

**Draft Outcomes of the Estuary Prawn Trawl MAC meeting held on the 26th of November 2009.**

Agenda Item	Outcome
Welcome and Apologies	<p>Mr Pat Appleton (Chairperson deputising for Mr Brian Beer), opened the meeting and welcomed Committee members and observers to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Attendance:</b>  <i>Chairperson:</i>            Pat Appleton</p> <p><i>Management Advisory Committee Representatives:</i>            Mr Don Johnson, Ms Suzane Hamilton, Mr Rolf Norington, Mr Malcolm Poole, Ms Anissa Lawrence, Ms Fiona Hill.</p> <p><i>Observers:</i>            Mr John Harrison, Mr Geoff Rose, Mrs Mary Howard, Mr Jim Drinkwater, Ms Carla Ganassin, Mr Doug Ferrell, Mr Warren Winter, Dr Steve Montgomery, Mr Andrew Goulstone, Ms Jackie Gerard, Mr Peter Brown, Mr Chris Colageras, Ms Sharon Molloy.</p> <p><i>Apologies:</i>            Mr Brian Beer, Mr Gary Howard.</p> <p><b>Meeting commenced: 9:30AM</b></p>
Agreement on agenda	Agenda agreed.
Confirmation of draft minutes	<p>Outcomes from previous meeting approved.</p> <p><b>Action</b> – I&amp;I NSW to replace the draft outcomes on the I&amp;I NSW website with the final outcomes.</p>
Correspondence sent and received	Correspondence received and sent was noted.
Business arising from previous minutes	List of actions noted and updated.
Updates	The Committee noted the updates provided from I&I NSW Management, Research and Compliance.

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	<p>The MAC discussed the issue of prawn counts and how they will be managed in the future. It was noted that the option for industry to instigate voluntary management arrangements would be more cost effective than Departmental intervention.</p> <p>The Hawkesbury River representative suggested that permits were not the best option to provide for the use of diamond-mesh codends in the lower part of the Hawkesbury considering the outcomes of the research undertaken by I&amp;I NSW. The Committee noted that there is currently a proposal to amend the <i>Fisheries Management (Estuary Prawn Trawl Share Management Plan) Regulation 2006</i>.</p> <p>The Committee noted and commended a good compliance rate.</p> <p><b>Action</b> – I&amp;I NSW to provide the compliance tables associated with the graphs included in the Agenda.</p> <p>I&amp;I NSW Research provided an update on the outcomes of the FRDC research project on the growth and mortality of school prawns. There was considerable discussion on the suggestion of a possibility of short-term recruitment overfishing during flood events, with general opposition being voiced by industry MAC representatives and observers.</p> <p><b>Action</b> – I&amp;I NSW include school prawn biology, movement and behaviour as a specific agenda item for the next meeting, with appropriate I&amp;I NSW scientists in attendance to facilitate discussion.</p> <p>The Committee also noted an update on proposed research related to cephalopods and pipis and noted the workshop being undertaken in QLD relating to female mud crabs.</p>
Industry Reform Program for NSW commercial fisheries.	<p>I&amp;I NSW reviewed key points that have arisen during the recent consultation process on the Industry Reform Program for NSW Commercial Fisheries and sought the Committee's views on options for linking shares to tradeable units and on SIAC's recommendation for a \$500 Industry contribution for an exit grant scheme. The Committee discussed potential strategies that could assist to restructure the fishery, including exit grants and linking shares to tradeable units e.g. gear. The MAC noted that the Hunter River and Hawkesbury River representatives, following consultation with fishers in their region, did not believe that there was any current need to link shares to tradeable units. Importantly, the MAC noted that making tools available to provide for linking shares to effort or catch did not mean it had to be implemented in all sectors of all fisheries.</p> <p>The Committee supported an exit grant scheme, particularly if matched with government funding. However, industry representatives advised they could not provide a clear position on the exit grant without first consulting with fishers in their region. Further, there was general support that if an exit grant was introduced for the EPT fishery, it should be on a share class basis.</p>

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	<b>Action</b> – Industry to consult with fishers regarding Industry contribution for an exit grant scheme.
Habitat makes fish happen: loss of habitat along NSW estuaries.	<p>The Committee noted a presentation by I&amp;I NSW Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Unit on habitat loss and the estimated cost and impacts on fisheries. Due to considerable interest in the topics covered, it was agreed that the presentation would be made available to MAC members on request.</p> <p><b>Action</b> – Interested parties to contact Ms Molloy: <a href="mailto:Sharon.Molloy@industry.nsw.gov.au">Sharon.Molloy@industry.nsw.gov.au</a> to obtain information presented.</p>
FishOnline System	The Committee noted a presentation by I&I NSW on the Systems Reform Project and the introduction of the FishOnline program. The MAC generally supported online services being offered as an option and there was a strong support for the paper-based system to remain as an option.
Infrastructure in the Hawkesbury River EPT Fishery and its impact upon Fishery access.	<p>The Committee noted a presentation by Mr Geoff Rose (Hawkesbury River EPT fisher) regarding the installation of moorings and pontoons in the Hawkesbury River and the impact this is having on the available fishing area. I&amp;I NSW advised the Committee that it does not have the legislative power to prevent these installations but does play an advisory role in the approvals process. It was also noted that NSW Maritime has the responsibility for assessing and approving swing moorings. It was noted that this was not a significant issue in the Clarence River because the PFA is closely engaged with local NSW Maritime and Council authorities and is directly consulted on any mooring proposals that might affect commercial fishing.</p> <p><b>Action</b> - I&amp;I NSW to liaise with NSW Maritime Authority regarding consultation with EPT fishers during any application assessment process.</p>
Transferability of shareholdings	The Committee noted a presentation from Ms Suzane Hamilton (Hunter River MAC representative) regarding the issue of current transfer rules. The Committee noted that the Department consulted on share trading prior to the commencement of share management and that the specific example provided by Ms Hamilton could not be addressed under the current transfer rules. The Department took the concerns related to share trading on notice.
FRDC Project – Empowering Industry Research, Development and Extension.	The Committee noted the presentation from Mr Chris Calogeras regarding the national consultation process currently being undertaken. He invited MAC members and observers to become involved in the RD&E process.

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Age, growth and maturity of cuttlefish and octopus species.	<p>The Committee noted a presentation from I&amp;I NSW regarding the proposed research.</p> <p>It was moved that the MAC not support the research as it is more relevant to the Ocean Trawl Fishery. MAC support should be reserved for research more relevant to the EPT fishery.</p>
Other Business	<p>The Clarence River MAC representative, Mr Don Johnson, discussed the issue of retention of bycatch species as byproduct in the Clarence River EPT fishery. The Committee noted that the target and byproduct species were defined and assessed during the EIS process and when the Fishery Management Strategies were developed. The MAC also noted that additional species may be required to go through an environmental impact assessment process under the EP&amp;A Act prior to being approved as a byproduct species. The importance of refining BRDs was also discussed.</p> <p>The Committee noted an update by Mr John Harrison (PFA) regarding the Clarence Valley Council's Management Plan for Lake Wooloweyah and the issues surrounding several draft action items that Council wished to include in the final plan. The Committee noted that Estuary Management Committees have been established by various local councils, most of which do not have commercial fishing representatives. As such it was recommended that fishers are involved in the committees to ensure a balanced representation from all sectors.</p> <p>The Committee discussed industry concerns with the growth overfishing classification, particularly in relation to school prawns. The Hunter River representative advised that the Resource Assessment Review Committee had recently changed their assessment from 'growth overfished' to 'fully fished'. The Department advised that, while potentially misleading to the layperson, the term "growth overfishing" is a well recognised international term that has been used for many decades, and as such would be difficult to change.</p>
Chairperson summary and next meeting date	<p>The Chairperson thanked all members and observers for their attendance and contributions to discussions during the meeting and advised that the date for the next meeting would be determined out of session. Further to this, the Chairperson reminded members of the need for further consideration and input into some items.</p>