

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Organisation: The Adventure and Safari Industry Association of NSW Inc
Name: Mr Bob McComb
Position: Chair
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Submission to the Parliamentary Recreational Fishing Inquiry

Bob McComb

The Adventure and Safari Industry Association of NSW Inc

The Director,

Select Committee on Recreational Fishing, Legislative Council,

Parliament House Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000

The greatest concern for the Adventure and Safari Industry Association (ASIA) regarding recreational fishing is the loss of access. Recreational fishers have been vilified by various protectionist organizations masquerading as conservationists, in attempts to have access removed as an abatement action for a perceived threat to bio diversity.

The key threatening processes for our marine environment needs to be established upon non biased transparent science upon which the recreational fishing sector can seek peer review. The abatement actions likewise.

It should be established that there are genuine outcomes for bio- diversity from marine parks and marine protected areas and these outcomes should be measurable and available for review.

The 'Precautionary Principle' has merit, however as it is subjective it is open to misuse and a strong code of practice and guidelines should be established around its use.

Our fisheries catch should be managed around an 'adaptive management' system rather than the current 'harvest 'til death' strategy. That is our managers through monitoring catches can establish the trends in relative abundance and set quotas and bag limits. Not wait until a fisheries has already collapsed to 'trigger' management.

Recreational fishers need a representative, transparent and relevant advisory committee. A new advisory body based upon the 'Game Council' model should be adapted. Councilors should be nominated by fishers who can choose those who they believe have the greatest understanding of their needs and concerns and can best represent them. The expenditure from license fees should also be controlled by this new council.

Recreational fishers have always accepted new regulations regarding bag and size limits, gear restrictions and license fees. In many cases fishers have lobbied for new reforms and volunteered for conservation projects. Fishers have always demonstrated a very high level of compliance, no doubt

due to a strong culture within this group of stakeholders to respect the environment and the laws of our land. Why then is there an existing sentiment amongst recreational fishers that we are the victims of a minority of fringe groups and their protectionist ideology?

Yours Sincerely,

Bob McComb

Chair The Adventure and Safari Industry Association of NSW Inc