

## MFAC Chair's Summary

Council met online (via Microsoft Teams) on 5 September 2023. The following were the key matters discussed at the meeting:

1. The Minister for Agriculture, Tara Moriarty, attended the meeting and updated members on a number of matters including attending a meeting with oyster farmers at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute on 31st August; listening to the community and stakeholders about potential issues on offshore wind turbines; meeting young women and encouraging women to get involved in primary industries. Matters discussed with the Minister included strategies to address thermal pollution in inland waterways, concerns about fishing access and impacts to fishing areas associated with offshore windfarms, opportunities to improve water quality related to oyster farming, arrangements for Aboriginal Cultural Fishing, the Eastern Rock Lobster Fishery certification by the independent Marine Stewardship Council.
2. The Deputy Director General Fisheries, Sean Sloan, led discussions on several matters including offshore wind energy developments in Commonwealth waters off NSW, DPI planning for the Bureau of Meteorology forecast of a marine heatwave on the east coast this summer, the report from the NSW Chief Scientist on the Menindee Fish Deaths, White Spot disease response in the Clarence River, the reinstallation of shark on 1st September, QX disease impacts on oyster farmers in Port Stephens, progress to develop Harvest Strategies, marine park planning and proposed legislative reforms to fisheries regulations to include a fit and proper person test for NSW commercial fishing businesses.
3. Council noted issues raised by commercial fishing representative Greg Finn in MFAC Meeting #28 remains a standing item. This includes the rising cost of doing business, interest rates, inflation and cost of holding and accessing equipment. The chair offered to facilitate discussions with a lending body to explore better recognition of the value held in fishing shares. It was agreed this would be explored further with input from Commfish.
4. The Cultural Fishing Roundtable on June 30 2023, involving all Fisheries advisory councils (MFAC, AFAC, RFNSW and CommFish) chairs was discussed, as a really good opportunity for collaboration between the fisheries advisory councils. MFAC members noted AFAC carefully considered a range of factors in informing options for a draft regulation including the current Aboriginal Cultural Fishing Interim Access arrangements. The Hastings Local Management Plan (LMP) video was also discussed. This will be publicly promoted by DPI in the coming weeks to demonstrate the great work on this positive initiative with the Hastings Aboriginal community.
5. The Council also discussed the oyster industry, Aquaculture representative Mark Bulley added he was pleased to participate in the excellent presentation as part of the Minister's meeting with oyster farmers at Port Stephens. He also noted how the forecast dry, spring and summer may assist.
6. Following a brief discussion with members on emerging issues affecting fisheries in NSW, it was agreed for DPI to invite all advisory councils and members of MEMA to participate in a series of focussed collaborative discussions commencing with the forecast marine heatwave with a briefing and presentation to be provided by DPI Fisheries. Separate sessions will also be arranged on cultural fishing communication strategies, offshore wind farms and water quality.



## Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council

Yours sincerely,

Dr James Findlay  
Chair  
Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council