



# Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee Outcomes, 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting

## Port Stephens Fisheries Institute, Taylors Beach

19 November 2013

### Attendees

Bruce Schumacher (Chair), Ron Butler (Region 2), Ron Croker (Region 3), Ian Ward (Region 4), Tom Williams (Region 5), Debbie Lennon (Region 6), Richard Ping Kee (Region 7), Kevin McKinnon (Region 8) Peter Turnell (NSW DPI).

### 1. Chairs introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

### 2. Apologies

Max Graham (Region 1)

### 3. Confirmation of outcomes from previous RFFTEC meeting

The draft outcomes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> RFFTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting. Moved: Kevin McKinnon Seconded: Ron Croker

### 4. Action items from previous meetings

The progress of action items from the previous meeting was noted.

### 5. NSW Recreational Fishing Trust Report

The status of the Freshwater Trust was presented at the meeting. Meeting reports for Trust funded programs were submitted by project managers to enable committee members to review progress of projects prior to the meeting. The committee was advised that the Recreational Fishing Fees had increased on 1 September.

**Action item 1:** The committee recommended that consideration be given to removal of the 3 day licence when recreational fishing fees are next reviewed.

The committee had previously raised concerns about delays in processing of committee member meeting expenses. DPI advised that a new financial system had been implemented across NSW Trade and Investment which resulted in some delays to meeting payments, however all committee travel and sitting fee payments from previous meetings should now be up to date.

**Action item 2:** The committee requested if remittance advices with more information on payment details could be provided in the future.

## 6. Review of 2013/14 Habitat Grant funding applications

The status of the Fish Habitat Network program and previously funded habitat grants was discussed. A total of 69 habitat grant applications were received this year in response to the expression of interest. The freshwater habitat grants technical assessment panel (TAP) met on 25 October to assess the applications. The TAP developed a list of recommended projects which were reviewed by the committee. Meeting recommendations with respect to each project are provided in Tables 1 and 2.

## 7. Review of new 2013/14 Trust funding applications

The committee reviewed the new and deferred freshwater grant applications. Funding recommendations with respect to each project were forwarded to the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing for subsequent recommendations to the Minister for consideration. Meeting recommendations as considered by the Minister are provided in Tables 3 - 5.

## 8. Angler access program update

DPI provided an update on assessment of applications as part of the Crown Roads Disposal Program. An access strategy is being developed to address access issues on a river reach basis and to provide anglers with information that will assist them in accessing rivers. The angler access team is currently conducting whole of river reach assessments of access points within a river reach. Effort is concentrated on more important waterways. Web delivery of access locations and site details is planned in the future. The Fisheries Management Officer has continued to undertake site inspections and assessments of identified access locations on numerous waterways throughout the state. A training session was recently held at Grafton Lands Office with Fisheries and Crown Lands staff to discuss road closure assessment procedures.

## 9. Inland Fishcare volunteer program update

There are currently 280 active volunteers in NSW who attend around 500 events each year. Some major freshwater events attended over the past 3 months by the inland Education Officer include the Mudgee Small Farm Field Days, Blacktown Family Fish Inn, Gunnedah AGQUIP, Henty Field Days and the Narrandera Fishing Workshops. The next round of training of western volunteers is planned on 22/23 February 2014. In 2013, 89 NSW primary schools were registered with the Get Hooked program. Get Hooked staff together with Education Officers and Fishcare volunteers conducted 13 school visits and attended the Sydney International Boat Show, Dive Show and Cronulla Spring Fair. Over 5000 contacts were made at these events. A total of 33 schools with around 1,100 children are participating in Get Hooked workshops, being held during October/November.

## 10. Tour of bass hatchery facility

A tour of the bass production facility including bass nursery building and broodstock holding facility was undertaken. A trust funded fisheries technician is currently funded to boost breeding and stocking of Australian bass. Committee members viewed shade cloth and pond infrastructure previously funded through the Freshwater Trust. Intensive and extensive methods of fish cultivation were discussed. Control over environmental influences can be achieved during fertilisation, egg and fry development to achieve successful rearing. A total of 413,000 Australian bass fry were released this year into 22 public, freshwater impoundments across NSW, which is a record.

## 11. Development of a research plan

Dr Bob Creese discussed the development of a Strategic Research Plan that clearly links with the Fisheries NSW Strategic Plan. This covers: priority programs (7) with indicative themes within each; key research tools that can be used; how science is communicated; and how data can be provided to internal and external stakeholders. The Plan will serve as a Framework to guide the development of future research projects. Importantly the Plan can also be used to guide research priority-setting by the recreational sector, which is essential for broader planning and assessment of programs for the expenditure committees and ACoRF. The Committee discussed a process for getting stakeholder input for priority setting. The Chair noted that ACoRF and the committees will develop a list of research priority areas in the near future to be considered within the context of the plan.

Internal work is also well under way on one aspect of the 'Web Portal' project, including looking at the potential for making data collected from the Resource Assessment System available to external users. DPI also advised the Resource Assessment Workshop was held in October and some priority species identified for research (eg bait species, tailor). There is also a new FRDC project to examine better

integration of data sets into NSW stock assessments approved through the EOI stage.

## 12. Fisheries compliance program update

An overview of recent compliance actions undertaken across inland NSW including significant enforcement outcomes was provided. Inland Fisheries Officers have contributed significantly to freshwater patrol activities. There has been a continued focus on maximising voluntary compliance and creating an effective deterrent by having presence during periods of high fishing activity and by targeting fishers involved in illegal fishing activities utilising covert and overt operations. Many operations were held over the past financial year targeting Murray crayfish, fishing competitions, patrolling closed trout spawning streams, Murray cod closed and open seasons and inspecting restaurants and processors selling fish. Over 11,700 freshwater fisher contacts were made during the last financial year with 88% of fishers found to be complying with the fisheries legislation.

## 13. General business

*Future catfish re-introductions* - Mr Richard Ping Kee requested an update on the feasibility of stocking Freshwater Catfish from Copeton Dam into the lower Gwydir River. DPI advised that a report on areas suitable for Freshwater Catfish re-introductions is being prepared, which will include a review of environmental factors to permit future Freshwater Catfish restocking (subject to adherence with population genetic guidelines for breeding of the species). A research program would need to accompany any future stocking program in order to monitor the effectiveness of re-introductions and to determine whether Freshwater Catfish populations are naturally recovering. Such research would provide the basis for any future proposal to delist Freshwater Catfish as an endangered population. It was noted that recreational fishing for Freshwater Catfish is currently prohibited in western rivers, however the species can be taken in listed impoundments, and eastern rivers and dams.

**Action item 3:** DPI to discuss the requirements for future restocking of catfish with the research and threatened species units.

*Mannus Creek Dam fishway* - Mr Ron Croker asked whether a fishway was planned to be installed at Mannus Creek Dam as part of an upgrade to dam wall. DPI advised that the Minister has discretion on requirements for fishway construction and may require an appropriate offset to ensure fish passage is achieved in the catchment.

**Action item 4:** DPI to provide an update on status of fish passage at Mannus Creek Dam.

*Tallowa Dam high fishway* – Mr Ron Croker asked if information on the functioning of the 27 metre fish lift at Tallowa Dam could be provided as it appeared to have been inoperable for an extended period of time.

**Action item 5:** DPI to provide an update on the operational status of the Tallowa Dam high fishway.

*Future consultative structures* - The Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council (MFAC) has been established to provide the Minister for Primary Industries with high-level strategic and policy advice on issues relating to the management of fisheries resources in NSW. Expressions of interest have been sought for the appointment of five core members of the MFAC, each with expertise in or ability to represent the interests of commercial fishing, recreational fishing, aquaculture, Aboriginal cultural fishing and conservation of aquatic resources. Changes to consultative arrangements for recreational fishing continue to be developed.

## 14. Next meeting

The next meeting is proposed on 6 May 2014 (to be confirmed).

## 15. Meeting closed

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

## 16. Action items

Action items	Group responsible	Status
1. Consideration is given to removal of the 3 day licence when the price of the recreational fishing fee is next reviewed.	Recreational & Indigenous Fisheries Unit	Noted for consideration during next review of the recreational fishing fee pricing structure
2. The committee requested if remittance advices with more information on payment details could be provided in the future.	DPI	Pending
3. DPI to discuss the requirements for future reintroductions of catfish with the research and threatened species units.	Dr Meagan Duncan, Research Unit	Update on status to be provided at next meeting
4. DPI to provide an update on status of fish passage at Mannus Creek Dam.	Luke Pearce, Conservation Unit	Update on status to be provided at next meeting
5. DPI to provide an update on the operational status of the Tallowa Dam high fishway.	Dr Dean Gililgan, Research Unit	Update on status to be provided at next meeting

**Table 1: Freshwater Trust habitat grant applications supported by RFFTEC****Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Belubula River Fishing Park Blayney</b></p> <p>Removal of willows in a section of Belubula River about 100 metres from Blayney Post Office to be used as a public park for fishing. The river at this location is stocked annually with trout fry.</p>	Central Acclimatisation Society Inc	\$8,285	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Laura Creek crossing on Longford Road</b></p> <p>Longford Road causeway project is the replacement of an existing pipe culvert that has poor inlet conditions with a box culvert at a lower level to reduce headloss in stream flow</p>	Guyra Shire Council	\$25,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Restoring fish habitat and riparian biodiversity at Inverell</b></p> <p>The project will see 0.8km (1.6ha) riparian invasive weeds removed from the banks of the Macintyre River in Inverell. The project will involve significant volunteer contributions through ongoing site maintenance and revegetating 2.4ha (0.8km) of the public reserve with native species.</p>	Inverell Shire Council	\$13,625	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Bringing Back the Fish on the Horton River</b></p> <p>Protecting and improving an area of high habitat value by 12km fencing, 4km weeding, resnagging (3) and road barrier removal on the Horton River.</p>	Upper Gwydir Landcare Association	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>The Macquarie River Waterways and Riparian Restoration Action Program (WRRAP) - Reach 3 restoration works</b></p> <p>The project will rehabilitate a section of river by replacing 750m (3ha) willow infestations with a biodiverse range of native species to reduce erosion and flooding, improve water quality, increase available habitat, and improve access to the river for recreational activities.</p>	Bathurst Regional Council	\$23,140	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Making Fish Happen in the Macquarie</b></p> <p>Installation of key fish habitat (25-40 snags) at 12 sites in the Macquarie River at locations identified through habitat mapping to be deficient in large woody debris</p>	Inland Waterways Rejuvenation Association	\$10,000	\$0	\$0

**Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>UMDR community willow control project</b>	Kosciuszko 2 Coast Inc	\$10,440	\$0	\$0

The project will engage community members and river interest groups to control young instream sapling willows and survey all willow infestations along 45km of the Upper Murrumbidgee River within the NSW section of the Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach. Consultation with recreational user groups to identify further opportunities to enhance community use and fish habitat in the UMDR.

**Motion:** The expenditure committee supported funding for these projects. **Moved:** Ron Croker **Seconded:** Ian Ward **Carried.**

**Table 2: Freshwater Trust habitat grant applications *not supported* by RFFTEC****Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Deniliquin Recreational Fishing Park</b></p> <p>The project aims to drain, dredge and remove silt and pest species from a lagoon located in parklands in Deniliquin. The lagoon will then be re snagged and refilled and the banks of the lagoon will be revegetated.</p>	Deniliquin RSL Fishing Club	\$34,545	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Yass River Fish Habitat Protection program</b></p> <p>Willow removal in 1.15 Km priority stretch of the Yass River to improve fish and riparian habitat values and passage for native fish species endemic to the Yass River</p>	Yass Landcare and Yass Acclimatisation Society	\$28,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Nandillion Ponds Creek Enhancement</b></p> <p>The project will involve the environmental enhancement of the riparian (3ha weeds, 2ha reveg) and flow zone (0.3km erosion control) of Nandillion Ponds Cree to improve and protect native fish habitat at the headwaters of the Bell River</p>	Orange City Council	\$17,200	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Exotic Vegetation Removal and Resnagging at Boree Creek</b></p> <p>The proposed exotic vegetation removal (TBA km) and large woody debris (10 snags) project along Boree Creek at Cudal will provide immediate benefits to structural and functional diversity within the aquatic environment of Boree Creek.</p>	Cabonne Council	\$8,700	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Boree Creek Willow and Weed Removal and Replanting</b></p> <p>The project is aimed at 4km weed removal, native vegetation enhancement and 0.5km stream bank stabilization along a 4km stretch of Boree Creek. The existing River She Oak gallery forest is infested with willows, hawthorn, blackberry, hemlock and phalaris grass.</p>	Boree Creek Landcare Group	\$28,415	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Marra Creek Culvert Renewal</b></p> <p>Construct single (1) cell fish friendly box culvert with scour protection, re-establish road alignment and remove existing culvert.</p>	Warren Shire Council	\$40,000	\$0	\$0

**Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>"Save Our Severn"</b></p> <p>Protect critical aquatic ecosystems on part of the Severn River by controlling 12km Honey Locust and Willows and feral animals (pigs, foxes), restoring riparian vegetation and native habitat and stabilizing stream banks (grass only mentioned) to increase the productivity at surrounding land and reducing degradation of the river.</p>	Ashford Business Council Inc	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Rehabilitation of fish habitat in Lower Warrego River</b></p> <p>Improving native fish habitat in the Booka Dam reach of the Warrego River by de silting 18000m<sup>3</sup>, re snagging 20 snags and 4.2km fencing off the waterway. Finally to design a long term solution that improves river flow, upstream fish migration and continues to support major habitats for fauna (modified flood gate structure).</p>	Darling Irrigation	\$38,400	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Quirindi Creek rehab. project upstream of Henry Street bridge</b></p> <p>Access, renovate, regenerate 1km (5ha) creek frontage, weed removal/revegetation/bank stabilisation (0.1km)/ re snag (3)</p>	Liverpool Plains Shire Council	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Kremur Street Banks Rehabilitation and willow/woody weed removal between Kremur Street and Padman</b></p> <p>To conduct bank remediation works, including 1.1km weed removal and revegetation, between Kremur Street boat ramp and Padman Park (west Albury). Engineering design works and approvals have been received by Council for the river bank remediation works.</p>	Albury City Council	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Jugiong Water Treatment Plant Riparian Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>The project aims to rehabilitate the Murrumbidgee River bank area at the Jugiong Water Treatment Pant by removing 1.16ha invasive weeds and revegetating this area with native species; enhancing both local and downstream reaches for recreational fishing.</p>	Goldenfields Water County Council (GWCC)	\$37,200	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Remediation and habitat improvement along the Castlereagh River and West Creek Coonabarabran</b></p> <p>Habitat improvement along West and Racecourse Creeks and the Castlereagh River. Includes removal of weeds, bank stability, planting native vegetation over a total of 550m to improve terrestrial and aquatic habitat, and linking a public area to create a large space suited for recreational fishing and other recreational activities.</p>	Warrumbungle Shire Council	\$40,000	\$0	\$0



**Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Gwydir River Healthy Habitats</b></p> <p>The project will enhance fish habitat by mitigating negative effects of flooding that has occurred (0.5km erosion control wks, 0.8km fencing, 5km weeding, 1.5km reveg), providing much needed shelter during high flow times (8 snags), as well as providing structure to create optimum conditions for fish habitat and recreational fishing</p>	The Gwydir Shire Council	\$36,830	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Bell River Log Jam</b></p> <p>The implementation of an engineered log jam at the junction of the Bell and Macquarie Rivers to reduce erosion and silting while creating protection habitat for native fish (0.5km section).</p>	Mid Macquarie Landcare Inc	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Lachlan River Remediation Project</b></p> <p>The property manager of Morbane aims to rehabilitate the riparian zone for 1 km of river frontage that the property has to the Lachlan River. 2.5 km revegetation, 0.2 km erosion control works and 0.35 km riparian fencing. The site is a popular fishing spot for both local residents and visitors to the area.</p>	Hoey Family Trust	\$9,550	\$0	\$0

**Motion:** The expenditure committee did not support funding for these projects. **Moved:** Ron Butler **Seconded:** Debbie Lennon **Carried.**

**Table 3: Freshwater Trust project applications supported by RFFTEC****Platform: Recreational fishing education**

## Small Projects

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Distribution of free Fishing Safety DVDs to fishing groups, community groups, agencies and other organisations</b></p> <p>Printing and distribution of bulk copies of fishing safety DVDs to community and angling organisations</p> <p><b>SUPPORTED. Moved:</b> Debbie Lennon, <b>Seconded:</b> Ron Butler <b>Carried.</b></p>	NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
<p><b>Fisheries Advisory trailer, south west NSW</b></p> <p>To purchase a fisheries advisory trailer based at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre for use by Fishcare volunteers and angling clubs to promote responsible fishing practices, recreational fishing trust programs and fishing rules and regulations at open days / field events.</p> <p><b>SUPPORTED. Moved:</b> Ron Butler, <b>Seconded:</b> Ian Ward. <b>Carried.</b> NSW DPI to also obtain quotes from inland suppliers to apply durable trailer branding and fit solar panels to trailer housing for comparison with the existing quote.</p>	NSW DPI	\$31,635	\$0	\$0
<b>Platform: Fishing access and facilities</b>				
Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Fisheries Management Officer (Angler Access)</b></p> <p>To employ a Fisheries Management Officer to address the increased volume of road closure applications associated with the Crown Lands Road Disposal Program.</p> <p><b>SUPPORTED. Moved</b> Ron Croker, <b>Seconded</b> Ron Butler. <b>Carried.</b></p>	NSW DPI	\$0	\$127,650	\$0

**Platform: Fishing access and facilities**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Managing the recovery of Murray crayfish in the southern Murray-Darling Basin</b></p> <p>To assess the population status of Murray crayfish in the Murray Darling Basin, particularly within black water affected reaches and to develop a long term monitoring strategy for Murray crayfish.</p>	NSW DPI & Nature Glenelg Trust	\$95,166	\$72,011	\$0
<p><b>SUPPORTED. Moved</b> Tom Williams, <b>Seconded</b> Kevin McKinnon. <b><u>Carried.</u></b></p>				

**Table 4: Freshwater Trust project applications *not supported* by RFFTEC****Platform: Recreational fishing education**

## Small Projects

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Development of local native fish education kit and brochures</b></p> <p>The project aims to develop an education package including brochures and posters for schools and universities about native fish held in aquariums at Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre, Burrumbuttock and responsible fishing practices.</p> <p><b>NOT SUPPORTED. Moved</b> Kevin McKinnon, <b>Seconded</b> Debbie Lennon. <b>Carried.</b> The Committee considered the project to be low priority. A range of advisory publications are currently available on fish species, recreational fishing rules and programs. The Trust is currently funding a “Get Hooked it’s fun to fish” school education program.</p>	Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre	\$4,800	\$1,800	\$0

**Platform: Fishing access and facilities**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Camden Town Farm Lagoon Platform</b></p> <p>Install a fishing platform and footpath at Camden Town Farm lagoon to improve angler access opportunities at the lake and to remove carp and noxious weeds from the dam</p> <p><b>NOT SUPPORTED. Moved</b> Kevin McKinnon, <b>Seconded</b> Richard Ping Kee. <b>Carried.</b> The committee questioned whether or not the facility was presently open to the public, what the opening hours of the facility would be and whether or not it would be open to the public without charge. The footpath component of the application was considered to be a general public amenity which should be the funding responsibility of Council. NSW DPI to investigate public access at the facility and feasibility for public fish stocking.</p>	Camden Council	\$28,000	\$0	\$0

**Platform: Recreational fishing enhancement**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<p><b>Dollar for dollar native fish stocking program</b></p> <p>To increase the dollar for dollar native fish stocking program budget due to increased stocking applications received and to assist hatcheries to fulfil HQAS and calcien marking requirements.</p> <p><b>NOT SUPPORTED. Moved</b> Kevin McKinnon, <b>Seconded</b> Ron Croker. <b>Carried.</b> Richard Ping Kee declared a potential conflict of interest and abstained from voting. While the Committee acknowledged an increase in fish production costs and popularity of the program, the Committee did not support increasing the budget to the level proposed within the application. The Committee recommended that NSW DPI submit a revised dollar for dollar funding application, noting that the project should continue to be administered by NSW DPI.</p>	NSW Silver Perch Growers Association	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0

**Table 5: Saltwater/Freshwater Trust applications *not supported* by RFFTEC****Platform: Research on recreational fishing**

Project title and summary	Organisation	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Recreational Survey Data Internet Portal</b>	systems2serve	\$118,000	\$0	\$0

A web portal will be developed that provides user-friendly access to recreational fishing survey data to the public including graphs and tables on catch and effort by species, location and date. Note, this application was deferred pending confirmation from DPI research that it was proceeding with its web portal program.

**NOT SUPPORTED. Moved** Kevin McKinnon, **Seconded** Ian Ward. **Carried.** Trust funds have previously been allocated towards an existing web portal program.