

**Recreational Fishing NSW
Advisory Council minutes**

**Meeting 28, 2 and 3 August 2023
Microsoft Teams virtual meeting**

Members Present	Johann Bell Patrick Linehan Paul Lennon Anna Clark Grahame Williams OAM Vicki Lear Matt Hansen Karl Mathers Ray Tang Bill Blair Peter Dugan Matt Tripet Ian Puckeridge Simon Clark	Independent Chair Region 1 – Upper North Coast Region 2 – Lower North Coast Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast Region 4 - Illawarra Region 6 – North West Inland (and MFAC rep) Region 7 – South West Inland Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Charter Fishing Social Benefits of Recreational Fishing Spearfishing Acting Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management
Apologies	Dean Hamilton Peter Turnell	Region 5 Nominee of the Secretary - DPI representative

1) Welcome, introductions and housekeeping

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members to the 28th meeting of RFNSW.

2) Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested that members declare any changes or additions to the RFNSW Conflict of Interest Register.

- Vicki Lear declared she is commencing an Australian Women in Fishing program.

3) Agreement on the agenda, adoption of previous meeting record, proposed future meeting schedule

NOTED:

- RFNSW members agreed on the agenda for the meeting.
- The outcomes of the 27th meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting by the previous Council members in attendance.
- Next meeting is proposed to be 23-24 October 2023.

4) RFNSW Key Priority Areas

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief overview of the status of actions for each of the Key Priority Area issues and discussed further actions that will be developed where required.
- It was noted that revisions to the draft Recreational Fishing Strategy and Actions were currently being undertaken prior to submission to the Minister.

5) NSW Harvest Strategy update

a) Progress of current strategies

NOTED:

- DPI updated the Council on the progress of the Line and Trap (Snapper and Kingfish) Harvest Strategy, noting two meetings had been held to date with discussions focusing on fishery information, scope and objectives.
- DPI noted the Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy is due to be released soon.
- 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.
- The Chair attended the 10th meeting of the Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group meeting in July, where the need for more precise estimates of Mulloway recreational catch to monitor recovery was discussed.
- DPI has been investigating options to support a digital near real time solution for a tagging and associated reporting system 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 digital data collection system options at the next meeting.

b) Update on monitoring the recovery of Mulloway and consideration of further temporary fishing regulations for Mulloway pending release of the Harvest Strategy

NOTED:

- Council received a further update on the steps that DPI is taking as part of the Mulloway recovery program, which is a priority for DPI Fisheries.

- A key feature of the presentation from DPI was that despite the previous implementation of a range of measures to assist the recovery of Mulloway, no measurable improvement in the stock has been detected.
- In recognition of the potential for the flooding events in recent years to improve recruitment, DPI is proposing interim management arrangements to harness this potential through catch reductions 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.

6) Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) staff member introduction

NOTED:

- The Council welcomed Kris Cooling, Extension Officer, FRDC, who organised a brief 'meet and greet' session with Council.
- Mr Cooling is investigating avenues for improving the connection between recreational fishers, representative organisations and Research and Development providers.
- The Chair recommended Mr Cooling be invited back to a future meeting to provide a more in-depth discussion on stakeholder engagement, and options for how RFNSW members and their networks and regional knowledge could potentially assist FRDC to have greater reach among the recreational fishing sector.

7) Social benefits of recreational fishing

NOTED:

- 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 program as a vehicle for promoting additional opportunities to deliver mental health and wellbeing outcomes through recreational fishing.

8) Trout update

a) Snowy Hydro 2.0 and associated Recreational Fishing Management Plan

NOTED

- DPI updated the Council on the Snowy Hydro 2.0 scheme and the associated Recreational Fishing Management Plan, which aims to mitigate risks to the trout fishery at Tantangara Reservoir and Lake Eucumbene associated with development of the scheme.
- RFNSW provided feedback on the Management Plan and was supportive of the proposal to mitigate potential impacts of Redfin Perch on salmonid populations in Tantangara Reservoir and Lake Eucumbene via the provision of \$5 million in funding to enable the development of additional hatchery facilities at DPI's Gaden Trout Hatchery.

- Council was advised that these hatchery facilities will be modified to have a recirculating aquaculture system with the capacity to produce up to 20 tonnes of 'advanced size' salmonid fingerlings with lower predation rates from Redfin Perch on an 'as needs' basis.
- It was noted that numbers and frequency of salmonids produced and stocked will be determined and managed by NSW DPI, with input as required from an associated monitoring program under the draft Plan.

Action item: DPI to collate RFNSW feedback on the Snowy Hydro 2.0 Recreational Fishing Management Plan and submit to Director, Freshwater Environments for consideration.

b) Draft Trout Strategy update

NOTED

- DPI provided an update on the new draft 10-year strategy to guide the management of the NSW recreational trout fishery, noting the draft was presented to key stakeholders at the Trout Allocation Committee meeting in May this year.
- It was noted that DPI was working to finalise the Strategy and background paper and has also commenced work on the inaugural NSW Murray Cod Recreational Fishing Strategy.

c) Options to manage anti-social behaviour during the Eucumbene River spawning run fishery

NOTED:

- DPI updated Council on reports of anti-social behaviour during the 2023 spawning run on the Eucumbene River earlier this year.
- It was noted that favourable conditions and reports of large numbers of fish resulted in large numbers of fishers in the area.
- In order to encourage responsible and respectful access, DPI initiated a social media campaign encouraging anglers to "Do the Right Thing on the Eucumbene".
- DPI advised Council that management options for the 2024 season will be considered for implementation, as required.

9) Session with the Deputy Director-General, Fisheries

NOTED:

- The DDG Fisheries provided a brief update on current fisheries programs and actions taken by the Department to support the Government's election commitments relating to recreational fishing.
- During the session, RFNSW members expressed an interest in gaining further knowledge and understanding of the different commercial fisheries operating in NSW, which may assist with future consideration of cross sector issues.
- The DDG supported facilitation of a presentation on commercial fishing at the next RFNSW meeting.

Action item: DPI to facilitate a commercial fisheries presentation at Meeting 29.

10) Proposed consultation relating to commercial harvesting of pipis at Stockton Beach

NOTED:

- It was noted that the DPI had held an independently-chaired workshop with commercial fishery shareholders to discuss industry concerns relating to the commercial harvest of pipis on Stockton Beach.
- During the workshop, some potential changes to current management arrangements were proposed that could proceed to broader consultation with all Estuary General hand-gathering endorsement holders.
- Prior to this consultation, DPI sought Council feedback on whether this process should encompass recreational harvest of pipis on Stockton Beach.
- At the meeting, RFNSW did not consider extension of any commercial fishing closure on Stockton Beach to recreational harvesting was necessary, given i) the very low recreational take of pipis for bait, and ii) that previous commercial fishing closures related to pipis on Stockton Beach had not been extended to recreational fishers.

11) Update on the \$2-for-\$1 Native Fish Stocking Program

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief update on the 2022/23 season of the \$2-for-\$1 program (previously called \$4\$ program) that provides two dollars in Trust funds for every one dollar in funds raised by the community to stock native fish in public waters to benefit anglers.
- It was noted that Narrandera Native Fish Hatchery recently worked with stakeholders to release ex-broodstock Golden Perch into the Murray River at Corowa, Torrumberry and, and also in the Edwards River at Deniliquin.
- These sites were specifically selected to boost stocks in areas affected by recent private hatchery production constraints under the \$2-for-\$1 program.
- Additionally, ex-broodstock Murray Cod were released from the hatchery into Blowering Dam, to help maintain the dam's reputation as a premier trophy cod fishery.
- Member Karl Mathers raised the concept of possibly expanding the program to include selected threatened species (specifically Catfish and Trout Cod).

Action item: DPI to seek feedback from Director, Freshwater Environments on potential opportunities for stocking threatened species under the \$2 for \$1 program
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12) Update by Director, Aboriginal Fishing and Marine Conservation

a) Cultural Fishing program update

NOTED:

- DPI provided Council with an update on the Cultural Fishing program, including the provision of advice on the Fisheries Advisory Council roundtable on draft cultural fishing regulations in July, which included representation from RFNSW.
- The Director, Aboriginal Fishing and Marine Conservation thanked the RFNSW members who attended the meeting for their time and valuable contribution to the process.

- It was noted that DPI had received good feedback on the cultural fishing regulations consultation paper and looked forward to working further with Council during the consultation process.

b) Marine Parks

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on Marine Park planning, including advice on the Draft Network Management Plan, which is a key Government priority.
- DPI undertook to notify Council when the Management Plan had been approved.
- DPI also advised Council that a community survey of Lord Howe Island Marine Park had commenced. The purpose of this survey is to better understand what the community and stakeholders value about the Marine Park and identify any perceived threats to those values. The survey will help inform the preparation of a management plan for the Lord Howe Island Marine Park. DPI encouraged members to participate in the survey.

13) Fish for Life update

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on the Fish for Life program, including the recently launched 'Keep It Clean' campaign.
- Council learned that DPI has developed creative content for social media and brochures for the 'Keep it Clean' campaign to encourage fishers to understand the impacts of fishing-related debris, and to be proactive stewards of the resource and improve social licence within the general community.
- An update was also provided on the Female Fishos subprogram which aims to support new and existing female fishers in NSW.

14) DPI update on showcase 'bubble plume' system to mitigate cold water pollution (CWP) from NSW impoundments

NOTED:

- DPI provided Council with an update on the development of the pathway for a proposed Bubble Plume trial to demonstrate whether the system is effective in mitigating Cold Water Pollution (CWP) and other reservoir water quality issues.
- For the interest of new members, background on CWP and the proposed Bubble Plume trial was also provided.
- It was proposed that a meeting be facilitated between DPI and members Karl Mathers and Matt Hansen to discuss how RFNSW can support DPI in accelerating CWP mitigation projects, and enlist the assistance of other stakeholders in the agricultural and tourism sectors, in the short and medium term.

Action item: DPI to facilitate a meeting between RFNSW members and staff from Freshwater Environment Branch to discuss an action plan for accelerating support for CWP mitigation projects in collaboration with other stakeholders.

15) Recreational Fishing Trust update

a) Recreational Licence Fee

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on Recreational Fishing Licence CPI indexation following a member update request.

b) NSW Government Media Release - Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill

NOTED:

- It was noted that in May this year, the NSW Government issued a media release about the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Bill 2023 which was passed on 25 May 2023 and commenced on 1 July 2023.
- The Bill strengthens the Government's obligations to follow the NSW Grants Administrative Guide which was introduced in September 2022.

c) Trust Project Promotion

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief overview on the various methods used to promote projects that receive funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts. This includes social media (Fisheries Facebook and Instagram), Newscast, 'Supporting your Sport' brochures, Fishcare Volunteer promotion, magazine articles and media releases.
- The Chair led discussion on the merits of including specific recreational fishing research priorities as part of the expression of interest for future Trust funding rounds.

Action items: DPI to place the issue of developing specific recreational fishing research priorities on or

16) Clean, Safe Wharves update

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on the Clean Safe Wharves program that seeks to maintain access to 50 ferry wharves in Sydney and the Parramatta River.
- It was noted that complaints relating to recreational fishing on commuter wharves peak during January and April school holidays, and relate to a range of issues including anti-social behaviour and fishing waste.
- DPI has regular communication with Transport NSW, NSW Police and other relevant wharf management organisations to manage emerging issues and develop and implement management solutions.

- DPI advised that new wharf recreational fishing signage was being rolled out prior to summer this year to provide clear, consolidated advice on recreational fishing on the wharves to promote responsible and safe behaviour.

17) General Business

a) Offshore Artificial Wind Farms

NOTED:

- It was noted that the Commonwealth Government had recently declared an area in the Pacific Ocean off the Hunter region as suitable for future offshore wind energy.
- At the request of member Grahame Williams, DPI provided a brief update on this declaration.
- Mr Williams raised concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed offshore wind renewable energy area on game and recreational fishing grounds in NSW.
- It was proposed that DPI extend an invitation to a representative from the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to present to Council at the next meeting on the offshore wind proposals in NSW.

b) Correspondence from Edward Wakool Angling Assoc. (EWAA) and the Moama Aboriginal Land Council re recovery program for Murray Crayfish

NOTED:

- It was noted that EWAA and the Moama Aboriginal Land Council had written to RFNSW seeking support for the establishment of improved partnerships and evidence-based decision making on fishing for Murray Crayfish in the Murray and Edward-Wakool system.

Action item: DPI to forward the correspondence to the Director, Freshwater Environment for action.

18) Junior River Ranger program and River Dreaming Corporate Tours

NOTED:

- Brett Smith, Director of River Dreaming Aboriginal Corporation, provided an insightful update on the Junior River Ranger Program and River Dreaming Corporate Tours.
- The Chair thanked Mr Smith for presenting to the Council and sharing information on his program, noting the program framework may provide future opportunities for education partnerships.
- RFNSW made a suggestion that Mr Smith should also present his update to the Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council.

19) PhD student introduction

NOTED:

- Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair provided a brief introduction to University of Wollongong postgraduate student, Mr Chris Jones, who is undertaking his PhD on the social licence issues in recreational fishing.

- Members (especially those representing coastal areas) were encouraged to contact Mr Jones for an interview to ensure that the social importance of recreational fishing from a member's perspective are documented and incorporated into Mr Jones's research.

Meeting closed.

Out of Session online meeting with the Hon. Tara Moriarty, MP, Minister for Regional NSW

On 6 September 2023, the Council met with the Minister to provide a brief update on four of the Council's Key Recreational Priority Areas, including the Recreational Fishing Strategy and Actions; fostering more inclusivity in fishing, including women; providing more opportunities for fishing to deliver mental health and wellbeing outcomes; and developing innovative ways to collect recreational catch data for key species (e.g., Mulloway and Lobster).

The Minister addressed the Council and spoke about the priority areas for the Government relating to recreational fishing, including commencing work on implementing key election commitments. The Minister thanked the Council for the work it does and said she was looking forward to working with RFNSW to strengthen the recreational fishing sector.