

**Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council
Outcomes
Meeting 19, 24 and 25 Feb 2021
Rydges, Newcastle**

Members Present	Johann Bell Dave Rae Paul Lennon Grahame Williams OAM Justin Duggan Vicki Lear Jo Starling Matt Hansen Karl Mathers Steven Samuels Ray Tang Matt Tripet Peter Turnell	Independent Chair Region 1 – Mid and Far North Coast Region 2 – Lower North Coast Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast Region 4 – Illawarra Region 5 – South Coast Region 6 – North West Inland Region 7 – South West Inland Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Social benefits of recreational fishing DPI representative
Apologies	Ian Puckeridge	Spear Fishing

1) Member Welcome, Chair Introduction

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the 19th meeting of RFNSW at Rydges, Newcastle.

2) Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested that members declare any changes or additions to the Register of Interests provided in the agenda.
- The Chair noted Mr Dave Rae had provided details out of session advising he is Field Editor for Fishing World magazine and a member of Ozfish. The Register of Interests table has been updated to reflect this information.

3) Agreement on the agenda, adoption of previous meeting record, proposed future meeting schedule

NOTED:

- RFNSW members agreed on the agenda for the meeting.
- The outcomes of the 18th meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

4) Review of action items from meeting 18 (17 December 2020)

NOTED:

- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.

5) Debrief – joint session with CommFish NSW – regarding Mulloway, Kingfish and black marketing

NOTED:

- Council held its third joint session with CommFish NSW on 24 February 2021, which focused mainly on the Mulloway Recovery Program. RFNSW members reiterated their grave concern about the status of Mulloway in NSW based on the current stock assessment, which has indicated a spawning potential ratio (SPR) of between 7% and 17%. Generally, scientific opinion based on many assessments of fish stocks from around the world recommends that SPR should be maintained above 20% to achieve ongoing sustainable yields from a fishery.
- RFNSW and CommFish discussed a number of measures for preventing a further decline in abundance of this iconic fish species before implementation of a Harvest Strategy. These included establishing a joint Working Group comprised of three members from each of the Advisory Councils to investigate options for strengthening the Mulloway Recovery Program. Another option was fast-tracking development and implementation of a Harvest Strategy.
- A number of management options were considered, ranging from a cessation of fishing to other controls.

<p>ACTION 1: RFNSW to recommend to the Minister that Mulloway is prioritised as a species for development of a Harvest Strategy, and that a Harvest Strategy Working Group is formed as soon as possible.</p>
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6) Fishing licence arrangements in Lake Hume

NOTED:

- The Victorian Government previously announced that NSW recreational fishers will be able to fish in Lake Hume on the Murray River using their NSW fishing licence for a trial period of 12 months starting from 1 January 2021.
- DPI advised the Council that the Department had previous discussions with the Victorian Fisheries Authority regarding licensing arrangements across the two states. Both Victoria and NSW have previously acknowledged that any cross-border licence proposals should be cost neutral, and not diminish the revenue received from the recreational fishing licence system in either state.

7) Management of the inland charter fishing and professional guiding sector

NOTED:

- At the previous meeting, Council considered correspondence from Mr Brett Richards, PFIGA, regarding licensing for inland guides and charter operators referred to RFNSW by the Minister. An action item from Meeting 18 was for DPI to prepare background information on inland charter/guide fishing sector issues related to irresponsible operators, such as lack of insurance, inappropriate behaviour at inland access points and poor client service delivery, because these issues will have flow-on impacts on the social licence of the inland charter sector and recreational fishing more broadly.
- DPI presented a risk assessment on the above issues to Council, which concluded that there was merit in developing a DPI Code of Practice to promote best industry practice and professionalism in the sector to address social licence issues. It was also noted that there remains strong government support for the marine and freshwater charter/guide sectors, and the associated fishing tourism opportunities they provide in NSW.

ACTION 2: A Code of Practice for the inland guide/charter sector should be developed by DPI to promote best industry practice and professionalism.

8) Draft Marine Estate Management Education Strategy

NOTED:

- Council received a presentation by DPI on the draft Marine Estate Management Education Strategy.
- The Strategy intends to set the overarching framework for coordination, collaboration, and integration of marine education in NSW.
- Following the presentation, Council was invited to provide feedback on the draft DPI Education Strategy.

ACTION 3: DPI to convey comments from RFNSW on the draft DPI Marine Estate Education Strategy to the relevant team.

9) NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy

NOTED:

- A productive session on the development of the NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy was held with staff from DPI, during which RFNSW proposed some revised options for the vision and objectives for the Strategy.
- Council also reviewed and supported the Terms of Reference for a RFNSW sub-group to continue to develop the Strategy out of session. This work will include identifying actions to further enhance recreational fishing and associated tourism opportunities.
- RFNSW considers that the Strategy is a highly worthwhile project that will promote improved, and socially-beneficial, recreational fishing opportunities in NSW.

ACTION 4: DPI to coordinate the second sub group meeting proposed for late March 2021.

10) Presentation on recovery initiatives for Macquarie Perch

NOTED:

- Building on a previous presentation to RFNSW on the Macquarie Perch Recovery Plan, DPI described the additional initiatives expected to assist with stabilising the remnant populations of Macquarie Perch in NSW, and to restore recreational fishing for this iconic inland fish species. These initiatives include applying advances in hatchery rearing, and larger-scale restocking programmes.
- Council strongly supported the proposed actions needed to strengthen the Macquarie Perch Recovery Plan and requested the Chair to write to the Minister to champion the urgent measures needed to save this iconic native fish from local extinction in NSW and restore populations to levels where they can once again support recreational fishing.

ACTION 5: The Chair of RFNSW to write to the Minister requesting him to champion the recovery of Macquarie Perch in NSW, and communicate the plight of this native species to the Minister for Energy and Environment and Minister for Water.

11) General Business

a) Concerns raised over Warrell Creek

NOTED:

- DPI advised RFNSW that an updated Code of Practice on Estuary General commercial fishing is proposed to be published on the DPI website. The Department also advised that it had discussed the issue with Ms Tricia Beattie, Professional Fisher's Association (PFA), regarding the issue. The PFA was supportive of the Code of Practice being published.
- RFNSW also recommended that its concerns regarding alleged irresponsible behaviour of some commercial fishers be passed onto Fisheries Compliance and the NSW Police for their information.

b) Discussion on fresh bait supply

NOTED:

- Member Jo Starling led discussion on her investigations into the inferior quality of bait bag prawns and the lack of net weight information on bait bags.
- Ms Starling noted that there may be biosecurity implications for NSW if people are choosing to buy imported supermarket prawns to use as bait, rather than inferior retail bait.
- Members discussed this issue and identified the potential risks of the above scenario and impacts on the environment and fish stocks, e.g., the previous outbreak of white spot syndrome virus in southeast Queensland. One suggestion was the potential introduction of a 'bait safe' accreditation scheme for bait prawns that could be clearly labelled to identify that they are safe for consumption and for use as bait.

ACTION 6: DPI to facilitate a presentation by the DPI Biosecurity unit at the next meeting to discuss the issue of bait quality and how potential biosecurity implications could potentially be addressed.

c) Murray Crayfish below Hume Weir

NOTED:

- Member Steve Samuels requested an update from DPI regarding a potential fish kill of Murray Crayfish below Hume Weir.

d) Redfin, Thompson Creek Dam

NOTED:

- Member Ray Tang advised the Council that Redfin had been detected in Thompson Creek Dam. While the exact source of the translocation was unknown, RFNSW acknowledged this was a very disappointing outcome given the significant work that has been undertaken by recreational fishing organisations and DPI to develop the waterway into a quality fishery.
- Mr Tang advised that Energy Australia, as the asset owners, had initially expressed an interest in working with DPI and relevant stakeholder groups to help remove/reduce Redfin from the Dam.

12) Update on Research evaluation for Trust funds draft paper

NOTED:

- It was noted that the first meeting of the Research sub group was held on 23 February 2021. The sub group had been tasked with progressing a draft paper on additional evaluation of research Trust applications and to investigate further platforms for recreational fisheries research.
- The sub group advised that they recognised the benefits of additional research evaluation, and that such a progress is expected to have the benefit of lifting the quality of research applications, with flow-on benefits to recreational fishing management policy needs.

ACTION 7: The sub group is to have a second out-of-session meeting to further consider and finalise the draft paper on evaluation of research Trust applications.
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13) Update on Fish for Life Campaign

NOTED

- DPI updated Council on the status of the 'Fish for Life' campaign, which is designed to promote the health and socio-economic benefits of recreational fishing in NSW to the wider community. Council provided feedback on two of the components – one aimed at current fishers and the other at new participants. Council welcomed the progress made on the Fish for Life campaign and its proposed launch in the near future.

14) Presentation on the 17/18 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey

NOTED

- DPI presented the outcomes of the most recent Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey to Council. The presentation provided great insight into recreational fishing catch and effort patterns and trends in NSW, and the value of this regular (2-yearly) survey for informing stock assessments of key fish species in NSW.

15) Correspondence

a) Letters from Minister Marshall and Mr Scott Lems re recreational size limits for Dusky Flathead

NOTED

- RFNSW noted the response from Mr Lems, and the current RFNSW position on management arrangements for Dusky Flathead.

b) Letter from Minister Marshall to Chair re Cold Water Pollution Curtain, Burrendong Dam

NOTED

RFNSW noted the response from the Minister on this issue.

c) Letter from Mr Tom Weiers re request an increase in the size of the Clarence River Recreational Fishing Haven

NOTED

- RFNSW noted the current Government position on additional Recreational Fishing Havens (RFHs) in NSW, i.e., that there are no plans to create new RFHs, unless there is consensus from both the commercial and recreational fishing sectors. RFNSW requested DPI to advise Mr Weiers about the Governments current position.

d) Letter from Minister to Chair re Meeting 16 outcomes

NOTED

RFNSW noted the response from the Minister on this issue.

e) Letter from Mr Denis Pontin, President, Coasters Retreat Assoc. re sewage pollution from recreational boats

NOTED

- While RFNSW acknowledged that the illegal sewage pump out from recreational boats is a matter for Transport for NSW, member Grahame Williams OAM advised he would refer the issue to the NSW Game Fishing Association and the Game Fishing Association of Australia for consideration of inclusion of relevant best practice information in the organisations respective Code of Practices.
- DPI also advised that the issue could be raised with the Charter NSW Working Group. RFNSW also suggested DPI write to Transport NSW to request consideration of the use of signage near mooring areas to advise about the illegality of sewage pump out and the associated penalties.

ACTION 8a: Member Grahame Williams OAM to refer the issue of illegal sewage pump out from recreational boats to the NSW Game Fishing Association and the Game Fishing Association of Australia for consideration of inclusion in the organisations respective Code of Practices.
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ACTION 8b: DPI to raise the issue with the Charter NSW Working Group and write to Transport NSW to request consideration of the use of signage near mooring areas to advise about illegal sewage pump out and associated penalties.

f) Letter from Sean Sloan, D-DG, DPI Fisheries re Proposed Fisheries and aquaculture regulation changes

NOTED:

- RFNSW noted the current consultation process underway.

16) Update on the Environmental Assessment for Recreational Fishing

NOTED

- DPI provided a presentation on progress of the Environmental Assessment for Recreational Fishing project.

17) Update on permitting crab traps in Lake Macquarie

NOTED

- DPI provided a brief update on work being progressed with the Environmental Protection Authority regarding any updates required to the dietary advice relating to consumption of crabs in the lake.

18) Social media etiquette

NOTED

- DPI provided a short presentation on social media etiquette and advised further information and training will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION 9: DPI to provide additional training on social media at Meeting 20.

Other items:

- Due to time constraints, the DPI presentation on Lord Howe Island Marine Park implementation (including spearfishing), and the update on Harvest Strategies, were deferred to the next meeting.

CLOSE