



AUSTRALIAN ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

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Premier of WA
Hon Alan Carpenter MLA
197 St George's Terrace,
Perth WA 6000

Dear Premier

Rottnest No Take Zone Proposals.

The Australian Anglers Association represents 26 recreational fishing clubs from Esperance to Northampton. The Association has a great interest in a sustainable and well managed fishery for the benefit of the entire community.

We are incensed at the misinformation and the manipulation by the Rottnest Island Authority in the development, content, documentation and public consultation of these proposals.

We submit that the only acceptable option is for these proposals in their current form to be abandoned.

Alternatives to achieve real benefits.

The Carpenter Government has an opportunity to take visionary steps to properly protect and manage the entire metro marine area. It also has an obligation to the fish, to the environment and to the present and future citizens of WA.

Changes at Rottnest must be properly integrated into much wider and effective management.

Urgent action should be taken to properly address the real threats in the entire greater metro area (at least Cape Bouvard to Moore River), and deliver real benefits.

This action must specifically and urgently address excessive fishing pressures and the depletion of some fish species.

These metro measures should include special attention to Rottnest.

Through that, benefits for Rottnest will be achieved which will be many times greater than can ever be achieved by the type of isolated actions in the Rottnest proposals.

Only by doing that proper metro wide management, can WA continue to claim to have one of the best managed fisheries in the world.

Flawed process used in the development of proposals.

I have attached a report by Norman Halse on the process by which these biased and flawed Rottnest proposals were developed. Norman was a member of the group which attempted to negotiate a strategy.

Norman is quite rightly extremely highly regarded by Government, organisations and the community for his knowledge, judgment, experience, abilities, contributions and above all, for his integrity and his reputation earned through decades of work in many different capacities.

Norman's report is an indictment of the abuse of the consultation process, and demonstrates that a proper outcome and true consensus was not and could never have been achieved.

Flawed proposals.

The previous Fisheries Minister, Kim Chance advised Parliament that there is no evidence that WA recreational anglers have compromised biodiversity.

Despite this, it is clear from Norman's report that the Rottnest proposals are based on an ideology of closed no take sanctuary areas as "the" solution, and ignore many other actions which would provide better protection against the real threats which exist.

It is also clear that the main outcomes of the proposals are resource and area reallocations to some users, and that the main losers are recreational anglers. There are no objectives or success and failure criteria against which the actual benefits can be assessed at any time in the future.

The Association, and we believe other recreational anglers, would not have any objection to the reservation of some areas at Rottnest for the exclusive use of divers, areas for research, etc.

But we demand that reallocation be negotiated openly and honestly, and not be misrepresented as "essential for preserving biodiversity" or attempting to justify them by weak claims of protecting fish, and by undeliverable promises of improved recreational fishing at some time in the future.

Flawed and biased documentation and consultation.

The public consultation process has been fatally compromised by the actions of the Rottnest Island Authority and their contractors.

The information provided to the public to allow them to be properly informed so that they can comment on the proposals is biased, emotive and misleading.

But the most serious error is that there are two very different versions of the document headed "Rottnest Island Draft Marine Management Strategy" issued to the public which are completely different in layout and contents and words and details. The two versions are the hard copy printed booklet and the PDF version downloaded from their web site.

Every public consultation, and the principles of open government and community consultation demand that information and documents available to different people contain identical information, so people get consistent information from the various sources and use that in their comments.

Without this consistency of information, comments received by any public comment process cannot be considered to be properly informed comments, and any analysis of these comments is completely invalid.

Many people do not have access to the Internet, and any claim that all the information is available on the RIA website is simply not realistic and acceptable. In any case, there is every expectation that documents which clearly appear to be one and the same thing, should actually be the same thing regardless of where they are obtained from.

There is absolutely no indication or expectation that there could be two so very different versions of this document.

Flawed feedback forms.

The questions on the feedback form and the operation of the online version appear to be deliberately designed to achieve responses which can be interpreted as majority support for the proposals.

The information provided and the questions are leading to a desired outcome. The online form does not allow for agreeing with an objective but disagreeing with the proposed method of achieving that.

The online form does not allow any editing or change of mind part way through the process of entering comments. Once a question is completed it is locked in for ever and there is no way of going back. Allowing a change of comments before final submission is fundamental and mandatory in a properly constructed online survey form, and this omission can only be deliberate.

The control of online submissions relies solely on the email address used. This completely ignores the reality that many families use one common email address, and would prevent different family members from commenting. It ignores that many other people have multiple email addresses which would allow them to submit comments more than once.

All of the above is either incredibly inept or deliberately designed to mislead and achieve a predetermined outcome of majority support for the proposals. It is inconceivable that this could have happened without explicit directions from the customer, Rottnest Island Authority. The source of these directions should be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Summary

These flawed Rottnest proposals should be abandoned and replaced by proper management of the entire metro marine area.

As you would appreciate, there is a great amount of detail behind the comments in this letter.

I would be very happy to demonstrate or provide more details of our concerns about the consultation and documentation or any other points to you or anyone you wish to nominate.

Please contact me on the above telephone number or email.

Yours sincerely



Terry Fuller
Secretary,
Australian Anglers Association (WA Division)

Letters also sent to

Hon. Jon Ford, Minister for Fisheries 9th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth 6005

Hon John Kobelke MLA, Minister for Sport and Recreation 20th Floor, 197 St George's Terrace Perth 6000

Hon Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Tourism 12th Floor Dumas House 2 Havelock Street West Perth 6005

Hon Mark McGowan MLA, Minister for the Environment 20th Floor, 197 St George's Terrace Perth 6000

Hon Eric Ripper MLA, Treasurer 28th Floor, 197 St George's Terrace Perth 6000

Hon Jim McGinty MLA 30th Floor, Allendale Square 77 St George's Terrace Perth 6000

Hon Kim Chance MLC, 11th Floor, Dumas House 2 Havelock Street West Perth 6005