



# Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee Outcomes, 44<sup>th</sup> meeting St George Rowing Club Wollii

19 August 2015

## Attendees

Bruce Schumacher (Chair), Lionel Jones (Region 5), Stuart Rhodes (Region 6b), John Paton (Region 6a), Ann Garard (Region 7), Stan Konstantaras (RFA), John Burgess (ANSA), Bryan van der Walt for Peter Turnell (DPI), Adrian Wayne for John Featherstone (Region 3), Grahame Williams for David Jones (Gamefishing) and Micah Adams for Greg Liddell (Region 8).

## 1. Chairs introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

## 2. Apologies

John Featherstone (Region 3), David Jones (Gamefishing), Greg Liddell (Region 8), Lisa Terry (Region 2), Geoff Shelton (Region 4), Peter Turnell (DPI).

## 3. Confirmation of outcomes from previous RFSTEC meeting

The draft outcomes of the 41st RFSTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## 4. Action items from previous meetings

The Committee noted the progress on action items from the previous meeting.

## 5. Status of the Trust Fund

The status of the Saltwater Trust was presented. Licence revenue generated for the Recreational Fishing Trusts for the 2013/14 financial year totalled \$15.6 Million. New Trust project milestone reporting procedures have been implemented and are working well, which will provide for improved monitoring and delivery of Trust projects.

## 6. Review of new 2014/15 Trust funding applications

The committee reviewed new Saltwater and joint Freshwater/Saltwater Trust grant applications (large and small grants) received by DPI. Funding recommendations in the attached Tables will be forwarded to ACoRF for subsequent recommendations to the Minister for consideration.

## 7. Presentations

### Fisheries Enhancement Research and Monitoring

Dr Michael Lowry updated the committee on the progress of the Fisheries enhancement program. The program has made significant achievements in the delivery of on the ground works (estuarine and offshore reefs) supported by research outcomes which have facilitated the development of the program. The success of this program remains an example of a coordinated approach between research and management with information provided by the research program supporting the planning and assessment processes for artificial reefs.

### Research on Pipsis and Beachworms

This collaborative research project was designed to describe the age structure, growth rate, patterns of reproduction and investigate environmental factors that may impact on pipi abundance. The project developed and validated a methodology to provide the first estimates of the age of pipis via thin sections of shells. Estimates of age ranged from 1-5 years with the majority of pipis 1-2 years old. Results indicate that pipis as small as 27 mm total length are capable of reproducing, with 100% of pipis greater than 45 mm total length sexually mature. The implications of environmental factors, including trematode infection and harmful marine diatoms on pipi populations are also being investigated.

### Coastal Fish Habitat Protection and management

The primary objective of the program is to ensure the protection of coastal fish habitats. The focus is on developments within or adjacent to Key Fish Habitats (which have now been mapped for the whole state). Most new and expanded developments, including those remote from KFH, pose a risk to fish habitats via the generation of dirty stormwater during rainfall events. During 2014/15, 1,016 assessments of developments were completed (716 coastal and 300 inland). 46 of these were within Recreational Fishing Havens and 315 within popular fishing areas. Developments are assessed for direct and indirect impacts during both the construction and operational phases. Newly available Departmental mapping tools including a fish passage barriers database and "IndustryView" have enhanced our ability to assess developments quickly and objectively.

### NSW Research Angler Program

Knowledge gaps exist in the biology of some of NSW's key recreational fish species, usually information on the largest (and potentially oldest) individuals in the population. These gaps can be filled using recreational fishers to collect biological material (scales or otoliths) from the fish they catch and donate them to research. This 'citizen science' program provides a vehicle for fishers to actively contribute to stock assessment and improved management of their favourite species. Up to this point, the project has been enormously successful in collecting data from recreationally-caught mulloway, but is now expanding to include four other key recreational fish species: snapper, yellowtail kingfish, tailor and dusky flathead.

### Recreational Fisheries Compliance

Compliance activities undertaken throughout NSW over the past 12 months were presented, including information on fishers checked, recreational fishing fee compliance rates, significant apprehensions and advisory education events undertaken. There has been a continued focus on maximising voluntary compliance and creating an effective deterrent by having presence during periods of high fishing activity.

### Fishing event management

The program works with fishing clubs and fishing event organisers to promote best practice recreational fishing and competition management techniques. This includes provision of catch and release packs, (including gloves, circle hooks, pliers, C&R mats, DVD's, release weights and C&R advisory information) to competition managers to promote best catch and release techniques and new gear types to anglers. New wider catch and release mats have been developed to assist in the measurement of large Snapper and Murray Cod for photo validation. Examples of tournaments that have moved from harvest based competitions to catch and release formats in recent times were discussed. A video clip promoting the use of release weights to return fish retrieved from deep water to reduce the effects of barotrauma was shown. New instructional videos on fish handling, releasing fish and use of circle hooks are planned in future.

## Fisheries Enhancement – FADs & Artificial Reefs

The fisheries enhancement program had a successful 2014/15 FADs season with two new FADs installed and reliable catches of dolphinfish reported along the NSW coast. NSW DPI are currently investigating a number of new FAD locations to be included in the 2015/16 season including Narooma. FAD deployments are scheduled to commence in September. The expansion of the St Georges Basin estuarine artificial reef was completed in May 2015 with an additional 210 modules successfully installed, making this the largest estuarine reef deployed to date. The Sydney and Shoalhaven offshore artificial reefs (OARs) continue to attract fish and recreational fishers in large numbers. Visitation rates on the Sydney OAR continue to increase each year. The Port Macquarie OAR design and construct Request For Tender (RFT) has been released and is due to close in late August. Installation of the reef is expected to be completed in early 2016. Planning for the Port Botany offshore reef system are well underway. The location of the 5th OAR is yet to be determined. It has been recommended that a steering committee be formed which includes a member from the committee.

## Community Education programs

An outline of the program's achievements for the year included:

**Fishcare** - 214 active Fish Care volunteers in NSW, attended 397 events, making 52,000 face to face contacts. The Fish Care volunteers committed a total of 7,200hrs or 1,023 days to attending events and other various activities.

**Get Hooked..it's Fun to fish** - Registered 87 schools, with 4,300 primary students taking part in the lessons and codes throughout the year. The Minister recently launched the new "Get Hooked, it's fun to fish" manual and resources for use in primary schools during 2015/16.

**Fishing Workshops** – 7,100 new participants were taught to fish across NSW at local waterways.

## 8. Next Meeting

The next expenditure committee meeting is scheduled for 25 November 2015.

## Action items from this meeting

Action	Responsibility	Status
Action item – RFSTEC requested the Director Fisheries Operations to attend the next meeting to present and discuss GLS fees and licensing issues to the committee.	DPI	Pending
Update list of registered charter boat operators on NSW DPI website	DPI	Pending
Development of Smartphone app to consider inclusion of a link to charter boat operators web page on NSW DPI webpage	DPI	Pending
Charter Boat Economic survey to be uploaded on NSW DPI webpage	DPI	Pending

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (November 2015). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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**Table 1: Summary of new Saltwater Trust grant applications recommended for funding by RFFTEC**

Project Title and Summary	Organisation	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<i>Platform: Recreational Fishing Education</i>				
<p><b>KINCHELA PRIMARY SCHOOL – FISHING</b></p> <p>Educate students in basic fishing skills including: Hazards, Environment, Fishing gear, Casting, Bait and Practical. To be carried out by Hat Head Fishing Club Volunteers in conjunction with NSW Fisheries “Get Hooked” program</p> <p><i>SUPPORTED - Moved John Paton, Seconded John Burgess, Carried.</i></p>	KINCHELA PRIMARY SCHOOL -FISHING	SW \$2000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Reproduction of 13,500 NSW Fishing Safely DVDs</b></p> <p>Reproduction of 13,500 Fishing Safety DVDs and free bulk distribution to NSW DPI, fishing groups, safe fishing clinics, community groups, other agencies and organisations.</p> <p><i>Stan Konstantaras (RFA) declared a conflict of interest and left the room during voting</i></p> <p><i>SUPPORTED - Moved John Paton, Seconded John Burgess, Carried.</i></p> <p><i>CONDITION – Animation of spearfisher to be updated on cover with float-line to surface.</i></p>	Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW	SW \$9,970	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Recreational fishing Smartphone app (FishSmart)</b></p> <p>Involves development of a DPI recreational fishing app to provide interactive, easy to find information on various fishing aspects, such as fishing rules, recreational fishing havens, artificial reefs, fish aggregating devices, fishing guides, a newsfeed facility, marine park maps, report illegal fishing, threatened species sightings, pest fish etc.</p> <p><i>Note: RFFTEC supported funding for this project at a previous meeting. The former Minister at that time requested DPI obtain a quote for supply of the app prior to funding approval. DPI has subsequently received a quote from a preferred supplier to deliver an iOS (Apple) and Android compatible app. RFFTEC reiterated its previous support for this project.</i></p>	NSW DPI	\$42,000 SW \$18,000 FW	\$0	\$0

**Table 2: Summary of new Saltwater/Freshwater Trust grant applications recommended for funding by RFSTEC**

Project Title and Summary	Organisation	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<i>Platform: Recreational Fishing Education</i>				
<p><b>NSW Fishing Day 2015 – Go fishing in NSW</b></p> <p>To conduct the inaugural Annual NSW Fishing Day on 5 December 2015 in six locations throughout NSW to recognise and promote the importance of fishing to the community, particularly in regional NSW. The project ultimately aims to encourage people to go fishing, especially new entrants to the sport. Ultimately the aim is to increase participation in recreational fishing.</p> <p><i>Bryan van der Walt (Trust Executive Officer) declared a conflict of interest and left the room during voting</i></p> <p>SUPPORTED - Moved John Paton, Seconded Lionel Jones, Carried.</p> <p>RECCOMENDATION – NSW Fishing Day 2015 – Go fishing in NSW should be a Licence fee free day to encourage newcomers to try fishing and promote recreational fishing within the community</p>	NSW DPI	SW \$85000 FW \$40000	\$0	\$0

**Table 3: Summary of new Saltwater Trust grant applications NOT recommended for funding by RFSTEC**

Project Title and Summary	Organisation	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Platform: Recreational Fishing enhancement programs</b>				
<p><b>Port Stephens Inshore Artificial Reef Project</b></p> <p>To create an inshore (Bay) Artificial Reef for Fish Aggregation within Port Stephens in the deeper Channel Waters around Soldiers Point for improved future Rec Fishing and promotion of Habitat.</p> <p><i>NOT SUPPORTED - Moved Lionel Jones, Seconded John Paton, Carried. The committee acknowledged the benefits of Artificial Reefs to recreational fishers, however noted significant issues with the application, including a lack of detailed methodology, planning, consultation and inadequate budget. The committee recommended the Port Stephens be included in the location prioritisation process for future artificial reefs. The Committee also suggested a RFSTEC member be included in future site selection processes.</i></p>	Individual	SW \$10000	\$0	\$0
<b>Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing</b>				
<p><b>Safer rock platform fishing via better information for fishers and emergency services – stages 1 and 2.</b></p> <p>The project will help improve angler safety by documenting usage patterns of Illawarra rock platforms to provide input to hazard models being developed by universities. This will aid angler understanding of the risks posed by individual rock platforms and speed up emergency response times by providing a 'street map' of where people fish.</p> <p><i>NOT SUPPORTED - Moved Stan Konstantaras, Seconded John Paton, Carried. The committee noted the recent Coronial recommendations with regard to a series of rock fishing fatalities. It was considered prudent that the Government response to the recommendations be considered prior to committing to any new education and monitoring projects, noting that it is highly likely a series of new education and monitoring strategies will most likely be needed in the future to address the issue of rock fishing drownings.</i></p>	Australian Aerial Patrol	SW \$56000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Effects of seismic airgun blasts on iconic recreational fish species.</b></p> <p>Seismic airguns produce substantial acoustic energy and are used by marine prospectors to locate natural resources. This project quantifies their effect on iconic species of fish commonly caught by NSW anglers.</p> <p><i>NOT SUPPORTED - Moved Lionel Jones, Seconded Micah Adams, Carried. The committee acknowledged the application had merit but expressed concern about contributing funding from other sectors noting the flow of benefits will be to a number of -sectors.</i></p>	Macquarie University	SW \$143,498	SW \$128,988	\$77,648
<b>Platform: Fishing Access and facilities</b>				

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<b>South West Rocks, Back Creek – Jetty Replacement</b>	NSW Trade and Investment, Crown Lands	SW \$100,000	\$0	\$0
Demolish existing dilapidated mooring jetty and replace with new fishing platform. The jetty is heavily utilised as a fishing platform by locals and tourists.				
<i>DEFERRED/NOT SUPPORTED AT THIS STAGE - Moved Grahame Williams OAM, Seconded John Burgess, Carried.</i>				
<i>The Committee noted the community benefit of the funding and recommended DPI request the following additional details to enable further consideration of the application out of session:</i>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Confirm which design will be used if requested funding of \$100,000 is supported</i></li> <li>2. <i>Confirm that Crown Lands will be funding the ramp and remaining funds required for the platform</i></li> <li>3. <i>Letters of support from local recreational fishing stakeholders</i></li> <li>4. <i>Advice on any other funding sources e.g. Kempsey Shire Council</i></li> </ol>				

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