

Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee Outcomes from 20th meeting St George Rowing Club, Sydney

24 July 2013

Attendees

Brian Beer (Chairperson), Mark Flanagan (Region 2 - Mid North Coast), Scott Thorington (Region 3 – Central Coast), John Paton (Region 4 - Sydney), Ann Garard (Region 5 - Illawarra), Keith Appleby (Region 7 - Far South Coast), Sanchia Glaskin (Recreational Fishing).

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed committee members and declared the meeting open.

2. Apologies

Roland Persson (Region 4 - Sydney), Shirley Massey (Commercial Fishing), Attila Kaszo (Conservation), Peter Turnell (DPI).

3. Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: The committee accepts the outcomes as a true and accurate record of discussions from the 19th MERCMAC meeting, held 18 October 2011. Moved: Sanchia Glaskin. Seconded: John Paton. **Carried.**

4. Business arising from the minutes

Nil.

5. Recreational and Indigenous Fisheries Management update

a) Recreational fishing fee revenue overview

i) Recreational Fishing Trusts overview

The status of the Recreational Fishing Saltwater, Freshwater and Charter Fishing Trusts was provided at the meeting. A total of \$13 million in revenue from NSW recreational fishing licence fee sales was placed into the Recreational Fishing Trust in 2012/13. The Charter Fishing Trust received income of around \$190,000 from charter fishing licence renewal fees, boat replacements and licence transfers in 2013/13.

ii) Recreational fishing fee

The NSW recreational fishing fee was last increased in 2005. The fee will increase on 1 September 2013 for each fee category as follows:

3 day - \$7.00 (from \$6.00); 1 month - \$14.00 (from \$12.00); 1 year - \$35.00 (from \$30.00); and 3 years - \$85.00 (from \$75.00).

DPI was asked if there is any capacity to issue a free Recreational Fishing Fee receipt to an exempt fisher, upon application. This has been considered before and has a range of benefits for research, compliance, information sharing and management. However there is a major cost impediment and the issue of increasing red tape for current exempt fishers.

ii) Fishing Fee Exemption Certificate - Charter Fishing Boats

The annual fee for the certificate is currently \$120 for up to 4 persons per year, with a further \$30 payable for each additional person up to a maximum fee of \$300. Following the fee increase, the annual fee for the certificate will be \$140 for up to 4 persons per year, with a further \$35 payable for the fifth and each additional person up to a maximum fee of \$350. These fees are placed in the recreational fishing trust to directly fund recreational fishing programs to improve fishing opportunities.

Under this exemption, charter fishing clients are not required to individually pay the fee for recreational fishing. It is not compulsory for charter fishing operators to pay this fee, as it is ultimately their clients' responsibility to be licensed unless they are otherwise exempt. The committee discussed whether the charter fishing exemption certificate should be mandatory for all charter fishing businesses. It is believed this would provide a higher level of service to clients and greater professionalism from industry. The committee encouraged DPI to consult operators on this issue during the next round of port meetings.

b) Consultative structures

The NSW government is proposing changes to consultative arrangements to improve consultation with stakeholders, including recreational fishers and charter operators.

i) Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council

A new Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council (MFAC) is currently being established. The MFAC will be independently chaired and comprise experts in commercial fishing, recreational fishing, Aboriginal fishing, aquaculture and conservation. The council will provide advice to the Minister on high level fisheries policy issues and that the initial priorities will be resource allocation and cost recovery. Current and revised recreational fishing consultative mechanisms will continue to be used to address specific recreational, spearfishing and charter fishing issues, with major, high level issues from these groups to be considered by MFAC..

MERCMAC suggested ACoRF write to the Minister to request charter fishing representation on MFAC in recognition of it being a legitimate third fishing sector in NSW.

ii) Proposed new consultative body for recreational fishing

DPI recently surveyed around 72,000 recreational fishing licence holders to obtain feedback on how the NSW Government consults with anglers, including committee selection (election, nomination or a combination of both), the importance of regional representation, expertise representation, as well as the importance of communication ability. A total of 5,667 fishers responded, providing a response rate of 8.3%. This feedback is currently being considered and will help DPI and the NSW Government to improve recreational fishing consultation and management of fish stocks in NSW. It is proposed for current consultative arrangements to remain in place until any new consultative body is set up and becomes fully functional.

Motion: The committee seek support from ACoRF for a letter to be sent to the Minister to address the following issues relating to the proposed consultative arrangements: a) request formal representation of a charter fishing sector delegate on the MFAC, in addition to the recreational fishing representative; b) charter fishing sector representation on any new recreational fishing consultative body; and c) support the retention of the current MERCMAC process until new consultative arrangements are established and implemented, to ensure ongoing provision of advice on recreational charter fishing matters. Moved: John Paton. Seconded: Ann Garard. **Carried.**

c) Southern Bluefin Tuna Species Impact Statement

The proposed Ministerial order (MO) and Species Impact Statement (SIS) for Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT), including advice received from advisory bodies (including ACoRF, AFAC and the FSC), will be placed on public exhibition prior to the order being made.

The MO and SIS will be publicly exhibited for a minimum of 30 days. A copy of this information will be sent to committee members, when exhibited.

d) Mulloway Recovery Program

Approximately 500 submissions were received during the consultation period. Over 80% of responses were from recreational fishers. A submissions report has been prepared by DPI. Future management

arrangements to achieve recovery of the species are currently being considered by the Department and are expected to be implemented soon.

e) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of marine stocking in NSW

DPI advised that a submissions report addressing all issues relating to the marine stocking EIS raised in the public submissions had been prepared. The Minister has submitted the EIS, Fisheries Management Strategy (FMS) and submissions report to the Minister for Planning for approval. It is proposed for DPI to implement a small-scale program initially. Following approval of the EIS and FMS, a stocking plan will be developed in consultation with stakeholders prior to stocking.

f) New requirements for payment of meeting related travel expense claims

New departmental administrative arrangements require current car registration and comprehensive insurance records for each member to be attached to meeting related travel claim forms. Members can either send a copy of these records with each claim directly to the Accounts section, or scan and email these records to the Recreational Fisheries Program (RFP) team to be put on file so they can be attached to a meeting claim, if a member forwards the claim to RFP for processing. Alternatively, members are able to invoice DPI directly for meeting and travel expenses. Invoices should be sent to the Recreational Fisheries program team for processing and forwarding to Head Office.

g) Conflict of interest issues

Members were reminded that they have a duty to declare any private interest that may impinge on a council decision. When an issue arises, members must as soon as practicable disclose details of the interest to the council. If a conflict of interest is identified, the matter is then considered by the council through the chair. Members are also required to disclose interests to the council in corporations, partnerships or other organisations that may be relevant to the activities of the council (and recorded in a register).

Action item: DPI to circulate pecuniary interests declaration to enable members to update their details.

6. Review of NSW Recreational Saltwater and Freshwater Fishing Rules

The Committee discussed each review proposal/option in detail and voted on issues to form a consensus view, which was recorded as the formal position on each issue as part of the MERCMAC submission.

DPI will present an update on the analysis of submissions at the next meeting.

7. Charter fishing issues

a) Charter Fishing Trust

Update provided in item 5.a.

b) Charter fishing logbook monitoring program

The committee was presented with a summary of the logbook monitoring program data submitted by operators for the 2010, 2011 and 2012 calendar years, including: number of CFBs reporting charter fishing trips (2010 – 121; 2011 – 136; 2012 – 127); number of charter fishing trips reported (2010 – 6,381; 2011 – 7,207; 2012 – 6,505); number of anglers that went charter fishing on reported trips (2010 – 69,337; 2011 – 61,336; 2012 – 57,924); and the number of CFBs reporting in each port each year.

8. Out of session items

Information noted.

9. General business

Nil.

Next meeting

Members requested the following issues be placed on the agenda for discussion: Fish Online project update; Compliance update; and Charter fishing economic survey project update.