Submission
No 827

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Organisation: Manly Council
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Reference: 170310 Recreational Fishing Review JW:HTW
Enquiries: Land Use and Sustainability

The Director
Select Committee on Recreational Fishing
Parliament House
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Recreational Fishing (Inquiry) – Submission Manly

Reference is made to the Recreational Fishing Inquiry conducted by the Recreational Fishing Committee established 24 November 2009.

Manly Council at the ordinary meeting held Monday 8th March 2010 passed a resolution to lodge a submission to the Recreational Fishing Inquiry.

Please find attached submission by Manly Council.

Should you wish to discuss the matter, please contact me during standard business hours (

Yours faithfully, Date: 17.3.10.

Henry Wong
General Manager

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Manly Council Supports Smoke Free Zones www.smokefreecouncils.com.au

Submission: Inquiry into Recreational Fishing 2010.

Introduction.

- To protect our oceans for future generations we need to improve our marine management and ensure our fishing practices are environmentally sustainable. This will help ensure we have healthy and thriving NSW oceans for us all to enjoy.

- Fishing is an important part of the social and economic lives of communities in NSW, and with proper management this can be balanced with environmental needs.

A. The current suite of existing regulatory, policy and decision-making processes in relations to the management of recreational fisheries in NSW, including the process for the creation of Marine Protected Areas and Marine parks and the efficacy of existing Marine Protected areas and Marine Parks.

- Manly Council publicly supports the creation of a multiple use Sydney Marine Park with increased sanctuary areas for Manly's marine waters.

- The various forms of marine protected areas (MPAs) are confusing for community members. There is a perception that marine parks aren't multiple use and there is much confusion over what activities are permitted in other MPAs. Better communication from government agencies is needed about what MPAs are and the benefits for fishers and other community members.

- All zoning types of marine parks should be standardised so they can be more easily interpreted by community members

- The staged process of marine park creation currently works well, with public consultation on zoning options enabling stakeholders to input to marine park zoning once the park is announced.

- During MPA processes, significantly more effort needs to be made to communicate to the NSW community the benefits of marine parks and the science behind them. In particular, there needs to be an increased effort to communicate positive examples of marine parks to recreational fishers. Currently certain lobby groups have spread misinformation amongst local communities and this hinders community-based MPA processes by negatively influencing community views on MPAs, therefore potentially affecting MPA outcomes.

B. The effectiveness and efficiency of the current representational system of trusts and advisory committees that advise government departments and statutory authorities,

- Some of the current information arising from these sources is misrepresented and at odds with scientific opinion, economic statistics and community opinion. Efforts should be made to eliminate bias from these committees.

C. The value of recreational fisheries to the economy in NSW

- Recreational fishing, along with other marine-based recreational activities is good for the economy and holds an important place in the social and economic future of NSW. Multiple use marine parks and fisheries management tools can be compatible with ongoing recreational fishing businesses, together with a more sustainable future for all marine based industries in NSW.

D. The gaps in existing recreational fisheries programs, including the number and location of Recreational Fishing havens

- Recreational fishing programs need to include MPA educational information to help gain widespread understanding and support from the recreational fishing community, for the establishment and management of MPAs. A statewide recreational fisher targeted educational program would enable unbiased, accurate and relevant MPA information to be provided to this group. This will enable more informed debate and participation in government MPA processes by more educational audiences and would enable less arduous creation and management of NSW's MPA system.

E. Ecologically sustainable development issues related to improving recreational fisheries

- An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be immediately undertaken for the recreational sector in NSW and catch and effort data collated for all NSW recreational species. Without these measures, effective management and the goal of ESD are impossible.

- While the general perception is that commercial fisheries have a larger footprint on the environment due to methods used and overall catch levels, in some cases, the total recreational catch is equal to or sometimes significantly greater than the total commercial catch, as illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparison of total annual catch by NSW commercial and recreational fisheries. Source: Status of Fisheries Resources in NSW 2006/07.

Species	Exploitation status	Commercial catch (tonnes)	Recreational catch (tonnes)
Bluespotted Flathead	Fully Fished	125	320-450
Dart	Undefined	<5	15-50
Dusky Flathead	Fully Fished	120	570-830
Flounders	Undefined	<20	10-20
Grey Morwong	Overfished	40	130-210
Hammerhead Shark	Undefined (IUCN Vulnerable/Endangered)	<5	10-50
Luderick	Fully Fished	350	270-550
Mackerel Tuna	Undefined	15	<50
Mahi Mahi	Undefined	<5	100
Mako Shark	Undefined (IUCN Vulnerable)	6	30-140
Mulloway	Overfished	40	100-500
Pearl Perch	Uncertain	13	<30
Sand Whiting	Fully Fished	14	230-460
Snapper	Growth Overfished	200	180-250
Spanish Mackerel	Fully Fished	5	10-100
Spotted Mackerel	Fully Fished	25	10-100
Sweep	Fully Fished	40	30-60
Tarwhine	Fully Fished	75	130-210
Teraglin	Fully Fished	10	70-110
Tiger Shark	Undefined (IUCN Near Threatened)	5	10
Yellowfin Bream	Fully Fished	360	820-1070
Yellowtail Kingfish	Growth Overfished	125	120-340

- The higher catch rates and, importantly, the uncertainty in the total recreational catch for many species demonstrates the need for significant improvements in research if ESD principles are to be met.

- Waste, in the form of lost gear, bait bags and other litter, either lost accidentally or left behind through carelessness, has an impact on the environment but that impact needs to be quantified and efforts made to reduce it. Once again, an EIS accompanied by further research are the obvious tools to start this process. There have clearly been positive steps taken to reduce damage in this area with the invention of biodegradable line and the use of non stainless steel hooks and circle hooks.

- An EIS and targeted research might also determine any negative effects of selectively removing larger fish and highlight instances where maximum, as well as minimum, size limits might be appropriate.

- Measuring cryptic mortality of fish that have either escaped before capture or have been released post capture is also important in any ESD assessment.

- An EIS should also look at the scientific basis for setting size and bag limits. The minimum size limit for mulloway, for example, stands out as being inappropriate as it is well below the size at maturity. The precarious state of mulloway stocks indicates a need for a radical reassessment of this minimum size limit.

- It is hard to reconcile the policy of fish stocking with ESD principles. Fish stocking should only be used as a last resort as it merely serves to temporarily mask the real causes of fish decline and can hamper stock and ecosystem recovery efforts. Stocking of non-native fish, such as trout, in freshwater systems, damages the natural environment and is harmful to native species and we do not support this.

END