

## **Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries**

Mr Geoff Clark

Dear Mr Clark

I refer to your letter of 15 May 2003 forwarded to me by Mr Joseph Tripodi MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport Services, concerning commercial fishing activities in Trial Bay.

I note that Mr Tripodi has responded to the safety concerns in relation to the use of the Waterways Authority buoys by commercial fishers raised in your letter.

The NSW Government has jurisdiction over purse seine activities inside three nautical miles of the NSW coastline while the Commonwealth manages the tuna long line fishery outside three nautical miles. A limited number of Commonwealth tuna fishers are authorised to fish in State waters to take bait, however, there are strict eligibility criteria for a permit numbers. This approach ensures that fishing pressure does not increase beyond historical levels.

This Government introduced a new strategy for the ocean haul fishery on 1 November 2002 which has been subject to a full environmental assessment. The collection of bait has been assessed as part of the ocean hauling fishery management strategy. As a consequence the NSW Government is working cooperatively to ensure collection of information about bait catches and to develop a code of conduct for fishers using purse seine and lift nets to collect bait. I have enclosed a copy of the overview document for your information.

In light of the considerable conflict between recreational and commercial fishers over the harvesting of bait fish and the use of the buoys in Trial Bay, officers of NSW Fisheries and the Waterways Authority have met with tuna fishers and local recreational fishers from South West Rock to seek a resolution to reduce conflict.

I am advised that the issue of commercial bait fishing from the Waterways Authority mooring has been discussed and on the basis of those discussions NSW Fisheries has introduced a commercial fishing restriction around the moorings. Commercial fishers are now not permitted to harvest fish in a 100 metre radius around the two Waterways Authority moorings in Trial Bay.

If you have further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact Mr Darryl Sullings, Fisheries Manager – Ocean Hauling on (02) 4972 6548

Yours sincerely

Ian MacDonald MLC  
NSW Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

(stamped 19 Sep 2003)