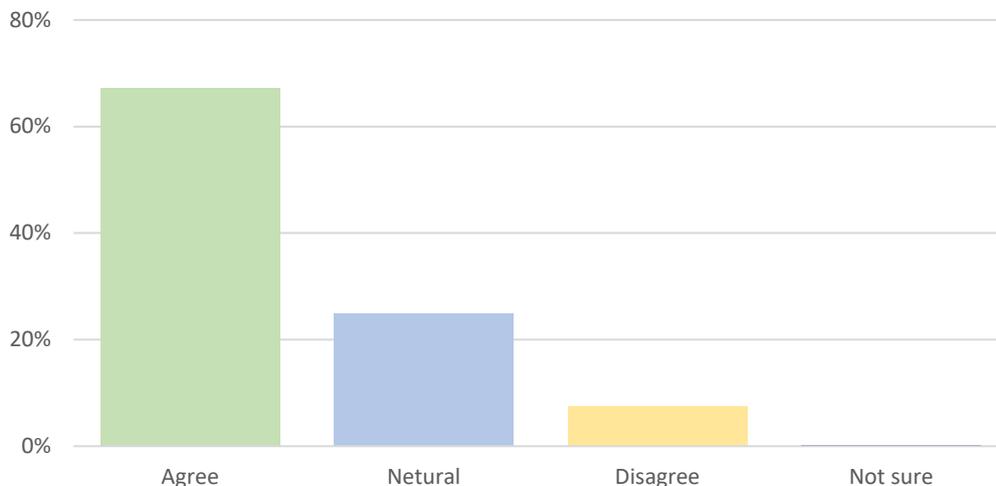
Two initiatives about fishing rule compliance were proposed in the *For a Better Fishing Future* survey:

1. Having a greater marine police presence on the water, and;
2. Reviewing penalties for breaking fishing rules

Both initiatives are presented together here due to their similarity in scope and responses provided.

The first initiative received 67% approval.

### Support for having a greater Police presence on the water

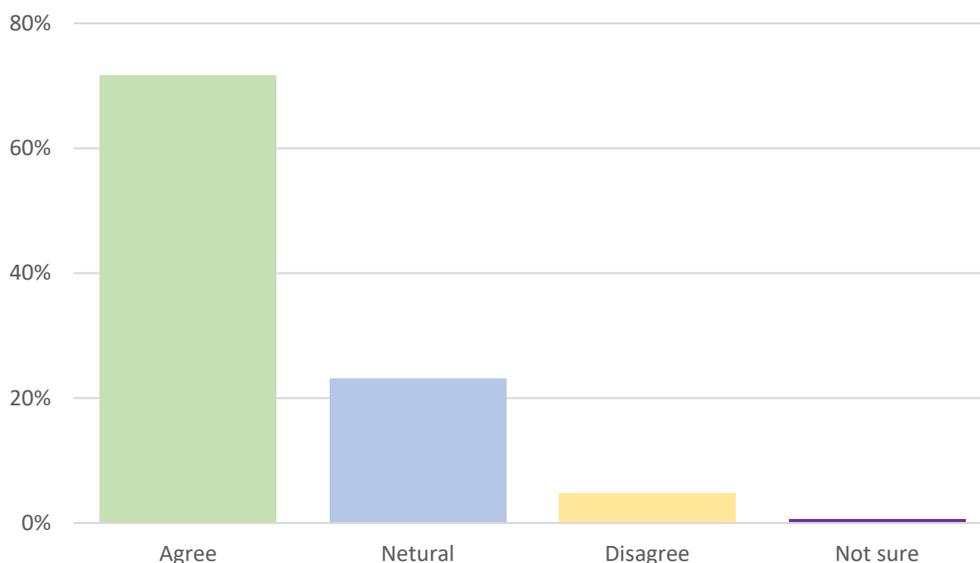


Of the many comments received, the large majority were supportive of a more visible Tasmanian Marine Police presence. Respondents indicated they would like to see a greater compliance presence at various locations – in order of suggested preference, these were boat ramps, jetties, on the water, and along shorelines.

Many requests for greater shore-based presence were related to reports of illegal fishing activity from multicultural fishers. Some respondents also suggested that recreational fisher’s compliance activities should be undertaken by specialised fisheries inspectors rather than the Tasmanian Marine Police.

The second initiative received 72% approval.

### Support for review of penalties

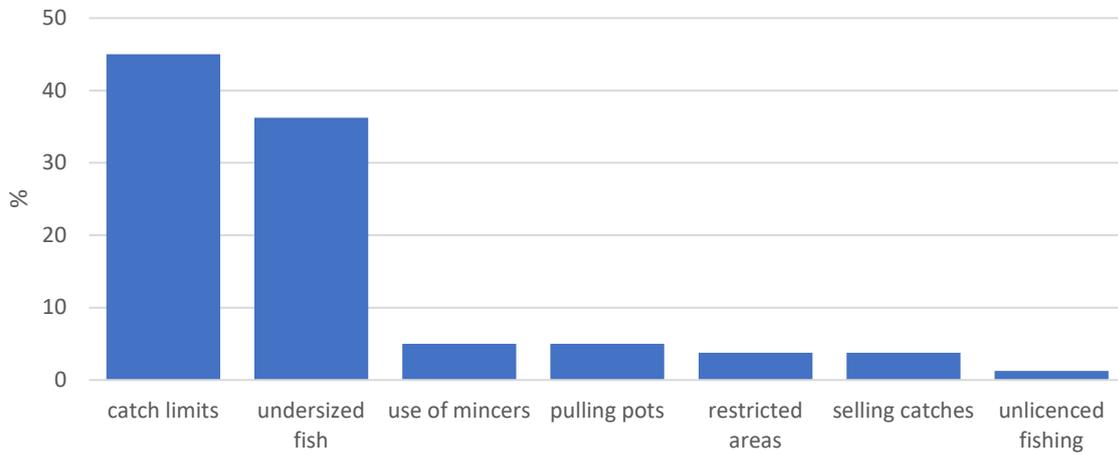


Of the comments received, most argued for higher penalties with the main theme relating to alternative penalties to monetary fines such as equipment confiscation, licence cancellation,

community work orders and luggage inspections at airports (particularly at King and Flinders Islands).

Comments drew attention to compliance breaches by multicultural fishers as well as specific offence categories requiring additional enforcement attention as illustrated in the figure below.

### Concerns raised about types of offences

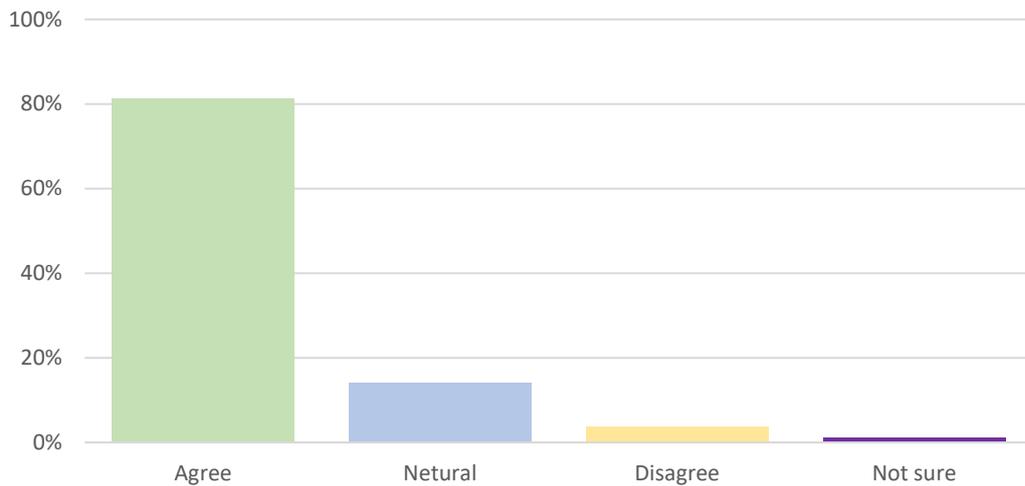


## OUTCOME 5: ENSURING THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF FISHERIES AND HABITATS

### 5a. More research into popular recreational fish species

This initiative was strongly supported, attracting 81% approval.

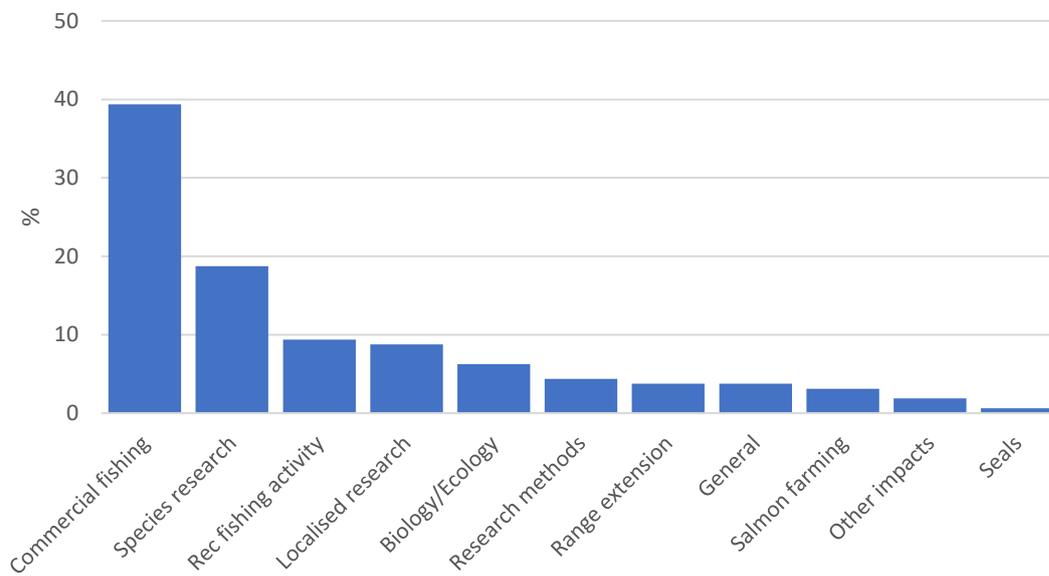
#### Support for research on popular fish species



Most comments suggested a greater research focus on commercial fishing (rather than recreational fishing). Apart from generalised comments, more specific comments about focusing research on commercial fishing impacts on fish stocks related to:

- the impact of particular gear types, particularly trawling vessels
- the impact of commercial fishing on areas and species important to recreational fishers
- the impact of foreign owned vessels

#### Suggested priority areas for research



Responses provided on the highest priority topics included:

**Species research:** This relates to suggestions for research pertaining to particular species. In descending order of citation, fisheries of note were flathead, lobster, abalone, scallops, King George whiting, snapper, barracouta and yellowtail kingfish.

**Recreational fishing activity:** Most responses focussed on a need to better understand ‘actual’ recreational catches (including relative impacts of recreational lobster potters and divers), and the impacts of illegal and irresponsible recreational fishing.

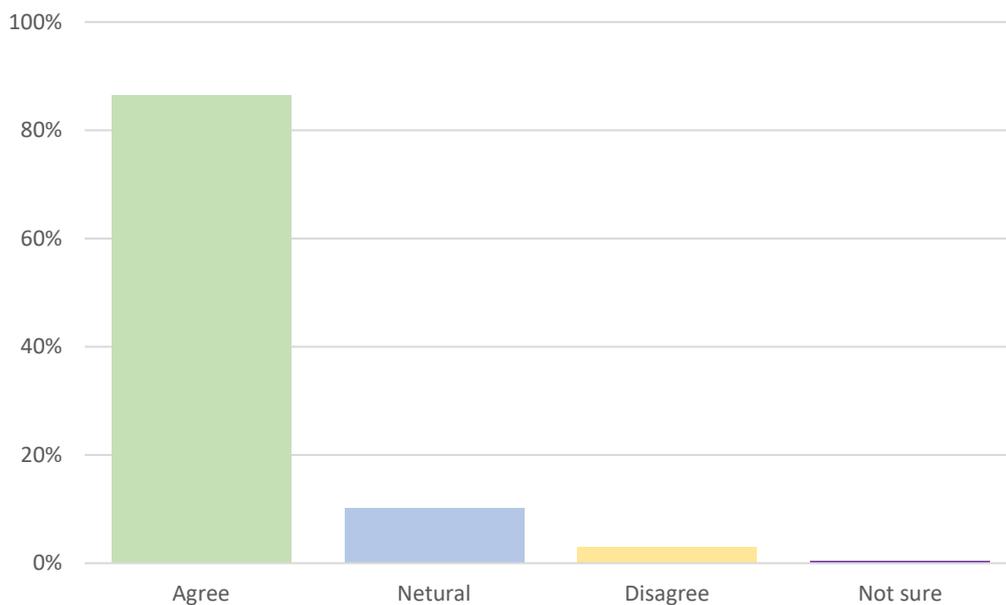
**Localised research:** This sub-theme was based on suggestions for fisheries research in specific locations, either due to their high fishing pressure or other localised phenomena.

**Biology/ecology:** A better understanding of key biological and ecological parameters (eg, life cycles, size at maturity, trophic relationships) in order to inform management – in general terms or for specific species.

### 5b. More research into the marine environment

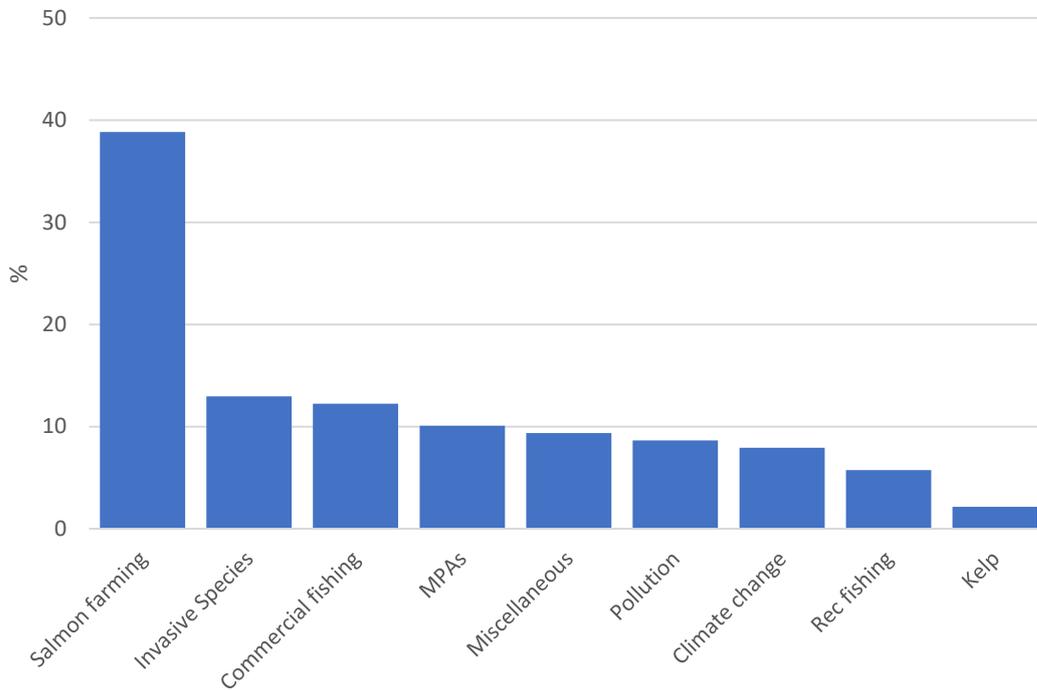
This initiative was strongly supported, attracting 86% approval.

#### Support for more marine environment research



Of the written responses received, as indicated in the graph below, most were suggestions for focused research activity with the most frequent topic being salmon farming. Here, comments were provided in relation to perceived impacts to benthic fauna, seagrass, juvenile fish nursery areas, marine debris, scallops (particularly in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel) and algal growth.

## Suggested priorities for marine environmental research



Responses provided on priority themes are summarised below:

**Salmon farming:** A range of comments were provided on the need for more research into the effects of salmon farming on important recreational species and the marine environment generally.

**Invasive species:** Most comments related to the need for further research on slowing the proliferation of urchin barrens.

**Commercial fishing:** Other than generalised comments, the main specific concerns to be addressed through research related to by-catch and the impact of trawlers and scallop dredging operations on benthic communities.

**Marine protected areas (MPAs):** Respondents suggested a need to better understand the benefits of MPAs in promoting ecosystem health to surrounding areas and fisheries.

**Miscellaneous:** Miscellaneous suggestions for environmental research included generalised comments on the need to better understand ecosystems, habitats and prey species such as baitfish.

**Pollution:** Suggested pollution concerns needing further research and monitoring included land-based pollution (eg. fertilizers and pesticides), heavy metals, microplastics and the contraceptive pill.

**Climate change:** While there is an overlap in scope with invasive species (above), some respondent provided generalised suggestions of the need to research climate change impacts on the marine environment.

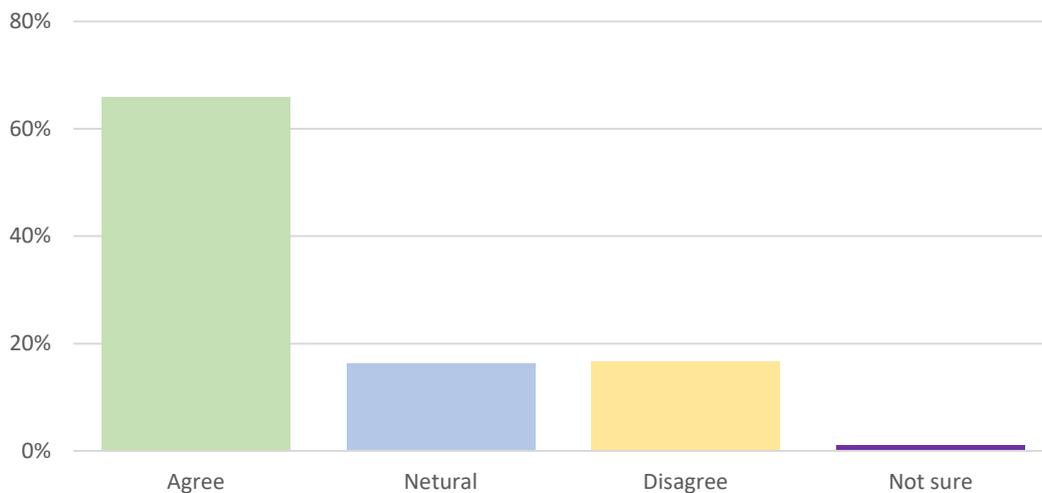
**Recreational fishing:** Recreational fishing activities requiring greater research attention were the excessive harvesting of intertidal shellfish in localised areas, by-catch from netting, and the impacts of discarded fishing gear.

**Kelp:** Suggestions related to better understanding kelp loss.

### 5c. Assessing whether high impact recreational fishing methods such as gillnetting should be allowed

This initiative attracted 66% approval.

#### Support for high impact fishing methods



Of the 106 written responses received, the majority called for the complete banning of nets, although some submissions opposed a ban and other urged for exceptions or concession to be considered if a ban on gillnets was proposed.

Among comments supporting prohibiting gillnetting, the following points were raised:

- Gillnets can have adverse impacts on populations of target and non-target species (including seabirds) and can disrupt ecosystem functioning
- Gillnets (including the illegal use of) were having a noticeable impact on King George whiting on the north coast and snapper in the south-east, with potential to suppress the emergence of these popular range-extending species
- Gillnets are an antiquated gear, the use of which is not consistent with a forward-thinking approach with an emphasis on sustainability
- Gillnetting is a detriment to fishing opportunities for anglers

Some supporting this initiative also mentioned a need to reconsider the use of setlines and drop lines. Other respondents also urged a reassessment on the use of commercial gillnets.

Those supporting change but not a complete ban urged the consideration of the following:

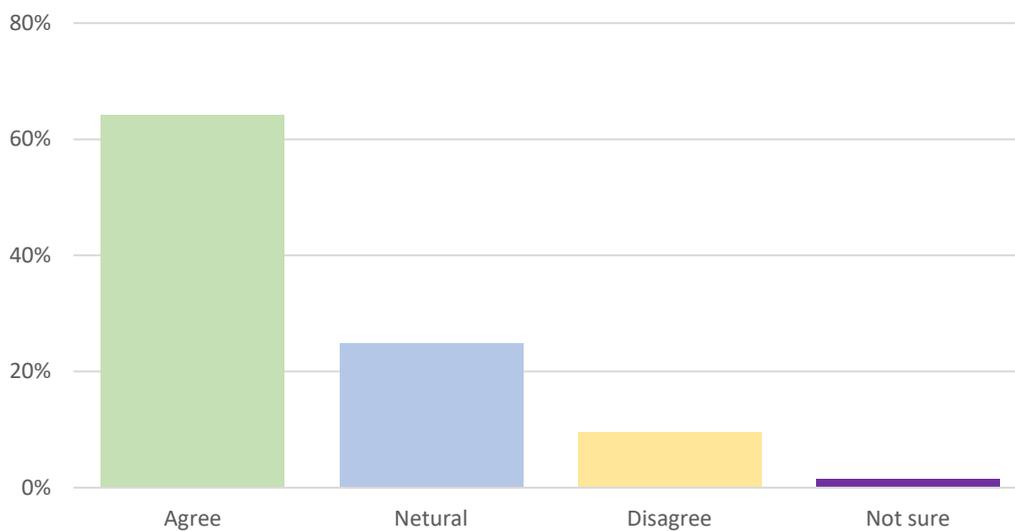
- Banning monofilament nets but allowing the use of cotton nets on the grounds that they do less damage to fish and biodegrade faster if abandoned as 'ghost nets'.

- Banning nets from shark nursery areas only.
- Banning nets from estuaries only (to reduce the impact on King George whiting).
- Banning nets from all marine waters except Macquarie Harbour, where nets are regularly used to remove escaped Atlantic salmon.

#### **5d. Reducing impacts of recreational fishing on non-target species and the marine environment**

This initiative received 64% approval.

#### **Support for reducing impact of recreational fishing on non-target species and the marine environment**



The most common suggestions made were that recreational impacts on non-target species were negligible compared with reports of bycatch disposal by commercial fishers. Other suggestions of impacts included:

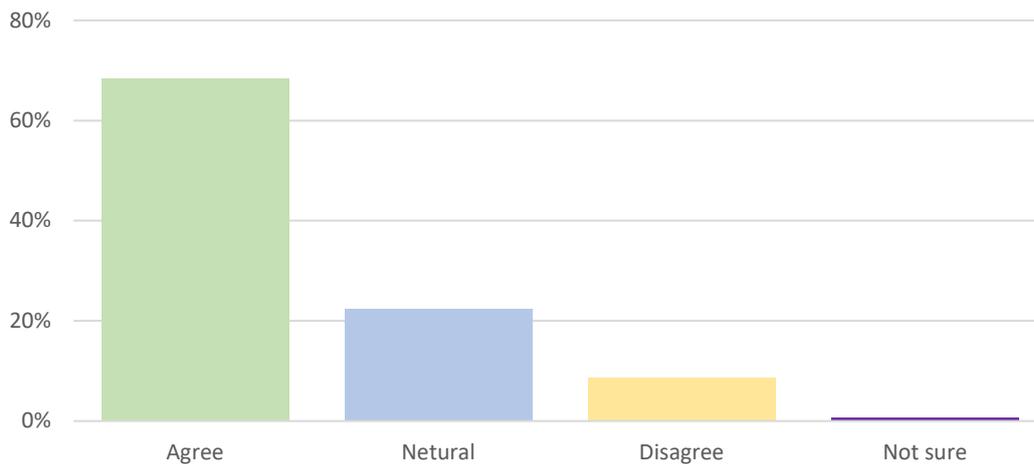
- The improper disposal of fishing waste (line, ghost nets, soft plastic lures, general rubbish).
- Impacts from hooking untargeted species (including seabirds).
- Leaving fish frames near boat ramps.
- The deliberate killing of 'nuisance' species such as toadfish, gurnard and draughtboard sharks.

## OUTCOME 6: IMPROVING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT RECREATIONAL FISHING

### 6a. Investigating new ways of collecting recreational fishing catch information

This initiative received 68% approval.

#### Support for new ways to collect recreational fishing catch information



Of the comments received, many were concerned that current methods of estimating recreational catch are inaccurate and in need of change. There were a range of suggestions on how this could be achieved, including:

- Implementation of a tagging system for highly valued species, particularly rock lobster (and to a lesser extent abalone, southern bluefin tuna, striped trumpeter and blue-eye trevalla). Reasons cited for the needs for tags were a better understanding of recreational catch, a more equitable distribution of catches amongst fishers and the ability for occasional fishers to catch a larger number of fish per day.
- Consideration of logbooks (both compulsory and voluntary) or apps to collect catch and effort data. Some respondents indicated concern about the effectiveness of apps due to poor mobile network coverage in some areas and the reliance on the honesty of fishers for the collection of accurate data.
- Creel surveys at intercept points such as boat ramps to collect catch data, including calibrating data collected through other means.
- Collecting catch data of key species at a finer regional scale.
- The use of underwater videos for monitoring fisheries (and environmental) health.

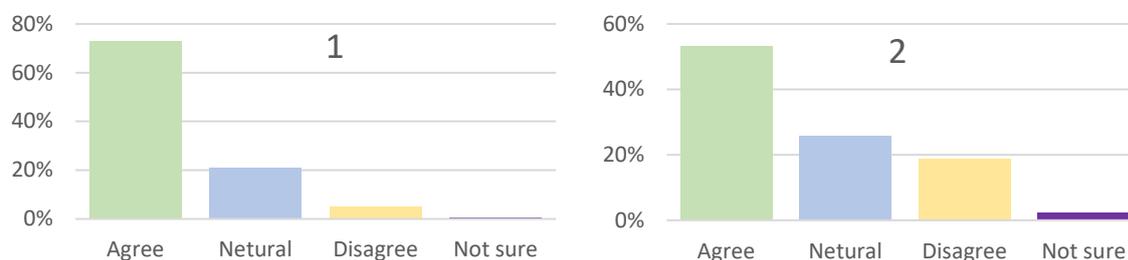
### 6b. Consider options for funding improved programs and facilities that minimise cost inequities among fishers

Two initiatives about funding programs and facilities were proposed in the survey:

- I. Identifying extra funding to improve programs and facilities that benefit fishers, and;

2. Spreading costs more evenly among recreational fishers instead of only licensed fishers paying.

### Support for (1) Extra funding and (2) Spreading costs among recreational fishers



The initiative about identifying additional funding received 73% support whilst spreading management costs in a more equitable manner received 53% support.

The results from both initiatives are presented together due to their similarity in scope and the nature of responses provided. While potential changes to the current licensing system were not specifically indicated in the survey, most responses provided feedback on the need (or otherwise) for licensing changes.

Of comments received, the majority related to licensing – particularly the expansion of the current endorsement system to a more general licensing system with a majority of views supporting this expansion. However, some respondents supporting the expansion of licensing provided conditional or contextual comments. These were:

- General licences should be combined with freshwater fishing licences.
- Other than providing funding, a broader licence could assist with research and communications.
- Children should remain unlicensed.
- Tourists should be charged extra.
- Concessions for seniors should apply.
- All monies should be 'ring-fenced' for recreational fishing purposes.

Of the comments urging against broader licensing, the main argument was the fundamental right of Tasmanians to fish without being charged. Other arguments included:

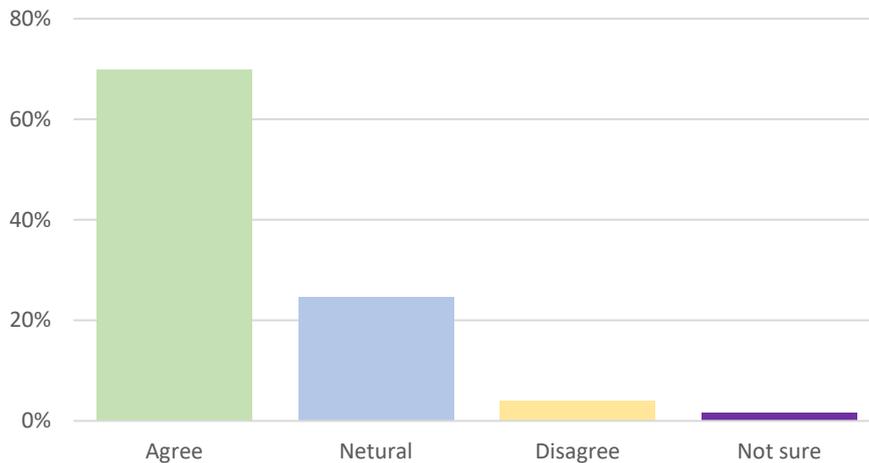
- The perception that fishers already pay enough to fish through fishing related expenses, many of which provide government revenue through GST.
- Additional licence fees could decrease fishing participation, tourism and revenue for reliant businesses.

Non-licensing related comments focused on other ways in which additional revenue to support recreational fishing could be sourced. These included additional government support, a boat-based fishing levy and increased fines for fisheries offences.

### **6c. Improving services to fishers by working more closely with Inland Fisheries Service and Marine and Safety Tasmania**

This initiative received 70% approval. Comments on this initiative suggested that communications, resourcing and licensing benefits could be available through stronger linkages or partnerships.

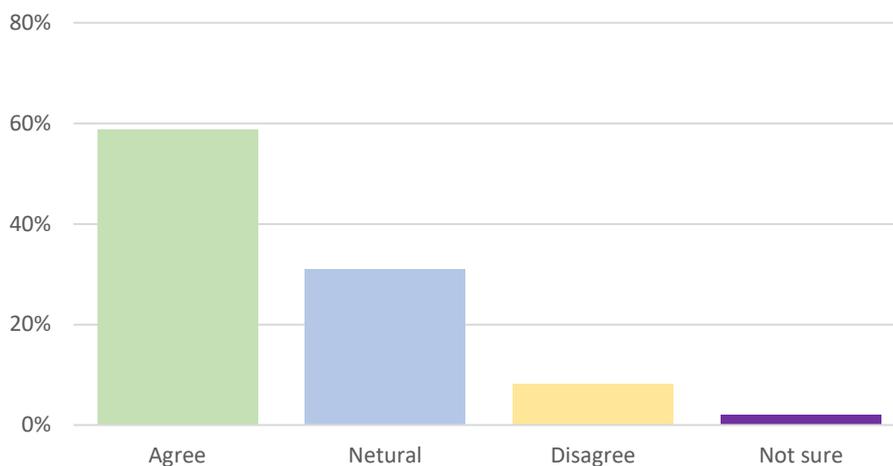
#### **Support for working more closely with IFS and MAST**



### **6d. Having a greater focus on managing charter boat operators and other fishing tourism businesses**

This initiative received 59% approval.

#### **Support for a greater focus on charter boat operators and fishing tourism**



Comments received were diverse. Some respondents called for greater regulation of the charter sector because of the overall impacts on fish resources and that sectoral activities are more akin to commercial fishing than recreational fishing. Some respondents suggested that ecotourism ‘catch and cook’ operations have caused localised depletions of abalone and lobster in Tasmania’s south-east. Other comments included acknowledgement of the regional economic benefits associated with charter fishing and the social benefits to fishers without access to boats, particularly boats with offshore fishing capacity.

## ANALYSIS OF MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

More than 1000 comments were received that did not align with the proposed Strategic Initiatives. Of these, 759 comments were valid in terms of their overall relevance to the survey. Here, the six areas of concern or interest were:

- Commercial fishing (35%)
- Need for changes to recreational fishing regulations (25%)
- Suggestions for different ways of managing fisheries (7%)
- Salmon farming (6%)
- Seals (5%)
- Marine Protected Areas (5%)

### Commercial fishing

A total of 265 comments were received. Comments focused on three sub-themes:

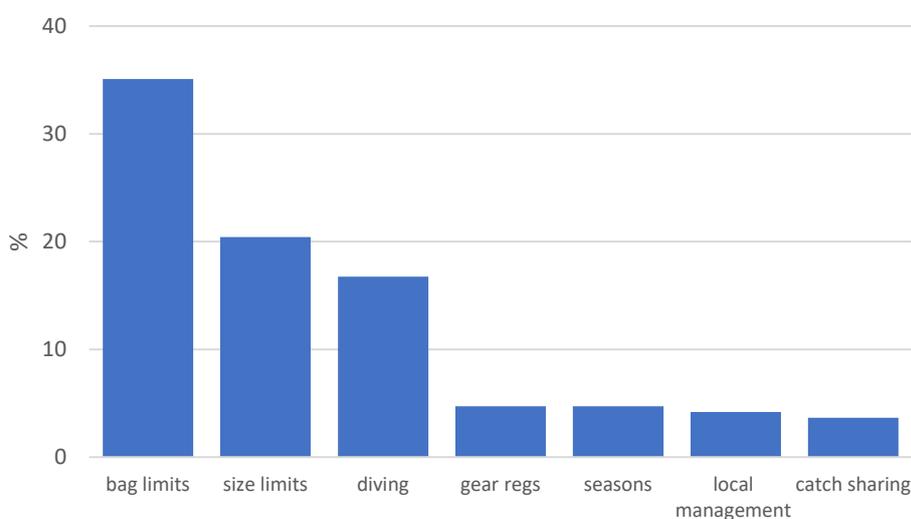
1. a perceived need to restrict commercial fishing activity
2. perceptions that fisheries management decisions (particularly those relating to access and allocation) were biased towards the recreational sector, and
3. perceived stock impacts from commercial fishing.

Many comments weren't specific about the type of commercial fishing or the target species. For comments making specific reference to vessel types or gears, the most prominent ones were inshore trawlers (Danish seiners), larger offshore vessels (including 'super-trawlers' and internationally owner vessels) and inshore netting.

The species attracting the most comments (either explicitly or implicitly) were flathead (43) and rock lobster (25).

### Need for changes to recreational fishing regulations

There were 193 suggestions to change current recreational fishing regulations. The seven most prominent sub-themes, and their proportion of overall responses, are illustrated below



**Bag limits:** Of the 67 comments received, 65 suggested increasing or decreasing limits, in general terms, or for specific fisheries.

Fishery	Increase	Decrease
General	12	7
Lobster	14	2
Flathead	1	12
Abalone	3	3
Scallops	3	1
Southern bluefin tuna	1	1
Squid	0	2
Bream	0	1
Barracouta	1	0
Gummy shark	1	0

**Size limits:** A total of 39 comments were received, most in relation to specific fisheries.

Fishery	Increase	Decrease	Max size	Maintain
Flathead	12	3	6	0
Lobster	0	0	10	0
King George Whiting	0	2	0	1
General	2	0	1	0
Bream	2	0	0	0
Snapper	1	0	0	0

**Diving:** All 32 comments suggested that recreational diving activities need to be curtailed. Over 65% of comments related to rock lobster. Some respondents distinguished between snorkelling and surface to air diving. Of the latter, 8 respondents urged that restrictions apply to hookah diving only.

### Suggestions for different ways to manage fisheries

There were 50 suggestion for considering new management initiatives or expanding existing ones. In descending order, the most prominent initiatives were:

1. The expansion or implementation of seasonal closures during spawning periods. The most cited fishery was flathead.
2. The need for fishery biomass targets and/or a greater focus on overall stock rebuilding.
3. Spatial-based rotational harvesting/closures.
4. Commercial licence buy-backs.
5. Changes to the fisheries administration/management structure.

### Salmon farming

A total of 45 comment were received. Most were general concerns about the impacts of farms on fish stocks or the marine environment or calls to reduce farming activities. More

specific comments focused on perceived impacts on areas or species (especially flathead) and suggestions to relocate farms onshore.

### **Seals**

Comments focussed on the perceived impacts of seal predation on fish stocks (especially SBT, striped trumpeter and trevalla) while others recommended a government focus to reduce seal numbers and/or interactions.

### **Marine Protected Areas**

Most of the 41 comments were appeals to implement more MPAs though there were a small number of complaints that current MPAs are restricting fishing access.