

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW "Promoting Sustainable Fishing"



NEWS BULLETIN 44 **Botany Bay Recreational Fishing Haven under Threat** **11th September 2008**

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW is asking recreational anglers who fish Botany Bay to be on high alert to report and photograph any inconsistencies they see with the dredging works for either the Port Botany Expansion Project or the Desalination Pipeline across the Bay.

Sediment plumes, silt curtains, and access obstructions will be under daily scrutiny as the RFA of NSW mobilises an estimated 1000 local fishers from its member groups, which include the Australian National Sportfishing Association – NSW Branch, NSW Fishing Clubs Association and the Underwater Skindivers and Fisherman's Association.

That will be 1000 pair of eyes watching and looking on, under and around the bay, ensuring that the NSW Government keeps its promise to protect this fragile eco system.

Both projects will be dredging through layers of contaminated sediments, which can contain heavy metals and acid sulphate soils, which have the potential to impact on the fish stocks within the Bay. Botany Bay is significant fishing area to thousands of recreational fishers, who have had monies from their licence fees used to buy out commercial fishing effort in Botany Bay, making it 'their' fishing haven.

The States Advisory Council of Recreational Fishing (ACoRF) has been requested on several occasions since 2004, to action with relevant Ministers and Government a suitable compensation package for the loss of access to the estimated 100+ hectares of productive fishing area in the bay. There has been no response to date. Recreation anglers would like to see habitat enhancement, fishing platforms, more boat ramps and projects to offset the loss of access.

Local alerts and information packages will be distributed to all fishing clubs who fish Botany Bay. A team of local club anglers from South Sydney Amateur Fishing Club will be coordinating the "unofficial" monitoring project asking anglers to report and take photos of sediment plumes or commercial work boats obstructing recreational boaters and anglers.

Some recent incidents are shown over, and this was just in the first few weeks of the projects, so yes there is a need for concern as the evidence mounts. Losing 100ha of fishing and boating area is bad enough, but additional environmental damage, loss of boat ramp facilities and loss of access to public pontoons will not be tolerated.

The Ports Minister **MUST** do a lot more than just replace a boat ramp that is being absorbed into the new Port.

Anglers or Boaters who encounter any problems with the Port expansion or Desalination Project are urged to contact the **RFA of NSW** at publicity.officer@rfansw.com.au in the first instance and then lodge an official complaint /question at the following project offices;

Port Botany Expansion email address is portbotany@bh.com.au or the

Toll-free number 1800 177 722

Desalination Project Toll free number 1800 685 833

With several years of work scheduled for the Bay, boaters and fishers are happy to co-exist with all concerned, however instances like these outlined over are not acceptable. Recreational anglers are already concerned with the severe lack of compensation and will not tolerate contractors dominating public pontoons or degradation of fish habitats and fish stocks. It is evident that recreational anglers and fish stocks will be the only losers when the works are completed. Recreational anglers are already seeing their \$4m investment being wilted away by the Government.

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Photo: 1 – Port expansion boat tied up to pontoon at Penrythn Road Boat Ramp, making the pontoon unusable to recreational anglers.



Photo: 2



Photo: 3



Photo: 4 – Photos 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate silt curtains failing only a few days after works have begun.

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