

**Submission
No 74**

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

Name: Mr Rodney Wright

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I welcome a Parliamentary enquiry into the current fishing reforms and the ability to inform the committee on issues facing the industry. I have only commented on the points within the terms of reference most affecting my business but am acutely aware living in a relatively small community of the impact that the reforms in the current form will have on regional economies, local communities and supply of sustainable seafood to broader community. I am sure the enquiry will find that DPI fisheries is driving a reform that is not based on science or in accordance with the real needs of the NSW fishing industry but more on the views of a select few within the Department of Primary Industries some of whom were involved in and responsible for over issue of shares when the industry moved to share allocations. The most viable options put forward and supported by industry should be adopted and the views of industry not put aside in favour of a select view within the Department of Primary industries.

Attached is my submission to the SARC consultation. A number of the recommendations are relevant to the Parliamentary enquiry especially in relation to terms of reference items 1(d), (e ii and iv). I request that you consider the submission and the following key points:

1(d) current arrangements. I purchased a fishing business in 2007 in good faith on the understanding that access to fishing was guaranteed by the NSW Government through Allocation of Shares and Management arrangements under Fisheries Management Act and regulations. There is general agreement that some consolidation of effort is required but penalising those that are active is not the right approach and there is general agreement on this. There is scope to use the \$16million to buy out those that want to exit the industry and to buy endorsements on the market place and either extinguish those shares or reallocate them across all shareholders in that fishery.

(ii) implementation to date. DPI fisheries and SARC proposed a range of restructure options and sought feedback from industry and despite industry selecting preferred based on option and recommendations from DPI and SARC the industry seem to have been ignored in favour of DPI Fisheries preferences.

For example in Estuary General Crab trapping options proposed suggested either number of traps or quota as most viable option. Quota was recognised as having higher administration costs. Those that made submission most favoured trap numbers as limit of effort. Despite this the final determination by SARC suggested a combination of trap numbers and quota and this was not even put forward as a suggested model in the consultation process.

Recommendation. Limit effort to trap numbers not quota in mud crab and eel fisheries and allow those that want to increase effort acquire extra endorsements and use extra traps. DPI Fisheries have put on record that at this point these fisheries are sustainable and there is no issue with the level of catch.

In Ocean trap and line West it was proposed to consolidate endorsements by increasing the minimum shareholding from 40 shares to 50. This was generally supported yet in the final determination an option not proposed during consultation suggesting minimum shareholding of 60 shares was adopted. **Recommendation. Adopt the limit on effort initially proposed and supported by industry of 50 shares not 60 for Ocean trap and line West.**

It is suggested in reforms that administration and artificial restrictions are reduced. The need for licensing of vessels on top of commercial registration has been recognised as unnecessary and in a number of areas need for licencing of vessels especially those up to 7.5 metres has been removed from 1 July 2017. Yet for Ocean Trap and line the requirement for Boat licensing, including OG1, has been retained which makes no sense from either cost benefit or limit on fishing effort. **Recommendation. Remove need for Fishing boat license including OG1 for Ocean trap and line West**

(e) (iv) economic modelling

The economic modelling uses virtually no real data from existing NSW fishing businesses affected by the restructure. Most is based on examples in fisheries in other states and jurisdictions. The figures used in modelling and the economic analysis are not obtained from existing businesses but are only what can be described as best guess. As outlined in my submission to SARC the direct financial impact on those actively fishing will be significant and in my example reduce my income on my current holdings by approximately 66% and make my business unfinancial. This is despite my efforts to seek additional shares to adjust which are currently not available. **RECOMENDATION. Acknowledge average catch returns for last 3 years and if moving to quota allocate quota across those businesses active in that fishery. Review economic analysis and modelling to use real figures from existing active multi-endorsed fishing businesses in NSW.** I would be happy to provide figures for the last 3 years for my fishing business to demonstrate that to date my business has been economically viable and a means to support my family and the local economy but under the prosed reforms will not be viable.

Thanks you for the opportunity for input and I hope that the enquiry can lead to some meaningful changes that support an ongoing sustainable fishing sector in NSW. I would be more than happy to clarify any items or elaborate further on issues within the current arrangements.

regards Rodney Wright

Fishing Business 00378 Rodney and Carol Wright