

20 April 2023

The Hon. Damien O'Connor
Minister for Trade and Export Growth
New Zealand Parliament
Parliament Buildings Wellington 6160

Via email d.oconnor@ministers.govt.nz

Discriminatory licence charges for Australian recreational fishers visiting New Zealand

Dear Minister,

The NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers is the peak body for Australian recreational freshwater fishing organisations in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. While our members' principal interest is recreational fishing in NSW and the ACT, travelling to fish in New Zealand is an activity that many Australian anglers frequently enjoy—and spend money on.

New Zealand freshwater angling is managed by the New Zealand Fish & Game Council (<https://fishandgame.org.nz/>) which comprises 12 regional councils. New Zealand Fish & Game Council is a public entity, not a government department and not funded by taxpayers. Nevertheless, the council has statutory powers and your New Zealand government has expectations that they oversee the effective management of the country's fish and game resources. See <https://fishandgame.org.nz/>.

Recent developments in New Zealand recreational fisheries management impact adversely on Australians travelling to New Zealand to fish: your New Zealand Fish & Game Council is proposing to introduce a 'Designated Waters Licence' which limits the number of days that Australian anglers can fish in some of the most popular regions, and which imposes an extra charge of \$35 to \$50 per day on those anglers. See <https://fishandgame.org.nz/freshwater-fishing-in-new-zealand/designated-waters-licence-proposal/>.

This, by the way, is on top of the discriminatory \$250 per year fishing licence fee already in force which is charged to Australian visitors, much higher than the \$145 charged to resident anglers.

Australian visitors would also be restricted to the number of licences they can purchase (3-6 per region per year).

Resident anglers will not be charged for Designated Waters Licences for their local region and only a nominal \$5 for other regions, and are free to fish at any time for unlimited days.

While the New Zealand Fish & Game Council website states 'Fish & Game New Zealand is seeking feedback from licence holders on a proposed new licence category' only 100 licence holders were individually invited to comment. There was no broad public consultation. (See Resident anglers: <https://www.research.net/r/designatedwaterlicencefeedback> and Non-resident anglers: <https://www.research.net/r/designated-waters-licence-feedback>).

This contravenes the 1983 New Zealand – Australia Closer Economic Relations agreement. <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade/free-trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements-in-force/nz-australia-closer-economic-relations-cer/cer-overview/>.

Under the terms of that agreement New Zealand and Australia agreed not to discriminate against each other's citizens for services. We contend that the provision of a fishing licence and a special Designated Waters Licence should be seen as services under that agreement.

We ask you to intervene in this matter so that New Zealand agencies do not discriminate against Australians for the provision of these services.

We also ask you to consider the impact that the proposed imposts will have on lucrative recreational fishing tourism into your country.

Yours faithfully
Peter Gibson
President, NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers