

Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council (RFNSW) Chair's Summary Meeting 35



The 35th meeting of RFNSW was held online on 26 September 2025. Members welcomed the opportunity to provide advice on a range of recreational fisheries management matters. Council also welcomed the opportunity to meet with Ms Tara Black, who has recently been appointed as the DPIRD Deputy Secretary Fisheries and Forestry. The key outcomes from meeting discussions are summarised below.

Development of the 'Rebuilding Programs' strategy for key recreational fish species

DPIRD provided an update on the development of Rebuilding Programs for four species, including three currently classified as 'depleted' and another as 'recovering'. Council was pleased to see that previous feedback provided by RFNSW, as well as inputs from CommFish and the Charter Fishing NSW Working Group, had been incorporated into the proposed Programs. Council learned about the revised management arrangements by DPIRD, which aim to rebuild the stocks to more sustainable levels, and the next phase of the Program involving community consultation.

Final inputs to Communique on improving water quality

DPIRD provided a presentation on current projects aiming to improve water quality of estuarine and marine fish habitats in NSW under the Marine Estate Management Strategy, including: coastal wetland rehabilitation, riverbank stabilisation and vegetation improvements, sediment management, oyster reef restoration, and ongoing water quality monitoring and research programs. It was noted that poor water quality was the highest ranked threat to the NSW marine estate in the 2017 Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment. Council appreciated the presentation and incorporated relevant details into the final draft of the joint Communique with CommFish to the Minister to provide a plan to address the important need to improve water quality in our estuaries and rivers. The Communique emphasises the urgent need to improve water quality to restore fish nursery habitats, boost fish stocks, and deliver better environmental outcomes for other fauna, including listed birds.

Recreational Fisheries Monitoring Program Update

DPIRD presented the outcomes of the most recent Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey. The presentation provided further insights into recreational fishing catch and effort patterns and trends in NSW, while also highlighting the importance of this biennial survey for informing and supporting stock assessments and harvest strategies for key fish species in NSW. DPIRD also advised that the 2025/26 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey has recently commenced. To further complement this research, DPIRD will also incorporate a targeted boat ramp survey of recreational fishers, which will commence later this year.

Gone Fishing Day 2025

RFNSW was advised that Gone Fishing Day 2025 will be held on Sunday 19 October. DPIRD will be running five events across the state, with support from Fishcare volunteers. DPIRD also advised Council that a total of 40 fishing clubs and organisations have also received fishing packages with gear to use at their local events, while another 49 clubs and organisations are receiving grants of up to \$2000 to help run their events.

Professor Johann Bell (Chair)