

Submission
No 80

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 30/07/2012

Partially Confidential

July 30, 2012

Select Committee on Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre Closure
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Committee Members:

I have been working at Cronulla Fisheries

In regards to the Inquiry into the closure of the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence I am only able to comment on points the following points as I can speak from personal experience on these.

- b) what consultation was undertaken prior to the decision with stakeholders
- g) the impacts of the decision on service delivery to stakeholders
- h) the impact on staff and their families of the closure and the relocation

There was no consultation undertaken with stakeholders prior to the decision in particular staff. I was notified over the telephone by my line manager and I was informed that staff were the last to find out. I was asked to make a decision on the spot whether I would prefer to stay in Sydney or relocate; naturally I chose to stay in Sydney considering my family needs. I later discovered my decision to stay in Sydney rather than relocate cost me any redundancy entitlements I may have been entitled to should I decide not to relocate and that my decision could not be reversed.

From when the announcement was made to staff in September 2011 it took over 6 months for the department to send staff an official letter giving us direction on what was actually going on. This was a very taxing time on all of us waiting to know our future direction and not being able to inform our families of our work stability. Based on the letter I received I was lead to believe I would be relocated to Newington in February 2013, however this was subject to change and was not binding thus leaving my future yet uncertain. This does not affect me as much as my colleagues who have been relocated to regional areas and need to start considering selling their properties and moving their families. Staff cannot make such huge decisions without the information or confidence in the department to back up their decisions.

I left a productive, proactive, positive work environment. I returned to a work place drenched with negativity and no morale, productivity significantly hindered by people's loss of motivation and constant interruptions with staff meetings in regards to the relocation. Not to mention the stress of people having to make life changing decisions that effect their families in regards to moving or suddenly thrown into unexpected job searching against their will as it is not viable for them to move.

I believe the entire way the decision has been handled and people's loss of respect for and confidence in the department has already had a massive negative impact on service delivery to stakeholders and will continue to into the future. We have already seen 18 staff with extensive experience leave the department and there are many more actively searching for jobs. With severely compromised staff numbers and experience I believe the department will not continue to operate and delivery services at the level I have seen and been a part of before the decision to close Cronulla Fisheries.

I accepted my position with the department in 2008 as it was an opportunity to gain the work life balance I had lacked in many of my previous places of employment and with a young family this is a priority for me. I currently commute to work by car in 20 minutes to 30 minutes, in February next year I will be commuting to work in much more traffic and I anticipate it could take me up to an hour some days, although this is

typical for Sydney life, for me this takes time away from my son and adds pressure to his carer's day. I am forced to make the move and if it does not work out I will be left with no other option but to look for other work closer to home and potentially lose my flexible working arrangement. I have received no encouragement from the department to stay, my contract was extended a year since the decision but no offer was made to make my position permanent and I have no confidence that I will have a job with the department after the project I am working on wraps up or my contract expires.

I believe the decision to close Cronulla Fisheries was poorly made, with no consideration, empathy or support plans in place for the staff and stakeholders. I know that invaluable experience, knowledge, history and equipment are being lost in this closure and that the future operation and service delivery of the department is looking bleak. Staff including myself who have served the department for years, some over 30 years, have been treated with the utmost disrespect and disregard for their input into the organisation. I believe the decision should be seriously reconsidered before the vast majority of staff and assets are lost.

Sincerely
Concerned staff member