

INQUIRY INTO COMMERCIAL FISHING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Daniel Smith
Date received: 9 December 2016

To The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No.5

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Daniel Smith and I am a second generation fisher on the Clarence River. I bought my right to fish in the Clarence back in 2003 and have made a less than modest income in the 13 years that have followed.

I have struggled to meet my fee repayments as well as the general upkeep that a fishing business requires such as boat registrations, safety gear and equipment and can not see a way for my business to meet the new reforms financial requirements.

Fishing is a hard job often for little reward and the small fishing operation I run does not justify the fees that I have been made to pay. I cannot see how all fishing businesses are made to pay the same fees regardless of whether you are actually making a lot of money or none at all. I am very angry, frustrated and scared at what this reform means for myself and my family. I have already been in debt to pay-off buying my fishing license and cannot believe that I can just be told I have to pay that again to keep the same rights I currently have.

We have never made much money and will not meet the requirements of the loan assistance package being offered nor will we be able to get a loan from a bank. I am the sole provider for my family, with three small children we currently live week to week. Fishermen struggle to make a living without being told how many days they can work. With a business subject to weather, fish stocks and breeding cycles, floods, drought and injuries how can allotting a specific number of days work in our favour.

The estimated value for me to reinvest will be in the proximity of \$100,000. So far the information given about this reform has been evasive and unclear and has caused immense emotional, physical and financial pressure on myself and my family. This will not only affect myself but many fishers I know, will not be able to afford to reinvest into their businesses which will have a knock on affect to the Fishermans CoOperative and the many jobs that filter outward into the community as a direct/indirect affect of this reform.

I believe that new fishers buying into the industry are the ones who should be subject to these changes and current license holders should be able to continue to fish as their license have always been. Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and for seeing the need to inquire into the commercial fishing industry.