

**Submission
No 78**

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

Name: Mr G Staniford

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cronullafisheries - Submission for the Inquiry into the closure of Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence

To: <cronullafisheries@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
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Subject: Submission for the Inquiry into the closure of Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence

The Director
Select Committee on Cronulla Fisheries
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Submission for the Inquiry into the closure of Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence

The research facility at Cronulla places little demand on the NSW budget purse and provides much needed research on marine sustainability, therefore I cannot understand why the NSW Government would even suggest closing it. The research centre employs local people and is in close proximity to the city of Sydney, allowing research of marine waters close to the largest population in Australia. This facility is in a perfect position and we would do well to leave it there.

Marine Research

I believe marine research funding should be increased and therefore support facilities along the NSW coastline. The more research we invest in, the better we understand the marine environment and the impact our increasing population has on it. Resources should be made available to ensure the sustainability of marine creatures and the environment they live in, so why not keep the excellent facility we currently have at Cronulla and expand the Port Stephens facility. I support centres at Coffs Harbour and Nowra as well, but not with Cronulla staff, unless they wish to relocate.

The Scientists – real people

The people who work at the Cronulla research centre must be doing a good job or you wouldn't be asking them to relocate. To keep these unique people, so that NSW can benefit, please look after them – by considering the impact relocation would have on their personal lives. Some may have children at school or university, and therefore have the agonizing choice of moving them which causes disruption to the whole family, or leaving them behind (with maybe the added expense of finding accommodation for them). As a parent, I wouldn't leave my teenager in Sydney to complete studies, or leave for a job outside Sydney which may involve leaving my partner behind to stay with my children. Finding another job or splitting the family shouldn't be forced on scientists we regard highly.

Other Options

Universities at Lismore and Wollongong offer Marine Biology degrees, so graduates could be recruited to form the majority of researchers at Coffs Harbour and Nowra (obviously with experienced scientists in key positions, who may choose to relocate). Graduates would be eager to produce results and also be pleased to be given a job, as I know of two marine biology graduates from Lismore who are living in Perth looking for work. To lose graduates trained in NSW seems

ludicrous, especially when marine research is so important.

Infrastructure

The Coffs Harbour region would welcome a new marine research facility, but is the infrastructure sufficient to support the increasing population? I am a friend of a doctor at the Coffs Harbour hospital emergency department, who recently said the hospital was the busiest in NSW, outside of Sydney. Also, the Pacific Highway, although being upgraded, has the highest volume of traffic of any highway in NSW – including heavy vehicle traffic, which claims many lives each year. Until freight is moved by rail, the risk to motorists remains.

Relocating Sydney scientists increases the traffic on this notorious highway and puts their families at risk – not everyone chooses to fly and going by train takes longer than driving. The need to visit friends and family in Sydney must be considered and is a burden.

Cost

The cost of relocating people is high and requires more commuting. If we're serious about reducing our carbon footprint, the Cronulla facility should remain open. Has a cost benefit analysis been done – if so, could I please be sent the data? NSW already owns the facility, so why are we not keeping it?

Please explain why this relocation is necessary? Is it just because the NSW Government have a policy to decentralize? If so, I'm certain there are other government departments that could be better relocated. Was the Cronulla facility chosen because it was deemed to cause the least disruption? A marine facility at the mouth of a river in Sydney, which costs little to run and has experts who live locally working on important projects, appears to be a perfect site to me – please advise any negative considerations I've not considered?

In conclusion, please do not close the Cronulla research centre and please consider the personal trauma associated with such an unnecessary proposal. Scientists need their family and I envisage detrimental outcomes both personally and professionally if this proposal goes ahead. NSW will be worse off and other states could benefit.

Thank you for your time.

G. Staniford

30th July 2012