

**Submission
No 4**

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

Name: Ms Rhonda Davies

Date received: 9/07/2012

The Legislative Council Select Committee on Cronulla Fisheries,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY 20000

8th July, 2012

Dear Committee Members,

I would like to submit my objection regarding the closure of the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre (CFRC)

I do not fish or have any connection with the staff at Cronulla or any of the groups using it's services. My love of the ocean is as simple as walking beside it and enjoying what can be seen on a particular day. It is a supreme part of our Australian environment and indeed the world. I love learning about it's secrets and how important a healthy marine environment and the plants and creatures that live within are on a global scale.

The CFRC has encompassed these principles and in doing so has a world wide esteemed reputation.

I cannot for the life of me understand how one Minister and our NSW Government can even consider closing this centre down. They should be so proud of what this centre has achieved for our state let alone country.

I ask why was the decision was made to "decentralise" this centre. Yet Grafton jail is being closed in a rural area that needs all the industry it can have and it was already "decentralised". Perhaps it is time Parliament House NSW was decentralised.

The ocean does not "decentralise", each part of the NSW coast is part of the whole but with different characteristics. I see this centre as a focal point for scientists and their staff in the whole state. Why destroy that, and for what? Having to rebuild the facilities elsewhere at a huge cost does not make sense. Separating a world class team also does not make sense. Once these teams are broken up it is very difficult to gather the same expertise again even in the long term. Not to mention the impact personally to people who have dedicated their lives to research and protecting our marine environment.

I ask, did the relevant Minister ever visit the facility being closed? Were the correct questions asked? Did the Minister understand the research that is carried out at Cronulla and that it had a world class reputation?

To my knowledge there are at least 13 research projects going on at Cronulla, topics including bull shark research, stock assessment so fish stocks are not overfished. Included is fish biology in which the team is a world leader.

Cronulla is half way between Newcastle and Wollongong which are both important recreational fisheries. Sydney Harbour still provides fish for our tables.

I see no problem with some centers such as Cronulla remaining close to Sydney. Surely others doing research in regional areas both north, south and west can come to a central point for advice and support. It is close to Sydney Airport for overseas scientists.

The decision to close this facility appears to me to be one of ignorance, a total disregard for scientific research, very shortsighted and for what. Is this age of oceans and it's life being so under threat from pollution, climate change and resource depletion why on earth would a world class facility be closed, it should be praised.

Yours sincerely,

Rhonda Davies,