

**Submission  
No 15**

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

**Name:** Ms Melissa Murray

**Date received:** 25/07/2012

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Dear Committee,

I believe the closure and relocation of the Cronulla Fisheries centre to be a mistake and a decision that needs to be reversed as soon as possible. My reasons for this are outlined under the headings below. More detail can be found in the attached file.

1. Loss of expertise
2. Risk to sustainability of NSW fisheries resources
3. Cost to tax payers
4. Loss of facilities
5. Impact on community/families of staff members
6. Loss of brand

In conclusion, this is a very poor and ill informed decision.

Dear Committee,

I believe the closure and relocation of the Cronulla Fisheries centre to be a mistake and a decision that needs to be reversed as soon as possible. My reasons for this are outlined under the headings below.

1. Loss of expertise

- \* The staff at Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre (CFRC) are specialists.
- \* Recreational & commercial management and associated licensing sections have over 300 years in fisheries management experience and 25 science degrees.
- \* It is estimated that more than 90% of staff will not be able to move to the proposed new locations and therefore specialised skills and experience will be lost from Fisheries.
- \* Cronulla Fisheries Centre has a world class reputation.

2. Risk to sustainability of NSW fisheries resources

- \* Good fisheries management cannot be undertaken without good scientist and experienced managers.
- \* The loss of so much specialised fisheries scientific and management expertise can mean only one thing for the fisheries resources of NSW – greater uncertainty and therefore greater risk of overfishing.

3. Cost to tax payers

- \* Currently the Cronulla site costs little to run.
- \* There is no rent and maintenance costs are modest.
- \* It is estimated that staff relocation costs, plus moving costs and provision of facilities at new sites will be in excess of \$20 million.
- \* There will also be significant on-going costs of managing stakeholders and projects from sites less central and more difficult to access.

4. Loss of facilities

- \* The facilities at Cronulla are amongst the most modern and effective for fisheries research in Australia.
- \* These facilities cannot be replicated at any of the other proposed sites due to the nature of the water quality at Cronulla.
- \* They are state-of-the-art and have had over \$1 million recently spent on upgrading and modernising the laboratory facilities.

5. Impact on community/families of staff members

- \* CFRC is the largest single employer in Cronulla with around 150 employees and with an annual budget of about \$17 million a significant purchaser of local goods and services.
- \* Moving these jobs and our business elsewhere will have a significant impact on the local community.

6. Loss of brand

- \* The Cronulla fisheries site is a unique and iconic institution in terms of its scientific and fisheries management credentials, its heritage and cultural value, and is highly regarded by the national and international scientific communities as a research centre of excellence.

In conclusion, this is a very poor and ill informed decision. The announcement was made by a Minister who has not visited the staff at the Cronulla site and had virtually no consultation with the major stakeholders. The decision has been supported by one group of commercial fishers that

includes some self-interested individual fishing businesses based on the north coast. There was no support sought from recreational fishing groups or recreational fishers (estimated to be over one million in NSW), environmental groups, the scientific community or the general public – evidenced by the 19,000+ petition signatures against the decision to relocate the site. I hope you reconsider the decision as it is a vital research centre needed in this part of the world, in terms of expertise and value to the local community and economy.

Yours sincerely

Melissa Murray  
25 July 2012