

Submission
No 36

**INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF THE CRONULLA
FISHERIES RESEARCH CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 29/07/2012

Partially Confidential

As a staff member, I am quite frankly appalled at the government for such a nonchalant and arrogant approach to the proposed closure of Cronulla Fisheries Centre of Excellence.

I will not be able to relocate due to family and financial circumstances and have been with the department for many years. During this time I have built up an extensive specialised knowledge of the area I work in which, along with other specialist research and management staff members who can not relocate, and it will be difficult to replicate the level of functionality and service we collectively now achieve.

I'm astounded that the government is not concerned that this expertise will be lost, including a loss of service to stakeholders as entire units have said they can not relocate. The current minister does not seem not to care about the work we do or the staff she employs. It appears that the only line this minister continues to hold onto is that it will be great to decentralise to the regions and it will be good for our stakeholders. Why then, has she shut down many public service offices in the regional areas such as Grafton, Tweed, Broken Hill, etc. This constant ministerial rhetoric appears to be covering up hidden agendas that really need to be surfaced as part of this review. Someone also needs to be made accountable for this hasty underhanded decision, which amongst other things, appears to have been made to remove selected staff members or for national party electoral or political brownie points.

Our stakeholders, including the recreational fishing community and commercial fishers have shown very little support for this decision. Recreational fishing website blogs show complete disgust with the decision. The limited commercial fishing representatives who were initially in support have since left the NSW industry. Of noteworthy fact, many stakeholders and community members have signed a 19,000 signature strong petition saying they want to save Cronulla fisheries. On submitting the petition to parliament for debate, the same rhetoric was repeated as has been throughout this entire saga. It appears the same lines are repeated by this minister, just to save face and to avoid having to admit that this indeed is a bad decision.

The world class facilities that exist at Cronulla will cost a fortune to relocate to separate locations, for no justifiable reason. Recently all the laboratory's at Cronulla were upgraded and now are state of the art facilities. What a complete waste of tax payers money to appease some political whim. The government is already in debt. Minimal costs are associated with running the Cronulla centre as no rent is payable. This short sighted political orientated decision should not be allowed to proceed as this will be a major barrier to important research work that underpins managing fisheries resources. The consequences of the impact on fish sustainability will not be felt by this government, but by future generations, and by that time the individuals in this government responsible for this decision would have moved on. Please do everything in your power to ensure this proposal does not proceed.