

INQUIRY INTO COMMERCIAL FISHING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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The minister has repeatedly stated that Labor issued too many shares but does not explain how or why and is still being advised by the same dpi staff who advised Labor how to issue those shares. What has changed for him to now believe the advice he is getting is in fact the same advice Labor was getting is now sound when over ninety percent of industry is still adamant that the reform is floored and will do more harm than good.

Why couldn't fishers be a part of the working groups unless they agreed with the reform and how could that be considered fair.

What is the interest earned on the 16 million dollars because of the length of time being taken to use the money provided and why is it not added to the pool of funds when we are hearing that there is a short fall of tens of millions of dollars to implement the reform in its current form.

Minimum shares to work was a very unfair management strategy bought in to early and doing so sent some small operators broke. It should have been implemented at the same time as a buyout.

Why did they not have a buyout when money was first made available to get rid of excess shares and endorsements instead of charging fishers for unusable endorsements and forcing some fishers to sell latent effort by sending them broke and causing unnecessary stress and hardship.

Ocean Prawn Trawl Vessels shares should have been unitised when issued. The formula used to issue shares meant they were linked to effort when issued but not unitising shares when issued has decreased the value of licences with good history and share package and allowed for an increase in latent effort. In essence the .69 nights per share has meant that fishers history was taken from them and shared with latent

effort holders so the latent effort could be reactivated instead of removed.

Since the nineties in the ocean prawn trawl we have seen the number of days fished decreased and the number of vessels has also decreased but we now have upgraded latent effort because large vessel owners have been able to buy shares from small vessels without penalty and that latent effort is now waiting to be reactivated. A fundamental management error will occur of unitising the shares retrospectively with the upgraded effort and can only mean an unnecessary increase of effort =hull units, net units, horsepower units and days worked. Any shares that are being upgraded should have a penalty incurred of surrender one share for every share upgraded or reactivated.

Not enough trawlers are left to need a days allowed to fish policy bought in when taking into account the weather conditions we can't work in and if share trading had been done properly initially. Fishing days are only adding an unnecessary cost burden. This is DPI staff making jobs for themselves at fishers expense.

People have bought shares to resell knowing that the reform was floored and that they could make a quick buck and the people who were honest and held off and fought to have a fair outcome for everyone will be forced to buy those shares at greatly inflated prices of ten to twenty times the purchase price paid by the few who are profiteering and being supported by the minister and DPI.

Country Hour ABC Radio 1/12/16 the minister states he is going ahead with the reform because people have invested in shares. No-one should have been encouraged to invest until the majority of industry was agreeable to the reform. It clearly stated in the disclaimer page 2 grey book handed out to OPT Fishers in 2007 that the government would not be responsible for any decisions that people made to buy shares or

not buy shares so why has he decided that “because Fishers have invested in shares” it is now a factor in pushing through a reform that over ninety percent of stakeholders don’t agree to and at the same time leaving people who wanted to see the reform implemented properly vulnerable to being forced out of the industry.

NSW has the worst fishery managers and worst log books in the country and much higher management costs. If the government wants a user pays policy then stakeholders have a right to competent managers who will work with industry reps chosen by industry not by DPI staff. I have no confidence in the minister or the fisheries managers to honestly and diligently perform their duty. Reform is needed to the rules and regulation to get rid of stupid regulation like h.p units that has little bearing on the ability of a vessel to tow nets and should never of been used as a management tool.

Fisheries latest fiasco is the share auction and classing shares that they know are active as inactive. Fisheries have been derelict in their commitment to scan logbooks for omissions and errors (page 48 Ocean Trawl Fishery: Fishery Management Strategy January 2007) meaning that endorsements were classed as inactive for minor errors such as when reporting areas fished.

Yours Sincerely Kevin Solway