

INQUIRY INTO FRESH FOOD PRICING

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As a commercial fisher of over 40 years my colleagues and I have endeavoured to supply cheap affordable fresh seafood to our region.

As you would be aware the northern central coast and southern Lake Macquarie regions have a high percentage of retirees and pensioners and it is this cohort of people who desire fresh locally sourced product. They are concerned about imported farmed product with dubious labelling. They still lament the closure of Mannering Park Fish Co-operative 15 years ago when Lake Macquarie was made a recreational fishing haven.

At present with the annual spawning run of common fish, eg mullet, luderick and bream fish, will be at their cheapest, however, prices will soon increase as supply decreases.

Estuary fish prices have increased over recent years as commercial fishers have had decreased access to waterways through the creation of recreational fishing havens and marine parks and commercial fishing area closures and Government led reforms.

I have made a number of submissions over the years to address problems of supply of fresh seafood in NSW Fishers need to regain access to recreational fishing haven to target non recreational species like mullet.

Another problem there is no pathway for young people to enter the industry as the cost to buy a fishing business is prohibitive. I am sure the average age of fishers in NSW would be in the 60's. We cannot work any longer and harder than we now do.

Kelvin Wynn