



## FISHERIES OFFICER INFORMATION PACKAGE 2010



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## Overview of the Work of a Fisheries Officer

### General Role

NSW Industry and Investment (I&I NSW) is responsible for conserving, sharing and managing the fisheries resources of New South Wales.

The work of fisheries officers involves optimising compliance with fisheries laws established by the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and associated regulations and in some areas Commonwealth fisheries legislation. Duties include field-based work (patrols and inspections) and an educative/advisory role in delivering information and advice on programs relating to any number of fisheries issues involving recreational and commercial fishers and the wider community.



Compliance activities include patrols of offshore waters, estuaries and inland freshwater rivers, lakes and impoundments. Patrols can include driving 4-wheel drive vehicles in difficult terrain and travelling by aircraft and seagoing vessels.

Fisheries officers inspect recreational fishers' catches to check legal lengths and bag limits and compliance with other laws of recreational fishing. Commercial fishers are also checked to ensure that they're operating within licensing conditions and that catches, equipment and vessels meet legal requirements.

Fisheries officers patrol waters closed to fishing, inspect and report on oyster leases and other aquaculture, and investigate conservation issues such as habitat destruction and damage to marine vegetation.

Fisheries officers perform administrative duties, such as maintaining records, preparing correspondence; entering data into activity reporting and intelligence databases, preparing work rosters and work plans, information papers, briefs and reports.

Fisheries officers also have to maintain the equipment they use such as boats and trailers, vehicles and specialised equipment.



### Law Enforcement

Fisheries officers provide a regulatory function including the issuing of cautions or infringement notices for minor fisheries offences and the



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preparation of offence reports for serious offences. Officers conduct or participate in investigations and special operations designed to detect fisheries crimes and are required to attend court from time to time to give evidence in relation to fisheries offences in which they were either the reporting officer or a witness.

### **Education and Advisory**

Education and advisory duties include giving talks and presentations to fishing clubs, schools and community groups and organising events such as fishing clinics and advisory stands at trade shows and field days. Some duties involve the use of media such as preparing newspaper articles and giving interviews on radio and TV (if previously approved).



### **Working Hours**

Fisheries officers are required to work 152 hours over a 28 day period on a rotating shift basis (38 hr week). These hours are not normally worked on more than 5 days per week, although the working week is not restricted to any particular five days. Work on weekends, public holidays and at night is

often required due to the nature of fishing-related industries. Fisheries officers may also be required to camp overnight or for several nights during extended inland patrols and to serve on offshore patrol boats for extended patrols to sea.

### **Qualifications, Skills and Experience**

A Higher School Certificate (HSC) or an educational standard equivalent to the HSC (for example a trade qualification) is essential.

An appropriate level of physical fitness is required including the ability to swim 200m continuously and the physical ability to lift heavy fishing industry-related gear, patrol gear and other items.

Proof of colour vision testing to a level required for marine certification and the satisfactory completion of medical fitness examination are essential prior to recruitment.

Applicants for the position must hold a motor vehicle (manual) driver's licence valid in NSW and a current NSW boat driver's licence or equivalent (check with NSW Maritime Authority for equivalence status).

Experience in a regulatory field or knowledge and understanding of fisheries or natural resource management is an essential requirement for the position.

The ability to maintain and safely handle watercraft including the ability to launch; operate and retrieve a vessel, sometimes at busy locations, in adverse weather conditions or at night, are vital skills required of a fisheries officer.

Proof of identity is required for all applicants (100 points). Criminal record and working with children checks are performed on candidates prior to appointment.

### **Fisheries Officer Training Program**

Successful applicants will undergo a twelve-month orientation and training program covering practical and theoretical areas as contained within the National Seafood Industry Training Package – Certificate III in Fisheries Compliance.



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Practical fieldwork for trainees includes handling watercraft, fish identification, monitoring of fish catches for legal compliance by inspecting recreational and commercial fishers, monitoring and checking wholesale and retail fish suppliers and inspecting land-based aquaculture, oyster leases and other water-based aquaculture operations.



The ability to manage customer aggression through negotiation and resolution is an important skill required of fisheries officers so training is provided to develop these and other communication skills. Officers are issued with a baton and handcuffs and trained in the use and safe custody of these items.

Trainee fisheries officers are located in the Sydney region or the Central Coast on a probationary basis. During the 12 month probationary period, trainees are regularly assessed and examined to ensure that they meet the competencies and standards required for permanent appointment as a fisheries officer.



Upon successful completion of the program, trainees may be offered positions in any of the 26 fisheries districts in coastal and inland NSW as they arise.

### **Prospects and Career Development**

Subject to meeting the required skills level and/or qualifications (such as is the attainment of a Certificate of Competency as a Coxswain), opportunities may become available for promotion either within the Fisheries Officer classification (to Fisheries Officer Grade 3), District Fisheries Officer or Supervising Fisheries Officer as vacancies become available.

Lateral transfer opportunities (moving from one fisheries district to another at the same grade) may become available from time-to-time for officers to further their skills, knowledge and experience in other locations.

### **Position Description**

See the Fisheries Officer Grade 1-2 Position Description available to applicants for a more comprehensive list of duties.



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