

## Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW)

### Chair's Summary (Meeting 17)

The 17th meeting of RFNSW was held in Newcastle on 27 November 2020. Following a series of video-conference meetings this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, RFNSW welcomed its first face-to-face meeting since February 2020. The Council also welcomed Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director-General, DPI Fisheries to the meeting, who provided Council with an update on general fisheries management news, including the release of the draft Harvest Strategy Policy and guidelines for public consultation.

The key outcomes from discussions of the agenda items are given below.

#### RFNSW top priorities

RFNSW finalised the revised list of top priority issues, which will be used by Council to help guide its recommendations to the Minister about key actions to improve the quality of recreational fishing in NSW. In finalising the list, Council agreed to expand the priority issue related to enhancing river connectivity through improved fish passage by including screening of irrigation pumps and addressing thermal pollution effects below impoundments.

#### NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy

Following identification of the need by RFNSW to develop a NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy, DPI advised Council that once the Minister has endorsed the formation of a sub group for this initiative, the first meeting would be scheduled and would focus on drafting the Strategy.

#### Update on the recovery of Macquarie Perch

DPI presented Council with an update on recovery initiatives for Macquarie Perch. Council acknowledged the excellent work being done by DPI in partnership with the Central Acclimatisation Society and other groups to assist in the recovery of this iconic native freshwater species. There are many challenges facing the recovery of the species and Council confirmed its support to progress the recovery program. DPI was invited to provide further feedback on additional initiatives that may be needed to boost recovery, including continued development of breeding technology and stocking work.

#### Weir pool effects on the health of inland fish stocks

Council received an informative presentation from member Matt Hansen on the detrimental effects of weir pools on the health of inland fish stocks, using the dysfunctional Gin Gin weir as an example. The presentation highlighted how the backing up of water, eliminating/reducing river flow, by weirs reduces the "riffle and run" habitat that is essential for native fish populations to thrive. The presentation also proposed alternative solutions to weirs, including on-farm storage options, for supplying the water needed by rural communities and agricultural enterprises. RFNSW supported the Chair writing to the Minister to request that the planning of new water infrastructure in NSW should make every effort to reduce the extent of weir pools, and to consider raising the issue with the Hon. Melinda Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing.

### Evaluating research applications for Recreational Fishing Trust funds

Feedback was sought from Council members on a draft information paper proposing additional evaluation of the scientific methods in research applications for Trust funds that would build on the initial evaluation of those applications by the Expenditure Committees. A sub group was formed to consider the process further and to report back to Council.

### Joint session with CommFish NSW

Council welcomed the opportunity to have a joint session with CommFish NSW on 27 November, which focused on cross-sector issues, including initiatives to further assist with the recovery of Mulloway, evaluate the status of Kingfish stocks, and work together to identify effective ways to reduce black marketing of fish and shellfish in NSW.

### Next RFNSW meeting

The next meetings of RFNSW will be held on 17 December 2020 (via videoconference) and on 24 February 2021. The February meeting and subsequent meetings in 2021 will be organised to coincide with the meetings of CommFish to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the two Councils.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Johann Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'B'.

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)

15 December 2020