



**Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory
Council**

Minutes

**Meeting 23, 17 February 2022
Noah's on the Beach, Newcastle**

Members Present	Johann Bell Dave Rae Paul Lennon Grahame Williams OAM Justin Duggan Vicki Lear Jo Starling Matt Hansen Karl Mathers Steven Samuels Ray Tang Vic Levett Matt Tripet Peter Turnell	Independent Chair Region 1 – Mid and Far North Coast Region 2 – Lower North Coast Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast Region 4 – Illawarra Region 5 – South Coast Region 6 – North West Inland Region 7 – South West Inland Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Charter Fishing Social benefits of recreational fishing Nominee of the Secretary - DPI representative
Apologies	Ian Puckeridge	Spear Fishing

1) Welcome, introductions and housekeeping

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members to the 23rd meeting of RFNSW.
- The Chair welcomed the Hon. Dugald Saunders, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales who provided a warm introduction to the Council following his appointment to Cabinet.

2) Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested that members declare any changes or additions to the Register of Interests provided in the agenda.
- Jo Starling declared she was the applicant in a revised Recreational Fishing Trust application titled: Women's Recreational Fishing League Seed Funding.
- Vicki Lear declared some voluntary involvement in the revised Recreational Fishing Trust application titled: Women's Recreational Fishing League Seed Funding.
- Justin Duggan declared he is a founding member of the Sydney Harbour Chapter of OzFish.
- Karl Mathers declared a potential interest in any future tender opportunities associated with the Recreational Fishing Trust application titled: Review and update the NSW Trout Strategy and design a framework for the development of management strategies for other key NSW freshwater sportfish.
- DPI updated the Register of Interests accordingly.

3) Agreement on the agenda, adoption of previous meeting record, proposed future meeting schedule

NOTED:

- RFNSW members agreed on the agenda for the meeting.
- The outcomes of the 22nd meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- Next meeting is proposed for 17 and 18 May 2022 in Sydney.

4) Review of action items from Meeting 22 (23 November 2021)

NOTED:

- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.

5) Session with the Hon. Dugald Saunders, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales

NOTED:

- Members welcomed the Minister to the meeting and provided a brief introduction on their role within the Council.
- The Minister indicated that he looked forward to working closely with RFNSW members and to receiving their advice on recreational fishing matters.
- The Minister expressed his desire to further enhance recreational fishing opportunities in NSW and expressed a keen interest in promoting greater participation in recreational fishing.
- The Minister was also supportive of the many programs currently underway that boost recreational fishing.
- The Council took the opportunity to highlight a number of key recreational fishing priority areas with the Minister and thanked him for making time to meet with the Council so quickly after his appointment to Cabinet.

<p>ACTION: DPI to extend an invitation to the Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW to all upcoming meetings of RFNSW.</p>
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6) Deputy Director General Update

NOTED:

- Mr Sean Sloan informed Council about the progress of various issues within DPI, including the development of Harvest Strategies. He advised that the Trawl Whiting Harvest Strategy had recently been finalised and the other three strategies were underway – Lobster, Spanner Crab and Mulloway.
- Mr Sloan also acknowledged Council's involvement in the development of the Recreational Fishing Strategy – Driving Recreational Fishing Forward and summarised the progress of the Fisheries Co-Management Policy and the Draft National Fisheries Plan to be released this year.

7) Draft Hastings/Tweed Cultural Fishing Local Management Plans

NOTED:

- DPI provided Council with an overview of an initiative between Hastings and Tweed Aboriginal communities and DPI to develop Local Management Plans (LMP) for Aboriginal cultural fishing.
- It was noted that the LMP trial seeks to inform the best way to protect and promote Aboriginal cultural fishing access going forward and provide an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to be involved in planning and self-determination.
- Development of the trial Hastings Aboriginal Cultural Fishing Local Management Plan is underway and the Hastings Aboriginal community is working closely with DPI to implement this two-year trial and to monitor and evaluate the outcomes.
- For information of members.

8) Harvest Strategy update

NOTED:

- It was noted that a brief update on the progress of Harvest Strategies was provided by the Deputy Director General in his update.
- In addition, DPI provided an update on the Lobster Harvest Strategy, which included among other features: i) development of decision rules designed to maintain stocks at, or close to, the target level; and ii) increasing safeguards to support ongoing sustainability and return to target levels should trigger or limit reference points be breached due to issues including fishing mortality, data uncertainty and unforeseen environmental impacts on the stock.
- RFNSW was supportive of the proposed draft decision rule framework for lobster in relation to recreational fishing, which links the recreational bag limit to the status of the stock.

9) Recreational Fishing Trust matters – Expenditure advice from RFSTEC and RFFTEC

NOTED:

- Council reviewed advice from the Recreational Fishing Trust Expenditure Committees regarding Saltwater and Freshwater Trust applications made to the Recreational Fishing Trust. This review included in-depth discussion related to two funding applications. Alternative partnership pathways were investigated and proposed for these two applications, which Council thought would result in extended beneficial outcomes for recreational fishing. Council provided advice on all applications for passing on to the Minister for his consideration.

10) Promotion of the use of more environmentally responsible crab traps and nets

NOTED:

- DPI presented to Council a proposal to roll-out a state-wide crab gear exchange program to promote the use of more environmentally responsible traps and nets.
- It was noted that witch's hats and rectangular crab traps continue to represent a significant risk to turtles in NSW.
- It was also noted that the successful Port Stephens trial in 2016, which required modifications to witch's hats and rectangular traps, had significantly reduced interaction with turtles.
- The gear exchange program can be coupled with a gradual phase-in of modification requirements for witch's hats and rectangular traps.
- The Council supported the above approach and also recommended enhanced communication about this important issue.

11) Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief update on the Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program.
- On 17 December 2021, the NSW Government invited local Councils to apply for funding grants under the Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program. The \$4 million funding round will provide grants to local Councils for the purpose of upgrading and developing boat ramps, fish cleaning stations, toilet blocks or any infrastructure/facility (including improved access arrangements) directly associated with recreational fishing, boating and camping.
- The program will boost recreational fishing amenities throughout the state and provide considerable benefits to the recreational fishing industry and economy.

ACTION: DPI to provide a further update on the Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program at Meeting 24
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12) Inland Fisheries update

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief update on the progress of the re-development of the Gaden Trout Hatchery,

including the design and tender process for the new building and tourist/education centre; and the construction of the new Narrandera Fisheries Centre hatchery.

- DPI also informed Council about the record breaking production of Murray Cod at Narrandera for the 2021/22 season, with 1.27 million Murray Cod produced. This record eclipsed the previous record of 780,000 fingerlings in 2006/07.

ACTIN: On behalf of the Council, DPI to extend its congratulations to the hatchery team involved in the record production of Murray Cod for the 2021/22 season.

13) Charter fishing gemfish boat limit

NOTED:

- DPI advised that drop lining for deep-sea species is a unique charter fishing operation, where clientele have the opportunity to catch fish that would otherwise be inaccessible to them. Charter fishing operators must adhere to general recreational fishing rules and are therefore restricted to a bag limit of 2, and boat limit of 10, for Gemfish.
- It was noted that the boat limit occasionally constrains charter operations, particularly for charter boats with large client capacity exceeding 10 people. This has created some instances where clients on large-capacity boats miss out on taking a Gemfish home after the completion of their trip.
- RFNSW considered a potential proposal to increase the boat limit of Gemfish to 20 for Charter fishing boats only.
- Given the relatively low targeting of Gemfish by NSW Charter fishing operators, it was considered the proposal would have minimal impact on the Gemfish resource whilst providing for increased clientele satisfaction onboard deep-sea charter operations. On this basis, Council was supportive of a proposal to run an initial trial of a bag limit of 20 Gemfish for Charter fishing boats

14) Cold Water pollution from NSW impoundments

NOTED

- Matt Gordos from DPI made a presentation on Cold Water Pollution (CWP) stemming from impoundments and the associated impacts on downstream native fish populations and fish habitats.
- The presentation emphasised there have been some challenges with existing technology aimed at mitigating CWP impacts. For example, a trial of a temperature control curtain in Lake Burrendong has had limited success due to being offline for extended periods after large rainfall events.
- As an alternative option, DPI is developing a proposal to investigate 'Bubble Plume' technology to potentially mitigate CWP in some trial impoundments.
- DPI will keep RFNSW updated on the proposal.

ACTION: DPI to extend an invitation to Mr Matt Gordos to update Council on the progress and associated requirements of establishing a showcase Bubble Plume system.

15) Consultation on Proposed Regulatory Amendments

NOTED:

- DPI updated the Council on a series of proposed compliance and enforcement amendments to the Fisheries Management (General) Regulation (2019).
- These proposed amendments target illegal fishing and trafficking and aim to increase protection of shared fisheries resources.
- The Council supported the proposed amendments.

16) General Business

a) Fishing lures to promote responsible fishing in inland NSW

NOTED:

- Council member Matt Hansen requested an update on the above project which was aimed at recognising and acknowledging responsible fishing behaviour in the inland. DPI advised the first phase of the program had been successfully completed and it was intended to continue the project into the future.

b) Recreational fishing access in the Eurobodalla region

NOTED:

- It was noted that DPI had approached the Eurobodalla Shire Council about increased fishing opportunities in the region, including in impoundments, and that discussions were continuing. DPI advised it will keep Council updated on this issue.

c) Parramatta fish kill

NOTED:

- At the meeting, DPI provided an update from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) who were investigating the recent fish kill in the Parramatta River.
- It was noted that the river condition, combined with repeated heavy rain, large tidal currents, and increased amounts of organic matter, such as leaves and grass, in the river had reduced the dissolved oxygen available to aquatic life, resulting in the fish kill.
- EPA laboratory data confirmed oxygen levels were critically low, especially near the bottom of the river. Water sampling results did not detect any chemical or common organic contaminants that could cause a fish kill, and indicated that when the water was re-oxygenated, it was not toxic.

MEETING CLOSED