

Submission  
No 798

## INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

**Organisation:** Grafton District Anglers Club

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## SUBMISSION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON RECREATIONAL FISHING

The benefits and opportunities for recreational fishers resulting from improved recreational fisheries, are many. The greatest of these being increased catches and easier and extended access to fishing grounds, both terrestrial and marine. Any enhancements are, however, dependent on Legislative changes, foremost among which is a halt to any expansion of Marine Parks, Marine Reserves, Marine Protected Areas, and their associated sanctuary zones, ( which in all reality should be reduced ), particularly where they abut the shoreline. I would also include terrestrial National Parks.

I make this claim on the grounds that there are as many Marine Scientists who dispute the value of sanctuary zones in particular, and marine parks in general. I cannot ( unfortunately ) name anyone in particular, as I did not foresee myself writing this submission, and did not make a note of any names.

The process for the creation of these parks is anti fishing in that the structure of the bodies charged with evaluating their creation in the first instant is biased, by the number of positions allocated to the 'green' sector in relation to those allocated to others who would be more likely to recommend general usage. In this case, I can speak from personal experience, with the creation of the Solitary Islands Marine Park. As recreational fishers we tried to present a ten thousand signature petition to Parliament through our local member at the time. It was ignored. During the anti park campaign the relevant minister shifted a public meeting, just minutes before it was due to begin,

on no other grounds, apparently, than the number of opponents far outweighed those for it, to an area which denied the anti park sector fair and equal access. Though the Minister did reluctantly agree to meet one (out of approximately one thousand) representative.

With regard to the current system of representation by trusts and advisory committees, many recreational fishers find the system unsatisfactory, because of a lack of communication, in both directions. The current system appears dependant on the internet, and not everyone has ready access. Also seemingly totally lacking is a written annual report.

The value of the recreational fishery to the N.S.W. economy is approximately five times that of the commercial fishery, particularly when travel and accommodation costs are taken into account. For some specific fisheries that amount is far greater. For example the average Luderick angler coming to the Clarence for the season, could cost their catch at approximately \$70.00 per kilo, whilst the retail value of a kilo of professionally caught luderick "IN SEASON" is approximately \$8.00., and this is just one shore based species.

In relation to the Clarence River in N.S.W. the size and range of recreational fishing havens, is totally inadequate, and the area available to professional fishers excessive. The feeling, (without being able to scientifically prove it) among most recreational fishers is that the whole of the river upstream of the western end of Brushgrove Island, and downstream of the western end of Freeburn Island should be free from professional fishing activities.

In relation to ecologically sustainable development issues related to improving recreational fisheries, the biggest issue downgrading our fishery, is the seemingly unfettered professional activity on the Clarence River, as well as the continual downward revision of bag limits, and upward revision of size limits, on recreational fishers only. As well as the activities of the professionals, there are many who believe it their right to continue to sell their catch after they have relinquished their licence. There are several in this category known to the N.S.W.F inspectors in Maclean

This submission is made on behalf of Grafton District Anglers Club by the authority of the club executive

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