

7th September 2008

Senator McEwen, Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
by email to eca.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator McEwen,

Please accept this submission to the inquiry into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008.

Unfortunately due to a sudden shortness in response time to the above submission, I would like to let you know in short detail about my feelings and those of 10 000's of others on what impact closures would have both in mental health and massive swings in the party that implements it.

I own a fishing tackle store called "Doug Burts Tackle World Gold Coast" which is one if not the largest turnover fishing tackle retail business in Queensland. We literally have a regular clientele of over 10000 different customers locally, plus 10000's more outside of the Gold Coast. I am 44 years of age and I have been involved in the fishing tackle business since I was 12 years old working after school and on weekends here on the Gold Coast, it is all I know, fishing is my life and I know it well - far better then any advisor to any green group that is trying to stop it along our beautiful coastline. I know that what was done up north in closures was only partially right, but alot of it was pure stupidity and most of the decisions made were the decisions of a group of vegetarians that only know one thing.....how to upset fishermen/people. As far as I can see the future down this way looks as if it has already been set . VERY SIMILAR TO UP NORTH, but one thing that may have not been noted is called population...you know- numbers- voting numbers and which ever senator has the heart to understand our thoughts, about ours and their children/grandchildren and future generations who would love to be given the chance to have the lifestyle that we were given before this day in respects to fishing in our own waterways, to travel in our own waterways and to have the rights to go and catch our selves a feed and do a bit of that hunting instinct that is built into us (except for a few green eating morons, that probably eat meat and fish when nobody is looking). I personally don't care too much about my business, but I'll do what ever it takes to let my 5 children and 3 grandchildren enjoy the life fishing that my father gave to me and his father gave to him. As a whole we are not upset about new bag and size limits on fish and if anything we recommend it, but taking away the opportunity to go fishing in common areas that have produced fish and a healthy happy lifestyle is a no no....unless there is sufficient scientific detail to prove why.

I will tell you some points that I know about fishing- more then 80% of our customers go fishing to enjoy the serenity of it all (life is full of pressure and no free time these days) it truly has a great impact on the well being of people's mental health, and knowing that they can access all these great fishing spots and perhaps catch a fish or two helps even more to improve ones health and to distress.

Most of these customers also go fishing with their family/children to share what little time they have spare in their lives outside of excessive working times.

All of these customers would be in favour of bag limits on all fish species and new size limits as long as it was not overdone in a stupid way.

The customers of old, who were into massive bag catches of local species are a rare breed these days and most customers are probably more green then what you would think in regards

to releasing fish and only keeping a few fish to feed the family, this is perhaps the biggest change that I personally have seen in the last 30 years of dealing with every day normal fishermen, this has especially become noticeable to me in the last 10 years to now, and every year these people become to respect more and more of what beauty we have in marine life/fish and environment.

But most of all I can tell you that these people have rights and they all vote and there are lots and lots and lots of them, take away some of the opportunities above that they have, especially if it has no genuine scientific reason, then be prepared for a huge vote swing to those who implement it.... Last election the fishermen/people did not know or want to believe about any changes to their area, it is unfortunate that sometimes a change to the worse is what is needed to get people off their backsides and do something about it... but that is what they will do if the wrong changes happen to our beautiful area.... Moreton Bay, the islands adjacent and down to and including the Broadwater and Gold Coast Waterways.

I personally think that its about time the greens started thinking a bit more about the mental health and stress that every day people face and what we could do to help them and stop thinking about how much a fish hook hurts a fish and what fishing areas they can close to make these people suffer...It's about time to think about the majority feelings and not the minority ,

Please ...for all of us and future generations please.

I have spoken of this truly from my heart and I hope that it makes its presence felt in the right capable hands.....thankyou so much Senator McEwen.

Yours Faithfully,

Douglas John Burt.