



Commercial Fishing NSW Advisory Council (COMMFISH NSW AC)

Dear Minister

Thank you for your response to my letter dated the 17 August 2023 in relation to Offshore Wind Farms, providing your support to prioritise further research at a State level to assess the impacts on the NSW commercial fishing industry.

The Commercial Fishing NSW Advisory Council (CommFish NSW) held its 27th meeting in Sydney on the 24th and 25th October 2023. On the first day CommFish attended a joint session with Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW) where the committees received a presentation from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on the declaration and application process for the Illawarra and Hunter Offshore Wind Farm developments.

Both advisory councils shared their concerns on potential impacts the wind farms could have on the marine ecosystem and consequently on commercial and recreational fishing productivity and access. Both councils have agreed to work together and share information to assist in developing advice to ensuring the health and productivity of the natural resource is foremost in consideration along with access security for both sectors.

The Council also received a presentation on the modernisation of the Commercial Fisheries online catch reporting and business management application. Council members were impressed with the modernisation initiative and in particular the engagement with commercial fishers to ensure the program is fit for purpose. It is foreseen that the output of this program will generate many benefits for the management of the marine resource through improved information. This will benefit both the commercial sector and other marine resource stakeholders. Council members are keen to see the delays in the re-hosting of the suite of applications for FishOnline resolved, which will require Department of Planning and Environment to work proactively with NSW DPI Fisheries.

CommFish reviewed progress of the NSW Sustainable Commercial Fishery Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The committee were impressed with the progress DPI Fisheries has made towards delivering the strategy. An action from the strategy raised by members was the review of fish receiver program to assist local NSW seafood small business operators diversify their market and build connections with local consumers.

The deregulation of fish marketing requirements in 1996 resulted in the introduction of two 'permit' type requirements which apply to either commercial fishers wishing to sell their catch direct to consumers or apply to businesses wishing to purchase seafood direct from commercial fishers. The cost burdens of these requirements are having a negative impact on supply chains and business operations for commercial fishers.

CommFish NSW

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There is potential for the Fresh Food Advocate, once appointed, to review the merits of the current arrangements. In the interim, the Council request that the fees (which are currently \$1200 per annum for a commercial fisher and \$3900 for a seafood business) be reviewed and reflected as a transactional fee, similar to commercial fishing licences. The committee supports progress of this action.

I would like to recognise those members whose term are due to expire and current members to thank them for the expertise and advice they have provided on behalf of all the commercial industry and for the countless hours they have invested into CommFish.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Richey AM, Chairman

CommFish NSW