

**Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing**

**Outcomes from Meeting 55 – Tuesday 27 September 2011  
Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence**

***Attendance***

Bruce Schumacher	Chairperson
John Drew	Estuary Fishing
Neil Ryan	Fishing Media
Max Castle	Estuary Fishing
Susan North	Freshwater Fishing and Fishing Industry Liaison
Charlie Howe	Estuary & Offshore Fishing
Kevin McKinnon	Freshwater Fishing
John Clarke	Offshore Fishing
John Humphries	Freshwater Fishing
Pat Jones	Offshore Fishing
Ann Garard	Charter Boat Fishing
Peter Turnell	Director, Recreational and Indigenous Fisheries

***1. Apologies***

Adrian Wayne (Underwater Fishing), Alistair McGlashan (Offshore Fishing and Media), Michelle Martin (Tackle Sales), Jan McLeod (Estuary Fishing) and Claudette Rechterik (Conservation).

***2. Welcome***

The Chair welcomed members and confirmed that a majority of members were present so there was a quorum for the meeting.

***3. Draft minutes from previous ACoRF meeting***

The department advised that the draft outcomes from the previous meeting would be circulated to members out of session in the near future. Meeting 54 and 55 draft outcomes to be ratified at the next meeting.

***4. Business arising from the minutes***

Not applicable.

***5. Closure of Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence***

Dr Geoff Allan, A/Executive Director Fisheries NSW, provided an overview of the NSW Government's recent announcement to close the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence and relocate positions/staff to regional centres in Nowra, Port Stephens and Coffs Harbour.

Council members expressed concerns that the relocation could jeopardise the level of fisheries services to recreational fishers. The council recognised the strong relationships, rapport and level of trust between Recreational Management staff at Cronulla and recreational fishing stakeholders, which is important for effective consultation. The council noted that there were a

number of Sydney based projects funded by the Trusts and were concerned about the potential impact on the success of these programs.

The Chair advised that he had already written a letter to the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson, Minister for Primary Industries regarding these concerns and was planning to meet with the minister soon to reiterate ACoRF's position on this issue.

### **5. NSW Marine Parks update**

The council discussed its draft submission to the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW, which was developed by Professor Robert Kearney in consultation with a working group of council members. The draft submission was distributed to members for comment prior to the meeting. The council made a number of amendments including the addition of an executive summary to clearly outline the key points of the submission. The Chair advised the submission was due by Friday 30 September 2011 and that any further comments should be forwarded to him as soon as possible.

### **6. Recreational fishing communication strategy**

Dee McElligott, State Coordinator Communication Programs, NSW DPI, provided an update on the development of the DPI recreational fishing communication strategy. This includes the proposed new format for the Newscast e-newsletter. The department advised that there is a need for a specific strategy for communicating with recreational fishers. The council noted that communication issues relating to ACoRF, RFFTEC and RFSTEC would be incorporated into this strategy.

The council reiterated its recommendation for a working group with representatives from ACoRF, Fishcare volunteers, NSW DPI Recreational Fisheries Management and Communications Units, to be established to work through the issues and develop a draft strategy prior to wider consultation.

Note: The council nominated Susan North, Claudette Rechterik and Alistair McGlashan as possible working group members.

### **7. Cultural Fishing Events in Recreational Fishing Havens**

Laura Best, Senior Fisheries Manager, NSW DPI, advised that the department had previously and, again more recently received an application from an Aboriginal group to carry out a cultural fishing event within the waters of a Recreational Fishing Haven.

The department advised that permits may be issued under Section 37 of the Fisheries Management Act 1994 (the Act) for cultural events where the proposed fishing activities are considered suitable for that purpose but not consistent with current legislation.

The council noted recent changes to the Act including: a new object that recognises the spiritual, social and customary significance to Aboriginal persons of fisheries resources and to protect, and promote the continuation of, Aboriginal cultural fishing and, the inclusion of a definition of Aboriginal Cultural Fishing. It also acknowledged the work being undertaken by the department in consultation with the Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council (AFAC) to develop a cultural fishing policy, which it is proposed will incorporate a framework for the consistent assessment of cultural fishing permit applications in line with the Act.

The council confirmed that it was keen to work with AFAC and the department in their progression and development of the cultural fishing policy to develop the cultural fishing policy, however, members reiterated their past recommendation that the use of any commercial fishing gear (or modified gear) in Recreational Fishing Havens is not supported.

### **8. Recreational Fishing Program Presentations** Recreational Fisheries Enhancement

NSW DPI, provided an update on the following components of the Recreational Fisheries Enhancement program:

*i) Estuarine Artificial Reefs (EARs)*

The expansions of the EARs in Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay, St Georges Basin, Lake Conjola and Merimbula Lake have now been completed. The department is currently investigating the possibility of new EARs in additional estuaries, including Lake Illawarra and the Bellinger River, in a cooperative approach with local authorities.

*ii) Offshore Artificial Reef (OAR)*

The tender for the construction and deployment of the first OAR off Sydney's South Head had been awarded to Waterway Construction Pty Ltd. The deployment of this 12m high structure (weighing 42 tonnes) is scheduled for October 2011 (subject to weather conditions).

*iii) Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs)*

The 2011/12 FADs season was about to commence with a number of FADs already deployed along the NSW coastline. A total of 25 FADs will be deployed for the summer fishing period. The department advised that it is proposed for a bait FAD to be deployed to replace one of the NSW Maritime buoys at Trial Bay, South West Rocks.

## **9. Out of Session**

*i) Sydney Harbour Clean Safe Wharf Campaign*

The council was advised that the NSW Minister for Roads and Ports, The Hon. Duncan Gay MLC had announced today that fishing would be banned at Cabarita Wharf at all times. The implementation of a new three phase strategy to clean up anti-social behaviour at other popular fishing wharves on Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River was also announced.

The council noted the department's previous Clean Safe Wharfs education campaign in autumn this year and the proposal for a follow-up 'Do the right thing' spring and summer campaign, which involves:

- Continuation of the current DPI staff and Fishcare volunteer on-water advisory campaign during spring and summer months;
- Implementing additional rounds of advertising 'Key messages to promote Responsible Fishing on Commuter Wharves' in western Sydney and inner city local newspapers;
- Further distribution of the dedicated 'Responsible fishing on Sydney Harbour wharves - Do the right thing' brochures to western Sydney fishing tackle stores;
- Facilitating education advisory days in the Cabarita area with the "Bluey" advisory trailer;
- Contacting local fishing clubs to investigate setting up a potential 'Wharf Guardianship' program similar to the Recreational Fishing Haven guardians concept.

The council ratified its support for the proposed actions on this important issue to ensure there are no flow-on impacts to recreational fishing access on other wharfs.

*ii) Renewal of the existing closure for the Marine Extension of the Bouddi National Park*

The council ratified its lack of support for the renewal of the closure and suggested that a review be undertaken by Marine Parks staff to assess the effectiveness of, and ongoing need for, the closure.

*iii) Ministerial Orders to allow continued fishing in the Darling and Lachlan Endangered Ecological Communities*

The council ratified its support for these Ministerial Orders, as proposed.

### **Action Item**

The council to write to the Minister for Primary Industries supporting the Ministerial Orders to allow continued fishing in the Darling and Lachlan Endangered Ecological Communities, as proposed.

## **10. Correspondence**

The council noted the following correspondence:

i) Letter from the council to the Minister for Primary Industries respectfully requesting that the NSW Government reconsider its decision to close the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence, as well as explore alternate options to the currently proposed locations.

## **11. General Business**

### i) Pipis

Council member John Clarke advised that he is still concerned that pipis are being over harvested by commercial fishers. Mr Clarke advised that an action item from the Pipi Working Group meeting held on 19 July 2011 was for all NSW beaches to be closed to commercial harvesting, with only selected beaches open under the authority of permits issued in accordance with section 37 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*.

The council noted that a Resource Planning Group meeting was then held on 12 September 2011, which was attended by council members John Clarke and Charlie Howe. Mr Howe advised that a series of alternative arrangements were proposed, including increasing the size limit to 4.5cm, a 40kg daily catch limit and a closed season from 1 December to 31 May each year.

The council expressed concern that these arrangements would not be enough to ensure recovery of the species and called for a complete closure on the commercial harvest of Pipis on all NSW beaches.

**Motion:** A complete closure on the commercial harvest of Pipis on all NSW beaches be implemented. Moved: John Clarke. Seconded: Charles Howe. **Carried.**

### Action Item

The council write a letter to Oceanwatch Australia expressing their concerns about the current commercial harvest of Pipis in NSW.

### ii) Salmon Working Group recommendations

The council discussed the recommendations from the Australian Salmon Working Group meeting, which were not supported at the last council meeting. Members considered the proposed 224 tonne catch provision outlined by the working group to be excessive

The department advised that the previous fishing closure had been extended for a further three months to enable additional consultation.

### iii) Bag and Size limit review

The council acknowledged that a meeting of DPI representatives on the Bag and Size Limit Review Technical Working Group was held on Friday 23 September 2011 to discuss and prioritise issues for inclusion in the review. The department advised that a meeting of the broader Technical Working Group including external stakeholder representation is proposed for November. Nominated recreational fishing representatives will be advised of the meeting details soon.

### iv) Australian Government's marine bioregional planning process - East Marine Bioregion

The council requested that Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population & Communities (DSEWPC) staff attend the next ACoRF meeting to provide an update on the development of the draft Marine Bioregional Plan and Commonwealth Marine Reserve Network proposal for the East Marine Region.

### v) ACoRF membership details on the DPI website

The council discussed the need to update the current ACoRF membership page of the NSW DPI website noting that a number of new members were not currently included. A draft biography for each representative has previously been circulated to members for review and will be finalised as a matter of urgency.

**Action Item**

Council members to provide the department with information on their fishing experience, expertise and affiliations as soon as possible.

***12. Next meeting***

The next meeting (ACoRF 56) is scheduled for 29 and 30 November 2011.

**Action items from 54<sup>th</sup> ACoRF meeting on 24 August 2011**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Team Responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>
Recreational Fisheries Management update d) Pittwater Parking	The department to contact the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW and outline the issues regarding the parking of vehicles and boat trailers.	Recreational Management/ ACoRF	Pending
NSW Marine Parks update	Nominated council members to meet with the preferred contractor to ensure the council's views on marine park issues are discussed and incorporated into the submission.	ACoRF	Completed
Update on Indigenous fishing and cultural fishing rules	The department to provide council members with the definition of cultural fishing activities as described in the Act.	Recreational Management	Pending
General Business a) Ministerial Orders to allow continued fishing in Darling and Lachlan Endangered Ecological Communities	The department to provide copies of the Species Impact Statement for the Darling and Lachlan Endangered Ecological Communities to council members out of session for comment.	Recreational Management	Completed

**Action items from 55<sup>th</sup> ACoRF meeting on 27 September 2011**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Team Responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>
Out of Session iii) Ministerial Orders to allow continued fishing in Darling and Lachlan Endangered Ecological Communities	The council to write to the Minister for Primary Industries supporting the Ministerial Orders to allow continued fishing in Darling and Lachlan Endangered Ecological Communities without amendment.	Recreational Management	Completed
General Business i) Pipis	The council write to Oceanwatch Australia expressing their concerns about the current commercial harvest of Pipis in NSW.	ACoRF	Pending
General Business iv) ACoRF membership details on the DPI website	Council members to review and approve their draft biographies and/or provide the department with additional information on their fishing experience, expertise and affiliations as soon as possible, to enable council membership details to be finalised and displayed on the website.	ACoRF/ Recreational Management	Pending