

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

Name: Mr Peter Robinson

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Partially
Confidential

I had 6 day's off in MThs no sick day's no holidays & no weekends the other 3 MThs was spent painting & fixing my boat for the next yr.- last year i caught \$160,000 worth of fish, it cost me \$60,000 in expenses & a further \$30,000 tax I didn't even make \$70,000

I am a commercial h/line fisherman from Newcastle, NSW . I am not campaigning for any special treatment for myself, but in saying that I would appreciate that you acknowledge the circumstances in which I fish under .. To start I do not have any by-catch , I only catch what I fish for, I don't use nets or traps although I have a license to use both , I fish by myself, I use 1 fishing line with 2 hooks attached, the only fishing gear I loose is the odd sinker or hook, the fish I catch (Hair tail,teraglin,) are not caught by any other method but handline. I am the only one who does this in Newcastle ! My job involves fishing every night either in the harbour or out to sea, i fish by myself from p.m. until am , very night including weekends & holidays, I do not get to sit down on the boat at all, I don't take breaks, my hands are constantly wet for hers minimum every night , I don't know how much the fish I catch are worth until the day after I catch them, I can receive \$10 a kg one day& the next day \$4 a kg . I am lucky to earn 40 cents in a \$1.00 , I never know what's going to happen from one minute to the next! the wind can get stronger,the current can get stronger, dolphins can turn up,seals can turn up,sharks can turn up,bad weather can arrive,lightning can blow in, amateur fisherman can be where I fish, birds can make it unfishable,yellowtail can be so numerous it can be unfishable Or I can hit objects in the harbour & not even make it fishing !It can cost me up to \$1,400.00 for new propellers if I run over a piece of wood or anything else. Most nights it is an effort just to stand up, without having to catch enough fish to earn a living,then there's Port crop & security guards, ships & tug boats the freezing cold weather – I can't catch fish with my hands in my pockets ! sometimes I have to go home because my hands are either stinging or there numb from the wind chill. WOULD ANYBODY ELSE DO THIS !!

I have to fish in enclosed waters when the water is cold or the weather is to rough to fish outside , the best places to fish for Hair tail in he harbour have been taken away ,the floating dock was sold,Lee wharf is about to be developed & the coal loaders are again about to be extended further up river, even before the development started it was hard enough! I was constantly in arguments with security guards over being able to fish where vie always fished, & ended up having to have a meeting with Port-crop so I could continue fishing. Then there's the shipping ,just one ship arriving or leaving the wharf stops the fishing for 2 days because the water is stirred up so much from the tugs ,the fish disappear. When the shipping is busy they turn them around in hers ,this means I don't get to fish in the harbour at all ,i have never complained I have nothing against the port facilities or the work carried out there, I fish around it & do what I can when I can. Now vie been told the 100 shares I posses in estuary general imp allowed 0.01 of a day for each share possessed so I can fish 3 days a yr., & considering I use 2 hand-lines with a single hook on each to catch Hair tail my estuary general endorsement is useless to me .

Originally I bought this license to (1)be able to hand-line Hair tail in the harbour (2) to take a mesh netter out of the river (nobody has used the meshing aspect of this license since I have

owned it) I have never put a mesh net in the water which I thought was a good thing, but according to the reform I would have been better off to have meshed every night....

I agree a reform is needed, but it should be concentrated in the areas that it will do the most good for the fishery ! & not spread out among everybody just because they are fishermen. At least do the most critical areas first so they can be done properly ! I could be meshing but I chose not to because I know what an important role they play for future fish stocks, because I chose not to mesh I am punished while the ones with the nets & the money are rewarded .

There is not one area of this reform that is any benefit to me in any way ! It will totally ruin everything I've worked for in the last 20yrs ! I ask where is the merit in destroying a totally sustainable fishing business for nothing & let unsustainable fishing practices flourish. Where is the merit in allowing the very people that have depleted the fish stocks to have more access , longer nets more hooks etc & to top it off , if you have more access than you can use you can lease it to somebody else !! this will only put more pressure on the already depleted fish stocks. I have ocean trap & line & a estuary general licenses , as long as I've been in possession of them there has been one less fish trapper & one less river mesher in the industry ! Now I'm told it is more sustainable to the fishing industry to have every element of the license at work , even if it involves 3 fishers instead of one & to avoid this from happening it will cost me \$300,000 as well as ongoing fees.

If you don't fish the license yourself , if you're in the business! of buying licenses & shares just to make money from other fishermen , then you don't deserve to be in the industry But not only are they in the industry, they are now threatening to take legal action against fisheries if this reform is not pushed through faster.

Since this reform was very first conceived not a single person except _____ has said a single word about the reform to me ! Nobody even knows what I do, they just know that I have a otlw & eghhc4 license even though these are the licenses I had to buy to be able to handline, I'm treated like a trapper/mesher. I've been commercial fishing for 20yrs & in that time I have never been asked even one question about the state of the fishery by fisheries, in the past I have offered to tag h/head sharks, spinner sharks, jewfish & hairtail at no expense to them, they were not interested so how do they assess the environment.

The fish stocks have already been put under far more pressure from this reform by exiting fishers who have increased their fishing effort while they can so they can exit with max finances .

If days fished is such a big part of this reform why was it not treated like that ? The last truck leaves for Sydney markets at 4pm on Thursday , so fish I catch on thurs night through to Sunday when the next truck is due , stay at the co-op for 3 days, If they are ice slurried the quality is excellent (BUT I ONLY GET ONE DOCKET) As I'm the only one that looks for hairtail most nights, the meshers & prawners wait for me to get decent catches then they use amateurs to stop me fishing by arriving at the spots I fish before me (most spots are about 20 ft in width) & holding the spots until the other commercial fishermen get there, then the amateurs go & I get to watch the meshers catch fish it took me 3 days to find. So to stop this

I only put hairtail in the market every 2-3 days then I fish somewhere else . Because of this I only get 3-4 dockets a week , even though I fish 7 days ! The dockets are the only way I can prove that I have fished . Every single fish I've caught is in my log books... Nowhere in the log book does it say that the number of entries I make will be my future fishing engender ! It say's the information is used by DPI to **monitor** the **catch and effort** of NSW commercial fisheries.

Day's fished is such a big part of this reform why wasn't this made 100% clear in either a separate document , underlining , highlighting , not even bold lettering was used. Because it wasn't a priority all the figures & equations fisheries have based all the numbers around are by no means even close to being accurate & if used will be done so fraudulently . Im told I knew a reform was coming a long time ago, & I was aware that changers would be made , but even now I don't know what changers ! So how do you prepare for that ! Whoever spoke or represented the fishermen , definatley did not speak for me in any shape or form, & no other fisherman will ever speak on my behalf ! The people who run this co-op are as corrupt as they come ! One even say's he will be the fishing baron of Tea Garden's..

I thought by only using a hand-line & 2 hooks I would separate myself from the others & be left out of this reform if its decided by merit as you say! I will be . But then again nobody even knows what I do

everything I do & own revolves around fishing-from what I eat, what I wear where I live, the car I drive, the tools I have --- even my identity ! If what I was doing was in any way a environmental threat or harming the fish stocks I would change today. I've been reading the comments on the commercial fishermans facebook site , i've herd a lot of winging but no alternatives to the reform , the health of fisheries not the fishing industry is far more important than individuals (whoever they are)

I was told by fisheries to read the instructions in the log book ,

Effort Quantity (Qty) The fishing method and effort

table on the cardboard backing which separates the

log sheets lists the unit of effort quantity

measurement for each method. ---i was told to enter THE NUMBER OF HOOKS I USE, I USE 2 HOOKS IN TOTAL. Then last yr I was told to enter the number of times I pull my lines in----- this could be anywhere between 100-1000 then I was told a rough estimate would do.

Only record fishing events where actual fishing

occurred (e.g. nets were shot) and not time

spent spotting----the location where **most fish** were caught ----- the start location of the shot where

most fish were taken----- record the location code where most fish were caught. SHOULD HAVE READ MOST OR NO FISH

Note If you are recording catch taken under the
included)

(this should have been

authority of a section 37 permit of the Fisheries

Management Act 1994 record the relevant

endorsement code as listed on the permit.

The information may be used to compile industry based statistics in a manner not identifying individuals.

Peter Robinson