

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Mr Andrew Stoner MP
Member for Oxley
PO Box 120
West Kempsey NSW 2440

Dear Mr Stoner

I refer to your facsimile of 11 September 2003 to Mr Max Withnell of NSW Fisheries regarding the use of the emergency buoys at Trial Bay.

I am aware of concerns over the use of these buoys and access to bait fish resources in this area. I understand that NSW Fisheries, the NSW Waterways Authority, Coff's Harbour Fisherman's Co-operative, East Coast Tuna Boat Owners Association, tuna fishers and recreational fishers from South West Rocks have been working to resolve these issues over the past two years.

These efforts have seen the new mooring buoy installed by Coff's Harbour Fisherman's Co-operative on 6 September to enable collection of bait by commercial fishing vessels. It also doubles as an additional safety mooring with capacity for large vessels.

Commercial bait harvesting is now banned within 100 metre radius of the original two emergency mooring buoys. However, safety is paramount and I am advised that there will be occasions where it is necessary for vessels, including those involved in commercial fishing, to tie up to the emergency moorings.

In respect of your advice that a trawler was reportedly tied up to one of the emergency moorings, NSW Fisheries advise that such a vessel is unlikely to have been involved in bait harvesting. A local charter boat operator has indicated other boats have recently used the mooring but confirmed they had not been engaged in commercial fishing.

NSW Fisheries will be monitoring compliance with the new fishing bans and I encourage anyone with concerns about suspected illegal commercial activity to contact the Hastings Fisheries Office on (02) 6581 4084, or the Fishers' Watch Line on 1800 043 536. If you have further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact Mr Jamie Gibson of my office on (02) 9228 3344.

Yours sincerely

Ian MacDonald
NSW Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

(stamped 02 Oct 2003)