



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events

MEDIA RELEASE

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FISHING 4 THERAPY MAKING A DIFFERENCE

One of the State's favourite pastimes is able to be enjoyed by those less mobile thanks to a grant which benefits people who suffer from physical and mental disabilities, Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, said today.

Ms Hodgkinson attended a Fishing 4 Therapy workshop, which is funded by a \$21,500 grant from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts.

"These recreational fishing therapy workshops are co-ordinated by the NSW branch of the Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA) and provide an opportunity for those suffering disabilities to benefit from the therapy of throwing a line," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"Each fishing workshop is held at the Fly Casting Pond in Sydney's Centennial Park, allowing the workshop attendees to fish for carp from the pond viewing platform, adapted to suit people using wheelchairs and frames."

Co-ordinator of the Fishing 4 Therapy workshop program, Tony Steiner, said the workshops give attendees confidence, time to socialise and bond with other people and a chance to have a laugh, while undertaking specially designed exercises that improve basic hand eye co-ordination skills.

"Attendees of our workshops have come from Head East and Head Way, a community based service for people with an acquired brain injury, which is a permanent injury acquired after 10 years of age," Mr Steiner said.

"Attendees also come from New Era, a care facility for those with Cerebral Palsy and Down syndrome in their early teens to mid-30s.

"The fishing workshops allow these people to enjoy fishing in a safe environment, and reap the rewards of the physical and mental therapy that the activity provides.

"The fishing gear that our attendees use is all specifically built by the ANSA volunteers, who also come along to the workshops when they can to help out."

Ms Hodgkinson said the NSW Government is proud to have supported this program.

"This is a remarkable program which makes a huge difference to ensure everyone, regardless of their ability, can enjoy the benefits of fishing and enjoy a brief moment where disabilities are forgotten," Ms Hodgkinson said.