

Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee
Outcomes - Meeting 33, 11 August 2009

1. Apologies

All present.

2. Confirmation of outcomes from previous RFFTEC meeting

The draft outcomes of the 32nd RFFTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting. **Moved:** Karl Schaerf **Seconded:** Kevin McKinnon. **Carried.**

3. Action Items from meeting 32

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

4. The new Department of Industry and Investment

The Premier announced the creation of 13 new "Super" Departments on 11 June 2009 that will deliver a continued high level of service delivery to our clients across all industry sectors.

NSW DPI is now part of a new organisation known as Industry and Investment NSW (I&I NSW). Other existing agencies to join the new Department include:

- Department of State and Regional Development
- NSW Tourism
- Department of Water and Energy (Energy)
- Screen NSW (Film and Television Office)
- Rural Assistance Authority
- Mine Subsidence Board
- Coal Compensation Board
- Game Council
- NSW Food Authority

The joint focus of our new Department will be on benefiting the whole community by leveraging investment and supporting industry, innovation and economic development with one of the key focuses being to create jobs in NSW.

As part of these reforms, the Fisheries Operations Branch is now known as the Fisheries Resource Management Branch.

5. Recreational Fishing Trust Report

The status of the Freshwater Trust was presented at the meeting. The Committee was advised that a total of \$13.4 million was received from recreational fishing licence sales in 2008/09. The Committee reviewed the summary tables of meeting reports submitted by external applicants and I&I NSW managers. These tables and reports enabled members to review progress of the various programs funded by the Trusts.

6. Review of new 2010 Freshwater applications

New applications (large and small grants) for funding from the Freshwater Trust reviewed by the Committee's are shown in Table 1 (see appendix).

7. Trust program updates – presentations

a) Freshwater compliance update – Mr Glenn Tritton, Manager, Fisheries Compliance, provided an update on recreational compliance activities for 2008/09. The report included

details on the top ten recreational fishing offences, compliance actions taken, seizures of illegal gear and significant court outcomes. Details were also provided on Recreational Mobile Squad activities and state wide operations over the Easter weekend. It was noted that four of the six inland Trust funded fisheries officer positions were currently filled, with the remaining two positions planned to be filled over the coming months.

Ms Debbie Lennon and Mr Schaerf questioned whether the Fishers Watch phone line for reporting fisheries offences was operating at all times. Ms Lennon advised that the 1800 number did not appear to be working effectively if called from within Victoria or along parts of the Murray River. I&I, NSW advised that Fishers Watch phone was a 24 hour service however immediate response might not be possible at all times. District Fisheries Officers continue to act on information received from this number and this information is used in targeting on-going surveillance and for enforcement activities. However, I&I NSW will investigate the effectiveness of the Fishers Watch phone line if called from Victoria and the Murray region and will report back the Committee at the next meeting with regards to this issue.

Mr Karl Schaerf questioned whether or not on the spot fines could be imposed if fishing licences were not presented upon request and asked whether the current provision to enable presentation of fishing licences within 14 days following inspection could be removed. I&I NSW noted that this policy only applies to persons that have already purchased a fishing licence or to those that are exempt from purchase but do not have the licence or exemption with them at the time of request. However the policy for issuing of on the spot fines will be reviewed in the future.

Action item: That the Manager, Fisheries Compliance provide information for the next RFFTEC meeting on general demographics of fishers currently not complying with freshwater fishing laws.

Action item: That the Manager, Fisheries Compliance investigates the effectiveness of the 1800 Fishers Watch number if dialled from within Victoria and lower Murray region and to provide information to the Committee at the next meeting about this issue.

b) Recreational Freshwater Fishing Poster - A draft of the new freshwater fishing poster publication was circulated for comment. The committee suggested that more obvious labels for protected and/or pest species should be included on the poster.

c) Recreational fishing calendar - Ms Sarah Martin, Fisheries Manager provided a summary of the freshwater fishing calendar photo competition and the photographs selected by the committee as most suitable for inclusion in the 2010 calendar. Over 800 entries have been received for the 2010 calendar. The department has a non-exclusive copyright of all submitted photographs enabling their future use in brochures and other publications. To date, the calendar has been matched with \$1.50 in sponsorship for every \$1 provided from the Trust. The Committee discussed that freshwater forage species and threatened species should be included in the 2010 calendar, if possible.

The Committee discussed the merit of producing a combined fishing freshwater/saltwater calendar in 2011. However, the concept was not supported by the Committee at this stage.

d) Effectiveness of stocking research - Ms Prue McGuffie, Fisheries Technician provided a presentation on the effectiveness of stocking research carried out since 2000 and a brief overview of otolith microchemistry used for ageing fish and calcein marking of hatchery produced fish for discrimination between wild and stocked fish. A detailed study of Murray cod in the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers is planned in the future which will incorporate data collected since 2005. The study will investigate size limit impacts, size at maturity, recreational fishing take and the percentage of wild recruitment. Additional monitoring of the Lake Copeton fishery is also proposed for this year.

Mr Leo Cameron, Fisheries Technician presented an overview of the Snowy River bass re-stocking assessment work currently underway. So far the research suggests low survival of stocked fish, although growth rates of stocked fish have been reasonable. Mr Cameron provided an overview of his non-lethal calcein marking trials with bass and the plans to analyse dietary behaviours of bass and other fish species in the Snowy River to determine interactions between stocked and wild fish communities.

e) Fish production and stocking - Mr Ben Doolan, Fisheries Management Officer provided a background on the various fish stocking programs co-ordinated by I&I NSW staff, the fish stocking plans for the 2009/10 year and the assessment process applied to all inland stockings. Stocking figures for the 2008/09 season were also provided. Mr Doolan discussed the production at the government hatcheries including the improved success with central zone bass spawnings this year due to modifications being applied to the Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme. Mr Cameron Westaway noted that some areas in inland NSW have been set aside from stocking as wild fisheries for genetic reasons.

An over expenditure in the Dollar for Dollar program in 2008/09 of approximately \$50,000 has limited the available budget for the 2009/10 season and a total of \$250,000 of applications have been received this year. Various options to reduce the deficit were discussed although these were identified as difficult to implement, given that stocking approvals have already been issued to bass clubs and bass production orders are now underway. A motion to increase the Dollar for Dollar budget for 2009/10 to account for this year's budget shortfall was not supported by the Committee. The Committee instead supported a reduction in this year's applications at a pro rata percentage to ensure a balanced budget for the program.

f) Freshwater access - Mr Alistair McBurnie, Angler Access Manager outlined the responsibilities of the angler access manager, which included responding to regional reserve referrals from DECC, commenting on NSW road closures from NSW Lands, assessing perpetual lease conversions to freehold land and review of National Parks Plans and other plans of Management. The future creation of iconic fishing reserves was also discussed.

Other duties of the access manager include working with the Council of Freshwater Anglers (CFA) on an angler access stiles project, the installation of access signage and development of a freshwater angler access guide book. Approximately 1500 sites have been nominated for the guide book, each of which requires verification for legal entry and accessibility.

f) Fishing Infrastructure – Mrs Mel Bradbury, Angling Facilities Manager, provided an update on Trust funded angling facility projects and an overview of completed and non-completed projects. Popular designs of fish cleaning stations, shelters and fishing platforms were also presented and discussed. Progress has been made with projects that

were referred to the Infrastructure Manager for further development, including consultation with angling clubs which have been involved in the project development. The Infrastructure manager also provided an update of the Trusts application form which was distributed to members for comment out of session. Best practice design guidelines are planned for inclusion with this application in the future including method of waste disposal at fish cleaning tables. Promotion of angling facilities has included articles for Ministerial release, a regular article in the Newscast publication and a recent article in the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie Community Environment Network newsletter.

Photographs of the completed cleaning table and shelter at Pallamallawa were provided. Mrs Bradbury advised that Pallamallawa fishing club had requested whether remaining funds from their recreational fishing grant could be spent on the erection of a notice board at the reserve to promote fishing club events / community functions and to acknowledge contributions from the Trust and Council for the erection of the fish cleaning table & shelter.

Motion: The Committee supported the use of remaining grant funds for installation of a community notice board at the cleaning table and shelter site at Pallamallawa reserve.

Moved: Richard Ping Kee. **Seconded:** Debbie Lennon. **Carried.**

Action item: That committee members to provide feedback on the updated Trust application form out of session.

8. General business

Ballina Habitat Forum

Mr Kevin McKinnon reported that several committee members had represented RFFTEC at the Habitat Forum in Ballina on 18th and 19th of June.

Action item: Mr Tom Williams and Mrs Debbie Lennon to provide a written report by email on the outcomes of the Fish Habitat forum out of session.

Forum on Murray cod fishery in Murray Darling Basin

Mr Cameron Westaway outlined an application submitted to FRDC for a forum on the Murray cod fishery throughout the Murray Darling Basin. Fisheries Victoria is the principal investigator with I&I NSW as co-investigator. It is proposed that recreational managers, researchers and recreational fishing sector representatives will be in attendance. The forum aims to align management and research activities to enable a sustainable Murray cod fishery.

Dunns Swamp fish stockings

Mr Karl Schaerf expressed concern about stocking restrictions within World Heritage Areas including Dunns Swamp. Mr Cameron Westaway reiterated that the restrictions have been in place since the Freshwater Fish Stocking Fishery Management Strategy (FMS) was introduced in 2005 and the restriction encompasses man-made waters within World Heritage Areas. The restrictions will be investigated in the review of the FMS in 2010 and in the meantime native fish can be stocked in the upper Cudgegong River upstream of Dunns Swamp.

Golden perch fishing competition during Murray cod closed season

The Committee expressed concern that a golden perch fishing competition is proposed during the Murray cod closed season in the Bundalong region of the Murray River and that the catch and release of any cod could affect cod approaching their breeding season. Mrs

Lennon asked if a letter could be written to competition organisers to seek a change in the timing of the competition so that it took place outside of the Murray cod closure spawning period. It was noted that fishing for golden perch is permitted during the Murray cod closed season as the closure does not close waters to fishing.

Motion: That Tournament Management program staff consult with competition organisers regarding the golden perch fishing competition in the Bundalong region of the Murray River. **Moved:** Debbie Lennon. **Seconded:** Karl Shaerf. **Carried**

Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme accreditation for Manilla Hatchery

Mr Ian Ward informed the committee that after considerable time and expenditure, the Manilla Hatchery recently received HQAS accreditation. The Manilla Fishing Club is now once again able to recommence breeding of golden perch and to undertake fish stockings in public waters. Ian will be collecting additional broodstock in one month in preparation for this years breeding program.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th of November, 2009 at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre. Next year's annual budget meeting will be held on 4-5 May, 2010 and following meetings on 10 August, 2010 and 23 November, 2010.

Table 1 - New Trust Project Applications supported by RFFTEC for funding

Large

Platform: Recreational fishing enhancement programs					
Project Title	Organisation	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Recreational fishing fee administration – top up funds to reach the 10% of fee revenue allocation - To provide and manage a comprehensive administrative liaison service for recreational fee sales agents and recreational fishers. To provide a convenient network of agents for the payment of recreational fishing fees throughout NSW.	I&I, NSW	\$50,311			
Gaden Trout Hatchery Tour Guide – Involves a trial employment of a dedicated tour guide for Gaden Trout Hatchery to improve service delivery at the hatchery.	I&I, NSW	\$17,000			

Table 2 – New Trust Project Applications deferred by RFFTEC

Small

Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation					
Project Title	Organisation	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Bringin' Back the Natives - involves running a carp fish out event and planting native vegetation along stretches of the Coolaburrgundy and Talbragar rivers. Motion: The committee requested that the application be referred to the Habitat Grants Program for assessment. Moved: Karl Schaerf. Seconded: Debbie Lennon. Carried.	Dunedoo Area Community Group Inc	\$4,000	166,678	166,678	

Table 3 – New Trust Project Applications not supported by RFFTEC

Large

Platform: Fishing access and facilities					
Project Title	Organisation	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<p>Shannon Park Riverside Fishing Platform / River Access Structure – to provide improved access to the Orara River for shore and canoe based fishing activities. The structure will replace the town’s previous platform which was destroyed by a flood event in February this year. Motion: The Committee did not support funding for the program. Moved: Karl Schaerf Seconded: Tom Williams. Carried.</p> <p>Note: The Committee did not support funding for this project as the majority of the proposed expenditure was on bank stabilisation /engineering works that did not benefit recreational fishers. The Committee advised that the application could be resubmitted for the fishing platform component only.</p>	Clarence Valley Council	\$18,288			

Small

Platform: Recreational Fishing Education					
Project Title	Organisation	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<p>Fish Safe and Sound Radio Program - The project aims to establish a regular radio program, at least one hour per week, to raise the awareness of safe and environmentally friendly recreational fishing. Motion: The Committee did not support funding for the program. Moved: Kevin McKinnon Seconded: Karl Schaerf. Carried.</p> <p>Note: The Committee considered that the program provided limited benefit to recreational fishers because of the perceived small localized audience that the program would reach and that funding such a program could create a precedent for funding similar projects.</p>	Planina-Macedonian-Australian Fishing & Hunting Association	6,460			

Small

Platform: Recreational fishing enhancement programs					
Project Title	Organisation	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<p>Mobile catering / fish station – to provide a mobile catering trailer, including barbeque and measuring / weigh and cleaning station for the fishing club to take on outings. Motion: The committee did not support the application. Moved: Karl Schaerf. Seconded: Tom Williams. Carried.</p> <p>Note: The Committee considered that the project had limited benefits for recreational fishers as it only benefited a single fishing club.</p>	Tullibigeal Amateur FC	\$4,150			