



Top angling gong landed by Byrne

The Queensland Branch of the Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA Queensland) has today revealed Bill Byrne as their 2016 Ron Dempster Award recipient. The organisation's top award is bestowed upon an individual in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the enhancement of recreational fishing in Queensland.

ANSA Queensland President, Nathan Johnston said that the decision to grant the award to Mr Byrne was straightforward.

"When we considered the contributions to recreational fishing in the year past, the introduction of three net free fishing havens along the Queensland coastline was by far the standout item in 2016 set to enhance recreational fishing and associated tourism for the state".

"Bill Byrne's personal commitment to introducing and implementing the net free fishing havens has delighted our members and affiliated clubs along with 900,000 other Queenslanders who go fishing recreationally every year".

"The award is the most prestigious offered by ANSA Queensland and has been up for grabs since 1996 when it was first offered up in memory of the late Ron Dempster".

"The 1st February 2017 marks opening of the barramundi season for Queenslanders and so we are using this important date in the recreational fishing calendar to announce this award publically."

"While it takes several years for stocks of legal and trophy size fish to rebuild, our members and the wider recreational fishing community are already noticing it getting easier to catch better sized fish in these zones." Nathan said

"During the closed season, members including myself have been enjoyed catching other sportfish. For example, during the closed season I have been fishing the same beach at Great Keppel Island to target Queenfish and catching good numbers of fish and some decent sized ones."

"In the past I might have found a school like this once and then gone back a couple of weeks later and they would have disappeared, likely netted".

"This year queenies have been caught in my last four consecutive trips in exactly the same spot and this bodes well for getting people off the couch and involved in more active pursuits like recreational fishing." explained Nathan.

The news is also positive for fishing tourism and guiding businesses in the local area. As schools of sportfish grow and become more prolific and predictable to target, anglers begin to consider travelling to these areas to fish, stay and eat. Those further afield feel more confident in making plans to fly in and pay for guides to put them onto a particular trophy fish on their bucket list.

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"All of this would not have been possible without the hard work of Bill Byrne and those who supported introduction of these zones. This is why Bill has been recognised for his outstanding contribution to the enhancement of recreational fishing in Queensland".

ANSA Queensland is now gearing up along with ANSA National for the Aussie Sportfisher Conference 2017. The event will be an opportunity for members and the wider recreational fishing community visit destination Cairns as we celebrate 50 years of Sportfishing in Australia.

ANSA's enduring motto of Sport, Conservation and Integrity in fishing will shine through as central themes in all the opportunities and experiences on offer during this great week and will kick off with an informal barefoot yobbos BBQ on Friday 22nd September 2017 at the Figtree, Tanks Art Centre, Cairns.

"This week long event is one not to be missed for anyone who wants to join in the celebration of Sportfishing in Australia and includes a Conference, Expo, Fishing Competition and Fishing Expedition designed to gather together like-minded anglers so we can all enjoy and celebrate 50 years of Sportfishing in Australia.

"This event is also when we announce the Ron Dempster award recipient for 2017. Thanks to Bill Byre, our 2016 recipient, we have included a fishing competition in the Cairns Net Free Area as part of the program.

Those interested in learning more about the week-long event in Tropical Cairns, North Queensland, the birthplace of ANSA and Sportfishing in Australia can visit: <http://www.ansaqld.com.au/ansa-50th/>

Those who would like to learn more about the Ron Dempster Award can visit: <http://www.ansaqld.com.au/ron-dempster-award/>

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About ANSA QLD

The Queensland Branch of the Australian National Sportfishing Association is a not for profit organisation made up of affiliated clubs and members who promote sport, conservation and integrity in angling.

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