

Questions on Notice

Upper House Inquiry in to Commercial Fishing Reforms

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Prior to 2008-09 how regularly were the status reports produced? I note you say they should be produced annually?

Comprehensive Status of Fisheries Resources reports were completed in 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09. After speaking with the DPI helpdesk I have been unable to locate reports before this period however I understand that 3year reviews were conducted prior to 2006-07 in consultation with the Management Advisory Committees.

In keeping with best practice fisheries management we recommend that comprehensive fisheries status reports be produced annually.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: In your submission you also talk about the importance of observers and the issues with the current observer regime. What do you suggest to the Committee would be an enhancement?

The current NSW observer programs are usually targeted at trying to understand specific problems or catches. While this is important, there is significant benefit in broader and more comprehensive observer programs, such as those implemented at the Commonwealth level. The Government's ability to sustainably manage fish stocks relies on having the best available information on catch and bycatch, and a comprehensive third party observer program ensures the best quality data is being used to develop management plans. We strongly recommend observer programs being expanded across fisheries managed by the NSW Government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In your submission you mention ocean hauling and you support a day quota in that regard. The Committee has heard some evidence today from some fishers that they thought day quotas would lead to them "hitting it hard" on that day. Do you have any comment on that?

We support an effort quota for the ocean haul fishery. The fishing industry reforms proposed to set this quota by allowing the total number of days available to each share class groups of the fishery to be taken from the year that had the maximum number of days reported being worked in each region over the 4 year period 2009/10 to 2012/13. While supporting the quota, we expressed concern that basing the quota on the maximum number of days to be fished, when combined with the other proposed reforms, has the potential to increase fishing effort for species which are already considered to be fully fished. Given there is a physical limit to the amount of fishing that can be done in a day, and the fisheries reform process proposed basing the number of days on the maximum number of days fished in each region, it is difficult to see how such a quota would lead to fishers "hitting it hard" on their quota days. We also note that we submit that any day based effort quota must be accompanied by individual quotas for sea mullet to ensure sustainability for this species.