



**Recreational  
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Freshwater  
Trust Expenditure Committee***

**MINUTES**

**14<sup>TH</sup> RFFTEC MEETING  
26 September, 2002**

**Bay Lounge, Cronulla Leagues Club  
Captain Cook Drive, Woolooware**

**Fourteenth Meeting of the NSW  
Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee  
MINUTES**

**26.9.02, 9:30am to 3.30pm**

Bay Lounge, Cronulla Leagues Club  
Captain Cook Drive, Woollooware

**Attendance**

**Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee Members**

Bruce Schumacher	Chair
Doug Joyner	Region 2
Steve Tooley	Region 3
Elizabeth Brodbeck	Region 4
Debbie Lennon	Region 6
Larry Sykes	Region 7
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8

**NSW Fisheries (observers)**

Mr Glenn Tritton, Principal Manager Fisheries Services  
Mr Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager (Inland)  
Mr John Pursey, Senior Conservation Manager, Threatened Species Unit  
Mr Craig Watson, Fisheries Manager Recreational Fisheries

Other NSW Fisheries staff to give presentations

## **Business**

### **Agenda Items**

1. Progress report on the bass habitat mapping program (Rob Williams)
2. Expression of Interest process for Freshwater Habitat Grant Program and update on conservation management programs (Sharon Molloy)
3. Progress report on inland fisheries compliance programs (Chris Clarke)
4. Progress report on the regional education officer program (Paul Dewick)
5. Progress report on the fishery management strategies for recreational fishing and fish stocking and associated environmental assessments (Marcel Green)
6. Progress report on recreational fishing stocking programs (Craig Watson)
7. Recreational fishing licence sales (Craig Watson)
8. Freshwater trust fund report (Cameron Westaway)
9. Progress report on aspects of the assessment of stocking program, angler catch research program and Snowy Mountains Lakes research program (Bob Faragher)
10. Declaration of Lower Murray River catchment as an endangered ecological community and recent nomination of the Lowland Darling River Drainage as an endangered ecological community (John Pursey)
11. Small project enhancement applications (Craig Watson)

### **Apologies**

Mrs Janine Rudder (Region 1)  
Mr Keith Woolbank (Region 5)  
Mr Richard Ping Kee (Region 7 – Mr Larry Sykes is attending the meeting in place of Mr Ping Kee).

### **Chair's welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the 14th meeting of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) and noted a full agenda for the meeting.

### **Minutes from previous meeting**

#### **Recommendation**

Amendments to the draft minutes of the previous RFFTEC meeting (held 27 June 2002) were tabled. The draft minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting, with included amendments.

**Information**

Progress report on the Definition of Bass Habitat in the Macleay, Hawkesbury and Shoalhaven Rivers project.

**Background**

The aims of the project are to map habitats of three key bass rivers, to initiate the basis for the longer term monitoring of those habitats and to commission angler involvement in freshwater habitat assessments. Past modification of land use such as catchment clearing and manipulation of flow regime, such as occurs with water extraction and erection of barriers to fish passage, have changed the extent and nature of habitats of fish in the coastal rivers of NSW. The extent of degradation needs to be determined, as does the potential for impact from additional population growth in the riverine regions. The success of remedial activities by Landcare and through other projects needs to be assessed.

The project builds on expertise and equipment already in place. The project will focus on relevant habitat issues in each of the selected rivers, and involve the Steering Committee and angling groups.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that a number of meetings have been held with Bass Kempsey Fishing Club in relation to the upstream mapping of the Macleay River and preliminary maps of the river have been prepared. Mapping of the downstream reaches of the Macleay River has been completed and mapping of the downstream reaches of the Shoalhaven is set to commence shortly.

An overview of the data logging process was presented. For each of the data attributes, several types of information are collected including macrophytes, substrate, bank vegetation, bank status, habitat features, polygon features and point features. Examples of digitised data laid on orthorectified imagery were circulated amongst Committee members.

**Recommendation**

Progress report noted.

**Information**

Expression of interest process for the restoration of aquatic habitats program, and conservation manager's update.

**Background**

Aquatic habitats program -The expression of interest (EOI) will be released in September 2002. The community EOI has been distributed to Committee out of session, for the information of members. Sharon Molloy and Michelle Perry are in the process of making contact with groups regarding the development of project proposals.

Conservation Module -The conservation module is being developed at present - a draft is available and will be distributed to members at the meeting. This module has focussed on issues relating to the conservation of native fish in inland NSW and will be a valuable document for many forums in the future. The module will form part of the existing Fishcare Volunteer Freshwater Manual. It is also hoped that this module will be expanded into a one day teaching program for those interested in a longer course specifically dealing with conservation issues.

Gwydir Oral History -Draft copies of the book have been sent to each of the interviewees for a final check (copyright procedures). Publication of the book will follow shortly.

Walcha Options Paper - Results of the electrofishing survey and the community consultation survey are now being analysed and a draft report will be available for the committee.

**Outcomes**

A summary paper of the Walcha fish management strategy outlining the species and numbers of fish sampled by electrofishing in each catchment, was distributed to Committee members. These results and the community consultation survey will form the basis for the draft Walcha fish habitat options paper.

NSW Fisheries advised that selection criteria had been developed to assist in assessing applications for funding under the habitat restoration program. The criteria will be used to determine the benefits to recreational fishing and threatened native fish species. Projects that satisfy the criteria will be forwarded to the Committee for consideration.

A draft Gwydir oral history project paper has been sent out to participants for comment. The community has been highly supportive of this project and overall feedback has been positive. Participants in the survey highlighted some significant differences in the Gwydir River in terms of fish numbers, fish habitat and flooding regimes since the construction of Copeton Dam. It is expected that the final project document will be published by the end of the year.

**Outcomes continued:**

A conservation module is being developed as a reference tool for recreational anglers and the wider community on the major conservation issues facing native fish species in NSW. The module is being established for use as a one-day teaching aid and includes information on water conservation, management of floodplains, fish passage, fishways, pesticides, blue green algae, turbidity, alien species, riparian vegetation, snags, weirs, salinity, thermal pollution, environmental flows, translocation and stocking, and policy and legislation. A one-hour teaching component will also be incorporated into the current Fishcare Volunteer training manual for use by Fishcare volunteers.

Conservation managers are presently involved with the Catchment Management Boards Blueprint implementation process at a regional level, developing bids for interim priority funding and three and ten year investment strategies. An environmental flow workshop has been set up for 16 October 2002 to develop scenarios for the delivery of the Environmental Contingency Allowance (draft Water Sharing Plan rules).

The draft statutory Water Sharing Plans for the Mooki, Macquarie–Cudegong, Upper Castlereagh, Horton, Gwydir, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Murray, Tenterfield and Namoi catchment areas are presently being developed. Reports have been produced on local issues addressed by the Water Management Committees.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Information**

Inland Compliance Report 2001 / 2002

**Background**

A brief overview of the functions and operations of compliance staff within the Western Region during the past 12 months will be presented. Information to be provided will include fishing activity, compliance operations, court results, advisory and educational programs, training and new initiatives. Major developments in inland fisheries management over the past financial year have included the banning of inland native finfish commercial fishing and an increased profile of aquaculture. Drought conditions have also had a significant effect on fish and their habitat.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries discussed the functions and duties of Fisheries Officers within the western region. The freshwater trust funds 6 full-time positions. These positions are located at Albury (1 position), Bathurst (1 position), Buronga (1 position), Inverell (1 position) and two inland mobile squads (northern-1 position and southern-1 position). The officers funded by the trust have developed specialised skills in inland compliance, and have also assisted with advisory activities, aquaculture inspections and conservation work in their districts.

The outcomes of some specific compliance operations conducted over the past year were discussed. Additional resources have been provided for major operations and many successful prosecutions have been mounted. Information relating to new technology, such as digital cameras and officer training was presented. The new technology has enhanced the ability of Fisheries Officers to gather evidence for prosecutions. Overall compliance with the requirement to hold a fishing licence has been high (above 90%).

Compliance staff have attended a number of major community forums in the western region such as boat and tackle shows and agricultural shows. Staff have also assisted with the children's fishing clinics at the Government hatcheries and been involved with other clinics within their districts. NSW Fisheries is set to launch a new advisory program for school children entitled "Get hooked it's fun to fish" and western regional staff will be visiting schools within their area to assist with the implementation of this program. More than four hundred advisory signs funded by the freshwater trust have been installed at popular fishing destinations across the western region.

Drought conditions in far western NSW have prompted NSW Fisheries to call for expressions of interest from the community to remove native fish from drying lakes: Lake Menindee, and more recently, Lakes Pamamaroo and Cawndilla. Part of the permit provision for commercial access to these drying lakes involves money being paid into the freshwater trust fund. Inland compliance staff are monitoring commercial fishing activity in this part of the State.

**Recommendation**

Information noted

**Information**

Regional education officer program

**Background**

The fisheries education officer started duties at the Peel Fisheries Office, Tamworth on 18 March 2002. The officer has been involved in a wide range of activities including conducting presentations at informal public information nights at Mudgee, Tamworth, Inverell, Gunnedah, Dubbo, Cowra, Bathurst and Scone. The information nights were aimed primarily at introducing the position of education officers and to provide an opportunity to discuss the Fishcare Volunteer Training program. The seminars also provided a forum through which other freshwater fisheries management programs could be presented, and local issues could be discussed with Fisheries Officers.

Fishcare Volunteer Training has been completed in Orange and Armidale. The Orange volunteers have completed their field orientation day and have been certified. The Armidale volunteers are expected to complete their last day of training by the end of September.

The fisheries education officer has attended several trade shows including the Mudgee Small Farm Field Day, Agquip at Gunnedah and the Dubbo Four Wheel Drive and Camping Show. The officer has hosted three fishing clinics for children, located at the Dutton trout hatchery near Ebor, the Gaden trout hatchery near Jindabyne and at Windamere Dam.

Proposed upcoming events include:

- Fishcare training in Mudgee, Scone, Cowra and Tamworth. (7 and 8 September)
- Children's fishing clinics in conjunction with the education officers from DLWC and staff from NPWS at Mudgee and Forbes as part of 'water week' in October. Children's fishing clinics will be held at the Dutton trout hatchery in September and November.

**Outcomes**

Five regional education officers have been appointed to facilitate the expansion of the Fishcare Volunteer Program across NSW. The education officers will provide greater interaction with volunteers in regional areas and will be responsible for their training and assessment. The education officers will also provide support at fishing clinics, schools and at other advisory shows.

The two inland education officers are based in Tamworth and Albury. Since commencing duties in March, the Education Officers have conducted Fishcare training weekends in Armidale, Orange, Tamworth and Braidwood. As a result of these training weekends, 32 new volunteers have been incorporated into the Fishcare Volunteer program. Future Fishcare training is set to take place in Cowra, Mudgee, Wagga Wagga and Scone in the coming months. Recruiting has commenced for new volunteers at Mulwala and Tocumwal and further recruiting is set to take place for the Snowy Mountains region.



**Outcomes continued:**

The education Officer at Tamworth has conducted a series of community information nights about the Fishcare program, in Tamworth, Gunnedah, Mudgee, Dubbo, Bathurst, Scone and Forbes.

The Education Officer at Tamworth has also attended major community events such as Agquip at Gunnedah, the Forbes Agricultural show, the Dubbo Four Wheel Drive and Camping Expo and the Mudgee Small Farm Field Day. Future events include the Bathurst Fishing Expo, the Armidale Adventure Expo and children's fishing days at Mudgee and Forbes.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Issue**

Preparation of the fishery management strategies for fish stocking and for recreational fishing and associated environmental assessments.

**Background**

The costs and consultative process involved in the preparation of the recreational fishing environmental impact statement were discussed at the previous Committee meeting on 27 June 2002. The Committee recommended contingency funding of \$125,000 for the two financial years (2002/03 and 2003/04), based on a pro-rata arrangement with the saltwater trust, for the preparation of the fishery management strategy (FMS) and associated environmental assessment for recreational fishing.

The costs and consultative process involved in the preparation of the fishing stocking environmental impact statement were discussed at the previous Committee meeting on 27 June 2002. The Committee recommended contingency funding of \$140,000 for the three financial years (2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/2005), or a lesser period if cash funds are available, for the preparation of the fish stocking fishery management strategy (FMS) and associated environmental assessment.

A preliminary draft of the FMS on fish stocking has been prepared following input from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Management Planning Committee (RFFMPC) at their last meeting of 25 July 2002, and has been distributed to stakeholders for comment. The closing date for stakeholder comment is 4 October 2002. Six regional meetings were also held. A revised preliminary draft FMS will then be sent to RFFMPC and the Advisory Councils for comment and discussion. NSW Fisheries will then produce the draft FMS upon which consultants will base their environment assessment. NSW Fisheries is evaluating the quotations received from consultants for the environmental assessment component of the environmental impact statement.

**Outcomes**

The planning and legislative framework surrounding the preparation of the fishery management strategy (FMS) and environmental impact statement (EIS) for fish stocking were discussed. The completed document will consist of eight chapters. Chapter A is a summary of the EIS, chapters B and C comprise the fishery management strategy and chapters D-H are the environmental assessment of the fishery management strategy. Together, the whole package will constitute the environmental impact statement and will go on public exhibition. Indicative timeframes for completion of the various stages of the EIS process were outlined.

Information was provided on the structure and content of the fishery management strategy. A preliminary draft strategy has been prepared and discussed with major stakeholders. NSW Fisheries has recently held a number of regional meetings to discuss the environmental assessment process with stakeholders.

The Recreational Fishing Freshwater Management Planning Committee is the primary consultative body (via the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing) for the development of the draft strategy.

Issues canvassed in the strategy include impacts on biodiversity, genetic resource management, translocation of live aquatic organisms, fish health, hatchery management and quality control. Information systems being developed to improve current fish stocking management and administration services were also discussed.

NSW Fisheries has also commenced recruitment of staff for the development of the fishery management strategy for recreational fishing and the associated environmental assessment. Following appointment of these staff, drafting of the recreational fishing FMS will commence.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Issue**

Progress report on recreational fish stocking programs

**Background**

The annual recreational fisheries stock enhancement program is conducted by NSW Fisheries staff using fish produced at departmental facilities and by community groups using fish produced by private enterprise.

The department has 5 facilities that produce fish for public release. The Narrandera Fisheries Centre produces Murray cod, golden perch & silver perch fry for recreational fisheries impoundment stocking and trout cod fry for conservation stocking. The Grafton Research Station is primarily a silver perch research centre and not a production facility, however on occasions makes excess silver perch stock available for public release into north-western impoundments. The Port Stephens Fisheries Centre produces Australian bass fry for recreational fisheries impoundment stocking.

Dutton trout hatchery produces rainbow trout fry and brown trout fry for recreational fisheries impoundment and river stocking (conducted in conjunction with the acclimatisation societies). Gaden trout hatchery produces rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout and atlantic salmon fry and fingerlings for recreational fisheries impoundment and river stocking (conducted in conjunction with the acclimatisation societies).

There are a number of private fish hatcheries that produce fish for community stockings into rivers and dams across NSW. Most of the community stockings occur via the Dollar-for-Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program, which permits the release of Australian bass, Murray cod and golden perch fry into rivers and dams across the State, for the enhancement of recreational fisheries. Four fish hatcheries have registered to supply Australian bass fry and ten fish hatcheries have registered to supply Murray cod and golden perch fry for dollar-for-dollar stockings, during the 02/03 season.

**Outcomes**

The annual fish-stocking schedule was discussed. It was noted that salmonid releases occur into notified trout streams of the New England region, the Central and Southern districts, the Monaro region, and around Orange with the five acclimatisation societies. These releases usually start at the end of August (New England area) and are followed by releases in the Central and Southern districts (September/October) and the Monaro region in December. Fry for the New England, Central districts and Southern Highlands are supplied by the Dutton trout hatchery. Any fish left over after these releases have been completed (normally only rainbow trout fry) are stocked by departmental staff in October. Fry for the Snowy Mountains region are supplied by the Gaden hatchery. Staff from the Gaden hatchery also conduct salmonid fingerling releases over summer and autumn.

Salmonid release figures for the 2001/02 season were presented. With respect to the 2002/03 stocking season, it was noted that more than two million salmonids have been released to date. Further salmonid releases are planned over the coming months.

**Outcomes continued:**

The native fish release program for the 2002/03 season has not yet commenced. Australian bass stockings will start in October and carry through until November. Murray cod and trout cod are generally stocked during December and golden perch silver perch are stocked throughout summer and into autumn.

Native fish stocking figures for the 2001/02 season for both the Government and community (Dollar for Dollar) programs were presented for the information of the Committee. Dollar for Dollar stocking rates for northern, central and southern stocking zones were also discussed.

A draft native fish stocking program list has been released for public comment. The list outlines the native fish releases from previous seasons and gives the projected release figures for major impoundments and a number of smaller reservoirs across NSW, for the coming season. Following receipt and assessment of these comments, the final native fish stocking program is set for the year. An allocation of fish for small dams is included for stocking additional areas, following public consultation. Proponents are invited to list additional small dams for consideration for the native fish stocking program. Applications need to include supporting information including a letter of permission from the managers of the impoundment. Small dams will be considered for stocking if there is reasonable public access and fishing is allowed. The closing date for public submissions is 11 October, 2002.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Information**

Recreational Fishing Licence sales

**Background**

The amount of money collected from the recreational fishing fee from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 was \$8.1 million. The number of the different types of licences sold during this period are as follows:

Approximately  
21,000 three year licences;  
207,000 one year licences;  
72,000 one month licences; and  
152,000 three day licences.

**Outcomes**

A report of monthly licence sales since the implementation of the licence was distributed to members at the meeting. It was noted that the one-year licence was the preferred type of licence that was purchased by anglers.

From July 2000 to June 2002, a total of 727,732 fishing licences had been sold, made up of 43,457 three-year, 360,944 one-year, 123,415 one-month and 199,916 three-day and pre-paid licences.

Trends in licence sales were discussed. Peak sales were noted to consistently occur during the months of March and December, which correspond with the busy Easter and Christmas holiday periods.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Issue**

Freshwater trust fund report

**Background**

A budget summary table of trust expenditure for 2001/02 was presented at the budget meeting in June. The budget table has since been amended to reflect the actual expenditure and the amount of carry over for each project at the end of the 2001/02 financial year. Allocations for each project for the 2002/03 financial year have been adjusted in line with these amendments to bring the available budget to the level approved by the Committee at the last budget meeting. Discussion on the level of reporting will occur with the Committee at the meeting.

**Outcomes**

A table was presented at the meeting for information. The table compared the forecast project allocation figures against the actual allocation figures for projects for the 01/02 financial year. Adjustments to the table have been made according to these differences, to bring the available budget for the 02/03 financial year to the level approved by the Committee at the previous meeting.

In relation to the issue of project account reporting, a cost centre report outlining monthly expenditure for a trust fund project was presented to the Committee for discussion. The statement outlined costs attributed to capital works, operational expenses, salaries and overheads. The Committee noted that the information within the statement provided sufficient detail in terms of the level of reporting on programs and expenditure. RFFTEC asked for these cost centre reports to be supplied for all freshwater trust funded programs on a quarterly basis, for the information of Committee members.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Issue**

Progress report on aspects of the assessment of stocking program, angler catch research program and Snowy Mountains Lakes research program.

**Background**

The assessment of stocking program is analysing the contribution of stocked fish to various fisheries. A marking procedure has been developed and marked fish have been released into various waterways across NSW.

The Anglers Catch Research Program collects data from fishing competitions in order to monitor numerous river and impoundment fisheries.

Monitoring of angler catch and spawning stream populations is also important for the Snowy Mountains lakes and the data is used for management decisions regarding the lakes.

**Outcomes**

The marking of rainbow trout, golden perch and Australian bass took place last year and sampling has commenced to recapture marked fish. To date, the following waterways have been sampled: Moonbah River, Swampy Plains River, Three Mile Dam, Hastings River, Wollomombi River and Guy Fawkes River

Results of the marking procedure have been accepted for publication in the North American Journal of Fisheries Management (a paper on alizarin complexone marking) and in the New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research (a paper on the temperature marking of the rainbow trout).

A document is being prepared on the management of the Snowy Mountains Lakes for public release. The publication will summarise current research findings from angler catch at the Snowy Mountains Trout Festival and findings from the monitoring of trout spawning stream populations, and will provide a number of management options.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.



**Issue**

Update on endangered ecological communities.

**Background**Lower Murray River catchment endangered ecological community

In December 2001 the range of aquatic species in natural waterbodies in the lower Murray and Murrumbidgee catchments were listed as an endangered ecological community. The listing by the Committee was a decision about conservation status of the aquatic ecology and not about what activities that can or cannot take place. The Minister made an interim order to allow recreational fishing to continue while a Species Impact Statement (SIS) was prepared to determine the impacts of recreational fishing. The SIS was prepared and community consultation finalised. As a result of the consultation, changes to fishing for freshwater catfish and Murray crayfish will be implemented from December 1 2002 to ensure that continued fishing is sustainable and will not have a significant impact on the endangered ecological community. Changes are a reduction in the bag limit of Murray crays from 10 to 5 (with only one greater than 12cm allowed), with a closed season from September to April inclusive and a ban on the taking of these crays in notified trout waters. A zero bag limit for freshwater catfish and river blackfish will also be introduced. No changes will be made at this time to the use of setlines, with the majority of submissions not supporting a ban on setlining, or to fishing for Murray cod, with submissions mixed on this issue.

Darling catchment endangered ecological community

A proposal to list the entire fish community in the Darling catchment and its tributaries (excluding the Lachlan and Paroo) is currently open for public submissions (closes 4 October). The Fisheries Scientific Committee will consider all submissions then make a final decision on whether or not to recommend the listing. If the listing is made, a similar process will be followed. An interim order will be made immediately to allow current fishing practices to continue until the process is complete.

**Outcomes**

A summary of the process and implications of listing endangered ecological communities was provided by Mr John Pursey, Senior Fisheries Manager, Threatened Species. Information relating to the Fisheries Scientific Committee, the plan to list the Darling River lower catchment as "endangered" and the new fishing rules for the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers was provided for the information of the Committee.

The community is being asked to comment on a proposal by the Fisheries Scientific Committee to list the aquatic ecological community of the Darling River's lower catchment as an endangered ecological community. The area includes all the tributaries of the Darling and Barwon systems on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range below 500 metres, but excludes the Lachlan River catchment and the Paroo River catchment. The Fisheries Scientific Committee will consider all submissions then make a final decision on whether or not to recommend the listing. Submissions on the proposed listing will close on 4 October, 2002.

**Outcomes continued:**

If the listing proceeds, the Minister may make an interim order to allow freshwater angling to continue, until such time as a Species Impact Statement on the impacts of recreational fishing is prepared for this area.

As a result of the public consultation on the Lower Murray Species Impact Statement, fishing regulations for freshwater catfish and Murray crayfish are set to change from December 1 2002. The new laws include a reduction in the bag limit of Murray crays from 10 to 5 (with only one greater than 12cm allowed), with a closed season from September to April inclusive and a ban on the taking of these crays in notified trout waters. A zero bag limit for freshwater catfish and river blackfish will also be introduced.

RFFTEC sought clarification on the community response to the proposal to ban the use of setlines in the Lower Murray drainage area. NSW Fisheries advised that the majority of submissions did not support a change to current setline regulations. There was also a mixed response from the community on the proposal to amend the regulations in relation to the taking of Murray cod. As a result, current fishing regulations for Murray cod would also be maintained.

**Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Issue**

Applications for funding support via the small project enhancement program.

**Background**

The small grants program enables fishing clubs, councils and other community members to submit freshwater and saltwater proposals for small, local or regional projects to enhance recreational fishing. Funding proposals are limited to \$5,000 and should be matched by funds from the applicant or other sources. The small grants program allocation has been set at \$20,000 per annum.

NSW Fisheries has received two applications for funding support through the small project enhancement program. The first proposal is a request for a grant to produce a brochure promoting the benefits of fishing club membership. The proponent is seeking funding for design and printing costs for this project. It is intended that the brochure will be circulated through tackle shops. The second project is a resubmission of a proposal for funding support for the installation of an artificial breeding reef at Copeton Dam. The project will see the construction of a trial nursery reef in shallow waters of Copeton Dam to provide additional habitat for juvenile native fish species.

**Outcomes**

The Committee reviewed the proposals, and did not support a funding allocation from the freshwater trust for either of these projects at this time. In relation to the proposal to develop a fishing club brochure, NSW Fisheries endorsed the notion of promoting the benefits of community participation with fishing clubs and will look into developing a brochure outlining these benefits. With respect to the proposal to install an artificial reef at Copeton dam, the Committee proposed that the Conservation Manger (Inverell) contact the proponent to discuss the possibility of involving the St Kilda Fishing Club in a local habitat protection project through the habitat restoration program, as an alternative fish habitat project.

**Recommendation**

- NSW Fisheries to investigate developing a brochure advocating the overall benefits of participation in organised fishing activities.
- NSW Fisheries to contact the proponent of the Copeton dam artificial reef project to discuss the possibility of involving the St Kilda Fishing Club in an alternative local rehabilitation project, via the habitat restoration program.

## **Other business**

### **Information**

Recreational fishing grants program, Fisheries Victoria

### **Discussion**

Mr Robert Krix, Program Manager, Recreational Fishing Licence Revenue Expenditure, Fisheries Victoria (guest presenter) briefed the Committee on the structure of the recreational fishing licence grants program, as it applies in Victoria. The Fisheries Revenue Allocation Committee (FRAC) is the chief consultative body in Victoria that reviews grant applications and makes recommendations to the Minister for Energy and Resources on funding priorities.

Mr Krix provided details on the guidelines and conditions for preparing and submitting applications for grants. A list of Recreational Fishing Grant Program projects funded from the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account (2001/02 year) was distributed for the information of the Committee.

### **Recommendation**

Presentation noted.

### **Issue**

Transfer of radio-telemetry survey from Balranald weir to Euston weir

### **Discussion**

Due to a delay being experienced in the construction of the Deelder fishway at Balranald weir, the innovate fishways project will be moved to a weir at Euston, as agreed by the Committee in a previous meeting. In addition to the radio tracking study, the project will incorporate Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag technology, to assess the movement of fish through the fishway. The Denil fishway for Euston weir is scheduled to be completed by Christmas and the sampling is expected be undertaken soon thereafter.

### **Recommendation**

Information noted.

**Issue**

Funding for advisory trailers in north-western NSW

**Discussion**

The Committee questioned the status of advisory and education trailers in NSW. NSW Fisheries advised that funds had been set aside from the saltwater trust for the purchase of five new advisory trailers for use at saltwater community events. The trailers will be used by Education Officers, Fishcare volunteers and Fisheries Officers and be housed at various locations along the coast. Some advisory trailers were already in use on the inland. At this stage, funding had not been allocated from the freshwater trust for the purchase of additional inland advisory trailers.

The Committee discussed the possibility of purchasing additional advisory trailers for use at open days and field events in inland areas. It was proposed that one of the trailers could be managed by club members in the Moree area, for field shows in north western NSW.

The Committee asked NSW Fisheries to obtain quotations for the purchase of advisory trailers for use in western areas, and for these to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting, for the consideration of members.

**Action**

NSW Fisheries to obtain quotes for the purchase of advisory trailers for use in western areas, for presentation to the Committee at its next meeting.

**Issue**

Additional research into New England Trout Streams

**Discussion**

NSW Fisheries advised that correspondence had been received from the New England Trout Acclimatisation Society (NETAS) seeking funding for additional research into New England trout streams to assess the stocking success of the current trout stocking program. A copy of this correspondence is included with the agenda papers for the deliberation of the Committee.

Some research is being carried out in this area by the freshwater recreational research team. One hundred and fifty thousand (150 000) rainbow trout have been chemically marked and released into three New England trout streams as part of the stocking success program. A number of trout streams in the Coolah area have also been investigated for stocking suitability. In addition, an electrofishing survey has been conducted in streams around the Walcha area as part of the Walcha fish management strategy.

NSW Fisheries noted that it may be possible to use unexpended funds from the existing freshwater monitoring program budget to conduct additional sampling of New England trout streams, within the context of the current research project investigating the effectiveness of stocking activities. RFFTEC suggested that NETAS discuss this issue further with NSW Fisheries researchers, to map-out a program of issues and priorities for this area. RFFTEC recommended that NSW Fisheries consult with NETAS out of session in relation to this issue, and report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

**Issue**

Deputies for committee members

**Discussion**

The Committee sought clarification on the process for nominating delegates to attend meetings in the place of a member, should they be unable to attend. NSW Fisheries advised that Ministerial approval was required prior to a nominated deputy being granted full functions of an appointed member, but that this did not prevent a deputy attending as an observer at short notice (subject to discussion with the Chair), especially as most issues were dealt with on a consensus basis. It was suggested that if this was likely to be an issue for more than the odd meeting, members may wish to submit a nominee with plenty of notice, to formalise deputy arrangements. The Chair proposed to discuss this issue further with the Director of Fisheries.

**Next Meeting**

The next RFFTEC meeting was scheduled for Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2003 at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre.

Meeting concluded at 2.30pm.

