

# Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee Outcomes, 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting St George Rowing Club Wolli Creek

18 September 2014

## Attendees

Bruce Schumacher (chair), Geoff Shelton (Region 4), Lionel Jones (Region 5), Stuart Rhodes. John Paton (Region 6a), Ann Garard (Region 7), Malcolm Poole (RFA), John Burgess (ANSA), Lisa Terry (Region 2), Cameron Westaway for Peter Turnell (DPI), Adrian Wayne for John Featherstone.

## 1. Chairs introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

## 2. Apologies

John Featherstone (Region 3), David Jones (gamefishing), Greg Liddell (Region 8).

## 3. Confirmation of outcomes from previous RFSTEC meeting

The draft outcomes of the 41st RFSTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting with the following amendment: The Trust application titled: Development of a Strategic Research Plan for the Saltwater Recreational Fishing Sector of NSW was deferred for out of session consideration.

## 4. Action items from previous meetings

The Committee noted the progress on action items from the previous meeting.

## 5. Status of the Trust Fund

The status of the Saltwater Trust was presented. Licence revenue generated for the Recreational Fishing Trusts for the 2013/14 financial year totalled \$15.6 Million. DPI advised that the number of electronic licence sales continues to increase with a corresponding decrease in manual methods, such as licence agents. Three day recreational fishing licence sales were the most popular form of licence in 2013/14 year comprising around 42% of sales.

*Action item* – RFSTEC requests display of statistics, such as recreational licence numbers and additional financial information, on the DPI website.

## 6. Trust funding projects and applications

Tailor research program: DPI advised that Australian Research Linkage funding would be sought to leverage additional funding for the project. This project variation was supported by the Committee.

NSW Fish Habitat Partnership, Working together for healthy fish habitat: DPI advised that the NSW Fish Habitat Partnership has sought a project variation to the proposed funding agreement, which involved access to funds prior to other funding partners' contributions being secured. This would greatly assist with securing funds from those other proposed partners. Malcolm Poole and John Burgess declared a conflict of interest. The Chair determined there was no direct pecuniary interests and members were allowed to remain for further discussion. The Committee supported the project variation conditional on: 1) the

Recreational Fishing Trust logo be incorporated into the NSW Fish Habitat Partnership advertising and 2) that securing additional funding from other funding partners be included into the project milestones in the funding agreement.

The committee reviewed new Saltwater and joint Freshwater/Saltwater Trust grant applications (large and small grants). Funding recommendations with respect to each project will be forwarded to ACoRF for subsequent recommendations to the Minister for consideration.

## 7. Development of new Recreational Fishing Trust Investment Plan

The current Recreational Fishing Trust Investment Plan finishes at the end of this financial year. The Minister has endorsed the development of a new investment plan. To assist in the development of the new Investment Plan DPI has undertaken a number of review initiatives, including:

1. ongoing independent financial audits of Trust processes
2. RFT Planning Workshop held in August 2012
3. DPI Recreational Fishing Licence Fee Survey May 2013

Outcomes of the survey indicated that all trust funded activities (Recreational fishing education, aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation, recreational fishing enhancement programs, research on fish and recreational fishing, fishing access and facilities and enforcement of fishing rules) were considered as being of benefit to recreational fishing.

4. July 2014 risk audit of Trust projects funded in the current Investment Plan.

It is proposed that a three year investment plan be developed for the 2015/16-2017/18 period allowing for greater flexibility and to improve ability to account for emerging priorities.

*Action item* - RFSTEC requests that DPI publish outcomes of the licence fee survey.

*Action item* - Potential conflicts of interest to be a standard agenda item.

RFSTEC acknowledged that out of session application review provides challenges with assessment. It was recommended that out of session review be restricted to urgent items only and be facilitated by teleconference, where possible. Moved John Paton, Seconded Malcolm Poole, Carried.

## 8. Recreational fishing research priorities

As part of the process to develop a recreational fishing stakeholder research priority list, members identified potential priorities for inclusion in the list across a range of areas relevant to recreational fishing, including threats to fishery resources, sustainable and quality recreational fishing, fishery enhancement and fish habitat improvement as well as social and economic aspects. Priorities from RFFTEC, RFSTEC, ACoRF and MERCMAC will be collated into a consolidated list and be presented to RFSTEC.

## 9. Mulloway angler research program update

An update was provided on the NSW Research Angler Program (NSW RAP), which encourages recreational fishers to contribute biological information to research by donating the frame, head or a single otolith from fish they catch for ageing purposes. This biological data is used to assess the health of fish stocks. Since commencement of the program in September 2013, over 250 recreational fishers have donated over 400 frames from mulloway (up to 164 cm in length). A network of 27 tackleshop drop-off points has been established between Tweed Heads and Bermagui. Recently, the NSW RAP has been expanded to include a tagging component (in collaboration with ANSA NSW) to provide information on movements, growth, post-release survival and tag retention. A Keen Angler Diary component aimed at improving estimates of the recreational mulloway catch (including released fish) has also been implemented.

## 10. Compliance update

An update on recent fisheries compliance activities was provided. Details of some significant apprehensions for 2013-2014 included:

- Hat Head: Four men were issued penalty notices totalling \$1200 for spearfishing with the aid of lights in closed waters. Fish and spears were seized.

- Wallis Lake: A man was found in possession of 212 blue swimmer crabs, 20 mud crabs and a number of fin fish. A prosecution is pending for the matter.
- Sydney: Four men were fined \$500 each for possessing prohibited size yellowtail kingfish.
- Sydney: An operation resulted in the seizure of more than 3000 invertebrates and almost \$15,000 in penalty notices being issued.

Significant Court Outcomes included:

#### Maclean Local Court

- Spearing NSW's official state fish resulted in fines and professional costs of \$3,660 plus additional court costs after a man was convicted for killing six blue groper

#### Milton Local Court

- The skipper of a South Coast based trawler was fined \$4,000 plus placed on a good behaviour bond by Milton Local Court for selling prohibited size fish.

#### Moruya Local Court

- A 54 year-old man was observed by fisheries officers in April 2013 setting a 68 metre meshing net in the Tuross River, which is a declared a recreational fishing haven. He was convicted of each charge, placed on a 12 month good behaviour bond, fined \$500 and had his boat and motor, worth \$3,500 forfeited to the Crown.

#### Kiama Local Court

- Two men were convicted of abalone theft, fined \$4,000 each and placed on good behaviour bonds after being caught stealing 185 abalone.

#### Sutherland Local Court

- A Sydney man attempting to sell illegal fishing gear online was fined and placed on a 12 month good behaviour bond.
- Following an anonymous report from the public officers discovered the man had listed the illegal nets for sale on a popular online sales website
- The man was convicted, fined a total of \$2,000 and placed on a good behaviour bond for the next 12 months.

## 11. Fisheries Enhancement update

Four new FADs have been approved for the next season starting December 2014. These include: Ulladulla, Shellharbour, Nambucca and Yamba. The Shoalhaven Artificial Reef contract for fabrication and installation has been awarded and is due to be deployed later this year. The reef will be located approximately 4.3km off Shoalhaven heads and will consist of a series of 20 large cement modules. A similar design will be used for the development of two new offshore artificial reefs off Botany. In addition a preliminary site has been identified for the development of an artificial reef off Port Macquarie.

## 12. General Business

*Action item:* RFSTEC requested an update on outstanding licence agent debt.

## 13. Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

## Action items from previous meetings

Action	Responsibility	Status
DPI to distribute recreational fishing guides to expenditure committee members.	DPI	Completed
RFSTEC recommends that ACoRF write to the Minister to request a review of the Fisheries Scientific Committee process in terms of their jurisdiction over issues in Commonwealth waters.	ACoRF	To be discussed at next ACoRF meeting

The Chair write to the various parties involved in the Laggars Point boat ramp project congratulating them on the timely and successful completion of the project.	RFSTEC	Completed
RFSTEC to submit any specific coastal stakeholder research priorities by the next RFSTEC meeting.	RFSTEC	Completed
New Get Hooked manual to be sent to committee members.	DPI	Completed
RFSTEC write to Mr Stan Konstantaras, ANSA (NSW) to congratulate ANSA on their efforts to establish two offshore reef and fishing platform projects in the Botany Bay area.	RFSTEC	Completed

### Action items from this meeting

Action	Responsibility	Status
RFSTEC requests display of statistics, such as recreational licence numbers and additional financial information, on the DPI website.	DPI	Pending
RFSTEC requests that DPI publish outcomes of the licence fee survey.	DPI	Pending
Potential conflicts of interest to be a standard agenda item	DPI	To be included in future agendas
Out of session application review be restricted to urgent items only and be facilitated by teleconference, where possible.	RFSTEC	To be adopted in future assessment processes
RFSTEC requested an update on outstanding licence agent debt.	DPI	Pending

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (November 2014). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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**Table 1: Summary of new Saltwater Trust grant applications recommended for funding by RFSTEC**

Project Title and Summary	Organisation	2014/15
<b>Platform: Recreational fishing education</b>		
<p><b>Fishing 4 Therapy – Recreational fishing workshops for the physically and mentally disabled (extension following completion of phase 1)</b></p> <p>Recreational fishing therapy workshops provide an opportunity for those suffering disabilities to benefit from the therapy of throwing a line. These workshops are held in Sydney’s Centennial Park, allowing the workshop attendees to fish for carp from the pond viewing platform, adapted to suit people using wheelchairs and frames. Malcolm Poole and John Burgess declared a conflict of interest and left the room during consideration. SUPPORTED - Moved John Paton, Seconded Lisa Terry, Carried.</p>	<p>Australian National Sportfishing Association – NSW Branch</p>	<p>\$64,500</p>
<p><b>Pre proposal - Improving consultation and service delivery for recreational fishers in NSW</b></p> <p>The RFA is committed to engaging in policy discussions, decision making and negotiations with government to ensure effective recreational fisher representation. Typically recreational fishing organisations have mostly done this on a volunteer basis which has hindered the effectiveness of this representation and consultation. RFA proposes to employ a dedicated paid Executive Officer to pursue and manage key issues for the organisation and engage and negotiate with key stakeholders and government on key recreational fishing issues for the benefit of recreational fishers. The RFA recognises that creation of an EO carries with it a responsibility to represent not just RFA members, but also the interests of all fishers in NSW.</p> <p>RFA members declared a conflict of interest and left the room during consideration. The committee acknowledged the need for an executive officer (managed by a major recreational fishing organisation/group recognised by government to represent recreational fishers and play a role in broader stakeholder consultation (government and non-government). It was important that the executive officer (and associated major recreational fishing organisation/group) be recognised by other stakeholders. It was therefore recognised that the appointment process should be facilitated by a competitive tender process involving rigorous tender specifications and be subject to performance monitoring. A tender panel should involve an independent stakeholder and DPI representatives.</p> <p>RFSTEC provided in principle support for the pre-proposal, subject to the processes outlined above. SUPPORTED – Moved John Paton, Seconded Lisa Terry, Carried.</p>	<p>Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW (RFA)</p>	<p>\$119,000 SW \$51,000 FW</p>
<b>Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing</b>		
<p><b>How many species of blood worms are there in NSW? and does this matter?</b></p> <p>Determine the number of species of blood worms along the NSW coast which are used as bait by recreational fishers, to facilitate the development of appropriate management plans.</p> <p>SUPPORTED – Moved John Paton, Seconded Malcolm Poole, Carried.</p>	<p>Australian Museum</p>	<p>\$20,578</p>

**Table 2: Summary of new Saltwater Trust grant applications NOT recommended for funding by RFSTEC**

Project Title and Summary	Organisation	2014/15
<i>Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation</i>		
<p><b>“Seal The Loop” – NSW</b></p> <p>Dolphin Marine Magic has run a pilot “Seal The Loop” program to collect waste fishing line in Coffs Harbour since 2013 with great success and is looking to expand the program throughout coastal council areas in the northern half of NSW. This funding application will provide funding for a further 40 bins as giveaways to supplement a broader roll out of bins to north coast councils and community groups.</p> <p>NOT SUPPORTED – Moved Malcolm Poole, Seconded John Burgess, Carried.</p>	<p>C.H.A.R.T (Coffs Harbour Animal Rescue Trust)/Pet Porpoise Pool Pty Ltd (trading as Dolphin Marine Magic)</p>	<p>\$20,000</p>
<i>Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing</i>		
<p><b>Using insights from the past to better understand the status of New South Wales snapper</b></p> <p>Archival data and fisher knowledge will be used to inform fisheries scientists, fishing bodies and the public about the history, development and status of the NSW Snapper fishery.</p> <p>NOT SUPPORTED – Moved John Paton, Seconded Malcolm Poole, Carried.</p>	<p>The University of Queensland</p>	<p>\$58,600</p>