



P.O. Box 630
NARRABEEN NSW
2101

3rd May 2006

The Honourable Ian MacDonald, MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Level 30 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney, NSW, 2000

Dear Minister,

Re: Manning River Recreational Fishing Haven

One of the stated purposes of recreational fishing areas when they were announced in 2001 and subsequently implemented by the former Fisheries Minister Eddie Obeid was to reduce conflict between the recreational and commercial sectors, both being the main stakeholders in fish resources. Conflict between the 2 sectors actually increased during the consultation phase for the recreational fishing area in the Manning estuary.

Feelings are again running high in the Taree area following proposals by the Taree Fishermen's Co-op for changes to the Manning River recreational fishing haven. These changes include:

- shifting of the upstream boundary of the RFH to 3.2 km downstream of Ghinni Ghinni Creek in exchange for extending the RFH from Cedar Party Creek to 3 km downstream.
- permission to net spawning mullet at the mouth of the Manning for one month, and
- permission to trap crabs and eels upstream from Cattai Creek.

In September 2005 correspondence with us, you indicated that there would be no changes to Recreational Fishing Havens unless there is consensus between the two groups both locally and via the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF) and the Seafood Industry Advisory Council (SIAC). In response to our letter of 30th June 2005 you said:

"I remain committed to promoting a productive relationship between recreational and commercial fishing sectors. In the first instance, concerns of the seafood industry and recreational fishers will be referred to ACoRF and the Seafood Industry Advisory Council (SIAC) to obtain a consensus approach. Regional forums may be used to develop options to address local issues prior to being forwarded to the relevant advisory bodies for broader consideration." And: "I have recently formed a joint working group with membership from both ACoRF and SIAC who will meet to discuss matters of mutual interest, including those where consensus is being sought. Please note that any outcomes from this working group would remain subject to consideration by ACoRF and the relevant commercial fishing Management Advisory Committee or SIAC."

With the current push by the Taree Fishermen's Co-Op for changes to the Manning RFH we understand that there has been no attempt at obtaining local consensus, and that ACoRF passed a resolution to not support any variation to the Manning River RFH (Minutes #31 of ACoRF of 8th December 2005).

We also understand that letters supporting the proposal came from the Taree RSL and Golf Club Fishing Club and the Wingham Anglers Club, but there were letters against the proposal by Fishing and Tourism Inc., Taree West Bowling and Fishing Club, Coopernook Hotel Fishing Club, Old Bar Beach Fishing Club showing that local consensus has not been obtained.

In view of your previous statements concerning consensus, and the facts that there was no local consensus and that ACoRF resolved to not support any changes to the Manning RFH, we urge you to not make any changes to the Manning RFH. The approval of any changes to the Manning RFH without local consensus or support from ACoRF will set an unfortunate precedent for other RFH's.

Yours sincerely

Phillip Ingram
President
Anglers Action Group