

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON RECREATIONAL MARINE FISHING IN TASMANIA MET AT STRAHAN, ON MONDAY, 14 JULY 2008.

Mr DON GRINING, AND Mr BILL GRINING, CITIZENS, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Gentlemen, thanks for being here. The hearings of this committee are all recorded and transcribed so we have a record of them. You are protected by parliamentary privilege, therefore you are at liberty to tell your story the way you see fit. I am interested to hear how you became aware that we were here today. Was it because of newspaper -

Mr BILL GRINING - I read it in the *Advocate* today. Otherwise I would not have known about it.

CHAIR - Going back some months, when we established the committee, we ran large advertisements in the three major newspapers to alert people to the fact that there an inquiry was about to commence and calling for submissions. On occasion it is always valuable for us to revisit the processes that we use to get information. It is interesting that you saw the piece in the newspaper.

Are you aware of the terms of our reference? You are probably not.

Mr BILL GRINING - No.

CHAIR - Let me read them to you. We have a whole broad brush of powers but we are inquiring particularly into the matters I will outline. Recreational marine fishing in Tasmania is the broad description, but with specific reference to firstly, the suitability of the current recreational and marine fishing body, TARFish. So we want to address our mind to the suitability of TARFish - whether it is the right model or not.

The second issue is the suitability of the current licensing arrangements for recreational fishing activities. We want to make some assessments about whether Tasmania's licensing regime is reasonable. We will be comparing our system of licensing to those of other places around Australia.

The third matter is the suitability of the recreational fishing licences trust fund, that is the Fishwise Fund, and the Fishwise Community Grants program. There are grants flowing from recreational fishing licence payments. The next matter is the socioeconomic impact on the State; we want to address our minds to the impact on both small and large communities of recreational fishing. That goes across a whole range of things from buying boats and trailers to tackle and the like, so there is some economic impact on the State. Then there is the biomass sustainability.

Finally, we always throw in an overarching matter, an all-encompassing one, of any other issues related to any of the above. So we can be as broad as we want or as narrow as we want. If you need to refer to any of those areas during your talk to us today, then

you are welcome to do so. Bill, if you were going to open, as a former chairman of TARFish, your comments would be most welcome on -

Mr BILL GRINING - Suitability.

CHAIR - Yes. I think that would be the term of reference which would best sit with your experience and involvement with recreational fishing, but if there are other matters there where you feel you have some expertise to comment on, then feel free to do so, please.

Mr BILL GRINING - Talking about the suitability of it, I think the makeup of it is wrong for the simple reason that they have a committee which, when I was on it there were representatives from different parts of Tasmania. But now there are not - not to my knowledge, anyway - because there was a bit of upheaval within TARFish and they cut off the representation at that time. The representation had to be passed by this committee in Hobart, and then anything they brought up, if the committee didn't like it, it just went out the door and didn't get to a vote. When I was there, each person from the different areas had a vote.

CHAIR - How many votes were there at that time?

Mr BILL GRINING - The north-east and north-west, west and south, and they were trying to get one for the east coast because the fellow in Hobart had responsibility for an area from right down at Dover and up the east coast - it was too big an area.

CHAIR - So your chairmanship was of which committee? Was it a subcommittee?

Mr BILL GRINING - Subcommittee - the west coast. From what I recollect, on the committee comprised a licensed abalone fisherman; an owner or representative of the fishing tackle; a representative of the divers - he had a dive shop - and another one who represented the charter boats. There were two or three of them from the same association that went into TARFish. That was at St Helens, and then there was another one representing the south.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - Two representing the same organisation.

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes, but just in a different organisation so that they came into it. That sort of tipped the scales a bit one way. They were all for getting rid of nets from recreational fishing; they got rid of one and now they are talking about trying to get rid of the last one. It is supposed to be for recreational fishermen but all the members of the new committee were on it before we were even elected as area representatives. They were put in by the Fisheries or the Government or someone - I don't know how - and the same people are still there. While ever it goes that way, the areas are not going to have a say in anything. If it doesn't suit the charter boat operators, that's it, it is just wiped.

Ms THORP - It's funny, in the minutes of the meetings from TARFish I notice that your role stopped - 'The west coast regional committee chair: Due to the adoption of the new rules as from July 2006 regional committees no longer existed, therefore Bill's role as a west coast regional chair ceased to exist'. They seem to have gone through systematically and all the committee chairs of the different regional groups came off and then in December 2006 regional representative members were put on.

Mr BILL GRINING - I don't know who.

Ms THORP - John Cleary, John Bryan and Lyndon Chipman as individual regional representatives.

Mr BILL GRINING - John Cleary? Brett Cleary is on the committee representing the sports fishermen.

Ms THORP - Must be a different one?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes, it must be.

Ms THORP - It is interesting that once there were committees and committee chairs sat on TARFish and then the rules changed and the regional committees went and three regional representatives were put on the board. It doesn't really explain why that change came about.

Mr BILL GRINING - My thoughts on it were that if we got the other representative from the east coast we would have had a controlling interest, but because it was even and the chairman voted on their side - he was from down there - they changed the rules. Also, at that last meeting there was a representative from St Helens who was supposed to represent the charter boats up there and apparently he wasn't even a member; he hadn't been a paid-up member for two years that we know of.

CHAIR - That is a matter that we'll investigate as a committee. We've had that suggestion made to us and we will investigate that with some thoroughness.

Mr BILL GRINING - That vote tipped the scales.

Ms THORP - But how did the change go? Getting rid of the regional committees, who made that decision?

Mr BILL GRINING - That was set up - I was elected at a public meeting in this room.

Ms THORP - But how did the rules change? Was it TARFish that changed the rules or were the rules changed by someone outside?

Mr BILL GRINING - No, the committee that is in Hobart now changed the rules.

Ms THORP - They changed the rules to get rid of the regional committees?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes - and took the vote away.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - And because they had the numbers they were able to get that motion through the meeting because they got together - and tell me if I am assuming something wrong - and, in your view, they had enough numbers to disband the regional representative groups?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

Ms THORP - And the SCBOOT.

Mr BILL GRINING - That is one of them; they got a representative on there.

Ms THORP - Was that vote needed to get the change of rules?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. There were two that didn't turn up at that meeting but their vote was taken over the phone.

Ms THORP - That's interesting.

CHAIR - Can you identify some dates for that process unfolding? If not now, we could get Colin to contact you and if you could provide those dates?

Ms THORP - They are here, Chair. It says 'Due to the adoption of new rules as from 19 July 2006, regional committees no longer existed.' That is in the TARFish minutes.

Mr BILL GRINING - I did get a letter from them to say thanks for my service but it was no longer required.

CHAIR - I want to come back in a moment to the process whereby you were elected chairman for this area. First of all, while we are on that track, you have just talked about the voting process which unfolded at that time. Who were the two people, if you are aware, who phoned in to that meeting to register their vote? Which organisations did they represent, if you are aware of that?

Mr BILL GRINING - One was the north representative; he changed his mind and changed his vote at the last minute. He was a representative; he was not on this committee.

CHAIR - So he originally did not support the change but then changed his mind and phoned in a vote?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. It could have been because he was lobbied a bit, because I had a lawyer ring me up when I was in Hobart to attend the meeting to try to get me to change my vote.

Ms THORP - Do you remember that fellow's name, the northern representative who changed his mind and voted over the phone.

Mr BILL GRINING - He had a business up there.

Ms THORP - Anthony Brock?

Mr BILL GRINING - That is him.

Ms THORP - He was the north-east one?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. At the time of that meeting he had been elected as the State chairman.

Ms THORP - Of TARFish?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes - the meeting before was when we had him elected.

CHAIR - Prior to phoning in his vote he was not of the view that the proposed change needed to proceed? Subsequent to that he changed his mind, phoned in his vote and voted in favour of that process change that Lin has referred to?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

Ms THORP - August 2005 - Anthony Brock was TARFish Chair.

Mr BILL GRINING - A couple of representatives from the north-west resigned over the way they thought things were being run.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - So they were disappointed, in your view, in the way the direction of the organisation was heading in not having regional representation on the committee?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. If you couldn't attend you could have a proxy. I know at one meeting a fellow from the north-west had rung up and he wanted a proxy. They would not accept it and yet someone couldn't attend from the east coast or wherever it was of this committee so someone was there and he took the proxy. He had it whereas the representative from the north-west was not accepted. It was not being run true to the rules. That is why I say the process is not suitable.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - The structure?

Mr BILL GRINING - In my view it should be recreational people. They are all making a living, more or less, out of -

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - It appears to you that the commercial arm of fishing seems to have more of a say about what happens to the recreational side of the fishing?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

CHAIR - Bill, you mentioned the delegate from the north-west whose proxy vote was not accepted via telephone; do you recall who person was?

Ms THORP - Alan Wolfe?

Mr BILL GRINING - Alan Wolfe, yes.

CHAIR - What process was used when you were elected - here in this very room?

Mr BILL GRINING - A public meeting was called at Strahan -

CHAIR - By TARFish?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. It was to replace the one they had before. It was explained that it was going to give the people representation. I was elected at the meeting - no-one else wanted the job.

Laughter.

Mr BILL GRINING - I had help from Brian.

CHAIR - How many people would have attended the public meeting?

Mr BILL GRINING - It think about 30-odd.

CHAIR - That is reasonably significant.

Mr BILL GRINING - We had some from Queenstown, even Trial Harbour.

CHAIR - Recreational fishing on the coast is, like most other communities, significant and important to general recreation in the area, but also contributes to the economy.

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

CHAIR - So no wonder significant numbers were interested to come to a meeting and have their say on a State body.

Mr BILL GRINING - Of course when their say was not recognised some of them did not come back.

CHAIR - What meeting processes were there once you were elected chairman? How often did a larger committee meet when you were representing this area? Where did you meet and were your costs covered?

Mr BILL GRINING - Brian covered the costs of our first couple of meetings then we used to meet on one of the tourist boats where there was no cost. That was not passed on to TARFish. The only costs they had were my expenses to travel to Hobart and accommodation.

CHAIR - How often did you meet in Hobart?

Mr BILL GRINING - It was six weeks and then it was two months - they were going to put it out further. As soon as I got back here I would call a meeting here.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - To discuss the outcomes of the meeting with TARFish?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. I would go to Fisheries directly and get one version and at the meeting down there you would get another version.

CHAIR - At those six-weekly or two-monthly meetings, did that bring together not only the regional representation - people such as you - but also the other people to whom you referred to at the start?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

CHAIR - The predominantly commercial representatives?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

CHAIR - So that was a fairly large group sitting around the meeting table, probably up to a dozen people or thereabouts?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes. At most meetings there was always someone there from the university to speak or different people talking about fishing in general.

CHAIR - Would it be possible to give some description of the purpose of those meetings?

Mr BILL GRINING - Anything brought up in the region was put before the full committee. If that was passed it was supposed to go further to Fisheries or whatever department was concerned.

CHAIR - Did you ever feel that the meeting deliberations were of benefit in addressing issues within the recreational fishing industry?

Mr BILL GRINING - I think in the first few meetings it was but in the outlying regions it did not matter much. It then came to the fore that everyone was looking after their own place.

CHAIR - Is that typical of all the regions, though, or was there some overarching control, for want of a better word, exercised by the commercial fishing interests on the group? That might be drawing a long bow but it is a thought that occurs to me.

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes, I think it was because I was told outside one of the meetings, the third or fourth-last meeting, by one of the fellows, a commercial bloke, 'At least we have one net; we will be working on the next one now'. That was because of what we call the rod and tackle crowd in the charter boats. They reckon that by catching the small fish inshore you are taking away the bait for the tuna and things like that - game fish.

CHAIR - Would the non-commercial interests in that meeting group have had the numbers if you stuck together as a group, or were the commercial interests always outnumbering the non-commercial interests?

Mr BILL GRINING - They were at one stage, until they changed the rules. We were having a bit of trouble keeping the north-west representative, Alan Wolfe. His secretary is carrying on. But then he changed jobs a couple of times. He finished at Savage River and at Queenstown, so he was out of the area. But they had a subcommittee at Smithton.

CHAIR - Please go back to the evidence which you were providing in terms of your recollections of what was happening at the time.

Mr BILL GRINING - Just on the construction of it, there were too many commercial people in it. I do not think TARFish could work and will not work if they keep it that way.

There is a new CEO now. He came to Zeehan a couple of months back and had a meeting.

CHAIR - Mark Nikolai; yes, we met with him once.

Mr BILL GRINING - I told him when I went up to Zeehan that it just would not work, not with that committee and with no voting powers for the regions.

CHAIR - How long were you on the group?

Mr BILL GRINING - About two-and-a-half years. Two years was what you were supposed to do and then you came up for re-election or whatever.

CHAIR - But at the end of that two-year period it was basically goodbye and disband?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

CHAIR - Nobody elected to take your place because of the change of process?

Mr BILL GRINING - No. From then on they were going to be a committee in Hobart. A representative from the regions was put up. They either accepted him or did not, and from then on I do not know what happened.

CHAIR - Is there anything else you wanted to raise?

Mr BILL GRINING - No, not really because I do not think it would ever work the way it was. It is not representing the whole of Tasmania because each section of Tasmania has different areas and different ways of fishing. What would work down there will not work up here.

CHAIR - Yes, there are varying conditions out there on the water.

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes, that is right. On the east coast or the south-east you could say it is not good here today, yet 20 miles further up the coast you are all right. But you cannot do it here. Also there are a lot of miners and fellows who work like that. When they get their time off the weather might not be any good for them, and the hours that they work regulates when they can fish.

Ms THORP - I'm just going through the rules of association and I'm a bit confused by them because there is reference in the rules to the fact that the chairs of the regional committees of this association be part of the organisation. It refers to a clause XX, which doesn't seem to be there and, again, rule XX which doesn't seem to be there either. On page 8 of the rules it says: 'Any discussion may be closed by a resolution ...' - what happens if it is not put, as happened with TARFish? I don't really understand why that is in there. The way it is reading to me is that there are people on TARFish who couldn't run it the way they way they wanted to because of the chairs of the regional committees being there so they changed the rules to exclude people. That's how it reads.

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes, that's exactly right.

Ms THORP - And then one of the fellows who changed his vote - the northern vote - a few weeks later was made chairman, so he was on in a different capacity, and then a couple of weeks after that he was off again.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - You believe that TARFish, given its structure now, is too much weighted towards the commercial arm of fishing over the recreational fisheries type of representative. Is that a fair understanding of what you think?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes, that's right. There is a representative there from the fishing tackle shops. He is only interested in the rod and reel part of it because that's where his sales are.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - So in your mind he's probably not going to have an objective view about netting, for instance?

Mr BILL GRINING - Yes.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - Mr Chairman, I've really appreciated the opportunity to speak with Bill and Don prior to the hearing.

CHAIR - Don, is there anything you want to make comment about?

Mr DON GRINING - My opinion about all the things you have been told is that there was constant discussion at the meetings. All the meetings were discussing that they didn't consider that the amateur fishermen were getting a fair crack of the whip, that they were being penalised by professional interests. I agree with Bill that it can't possibly work while you have these other people. It's for amateur fishing and you'd think it would be amateur fishing, not have representatives of all these other groups on there. I can't see how the fellow who's interested in rod and reel fishing, and nothing against rod and reel fishing, but he's not going to be interested in setting a net or going our craying et cetera. It was always a general consensus that the pro side of it had the upper hand on this major committee.

Mr BILL GRINING - They were representatives from different organisations - SCBOOT and two others I can't remember now - and the fishing tackle part of it too.

CHAIR - TARFish have a bulletin now. It comes to me in the mail. You can have a copy.

Mr BILL GRINING - He was going to post me one of these too, but I haven't got it.

CHAIR - He might have put a note in there that I should deliver it to you.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - Hand-delivered, Bill, from the south of the State.

CHAIR - I think we're about done there for that part of it, and thanks very much for not only taking the interest to come to the hearing but then further to that, to give some evidence, particularly based on your experience, Bill, as a former chairman. Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr BRIAN GARDINER WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Brian, welcome, and thanks for providing some time to enlighten us as to what your experience with the process of recreational fishing control has been.

Mr GARDINER - I haven't been involved as much as Mr Grining was, of course, so I came just as an observer, but I have been involved in recreational land use and fishing on the coast for many years. Basically, we always thought that the TARFish set-up was what we call a game of crow on the coast; it was set up to enhance the Government's push into completely controlling recreational fishing in the State. Mr Grining was elected at a public meeting which resulted from a meeting formed by the State Government body here; they were conducting a series of meetings throughout the State. They always came here.

It should be noted that the best attendances anywhere in the State were here on the west coast. We always had 30 or 40 when the rest of them had 10 or 15. They always said that we drew from Zeehan to Trial Harbour and Tullah, which we did, because we were supposed to, because we were supposed to be representing the west coast.

Mr Grining was elected at a public meeting. After that a small committee was elected. They held meetings, and I think - Mr Grining may correct me - in the course of Mr Grining's seat as our representative on TARFish, we met probably four or five times as the local group, on the heritage boat down here. We mainly met after Mr Grining had attended a meeting in Hobart, to get a report back and to put forward any other issues. Basically I know nothing at all about the inside detailed workings of TARFish; I just hear reports brought back by Bill. We have always had major problems on the coast in relation to having a small boat base. We have always been of the opinion that we do not get a fair go or fair hearing and the end result of when Bill was not put for TARFish reinforced that opinion for people on the west coast.

As a result of that, Mr Grining is interim chairman of a new committee being formed on the west coast called FishWest. I am chairman of the Strahan Consultative and Development Association Incorporated. The association was formed 12 months ago at a public meeting, which 120 people attended. The idea of the association was to give the coast a vital forum and a voice. A lot of decisions are being made around the coast and outside the coast and we are not being consulted about them. Subsequently I was elected interim chairman of that committee, and three months after that a main committee was formed and had become incorporated. Three months after that I was elected chairman of the newly incorporated body, which I am at the moment. There were five interim committee members elected and at the last public meeting there were nine permanent committee members elected and myself as chairman.

Subsequent to that again, two issues have been brought forward by the community, and one is cloud seeding. A subcommittee of our association has been formed for that. Mr Peter Schulze is the chairman of that subcommittee. We are in the process of forming FishWest, which is to be the recreational fishing arm of the west coast, and Mr Grining has agreed to be chairman of that subcommittee. The secretary of the subcommittee will be the original secretary of the TARFish representatives. We have not had a meeting as

yet. The main committee meets the month after next - we only meet every three months - to ratify the decisions before FishWest.

Hopefully that will give us the experience Mr Grining and his committee has into our main committee and hopefully subsequently give us a voice where it is needed in recreational fishing.

I do note and agree with Mr Grining that the concept on the coast is that we think that we need a body which is totally independent of government and totally independent of professional fishing. We cannot have a recreational fishing body if it is controlled by outside influences if the government line is being pushed, detrimental to what the local people want. I think that we need in this State a separate body, much like professional fishermen have, like the Professional Fishermen's Association, but a recreational fishermen's association, where it is totally separate of government and totally separate of professional fishing. It would have State representatives for each region and they would run recreational fishing. How much they would become involved in it - I am not a professional fisherman, I do a bit of recreational fishing but now I am involved with other things I do not get time to do it.

Basically, that is where I am coming from. I think I am quite safe in saying that we are a different type of fisherman on the west coast. On the east coast you can fish every day but here, on a day like this - Mr Grining will tell you he was going to go fishing today but he is here to make sure he can go fishing in the future, hopefully. If you look out the window you see Macquarie Harbour and say, 'Great spot, beautiful spot to go fishing', but in all the area there are only four access points. It is not as though you can get out and step on the shore anywhere and go fishing, you just cannot, and those access points are public boat ramps. Unless you have a boat you cannot fish in Macquarie Harbour, not like you can at the lakes. You cannot step out onto the shore here and cast a line and fly-fish anywhere, and this is what people tend to fail to realise. The weather is a major problem here; today you would say it isn't, but we get days like this. Because we catch a lot of fish outside the heads, we have to go outside the heads to fish and it is a dangerous area to fish.

As far as recreational fishing goes, we do not have a lot of fishermen. We do not have fly-fishermen. Some years ago when I was involved the Traditional Recreational Land Users Federation there was a push by the then statewide body to try to make Macquarie Harbour a rod and reel area where you could only fish by rod and reel like the Lakes. That was a big push then.

CHAIR - How long ago was that?

Mr GARDINER - Ten years ago.

CHAIR - Where was that push coming from, Brian?

Mr GARDINER - From what was then called it was the statewide fishing body, FACT - Freshwater Angling Council of Tasmania. They had members on TTRLUF, they had two members on TTRLUF and the concept then was that no netting should be allowed in Macquarie Harbour. There was a big push against nets at the time as well, particularly in Macquarie Harbour because it was a such an ideal area that it should be just rod and reel fishing.

CHAIR - The acronym TTRLUF what is that?

Mr GARDINER - Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land Users Federation a statewide body on recreational land usage. It still runs from Devonport. The west coast is still a member and I still maintain membership for the west coast. I was chairman of TTRLUF for two years and CEO for two years when it was formed.

CHAIR - Sorry, I interrupted your flow so please proceed.

Mr GARDINER - On netting, I am probably outside your terms of reference because I do not know what they are and, as I said, I do not know the workings of TARFish.

CHAIR - If I can give you a quick precis of that, I should have done that at the start.

We are inquiring broadly into recreational marine fishing in Tasmania but with a couple of specific focuses. One is the suitability of TARFish and another is the suitability of the current licensing arrangements which we have in the State, whether they might need some changes as recommended by this committee if that is the case. We are also looking at the suitability of the Fishwise Community Grants program because flowing from licences there is a pool of funds to fund TARFish but also to fund Fishwise Community Grants programs. The committee will also have a look at the socioeconomic impact on the State and consider the biomass sustainability and management. We can also look at anything else that we think we ought to address our minds to as we proceed. So it is fairly broad but with a specific focus clearly on recreational fishing.

Mr GARDINER - On recreational fishing in general: netting has always been a major problem in relation to rod and reel fishermen throughout the State. Over a period of years netting has gradually been decreased and we are probably the only State in Australia where we still allow recreational nets, I think. We have fought for many years here to maintain recreational fishing and in the last change to the rules and regulations we were the only ones who held night fishing throughout the State.

CHAIR - Netting?

Mr GARDINER - Yes, night netting throughout the State. The reason being some time ago there was a push from Fisheries then to cut out nets. Mr Alex Schaap, who was then just an officer in the Department of Fisheries, was commissioned to come through and do a survey at Macquarie Harbour. Our argument was that we get no day fish - you set a net in the Harbour all day and you get no day fish at all - we only get night fish.

He came through and Malcolm Park took him down the bay. As I said I was not prepared so I did not bring the report with me, but in that report they set 40 nets, I think it was. They got no day fish. Out of those 40 nets they set they got six species and 11 fish. I pull out that report every time I get into trouble in relation to netting throughout the State because it clearly shows that if they take away night netting on the west coast they may as well take away fishing because we do not catch fish in the day time, we get them only of a night time.

CHAIR - Brian, who produced that report?

Mr GARDINER - It was Fisheries. It was a report for Fisheries.

CHAIR - Okay, we will track that down.

Mr GARDINER - The Schaap report I think it was called. It would have been 15 years ago - time gets away from us, it is probably longer than that.

CHAIR - So that would have been Alex Schaap?

Mr GARDINER - Yes, it was Alex.

CHAIR - He has a different role these days; he is not involved in the fisheries management, I do not think.

Mr GARDINER - Isn't he? .

Ms THORP - He is Quarantine I think.

CHAIR - Okay, we will track that down but if we need a reference we might give you a call.

Mr GARDINER - Yes. It is a report worth looking at because it was quite comprehensive and it showed where they set. They set in all the places that we set, so it was quite interesting.

CHAIR - Based on that report, would your contention be that one size doesn't fit all in terms of management processes which might be introduced by the department?

Mr GARDINER - That is correct. I have always been of the opinion that different areas may need different rules. That is hard to bring, which I do realise, but what works on the east coast or the north coast does not work on the west coast.

CHAIR - We heard similar evidence to that 10 or 11 years ago when we were inquiring into the rock lobster quota process. The fact that here on the coast, because of the weather conditions, it was at least worthy of consideration for different processes to apply. So you're echoing that comment regarding recreational fishermen?

Mr GARDINER - Yes. I'm not sure whether it still applies now but for many years we were able to obtain a licence - I don't lobster fish but Bill or Don would probably know - which allowed us to take double our quota, so instead of 10 a day we could take 20 and be in possession of 20. That was on our Christmas break. We were in the mining community - it is not so relevant now - and most people took their break over the Christmas period when the mines shut down and that was the only time we got to go fishing. You obtained a special licence which allowed you to fish and take your extra quota for that 14-20 days. You had to apply for that licence.

CHAIR - It would be reasonable to presume that most recreational fishermen would take advantage of that and make that extra application, I presume?

Mr GARDINER - Only those who worked in the mines. I'm not sure what the figures were. I know of probably about 10 people here who used to. Quite a few from Queenstown used to who worked in the mines because they had shacks at The Heads, so they would take their break and go down and fish. I am not sure whether that still runs or not but

now, with the change in the working conditions and time factors of the mines where they have five days on and five days off, we get a lot more people starting to fish on the weekend. There are a lot more people coming down from the north-west coast to fish. Again, it is a double-edged sword. If you can get out on a good day you're guaranteed to catch your quota. It can't be done on the east coast where there are not many places where you can go out and are guaranteed to catch fish, so subsequently we get a lot of people coming in over the Christmas break, the Easter break and long weekends from the north-west coast to fish outside The Heads or in the harbour. Ideally we say we should lock them all out and just have the locals!

CHAIR - We will tell Peter Schulze that when we see him. He's not a local any more.

Mr GARDINER - No, he lives in Devonport now.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - In previous hearings, Brian, we have had some suggestions that all recreational fishing persons should hold a licence of some description to help gather the whole picture of how many people are involved in the industry. Do you have a view on that?

Mr GARDINER - The only ones who aren't licensed now are rod and reel, aren't they? If you are a recreational fisherman and you acquire nets, you need a licence; if you acquire rings or a pot, you need a licence. I wouldn't like to see the concept of catching fish without a licence fee being lost throughout the State.

Ms THORP - Like me catching a flathead every now and again.

Mr GARDINER - Yes, if you wanted to go and catch three or four flathead you shouldn't have to get a licence, but if you wanted to catch the quota, that is different. Say the scalefish limit was 15 flathead and you had no intention of going out and catching 15, you just went one or two days a year and only caught three or four, then probably you shouldn't need to be licensed. But if you wanted to go and catch 15 flathead every day then probably a licence fee should apply. That way you're not knocking out the Joe Bloggs who go one or twice a year who might take his boat out and throw a line over. You are not forcing him to get a licence. All these licence fees do in a lot of instances is force people to break the law. They say, 'I'm not getting a licence' and people who haven't had to get a licence for many years don't do so. What you are doing is forcing them to break the law.

Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER - I was interested in your comment - and it was something I perhaps should have asked Don and Bill earlier - that something had come up in previous evidence that you would get a better understanding of how many people are directly involved in recreational fishing if you had some sort of token licence system. I appreciate your comments.

CHAIR - Thank you, Brian. We appreciate your time.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.