



Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW)

Chair's Summary (Meeting 15 – August 2020)

The 15th meeting of RFNSW was held by videoconference on 19 August 2020 from 9:30 to 13:00 due to the ongoing COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

The key outcomes from discussions of the agenda items are given below.

Mulloway recovery program. Members were updated about the formation and operation of a sub-group within RFNSW on “Improving Fish Stocks”, set up to investigate and develop additional initiatives and potential management actions to help ensure the recovery of Mulloway and other species of major interest to recreational fishers. Council recommended CommFish also considers establishing an equivalent sub-group, to meet jointly with the one from RFNSW to progress and monitor the Mulloway recovery programme in the first instance. RFNSW also agreed that there would be great benefit in DPI producing a user-friendly publication about the Mulloway recovery programme that could be disseminated online, and in print.

Ministerial Fish Passage Taskforce. Council received a comprehensive presentation on the NSW Fish Passage Strategy from DPI, and acknowledged the substantial progress being made to implement the Strategy. Council also received an update on Murray Darling Basin issues, and the progress being made to ensure that sufficient flow remains in the Macquarie River to support adequate fish habitat during finalisation of arrangements to amend regulations for the Orange Pipeline.

Crown Lands Draft State Strategic Plan review. Professor Richard Bush, Crown Land Commissioner, invited RFNSW to make a submission to The Crown Lands Draft State Strategic Plan. Council noted that the Crown land reserves and Crown road network provide vital access to the State's waterways, enabling the people of NSW to participate in fishing activities. RFNSW members with relevant expertise agreed to draft a submission, calling for retention of maximum public access to waterways in the Strategy.

NSW Fisheries draft Harvest Strategy policy and guidelines. On 30 July 2020, RFNSW held an ‘out of session’ meeting to provide an opportunity for members to review the draft Harvest Strategy policy and guidelines. During the session, RFNSW supported the draft Harvest Strategy policy and produced a draft list of priority species for subsequent development of harvest strategies. The priority species list was ratified at the 15th RFNSW meeting and an additional three species were added to the list. The final list, in order of priority, is: Mulloway, Kingfish, Snapper, Bream, Dusky Flathead, Tailor, Bonito and Teraglin.

Discussion on Australian Salmon stock levels in Sydney/Central Coast. Council member Justin Duggan led discussion on concerns over Australian Salmon stock levels in the Sydney/Central coast area and elsewhere during the current winter season, and in recent years. Considering that Australian Salmon is a highly-valued recreational species, the Chair requested that DPI provide a detailed presentation to Council on the fishery and stock status of this species at the next meeting.

Marine Estate. DPI provided an update on the marine park management planning process, which provides for an evidence-based planning approach for the State's marine parks. This will include the development of new 10-year management plans. There was discussion on the current process, which has already commenced for the Batemans Bay and Port Stephens-Great Lakes marine parks.

RFNSW has also been invited to provide comments to inform the review of the Marine Estate Management Act. Council recognised the importance of making a submission prior to the closing date. A sub group was formed to provide input to a submission from RFNSW.

Next RFNSW meeting.

The next meeting of the Advisory Council has been proposed for 12 and 13 October 2020.

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)
27 August 2020