



Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

The Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW) held its first meeting in Sydney on Monday 20 June 2016. Key outcomes from that meeting were as follows:

1. The Hon. Niall Blair, Minister for Primary Industries and Minister for Lands and Water attended the meeting to congratulate Council members on their appointment and to emphasise the key role the Council will play in the development of policies for recreational fishing in NSW. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Director-General, DPI Fisheries, Dr Geoff Allan.
2. The Council endorsed the terms of reference in the RFNSW Charter. Specifically, the Council is to advise the Minister for Primary Industries, as requested, on:
 - a) the development of strategic policies and goals for the management of the recreational fishery;
 - b) issues relating to recreational and charter fishing, including the processes for developing fishery management plans or strategies;
 - c) the priorities of, and challenges facing, the recreational fishery, including communication with the recreational fishing sector;
 - d) information needs to support effective management of the NSW recreational fishery;
 - e) high level priorities for Recreational Fishing Trust funds; and
 - f) any other specific issue referred to the Council by the Minister, the Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries NSW or the Group Director, Recreational and Indigenous Fisheries.
3. The Council endorsed the RFNSW Charter for the conduct of its meetings, with the following amendment:

6.6 Confidentiality

Council members must use their discretion when consulting with all stakeholders and must not disclose confidential information that has been prepared for Council members and for discussion in Council meetings e.g. specific details contained within Recreational Fishing Trust funding grant applications. This applies prior to, during and following meetings.

Direction on confidential items will usually be provided by the Chair at each meeting. However, if a Council member is unsure about what they can disclose generally and/or have any doubts relating to a particular matter, they must discuss issues with the Chairperson (via the Council Executive Officer) prior to any external communication.

All deliberations of Council meetings, identified as confidential, must be treated as confidential until the Minister, the Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries NSW (or delegated officer - Group Director, Recreational and Indigenous Fisheries), or Chairperson at the direction of the Minister, releases information about the findings of these Council issues.



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3. The Council received the following presentations:
 - a) How recreational fishing aligns with the DPI Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019, and the role of DPI in driving economic growth and increasing the value of primary industries, including recreational fisheries, in NSW - Dr Geoff Allan
 - b) Recreational Fishing Licence and Trusts, including the current three year Investment Plan - DPI
 - c) Digital licensing program for recreational fishing licences - Service NSW
 - d) Current programs to promote freshwater recreational fishing - DPI
4. Council members provided details of key issues in their region and sector, which will be used to identify priorities for the Council.
5. DPI provided a concept proposal from local stakeholders on the South Coast for a trial trophy fishery using a voluntary Code of Practice to promote catch and release of large dusky flathead in St Georges Basin and Tuross Lake. The Code of Practice would assist with boosting local fishing tourism whilst promoting sustainability of flathead stocks. Council were generally supportive of the concept but requested additional information on the proposed strategy for implementation, and associated communication plan for fishers, in order to make a final recommendation at the next meeting.
6. Council members were provided with a summary of funding recommendations from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater and Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee meetings held on 4-5 May. It was agreed that members should have the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations via email and an out of session teleconference (to be set up) within three weeks of the Council meeting. Following that discussion, the recommendations will be forwarded to the Minister for consideration and approval.
7. DPI presented a proposal to change the name of recreational fishing havens back to recreational fishing areas. It was agreed that more information on the proposal be provided at the next meeting, with a view to making a recommendation then.
8. Council supported the proposal to remove the current abalone regional weekend closure (Port Stephens to Wreck Bay) for recreational fishing, which was previously implemented due to an outbreak of the aquatic parasite *Perkinsis olseni*.
9. Council received a written update from the Marine Estate Management Authority on the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment. A further presentation on the assessment process will be provided at the next meeting.
10. Council members made two specific requests during the meeting. The first request was for guidelines for using social media to seek feedback from regional stakeholders. DPI advised information and guidance will be provided at the next meeting. The second request was for short information papers to be circulated prior to meetings to provide them with background on issues requiring recommendation at a meeting.
11. Two very encouraging general outcomes of the meeting were the willingness of all members to work together as a team, and a broad overlap in aspirations for the sector.
12. The next meeting of Council will be 8 September 2016 in Sydney.

Professor Johann Bell
Chair
June 2016