



**Recreational Fishing NSW
Advisory Council
Draft Minutes
Meeting 25, 17 and 18 August 2022
The Branksome 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 Matt Tripet	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 Social Benefits of Recreational Fishing
Apologies	Ian Puckeridge Peter Turnell	Spear Fishing Nominee of the Secretary - DPI representative

1) Welcome, introductions and housekeeping

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members to the 25th meeting of RFNSW.

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 Vicki Lear declared she had been appointed Vice President of the Women’s Recreational Fishing League.

- Member Steve Samuels declared an interest in the Recreational Fishing Trust application titled: "Keeping trout anglers on the right track". The Chair requested Mr Samuels to leave the room during discussion of the application.
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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 24th meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- Next meeting is proposed to be held on 23 and 24 November 2022 (location TBC).

4) Update on upcoming Expression of Interest process for RFNSW membership

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief update on the upcoming Expression of Interest for RFNSW membership.
- It was noted that all member positions will expire on 30 November 2022.
- DPI advised a call for Expression of Interest for membership on the Council is expected to be advertised later this year.
- The Chair strongly encouraged all members to re-apply for positions on the Council.

5) Review of action items from Meeting 24 (17 and 18 May 2022)

NOTED:

- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.

6) NSW Harvest Strategy update

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on progress of the development and implementation of Harvest Strategies in NSW, including advice that the Spanner Crab Strategy was currently being drafted.
- Council was also informed that the Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group had met five times and was continuing to consider a range of interim support measures whilst the Strategy is developed.
- These measures included improving the data on the recreational catch of Mulloway to enable effective monitoring of changes in abundance of the depleted stock.
- At the meeting, Council provided in-principle support for the introduction of real time catch reporting of Mulloway as one of these interim measures, noting that the Chair suggested that further discussion be held at the next meeting following a proposed presentation by DPI on other real time catch reporting case studies.

- An update will be provided at the next meeting on the proposed establishment of a NSW Line and Trap Fishery Harvest Strategy Working Group, which will include key species in the NSW inshore and offshore line and trap fisheries, commencing with Yellowtail Kingfish and Snapper.

ACTION: DPI Compliance to provide an update on the DPI Mulloway Compliance Operation at Meeting 26.

ACTION: DPI to provide a presentation on

7) Overview of stock enhancement of marine fish in NSW

NOTED:

- The Council received a presentation from DPI on the best practices for undertaking marine stocking based on worldwide scientific studies, which are being applied to DPI marine stocking practices to enhance fish stocks, including Mulloway and Dusky Flathead.
- The presentation highlighted the strategy used by DPI to use the release of hatchery-reared juveniles to enhance stocks of where recruitment is often limited, e.g., in intermittently opening and closing coastal lagoons. The presentation also highlighted some fundamental requirements for successful stocking of marine fish, to ensure good environmental and program outcomes. These requirements include: having appropriate breeding protocols to ensure high genetic diversity of stocked fish, strong biosecurity protocols to avoid disease transfer into wild systems, and ensuring good survival by stocking fish at an appropriate size at suitable water temperatures and into suitable fish habitat. Considering and addressing these requirements significantly reduces mortality of stocked fish and promotes success of stocking programs.

8) Spearfishing

a) Proposed amendment of spearfishing closure at Brunswick River entrance

NOTED:

- At a previous meeting, member Ian Puckeridge requested a review of a number of spearfishing closures, including at the Brunswick River entrance (north of breakwall).
- DPI advised that the long-standing closure was adjacent to the boundary of the Cape Byron Marine Park and that targeted consultation was being undertaken regarding a small adjustment to the closure to facilitate additional spearfishing access, with little or no impact on other users.
- Council was supportive of the proposed closure adjustment subject to outcomes of the targeted consultation.

b) Stakeholder concern re spearfishing in Fingal Bay

NOTED:

- DPI advised Council that correspondence had been received from a recreational fishing stakeholder, raising concern with spearfishing safety at Fingal Bay, Port Stephens.
- The correspondent was seeking consideration of a ban on spearfishing within the 4-knot zone at Fingal Bay.
- DPI advised that, instead of closure, installation of responsible spearfishing signage at the location should address the concern raised. Similar signage has been effective at other high-use beaches to manage interaction between spearfishers and other users, including Little Bay and Bondi Beach in Sydney.
- RFNSW was supportive of the installation of signage at this location.

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

NOTED:

- DPI provided an overview of the current status of the Recreational Fishing Trust, including advice that over 2800 grant projects had been completed since 2001.
- At the meeting, the Council reviewed advice from the Recreational Fishing Trust Expenditure Committees regarding a number of new Saltwater and Freshwater grant applications made to the Recreational Fishing Trust.
- Council endorsed the advice provided by the Expenditure Committees and will now pass this advice on to the Minister for consideration.

10) DPI presentation on a showcase 'bubble plume' system to mitigate cold water pollution (CWP) from NSW impoundments

NOTED:

- At Meeting 23, DPI provided a brief update on CWP and informed Council of innovative new "Bubble Plume" technology that has potential to mitigate the problem by de-stratifying the water column in inland reservoirs.
- In response to Council's invitation to provide members with information about the requirements for establishing a trial 'bubble plume' system, DPI outlined a proposal to set up a demonstration site at one of the eight priority dams in NSW identified in the Cold Water Pollution Strategy.
- Council welcomed the presentation and provided its ongoing support to DPI in implementing the trial and looked forward to further updates from the demonstration site.

11) Evaluation of Trust Fund applications for research

NOTED:

- It was noted that RFNSW previously considered development of a process to provide research expertise to assist with assessing Trust research funding applications with complex methodologies (noting there is no dedicated membership on RFSTEC and RFFTEC with research expertise). One option included setting up a small panel of scientists with expertise in various fields which could consider applications referred to it.
- RFNSW discussed a potential more streamlined option following feedback from DPI, which is based on a similar peer review model commonly used by research organisations. This would involve applications with complex methodologies identified by the Expenditure Committee Chair being referred to the DPI Director Fisheries Research to source independent review expert/s.

- To address potential conflicts of interest with review of DPI applications, the Chair recommended that the Director selects multiple reviewers which can be forwarded to the Expenditure Committee Chair to make an independent selection. RFNSW was supportive of the above approach and recommended this amended process be forwarded to the Minister for consideration.

12) Capacity building session on Aboriginal cultural fishing in Harvest Strategies

NOTED:

- Following a request by the Council at Meeting 24 to invite Mr Ian Knuckey, Director, Fishwell Consulting to this meeting, Mr Knuckey led discussion on capacity building opportunities associated with Aboriginal Cultural Fishing and Harvest Strategies, as well as directing the Council to current capacity-building resources available on the internet under the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Project 2017-069.
- DPI noted there was significant scope for incorporating these capacity-building resources into a number of existing and future advisory and capacity-building recreational fishing programs.
- The Chair thanked Mr Knuckey for his time and looked forward to further engagement in relation to capacity-building opportunities and resources, including when any new members are appointed to Council.

13) Shore-based guided recreational fishing activity targeting mulloway on Stockton Beach

NOTED:

- RFNSW discussed the issue of land-based recreational fishing guided in NSW. It was noted there had been a history of land-based guiding in freshwater for decades and many of these operators were affiliated to the PFIGA, which provided guidance and direction to its members to promote professional and responsible guiding practices.
- Currently coastal charter boat operators are required to be licenced in NSW. Council recognised that the number of saltwater land-based guides had increased in recent years and that the associated impact on fisheries resources may be increasing.
- It was also noted that some of these land-based guides may be operating without appropriate insurance, may lack professional operating standards and be acting irresponsibly.
- RFNSW recommended that the government now require the licencing the land-based guiding sector to address these issues.

14) NSW DPI Murray River Socio-Economic Study - stakeholder insights, and Trout Cod closure update

NOTED:

- DPI provided a presentation on the key outcomes of the recent independent report examining the socio-economic impacts of the three-month seasonal closure for Trout Cod in the Murray River. It was noted that Trout Cod remain listed as Endangered under NSW and Commonwealth legislation.
- Council acknowledged the outcomes of the study and reiterated its ongoing support for DPI's freshwater fish species recovery programs.

15) General Business

a) World Recreational Fishing Conference

NOTED:

- Council members agreed that the World Recreational Fishing Conference to be held from 19 – 22 February 2023 in Melbourne would provide an excellent opportunity for RFNSW and DPI to showcase the Fish for Life program.

ACTION: DPI to submit an abstract on the Fish for Life program for consideration at the World Recreational Fishing Conference in February 2022.

b) Signage request for the fish cleaning table at Bayview on the Northern Beaches of Sydney

NOTED:

- Member Justin Duggan sought Council's consideration of educational signage at the Bayview fish-cleaning table following ongoing concerns with related fish waste, odour and potential social licence issues resulting from discarding of fish frames in the immediate vicinity of the fish-cleaning table.
- DPI advised it was able to investigate the potential for installation of responsible fishing signage (including responsible disposal of fish offal) at the Bayview location.

c) Australian Salmon

NOTED:

- RFNSW members discussed concerns regarding anecdotal reports of ongoing low abundance of Australian Salmon along the NSW coast in recent years and an apparent reduction in the numbers of fish migrating north.
- It was noted that climate change and recent floods (especially over the past 2 years) may be factors influencing recruitment and associated seasonal abundance and distribution of the species in NSW.
- RFNSW recommended that the current information on stock abundance of Australian Salmon be reviewed by DPI, including any information available on climatic and environmental factors that may be influencing the distribution of the stock, as well as any socio-economic information, to inform further discussion.
- It was noted that there was a long-standing, significant commercial fishery for Australian salmon in NSW and the use of the resource is also shared with the Aboriginal fishing community.

ACTION: DPI to provide a follow-up presentation at Meeting 26 on the current stock status of Australian Salmon in NSW and SE Australia more broadly, including any information available on climatic and environmental factors that may be influencing the distribution of the fish, as well as any socio-economic information on the value of the stock to recreational fishing, the commercial sector and indigenous communities (noting that a presentation on stock status was provided at Meeting 16).

16) DPI Aquaculture update, including water quality impacts

NOTED:

- DPI provided an overview about how climatic events, including flooding, have impacted the aquaculture industry in recent years. Additional factors such as sewage spills, other pollution events and poor floodplain and riverbank use can also impact water quality and associated aquaculture operations. These water quality issues can also impact the

recreational and commercial fishing sectors.

- It was proposed that a presentation by industry representatives from the NSW Shellfish Committee and DPI be provided at the next joint CommFish and RFNSW meeting to discuss a potential collaborative cross-sector fisheries and aquaculture industry approach to water quality issues.
- The Council provided support for improving water quality protection in NSW and examining new ways to inform and integrate recreational fishers into the management of water quality.

17) Game Fishing Tournaments and Shark Interactions

NOTED:

- Members were advised that the NSW Game Fishing Association (GFA) recently agreed to increase the minimum weights of sharks caught by adults for the various line classes.
- This decision is expected to significantly reduce the number of 'non-table' sharks weighed in at tournaments (and at other non-tournament times) during the year by around 65%.
- Council acknowledged and supported the effort of GFA in implementing these changes to improve the environmental performance of game fishing in NSW.
- RFNSW noted that GFA will assess the effectiveness of these rule changes after a 3-year period.

18) Inland Fisheries and Fish Stocking update

NOTED:

- DPI provided a brief update on Inland Fisheries matters, including an overview of the 2021/22 fish stocking season.
- An update was also provided on marine stocking of Dusky Flathead and Mulloway for the current breeding season. It was noted that the Port Stephens Fisheries Institute hatchery team had commenced Mulloway production in June 2022. Three waterways (Georges River, Lake Macquarie and Hastings River) had been successfully stocked with Mulloway.

19) Recreational Fishing Access update

NOTED:

- DPI provided an overview of the work being undertaken by the DPI fishing access team, including collaboration with key stakeholders to achieve positive recreational fishing access outcomes, including the provision of enhanced access at East Jindabyne and Penrith Lakes.
- Member Ray Tang raised the proposed Pinecrest Solar Farm at Lidsdale due to the potential access implications to the Upper Cox's River. DPI advised it can monitor access to the Cox's River noting the proposed Pinecrest Solar Farm.

20) Forge Through' program video

NOTED:

- Members were shown a short video promoting the 'Forge Through' mental health support program. The program, which has received contributing funding support from the Recreational Fishing Trust, demonstrates how fishing helps veterans deal with post traumatic stress disorder. Council acknowledged the benefits of this and other programs

providing mental health support through active engagement with recreational fishing and the associated outdoor experiences.

Meeting closed