

## NSW MULLOWAY HARVEST STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Chair's Summary – 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

The eleventh meeting of the NSW Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group was held over three sessions on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023. This meeting proposed to confirm management arrangements under the harvest strategy and review and complete a final draft of the harvest strategy.

The meeting commenced by welcoming guest speakers from the DPI's Fisheries Research Branch, which involved a presentation and discussion addressing issues regarding uncertainty in the assessment process and estimates of stock biomass for Mulloway. It is pleasing to note the development of a new integrated assessment model which includes recommendations from Working Group discussions, that will better inform assessment outputs with improved confidence in estimates of uncertainty when assessing biomass levels and fishing mortality of Mulloway. There is no doubt this will deliver a more robust assessment process and support effective operation of the harvest strategy through and following the rebuilding process towards target levels.

It was pleasing to learn that following recommendations made in the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting by the Working Group, efforts have already been made by the Department to improve catch reporting. The Working Group showed appreciation for this progress, however, agree further measures to enhance reporting and available data for all sectors must continue as a priority.

The Working group again reviewed market volume and price data to establish a better understanding of any relationships between the two, and thus the influence of potential management options on fishery economics.

The Working Group was presented with a summary of options discussed at previous meetings, to assist their decision making to confirm arrangements to manage harvest under the harvest strategy. Unfortunately, after several meetings and numerous discussions on related matters, the Working Group could not find middle ground for a suitable approach.

The key task of this group is to develop a draft harvest strategy to guide the overarching monitoring and management of Mulloway stocks and this is done, however more finite arrangements can be established outside the harvest strategy at DPI's discretion. With consideration to this, I now suggest that members make their recommendations regarding further management mechanisms to DPI unless they choose to consider further recommendations through the working group process.

This meeting included a complete review of the draft harvest strategy. Discussions consist of clarification on certain aspects in some sections, predominantly focusing on incorporation of current indicators and potential information sources to strengthen the assessment model outputs.

This has proven to be quite a challenging topic, and I commend the Working Group for their commitment and involvement towards developing a comprehensive document that supports the objectives of all fishing sectors.

Members are now required to consider the draft harvest strategy for Mulloway as final or provide necessary comments and feedback noting the next step will be review by the Fishing Advisory Councils.

Dr James Findlay, Chair, NSW Mulloway HSWG.