

**CENTRAL ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY INC.**  
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Select Committee on Recreational Fishing  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
**Sydney NSW 2000**  
Attention Ms Kate Harris, **Council Officer**

**Inquiry into Recreational Fishing – Submission 992.**

Dear Ms Harris,

I refer to your letter of 6 May 2010, in which, amongst other things, you requested answers to the following additional questions from members of the Committee:

- Q1 Is there currently a competition for resources between native fish stocking and trout/salmon fish stocking?
- A. I contend there is such competition for resources, however, due to the convoluted budgetary procedures within NSW I&I Fisheries, amounts either allocated or actually expended against various cost centres are difficult to ascertain with the limited resources available to either the society I represent, or me, as an individual.

From what I have been able to ascertain, prior to the current “rescue package”, funded by the Freshwater Trust Fund (in excess of \$400,000 per annum), towards securing the future of the Gaden Trout Hatchery at Jindabyne, approximately \$1,000,000 per annum (which I believe to be the figures for the Financial Year 2007-2008), was allocated to fish production at the four state owned and operated hatcheries. Of this amount, now reduced to approximately \$600,000 following the injection of the Freshwater Trust Funds (dedicated, in their entirety, to Gaden Trout Hatchery), approximately \$375,000 was allocated to Dutton Trout Hatchery, Ebor and approximately \$146,000 to the Narrandera Fisheries Centre. Unfortunately, I have not been able to ascertain the amount allocated to the production of Australian bass at the Port Stephens Fisheries Institute, but I believe it is not unreasonable to suggest the balance of the current funding for fish production, say \$80,000 is currently allocated to that cost centre. Assuming my extrapolations are reasonably correct, one can clearly see a far greater sum is expended upon the production of trout and salmon than native fish; approximately \$800,000 on trout/salmon production and \$250,000 on native fish production. The provision of native fish for public waterways in NSW, is, of course, further supplemented by funding from the Freshwater Trust Fund under the Dollar for Dollar Native Stocking Fish Programme. The entire programme is funded by recreational fishers, whose local funding activities are simply matched through approved funding from the Freshwater Trust Fund.

I hasten to add, in addition to the funding to ensure Gaden Trout Hatchery is maintained, recreational fishers have made (through the Freshwater Trust Fund), large contributions to both Gaden (provision of a Hatchery Guide and construction of a new packing shed), and Dutton (funding for a water cooling plant and other improvements), in recent years. Recreational fishers have also contributed funds to Port Stephens Fisheries Institute (investigation of and prevention of the spread of nodavirus in

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Australian bass), Narrandera Fisheries Centre (funding for investigation of and the artificial breeding of Macquarie perch), and similar works undertaken on eastern cod at Grafton Primary Industries Institute (Grafton Aquaculture Centre).

It is my opinion that, in the future, as Climate Change has an even greater impact than already is (seemingly), evident, with longer and more severe drought periods, we will be faced with the inevitable consequence that the freshwater species that have evolved in this continent, will become even more significant than they already are. The availability of waters suited to the alien salmonid species (as appealing as they might be to many recreational fishers), will be even further reduced due to increased water temperatures and greater demand for human uses. This will result in our native fishes, already known to have evolved to withstand far higher temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen content than the introduced, alien species, being the inevitable and only choice of recreational fishers over the vast majority of our inland waterways, still able to provide a reasonable expectation of recreational fishing.

We cannot continue to avoid the already serious decline in the extant, riverine populations of silver perch (*Bidyanus bidyanus*), and Freshwater catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*), through reliance upon restrictions, such as those currently in force in NSW, where the taking of either species in streams is banned. We will be compelled to breed both species for restocking of streams and this will involve considerable, additional expenditure, particularly in the case of catfish, to successfully commence artificial breeding programmes with the objective of producing sufficient numbers to undertake this vital restocking. Further expenditure will be incurred in order to comply with the current suite of regulations in relation to genetic integrity of both species, as already in force in the case of both Murray cod and golden perch, where only fish bred from brood stock taken from a particular system may be released into that system.

The reliance upon salmonids to provide as great a proportion of the inland freshwater recreational fishery as it presently does, can and must be reviewed and the only logical conclusion is that the preponderance of expenditure must be swung in favour of our wonderful native species.

Q2 Can you advise if consideration was ever given to seeking funding from the Freshwater Trust Fund for this ("Bringing Back the Fish"), programme?

A. It is not a matter of "...if consideration was ever given...", rather, it is an indisputable fact that the Freshwater Trust Fund was requested for funding and provided it for a number of projects undertaken during the "life" of this vital project.

Applications for funding to remove and/or remediate numerous barriers to fish passage were received and approved by the Freshwater Trust Fund and this support is duly acknowledged on the website <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/habitat/publications/fish-passage-assessments/bringing-back-the-fish-project-reports>

The concern I, along with many others, hold, is that due to the effective disbandment of the project, the works undertaken at the many, identified sites, impacting upon the migration and recruitment of fishes, will, with the passage of time and the failure to deal with all the sites identified, despite the evidence indicating the success of those projects finalised, be greatly diminished.

The fact remains that, due to funding cuts to the Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Unit in the last State Budget, those responsible for identifying the barriers and devising the means by which they might be

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remediated, as well as securing the necessary funding from various sources (including both the Freshwater and Saltwater Trust Funds), and who oversaw the works, are no longer engaged in those projects.

Conservatively, the estimated contribution from recreational fishers exceeded \$100,000 during the life of the project, but the real issue is the potential loss of expertise, dissipation of knowledge gained and the excellent relationships established between dedicated staff from the various agencies involved and their ability to access funding from diverse sources and co-ordinate the use of resources.

It should also be remembered that the project also addressed the serious issue of acid sulphate soils and their impact upon numerous waterways and the aquatic ecosystems, but much more remains to be done.

The curtailment of this programme is a case of expediency spelling the end of a programme that should, for the sake of future generations of all Australians, not just recreational fishers, be continued until all the barriers to fish passage are removed or remediated and the other issues affecting the recruitment and survival of fishes in, particularly, our coastal streams, have been addressed.

Q3 Can you supply the Committee with any evidence to support your claim (“...that the Department of Industry and Investment were poorly organised as far as recreational fisher representation is concerned.”)?

A. I have attached copies of four e-mails in relation to my own, recent, former membership of The Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC), which I believe is indicative of some of the issues of concern to me and I believe, others involved in recreational fishing in NSW.

These e-mails (all of which are dated 3 May 2010), resulted from discussions I had with Mr Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager, Inland & Abalone, on 29 April 2010, in relation to my (then), recent telephone call from Mr Craig Watson, Fisheries Manager, Recreational Fisheries, advising me I was unsuccessful in my attempt to secure re-appointment as the Region 2 representative on RFFTEC. The e-mails resulted from my concerns that I have in my possession (copy attached), a letter dated 4 September 2007, signed by the then Minister responsible for fisheries in NSW (Mr Ian McDonald, MLC), indicating my period of appointment as Region 2 representative to RFFTEC was until September 2010. Despite this, however, that position was advertised in the Central Coast Express Advocate on 17 July 2009 (copy of advertisement attached) as becoming vacant in the near future. In addition to the newspaper advertisement, I also received from the then Department of Primary Industries an undated, written invitation to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), for various positions, including the position I then held [“Tuncurry/Forster to Wollongong (freshwater trust central coast region 2)” sic], along with the other impending vacancies. (A copy of that document is also attached.) The closing date for applications for all the positions listed was 28 August 2009. I have also included a copy of my EOI dated 19 August 2009, together with the resume I forwarded with that letter. I heard nothing further from NSW I&I Fisheries (as it became, subsequent to the submission of my application), despite attending the 11 November 2009 meeting of the committee and making a number of telephone enquiries earlier this year and indicated this to the Select Committee in my submission dated 19 March 2010. I was finally contacted by Mr Watson, sometime around the date (unfortunately, I did not keep a note of the date on which I was telephoned), I appeared before the Select Committee to give evidence on 27 April 2010, advising me I had been unsuccessful in my attempt to gain re-appointment to the Expenditure Committee. On 29 April, 2010, I found the letter from Mr McDonald and I immediately contacted Mr Westaway to advise him of my concerns and it

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wasn't until 3 May 2010 that Mr Watson sent me the e-mail that began the chain of four e-mails relating to this matter.

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