

OUT19/4612

MEETING	Charter Fishing NSW Working Group - CFNSW	
MEETING NO.	1	DATE AND TIME
LOCATION	Kingsford Room, Quality Hotel, Wooli Creek	21 February 2019 – 0900hours
ATTENDEES	John Paton (Chair), Kyle Cush (Region 1), Roland Persson (Region 4), Ann Garard (Region 5), Bill Deverill (Region 7), Vic Levett (RFNSW rep), Bryan Van Der Walt (DPI), Nathan McNamara (DPI), Geoff Barrett (DPI)	
APOLOGIES	Mark Flanagan (Region 2), Scott Thorrington (Region 3)	

1. Introduction by the Chair

The Chair welcomed members to the first CFNSW meeting in Sydney and acknowledged Country. In his welcoming remarks, the Chair noted the CFNSW terms of reference and thanked members for joining this new Working Group that will assist in the decision making process of the Charter fishing industry. The Chair noted that the Department would continue to advertise the Vacant Region 6 position – **ACTION ITEM**.

The Department advised the working group that a CFNSW webpage will be created under the NSW DPI webpage and will include member region representations – **ACTION ITEM**.

2. Agreement on the agenda

CFNSW members agreed on the agenda for the meeting.

3. Register of Interests

The Chair advised that a register of interests will be maintained for CFNSW and requested that members declare any interests on the new register. This register will be tabled at every CFNSW working group meeting.

4. Charter Management update

DPI provided an update to the Working Group regarding the charter fishing reforms.

Charter fishing business concept

A motion was moved by Roland Persson, Seconded by Vic Levett, to progress the charter fishing business concept to give greater flexibility to Charter fishing businesses to operate their business. Specifically, this includes the ability to move a CFB licence between surveyed vessels without the requirement to submit transfer applications to DPI - Fisheries Business Services. Supported by CFNSW members.

Transfer rules

A motion was moved by Roland Persson, Seconded by Ann Garard, to allow the transfer of a complete charter fishing business between owners. Supported by CFNSW members.

The trading of endorsements between existing operators was not supported by CFNSW members until the expired licence issue was addressed.

Guided non-motorised activity

DPI informed the working group of the increasing interest with this sector. The working group queried the legalities of permitting a commercial operation on a non-surveyed vessel. DPI to formally consult with AMSA regarding requirements and specifications – **ACTION ITEM**.

Charter Seats

The Working group raised concerns over the potential for increase in fishing effort, especially with the estuarine endorsement. DPI advised that the charter industry fishing is trending towards smaller, faster vessels, resulting in a significant amount of charter fishing business having more seats than their survey permits. DPI to review and develop an options paper – **ACTION ITEM**.

Exemption certificates

The Working group supported a uniform expiry of exemption certificates, bringing them into line with Charter fishing licences – **ACTION ITEM**.

DPI informed the working group that industry wide consultation will need to be undertaken on the above reform issues and that any subsequent regulation amendments would need to be drafted as a package of reforms.

5. Fish online / Catch reporting

The Working group noted the current trend in charter operators meeting their monthly reporting requirements and supported appropriate action to be undertaken to increase reporting, including monthly reminders, nil return requirements and compliance action.

Fish online

Working group members advised that the fish online system could be more user friendly, which would potentially improve online reporting rates.

Both the chair and members outlined the below specific issues with regard to input of logbook data into the Fish Online system:

- Default units for retained catch to be changed from Kg to numbers of fish
- Auto correct function (on board dictionary) does not recognize common fish species. Suggest additional words list be added to the dictionary or spell check completely removed
- Individual operator reporting history not showing successful monthly nil returns
- Charter specific interface may be required to reduce overall complexity (Eg remove “Fish Receivers” option).
- Industry wide output queries (currently available for individual FBs) needed for management for analysis.

NSW DPI to review fisher online to improve system friendliness and increase user participation – **ACTION ITEM**

Fisher mobile

Fisheries compliance advised that the pre fish reporting must be considered if the Charter fishing business concept (CFBs flexibility) is implemented. The Region 5 representative raised concerns with an aging industry and their ability to meet pre fish reporting requirements through the mobile app.

It was noted that the pre fish report will generate an event, which will remind operators to complete a catch record for that day.

6. Compliance Update

The Working group noted the 89% compliance rate from quality inspections conducted on Charter fishing licence operators. To mitigate illegal Charter operations, fisheries compliance has been sending letters to potential illegal operators as a preventative measure. Compliance agreed to send a copy of the letter to CFNSW members – **ACTION ITEM**. It was discussed that advertising from non-lawful charters should be made an offence.

Fisheries compliance noted that it will focus on catch reporting requirements in the near future.

7. Research update

The Working Group was provided a thorough research update from NSW DPI Science and Research team. A copy of the presentation is available upon request. It was noted the importance of accurate and up-to-date catch records from industry and how it feeds into the Integrated Monitoring Program and a quality stock assessment process.

8. Expired licences

NSW DPI provided an update on the status of expired licences in the Charter fishery, noting that 26 non-transferable, and 45 transferable licences have been expired for greater than 3 years. A motion was moved from Ann Garard, Seconded by Kyle Cush, for NSW DPI to commence a show cause process of long term (greater than 3 years) expired charter fishing licences, including both transferable and non-transferable expired licences. Supported by CFNSW.

Action item: DPI to facilitate commencement of the show cause process for expired charter fishing licences

9. Other Business

a) New inland charter position on CFNSW Working Group.

The Working Group did not support the creation of a Freshwater charter position at this stage, as the primary focus of CFNSW is to provide management advice on the NSW Charter fishing industry, being estuarine and marine. The Working group supported inviting an inland representative to attend the next meeting and provide a presentation – **ACTION ITEM**.

b) Snapper and Kingfish

DPI advised the Working group that the national 'Status of Australian Fish Stocks' (SAFs) reports for Kingfish and Snapper are due to be released in 2019. It was noted that the current assessment highlights that the biomass of the part of the Kingfish stock that occurs in NSW waters is likely to be depleted and that recruitment is likely to be impaired. Current fishing mortality levels are expected to prevent the NSW part of the stock recovering from a recruitment impaired state. NSW DPI advised that the NSW Kingfish fishery is likely to be depleted, with harvest primarily comprising of juvenile fish (<85cm). The Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council has supported a range of management changes to address the current stock status and to promote recovery.

The NSW component of the Snapper east coast stock appears to be fishing on a sustainable basis. The Region 1 representative raised concerns with the current size limit (30cm) of Snapper in NSW, noting that Queensland snapper size limit is currently 35cm. NSW DPI

advised that the Queensland DAF Department has developed a Sustainable Fisheries Strategy, which includes reviewing the Snapper rules to reduce the retained catch by 30%.

c) Spearing and line fishing conflict around FADs

Members of the Working group advised of some conflict between boat based fishers and spearfishers around FADs. NSW DPI advised that it is investigating increasing the number of FADs deployed to reduce conflict and spread effort at FAD locations. Further, a Code of Conduct for FAD users has been developed to promote sharing.

10. Chairperson Summary

The Chairperson made a summary of the first CFNSW working group meeting and thanked members for their time. The next meeting will be scheduled for June/July.