

Chair's Summary

Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council

The Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council (AFAC) held its 27th meeting in Tweed Heads on 21-23 February 2023.

A key priority for this meeting was to undertake a facilitated workshop session to assist the Council with developing an AFAC Strategic Plan. The report from the workshop, which focused on determining AFAC's Purpose, Vision, Values and Priorities, will be used to guide Strategic Plan development.

A facilitated session was also undertaken with AFAC and members of the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee (AFTEC) to review the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Fund process, with the aim of identifying ways to improve efficiencies to ensure the current scope of the Trust Fund is supporting its intended outcomes.

AFAC members had the opportunity to join the DPI Fisheries Executive and staff in a cultural immersion on Country at Fingal Head. AFAC is grateful to the members of the local Tweed Aboriginal community for the guided tour, and for sharing their knowledge, history and cultural significance of the area. AFAC was pleased to learn that the Department intends for this to be first of a series of cultural immersions that it will undertake with Aboriginal communities across NSW.

Another key focus for the Council was to discuss the Government's response to the recommendations from the Parliamentary Inquiry into the commencement of the *Fisheries Management Amendment Act 2009*, and the timeframe for the development of a cultural fishing regulation this year. AFAC will be closely involved to provide guidance and advice to the Department throughout this process.

The Council focused on several other current matters including progress of the cultural fishing framework for harvest strategies; the expressions of interest assessment phase of the Aboriginal Fisheries Business Development Program; and the cultural learning program being delivered to DPI Fisheries staff this year. An update on the progress of the Recreational Fishing Environmental Assessment (Saltwater), including the current phase which is looking at impacts of saltwater recreational fishing on Aboriginal cultural heritage and use of the marine environment in NSW, was also provided. AFAC will continue to have input into each of these important priorities.

Updates on a range of other key issues were also provided including the status and implementation of the Hastings and Tweed Local Management Plans, the Marine Estate Management Strategy (initiative 4) (protecting Aboriginal cultural values of the marine estate) projects, and several other emerging projects and departmental matters.

AFAC looks forward to strengthening relationships with the Minister and DPI Fisheries Executive, as well as with the other fisheries advisory councils going forward.

Rene Woods
AFAC Chair

21 April 2023