

Waiting to be made	Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council
MEETING NO.	Meeting 5
DATE & TIME	02 June 2017 9am – 5:30pm
LOCATION	Mercure Hotel – Sydney International Airport. 22 Levey St, Wolli Creek, NSW.
ATTENDEES	Johann Bell (Chair), Max Castle, Vic Levett, Chris Cleaver, David Rae, Greg Reid, Jo Starling, Matt Hansen, Matthew Poulton, Paul Lennon, Ray Tang, Steve Samuels, Vicki Lear, Peter Turnell
APOLOGIES	Stan Konstantaras and Karl Mathers

1. Chair's introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the fifth meeting at the Mercure Hotel, Sydney International Airport.

2. Register of interests

The Chair requested that members declare any additions to the Register since the last meeting. Two members stated that they have made applications for the Gone Fishing Day Grants process, but the Chair determined there was no conflict of interest as all applications will be assessed by an independent panel.

3. Agreement on the agenda

RFNSW members agreed on the agenda for this meeting

4. Adoption of the record of the previous meeting

The draft outcomes of Meeting 4 were accepted without change as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

5. Future meeting schedule

Meeting 6: Two days at Port Stephens Research Centre on 31 August and 01 September 2017.

Meeting 7: 1 December 2017

6. Review of achievements and action items from previous minutes

The Committee noted the progress on action items from the previous meeting (Annex 1). Some additional action items were discussed and tabled below.

Action Item: DPI to provide and maintain a summary of outgoing RFNSW correspondence to enable easy tracking, including responses received.

DPI provided a summary of the progress of the Trout strategy sub group. Funding has been requested from the Recreational Fishing Trust to support consultation processes. A working group has been established, and recruitment is currently underway for a scientist to work in this group. Once a scientist has been appointed, the first trout strategy sub group meeting will be held. DPI will also be attending a meeting with Fisheries Victoria where trout management will be discussed.

Action Item: DPI to provide an update from the trout management meeting in Victoria to sub group members.

Council discussed that a dedicated Recreational Fishing Trust communication strategy would be worthwhile to ensure effective communication and promotion of achievements of the Trusts. The strategy should include key messages, target audiences and a range of media to communicate key messages as widely as possible. DPI advised that development of a Trust communication strategy was being progressed by the Trust expenditure committees.

RFNSW also discussed options for enhanced committee communication channels because long email chains can be hard to follow. It was considered a closed Facebook group may be the easiest and most effective platform for internal communication between members. It was also noted that a social media etiquette course would be included in the next meeting agenda.

Action Item: DPI to organise a private Facebook page for the RFNSW council and to facilitate a social media etiquette course for inclusion in the agenda for the next meeting.

7. Progressing the top 10 priority issue: reviewing status

RFNSW discussed progress of its top 10 priority issues as summarized in the meeting agenda.

Stock Assessments of Key Species (Kingfish, Snapper, Flathead and Tailor)

DPI provided a presentation about the status of Kingfish in NSW. Commercial and recreational landings spiked in 1988/89 and then dropped significantly thereafter. Landings of Kingfish have since remained at around the 200 tonnes per year level for recreational and commercial fishing combined, with ~ 100 tonnes per year being taken by each sector. The fishery appears to be dependent on young fish. Females mature at around 95 cm.

Previous research on recreational catch has shown 85% survival for Kingfish that have been caught and released. The species is currently growth overfished (i.e., too many small, immature fish are being caught).

Generally, increased size limits and reductions in bag limits can be used to address and reduce the effects of growth overfishing. Options for doing this for Kingfish were discussed. So that the recreational sector could play its part in rebuilding the stock of Kingfish, RFNSW recommended 1) an increase in the size limit to 75 cm, 2) a reduction in the bag limit from 5 to 2, with only one fish over 100 cm permitted, and 3) banning leadlining by recreational fishers.

Action Item: The chair to write to the Minister to request consideration of the RFNSW Kingfish recommendations.

Action Item: Future agendas for RFNSW meetings to split the key species into separate items to be addressed individually: Kingfish, Snapper, Flathead and Tailor. These species are to be scheduled for future RFNSW meetings.

Action Item: Fisheries Compliance to be advised about RFNSW concerns about black marketing of kingfish on the south coast

Mulloway Recovery Program

DPI updated RFNSW on outcomes from the first recreational fishing stakeholder meeting to discuss progress of the Mulloway Recovery Program. Key issues discussed included removal of the allowance of 10 undersize Mulloway (45 to 70 cms) from the Estuary General Fishery, consideration of changing the recreational fishing rules to further reduce fishing mortality, consideration of the introduction of an observer program for estuary and ocean prawn trawl operations to monitor and reduce the mortality of juvenile mulloway during prawn trawling, and further work on the effectiveness of current bycatch reduction devices and survival rates of discarded juvenile Mulloway.

Action Item: DPI to distribute the final meeting outcomes to RFNSW from the recreational fishing stakeholder meeting to discuss progress of the Mulloway Recovery Program.

Abalone recreational fishing rules

RFNSW raised the issue of the potential to review Abalone recreational fishing rules in NSW. The council had expressed previous support for an increase to the current bag limit of 2 Abalone. Some members expressed concern that this has not yet been resolved.

Action Item: DPI to provide further information about the current management issues associated with Abalone harvest across all sectors at Meeting 6 and propose a way forward for increasing the bag limit for recreational fishers.

Redfin

Action Item: DPI to provide previous feedback received from Matt Barwick regarding Redfin control. DPI to provide a summary of the current redfin education initiatives being undertaken as a means to determine if any additional education and advisory actions are required.

8. Attitudes and motivations of recreational fishers: survey by University of Wollongong

Dr Michelle Voyer, Social Scientist, University of Wollongong provided a presentation on her study to improve understanding of the motivations and attitudes of recreational fishers in NSW. Recreational fishers are a diverse group (age, sex, ethnicity) and fishers offered a range of reasons about why they fish and what makes for a “satisfying” fishing experience. This study looked at what motivates people to fish, and how these motivations interact.

Questionnaires over the phone and online were used to collect information, and five latent classes of recreational fishers were identified. Focus groups were then used to gather further information about each class. Fishers were inspired to fish by a combination of non-catch related motivations (socialization, escapism, mastery, etc) and consumptive motivations (catching something, keeping fish, catching large fish, etc.).

The five classes of recreational fishers are:

- Social fishers – prioritise socialization and escapism
- Generalists – prioritized all motivations equally
- Hunter Gatherers – care about catching fish to take home. Barriers to fishing include costs and not understanding the rules
- Trophy Fishers – motivated by mastery and big fish. Barriers to fishing include crowds and costs.
- Outdoor Enthusiasts – prioritise mastery, escapism and socialization.

Understanding the motivations and barriers people have to recreational fishing can help us to recruit and retain fishers, as well as helping us to know how to target education, advertising, compliance, etc. A summary of Dr Voyer’s research can be found here:

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/696245/Attitudes-and-Motivations-of-recreational-fishers.pdf

9. Presentation on Redmap Australia

Dr Natalie Moltschaniwskyj, DPI Director of Fisheries Research, presented information about the range shifts that are occurring in the marine environment due to ocean warming. She also informed RFNSW about a citizen science initiative called Redmap Australia. It was noted that increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have led to ocean warming and ocean acidification, which has resulted in a number of changes to our marine ecosystems. For example, the East Australian

Current is pushing further south each year and is persisting for longer periods down the East Coast. Some species have subsequently extended their range further south.

Redmap commenced as a method for citizens to contribute their photos and observations about marine species that have been sighted outside of their usual range. This information is collected in a database, and all verified sightings can be viewed on the Redmap website or app.

The University of Newcastle is the Redmap host in NSW. The information gathered on Redmap has been used in many peer-reviewed journal articles and may be used as a starting point for future research.

Currently, a lot of information is being contributed to the Redmap project from snorkelers and divers but the program would benefit greatly from increased reporting from recreational fishers.

Action item: RFNSW members to circulate details of the Redmap project to their networks to encourage reporting by recreational fishers through redmap.org.au or the Redmap app.

Action item: DPI Director, Fisheries Research, to provide a list of “out of range” species for NSW.

10. Strengthening the social licence for recreational fishing in NSW

Jo Staring facilitated a second workshop on strengthening the social licence of recreational fishers in NSW. Ms Starling led the group in a SWOT analysis, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were discussed in relation to social licence for recreational fishers. Members were requested to express interest in forming a RFNSW sub group to further investigate the dynamics between recreational fishers and people who criticize recreational fishing, and how to positively influence the perceptions of fishers in the wider community. Ultimately, this sub group will develop tender specifications for a professional contractor to assist with development of a social licence strategy.

Action Item: RFNSW members to nominate for the RFNSW social licence sub group. Sub group to meet to progress development of contractor specifications.

11. Talbingo: Jounama Pondage – Request for access

Max Castle advised RFNSW that he had recently been approached by local residents from Talbingo seeking assistance to re-open Jounama Pondage for swimming, kayaking, canoeing and fishing. Local residents report the village is suffering significantly from a lack of tourists and any initiative, such as permitting kayaks/canoes access, will improve tourism.

Mr Castle reported that the community supports the proposal to open Jounama Pondage for recreational use, however, there are safety issues regarding rapidly changing water levels during water capture and release activities. Mr Castle suggested that a working agreement could be arranged with NSW Roads and Maritime (RMS) and Snowy Hydro to address safety issues while allowing recreational activities to take place when it is safe to do so.

Mr Castle has approached Snowy Hydro and RMS to seek clarification around the reasons for the closure of Jounama Pondage and to request an assessment to determine the suitability of the Pondage for small craft.

RFNSW noted that the Minister for Primary Industries had previously written to Snowy Hydro seeking clarification on the reasons for the current restrictions. It is therefore appropriate to review any response prior to further action.

Action Item: The chair to write a letter to Dr Clayton Barnes expressing RFNSW support for recreational fishing access to Jounama Pondage noting boating safety is a matter for RMS. The

letter should also encourage Dr Barnes and the Progress Association to continue to work with Snowy Hydro with a view to undertaking an independent risk assessment.

12. Compulsory lifejackets trial in Randwick local government area

Council was provided with information from Stan Konstantaras expressing his concern regarding the lack of communication on the new rock fishing lifejacket law in the Randwick local government area. The new law, which began on 1 December 2016, makes it compulsory for anyone who is rock fishing anywhere in the Randwick local government area (including children) to wear an appropriate lifejacket. An appropriate lifejacket is defined as: adult - Australian Standard AS 4758 level 50S or greater; child (under 12 years of age) - must be level 100 Australian Standard AS 4758 or greater. Mr Konstantaras is concerned about the lack of communication on the performance of life jackets being provided through the Office of Emergency Management communication strategy. For example, a Level 50 jacket is only intended for use by those who are able swimmers and who are near to bank or shore, or who have help and a means of rescue close at hand. They are not designed to assist in turning the wearer into a face-up position. L50 jackets also require active participation by the wearer. However, this important information is not being communicated which may present false sense of security.

These jackets may therefore be inappropriate for rock fishers that are unconscious when entering the water. Mr Konstantaras considers a risk analysis should be undertaken of the potential advantages and disadvantages of the compulsory requirement to wear a life jacket under AS4758, with associated water performance testing to try and determine an appropriate lifejacket for rockfishers with regards to the definition of the Australian Standard.

Action item: The chair to write to the Minister seeking support for better education around lifejacket wear as well as performance testing and appropriateness of all personal flotation devices and lifejackets deemed suitable for rockfishers.

13. Baitfish in NSW waters for use in Eastern tuna and billfish fishery (ETBF)

Council was provided with an update on the NSW baitfish policy covering the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF). DPI has a current policy that provides for the issue of permits allowing Commonwealth managed ETBF operators to take baitfish using a purse-seine net or lift net in NSW state waters for use in their ETBF operations (not for sale). The policy currently prevents the issue of any new permits or replacement permits if an ETBF authority is transferred to another owner/vessel. Due to longstanding concerns regarding the highly restrictive nature and inequities of the current policy, the Department in consultation with stakeholders, has agreed to conduct a formal policy review. The policy review will consider the future management of baitfish access by ETBF operators, including the form and longevity of access and monitoring, research and compliance requirements.

Pending the finalisation of the policy review, it was previously agreed to extend the access to baitfish (via the issue of additional permits) to those ETBF operators who have a recent history of tuna fishing in NSW waters but do not currently have a permit (limited to a maximum of 32 permits, as previously supported by the Baitfish Working Group, the former Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing and the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee). Other conditions of the permits have been strengthened to better address the potential interactions between sector groups, including: bait fishing restricted to 2 days per week; yellowtail scad and blue (slimy) mackerel harvest permitted only; purse-seine nets of a maximum length of 100 m to be used; and the list of exclusion zones continue to be applied around key ports and offshore artificial reefs. These revised interim arrangements will be in place pending the implementation of longer-term management arrangements that will be developed in conjunction with the Baitfish Working Group and other stakeholder groups. Council will be kept informed on this issue.

14. Long-term strategy for offshore artificial reef locations

The Minister recently announced the location of the fifth offshore artificial reef to be built off Merimbula in 2017/18. This announcement follows a Ministerial expression of interest (EOI) process where numerous fishing clubs along the coast lodged detailed submissions for new reefs to be built in their region. Each time there is an announcement of a reef location, there is significant competition and speculation between sport fishing communities as to where the next reefs will be built. To address this ongoing issue and to achieve better planning, a longer-term artificial reef strategy (between 2018 and 2020) has been developed which outlines plans over a three year period rather than the current reef by reef approach. DPI provided a brief outline of the outcomes of the EOI location process, which included a site suitability assessment. The assessment took into account various criteria, including accessibility, availability and quality of existing reef and extent of local recreational fisher and community support. RFNSW noted that the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee was supportive of the first two priority sites for reefs 6 and 7 which ranked highest in the site suitability assessment. Council was supportive of these two priority sites. RFNSW also identified no issues with the next two highest ranked locations for reefs eight and nine that ranked the next highest although it was noted further consultation was still being undertaken.

15. Recreational Fishing Trust project recommendations from RFSTEC and RFFTEC

DPI advised RFNSW that the annual expression of interest inviting anglers, fishing clubs, councils, universities and other organisations to apply for funding from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust had been widely advertised. A total of 53 applications were received for funding from the Trusts in 2017/18 and beyond. The Recreational Fishing Saltwater and Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee RFSTEC and RFFTEC met on 10 and 11 May to review the applications. Council endorsed the Expenditure Committee recommendations, with one exception and two comments, and these will be forwarded to the Minister for consideration.

16. Pumped hydro = pumped redfin

Steve Samuels advised RFNSW that the Commonwealth Government is examining the prospect of implementing a “pumped hydro” project for the Snowy Scheme. The scheme involves pumping water back to a holding reservoir once used so it can be recycled through turbines at times of peak energy demand.

Mr Samuels is concerned that if water is pumped from Khancoban or Talbingo to any other dam, there is the possibility that redfin larvae will get translocated into that lake. The problem is compounded if the destination dam is Tantangara because water from Tantangara feeds directly into Eucumbene via the Providence Portal. Water from Eucumbene can service every other dam in the system, and extend to the sensitive ecosystem of the Snowy River. A redfin explosion across the whole of the Snowy Scheme is a distinct possibility if the proposed “pumped hydro” scheme is not managed appropriately.

Mr Samuels suggested potential options that could prevent the translocation of redfin larvae. Screening could be an option, however, this may be ineffective due to the high pressure and high volume of water being pumped. Alternatively, another dam could be built to act as a buffer for redfin translocation. Mr Samuels noted that businesses that depend on trout tourism, and which are estimated to generate more than \$100 million each year for the economy in the Snowy Mountains area would be severely jeopardized by introduction of redfin into all Snowy Mountain lakes.

Action Item: The chair to write to the Minister requesting that his office contacts the Commonwealth Minister overseeing the expansion of the Snowy Scheme to ensure that the proposed feasibility study includes costings to ensure that redfin perch and redfin perch eggs cannot be translocated to a non-redfin infected dam under the pumped hydro scheme.

17. Fishing Closure between Yarrowonga Weir and Tocumwal between September and November (Steve Samuels)

The RFNSW has previously discussed the Statutory Review of the NSW Trout Cod Recovery Plan: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/species-protection/conservation/what-current/endangered-species/trout-cod/review-of-the-trout-cod-recovery-plan>

This review showed that outcomes of the plan were generally positive, however, self-sustaining populations have only been established in a small percentage of the species' historic range, indicating that much work is still required before the overall objective of the NSW Trout Cod recovery plan is achieved.

DPI advised that the fishing closure between Yarrowonga Weir and Tocumwal was originally put in place because this stretch of water supported the last remaining breeding population of Trout Cod. Since then the range of the population has extended beyond the boundaries of the closure highlighting the success of the closure in the recovery of the species. Numbers of Trout Cod have also increased in other areas such as the Murrumbidgee due to the stocking that DPI has carried out.

RFNSW highlighted it was apparent that more communication on the requirement and benefits for the closure need to be communicated to the local fishing community.

Action Item: DPI to consider more communication and advisory material, such as a factsheet, for the local fishing community on the requirement and benefits for the Trout Cod closure.

18. General business

Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs)

DPI advised that Local Land Services is seeking community input on the Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) network in NSW to ensure it remains connected, viable and well maintained. There are more than 6,500 TSRs on Crown land in NSW, covering approximately two million hectares. The Crown Lands Management Review in 2012 found that many TSRs are no longer used for their original purpose. A new, comprehensive review of the network will examine the parcels of land required for the TSR network in the future.

The aim of the current TSR review is to determine which TSRs are still used or required for the original purpose they were set aside for and to determine if they are important for other reasons. This information will inform future decisions about how this land can be best reserved, managed and owned. The information will also be used to develop a comprehensive map of the TSR network in NSW — where the reserves are, what they are now used for, who uses them and how often.

In the community consultation paper, TSRs have been categorised into four broad categories:

Category 1 — TSRs that are only used for travelling stock or emergency management and biosecurity purposes. These sites have no other important uses or values. These TSRs would need to remain and be managed for travelling stock purposes.

Category 2 — TSRs that are used for travelling stock, emergency management or biosecurity purposes, but are also important and used for a range of other reasons – for example, biodiversity conservation, Aboriginal cultural heritage or recreational purposes. These TSRs will need to remain as TSRs and be managed for their multiple purposes.

Category 3 — TSRs that are not used for travelling stock or emergency management, but are important, valued and used for other reasons - for example, biodiversity conservation, Aboriginal cultural heritage or recreational purposes. These TSRs may need to be re-reserved or re-purposed to ensure they are effectively protected and managed for the purposes they are used and valued for.

Category 4 — TSRs that are no longer used or valued for any of the above reasons.

DPI advised it will be making a submission to address recreational fishing issues, however, submissions from angling groups should also be encouraged to provide additional sector feedback to the review.

Action Items: The chair to write to the Minister to highlight Council issues associated with the TSR review with a copy sent to the review submission address.

Opera house traps

Matt Hansen highlighted current issues associated with bycatch in 'opera house' traps, including recent bycatch reports of species such as water rats and platypus. RFNSW agreed that more communication to the recreational fishing sector would assist with highlighting the issues with current traps and how bycatch can be mitigated. Council established a position that the use of 'opera house' traps should be banned in NSW as soon as possible (and preferably within three months). DPI advised that the significant nature of this proposed statewide rule change would usually trigger the need for further community and industry consultation prior to implementation to ensure consideration of the potential regulatory impacts of the rule change.

Action item: The chair to advise the Minister about the RFNSW position on the banning of opera house traps in NSW and to recommend that DPI undertakes the necessary community and industry consultation to enable consideration of the potential regulatory impacts of this proposed rule change. DPI to also undertake media to highlight the risks of using opera house traps and opportunities to reduce bycatch of non-target species.

Transitioning the NSW Southern fish trawl fishery into the Commonwealth fishery

DPI advised RFNSW that notice has been provided to NSW Southern Fish Trawl (SFT) fishing business owners and Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) authority holders to notify them about the process of transitioning the SFT into the SESSF, and to call for nominations for the Southern Fish Trawl Transitioning Working Group. RFNSW will be kept informed when there is more information/detail available as the Working Group gets underway.

Extension of trophy fishery code of practice to Lake Macquarie

DPI has received several submissions from local Lake Macquarie fishing groups in support of the extension of the trophy fishery concept to Lake Macquarie. Lake Macquarie is considered a suitable location in which to expand the concept. As with St Georges Basin and Tuross Lake, it is a recreational fishing haven and highly regarded as a productive Flathead fishery. Council acknowledged it was pleasing to note that a number of local fishing groups are supportive of the voluntary trophy fishery code of practice concept in Lake Macquarie, which promotes release of all flathead over 70 cm. RFNSW supported the requested extension.

Fisheries Officers – Greg Reid

Due to time constraints, RFNSW deferred this item to the next meeting.

Update on Native Title claims

Due to time constraints, RFNSW deferred this item to the next meeting.

Action item: Agenda items regarding Fisheries Officers and Update on Native Title claims to be held over to the next RFNSW meeting.

Agenda items for next meeting

Council raised three issues for consideration at the next meeting:

- Public liability requirements associated with installation of angel rings
- Bowfishing for carp update

- Update on the proposed risk assessment for recreational fishing opportunities in water supply reservoirs.
- Managing fishing tournaments in recreational fishing havens