

Question 1

We believe it would be of great benefit to all involved to merge at least two departments. That being fisheries and marine parks; and even better if all three were together. There are many and various reasons, the obvious being cost saving, operational efficiency and public convenience, to name a few. Fisheries would be our choice to run the amalgamation.

Question 2

No! We are not proposing complete removal of commercial fishing.

Commercial fishing is of great value and necessary to all the people in the world, as is recreational fishing. Recreational and commercial fishers should be together to solve these problems and most are, but as in everything, there are some on both sides that don't and won't conform. Reduce the number of commercial fishers across the board - weed out the part timers, creating a sustainable industry for those that derive a minimum of 75% of their living out of commercial fishing.

Recreational fishing havens in all areas have been very successful, however, the pressure on 'non haven' river systems is immense and the chance to reduce the numbers of netters should not be missed.

If fishing havens, marine parks or whatever you choose to call them, are to do what they are designed to do, e.g. 'Protect', then there are many areas we need to look at before we start to 'lock them up'. For example:

- Farming and other agricultural practices
- Flood mitigation
- Using seasonal closures in some areas
- Having non anchoring areas
- Non bottom fishing areas
- The use of circle hooks for catch and release
- Educate commercial fishers to stop fishing when a glut has been reached and the fish are worth almost nothing - Quotas could possibly be the answer.

Question 3

Commercial fishing practices: Yes, this has always been the practice and yes, going on surveys, it is sustainable; but we note that fish stocks in quantity and quality, have declined in our lifetime, as would be expected with modern fishing techniques.

Beach hauling figures vs recreational fishing figures quoted by the Dept of Fishing Resources are of concern to us. We would like to know how the figures relating to recreational fishing catches are obtained. To our knowledge, there has never been a survey of recreational fishing catches, so we question the accuracy of this information.

Even though it has been stated that certain practices are no longer taking place by commercial beach and river fishermen, the authorities should go out and have a long, hard look, they will most certainly be surprised.

Question 4

At a recreational fishers rally held at Laurieton, a guest speaker raised this information. The sources were:

- Ernst & Young Report 2006 – Economic Impact of Recreational Fishing in Port Stephens and Narooma – Bermagui
- A newspaper article in the Manning River Times about 300 fishers being caught in sanctuary zones at Port Stephens Marine Park
- A half page advertisement in the Sunday papers and in fishing magazines, inviting you to visit the Marine Park
- Much more detail in the Ernst & Young Report

Question 5

Laurieton United Servicemen's Club Fishing Club, along with all the other clubs involved, surveyed members that were available. The indicator is they don't fish the area in question, so we have no feed back.

Questions on Notice

Question on notice from the Hon Christine Robertson:-

Membership of the Laurieton United Servicemen's Club Fishing Club is 112, being active and social members. This is not one of the biggest clubs in the State, however, the Camden Haven, has five clubs with a total of over 500 active and social members. Maybe we just make lots of noise.

Question on notice from Mr Ian Cohen:-

We thought we had things in place with RecFish, ACORF and the like; they should go in the same hole as The Torn Blue Fringe. Their efforts, to date, have been less than ordinary. We would like to be represented by fishermen, not government appointees.

As mentioned at the enquiry, we feel it would be an advantage to divide the State into divisions, each having **elected** representatives on a committee that have access to government bodies to discuss issues and handle problems as they arise; unlike the situation that we have now. This would alleviate a lot of the BS we are currently experiencing.


Again, thank you for giving us the opportunity to have input. Please don't hesitate to contact us again with any further queries.

Kind regards

Ray Robinson

 2/6/10

Geoff Williams

 2/6/10

Bill Judd

 2/6/10

Additional questions from members

Camden Haven Fishing clubs

Mr Ray Robinson, President, North Haven Bowling Fishing Club

Mr Geoff Williams, Lake Cathie Bowling Club Fishing Club

Mr Bill Judd, Laurieton United Servicemen's Club Fishing Club

1. Do you think there is any advantage, either in cost saving or operational efficiency, in merging the operations of the Marine Parks Authority, the Department of Fisheries, and NSW Waterways?

If some amalgamation was to take place, under which of these agencies is it most appropriate to amalgamate these operations?

2. While you propose more commercial buy-outs – surely you are not proposing the complete removal of commercial fishing effort?

What modifications or changes to the commercial fishing industry are you seeking while still maintaining the ability of the general public to purchase local fish, which is provided by the commercial fishing industry?

3. With respect to commercial fishing practices you say that your major concern is that the migratory spawning run along the east coast of your most commonly targeted fish is targeted by the commercial fishing industry.

Has not this always been the case? Do you believe this practice is unsustainable, if you do, have you noted declining numbers of these fish species?

4. On page 2 of your submission you include what appears to be a quote from some document, namely:

A consultancy firm was hired to estimate the economic impact prior to the declaration of the Port Stephens marine park. It found visitation would be cut by more than 50% if recreational fishers could not access their favourite grounds. The report recommended alternatives should be found. The marine park was declared and in the following weeks 300 recreational fishers were fined \$500 each. Then half page coloured advertisements were placed in newspapers and fishing magazines to encourage recreational fishers to visit.

Can you advise the Committee the source of this quote?

5. Did your club members traditionally fish in the areas now covered by the Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park, and if so, do they still fish there?

Have you received feedback from your members on the impact of the Marine Park on fishing in the area?