

The Hon Simon O'Brien
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
West Perth WA 6000

12 April 2016

Dear Mr O'Brien

Petition No 112 – Oppose Fish Traps for the Gascoyne

I refer to the above petition submitted on the 16th of March 2016.

I submit to the Committee that the Fish Trap proposal is an extremely unpopular one in the Gascoyne and in addition to the signatures submitted on the petition to the Legislative Council a further 1852 people have signed the on line petition at Change.org.

Fish traps are not acceptable for the Gascoyne Region due to the sensitive environment that they are proposed for, from Shark Bay to Coral Bay in coral and sea grass areas and two world heritage areas. Fish traps if lost will continue fishing “forever” and this alone poses an unacceptable environmental risk.

There was overwhelming public opposition to the proposal with over 250 submissions to Recfish against the proposal.

Any increased short term economic gain from the commercial fishing sector will be minimal in comparison with the loss from the tourism and recreational fishing sector.

Tourism is the largest industry in the Gascoyne and the reputation of our region as a pristine environmental area would be damaged by a Fish Trap Fishery.

The proposal allowed fish traps to be used in areas used by recreational fishers and in areas where fish spawn, meaning the potential obliteration of entire fish stocks.

The social impact of decimating recreational fishing areas through the use of fish traps will be significant as fishing is the most popular recreational activity in the Gascoyne, popular across every age group and culture we have in our region.



Vince Catania MLA

Member for North West Central

The use of Fish Traps could also have a detrimental impact on the fishing industry, where line caught fish is seen as sustainable and demands a premium. The use of Fish Traps could in fact reduce the value of fish caught from the Gascoyne as environmentally conscious consumers seek out line caught fish.

I would like the committee to also consider the haste with which this proposal was proposed and the limited amount of time allowed for public comment. The initial public comment period was only two weeks without the proposal even being listed on fisheries website.

While the comment period was duly extended by another two weeks after the public opposition, I believe that this was still an insufficient period to enable good public consultation on such a proposal.

I thank you for considering this submission as part of your investigations into this petition.

Yours sincerely



Vince Catania MLA
Member for North West Central