

SWRAA President's February Message

A new year has begun and if last year's indicators are to continue the same way, amateur fishers on the Macleay River can expect that the absence of fish at present to become the norm.

The year just gone has seen an almost complete absence of legal sized Bream, Luderick and Mulloway, just to name a couple of popular recreational species. While my statistics are from personal experience and anecdotal in nature, I know that the general consensus amongst anglers is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to catch a fish of legal size.

Present fishing practices which are sanctioned by the DPI are probably the most glaring culprits. Why these practices are allowed to continue in the Macleay River while they are banned in the Hastings, The Bellenger/Kalang and Lake Macquarie is a question that all residents in the Macleay region should be asking. What measures if any, are being taken by the DPI to ensure that fish stocks are remaining healthy?

Every homeowner and business owner, whether they realise it or not, has a vested interest in seeing the Macleay's fish populations return to a healthy and sustainable level. One of the major reasons that tourists and new residents flocked to this area was because the Macleay was a fishing Mecca. This, sadly, is no longer the case and the river is becoming little more than a drain.

The factors that enabled the river to be so productive in the past are still present. Things like water quality, flow rates and baseline nutrients are still able to contribute to it's health. What is glaringly absent is effective management of the resource.

SWRAA has at it's core a wish to improve fish stocks in the river and the surrounding beaches and headlands. We welcome submissions and input from all stakeholders in the area. A concentrated effort by all those with a vested interest will eventually result in the governing bodies having to admit their liability in the degradation of our beautiful River. Please do not hesitate to contact the SWRAA in regard to these matters. The SWR Country Club where we meet monthly is a great focal hub for us to coordinate our efforts.

Apathy and inaction has got us to the position we are in today. We must do better!,

Thankyou

Damien Ashley President of SWRAA.