

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Organisation: Wollongong Sportfishing Club
Name: Mr Heydon Chrystal
Position: Secretary
Date received: 16/02/2010

The Director
Select Committee on
Recreational Fishing
Dear Sir

15/2/10

Thank you for the opportunity to inform you of the complaints and general frustration of our members. The recreational fishermen have become, over the past ten or so years, the most over regulated sport/recreation in the country. New South Wales seems to be leading this trend with the advent of uncompromising regulations revolving around Marine Parks. Whilst we are not against Marine Parks, we totally disagree with the “lock it up and throw away the key” mentality introduced by the Greens and gladly endorsed by the NSW Government in order to keep the Green support at election time.....I am referring to Sanctuary Zones.

Marine Park Sanctuary Zones are put in place using so called scientific information selectively gleaned from papers and reports by overseas organizations which have no relation to conditions along our eastern seaboard. According to noted Scientists and Marine Biologists Professor Robert Kearney, Dr Julian Pepperall and Dr Ben Diggles the Government has selected statements and data to suit their agenda and ignored other information which dispute all the reasons for the implementation of Sanctuary Zones. Unfortunately these zones have been positioned on some of the best fishing spots to completely lock out the recreational fishermen, becoming no take areas to “preserve” fish stocks.

Working under the NSW Fisheries rules regarding bag limits and legal lengths, we, the recreational fishermen, have better control over the preservation of fish stocks than any Sanctuary Zone. If we don't adhere to these rules we are

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fined and in certain situations can have our gear, boats and even cars confiscated by law. A better outcome for the fishermen would be to have a two zone Marine Park using the existing General Use and Habitat Protection Zones as the only requirement, doing away with Sanctuary Zones completely. The U.S. has recently passed a law granting recreational fishermen access to all Marine Parks.

We are now faced with the National Parks Association promoting their "Torn Blue Fringe" concept, to create yet another Marine Park to run from Sydney to Shellharbour and include Sanctuary Zones in Lake Illawarra. According to a response I received from the NSW Government, they have passed this report on to the Marine Park Authority for consideration and evaluation..... judging by previous decisions, one would suggest the MPA would gladly add this to the existing Marine Parks and include more unscientific Sanctuary Zones along our coastline.

I hope this is only one of many submissions received on this subject as a majority (unfortunately a silent majority) of recreational fishermen are concerned with the many restrictions Government is placing upon them. These tend to have nothing to do with preserving the environment and every thing to do with preserving their political future.

Thanking You
Heydon Chrystal
Secretary
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