



**Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council  
Outcomes  
Meeting 15, 19 August 2020  
Video conference**

Members Present	Johann Bell Dave Rae Paul Lennon Grahame Williams OAM Justin Duggan Vicki Lear Jo-Anne Starling Matt Hansen Karl Mathers Steven Samuels Ray Tang Vic Levett Ian Puckeridge 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 Charter Boat Fishing Spear Fishing Nominee of the Secretary – DPI representative
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**1. Introduction by the Chair**

**NOTED:**

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of RFNSW.
- The meeting was held by videoconference due to the current COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

**2. Register of Interests**

**NOTED:**

- The Chair requested members declare any changes or additions to the Register of Interests provided in the agenda.
- Members did not raise any additional interests or request any amendments to the current Register of Interests.

### **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 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- It was proposed that the next meeting of RFNSW be held on 12 and 13 October 2020, with a 3 hour session each day. The final meeting of the year was proposed for 3 December 2020 (TBC).

### **4. Review of action items from meeting 14 (May 2020)**

#### NOTED:

- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.
- DPI explained that a number of action items were awaiting discussion at the proposed joint session meeting with CommFish, which is currently on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### **5. Update on previous top 10 priority issues: reviewing status**

#### NOTED:

- Members endorsed the formation of a 'RFNSW Improving Fish Stocks' sub-group to investigate and develop additional initiatives and potential management actions to help ensure the recovery of Mulloway as a priority, and other species of major interest to recreational fishers.
- Council recommended that the Minister's Office be strongly encouraged to write to the CommFish Chair regarding establishment of an equivalent 'CommFish Improving Fish Stocks' sub-group, to meet jointly with the one from RFNSW to progress and monitor the Mulloway recovery programme in the first instance.
- RFNSW also agreed that it will be important for DPI to produce a user-friendly publication about the Mulloway recovery program, to be disseminated as soon as possible online and in print.
- Member Matt Hansen requested a review of the RFNSW top 10 priority areas at the next meeting.

**ACTION:** The Chair to write to the Minister to request him to consider writing to the CommFish Chair to establish a CommFish 'Improving Fish Stocks' sub-group to meet with the RFNSW sub-group to jointly discuss the current status of the Mulloway recovery program and collectively identify any potential, additional management actions required.

**ACTION:** The Chair to write to the Minister to request publication of the Mulloway Recovery Programme.

**ACTION:** DPI to provide copies of the 2017/18 state-wide recreational fishing survey, when released, including confirmation of released versus retained catch.

**ACTION:** Review of the RFNSW top 10 priority areas to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

## **6) Presentation on the Ministerial Fish Passage Taskforce, and update on the Macquarie River pipeline and Murray-Darling issues following the drought**

### NOTED:

- Council received a comprehensive presentation on the NSW Fish Passage Strategy from DPI, and acknowledged the substantial progress being made to implement the Strategy.
- Council also received an update on Murray-Darling Basin issues, and the progress being made to ensure that sufficient flow remains in the Macquarie River to support adequate fish habitat during finalisation of arrangements to amend regulations for the Orange Pipeline.

ACTION: DPI presentation on the enhancement works being done at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre hatchery to boost production capacity to be included in the agenda for the next meeting (at the request of Member Matt Hansen)

## **7) Crown Lands Draft State Strategic Plan review**

### NOTED:

- Professor Richard Bush, Crown Land Commissioner, invited RFNSW to make a submission to The Crown Lands Draft State Strategic Plan. Council noted that the Crown land reserves and Crown road network provide vital access to the State's waterways, enabling the people of NSW to participate in fishing activities. RFNSW members with relevant expertise agreed to draft a submission, calling for retention of maximum public access to waterways in the Strategy.

ACTION: RFNSW to make a submission to the review of the Crown Lands Draft State Strategic Plan.

## **8) Discussion on the NSW Fisheries draft Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines**

### NOTED:

- On 30 July 2020, a RFNSW out-of-session meeting provided the opportunity for members to review the draft Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines. The draft Policy was subsequently supported by members and a list of priority, recreationally-significant fish species to be included in the development of harvest strategies was proposed. The priority species list was ratified at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and another three species were added to the list.
- The species selected, in order of priority, are:
  1. Mulloway
  2. Kingfish
  3. Snapper
  4. Salmon
  5. Bream
  6. Dusky flathead
  7. Tailor
  8. Bonito
  9. Teraglin

## 9) Marine Estate matters

### a) Marine Parks Management Planning processes update

#### NOTED:

- DPI presented an update on the marine park management planning process, which provides for an evidence-based planning approach for the five mainland marine parks. This will include the development of new 10-year management plans for these parks.
- There was discussion on the current process, which has already commenced, for the Batemans Bay and Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Parks.

### b) Review of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*

#### NOTED:

- Council has been invited to provide comments to inform the review of the *Marine Estate Management Act*. RFNSW recognised the importance of Council making a submission prior to the closing date. A sub-group was formed to provide input to a submission from RFNSW.

### c) Discussion of sanctuary zone modifications within the Batemans Marine Park

#### NOTED:

- Member Jo Starling discussed the status of the Brou Lake South Sanctuary Zone (Whittaker's Creek), which is currently subject to an amnesty allowing catch and release fishing as part of number of proposed zone changes in the Batemans Bay Marine Park to increase recreational fishing opportunities.
- Ms Starling advised bait was being collected in the area which was not considered consistent with the intent of catch and release-only. RFNSW members considered that additional rules could be potentially implemented to ensure survival of fish was maximised in those areas, e.g., use of circle hooks when using bait or designation as fly and lure only areas.
- Member Ian Puckeridge advised Council that he did not support additional changes to existing catch and release areas.
- Member Steve Samuels sought consideration by DPI to modify the rules governing the Murramarang Coast Special Purpose Zone at Pretty Beach (within the Batemans Marine Park) to allow land-based wilderness fishing. Mr Samuels agreed to write to DPI about the proposal.

ACTION: RFNSW sub-group to prepare a submission for the review of the Marine Estate Management Act.

ACTION: DPI to investigate the feasibility of implementing additional rules for proposed "catch and release" areas within marine parks, as part of the marine park management planning process. This will assist marine parks to operate effectively and deliver outcomes to fit the purpose and intent of the zoning.

## 10) Discussion on Australian Salmon stock levels in Sydney/Central Coast

#### NOTED:

- Council member Justin Duggan led discussion on concerns over Australian Salmon stock levels in the Sydney/Central coast area and elsewhere during the current winter season,

and past seasons. Recognising that Australian Salmon is a highly-valued recreational species, the Chair recommended that DPI provide a detailed presentation to Council on the fishery and stock status of the species at the next meeting, so that RFNSW can assess alternative management strategies for the species and discuss these with CommFish.

**ACTION:** DPI to provide a detailed presentation to Council on the fishery and stock status of Australian Salmon at the next meeting.

### **11) Discussion on Batemans Bay waterfront development and removal of Clyde Street boat ramp**

**NOTED:**

- Due to time constraints, RFNSW member Jo Starling advised Council she would work with DPI on this issue, specifically the recreational and boating implications associated with the proposed removal of the Clyde Street boat ramp under the planned Batemans Bay waterfront development. It was noted that DPI had provided initial feedback on the proposal to Eurobodalla Shire Council.

**ACTION:** Jo Starling to liaise with DPI regarding the recreational and boating implications associated with the proposed removal of the Clyde Street boat ramp under the planned Batemans Bay waterfront development.

### **12) DPI Trust funded project update on artificial reefs, fish stocking and Gone Fishing Day 2020**

**NOTED:**

- Due to time constraints, DPI will provide members with an “out of session” project update on artificial reefs and fish stocking.
- A brief update was provided to Council on plans for Gone Fishing Day 2020, taking into account COVID-19 restrictions. The update included some details on the potential for a virtual fishing event on 18 October.

**ACTION:** DPI to circulate an “out of session” update on the artificial reefs and fish stocking programs.

### **13) Correspondence received**

#### **a) Letter to RFNSW Chair re NSW DPI Trawl Whiting Harvest Strategy Working Group**

**NOTED:**

- Council noted Jo Starling had been nominated as a member of the working group.

**b) Letter to Chair from Lands Commissioner re Draft State Strategic Plan review**

NOTED:

- Council noted the issue had been addressed in agenda item 7.

**c) Email from stakeholder regarding possession limits**

NOTED:

- Council noted the general comment relating to possession limits in saltwater jurisdictions. It was acknowledged that possession limits are mostly equivalent to the prescribed bag limit in NSW.

**d) Email to Chair inviting a submission on the *Marine Estate Management Act* review**

NOTED:

- Council noted the letter had been addressed in agenda item 9.

**e) Email from the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW regarding the use of research data collected by Recreational Fishing Trust-funded research programmes and the *Marine Estate Management Act* review**

NOTED:

- Council noted the issue raised by RFA regarding consultation on the review of the *Marine Estate Management Act*. As highlighted in agenda item 9, RFNSW considered it was important for Council to respond to the invitation for RFNSW to make a submission.
- It was noted that due to time constraints and the complexity of the letter regarding the use of research data collected by Trust-funded research programmes, this item should be deferred to the next meeting to allow adequate discussion of the issues raised.

ACTION: DPI to place the issue raised by RFA regarding the use of research data collected by Recreational Fishing Trust-funded research programmes on the agenda for Meeting 16. DPI to seek relevant research information and input for presentation to Council.

**14) General Business**

**a) Discussion on fresh bait supply**

- Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

**b) Update on the Business Efficiency Program (BEP)**

- Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

**c) Blue Swimmer Crab size limit increase**

NOTED:

- At the 13th meeting of RFNSW, Council supported increasing the blue swimmer crab minimum length from 6 to 6.5cm to achieve consistency across recreational and commercial fisheries. Council reiterated support for the proposed increase.

**d) Development of a NSW recreational fishing strategy**

**NOTED:**

- Member Karl Mathers requested development of a 'NSW recreational fishing strategy', which is an outstanding top 10 priority issue, and suggested that the best way to do that would be to form a sub group to initiative the process.

**ACTION:** The Chair to write to the Minister to recommend development of a NSW recreational fishing strategy.

MEETING CLOSED