

**Submission  
No 34**

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

**Organisation:** South West Anglers Association Inc

**Date received:** 29/07/2012

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# **SOUTH WEST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION INC.**

The South West Anglers Association Inc. (SWAA) is an Association of Recreational Angling Clubs in the South West and Riverina regions of NSW. It represents the interests of approximately 2,500 individual recreational fishers.

SWAA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Inquiry into the proposed closure of the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence.

Let us start by expressing our deep concern at the proposed closure of this world class centre and also our disappointment at Government for the announcement of the proposed closure without due consideration of the impacts and without any consultation with the recreational fishing community.

Recreational fishers generate over \$13 million dollars in licence revenue alone, along with the many millions of dollars injected into communities around the state. As stakeholders they expect open and honest consultation on major matters relevant to the fishery and this has not happened in the Cronulla Fisheries Centre debate.

The centre is a very valued part of both the recreational fishery and the local community of Cronulla. The local community of Cronulla have advised Government of its desire to retain the Centre and the majority of staff have established themselves in that community

Considerable amounts of funding have been made available in recent times to modernise and maintain the site. It is owned and controlled by Fisheries and as such does not have the ongoing uncertainty of lease arrangements and rental costs.

The relocation costs of current staff will be significant if indeed they decide to relocate. Our understanding is that a recent survey of staff indicated that some 90% were reluctant to move. This could have the result of huge redundancy costs and that is not to mention the loss of talent and expertise that fisheries and we the fishers cannot afford to lose.

As we believe only about 12 staff has at this point in time relocated, with 18 resigning.

Are we to witness the greatest “brain drain” in NSW fisheries history and why should we as residents of the state and fisheries stakeholders accept losing this talent that we have built up over a long period of time.

As recent as 6 years ago some \$1 million dollars was spent on a new laboratory and research facilities, this now becomes a waste as duplicate facilities will need to be added to other centres.

As our members with experience on committees such as the Advisory Council on Recreational Fisheries (ACoRF) will attest the Cronulla Centre is ideally located with easy access to the airport and public transport as well as parking for private vehicles.

The value of having fisheries personnel available at short notice for updates and advice is critical in the decision making that goes with the position. This is not always available with the fly-in/ fly-out nature of meetings in other regions.

Terry Maloney     Secretary. South West Anglers Association Inc.