



Merimbula Big Game & Lakes Angling Club Inc

Established 1936

Secretary
Productivity Commission
Australian Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture
GPO Box 1428
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Email: Fisheries.Inquiry@pc.gov.au

Dear Secretary

Re Submission for Australian Government Productivity Commission – Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture

We were alerted to this inquiry and the opportunity to make a submission by means of Federal Member for Eden-Monaro Dr Peter Hendy's press release titled **Have your say on fisheries and aquaculture regulation** dated 15 March 2016 "The Productivity Commission has today released an issues paper outlining key issues for the sector".

Undertaking a web search we find there is a Productivity Commission "Issues Paper" titled Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture dated February 2016 which describes its inquiry into the regulation of Australian marine fisheries and aquaculture. This Paper cites 31 March 2016 as the final date for submissions to be received.

The Terms of Reference provided by Scott Morrison, Treasurer, pursuant to Parts 2 and 3 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998* include instruction that the Commission is to have particular regard to impediments to increasing productivity and lists as an example "The extent to which fisheries management regimes align with and protect the interests of the wider community (in particular, the balance between commercial, recreational, indigenous fishing and conservation interests, and consumers' interests). We immediately flag the conflict between commercial fishing and recreational angling.

It is unfortunate that Commonwealth fisheries legislation does not adequately recognise recreational fishing values or access and the potential for adverse flow on impacts to recreational fishing as a result of management decisions by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA). We assume this conflict is the reason that the wider community, including recreational anglers, are given only two weeks, which include the Easter holiday period, in which to prepare and submit their submission. We advise that this submission by the Merimbula Big Game & Lakes Angling Club Inc is preliminary due to the lack of a suitable period for its completion.

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Nevertheless our position is clear;

1. We cannot keep feeding the ever expanding world population with wild caught fish.
2. The answer is Aquaculture as expressed, for example, by the Sydney Fish Markets last Christmas where publicity focussed on; a. Prawns – sourced from prawn farms, b. Oysters – sourced from oyster leases and c. Atlantic Salmon – sourced from fish farms.
3. Australian government regulation must be directed as a priority to the support for all types of fisheries aquaculture including research to solve environmental inhibitors.
4. The Australian government should recognise the implicit link between recreational angling and tourism. The Australian government department of Resources, Energy and Tourism's 2010 paper titled "2020 Tourism Industry Potential" states; *"Tourism is a significant industry for Australia. It generates \$94 billion in spending and contributes nearly \$34 billion to Australia's GDP, directly employs over 500,000 people and earns nearly 10% of our total export earnings, making it Australia's largest service export industry"*. Now, 6 years later, following the demise of the resources boom, tourism must be considered one of Australia's main growth industries and supported accordingly. Locally, along the Sapphire Coast of NSW, tourism is the major industry. Data provided by Merimbula Tourism (attached) tells us that 42% of local tourism is recreational angling related.
5. **With respect to recreational angling there is a clear policy void in Commonwealth fisheries regulation.** This must be revised to account for the value of recreational angling/tourism based on wild caught fish and preserve this resource by constraining the commercial catch. An example is the buyout of commercial netting licences in Port Phillip Bay.

Access Rights to the Highest Value User

In Section 2 of its Issues Paper the Commission states that the optimal allocation of access rights would ideally go to the highest-value user. The Commission Issues Paper states that the value of commercial fishing is more readily determined by the market value of their catch. The Commission quotes that in 2013-14 the gross value of Australian fisheries production amounted to \$2.5 billion, of which \$1.5 billion or 60 per cent of total production comprised wild-catch fisheries and the remainder aquaculture. The Commission then states *"that the true value of recreational angling is not measured in market terms but rather in the benefits accruing to the fisher — such as their enjoyment of the activity, a connection with nature, the preservation of cultural or family traditions; even the taste of fresh fish"*. Arguably this is one of the key links between recreational angling and tourism. However it is only an indirect measure of value. The

Commission does not mention direct measures of value, why not? These measures include: food, and accommodation, transport to and from the fishing location, fuel, fishing tackle and equipment, boating equipment and public administration. For example, Ernst & Young's, Victorian Recreational Fishing Survey of 2015 measures the value of recreational angling at \$2.9 billion on direct general fishing expenditure and boat related costs alone, see attached. The economic output for recreational angling in Victoria was \$3.9 billion combined direct and indirect value added, including 16,257 direct jobs.

The NSW Recreational Fishing Licence Trust, in conjunction with the University of Wollongong estimated the expenditure of recreational fishers in NSW and its economic impact. In 2012 it found that recreational fishers spent a direct \$1.625 billion on travel for recreational fishing trips, fishing tackle and boat related items, see attached. The economic output for recreational angling in all NSW was \$3.42 billion with an associated employment of 14,254 equivalent full time jobs.

In its Media Release of 26 May 2015 the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) states "Overall Australia's recreational fishing community is worth \$10 billion to Australia's economy annually, far exceeding the value of all commercial fishing" This valuation was published well before the release of the November 2015 VR Fishing Study. The current value of recreational angling, Australia wide, clearly exceeds \$10 billion.

The Commission is encouraged to recognise the value of recreational angling vs commercial wild caught fishing and assign access rights accordingly.

AFMA Managed Commercial Fishing

The current management of the Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) provides a clear example of how recreational fishing values and interests are not adequately addressed by the Australian Government. There are insufficient legislative measures in place to protect recreational fishing grounds and the surrounding regional communities that they support.

With respect to the South Coast NSW Game Fishing Industry, there is a clear and immediate conflict of interest with the industrial trawler the Geelong Star. Since the lifting of the ban on its trawling in Zone 6 on 16 December 2015 (Following its killing of Seals and Dolphins), our worst nightmare has occurred. The Geelong Star returned to the Sapphire Coast and has since continuously trawled a "tram line" strip between Eden, Bermagui and Moruya only stopping to return to port to unload, take on fuel and supplies and effect crew changes. Given the vessel can process 200 tonnes per 24 hours and it works day and night, our estimates for its catch to the end of February are conservatively 4,000 tonnes.

AFMA management allows for the vessel to take 6,000 tonnes per 30 day period from the three catch grids that are being worked; G101, G103 and G105, to a maximum of

10,890 tonnes per Zone (i.e. Zone 6) see attached Map of catch grids. So in just two months by the end of February, since it returned to the Sapphire Coast, the vessel has taken almost 40% of its allowable quota! It has been able to do this because of the large shoals of baitfish gather to spawn along the crest of the Continental Shelf. These bait fish comprise the base of the food pyramid that supports Dolphins, Seals, Albatross etc including the Predator fish such as Marlin and Tuna that underpin the NSW South Coast's 80 year iconic game fishing industry. An established industry and one that brings a great deal of Tourism to the region. We quote Dr James Findlay CEO of AFMA, 11 February 2016: *"I personally spent the last 2 weeks on rec leave fishing the shelf between Moruya and Bunga and found bait (and striped marlin!) levels to be some of the highest I've encountered on the south coast of NSW in nearly 20 years of fishing that area. By all reports, the fishing in the area between the Kink and the 12 Mile this season has been world class and it was great to see 100-150 boats out fishing on every day the weather allowed."* Frankly this says it all; a. Why the Geelong Star has fished here and nowhere else and b. That this is a World Class game fishing region attracting a large amount of angling related tourism and so considerable economic benefit.

The "Closure to Deep Water Trawling" by AFMA (which we are advised affects the Geelong Star) uses the edge of the Continental Shelf, off the NSW south coast, as its western boundary, see attached map. This geomorphic feature focuses the oceanic upwellings of this region which carry sufficient nutrients to support bait fish "hotspots" and their predator fish such as Marlin and Tuna. This area is the exact site of southern NSW's recreational game fishing which is today a world leader in catch and release methodology. The actual width of this zone is perhaps as small as 1-2Km. The area along the coast utilised by the Geelong Star for "Mid Water Trawling" is about 140Km in length (Eden to Moruya) therefore the vessel has concentrated its trawling to an area of some 280 square kilometres or less! This is just 0.19% of the area of its licenced catch limit Grids in Zone 6 alone.

Let's look at ARFF's discussion re "Intensity of Fishing"; AFMA allows for a catch limit of 2,000 tonnes per 30 day period per Grid. The average size of a catch limit Grid is 12,384 square kilometres, hence AFMA allow for a maximum intensity of fishing of 160kg per square kilometre. Along the Sapphire Coast last January and February the Intensity of Fishing by Geelong Star is estimated at 7.14 tonnes per square kilometre, approximately 45 times greater than AFMA's allowable limit! This is a commonwealth sponsored intensity that is completely unsustainable, likely to result not only in localised depletion but a potential collapse of fish stocks.

From AFMA: "Fishing should be spread out to avoid localised depletions, especially in relation to any local ecological 'hot spots' where there is particularly strong local dependency between predators and prey" (Buxton et al.).

AFMA states that Australia has the third largest economic fishing zone in the world but the paucity of nutrients and lack of upwellings means we only produces approx. 0.2% of the worlds fish product. That is our fish stocks are scarce! The commercial fishing industry accounted for around 0.1 per cent of Australia's GDP in 2013-14. The fish

stocks that do exist support a Recreational Fishing Industry with an economic benefit worth far more than wild caught Commercial Fishing. It is outrageous to consider that our government has allowed a factory trawler into our waters with only one possible outcome – depletion of these (SPF) fish stocks as has occurred everywhere else in the world.

Recent decisions (March 2016) by the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) include the position statement; *“We do not believe that this resource (SPF) should be fished at all and it is better for Australia and the environment if it is left in the water”*.

REGULATION OF MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING

The productivity Commission have published a brochure titled: Regulation of Marine Recreational Fishing – Have Your Say. Within this brochure the Commission lists some questions specific to recreational fishers and welcomes comments on any or all of these, or any of the broader questions raised by the inquiry.

We list below our comments regarding the listed questions then go on to address sections of the Issues Paper.

Specific questions relating recreational fishing:

1. *What is the impact on recreational fishers of controls such as size and bag limits, restrictions on fishing equipment and seasonal closures?*

There is scientific evidence that recreational angling alone does not threaten the resource. The NSW Department of Primary Industry (DPI) has undertaken scientific studies on the effects of recreational fishing. Studies show that when commercial netting is taken out of the equation **“fish populations had recovered and substantially, despite an increased recreational participation rate”** (Steffe et al. NSW DPI 2005). At Tuross Lake, for example, the results show three key outcomes following the cessation of commercial netting:

1. There was an increase in recreational angling (25%) hence an increase in economic benefits.
2. There was increase in the number of fish and;
3. There was an increase in the size of the fish.

The south coast of NSW is a recognised ocean Flathead fishery where commercial netting sees boats regularly unloading truckloads of Flathead. At the same time recreational bag limits have been halved (November 2014). The reason is simply politics: the Minister is pandering to the emotion of NSW housewives! *“It would be a shame for the community, residents and visitors to have to rely on imported fish for their fish and chips”* – Unfortunately the Minister pitches the politics of the housewife’s vote above the sustainability of coastal tourism and recreational angling.

The impact on local recreational angling is likely a reduction in trips as it is expensive to mount a trip out into the ocean for just 10 Flathead. Bag limits do not take account of fish size and so it has become common practice to “upgrade” by throwing away smaller – though legal size fish - until 10 large ones remain. Who wants to make a long fishing trip for 10 smallish fish? The bag limits for Ocean Flathead along the South Coast should be revised back to at least 20 per person. This will make offshore fishing more worthwhile and stop much of present wastage.

2. *How effective are current regulations on recreational fishing in managing Australia’s fisheries to ensure their longer term sustainability? Are there alternative, better controls that would still preserve marine fish stocks and their habitat?*

Scientific studies (Steffe et al.) show that current regulations on recreational fishing such as politically not scientifically derived bag limits, lack of access to Marine parks etc have little or no relationship to longer term sustainability. The main constraint on sustainable fish stocks is commercial netting. The best control to preserve marine fish stocks is to stop bulk removal of fish stocks and by-catch by commercial netters. The housewives of Australia are already well served by Aquaculture.

- 3 *Are current licencing requirements an effective means of ensuring the sustainable use of Australia’s marine fisheries by recreational fishers? If not, how might licencing arrangements be improved? For example, should all recreational fishers be licenced, or should there be species-specific licencing*

The general recreational fishing licence fee was introduced in NSW in 2001. Funds raised are managed by the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust with current income in the order of \$16 million annually. The funds are disbursed by the Trust into services and projects that help enhance recreational fishing. This may be viewed as a form of user pays between Government and the recreational angling sector. The Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water, Niall Blair (June 2015) announced \$13 million will be invested in 63 recreational fishing projects in NSW in 2016. **“Fishing is one of the state’s most popular recreational activities – and it is so important we invest in infrastructure and programs to support this crucial sector,”** Mr Blair said.

- 4 *How well are fishing rules enforced? In what ways could the enforcement of the fishing rules for marine fisheries be improved? Are there particular areas or species to which more attention needs to be paid by fisheries officers?*

In southern NSW, rules and regulations are enforced by DPI Fisheries officers, Roads and Maritime Service officers and Water Police, all with their own water craft and office infrastructure, perhaps there is duplication of effort?. One area of concern is the potential for visitors to flout local regulations more often than locals. This is an educational issue.

- 5 *Do bans on recreational fishing in certain locations (such as marine reserves) work? On what basis should decisions on locations available to recreational fishers be made?*

Recreational anglers who today practice more and more catch and release methodology particularly of key species should not be locked out of any part of the Commonwealth marine reserve system. Recreational fishers are generally limited to a conservative amount of fishing gear with strict controls on the number of lines and hooks that can be used. This gear is highly inefficient when compared to the gear allowed to be used by commercial fishers such as hundreds of metres of gill nets, long lines and seine or trawl nets.

Recreational fishing is a low risk to biodiversity and it is therefore not inconsistent with marine conservation values. For example, recreational fishers do not have significant bycatch or interactions with protected species. Recreational fishing by line and rod is a benign method with negligible impact of the seabed.

6. *What is the best way to collect data on recreational fishers' marine catch? Aside from catch data, are there other ways recreational fishers can contribute data and information to inform fisheries research*

The use of new technology such as smart phone apps could be used to collect more real time data on catch and effort and this could lead to less regulation in future by reducing knowledge gaps.

7. *Are there any other aspects of recreational fishing in marine waters that you would like to comment on?*

Yes there is a huge conflict of interest between recreational angling and commercial fishing. Examples specific to the Sapphire Coast of southern NSW are provided below:

1. This region is a renowned Ocean Flathead fishery. Commercial fishing takes literally truckloads of Flathead – visit the Bermagui and Eden wharfs. Recreational anglers have a 10 per person bag limit. These anglers are in many cases visitors - contributing to the Tourist industry of the region. Data from Sapphire Coast Tourism indicates the economic benefit from Tourism locally is some \$600 million per annum. Twice that of any other individual industry in our region. Around 42% of visitors are motivated by angling as an activity compared to an 8% benchmark of comparable regions (Coffs, Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay, Gippsland). Recreational anglers are catching smaller and smaller fish because commercial netting is winnowing the stock – their nets leave behind the smaller fish. The outcome, should unrestricted commercial netting offshore of popular tourist resorts continue, will be a measurable drop in tourism and hence the economic well being of the local NSW south coast towns.

2. We have a current NSW recreational fishing bag limit of 5 Australian Salmon. For commercial fishing it is a little different; - one boat from Eden is reported to have landed just 90 tonnes in one set! Before and during Easter 2013 a Purse Seine fishing trawler from Eden vigorously worked inshore fishing areas about Tura Beach and Tura Beach – Dolphin Cove;



Seine netting salmon just outside surf zone Tura Beach 2013

One of our neighbours phoned Fisheries and complained “We have a bag limit of 5 fish and the trawler is stuffed full!” He was told the boat was licensed – end of story! A group of us fished the beach, not a single bite! Here at Tura Beach, Easter 2016 the story is exactly the same; visitors ask us, why can this trawler work so close to the town especially during the holiday season?

Residents and visitors alike stared in askance when the seine trawler from Eden set its net just metres from surfers off Merimbula Main Beach on Wednesday morning 29 April 2015. How authorities can allow a commercial trawler to operate within a prime tourist area is unbelievable! But just phone fisheries and complain and you will get the same answer over and over again “they have a licence”. This “licence” apparently justifies the rape and pillage of local fish stocks that support recreational fishing and tourism along the Sapphire Coast. The effect on our local tourist industry is profound, not to say the danger to our surfers nearby. But don’t worry the Fishing Act protects the commercial fisher, as while fishing, this vessel has right of way over all other craft!



Photo shows seine fishing net placed right beside Merimbula surfers -2015.

Or does it? Roads and Maritime Services prohibit any powered vessel from within 500m of shore in a designated surfing zone and from within 60m of a surf “swimming area”. Main Beach is the background. Local residents, the Tourist Bureau and recreational anglers all believe it is high time this netter took a close look at its civic responsibility and limited its capture of wild caught fish to more remote areas away from popular tourist areas. Needless to say there was a significant lack of near-shore fish available during the Easter Holiday and we feel this must have a markedly adverse effect on tourism and overall an adverse effect on the local economy.

The solution to these issues is simple; conflict of interests can be resolved by a 30km (the average distance a small craft will likely travel at sea to fish) restriction to commercial fishing (but not charter operators who are conflicted by commercial fishing exactly the same as recreational anglers) around the popular south coastal tourist towns; Narooma, Bermagui, Tathra, Merimbula, Pambula and Eden. This limit includes both state and commonwealth waters.

Our comments on other aspects of the Issues Paper are noted below:

Australian fisheries

Are fish stocks allocated and managed in a way so as to ensure a viable and sustainable fishing sector both now and into the future?

No, Scientific studies (Steffe et al.) show fish stocks improve after commercial netting is stopped.

How should the value of recreational fishing and Indigenous customary fishing be measured and so better inform access allocation decisions?

“It is cheaper and easier to identify a market price for some economic flows than it is for others. But valuing all of the economic benefit for recreational fisheries is increasingly important.” Quote from Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Issues Paper; Measuring the economic value of Recreational Fishing at a national level by Ridge Partners, Project Id. 2012/214. Ridge go on to say; *“In advanced economies with ready access to aquaculture trade substitutes and imports, it is clear that the recreational harvest and value of some fisheries is increasingly exceeding their consumptive harvest value - **a fishery has a higher community value for tourism and recreation, than for food.**”*

Methods to measure and monitor the way a fishery is managed and valued include the University of Wollongong’s final report to the NSW Recreational Fishing Licence Trust, NSW DPI, titled “Developing a cost effective state wide expenditure survey method to measure the economic contribution of the recreational fishing sector in NSW” dated November 2013. There is also the more recent valuation by Ernst & Young for VRFish the Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body, titled “Economic Study of Recreational Fishing in Victoria”, dated 9 November 2015.

The results of these studies clearly define the value of recreational angling being much greater than the commercial catch of wild fish. Access to fish stocks must be allocated accordingly.

Do the current access arrangements provide for the realisation of the highest economic value from fisheries?

As above, note Ridge Partners, UOW and VRFish studies. The real value of recreational angling is in tourism. On the south coast of NSW this is the most important industry and it requires every assistance from government by removing commercial fishing.

Is there a reasonable balance between the interests of different users in the current allocations of access to marine fisheries?

Refer above. The balance is hugely biased to commercial fishing where a seine netter can take 90 tonnes of Australian Salmon in one drop alongside a holiday resort beach and the recreational angler has a bag limit of 5 fish only. This is ludicrous!

Is there room to improve the process for determining the allocation of such rights? For example, how might competing interests be better reconciled?

Competing interests can be reconciled by buy-back of commercial licences at fair market rate (Note Current Port Phillip Bay buy back) and in parallel assist those losing their licences to move to aquaculture based industries.

Where are there overlaps or conflicts between the rights of access for the different groups of fisheries users? How are such overlaps and conflicts best addressed? How best can the common interests of users be leveraged to improve fisheries outcomes?

Locally (southern NSW) the solution to these issues is simple; **conflict of interests can be resolved by a 30km radius (the average distance a small craft will likely travel at sea for fish) restriction to commercial fishing** (but not charter operators who are also conflicted by commercial fishing exactly the same as recreational anglers) around the popular south coastal NSW tourist towns; Narooma, Bermagui, Tathra, Merimbula, Pambula and Eden. This limit includes both state and commonwealth waters.

Specific to the Sapphire Coast of southern NSW – this is a renowned sea Flathead fishery. Commercial fishing takes literally truckloads of Flathead on virtually a daily basis – visit the Bermagui and Eden wharfs. Recreational anglers have a 10 per person bag limit. These anglers are, to a great extent, visitors - contributing to the tourist industry of the region. Data from Sapphire Coast Tourism (see attached) indicates the economic benefit from Tourism locally is some \$600 million per annum. Twice that of any other individual industry in our region. Around 42% of visitors are motivated by angling as an activity compared to an 8% benchmark of comparable regions. Recreational anglers are catching smaller and smaller fish because commercial netting is winnowing the stock – their nets leave behind the smaller fish. The outcome, should unrestricted commercial netting offshore of popular tourist resorts continue, will be a measurable drop in Tourism and hence the economic well being of NSW south coastal towns.

Commercial fishing

What are the key influences on, or barriers to, innovation and productivity improvement in the commercial fisheries sector? Where does regulation most affect resource use and incentives to improve? What management settings should be changed or implemented to maximise productivity growth?

The message is clear, Australian government regulation must be directed as a priority to the support for all types of fisheries aquaculture including research to solve

environmental inhibitors. It should also encourage commercial fishers to switch to aquaculture by means of education and utilisation of licence buy-back funds.

Recreational fishing

Are controls such as licences, bag limits and size limits effective? Is there scope to reduce the burden (time or monetary costs) of fishing rules on recreational fishers while achieving the same regulatory objectives?

As noted above bag limits are controversial. Do recreational anglers need them? Would it be more cost effective not to police bag and size limits? **The fallacy of bag limit control is that it implies that recreational anglers are fishing in a regular and systematic manner like commercial fishing and so depleting fish stocks; nothing could be further from the truth**, particularly as recreational anglers practice more and more catch and release! It has actually been stated in a DPI review, believe it or not, as an argument for the reduction in bag limits that; *“The latest scientific surveys indicate that the bag limits for commonly caught species are rarely reached by most recreational fishers (less than 1% of fishing trips)”*. So how does the Department justify the expense of regional Fisheries Officers and their water craft etc?

We are not getting a fair deal from the DPI, why shouldn't Recreational Angling be managed by the Department of Sport and Recreation and so remove the conflict of interest with commercial fishing? It's worth a thought!

How well is recreational fishing recognised in current fisheries management and regulatory arrangements (including in relation to access rights)?

Commonwealth fisheries legislation does not adequately recognise recreational angling values or access and the potential for adverse flow on impacts to recreational angling as a result of management decisions by AFMA. State based natural resource management legislation could also be strengthened to better protect recreational fishing access rights.

How does the regulation of commercial fisheries affect recreational fishers?

Management of the Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) – allowing entry to Australia of a foreign owned industrial freezer trawler - provides a clear example of how recreational fishing values and interests are not adequately addressed by the Australian Government. **There are insufficient legislative measures in place to protect iconic recreational game fishing grounds and the surrounding regional coastal communities and the tourist Industry that they support.**

We do not believe the SPF, under its current management approach, is best value use of this resource and quote ARFF's recent (March 2016) statement: *"We do not believe that this resource should be fished and it is better for Australia and the environment if it is left in the water"*

The bait fish taken in the SPF are vital food sources for game fish species. Recreational anglers rely on these aggregations of spawning bait fish, well formed and with minimal disruption, near the surface of the water column to support effective fishing – we note as well that the majority of big game catches are now more than ever before catch, tag and release so protecting the resource and providing valuable scientific data.

The support of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) for industrial scale fishing of SPF utilising large scale freezer trawlers to fish in our iconic recreational fishing grounds highlights the extent of the deficiency in Commonwealth legislation.

What are the main sources of tension between recreational fishers and other fishery users?

A major source of tension stems from conflict arising when a new AFMA sponsored industry (a large scale SPF freezer trawler) focuses its activity on areas such as the 80 year old and iconic game fishing grounds located along the crest of the continental shelf off the south coast of NSW. AFMA should prohibit this conflict of interest not support it!



Game fishing off Merimbula. Note Geelong Star in background

As described above, along the south coast of NSW there is conflict between recreational anglers and commercial Ocean Flathead trawling and the seine netting of whole schools of Salmon. Recreational anglers are generally limited to a conservative amount of fishing gear with strict controls on the number of lines and hooks that can be used. This gear is highly inefficient when compared to the equipment used by commercial fishers such as hundreds of metres of gill nets, long lines and trawl or seine

nets. That is why the management of commercial fisheries must be done in a way that does not overlap with key recreational fishing grounds - either spatially or temporarily.

What, if any, tensions exist between the controls on recreational fishing across jurisdictions and fisheries?

In general terms, tensions can exist within a jurisdiction on the water between say spear fishers and line fishers targeting the same species in the same area. Education is often the best tool to address any such tension. These tensions are also relatively minor, compared to commercial fishing interactions as explained above.

Given the services provided by state and territory governments to support recreational fishing, do recreational fishers get good value from licence fees?

In NSW the DPI raises some \$16 million per annum from licence fees. The Minister has advised expenditure of \$13 million on improvements for recreational angling for 2016. These improvements include a 5th artificial Reef for an as yet unnamed area. This all seems a reasonable return for the fees.

It is noted that Seniors in Victoria have a free licence whereas in NSW Seniors have to pay the full fee. There is room for NSW to be more lenient towards its Seniors.

The management of fisheries

What should be the main objectives of fisheries management and regulation?

To recognise the value of recreational angling which is a major contributor to tourism and assign access rights accordingly.

Meeting environmental objectives

How well does current scientific and research effort support the environmental and ecological objectives of fisheries management?

There is no doubt that Aquaculture is the way forward - able to provide renewable fish products for both domestic consumption and export. Government is encouraged to support - as a priority - environmental research to facilitate an expanding fish farming industry.

Marine Parks and Reserves

How effective and efficient are regulatory arrangements covering marine parks and reserves? How well coordinated and consistent have the jurisdictions been in designating their respective marine parks? What are the economic, environmental and social impacts of marine park areas?

Recreational angling should have similar access to the Commonwealth marine reserve system as other recreational activities such as diving and large scale tourist activities.

Recreational fishing is a low risk to biodiversity and it is therefore not inconsistent with marine conservation values. For example, recreational angling by rod and line is a benign method with negligible impact of the seabed.

Recreational fishing is managed by a suite of controls; including catch, gear, area, seasonal and minimum size limits. These controls may be constantly reviewed and adjusted in real time, consistent with adaptive management principles.

Regulation of aquaculture

What, if any, developments have there been in the aquaculture industry since 2004 that the Commission should specifically consider in this Inquiry?

There is an ever increasing acceptance of farmed fish – in restaurants here on the NSW south coast Tasmanian farmed Atlantic Salmon has become endemic. The Sydney Fish Market this past Christmas advertised its wares as “Prawns, Oysters and Salmon” – all from Aquaculture. This is the way of the future. Government must recognise this and assist the aquaculture industry to access suitable sites. It should undertake research so that fish farms utilise land based food products and undertake environmental research to enable the farms to manage waste products.

Yours sincerely

Chris Young
Secretary
Merimbula Big Game & Lakes Angling Club Inc.
30 March 2016

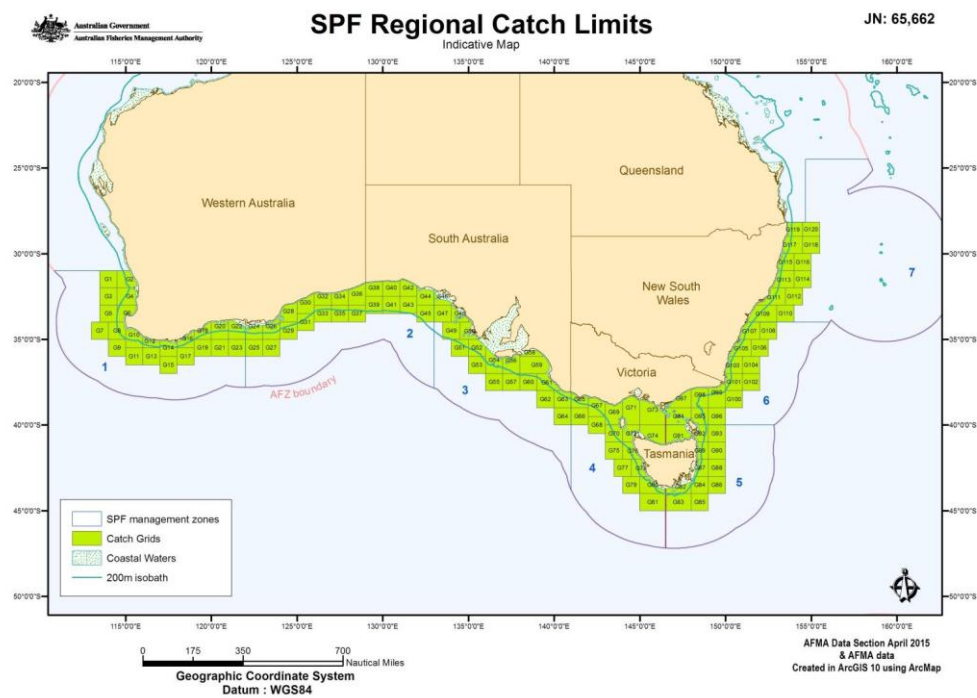
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ATTACHMENT

- Sapphire Coast Tourism PO Box 89 Merimbula 2548 NSW Australia. Letter of support for Merimbula Big Game & Lakes Angling Club Inc. Merimbula Artificial Reef

PLANS



Catch Grid Plan for Geelong Star

Areas Closed to Midwater Trawl

JN: 65,938

