

## Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW)



### Chair's Summary Meeting 27

The 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of RFNSW was held on 27 and 28 April 2023 in Sydney. The Council welcomed the Hon. Tara Moriarty, MP, Minister for Agriculture, Regional NSW and Western NSW to the first meeting of the new Council term. Council members participated in a range of discussions on key recreational fishing matters and received updates from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) on various programs relevant to recreational fishing. The key outcomes from the meeting are summarised below.

### **Session with Hon. Tara Moriarty, MP, Minister for Agriculture, Regional NSW & Western NSW**

Members of RFNSW greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with the new Minister, introduce themselves and explain their roles on the Council. Brief discussions were held on a number of current and emerging priority issues for recreational fishing. Members also highlighted a key RFNSW initiative – *the Recreational Fishing Strategy – Driving Recreational Fishing Forward* and requested that this important document be referred to the Minister for consideration. The Council reiterated that it is looking forward to working with the Minister to achieve positive recreational fishing outcomes in NSW.

### **RFNSW top priority areas**

The previous Council developed a 'top priority areas' list outlining the key issues that members considered high priority for recreational fishing. At the meeting, breakout groups were formed to identify current and emerging priority issues, which were then workshopped into a draft list of 'top priority areas'. Some of the key focus areas included building on the Fish For Life program; promoting and protecting recreational fishing access; supporting innovative collection of recreational catch data for key species; making recreational fishing havens even better, implementing innovative management plans for key recreational fisheries, and boosting initiatives to improve fish habitat, including reducing impacts from cold water pollution, removing barriers to fish passage and restoring habitat. The draft list will be referred to members for comment prior to being forwarded to the Minister.

### **Social benefits of recreational fishing – the importance of fishing to mental health**

Member Matt Tripet led a discussion on the vital role recreational fishing can play in delivering mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Member Dean Hamilton also shared program information on how the wellbeing benefits of fishing can help veterans, first responders and other community members deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Council acknowledged the role fishing can play in this important therapeutic work and recommended that further consideration of this issue be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

### **Key project updates**

DPI provided an update on the development and implementation of Harvest Strategies in NSW for the benefit of new Council members. Council was advised that the Line and Trap Harvest Strategy Working Group, established to develop harvest strategies for key species, held its first meeting in May 2023 and is commencing with Kingfish and Snapper. Council also received presentations on other key fisheries programs, including the Fish for Life program, management of cultural fishing, the Lord Howe Island Marine Park, freshwater ecosystems including carp and the recent fish kills on the Lower Darling-Baarka River, and progress on the Environmental Assessment for recreational fishing.

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)