

My name is Chris Hyde

I am presently the owner/operator of a river prawn trawler used in in the Hunter River.

I am a fourth generation fisherman in this river and have had personal ties with the prawn trawl industry well before owning my first trawler at the age of 17 years in 1973.

At present my personal prawn fishing activities have been geared for the shallow waters of Fullerton Cove. Now affected within the contaminated zone of Williamtown RAAF base. My purpose built boat with shallow draft and low fuel consumption engine has been designed and built for this area.

Overall my boat and fishing business has mainly been created to benefit my future semi-retirement.

To me, prawn trawl fishing is a lifestyle of which is more than just a business (as like a man who grows up on the land continues to live the land).

My investment in boat, fishing business, prawn trawl endorsement shares and also purchasing of further shares to keep up with the future probable changes to Hunter River Prawn Trawl Fishery has cost in excess of \$110,000.

There are many fishermen who have been affected by the closure of Fullerton Cove and each one of us has a story to tell on how this closure does affect each one of us personally.

It is not just a case of having the rest of the river to work, as it will now be overcrowding other areas of the river, most fishermen have spread themselves around into their preferred fishing areas and all will now feel the impact of closing even one area.

The name and reputation of the quality of our product has been damaged to the point that no fishermen may find it possible to earn a living from the river for many years to come.

As far as giving a compensation of \$5,000 to fishermen who work within the closed area, I personally am not entitled, although I prawn trawl approx. 95% of my fishing within the now closed Fullerton Cove. I have other outside of fishing, business interests. So apparently I am not in the needy class of person. Although I still pay approx. \$4,000 per year to hold my fishing license entitlements.

Is this how the land owners within the RED ZONE will be dealt when some form of compensation is offered for their property? And will there be any consideration given to their present and preferred lifestyles?

I have no doubt that many fishermen will be forced out of work over this matter, due to the depreciation of prices for their product alone.

Many fishermen have invested their whole life into this industry and have invested their whole wealth also.

I beg the RAAF base to consider the dilemma that these persons are in. They do not catch a bus to work, they take their investments to work and their jobs are being made redundant.

Regards  
Chris Hyde