

Chair's Summary Meeting 25

The 25th meeting of RFNSW was held on 17 and 18 August 2022 at the Branksome Hotel, Sydney. It was another productive session with members participating in discussions on a range of recreational fishing matters. The key outcomes from the meeting are summarised below.

Harvest Strategy update

DPI provided an update on progress of the development and implementation of Harvest Strategies in NSW, including advice that the Spanner Crab Strategy was currently being drafted. Council was also informed that the Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group had met five times and was continuing to consider a range of interim support measures whilst the Strategy is developed. These measures included improving the data on the recreational catch of Mulloway to enable effective monitoring of changes in abundance of the depleted stock.

Recreational Fishing Trust expenditure

The Council reviewed advice from the Recreational Fishing Trust Expenditure Committees regarding a number of new Saltwater and Freshwater grant applications made to the Recreational Fishing Trust. Council endorsed the advice provided by the Expenditure Committees and will now pass this advice on to the Minister for consideration.

Trial of 'bubble plume' system to mitigate cold water pollution (CWP) in NSW impoundments

At Meeting 23, DPI provided a brief update on CWP and informed Council of innovative new "Bubble Plume" technology that has potential to mitigate the problem by de-stratifying the water column in inland reservoirs. In response to Council's invitation to provide members with information about the requirements for establishing a trial 'bubble plume' system, DPI outlined a proposal to set up a demonstration site at one of the eight priority dams in NSW identified in the Cold Water Pollution Strategy. Council welcomed the presentation and provided its ongoing support to DPI in implementing the trial and looked forward to further updates from the demonstration site.

NSW DPI Murray River Socio-Economic Study and Trout Cod update

DPI provided a presentation on the key outcomes of the recent independent report examining the socio-economic impacts of the three-month seasonal closure for Trout Cod in the Murray River. It was noted that Trout Cod remain listed as Endangered under NSW and Commonwealth legislation. The Council acknowledged the outcomes of the study and reiterated its ongoing support for DPI's freshwater fish species recovery programs.

Game Fishing Tournaments and Shark Interactions

Members were advised that the NSW Game Fishing Association (GFA) recently agreed to increase the minimum weights of sharks caught by adults for the various line classes. This decision is expected to significantly reduce the number of 'non-table' sharks weighed in at tournaments (and at other non-tournament times) during the year by around 65%. Council acknowledged and supported the effort of GFA in implementing these changes to improve the environmental performance of game fishing in NSW. RFNSW noted that GFA will assess the effectiveness of these rule changes after a 3-year period.

Importance of fishing to mental health

Members were shown the short video promoting the 'Forge Through' program. The program, which has received some funding support from the Recreational Fishing Trust, demonstrates how fishing helps veterans deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and was much appreciated by Council.

The next meeting of RFNSW will be 23-24 November 2022.



Professor Johann Bell (Chair)