

## NSW MULLOWAY HARVEST STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Chair's Summary – 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2023

The tenth meeting of the NSW Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2023. This meeting proposed to continue review and development of the draft harvest strategy, including further discussions around the decision rules (or management actions) to manage the rebuilding and future health of Mulloway.

DPI provided an update on the Mulloway compliance program which commenced in July 2022 to enhance education and compliance activity. It is especially pleasing to hear many fishers across all fishing sectors are voluntarily making an effort to manage their fishing practices to protect Mulloway. Members showed their appreciation towards both the compliance program and the recent communications package released by DPI to support responsible fishing practices for this species following recent recommendations by the Working Group.

This meeting again explored potential options for managing catch through the rebuilding stage of the harvest strategy. The Working Group has broadly analysed this topic which has proven to have many complexities. Nonetheless, significant progress has been made with members once more showing exceptional expertise and understanding of this fishery.

The developing draft harvest strategy decision rules were again reviewed, and members discussed decision rule options for rebuilding the stock within timeframes appropriate for this species. Members also discussed options for adjusting catch to support progress to and maintain longer-term biomass targets. A precautionary approach is likely required to effectively manage the stock in the early stages of the harvest strategy, particularly until there is greater certainty around stock estimates. Members supported an approach to provide equitable and independent management arrangements for each fishing sector, whilst supporting a shared responsibility and benefits from rebuilding and maintaining stock biomass levels.

This meeting welcomed a guest speaker from both CommFish NSW and RFNSW to give external perspectives towards specific Mulloway management issues associated within the commercial and recreational fishing sectors. It was evident from discussions that minimising incidental catch of Mulloway and protecting this species holds high importance for each sector, both having contributed to achieving a healthy Mulloway fishery for the benefit of all sectors.

The next meeting is set for October 2023 where the Working Group will further consider the draft harvest strategy framework, in order to progress finalisation of the draft harvest strategy to support the health of the Mulloway stock into the future.

Dr James Findlay, Chair, NSW Mulloway HSWG.