

**INQUIRY INTO COMMENCEMENT OF THE FISHERIES  
MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT ACT 2009**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 22 February 2022

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Partially  
Confidential

**Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional New South Wales, Water and Agriculture inquiry into the failure to proclaim the commencement of Schedule 1 of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009 concerning Aboriginal cultural fishing**

Submission dated 21 January 2022

From:

Thank you for the opportunity to make an individual submission as a South Coast Aboriginal person to the Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional New South Wales, Water and Agriculture inquiry into the failure to proclaim the commencement of Schedule 1 of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009 concerning Aboriginal cultural fishing.

I am a South Coast Aboriginal person. I am a part of the  
family groups.

It's [Sea Country] very important because as far as my parents, they grew up from it. My grandparents who always grew up that way, all lived off seafood. We're all South Coast people. We're all brought up by the sea and what's in it, to eat out of it.

Interactions with fisheries and police

I was pulled up on the highway. I had to wait. Warilla police station come down and then they told me to wait for a sergeant from Kiama. And Kiama come down and I had to wait for detectives to come from Nowra. And I was asked 1000 questions. My car was searched. They even pulled my distributor cap apart. I don't know what they were looking for, but I had to lift the bonnet, the boot. And I had like a CB (radio) in my car and they said the two-way radios were for abalone. It must've been, six to eight officers that are dressed all in black running across the highway towards us. They just sort of went through everything; everything possible they could put their hands on. So I don't know what those officers were, all dressed up in black. I had no idea. They were probably a squad team, I don't know 'cause I didn't want to ask any more questions because I was told 'shut up, stand back and say nothing.' I give him my name, but I wouldn't give him my address. And they said it's alright, we'll just get the rego number and we'll go straight around to the house and search the full house. But they didn't come around no. We were on the highway for up to three hours. Three hours waiting on authorities.

Another time we went to fisheries to ask the limit and that and big questions and Warilla fisheries locked his door and rang 000 on us. And then they all come and they wouldn't let us in the office and that's where they drew their line. And then I was walking closer to talk to a constable and he just put his hand on his weapon. I didn't know what he was gonna do. And no one was aggressive. We were just trying to talk the situation out. The fisheries had an Indigenous worker with them and she wasn't helpful at all. You know, she was only for the fisheries I think.

All other times we've been down the rocks and at Gerringong and they'd sit up near the cemetery looking down at us. And when we used to drive away, they'd meet us as we're

driving away and we had to pull over and they wanted to search the cars and that. But that was fisheries though.

## Interactions with the legal system

was the very last person to go in and have his court case heard. Troy [Tungai] was with him because Troy was charged as well and Troy went first and then followed up after Troy and. Well, that was very scary. What that judge said to He said 'you face my courtroom again, bring your toothbrush.' And look it does scare you, you know, when things been said to you like that.

## Impacts

[It has] a big impact because you get that way [anxious] when you're driving and the police officer pulls you over you. You're always thinking what have I done wrong? You gotta stop, you pull over. And you do the right thing. Look it [the interactions with fisheries and police] is traumatising when you think of it. That was the only experience that I've ever been traumatised by. What happened on the highway. And that's the only thing that's really ever really happened to me.

Lots of families who got more than two kids. Some families who got up to ten children in the family. And if there's a limit on it, Oh my God, how you supposed to feed 10 kids? I heard the limit was ten mutts (abalone) and it was reduced to two.

## Recommendations

I just don't like how the Indigenous people get treated half the time I guess. [I'd like to] see it [prosecution of Aboriginal fishers] change. And also I reckon all these people that had been done by all of this should be entitled to some form of compensation for what's happening to people. And what about the poor guys that have been sentenced over this and done time over getting food out the ocean to support their families? But I don't know if that's gonna happen. But that's my idea though.