

Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW) Chair's Summary Meeting 31



The 31st meeting of RFNSW was held at the Branksome Hotel, Sydney, on 27 and 28 June 2024. Members welcomed the opportunity to meet face to face to consider and provide advice on a range of recreational fishing matters relating to the sector in NSW. The key outcomes from the meeting are summarised below.

Eastern Blue Groper

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) advised that the public submissions process on the Eastern Blue Groper rule changes had been completed. Members of the public were able to provide feedback via the Department's website over a two-month period. A submissions report is being prepared, which will be submitted to the Minister for consideration. At the meeting, members considered a range of options and available management tools for longer-term changes to Eastern Blue Groper fishing rules. Council also recognised the need to boost statewide advisory messages regarding fishing rules.

Cold Water Pollution

Members welcomed an update on cold water pollution (CWP) and bubble plume technology. CWP has been identified by RFNSW as a key management issue that requires effective mitigation in NSW. A cornerstone recommendation of the draft CWP Strategy is to implement a trial of a bubble plume destratification system at Pindari Dam in northern NSW. It was noted that DPIRD Fisheries is collaborating with WaterNSW to develop final designs for the bubble plume system and is working to secure funding for the trial over the coming months. DPIRD thanked RFNSW for their continued input into major freshwater ecosystems projects, including CWP, the Fish-Friendly Screens program and the 20-year Fish Passage Strategy. RFNSW looks forward to further updates on progress of the bubble plume trial.

Fish for Life

Members received an update on the latest outcomes under the 'Fish For Life' brand, including the progress of the 'Keep It Clean' subprogram. This subprogram focuses on raising awareness about the impact of fishing-related litter through an education campaign and engaging recreational fishers in cleanup activities across NSW, in partnership with OzFish. High-quality content (videos and social media tiles) under nine themes have been pushed out through various media channels with 2 million impressions and a reach of 980,000 so far over the past 10 months. The content encourages fishers to do the right thing when it comes to litter and the environment.

Project updates

Members were updated on a number of key Departmental projects, including the progress being made by the Mullocky, and the Line and Trap (which includes Snapper and Yellowtail Kingfish) Harvest Strategy Working Groups; development of the Draft NSW Recreational Fishing Enhancement Action Plans for Trout and Murray Cod; and the Recreational Fishing Environmental Assessment project.

The next meeting will be held on 18 September 2024 (TBC).

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)