

DRAFT OUTCOMES of the EPTMAC meeting held on 1st Septemeber 2006.

Agenda Item	Outcome
Welcome and apologies	Members and observers were welcomed.
Estuary Prawn Trawl MAC Appointments	The Chairman welcomed Ms Suzane Hamilton (Hunter River) and Mr Rolf Norington (Hawkesbury River) to the committee and thanked Mr Dennis Hyde and Mr Greame Hilyard for their valuable contribution to the estuary prawn trawl fishery over the years.
Agreement on agenda	Agenda agreed.
Confirmation of Draft Minutes	Outcomes for previous meeting approved. Action – DPI to replace the draft outcomes on the DPI website with the final approved outcomes.
Action status list	List of actions noted.
Correspondence received and sent	Correspondence received and sent was noted.
Updates	<p>The committee noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Country of Origin Food Labelling laws appear to be creating increased consumer demand for fresh local seafood in some of the more populated areas in NSW. • Sydney Water has not yet consulted with the community or local commercial fishing industry on the implementation plan for the Brooklyn / Dangar Island Sewerage Treatment Plant that is expected to be commissioned October 2007 (also see agenda item “Brooklyn STP and Outfall”). • A proposal for a River Keeper program in the Hawkesbury River. • Concerns by Industry and the recreational sector over the Bateman’s Bay and Port Stephens Marine Park

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	<p>zoning proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates by the Department's Science and Research Branch on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development and building of models for the eastern king prawn and school prawn populations. - The FRDC funded project on the growth and mortality of school prawns. - Port monitoring of prawn sizes in landings at Ballina, Iluka and Coffs Harbour co-operatives. <p>Action - DPI to consider whether applying size limits to species such as flounder means that those species can no longer be taken in prawn trawl nets, noting that the current regulation (cl38) prohibits the taking of species subject to size limit from estuarine waters using a prawn trawl net.</p> <p>Action - Hawkesbury EPT representative to identify points of contact for relevant authorities co-ordinating the proposed River Keeper program in the Hawkesbury River, with a view to the committee providing a letter of support. DPI to consider the committee's suggestion for DPI to contribute to the program.</p>
Development of share management plans	<p>The committee discussed the content of the draft estuary prawn trawl share management plan and noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial plans are a first step and will be expanded and refined over time. • The plans are expected to be gazetted in December 2006 and take effect early 2007. • There will be further consultation with industry on the content of the draft plans during the public exhibition period, and that there is further opportunity for the MAC to review the plans prior to gazettal, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed minimum shareholding of 150 for new entrants to the Clarence River and Hawkesbury River estuary prawn trawl fisheries (also see next agenda item), and ○ The opening and closing arrangements for the Clarence River.
Share trading on commencement of plans	<p>The committee supported the proposed share trading rules.</p> <p>The committee noted that the department is considering a proposal by estuary prawn trawl representatives for a new class of share or a re-allocation of shares that takes into account recent participation in the fishery, and new minimum shareholdings. The committee also noted that the Seafood industry Advisory Council (SIAC) and the department are also exploring the potential for shares to be linked to input controls (eg. days, trap numbers etc) to contain latent capacity and to encourage autonomous restructuring, noting that this approach does not appear to be suitable across all fisheries (eg. meshing).</p>

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Proposed changes to licensing arrangements	The committee supported the proposed changes to the licensing arrangements (ie. plastic licences, fishing business cards, new nomination arrangements, new boat licensing arrangements etc).
Reviewing Research on Riddling	Discussion on the research on 'riddling' was postponed until the next committee meeting.
Brooklyn STP and Outfall	<p>The committee noted the concerns of Hawkesbury River estuary prawn trawl fishers regarding the Department of Planning's consultation process, assessment and subsequent conditional approval of the Brooklyn / Danger Island sewerage treatment scheme. Issues of particular concern were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information regarding the proposed "exclusion zones". • Community perception of product taken from an estuary with treated sewerage effluent discharge outlets. • Lack of research data on the affect of tertiary treated effluent on zooplankton and ecological communities. • Water quality assumptions based on plant running at 100% efficiency. <p>The committee noted that Hornsby Shire Council has offered limited funding to undertake water quality monitoring prior to commissioning, and that NSW Maritime were also willing (as work priorities permit) to provide an officer and watercraft to assist.</p> <p>Action - DPI to seek clarification from the NSW Food Authority on the proposed "exclusion zone(s)" and opportunities for industry input.</p> <p>Action – DPI to consider designing, funding and implementing, in conjunction with the Hornsby Shire Council and NSW Maritime, a water monitoring program (eg. before and after controlled impact (BACI) experimental design) to monitor the affects of the STP on zooplankton, particularly species of zooplankton important to commercial and recreational fishing. Any such testing must commence prior to commissioning the STP during 2007 to ensure adequate before / baseline data.</p>
Square mesh codends in the Hawkesbury River	The committee commended Mr Rolf Norington on his work on square mesh codends in the Hawkesbury River and latest report, in particular current work with larger circumferences and composite constructions (diamond and square mesh cod-ends).

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	<p>Recommendation to implement square mesh codends in the Clarence River as soon as possible, and provide Hawkesbury and Hunter River fishers a further 12 months for refinement by industry and then testing by the department. Industry will then need to source materials and construct new codends.</p> <p>Action – DPI to review the conditions on permits issued to Hawkesbury River fishers to enable testing of cod-ends with larger circumferences, and streamline the process of issuing permits to encourage and assist industry test new net designs.</p>
Other Business	<p>The committee noted that the RTA's preferred route for the F3 Freeway to Raymond Terrace upgrade includes a new crossing over the Hunter River, upstream from the Hexham bridge. The RTA's preferred route is currently on public exhibition until 13th October 2006.</p> <p>The committee discussed the valuing of product taken in NSW commercial fisheries, in particular the value of prawns and squid taken from the Hawkesbury River. Industry committed to providing information on the value of product following on advice from the department on the type of information required to substantiate higher prices at the point of first sale.</p> <p>Action - DPI to review the price information relied upon to value catch and determine if the data is region specific and if it can be updated to provide a more accurate value of the product taken in the Hawkesbury River.</p>
Next meeting	<p>The Chairperson thanked all members, deputies and observers for attending the meeting and advised the date for the next committee meeting would be determined out of session, noting that a joint MAC meeting is proposed during September.</p>