

Chairman's Report – AAT 2008

"Through the representation of all anglers, ensure the realisation and maintenance of the full potential of the fishery."

This, I believe is how AAT is growing and developing.

Anglers Alliance of Tasmania has matured wisely over the last year. We have managed change within our organization and developed into a stronger group. The most important thing within an organization is 'openness to change' and we must ensure we don't just keep doing things as we did in the past. This will be the very reason AAT grows and strengthens.

Loss of the Northern Tasmanian Fisheries Association was sad for an Association that had been in existence since 1898. But we have changed to accommodate this loss.

The resignation by the North Western Association from AAT at the AGM 2007 was also disappointing.

Rather than weaken AAT though it has made us stronger. Representation is robust and it is good to see open forums where clubs take the opportunity to attend meetings, despite not having voting options. AAT has welcomed discussion – and invited input without fear or favor - from many sources. Wise counsel has come from many anglers – as well as non anglers.

It is also interesting to note on the voting point in that over the last year not one decision has been voted on. Consensus has been my goal and meetings, whilst rigorously structured, are not so formal as to stifle discussion.

Discussion has, at times been robust, because we all desire a better and improving fishery. I believe this simple principal strongly guides our outcomes.

Water, the use of, the lack of, and the conflict within the Minister's portfolio that encompasses primary industry, power generation and the trout fishery has drawn huge interest, many letters, and a lot of time. It will remain a very difficult issue – only solved by an excess of rain.

Our meetings with the Minister have not been as productive as we might have liked, but that is mostly because of the conflicts already mentioned within his portfolios.

However the Minister does remain fully supportive of AAT.

Likewise, the IFS is a strong ally, as is AAT of IFS.

We are lucky in Tasmania to be able to access most levels of bureaucracy and Government. This is extraordinarily difficult in other States and almost impossible in other places in the World. Consequently we can get things done, get a straight answer to a difficult question quickly, or understand the reasons why things are done, or not done. It often takes just one phone call.

Understanding angling issues is always difficult. From the grass roots, to Clubs and Associations – all have valuable input and I believe AAT represents all levels of angling and anglers very well. I have heard complaints from some that say we don't represent all anglers, but these people are often just whingers who do nothing and contribute nothing. However, we are still happy to hear from them and take their advice.

Projects by AAT - these will be outline fully in the General Meeting which follows this AGM.

Access

One of the longest running issues for all anglers in Tasmania. The Access Plan is a detailed plan for improved access, signage, interpretation and information on Tasmania's rivers and lakes. This was one of the NWFA's primary concerns regarding Tasmania's fishery.

Recreational Fisheries Development Plan

A plan for improving fishing for all anglers. Whilst some anglers have some concerns regarding the high profile Tourism has within this plan it will bring improvement for all. The RFDP is developing extremely well.

Didymo Awareness

Another project that is ongoing and of huge importance to Tasmania.

Junior Angler Education

An important part of building good fishing practices and understanding of future anglers.

I express huge thanks to;

Terry Byard – Deputy Chair. His work with the Southern Association is enormous and his attention to water issues has been particularly helpful for AAT. Thank you Terry.

Roger Butler – Treasurer. Managing a huge task with numerous grants, GST issues and a number of projects has been done with vigor and dedication. Thank you Roger.

Dennis Edwards – Secretary. Dennis came to the secretary's job with a strong conviction and he has contributed willingly. His attention to detail and speed with minutes is welcomed and appreciated. Thank you Dennis.

Helene Stewart – Executive Assistant. Helene's help to AAT has been a developing role that has been smooth and totally glitch free. Her help has mainly been to the Executive Officer and I thank Helene for that.

Richard Dax – Executive Officer. A happy and determined man, Richard lives and breathes trout and Anglers Alliance. His strength in building networks and alliances has served AAT more than most will know. Projects run seamlessly and Richard seems to have a friend, or associate in every Government department – usually they are running it. I applaud and thank Richard and wish him well.

In my role as Chair over the last two years I have tried to mediate the Alliance, rather than direct it. AAT has grown and matured in the most rewarding way. We don't agree on all things, but we all love trout. Most importantly I believe we all respect each others rights to a view and we all leave as friends.

Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress. Mahatma Gandhi

Mike Stevens