

Submission  
No 825

## INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

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**Date received:** 18/03/2010

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**BALLINA FISHERMEN'S  
COOPERATIVE LIMITED**

**Submission to the**

**New South Wales Legislative  
Council**

**Select Committee on Recreational Fishing  
March 2010**

**Prepared by  
Phillip Hilliard  
Cooperative Secretary**

## Executive Summary:

We note that this inquiry is solely tasked with benefits and opportunities of recreational fisheries may represent to fish licence holders in NSW. As the representative of a number of licensed Commercial fishermen on the North Coast of New South Wales we offer the following submission to the Select Committee.

As in any organisation we have a number of extreme views, however the general view is expressed within this Document.

- Recreational fishers are a valuable resource to the community providing irregular sources of self sufficiency with regard to provision of food.
- Fishing provides a number of other health benefits, outdoor activity, relaxation, and educational aspects .i.e. patients and perseverance etc.
- A number of negative impacts are , approx 90% of fishing equipment is imported, lack of a regulated fish catch i.e. record keeping and some poor practices with disposal of waste, fishing line, plastic bait bags etc.
- The greatest threat to the future of fishing is the degradation of the environment.
- The creation of fish sanctuaries and marine parks both state and commonwealth may be a part solution however unless the designated area is defined through well established scientific research and proper community consultation they will become part of the threat.
- Economic value of recreational fishing per se will be difficult to quantify due to the lack of scientific data, any attempt to use estimates or antidotal evidence can only lead to a question over the authenticity of the inquiry report.

We believe recreational fishing havens and marine parks play a part in a structured management system of the marine environment and based on current scientific studies the present areas should be reviewed, removed or moved to better protect threaten species or areas.

Any improvements to recreational fishing can only be sustainable through the investment in the environment, improved water quality, improved habitat, improved sea grass beds and improved catch management of recreational fishers.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on the benefits and opportunities that improved recreational fisheries may represent for fishing licence holders in New South Wales, and in particular:

- (a) 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 Marine Protected Areas and Marine Parks and the efficacy of existing Marine Protected Areas and Marine Parks,

#### Comment:

It is difficult to construct a model of management and its short comings without looking at what is to be managed, the fishermen, the fish or the area where both come together, the marine environment. While this inquiry is focused on recreational fishers, the state currently manages the commercial area with a number of systems which should be applied to the recreational area in some form.

We also see that a range of controls are required on both the fishermen and those that effect the fishing environment. With the fishermen a more meaningful management system i.e. with the licence comes a log book showing locations fished and catch details filed on renewal of licences. (children to be registered with log book optional with a nil fee).

The greatest threat to fishing is the declining fish resource, while catch management regulates the fish taken nothing is done about ensuring the continued supply which is dramatically effect by

- Water quality
- Fish passage
- Wetlands
- Riparian vegetation
- Seagrass beds

Each of these areas is controlled and effected by people ancillary to fishing with most being effected by upstream activities, Local councils, farmers/Land Holders Govt Dept's (RTA)( Forests) and various water & environmental agencies. All these groups need to be co-ordinated to ensure the optimal conditions exist for fish to spawn & grow.

**(b) the effectiveness and efficiency of the current representational system of trusts and advisory committees that advise government departments and statutory authorities,**

Comment:

Like all areas of management self interest groups permeate all levels of governance, government departments a filled with individuals whose careers revolve around their self interest and at every opportunity they will only promote their own interest.

Management and Statutory groups should be representative of the stakeholders with a balance of views. Regulations, procedures and instructions should be worded to ensure all recommendation and actions are in line with the goals and take into account economic advantage or loss created by decision's at all levels.

**(c) the value of recreational fisheries to the economy in New South Wales,**

Comment:

Without some record based information sourced from multiply outlets who service the recreational fishing market, placing any monetary valve on this sector would be pure guess work. Of greater value, which will also be difficult to estimate are the social & health benefits from this past time.

We would estimate that the direct value to a community from recreational fishermen to be minimal other than as a conduit to overseas suppliers.

**(d) the gaps in existing recreational fishery programs, including the number and location of Recreational Fishing Havens,**

Comment:

We believe that any increase in recreational fisheries, Haven or Marine parks should not be undertaken without a meaningful consultation process with scientific research to support any recommendations, clearly not evident in any of the existing protected areas.

At the same time an independent study should be undertaken into the so called threatened species being protected or recreational fish protection afforded to some species. As an example Salmon currently protected is in plaque proportions and Gar Fish and pilchards are declining as a result of the plague of salmon moving up the coast of NSW

**(e) ecologically sustainable development issues related to improving recreational fisheries.**

Comment:

As with any initiative the development of any particular area will result in a loss in another area, which if it is for the greater good is acceptable however where there is a loss of "the Right of existing Use" there should be a built in a compensation package.