



**Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council  
Outcomes**  
**Meeting 17, 27 November 2020**  
**Noah's on the Beach, Newcastle (and via videoconference)**

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 Matt Tripet Vic Levett Ian Puckeridge 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 Social benefits of recreational fishing Charter Boat Fishing Spear Fishing Nominee of the Secretary – DPI representative
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## 1) Welcome, introductions and housekeeping

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of RFNSW in Newcastle with some members joining via zoom video conference.
- The Chair also welcomed Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director-General, DPI Fisheries to the meeting, who provided Council with an update on general fisheries management news, including the release of the draft Harvest Strategy policy and guidelines for public consultation.

## 2) Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested that members declare any changes or additions to the Register of Interests provided in the agenda.
- No changes or additions were requested.

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- Members were provided with a tentative meeting schedule for 2021.
- Members supported the approach of having RFNSW meetings coincide with the meeting dates for CommFish NSW meetings to ensure ongoing communication on cross sector issues.
- The proposed meeting schedule for 2021 is 24 February, 12 May, 18 August and 24 November (TBC).

#### **4) Review of action items from meeting 16 (12 and 13 Oct 2020)**

**NOTED:**

- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.

#### **5) Update on previous top 10 priority issues: reviewing status**

**NOTED:**

- At the previous meeting, Council reviewed the list of the top 10 priority issues to ensure that it still adequately reflected the current focus of the Council on addressing key areas of interest to the recreational fishing sector.
- At the meeting, RFNSW finalised its revised priority list, which will now be used to help guide Council on consideration of key issues and the development of associated actions.
- It was considered that enhancing river connectivity through initiatives such as screens, fishways and addressing thermal pollution effects should be combined as one of the thirteen key priorities.
- During these discussions, members supported the Chair approaching the Ministerial Taskforce on Fish Passage with a recommendation to consider other water infrastructure issues which affect fish (in addition to fish passage remediation).

ACTION: The Chair to make a recommendation to the Taskforce on Fish Passage to consider including all water infrastructure issues which affect fish as part of their role and to consider complementary measures, such as prevention of cold water pollution and fish screening.

#### **6) Preparation for joint session meeting with CommFish**

**NOTED:**

- The Chair led a discussion on the agenda items to be discussed at the afternoon joint session meeting with CommFish NSW.
- Discussion focused on the key cross-sector issues, including initiatives to further assist with the recovery of Mulloway, the status of Kingfish stocks and working together to identify opportunities for reducing black marketing.

#### **7) Evaluating research applications for Trust Fund**

**NOTED:**

- The Chair sought member feedback on a draft paper that provides for an independent assessment system that would build on the initial evaluation of research proposals for Trust Grants by the Expenditure Committees.

- A sub group was formed to investigate the process further and to report back to Council. The sub group consists of Grahame Williams, Steve Samuels, Dave Rae, Karl Mathers and Matt Hansen.

**ACTION:** The sub group formed to progress the draft paper on the evaluation of research applications for Trust Fund to report back to Council. The sub group will also assist Council to identify the key areas for research needed to address the top priority issues to guide the submission of research applications for Trust funds.

## **8) Recreational Fishing Strategy update**

- Following identification of the need by RFNSW for development of a NSW Recreational Fishing Strategy, DPI advised Council that the first meeting of the sub group will be scheduled to focus on drafting the Strategy once the Minister has endorsed the formation of the sub group.
- It was noted that the terms of reference for the sub group will be established, together with potential timeframes for completing the project.

## **9) Gin Gin weir re-structure and Inland Fencing Grants for Farmers and Landholders adjacent to riparian river habitat**

- The Council received an informative presentation from member Matt Hansen on the detrimental effect of weir pools on the health of inland fish stocks, using the dysfunctional Gin Gin weir as an example.
- The backing up of water by weirs and the elimination/reduction of river flow was highlighted. This action has the effect of submerging the “riffle and run” habitat that is essential for native fish populations to thrive.
- The presentation also proposed alternative solutions to weirs for supplying water needed by rural communities, including on-farm storage options.

**ACTION:** RFNSW supported the Chair writing to the Minister to request that the planning of new water infrastructure in NSW should make every effort to reduce the extent of weir pools and to also consider raising the issue with the Hon. Melinda Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing.

## **10) Spearfishing issues**

- Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to Meeting 18.

## **11) Status on the recovery of Macquarie Perch**

- Mr Luke Pearce, Fisheries Manager, DPI Fisheries presented Council with an update on recovery initiatives for Macquarie Perch.
- Council acknowledged the excellent work being done by DPI in partnership with the Central Acclimatisation Society and other groups to assist in the recovery of this iconic native freshwater species.
- It was noted that there are many challenges facing the recovery of the species and Council extended its support to further progress the recovery program.

**ACTION:** DPI was invited to provide further feedback on additional initiatives that may be needed to boost recovery of Macquarie Perch, including development of further breeding technology and stocking work.

## **12) Fish for Life update**

- DPI updated RFNSW on the development of the proposed Fish for Life campaign, which is being progressed with assistance from a creative supplier. The campaign will be aimed at new participants in recreational fishing but will also have components aimed at existing fishers. DPI acknowledged the efforts of RFNSW member Jo Starling who had been providing feedback on campaign concepts.

## **13) Harvest strategy update**

- Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to Meeting 18.

## **14) Correspondence received**

- Due to time constraints, the review of correspondence was deferred to Meeting 18.

## **15) General Business**

### **a) Concerns raised over Warrell Creek**

- A Council member updated RFNSW on concerns that have been expressed by some local recreational fishers about commercial netting practices in Warell Creek, a tributary of the Nambucca River. Some concerns about potential seagrass damage from boat propellers during netting operations was also expressed.
- The Chair recommended further consideration of this issue at meeting 18.

**ACTION:** Warrell Creek fishing concerns to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

### **b) Other items**

- Due to time constraints, agenda items relating fresh bait supply were deferred to the next meeting.

CLOSE