

**Submission  
No 48**

**INQUIRY INTO COMMERCIAL FISHING IN NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

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**Date received:** 7 December 2016

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## COMMERCIAL FISHING IN NSW

### (a) HISTORY:

The NSW fishing industry hasn't had much luck lately when it comes to Ministers and bureaucrats. No need to elaborate on the virtues or positive achievements of Eddie Obeid, Ian MacDonald and Steve Dunn. Suffice to say that their decade of administration was a dark chapter in the history of NSW Commercial Fishing.

Lately, even Katrina Hodgkinson showed more passion for the Greyhound Industry than she ever did for commercial fishermen.

Niall Blair ? We can only hope.

### (b) ECONOMIC VALUE:

I'm no economist, but common sense suggests that the more people employed in an industry earning a living must have spinoff benefits to the state and local economy. Furthermore, self esteem comes from participation and non reliance on welfare.

The industry needs encouragement rather than restrictive constraints.

### (c) SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH:

Science is a valuable tool, but only when applied with an open mind to unbiased comprehensive data. Am I dreaming?

Fisheries management appears to be driven more by individual agendas rather than sound scientific facts. Bureaucrats embedded deep within Fisheries pursue personal ideologies, no matter what, and are difficult to root out. Selective research is a valuable tool, a prime example is the purely anecdotal evidence provided by divers, accepted to inflict the Grey Nurse fairy tale upon fishermen. The result was financial loss to fishers and financial boom for divers!

### (d) RESOURCE ASSESSMENT:

Academics and scientists may think them simplistic, but the hard facts delivered by catch records are the most effective yardstick in determining the health of any particular fishery.

### (e) BUSINESS ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM:

(i) The SARC was an ill-conceived group of scientists and academics formed to tell practical fishermen how to suck eggs. Their mission was to downsize the NSW fishing industry by pricing the average fisherman out of business by unrealistic restraints and higher licensing fees, ultimately opening the door for large scale operators and even overseas fleets to access our resource.

So, please try to get a straight answer, in plain English, to this question:- What is the benefit to NSW Fisheries, the people in the industry along with their local economies as a result of the Business Adjustment Program.

(ii) Implementation has been clumsy, bumbling and uncertain. Confusion and heartache have been the hallmark of this unpopular restructure. Apart from being impractical the rules are frequently changed and people find it difficult to comprehend them, let alone plan for the future, e.g. in the past, to enter the NSW Fishing Industry it was compulsory to purchase a Fishing Business (FB) and a mandatory number of shares depending upon the endorsements required. For instance, in Ocean Trap & Line, 40 shares were required to fish Handline West. Fine, job done. Now the requirement is set to be 60 shares. What will the figure be in the future?

(iii) How can you plan & build a future if the goalposts keep moving?

(iv) Sorry, I have always been of the opinion that if you put seven economists in a room & gave them a scenario to discuss, no two would agree.

I don't understand how the future of an industry can be based on nothing more than guesswork.

(v) Our fisheries appear to be in good shape. Why mess with it??