



**Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter  
Management Advisory Committee**

**FINAL MINUTES**

**1<sup>st</sup> MEETING, 1/02  
9:30am, 22 April, 2002**

**Conference Room, Cronulla Fisheries Centre  
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

## **Attendance**

### **Chair**

Dr Michael Sargent

### **Members**

Mr Peter Bolic  
Ms Margaret Dodson  
Mr Allan Ross  
Mr Peter Sayre  
Mr James (Jim) Lumb  
Ms Ann Garard  
Mr John Stevens  
Mr Keith Appleby  
Ms Barbara Radley  
Mr David Taylor  
Dr Maria Schreider

### **Representative**

Far North Coast  
Mid North Coast  
Central Coast  
Sydney  
Sydney  
Illawarra  
Mid South Coast  
Far South Coast  
Commercial Fishing  
Recreational Fishing  
Nature Conservation Council

### **Observers**

John Diplock, Principal Manager Recreational Fisheries  
Nick James, Manager Recreational Fisheries  
Susan Wildgoose, Fisheries Management Officer Recreational Fisheries

## **Business**

Welcome by Chair

Apologies

Allan Ross

Steve Dunn, Director of Fisheries

## **Agenda Items**

1. Fishery Management Strategy and Environmental Impact Statement - presentation by the Director, Management Planning to outline the requirements and timeframe associated with the development of a Fishery Management Strategy and Environmental Impact Statement for charter fishing activities.
2. Consideration of abeyance provisions for charter fishing boat licences
3. Licence review process – update
4. Charter boat monitoring program update
5. Compliance report
6. Request for MERCMAC to nominate 2 charter fishing boat representatives for consideration for appointment to the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF)
7. Issues raised by industry
8. Other business  
*Correspondence received*

Next meeting

**Issue**

Development of an environmental impact statement and fishery management strategy for the NSW charter fishing boat sector.

**Background (provided by NSW Fisheries)**

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) was amended by the Government in November 2000 and now contains specific provisions requiring environmental impact statements to be prepared for each of the State's significant fisheries. This overrides the requirement for individual assessments for each charter boat.

The process is an examination of the environmental impact of activities proposed under the fishery management strategy. The term 'environment' includes biological, economic and social aspects of the fishery. The environmental impact statement will include consideration of the potential impacts of fishing on target species, by-catch species, important fish habitat and the broader ecosystem, as well as economic and social issues.

A fishery management strategy is a document outlining the management goals and objectives, and strategies for achieving these (including the fishing controls), and identifying performance indicators and monitoring programs that apply to a fishery. The strategy will include information about the background, operation, current status and vision for future management of the fishery, as well as the regulated management plan.

Environmental impact statements and fishery management strategies must be prepared for each of the major commercial fisheries in NSW, as well as for charter boat fishing, recreational fishing, fish stocking and shark meshing. These strategies will allow the community to scrutinise the management arrangements for each fishery and will ensure that the arrangements in place provide sustainable fisheries into the future. It is possible that the charter boat strategy will be merged with the recreational fishery strategy to avoid duplication and overlap and associated costs.

The Management Planning team will outline the requirements and timeframe associated with the development of a Fishery Management Strategy and Environmental Impact Statement for charter fishing activities in NSW.

Copies of the Estuary General, Estuary Prawn Trawl and Ocean Hauling fishery Environmental Impact Statement summary documents will be provided.

Discussion about the costs of the charter fishing boat component of the strategy and the best way to recover those costs from industry is requested.

## **Outcomes**

### Role of MERCMAC

The requirement to produce a Fishery Management Strategy and Environmental Impact Statement is a significant development for both commercial and recreational fishing activities and will be a main focus of the MAC. It is proposed the charter fishing boat fishery form part of the combined fresh and saltwater recreational FMS/EIS. The MAC will have an active role to ensure issues relevant to the charter boat fishery are fully considered. The purpose of the FMS is to identify issues relevant to the fishery and provide a plan of how these will be addressed.

### Timeframe

- The statutory deadline for the completion of the charter boat FMS is July 2003.
- Strategies for commercial fisheries are being progressed (estuary general has recently gone through the community consultation phase).
- Planning NSW is currently developing the FMS and EIS guidelines for the charter boat fishery, which will be distributed to MERCMAC members upon completion.
- NSW Fisheries would like MERCMAC to consider issues for the draft charter boat FMS, which will commence by mid 2002.

**Action item** – NSW Fisheries to distribute the draft charter boat FMS and EIS guidelines to MERCMAC for comment when available. Planning NSW will be asked to brief MERCMAC on the draft guidelines.

**Action item** – NSW Fisheries to advise MERCMAC of developments on the general recreational FMS and EIS guidelines.

### Funding

- Funding to develop the FMS/EIS is an issue.
- Advertising, consultation and printing make up a large proportion of the final cost.
- The commercial FMS and EIS are being paid for through a levy system on commercial fishers (\$150 per fishery for the first 2 fisheries and \$100 for each additional fishery).
- A detailed funding bid needs to be developed for the charter boat fishery.

### Combining the Charter Boat and Recreational FMS and EIS

- Although charter boats are recognised as a unique recreational/commercial industry, the recreational and charter boat FMS will cover many common areas. Combining these strategies would lead to better outcomes for the resource, remove duplication and result in time and cost savings.
- MERCMAC showed general support for a combined recreational fishing FMS if it proves to be more cost effective than a separate charter boat FMS. The MAC also made the following comments and suggestions:
  - Charter operators should only be required to contribute a pro-rata payment, based upon the percentage of the recreational fishing sector that charter boats comprise and the charter boat sector should only pay for components within the recreational

FMS that relate specifically to charter fishing boat activities.

- Charter boat operators pay the recreational fishing fee (licences and exemption certificates) and feel they should not have to 'double dip' to help pay for the general recreational aspects of a combined FMS and EIS. The Committee felt charter boat operators should not have to subsidise costs for the general angling community.
- Small and large charter boat operators could pay proportional costs.
- Information contained in the current charter boat management arrangements should be considered during development of the FMS.

**Action Item** – NSW Fisheries to provide MERCMAC with a detailed budget, when available, to assist future decisions on funding issues.

NSW Fisheries reinforced that this process will result in a progressive management strategy that will protect, and define stakeholder access to the resource. The strategy will include charter boat industry rules regarding sector development and is an opportunity for the MAC to discuss and make recommendations on these important issues.

It was acknowledged there will be a need for ACoRF and MERCMAC to liaise closely in the future to discuss and progress the FMS. The MAC requested that every licensed charter fishing operator receive a copy of the draft management strategy when released. Further consultation with ACoRF and MERCMAC is required to determine the most effective and cost efficient method of distributing the draft FMS to stakeholders (eg. hardcopy reports, email, disk/CD etc).

**Recommendation**

Presentation was noted

**Issue**

Consideration of abeyance provisions for charter fishing boat licences.

**Background (provided by NSW Fisheries)**

Administration of charter fishing boat licensing arrangements is undertaken by NSW Fisheries' Licensing team, which has highlighted concerns with the current lack of abeyance provisions for charter fishing boat licences.

Abeyance provisions provide the opportunity for operators to place their licence "on the shelf" for a specified period while the licence is not being used. For commercial fishing licences, the maximum period for which a boat licence may be placed in abeyance is two years from the date of expiry of the licence or from an earlier date advised in writing by NSW Fisheries. Under these arrangements, a boat licence that has lapsed for more than two years will not normally be re-issued. Operators are required to advise the department in writing if they are placing their boat licence in abeyance and to also state their reason for doing so and their future intentions. Licence fees must be paid whilst a boat licence is in abeyance.

MERCMAC's views are sought on the following issues:

1. While there are no abeyance provisions, charter boat operators retain the right to hold a licence without paying fees. These operators benefit from industry funded long term management, compliance and research without contributing
2. Licence holders are presently able to maintain licences in abeyance for an indefinite period. It is questionable whether latent effort licences should remain inactive for extended periods of time with the potential to become active and impact on a well managed industry. Holding such licences especially where no fee is paid is pure speculation and beyond the intent of the current scheme of management. A maximum abeyance period would be appropriate to overcome this issue.

**Outcomes**

The MAC were concerned that the approval criteria for the issue of a charter boat licence appeared to make it possible for heavily used boats to be issued with more than one licence and that owners may then place the spare licence(s) into abeyance. Unless extremely extenuating circumstances could be demonstrated, only one licence should be issued from the history of operation of any charter vessel.

The Chair clarified that abeyance provisions were proposed to be established to set a limit to the amount of time an existing licence can remain in abeyance and to ensure that fees are paid while a licence is in abeyance.

MERCMAC discussed the following:

- Not knowing when inactive licences are going to be used in the future makes it difficult to manage the industry and promotes uncertainty.
- Clear abeyance provisions are a necessary means to control the use of abeyance by charter boat operators. Operators occasionally need to place licences in abeyance when vessels require maintenance or replacement. The MAC agreed that although six months may be a reasonable timeframe to prevent misuse of this licence status, two years could be necessary to allow legitimate operators to undertake maintenance, boat replacements or other such activities that would prevent them from operating.
- It may be necessary to make allowances for exceptional circumstances
- Payment should continue throughout abeyance periods.
- A licence placed in abeyance for over two years should be cancelled.
- Another option is that no fees be required to be paid during the abeyance period but all fees must be paid prior to reactivating of licence. This is consistent with commercial fishery abeyance provisions.
- For licences that have never been active the abeyance period should start from the time of gazettal of the change to regulation or date of approval if the licence is currently under review.
- The term 'catch history' should be changed to 'the history of operation of a vessel'.

One member suggested that allowing licences to remain indefinitely in abeyance, whilst continuing to pay annual fees, would result in less administration and a lower impact on fish stocks.

Before making a formal recommendation to the Minister on the nature of these provisions MERCMAC would like time to consult their constituents.

### **Recommendation**

NSW Fisheries recommends:

- Relevant fees to apply to licences in abeyance.
- A maximum abeyance period of two years (with a special circumstance extension of a maximum of 6 months) with cancellation of the history of operation of the vessel after that period.

To give effect to this policy a final date for application for an original charter boat licence will need to be agreed.

- NSW Fisheries recommends 30 June 2003.

### **MERCMAC recommendations:**

1. The MAC be given further time to consider the abeyance provisions.
2. MERCMAC requests that the Minister does not exercise further discretion to accept/consider late licence applications.
3. This discretionary power of the Minister be removed from the regulations as soon as possible.

**Issue**

Update on the licence review process.

**Background**

An overview of the review process and progress report will be provided to Committee members at the meeting.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries provided the MAC with general figures on the status of the licence review process. It was stressed that the Review Panel and NSW Fisheries had to be meticulous about the licence review process, with the timeframe reflecting how complicated and detailed the process is, in order to ensure that due process was observed.

The MAC raised concern that insufficient notice was given of review hearing dates, and that there was a lack of flexibility in regard to the dates and locations of review hearings. This lack of flexibility had resulted in the non-attendance of some industry members, particularly related to 3<sup>rd</sup> party reviews.

**Recommendation**

MERCMAC noted the information presented.

**Issue**

Budget and consideration of future expenditure priorities.

**Background (provided by NSW Fisheries)**

Charter fishing boat fees contribute to the management, licensing, research and compliance costs related to the charter fishing industry in NSW. Revenue from the 2000/01 and 2001/02 licence fees has been allocated to the Licensing review process, establishing the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee and the charter boat monitoring program. An overview of incurred/proposed expenditure will be provided to MERCMAC at the meeting.

The Committee's consideration of future expenditure proposals and priorities is requested.

**Outcomes**

As the Fishery Management Strategy budget/cost has not been finalised this item is to be presented at the next meeting, to ensure that a thorough and realistic budget can be considered by the MAC.

**Recommendation**

The draft budget, including estimated costs for the FMS process, to be presented at the next meeting.

**Issue**

Charter boat monitoring program update and future data/report priorities.

**Background (provided by NSW Fisheries)**

The Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Fishing Boat Logbook Program is designed to provide reliable information to assess the impact of recreational charter fishing on fish stocks for fisheries management planning, monitoring and review. Relevant information to be recorded includes, the time spent fishing, species caught, numbers retained, and the number and length of selected catch. This information, in conjunction with data from other sectors, enables trends in the fishing success of the marine and estuarine recreational charter fishing sector to be identified and the general health of targeted fish stocks to be monitored.

Logbook data also provides information essential to managing ongoing access by marine and estuarine recreational charter fishing boat operators to scarce fisheries resources. As a result of growing competition for access to limited fish stocks by the commercial, recreational and charter boat sectors, NSW Fisheries is coming under increasing pressure to make decisions regarding access to, and the allocation of, fish stocks among competing user groups. Information from the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Fishing Boat Logbook Program will help to ensure that the sector continues to have access to fish stocks sufficient to its needs.

Operators are required to complete logsheet information for each charter fishing trip conducted on board a licensed charter fishing boat. Information provided by individual operators is treated as commercial-in-confidence and will only be released in an aggregated form that protects the confidentiality of individual licensees.

NSW Fisheries would like advice from industry regarding their preferred options for future reporting of this logbook information, having regard to privacy laws.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries presented a preliminary data report from the charter boat logbook database.

With regards to logsheet development, MAC members suggested that the three logbook system could be combined into one by ticking a box to state the activities undertaken.

The Committee were concerned that fork length measurements, as required on logsheets for scientific purposes, are less than the legal lengths stated in regulation. Therefore, they have to measure the fish twice, which confuses clients and is an inefficient use of charter boat operators' time. MERCMAC stated that operators want to measure the catch only once and prefer the whole fish length measurement. NSW Fisheries research staff will be consulted on this issue to try to find a simpler solution.

It is not a requirement to measure every fish. NSW Fisheries understands that due to the nature of the business/client needs this is not always possible. When operators are unable to measure every fish a random sample is desirable. Charter boat operators are required to correctly record the number of each species caught. NSW Fisheries reinforced that the charter boat industry benefits from the collection of this data.

NSW Fisheries and the MAC will work with operators to consider ways of streamlining the data collection process over time.

It was noted that the statewide kingfish catch is higher than expected, which is encouraging after the decline in previous years. It is widely acknowledged that the removal of floating kingfish traps from the commercial sector is a major factor and the MAC wished to pass on their congratulations to the Government.

It was also noted that significant numbers of recognised sports fish are caught and released by charter operators.

#### Data Reporting

The Committee was asked to give NSW Fisheries an indication of what operators would like to see produced from the logbook database:

- Catch per unit effort for each region.
- Angler passenger movements (eg repeat trips, interstate clients etc). This data could assist in determining a tourism \$ value on the industry in NSW.
- It was suggested that specific operational details should not be released with any data report, to prevent unscrupulous anglers/operators from mis-using the information.
- The number/percentage of passengers covered by exemption certificates that also hold a recreational fishing licence.
- More tagging of fish, for example, snapper.

MERCMAC members will report back to NSW Fisheries on what further information they would like from the charter boat logbook database.

It was suggested that an application could be made to the Saltwater Trust Small Grants Program to undertake a study of angler movements, as angler surveys had been identified as a funding priority area.

#### **Recommendation**

Information noted by the MAC.

**Issue**

Compliance (Regional Services) report.

**Background (provided by NSW Fisheries)**

Regional Service Officers and the Fisheries Investigation Unit frequently conduct planned operations in many fisheries, both commercial and recreational. It is a requirement for the Regional Services team to implement Operational Plans to carry out enforcement duties when there is concern that unauthorised fishers may be operating in contravention of the legislation. At present, Fisheries Officers inspect charter fishing boats during their regular patrols, and on an as needs basis.

A targeted compliance operation to investigate unauthorised charter fishing boats is currently being planned.

A draft policy for officers to board and inspect charter fishing boats is detailed below. The Committee's consideration of the proposed policy is sought.

**DRAFT POLICY****BOARDING AND INSPECTING CHARTER FISHING BOATS**

*Charter boat fishing in NSW is now regulated. Charter boat fishing provides opportunities for recreational fishers to expand their fishing activities to new methods, new species and new grounds.*

*Participants in the charter fishing industry have many responsibilities to adhere to in promoting their business and ensuring safety of their customers while conserving the State's fisheries resources.*

*When Fisheries Officers undertake their authorised functions they have an obligation to conduct themselves so as to not cause danger or undue interference to the master, crew or fishers whose activities they are seeking to inspect.*

*Fisheries Officers, when boarding and checking charter boats at sea, in port or on any waterway, have a responsibility to do so in accordance with a professional code of conduct. Therefore an officer must seek the cooperation and guidance of the master or crew of the vessel. In so far as it is practical Officers should cooperate with the master and crew of the boat when undertaking a vessel inspection.*

**Other than when in hot pursuit or to avoid the destruction of evidence a Fisheries Officer will:**

- *only board a charter boat with the cooperation, acknowledgment and under the guidance of the owner, master or crew of the respective boat;*

- *if the boat is in the process of mooring wait until the boat's crew has secured all mooring lines and the boat is stationary;*
- *position themselves at a point indicated by the master of the vessel so as to not jeopardise the safety of themselves, those on board or any person on the immediate adjoining land or structure;*
- *clearly identify themselves and inform the owner, master and crew of the specific purposes for the boarding;*
- *with the assistance of the master or crew identify themselves to all fishers on board and inform them of the purpose of the boarding, what functions they will be performing and any role the fishers will be requested to play eg produce fish, fishing gear or fishing authority;*
- *give an indication as to how long the inspection is expected to take;*
- *be meticulous and courteous when carrying out inspections of any fish, fishing authority or fishing gear;*
- *treat all fishers and others in a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory manner and provide them with appropriate advice concerning their fishing activity.*

*In undertaking an inspection the Fisheries Officers will expect a reasonable level of support, understanding and conduct from the master and crew.*

*Management of charter boat fishing involves close liaison between the charter fishing boat operators and NSW Fisheries. It is essential that a professional approach be maintained at all times as charter boat operators have an obligation to their clients as does NSW Fisheries.*

Other initiatives undertaken by the Regional Services team will also be discussed during this update.

## **Outcomes**

Glenn Tritton, Principal Manager, Regional Services, presented an update on compliance activities to committee members.

### Annual Plan for Officers

Large scale targeted operations have been planned. Operational plans cover a whole range of contingencies, such as conduct, intelligence reporting and preparation of information.

### Nelson Bay boarding incident

As a result of this incident the Regional Services team has developed a draft policy regarding the boarding and inspection of charter fishing boats.

Several MERCMAC members suggested that there is no need for compliance officers to board a charter boat at sea. The majority of skippers enforce compliance (self-regulation) and it is much safer to board at port or in the calmer waters of an estuary. It was suggested that insurance issues might arise from officers boarding charter boats at sea. Members were advised that officers would use a level of common sense on this

issue, ie safety - if the sea is too rough they would not board at sea. MERCMAC understands that NSW Fisheries has a need to conduct compliance activities aboard charter boats.

Discussion of self-regulation opportunities and the management of compliance activities will be ongoing. MERCMAC suggested a need to develop a code of conduct for the charter boat sector. As the majority of operators already self-regulate fishing activities on board their vessel, MERCMAC would like to see greater compliance operations targeted at the unlicensed operators who do not adhere to the regulations. MERCMAC agreed to consider compliance issues within the industry and to report back to the compliance representative at the next meeting.

#### Future Discussion

- Balancing operators' needs (in regard to passenger service/comfort) and NSW Fisheries' needs in regard to policing charter activities.
- A protocol may need to be developed for operators to advise clients about the need for, and benefits of, compliance operations.
- NSW Fisheries and Waterways will meet in the near future to clarify charter boat issues and legal definitions.
- NSW Fisheries to consider the distribution of an educational pamphlet and signage, for example, aboard boats and displayed in tackle stores, to advise the community about charter boat licensing arrangements.
- Placement of charter boat information on website.
- Investigate avenues regarding cooperative action with tourism agencies (as observed in QLD).

#### **Recommendation**

MERCMAC noted the issues.

**Issue**

MERCMAC nominations for appointment to the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF).

**Background (provided by NSW Fisheries)**

An expression of interest for various ACoRF positions closed in December 2001. One of these positions requires a person who has expertise in the charter fishing boat industry. Margaret Dodson's position on ACoRF expired in February 2002.

Applications for membership to ACoRF were received from three licensed NSW charter fishing boat operators. Two nominations are sought from amongst MERCMAC members for consideration as part of the existing field of nominations.

**Outcomes**

The Minister's request was discussed by MERCMAC.

**Recommendation**

MERCMAC nominates Margaret Dodson and Ann Garard to be considered for appointment by the Minister to ACoRF.

**Issue**

Issues raised by industry.

**Background**

Some issues raised to date include:

- The possibility for licensed operators to expand the size of their business. Examples include: being able to purchase an existing licence and amalgamate the two licences, to provide additional seats without increasing the total number of permitted passengers in the industry; the scope for increases in fishing capacity, for example, changing the permitted number of passengers from 6 to 8 (this would increase the total number of permitted passengers in the industry, but could be capped as, for example, a one-off opportunity for a maximum of 2 additional seats); and the possibility of applying for additional activities, for example, a traditional estuary operation being able to gain offshore endorsements. This would result in the expansion of that business into areas it did not traditionally operate within. **NSW Fisheries comment:** *Rules for expansion/development of the industry will be incorporated into the charter fishing fisheries management strategy.*
- Exemption certificates for charter boats. Operators with surveys to carry more than ten passengers are only required to pay a maximum of \$250 per year (equal to 10 passengers), irrespective of the number of passengers on board. Smaller scale operators have to pay an exemption certificate “per seat” (ie 6 = \$150, 10 = \$250). As a result, it has been suggested exemption fees should be charged on a per seat basis, so that smaller operators do not pay disproportionate costs for this service. **NSW Fisheries comment:** *The current arrangement is based on extensive consultation with charter fishing boat operators.*
- Clarification regarding the rights of privately owned boats and fishing club vessels to operate as “charter” fishing boats. Compliance initiatives include targeted operations to ensure unlicensed vessels do not compete with legitimate operators. Bermagui members of the Charter Boat Operators Association Inc. have endorsed the release of a pamphlet to warn the general public about unlicensed charter fishing boats. The Committee’s view on this approach is requested. **NSW Fisheries comment:** *NSW Fisheries currently only supports licensed charter fishing boats operating in this capacity. There may be a need to tighten up on definitions of charter boat fishing and / or a general definition for charter boat. This will require consultation with NSW Waterways. Further clarification/compliance will be undertaken.*

**Outcomes**

1. This will be one of the key issues for the MAC to debate and determine a consensus view to include in the FMS for charter boats. It was mentioned that the commercial industry has used amalgamation as part of their management strategy to allow businesses to expand without an increase in the overall effort in the sector. Further

consideration should be given to allow charter boat operators to expand and diversify their business for non-extractive activities, such as whale watching. This issue is to be considered during the development of the FMS.

2. A number of smaller operators were concerned about disparity in the charges for certificates of exemption. The MAC flagged that it may want to make a recommendation to the Minister regarding this issue in the future. NSW Fisheries clarified that the consultation process that led to this decision involved extensive port meetings and negotiation with charter boat, hire boat and house boat operators. MERCMAC was advised to consult industry and collate information if they wish to make a recommendation to the Minister.

**Action Item** – NSW Fisheries to provide members with summary information on the number of licensed charter boats with exemption certificates and the number of anglers covered by exemption on these vessels.

**Recommendation**

MERCMAC to consider and consult on industry development issues, to be included in FMS.

**Issue**  
**Other business**

1. Part refunds to interim licence holders who are unsuccessful through the 3<sup>rd</sup> party review process.

There are currently no provisions in the Regulation to provide refunds to applicants who are deemed ineligible for a licence as a result of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party review. Refund provisions exist for other reasons, for example, unsuccessful applicants who have gone through the general review process.

**NSW Fisheries position:** *NSW Fisheries does not propose to amend regulations to create part refunds. The transaction would have to be absorbed from the existing revenue and would be unfair to remaining operators.*

The committee did not support issuing refunds/part refunds to unsuccessful interim licence holders.

**Outcomes**

2. Correspondence received

- a) Hydraulic winches

- the MAC felt this is a general recreational fishing issue, not specifically charter and referred it to ACoRF and the Ocean Trap and Line MAC.

- b) Braided line – The MAC referred the issue to ACoRF.

3. Issues raised by members

- a) Commercial fishing

- A letter was tabled requesting the NSW government to take action over the targeting of striped marlin by longliners.

- A tender will soon be advertised to conduct an economic survey of the striped marlin resource, for resource allocation purposes.

- NSW banned the commercial take of black and blue marlin and forced the Commonwealth to introduce similar arrangements in Commonwealth waters.

- the Minister will further consider this issue after the economic survey is complete.

- b) The Minister requested consideration of issues raised by a prospective charter boat operator, as outlined in MF02000284. The MAC discussed this issue on a hypothetical basis. The committee confirmed that hundreds of people in NSW possess Coxswain and Master Class 5 certification, but do not own a suitable charter fishing boat. MERCMAC did not support the issues raised. (Note that when

final minutes are distributed a letter will need to be prepared to the person and MP, Mr Markham, who raised this issue on his behalf.)

c) Information flow from NSW Fisheries

NSW Fisheries sought advice from the MAC on the best way to liaise with the charter boat industry, eg a quarterly newsletter or mailout. The MAC considered this would be a good tool to keep the industry up to date. Regional charter boat meetings have been suggested, to officially introduce MERCMAC members to constituents. A letter should be sent well in advance to ensure high attendance. This will allow NSW Fisheries and the MAC to advise operators about the FMS process and to encourage their involvement during the development. A letter is being drafted to inform all licensed operators of the MERCMAC composition. This letter also asks constituents for permission for NSW Fisheries to provide their contact details to their regional representatives.

**Recommendations**

1. MERCMAC does not support issuing refunds/part refunds to unsuccessful interim licence holders.
2. MERCMAC recommended that the issues raised by the commercial fishing representative be forwarded to ACoRF for consideration.
3. b) MERCMAC does not support the issues contained in the submission associated with MF02000284.

**Next Meeting: To be advised**