



The Honorable Minister
Norman Moore
Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Fisheries; Electoral Affairs.

Dear Minister,

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of the Koi Society of West Australia.

You may or may not be aware that in late 2005 the then Federal Minister with responsibility for the Fisheries portfolio released with some fanfare a document entitled, “A Strategic Approach to the Management of Ornamental Fish in Australia – Consultation Draft”.

This process came as a complete surprise to us, we had no knowledge that such a review was being undertaken. We were advised that the Pet Association of Australia was looking after our interests. A commercial organization looking after the interests of hobbyists without on any occasion asking them what their needs might be!

As a result of our omission, the Koi Societies of Australia combined their efforts. In a comprehensive and constructive manner, we made representation through a document and DVD’s to the then Working Group. We did get acknowledgement of our submission and verbal communication from the then Chairman that consideration of our needs as a hobby was not well understood by the Committee. We were assured that our submission would assist greatly in their deliberations.

In a letter from the then Chairman (copy attached) of the Working Group convened to consider the draft conclusions and presumable change or implement the findings we were advised

“There was also broad agreement that management was best achieved by a comprehensive communication/education network leading to effective self-regulation for hobbyists, whilst acknowledging that managing importers, wholesalers and aquaculturists may require a more formal regulatory framework.”

and further,

Many of the submissions expressed concern about koi carp (i.e. *Cyprinus carpio*) being on the Proposed Noxious Fish Species list. The Group acknowledged the fact

that, although koi carp are technically the same species as noxious “European” carp, domesticated koi comprise the basis for a widespread industry embracing many hobbyists and several koi-specific Societies and Groups. Hence, the Group recommended that, whereas “Common” or “European” carp should remain on the noxious species list, consideration should be given to placing “Domesticated Koi” carp on the grey species list. When the review of species on the grey species list occurs, an effective and agreed method of distinguishing or separating koi from common carp will have to be developed. This process will involve consultation with Koi Groups/Producers.

Our membership, over 300 strong in W.A., is mainly made up of family memberships. We provide education through our meetings to those who wish to keep domestic koi fish. Our extensive web site has an Environmental Mission Statement, we print in Mandarin and Vietnamese and we provide a service to pick up unwanted fish from any member of the public in W.A. Rather than have members of the public dump fish in local lakes.

We continue to educate and at a time when leaders in government are bemoaning the breakdown of family values; as our youth appear to be getting more destructive and aggressive I can assure the Minister that part of the solution lies in hobbies and clubs such as our own. Yes these are ‘old fashioned values’ but values which are fashioned through young people being engaged with older people in hobbies of their choice.

Minister, we started with a well intentioned Steering Committee/Working Committee with terms of reference to provide strategic management of ornamental fish in Australia. This was to be achieved through a consultative process. Initially we had no representation but we were appreciative of the response to our submission by the then Chairman of the Working Group.

Alas since Feb 2006 little progress has been made. The Chairman and a number of his Working Committee members have changed out. Our submission, recognized at the time for its constructive content has not been read by these new members. Nor I suspect has the return letter to the Koi Societies from the then Chairman. I stress I do not believe this to be the fault of those now representing us, rather it is simply the lack of process continuity.

Is the Minister aware that the last meeting in Canberra of the ‘Working Committee’, our West Australian Fisheries representative was not invited! How can this be?

Consider this please:-

I have personally asked the question of Fisheries, ‘do domestic koi fish cause any concern to you, have you any documented occurrences of damage caused by domestic koi to our waterways’. NO was the answer to both these questions.

Yet a risk assessment has not been conducted on domestic koi fish, they remain on the ‘noxious fish list’ and if they have not done any damage in W.A. then why would they not be considered to be placed on the so called ‘grey list’? We have put this argument previously and yet after 2 years, nothing....

We maintain our position that domestic koi fish cause no appreciable risk to the W.A. environment.

What is it we would like to see happen from here:-

1. We wish our W.A. Fisheries representative to be present at all 'Working Group Meetings' in Canberra or where ever.
2. We wish to be communicated to by our Government representative on past, current and all future meetings, agreed forward strategy and discussions
3. As a minimum we wish domestic koi to be independently risk assessed under W.A. conditions, as a matter of urgency. The then Chairman of the Working Committee stated in a letter to us over 2years ago that 'domesticated koi would be considered for the 'Grey List' (see attached letter).
4. We wish to have open discussion with the relevant Government Departments on any legislation currently being conceived. Our belief is that such legislation is being drafted which will restrict or make it illegal to move koi fish interstate. As we are not allowed to bring fish in from overseas (our Society's policy is to support this Government position) then restricting our gene pool within Australia will eventually kill off our hobby.
5. We wish to be given the opportunity to form a productive relationship with relevant W.A. Government Departments. We are currently the only people educating the public on domestic koi fish and the greater environment. We have some very professional people in our organization who could be very useful to resource strapped Government Departments. The challenge is to work together.

Koi have been in this State from the early 60's some say much longer. They are not a new species to W.A and we believe there is no record of environmental damaged caused by them. The Koi Society has been in existence and growing for over 20 years.

Minister, on behalf of the Koi Society of W.A. and its Branches we thank you for your time and look forward to a response in due course.

Kind Regards,

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