

Chair's Summary

Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council

The Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council (AFAC) held its 26th meeting in Sydney on 10 and 11 October 2022.

A key priority for this meeting was to consider and put forward AFAC's views on the 30 applications submitted to the 2021/22 funding round of the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Fund (AFTF) following a community expression of interest process. AFAC considered the AFTF applications in conjunction with the views provided by the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee (AFTEC). The applications were reviewed and assessed on the extent of their potential to enhance, maintain and protect Aboriginal cultural fishing or provide economic opportunity for Aboriginal communities associated with the fisheries resource. As done previously, an independent probity advisor was engaged to ensure that the AFTF process, particularly in relation to the operations of AFTEC and the Council, was fair and equitable. Recommendations from the Council will be provided to the Minister in a separate briefing for consideration.

After completion of the AFTF review process, the Council focused on several current matters including the newly announced expression of interest process for the Aboriginal Fisheries Business Development Program, progress on the development of a culture fishing framework for harvest strategies, and AFAC's role in the Government's response to the Parliamentary Inquiry report into the commencement of the *Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009*. Council was also provided with a presentation on the DPI Fisheries Draft Co-Management Policy and asked to consider providing feedback out of session.

The Council undertook a vote to elect David Carter (AFAC Member, Region 4 South West) to the Chair position on the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee (AFTEC) following the recent resignation of Phil Duncan from AFAC.

Council was also updated on several other key issues including the status of the Hastings and Tweed Local Management plans, the Marine Estate Management Strategy – Initiative 4 (Protecting Aboriginal cultural values of the marine estate) projects, proposed commercial fishing regulation amendments, and the network management plan for the five NSW mainland marine parks.

The AFAC resolved to focus on developing an AFAC Strategic Plan and reviewing the AFTF process at its next meeting which is proposed to be held in Dubbo in February next year.

Rene Woods

AFAC Chair

10 November 2022