

OCEAN TRAWL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

18 and 19 MAY 2009

10am

SYDNEY FISH MARKET
PYRMONT NSW

Chairperson

Neil Ward

Management Advisory Committee Representatives

Shane Castle	Region 1 – upper north coast
Gordon Farrell	Region 2 – Clarence region
Darren Ward	Region 3 – north coast
Murray Ham	Region 4 – central coast
Richard Bagnato	Region 5,6,7 – metropolitan, upper south coast and lower south coast
Paul Bagnato	Regions 5,6,7 – metropolitan, upper south coast and lower south coast
Peter Plunkett	Recreational representative
Ben Birt	Conservation
Fiona Hill	Director-General's nominee

	Welcome and Apologies	Chairperson
	Agreement on agenda for 18 and 19 May 2009	Chairperson
	Confirmation of draft outcomes for OTMAC meeting on 4 & 5 December 2007	Chairperson
	Correspondence received and sent	Chairperson
1	Business arising from the previous meeting	Chairperson
2	Updates	All members
3	Structural adjustment and future direction for the Ocean Trawl Fishery	DPI
4	Catch record reform project	DPI
5	Licence splitting policy	DPI
6	Effort Unit Transfer Policy	DPI
7	Regulatory reform	DPI
8	Code of Practice	DPI
9	Species recovery planning process	DPI
10	Bycatch Reduction Devices	DPI
11	Square Mesh Codends	DPI
12	Other Business	Industry/DPI
13	Chairpersons summary	Chairperson

Chairperson

Issue

Welcome and apologies

Outcome

Chairperson

Issue

Agreement on agenda

Background

Notice of the meeting and a request for agenda items was circulated to committee members, Regional Industry Convenor, Fishermen's Co-operatives, other interested parties and regional offices of the Department of Primary Industries on 1 April 2009.

Outcome

Chairperson

Issue

Confirmation of draft outcomes from the previous meeting on 4 & 5 December 2007.

Background

Draft outcomes for the OTMAC meeting on 4 & 5 December 2007 were circulated amongst MAC members for comment prior to being distributed to Regional Industry Convenor, Fishermen's Co-operatives, other interested parties and regional offices of the Department of Primary Industries.

Outcome

DRAFT OUTCOMES of the OTMAC meeting held on 4th & 5th December 2007.

Agenda Item	Outcome
Welcome and apologies	Members and observers were welcomed. The Chair welcomed Mr Peter Plunkett (recreational representative) and Mr Shane Castle (deputy for Mr Bill Litchfield - Region 1) to the committee and thanked Mr Alan Keft (retiring recreational representative) for his valuable contribution.
Agreement on agenda	Agenda agreed. Action: DPI to assist where practical with industry representatives meeting prior to the formal MAC meeting so that consolidated industry views can be presented at the MAC meeting.
Confirmation of draft minutes	Outcomes for previous meeting confirmed.
Correspondence received and sent	Correspondence received and sent noted. Committee advises that better identification of lobster traps and improved communication between sectors at the local level should assist to resolve adverse interactions between the trawl and trap fisheries. Concerned parties to liaise with local DFOs to arrange any necessary communication.
Business arising from the previous meeting	Committee supports the removal of all actions that have been completed, are considered redundant or are included on the agenda from the action list.

Updates	<p>The Committee noted the updates provided.</p> <p>Industry representatives of the Committee advised that in accordance with management response 5.1(c) and research results (Sydney inshore trawl-whiting fishery, codend selectivity and fishery characteristics) fish trawl endorsement holders should be permitted to use the following codends to harvest school whiting; minimum 90mm mesh, maximum 200 meshes in circumference, single or double twine, maximum twine diameter 5mm.</p> <p>Action: DPI to confirm/clarify the territorial baselines and their relationship with the 3nm line, the southern boundary of the northern fish trawl fishery, and provide Metropolitan and South Coast representatives details of the Bouddi National Park extension.</p>
A quantitative analysis of prawn harvesting strategies in NSW	<p>Presentation noted, particularly the model indicating product price to be a major influential factor. Committee supports any actions by DPI or Industry to promote NSW product and or improve product price.</p>
Marine pests and their relevance to the ocean trawl fishery	<p>Presentation including Government's programs and actions noted, and industry encouraged to report sightings of marine pests to DPI.</p>
Ocean Trawl share management plan	<p>Action: DPI to review nomination provisions to determine if further efficiencies can be achieved. Timing subject to resourcing and priorities.</p>
Share Management - Stage 2 regulatory reform	<p>Committee noted proposed regulatory reform and proposal for an industry information paper early 2008. Potential issues identified include some fishers using greater than 100 fathom sweeps (200-250 fathom); one fisher using greater than 60m head line; chain on fish trawl gear typically greater than 12mm diameter; the need to firm up description for fish trawl codend circumferences and the need to clarify method of measuring 100mm droppers.</p> <p>Action: DPI to consider commercial bag limit of 2 lobsters per trawler.</p>
Juvenile king prawn closures - amendments to the OTSMP	<p>Action: MAC members to arrange port meetings to discuss with constituents modifications to juvenile king prawn closures, in particular Tweed Heads, Brunswick Heads, Ballina, South West Rocks and Port Stephens and report back to DPI by the end of January 2008.</p>

<p>'Spikes' and 'riddlers' in ocean trawl fishery</p>	<p>Committee advises spikes be permitted on "retained" species only. Committee supports prohibition on "riddlers" as per the OTFMS.</p>
<p>School whiting grounds</p>	<p>Action: MAC members to arrange port meetings to map with constituents designated whiting grounds. DPI to work with OTMAC representatives to transfer data to C-plot and prepare descriptions suitable for regulation by the end of March 2008.</p>
<p>Industry alternatives to the OTFMS square-mesh codends</p>	<p>Action: Industry requested that DPI consider as a priority delaying implementation of the OTFMS proposed square mesh codends for 12-18 months so that industry can secure funding, engage consultants, conduct testing, and for DPI's consideration of results and potential regulation amendments. DPI to also consider industry's request for assistance with this research and interim prohibition on codends greater than 150 meshes in circumference.</p>
<p>Review of sweeps in the deepwater prawn trawl fishery</p>	<p>Action: Metropolitan and South coast representatives and DPI to monitor progress of research. Research results to be distributed and matter listed for discussion at future meeting.</p>
<p>Trevally size limit</p>	<p>Committee is seriously concerned with the dumping of substantial quantities of product as a result of the introduction of a size limit on trevally.</p> <p>Action: Discussion postponed until next meeting and all members including DPI to consider potential solutions.</p>
<p>Taking fish subject to size limits in prawn trawl nets - flounder and sole</p>	<p>Action: DPI to investigate Industry recommendation to remove the size limit on sole.</p>

BRD's on grounds other than designated whiting grounds	<p>Committee supports introduction of the radial escape panel BRD and the new specifications for each of the other BRDs (subject to a review of the maximum bar spacing applying to the Nordmore grid).</p> <p>Action: DPI to review bar spacing for Nordmore grid.</p> <p>Action: MAC members to discuss with constituents refining and then demonstrating the effectiveness of BRDs south of Smoky Cape as an alternative to the prohibition on taking fish subject to size limits. Any other issues identified with the new specifications to be referred to DPI as soon as practicable.</p>
Review of south east fish trawl trip limits	<p>Action: DPI to consider Committee advice that all trip limits should be removed other than that for gemfish which should be reviewed as part of the development of a recovery program for gemfish.</p>
Effort controls for the ocean trawl fishery	<p>Issue postponed until the next meeting pending outcome of Richard Stevens review into structural adjustment.</p>
Coal ships moored between Newcastle & Sydney	<p>Committee recognises the seriousness of this issue and noted that the Minister for Primary Industry has written to Minister for Ports and Waterways requesting a meeting be convened between relevant stakeholder groups. The Committee reiterates its concern for the safety of fishers and need for action as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>Action: Industry representatives to contact Seafood Services Australia (SSA) for assistance and to ascertain a line of communication with the National Maritime Safety Committee.</p>
Commonwealth structural adjustment scheme and marine parks	<p>Committee noted that DPI is continuing to assess the risk of increased potential fishing effort displaced into NSW fisheries as a result of the Commonwealth's buy-out. The Committee and DPI are both supportive of finalising this process as matter of urgency and note that any legal action may delay finalisation.</p>
New submarine cable protection zones	<p>Committee agreed to consider negotiating provisions to offset potential impact on the commercial fishing industry as a result of further telecommunication cables being laid off the NSW coastline in the future.</p>

<p>Optimum size at first harvest - king prawns</p>	<p>Committee notes the resources required to organise a forum similar to the Juvenile Prawn Summit held in 2000. however believe such a forum will be useful to further consider resource allocation and management issues between sectors.</p> <p>Action: Item to be postponed until the next meeting. In the interim DPI and MAC Chairs to raise the issue with the other MACs to assign some priority to this matter. DPI advised that is was willing to assist Industry should they wish to take carriage of this issue.</p>
<p>Review of bobbin gear</p>	<p>Action: DPI to consider Committee request to undertake a formal review with a view to providing for bobbins/discs up to 150mm (6 inch) south of Seal Rocks.</p>
<p>Japanese submarine off Sydney</p>	<p>Action: DPI to provide the Heritage Office with the Metropolitan and South Coast representatives contact details.</p>
<p>National Strategy to address interactions between humans and seals</p>	<p>Action: Central and Metropolitan and South Coast representatives to review the strategy for any implications arising for management of the Ocean Trawl fishery.</p>
<p>Next meeting</p>	<p>The Chairperson thanked all members, deputies and observers for attending the meeting and advised the date for the next committee meeting would be 3rd and 4th April 2008.</p>

Chairperson

Issue

Correspondence received and sent

Background

A list of correspondence received is attached for the committee to note.

Outcome

OTMAC CORRESPONDENCE LIST

Date	From	Issue	To	Action
24/12/2007	NSW DPI	Fisheries Compliance Branch restructure advice	OTMAC	Information
29/01/2008	NSW DPI - Research	Updating priorities listed in the strategic research plan.	Chair	Comment
21/02/2008	NSW DPI	Out of Session Agenda Item – Snapper size limit	OTMAC	Comment
1/04/2008	NSW DPI	Advice to industry regarding the introduction of square-mesh codends for prawn catching gear	Industry	Information
10/04/2008	Minister	Letter from the Minister regarding the report of the OTMAC meeting 4 & 5 December 2007 (see Attachment 1).	Chair	Information
2/05/2008	NSW DPI	Out of session agenda item – Catch reporting reform project information	OTMAC	Comment
18/06/2008	NSW DPI	Review of 'Bobbin Gear' in the NSW Ocean Trawl Fishery	OTMAC	Information
24/07/2008	NSW DPI	Notice to fishers regarding the phase-in period until the 1 January 09 applying in respect to square-mesh codends	Industry	Information
31/07/2008	NSW DPI	Implementation of square-mesh codends in the OT fishery	Industry	Information
22/09/2008	NSW DPI	Information paper on changes to regulation governing the NSW commercial fishing industry	Industry	Information
18/08/2008	NSW DPI	Seeking renewal of C/W export approval	OTMAC	Comment
14/11/2008	NSW DPI	Changes to regulation governing NSW Commercial Fisheries	OTMAC	Information
14/11/2008	NSW Maritime	Invite to a stakeholder meeting	OTMAC	Information
18/11/2008	NSW DPI	Consultation on Offshore Artificial Reefs Project	OTMAC	Information
1/12/2008	NSW DPI	Adaption of Fisheries and Fisheries Management to Climate Change	OTMAC	Information
3/12/2008	NSW DPI	Information regarding the revised catch reporting arrangements	OTMAC	Comment
11/12/2008	NSW DPI	Wildlife Trade Operation Approval Progress – 3 month extension	OTMAC	Information
23/12/2008	NSW DPI	Square Mesh Codends – phase-in extension	OTMAC	Information
12/01/2009	NSW DPI	Updating priorities in the strategic research plan	Chair	Comment
09/02/2009	NSW DPI	National Seafood Industry Leadership Program	OTMAC	Information
12/02/2009	NSW DPI	Phone hook-up – Wildlife Trade Operation	OTMAC	Information
20/02/2009	NSW DPI	Bycatch reduction devices	OTMAC	Information
23/02/2009	NSW DPI	Closures to protect fish following floods (see Attachment 2)	General public (media release)	Information
04/03/2009	NSW DPI	Bycatch Reduction Devices for use in the New South Wales Ocean Trawl Fishery	Industry	Information

04/03/2009	NSW DPI	Wildlife Trade Operation approval	OTMAC	Information
10/03/2009	NSW DPI	Designated whiting grounds for the OT and SFT Fisheries	OTMAC	Comment
31/03/2009	NSW DPI	"Pyrmont Pact" to promote strong future for commercial fishers (see Attachment 2)	General public (media release)	Information
1/04/2009	NSW DPI	Call for agenda items for the May MAC meeting	OTMAC	Information
1/04/2009	NSW DPI	Emergency fishing closures	OTMAC	Information
3/04/2009	NSW DPI	Prawn trawling closures following floods (see Attachment 2)	General public (media release)	Information
4/04/2009	NSW DPI	Minimum shareholding for an endorsement in the Ocean Trap & Line or Ocean Trawl fisheries.	Industry	Information
9/04/2009	NSW DPI	Buy local and support our fishermen this Easter (see Attachment 2)	General public (media release)	Information
24/04/2009	NSW DPI	Proposed amendments to square-mesh codends and BRD construction	OTMAC	Comment
6/05/2009	NSW DPI	Smart Gear Competition 2009	OTMAC	Information
6/05/2009	NSW DPI	Cultural Fishing in NSW	OTMAC	Comment

Issue

Business arising from the previous meeting.

Background

An action status list is attached for the committee to note.

Items complete and previously noted by the OTMAC have been removed from the list.

It is recommended that the OTMAC reviews the Action Status List with a view to removing those actions that are not a priority or are no longer relevant.

Outcome

Action Status List for the OTMAC – Updated May 2009

Recommendation/Resolution/Action	Meeting	Responsibility	In Progress	Pending	Complete	Ongoing
DPI to assist where practical with industry representatives meeting prior to the formal MAC meeting so that consolidate industry views can be presented at the MAC.	December 2007	DPI/Industry				✓ Subject to practicality. As the current MAC meeting is being held over 2 days, it allows industry to discuss the agenda papers on the Monday night.
DPI to confirm/clarify the territorial baselines and their relationship with the 3nm line, the southern boundary of the northern fish trawl fishery, and provide Metropolitan and South Coast representatives details of the Bouddi National Park extension.	December 2007	DPI			✓ Details of the extension of the Bouddi National Park were enclosed with the draft outcomes provided to MAC members in January 2008. The southern boundary of the northern fish trawl fishery is defined by a "line drawn due east from Barrenjoey Headland (latitude 33°35' south)" as outlined in clause 5(8) of the OTSMP.	
DPI to review nomination provisions related to the OT share management plan (SMP) to determine if further efficiencies can be achieved. Timing subject to resources and priorities.	December 2007	DPI		✓		
DPI to consider commercial bag limit of 2 lobsters per trawlers.	December 2007	DPI		✓		
MAC members to arrange port meetings to discuss with constituents modifications to juvenile king prawn closures, in particular Tweed Heads, Brunswick Heads, Ballina, South West Rocks and Port Stephens. Members are to report back to DPI by the end of January 2008.	December 2007	Industry			✓ Port meeting completed for Ballina and Port Stephens with fishers supporting recommended changes to juvenile king prawn closures within their regions.	

Recommendation/Resolution/Action	Meeting	Responsibility	In Progress	Pending	Complete	Ongoing
MAC members to arrange port meetings to map with constituents designated whiting grounds. DPI to work with OTMAC members to transfer data to C-plot and prepare descriptions suitable for regulation by the end of March 2008.	December 2007	Industry/DPI	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>With respect to the fish trawl sector, DPI notes industry is considering mapping important whiting grounds for further negotiations with DPI.</p> <p>In the interim or until 31 May 2009, whichever comes first, fishers may use the 'whiting codend' in waters to 90m or 50 fathom (as opposed to 30 fathom)</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>With respect to the prawn trawl sector, the proposal to establish designate whiting grounds (where a less effective BRD may be used) has been superseded by the decision to implement a [larger] BRD that may be used in all ocean waters.</p>	
DPI to consider as a priority delaying implementation of OT Fishery Management Strategy (FMS) proposed square mesh codends for 12-18 months so that industry can secure funding, engage consultants, conduct testing, and for DPI's consideration of results and potential regulation amendments. DPI to also consider industry's request for assistance with this research and interim prohibition on codends greater than 150 meshes in circumference.	December 2007	DPI			<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>DPI has delayed implementation to 1 November 2009 due to the lead time required for manufacture and supply of material and construction of codends. This extension will also allow DPI and industry to work together to refine the current specifications.</p> <p>DPI has developed a policy to assist industry instigated and funded research to substantiate the effectiveness of any preferred alternative codend designs.</p>	
Metropolitan and South coast representatives and DPI to monitor progress of research relating to sweeps in the deepwater prawn trawl fishery. Research results to be distributed and matter listed for discussion at future meeting.	December 2007	DPI and Industry		<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Management has made enquiries with DPI Science and Research and with AFMA management.</p>		

Recommendation/Resolution/Action	Meeting	Responsibility	In Progress	Pending	Complete	Ongoing
All members to consider potential solutions to reported trevally dumping due to the introduction of a minimum size limit.	December 2007	All				✓ Refer to Attachment 1 for letter from Minister Macdonald to MAC Chair - DPI and MAC members to continue to consider ways to improve the selectivity of fish trawl gear and related operations to reduce the capture of undersize trevally.
DPI to investigate industry members' recommendation to remove the size limit on sole.	December 2007	DPI		✓		
DPI to review bar spacing restrictions for the Nordmore Grid.	December 2007	DPI			✓ Refer to DPI website for revised specifications for the Nordmore grid (now provides for 30mm spacing).	
MAC members to discuss with constituents refining and then demonstrating the effectiveness of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) south of Smoky Cape as an alternative to the prohibition on taking fish subject to size limits. Any other issues identified with the new specifications to be referred to DPI as soon as practicable.	December 2007	Industry		✓ DPI awaiting industry response.		

Recommendation/Resolution/Action	Meeting	Responsibility	In Progress	Pending	Complete	Ongoing
DPI to consider MAC advice that all trip limits should be removed other than that for gemfish which should be reviewed as part of the development of a recovery program for gemfish.	December 2007	DPI	✓ DPI reviewing species list to determine which species may be removed or limits adjusted based on stock assessment research, effort management control programs and complimentary arrangements with the Commonwealth. As acknowledged by the OTMAC, gemfish will be assessed on completion of a Recovery program for the species.			
Industry representatives to contact Seafood Services Australia for assistance regarding coal ships moored between Newcastle and Sydney and to ascertain a line of communication with the National Maritime Safety Committee.	December 2007	Industry	✓ DPI provided contact details for the NSW Maritime representative on the NMSC (refer letter to OTMAC representatives for Regions 4 and 5.6 of January 2008).			
DPI and MAC Chair to raise optimum size at first harvest for king prawns with other MACs and assign some priority to the matter.	December 2007	DPI and MAC Chair	✓			

Recommendation/Resolution/Action	Meeting	Responsibility	In Progress	Pending	Complete	Ongoing
DPI to consider MAC request to undertake a formal review of bobbin gear with a view to provide for bobbins/discs up to 150mm (6 inch) south of Seal Rocks.	December 2007	DPI			<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> DPI has completed a review of Bobbin Gear in the NSW OT Fishery and forwarded a copy of the final report to all OTMAC representatives in June 2008. The report recommended that an evaluation of proposals to increase the size of ground gear would only be possible when related to OTFMS responses to “define and map the extent of the trawl grounds, determine the intensity of trawling on these grounds and the implementation of closures to protect ocean habitats and biodiversity” were addressed.	
DPI to provide the Heritage Office with the Metropolitan and South Coast representatives contact details regarding the Japanese submarine off Sydney.	December 2007	DPI			<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> NSW Heritage Office provided contact details for Region 5/6 OTMAC representative.	
Central, Metropolitan and South Coast representatives to assess the <i>National Strategy to address interactions between Humans and Seals</i> for any implications arising for management of the OT fishery.	December 2007	Industry		<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> DPI awaiting industry response.		

Issue

Updates

Background

Opportunity is provided for members to provide an update on contemporary issues relating to the management of the Ocean Trawl fishery. Following are updates by DPI on issues that may be of interest to stakeholders.

MANAGEMENT UPDATE**Export Approval**

In September 2008 and on behalf of Industry, DPI provided the Department of the Environment, Heritage, Waters and the Arts a submission seeking ongoing export approval for the Ocean Trawl Fishery. The submission was assessed for the purposes of the wildlife trade provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* and took account of measures that have been developed and implemented by DPI and Industry to improve the ecological sustainability of the fishery. A three year Wildlife Trade Operation approval was granted in February 2009.

Seafood Industry Advisory Council (SIAC)

SIAC met in February and December 2008 and covered a range of issues some of which will affect the future of all commercial fishers. The main issues discussed by SIAC at these meetings can be viewed on DPI's website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Share Appeals

All of the appeals (approx. 70) have been heard and the Fisheries Share Appeal Panels have made their recommendations with respect to each fishing business. NSW DPI will inform all of the appellants of the result shortly.

Flood closures

To allow fish stocks to recover following two flood events on the mid north coast, NSW DPI in consultation with local industry members, implemented closures preventing the use of otter trawl net (prawns) in waters adjacent to the following rivers:

- first flood response closures: Bellinger, Nambucca, Hastings and Macleay Rivers;
- second flood response closures: Bellinger, Nambucca and Hastings Rivers.

Marine Pests

NSW DPI has produced a short brochure summarising the actions Industry can take to minimise the spread of marine pests in NSW waters and made laminated 'marine pest identification cards' showing some of the major marine pests to watch out for. These are available free to NSW commercial fishers by calling Aquatic Biosecurity staff on (02) 4982 1232 or visiting your local Fisheries Office.

Designated trawl whiting grounds

The trawl whiting grounds for the fish trawl sector are currently designated as all waters west of the 90m (50 fathom) depth contour, however this will default back to the 30 fathom depth contour on 1 June 2009. DPI has received 1 set of proposed coordinates from fishers on the south coast. It is important that fishers provide details to DPI as soon as possible, keeping in mind the need to restrict the use of the less-selective double braided codends to whiting grounds only.

Marine species listed as conservation dependent

The eastern Australian population of gemfish (eastern gemfish) and school shark have been placed in the *conservation dependent* category on the national threatened species list. The listing does not prohibit the fish being caught at low levels. A condition on the Wildlife Trade Operation approval for Ocean Trawl is:

“NSW DPI to review its current management arrangement for eastern gemfish, and where appropriate, in collaboration with AFMA and other jurisdictions, develop and implement timely and complementary management arrangements that assist to stop the decline of, and support the recovery of eastern gemfish stocks.”

Sawsharks

The exploitation status of Sawsharks will now be included in the DPI Resource Assessment Workshop.

Minimum shareholdings

The Ocean Trawl Share Management Plan specifies the minimum number of shares required to be eligible for an endorsement. Fishing business owners who were eligible for an endorsement immediately before commencement of the plan on 5 February 2007, but who were issued less than the minimum shareholding have been authorised by the Plan to remain endorsed for a period of 2 years and 6 months after the Plan commenced, that is until 5 August 2009.

After this date all Ocean Trawl fishing businesses will be required to have the minimum shareholding specified in the plan to be eligible for an endorsement for the relevant share class. The minimum shareholdings for each class of share are set out below:

Class of share	Minimum shareholding
Ocean trawl – inshore prawn shares	32
Ocean trawl – offshore prawn shares	32
Ocean trawl – deepwater prawn shares	20
Ocean trawl – fish northern zone shares	32

Biosecurity Australia – Prawns and Prawn Products Import Risk Analysis Update 2008/09

The *Draft Final Import Risk Analysis Report for Prawns and Prawn Products* has been referred to the Eminent Scientists Group for review by BAA. For further information see the BAA website: www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au

Newcastle coal queues

See Attachment 3 for recent media releases regarding this issue.

Contemporary Commonwealth fishery management issues

MACs

DPI attended the Joint Management Advisory Committee and South East Trawl Management Advisory Committee meeting 99 on 3 and 4 February 2009 and SETMAC 100 on 16 and 17 April 2009. The main points of discussion relating to NSW were setting the TAC for silver trevally and school whiting (both had a recommended increase) at JointMAC, school sharks and eastern gemfish at SETMAC 99 and gulper sharks (and to a lesser extent pink ling) at SETMAC 100.

SETMAC and the Gillnet Hook and Trap Management Advisory Committee will be combined to form the new South East MAC. This will take effect from 1 July 2009.

OCS

NSW DPI and AFMA have met several times over the past 6 months to discuss OCS arrangements. It has been agreed that the OCS discussions will, at this stage, focus on the fish trawl fishery operating south of Barrenjoey Head. It is proposed that consultation will start in the near future.

RESEARCH UPDATE

An update provided by Dr Kevin Rowling will be tabled at the meeting for discussion.

COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Mr Glenn Staples, District Fisheries Officer, DPI will provide an update on compliance related issues at the meeting.

CONSERVATION UPDATE

The conservation representative will be given the opportunity to provide an update.

Outcome

Issue

Structural adjustment and future direction for the Ocean Trawl Fishery

Background

The NSW commercial fishing industry continues to face significant challenges as a result of changes in access, increasing operational costs, competition from imports, and excess catching capacity.

There are many options to promote structural adjustment and/or for alternate management frameworks, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.

Issues related to industry structure and alternate fishery management regimes have been discussed by OTMAC since its inception, in particular during implementation of restricted fisheries and more recently the implementation of share management fisheries.

SIAC and its working group on structural adjustment have been working closely with DPI to explore ways of effectively addressing fishery issues, and in particular the need for long-term structural adjustment.

The Government has indicated support for restructure of the commercial fishing industry that would make it more viable, and for undertaking legislative changes if necessary. A number of potential options exist and advice is being sought from the MACs for each fishery to assist development of a well thought-out and workable proposal that will provide a business environment that promotes a strong, healthy commercial fishing industry in NSW.

For discussion.

Outcome

Issue

Catch record reform project

Background

DPI is introducing revised catch and effort reporting arrangements for the NSW commercial fishing industry commencing from July 2009.

The revised reporting arrangements have been developed to address requirements for finer scale (spatial and temporal) information and are expected to provide an improved information base to support fishery management and planning processes and to enable more robust stock assessments to be completed. The revised arrangements also allow for more efficient administration processes and align reporting with the new share management fisheries arrangements which commenced in February 2007.

A document titled 'Business Requirements Specification – Revised Reporting Arrangements' was sent to all MAC members and other stakeholder group representatives in April 2008, seeking comment. In addition, DPI has met with a cross section of industry participants seeking advice on the new arrangements for catch and effort reporting.

A summarised list of the issues raised by stakeholders, along with a brief description of DPI's response to each, is available on the website.

DPI completed a pilot program in February 2009 to refine the new arrangements. This will be followed by an education and information campaign leading up to the commencement of the arrangements in July 2009.

An update on progress of the catch records reform project and the outcomes of the recent pilot program will be provided for the committee's information.

For discussion.

Outcome

Issue

NSW "licence splitting" policy

Background

The (voluntary) surrender of Commonwealth fishing authorities as part of the Federal Government's *Securing Our Fishing Future* buy-out was in breach of the long standing national licence splitting policy and NSW's fishing business transfer rules. A breach occurs as the external authorities are separated from the business' NSW fishing authorities.

The Seafood Industry Advisory Council previously advised the Government to take strong action to prevent the displacement of fishing effort into NSW fisheries as a result of the separation of dual licences. In May/June 2007 the Minister approved six actions to help reduce the risk of additional fishing pressure moving into NSW waters. These included:

1. Cancelling any permits issued to former Commonwealth tuna longline fishers (i.e. those who surrendered Commonwealth tuna longline or poling permits) which authorised the taking of bait from NSW waters;
2. Deleting the policy provision to grant "new" permits to take bait from NSW waters to businesses that hold or acquire a Commonwealth tuna longline permit;
3. Requiring boats (and licences) previously upgraded above the standard boat replacement rules because the owner held a tuna longline permit, to return to their original NSW boat length if the owner surrendered that tuna longline permit;
4. Amending NSW DPI policy to remove provision to grant new approvals for the use of longer boats in NSW fisheries above the standard boat replacement rules;
5. Cancelling the relevant NSW fishing authorities of former dual licensed operators who have no recorded catches in NSW waters between the years 2000-2005;
6. Undertaking a review of the risk of increased fishing effort in NSW waters following the completion of the Commonwealth Government's buy-out and the recent NSW marine park buy-outs and development of a methodology for further action, if necessary, to mitigate the risk.

Actions 1 to 5 have been implemented. The review foreshadowed in the 6th action has also now been finalised and the Minister has approved a new methodology for action which minimises the risk of fishing effort shifting into NSW managed fisheries.

The methodology, which takes account of the risk posed by each individual business in breach of the transfer rules, is in the final stages of being applied to each former Commonwealth/NSW dual operator. It involves a proposal to take no action or to cancel some or all of the NSW fishing authorities of the businesses in question depending on their past level of NSW activity compared with other State-only operators, subject to a 'show cause' process. The relevant business owners will be notified of the outcome in the near future.

The Minister has also approved application of the methodology to any other future cases where entitlements are split from a dual operator fishing business. This means that the previous 'blanket' licence splitting policy has been superseded by the new risk-based approach. NSW DPI will be writing to all dual operators shortly to advise them of the new arrangements.

A presentation of the new methodology will be presented at the meeting so that MAC members understand how it operates.

The licence splitting policy will remain until such time as the Minister is satisfied the broader fishery management arrangements in place in NSW nullify the risks and thus eliminate the need to continue the policy.

For information.

Outcome

Issue

Effort Unit Transfer Policy

Background

When effort units were introduced for T1 and T2 symbol holders in the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery, NSW DPI developed the following policy to reduce the risk of increased effort in NSW as a result of quota transfer in Queensland:

- If a fisher was allocated less than 30 nights they were permitted to transfer quota without being penalised under the *NSW Licence Splitting Policy*;
- if a fisher was allocated more than 30 nights, they were permitted to transfer up to 20% of their quota before being subject to the licence splitting policy.

Things to consider:

- The policy was initially introduced in response to concerns from northern NSW operators regarding transfer of effort into NSW.
- Since mid-2006 the Queensland Government has pooled EUs and attached them to the licence holder, therefore EU are no longer attached to the boat licence or symbol.
- To date, NSW DPI has not determined EU to be an "external authority", only the symbols have been determined as external authorities. To maintain the current policy on transferring EU in Queensland, NSW would need to determine EU as an external authority and subsequently monitor both symbol and EU movement between licences. This would come at a cost to DPI.
- When EU were first introduced they were trading at ~\$45-55 per EU, the prices is now down to between \$10-20 per EU, with some reports as low as \$8. In other words, investment in the Queensland fishery is currently low, in which case the risk of effort increasing in NSW as a result of transferring EU is also currently considered to be low.
- Recent amendments to the northern/southern closure "sit-out" arrangements allows operators to fish in Queensland outside of the closure area; this may reduce the number of boats moving into northern NSW waters over the traditional southern closure "sit-out" period.
- Since the introduced of EU, the NSW OTF has been converted into a Share Managed Fishery. Particularly important is that the rate of restructuring in the NSW OT fishery has increased in recent years due to the new share transfer rules and minimum shareholding requirements. This restructuring is contributing towards reducing the risk of overall fishing effort increasing in NSW.
- Quota transfers for dual endorsed operators for other Queensland species (e.g. spanner crabs) and AFMA managed species are not subject to a licence splitting policy.
- A new methodology for assessing licence splitting (or proposals to licence split) has been approved by the Minister for application across all NSW coastal commercial fisheries. A presentation on the methodology will be provided at the meeting (see previous agenda item). The new methodology focuses on businesses' level of activity in NSW fisheries, as opposed to focusing on the businesses' level of activity (or fishing entitlements such as quota) in other jurisdictions.

Options for discussion:

1. Removal of the current Effort Unit transfer policy, and rely solely on the new methodology approved by the Minister.
2. Maintain the EU policy as it currently stands (comes at a cost to DPI), and apply it as well as the new methodology approved by the Minister.

3. Maintain the EU policy and relax the trigger points (the 30 day and 20% limits), and apply it as well as the new methodology approved by the Minister. This option still comes at a cost to DPI, but would aim to give dual licensed fishers with limited activity in NSW (i.e. fishers below the 'benchmark' applicable under the new methodology) greater flexibility.

For discussion.

Outcome

Issue

Regulation Reform

Background

Since the implementation of the Ocean Trawl Share Management Plan resources have focused on (a) identifying the current regulations that can be included in the Plan (b) identifying any new regulations that need to be developed as part of the FMSs and (c) identifying fishing closures that can be included in the plans. The objectives of this program include:

- To ensure that the majority of rules applicable to a fishery are included in the Plan;
- To cover off on amendments consequential to the introduction of Share Management Fisheries;
- To remove outdated regulation and 'red tape';
- To ensure regulation appropriately assigns Government and Industry responsibility;
- To streamline regulation and set up cost effective frameworks for adaptively managing activity; and
- To reduce costs associated with maintaining fishing closures.

Many changes to the OTSMP were gazetted in November 2008. A number of further changes, including conversion of the remainder of fishing closures into regulation, are currently underway (**Attachment 4**).

For discussion.

Outcome

Issue

Code of Practice

Background

The Ocean Trawl Fishery Management Strategy requires the development of an industry code of practice. In light of recent changes in the legislative framework governing the fishery, DPI is seeking advice on the development of, and suggested inclusions in, an Ocean Trawl Fishery Code of Practice. The code of practice can be used by both DPI and industry to positively promote the fishery.

For comment.

Outcome

Issue

Species Recovery Planning Process

Background

If a species taken in a NSW commercial fishery is determined as overfished, the Fishery Management Strategies require implementation of, or assistance in developing, a recovery program for that species. Some FMSs require drafting of a recovery program for consultation within a short timeframe, e.g. six months, of a species being determined as overfished.

The process of developing a recovery program for an overfished species initially involves NSW DPI preparing a summary of the known factors that have led to the determination and identifying a range of management options.

Important to note is that a formal recovery program is not required for species that are determined as growth overfished if the Director-General, NSW DPI, considers that the combination of the existing harvest strategy and life history characteristics of the species provides sufficient protection.

If developed, a recovery program must include a description of the actions proposed to return to acceptable levels those parameter(s) that have led to the determination of the species being overfished. The recovery program also sets out a timeframe for actions and may specify further appropriate action should recovery targets not be met.

There are currently 11 species taken in NSW fisheries (abalone, eastern king prawns, eastern sea garfish, gemfish, grey morwong, mulloway, redfish, school prawn, silver trevally, snapper and yellowtail kingfish) which are classified as overfished or growth-overfished and require assessment and/or development of a recovery program. With the exception of Abalone, these species are taken at various life history stages across several fisheries, using a range of methods.

Given the number of species involved and the complexity of interaction between various fisheries, it is desirable that a consolidated process be introduced for evaluating the factors leading to over fishing and identifying appropriate management responses. This will provide for consistent decision making and facilitate the development of cost effective strategies for the benefit of multiple, or all, overfished species. It also enables consideration of the cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts of any proposed changes.

To facilitate coordinated consultation it is proposed to use the Resource Assessment Review Committee as a point of contact for initial discussion rather than individual fishery MACs. It is envisaged that consultation with relevant MACs and advisory bodies will occur at strategic times throughout the process for developing the recovery programs.

For discussion.

Outcome

Issue

Bycatch Reduction Devices

Background

Consistent with the National Policy on Fisheries Bycatch and in accordance with the requirements of the Ocean Trawl Fishery Management Strategy, BRDs are mandatory in all otter trawl net (prawns) in NSW. The OTFMS places significant emphasis on refining BRDs and adopting new strategies, such as appropriate handling techniques to minimise the impacts of trawling on biodiversity. In line with these requirements the BRDs approved for use in the OT Fishery were reviewed. Subsequently, a revised set of BRDs were gazetted on 13 February 2009 (copies of the current BRD specifications will be provided at the meeting for discussion).

Changes included:

- removal of the unutilised Blubber Chute, Diamond and V-Cut BRDs from the list of approved BRDs;
- introduction of the Radial Escape BRD;
- reduction of the size of the Big-eye BRD to allow positioning closer to the drawstring;
- increasing the bar spacing on the Nordmore Grid to reduce the risk of product loss;
- replacement of the two Square-Mesh Panel BRDs proposed in the OTFMS with a modified "Ocean Square Mesh Panel BRD" that may be used in all sectors of the fishery; and
- restriction of the use of the current Square-Mesh Panel BRD ("Deepwater Square Mesh Panel BRD") to single rig boats working under deepwater prawn trawl endorsements, pending research on BRDs in this sector.

Since the gazettal of these BRDs DPI has received representation from industry requesting amendments to the specifications to alleviate construction concerns and minimise the risk of loss of marketable product.

DPI is seeking comment on the following industry proposals:

1. Positioning the Ocean Square Mesh Panel BRD at 1.5m from the drawstring (and within 2 meshes of the codend) as opposed to 1.2m (the smaller mesh surrounding panel within 1.5m and the larger mesh panel inserted within 1.6m).
2. Positioning the Big-eye BRD at 1.5 from the drawstring as opposed to 1.2m.
3. Moving the position of the Deepwater Square Mesh Panel forward to minimise the loss of marketable product.

For discussion.

Outcome

Issue

Square mesh codends

Background

The Minister approved the mandatory introduction of square-mesh codends in commercial prawn-catching gears in the Ocean Trawl (prawn trawl sector only), Estuary Prawn Trawl and Estuary General fisheries.

An advisory period currently applies for the requirement to use square-mesh codends in the Ocean Trawl fishery. Fishers are required to fit appropriate codends before 1 November 2009.

Several suggestions have been put forward by industry members to assist in the construction of the codends and to reduce the loss of marketable product. An alternative design (see **Attachment 5**) was subsequently suggested by DPI and distributed to MAC members. Several comments have been received.

The comments to date include:

- suggestion for the rows of diamond-mesh at the back end of the codend to be greater than 0.35m
- suggestion for a diamond-mesh codend alternative for use in 'inshore waters'
- suggestion for a reduction of the current minimum mesh size from 35 to 33mm.

For discussion.

Outcome

<p>Issue Other Business</p> <p>Specific issues raised by each MAC representative follow for discussion.</p> <p>Region 1</p> <p>Region 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Nominated skipper2. Square mesh codends (see Agenda Item 10)3. Location of BRDs (see Agenda Item 9)4. Effort control in the OPT – amalgamation of hull and horsepower units5. Counts on King Prawns6. Nights v outputs7. Minimum share requirement by Feb 2012 <p>Region 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Minimum shareholdings, 10 year plan2. Input controls: horsepower, hull units and the impact of current arrangements on fishing businesses (insurance costs, safety etc.) <p>Region 4</p> <p>Region 5, 6, 7</p>

Outcome

Issue Chairperson's summary

Outcome

MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
 MINISTER FOR ENERGY
 MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES
 MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT



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MOC08/38

Mr Neil Ward
 Chairperson
 Ocean Trawl Management Advisory Committee
 C/- NSW Department of Primary Industries
 PO Box 21
 CRONULLA NSW 2230

10 APR 2008

Dear Mr Ward

Thank you for forwarding the draft outcomes for the Ocean Trawl Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 4 and 5 December 2007.

I am advised by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) that the meeting was constructive, and as such I take this opportunity to thank all participants.

I note the Committee's advice regarding coal ships moored off Newcastle and Sydney. As advised by NSW DPI at the meeting, I wrote to my colleague, the Hon Joseph Tripodi MP, NSW Minister for Ports and Waterways requesting that a meeting be organised involving industry representatives and the relevant agencies. I have asked NSW DPI to follow up this matter with the port authority.

I also thank the Committee for its advice on the future use of 'spikes' and 'riddlers' in the Ocean Trawl fishery. I have directed NSW DPI to prepare the necessary regulatory changes.

I note the Committee's request to delay the implementation of square-mesh codends. However, I consider that it would not be desirable to further delay the introduction of the new specifications, particularly in light of relevant research results and the requirements set out in the Ocean Trawl Fishery Management Strategy which are also reflected in the Commonwealth's export approval. Accordingly, I have recently approved new specifications for commercial prawn-catching gear in the Estuary General, Estuary Prawn Trawl and Ocean Trawl fisheries. These changes are based on extensive research undertaken by NSW DPI scientists and some of the feedback from industry. NSW DPI will provide advice to all relevant commercial fishers and will ensure a reasonable lead-in time for fishers to adjust their gear accordingly.

I understand that some industry participants in the Ocean Trawl and Estuary Prawn Trawl fisheries are intending to undertake research to further refine their fishing gear; any such research would need to satisfy criteria set by NSW DPI scientists if its results were to contribute to future policy.

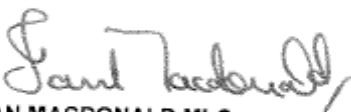
The committee's concerns regarding the new 30cm size limit for silver trevally is noted however, I am advised by my scientists that the introduction of this size limit is warranted. Ongoing monitoring of commercial trevally catches shows that there is no change in the status of the stock as "growth-overfished". Additionally, the new 30cm size limit was introduced

following extensive consultation with industry and the general public during the preparation of the relevant commercial fisheries environmental assessments and other changes to bag and size limits. This change, along with all changes to bag and size limits, was jointly supported by the Seafood Industry Advisory Council and the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing. The implementation of an effective recovery program for silver trevally species contributes to NSW fulfilling the Commonwealth's export approvals for the Ocean Trawl Fishery. Silver trevally is also an important species for the Ocean Trap and Line commercial fishery and the recreational fishery.

Consequently, I intend to maintain the new limit for silver trevally and believe that our collective efforts would now be better directed towards improving the selectivity of fish trawl gear and related operations. To that end, I have directed NSW DPI officers to continue to work with industry to help them to respond to this matter.

I note that a number of other matters, including: strategies to minimise the discarding of prohibited size fish, mapping designated trawl whiting grounds, refining the by-catch reduction device requirements applying to the prawn trawl sector and current species trip limits were raised during the meeting and I am advised that NSW DPI will continue to work closely with the Committee to progress them.

Yours sincerely



IAN MACDONALD MLC



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 9 April, 2009

Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

Buy local and support our fishermen this Easter

Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald today called on consumers to support the State's local commercial fishing and aquaculture industries by choosing local seafood instead of imports this Easter.

"Easter is the seafood industry's second biggest retailing event of the year after Christmas and represents an excellent opportunity for everyone to enjoy top quality seafood from NSW," he said.

"The Sydney Fish Market has a plentiful supply of a number of NSW species including Yellowtail Kingfish, Sydney Rock Oyster, farmed Black Tiger Prawn, Yellowfin Tuna and Flat Head.

"Consumers can rest assured they are purchasing premium quality seafood that is harvested from sustainable fisheries right at our doorstep."

The Minister said comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the seven major commercial fisheries in NSW and detailed Fisheries Management Strategies have been developed for each.

"The seafood industry in NSW generates over half a billion dollars of economic activity each year and employs more than 4,000 people," Minister Macdonald said.

"Buying local means consumers are supporting regional economies and employment across the State.

"The great thing about seafood is that it is healthy and nutritious.

"It's low in fat, high in protein and an excellent natural source of Omega 3 fatty acids."

03 Apr 2009

Three short-term prawn trawling closures have been introduced to protect fish stocks after the flooding on the NSW mid north coast, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

"The closures prohibit prawn trawling in ocean waters off the mouths of the Bellinger, Nambucca and Hastings Rivers," Minister Macdonald said.

"The closures, which were introduced this week, are aimed at protecting fish washed out of the rivers as a result of the floods," he said.

"They will be in place until 16 April for the Nambucca and Hastings River areas and until 23 April for the Bellinger area."

Director of Fisheries Operation with NSW Department of Primary Industries Peter Turnell said during floods a greater number of juvenile and non-target fish are flushed from the upper reaches of the rivers out to sea.

He said the waters adjacent to the three rivers had only recently been re-opened after the February floods in the area.

"On this occasion, as was the case with the last set of closures, NSW DPI officers have consulted closely with local commercial fishers," he said.

"They agree that the approach is in the best interests of the fishery and fishers."

Mr Turnell said the flood closures complement a number of rules and regulations in place to ensure the ocean trawl fishery was fished in a sustainable way.

"There are input controls on the fishery that restrict things like the number of licences, the size and engine capacity of boats, the length and mesh size of nets, and the areas and times which can be worked," he said.

"All prawn trawl nets for example must be fitted with an approved By-catch Reduction Device.

"These closures are all part of detailed commercial fisheries management strategies to ensure sustainability."

Information on the fishing closures or on the sustainable management of the Ocean Trawl Fishery is available by calling (02) 9527 8411.

A natural disaster declaration covers Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley and Nambucca local government areas.

This means affected primary producers and businesses are able to apply for assistance available under the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements by contacting the Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.

More information

Media contact: Phil Bevan, NSW DPI, Wollongbar Ph 6626 1350 or 0429 458 053



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 31 March 2009

Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

“Pymont Pact” to promote strong future for commercial fishers

A new era in economic and environmental sustainability for the state’s commercial fishing industry has been reached following the adoption of the “Pymont Pact”, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

Minister Macdonald said the new scheme is designed to promote the long-term viability of the industry.

“This provides a clear direction forward for an industry that provides a significant economic contribution to NSW,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The direct and indirect value of the commercial fishing industry is approximately half a billion dollars annually and it employs nearly 4,000 people across the State.

“These changes are logical, they directly address the key challenges that fishers face, they will inform and drive industry and regulatory reform with practical and achievable outcomes.

“The critical issue of share management is addressed, the Pact looks at dormant effort holdings and minimum shareholder requirements – which will ensure that shares are being used in the way that they were intended.

“This will build on the share management embodied in the Fisheries Management Act.”

A reform program will now be developed which will include:

- Initial restructuring with minimum shareholdings and exit grants;
- A comprehensive review of industry regulatory requirements and streamlining DPI administrative systems;
- Creating tools to provide for tradeable input and output controls so fishers will be able to choose between the type of gear used and types of catch limits and quotas;
- Moves towards a risk-based model for managing fish resources; and
- Initiating an industry development program to enhance the economic value of product to fishers and improve industry and government co-operation.

The Minister praised the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Seafood Industry Advisory Council (SIAC) as well as the SIAC Working Group for working together to achieve an “ambitious, balanced and comprehensive” agreement.

“Industry has done an outstanding job of addressing the challenges it faces and the Government is committed to supporting SIAC’s objectives in achieving enhanced sustainability and viability for the NSW commercial fishing industry,” he said.

“I am confident this Pact will move the industry forward and will result in a strong and sustained working relationship as we work together to achieve the best results.”

23 Feb 2009

Four short-term fishing closures will help fish stocks to recover following last week's flooding on the NSW mid north coast, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

"The closures prohibit trawling by commercial fishing operators in ocean waters off the mouths of the Bellinger, Nambucca, Macleay and Hastings Rivers," Minister Macdonald said.

"The closures, which were introduced on Friday, are aimed at protecting fish washed out of the rivers as a result of the floods, and they will be in place for a period of up to two weeks," he said.

NSW Department of Primary Industries Director Fisheries Operations Peter Turnell said in high water flows there is a much greater chance of juvenile and non-target fish that have been flushed from the upper reaches of the rivers out to sea being caught as by-catch.

"We need to protect these fish and give them time to return to the rivers," Mr Turnell said.

"NSW DPI officers have been in contact with local fishers to discuss the closures and most agree that the approach is in the best interests of the fishery and fishers.

"It is very pleasing to see the cooperative and proactive approach local fishers have taken in response to the flooded rivers."

Mr Turnell said in a separate flood-related incident 300 to 400 fish had died in the Belmore River system, a tributary of the Macleay, as a result of low oxygen levels in the river.

"Fisheries officers are working with Kempsey Shire Council to monitor the situation," he said.

"We expect dissolved oxygen levels in the river will deteriorate over coming days as waters discharge off the floodplain " which may result in further fish losses."

The disruption to fish stocks is just one of the many impacts of the floods that hit the mid north coast last week.

NSW DPI agriculture and fisheries officers in the region received reports of losses on a free-range chicken farm on the lower Maria and damage to oyster rafts and infrastructure, fencing, pastures and maize crops, as well as small numbers of missing livestock.

Fortunately, most people were aware of the potential of flooding through the radio warnings and most stock was taken to higher ground.

Natural Disaster Declarations had been declared for Coffs Harbour, Bellinger, Nambucca, Kempsey, and Hastings Local Government Areas.

Affected primary producers and businesses are able to apply for assistance under the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements by contacting Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593.

Information on the fishing closures is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/closures or call (02) 9527 8411.

Media contact: Phil Bevan 6626 1350



April 07, 2009 03:54am AEST

Deadline extended on Newcastle port expansion

April 07, 2009

Article from: *The Australian*

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has extended until tomorrow the deadline for the NSW Labor Government and coal producers to strike an agreement on access to coal loaders at the Port of Newcastle. ACCC chairman Graeme Samuel last night heralded a breakthrough in talks that he said could end bottlenecks at the port.

In recent years, queues of ships off the port have sometimes been 70 vessels long, slowing the export of coal during the resources boom.

It is understood a deal is being held up by BHP Billiton, the only company not yet on board with a plan to use long-term contracts to allocate berths at the three loaders.

However, NSW Ports Minister Joe Tripodi told the ACCC yesterday there was in-principle agreement and "internal approvals" were being sought by one of the producers.

Without a deal on long-term access, investment in the facility is stalled, threatening expansions that could triple its capacity and reduce the lengthy queues of ships waiting to be loaded.

Imre Salusinszky

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Solution close for Newcastle coal queues - ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corp... Page 1 of 1



Solution close for Newcastle coal queues

Posted 13 minutes ago

The head of Australia's competition watchdog is confident that an agreement reached between the Hunter's coal producers will achieve a permanent solution to ship queues off Newcastle.

• [Map: Newcastle 2300](#)

Port Waratah Coal Services and Newcastle Port Corporation submitted and signed the memorandum last week, but the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) refused to.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) gave the NCIG a deadline of 4:00 pm (AEST) yesterday to sign.

ACCC chairman, Graeme Samuel, says agreement has now been reached with all of the parties.

"I've received advice from both Minister Tripodi, and the various parties concerned, that agreement has been reached between all of the parties including all the participants and NCIG," he said.

"Signatures have been put on the document, I think, by all bar one party and they've reassured me at the chief executive level that that signature will be in place by Wednesday this week."

Tags: [public-sector](#), [states-and-territories](#), [programs-and-initiatives](#), [coal](#), [sea-transport](#), [newcastle-2300](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/04/07/2536873.htm?section=business>

7/04/2009

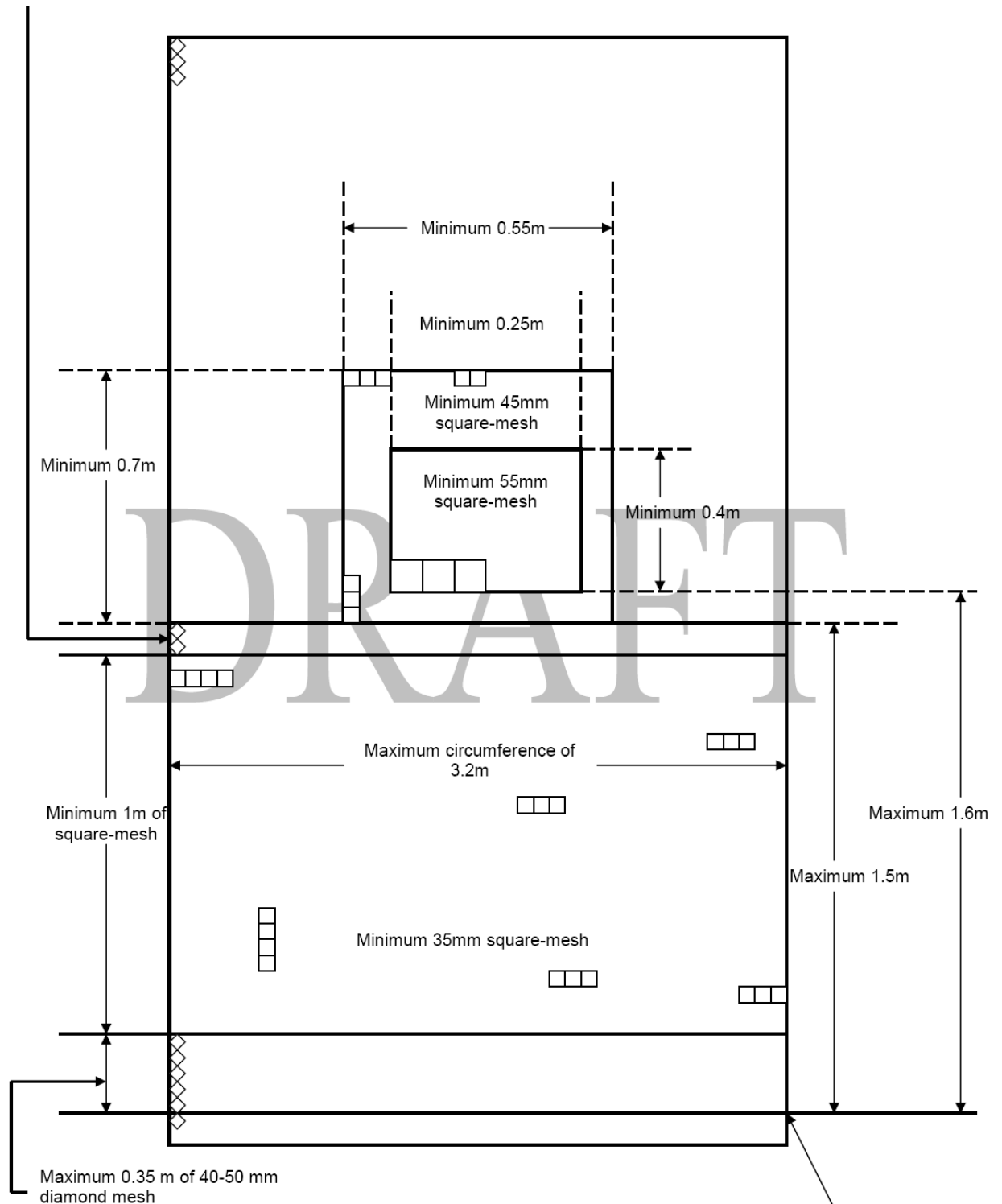
Other changes relating to the NSW OT fishing currently being proposed

Additional information on these proposed changes will be issued prior to them taking effect. Amendments being developed include:

- Modifications to the registration requirements for nets;
- Carriage of stowed commercial fishing gear through closed waters;
- The South West Rocks juvenile king prawn closure;
- Clarifying the boat capacity provisions.

NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

Joining mesh: a maximum of 2 rows of diamond-mesh inserted between the square-mesh codend and BRD.



Note: The square-mesh codend can be between 1 and 3 metres in length.

Drawstring: Noting there are several options with respect to where and how the drawstring may be inserted.