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17<sup>th</sup> December, 2003

The Honourable Ian MacDonald, MLA  
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries  
Level 30 Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
Sydney, NSW, 2000

Dear Minister,

Please find attached a copy of a paper written by AAG member Brian Dare entitled 'Freshwater Anglers Viewpoint'. Brian lives west of the Divide on the NSW/Queensland border, and his article raises some interesting points with respect to the policy differences in the stocking programs for freshwater native fish between Queensland and NSW.

NSW Fisheries program of the stocking of native fish in freshwater storages and streams of NSW for 2003/2004 will cost an estimated \$498,000, plus an additional \$200,000 allocated for rivers and streams via the Dollar for Dollar system. The breakdown of the \$498,000 is as follows:

Golden Perch	16c per fry	1,040,000	\$166,400
Silver Perch	14c per fry	332,000	\$53,120
Murray Cod	66c per fry	320,000	\$243,200
Australian Bass	26c per fry	220,000	\$35,200

Examples of the stocking rates of various species in various storage areas for fry for the 2001/2003 stockings were calculated to be:

Copeton Dam, Inverell (4600 hectares at full supply level) has rates of 3.62 Murray cod fry per hectare per year, 28 golden perch fry per hectare per year and 10.86 silver perch fry per hectare per year.

Burrinjuck Dam at Yass (5600 hectares at full supply level) had 2.38 Murray cod fry per hectare per year, 92.85 golden perch fry per hectare per year and 34 silver perch fry per hectare per year.

Many dams are not intended to be stocked at all with some species.

A paper by Simpson, Hutchison, Gallagher and Chilcott entitled “Fish stocking in impoundments: A best practice manual” of 2002 (FRDC Project No 98/221) recommended that the best results of native stocking are obtained with fingerlings and with rates of 100-200 fingerlings per hectare per year for each species. In this recommendation fry are grown into fingerlings at breed out ponds.

The following questions need to be answered:

- Why does NSW Fisheries native stocking program use fry rather than fingerlings which are known to have a much higher survival rate?
- Why are not funds used from the Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust for the use of breed out ponds?
- Why does NSW Fisheries stock freshwater impoundments at a rate significantly lower than that recommended by the FRDC?
- To reduce stress levels of the small fish in transportation times, why can't stocking groups located near the borders of Queensland and Victoria purchase fingerlings from hatcheries in those states? It must only be a procedural matter to get interstate hatcheries onto the NSW Fisheries accredited list?
- Why isn't the eel-tailed catfish considered for stocking in rivers where it used to be common but is now rarely found?
- Why is the Dollar for Dollar program still in existence, particularly as anglers already contribute to the Recreational Angling (Freshwater) Trust Fund?
- Why is money initially being spent on ad-hoc habitat programs where grants are allocated to other departments or councils, or to other projects that should not be funded from the Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust? Surely the aim should initially be to get fish back into the waterways, and these other programs such as habitat regeneration can be looked at later, and approached in a holistic and sensible manner rather than the current ad-hoc way its now done?

Finally, I know it's not in your portfolio but its something that is of concern to many people, and that is the comment that Brian Dare makes concerning public liability and that the Queensland State Government has implemented an umbrella policy to cover all non-profit groups, charities and public halls. Has the NSW Government considered such a scheme, or is it likely to consider such a scheme in the future?

Yours sincerely

Phillip Ingram  
President  
Anglers Action Group (Sydney Northside) Inc.