

Submission
No 997

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Organisation: Australian Aerial Patrol
Name: Mr Harry Mitchell
Position: General Manager
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(Under the Incorporation of the City of Wollongong Aerial Patrol Inc.)

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Member of Illawarra District Rescue Committee

Member of Monaro District Rescue Committee

Member of Goulburn/Mulwarre Local Rescue Committee

Our Ref.:

10/2770/hm

Your Ref.:

17 March, 2010

The Director
Select Committee on Recreational Fishing
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: FISHERY AVIATION SUPPORT

Some years ago, the Australian Aerial Patrol (AAP) engaged in a partnership with NSW Fisheries to provide aerial surveillance of the south east coastline in an effort to identify random Compliance breaches and regular geographic hotspots at which such breaches might occur. The carriage of the NSW Fisheries logo was proudly displayed on our aircraft at the time (see photo at end of correspondence).

The results of the six year programme proved mostly successful and generated considerable editorial across the state.

Media reports relating to recent Compliance breaches have prompted the AAP to re-visit the topic of Fisheries Enforcement and Intelligence Gathering once again with a view to offering a worthwhile solution to maximising enforcement outcomes using fixed wing aerial surveillance.

Allow me to provide you with a brief background of the Aerial Patrol.

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The AAP is an Illawarra based fixed wing aviation provider based at Albion Park (south of Wollongong) and probably best known for its regular shark patrols over Sydney, Illawarra and South Coast beaches. However, the not for profit organisation does a lot more than that, working closely with other agencies to gather intelligence and help maintain the welfare of the community and its property.

All aircraft are equipped with a suite of communications frequencies, including Fisheries, to provide information to the various agencies on the ground or on the water.

We continue to believe that aviation support on behalf of Fisheries Management and Enforcement is a cost effective resource presently not being utilised to help achieve best outcomes. A number of key Fishery Management and Enforcement areas have been identified that would benefit from greater use of aviation support services.

Intelligence gathering ranging from the poaching of high value species such as cray and abalone to offshore monitoring of fishing vessels in pursuit of tuna species for example are considered priorities particularly with a high proportion of that activity in our immediate area.

The AAP conducts its coastal operations the year round and, with specifically designed media editorial in concert with Fisheries, can be interpreted by potential "law breakers" as a highly visual deterrent.

Further, the utilisation of fixed wing aviation reconnaissance as a management tool to survey and map fishery and species is also a means by which outcomes can be maximised. For example, monitoring of the current Australian Salmon population can result in a clearer picture of the stocks in NSW. The Great White research presently undertaken by the NSW DPI would also be enhanced by utilising an aviation platform.

I welcome an opportunity to discuss these and other opportunities at a time convenient. I can be reached on either :

With kind regards,

Yours faithfully,
AUSTRALIAN AERIAL PATROL


Harry Mitchell
General Manager

