

Final Outcomes of the Estuary General Management Advisory Committee (EGMAC) meeting held on 10 August 2006.

Agenda Item	Outcome	Timeline	Responsibility	Action
1.	<p>The Chairperson welcomed all the members to the meeting and the new Indigenous representative was introduced to the Committee.</p> <p>Meeting start 9:35 am</p>			
2.	The Committee agreed on the agenda for the 10 th August 2006 EGMAC meeting.			
3.	Members agreed on the draft minutes of 21 st October 2006 EGMAC meeting. Moved Region 3, seconded Region 4 (south). Motion carried.			
4.a.	<p>The Committee discussed the business arising from the previous minutes with the following outcomes:</p> <p>Item 2. Region 4 (south) representative advised the Committee that the item regarding an agreement between recreational and commercial fishers in the upper Myall River should be removed because of the PSGL Marine Park implementation.</p> <p>Item 9. Remove item related to industry-funding assistance for buyouts. The Structural Adjustment Working Group (SAWG) is determining options regarding industry-funded buyouts for structural adjustment.</p> <p>Item 10. Remove item related to investigating local council funding as the SWAG is looking at options for buyouts options.</p> <p>Item 14. Region 4 (North) representative supports inclusion of 'clover leafing' into Regulations following the research completed by DPI. Recent research on specific prawn gears has indicated that size selectivity is improved when utilising square mesh codends.</p>	ASAP	DPI	DPI to review research outcomes and include in the Regulations as appropriate

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	<p>Item 19. The recreational representative advised the Committee that there may be a closure being drafted in proximity to the Brooklyn sewerage outfall.</p> <p>Items 22. Possible future discussion on linking shares with effort following Estuary General Share Management Plan (EGSMP) implementation.</p> <p>Item 27. Industry advised that they do not support the proposal to place a condition on pipi licence holders, preventing them from collecting pipis from an open beach and then driving onto a closed beach. Industry believes that the closure is unworkable for most beaches. Action item to be removed.</p> <p>Item 31. The recreational representative advised that a proposal to prevent recreational use of crab traps had been discussed by ACoRF and rejected due to resource allocation issues.</p> <p>Item 32. The Committee elected the Region 3 EGMAC representative, Mr Geoff Blackburn as the deputy SIAC representative for the Estuary General Fishery (EGF).</p> <p>Item 35. The Region 3 representative is working on a proposal for the commercial harvest of Australian bass, however requested an amendment to the Action Item to include estuary perch and make reference listing the fish as bycatch species, not target species.</p> <p>Item 37. The Committee supported a proposal that the current catch and effort working group representative, Mr Jim Drinkwater, be able to nominate a deputy if unavailable to attend meetings.</p>			

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	<p>Ongoing Action items:</p> <p>Item 3. It was agreed to remove item regarding use of additional mud crab traps. This item is not correct, as commercial fishers can now only set a maximum of 10 crab traps in all estuaries.</p> <p>Item 5. It was agreed to remove item regarding hauling in certain penguin habitat areas, as no longer required due to the closure of commercial fishing in Port Jackson.</p> <p>Item 6. It was agreed to remove item regarding closures, as these will be included in EGSMP.</p>			
4. b.	The Committee considered Ocean Watch's request and approved supplying them with EGMAC member contact details.	ASAP	DPI	Notify and send Ocean Watch details.
5. SMP	<p>The current roles of DPI commercial management staff whilst share management plans are being developed were outlined.</p> <p>Information on development of the draft Estuary General Share Management Plan was provided to the Committee. The following issues emerged:</p> <p>1. The Committee endorsed the tabled draft share trading rules, supporting the proposed rules that: require new entrants must purchase an entire fishing business (FB); existing FB owners may trade shares between FB with a few exemptions for certain Ocean Hauling, Ocean Trap and Line and Ocean Fish/Prawn Trawl share classes (see agenda item); and once trading takes place the minimum shareholding requirements are applied to the traded share class (for both the transferee and transferor). It was noted that the share trading rules provide for increased flexibility for business owners without increasing the number of FB's and endorsements.</p>			

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	<p>2. The Committee requested the implementation of a fishing licence test (like a drivers licence test) - similar to the training program used in QLD for new licence holders, to ensure new entrants have an understanding of NSW fisheries and the importance of sustainability.</p> <p>3. The activity levels by share class were tabled and discussed. Commercial and Indigenous representatives did not support a timeframe requiring existing shareholders to meet the minimum shareholding requirements. Similarly, the Commercial and Indigenous representatives opposed an increase in minimum shareholding at this stage.</p> <p>The Recreational representative however would like to see an increase in minimum shareholding to stimulate industry adjustment.</p> <p>Proposed general licencing arrangements were discussed and the following issues emerged:</p> <p>1. The Committee supported the proposal to remove the owner-operator rule for the EGF and the issuing of a plastic FB card. The endorsements for a business will be placed on the card. The FB owner is to advise the Department of the licensed commercial fishers to be listed as potential nominated endorsement holders. The FB owner may then select one of the listed fishers to work their business at a particular time and notify the Department. The nominated fisher will then be given the FB Card and permitted to work the endorsements.</p>	ASAP	DPI	DPI to investigate the implementation of a fishing licence test.

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	<p>2. It was proposed that following commencement of the SMPs that all licences will be aligned to expire after each financial year (i.e. June 30). The Committee also supported the proposed fishing boat licences and fisheries management invoices (see agenda).</p> <p>Overall, the Committee was supportive of the tabled draft share management plan contents and proposed supporting amendments to the Fisheries Management (General) Regulation.</p>			
6. MPA	<p>A Marine Parks update was given by Ms Veronica Le Nevez - Marine Parks Policy Officer.</p> <p>Zoning plans were discussed for individual estuaries within the Batemans Bay Marine Park (BBMP). It is planned that the zoning plan legislation will be implemented by the end of 2006, once public submissions are received and reviewed.</p> <p>Commercial representatives provided comments and outlined their concern that no sanctuary zones have been placed in Recreational Fishing Havens, forcing a significant portion of the area currently open to commercial fishing to be classified as sanctuary zones.</p> <p>Industry representatives believe that Marine Parks are being used as a fisheries management tool and that the marine parks will sanitise simple management decisions on the basis of conservation and not sound fisheries management practice.</p>			

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	<p>The Region 3 representative queried the overall benefits of marine parks and asked if the MPA had collected information on this matter following the implementation of the Solitary Island Marine Park (SIMP), or if any data exists on the effects the park has had on the commercial fishing industry. The Committee was advised that several reports on the SIMP are available on the internet.</p> <p>Region 7 representative queried the possible partial compensation for the fishers remaining in the area. The MPA advised that there would be no partial compensation for fishers left in the industry.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by the Indigenous representative regarding the decision making on the BBMP and the effects it will have on Indigenous communities and fishers in Region 7. He stated that entire livelihoods and communities on the south coast are at risk due the BBMP. The Indigenous Representative proposed to organise a meeting with MPA to present the views of his constituents.</p> <p>The NCC representative queried: What is the definition of 'biodiversity'? What experimental protocols are used to evaluate the effects on biodiversity of the different zones? Who is undertaking the research? Where are the experimental results published?</p> <p>The Committee was advised that there is no standard definition of biodiversity and that habitats have been used as</p>	ASAP	Indigenous Rep	Indigenous rep to organise meeting with MPA to outline his concerns.

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	<p>surrogates. The research plan for evaluating Marine Parks is on the MPA website and is being undertaken by the Senior Research Scientist for the MPA. There are several peer-reviewed papers in the scientific literature and Departmental reports. The public information available on NSW MPs is located on the MPA website.</p> <p>The Region 6 representative proposed that the Chairperson write to the Minister regarding the marine park process, including placing sanctuary zones in certain RFHs, removal of other restrictions on commercial fishers and affects on the commercial fishers. Supported by indigenous representative.</p> <p>The Chairperson reiterated the Committee's disappointment with the marine park consultation process and the compensation arrangements for commercial fishers, and suggested that the implementation process for marine parks needs to be reviewed.</p>	ASAP	Chairperson	Chairperson to write to the Minister to reflect concerns of the EGMAC.

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7. a.	<p>The SIAC representative for the EGF gave a verbal update of the recent SIAC meetings. There was a request from Committee members to post final SIAC outcomes on the internet.</p> <p>Recently, SIAC has concentrated on the structural adjustment of industry through the Structural Adjustment Working Group (SAWG).</p> <p>The Catch and Effort Working Group (CEWG) also held its meeting for 2006. Issues raised at the CEWG regarded the status of Mulloway stock and the potential need for a recovery program.</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>Next meeting</p> <p>Next meeting</p>	<p>DPI</p> <p>DPI</p> <p>DPI</p>	<p>Request approval from SIAC to make final outcomes available for public information.</p> <p>DPI to provide a SAWG update to the Committee.</p> <p>DPI science and research to provide update to MAC on the Mulloway research.</p>
7. b.	<p>Research update. Dr Rotherham, research scientist, gave a verbal update on the fishery independent survey project.</p> <p>Compliance update. A verbal update was given by the Compliance representative. For the 05/06 fishing season, an overall compliance rate of 93% for the fishery has been achieved. More specifically, there were 1660 checks resulting in 34 cautions, 42 infringements and 14 prosecutions.</p>			
7. c.	<p>Region7 – The region 7 representative asked when will a review of RFHs occur? The Committee was advised that there is no review process for RFHs, however a policy regarding any possible amendments to RFHs is being prepared to ensure transparency and consistency.</p>			

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	<p>Region 4 (North) – The representative suggested that a review of permits should be undertaken and alternate arrangements included in the SMP where appropriate. It was also requested that some discretion with regard to fishing near seagrass beds be provided until the mapping process is finalised and a definition of “adjacent” provided.</p> <p>Region 2 – raised concerns regarding the “helpers” (unlicensed crew) permit and the increase in effort arising from the issuing of these permits. DPI advised the Committee that these permits would not be available once SMP commences, as nominations can be utilised.</p> <p>Appreciation for Barry Johnson’s commitment to the MAC process was expressed</p> <p>Region 4 (South) – Reiterated support for the tabled EGSMP and concerns with MPs.</p> <p>Region 3 – Region 3 fishers have been concerned MAC meetings are not held frequently enough and requested more frequent EGMAC meetings.</p> <p>Recreational Issues – The issue of compensation under the SMP process was raised. There is concern there is no clear outline about how compensation would be structured with regard to specific issues such as resource sharing and allocation e.g. Who should pay, when is it due, who has liability?</p>			

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	<p>It was stated that the recreational trust has \$3m that could be used for removal of commercial effort in targeted areas. There are a variety of challenges that have been identified with regard to how any such process could be implemented. There is still considerable concern with regard to the level of latent effort and how this could negate any benefits derived from a buyout.</p>			
8. a.	<p>Out of session agenda items.</p> <p>Noted by committee.</p>			
8. b.	<p>EG Code of Practice (EGCoP) review.</p> <p>1. The Committee questioned the reasons for the recommendation that guidelines for the use of cod ends in eel traps be included in the code of practice. The Committee recommended not to include a condition in the EGCoP stating that codends in eel traps be required under certain circumstances.</p> <p>2. Committee agreed that fishers should attempt to minimise noise associated with fishing operations, especially when fishing during general sleeping hours.</p>	ASAP	DPI	<p>Replace condition 34 of EGCoP with “Minimise noise associated with fishing operations especially between 10pm and 5am.”</p>

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8.c.	The Committee questioned the need for a cut off date for the registration of new flathead nets. The NSW DPI compliance representative outlined the reasons for the proposed cut off date for flathead net replacement. The Committee recommended that no cut off date for new flathead net and replacement overnight net registrations be implemented.			
8.d.	Prawn seining in the two rivers adjoining Watson Taylors Lakes. DPI does not support the proposal to allow prawn seining in additional rivers; however there may be scope to review arrangements for prawning in the future.	Following research completion.	DPI	DPI to review request pending research results.
8.e.	Proposal to authorise unlicensed crew for prawn hauling operations in the Richmond River. Implementation of the EGSMP will allow for nomination of FB's. The Department advised that it does not support unlicensed fishers conducting commercial fishing operations.			
17.	The Chairperson gave a verbal summary of the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Meeting Close – 3:15 pm.			