Fishing Industry Research and Development Bill 1987

Date introduced: 18 March 1987
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. John Kerin, M.P., Minister for Primary Industry

Digest of Bill

Purpose
To make provision for the funding and administration of fisheries research and development, and to improve the current regulatory system.

Background
The Bill replaces the Fishing Industry Research Act 1969, whose provisions were not adequate for the modern requirements of the industry, and government policy on national fisheries.

In November 1979 a Federal Parliamentary Committee - the then Senate Standing Committee on Trade and Commerce - commenced a major inquiry into the Australian fishing industry. Three years later the Report of this inquiry was released. Its major recommendation was that the Federal, State and Territory Governments should develop and implement a national fisheries policy for the utilisation, management and conservation of Australia’s fisheries resources. This recommendation has been implemented by the convening of the Australian Fisheries Conference in Canberra from 31 January to 2 February 1985. The conference was attended by representatives from the industry and Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory Governments. The resolutions covered the objectives and strategies for the rational utilisation and guidelines for the management and conservation of those reserves. They also identified priority areas for research funded by the Fishing Industry Research Trust Account (see below) - fisheries management, aquaculture, development, increased utilisation of resources, marketing of Australian fish, training and extension areas.

These objectives and guidelines provide the basis of the main provisions of this Bill.

Main Provisions
The objects of the Bill are contained in clause 3 and include to identify the areas of research and development relevant to the fishing industry; improve the efficiency
The Fishing Industry Research and Development Council (the Council) will be established by clause 5.

The functions of the Council are listed in clause 6 and include to prepare research and development plans and annual research programs; to approve payments out of the Trust Fund and to monitor and report on projects funded by the Trust Fund.

Proposed Division 2 of Part II deals with the constitution of the Council (a Chairperson, a government member and between three and seven other members-clause 8) and its meetings. The proposed Division contains the usual clauses relating to appointment, termination, disclosure of interests etc.

Clause 22 deals with research and development plans. For each planning period (i.e. the five year period commencing on 1 July following the commencement of this Bill and each subsequent five year period) the Council is to prepare a research and development plan setting out the broad objectives for the period and the policies and strategies to be used to achieve those objectives. The Council is to consult with the Australian Fisheries Council and the National Fishing Industry Council before preparing or revising a plan.

Annual research and development programs setting out the type of research and development that it is proposed to finance from the Trust Fund and the estimated cost of those projects are to be developed. An annual program will have no effect until approved by the Minister (clause 23).

Proposed Division III deals with the Fishing Industry Research and Development Trust Fund. The Trust Fund will be established by clause 30 and is to consist of funds from approved State research funds and an equal amount from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to a maximum of 1% of the gross value of production of the industry (clause 33). Proceeds from the sale of property and interest are also to be credited to the Trust Fund (clause 34).

Payments out of the Trust Fund may be made to meet the Council's or Selection Committees liabilities, for renumeration or for the costs of managing the Trust Fund (clause 35).

The Fishing Industry Research and Development Council Selection Committee will be established by proposed Part IV to select people for nomination to the Council.

Clause 63 will allow the Council to enter into agreements for the carrying out of fisheries research and development on behalf of the Commonwealth.

For further information, if required, contact the Economics and Commerce Group.
This Digest does not have any official legal status. Other sources should be consulted to determine the subsequent official status of the Bill.

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