



**Recreational Fishing NSW
Advisory Council
Minutes
Meeting 24, 17 and 18 May 2022
The Fullerton Hotel, Sydney**

Members Present	Johann Bell Dave Rae Paul Lennon Grahame Williams OAM Justin Duggan Vicki Lear Matt Hansen Karl Mathers Steven Samuels Ray Tang Vic Levett 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 6 – North West Inland Region 7 – South West Inland Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands Charter Fishing Nominee of the Secretary - DPI representative
Apologies	Ian Puckeridge Matthew Tripet	Spear Fishing (18 May only) Social benefits of recreational fishing

1) Welcome, introductions and housekeeping

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members to the 24th meeting of RFNSW.
- The Chair welcomed the Hon. Dugald Saunders, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales and Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director General, DPI who joined the meeting for a session to discuss current and emerging recreational fishing issues.

2) Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested that members declare any changes or additions to the Register of Interests provided in the agenda.

- Member Karl Mathers declared an interest in a DPI related project which is investigating facilities augmentation and fish production options to produce and supply additional salmonids from DPI's Gaden Trout Hatchery as part of the Snowy 2.0 project. Mr Mathers advised his consultancy, the Wedge Group, had been recently engaged by Snowy Hydro Ltd as a sub-contractor on the project.
- 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 23rd meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- Next meeting is proposed to be held in August 2022 in Sydney.

4) Review of action items from Meeting 23 (17 February 2022)

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:

- It was another valuable session with the Minister who joined the meeting via videoconference. The session provided the Council with the opportunity to discuss a number of current and emerging recreational fishing priority issues.
- The Minister updated the Council on a number of matters, including recent stakeholder engagement in relation to the management of Marine Parks and the proposed opening of the next round of Recreational Fishing Trust funding grants.

6) Harvest Strategy update

NOTED:

- DPI updated the Council on recent progress of Harvest Strategies in NSW. RFNSW was pleased to note the imminent completion of the Lobster Harvest Strategy. DPI commended the contribution of the Working Group members, which included representation from RFNSW.
- Council was also pleased to hear that the development of the Mulloway Harvest Strategy is progressing well with the Working Group meeting in April and June this year.
- A productive discussion was also held regarding additional management actions to support the recovery of Mulloway whilst the Harvest Strategy is being developed, including compliance actions, such as fin clipping; and enhancing data collection through real time data reporting by either virtual or physical tagging.

7) **Aboriginal Fishing Issues**

7a) **Draft Hastings Cultural Fishing Local Management Plans**

NOTE:

- During meeting 23, DPI provided Council with an overview of an initiative between Hastings Aboriginal communities and DPI to develop a Local Management Plan (LMP) for Aboriginal cultural fishing.
- Council members took the opportunity to debrief following last meeting's session.
- The Council considered it would be beneficial to write to the Chair of the Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council to advise about the current role and work of RFNSW and opportunities for a joint meeting in the future to discuss items of mutual interest.

ACTION: RFNSW to write an introductory letter to the Chair, AFAC introducing the Council and extending an invite for a future joint session meeting.

7b) **Aboriginal cultural fishing in Harvest Strategies**

NOTED:

- Council was advised that DPI has commissioned Fishwell Consulting to undertake a project to develop a framework for incorporating Aboriginal cultural fishing in Harvest Strategies.
- DPI advised the framework will determine how best to integrate cultural fishing objectives, data and performance indicators into Harvest Strategies that explicitly incorporate Aboriginal cultural fishing values.
- Members requested that Fishwell Consulting be invited to the next RFNSW Meeting to discuss capacity-building opportunities.

ACTION: DPI to invite Mr Ian Knuckey, Director, Fishwell Consulting to attend meeting 25 and to discuss capacity-building opportunities associated with Aboriginal cultural fishing and Harvest Strategies.

7c) **Update on Lord Howe Marine Park Management Plan**

NOTED:

- Following a request from the Spearfishing representative on the Council, DPI provided a brief update on the status of development of a new draft Plan of Management for Lord Howe Marine Park.
- DPI advised a draft management plan for the mainland marine park network has now been completed. The next phase is implementing the new management plan by reviewing management rules (regulations) in each marine park, including Lord Howe Island.
- Spearfishing access will be considered as part of the rules review for Lord Howe Island Marine Park and DPI will consult with RFNSW when the review is underway.

8) National Carp Control Program

NOTED:

- Following a request from members at Meeting 23, DPI provided a brief update on the status of the Program.
- An assessment of the feasibility of using Cyprinid herpesvirus 3 as a biological control agent for introduced common carp in Australia was delivered to the Australian Government in January 2020. Ongoing research designed to augment and cross-check previous scientific work is currently being completed, and will be integrated into the plan and provided to the Australian Government in 2022.

9) Game Fishing Tournaments and Shark Interactions

NOTED:

- Following previous community concerns regarding the weigh-in and discarding of large sharks at a Game Fishing tournament in late 2021 at Jervis Bay, DPI advised Council that they had been working with the NSW Game Fishing Association (GFA) to identify options to improve the environmental performance of game fishing tournaments in relation to Non-Table (Tiger and Blue) landed shark catches.
- This included potentially increasing the minimum weights for the various line classes, which would significantly reduce the number of Non-Table sharks weighed in at tournaments. The GFA advised that this proposal would be presented at their Annual General Meeting in July and a report would be provided to RFNSW on the outcome.
- The GFA also advised that they were not proposing any changes to current minimum weights for Table quality sharks.

ACTION: DPI to present the outcomes from the July GFA Annual General meeting regarding rule changes related to landed Non-Table shark catches.
--

10) Business Efficiency Program (BEP) Working group update

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief update on the BEP Working Group, which includes membership from RFNSW and CommFish NSW that was formed to assist with the review of existing commercial fishing regulations that are no longer considered necessary and continue to impede business efficiency following reforms to the commercial fishing sector.
- DPI thanked the RFNSW members on the joint Group for their contribution and time commitment to the Working Group.

11) Presentation by Craig Copeland, Director, OzFish on OzFish volunteer recreational fishing projects currently underway in NSW

NOTED:

- DPI Craig Copeland, Director, OzFish presented the Council with an overview of current OzFish recreational fishing projects underway in NSW. The presentation was well received by Council and members were enthused by the work being done to improve fisheries habitat

and enhance recreational fishing outcomes.

- The presentation outlined some of the key areas that OzFish is involved with, including working on fish habitat remediation, assisting with installation of fish screens, citizen science and education, shellfish and seagrass restoration and re-stocking projects.
- On behalf of the Council, the Chair commended Mr Copeland and the network of OzFish Chapter volunteers for their commitment and hard work.

12) General Business

a) Ministerial Fish Passage Taskforce meeting update

NOTED:

- The Chair noted that the 15th Meeting of the Taskforce was held on 31 March 2022.

b) Offshore anchoring research project

NOTED:

- DPI advised the Council that Departmental researchers were working with the Ports Authority of NSW to identify potential discrete ship anchoring zones off Port Kembla to limit habitat damage in the future.
- DPI will keep the Council updated on further progress of the project.

c) Digitising licensing across industry sectors

NOTED:

- DPI advised the Council that the Department of Customer Service Licensing Program is delivering a large digital end-to-end licensing program for all agencies across NSW Government to provide an improved digital and licensing experience for customers.

d) Nomination for 1-2 members to participate in a MEMS survey to gauge stakeholder understanding about the Strategy.

NOTED:

- At the meeting, DPI sought nominations from the Council to participate in a confidential Marine Estate Management Strategy survey to gauge the level of stakeholder understanding about the Strategy.
- Two members kindly agreed to participate in the survey.
- DPI to provide the names of the survey participants to the DPI MEMS branch.

13) Proposed amendment of spearfishing closure at Crescent Head

NOTED:

- Following a request from a member of the Council to investigate spearfishing access at Crescent Head, DPI advised the Council they had completed targeted consultation with NSW Crown Lands, Port Macquarie Hastings Council, Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club, Fisheries Compliance and local retailers regarding possible amendment to the

Crescent Head spearfishing closure to facilitate increased access without impacting other water user groups.

- The Council was supportive of the potential closure amendment following the targeted consultation.

14) Update on Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program

NOTED:

- advised that 36 applications from 20 NSW Councils had been received for funding from the Commonwealth grants program for local Councils to facilitate fishing and camping projects and other related recreational tourism infrastructure.
- Following assessment, the Minister recently announced across 16 local government areas.

15) Porters Creek Dam access

NOTED:

- DPI advised the Council they are currently investigating new recreational fishing amenities on the South Coast, including Porters Creek Dam and Deep Creek Dam. DPI plans to submit proposals to Eurobodalla Shire Council to allow passive watercraft fishing at these two dams.

16) Fish for Life update

NOTED:

- The Council received an update from DPI following the launch of the Fish for Life advertising campaign in December 2021, which was run over the Christmas and Easter peak fishing periods.
- Following RFNSW discussion at the last meeting, DPI advised that it was now developing stage 2 of the campaign, which will involve implementing five modules aligning with the core values of Fish for Life. Members were supportive of the proposed direction of the stage 2 campaign, including the strong focus on engaging the recreational fishing sector and utilising external delivery partners to achieve the outcomes of the Fish for Life program.
- The Council thanked DPI for the excellent progress being made with the Fish for Life project.

17) VFA Reciprocal Licence for Mulwala/Murray

NOTED:

- The Council discussed the recreational fishing licence exemption on Lake Hume for NSW recreational fishers, which was recently trialled by the Victorian Fisheries Authority and an associated Victorian proposal to have similar arrangements for Victorian fishers in Lake Mulwala.
- RFNSW expressed significant concern regarding potential impact on revenue noting Victoria is an exporter of recreational fishing effort into NSW.
- RFNSW also considered that further consultation between the VFA and NSW DPI should occur noting that any commitment to the Lake Mulwala option would lead to further expectations for broader licence reciprocation from the fishing community.

- It is therefore essential that cross-border discussions occur to assess the full potential costs and benefits of NSW/Victoria licence reciprocity prior to any commitments being made. For these reasons, Council was not supportive of any progression on licence reciprocity at this stage.

18) Proposal for a yabby trap recycling program

NOTES:

- At the meeting, members discussed the recent reporting of platypus drownings in an illegal yabby trap in waters near Dorrigo.
- It was recognised that despite the use of yabby traps now being banned throughout NSW waters, many fishers still had legacy trap gear. Council considered an opera house yabby trap recycling program to promote and support the current rules for targeting and catching yabbies using pyramid nets and lift nets to ensure the conservation of platypus, native water rats and other aquatic native wildlife.
- Council recommended that a working group consisting of RFNSW members, DPI and other key stakeholder groups be established to identify a range of additional responsible yabby fishing initiatives.
- The working group will report back to Council at the next RFNSW meeting.

19) Proposed freshwater regulation amendments

a) Amend clause 43 of the Fisheries Management (General) Regulation, handheld lines and trout and salmon closure notification

NOTED:

- DPI sought Council endorsement to amend the regulation to help broaden access to recreational fisheries resources and provide quality recreational fishing amenity for all anglers.
- Amendment supported by RFNSW.

b) Minor amendments to trout dam listings within the Section 8 trout and salmon closure notification

NOTED:

- DPI sought Council endorsement to amend the listings of two trout dams within the trout and salmon closure notification.
- Amendment supported by RFNSW

20) Update on implementation of the Dusky Flathead and Lobster rule changes

NOTED:

- The Council was pleased to hear that following the recent community consultation process on proposed recreational fishing rule changes for Dusky Flathead and Lobster, a decision on commencement of the new rules by the NSW Government was expected soon.
- During discussion on proposed rule changes, member Dave Rae requested a summary of other RFNSW saltwater advice recommendations and their current status.

ACTION: DPI to provide a summary of other RFNSW saltwater advice recommendations and their current status for presentation at the next meeting.

MEETING CLOSED

Out of Session meeting 26 May 2022

Following advice from DPI during RFNSW Meeting 24 that an expression of interest process for membership on the Harvest Strategy Working Group for Ocean Trap & Line key species, including Kingfish and Snapper, is proposed to be released over the next 12 weeks, RFNSW met out of session to discuss options to improve the performance of the NSW Kingfish and Snapper fisheries. Council resolved to replace its former advice made at previous meetings related to potential changes to the bag and size limits for Kingfish and Snapper with its full support for prioritising the development of the Harvest Strategy for Ocean Trap & Line key species. RFNSW noted that the development of the harvest strategy was expected to take 12-18 months from the initial meeting of the Working Group and would involve a science-based approach for the development of management options designed to respond to the status of stocks and the needs of all stakeholders.