

## Media Release

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016

### Recreational fishers help to build a sustainable fishing future for SEQ

Not-for-profit organisations, Healthy Waterways and Catchments and Ozfish Unlimited are holding the first 'Fishers for Fish Habitat' forums in Queensland, engaging recreational fishers in the protection and management of the region's valuable areas of fish habitat.

The forums are part of a national effort funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to support the recreational fishing community to get active in fish habitat protection and restoration.

The first of two forums will be held on Saturday 5th November at Caloundra Power Boat Club from 8.30am to 12.00pm. This free forum is an opportunity for fishers to learn how important fish habitat is to quality fish, and what they can do to improve their local fishing environment. At this forum, attendees will hear from Michael Hutchinson from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Jock McKenzie from Mangrovetech and local elder from Kabi Kabi nation, Kerry Jones.

Ms Julie McLellan, CEO of Healthy Waterways and Catchments, said the declining health of fish habitats in South East Queensland can have social, economic and environmental repercussions. "By volume and value per unit area, the Moreton Bay region is the most important fishery in the state. Recreational fishing is an important leisure activity in South East Queensland."

"Our mangroves, seagrass and saltmarsh provide critical environments for juvenile fish, crustaceans and many other plants and animals that are the basis of vital fisheries. Impacts to the health of fish habitats include loss of riparian zones and mangroves, barriers to fish movement and decreased water quality," Ms McLellan said.

"We are very excited to be working alongside Ozfish Unlimited and our local recreational fishers to understand the values of our local fish habitat areas, the impacts of a poor environment, and to build a collective vision in the protection and restoration of these vital natural assets."

Director of OzFish Unlimited, Craig Copeland, said impacts on fish habitats can be addressed by actions such as removing barriers to fish movement, replanting riparian areas and improving water quality.

"It's recreational fishers that will make the difference - we get the most out of having a good place to fish, so helping fish habitat seems like the right thing to do" he said.

For more information and to register, visit [healthywaterways.org/eventscalendar](http://healthywaterways.org/eventscalendar). The second forum will be held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at the Gold Coast.

Healthy Waterways and Catchments is an independent, not-for-profit organisation focused on connecting science and knowledge with people and on-ground actions to protect and restore our land and waterways. Ozfish Unlimited is a national not-for-profit organisation, helping recreational fishers contribute to a better fishing future.

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For media enquiries or to organise an interview, please contact:

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