

Our Ref: BNE210-2
BNE2004/7636
E/04/01574

Your Ref: 305-04

25 June 2004

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 23 April 2004 forwarding a copy of a petition received by the House on 22 April 2004 regarding a closure to fishing in Cooper Creek.

Cooper Creek is within the Daintree National Park and Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The closure of Cooper Creek to fishing was the result of a consultative decision-making process that involved negotiations between Government Agencies, scientists and independent organisations (Sunfish) representing amateur anglers. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries scientific technical committee recommended that fishing be excluded from 17 listed estuaries and streams as reference areas, within 2000 kilometres of north Queensland coastline. Of these 17, Cooper Creek was recognised for its "outstanding value". Cooper Creek is, therefore, set aside for "nature conservation and fisheries management". This has been in place since 1997 (Nature Conservation Regulations Schedule 2 amendment 1997).

Cooper Creek falls within the boundary of the Daintree National Park and thereby provides a mechanism for "nature conservation and fisheries management" under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Local anglers have access to many beaches, creeks and rivers in the near vicinity and closure of Cooper Creek is unlikely to have severely disadvantaged the local community.

Consequently, the sand spit at Cooper Creek is not available for reopening to fishing.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

JOHN MICKEL
Minister for Environment