

## Memories from the past of ANSA in PNG

I recently received an email via the ANSA website from a Peter Power inquiring about a National Lurecasting Record awarded to his mother (Mary Power) in 1980 for a 4.62 kg Papuan Black Bass captured on 6kg on the Aroa River in Papua New Guinea.

Peter had his mother's original record certificate but could find no trace of the record on the ANSA national record chart or Papuan Black Bass on the ANSA eligible species list.

After a bit of digging it was established that Peter's parents (John and Mary Power) were stationed in Port Moresby from 1969 through to the early 80's and were members of the Boroko RSL Fishing club which was a popular venue for Australian expatriates and which no doubt included some very enthusiastic ANSA members who were keen to introduce ANSA to the region. It is believed the club became affiliated with ANSA early 1980.

A lot of fishing was done by the Aussie expats on several rubber plantations located 100 km up the west coast adjacent to the Aroa river, a fast flowing tidal river which flowed into the Galley Reach tidal estuary system which was teeming with fish, especially Black Bass.

According to Peter his father used to keep a supply of hooks and packets of cigarettes on board the family tinny which would be swapped with the local people for snagged and discarded fishing lures which they had found during the dry season when the river levels would drop significantly. Peter reckons his mother was a very capable sportfisher and used to catch more fish than the male club members.

I did manage to track down a couple of ANSA Rule Books from the 1980's and sure enough the Papuan Black Bass was listed as an eligible species and the boundaries for eligible captures included any part of Australia, Australian Territories, Dependancies, Papua New Guinea and or their territorial waters.

With self government for PNG occurring in the mid 70's the Australian presence in the Territory steadily wound down and by the early 90's all references to Papua New Guinea and the Papuan Black Bass had disappeared from the ANSA Rule Book and the record chart. Presumably the Boroko Fishing Club and its affiliation with ANSA had come to an end. The last reference to a Papuan Black Bass was in the 1991 Record Chart which had J Kinkade listed as the holder of a Lure Casting Record for his 17.5kg capture on 6kg on the Laloki River on 18 Sept 1981.

Peter's parents retired to Hull Heads near Tully in Queensland in 1982 and continued to fish for many years. Mary Power is now 92.

Peter did send me the original of the Record certificate awarded to his mother which incidently was signed by the legendary Dick Lewers as National President and Pat Hunter as National Secretary. Peter also sent an extract from the Boroko RSL Newsletter which features a reference to Mary's capture written by Neil Handsley the then club's recorder.

It was a great pleasure to delve into the past and learn about the experiences of Peter's parents and their time in PNG which must have been a great adventure with opportunity to fish in such remote and bountiful fishing locations and of the historic connection between ANSA and the Australian contingent stationed in Papua new Guinea over those transformative years.

Spare a few minutes to read over the historic material that Peter sent to me - its a nostalgic snapshot of ANSA's past links with PNG.

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