

## Section 8

### Representing amateur fishers' interests

This section has questionable relevance to improving the management of coastal fisheries. It simply identifies that there will be costs, and that the Government will, for a short while, pay some of those costs.

Such costs appear to be significantly exceeded the funding offered in the discussion paper.

This section will be considered in detail in "The People's Submission."

Amateur fishers can and should have an important role in fisheries management, particularly by feeding their views into the decision-making process and in areas such as the development of fisheries plans.

Greater involvement by amateur fishers would mean more and better information on their views and objectives would be available to fisheries decision-makers. It would ensure that users were part of the development of long-term management strategies, and would help in the creation of ideas and policies acceptable to a large number of people.

An obvious problem with greater involvement by amateur fishers is that most participate on a voluntary basis and not through any professional role. Current organisations find it difficult to generate funding and to represent all amateur interests. Representing the broad public interest in amateur fishing will always be difficult, and assessing and taking account of such dispersed interests is often left to the Government.

Strengthening the voice of amateur fishers in the management of shared fisheries could be achieved through the use of professional representatives. This would enable more effective input by the amateur sector on the development of Fisheries Plans, discussions with the commercial sector on allocation, access to particular areas and the improvement of shared fisheries generally. Ultimately, such staff would be employed by a fully representative amateur fishing organisation. The following proposal would be an intermediate step toward this goal.

#### **Proposal: Creation of an Amateur Fishing Trust**

The trust would work with existing amateur fishing organisations to provide professional input into fisheries management; fund projects in line with the purpose of the trust; and promote the development of a representative, accountable and funded structure for the amateur fishing sector. Trustees would be appointed by the Minister and establishment trust funds would come from the Government and possibly other sources. The trust deed would require accountability to amateur fishers and would include public reporting obligations.

The staff of the trust could carry out roles including coordinating the views of amateur fishing organisations and communicating these to MFish and the Government, working with amateur fishing organisations on Fisheries Plans, helping those

organisations to become more representative, accountable, and self-funding. The trust could be a step on the way to the formation of a new national representative governance structure developed by the sector for itself. This might build on existing organisations or possibly subsume some, and would eventually represent all amateur fishers. [82]

[82] \$3 million over ten (or five) years

Obligations:

Engage in fisheries management processes for all fish stocks - could involve as many as 60 Fisheries Plans.

Two representatives for each plan, allowing for twenty days = 40 man days per plan x 60 = 2400 days.

This is in addition to attending stock assessment meetings, input and participation into other processes i.e. MPA proposals.

If recreational fishers are going to engage in the Fisheries Plans process, minimum resourcing would include:

Scientific advice  
Policy advice  
Legal advice.

These costs would be in addition to managing the Trust.

Funding for ongoing administration would need to be found.

This section has been proposed as if the recreational sector has paid representation then they can participate as an equal partner in the fishery with the obligations and constraints that requires.

This is focusing on the wrong issue; representation by itself will do little for the recreational sector.

What needs to be focused on is getting a number of governance processes operating effectively. To give just one example. It is no good having advocacy if the advocate does not know what the constituents want or think about an issue. Secondly the constituents can't provide meaningful advice unless they are informed and there is a loopback communication system. These governance issues are difficult but if they are not addressed there will be no support for recreational leaders and advocacy will be a 'lone voice' advocating a vested or biased position.