

Submission
No 1000

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Organisation: Lake Macquarie City Council

Date received: 25/03/2010



From the Office of

His Worship the Mayor of the City of Lake Macquarie, Councillor Greg Piper

9 April 2010

[Redacted]
Principal Council Officer
Legislative Council – Committees – Recreational Fishing Inquiry
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Subject: Inquiry into Recreational Fishing

Thank you for providing Lake Macquarie City Council with the opportunity to provide technical comment on the Inquiry into Recreational Fishing.

Lake Macquarie, currently viewed by fishers as a 'recreational fishing haven', was declared a non-commercial fishing area within the lake itself in 2003 and has a large number of saltwater recreational fishing licence holders who enjoy the fishing experience in the Lake.

In Lake Macquarie, as may be the case in other local government areas, there could be thousands in the community that hold a recreational fishing licence for the privilege of fishing from time-to-time, rather than on a regular weekly or even monthly basis.

Lake Macquarie is seen to be a haven, not only for recreational fishing but for surfing, sailing, power boating, wader birds, nature watching, aquatic ecosystem services, water sports, passive recreation and even diving. Therefore, any inquiry into the allocation and use of funds that influence the local aquatic resources are of great interest to Council.

Reflecting this, Council would welcome a process that strengthens direct, or grass-roots, representation of recreational fishers as a whole on bodies such as recreational fishing advisory groups and the Saltwater Fishing Trust. It is important to recognise a distinction between the impressive numbers of people who hold a recreational fishing licence in NSW and recreational fishing experts or recreational fishing enthusiasts who currently allocate funds generated from the sale of recreational fishing licences and or make submission on behalf of recreational fishers.

Lake Macquarie City Council therefore commends this inquiry into recreational fishing and would be pleased if the above matters, and the following specific comments on the Terms of Reference (ToR) could be considered by the Legislative Council Select Committee on Recreational Fishing.

1. There seems to be an increase in preference to create and increase both off-shore and estuarine artificial reefs in NSW. In saying this, Council would recommend that similar to 1 (a) of the current ToR for the Legislative Council Select Committee on

Our Ref: F2010/00745
ABN 81 065 027 868

Submission by Mayor - Inquiry into Recreational Fishing.DOC

Recreational Fishing that refers to Marine Protected areas, the following should also be included in the ToR:

The current suite of existing regulatory, policy, and decision-making processes in relation to the management of recreational fisheries in New South Wales, including the process for the creation of artificial reefs and the efficacy of existing artificial reefs in sustaining or improving fish populations in NSW.

2. Council highly supports 1 (b) of the ToR, however, as stated above, the community consists of a broad spectrum of individuals with varied interests and passions. The aquatic environment is a public resource and is valued and used for a number of non-fishing activities and interests by the community. As well as investigating the efficiency of these trusts and advisory committee there needs to be a review of their representativeness. Council recommends the following is added to the ToR:

Investigate the 'representativeness' of NSW fishing licence holders on trusts and advisory committees that advise government departments and statutory authorities.

This may require a review and amendment of the Fisheries Management (General) Regulations 2002 – Reg 350. This states membership of the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing can come from those with expertise in one or more of: estuary fishing, offshore fishing, freshwater fishing, underwater fishing, sale of fishing tackle, the media (reporting on fishing), charter boat fishing, Aboriginal culture and only one person from the Nature Conservation Council. As well as the Director-General (or a nominee) such other persons as the Minister considers appropriate.

By law the public are required to hold a recreational fishing licence if they wish to fish. This does not mean they need or have expertise in any of the above, consequently this excludes them from being representatives on the above Advisory Council.

Effectively, only specialists or those with a pecuniary interest are the strong majority represented on the Trusts and advisory committees. The equivalent of this would be that road funding (collected from car registration) is allocated and influenced by an advisory body comprised of car mechanics, motor enthusiast and car yard proprietors, with no representation from general motorists, cyclists or pedestrians.

There are a number of other stakeholders that are not currently represented on the Recreational Fishing Trusts or Advisory Committees, to do with funds generated from recreational fishing licences. They include for example: Tourism, Marine Parks Association, divers, boating and navigational interests, commercial fishers, Department of Land and Property Management and local government.

3. It is noted that only 4.4% of funds generated from the sale of saltwater recreational fishing licences between 2008 and 2013 (\$40,364,312.00) will be spent on aquatic habitat rehabilitation. This information is sourced from the list of Recreational Fishing Enhancement programs found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/fees. To

assist the Select Committee on Recreational Fishing to review this the following could either be included into 1 (e) or be an addition to the current ToR:

Review resource allocation to projects and support equitable allocation of funds, generated from the sale of recreational licences, to ecological and ecosystem enhancement projects that sustain and improve recreational fish populations.

Should you require further information, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully
[REDACTED]