

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

**Organisation:** Save Cronulla Fisheries Team

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**SUBMISSION FROM STAFF**

**AT THE**

**CRONULLA FISHERIES RESEARCH CENTRE OF**

**EXCELLENCE**

**TO THE**

**SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY**

**INTO THE**

**CLOSURE OF THE CENTRE**

**AND THE**

**RELOCATION OF STAFF**

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## **SUMMARY**

This submission to the Select Committee Inquiry comes from the staff at the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence (CFRCoE). It provides many points that outline why the closure of the Centre and the relocation of its staff should not occur. It does so by grouping such points into a series of categories covering the following issues: (i) Reducing Stakeholder Service, including rebuttals of the reasons given by the Minister for why the decision was made (decentralisation and the age, expansion capacity and access of Cronulla), (ii) Loss of Brand, (iii) Loss of Expertise, (iv) Loss of Facilities, (v) Impacts on Community and (vi) Costs. We submit that the announcement to close the CFRCoE was done with no consultation with staff or stakeholders, no business case, no cost-benefit analysis and no planning - all of which are required under the government's own guidelines regarding such relocations, and what the public expect their government to do. We believe that this relocation will not lead to a relocation of services, but their abandonment and cause a major decline of science-based fisheries management in NSW, and in Australia generally. We respectfully ask the Select Committee to do all it can to reverse the government's decision to close the CFRCoE.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This submission has been prepared by the staff from the CFRCoE.

We respectfully ask the Select Committee to conclude that the government's decision to close the CFRCoE should be reversed. We base this on several categories of facts:

Reducing Stakeholder Service, Loss of Brand, Loss of Expertise, Loss of Facilities, Impacts on Community and Costs.

## **REDUCING STAKEHOLDER SERVICE**

The two main reasons given for relocating staff from Cronulla concerned: (i) decentralisation of Sydney-based jobs out of Sydney; and (ii) the age, expansion capacity and access of the Cronulla site. It was said that these two factors were hindering stakeholder service. This is wrong.

### **(i) Decentralisation**

NSW Fisheries is already one of the Public Sector's most decentralised agencies. At the time of the decision to close Cronulla, there were 400 Full Time Equivalent employees in NSW Fisheries, 67.5% of whom are based outside Sydney – in fact, only 35% of the division's scientific staff were at Cronulla. There are currently fisheries research and management staff located at Cronulla, Albury, Wollongbar, Ebor, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth, Port Stephens, Swansea, Dubbo, Warilla, Narrandera, Albury, Jindabyne, Grafton, Maclean, Batemans Bay, Narrandera, Maclean, Forster/Tuncurry, Ballina and Eden. There are very close, day-to-day links between fisheries management, fisheries scientists and stakeholders at all these sites.

It was said that the relocation concerns moving fisheries staff to where the fishing occurs. But moving staff currently at Cronulla to the target locations of Coffs Harbour, Port Stephens and Nowra will have the opposite effect. For example, over 60% of recreational fishers in NSW live in the Sydney Region, and less than 1% in the Nowra area (where the

recreational fisheries management team are supposed to go) and approx. 1% in the Port Stephens area (where the scientists are supposed to go).

Even though only 15% of the seafood consumed in NSW is caught by NSW commercial fishers, this is a vital fraction as it is the main source of fresh, healthy seafood available to the consumer. It also drives significant ministerial correspondence and resource allocation issues between sectors, both of which need to be managed by our commercial fisheries management team. Of this catch, 56% comes from areas north of Sydney and 44% comes from Sydney and the South Coast. Most of these fish are sold through the Sydney Fish Market in the Sydney CBD, which provides Cronulla's scientists with the majority of their samples for ageing and stock-assessment work.

It was claimed that the majority of commercial fishing happens in the Coffs Harbour area, but this is inconsistent with the facts which show that there are 3 times the number of commercial fishers in Sydney compared to Coffs Harbour. Even the far south coast is home to more than twice the number of commercial fishers than Coffs Harbour.

Commercial fishing on the south coast has already been significantly impacted by the establishment of 20 Recreational Fishing Havens south of Sydney and the Jervis Bay & Batemans Marine Parks. To further disenfranchise those stakeholders by relocating management and research services away from Sydney and the south coast, and breaking them into smaller groups, will greatly disadvantage commercial fishers in those areas. South coast fishers have expressed their concern that the decision to relocate commercial management staff to Coffs Harbour displays favouritism to north coast fishers at their expense and fear that future decisions will also be based on this apparent north

coast favouritism. If the argument is that it is difficult for commercial fishers to access researchers and managers under current arrangements, the proposed arrangements will be infinitely worse for the 70% of commercial fishers who do not live in or around the Coffs Harbour Region.

Maintaining a large base of diverse expertise at the Cronulla site is vital for proper stakeholder service due to the constant communication and updates on a variety of research and management-based programs. It provides for constant integration of ideas from all sectors which are based on stakeholder input. The ability for programs and services to be delivered in a timely, cost-effective manner will be diminished by the loss of staff and the fragmentation of groups throughout the state.

Notwithstanding the apparent current focus on the commercial fishing sector, the main fisher-stakeholders in NSW are not the relatively small number of commercial fishers (approx 1,000) – but the huge recreational fishing sector (over 1 million anglers). NSW has the largest recreational fishery in Australia (recently valued at well over \$500 million) and is one of the largest in the world. As mentioned above, over 60% of these anglers live in the Sydney area. Also, one third of the 276 operators in the multi-million dollar recreational charter boat sector (NSW's largest fishery) are based in the Sydney Region and one third of these are based in Port Hacking and Botany Bay (i.e. next to Cronulla).

The recreational fisheries program in NSW is supported by a licence which generates approx. \$13 million per annum. These funds are used to deliver a range of regulatory and non-regulatory programs such as fisher-safety, artificial reefs, fish stocking, education, research and compliance. There are currently a total of 142 programs funded through the

recreational fishing trusts, all of which are administered at Cronulla, which is geographically central to where all these programs operate. Very few, if any, of these programs have strong links to Coffs Harbour, Nowra or Port Stephens.

Recreational fishing is one of Australia's most dangerous recreational activities, with 14 fishers dying in 2010 in NSW alone. The majority of those deaths occur in the Sydney area, or involve people who lived in Sydney. There were 2 Coronial Inquests in 2011, resulting in a range of recommendations which require coordinated management, research and communication strategies. Moving recreational fisheries management and research away from Sydney will significantly hinder the ability to implement these recommendations, and compromise the fisher-safety program. This large program, jointly run by Managers and Scientists at Cronulla aims to minimise the number of lives that are tragically lost each year during fishing accidents.

In an ongoing attempt to reduce the need for government regulatory intervention, staff at Cronulla run a Fishing Event Management Program. This program involves managers and scientists working together to develop communication strategies and provide technical information and support for groups holding fishing competitions and events. The program encourages the adoption of Codes of Practice, improved competition formats to encourage sustainable fishing and is a major source of scientific data. A large proportion of fishing clubs and competitions are based in Sydney.

Other recreational fishing programs which are central to the Sydney area include the Fishcare Volunteer program. This program coordinates over 300 volunteers (73 reside in Sydney) who help communicate messages about responsible, sustainable and safe



fishing. Regional Education Officers already coordinate the volunteers based in regional areas. These Education Officers also coordinate the Get Hooked, It's Fun to Fish program. This program involves over 40 schools and 4200 students across the state, and is coordinated from Sydney to minimise travel and operating costs. The Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) program is also based in Sydney and is responsible for the deployment of 25 FADs each summer from Tweed Heads to Eden. Five of the FADs are deployed directly off Sydney. Over 90% of recreational fisheries management staff based at Cronulla and almost 100% of operating costs for these and other programs is funded from the recreational fishing trust.

Apart from the above fisher-stakeholders, the other (and most important) stakeholders for NSW Fisheries are those people who actually own these resources – the NSW public – the majority of whom live in Sydney. Removing our staff from Sydney will mean much poorer service to the general public and key media outlets, as well as the disintegration of key public-related programs run out of Cronulla. For example, we will not be able to produce the bi-annual “Status of the Fisheries Resources of NSW” report that is produced by Cronulla scientists, which relies on fish samples from the Sydney Fish Markets. This is the only mechanism the government has to publicly report on the status of the state's publicly owned fish stocks. It is a requirement of our legislated commercial Fisheries Management Strategies to produce this report. Other examples of Sydney-based, public-good research projects include the Bather-Protection Shark Meshing Program and the Sydney Harbour Bull Shark Tagging Program.

Sydney is the transport hub of NSW (and Cronulla is just 30 minutes from the airport), so our state-wide projects can be executed cost-effectively and quickly for regional fieldwork

and consultation. Further, our regionally-based clients/stakeholders (e.g. advisory committee members) can currently access Sydney quickly and efficiently from every regional location, minimising time away from their businesses. Requiring such stakeholders to commute to other regional locations will require stopovers in Sydney, extra flights, extra costs and extra days away from their businesses.

A likely outcome of the proposed relocations will be a major loss of community-based involvement in our statutory management and consultative processes that are so crucial to ensuring the work we do is relevant and delivering what our stakeholders and the broader community expect. Moving Commercial Management may be seen as a good decision by the commercial fishers living in and around Coffs Harbour but for all other commercial fishers it is unambiguously a bad decision. Splitting Commercial Management and Commercial Licensing and moving Licensing to Nowra will have a catastrophic effect to service delivery for stakeholders and is unambiguously a bad decision. Moving Recreational Management and Licensing to Nowra may be great for the very small number of fishers in and around Nowra but for all other recreational fishing stakeholders it is unambiguously a bad decision. And moving our highly experienced scientists away from Cronulla's unique aquarium and laboratory facilities, the Sydney Fish Markets where our samples come from, and the State's main universities, will decimate science-based fisheries management in this state.

If the Minister seeks to have the staff situated where the action is, we respectfully submit that Cronulla is, on balance, an ideal location. A conclusion that our forefathers recognised in 1895 when they established the site.

(ii) Age, expansion capacity and access of Cronulla.

Three reasons have repeatedly been given by the Minister to justify the closure of CFRCoE – all are false.

Firstly, it has been asserted that the Cronulla site is old and has constrained modernisation. Yes the site is old – proudly the oldest in the southern hemisphere, with all the attached heritage listings – yet it is also the most up-to-date and modernised. For example, based on the recommendations of a 1998 Sinclair Knight Mertz economic analysis, the aquaria and laboratories were recently modernised to the tune of over \$2 million dollars. It is now the most modern fisheries research science facility on the eastern seaboard of the Australian continent.

Secondly, the Minister has claimed that the site has constrained expansion capacity. But the largest and newest building on the site was purpose-built to have a second storey added with minimal cost. There are also three vacant lots on the site allowing for massive expansion if necessary. In fact, just one week prior to the announcement of the closure, 6 additional staff were moved into Cronulla by the same Minister and easily accommodated.

Finally, the Minister has consistently stated that the Cronulla site has 'limited access'. But the site has a two lane road leading into it with access for a two tonne truck to any building on site. There is a wharf that research, police officers and shark meshing boats use regularly giving access to the estuary and ocean. There is a bus stop within meters of the site and taxi, ferry and train services in Cronulla, all within minutes of the site. Finally Australia's largest domestic and international airport is 30 minutes away and easily

accessible by car or public transport. No other research facility in NSW DPI enjoys such excellent access.

In contrast, the proposed replacement site for the headquarters of NSW Fisheries (Port Stephens) is in a mangrove swamp, has no drinking water, no sewage, very little available building sites, poor, wet ground on which to construct buildings, has no public transport at all, has as its access road a one-lane bridge that can flood at high tide and the whole site is predicted to be totally inundated by seawater within the next few decades (using the NSW government's own sea-level rise planning benchmarks).

## **LOSS OF BRAND**

The Cronulla Centre is a unique and iconic institution in terms of its scientific and fisheries management credentials, its heritage and cultural value. Fisheries research has been undertaken at the site for more than 110 years and it is the first fisheries (or indeed any sort of marine/aquatic institution) in the Southern Hemisphere. Today, the researchers at Cronulla are recognised as among the best in the world in their fields of fisheries science. To fisheries professionals, it is as iconic a location as the Parkes Telescope and ANSTO are to astronomers and nuclear physicists.

Cronulla is the "birthplace of fisheries science in Australia" and has become a locally, nationally and internationally recognised "brand" associated with leading-edge fisheries research. This "brand" will be lost forever if the site is closed.

The news about closing the CFRCoE has caused a very significant “international incident” in the world's fisheries community, with many letters of support being sent to the Minister, seeking a revision of this decision (see **attached** some examples). The closure has cost the NSW Government hosting rights to the world's most prestigious fisheries conference, the 7<sup>th</sup> World Fisheries Congress in 2016. Prior to the announcement, Sydney was the favoured city to host this event of 1500 scientists and fisheries professionals, adding over \$4 million in foreign exchange to the Sydney economy. But the decision to close Cronulla (where side-visits and workshops were planned due to its international fame as the first fisheries centre in the southern hemisphere) and move staff away from Sydney led to the department and Business Events NSW pulling the bid. It has now been revealed by the President of the World Council of Fisheries Societies that this cost NSW the hosting rights and they had to quickly seek interest from Korea who subsequently won the hosting rights. This was a great opportunity lost to NSW in terms of showcasing its international reputation in fisheries science management – a reputation that is now in decline.

The entire Cronulla site is Heritage-listed, with several buildings and the aquarium facilities having separate listings. The site also had an aboriginal presence for approximately 8,000 years, with several significant aboriginal sites and middens on the property including an aboriginal women's birthing cave. We are also advised that it is the subject of a proposed aboriginal lands claim from the La Perouse Aboriginal Lands Council. The preservation and stewardship of these heritage and cultural values is deeply understood and respected by staff at the Cronulla site, and has been for decades.

Closing the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence and moving staff elsewhere will also cost the government significant media opportunities. In the last 5

years alone, over 200 media interviews, stories and documentaries were based on the work done at Cronulla, most in the mainstream Sydney and national TV, radio and print media.

Each year, the Centre hosts several formal international delegations of MPs, Ministers, Consular staff and Ambassadors – who wish to consult on, or inspect, fisheries-related facilities (organised through the Commonwealth government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's International & Community Relations Office). In addition, Cronulla is a usual stop-over for any international fisheries professionals visiting Australia. Such visits play an important role in promoting NSW internationally and establishing mutually beneficial relationships and will be lost if Cronulla is no longer available.

## **LOSS OF EXPERTISE**

The scientific staff at Cronulla, combined, have in excess of 500 years experience in fisheries research, and more than 50 science degrees (including 19 PhDs and 1 DSc).

As at 11 July 2012, of the 149 people originally at Cronulla, 118 are still at Cronulla, 18 have resigned of whom 4 have been backfilled, only 7 have relocated to regional NSW and 5 to other sites in Sydney. No boats, cars or any infrastructure has moved, but some library books have been moved. It is clear that most of the experience and expertise that exist at the site is still there – but soon it may not be. It is therefore definitely not too late to reverse this decision.

Because such expertise and knowledge is simply not available at the relocation sites, if the relocation occurs, the people and government of NSW will simply lose these things for many decades. Such a massive loss of expertise will have a negative impact on our ability to ensure sustainability of fish stocks and the information base underpinning fisheries management decisions, at a time when there are great challenges to the effective management of our resources.

If staff are relocated, there will be a major loss of benefits related to being located at the hub of scientific research and learning in NSW (Sydney): For example; formal alliances and routine interactions (e.g. lectures, seminars) with major universities (Sydney University, University of NSW, Macquarie University, University of Western Sydney, University of Technology, Wollongong University and the Sydney Institute of Marine Science) will diminish. Several universities rely on Cronulla to obtain federally funded University Linkage Grants: currently, the Universities of NSW and Sydney, Macquarie and University of Technology are receiving \$1.26 million in various grants due to their partnerships with scientists at Cronulla (we understand several letters from concerned academics have made this point). Also, Cronulla's proximity to the Sydney population, schools and universities facilitates education and mentoring of the next generation of natural resource scientists, managers, commercial and recreational fishers (e.g. our current supervision of 25 MSc/PhD students; and our "Science in the Suburbs" schools program for Year 11 students).

Cronulla has also been a major site for the training of Fisheries Professionals in Australia – many of the senior fisheries people in Australia have "cut their teeth" at Cronulla. For example the current Director of Fisheries Victoria began his career at Cronulla as did the

current Director Fisheries Research in Western Australia and the head of Fisheries Research at CSIRO.

Cronulla was also the headquarters of DPI's Chief Scientist who was charged with high-level strategic work on scientific matters, enhancing the overall quality of science done in the department and administering the Research Scientist Classification for the entire NSW Public Service. All this work was Sydney-based. Two weeks after the announcement of the closure this role was taken from this well-regarded and world-renowned scientist.

The Government's pre-election policy on commercial fishing sets out an ambitious reforms program at a cost of \$16 million. The ability of this program to be implemented successfully will be greatly diminished by the loss of commercial management and licensing staff who will not be able to relocate. The expertise possessed by these staff members in terms of training (Science degrees, Masters degrees and PhDs) and corporate knowledge will be vital in delivering these reforms. Such expertise cannot be replaced and it will take many years for the Department to reach the same level of high service delivery.

## **LOSS OF FACILITIES**

The facilities at Cronulla are amongst the most modern and effective for fisheries research in Australia. It is an old site (proudly, the original in fact) but certainly not "run-down". It is modern and state-of-the-art. It has the most modern computing technology and analytical software for fisheries research in Australia and is the envy of other state



fisheries research agencies in terms of its stock assessment and status reporting work which is based around the Sydney Fish Markets. It is also the home base for the staff working on the Treasury-funded FishOnline system that stands to deliver unparalleled service to the commercial fishing industry and charter boat fishery operators - regardless of their location.

The government has invested a considerable amount of funding in the site over the past decade, including an upgrade of its Heritage-listed H.C. Dannevig Fisheries Laboratory to state-of-the-art standard at a cost of more than \$1 million (to mark the 100 year anniversary of the site in 2006). This lab is used by staff and university students to investigate the life history characteristics of key recreational and commercial species. These include the ages, rates of growth, mortality, longevity and reproductive dynamics of key species. This information is used to set size and bag limits, advise on other management tools and feeds the resource assessment process.

The site's heritage-listed aquarium facility is unique in Australia due to its size and seawater quality and has also had a major amount of money spent on it in recent years with new pumps, pipes, filters, electrics, hypobaric chambers, etc. It is used by staff and university students to study our commercially and recreationally important fish species, including work on age validation and tag retention. The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) at Lucas Heights and the OEH Ecotoxicology Laboratory at Lidcombe rely on this high quality seawater for their work.

This aquarium facility CANNOT be replicated at the proposed alternative location (Port Stephens) because that location is in a mangrove swamp. For much of its history, in fact,

the Port Stephens Research centre was called the Brackish Water Research Station. It has quite poor quality salt water – the water there is brackish, not marine - and therefore unsuitable for experiments on marine species. Whilst it would be technically possible (at great expense) to hold marine fish there, the results from scientific experiments on marine species (such as tag-retention studies, age-validation work, etc.) would be highly questioned by the scientific community because the fish can not be labelled as being held in close-to-natural conditions - they would be physiologically stressed. This would compromise and invalidate the science.

To get anywhere near the quality and quantity of sea water currently used at Cronulla would require massive expense and the installation of major recirculation and filtration systems, augmented by a constant stream of trucks delivering water. The current water system at Port Stephens handles 40,000 L/day of brackish water and is a re-circulation system. The Cronulla system is a flow-through system of clear oceanic seawater (a far better system) and involves 1.75 million L/day (more than 40 times the amount available at Port Stephens).

The Cronulla Centre's library is the only Fisheries-specific library on Australia's eastern seaboard, has one of the oldest and most comprehensive fisheries research collections in the Southern Hemisphere, and services many universities and schools in the Sydney Basin. It houses an extensive and historic range of international and domestic journals and books (approximately 6,000 monograph titles, and 422 journal titles) and has all the latest inter-library loan technologies and search engines. It holds an archival record of all publications of the Centres' scientific staff since research began at the Centre over 110 years ago and supports the research activities of Cronulla fisheries staff, many visiting

university students and international researchers. To move this facility to Port Stephens would isolate the many Sydney-based universities, school students and international visitors from fisheries information.

## **IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY**

The Cronulla Centre is the largest single employer in Cronulla with 152 employees (124 full-time equivalents (FTEs)) in 2010-11. 45 FTEs are scientific staff, 49 FTEs are involved in fisheries management and licensing and 30 are in DPI corporate services such as finance, training, administration, IT, etc. There are also 25 post-graduate students from several universities working at the Centre.

The CFRCoE is situated on the outskirts of Sydney in the Sutherland Shire. The community has embraced the centre as an iconic feature of the region of 110 years standing and take pride in the status of the centre as an internationally renowned fisheries research centre. It was quite easy to get over 20,000 people to sign the petition to save the Centre.

The centre is a significant employer in the Sutherland Shire Region which has limited equivalent employment opportunities. In fact, in recent months two other major employers in the area (Caltex and Carbon Black) have announced their closure, further limiting employment opportunities in the Shire. The Sutherland Shire is on the outskirts of Sydney with a daily commute of over 2 hours into the city centre and return for most residents. Many staff at the centre, particularly those in supporting roles, work at the centre because it offers high quality local employment opportunities and has done so for

generations. For many staff, due to personal family circumstances, the option to work in the CBD is not viable, or, if they could, will add substantially to commuting traffic into and out of the CBD.

The local community, as expressed through the local council, local MPs and the petition in support of keeping the centre open, have expressed strong support for the Centre and seek preservation of the centre and the jobs they provide to the local community (these are not CBD jobs). Removal of these jobs from this region to other regions for no discernable benefit and at enormous cost is highly counter-productive to the community.

## **COSTS**

Currently the Cronulla site costs little to run. There is no rent, and maintenance costs are modest – especially because, in recent years, significant funding has been spent to modernise the site.

It is very difficult to estimate the costs of the proposed closure and relocations so the below figures are very approximate.

We estimate that staff relocation costs (solicitor's fees, stamp duty, relocation pay, removalists, etc.) will be in the order of \$60,000 per person (x 152 staff) = \$9.1 million. If 90% of staff decline to move, the costs of paying out those staff will probably be double or triple that amount - with the loss of corporate knowledge and expertise incalculable. A new laboratory will have to be built at Port Stephens – the new laboratory at Cronulla cost \$1 million 6 years ago. The upgrades to the seawater system at Port Stephens will cost

many millions of dollars as the water there is brackish – not marine - with the probability of ongoing trucking in of water. Offices will need to be built, rented and/or re-furbished at Coffs Harbour and Nowra at significant up-front and continuing expense. The actual moving of equipment, offices, files, the library, etc. is estimated to be in the order of \$1 million.

While the above very rough figures point to a probably huge bill for NSW taxpayers due to this relocation in monetary terms (ie. not to mention the costs of loss of expertise and knowledge), we believe it is critical for the Inquiry and/or the Auditor-General to fully examine ALL costs associated with this issue – relative to the costs of maintaining Cronulla. That is, costs need to be examined that include such items as rents at new locations, building infrastructure at new locations, sea water pumping, sea water trucking, flood-proofing the entire low-lying Port Stephens facility, additional flights, travel per diems, etc. for staff and stakeholders, etc. etc.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The announcement to close the CFRCoE was done with no consultation with staff or stakeholders, no business case, no cost-benefit analysis, no planning - all of which are required under the government's own policies regarding such relocations, and what the public expect their government to do. In essence, nothing was done prior to the announcement and the government has been in a constant state of "crisis-management" ever since – all just to avoid "a backflip".

Contact with stakeholders has revealed their dismay and led to substantial international, national and state-wide condemnation. The ultimate outcome of the proposed closure will be the loss of a vast amount of expertise in this very specialised field, at enormous cost in terms of payouts, relocation expenses, construction of new facilities, etc. which, in all likelihood, will not be used as the staff needed to use them will not move. Fisheries Research and Management are very specialist fields, with quite limited numbers of practitioners available anywhere. Because most of the current expertise and knowledge embedded in the staff at Cronulla will not re-locate, and replacements are not available elsewhere, this relocation will, in fact, not lead to a relocation of services, but their abandonment.

Strategic partnerships with universities and collaborations among fisheries divisions will fail. If the CFRCoE is closed, science-based fisheries management in NSW will decline - leading to major risks to the publicly-owned aquatic resources of the state and the high international standing that NSW used to enjoy in fisheries research and management.

The staff at the centre respectfully acknowledge the mandate of the government and the policy of the “decade of decentralisation” but submit that this decision regarding the CFRCoE is ill-conceived given the matters outlined above and is contrary to the government’s overall policy agenda of making the state Number One again. We are already Number One in the country in fisheries science and management, and closing the Cronulla site will lose NSW this status – it can be argued that this decision already has had this effect but we believe it is not too late to salvage the situation as the vast majority of staff are still at Cronulla. The staff suggest that there are many more appropriate

strategies available to the government to achieve the decade of decentralisation that don't involve such a massive cost to the state that this decision involves.

We sincerely request the Select Committee to consider the above points and do all it can to reverse this decision.