



The Hon Andrew Stoner MP
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Trade and Investment
Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services

The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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BOOST TO REGIONAL NSW WITH DECENTRALISATION OF CRONULLA FISHERIES RESEARCH CENTRE

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will provide a significant boost to regional coastal NSW by decentralising key services and facilities of the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre as part of its Decade of Decentralisation election policy initiative, Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services Andrew Stoner and Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson announced today.

Mr Stoner said the NSW Liberals & Nationals have a proven track record in decentralisation.

“It was our landmark vision to relocate the former NSW Agriculture headquarters to Orange in 1991,” Mr Stoner said.

“This has been hailed as an unparalleled success with increased efficiencies, greater interaction with farmers, a higher understanding of the regional and rural environment, jobs and careers for the community, and a large and regular injection of salaries in the local economy.

“The NSW Government is determined to ensure regional NSW plays a bigger part than ever before in the future of this State.

“We will continue to work closely with local communities to ensure their priorities, preferences and local regional strengths are understood in policy-making.”

Katrina Hodgkinson said decentralisation can and does work when it is planned and implemented properly.

“It makes clear sense to re-position NSW’s fisheries specialists closer to where the vast majority of their work is – along the NSW coastline, such as on the Mid North Coast, the Central Coast and the South Coast,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

The Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre is an old facility.

“One of the downsides of the site is that it has limited access and constrained modernisation and expansion capacity. It is time to decentralise fisheries research and management to alternative and more suitable sites in coastal NSW,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Importantly, we need to ensure this program is conducted in a planned and strategic manner, and relies on consultation with regional communities and fisheries stakeholders.

“We are also determined to retain the valuable expertise and knowledge of the staff so Fisheries NSW continues to provide a valuable service.”

The Centre now has a total staff of 147 people who are engaged in fisheries research, commercial, recreational and indigenous fisheries licensing and management, and the corporate services area for the Department of Primary Industries.

While destinations are being finalised, the principles guiding the decentralisation program are:

- the Fisheries research and fishery management services capacity is maintained;
- there is a higher degree of interaction between commercial and recreational fishers, and researchers and managers;
- there is full utilisation of the NSW Fisheries’ existing facilities along the coast, and co-location with industry will occur where possible;
- facilities that are appropriate to the modern needs of staff and their work will be provided;
- there are suitable and accessible regional health, education and transport services; and
- the decentralisation process will be staged over the next 12 months and will be conducted with due and professional regard to the needs of staff

The NSW DPI Director General briefed the staff at the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre about the plan this morning. Appropriate support and assistance will be provided to staff for relocation, they will be fully informed and they will play an active role in the relocation planning and implementation process.

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Fisheries Facts and Figures:

Recreational fishing

- There are approximately 520,000 recreational fishing licence holders in NSW.
- Recreational fishing is valued at \$550 million in NSW. This is the estimated direct and indirect expenditure value generated from recreational fishers across NSW.
- Money raised from the recreational fishing fee is placed into the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust, which reinvests the funds into a range of worthwhile recreational fishing projects to improve recreational fishing. The Trust to date has funded more than \$90 million worth of projects

Commercial fishing

- There are around 1,100 commercial fishers in NSW.
- The NSW commercial fishing industry sells \$80 million worth of product (gross).
- Commercial fishing provides many social and economic benefits to regional communities
- Prawn trawling is the largest wild commercial fishery in NSW.

Aquaculture

- The NSW aquaculture industry was valued at \$53.9 million in 2009/2010
- Oysters are the main aquaculture industry in NSW