

Submission  
No 597

## INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

**Organisation:** Boab Boat Hire  
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We started our boat hire business approx 7 years ago and have since franchised it across 4 states in Australia. It has had significant growth each year and directly and indirectly (ie sole suppliers / manufacturers) employs approx 30 people (full time) and is already turning several million. We currently have close to 5000 customers on our books with these hirers generally having between 3 and 6 other people on the boats and a large majority over 60% been repeat hirers, we believe we have had more than 25 000 people aboard boat hire boats. A large majority of these people hire the boats for the purpose of recreational fishing. My experience from starting the business and running several boats for years as well as being involved in hirers with our franchisees is that the vast majority of these hirers are lucky to catch a fish but still have a wonderful experience on the water. Our boats are take away vessels that people can hire and it is similar to owning your own boat that also have access to offshore waters. We try to help our hirers have a great time on the water and our local people try to inform the best they can to the hirers local conditions, ie marine parks ect. However after traveling to a lot of these areas, more time is spent studying maps, conditions, rules and regs, than actually boating and most of the time the areas are hard to identify and confusing (you need a degree to understand) the other problem that we see is because there are many zones that are no fishing within 2 Nautical miles of land this impacts our business as we (with NSW maritime) restrict some of our boats to within 2nm. It also increases the risk of loss of life as other rec fishers have to travel further to sea ward to be able to fish; some of the privately owned boats (not our boats) are not suitable for this intended use. I believe with Australia just been indicated as the worlds most obese country we should be encouraging people to get outside and undertake as many activities as we can instead of staying indoors watching TV. I have been to areas where even the locals and authorities are unsure of how the zones work. All the states are also coming up with there own rules and systems and this are even more confusing with so many people choosing to travel Australia. To travel Australia in the future you will possibly need to have 7 different fishing lic all with different rules. We would encourage things like reducing bag limits, increase fish sizes or even no take zones, areas ect but to continue to lock people out or have the general public risk been fined will reduce the growth of a company like ours, it will result in reduced employment and the effect on other businesses ie tourism, accommodation ect. We are very committed to the environment and sustainability for our children. We choose to use things like Honda 4 stroke out boards on our entire fleet for these reasons. The majority of people like ourselves love the outdoors and what Australia has to offer and we should be making it easier for people to have access to sustainable fishing and in our experience we believe rec fishing adds in a massive way to our economy but impacts very little on our environment.