



CSL60-03 SL10/271

The Australian Fishing Trade Association Inc.

Protecting Fishing's Future

Select Committee on Recreational Fishing Legislative Council
NSW Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

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Additional questions from Members:

1. Can you further detail your ideas (re recommendation 43 of your submission) in relation to creating a Recreational Fishing Peak body, and how such an organisation would work with the total fish environment and industry including commercial fishing?

- As identified in recommendation 42, the set-up costs of the new recreational peak body would need to be met by government for 5 years.
- Over time, as has occurred in other states, the peak body would seek to become financially autonomous by building service delivery capacity through assuming responsibility for services presently administered by government e.g. tagging programs, volunteer programs, survey and monitoring programs and fisheries enhancement programs.
- NSW has the opportunity to build a new peak body for recreational fishers incorporating the successful attributes of peak bodies in other states. However, unlike the other states, we advocate a broader based body that includes the associated fishing trades and boating interests. This would provide more inclusive representation, and a stronger stakeholder base.
- The fishing trades and boating industry have maintained longstanding peak bodies and would contribute essential experience and maturity to the new peak body.
- Unlike ACoRF, which has a very limited purview, the new peak body would be better placed to deal directly with government, government agencies, NGOs and conservation groups and to work with all stakeholders on issues of common interest.
- Unlike ACoRF, the new peak body could liaise and negotiate directly with the commercial fishing industry and work directly with commercial fishers and seafood marketers to achieve agreed objectives.
- The new body would not be confined within the narrow framework currently permitted for the Ministerial advisory bodies, but could more freely explore networks and associations wherever required.
- However and noting the above, recent liaison via a round table concept i.e. Victoria and federally should also be embraced and provides feedback to the sitting member also, plus provides input from bodies that are not members of peak bodies. See enclosed draft structures from the Victorian example. (Attached).

2. Your submission (p26) calls for biennial economic surveys to determine changes in the value of recreational fisheries state-wide and at key locations including RFHs and areas impacted by Marine Parks. It is accepted that recreational fishing contributes significantly to the State economy. If these regular surveys were conducted how should their findings be used?

.The value of recreational fishing both state-wide and locally should be included in all government planning processes. For example, all plans of management for Marine or National Parks should by law be required to address the impacts on recreational fishing including the economic and social impacts.

We have repeatedly seen decisions that severely impact recreational fishing (e.g. Marine Park sanctuary zones) made with no consideration of the economic and social consequences due to the lack of relevant hard data. Regular economic surveys would allow the impacts to be routinely assessed *in the decision making processes*.

Regular surveys would allow a more systematic approach to management of the recreational fishery by identifying growth areas requiring fisheries enhancement programs, or demographic trends that could be addressed through targeted education or promotional campaigns.

Economic surveys would also allow the value of recreational fishing to be factored into resource allocation and access decisions. *Up-to-date information from regular surveys* would allow the government and the community to better weigh the value of recreational fishing against other uses of the State's fish resources.

Surveys should be independent of government agencies associated with Marine Parks, so that perceived bias eliminated and through the NSW Trust tendered for to determine socio economic activity and actual value of recreational fishing to the community.

3. Your submission (pp31-32) calls for the creation of more Recreational Fishing Havens. The commercial sector is alarmed at this prospect. If the RFHs you propose were implemented how would the impact on commercial fishing industry be managed?

The impact on the commercial fishery would be managed by ensuring that there was fair and just payment for fishing businesses displaced by the RFHs.

The previous RFH buy-outs were based on extremely generous calculations of the value of fishing businesses that paid a premium compared to industry standards for compulsory acquisition.

Contrary to the claims of the commercial sector at the time, the RFHs introduced in 2001 did not destroy the fishing industry in NSW. The buy-out process allowed those who wanted to leave to do so through the provision of generous ex-gratia payments. Those displaced who wanted to continue to fish bought back into the industry in NSW or elsewhere.

The RFHs only impact commercial fishing in estuaries. This is the highest conflict fishery sector with the highest levels of latent effort and most in need of restructure. It is the least financially viable sector of the commercial fishing industry and contributes a relatively tiny component of the total amount of fish consumed in NSW. The impact on the commercial sector as a whole would be extremely small and easily outweighed by the social and economic benefits to NSW through tourism and regional development.

The RFHs provide areas where fish stocks are protected from unselective and damaging commercial fishing gear, and where production can be boosted through enhancement by artificial reefs and selective stocking. These well managed areas provide reservoirs from which the spill-over will enhance the remaining commercial fisheries.

4. How should the fish resource be shared between the recreational and commercial fishing sectors? And how should the fish resource be shared among the recreational fishing sector, given it is accepted that a small percentage of recreational fishers take the majority of the recreational catch?

- Resource sharing between the recreational and commercial fishing sectors should not be seen as a "one off" decision. Rather it should be a dynamic process that reflects

how the community values its fish resources, with a vision about the direction in which to proceed.

- Notwithstanding the proposed expansion of RFHs, the long-term process should be gradual, incremental and treat commercial fishers fairly.
- The vision should be for all estuarine and inshore waters to be recreational fishing only, with a small but economically efficient commercial fishery targeting non-recreational species in offshore waters.
- It is clear that the value of a recreationally caught fish exceeds that of a fish killed for sale. *Increasing affluence and leisure will only enhance the recreational value,* particularly where catch and release is practiced.
- In sharing the resource, preference should be given to the sector which;
 - Values the fish the most
 - Maximises the social and economic benefits
 - Aims to rebuild fish stocks
 - Reduces mortality rates
 - Minimises environmental damage
 - Contributes most to fisheries management, enhancement and research
- There should be an ongoing process for transferring ownership and stewardship over shared fish resources from the commercial to the recreational sector by buying out active commercial fishing rights using recreational fishing license revenue.

- Using an "willing buyer – willing seller" model this would, over time, allow the adjustment to occur with dignity.
- Commercial fishers should be encouraged to value add to their catch (e.g. by marketing live fish) thereby improving their economic efficiency without adversely impacting fish stocks. They should be reducing conflict by targeting species that are not sought by recreational fishers such as mullet.
- The bag and size limits, together with fishing gear restrictions provide the most useful and adaptable system for sharing the catch between recreational fishers
- As most recreational fishers never take their bag limit of any species, through choice or inability, bag limits specifically target the small proportion of skilled fishers who do. It thereby directly addresses the imbalance of captures.
- However and noting the above, The Commercial Industry should take a long hard look at their endorsements that are latent and live and provide independently audited buy backs that are not re allocated to operators, plus diminish the value of latent licenses to zero.
- Finally the statement (**given it is accepted that a small percentage of recreational fishers take the majority of the recreational catch?**) We find this an anecdotal statement within the question as we are unaware of any study that proves this to be so.

Yours Sincerely,

Doug Joyner- EO- AFTA