



**Recreational
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust
Expenditure Committee***

MINUTES

**16TH RFSTEC MEETING
6-7 April 2005**

**CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE
202 NICHOLSON PARADE CRONULLA 2230
02 9527 8411**

**Sixteenth Meeting of the
Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee
MINUTES
6-7 April 2005
Cronulla Fisheries Centre
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

Attendance

Chair

Bruce Schumacher

Committee Members - RFSTEC

Bruce Mahony	Region 1 – Qld border to Evans Head
John Drew	Region 3 – Woolgoolga to Port Macquarie
Graham Harrison	Region 4 – Port Macquarie to Seal Rocks
Lionel Jones	Region 5 – Seal Rocks to The Entrance
William Heaton	Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong
Greg Liddell	Region 8 – Narooma to Vic border
Malcolm Poole	Recreational Fishing Alliance
Anthony Moore	Nature Conservation Council
David Jones	NSW Game Fishing Association
Doug Joyner	for John Millyard of Australian Fishing Tackle Association
Dr Steve Kennelly	NSW DPI Chief Scientist

Committee Members – RFFTEC (combined session)

Steve Rudder	Region 1 – North Coast
Karl Schaerf	Region 2 – Central Coast
Robert Bell	Region 3 – South Coast
Rodney Tonkin	Region 5 – Central Inner West
Debbie Lennon	Region 6 – South Inner West
Richard Ping Kee	Region 7 – North West
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8 – South West
Brian Hale	Australian Fishing Tackle Association
Dr Steve Kennelly	NSW DPI Chief Scientist

NSW DPI (observers)

John Diplock, Program Manager, Recreational Fisheries
Bryan van der Walt, Senior Manager, Recreational Fisheries
Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager Inland (Combined Session only)
Jennifer Ranson, A/Manager, Recreational Fisheries
Craig Watson, Manager, Recreational Fisheries Inland (Combined Session only)

Agenda for 6 April 2005

9:30 - 12:00

Business

Chair's introduction

Welcome to new committee members

Apologies

Confirmation of minutes from previous RFSTEC meeting

Agenda Items

1. Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust status report for 2004/05

2. Review of applications for ongoing NSW DPI programs

Funding to be Approved

- a) Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)
- b) RFSTEC meeting expenses
- c) Small Grants
- d) Coastal Recreational Mobile Squad

Funding Pre-Approved

- a) Existing Services Budget
 1. Nine Coastal Fisheries Officers
 2. ACoRF consultation
 3. Gamefish Tagging Program
 4. Communications Management
 5. Management (Stakeholder Liaison)
 6. Recreational Research
- b) Advance Loan Repayments
- c) Recreational Fishing Trust Executive Officer
- d) Recreational Fishing Fisheries Management Strategy
- e) Artificial reefs
- f) Estuarine Fish Biology
 1. Life history and biology of black bream
 2. Biology and population structure of luderick
 3. Age validation and growth of key recreational species
- g) Recreational Harvest of Baitfish
- h) Using recreational anglers to estimate and maximise the survival of released line-caught fish.
- i) Flathead Research
- j) Research on recreational fish size limits

12:30 - 2:00

3. Project updates

- a) Mulloway stocking research
- b) Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake RFH research

2:15 - 5:00 (Combined session with RFFTEC)

4. Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Presentation
5. Review of joint Trust applications for ongoing NSW DPI programs
 - a) Recreational Fishing Fee Administration
 - b) Fishing Promotion
 - c) Fishing Workshops
 - d) Fishing Guides
 - e) Fishcare Volunteers
 - f) Tournament Monitoring
 - g) Fish Habitat Rehabilitation
 1. Combined Trusts Program
 2. Separate Saltwater Program
 - h) Recreational Angling Database
 - i) Licence Reminder Notice

Agenda items for 7 April 2005

9:30 - 12:30

6. Review of new applications

Deferred Grant Application

- a) A business and Economic Survey of the Recreational Charter Fishing Boat industry in NSW.

Research Programs

- a) Artificial Reefs Research
- b) Enhancing recreational fisheries through the responsible and optimal stocking of mulloway into NSW estuaries.
- c) Estimating and maximizing the post-release survival of key angler-caught fish in NSW.
- d) Quantifying and comparing changes through time in the marine recreational trailer boat fishery.
- e) Australian Salmon in NSW: An assessment of what they eat, where they move, how fast they grow, when and where they spawn and what gets caught.
- f) An investigation into the occurrence of mercury in striped marlin.
- g) Monitoring and Research on Landed Fish at Game Fishing Tournaments in NSW 2005/06.
- h) Historical insights into coastal NSW fish populations and their fisheries.
- i) Movements and behaviour of tiger sharks off NSW as determined by the use of popup satellite tags.
- j) Enhancing recreational fishing opportunities with artificial reefs in nearshore waters of NSW: the Coffs Harbour pilot project.

Management Programs

- k) Second Recreational Mobile Squad
- l) Rock Fishing Safety Awareness Campaign
- m) Assisting the recreational fishing sector with representation on emerging fisheries issues and sectoral development.

Habitat Program

- n) Restoration of a degraded estuarine riparian vegetation community on the Parramatta River foreshore at Pemberton Street, Parramatta.

Small Grant Applications

- a) Mylestom Boat Ramp upgrade
- b) Guidance posts at Bohnock Boat Ramp, Manning River, Taree
- c) Boat Ramp Light at Moira Parade Hawkes Nest
- d) Fishing Platform at Darawank Memorial Park Reserve
- e) Map of sea grasses in Kogarah Bay (resubmitted)
- f) Provision of an Annual Report for the Gamefish Tagging Program.
- g) Woolli Fish Cleaning Table Improvements.
- h) Development of a strategic long-term scientific program to assess recreational fisheries in NSW.

7. 2005/06 Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust budget

8. Milestone Reports

9. Action Items from previous meeting

10. General Business / Correspondence Received

11. Next Meeting Date

Meeting ends

Business

Welcome by Chair

The Chair opened the meeting by greeting members. The Chair noted that the Recreational Fishing Saltwater and Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committees will convene together in the afternoon to discuss budgets for joint programs funded by both Trusts.

Welcome to new committee members

The Chair advised that David Jones representing the NSW Game Fishing Association (NSW GFA) had been appointed by the Minister to the Committee.

The Chair also welcomed Dr Steve Kennelly, NSW DPI Chief Scientist, who was also recently appointed by the Minister. Dr Kennelly has an extensive research background and was appointed to provide scientific input, particularly during the Committee's review of scientific applications for funding. The Chair noted that a greater proportion of funds from the Recreational Fishing Trusts were being assigned to innovative and excellent scientific research. Dr Kennelly's expertise would be used during the review of research applications.

Apologies

The Chair noted apologies from Lisa Terry, David Turner and Warren Buchan and advised that Doug Joyner was attending on behalf of John Millyard, Australian Fishing Tackle Association.

Minutes of RFSTEC meeting 15 held 2 December 2004

The draft minutes of the 15th RFSTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

Business arising from the minutes

None.

Issue

2004/05 Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust report

Background

The general recreational fishing licence has been in place since March 2001. Over this time, there have been a large number of projects recommended by the Freshwater and Saltwater Expenditure Committees and the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF), and approved by the Minister.

Status of the Saltwater Trust

During 2004/05, the Committee supported a total budget of \$8.23 million for a range of compliance, research, management and education programs to improve recreational fishing, including programs with predicted carryovers from 2003/04. The total allocation from the Saltwater Trust in 2004/05 was \$6.91 million, leaving a predicted balance of over \$700,000 available for programs in 2005/06. Some programs are also expected to have significant carryovers this year, due to staff vacancies. These predicted carryovers in 2004/05 will be taken into account during the review of applications for funding in 2005/06. Total predicted income from licence sales in 2004/05 is approximately \$9 million. The 2004/05 financial table is attached for the Committee's information (refer to Attachment 1).

Trust application assessment form

A Trust application assessment form has been prepared to assist members when considering new applications for funding (refer to Attachment 2). The assessment form can be used as a tool to assist members to ensure that applications meet all the criteria and requirements for funding from the Trusts. Funding proposals can be assessed against specific selection criteria such as benefits to recreational fishing, cost effectiveness and consistency with expenditure priorities (see below).

Saltwater research priorities

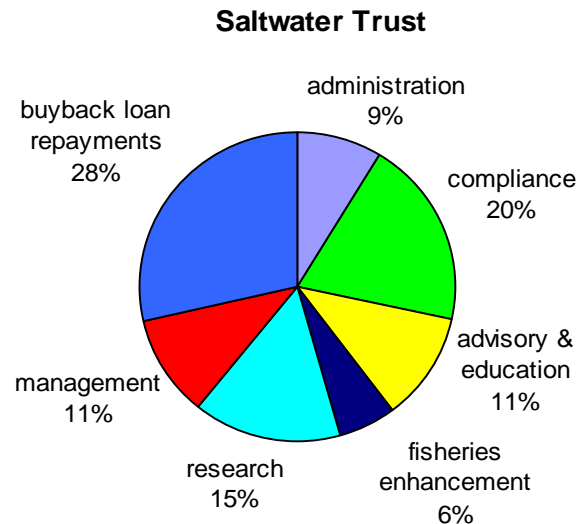
During the year ACoRF have identified research priorities to address management issues. A list of these priorities has been compiled to assist RFSTEC during the consideration of applications. The list (see Attachment 3) will be continually updated as new issues arise and other knowledge gaps become apparent.

Monitoring of existing programs

The summary table explaining the current status of each program (including internal programs) is provided for the Committee's information, (Attachment 4). A 'Gantt' table has been prepared which allows members to monitor the progress of Trust funded programs. A copy of the 'Gantt' tables will be provided to members at the meeting.

Breakdown of funding

Funding was allocated by the Expenditure Committee to a range of compliance, research, management, habitat restoration and education programs in 2004/05 as shown in the pie graph (see below). The graph serves as a guide for the Committee to determine if funding levels for each category should be maintained at or near the current levels in the next financial year.



Forward Planning

A draft budget table for 2005/06 will be updated throughout the meeting to track the total amount of funding allocated to programs by the Committee to ensure that the funding available is not exceeded.

Outcomes

Status of the Saltwater Trust

The Committee was advised that the total income from licence sales has increased each year since the implementation of the licence from \$8.1 million in 2001/02 to \$8.4 million in 2002/03 and \$9 million in 2003/04. Income from licence sales from 1 July 2004 to 31 March 2005 was nearly \$7.6 million, which is approximately \$1.1 million more than the income for the same period in 2003/04. If licence sales for April, May and June 2005 are similar to the previous year, then the total income in 2004/05 may reach between \$9.5 and \$10 million. The increase in income is attributable to an increase in sales of the 3 year licence. A proportion of these sales may have been made up of anglers renewing their 3 year licence that were purchased after the introduction of the general licence. Reminder notices may have also contributed to 3 year licence sales. It was noted that the licence sales income is expected to revert to a predicted \$8.5 million in the 2005/06 financial year.

The Committee has allocated almost \$7 million to programs during the 2004/05 financial year, leaving a balance of \$1.6 million as at 30 June 2005. The majority of these allocations have been transferred into appropriate cost centres or paid to external proponents. Some external programs for which funding has been committed have not been paid because program managers had not reached agreed milestones.

The allocation of funding to the Freshwater Trust for the years 2000/01 to 2004/05 was \$2.5 million per year with the remaining funds allocated to the Saltwater Trust. At the December meeting the Committee recommended that this current arrangement be maintained for the 2005/06 financial year. The Freshwater Expenditure Committee recommended that the \$2.5 million allocation be increased to \$2.8 million. ACoRF reviewed these recommendations and in December 2005 advised the Minister that the current arrangement be maintained for 2005/06. Due to the unpredictable nature of licence income ACoRF also recommended that the funding level be reviewed annually. The Committee was advised that the Minister had approved the recommendations from ACoRF.

The Committee discussed the importance of maintaining contingency funding in the Saltwater Trust due to the possible decrease in licence sales income in 2005/06. It was agreed that a total of \$8.1 million should be made available to ongoing and new programs in 2005/06.

Trust application assessment form

The Committee acknowledged the benefit of the form noting that it provided structure and consistency to the decision-making. The Committee requested that the form be simplified and that a flow of benefits table be included (similar to that shown on the FRDC application). The Committee was advised that staff would collect the forms at future meetings.

Action item: NSW DPI to amend and simplify the Trust application assessment form.

Saltwater research priorities

The Committee was advised that the priorities list would be continually updated with the assistance of ACoRF, this Committee and scientific and management staff. The Committee requested a list of key recreational species and available information on each species. The Department noted that as part of the Fishery Management Strategy process a preliminary risk assessment had been undertaken for all key recreational species in NSW as a method of assessing biological risk.

Action item: NSW DPI to provide the Committee with a summary of the current research projects being undertaken by the Department related to key recreational species.

Monitoring of existing programs

The Department noted the large amount of paperwork associated with this meeting including the agenda, annual reports for each program and applications for new and ongoing programs. Some members requested a reduction in the amount of reading material for future meetings. The Department proposed to stagger the reports so that small grant reports are received at meetings 1 and 3 and large program reports at meeting 2 and the annual budget meeting in April. It was noted that a number of program managers had requested a reduction in reporting requirements. The Committee proposed the provision of one report at each meeting summarising progress for all programs.

Action item: NSW DPI to compile a Gantt summary table and an associated report on all programs for future meetings.

Balance of the \$20 million loan

The previous balance of the \$20 million loan from the Recreational Fishing Haven process was \$1.523 million. This amount is made up of \$1.123 million (available in the Saltwater Trust) and \$400,000 (in the Saltwater Trust Recreational Fishing Haven cost centre), which is being used to finalise the compulsory acquisition of the remaining commercial fisher entitlements in Botany Bay. There is also approximately \$106,000 which was part of the original administration budget to oversee and implement the RFH process. A small portion of these funds will be used to fund a part time temporary staff member to finalise the process.

The Committee discussed the potential for additional buy outs of commercial fishing entitlements using the remaining funds from the \$20 million loan. The Department advised that the NSW Government does not plan to create any new recreational fishing havens. This is consistent with the approach to seek stability in the commercial fishing industry after a period of significant change and adjustment. However commercial fishers and ACoRF have also expressed concern regarding changes to fishing effort in some estuaries and are providing advice to the Department on how this could be dealt with in any future voluntary buyouts. The new Seafood Industry Advisory Forum, which is currently being established, would also need to consider any buy out proposal. The Department acknowledged that the Committee had originally set a deadline of 31 March 2005 for a firm proposal to be developed however it was noted that the creation of the Forum was taking longer than expected.

It was noted that the Department had held 2 meetings with commercial and recreational stakeholder representatives to discuss proposals for additional buy outs.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommended that the Chairman ask the Minister to write to all commercial fishing business owners seeking Expression of Interest (EOI) for participation in a voluntary buy out process. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Greg Liddell. **Carried.**

The Committee noted that once all EOIs are received consideration would be given to removing fishers from areas of conflict and ensuring value for money. The Committee requested that the Department investigate the potential for preventing fishers that are bought out from returning to the industry for at least five years.

Action item: The Chairman to ask the Minister to direct NSW DPI to write to all commercial fishing business owners seeking EOIs for participation in a voluntary buy out process.

Issue

Review of applications for ongoing NSW DPI programs

Background

RFSTEC has supported a number of programs carried out by NSW DPI over the 4 years since the introduction of the General Recreational Fishing Fee. These programs have achieved a range of benefits for recreational fishers in coastal NSW.

2005/06 NSW DPI ongoing programs to be approved by RFSTEC

Budgets for the following programs have not been previously approved by RFSTEC. Renewal applications with 2005/06 budgets for each program have been prepared and are attached for the committee's information.

a) Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

The Trust allocated funding to this high profile program in 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05 to deploy and monitor recreational fish aggregating devices (FADS) along the NSW coast. During the period of deployment the devices enhanced offshore sport and game fishing opportunities for fishers and provided an alternative recreational fishery. The program also investigated various FAD designs, monitored recreational fishing use and undertook preliminary research on the viability and sustainability of the devices in NSW. Further funding is requested to continue this highly successful program into the next financial year and increase the number of FADs from fifteen to twenty.

Budget 2004/05: \$138,403

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$135,000 2006/07: \$136,000 2007/08: \$175,000

b) RFSTEC meeting expenses

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee oversees expenditure from the Recreational Fishing (Saltwater) Trust. Three meetings have been held in 2004/2005 so far. A number of out of session meetings were also held during the year. Expenses associated with Committee meetings include sitting fees, air fare/vehicle expenses, accommodation and lunches.

Budget 2004/05: \$30,000

Proposed Budget 2004/05: \$30,000 2006/07: \$30,000

c) Small grants program

The small grants program enables fishing clubs, councils and other community members to submit saltwater proposals for small, local or regional projects aimed at enhancing recreational fishing. A total of \$189,000 has been allocated to the small grants program since 2001.

Budget 2004/05: \$50,000

Proposed Budget 2004/05: \$50,000 2006/07: \$50,000

d) Coastal Recreational Mobile Squad

The recreational mobile squad is comprised of three Fisheries Officers (operating out of Brooklyn) that are heavily involved in recreational compliance activities. The mobile squad aims to maintain a mobile support group with rapid response capacity - responsible for the protection of the State's coastal recreational fisheries.

Budget 2004/05: \$355,000

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$425,889 2006/07: \$425,889

The increase in budget is required to meet the recent Officer salary increases of 20% (with corresponding increases in associated overheads). Operating expenditure is consistent with this current year.

A summary of the programs and their funding to be approved is outlined in the table below.

Program	Allocation 2005/06	Allocation 2006/07	Allocation 2007/08
Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)	\$135,000	\$136,000	\$177,000
RFSTEC meeting expenses	\$30,000	\$30,000	Nil
Small Grants	\$50,000	\$50,000	Nil
Coastal Recreational Mobile Squad	\$425,889	\$425,889	Nil

2005/06 NSW DPI programs approved by RFSTEC

RFSTEC, ACoRF and the Minister have previously approved the following programs.

a) Existing Services Budget

A Position Paper was released by the Department in 2000 outlining the Government's policy for the introduction of a General Recreational Fishing Fee. The Paper advised that \$1.5 million will be sought from the Recreational Fishing (Saltwater) Trust to assist with existing services. RFSTEC, ACoRF and the Minister have previously allocated funding since 2001/02 for the following six programs:

1) Compliance-9 Coastal Fisheries Officers

Nine Fisheries Officers are based at Clarence, Hastings, Port Stephens, Hunter, Sydney North and South, Illawarra, Batemans Bay and the Far South Coast regions to enhance the level of compliance and advisory services in recreational fisheries.

2) ACORF Meeting Expenses

The Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing provides advice to the Minister on recreational fishing issues. At least four meetings are held each year and a number of out of session meetings, if required. Expenses associated with Council meetings include sitting fees, air fare/vehicle expenses, accommodation and lunches.

3) Gamefish Tagging

The Gamefish Tagging program involves the management and coordination of the distribution of tags to anglers. Information on tagging is collated from anglers onto a database which can be used to investigate the migratory habits and growth patterns of gamefish. The program funds an officer to oversee distribution of tags and undertake data entry, purchase of tags and tag cards and database maintenance.

4) Communications Management

This program aims to inform and educate the community about responsible fishing, compliance with fishing rules and to encourage responsible fishing. The program involves the management of the information and advisory service, coordinating the content of the web site, assessing the results of the trial of the primary school education kit, the publication of recreational fishing advisory material such as rules summaries, sticky measuring rulers, plastic measures, information brochures.

5) Management (Stakeholder Liaison)

The Recreational Fisheries Management team consults with angling groups and other recreational stakeholder groups and provides advisory and education information. The team oversees RFSTEC and ACoRF, which involves the preparation of agendas and minutes, organisation of meetings and completion of action items. A database of angling clubs is maintained for stakeholder liaison. The number of clubs on the database has increased from 700 to 1,100 clubs.

6) Recreational Research

This program has contributed to a study to assess the quality of recreational fishing in Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake, which has been completed. The study is an extension on extensive surveys conducted in 1999/2000 investigating changes in catch and effort by recreational fishers.

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee is entitled to support new priorities in favour of existing ones.

Program	Funding Allocation
Nine Coastal DPI- Fisheries Officers	\$1,053,475
ACoRF Consultation	\$16,500
Gamefish Tagging	\$120,000
Communication	\$142,500
Recreational Fisheries Management	\$75,000
Recreational Research	\$92,525
Total	\$1,500,000

b) Advanced Loan Repayments

The Recreational Fishing Havens established in 2002 were funded through a \$20 million loan from Treasury. The Recreational Fishing Havens enhance recreational fishing opportunities, as 27% of estuaries in coastal NSW are now free from commercial fishing. The Treasury loan payments schedule for the Recreational Fishing Haven process requires that repayments of \$2 million be paid in each financial year.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$2 million from the Saltwater Trust for this program in 2005/06. No further allocations are required for 2005/06. There is a remaining balance of approximately \$1.5 million from the buy out process.

c) Recreational Fishing Trust Executive Officer

The program involves a Trust Executive officer who oversees and provides service delivery to the Saltwater Expenditure Committee to ensure transparent reporting for the Recreational Fishing Trusts to fishing clubs and the broader community.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$141,178 from the Saltwater Trust for this program in 2005/06. No further allocations are required for 2005/06.

d) Recreational Fishing Fisheries Management Strategy

The development of the recreational fishing fisheries management strategy and associated environmental assessment is well underway. Community consultation papers have been prepared on bag limits, size limits, spearfishing, fishing tournaments and competitions and charter boat fishing. An expert scientific panel has determined the saltwater fish and invertebrate species, which will be subject to the formal risk assessment process.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$600,000 from the Saltwater Trust for this program. No further allocations are required for 2005/06.

e) Artificial reefs

This program will identify suitable sites for the construction of artificial reefs in 3 estuaries that have been declared Recreational Fishing Havens including Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay and St George's Basin. The project will obtain the necessary approvals from various Government agencies, including Department of Lands, the NSW Maritime Authority, Aboriginal Land Council and local councils. Development approvals are required to be prepared and lodged with local council. Recreational Management have consulted with the Science and Research Division, which have developed a research proposal to monitor the effectiveness of the reefs. The Committee will consider the research application in Agenda item 6.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$168,578 from the Saltwater Trust for this program in 2005/06. This budget has been separated into Management costs (approvals and deployment) with the remaining funds available for the Research (monitoring and ecological studies) component of the program.

f) Estuarine Fish Biology

This program is made up of three research projects focusing on key recreational estuarine species.

1. Life history and biology of black bream.

This study aims to assess the reproductive biology, length at age and growth, assess variability in reproductive biology, age and growth characteristics in populations from different estuaries and habitats, assess extent of movement within and between different estuaries, and consider the effects of environmental conditions on stock recruitment relationships.

2. Biology and population structure of luderick.

This study aims to collate and compile biological information on luderick, assess their reproductive biology, length at age and growth characteristics, review the results of previous tagging studies on luderick and develop a 'recreational fisher-based' tagging program for luderick in NSW to investigate migration, growth and relative exploitation rates.

3. Age validation and growth of key recreational species.

This study aims to provide a validated ageing technique for key recreational fish species. Information on age and growth of species will help to determine the sustainability of fish stocks.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$162,171 from the Saltwater Trust for the third and final year of the estuarine fish biology program in 2005/06. No further allocations are required for 2005/06.

g) Recreational Harvest of Baitfish

The program aims to define and quantify species targeted as baitfish by each recreational sector (charter, gamefish and trailer boat), provide length and weight frequency profiles of primary baitfish species by region, develop estimates of catch and effort for each of the recreational sectors by region, investigate regional and seasonal differences in weight and length of baitfish species and compare recreational use of baitfish species with commercial catch records for baitfish species. The program will enhance the current understanding of the recreational impact on baitfish stocks to develop more accurate stock assessment models and more equitable management frameworks. This program will be completed by December 2005.

The Minister has previously approved funds from the Saltwater Trust for this program. No further allocations are required for 2005/06.

h) Using recreational anglers to estimate and maximise the survival of released line-caught fish.

Anglers events are used in this program to estimate the post-release survival rates of key species associated with current hook and line fishing methods in NSW. Events have been held in Botany Bay (various species), Hawkesbury River (bream and mulloway) and Woolli (whiting). The program has also used manipulative aquarium experiments to determine the main factors affecting the post-release survival of bream and mulloway. This program will be completed by December 2005.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$146,574 from the Saltwater Trust for this program.

i) Size and age at maturity and timing and location of spawning of dusky flathead in NSW

In this research program the reproductive cycle, size and age at maturity and the timing and location of spawning dusky flathead will be investigated to ensure that future decisions on the most appropriate size limit for the species are based on rigorous scientific knowledge. The project also aims to provide advice on the species life history and possible management options to maintain sustainable harvesting including suitable size limits. This program commenced in late 2004.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$64,730 from the Saltwater Trust for this program in 2005/06. No further allocations are required for 2005/06.

j) Research on recreational fish size limits

This study is also funded by the FRDC and will investigate the size at which fish mature allowing fish to spawn at least once before being harvested. The majority of species included in the study are important recreational species and the information is essential for size limit management tools.

The Minister has previously approved funds of \$50,756 from the Saltwater Trust for this program in 2005/06. No further allocations are required for 2005/06.

Outcomes

FADs

The Committee noted that the FADs program had received extensive media coverage on radio, in local newspapers and popular fishing magazines. The Committee requested that the program should be referred to as the Recreational Fishing Trust FADs program. The Committee acknowledged the popularity of this program by anglers, particularly by the common angler who is able to experience direct benefit from the licence funds. The Committee were highly supportive of the continuation of the program in the future following the completion of the 3 year pilot program. The Department advised that Mr Heath Folpp, FADs program coordinator, had completed a First Class Research Honours, which had investigated some of the effects of FADs. A preliminary final report on the pilot program was provided to the Committee. It was noted that the FADs program management budget for the next 3 years was comprised of salary and operating expenses for maintaining the current 15 FADs as well as aiming to install an additional 5 devices in new locations. There is strong angler support for additional FADs.

RFSTEC Meeting Expenses

The Department advised that the budget for RFSTEC meeting expenses program in 2004/05 is \$30,000 which included predicted carry over funding of \$5,000.

Small Grants

The Committee was advised that a total of \$61,000 had been committed to various small grant programs and that there was a carryover of \$38,000 expected as at 30 June 2005. Dr Kennelly advised that to get Australian Research Council (ARC) linkage grants of around \$25,000 required contributions from non-university institutions of approximately \$8,000 to \$10,000. The Committee proposed increasing the level of funding for small grants from up to \$5,000 to \$10,000 per project. It was acknowledged that increasing the small grants amount above \$5,000 would encourage more applications, particularly from Universities and that the increase would provide flexibility for applicants to apply for funding throughout the year.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommended that the Recreational Fishing Trust application form be amended to advise that requests for funding up to \$10,000 will be considered in special circumstances throughout the year. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded** Lionel.

Carried.

Recreational Fishing Mobile Squad

The Department noted that the budget for the Coastal Recreational Mobile Squad had increased substantially from \$355,000 to \$425,889 due to a recent salary increase for Fisheries Officers.

Existing Services Budget

The Committee discussed the need for more transparent reporting for each of the programs funded from the \$1.5 million annual budget. It was noted that only the ACoRF meeting expenses and the Gamefish Tagging programs currently have separate Saltwater Trust cost centres. An alternative proposal for a Recreational Publications program was discussed. This program would involve the production and distribution of advisory material that informs the public about recreational fishing rules, responsible fishing and other essential fishing information. A separate Trust funded cost centre would be set up for this existing services program and all funds would be used on direct production costs. The Department noted that the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee is entitled to support new priorities for the \$1.5 million existing services budget.

Artificial Reefs

A revised management budget for the Artificial Reefs program was presented to the Committee. The Department advised it was appropriate to separate the program into management (involving obtaining necessary approvals, undertaking environmental assessments, Reef Ball construction, stakeholder consultation, site selection and deployment) and research (involving monitoring and ecological assessment) components. It was noted that the management budgets for the next 2 financial years were lower than the previously approved funding. The Department advised that a new research monitoring program to investigate the effects of artificial reefs on anglers catch would be reviewed by the Committee in Agenda item 6.

Estuarine Fish Biology

The Committee discussed the Estuarine Fish Biology research program and was advised that Dr James Haddy had left the Department to take up a University lecturing position in Tasmania. The Committee acknowledged the excellent work done by Dr Haddy on the luderick and black bream life history research programs. The Committee was advised that the technician currently employed would continue to analyse the samples and an EOI for the final year of the program would be advertised later in the year.

Recommendations

That a budget of \$135,000 in 2005/06, \$136,000 in 2006/07 and \$175,000 in 2007/08 for the 'Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. **Seconded:** Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$30,000 in 2005/06 for the 'RFSTEC meeting expenses' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** John Drew. **Seconded:** Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$50,000 in 2005/06 for the 'Small Grants' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** Bruce Mahony. **Seconded:** Bill Heaton. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$425,889 in 2005/06 for the 'Coastal Recreational Mobile Squad' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. **Seconded:** Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That the 'Existing Services' Budget for the following programs: Nine coastal Fisheries Officers (\$1,053,475), ACoRF Consultation (\$16,500), Gamefish Tagging (\$120,000) and Recreational Fishing Publications (\$310,000) **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. **Seconded:** Malcolm Poole. **Carried.**

That the revised budget of \$155,000 in 2005/06 and \$115,000 in 2006/07 for the 'Artificial Reefs Management (Implementation and Deployment)' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. **Seconded:** Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

Agenda Item 3

a. Dr Iain Suthers and Matt Taylor (University of NSW)

b. Jeff Murphy (Department of Primary Industries)

Project updates

a. Mulloway Stocking Research

b. Recreational Fishing Havens Research

Background

a. Mulloway Stocking Research

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust allocated funding of almost \$196,000 to the University of NSW (UNSW) to investigate mulloway stocking. The innovative research assessed the impact of the stocked mulloway on wild mulloway food sources by analysing and comparing gut contents of the stocked and wild mulloway. An extension to the research involved using ultrasonic tags to track mulloway, to provide information on daily and seasonal movements and produce estimates of the home range and preferred habitat of mulloway. Fish stocking supports some of our most important inland fisheries enhancing the recreational catch of anglers. This research is essential if the Government wishes to expand the fish stocking program into saltwater. Almost 150,000 mulloway, marked with a harmless coloured dye to help identify them from wild stock, were released into Botany Bay and Smith's Lake in 2003 and 2004. The mulloway stocked in 2003 have shown good survival rates and growth. Stocked mulloway have begun appearing in the recreational fishery with over 60 fish returned to the scientist. Tracking work with mulloway has produced very interesting results, answering several questions about the migratory habits of this fish. A preliminary final report is also attached for the Committee's information and a scientist from the UNSW will present results from the program.

b. Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake RFH research

Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake were declared Recreational Fishing Havens on 1 May 2002, along with 28 other havens, in recognition of their importance to the anglers of NSW and the fishing visitors who benefit the local economy. Between March 1999 and February 2000 the Department conducted extensive surveys of recreational fishing in Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake. These surveys were made possible through the active participation of the local community. Many local volunteers assisted in collecting the data on catches and fishing effort, and the Lakes' anglers provided their catches for counting and measurement. This information provided an important base for future evaluation of the state of the Lake's fisheries. The Department with funding from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust has re-surveyed recreational fishers during 2003-2004 to reassess the quality of the recreational fishery. The surveys began in December 2003 and finished in November 2004. The surveys allowed researchers to compare the size of the recreational harvest, the catch rates of fishers, the sizes of important fish species and the proportion of successful fishing trips. The information from this survey will be compared with previous survey results to assess changes in the catch and effort of recreational fishers following the declaration of Recreational Fishing Havens in the lakes and to ensure that recreational fisheries within the lakes are managed sustainably. Mr Jeff Murphy will present preliminary results from analysis of the data from the two surveys.

Outcomes

a. Mulloway Stocking Research

The Committee was advised that 140,000 mulloway fingerlings were stocked over two years in George's River (Botany Bay) and Smith's Lake. Sampling was undertaken during 200 trawl surveys and 89 mulloway were recaptured measuring between 60mm and 700mm. The 65 mulloway caught by recreational line fishers were all smaller than 550mm. The otolith (ear bone) was extracted from each fish and exposed to ultraviolet light to determine if the fish caught were stocked or wild mulloway. The mulloway stocked in 2003 grew approximately 0.81 mm per day and are now expected to be 5 times longer and 200 times heavier than when released. The fish stocked in 2004 grew slightly faster at 1.32 mm per day. The analysis of gut contents showed several shifts in diet as the mulloway grew and moved; small mysid shrimp are very prevalent in the diet of small fish, but this decreases as the fish grows; the number of prawns increases until the fish reaches about 500mm; above 500mm the numbers of relatively small baitfish and squid in the diet increases. These shifts in diet are important when estimating the impact of stocked mulloway. The results from the gut content analysis will be integrated into a consumption model. Early results show each surviving stocked mulloway consumes between 2.1 and 3.7% of their body weight per day over 6 years.

The second part of the project involved tracking the movements of mulloway in Botany Bay and Georges River, using acoustic pingers. The Committee watched a video showing the surgical implantation of the pingers. Implanted fish were tracked with a boat based receiver and GPS setup connected to a submerged hydrophone. Each individual fish was identified by a unique code. Preliminary analysis of some 2000 locations have shown that the preferred habitat of juvenile mulloway is deep holes with bottom structure and submerged sheer rock faces. The crevices in these rock faces and the presence of bottom structure provide refuge for the fish from both predators and currents. Mulloway were tracked for 72 hours over both the new moon and full moon in January. Day night movement patterns show that smaller fish move only short distances and mostly remain in their holes, corresponding with their prey preference of mysids, which are relatively sedentary. Larger fish actually moved out of their holes at night, probably to hunt fish, which are more prevalent in their diet. These fish returned to exactly the same holes, often passing over a dozen perfectly good holes in the process. Fish tagged in early 2004 moved out of the estuary during winter. Temperature loggers deployed at the mouth of the bay and at Picnic Point showed that the water cooled substantially in the estuary during winter and the fish temporarily leave the estuary for the nearshore areas and the warmer ocean water. Future work for the tracking project involves mapping the river at extremely high resolution to reveal bottom structure and subsequent mulloway habitat.

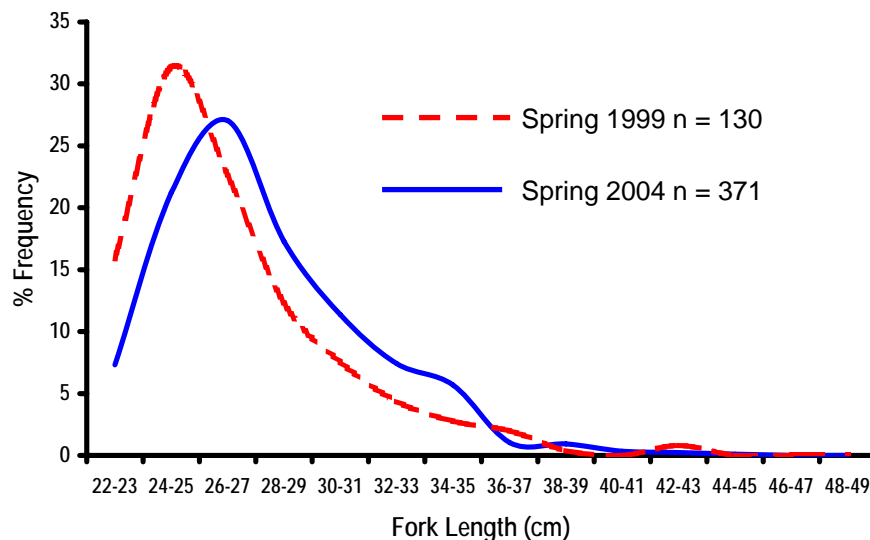
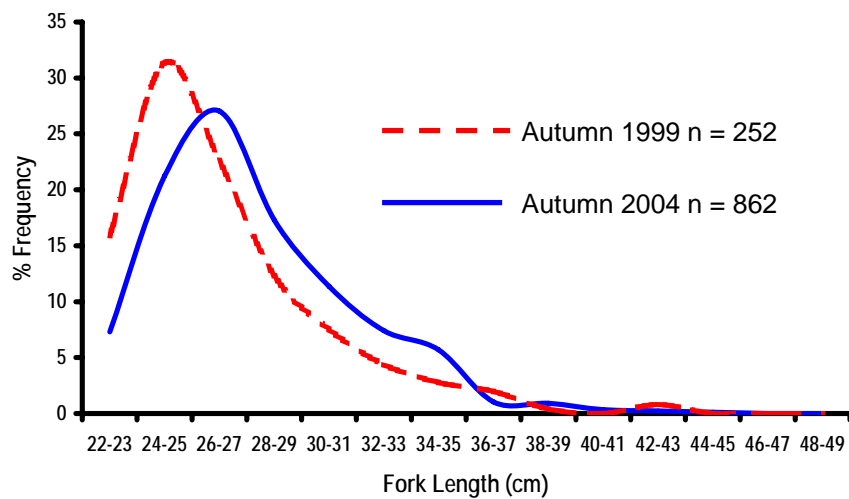
The Committee noted that there had been extensive media coverage of this program with numerous newspaper articles and that this program was very popular with anglers.

b. Research on Recreational Fishing Havens

The Committee was advised that over 70 volunteers and staff collected data on 72 sample days at each estuary during the 12 month survey period. At Lake Macquarie 4,200 shore anglers and 10,600 boat fishers were surveyed at the various boat ramps. At Tuross Lake 4,100 boat based anglers were surveyed.

During the analysis key indicators are being identified showing change in the recreational fishery, including differences in fishing effort, catch rates, proportion of zero catches among parties, fishing harvest, lengths of fish and species composition. For example the graphs below show the difference in length of bream caught in autumn and spring in Lake Macquarie during the two survey periods. Following analysis of the results of the surveys the Department will prepare brochures outlining the key findings, which will be posted on the website. Seminars will be held for the general public at Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake. The information will also be published in scientific journals.

Bream Lengths – Fish Caught in Lake Macquarie



Combined Session with the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) commenced

Agenda Item 4

John Wilson

Issue

Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Presentation.

Background

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) is a leading Australian agency concerned with planning, funding and managing fisheries research and development. The FRDC does not undertake research itself; rather it identifies research and development needs - and the means of addressing them - through a planning process and by contracting research providers. Stakeholders in the FRDC are the fishing industry; the governments of the Commonwealth, the states and the territories; and the people of Australia. The FRDC plans, invests in and manages fisheries research and development throughout Australia. It is a statutory authority within the portfolio of the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, jointly funded by the Australian Government and the fishing industry. The FRDC's mission is to increase economic and social benefits for the fishing industry and the people of Australia, through planned investment in research and development, in an ecologically sustainable framework.

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust fund a number of research programs that benefit recreational fishing. Some of these research programs also receive funding contributions from the FRDC. Mr John Wilson, Business Manager, from FRDC will address both expenditure committees at the meeting.

Outcomes

Mr John Wilson advised both Committees that the FRDC is keen to engage in meaningful research projects that benefit recreational fishing in NSW. The board of FRDC have also identified research areas of national importance including natural resource sustainability, industry and people development. The FRDC board is particularly interested in investing funds in projects that relate to people development. The Committees were advised that in 2004/05 FRDC provided funding of \$24.5 million for research related to recreational fishing in Australia, including studies that quantified changes in recreational catch and effort of blue swimmer crabs in Cockburn Sound and Geographe Bay and evaluation of the recreational fishery management controls of commercially important scale fish species. FRDC co-fund at least three research projects per year undertaken by the Department. Mr Wilson encouraged the Committee to consider projects that would be suitable for joint funding that could be considered by the FRDC board in May 2006. Mr Wilson also provided copies of various FRDC publications for the Committee's information.

Issue

Review of joint Trust applications for ongoing NSW DPI programs

Background

a) Recreational Fishing Fee Administration

The licence administration team manages a comprehensive administrative system of 1,100 recreational licence sales agents. It involves the efficient distribution of fishing fee receipt books in a timely manner to agents and the processing and reconciliation of monthly returns and agent accounts. WEB sales and an internal IVR system are also maintained.

The Department is currently preparing a tender with the assistance of the Department of Commerce for the conversion of the manual paper licence system to an electronic system. This will: provide for electronic data and funds transfer minimising the risk of fraud, speed up the sale of licences, ease the administrative burden on agents and staff, and provide for plastic licences and a renewal system. Anglers and agents have repeatedly called for these improvements to be made.

It is expected that the tender for the new system will be advertised in April/May 2005, with the implementation of the electronic system in the new financial year. The new system will be tested with a pilot scheme, which will need to overlap the maintenance of the current manual paper based system for 6 months. Once the pilot phase is complete, the manual system will need to be phased out coupled with the rollout and expansion of the new electronic system statewide. Termination audits for the old system will need to be carried out for every agent once the pilot system has been successfully completed and debt backlog will need to be addressed. The 2005/06 administration budget includes funding for 9 months maintenance of the manual system and carrying out termination audits. A contingency budget (comprised of funds for commissions for the pilot phase and statewide implementation of the new system) separate to the manual licence system budget will also be required.

Manual system:

Budget 2004/05: \$850,000
 (\$600,000 Saltwater Trust, \$250,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$900,000 (10% of 2004/05 licence income)
 (\$650,000 Saltwater Trust, \$250,000 Freshwater Trust)

Contingency funding for new electronic system:

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$300,000
 (\$210,000 Saltwater Trust, \$90,000 Freshwater Trust)

b) Fishing promotion

This program raises awareness of fishing rules (including the need for a fishing licence) and aims to encourage responsible and sustainable fishing practices. Responsible fishing is promoted through a range of media (newspaper, magazines, radio, etc) at peak fishing periods. Each advertising campaign is combined with a Departmental media release and newspapers are contacted in order to secure editorial/background coverage.

Budget 2004/05: \$71,100
 (\$49,500 Saltwater Trust, \$21,600 Freshwater Trust)

Budget 2005/06: \$71,000
 (\$50,000 Saltwater Trust, \$21,000 Freshwater Trust)

c) Fishing Workshops

The Trusts subsidise children's fishing workshops (formerly known as fishing clinics) held in the Sydney metropolitan area, at Government hatcheries (in Grafton, Narrandera, Ebor and Jindabyne) and across regional NSW, including clinics for special needs groups and non-English speaking communities. Funds are used to purchase fishing gear, t-shirts, tackle kits etc. The Recreational Management branch is now managing the program. Sponsorship is being sought to offset the costs of the program.

Budget 2004/05: \$88,000
 (\$60,000 Saltwater Trust, \$28,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$150,742
 (\$87,694 Saltwater Trust, \$63,048 Freshwater Trust)

d) Fishing Guides

This program involved the printing and distribution of 200,000 Recreational Saltwater Fishing Guides and 100,000 Freshwater Fishing Guides in 2004/05. The 2004/05 guides were updated to ensure the most current information is being provided to anglers. Advertising revenue topped up licence funds by over 25%.

Budget 2004/05: \$140,000
 (\$100,000 Saltwater Trust, \$40,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$140,000
 (\$100,000 Saltwater Trust, \$40,000 Freshwater Trust)

e) Fishcare Volunteers

The Fishcare Volunteer program provides a dynamic volunteer program to provide face-to-face sustainable fishing education to the community and to support community programs, such as fishing clinics and school visits. The Fishcare Volunteer program budget constitutes a state co-ordinator's position and education officer positions based in Lake Illawarra, Sydney, Coffs Harbour and inland NSW. The education officer position at Bathurst is currently vacant. A carry over from the freshwater budget from 2004/05 is expected as a result of this vacancy.

Budget 2004/05: \$875,007
 (\$606,877 Saltwater Trust, \$268,330 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$772,692
 (\$564,010 Saltwater Trust \$208,682, Freshwater Trust)

f) Tournament monitoring program

This program involves the monitoring of angler catch at selected fishing competitions and the analysis of catch rates, species compositions and size distributions and comparisons with previous events. Participating angling clubs and associations receive feedback by way of angling research competition reports. The program supports a technical officer and a scientific officer position. The saltwater program now incorporates the Gamefish Monitoring Program.

Budget 2004/05: \$300,000
 (\$150,000 Saltwater Trust, \$150,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$309,000
 (\$167,000 Saltwater Trust, \$142,000 Freshwater Trust)

g) Fish Habitat Restoration grants

1) Saltwater Clarence Pilot Program

The Clarence Pilot Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program commenced in 2002 with \$120,000 over 2 years of Trust funds spent on rehabilitation works in the Clarence catchment, which was matched by proponent contributions of \$445,000. In addition \$120,000 was received from federal funding through the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, which also received significant proponent contributions. The funding supported over 900 ha of floodplain and wetland habitat rehabilitation, 40 ha of acid soil scald repaired, 4.5 kms of riverbank replanted and 5 kms of waterway restored to fish passage.

2) Freshwater Program

The Freshwater Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program has been funded by the Trust since 2002 with \$300,000 allocated over 3 years for rehabilitating habitat in NSW freshwater catchments. Over the three years matching funding in excess of \$830,000 has been committed as cash and in kind support from project proponents. A total of 134 applications were received over the three years of the program and 41 projects have been funded. The projects approved in the first three rounds supported the rehabilitation of approximately 150 hectares of floodplain and wetland habitat, 80kms of riparian vegetation and fish passage reinstated for more than 260km of river. In addition over \$2.5 million has been received (2003 to 2005) from various other funding bodies throughout NSW to undertake mapping and assessment of areas for aquatic habitat rehabilitation and for on ground works.

Option 1 (Combined Program)

It is proposed that the Clarence Pilot Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program be expanded to coastal statewide and be amalgamated with the Inland Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program. In this instance it is proposed that funding be allocated on a region-by-region basis. A total of \$575,000 per annum is requested for this program in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Budget 2004/05: \$160,000
 (\$60,000 Saltwater Trust, \$100,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$575,000
 (\$375,000 Saltwater Trust, \$200,000 Freshwater Trust)

Option 2 (Separate Programs)

The Inland Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program to continue on its own merits and the Clarence Pilot Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program be expanded to coastal statewide. The programs would be managed separately.

Proposed Budget from Saltwater Trust 2005/06: \$375,000
Proposed Budget from Freshwater Trust 2005/06: \$205,000

h) Recreational Angling Database

The Recreational Angling Database was developed in March 2001 after the introduction of the general recreational fishing licence. The database collects information on the names, addresses, phone numbers, type of licence and starting date of each licence. It was considered essential that this demographic information on recreational fishers be maintained on an ongoing basis for research (such as the National Angling Survey), expenditure surveys and the reminder notice system, which recently commenced in March 2004.

The service provider contracted to implement and manage the new electronic licence system will be required to maintain a database of licence holders, which will be provided to the Department on a regular basis (negating the need for a separately funded program). A full year of funding will still be required for data entry of licences bought in 2005/06 because data entry is usually 3 months behind time of sale due to submission of returns by Agents.

Budget 2004/05: \$80,000
(\$56,000 Saltwater Trust, \$24,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$80,000
(\$56,000 Saltwater Trust, \$24,000 Freshwater Trust)

i) Licence Reminder Notice

The program involves the mailing out of licence reminder notices (with advisory material) to one and three year licence holders to ensure anglers renew their licences as they expire. Many anglers are unaware that their licences have expired and require a notice as a prompt. There is a strong expectation from anglers for this essential service.

The service provider contracted to run the new electronic licence system will be required to implement a reminder notice system (negating the need for a separately funded program). Therefore a budget has been prepared to support the reminder notice system from July 2005 to March 2006.

Budget 2004/05: \$144,000
(\$100,000 Saltwater Trust, \$44,000 Freshwater Trust)

Proposed Budget 2005/06: \$109,500
(\$76,650 Saltwater Trust, \$32,850 Freshwater Trust)

Outcomes

Nine Coastal Fisheries Officers

Mr Tony Andrews, Manager Special Operations, spoke to the Committees about the Fisheries Officer programs. Mr Andrews advised that the Recreational Fishing Trusts have been providing funding for fifteen fisheries officers positions, nine coastal and six inland. These positions continue to enhance officer presence and profile in key fishing areas (particularly in closed waters) and detect and deter illegal fishing activity. The Officers form an integral component of the team based in the 28 offices throughout NSW.

Trust funded Fisheries Officers have provided support for a range of targeted operations on illegal activities in various of fisheries and locations. These include operations on abalone and lobster poaching, Murray crayfish protection, trout fishing, the Murray cod closed season and illegal commercial fishing. A range of offences have been detected including use of nets, fish traps, excess set lines, (e.g. long lines being retrieved from Lake Mulwala), shucking of lobster / abalone, fishing during the closed seasons (e.g. for trout and Murray cod) and licensing offences. Statistics for the Easter fishing period show an overall compliance rate for buying the licence at 89.3%, with a higher rate, at around 93%, in freshwater areas.

Members of both Committees expressed some objection to the proposal by NSW DPI to pass on the 20% salary increase in full to the Freshwater and Saltwater Trusts. This would result in a significant increase in the budgets for the six inland Officers and the 3 mobile squad Officers. Mr Andrews explained that the salary increase was approved by the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) with corresponding increases in disbursements. The salary increases relate to an evaluation process of Officers work responsibilities and accountabilities, which has taken place over many years and has recently been ratified through the IRC by an independent arbitrator. Salary increments will be backdated to 25 February 2005.

The Committees also raised concern about cost recovery levels. The Department noted that a review of on-costs is currently being undertaken. The Committee believed cost recovery levels should be reduced following the amalgamation of the Departments into NSW DPI.

Action item: The Chair on behalf of the Saltwater and Freshwater Expenditure Committees to write to the Minister expressing concern about the level of cost recovery associated with NSW DPI programs.

The Freshwater Committee sought clarification on the status of employment of the 6 Inland Fisheries Officer positions and was advised that the Macquarie Office is presently carrying a vacancy, which will be advertised shortly.

Recreational Fishing Fee Administration

The Department advised that the new electronic system will provide for electronic data and funds transfer which will decrease opportunities for fraud and ease the administrative burden placed on agents. Recently the Department contracted a business analyst to assist with the development of tender specifications that addresses all the requirements, including essential features such as point of sale terminals in agents stores, a renewal process, automatic funds transfer and plastic licences. A sub committee made up of members of the Expenditure Committees, NSW DPI and the Department of Commerce will be formed to review the specification documents and to evaluate the tenders. There will be an implementation period with a pilot scheme involving a sub set of agents. The Department noted the need for contingency funding for the new system. Estimates of the total implementation and ongoing costs for the new system would be provided once the tenders have been received.

The Committees queried whether agents would be required to purchase or rent the sales terminals and the potential cost. The Department advised that pricing for implementation and maintenance of the new system will be negotiated in detail during the development of a contract. Costs for agents for any hardware/software will most likely need to be absorbed by the service provider. The Committees agreed that a new improved licence system with electronic data and funds transfer was essential, including a waterproof plastic licence for anglers.

Fishing promotion

The Department noted that the proposed budget for the 'fishing promotion' program for 2005/06 was the same as the previous years budget. The Expenditure Committees raised concern that the methods of the current promotions program may not be achieving the goal to maximise community understanding of the need for a recreational fishing licence and compliance with fishing regulations. RFFTEC / RFSTEC requested that a subcommittee comprised of members of the Expenditure Committees, Recreational Management and Communications staff be formed to develop an improved approach for promoting the licence and recreational fishing regulations.

Action item: NSW DPI to form a sub-committee to develop an improved approach for promoting the licence and recreational fishing regulations.

Fishing Workshops

The Recreational Management team aim to provide an enjoyable fishing experience for participants at workshops, where attendees can gain knowledge and understanding of recreational fishing and become equipped with the skills and equipment to enable them to go fishing in the future. The workshops include a theory session on responsible fishing, rigging and casting and a period of supervised practical fishing.

The Committees were advised that a total of 34 events are planned for 2005/06: 3 per hatchery (Narrandera, Ebor, Grafton and Jindabyne), 2 general workshops in each of the three saltwater regions (6) plus 2 additional within the Sydney metropolitan region, 5 workshops for people from a culturally linguistic and diverse background, 2 community engagement clinics per saltwater region (6) and 1 special needs clinic in each saltwater region (3).

The Committees queried the fee structure for fishing workshops. NSW DPI advised that pricing for all clinics will be standardised across all regions in the future and that a system was being developed to return funds received at workshops to the Trusts. Sponsorship is being sought to offset the costs of the program.

Fishing Guides

The fishing guides program involves informing and educating the fishing community about responsible fishing practices through the production and broad distribution of freshwater and saltwater fishing booklets. The bag and size limit discussion papers are expected to be released in the near future, which may result in regulatory changes, which may need to be incorporated prior to the next print run. If significant amendments are required as a result of the reviews, then the numbers of guides produced may need to be adjusted, or additional funds sought from each committee at a later date.

The Committees expressed concern about the number and type (freshwater versus saltwater) of guides received by agents. The Committee suggested that fishing guides be sent with each reminder notice. The Department advised that this option had been considered too costly, however advertising or sponsorship was being investigated as a means of covering this cost.

Fishcare Volunteers

Ms Dee McElligott advised that there are currently 352 volunteers operating across NSW and that 86% of these volunteers contribute more than 8 hours per month in angling related activities such as fishing workshops, fishing shows and field days, guided tours, angler surveys, research programs, club presentations, schools programs and tackle shop visits. Saltwater volunteers attended a total of 58 organised events with 12,000 community contacts made. Freshwater volunteers attended a total of 506 organised events and made 53,345 contacts with the general public. The Calendar of Events for volunteers for 2005/06 has been circulated for the information of members. Training has been limited to two intakes per year with the second round of intakes for the western region expected before the end of June.

The education officer position at Bathurst is currently vacant. A carry over from the freshwater budget from 2004/05 is expected as a result of this vacancy. NSW DPI will be re-evaluating the Education Officer positions to ensure they are appropriately graded and that Education Officer staff are operating effectively. The locations where Education Officer's are based will be reviewed to ensure they are working in close proximity to areas where there is high demand for their services and to reduce their travel times and associated running costs. The Department advised that there was a need for an additional part-time Education Officer at Newcastle to assist with Central region activities. Currently the central Officer is almost completely resourced to servicing the Sydney metropolitan area.

A proposal for a part-time Education Officer was provided to the Committee and supported. Officers based on the coast may also need to work in western areas from time to time to assist the inland Education Officer (e.g. the Coffs Harbour Education Officer may run the fishing clinics at the Government trout hatchery near Armidale rather than the Education Officer from Bathurst).

Tournament monitoring program

The Committees were advised that approximately 50 freshwater tournaments and 30 saltwater tournaments are being monitored at present and additional creel surveys are being undertaken at boat ramps. The Saltwater program has been expanded to incorporate monitoring of game fish tournaments and spearfishing tournaments. Freshwater results show a dramatic increase in the number of trout cod being caught in the Tocumwal area and significant declines in numbers of carp in the Lachlan around Hillston. There also appears to be a correlation between fish stocking and improvements in the number of native species being caught in some western rivers. The Committees requested copies of the angling research competition reports sent to participating angling clubs and associations.

Action item: NSW DPI to send to RFSTEC and RFFTEC members angling research competition reports for each tournament recently monitored.

Fish Habitat Restoration grants

Mr Craig Copeland, Program Manager, Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation gave a short presentation to the Committees, noting that the success of the Freshwater Habitat Grant program and the Clarence Pilot Program to date indicates that an increasing number of community and angling groups are interested in the rehabilitation of aquatic habitat. The funding allocated from the Recreational Fishing Trusts is a catalyst for other sources of funding, with the funding received from external sources up to seven times the amount from the Trusts.

Both Committees supported the proposal for an expanded habitat restoration program. However, the Saltwater Committee was concerned that the current saltwater proposal represented more than a six fold increase in the program compared to the previous \$60,000 a year pilot Clarence program. The Saltwater Committee recommended reducing the funding allocation from \$375,000 to \$200,000. The Committee advised that the allocation should only be used for grants and that the Department's conservation managers should undertake management of the program.

Recreational Angling Database

The Department noted that the service provider contracted to implement and manage the new electronic licence system will be required to maintain a database of licence holders, which will be provided to the Department on a regular basis. This will negate the need for a separately funded program in the future.

Licence Reminder Notice

The Department advised that the number of licences sold had increased since the program's implementation and the program has received positive support from anglers. The service provider contracted to run the new electronic licence system will be required to implement a reminder notice system, negating the need for a separately funded program in the future.

Recommendations

Review of joint Trust applications for ongoing NSW DPI programs

That a budget of \$900,000 in 2005/06 (\$650,000 Saltwater Trust, \$250,000 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Recreational Fishing Fee Administration' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Karl Schaerf. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$300,000 in 2005/06 (\$210,000 Saltwater Trust, \$90,000 Freshwater Trust) for 'Contingency funding for the new electronic system' **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Rodney Tonkin. **Seconded:** John Drew. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$71,000 in 2005/06 (\$50,000 Saltwater Trust, \$21,000 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Fishing promotion' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** John Drew. **Seconded:** Robert Bell. **Carried.** This recommendation is subject to an improved approach being developed.

That a budget of \$150,742 in 2005/06 (\$87,694 Saltwater Trust, \$63,048 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Fishing Workshops' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** John Drew. **Seconded:** Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$140,000 in 2005/06 (\$100,000 Saltwater Trust, \$40,000 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Fishing Guides' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** John Drew. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$876,252 in 2005/06 (\$667,570 Saltwater Trust, \$208,682 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Fishcare Volunteer' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Robert Bell. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$309,000 in 2005/06 (\$167,000 Saltwater Trust, \$142,000 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Tournament Monitoring' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

That the Clarence Pilot Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program be expanded to coastal statewide and be amalgamated with the Inland Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program. That a budget of \$400,000 in 2005/06 (\$200,000 Saltwater Trust, \$200,000 Freshwater Trust) for the program 'Statewide Fish Habitat Rehabilitation' **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Rodney Tonkin. **Seconded:** Anthony Moore. **Carried.** The Committees requested that 100% of the funding be allocated to habitat restoration on-ground works.

That a budget of \$80,000 in 2005/06 (\$56,000 Saltwater Trust, \$24,000 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Recreational Angling Database' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Bruce Mahony. Seconded: Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

That a budget of \$109,500 in 2005/06 (\$76,650 Saltwater Trust, \$32,850 Freshwater Trust) for the 'Licence Reminder Notice' program **be supported** from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts. **Moved:** Anthony Moore. Seconded: Greg Liddell. **Carried.**

Issue

Review of new applications

Background

The Recreational Fishing Trusts fund programs for the benefit of recreational fisheries. An expression of interest for applications was mailed to councils, fishing clubs and organizations and universities to encourage the submission of high profile applications that specifically benefit recreational fishing and directly enhance angler catch. The closing date for applications was 11 March 2004.

Deferred Program

a) A business and economic survey of the recreational charter fishing boat industry in NSW'

Dominion Consulting Pty Ltd applied for funding to conduct a business and economic survey of the NSW charter fishing industry. Due to the appointment of Alistair McIlgorm, Director of Dominion Consulting Pty Ltd to the position of Director at the National Marine Science Centre, the applicant name had changed. The applicant has provided an amended application, which also includes changes to timeline. The objectives of the study are to:

1. profile recreational charter fishing businesses in NSW;
2. survey charter boat operators along the NSW coast to determine the commercial and economic viability of the industry and its economic value; and
3. estimate the flow on effects and links between charter boat ports and the adjacent regional economies.

At the 15th Committee meeting on 2 December 2004, the Committee recommended deferring the application received by Dominion Consulting Pty Ltd to the next meeting to enable the Department to present the application to the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee (MERCMAC) for formal support and to request contributing funding to the study from the Charter Trust. The study will determine the economic and social benefits of the recreational charter fishing industry to NSW. Formal support and contributing funding for the study is currently being considered by MERCMAC out of session. The position of the Advisory Committee will be discussed at the meeting.

Deferred External Program	Proponent	2005/06
A business and economic survey of the recreational charter fishing boat industry in NSW.	National Marine Science Centre	\$59,320

Research Programs

a) Artificial Reefs Research program

Artificial reefs placed in barren areas have the potential to create essential fish, invertebrate and marine plant habitats thereby enhancing angler catch. At the 11th meeting held 25 November 2003 the Committee recommended funding of \$168,578, \$173,091 and \$180,313 over 3 years for the 'Pilot Artificial Reef Comparative Study' program. The Committee was advised that the project would involve scientific research on the proposed 'Reef Ball' artificial reefs in 3 Recreational Fishing Havens to determine the effectiveness of the reefs.

The budget for this program in 2005/06 and 2006/07 has been separated into Management costs (approvals and deployment) with the remaining funds available for the Research (monitoring and ecological studies) component of the program. The research component will be intensive and involve an extensive literary review and investigation into species composition, size range and catch rate, using fish tagging; in-water baited under water video; independent sampling and Otolith (fish ear bones) microchemistry. The research also proposes to investigate the effect of reef structure, size of reef, depth of reef, and distance from existing reef and determine the impact of artificial reefs on local fish populations.

b) Enhancing recreational fisheries through the responsible and optimal stocking of mullet into NSW estuaries.

Mullet is a highly prized key recreational species and the University of NSW have requested funding to continue stocking mullet in NSW estuaries particularly the Tweed, Richmond and Clarence Rivers. The project aims to evaluate the ecological aspects of stocking mullet, refine release techniques to optimise the survival and growth of mullet with respect to fingerling size, release season and habitat; evaluate the contribution of stocked mullet to the recreational catch; and investigate the genetic diversity of stocked and wild mullet caught. This project will also provide a scientific basis for quantifying the success of stocking in both financial (cost-benefit analysis) and biological (increased catch) terms. This information is essential to plan and execute successful ongoing mullet stocking throughout NSW. The applicant has provided the Committee a number of options with respect to the amount of fish to be stocked each year as part of the program. These prices are inclusive of marking and associated consumables for marking, transporting and stocking the specified numbers of fish.

c) Estimating and maximizing the post-release survival of key angler-caught fish in NSW

This four-year project will continue the work to estimate the short-term post-release survival rates and key factors contributing towards the mortality of line caught fish funded by the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust. The project will again use recreational angling events and aquarium experiments but will focus on other key recreational species, including snapper, luderick, dusky flathead, sand mullet, garfish and tailor. The project will also investigate new techniques to quantify any changes in behaviour and the mortality associated with the predation of these species and develop and test procedures and/or gear types that improve post release survival rates for these species. This work is essential to develop protocols that maximize the post-release survival of the key recreational species to ensure a sustainable recreational fishery.

d) Quantifying and comparing changes through time in the marine recreational trailer boat fishery.

This research aims to provide up to date information on the coastal trailer boat fishery and the biology of key recreational species. The first year will involve the establishment of Sea Rescue Bases throughout NSW and the collection of catch and effort data from the recreational trailer boat (and charter boats) fishery. In the second and third year researchers will survey 12 NSW ports across NSW to repeat a previous survey of the trailer boat fishery conducted in 1996. The information will enable a comparison of catch and effort information over a ten-year period. Biological studies (age, growth, reproduction) of the key recreational catches (donated by anglers) will be carried out in the first three years and fourth year. Partial funding for the second and third year of the project will be sought from FRDC and/or the National Heritage Trust. The Department plans to seek further funding from the Saltwater Trust for the second, third and fourth year following advice regarding funding from FRDC.

e) Australian Salmon in NSW: An assessment of what they eat, where they move, how fast they grow, when and where they spawn and what gets caught.

Australian salmon are a popular recreational species caught in estuaries and inshore NSW. The project aims to improve our understanding of Australian Salmon stocks in NSW by investigating the species biology. A scientist will undertake research on what salmon eat, where they move, their growth rate and age and when and where they spawn. A better understanding of the species trophic interactions, affects on the ecosystem, stock structure and population dynamics will lead to sustainable management of the species.

f) An investigation into the occurrence of mercury in striped marlin

Ms Jodi Russell from the Australian Maritime College proposes to undertake a study to investigate the mercury content in striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*) a popular recreational species caught in the eastern tuna and billfish fishery. In 2005 Ms Russell completed a study examining the mercury levels in the three marlin species captured by recreational fishers in NSW waters (Report provided for information). In the study, it was found that the mean total-mercury level for striped marlin was above the maximum allowable mercury concentration for the commercial sale of marlin, as set out by Food Standards Australia New Zealand. However, this study only used 10 samples of striped marlin and therefore did not provide an indicative representation. The aim of this research project is to identify the current mean level of mercury (both total and organic) in striped marlin, and to assess the potential risk(s), if any, to consumers.

g) Monitoring and Research on Landed Fish at Game Fishing Tournaments in NSW 2005/06.

Dr Julian Pepperell, Pepperell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd, Dr Nick Otway, NSW DPI and various tournament samplers propose to continue to organize, coordinate and report on biological research and sampling at major game fishing tournaments in NSW, following the successful methods established over the past three years.

h) Historical insights into coastal NSW fish populations and their fisheries.

The project involves the investigation of historic accounts of fish populations and habitat along coastal NSW by detailed research of early literature and records and to summarise the history of coastal fisheries off NSW from official accounts. Three time periods will be examined with the aim to assess significance of any changes indicated over last 200 years.

i) Movements and behaviour of tiger sharks off NSW as determined by the use of popup satellite tags.

Dr Pepperell, Dr Otway and Dr Kim Holland (University of Hawaii) intend to investigate the movement and behaviour of tiger sharks in NSW. The project will investigate how long tiger sharks remain off the NSW coast; determine short term and seasonal movement patterns, including vertical, inshore and offshore movements; investigate any sex or age related variability in movement patterns and determine correlations of movements with environmental variables. A commitment for additional funding (approximately \$25,000) has been received from the Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA) and approximately \$40,000 in-kind (donated vessel time) will be provided from individual owners of specialist shark fishing boats.

j) Enhancing recreational fishing opportunities with artificial reefs in nearshore waters of NSW: the Coffs Harbour pilot project.

This project aims to work with the recreational fishing community in Coffs Harbour to work through the political, legal, financial, environmental, scientific, technical, and administrative process to enhance recreational fishing opportunities in nearshore waters adjacent to the Solitary Islands Marine Park with the creation of an artificial reef. The project will involve a feasibility study on the deployment of an artificial reef to enhance recreational fishing opportunities; compare the costs and benefits of two artificial reef designs; work with Coffs Harbour's recreational fishing community to construct the selected artificial reef and deploy the structure in the selected site; and build capacity in the recreational fishing community to participate in the management of the reef and associated fish resources. The program will extend over four years.

Management Programs

k) Second Recreational Mobile Squad

At the 12th meeting held on 6 April 2004 the Committee discussed the proposal for a second 'flying squad' responsible for recreational fishing compliance activities in the Recreational Fishing Havens on the North Coast. The Committee was concerned about the level of funding already allocated to Compliance and that additional funding of \$355,000 might exceed the amount of funding available in 2004/05. The Committee provided in-principle support for the second mobile squad and considered the program a priority for funding when sufficient monies become available. The current highly successful squad, based at Brooklyn, comprises three Fisheries Officers that provide a 'visual' deterrent to illegal activity and are heavily involved in recreational compliance activities between Tweed Heads to Tuross Lake, taking in 14 Fisheries District locations.

l) Rock Fishing Safety Awareness Campaign

The program aims to inform target non-English speaking groups of the dangers of rock fishing. The program also aims to provide a direct network between water safety agencies and community organisations; provide individuals with a resource to take away and disseminate through club and association networks; and reduce deaths associated with rock fishing activities in NSW. The program involves media releases in local papers, suburban Korean and Vietnamese media, angling media, Metropolitan media and SBS Television; distribution of rock fishing material with DVD/Video; and two seminars with the relevant associations with people from Korean and Vietnamese communities and translators (initially) then ongoing seminars for all groups.

m) Assisting the recreational fishing sector with representation on emerging fisheries issues and sectoral development.

The program aims to improve the capacity of the recreational fishing sector to have greater influence in the development of policies that have adverse affect on recreational fishing and provide a strategy for recreational fishing. The project will involve the provision of independent position papers on allocation, access, management strategies and issues that are detrimentally impacting the recreational sector. The applicant also plans to interview key representatives in the recreational sector and determine a range of strategies for the development of the sector including capacity development and strategic goal setting; provide the recreational fishing sector with a strategic platform from which it can influence and be heard in government, and identify a range of models and human resource development needs for volunteering and participatory modes of recreational fisheries management in NSW. A PhD research student will be funded by an ARC Linkage grant for two of the three years of the program.

Habitat Program

n) Restoration of a degraded estuarine riparian vegetation community on the Parramatta River foreshore at Pemberton Street, Parramatta.

The project aims to protect and expand the existing patch of saltmarsh located on the Parramatta River foreshore adjacent to Pemberton Street, Parramatta through weed removal, minor excavation and stormwater rehabilitation works. Mangroves are present along sections of the river and there are small isolated patches of saltmarsh at some foreshore locations, including Pemberton Street Parramatta. This saltmarsh is currently under threat from invasion by exotic species. The 13,137m² block of open space is owned by the Council and is not maintained. Recreational fishing will benefit because the project will ensure the protection of this essential fish habitat. The project is part of a larger program to construct four fish ladders that currently block fish migration along the Parramatta river. The two projects combined will aid to bring native fish back up the river. The Council will provide matching funding for the program.

The funding to be approved for each program is outlined in the table on the next page.

Programs	Organisation	2005/06 Allocation	2006/07 Allocation	2007/08 Allocation	2008/09 Allocation
a. Artificial Reefs Research Program	NSW DPI	\$80,562	\$80,787	\$69,281	Nil
b.1 Enhancing recreational fisheries through the responsible and optimal stocking of mullocky into NSW estuaries. *	University of NSW	\$62,009 (1/2 year)	\$103,518	\$103,518	\$52,509 (1/2 year)
b.2 Direct Purchase of mullocky fingerlings from hatchery. Number of fish (size of fish).	60,000 (50mm) + 30,000 (100mm)	\$73,500	\$73,500	\$73,500	Nil
	50,000 (50mm) + 25,000 (100mm)	\$61,250	\$61,250	\$61,250	
	40,000 (50mm) + 20,000 (100mm)	\$49,000	\$49,000	\$49,000	
	30,000 (50mm) + 15,000 (100mm)	\$36,750	\$36,750	\$36,750	
c. Estimating and maximizing the post-release survival of key angler-caught fish in NSW. *	NSW DPI	\$67,049 (1/2 year)	\$199,586	\$160,704	\$126,903 (1/2 year)
d. Dynamics of the coastal recreational trailer boat fishery in NSW	NSW DPI	\$96,237	\$210,838	\$247,563	\$50,460
e. Biology of Australian Salmon	NSW DPI	\$135,474	\$125,261	\$59,365	Nil
f. Mercury in striped mullocky	Australian Maritime College	\$28,500**	Nil	Nil	Nil
g. Monitoring and research at gamefishing tournaments	Pepperell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd	\$24,500	Nil	Nil	Nil
h. Historical insights into coastal NSW fish populations and their fisheries	Pepperell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd	\$18,000	Nil	Nil	Nil
i. Movements and behaviour of tiger sharks off New South Wales as determined by the use of popup satellite tags	Pepperell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd	\$86,100	Nil	Nil	Nil
j. Enhancing recreational fishing opportunities with artificial reefs in nearshore waters of New South Wales: the Coffs Harbour pilot project.	National Marine Science Centre	\$50,800	\$98,800	\$21,800	\$12,800
k. Second Recreational Mobile Squad	NSW DPI	\$495,889	\$439,174	\$452,982	Nil
l. Rock Fishing Safety Awareness Campaign	Department of Sport and Recreation	\$88,000	Nil	Nil	Nil
m. Assisting the recreational fishing sector with representation on emerging fisheries issues and sectoral development.	National Marine Science Centre	\$60,000	\$75,000	\$1,500	Nil
n. Restoration of a degraded estuarine riparian vegetation community on the Parramatta River.	Parramatta City Council	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$50,000	Nil

* This is a three-year program, which extends over 4 financial years commencing January 2006 to December 2009.

** Applicant is seeking funding from GFAA which if successful will reduce this amount.

Small Grants

a) Mylestom Boat Ramp upgrade

Bellingen Shire Council have applied for funding to upgrade the Mylestom Boat Ramp at Bellingen. Although boat ramps are considered low priority for funding the applicant has advised that this boat ramp is used mainly by anglers and in its current state is unsafe. The applicant has also advised that the application for funding was rejected by the NSW Maritime Authority's 'Waterways Asset Development and Management Program' (WADAMP). The Council was advised that boat ramp upgrades are considered low priority. The boat ramp upgrade is part of a larger program to redevelop and formalise the car park with particular emphasis on boat trailer parking and signage installation.

b) Guidance posts at Bohnock Boat Ramp, Manning River, Taree

The project involves the installation of four guidance posts adjacent to Bohnock boat ramp on the Manning River. The post will prevent boats from drifting and increase the safety and effective use of the ramp, especially when launching and re-docking a boat in bad weather. The boat ramp is popular with local and visiting anglers and general boat users. The installation of the posts will require a Review of Environmental Factors report. The Manning River Sustainable Recreational Fishing and Tourism Committee have provided a letter of support for the installation of the post. The Greater Taree City Council is providing matching funds for the project. The Council was unsuccessful with their application for funding through the NSW Maritime Authority's WADAMP program. The boat ramp upgrade is part of a larger project, which includes the construction of a pontoon and information gathering services, which the Council will fund entirely.

c) Boat Ramp Light at Moira Parade Hawkes Nest

The Great Lakes Council plan to install a light at the boat ramp near the wharf and fish cleaning facilities located adjacent to Moira Parade Hawkes Nest. The two-lane boat ramp, wharf and fish cleaning facilities are well used by locals and visiting anglers. The ramp provides access to the Myall River. There is currently no lighting at the site. The light will enhance the existing facilities and provide a safer environment for anglers. The Council has advised that the proposed works were considered low priority for funding through NSW Maritime Authority's WADAMP program. The Council is providing matching funding for the project.

d) Fishing Platform at Darawank Memorial Park Reserve

The proposal is to construct and install a fishing platform on the Wallamba River at Darawank Memorial Park Reserve. The park is located adjacent to The Lakes Way, the main entry to the town of Tuncurry and Forster. The reserve is a grassed park with informal parking area, picnic shelter and toilet. The platform will be approximately 4m by 3m with a safety railing and several benches. The provision of the fishing platform will provide recreational fishers with an appropriate facility at a location where they currently partake in recreational fishing activities. The project will also incorporate riverbank erosion controls work. The Great Lakes Council is providing matching funding for the project.

e) Provision of an Annual Report for the Gamefish Tagging Program.

The aim of the project is to provide a comprehensive report for the Gamefish Tagging Program operated by the Department. The report would summarise the previous year's tagging activities, providing easy to follow graphics and tables on species tagged and recaptured. The report would include colour photos and graphics throughout and provide feedback to the thousands of anglers who participate in this successful program.

f) Map of Seagrasses in Kogarah Bay

RFSTEC deferred the proposal at the 12th meeting on 6 April 2004. The Committee requested additional information on any previous studies undertaken in Kogarah Bay. The Department found that an estuarine biodiversity study on the George's River and its tributaries had recently been undertaken which recommended that the distribution and extent of seagrass in Kogarah Bay be more fully assessed. At the 13th meeting on 26 June 2004 the Committee re-reviewed the proposal together with the additional information provided by the Department. The application for funding was not successful. The Committee noted the merit of the program and that the information derived from the study could be useful. However, the Committee considered the program to be of limited benefit to recreational fishing.

g) Woolli Fish Cleaning Table Improvements.

The boat ramp and existing fish cleaning table on the Woolli River is popular with local and visiting anglers. The boat ramp is in very good condition, but the current fish cleaning table is basic and fails to adequately meet the needs of the increasing number of fishers to the site. The project will involve building a shelter to protect the stainless steel table, installing a solar-powered light and sealing the boat wash down area. Matching funding is being provided through the Woolli Minnie Water Fishing Club and the Clarence Valley Council.

h) Development of a strategic long-term scientific program to assess recreational fisheries in NSW.

The Department is seeking matching funding for a workshop to review current Departmental research projects related to recreational fisheries and provide cost-effective and robust options and strategies to future monitor and assess recreational fisheries in NSW. The strategies will help guide the Department and the Recreational Fishing Trusts with priorities for funding for future research programs.

The total funds requested by the applicants are shown in the table on the following page:

Program	Proponent	2005/06
Mylestom Boat Ramp upgrade	Bellingen Shire Council	\$4,500
Guidance Posts, Bohnock Boat Ramp, Manning River, Taree	Greater Taree City Council	\$5,000
Boat Ramp Light at Moira Parade Hawkes Nest	Great Lakes Council	\$3,000
Fishing Platform, Darawank Memorial Park Reserve	Great Lakes Council	\$3,000
Provision of an Annual Report for the Gamefish Tagging Program	Pepperell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd	\$5,000
Map of Seagrasses in Kogarah Bay	Kogarah Council	\$4,750
Wooli Fish Cleaning Table Improvements	Clarence Valley Council	\$1,900
Development of a strategic scientific program to monitor and assess recreational fisheries in NSW	NSW DPI	\$5,000

Outcomes

Deferred Program

A business and economic survey of the recreational charter fishing boat industry in NSW

The Committee was advised that MERCMAC had considered the program out of session but had requested further review of the program at the next scheduled meeting. The majority of charter fishing boat operators were concerned about providing financial information for the survey.

New Applications- Research Programs

a) Artificial Reefs Research program

The Committee acknowledged that research to investigate the impacts of the 'Reefballs' once deployed was essential. It was also noted that the Department plans to advertise an EOI inviting Universities to undertake research on aspects of the artificial reefs, such as ecological processes. The EOI will be advertised as soon as the necessary approvals have been obtained.

b) Mulloway Stocking program

The Committee noted that the program provided essential information on the impacts of stocking, however additional research was still required. The excellent progress of the first study and quality of information obtained was acknowledged. Dr Kennelly advised that although the quote for the mulloway fingerlings appeared competitive, the Department should investigate whether the aquaculture facilities at Port Stephens Fisheries Centre could supply mulloway fingerlings. The Committee suggested that the funding to purchase the minimal amount of fingerlings for the first year be allocated with scope to approve further funding for the second and third year following investigation of other funding sources.

Action item: NSW DPI to investigate additional funding sources for the supply of mulloway fingerlings for the stocking program.

c) Maximising the post release survival rates of key angler

The Committee acknowledged that the research was essential and that the previous experiments at Botany Bay, Hawkesbury River and Wollie were very successful, with many anglers participating in the program. The 3 angler based experiments and aquarium experiments had provided excellent information on survival rates of released fish. Dr Kennelly advised that although much research had been carried on fish survival around the world in controlled research conditions, this study was the first to use anglers in the experiments using their own gear and techniques, resulting in a more accurate representation of 'true' survival rates.

d) Quantifying and comparing changes through time in the marine recreational trailer boat fishery

The Committee was not convinced that the program would directly benefit recreational fishers and agreed that the research should be undertaken and financed by the Department. It was noted that the Department had committed to continuing research associated with the National Recreational Fishing survey carried out in 2000/01.

e) Australian Salmon in NSW: An assessment of what they eat, where they move, how fast they grow, when and where they spawn and what gets caught.

The Committee noted the benefits of the research for this excellent sportfish and that anglers have reported good catches of the species recently. The Department advised that the Tomaree ProAm had concerns about the impacts of salmon feeding on other important fish species, especially juveniles. It was questioned whether a complete life history study was required and it was agreed that the Commercial industry should also contribute to the study.

f) An investigation into the occurrence of mercury in striped marlin

The potential for contributing funding from other sources for the above program, such as NSW GFA was discussed. The Committee suggested that the applicant seek additional funding and supported a funding level of 50%.

g) Game fish Tournament Monitoring research

It was noted that the Trust had provided ongoing funding for the program and that two previous reports from the program had been distributed to Committee members and NSW game fishing clubs.

h) Historical insights into coastal NSW fish populations and their fisheries

The Committee requested that royalties be sought from the applicant once the book was published.

i) Movements and behaviour of tiger sharks off NSW as determined by the use of popup satellite tags

The merit of the program was acknowledged and it was recognised that the research would provide interesting information. However the Committee expressed concern that the results may not benefit the common angler. The Department noted that CSIRO and Western Australia Fisheries were undertaking similar studies.

j) Enhancing recreational fishing opportunities with artificial reefs in nearshore waters of NSW

The region 3 representative advised that the angling community of Coffs Harbour was supportive of the project due to the access issues created by the Solitary Islands Marine Park. The Department advised that the Artificial Reefs Sub-committee had recommended that it was appropriate in the pilot phase of the current Artificial Reefs program to deploy small reefs in estuarine waters. The Committee was unsure if the applicant had considered the total cost, effort and approval required to sink a ship offshore. The Committee also discussed public liability issues and that other water users such as divers would also benefit from the project. The majority of the Committee agreed that the Trust should concentrate on the current pilot program and associated research, including undertaking an EOI inviting Universities to conduct research on the Artificial Reefs.

Management Programs

k) Second Recreational Mobile Squad

The Committee acknowledged the benefit of the current high profile mobile squad to recreational fishing. The Committee agreed that there was insufficient funding available to support a second recreational mobile squad at this time. A second mobile squad was still considered important and will remain a high priority for funding support from the Saltwater Trust.

The Committee discussed the revenue raised from the payment of infringement notices for fishing activities. It was agreed that the Trust should receive funds generated by recreational fishing offences, particularly those arising from the mobile squad (which is fully funded by the Saltwater Trust). The Committee noted that the Department of Conservation (formerly National Parks and Wildlife Services) and local councils receive revenue from fines issued by their officers.

Action item: NSW DPI to investigate a process to recoup funds arising from infringement notices issued by the mobile squad (and other Fisheries Officers) related to recreational fishing.

l) Rock Fishing Safety Awareness Campaign

The merit of the campaign to increase education about the dangers of the sport was acknowledged. The Australian National Sport Fishing Association (NSW Branch) was working in conjunction with the Department of Sport and Recreation on the program. It was noted that the in-kind contribution that would be provided by these organisations had not been included in the application.

m) Assisting the recreational fishing sector with representation on emerging fisheries issues and sectoral development

The Committee suggested that the applicant seek funding through FRDC for the program as it was related to capacity development.

Small Grants Programs

The Committee discussed the various small grant applications noting that there were a number of programs that would provide benefits to other water users. The Department advised that a number of applicants had previously applied for funding through the NSW Maritime Authority's WADAMP program but were unsuccessful because the projects were considered low priority due to the small scale or because other facilities existed in the area.

Mylestom boat ramp

The Department advised that Bellingen Shire Council was unsuccessful for funding through NSW Maritime Authority's WADAMP program for the upgrade to the boat ramp, because an alternate boat ramp nearby (used mainly by skiers) was in good condition. The Committee acknowledged that the Mylestom boat ramp was in a Recreational Fishing Haven and that half of the funding requested was to erect a sign.

Guidance posts at Bohnock Boat Ramp, Manning River, Taree

The Committee noted that the letter from NSW Maritime Authority's WADAMP program (attached to the application) to Greater Taree Council regarding the program was dated 4 January 2002. The Committee queried whether the Council had taken any follow up action. The letter advised that the Authority would provide funding for a comprehensive upgrade and proposed to meet with the Council to identify a suitable site that would be eligible for funding. The Committee suggested that the proposal be expanded to include an upgrade to the boat ramp, installation of a pontoon and fishing platform and fishing signage, which the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust could jointly fund with the Authority.

Action item: NSW DPI to advise the Greater Taree Council that the Committee provided in-principal support for a fishing platform or fishing signage and for the Council to contact the NSW Maritime Authority to be part of a larger program with joint funding through their WADAMP program.

Fishing Platform

The Committee acknowledged that the Great Lakes Council was seeking minimal funding for the program. The Committee noted that the Council should consider disabled access for the platform and installing a fish cleaning table at the site. If required further funding for the project could be sought from the Trust.

Report from the Gamefish Tagging program

The Department noted that a report from the Gamefish Tagging program had not been produced for the last six years and that the report would cover data collected since the last report was issued. The Committee suggested that the production of the report be amalgamated into and be budgeted for in the Gamefish Tagging program.

Develop a strategic long-term scientific program to assess recreational fisheries in NSW

The Committee recommended that a sub committee of the Expenditure Committee and Departmental staff be formed to determine how to effectively develop recreational scientific programs in the future. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

Action item: NSW DPI to form a sub-committee to determine how to effectively develop recreational scientific programs in the future.

The Committee also discussed a late application submitted by the University of Technology to undertake a sociological market survey about why people go fishing and why they buy a licence. The Committee recommended deferring the application to enable members to fully assess the program and requested that the applicant resubmit the proposal in the required format with specific advice about the funding requested and other sources of funding.

Recommendations

Deferred Program

That a budget of \$59,320 in 2005/06 for the study 'A business and economic survey of the recreational charter fishing boat industry in NSW' **not be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** John Drew. **Carried.**

New Applications - Research Programs

That funding of \$153,792 in 2005/06, \$146,239 in 2006/07 and \$69,282 in 2007/08 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Artificial Reefs Research' **be supported**. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. **Seconded:** Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That funding of \$98,759 (including \$62,009 for the research component and \$36,750 for purchase of mulloway fingerlings) in 2005/06, \$103,518 in 2006/07, \$103,518 in 2007/08 and \$52,509 in 2008/09 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Enhancing recreational fisheries through the responsible and optimal stocking of mulloway into NSW estuaries' **be supported**. **Moved:** Anthony Moore. **Seconded:** Lionel Jones. **Carried.** The Committee also recommended that Clarence be removed as a located to be stocked and suggested that either the Manning or Hastings Recreational Fishing Havens be stocked. **Moved:** Graham Harrison. **Seconded:** John Drew. **Carried.**

That funding of \$67,049 in 2005/06, \$199,586 in 2006/07, \$160,704 in 2007/08 and \$126,903 in 2008/09 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Estimating and maximizing the post-release survival of key angler-caught fish in NSW' **be supported**. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. **Seconded:** Greg Liddell. **Carried.**

That funding of \$96,237 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Quantifying and comparing changes through time in the marine recreational trailer boat fishery' **not be supported**. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

The Committee provided in-principal support for \$67,737 in 2005/06, \$62,630 in 2006/07 and \$29,682 in 2007/08 (50% funding) from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Australian Salmon in NSW: An assessment of what they eat, where they move, how fast they grow, when and where they spawn and what gets caught' should matching funding be provided by FRDC. **Moved:** Malcolm Poole. **Seconded:** Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

That \$14,250 (50% of funding) in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'An investigation into the occurrence of mercury in striped marlin' **be supported**. **Moved:** David Jones. **Seconded:** Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

That funding of \$24,500 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Monitoring and Research on Landed Fish at Game Fishing Tournaments in NSW 2005/06' **be supported**. **Moved:** David Jones. **Seconded:** Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

That funding of \$18,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Historical insights into coastal NSW fish populations and their fisheries' **be supported**. **Moved:** David Jones. **Seconded:** Malcolm Poole. **Carried.**

That funding of \$86,100 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Movements and behaviour of tiger sharks off NSW as determined by the use of pop up satellite tags' **not be supported. Moved:** Malcolm Poole. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

That funding of \$50,800 in 2005/06, \$98,800 in 2006/07, \$21,800 in 2007/08 and \$12,800 in 2008/09 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Enhancing recreational fishing opportunities with artificial reefs in nearshore waters of NSW: the Coffs Harbour pilot project' **not be supported. Moved:** Lionel Jones. Seconded: Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

Management Programs

That funding of \$495,889 in 2005/06, \$439,174 in 2006/07 and \$452,982 in 2007/08 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Second Recreational Mobile Squad' **not be supported. Moved:** Bruce Mahony. Seconded: Greg Liddell. **Carried.**

That funding of \$88,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Rock Fishing Safety Awareness Campaign' **be supported. Moved:** Bill Heaton. Seconded: Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That funding of \$60,000 in 2005/06, \$75,000 in 2006/07 and \$1,500 in 2007/08 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Assisting the recreational fishing sector with representation on emerging fisheries issues and sectoral development' **not be supported. Moved:** Graham Harrison. Seconded: John Drew. **Carried.**

Habitat Programs

That funding of \$15,000 in 2005/06, \$15,000 in 2006/07 and \$50,000 in 2007/08 from the Saltwater Trust for the program 'Restoration of a degraded estuarine riparian vegetation community on the Parramatta River foreshore at Pemberton Street, Parramatta' **not be supported** but referred to the Statewide Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program. **Moved:** Lionel Jones. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

Small Grants

That funding of \$5,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Development of a strategic long-term scientific program to assess recreational fisheries in NSW' program **be supported. Moved:** Malcolm Poole. Seconded: Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

That funding of \$4,500 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Mylestom Boat Ramp upgrade' program **be supported. Moved:** John Drew. Seconded: Bill Heaton. **Carried.**

That funding of \$5,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Guidance posts at Bohnock Boat Ramp, Manning River, Taree' program **not be supported at this stage. Moved:** Malcolm Poole. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

That funding of \$3,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Boat Ramp Light at Moira Parade Hawkes Nest' program **be supported. Moved:** Graham Harrison. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

That funding of \$3,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Fishing Platform at Darawank Memorial Park Reserve' program **be supported. Moved:** Graham Harrison. Seconded: Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

That funding of \$5,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Provision of an Annual Report for the Gamefish Tagging Program' program **be supported. Moved:** Anthony Moore. Seconded: Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

That funding of \$4,750 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Map of Seagrasses in Kogarah Bay' program **not be supported** but referred to the Statewide Fish Habitat Rehabilitation program. **Moved:** Graham Harrison. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

That funding of \$1,900 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust small grants program for 'Wooli Fish Cleaning Table Improvements' program **be supported. Moved:** Bruce Mahony. Seconded: John Drew. **Carried.**

Agenda Item 7

Bryan van der Walt

Issue

2005/06 Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Budget

Background

A draft budget table for 2005/06 will be prepared and presented to the Committee for consideration, based on the recommendations of RFSTEC for renewal of funding for existing and new proposals for funding. The budget position predicted from the initial recommendations will be compared against available funds. If necessary, approvals for programs, and or allocations to each program may need to be reviewed in order to achieve an appropriate Trust balance in 2005/06 and thereafter.

Outcomes

The Committee was advised that a total of \$6.9 million was supported for new and existing programs for 2005/06 financial year. The Committee agreed that available funds in the Saltwater Trust and predicted income in the current financial year and in 2005/06 would support this level of funding.

Agenda Item 8

Bryan van der Walt

Issue

Other programs – Annual Reports

Background

Program managers of all other Trust funded projects not presenting at this budget meeting have prepared annual progress reports for the Committee's information. These reports include details on project objectives and progress against these objectives.

Outcomes

The Committee discussed the study 'Effectiveness of Recreational Fishing Havens in Northern NSW' and the various issues identified by some Committee members and the co-investigator Dr Charles Gray (NSW DPI). Dr Gray had prepared a summary of comments and concerns relating to the proposed sampling regime. Dr Kennelly advised that Dr Gray was working with Professor Bravestock of Southern Cross University (SCU) to resolve the issues. The Committee felt that there were fundamental problems with the study, particularly the use of the video camera sampling as only a few species were attracted to the video and the limited sampling being undertaken in the Camden Haven River. Anthony Moore, SCU, acknowledged the benefits and limitations with the camera and advised that results from other survey methods, such as creel surveys, angler catch cards and gill netting, will be combined to show the effectiveness of the havens. The Committee noted that the progress of the program would be closely monitored to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved and the results are scientifically robust.

Action item: NSW DPI to release 50% of second year funding to SCU for the program 'Effectiveness of Recreational Fishing Havens in Northern NSW' and release payment of the video grant upon receipt of a tax invoice.

The Committee noted the variation to the Angel Rings project to use mapping software and that ANSA (NSW Branch) will be absorbing the costs of the variation.

9. Action Items from meeting 15

Agenda Item 10

Bryan van der Walt

Issue

General Business / Correspondence received

Membership on RFSTEC

RFSTEC members are appointed based on the expertise and ability to represent their region following an expression of interest process. Mr David Jones has been recently appointed to represent the NSW GFA. The three-year terms for members in regions 1, 6a, 7 and the representatives for the Australian Fishing Tackle Association and the Recreational Fishing Alliance are set to expire in June 2005. In order to maintain the present rotating cycle of membership on the Committee, an EOI for the vacancies arising in these regions is currently being prepared for advertising in May 2005. The existing representatives are eligible to be re-appointed and are encouraged to re-apply.

The Committee suggested that email provision be available for anglers when they buy a licence so that reminder notices can be sent via email to reduce costs.

The Committee suggested that some of the future meetings be held in regional centres. The Committee also advised that the public need more information about what their licence money is being spent on and suggested that the regional meetings could coincide with an information day for the community.

The Committee noted that the signage from the Belmont Fish Cleaning Table was missing and that there was no signage or media about the Weed Bait Tank at Newcastle. The Department noted that media had not been undertaken for the Weed Bait Tank because the proponent was experiencing difficulties with establishing and maintaining the weed.

Action item: NSW DPI to send Recreational Fishing Trust plaques to Lake Macquarie City Council.

The Committee felt that consideration should be given to maintaining recreational fishing signage as a number of members noted that signs that had been vandalised or stolen had not been replaced after 12 months. The Committee agreed that improved Recreational Fishing Haven and Recreational Bag and Size limit signs should be placed at all major boat ramps across NSW.

The Committee discussed the appointment of Dr Steve Kennelly (NSW DPI Chief Scientist) to RFSTEC. Members were concerned that the appointment of a NSW DPI staff member to the Committee (with voting capacity) may discredit the excellent reputation of this previous angler based Committee.

Action item: The Chair on behalf of RFSTEC to write to the Minister to express the Committee's concern about the appointment of a NSW DPI staff member to the expenditure committee.

Correspondence

1. Letter from Mr Barry Miller of the Narrawallee Inlet Social Club & Narrawallee Residents & Ratepayers Association thanking the Recreational Management team for their assistance to progress the grant funded fish cleaning table at Narrawallee Inlet. Mr Miller also provided photographs of the work being undertaken and the completed table and light. A copy of the letter and photographs was provided to the Committee for their information.

2. Letter from Mr Trevor Calmar of Pittwater. Mr Calmar has been unsuccessful in his attempts to encourage his local Council to build a fish cleaning table at Pittwater. Mr Calmar has the financial support of 12 local fishing clubs. Mr Calmar seeks in-principal support for funding through the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Small grants program to build a fish cleaning table at Pittwater.

Action item: The Chair to send a letter to Mr Trevor Calmar advising that the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust has supported many applications for funding to build or upgrade fish cleaning tables as they are regarded as a direct benefit to recreational fishing.

Outcomes

For information and discussion.

11. Next Meeting date

16 June 2005 Coffs Harbour National Marine Science Centre

Meeting End: 1:00pm 7 April 2005