

The farmers and the fish

A simple analogy of the farmers with the fish sums up sustainability under FQ.

Farmers A and B decide to get out of farming cattle and decide to farm fish.

Both put in 52 breeding pairs of the same fish specie on their neighbouring properties with identical dams.

This particular fish has 2 offspring per year.

After 1 week farmer A needs a bit of cash and nets out and sells 51 pairs of fish.

After a year both farmers harvest half their fish. Farmer A takes and sells 2 fish. Farmer B takes and sells 104 fish.

Every year thereafter farmer A can take and sell 2 fish per year and farmer B can take and sell 104 fish.

After the second year Fisheries Qld start some studies on both farms. These studies last for 10 years and cost a lot of money and provided doctorate qualifications for a number of staff. The studies concluded that **both farmers were fishing sustainably.**

Both Farmers have another lightbulb moment. They decide to offer recreational catch and release fishing in their dams. After similar extensive marketing by both, they have a steady stream of anglers turning up. Unfortunately after a few weeks, word gets out that most of the anglers fishing in farmer A's dam are catching very little while at farmer B's dam, anglers are usually assured of catching fish on a regular basis. Anglers continue to drive past farmer A and pay farmer B for the privilege of fishing in his dam.

This is effectively what is happening in Qld as tourist anglers drive and fly past on their way to the Northern Territory.

As anglers, we want to participate in scenario B.

We are arguing for sensible resource allocation and a fishery that provides an average angler a fair and reasonable chance and expectation of being able to catch a feed. That will require some resource re-allocation from commercial nets to angler lines as well as net free areas.

The debate on "sustainability" has been tied up for decades on technicalities while the fair allocation debate gets ignored.