

Chair's Summary (Meeting 19)

The 19th meeting of RFNSW was held in Newcastle on 24 and 25 February 2021. The key outcomes from discussions of the agenda items are summarised below.

NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy

A productive session on the development of the NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy was held with staff from DPI, during which RFNSW proposed some revised options for the vision and objectives for the Strategy. Council also reviewed and supported the Terms of Reference for a RFNSW sub-group to continue to develop the Strategy out of session. This work will include identifying actions to further enhance recreational fishing and associated tourism opportunities. RFNSW considers that the Strategy is a highly worthwhile project that will promote improved, and socially-beneficial, recreational fishing opportunities in NSW.

Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey – 2017/2018

DPI presented the outcomes of the most recent Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey to Council. The presentation provided great insight into recreational fishing catch and effort patterns and trends in NSW, and the value of this regular (2-yearly) survey for informing stock assessments of key fish species in NSW.

Recovery initiatives for Macquarie Perch

Building on a previous presentation to RFNSW on the Macquarie Perch Recovery Plan, DPI described the additional initiatives expected to assist with stabilising the remnant populations of Macquarie Perch in NSW, and to restore recreational fishing for this iconic inland fish species. These initiatives include applying advances in hatchery rearing, and larger-scale restocking programmes. Council strongly supported the proposed actions needed to strengthen the Macquarie Perch Recovery Plan, and requested the Chair to write to the Minister to champion the urgent measures needed to save this iconic native fish from local extinction in NSW and restore populations to levels where they can once again support recreational fishing.

Fish for Life campaign

DPI updated Council on the status of the 'Fish for Life' campaign, which is designed to promote the health and socio-economic benefits of recreational fishing in NSW to the wider community. Council provided feedback on two of the components – one aimed at current fishers and the other at new participants. Council welcomed the progress made on the Fish for Life campaign and its proposed launch in the near future.

Joint session with CommFish NSW

RFNSW held its third joint session with CommFish NSW on 24 February 2021, which focused mainly on the Mulloway Recovery Program. RFNSW members voiced their grave concern about the status of Mulloway in NSW, based on the latest stock assessment. A number of options for preventing a further decline in abundance of this iconic fish species before implementation of a Harvest Strategy were discussed by both Councils. The joint meeting also discussed the need to eliminate black marketing of all seafood.



Professor Johann Bell (Chair)
8 March 2021