



Chair's summary report to Minister (Meeting 22)

28 March 2022

Dear Minister

Congratulations on your appointment as the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. The CommFish members and I are looking forward to working with you to build on the healthy and sustainable fishing sectors in NSW.

CommFish NSW held their meeting on the 16 and 17 February 2022 in Newcastle to consider the last batch of the Business Efficiency Program proposals. Members have now actively reviewed over 800 proposals as part of this process, which has been an enormous effort and is a milestone, albeit there are several proposals that will be revisited due to further information requirements.

There were several presentations from DPI NSW including the Digital Restart Program, proposed regulatory changes to penalties, localised Aboriginal cultural fishing plan and an update on the economic and social indicator reports for commercial fisheries by BDO EconSearch.

CommFish generally supported the proposed penalty amendments to the Fisheries regulations particularly to infringements relating to illegal activity that impact on stock sustainability and equity in resource access. They considered some of the proposed penalties were too low. They also supported additional Fisheries Compliance Officers to ensure an equitable opportunity for fishers to carry out their business and protect the marine resource.

Council were also provided with insight into a draft Aboriginal Cultural Fishing Local Management Plan, which was supported by the members who also looked forward to being updated on the trial.

The Digital Restart Program, which intends to update FishOnline to an improved user-friendly and fit for purpose format was welcomed by the Council. Members indicated the importance of this project and are prepared to work with the project team. Members agreed to ensure the success of the project, it is important to provide a perspective from an end user. Council want to be involved to ensure that the new system is easier to use, which in turn will encourage fishers to provide accurate data. Accurate and timely data are key in ensuring excellent stock and resource management.

The Council looks forward in meeting you, as such I have asked the Executive Officer to coordinate a suitable date for when you are available, our preference would be for some time in late May.

Please contact me if you require further elaboration on any of the items discussed at this meeting.

Regards

Stuart Richey AM, Chairman
CommFish NSW