

**Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council
Outcomes
Meeting 14, 26 May 2020
Video conference**

Members Present	Johann Bell Dave Rae Paul Lennon Grahame Williams OAM Justin Duggan Vicki Lear Jo-Anne Starling Matt Hansen Karl Mathers Steven Samuels Ray Tang 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 Charter Boat Fishing Spear Fishing Nominee of the Secretary – DPI representative
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1. Introduction by the Chair

NOTED:

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the 14th meeting of RFNSW.
- The meeting was held by videoconference due to the current COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.
- The Chair noted it was previously proposed for this meeting to include a joint session with CommFish NSW in Eden and reiterated that the joint meeting would be held at the earliest opportunity.

2. Register of Interests

NOTED:

- The Chair requested members declare any changes or additions to the register provided in the agenda.
- It was noted that the interests of members provided on their “members’ pecuniary interests declaration and undertaking form” had been added to the register.
- Members did not raise any additional interests or request any amendments to the current Register of Interests.

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 13th meeting of RFNSW were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.
- It was proposed that the next meeting of RFNSW be held on 27 August 2020.
- Council reiterated the need to include a joint session with CommFish at the next meeting to progress key issues.

ACTION: DPI to arrange a joint session with CommFish at the earliest opportunity.
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4. Review of action items from meeting 13 (Feb 2020)

NOTED:

- DPI advised Council that a NSW Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy had been developed and reviewed by the Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council (MFAC) for initial feedback.
- Harvest strategies for a number of priority fisheries using the policy as a framework will be undertaken in the future following discussions with fisheries advisory councils on priority species.
- MFAC member Matt Hansen acknowledged harvest strategies are a big step forward in having long-term sustainability plans in place, particularly for key species with sustainability issues that are shared between the commercial and recreational sectors.
- It was noted that the policy will be circulated to the other advisory councils, including RFNSW, and also be released for public consultation along with guidelines for implementation.
- Council noted the action items from the previous meeting.

5. Update on previous top 10 priority issues: reviewing status

NOTED:

- DPI updated Council on the status of the top 10 priority list.
- A key issue discussed was the progress of the Mulloway recovery program. Council recognised there was a strong drive amongst the recreational fishing sector for additional management action to ensure the recovery of Mulloway. It was considered essential that any additional management initiatives be developed jointly with CommFish NSW.
- RFNSW agreed to form an “Improving Fish Stocks” sub-group to develop potential initiatives for discussion with CommFish at the next proposed joint session. The group will focus on working on management initiatives to recover the NSW Mulloway stock but can also work on other species including Kingfish, Snapper, Dusky Flathead and any other key species where there may be sustainability concerns or where they are considered to be performing sub-optimally for recreational fishers. An expression of interest for participation on the sub-group will be sent to RFNSW members out of session. The importance of developing initiatives, which are jointly supported by RFNSW and CommFish, was recognised by Council members to be critical for successful implementation.
- RFNSW also noted its previous position on Dusky Flathead for management changes involving a bag limit reduction from 10 to five and introduction of a slot limit for

recreational fishers between 36 and 70cm. Council members agreed this position should also be discussed with CommFish at the next proposed joint session.

- Council member Ian Puckeridge requested it be noted that he did not agree with the changes to the maximum size of Dusky Flathead.

ACTION: RFNSW to form an “Improving Fish Stocks” sub-group to develop the initiatives discussed at the meeting in relation to additional management actions to ensure the recovery of Mulloway (and other key species) for discussion with CommFish at the next joint session.

ACTION: RFNSW to discuss its current position on the recommended management changes for Dusky Flathead at the next joint session meeting with CommFish.

ACTION: The Chair to write to the CommFish Chair prior to the joint meeting session to discuss proposed agenda items.

6. Expenditure advice from RFSTEC, RFFTEC and Charter Fishing NSW

a) Expenditure advice from RFSTEC and RFFTEC

NOTED:

- The expenditure committees (RFSTEC and RFFTEC) met on 14 and 15 May 2020, respectively, and reviewed 13 applications that had been received by DPI since the last committee meetings.
- RFNSW reviewed and supported the funding advice from the two Committees as outlined in Tables 1 and 2.

b) Expenditure advice from Charter Fishing NSW (CFNSW)

NOTED:

- The Charter Fishing NSW Working Group met on 29 August 2019 and reviewed two ongoing project applications proposed to receive funding from the Charter Fishing Trust.
- RFNSW reviewed and supported the funding advice from the Working Group as outlined in Table 3.

7. Update on drought and bushfire recovery/rebuilding plans

NOTED:

- DPI provided an update on recovery plans following the COVID-19 health crisis, drought, floods and bushfires.
- An industry working group involving representatives from the recreational fishing industry and DPI has been established and has met several times. This working group has helped DPI identify key priorities which will assist the tackle and charter sectors recover as quickly as possible. These priorities involve promoting regional tourism, encouraging increased participation via fishing workshops, tackle expos, restocking programs and regional Family Fishing Days.

8. Proposed removal of fishing closure around the redundant Munmorah Power Station hot water outlet in Budgewoi Lake

NOTED:

- Council was advised there has been a long-standing fishing closure around the hot water outlet from the demolished Munmorah Power Station in Budgewoi Lake and there is no longer any need for the small area closure. Traditionally, the hot water outlet used to attract fish during the cooler months. The closure commences on 1 May each year and finishes on 30 August. Local Council has revamped the local area with recreational facilities and recently removed the fishing closure signs.
- DPI informed Council it is proposed to remove the closure from the Fisheries Management (General) Regulation (2019). Council raised no issue with this proposal.

9. Update on consultation for the Commercial Fisheries Business Efficiency Program

NOTED:

- DPI advised Council of the consultation process underway to review existing commercial fisheries regulations that are no longer considered necessary and continue to impede business efficiency, following the recent reforms to the NSW commercial fishing industry.
- A sub-group was formed at the meeting to provide initial feedback to DPI on the program.

ACTION: The RFNSW sub-group to draft initial feedback to DPI on the Commercial Fisheries Business Efficiency Program involving a review of commercial fishing closures and regulations.

10. Risk assessment into recreational fishing in Sydney's water supply dams

NOTED:

- The risk assessment into recreational fishing in Sydney water supply reservoirs has been completed and provided to the Minister. The Minister has written to the Hon. Melinda Pavey, MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing, requesting support for DPI to continue working with WaterNSW on the findings of the risk assessment.

11. Correspondence received

a) Email from Mr David Chitty regarding status of the NSW Trout Strategy

NOTED:

- DPI advised Council that Mr Chitty had been contacted by the Department to discuss his correspondence. DPI advised Mr Chitty that the Trout Strategy remained a high priority and continues to be rolled out.
- DPI advised a video conference with recreational fishers from the Snowy Mountains region and interested committee members was being scheduled for early June 2020. The meeting would provide an update on NSW Trout Strategy research and the recent announcements regarding the Gaden Trout Hatchery and Snowy Hydro 2.0. Mr Chitty would be invited to attend this meeting.

b) Email from Ms Tricia Beatty PFA regarding recreational bag limit for Whiting

NOTED:

- Council noted the correspondence and advised this issue can be discussed with CommFish at the next joint session.

c) Letter to RFNSW Chair re Review of Commercial Fishing Regulations (under the Commercial Fisheries Business Efficiency Program)

NOTED:

- Council noted the letter and that this issue had been addressed in agenda item 9.

12. General Business

a) Discussion on evaluation process for Trust research applications

NOTED:

- The Chair led discussion on a proposal to provide additional evaluation for all Recreational Fishing NSW Trust Grant applications related to research, which would involve a practical, independent system and build on the initial consideration of research proposals for Trust Grants by RFSTEC and RFFTEC.
- This would involve research applications being subject to evaluation by a panel of experienced, reputable scientists following consideration of applications by the expenditure committees and RFNSW.
- It was acknowledged that additional scientific expertise would often be useful for assessing research applications.
- In particular, a well-organised and respected system for evaluation of research proposals would have the following benefits: 1) It would reassure recreational fishers that Trust Grants allocated to research to improve the quality of fishing are being allocated to concepts that have been evaluated scientifically; 2) It would demonstrate best practice for allocating Trust Grants to research; and 3) It would raise the profile of Trust Grants among all relevant scientists as a competitive evaluation process with all the features expected of a responsible research grant system.

ACTION: The Chair to write to the Minister to request in-principle support for the concept of additional independent evaluation for all Recreational Fishing NSW Trust Grant applications related to research.

b) Snowy Hydro 2.0

NOTED:

- DPI and Steve Samuels (on behalf of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society) provided RFNSW with an update on the Snowy Hydro 2.0 Main Works Assessment Report, which was recently released. It was noted the approval conditions include the development of a five-year \$5 million Recreational Fishing Management Plan to further enhance trout stocks in the Snowy Mountains.
- The Chair took the opportunity to thank Council member Steve Samuels for his ongoing work in relation to the Snowy Hydro program and his efforts to ensure the protection of the Snowy Lakes fishery.

ACTION: DPI to facilitate a research update meeting via video conference with Snowy Mountains stakeholders, including anglers and RFNSW representatives to discuss

developments regarding Snowy Hydro 2.0, Gaden Trout Hatchery and the NSW Trout Strategy.

c) Kamay Ferry Wharves project – Transport for NSW

NOTED:

- DPI notified Council of a request for initial feedback by a Transport for NSW (TfNSW) consultant regarding the Kamay Ferry Wharves project.
- TfNSW are seeking feedback from Council on a development proposal to reinstate the ferry wharves at La Perouse and Kurnell. A ferry service operated between Kurnell and La Perouse from the 1890s until 1974 when severe storms damaged the wharves.
- A sub-group comprising of the Sydney-based members and Vicki Lear was formed to provide initial feedback which will be provided to TfNSW.

ACTION: The RFNSW sub-group to provide feedback on the initial proposal regarding the re-instatement of the Kamay ferry wharves in Botany Bay.

d) Bait supply

NOTED:

- Council member Jo Starling raised an agenda item for the next meeting regarding fresh bait supply for recreational fishers.

ACTION: DPI to place the issue of fresh bait supply on the Meeting 15 agenda.

e) Cultural fishing permits

NOTED:

- DPI updated Council on the ongoing issue of Section 37 Cultural Fishing Authorities where access to fisheries resources is needed beyond the provisions of the current cultural fishing rules. This could be for events such as a large cultural gathering, or ceremonies. Applications for an authority (permit) continue to be made by various groups for a variety of collection activities in different waterways. At times, applications are received for activities in Recreational Fishing Havens. Council member Peter Turnell invited members to contact him for any additional information on these cultural fishing permits.

Table 1. Summary of new Saltwater and Freshwater Trust grant applications SUPPORTED for funding by RFSTEC and RFFTEC

Platform: Recreational fishing enhancement

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Manilla Native Fish Hatchery structure and operations	Manilla Fishing Hatchery Inc	To provide operational funding support for the not-for-profit Manilla Native Fish Hatchery to enable golden perch breeding and stocking into local public waterways to continue. The hatchery is run by community volunteers. SUPPORTED. Moved: Ron Croker, Seconded: Michael Davey, Carried.	FW \$9,700	

Platform: Fishing access and facilities

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Too Good To Lose! Water Police patrols to help keep Sydney Harbour ferry wharves open to fishing	NSW DPI	This joint project between Roads and Maritime Services and DPI promotes responsible fishing behaviour on Sydney Harbour's wharves and piers during the key summer fishing season and has been running since 2017. The project involves commissioning dedicated police patrols at the 50 commuter ferry wharf locations and Walsh Bay piers throughout Sydney Harbour by NSW Police Marine Area Command to provide an effective enforcement presence to help manage issues involving rubbish, noise and anti-social behaviour from a minority of irresponsible recreational fishers. Police reports and RMS information indicates the patrols significantly reduce public complaints about fishing in the Harbour. It is proposed to continue the patrols into the 2020/21 summer fishing season. SUPPORTED. Moved: Lisa Terry, Seconded: Grahame Williams OAM, Carried.	SW \$180,000	

Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Driving Fish Habitat Action with a Landcare NSW/OzFish Unlimited community partnership – Years 2 and 3	OzFish Unlimited	This project involves Ozfish working with Local Landcare Coordinators to develop and facilitate priority fish habitat rehabilitation projects throughout NSW. The first phase of the project in 2019/20 saw the development of 15 habitat restoration projects during the first 12 months. Funding is now sought for year 2 and 3 so that 60 fish habitat restoration sites can be established by OzFish and Landcare combining resources across NSW. The project will build a network of skilled volunteers to continue the work well into the future. The project complements the DPI Habitat Action Grants program (although there is no overlap between projects). SUPPORTED. RFFTEC Moved: Karl Mathers, Seconded: Troy Bright, Carried. RFSTEC Moved: Lisa Terry, Seconded: Paul Connellan, Carried. Condition: The applicant should implement an equivalent to the technical assessment panel used by the Habitat Action Grants Program to enable recreational fishing stakeholder input to the project. The project should also increase promotion of relevant funding sources, including the Recreational Fishing Trusts.	FW \$84,700 SW \$105,050	FW \$131,000 SW \$174,500

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
NSW Fish Passage Strategy – Finalise Phase 1 Development	NSW DPI	The NSW Fish Passage Strategy is a coordinated 20-year plan to proactively restore unimpeded fish passage to 165 high priority weirs, which will significantly improve native fish access to 8,885 km of mainstem rivers and key off-channel habitats below all major storage dams in the State. This will significantly improve native fish populations and recreational fishing opportunities. This stage of the project will finalise development and secure funding for fish passage remediation at 47 of the highest priority sites in NSW. SUPPORTED. RFFTEC Moved: Ron Croker, Seconded: Ron Butler, Carried. RFSTEC Moved: Micah Adams, Seconded: Paul Connellan, Carried.	FW \$90,612 SW \$90,612	

Platform: Recreational fishing education

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Gone fishing – Supporting Student Learning Through Fishing	Granville Boys High School	Involves students disengaged in learning and with low literacy levels to participate in a program where they will actively learn to fish (including using the services of a charter operator) and understand the importance of sustainable fishing. They will also engage in reading in relation to fishing and sustainability and make connections in their community and develop resilience. SUPPORTED. Moved: Damian Kerves, Seconded: Micah Adams, Carried. Condition: RFFTEC supports \$5,000 to contribute towards the costs of transport, charter fishing, fishing equipment and bait.	Requested SW \$9,356 Supported SW \$5,000	

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Convene a 'Screens for Streams' stakeholder forum to investigate options and pathways for adoption of fish screening technology	NSW DPI (on behalf of RFNSW)	This project involves convening a stakeholder forum to provide an opportunity for knowledge and ideas exchange between local irrigation districts, water managers, the broader scientific and engineering communities and other regional stakeholder communities, including recreational fishing groups. The inclusive forum will discuss and investigate options and potential pathways on how best to promote adoption of fish screening technology across the wide range of gravity and pumped irrigation, urban and industrial offtakes. Key organisation contacts would include WaterNSW, Cotton Australia, the Murray Darling Basin Authority, Environment, Energy and Science (formerly OEH), Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water, Fisheries Research Development Corporation and other relevant groups. Following the forum, an implementation and options strategy will be developed for fish screening initiatives in partnership with industry, which will have demonstrable benefits to native fish stocks but also screening outcomes for irrigators. SUPPORTED. Moved: Max Graham, Seconded: Troy Bright, Carried.	FW \$148,000	

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Gone Fishing Day 2020	NSW DPI	Five annual NSW Gone Fishing Days have now been held and last year, over 20,000 people attended over 50 DPI and fishing club events across NSW. The Day is all about promoting fishing as a fun, healthy, outdoors fishing activity for the whole family. Funding grants or fishing packages are made available to fishing clubs to hold events in regional NSW while our DPI Fishcare Program hosts six major events across NSW. The DPI events have a wide of range of fun activities with many other partner organisations attending the events. The national date for Gone Fishing Day has been set for 18 October. SUPPORTED. RFFTEC Moved: Debbie Lennon, Seconded: Ron Butler, Carried. RFSTEC Moved: Lisa Terry, Seconded: Grahame Williams OAM, Carried. Condition: DPI to monitor COVID-19 social distancing rules in relation to the proposed October date.	FW \$40,000 SW \$100,000	

Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Citizen science fish monitoring at Leeton Bidgee Classic Fishing Competition	OzFish Unlimited – T/A Leeton Bidgee Classic Fishing Competition – MIA	The project involves anglers measuring, photographing and recording Murray Cod and Golden Perch caught during the Leeton Bidgee Classic catch and release fishing event held on the Murrumbidgee River above Gogeldrie Weir. The data is provided to DPI Fisheries scientists for monitoring fish stocks. The funds will support purchase of receivers and boosters as well as incentives for catch and release reporting. SUPPORTED. Moved: Ron Butler, Seconded: Michael Davey, Carried. Condition: All booster equipment purchased from the grant to be stored safely at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre.	FW \$9,900	

Table 2. Summary of new Saltwater and Freshwater Trust grant applications NOT SUPPORTED for funding by RFSTEC and RFFTEC

Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Recreational anglers taking charge in the clean up of reserves	OzFish Unlimited and Wagga OzFish	Wagga OzFish is proposing to organize and run a clean-up rubbish event. The clean-up event will involve collecting rubbish from the Murrumbidgee River and local reserves and creating a communication plan to assist with the reduction of waste dumping. NOT SUPPORTED AT THIS STAGE. Moved: Debbie Lennon, Seconded: Max Graham, Carried. While the merit of the application was noted, RFFTEC had concerns about the budget details and recommended that the applicant contacts Clean Up Australia regarding event resourcing, safety and disposal of collected waste, and to contact DPI to discuss suitability of the project for the fuel cards program and for assistance with signage.	FW \$6,000	

Platform: Recreational fishing education

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22
Installing sustainable fishing signage and line-tangle bin at the Nyah boat ramp	OzFish Unlimited and Nyah West OzFish	Nyah OzFish Chapter have noticed poor sustainable fishing practices from the local fishers in their area, such as taking undersized native fish, fishing litter and poor handling techniques. To assist in their mission to have sustainably minded fishers in their local area, the club is proposing erection of signage informing anglers of sustainable fishing practices and a dedicated line-disposal bin. NOT SUPPORTED. Moved: Ron Croker, Seconded: Peter Johnson, Carried. While the merit of the application was noted, RFFTEC had concerns about the budget details. RFFTEC recommended that the applicant liaises with DPI who can provide and erect fishing rules and responsible fishing signage using an existing sign design template (at no cost to the applicant).	FW \$9,500	
Enhance Estuary Habitat at the Woolgoolga Lake	Prosper Coffs Harbour, The Coffs Harbour Protection of the Environment Trust	This project will develop educational material highlighting the significance of estuarine habitat in the Woolgoolga Lake and inform visitors of ways to mitigate threats, enhancing the ecosystem and recreational fishing. NOT SUPPORTED. Moved: Micah Adams, Seconded: Karl Attenborough, Carried. RFSTEC noted that fact sheets and advisory signage may not be the most effective methods for recreational fishers and the location may be better suited for on-ground works through the Habitat Action Grants program.	SW \$5,566	

Table 3. Summary of two ongoing applications for funding from the Charter Fishing Trust SUPPORTED for funding by the Charter NSW Working Group

Projects SUPPORTED for funding from the Charter Fishing Trust

Project Title	Organisation	Project Summary	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Charter Fishing Logbook Monitoring Program	DPI	This program provides funding for the printing and distributing of logbooks and fish identification kits for Charter fishing licence operators. It also supports the data entry and validation of catch returns, targeted compliance operation and maintenance of the NSW DPI fish online database.	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
Charter Fishing Consultation and Management Program	NSW DPI	This program funds management initiatives for the Charter fishing industry including: promotion and targeted advertising campaigns, industry liaison, facilitation of the Charter Fishing NSW Working Group, exemption certificate and other administrative support services, and also assists with the development of new start-up charter businesses.	\$211,000	\$216,000	\$221,000