

Submission  
No 857

## INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Name: Mr Leslie Cheers

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### **Introduction and Background:**

My name is LES CHEERS I have been a commercial fisherman fo 50 yrs, I have worked in all aspects of the Industry, onshore and offshore. I owned and operated a 70 ft. trawler from Tweed Heads to Barrenjoey for 14 yrs. I was a lobster fisherman off Seal Rocks for 10yrs I have worked in the lakes and rivers of Region 4 for 50 yrs I was the Region representative for the M.A.C. for 9 yrs, I have been on the board of Wallis Lake Co-op as a Director , I was State representative for the Pro-Fisherman Council for 3 yrs I have been involved in research for the Fisheries Dept. for many years I am a member of the Commercial Co-p at Newcastle I am a devoted beach fisherman using a rod for recreation and relaxation

As you can read, my experience is vast and many.

I recognise the importance of recreational fishing in N.S.W. for both residents and vistors..As you have read I myself is a very keen recreational beach fisherman.

## Comments

I would like to bring to your attention the role of the commercial wild harvest fishers as suppliers of fresh sea food an important role as the public want and expect fresh seafood.

I will provide comments and recommendations to the committee on the potential consequences of ill-informed decisions or decisions based on flawed scientific evidence of politically motivated objectives or perception.

### Reference1

(a) The real threat to fish and fishing comes from other sources, the degradation that has been carried out on water quality, fish habitat and fish nurseries along the coast of N.S.W. is undoubtedly the single reason.

There needs to be extra effort on significant issues:

+ Restore vegetation

+Water quality

+Fish passage restoration

+Wetland rehabilitation

No more closures of waters through Marine Parks and Recreation Fishing Havens based on public perception rather than scientific facts and research.

(b) That no attempt be made to compare the two major fishing sectors as this is of little value in the debate over resource management.

( c ) How many fish do recreation anglers require to feed their families?

What was the tonnage of fish taken by the recreational sector from existing 30 recreational havens?

What has socio-economics loss through commercial fishing in the spots where RFH's were declared?

Anecdotal evidence indicates that of the 30 RFH only two (Lake Macquarie and St. George Basin) have shown any real increase in catch of fish. My reasoning for this is that there has been tremendous environmental improvements, which I believe to be the actual reason.

12 months before Lake Macquarie was closed to commercial fishing a survey that lasted 5 years was carried out to see how many fish was caught by amateurs from the lake . This survey was ordered by Eddie Obied.The report was carried out by KRUELL ENTERPRISES and it was called THE KRUELL REPORT.

This report found that 5 times more bream, flathead and crabs was taken from the lake by amateurs than the professionals This report was not made public until after the lake was closed. This report can be found on the internet.

(d)

Very little of the coastal waters bodies in N.S.W. are available to the commercial fishing people.

RFH eliminate the opportunity to commercially catch species not normally caught by

the amateur such as mullet, eels, catfish etc., mullet especially for bait to the recreational as bait.

Precedents have been set for allowing commercial fishing and amateur to co-exist.

(e)

Implementation of RFH's and marine parks has had detrimental impact on the commercial fishing sector and has not provided adequate compensation or removal of effort. (eg.) Is the by-out in Region 5 by RFH, it only allowed the fishermen of region 5 that were bought to re-invest in region 4 with big money to buy new motors, boats licences etc. and it has caused major extra effort in a small region of water. Where is the compensation for the fishermen that have been fishing in region 4 for 100 yrs. The huge extra effort makes it doubly hard to make a living with local fishermen having to work long hours to make the income they were making before more fishermen come into region 4. Where is the common sense in it all, when extra effort is not wanted but to make a basic living extra effort has to be!

(f) ECOLOGICALLY

This is the area that needs urgent attention:

Environmental Impact Statements completed for the development and introduction of Share Management (Estuary General especially) The fishing management strategy for all commercial fishing in N.S.W. has 7 goals and 31 performance monitoring points many with existing trigger points.

The recreational has nothing like this for management or indeed the community to assess its impact on the fisheries. There has been nonassessment processes completed for the recreational sector in N.S.W. This is a dreadful shortfall in management knowledge for fisheries in N.S.W.

The most important downside of the unregulated industry is simply not knowing what amount of impact and damage is being done by the fishers to the marine ecosystems.

(g)

The Estuary General Fishery

These fishermen has the most interaction with the recreational sector. With the majority of recreational fishing happening in the lakes and rivers.

For some species the amount the recreation fishermen take is far more than the commercial fisherman. (eg.) Jewfish

The E.I.S. SHOWED the importance of the Estuary General Fishery to the community for employment supply of seafood to the community.

(f)

Unfortunately the recreational sector has no studies to define the impact on the resources. Whereas the commercial fisherman is always challenged and pursued by fisheries agencies to provide more and more information on its catch and effort. It needs to be asked how fisheries Agencies can manage an unknown, limitless catch when for some species the Rec. catch far exceeds the commercial catch.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The N.S.W. government have a environmental impact study for the recreational

fishing sector of N.S.W.

( 2 ) A management plan to develop that measures are in place to assess the effort of catch and mortality.

(3) In some cases the Amateur is catching just as much as the pro and sold on the BLACK MARKET this needs to be looked into.

(4) Management agencies and the government must be confident that they are doing the right thing in many cases and can manage our resources responsibly.

(5) This should not report on or be bias for political reasons.

( 6 ) The committee must address this submission so that we can be ensured that N.S.W. has a ecological sustainable recreational fishing sector. We hope when this is put in place the combined efforts of all sectors can be assessed.

I appreciate the opportunity to have my say into this enquiry.

From my experiences over many years I feel I have a great deal to offer for improvements in both sectors.

I strongly support ecologically sustainability fishing for both sectors once this is achieved appropriate measures can be put into place. With the combined efforts of both sectors this can be achieved. At present this is not possible due to significant shortcomings of the lack of data by the recreational sector.