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AUSTRALIA**



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Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
Via email

Dear Senators

We thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this enquiry on the National Animal Welfare Bill 2005.

Recfish Australia is the peak national body for recreational and sport fishing representing the 3.3 million Australians who go fishing on a regular basis in an industry that is worth at least 1.8 billion dollars to the national economy. We are the voice of anglers to the Australian Government having been recognised in this capacity since 1983.

Having read the bill, introduced by the Democrats, we cannot support such a poorly articulated bill. Whilst the intent of some of the components of the bill has merit the reality is that the legal fraternity would twist and turn this to such an extent that the hugely popular pastime of recreational fishing, which millions of your constituents partake in, would be in jeopardy.

Overall the bill would appear to be totally unworkable and extremely restrictive across a range of industries involved with animals around Australia. Having been involved in the national workshop on the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy it would seem to us that this bill will do nothing more than run interference in a process that has widespread cooperation amongst a very broad range of industry groups and has been in development for the past 5 years..

However for the purposes of this submission our grave concern lies in Section 3 (b) (ii) of the draft bill. This is totally unacceptable and the passing of such draconian and emotive based legislation is not in the interests of recreational fishing and would be strongly opposed by us and the angling community at large.

The Australian Recreational and Sport Fishing Industry Confederation Inc.

Our mission – to represent and advocate the interests of recreational and sport fishers at a national level to ensure high-quality, enjoyable and ecologically sustainable fishing.

The approach and content of this private members bill from a member of the Democrats is in complete contrast to their publicly stated position on recreational fishing. In response to a question in a recent survey - *Would your party guarantee free and open access to recreational fishing for future generations?*

Conducted by a leading recreational fishing magazine publisher the Democrats in answering this question stated - *The Australian Democrats support continued recreational fishing, as part of an ecosystem-based management approach to the marine environment.*

We urge the Committee to strongly reject this private members bill.

Yours sincerely

John Harrison
Chief Executive Officer
29 November 2005

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