



**Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory
Council**

Minutes

Meeting 22, 23 November 2021

The Fullerton Hotel, Sydney

Members Present	Johann Bell	Independent Chair
	Dave Rae	Region 1 – Mid and Far North Coast
	Paul Lennon	Region 2 – Lower North Coast
	Grahame Williams OAM	Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast
	Justin Duggan	Region 3 – Sydney & Central Coast
	Vicki Lear	Region 4 – Illawarra
	Jo Starling	Region 5 – South Coast
	Matt Hansen	Region 6 – North West Inland
	Karl Mathers	Region 7 – South West Inland
	Steven Samuels	Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands
	Ray Tang	Region 8 – Central & Southern Tablelands
	Ian Puckeridge	Spear Fishing
	Vic Levett	Charter Fishing
	Matt Tripet	Social benefits of recreational fishing
Peter Turnell	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 22nd meeting of RFNSW.
- The Chair highlighted that the Hon. Adam Marshall, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales would be attending a session at the meeting to discuss key recreational fishing issues.
- The Chair also welcomed Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director-General, DPI Fisheries at the meeting.

2) Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested that members declare any changes or additions to the Register of Interests provided in the agenda.
- Ms Jo Starling re-declared she was the applicant for a Recreational Fishing Trust application titled 'Women's Recreational Fishing League Inc.', and
- Vicki Lear re-declared some voluntary, non-pecuniary involvement in a Recreational Fishing Trust application titled 'Women's Recreational Fishing League Inc.'
- Matt Hansen declared he was no longer a fishing columnist for Fairfax media.
- Justin Duggan declared he is a member of OzFish.
-

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 21st meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- Next meeting is proposed for 17 February 2022 in Newcastle.

4) Review of action items from Meeting 21 (17 August 2021)

NOTED:

- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.

5) DPI Fisheries Deputy Director General update

NOTED:

- RFNSW received an update from Mr Sean Sloan on various fishing issues and projects, including: the proposed release of the inaugural Recreational Fishing Trust Annual Report 2020/21, the significant progress being made by the various Harvest Strategy Working Groups, the drafting of the Fisheries Co-management Policy, community consultation underway on the Management Plan for the NSW Mainland Marine Park Network (2021-2031), the DPI response to QX detection in oysters in Port Stephens and NSW DPI input into the draft National Fisheries Plan.

ACTION: DPI to circulate copies of the Recreational Fishing Trust Annual Report 2020/21 and the National Fisheries Plan to members following publication.

6) Presentation on Harvest Strategies update

a) General Harvest Strategy update, including establishment of Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on the development and implementation of Harvest Strategies in NSW. The NSW Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and NSW Fisheries Harvest Strategy Guidelines were approved by the Minister in October 2021.
- It was noted that four Harvest Strategy Working Groups have been established to date, including for Trawl Whiting (Eastern School & Stout Whiting), Eastern Rock Lobster, Spanner Crab and Mulloway.
- Public consultation on the draft NSW Trawl Whiting Harvest Strategy closed on 31 October 2021.
- Members discussed the importance of more effectively communicating information on Harvest Strategies to grassroots fishers. A number of options were considered, including wider dissemination of information in recreational fishing media, such as magazines, and adopting 'champions' within the recreational fishing sector to share information at a local level on the implementation of Harvest Strategies.

ACTION: DPI to explore new opportunities to enhance communication on Harvest Strategies to grassroots fishers.

b) Draft Harvest Strategy for Eastern Rock Lobster

- DPI advised that the Lobster Harvest Strategy Working Group has developed a draft Harvest Strategy, which is currently on public exhibition until 3 December 2021.
- The Harvest Strategy applies to commercial, recreational, and Aboriginal cultural fishing and, together with all other relevant information, will inform the Total Allowable Fishing Committee (TAFC) in making a Total Allowable Catch determination for the species.

7) Recreational Fishing Trust matters

a. Recreational fishing grants Expression of Interest

NOTED:

- DPI advised the Council that an Expression of Interest calling for applications for funding from the Trusts is currently being advertised and closes on 3 December 2021.

b. Expenditure advice from the RFSTEC

NOTED:

- Council reviewed advice from the Recreational Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee

(Saltwater) regarding an 'out of session' Trust application for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trust to support stage 3 of the Tuckean Swamp Project.

- Council endorsed the advice provided by the Expenditure Committee and will now pass this advice on to the Minister for consideration.

c. Recreational Fishing Trust schedule

NOTED:

- Following a RFNSW recommendation at the previous meeting, DPI advised Council of an initiative to better inform the community about Trust funding opportunities.
- DPI has developed a draft schedule for submission and assessment of Trust applications, to be included in the Trust funding guidelines and placed on the DPI website along with other relevant information for applicants.
- Members provided feedback on the draft schedule related to clear messaging and recommended that DPI refer the final edited schedule to the Minister for consideration.

ACTION: DPI to amend the proposed Recreational Fishing Trust schedule to take account of member comments and to submit to the Minister for consideration.

d. Recreational Fishing Trust Annual Report

NOTED:

- DPI advised Council that the inaugural Annual Report for the Recreational Fishing Trusts 2020/21 has been prepared and is proposed for publication in the near future.

ACTION: DPI to circulate the Recreational Fishing Trust Annual Report 2021/22 to members when published.

8) Proposed changes to recreational fishing rules for Eastern Rock Lobster and Dusky Flathead

NOTED:

- RFNSW noted that DPI is currently undertaking community consultation on proposed changes to recreational fishing rules for Eastern Rock Lobster and Dusky Flathead.
- The proposed recreational rule changes include an increase to the daily bag limit from 2 to 3 for Eastern Rock Lobster, and the introduction of a slot size limit of 36 to 70 cm (currently 1 over 70 cm), and a decrease in the daily bag limit from 10 to 5, for Dusky Flathead.

9) Session with the Hon. Adam Marshall, Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW

NOTED:

- The Minister took the opportunity to extend his gratitude to the Council for its hard work and provision of advice on key recreational fishing issues.
- Members welcomed an update from the Minister on a number of matters, including the commencement of community consultation on the Draft Management Plan for the NSW

Mainland Marine Park Network (2021-2031), which has been developed to guide the management of the state's five existing mainland marine parks. The Minister advised that the draft plan does not include any specific proposals around changes to rules or zones, however, some preliminary work with the marine park regional committees on potential rule changes had begun. RFNSW indicated it was keen to see low-impact fishing activities included in certain marine park areas as part of the development of new park management plans. The Minister encouraged RFNSW to make a submission to the Network Plan prior to the closing date of 31 January 2022.

- The Minister provided information on the intent of the Animal Welfare Reform Discussion Paper, which outlines key proposed changes and enhancements to the existing NSW animal welfare laws to help streamline them and to make them easier to understand and follow. The Minister also advised that the Government is not supportive of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Aquatic Animal Recognition) Bill 2021 tabled before Parliament by the Animal Justice Party. The Minister invited interested Council members to submit any recommendations they may have regarding the need to strengthen the wording of the Animal Welfare Reform Discussion Paper for his consideration.
- Members were pleased to advise the Minister about a key RFNSW initiative, which has involved development of a strategy to drive recreational fishing forward. This strategy (roadmap) involves a range of new initiatives to boost recreational fishing over the next 10 years. The Minister stated that he looked forward to receiving and considering the draft strategy.
- The Minister advised that NSW has embarked on a process of developing tailored Harvest Strategies for key fisheries, in direct partnership with commercial, recreational and Aboriginal fishers. Harvest Strategies will provide all sectors with greater certainty and transparency in fisheries management decisions. RFNSW highlighted prioritisation of snapper and kingfish for harvest strategy development because both species are considered to be of significant importance to the recreational and commercial sectors. It is therefore important that the best fisheries management decision-making frameworks are in place for these species.
- RFNSW raised some concerns with the Minister about the resilience of some key species into the future, and the maintenance of recreational and commercial fishing for them at the present levels. These concerns stem anticipated increases in fishing pressure due to the growing population of NSW, greater participation in recreational fishing and ongoing improvements in fishing technology. Council encouraged the Minister to increase investment in the aquaculture of Kingfish and other popular fish species as a way of increasing the supply of these species for domestic consumption. The Minister stated that he would be supportive of projects that boost aquaculture production of key species, which may in turn ease increasing demand on wild stocks. It was recognised that the farmgate value of NSW aquaculture is currently growing at 10% per annum.

10) Roadmap to drive recreational fishing forward update

NOTED:

- DPI advised that the working draft of the above roadmap had been updated following further input from RFNSW at the last meeting and from sub-group members out of session.
- Council reviewed the final draft version of the roadmap and recommended some minor

changes.

- RFNSW recommended that the final draft (in a creative design version) be submitted to the Minister for consideration.

ACTION: The creative design version of the 'Driving Recreational Fishing Forward' roadmap to be submitted to the Minister for consideration.

11) Snapper and Kingfish

a) Discussion on research priority areas

NOTED:

- Following an action item from Meeting 21, DPI provided advice on research priority areas and knowledge gaps for Snapper and Kingfish.
- Members acknowledged some of the key priorities were identification of spawning areas and further investigation of genetic techniques that will enable fishery-independent stock assessment. The Chair sought consideration by members on ways to draw in Commonwealth funding and leverage support from other Australian states.
- Council considered development of an East Coast multi-jurisdictional research project proposal covering key knowledge gaps for Kingfish (and then other key species such as Snapper) should be progressed. This should also include investigation of potential funding sources at both the Commonwealth and state agency levels.

ACTION: DPI Fisheries Research to investigate a joint multi-jurisdictional proposal for an East Coast Kingfish stock assessment project, taking account of key knowledge gaps, including utilising new genetic approaches if possible to support the stock assessment. This should include relevant state and national agencies, including CSIRO.

b) RFNSW proposals on bag & size limits consultation

NOTED:

- As an outcome of Meeting 21, Council recommended additional management action may be needed to maintain quality recreational fishing for Snapper and Kingfish until Harvest Strategies have been implemented for the two species. The Council had previously recommended some revisions to the bag limit and minimum legal lengths for these two species.
It was noted that the next step should be for the RFNSW proposals to be referred to the Commercial Fishing NSW Advisory Council Fish for advice on the size limit proposal.

ACTION: DPI to include an agenda item at the next meeting of CommFish NSW to discuss

Note: On 26 May 2022, RFNSW resolved to replace its former advice made at this meeting and meeting 21 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. An expression of interest for membership on the NSW Line & Trap Fishery Harvest Strategy Working Group was advertised by DPI on 24 August 2022.

12) Correspondence

- a) **Letter from the Hon. Adam Marshall, Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW re Meeting 21 outcomes**

NOTED

- b) **Letter from DDG Fisheries re draft Lobster Harvest Strategy public consultation**

NOTED

- c) **Letter from DDG re Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group**

NOTED

- d) **Email from Mr Victor Riley re Manning River water extraction and dam storage**

NOTED:

- The Council noted Mr Riley's correspondence.
- The Chair requested that DPI respond to Mr Riley advising him that RFNSW had not previously considered the Coastal Harvestable Rights Review – Water in NSW.

- e) **Letter from CFA and RFA re review of recreational fishing in Sydney impoundments**

NOTED

- DPI provided an update on progress of the DPI/WaterNSW Recreational Fishing Access in Water Supply Dams Working Group.
- DPI advised the Council that the group was working on opportunities to permit recreational fishing access at Woodford Dam and to identify opportunities to improve/enhance existing fishing access at Fitzroy Falls Reservoir and at Tallowa Dam.

ACTION: DPI to provide an update to the Minister on progress of the Recreational Fishing Access in Water Supply Dams Working Group, which should include a request for a recreational fishing representative on the working group to increase information sharing with the sector.

- f) **Letter from the Hon. Adam Marshall, Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW re spearfishing in the Lord Howe Island Marine Park**

NOTED

13) Macquarie Perch recovery initiatives

NOTED:

- DPI briefed the Council on the outcomes of a sub-group meeting between freshwater members of RFNSW and staff from the DPI Threatened Species Unit to discuss further initiatives to aid the recovery of Macquarie Perch.
- Council recommended a two-staged approach involving short- and then longer-term project proposals to address current gaps and to enhance existing project areas, including redfin surveillance, translocation and population surveying, eDNA studies and hatchery enhancement support for the current breeding program. RFNSW recommended applying for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trust (and other potential sources).
- This proposed project work can contribute to the proposed 'Maction Plan', a strategy that sets clear objectives and actions required to rebuild Macquarie Perch populations.

14) Inland Fisheries update

NOTED:

- DPI updated the Council on key freshwater recreational fisheries programs, including inland

15) General Business

a) Trout Stocking levels at Pejar Dam

NOTED:

- It was noted that any stocking increases should be informed by scientific monitoring.

b) Request to increase stocking of Trout at Fitzroy Falls Dam and improve recreational fishing access

NOTED:

- It was noted that there is limited access at Fitzroy Falls Dam so increased stocking is not justified at this stage.

c) Fish Rock fishing rules

NOTED:

- Member Vic Levett advised Council that commercial linefishing using bait, including leadlining, is permitted around Fish Rock at South West Rocks. Fish Rock is designated as a Grey Nurse Shark Critical Habitat Area. Mr Levett also noted that recreational linefishing with bait is currently not permitted in a 200 m zone around Fish Rock.

ACTION: DPI to provide advice to Council to confirm current commercial fishing arrangements at Fish Rock.
--

d) Dollar for Dollar Fish Stocking Program

Member Steve Samuels queried the requirement for the personal indemnity clause in the current DPI Dollar for Dollar fish stocking deed. DPI advised it will investigate the matter and provide advice back to members.

ACTION: DPI to investigate the current requirement for the personal indemnity clause in the current DPI Dollar for Dollar fish stocking deed and to provide advice back to members.

16) Inland Fisheries Compliance update

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on local compliance activities in the inland following a request from RFNSW.
- DPI advised a recent compliance operation involved confiscation of a significant number of illegal fish traps in inland areas. The Department also advised it was trialling temporary inland mobile squads (TIMS) to respond to illegal fishing hotspots and issues. Initial trials have worked well and will be continued into the new year. DPI also advised that a Fisheries Officer recruitment process is also nearing completion.
- Member Steve Samuels suggested a potential long-term proposal for combining the regulatory functions of Fisheries Officers, Boating Safety Officers and Natural Resources Access Regulator officers to potentially increase on-ground compliance efficiencies and outcomes.
- Member Matt Hansen identified the need for an increased compliance presence in inland NSW to target illegal fishing activities.
- RFNSW recommended that a funding application be submitted to the Recreational Fishing Trusts for operational costs for two TIMS (accommodation, travel allowances and other operational expenses etc.) to enhance current compliance activities in the inland for a 2-year period.
- Matt Hansen also suggested investigation of a proposal for increasing the number of rigged rods from 2 to 4 in the inland (excluding trout waters) as well as a review of the use of cheese as a bait.

ACTION: DPI to investigate the potential for combining the regulatory functions of Fisheries Officers, Boating Safety Officers and Natural Resources Access Regulator officers to potentially increase on ground compliance efficiencies and outcomes. The investigation should also include reviewing outcomes from the previous joint compliance trial undertaken at two coastal locations and to provide a report to Council at the next meeting.

ACTION: DPI to collate information relevant to amending the number of rigged rods and a review of the use of cheese as bait. DPI to present this information at the next meeting.

17) Environmental Assessment of Recreational Fishing

NOTED:

- DPI presented an update on the Environmental Assessment on Recreational Fishing, which provides details on the completed social and economic assessment and the proposed next phase of the work.

- DPI acknowledged the input provided by the RFNSW sub group to the social and economic assessment.

18) FishGen update

NOTED:

- RFNSW noted the update.

19) Draft Management Plan for the NSW Mainland Marine Park network update

NOTED:

- Members noted the commencement of community consultation on the Draft Management Plan for the NSW Mainland Marine Park Network (2021-2031) and formed a sub group to develop a submission during the consultation period.

ACTION: A RFNSW sub group to develop a draft submission on the Draft Management Plan for the NSW Mainland Marine Park Network (2021-2031) prior to the closing date of 31 January 2022.

Meeting closed