

Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW) Chair's Summary Meeting 36



The 36th meeting of RFNSW was held at the Branksome Hotel, Mascot, Sydney on 11 December 2025. Council welcomed the opportunity to have a session with Ms Tara Black, DPIRD Deputy Secretary Fisheries & Forestry. The key outcomes from the discussions are summarised below.

Session with Deputy Secretary Fisheries & Forestry Ms Tara Black

The Deputy Secretary provided an update on the review of Fisheries Officers Powers and the re-alignment of the DPIRD Fisheries and Forestry organisational structure. The Council appreciated the Deputy Secretary's proactive approach regarding the review into Fisheries Officers Powers and reiterated its support for Fisheries Compliance staff and the critical role they play in enforcing fishing rules and regulations throughout the State. The Council also took the opportunity to discuss key recreational fishing issues with the Deputy Secretary, including the Recreational Fishing Action Plan, the RFNSW and CommFish Joint Communique on Water Quality and various Recreational Fishing Trust matters.

Harvest Strategies and Rebuilding Programs

DPIRD provided an update on the Mulloway Harvest Strategy, the Trap and Line Harvest Strategy and the Rebuilding Program for key species, which is currently undergoing public consultation. DPIRD advised that new assessment models were being implemented to further support the development of Harvest Strategies, particularly for Yellowtail Kingfish and Snapper. A brief update on the Rebuilding Program consultation process was also provided.

Commercial Fishing Proposals

RFNSW received a presentation from DPIRD and CommFish member, Graeme Byrnes, on a number of commercial fishing proposals. RFNSW highlighted concerns with each of the proposals, including but not limited to changes in resource allocation, fishery stock concerns, and shifting of commercial fishing effort. RFNSW noted the significant complexity and potential contentious nature of each of the proposals and requested further deliberation and consultation on these matters to identify practical and equitable outcomes (for example, using the previous BEP Working Group process). Council committed to write to DPIRD to recommend further deliberation and consultation on these matters.

Fish For Life Update

Members received an update on the latest outcomes from the 'Fish for Life' program. The 'Women in recreational fishing' initiative continues to have a positive impact on participation through the NSW Women in Fishing Recreational Facebook group (with >4,600 members in just 12 months) and 40 women leading fishing workshops that had over 700 participants. DPIRD also advised that new initiatives under the 'Fish For Life' brand that focus on responsible fishing will begin in early 2026.

RFNSW Achievements

The face-to-face meeting in December was the final one for the current term of RFNSW, which ends in early 2026. An EOI process for membership of the next term of RFNSW, commencing in early 2026, is currently underway. Council reflected on the many outcomes and achievements of RFNSW since its establishment, and over the past three years. It was highly evident that RFNSW continues to play a significant role in recreational fisheries policy development and consideration of matters relating to recreational fishing, including provision of quality advice to the Minister. I am proud to have served as the Chair of the Council for three terms and look forward to seeing the continued positive input that Council provides to the Government on the management of fisheries resources in NSW.

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)