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28th April, 2005

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

Dear Minister,

The structure of representation for recreational fishers is, as we can see, activity based for ACoRF, and regionally based for the recreational expenditure trust fund committees. Separate to this are the recreational representation on the various MACs and other groups and committees. This structure, on the surface, seems to fulfill the requirements of NSW DPI (Fisheries) and provide recreational fishers with adequate representation on the various advisory committees.

Representation of recreational anglers on various committees and MAC's is one thing, but to be able to function properly the recreational representatives need to be able to get information both to, and from, those they represent. This not only includes minutes and decisions made, but may involve discussions as to the reasons for these decisions and other points of view expressed. Information flow is paramount, and for this there needs to be either a method or system in place, or funds and resources be made available for the representatives to disseminate and receive information. Recreational anglers pay a fee in the way of a fishing license. This has given us a say with appointments to various committees, trust fund expenditure committees, and MACs, but this representation is meaningless to the majority if information flow is restricted.

In correspondence of 10th February 2004 you state that under the "*Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998* the personal information of committee members cannot be provided to the community without the permission of the member". You then go on to say that "to assist in consultation and to raise recreational fishing issues, I would encourage you to write to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing" and give the Chairman's address care of NSW Fisheries.

We appreciate, and agree, with the privacy issues you mentioned. Conversely, writing to the chair of ACoRF to raise issues may not be applicable in all instances, and communication is only one way. However, this is easily overcome with the provision of generic DPI/Fisheries email addresses for these representatives, with the added benefit that subsequent representatives will use the same email address. Hence to issue privacy is negated, and there is continuation of information passage as personnel/individuals filling these "generic roles" change. These "generic" email addresses could also access DPI (Fisheries) email lists for fishing clubs and groups. This is just one example of resources being provided to improve communication between representatives and the people they represent, while maintaining privacy.

As there appears to be limited resources and funds provided by DPI (Fisheries) provided for these recreational representatives, one has to wonder why?

- Does NSW DPI (Fisheries) consider it necessary or desirable that recreational anglers have direct communication with their representative on the various committees, and for the representative to be able to communicate with the people they represent?

- If not, then why not?

- If so, then what resources and funds are provided for the recreational fisher representatives to ACoRF, expenditure committees and MAC's to communicate with the people they represent? If none, then why? If there are resources available, exactly what are they and do they meet the needs of these representatives?

If NSW DPI (Fisheries) do not provide resources for angler representatives to have access to those they represent, then it follows that the current structure of "recreational representation" is of limited use to the majority of anglers. The idea and structure may sound good with spin-doctoring, but in reality, without funds and resources being available to provide for information dissemination and comment, then nothing is really achieved, no matter how many representatives are present on the various committees.

Yours Sincerely

Phil Ingram  
President  
Anglers Action Group (Sydney Northside) Inc

