

## **Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW) Chair's Summary Meeting 28**



The 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of RFNSW was held online on 2 and 3 August 2023. Council discussed a range of recreational fishing issues, including interim management arrangements for Mulloway proposed by DPI and the Snowy Hydro 2.0 Recreational Fishing Management Plan. RFNSW also received presentations on some key priority areas previously identified by Council. The key meeting outcomes are summarised below.

### **Mulloway management**

Council received a further update on the steps that DPI is taking as part of the Mulloway recovery programme, which is a key priority for DPI Fisheries. A key feature of the presentation from DPI was that despite implementation of a range of measures being implemented in the past, no measurable improvement in the stock has been detected. However, it is recognized that the recent flooding events due to La Nina conditions may result in improved recruitment. Encouragingly, Council learned more about the Harvest Strategy for Mulloway, which will provide a strategic framework and decision rules to promote stock recovery and equitably manage the recommended catch amongst user groups. Until the harvest strategy is operational, DPI is proposing interim management arrangements designed to achieve reductions in retained annual catch across all stakeholder groups. RFNSW was generally supportive of the proposed additional boat catch limit regulations in the recreational and charter fisheries to boost recovery until the harvest strategy is implemented.

The Chair attended the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group meeting in July, where the need for more precise estimates of Mulloway recreational catch was discussed to monitor recovery. DPI has been investigating options to support a digital near time solution for Mulloway and Lobster for recreational fishers. As noted at previous meetings, RFNSW is supportive of digital options which will contribute to improved management of Mulloway and Lobster (and potentially other key species). DPI will provide further details of the proposed system options at the next meeting.

### **Snowy Hydro 2.0 and Recreational Fishing Management Plan**

DPI updated Council on the Snowy Hydro 2.0 scheme and the associated Recreational Fishing Management Plan (the Plan), which aims to mitigate risks to the trout fishery at Tantangara Reservoir and Lake Eucumbene associated with development of the Snowy Hydro 2.0 project. Council was supportive of the proposed actions under the draft Plan for Snowy Hydro to mitigate potential impacts of Redfin Perch on trout populations in the two key reservoirs. This involves the provision of \$5 million in funding to enable the development of additional hatchery facilities at DPI's Gaden Trout Hatchery.

### **Social benefits of recreational fishing**

Council received an insightful update from member Matt Tripet on the outcomes of a 12-month research project undertaken by the University of Canberra on The Fly Program, which demonstrated the significant long-term mental health benefits that recreational fishing activities can have on participants. Mr Tripet also led a brief discussion on utilising the Fish for Life programme as a vehicle for promoting additional opportunities to deliver mental health and wellbeing outcomes through recreational fishing.

### **Project updates**

DPI also provided a general update on the progress of the Line and Trap (Snapper and Kingfish) Harvest Strategy, management initiatives for cultural fishing in NSW, and development of the pathway for a proposed Bubble Plume trial to reduce impacts from Cold Water Pollution and improve fish habitat.

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)