

**FINAL OUTCOMES, OTLMAC, 5 JUNE 2006.**

Agenda Item	Outcome	Action	Time	Responsibility
Welcome and Apologies	<p>The Chairperson welcomed all members and observers to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Chairperson</b> Dr Julian Amos</p> <p><b>Management Advisory Committee Members</b>            Paul Porter                      Spanner Crab            John Joblin                      Line fishing (western zone) north            Garry Braithwaite              Line fishing (western zone) south            John Garven                      Demersal fish trap north            Matthew Creek                  Line fishing (eastern zone) south            Megan Kessler                  Nature Conservation Council of NSW            Peter Goadby                      Recreational fishing            Fiona McKinnon                  Director General's nominee</p> <p><b>Observers</b>            Dianna Watkins                  DPI, Commercial Management            Andrew Goulstone              DPI Management Planning            Bill Talbot                      Dpi, Fisheries Conservation and Aquaculture            Marcel Green                    DPI, Environment Assessment            Tony Andrews                    DPI, Compliance            Graham Levitt                    DPI, Management Planning</p> <p><b>Apologies</b>            Paul Sullivan (Demersal Fish Trap South Representative)            Allen Hicks (Line Fishing (Eastern Zone) Representative)</p> <p><b>Welcome</b>            Lara Musgrave (Department of Environment and Heritage)            Rob Ferguson (Department of Environment and Heritage)</p>			

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Agenda	<p>The Committee noted that the meeting was a special meeting to focus on the review of the draft Summary of Submissions and Preferred Strategy Report for the OTL Fishery.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that business arising from previous minutes would be addressed at the completion of the meeting, time permitting.</p>			
Draft Minutes	Draft minutes of 5 April 2006 accepted as a true and accurate record.			
1. Draft Summary of Submissions and Preferred Strategy Report	<p>Representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage advised the Committee that risks or threats identified in the EIS for the fishery play a significant part in ensuring the necessary approvals are granted, particularly if those risks or threats remain unresolved. The impact of the fishery on grey nurse sharks is the most significant issue for the fishery.</p>			
	<p><b>Key Issue 1: Overfished Species</b></p> <p><b>Gemfish</b></p> <p>The Committee supported maintaining the 50 kg trip limit and co-operating with the Commonwealth on any spawning closure regimes.</p> <p>The Committee agree that the trip limit has achieved its purpose in effectively stopping the targeting of gemfish. The Committee were advised that gemfish has been nominated for listing under the Commonwealth threatened species legislation.</p>			

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	<p><b><i>Snapper</i></b></p> <p>The Committee noted an economic assessment of increasing the size limit to 32 cm is to be completed within 12 months of the commencement of the Fishery Management Strategy (FMS). It was also noted that the relevant management response in the FMS refers to implementing the outcomes of that review.</p> <p>The Committee did not support the options presented to increase the size of escape panel mesh in waters beyond 30 metres. Industry members claimed the loss of income through loss of byproduct (especially leatherjackets and pigfish) would make many fishers unviable. The Committee also stated that areas where large numbers of small snapper reside are avoided, and when working many of the trapping grounds beyond 30 metres only very small numbers of undersize snapper are caught.</p> <p>Industry members of the Committee proposed that the grounds where undersize snapper reside should be defined in consultation with local fishers in each region and closed to trapping. The Committee acknowledged that this may require a specific industry funded monitoring program to ensure the effectiveness of the closed areas, with an automatic action to implement the 50 x 87 mm panel mesh if the closures are found not to be working. The Committee suggested that the closed areas approach was a preferable outcome for industry than using a larger than 50 x 75 mm escape panel mesh.</p> <p>It was agreed that the use of anode free panels to reduce potential ghost fishing was not necessary. Industry</p>			

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	<p>members advised that ghost fishing is not an issue as fish swim freely in and out of the trap and vacate the trap once the bait is gone.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to revisit this issue if data collected on the number of lost traps shows a significant number of lost traps.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the combined effect of marine park closures, closures to trawling in Botany Bay and Port Jackson, and the proposed gear changes for ocean trawling (to improve selectivity) would assist in reducing the risk of fishing to the stock.</p>			
	<p><b><i>Kingfish</i></b></p> <p>The Committee noted the recommendation in the bag/size limit review to increase the size limit from 60 to 65 cm was supported through that process.</p> <p>DEH representatives noted that a recovery program for the species may be required.</p> <p><b><i>Other issues raised</i></b></p> <p>DEH noted that clearer targets were needed for recovery of each of these species and that research/monitoring priority needed to be given to species at high risk.</p>			
	<p><b>Key Issue 2: Threatened and Protected Species</b></p> <p>DEH representatives advised that the fishery risks the necessary approvals (by the Commonwealth) if areas around key grey nurse shark areas, including key</p>			

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	<p>aggregation sites identified in the EIS, are not protected.</p> <p>The MAC noted that some of the key aggregation sites are likely to be included within sanctuary areas of the Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Batemans Bay marine parks. Industry members from the south coast noted that if the marine park zoning plan doesn't offer sufficient protection to grey nurse areas, then they would support actively closing those areas to trap and line fishing.</p> <p>The Committee was not willing to support this direction Statewide as relevant representatives from the northern regions were not present at the meeting.</p> <p>It is noted that some key aggregation sites occur outside of the marine park sanctuary zones in the north of the State (Magic Point, Green Island, Mermaid Reef, Edith Breaker, Fish Rock and Bass Point).</p> <p>To further reduce interactions, the Committee agreed to the mandatory use of offset and non-offset circle hooks on all unattended lines, and the phasing out of the use of offset circle hooks by 1 July 2007. The phasing out of offset circle hooks does not apply for unattended lines set in waters greater than 50 fathoms.</p> <p>NCC representative advised their ongoing position of 1500 metre closures surrounding key aggregation sites.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the potential interactions with endangered birds pose a very low risk and therefore the proposed additional action in the draft PSR should be removed. It is low risk because the lines are dropped</p>			

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	vertically down from the boat using a weight/anchor; dissimilar to how pelagic longline hooks are set.			
	<p><b>Key Issue 3: High Risk Sharks</b></p> <p><b><i>Sharks</i></b></p> <p>The Committee supported the proposed trip limit for specified shark species of 1 tonne for a 24 hour period and 2 tonnes for a 48 hour period (or greater).</p> <p>Additional restriction proposed in the draft PSR of a 200 hook limit for shark fishers was not supported. The Committee did note that the catch of sharks needs to be closely monitored and action taken if increased pressure was placed on shark stocks.</p> <p><b><i>Wobbegong sharks</i></b></p> <p>The Committee accepted that additional action was required to prevent the targeting of wobbegong sharks and supported a separate trip limit for these species. The Committee recommended a limit to the maximum number of sharks landed as an alternative to a weight based limit due to the difficulty in estimating an accurate weight prior to landing. The proposed maximum number of wobbegong sharks is 12 for a 24 hour period.</p> <p>The Committee supported the proposal to prohibit the heading of wobbegong sharks at sea, so that the size limit can be enforced and for species identification purposes.</p>			
	<b>Key Issue 4: Excess Fishing Effort</b>			

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	<p>The Committee supported the approach in the draft PSR, in addition the Committee recommended the introduction of a minimum shareholding for the fishery (all fishers) of 40 shares with a two year implementation time frame.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the final approach to manage effort in the fishery would depend in part on the outcomes of the structural adjustment program (currently being developed in consultation with SIAC) and future marine park buyouts.</p> <p>DEH representatives noted that the timeframes to reduce effort in the fishery were not consistent with the threats identified in the EIS. It was suggested that to manage active effort, controls may also include gear limits (linking shares to the number of traps / hooks for example).</p>			
	<p><b>Other Issues: Sustainability, biodiversity and management of shared stocks</b></p> <p>The NCC representative noted that while the resource assessment framework determined the status of the key species, a framework was lacking for determining ecologically sustainable catch levels for each species and how resources should be shared among fisheries.</p> <p>DEH representatives noted other areas of concern including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paucity of information regarding recreational catch, how will this issue addressed and more reliable estimates achieved.</li> <li>• Need for an observer program to monitor bycatch.</li> <li>• Validation of catch data and the current scale of catch reporting. Finer scale (spatial and temporal) reporting was recommended.</li> </ul>			

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	No other changes to draft PSR recommended.			
2. Other Business	<p><b>SIAC Representative</b></p> <p>The Committee considered its nominations to the SIAC and nominated Garry Braithwaite as the preferred candidate and John Joblin the second candidate.</p> <p>The Committee requested a detailed SIAC update be provided at each Committee meeting.</p> <p><b>Marine Parks</b></p> <p>Industry members from the south coast again requested that Departmental representatives from the Fisheries Management Branch attend marine park consultation meetings.</p> <p><b>Licence Splitting</b></p> <p>Industry members referred to the recent letter sent to all commercial fishers regarding the NSW Government's policy on licence splitting and how it will be applied during the Commonwealth Government's buyout process. Industry members were opposed to the option outlined in this letter that allows dual endorsed fishers to fish in NSW waters after accepting a Commonwealth buyout. The potential increase in effort that may arise from this was a concern for all industry.</p> <p>The Committee supported retention of the licence splitting policy.</p>			
3. Next meeting	To be determined.			

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