

4th September 2008

The Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

By email to eca.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senators

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

My name is Stephen Evans. I enjoy the pleasures of fishing and watching my children fish. The amendments to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975, causes me great concern.

The idea of a criminal conviction for enjoying the relaxation of fishing and watching/tracking fish weather you are catching any or not I find rather alarming.

Many years ago in my capacity working for a overseas Taiwan based business I was commissioned to make a report on fishing and boating in British Columbia and Seattle region in relation to the recreational boating market.

A key issue and complaint was the over policing and over regulation from 3 different government departments from fisheries to coast guard and local authorities all carrying guns that made the boating fishing experience stressful instead of having the opposite effect.

I understand from the information I have read in the explanatory memorandum, fishing inspectors will be given the power to board a boat, search and go as far as frisk men and women, all for the sake of a few fish caught and have to go through a green zone to return home. That is ridiculous and not Australian.

How is the proof supplied they were caught out side of this zoned area?

I feel this is an unnecessary and intrusive act to be put forward let alone passed.

Acts like this will only widen the gap between Australians and how they feel about whats happening in their own country.

Australians will not tolerate fear based information and police state controls.

Please remember this important fact.

Many good hearted Australians who have learnt how to fish are actually real conservationists in their own right and to overregulate, overpolice fishing and boating is detrimental to Australians way of life.

There is no danger to the reef – it is dramatically underfished compared to every other tropical reef in the world

Politicians have a responsibility to all Australians and not just pressure groups who have their own twisted agenda.

Whatever happened to common sense?

I am the father of 5 well balanced kids brought up on "common sense ideals" and fishing and boating is generally one of the few freedoms left in Australia that keeps many people sane in such a hectic lifestyle where the word money means more than family.

Three convictions in ten years equates to a life time ban?

Please supply me with "any other" legislation that will lead to a life time ban for spending quality time fishing and boating with grandkids and children "whom are the future of this country"

See a smile to my sons face as I help him reel in his fish caught on his own line. How can fishing in the ocean compare to speeding on the roads, not receiving a lifetime ban be a totally different situation.

Did you realize the number of kids between 7-16 that are fishing on river banks in this country and learning about the environment and life skills and that fishing is by far the biggest recreation in this country and that all these kids will venture offshore in years to come and support so many factions of supply chain from boat manufactures to tackle stores.

We all don't live in the cities you know.

Once again "respectfully" I ask you to re think this legislation for everyones future living in this country.

Yours faithfully

Stephen C. Evans 6th generation Aussie