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Funding for fishing safety programs rock solid

The NSW Government and the NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust are working together to make the sport of rock fishing safer in NSW, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

“The NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust has allocated \$62,675 to install another 30 Angel Rings at various locations around the state, while ensuring the current 87 Angel Ring facilities are maintained and replaced over the next three years,” Mr Macdonald said.

“The trust will also provide \$50,750 to continue funding the successful *Rock fishing Safety* resource folder,” he said.

The funding is part of the trust’s \$13 million spending spree on more than 60 recreational fishing projects across NSW over the next year.

Angel Rings are life buoys installed at popular and dangerous ocean rock fishing spots along the NSW coast.

“Rock fishing is a sport which can be very dangerous, and a number of people have died as a result of being swept off the rocks,” Mr Macdonald said.

“This on-going funding will help provide life saving resources to try to put an end to these tragic deaths. They keep the victim afloat and allow the person to swim away from the rocks until help arrives.”

“This year alone there have been six confirmed rescues using the Angel Rings,” he said.

“This is a further extension of the successful Angel Rings project carried out since 1994 by the Australian National Sportfishing Association (NSW),” the Minister said.

The new rings will be placed at locations including Botany Bay National Park, Royal National Park and the Pittwater area.

The NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust will also provide \$50,750 to distribute 30,000 resource folders free of charge to anglers over the next three years.

“Unfortunately, many anglers who find themselves in trouble while rock fishing are from non-English speaking backgrounds,” Mr Macdonald said.

“The folders, co-ordinated by the NSW Recreational Fishing Alliance in conjunction with the Department of Sport and Recreation, will include DVD’s on how to rockfish safely, translated into Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese.

“Another 100,000 copies of these DVD’s have also been distributed free of charge to migrant centres, community groups, tackle shops and local grocery stores.

“The result is we’ve seen a marked increase in the number of anglers who now wear lifejackets on the ocean rocks, especially when fishing alone.”

The NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust is funded by license sales to recreational fishers. Funds raised from the sale of licences are placed into two trusts, one for saltwater and the other freshwater, and can only be spent on projects to improve recreational fishing in NSW.

“These projects are a great example of recreational fishing licence fees being put back into the water for the benefit of the fishing community.” Mr Macdonald said.

For a copy of the rock fishing safety resource folder go to www.safefishing.com.au
