

**Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter  
Management Advisory Committee**

**Outcomes from the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting - Thursday 9 November 2006**

***Apologies***

Ms Sanchia Glaskin, Mr Peter Sayre

***Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting***

The Committee accepted the outcomes as a true and accurate record of discussions from the 9<sup>th</sup> MERCMAC meeting, held 16 March 2006. **Moved:** Jim Booth. **Seconded:** Ann Garard.

**Carried**

***Business arising from the minutes***

- Meeting travel rates

The Committee requested a formal response from the Department to clarify ongoing travel related issues for Council and Committee meetings (i.e. official business rate/casual rate/Australian Taxation Office rate).

*Draft briefing prepared.*

**1. Appointment of staff and Committee members**

For information. No recommendations or action items.

**2. Marine Parks update**

Information noted. No recommendations.

**Action item**

Forward a copy of Andrew Read's presentation to the Committee, for members' information only.

*Completed.*

**Action item**

Distribute outcomes from the Marine Parks workshop (November 2006, Brisbane, Queensland) to members.

**3. Recreational Fishing Saltwater and Charter Fishing Trust Fund Update**

NSW DPI provided an overview of the trust funded issues. There is approximately \$170,000 in the Charter Fishing Trust Fund to allocate to new programs. The Committee was advised that there may be an opportunity for dollar for dollar funding from the Saltwater Trust, if a proposal for funding also benefits recreational fishing.

Considering there are funds available in the Trust, it was suggested that there be no increase in Charter Boat management fees in the near future.

Information noted.

***Motion:***

DPI to investigate the proposal for an economic survey of the NSW Charter Fishing Industry.

**Moved:** David Cribb. **Seconded:** Ann Garard. **Carried.**

#### **4. Recreational Fisheries Management Update**

NSW DPI provided an overview of recreational issues, such as the re-deployment of Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) and proposal for offshore artificial reefs. .

Applications for the Commonwealth Community Grants Program close in January 2007. The Department offered assistance with any ideas for funding applications that committee members may have.

Information noted.

#### ***Motion:***

DPI to liaise with members and investigate opportunities for funding from the Commonwealth Community Grants program. **Moved:** Jim Booth. **Seconded:** Mark Flanagan. **Carried.**

#### **5. Grey Nurse Shark/Gemfish update**

Mr Peter Gallagher, Senior Conservation Manager – Threatened Species, provided an update on the process relating to the Fisheries Scientific Committee's proposal to list Gemfish as an endangered species. Submissions are currently being considered by the FSC. Once a recommendation is made by the FSC, the Minister has two months to request further consideration before the FSC's final determination is made.

It was noted that the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing has recommended that the recreational boat limit on 10 gemfish be removed.

Mr Justin Gilligan, Research Technician, provided a presentation on the scientific information that has been collected to date from the Grey Nurse Shark research program.

Information noted. No recommendations.

#### **Action item**

Forward a copy of Peter Gallagher's and Justin Gilligan's presentations to the Committee, for members' information only.

*Completed.*

#### **6. Compliance Update**

Tony Andrews, Manager, Special Operations, provided the Committee with an update on recent charter/recreational fishing related compliance issues. Overall, the charter industry is highly cooperative and compliant with fisheries officers and regulations. Concern was raised by members about the apparent lack of action being taken by fisheries officers on Queensland and other NSW based illegal charter operators operating in NSW waters. Information noted.

#### **Action item**

The Chair write to the Minister to express ongoing concerns about illegal operators and request further compliance action and, if possible, legislative change to enable greater compliance capabilities in relation to illegal charter operators.

*Completed.*

#### **7. Industry Issues**

##### *Marine Parks*

Addressed in agenda item 2.

*NSW Maritime proposal regarding Part D of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels.*

Two press releases that outline recent decisions regarding this issue were distributed to the Committee for information. Members expressed strong support for the decisions made.

### **Action item**

The Chair write to Minister Macdonald to thank him and his colleagues (the Minister for Ports and Waterways during the consultation phase - the Hon. Eric Roozendaal and the Hon. Joseph Tripodi) for their input into negotiations regarding Part D of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels.

*Completed.*

### *Mutilation of fish*

In response to ongoing industry requests, DPI Compliance Operations have adopted a policy which provides for greater flexibility for licensed charter boat operators relating to the mutilation of fish. Currently clause 131 of the *Fisheries Management General Regulation 2002* restricts a person from mutilating any fish of a class specified in clause 9 (Prohibited size fish) in or on or adjacent to any waters in any manner other than by gutting or by removing the gills or scales.

The policy enables the mutilation (filleting) of fish with prescribed size limits by charter boat operators in accordance with the following conditions:-

1. A client while on the boat must have taken the fish.
2. The licensed charter fishing boat must be tied up at its mooring/berth or at the place where it usually embarks and disembarks clients.

The policy will be applied over a 12 month trial period commencing 20 November 2006.

This policy does not affect any laws or ordinances governing commercial vessel berthing or passenger disembarking at public structures nor does it affect any laws relating to pollution of waters.

The intention of this policy is to assist operators of licensed charter fishing boats to provide their clients with a service assisting in the provision of a quality recreational fishing experience.

### *CFB Consolidated logbooks*

The department is investigating an observer program to record catch information. This may result in an even more simplified logbook program for operators. Further details will be brought to the next meeting.

Information noted. No recommendations.

### *Catch and Effort Working Group*

Members were asked to consult with operators to see if there are any species that should be investigated by the Department's Catch and Effort Working Group. Suggestions to be discussed at the next meeting.

Information noted. No recommendations.

### *Variations in CFB numbers*

The Committee was again informed as to why a vessel's NSW DPI Charter Fishing Boat (CFB) number may vary to the permit number issued by NSW Maritime Authority.

Information noted. No recommendations

### *Industry Development issues*

- *Minimum capacity for licensed NSW charter fishing boats*

The Committee considered a proposal to amend clause 311 of the *Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2002*, to introduce a minimum capacity of 4 persons (3 passengers and 1 crew) for licensed NSW charter fishing boats that are in appropriate NSW Maritime Authority survey. Members discussed and acknowledged concerns from industry that operations of less than four persons are not viable, as costs associated with CFB businesses (i.e. NSW Maritime survey certification and DPI exemption certificates) are based on a minimum of four persons.

***Motion:***

The Committee unanimously supported the proposed regulatory amendment to introduce a minimum capacity of four persons. **Moved:** Jim Booth. **Seconded:** Mark Flanagan. **Carried.** *Regulation amendment has been prepared – process progressing.*

***Status of non-transferable CFB licences***

The Committee was uncertain on what should be done with non-transferable charter boat licences.

**Action item**

The Department to produce a brief report on all non-transferable licences detailing their level of activity, so the Committee can better assess the situation and consider further.

*Completed. To be discussed at the next meeting.*

***Other Business***

- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) – proposed cable Protection Zones off Sydney.

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

- Report on comments from a meeting of south coast Charter Fishing Boat Operators regarding draft zoning proposals for the Batemans Marine Park (Nick James)

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

- Expression of Interest for expiry of various recreational fishing representative terms on Recreational Councils and Committees, for information. Closing date for applications is 24 November.

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

- Recommendations for the new bag and size limits have been made. They will be implemented after the next round of regulation amendments. It was recommended that regulation amendments be made to allow for charter operators to store bait without breaking the bag/possession limits.

**Action item**

DPI to investigate a change to the regulation to allow charter boat operators to possess bait at levels that exceed current bag/possession limits.

**Action item**

The Department to commence drafting of an options paper, with proposals on where the charter fishing industry could head over the next 5-10 years, for distribution to the Committee prior to release to industry.

***Out of session***

Nil.

***Correspondence received***

Nil

***Next meeting*** – Meeting 11 (01/07) scheduled for Tuesday 20 February 2007.