



**Recreational  
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust  
Expenditure Committee***

***Draft MINUTES***

**18<sup>TH</sup> RFFTEC MEETING  
1 April, 2004**

**CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE  
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

**Eighteenth Meeting of the NSW  
Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee  
Draft MINUTES  
1.4.04, 9:30am to 3.30pm  
NSW Fisheries Cronulla Fisheries Centre, 202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

**Attendance**

**Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee Members**

Bruce Schumacher	Chair
Steve Rudder	Region 1
Doug Joyner	Region 2
Steve Tooley	Region 3
Peter Brodbeck (designate)	Region 4
Rodney Tonkin	Region 5
Debbie Lennon	Region 6
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8

**NSW Fisheries (observers)**

Mr Paul O'Connor, Executive Director Regional and Corporate Services  
Mr John Diplock, Principal Manager, Recreational Fisheries  
Mr Bryan van der Walt, Senior Fisheries Manager, Recreational Fishing Trusts  
Mr Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager (Inland)  
Mr Craig Watson, Fisheries Manager Recreational Fisheries

## **Business**

Chair's introduction

Welcoming of new members to the Committee

Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting

Action Items from previous minutes

## **Agenda Items**

1. New appointments to RFFTEC, terms of reference and membership details (Cameron Westaway)
2. Out of session agenda item - Second round of habitat grant proposals (Bruce Schumacher, Milly Hobson, Sharon Molloy)
3. Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust financial report (Bryan van der Walt)
4. Renewal of existing trust funded programs (Cameron Westaway / Bryan van der Walt)
5. Expression of Interest for trust funded applications - new trust fund project proposals and proposals for funding through the existing Small Grants Program (Cameron Westaway / Craig Watson)
6. Final Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust budget recommendations and allocations for the 04/05 financial year (Bryan van der Walt / Cameron Westaway)

## **Other business**

- Freshwater trust project account reports (Cameron Westaway)
- Recreational fishing licence sales report (Craig Watson)
- Quotes for fish stocking signs (Craig Watson)
- Licence project page on website (Craig Watson)
- Next meeting
- Date and location

## **Meeting close**

### **Chair's welcoming**

The Chair welcomed members to the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) and new temporary members, Mr Rodney Tonkin (Region 5) and Mr Steve Rudder (Region 1). The Chair noted a full agenda for the meeting, which included the assessment of ongoing programs and the consideration of new projects for funding. Discussion should be kept as concise as possible.

### **Apologies**

Richard Ping Kee (Region 7)

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### **Recommendation**

The draft minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC meeting were accepted by RFFTEC as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### **Action items of the previous meeting**

#### **Recommendation**

Action items arising from the previous meeting were detailed in the action status table, included with the draft minutes. RFFTEC acknowledged the progression of action items from the previous meeting.

### **Agenda Item 1**

### **Cameron Westaway**

#### **Issue**

New appointments to RFFTEC, terms of reference and membership details

#### **Background**

Terms of reference: The Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) is a non-statutory sub-committee of the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF). The Council was formed in 1998 subsequent to the introduction of the freshwater fishing licence. The Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust funds programs for the benefit of recreational fisheries. The role of the Committee is to review these programs and to provide advice on new funding initiatives. RFFTEC members also seek input on expenditure priorities from their region or organisation and bring this input to committee meetings. The Committee then gives advice and makes recommendations to the Minister for Fisheries, via ACoRF on expenditure from the freshwater trust account, for the benefit of recreational fishing.

Membership: RFFTEC members are appointed based on expertise and ability to represent their region following an expression of interest process. There are eight positions on the committee: three representatives from east of the dividing range; being north, central and south coasts (regions 1-3), three representatives for the highland and western slopes; being north inner-west, central inner-west and south inner-west (regions 4-6) and two far west representatives; being far north west, and far south west (regions 7-8).

**Background continued**

Members are generally appointed on a 3 year-rotational basis. Exceptions apply if vacancies arise in a region during the term of office of a member, in which case, an Expression of Interest for temporary membership is called (as with regions 1 and 5). The three-year terms for members in regions 2, 3 and 6 will expire in August this year. Terms for members in regions 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are set to expire in February, 2005. In order to maintain the present rotating cycle of membership on the Committee, an Expression of Interest for the vacancies arising in these regions will take place in May (2,3 & 6) and November (1,4,5,7 & 8).

**Outcomes**

The Chair discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Committee. Mr Westaway discussed the terms of membership and confirmed the role of the committee. Expressions of Interest for new membership would be sought in May for positions expiring in August 04 and in November for positions expiring in February 05. Incumbents would be able to reapply for a position on the Committee, should they choose to do so.

**Recommendation**

Noted by the Committee.

**Issue**

Freshwater Fish Habitat Grant Program – second round of applications

**Background**

The Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust Expenditure Committee has previously supported the expenditure of \$300,000 over three years for aquatic habitat protection and restoration. The purpose of the fish habitat grants program is to provide “on-ground” rehabilitation for fish habitats. Projects are carried out by a range of stakeholder groups such as angling clubs, local councils, individual landholders and Rivercare and Landcare groups in collaboration with conservation staff from NSW Fisheries.

A total of 70 expressions of interest were received for round 1 of the fish habitat grants program early in 2003. The projects were ranked and 13 were recommended for funding and presented to the Committee for consideration on 29/5/03. All thirteen recommended applications were approved by the committee resulting in total funding of \$93,871 with an in-kind contribution of more than \$217,000.

Expressions of interest for round 2 of the fish habitat grants program were called on 23/10/03. In all, 36 applications were received. A list of all the projects with a summary description of each was sent to members on 3/2/04. The projects have been ranked by NSW Fisheries Office of Conservation staff, according to criteria including the benefit to rec anglers, quality of application, matching funding and habitat benefit. Twelve applications have been recommended for approval with total recommended funding of \$100,730 and an in kind contribution of \$223,520.

It should be noted that 7 of the 12 recommended projects are for fish habitat rehabilitation east of the great divide. Applications have not been ranked with consideration of geographic spread and as such many inland or highland projects have not been recommended to date, due to their failure to meet the main ranking criteria.

As a result, the Committee may wish to approve other inland projects (ranked highly but not recommended) to improve the geographic spread of projects. In addition NSW Fisheries would appreciate advice as to whether before the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of grants in 2004, assessment criteria should be altered to ensure that areas which have not received significant funding in the first two rounds, such as inland and highland catchments, gain access to this funding.

**Outcomes**

For round one of the habitat grants program, 3 projects had been completed and 10 progress reports were available. These were distributed to Committee members. For the second round of the program, 38 project applications had been received and 13 had been recommended for funding. Ms Hobson showed a map of regional distribution of projects.

Ms Hobson discussed the EOI process and the ranking criteria used for the assessment of proposals. To date, only a small number of submissions had been received from some areas namely highland areas, north western NSW and the far west of the State. The Committee noted that the effects of the drought could be contributing to the lack of submissions. It was suggested that extra advertising in these areas might be necessary for round 3, with the aim of encouraging habitat grants submissions.

The Committee endorsed the 13 projects for funding proposed by Office of Conservation plus a 2 further projects, located in Tumut and Oberon, to improve the geographic spread of programs. A full list of projects and funding levels are in Table 1.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC recommended that the projects listed in Table 1 be funded for the second round of the habitat grants program at a total funding level of \$113,760.

**Table 1: Freshwater Habitat Grant Program - Applications Summary Table Round 2**

<b>Priority Rank</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Proposal Summary</b>	<b>Funds Sought (\$)</b>
<b>1</b>	Ballina Shire Council (Peter Williams)	Skidders Creek crossing modification + revegetation, Wilsons River Catchment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The road crossing proposed to be modified is located on Skinner Ck</li> <li>This road crossing is the only crossing acting as a barrier to fish passage.</li> <li>Modification of the barrier will open up an additional 30km of fish habitat</li> <li>Fish species present in the area include freshwater catfish, gudgeons, rainbowfish, smelt, glassfish, freshwater herring &amp; Australian bass</li> <li>Revegetation will also take place at the site approximately 2.5km and 1000 native plants.</li> <li>Fencing to prevent stock will also be erected</li> <li>General weed control will take place.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
<b>2</b>	Cudgegong Catchment Committee (Nicky)	Cudgegong River rehabilitation, Mudgee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4km of river rehabilitation.</li> <li>The aim is to improve fish habitat &amp; river health in a popular fishing area on the Cudgegong River</li> <li>Pre-works monitoring (photos, water quality, macro invertebrate survey)</li> <li>Willow poisoning &amp; removal.</li> <li>General weed control.</li> <li>Stock exclusion fencing</li> <li>Revegetation, approximately 1000 tubestock</li> <li>Post works monitoring.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$8,805.00</b>
<b>3</b>	Murrumbidgee Wetlands Working Group (Melissa)	Murrumbidgee River Floodplain/Wetland research project, Narrandera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetland/floodplain covers an area of approximately 1300Ha</li> <li>The aim of the project is to monitor the impact of a flood event on fish movement and behaviour, water quality, aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna, water quality and nectar production over a 2 year period.</li> <li>Findings from project will improve knowledge and understanding to better manage environmental flows and their impact on River Red Gum floodplain ecosystems</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>



Priority Rank	Applicant	Title	Proposal Summary	Funds Sought (\$)
4	Gloucester Shire Council (Dan Croft)	Gloucester River Causeway modification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project site is at the Faulkland Road causeway, a barrier to fish @ the lower end of the Gloucester River</li> <li>The aim of the project is to improve fish passage past the crossing during relatively low flows, which is to complement other fish passage works along the Gloucester River</li> <li>Fish species including Australian smelt, freshwater catfish, striped gudgeon, cox's gudgeon, Australian bass, flat-headed gudgeon, dwarf flat-headed gudgeon, empire gudgeon, bullrout, pacific blueeye, freshwater mullet, bully mullet, longfinned eel and rainbow trout.</li> <li>The project is consistent with the Lower North Coast Catchment Blue print and contributes to the riparian revegetation works being carried out by local community groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$8,090.00</b>
5	Greening Australia (Daniel Williams)	South Creek rehabilitation, Western Sydney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sites selected for this project cover an area of approximately 7km</li> <li>This project is a continuation of the works carried out for Round 1 of the Freshwater Fish Habitat Grant Program</li> <li>African olives will continue to be removed and the associated large woody debris will be relocated along the site to provide increased fish habitat</li> <li>Revegetation works including both semi aquatic and riparian plants will take place.</li> <li>Weed control will also supplement these works along South Creek.</li> <li>Last years works created much interest and support from many community groups including Sydney Fly Rodders, Bass Fishing Club Sydney, Bass Australia and Native Fish Australia</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
6	Mid-Lachlan & Wallamundry Creek Water Users (Allan LeStrange)	Little Lachlan Willow Removal Works, Condobolin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20Ha of riparian and instream habitat rehabilitation.</li> <li>Removal of introduced pest species, namely willows &amp; establishment of native vegetation</li> <li>Project supported by 4 local fishing clubs.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>

Priority Rank	Applicant	Title	Proposal Summary	Funds Sought (\$)
7	Stephen Ross (Clarence River Wilderness Lodge)	Tooloom Creek, tributary of the Clarence River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1Ha of rehabilitation, to include 500m of riparian revegetation</li> <li>• This project is a continuation of previous works carried out under the 1st round of the Freshwater Fish Habitat Grant Program.</li> <li>• Fish species including the endangered Eastern cod are present at the site</li> <li>• Weed removal, species including privot, catsclaw &amp; lantana.</li> <li>• Riparian revegetation</li> <li>• Snag replacement program.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	\$3,850.00
8	Eurobodalla Shire Council (Peter Gow)	Deua River Rehabilitation, Moruya.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project site covers an area of approximately 32Ha</li> <li>• The project aims preserve the freshwater habitat of Australian bass within the Deua River</li> <li>• Removal of exotic weeds including privot, willows, wild tobacco along approximately 8km riparian zone which is expected to encourage natural regeneration from existing seed bank.</li> <li>• Education campaign using local media to relay the existing willow and weed problem along the Deua River</li> <li>• Fencing to exclude stock access</li> <li>• Conservation and rehabilitation of native flora in areas where weed removal takes place.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	\$9,000.00
9	Jack Buttsworth	Swamp forest/wetland rehabilitation, connects to Kalang River. Bellinger Catchment, Urunga.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 1 1/2 acres to be rehabilitated</li> <li>• The aim of the project is to encourage natural regeneration of a wetland ecosystem by fencing the area to exclude stock access and to control weed species such as Groundsel bush.</li> <li>• Some revegetation will occur along one side of the site, 100 plants.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	\$1,965.00
10	Wentworth Shire Council	Thegoa Lagoon Rehabilitation, tributary of the Murray River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim is to complete a feasibility study for the best option to provide fish passage at an existing road crossing and pipeline works, at the western end of Thegoa Lagoon</li> <li>• Low cost capital options, hydraulic assessment, fish passage design criteria options and recommendations will be made for preferred option.</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	\$10,000.00

Priority Rank	Applicant	Title	Proposal Summary	Funds Sought (\$)
11	Snowy River Interstate Landcare Committee (Errol Wilson)	Bombala River Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7km river rehabilitation, to build on previous willow removal works carried out as a result of successful funding bids over the last 2 years</li> <li>2km riparian weed control including willow Fencing if required. removal, broom and blackberry control</li> <li>1 km revegetation, 2000 plants.</li> </ul> <b>RECOMMENDED</b>	\$10,000.00
12	University of New England (Rex Glencross-Grant)	Namoi & Gwydir Rivers, North of Armidale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project aims to use a combination of laboratory and field trials to establish the hydraulic behaviour of water flow over different bed types in a modular fishway, compare the successful passage of fish species and ages along these different bed types and assess the hydraulic behaviour of fish within fishways which have been exposed to field conditions, eg, algal biofilms and invertebrates.</li> <li>The outcomes from this project are expected to provide vital information to increase the working ability of modular fishways in an economic and practical manner in the field.</li> </ul> <b>RECOMMENDED</b>	\$10,000.00
13	Riverina Highlands Landcare Network, Tumut	Goobarragandra River, Murrumbidgee Catchment, rehabilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project is to rehabilitate approximately 3km of river foreshore</li> <li>Goobarragandra River is a renowned trout fishing stream with other fish species present including Australian smelt, Murray cray, river blackfish &amp; mountain galaxids</li> <li>The aim of the project is to enhance fish habitat and aims to implement actions listed in the Goobarragandra River Management Manual</li> <li>The works will be undertaken on sites adjoining either existing revegetation site or where healthy riparian vegetation exists.</li> <li>Fencing to exclude stock, approximately 3km</li> <li>Revegetation of riparian areas, 2000 trees</li> <li>3 off river watering points will be created.</li> </ul> <b>RECOMMENDED</b>	\$8,200.00

Priority Rank	Applicant	Title	Proposal Summary	Funds Sought (\$)
14	Duckmaloi River Rivercare Group/Lithgow-Oberon Landcare (Eric Mohony)	Duckmaloi River, Oberon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project site is to cover approximately 750m of river foreshore</li> <li>• Previous bank rehabilitation works took place in 2002</li> <li>• The area currently provides habitat for platypus as well as brown and rainbow trout fish species</li> <li>• Weed removal including willows will take place</li> <li>• Revegetation using locally sourced specimens, 1000 plants</li> <li>• Local recreational angling clubs are being involved</li> </ul> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b></p>	<b>\$3,850.00</b>

**Issue**

Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust financial report

**Background**

The general recreational fishing licence has been in place since February 2001 and the freshwater licence has been providing funds since 1998. Over this time, there have been a large number of projects recommended by the fresh and saltwater expenditure committees and ACoRF, and approved by the Minister.

A spreadsheet showing budgets and anticipated carryover will be presented for discussion. Historical carryover of unexpended funds in existing projects contributed substantially to annual funding requirements in previous years. However, this carryover of funds was not expected to continue during 04/05 as many programs were now well established and expected to meet their full budgets over the coming financial year. Therefore, the overall program budget will need to be reduced to match the fixed revenue amount of \$2.5 million per annum.

RFFTEC will need to take the Trust Fund balance into consideration when considering new project proposals, the renewal of existing programs and funding levels for programs beyond 04/05.

**Current Trust Fund Position**

The balance of the Freshwater Trust at the end of the 2002/03 financial year was \$525,000. The total funding allocated by this Committee to programs in the 2003/04 financial year was just over \$2.7 million which is expected to reduce the balance of trust Fund to just over \$300,000 at the end of this financial year. The predicted total funding allocation for programs in 2004/05 (which takes into account anticipated carryovers as outlined in the agenda) amounts to \$2,566 million. This will reduce the balance to about \$240,000, which will be available for new programs. The 2004/05 program budget for ongoing programs and new programs will be assessed at the meeting.

**Table 2: Summary of current Trust Fund position**

Balance at end of 2002/03	\$525,090
Predicted income 2003/04	\$2,500,000
Approved allocations 2003/04	\$2,721,351
Predicted balance at end of 2003/04	\$303,739
Predicted income 2004/05	\$2,500,000
Amount available	\$2,803,739
Predicted allocations 2004/05	\$2,566,100
Amount available for new programs	<b>\$237,639</b>

### **Outcomes - Demographic breakdown of licence expenditure**

Previously the saltwater expenditure committee had requested information on the demographic breakdown of Trust Fund allocations, mainly to assist the committees when reviewing applications. This exercise would also enhance the level of reporting to the general public. NSW Fisheries had undertaken an analysis of the regional breakdown of Trust Fund allocations to each coastal and inland region. Not all projects can be split exactly on a regional basis as they operate across the State. For example, the Fishcare Volunteer program allocation was split based on the number of volunteers trained in each area of NSW. This information had been placed on the NSW Fisheries website. The next step would be to relate these proportions to the number of licences sold in each region.

### **Current trust fund position**

NSW Fisheries had prepared a forward planning financial table, to be used to forecast the balance of the Trust fund for the next financial year and beyond. This table was displayed on a screen and updated throughout the meeting to show a running tally of the amount allocated to programs and the amount available for future funding. At the end of the meeting, the actual carryovers were determined and subtracted from the budgets to calculate the allocations to come out of the Freshwater Trust during 04/05.

The Committee questioned the future status of funding between the fresh and saltwater trusts. NSW Fisheries advised that the amount allocated to the freshwater trust was to be maintained at \$2.5 million per annum, for a period of 5 years after the introduction of the general recreational fishing fee. This figure was based on the average income to the freshwater trust over the first 2.75 years of the freshwater fishing fee. A mechanism for determining the equitable distribution of funds between fresh and saltwater beyond March 2006, has not been established at this point.

### **Trust fund advertising**

NSW Fisheries called for Expressions of Interest over the past few months for programs to be funded by the Trusts. Previously only applications under the small grants program were called for, because of a fully allocated Freshwater Trust budget. However this year applications for small grants and larger funding were invited to increase the profile of the Freshwater Trust.

Previously many applications for funding from the fresh and saltwater trusts that had been received were deemed inappropriate. This year a more targeted advertising campaign was undertaken. An expression of interest for applications was mailed to councils, fishing clubs and universities. A poster was also developed to target the common angler, and distributed through licence agent, Fisheries Officer and Fishcare Volunteer networks. Expressions of Interest received were discussed at agenda item 5.

### **Recommendation**

Noted.

## Agenda Item 4

## Cameron Westaway

### **Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing programs

### **Background**

RFFTEC has supported a number of ongoing programs over the 6 years since the reintroduction of the recreational freshwater fishing licence. These programs have achieved a range of benefits for the recreational fishers and fish habitat in freshwater lakes and rivers in NSW.

### **Outcomes**

A brief summary of programs funded in 2003/04 was included within agenda items 4a to 4p to assist the committee in their deliberations. This information was provided to update new members on the range of funded projects, which were seeking renewal in 2004/05. Some project items also included alternative funding arrangements.

### **Recommendation**

Noted by the Committee.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Enhanced departmental fish production

**Background**

The purpose of this project is to assist in the production of native and salmonid fish for stocking in freshwater rivers and impoundments throughout the State, for the benefit of anglers. The fish are produced at the NSW Fisheries Hatcheries at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre, the Dutton Trout Hatchery at Ebor (near Armidale), the Gaden Trout Hatchery at Jindabyne, the Port Stephens Fisheries Centre, and the Grafton Aquaculture Centre. Since implementation of the program, the production of fish from departmental hatcheries has increased substantially, to the current output of approximately 7.2 million fish per annum. This total is comprised typically of 4.9 million trout and 2.3 million native fish.

Fish stocking supports some of our most important inland fisheries including the Australian bass fishery in Glenbawn dam, Murray cod and golden perch fisheries in impoundments such as Copeton, Pindari, Burrinjuck and Blowering dams and our trout fisheries in the Snowy Mountains, Southern Highlands and Central and New England tablelands. The program is ongoing from August to May each year. As at 4 March 2004, 4.2 million salmonids and 1.9 million natives have been stocked.

RFFTEC has supported provision of \$304,500 per annum for enhanced fish production. Funding has been allocated to each of the five departmental hatcheries split between \$182,000 for the inland hatcheries and \$122,500 for the bass and silver perch facilities at Port Stephens and Grafton. NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the Enhanced departmental Fish Production program budget at the existing funding level of 304,500 for the next year (04-05). No carry-over of funds are expected from this program during the 03-04 year. Therefore NSW Fisheries seeks a recommendation for an approval of a budget of \$304,500 with an estimated allocation of \$304,500.

**Outcomes**

Enhanced government stocking provided for the supply of high priority freshwater recreational species including trout, salmon, Australian bass, Murray cod, golden perch and silver perch. Many of the most important impoundments did not support native fish breeding, thus the stocking of fish in these impoundments supported significant recreational fishing activity.

The enhanced fish production program funded Fisheries Technician positions at Narrandera, Jindabyne and Port Stephens hatcheries. Operational funds provided support for additional production costs, including feeding, stocking costs, overtime and temporary assistance at hatcheries during peak periods.



**Outcomes continued**

This year, production levels had been maintained at levels well above those prior to additional funding. As at 13 March 2004, total fish stocked totalled 6,678,100 comprising 2,366,400 native fish and 4,311,700 salmonids. There had been a record production of native fish at Narrandera Fisheries Centre this year. Native fish from Narrandera, Grafton and Port Stephens were comprised of 1,136,000 Golden Perch, 371,000 Murray Cod, 598,200 Silver Perch, 66,000 Trout Cod and 204,200 Australian Bass. The fish production program was on track to match last year's record government stocking of 7.2 million fish.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the enhanced fish production program at the existing funding level of \$304,500 with an estimated allocation of \$304,500.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Purchase of fish from private hatcheries

**Background**

The Dollar for Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program has involved stocking of Murray cod and golden perch into inland rivers and dams, and Australian bass into coastal rivers and dams in NSW on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Typically, 80% of funds are used to stock inland native fish (Murray cod and golden perch) with the other 20% used to stock Australian bass. Stocking for 03/04 is ongoing however it is anticipated that approximately 500,000 golden perch and 250,000 Murray cod will be stocked. Bass stocking is complete and 230,000 bass were stocked. This is a record figure and 47,000 more fish than the previous best result. The expression of interest for the dollar for dollar program for the 04-05 year was released in February 04.

NSW Fisheries is seeking an increase in the program budget from \$200,000 per annum to \$225,000 per annum, (see attached submission) to allow for the increase in community participation and to overcome the need for to introduce a pro-rata reduction on applications, given the high number of stocking applications received. NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the dollar for dollar program (Purchase of Fish from Private hatcheries) budget at a new funding level of \$225,000, for the next year (04-05), with an estimated allocation of \$225,000, for this project. No carry-over is expected from this program during the 03-04 year.

**Outcomes**

The Dollar for Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program had been enthusiastically supported by angling groups and other community organisations since its introduction. The program was continuing to grow, particularly in the western drainage, so much so that applications for funds during 03-04 had exceeded the budget. This had meant that applications were reduced by 10%, to bring the overall amount offered back to the budgeted \$200,000. This was viewed unfavourably by some clubs and fish hatcheries, as funding was not provided on a dollar-for-dollar matching funding basis, as promoted. A request had been made by Mr Richard Ping Kee to increase the dollar for dollar program budget to \$225,000 for the 04-05 financial year to cater for the increase in community stocking requests. NSW Fisheries supported this increase and an application had been submitted to the trust. An increase in the budget would enable greater community participation in the program and should overcome the need for any pro-rata reductions on proposals in the future.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the Dollar for Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program at an increased funding level of \$225,000 with an estimated allocation of \$225,000.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - freshwater recreational management

**Background**

Funding is provided for employment of an inland recreational fisheries manager, based at Tamworth. The position is chiefly responsible for management activities associated with the co-ordination of the community and government fish stocking programs, the small grants program and this expenditure committee. The position plays a key role in community liaison, correspondence with fishing clubs and other key stakeholder groups, the advisory signage program and in the updating of freshwater fishing publications.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the freshwater recreational management program budget at a funding level of \$160,420 for the 04-05 year. No carry-over is expected from this program during the 03-04 year.

**Outcomes**

The position is responsible for the development and implementation of annual stocking plans, the management of the Dollar-for-Dollar Native Fish Stocking and Small Grants programs, administration of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee, responding to community submissions, group extension work and providing general freshwater fisheries information to the public. The fishing clinics component of this budget had been transferred to the fishing guides and clinics program, which is administered by the communications branch. Hence, the budget for the freshwater recreational management program has been reduced to \$160,420 to reflect this change. No carry-over was expected from this program during the 03-04 year.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the Freshwater Recreational Management Program at a funding level of \$160,420 with an estimated allocation of \$160,420.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program – RFFTEC meeting expenses

**Background**

Funding is provided for meeting expenses for the administration of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee including travel to and from meetings, sitting fees, catering and accommodation expenses. At a previous meeting the Committee supported a discussion paper on freshwater trust fund strategic issues, which proposed that one meeting per annum should be held at an inland regional centre. Concern has since been expressed by some that the additional cost to the Trust associated with the holding of this regional meeting is not warranted, and that no further meetings should be held outside of the Sydney area. NSW Fisheries would seek clarification from members on a preferred Committee meeting strategy. NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the meeting expenses budget at a funding level of \$18,000, for the 04-05 year. A carry-over of \$6,000 is expected from this program during the 03-04 year. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC approve a budget of \$18,000 with an estimated allocation of \$12,000 for this project for the 04/05 financial year.

**Outcomes**

Cameron Westaway stated that after a request from RFFTEC, a separate cost centre had been set up for meeting expenses, including travel costs, sitting fees, catering and accommodation. On previous advice from the Committee, the number of RFFTEC meetings held had been reduced from 4 meetings per annum to 3 meetings per year, reducing annual meeting expenses by around \$5,000.

The Committee discussed the holding of meetings at regional centres. NSW Fisheries advised that the existing budget was sufficient to cover any additional travel costs associated with holding a meeting at an inland regional centre from time to time. It was considered appropriate to hold a RFFTEC meeting on the inland, given the Committee was made up of inland anglers, who helped administer the inland trust account. Regional meetings on average costed approximately an extra \$1,500. The Committee agreed that regional meetings should be maintained if there was a perceived need to attend a regional centre, such as to inspect a facility that was funded, part funded or proposed to be funded through the recreational fishing fee. Otherwise, RFFTEC meetings should continue to be held in Sydney, to reduce costs to the Trust.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the Committee meeting expenses budget at a funding level of \$18,000 with an estimated allocation of \$12,000 during the 04-05 financial year.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Fishing fee administration

**Background**

The licence administration system provides and manages a comprehensive administrative and liaison service for recreational licence sales agents and recreational anglers. The administration team has continued with the efficient distribution of fishing fee receipt books in a timely manner to agents and the processing of monthly returns and reconciliation of returns and agent accounts. WEB sales and an internal IVR system have been maintained. New applications by new agents have been processed and high volumes of replacement receipts issued as a service to anglers. The team has an important role in assisting compliance officers with requests for information. A number of new initiatives have been developed this year, including the introduction of new credit card sized fishing fee design and an Accountable Records Register for lost or destroyed fishing fee receipt books. A debt recovery action commenced with the assistance of the Legal Section.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the freshwater fishing fee administration program budget at an existing funding level of \$250,000, for the next financial year. No carry-over of funds are expected from this program during the 03-04 year.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that up to 10% of licence income went towards the maintenance of a recreational licence sales agents system. Currently there were approximately 1,100 licence agents, with 50% of those being gold agents which do not take any commission. The licence administration program involved the distribution of fishing fee receipt books in a timely manner to agents, processing of monthly returns, reconciliation of returns and agent accounts, maintaining WEB sales and an internal IVR system, processing new applications, issuing high volumes of replacement receipts and assisting fisheries officers with requests for information.

Some of the recent new initiatives this year had included the introduction of a new credit card sized fishing fee design and an Accountable Records Register for lost or destroyed fishing fee receipt books. A debt recovery system had also commenced with the assistance of the Legal Section of NSW Fisheries. Debt recovery had previously been a problem with agents not submitting returns and revenue from licence sales.

**Outcomes continued**

A consultant had been commissioned to identify realistic options for changes and improvements to the operation of the licensing system, with the benefit of two full years of licence sales. A survey would be conducted across a section of licence agents to assess problems with the sale of licences and the current perception of the licence system and to determine the cost of issuing licences anglers. Once completed, the results of the survey would be made available to RFFTEC and the saltwater expenditure committee (RFFSTEC).

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the licence administration budget at the existing funding level of \$250,000 with an estimated allocation of \$250,000.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Inland fisheries officers

**Background**

Six Fisheries Officer's positions were created after reintroduction of the freshwater fishing fee to restore inland numbers to the level that had existed prior to the loss of the licence in 1988. The six positions are currently located at Inverell, Bathurst, Wellington, Cooma/Jindabyne, Albury and Buronga. With a relatively stable workforce in the inland and good quality equipment, the need for upgrades or replacement of gear has been minimal during 03/04.

These officers continue to enhance the overall effectiveness of inland compliance strategies in NSW. These positions form an integral component of the team of officers based in inland NSW. Operations are conducted in all inland areas, including Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers, inland impoundments, Darling River and tributaries, highland trout waters. Having additional fisheries officers on hand provided an effective deterrent against illegal activity and afforded good opportunities to distribute advisory material and respond to angler enquiries.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC continue to fund the 6 inland fisheries officers program at the current level of \$625,000 per annum. No carry-over of funds is expected from this program during the 03-04 year.

**Outcomes**

Targeted operations conducted by trust funded Fisheries Officers and core funded officers had taken place to detect a range of offences including: excess bag and prohibited size Murray crayfish; prohibited size Murray cod; use of nets, fish traps, excess set lines and other prohibited gear for Murray cod and other inland native fish; scooping of trout in spawning streams; fishing during the closed seasons for trout and Murray cod and licence offences. The increased presence of fisheries officers at these times was widely appreciated by anglers.

All officers adopted a strong teamwork approach, with staff travelling to neighbouring Districts to assist in operational patrols. Education activities had also been increased via fishing clinics, response to enquires, talks at fishing shows and through ongoing in-field advisory work.

It was confirmed that the six positions located across inland NSW were currently filled. On request from the expenditure committees, the Officers employed by the trust were now clearly identifiable in the field, with the trust logo placed on shirt sleeves and hats and on some vehicles and equipment.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the inland fisheries officers program at the existing funding level of \$625,000 with an estimated allocation of \$625,000.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Fishcare Volunteers

**Background**

The freshwater Fishcare Volunteer program budget constitutes a state co-ordinator's position (jointly funded by the saltwater and freshwater trusts) and an education officer's position based in Bathurst. The state co-ordinator's role is to set the overall direction, policy and procedures for the program, guide the work of the education officers and coordinate state-wide involvement in responsible fishing community education programs. The education officer is responsible for the training and support of Fishcare volunteers in inland NSW. Western NSW has shown outstanding support for the program which has expanded to 14 areas (Armidale, Bathurst, Braidwood, Cowra, Corowa, Grafton, Nepean, Orange, Mudgee, Scone, Snowy, Tamworth, Wagga and Yass) with a total of 108 active volunteers as of 1 March 2004. The education officer also provides support to other community programs, such as fishing clinics and school visits.

Given that the education officer at Bathurst was only appointed in early December 2003, there has been a cost saving in the budget of around 5 months salary and travel. In response to numerous angler and committee member requests, NSW Fisheries proposes that these funds be used to finance a mobile education unit, to be managed by the education officer, and used at schools, recreational fishing events and major inland field events. Currently, three mobile education units purchased with funds from the saltwater trust are being used on the coast at fishing events, community days, schools visits and fishing clinics. These units have been extremely well received by the general community. The total cost for construction, outfitting with TV and video, and professional painting is \$25,000 per unit.

An independent consultant recently reviewed the Fishcare Volunteer program. The review process included surveys, interviews, and thorough assessment of interstate programs. Over 130 volunteers and 10 Trust members participated. The recommendations emerging from the review were considered by the RFSTEC / RFFTEC sub-committee and discussed at the last RFSTEC meeting in November 2003. A draft action plan has been developed based on the recommendations and NSW Fisheries is implementing the actions outlined in the plan.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC approve a budget of \$268,130 for the Fishcare program for the 04/05 financial year and consider the option of using \$25,000 of unspent funds from within the existing Fishcare Volunteer program budget to purchase an inland advisory trailer to be housed at the Bathurst office, for use at community fishing events.



### **Outcomes**

A number of issues were raised by the Committee with regard to the management framework of the Fishcare volunteer program. Some members felt that the operation of the program on the inland needed to be consolidated and re-focused to ensure the viability of the program in the future. The program did not appear to be delivering on its objectives in certain areas. The sense of community ownership was not apparent and the direction of the program within Government seemed unclear. It did not appear that current volunteers and team leaders were being efficiently serviced or properly coordinated. Community interest in some areas also seemed to be waning. In summary, the Committee felt that the program needed further review and refinement to ensure its future effectiveness on the inland.

NSW Fisheries concurred that there had been some difficulties in the administration of the program given its rapid expansion into new areas. There had also been recruitment delays in the appointment of the inland education officer, now working out of Bathurst. The program would not expand further on the inland until the existing volunteer network was strengthened. The Fishcare Volunteer program had also been recently reviewed by an independent consultant to assess ways for better co-ordination overall. The Communications branch was now implementing the activities prescribed in an action plan, which was based on the recommendations of the report and previous advice from the RFFTEC / RFSTEC subcommittee.

RFFTEC queried the management structure of the Fishcare Volunteer program. Paul O'Connor advised that the Fishcare Program would now be managed from within the Regional and Corporate Services Division. Mr O'Connor suggested that the RFFTEC / RFSTEC sub committee already established under the review could continue to work through the management issues raised by the Committee at this meeting, to ensure the feasibility of the program in inland NSW. Mr O'Connor stated that he was also prepared to fund any other Committee members who wished to attend the meeting.

The Committee did not support the expenditure of \$25,000 of unallocated funds on an inland education unit.

### **Recommendations**

- That the RFFTEC / RFSTEC subcommittee and any other members interested meet out of session (date to be set after the RFSTEC meeting) in order to work through the various management issues raised by the Committee in relation to the Fishcare program, with a view to consolidating and re-focusing the operation of the Fishcare Volunteers in inland NSW.
- RFFTEC approved a budget of \$268,130 for the Fishcare Volunteer program with an estimated allocation of \$178,130 for the 04/05 financial year. The budget and management issues will be reviewed by the sub-committee, for advice back to RFFTEC.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for licence advertising campaign, re-print of fishing guides and clinics

**Background**

Licence advertising: The 2003/04 fishing awareness campaign started with the opening of the Murray Cod season and involved the display of advertisements in regional newspapers. Over the peak December-January fishing season, two rounds of display advertisements were placed in regional newspapers and coastal papers to encourage responsible fishing and promote the fishing licence. Victorians were reminded to buy a NSW fishing licence when fishing the Murray over the Victorian long weekend in March. Newspaper (including non-English speaking), magazine and radio advertisements are scheduled over the Easter fishing period. Each advertising campaign is combined with a departmental media release and newspapers are contacted in order to secure editorial/background coverage. As a result, more than 30 newspaper articles featured responsible fishing messages over the Christmas fishing period (examples have been previously circulated to members). Advertisements had also been placed in Open Road, Fishing World and Fishing Monthly magazines.

Fishing guides and clinics: The freshwater and saltwater trusts funded the production of two updated fishing guides for the 2003/04 fishing season. Last year's highly successful inaugural fishing guides were given a fresh look and were updated to ensure the most current information was being provided for anglers. In total, 200,000 copies of saltwater guide and 100,000 copies of the freshwater guide were produced. These were widely distributed to Fisheries Officers, licence agents, Fishcare Volunteers and at community events, prior to the busy school holiday and Christmas fishing period. This program receives funding from the saltwater trust. Children's fishing clinics were held at Government hatcheries in 2003/04. To date, a total of 312 children have attended these clinics. NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the budget for licence awareness and the reproduction of fishing guides and fishing clinics. No carry-over is expected for either of these programs. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC approve a budget of \$24,000 for licence promotion and \$82,200 for fishing guides and clinics for the 04/05 financial year.

## **Outcomes**

Licence advertising: The 2003/04 responsible fishing awareness campaign involved four rounds of display ads in 7 regional inland newspapers at peak fishing times - the opening of the Murray Cod season, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and trout season opening – as well as ads in Open Road, Fishing World and Fishing Monthly magazines, non-English speaking newspapers and radio advertisements over Easter. The campaign encouraged responsible fishing and promoted the fishing licence. Victorians were reminded to buy a NSW fishing licence when fishing the Murray over the Victorian long weekend in March. The campaign was combined with departmental media releases and newspapers were contacted to secure editorial/background coverage. This year licence advertising would be conducted at the closing and opening of the trout fishing season [June and October long weekends], the reopening of the Murray cod fishing season on December 1, during the busy Christmas/New Year fishing period and in the lead up to the Easter holidays in April. The program received additional funding from the saltwater trust. The total budget had been adjusted to a 70:30% funding ratio, resulting in a proposed \$21,600 contribution from the Freshwater Trust and \$49,500 contribution from the Saltwater Trust.

Fishing guides: 100,000 copies of the 2003-04 NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Guides in November 2003 were produced and distributed widely to anglers via Fisheries Officers, Fishcare Volunteers and Licence Agents. Over \$26,000 dollars in advertising was sourced (Freshwater and Saltwater guides combined) which allowed NSW Fisheries to increase the number of copies produced for anglers. NSW Fisheries would be looking to produce a minimum of 100,000 guides prior to the busy Christmas / New Year fishing period this year and sponsorship of the guide would be broadened to further reduce the cost of production. Cost recovery of \$4,000 was rejected by the Committee.

Fishing clinics: Cameron Westaway advised that a fishing clinics committee had been set up within NSW Fisheries to look at streamlining the hatchery clinics by reducing running costs and improving service provision and accessibility. The clinics were quite expensive to run, as children took home a variety of fishing gear including rods, reels, hats and t-shirts at the end of the day's events. The cost of entry for hatchery clinics would also be reviewed.

The fishing clinics budget was previously considered by the Committee under the Freshwater Management program. As discussed under agenda item 4c, the fishing clinics budget had been transferred within the advisory and education program budget, encompassing fishing clinics and fishing guides. Fishing clinics would continue to be managed by the Communications branch.

NSW Fisheries would initiate a search for suitable corporate sponsorship of clinic and events programs in the future. It might be better to hold clinics for special needs children or school groups alone, rather than general clinics, to target new young fishers that hadn't previously attended a clinic.

**Outcomes continued**

RFFTEC queried the use of entry fees for the purchase of fishing gear at clinics. NSW Fisheries advised that entry fees were currently remitted to general revenue. NSW Fisheries would investigate the accounting procedures for hatchery clinics with a view to accessing fishing clinic funds for future clinics at Government hatcheries. RFFTEC requested that funds raised from hatchery clinics be used to purchase hatchery clinic equipment and be returned to the trust in the future. The Committee determined to reduce the budget for fishing clinics by \$10,000. Cost recovery on this program should also be removed.

Trust promotional video: NSW Fisheries proposed that a recreational fishing trust video be produced to promote the recreational fishing fee and licence funded programs, for use at community events and clinics. The cost to the trust for the video would be \$13,200. RFFTEC did not support funding this project from within the freshwater trust.

**Recommendation**

- RFFTEC approved the renewal of funding for licence advertising at a budget of \$21,600, with an estimated allocation of \$21,600.
- RFFTEC approved the renewal of funding for fishing guides at a budget of \$40,000 and hatchery fishing clinics at a budget of \$28,000 (reduced by \$10,000) - total \$68,000 for this combined program.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Small Grants Program

**Background**

The small grants program is designed to provide seed funding for community groups and other organisations for projects designed to enhance freshwater recreational fishing opportunities. To date RFFTEC has supported the expenditure of \$15,600 from the Small Grants Program during the 03/04 financial year for five projects – Eastern cod research (Upper Clarence River), Marsden weir redevelopment (Goulburn), Fishing platform and boat ramp improvements, Toonumbar Dam (Kyogle), Fish Cleaning Table/Measuring Station, Lake Keepit (Gunnedah) and inland fishing awareness and skills program at Narromine High School.

Applications for funding during the 04-05 expression of interest round will be considered by the Committee at the meeting.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider the renewal of the Small Grants program budget at the existing funding level of \$20,000, for the next financial year. Should the Committee choose further projects for funding at this meeting, it is likely that the program budget will be fully expended by the end of the 03-04 year. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC approve a budget of \$20,000 with an estimated allocation of \$20,000.

**Outcomes**

An invitation to the community to submit proposals was initiated in February 04. Seven small grants submissions have been received and would be assessed by the Committee under agenda item 5. The Committee asked that funding for any of the small grants project applications approved be expended from the 04/05 program budget.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of funding for the Small Grants Program at the existing funding level of \$20,000, with an estimated allocation of \$15,600.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program – Assessment of stocking success

**Background**

A number of freshwater recreational research projects have been funded for the last four years. These projects have included: The fish-marking study and related experimental assessments of the effectiveness of several marking techniques on trout and native fish species; Monitoring of spawning runs at major highland trout fisheries and experimental assessment of hooking mortality in silver perch using different hook and gear types.

The fish-marking project will provide estimates of mortality and survival rates of stocked fish, the contribution of stockings to recreational fishing and percentage returns to the angler. This assessment of the effectiveness of stocking will greatly contribute to the development of a stocking strategy for NSW freshwater waterways and will feed into the fish stocking fisheries management strategy, as it will allow for recommendations to be made on numbers and size of fish to be stocked. Several impoundments and rivers have been stocked with the marked fish including rainbow trout, Murray cod, golden perch and Australian bass.

Over the past 4 years, a proportion of the rainbow trout stocked into Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne have been finclipped. For Lake Eucumbene 150,000 rainbow trout are stocked each year. Lake Jindabyne receives 50,000 rainbow trout each year. Volunteers assist with the finclipping, which enables identification of these fish in the future. This will allow for the determination of survival and the contribution of stocked fish to the fishery and to the spawning population. The annual trapping of the main tributaries of both lakes has enabled recapture of some of these fish. The results show that the hatchery fish do contribute to the spawning population. Angler catch is also monitored in both Lakes at major fishing competitions, enabling estimates of the stocking in maintaining angler catch rates.

Sampling of the spawning migration of rainbow trout in Lakes Jindabyne, Eucumbene and Oberon will allow estimates of the contribution of marked fish. These include both finclipped and chemically marked fish. One year estimate for Jindabyne and Eucumbene of three year old finclipped rainbow trout estimated that around 7% of the fish over three years were marked in Eucumbene and 13% in Lake Jindabyne. This monitoring will continue this year in the Snowy Lakes as well as in Lake Oberon. Monitoring will also commence in Pejar Dam where the oldest marked fish are now three years old.

**Outcomes**

The stocking success research program was helping to identify areas requiring stocking and fish populations that were self-maintaining. A new Fisheries Technician had commenced duties in January this year. The technician would assist the Scientific Officer with the marking of fish and monitoring of stocked waterways. Samples of trout and native fish produced at Government hatcheries would continue to be chemically marked for later sampling. Sampling of stocked waterways would occur throughout the year by way of electrofishing and other standard fisheries techniques (e.g. backpack and boat fishing). 50,000 fish would be finclipped for release into Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne next year.

During the past 12 months, sampling had taken place in streams in the Monaro (Bobundara, Maclaughlin Kybeyan Kydra) and Mid-North coast regions (on the request of the New England Trout Acclimatisation Society). Brown and rainbow trout had been sampled in spawning streams in Oberon, Jindabyne and Eucumbene, and fish had been marked for stocking into Oberon and Pejar Dams. Rainbow trout from the Dutton Trout Hatchery had also been marked for stocking into the Guy Fawkes River. It was expected that additional projects would be included in the work program of the freshwater recreational research group, as a result of the Fish Stocking Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A review of the current stocking success program would be undertaken in October 2004 to refine objectives in future years. A carry over of \$30,000 was anticipated for this program.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of funding for the stocking success program at a funding level of \$160,000, with an estimated allocation of \$130,000.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for two inland conservation managers

**Background**

Two conservation managers are responsible for undertaking fisheries habitat management and dealing with conservation issues in inland NSW. The positions are based at Narrandera and Port Stephens. The conservation managers are responsible for overseeing on-ground habitat rehabilitation works, liaising with government and non-government organisations on fish habitat matters, partaking in broadscale natural resource management in inland NSW and coordinating the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Native Fish Strategy. Other duties include the management of the Freshwater Habitat Grant Program (see agenda item 5m), investigation of options for improved fish passage including the removal redundant weirs, habitat management projects such as the Gwydir Oral History Project (previously distributed to committee members), assessment of development applications, permit applications and environmental impact assessment documents (e.g. dredging and reclamation projects, site inspections), report writing (e.g. habitat protection plans, Walcha Options Paper), management of contracts and awards (e.g. by the Catchment Management Authorities through tender to implement actions within their Catchment Action Plans), input into the recovery planning process for threatened species and group extension and education.

At the last budget meeting, RFFTEC recommended an increase to this budget by \$16,000 to compensate for any additional costs incurred through the rolling of the weir removal program into one of the conservation manager positions. However, the reduction of the staff from 3 to 2 has created cost savings and a carry over of \$28,000 is predicted. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of inland conservation manager's program budget at a reduced funding level of \$280,000 for the next financial year.

**Outcomes**

The inland conservation manager's program constituted two managers based at Port Stephens and Narrandera, responsible for a range of duties including detailed weir review, fishway installation, management of the habitat grant program, management of habitat rehabilitation projects, impact assessment and report writing, extension and education and recovery planning for threatened species. RFFTEC was highly supportive of this program and congratulated the conservation managers on their achievements to date.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of inland conservation manager's program budget at a funding level of \$280,000 for the next financial year, with an estimated allocation of \$252,000



**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Eastern freshwater cod stocking

**Background**

The eastern cod stocking program did not go ahead this year as initially planned. The Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing recommended to the Minister for Fisheries that no additional stocking of eastern cod take place until a review of genetic factors relevant to the stocking practice was carried out.

On this advice, NSW Fisheries has obtained quotes for the independent research project. The project will review the adequacy of current practices relating to the conservation stocking program of eastern (freshwater) cod. The preferred quote is by Associate Professor David Brisco of Macquarie University, Key Centre for Biodiversity and Bioresources, and will cost approximately \$7,000.

The committee originally approved a budget of \$20,000 per annum for funding for eastern cod stocking over a three-year period (02-03, 03-04 and 04-05). To date, only a small proportion of the eastern cod stocking budget has been spent. This is due to a shortfall in supply of stock during the 02-03 year and the fact that no stocking has taken place during 03-04.

NSW Fisheries notes that future stocking activities are subject to a number of factors including the outcomes of the genetic assessment review. The research review is expected to be completed by the end of April 2004. NSW Fisheries will not undertake any further stockings until the report is finalised and reviewed by the Committee. The re-commencement of stocking will need to be supported by this Committee and ACORF.

With an anticipated carry over of \$13,000 an allocation of \$7,000 will be required if stocking recommences. A contingency budget of \$20,000 requires approval from RFFTEC.

**Outcomes**

The eastern cod stocking program was allocated \$20,000 in 03/04 however the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF) had requested that no additional stocking of eastern cod take place until a review of genetic factors relevant to the stocking practice was carried out.

Professor David Brisco of Macquarie University, Key Centre for Biodiversity and Bioresources, had been contracted to undertake the review which would cost approximately \$7,000. The research review was expected to be completed by the end of April 2004. NSW Fisheries would not undertake any further stockings until the report was finalised and reviewed by RFFTEC and ACoRF. However, approval for a contingency budget of \$20,000 in 04/05 was requested, should the recommencement of stocking be endorsed by the report.

**Outcomes continued**

RFFTEC noted that funding for the eastern cod stocking program should be discontinued until such time as the results of the genetic review of eastern cod stock were known. Should the genetic review support the re-commencement of the stocking program, a new application for the stocking of eastern cod could then be submitted by NSW Fisheries for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting. In the interim, the \$13,000 in unspent funds remaining in the eastern cod program cost centre should be returned the freshwater trust.

**Recommendation**

That funding for the eastern cod stocking program budget be discontinued and for the remaining \$13,000 to be returned to the freshwater trust account. Should the genetic review support the re-commencement of the stocking program, a new application can be submitted for consideration at a future meeting.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Habitat restoration program

**Background**

RFFTEC has supported provision of \$100,000 per annum for three years to fund a project that provides matching funding to community organisations for freshwater fish habitat restoration projects. The purpose of the fish habitat grants program is to provide “on-ground” rehabilitation for fish habitats. Projects will be carried out by a range of stakeholder groups such as angling clubs, local councils, individual landholders and Rivercare and Landcare groups in collaboration with conservation staff from NSW Fisheries. Round 1 of the Habitat Grant Program will lead to the rehabilitation of 100 hectares of floodplain and wetland habitat and 26kms of riverbank rehabilitated. The second round of applications were considered under agenda item 2. Round 2 of the program will lead to a total of 80 hectares of floodplain and wetland, 60km of river opened to fish passage and 40km of riverbanks to be rehabilitated. NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC confirm funding support for the habitat restoration grant program for the third of the three year program (funding finishes at the end of 04-05), at a funding level of \$100,000.

**Outcomes**

RFFTEC supported funding for the 3rd year of the 3-year program at the existing funding level. Mr Rodney Tonkin asked for the submission period for applications be extended to allow sufficient time for groups to meet and discuss project options. Ms Milly Hobson advised that staff would look into increasing the submission period for the third round of applications.

The Committee asked for NSW Fisheries to review the assessment criteria for applications, to ensure increased funding of inland catchments for the third round. NSW Fisheries agreed to review the EOI advertisement, the application form and assessment criteria for the ranking of projects prior to the next round of advertising, and to supply the amendments to members for comment out of session.

**Recommendation**

- RFFTEC approved the renewal of the habitat restoration grant program for the third year of the three year program at a funding level of \$100,000, with an estimated allocation \$113,760 (\*Note: the extra allocation accounts for an additional \$13,760 expended during the second round of applications, as approved by RFFTEC – refer to agenda item 2).
- RFFTEC requested that the department review the habitat grant assessment criteria to ensure increased funding of inland catchments, and to report back to members out of session for comment.

**Issue**

Second year of funding for the Gaden Trout Hatchery Capital Works

**Background**

RFFTEC approved a proposal on 29 May 03 for seed funding of \$100,000 (\$50,000 per year for two years) with a view to leveraging further government funding to redevelop the hatchery. The Minister announced further government funding of \$100,000 to undertake the project and further discussions are taking place. At the last RFFTEC meeting, the Committee discussed issues relating to staff accommodation which needed to be determined prior to redeveloping the hatchery production infrastructure. Lay-out plans and costings for the production facility are currently being prepared. A determination has now been made involving the refurbishment of the visitors centre to include staff accommodation. No trust fund monies have been expended on the accommodation complex at this point, meaning there is a full carry over of \$50,000 in the program this year.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC endorse a budget of \$100,000 for the second year of this two year program, with an estimated allocation of \$50,000.

**Outcomes**

Plans for the Gaden hatchery re-development had been prepared and a development proposal had been submitted to the Snowy River Council in February 04. Competitive quotes for refurbishment were being obtained. This would allow for full redevelopment of the existing hatchery site as a production only facility. Cameron Westaway re-iterated that trust funds would not be spent on the accommodation complex this year, resulting in a full carry over of \$50,000 in the program. It was anticipated that the full amount (\$100,000) would be expended during the 04-05 year.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the Gaden Trout Hatchery capital works budget for the second year of the two-year project at a funding level of \$100,000, with an allocation of \$50,000.

**Issue**

Renewal of an ongoing program – freshwater tournament monitoring

**Background**

Anglers at fishing competitions across NSW are contributing to the better knowledge of the state of our fisheries. NSW Fisheries researchers are collecting angling catch and effort data at selected events in freshwater areas. The information collected will assist fisheries managers to evaluate the success of strategies in place that benefit recreational fishing. A list of events attended will be distributed to members at the meeting.

This research commenced in freshwater regions in 1999. Approximately 45 freshwater tournaments are monitored each year. Anglers at selected competitions are issued with a "Fishing Report Kit". They then record all their fishing activities during the event including the length of each fish they catch as well as the time they spent fishing. This allows for the calculation of a catch rate (number of fish caught per angling hour or angling trip), which can be compared from year to year and between different waterways.

So far more than 18,000 anglers at freshwater competitions have taken part in this research. 210,000 hours of fishing effort and over 85,000 fish captures have been recorded by these anglers.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the budget for the tournament monitoring program. A carry-over of \$7,000 is expected from the cost centre during the 03-04 year. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC approve a budget of \$150,000 with an estimated allocation of \$143,000 for this project for the 04/05 financial year.

**Outcomes**

The tournament monitoring program collected angling catch data at fishing competitions throughout NSW which assisted in assessing the quality of freshwater angling and the effectiveness of fish stocking and other management strategies. Support has been shown to the program by angling groups throughout the state. Support to anglers was rendered from the program by way of data collection equipment and promotional material to ensure that quality angling data was collected.

In the past year, 52 fishing tournaments had been monitored in fresh and saltwater and more than 46,000 hours of angling had been recorded. In addition, over 20,500 fish had been measured and recorded, with over 8,500 angler days monitored and 46,000 hours of fishing. During 04-05, an increase in the amount and coverage of the data collected was anticipated. Improved submission rates by anglers would be targeted.

**Outcomes continued**

During 04-05, an increase in the coverage of freshwater angling activity would be carried out, through a prioritising of collection effort, as well as the utilisation of additional staff and Fishcare volunteers. Further work refining the established database would be done to improve access to information. A report would be prepared on the outcomes of the program to date, to improve management and transparency in the program. Reports on individual tournaments will be collated and distributed in the future.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the tournament monitoring program at the existing funding level of \$150,000 with an allocation of \$143,000.

**Issue**

Application for Freshwater Trust funding contribution to an ongoing Saltwater Trust Funded program – recreational angling database

**Background**

The recreational angling database was developed in March 2001 after the introduction of the general recreational fishing licence. The database collected 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 mailouts, research and expenditure surveys. The Saltwater Trust has funded the database since March 2001. The database is essential for sending out reminder notices to all one and three year licence holders, which recently commenced in March 2004. There has been strong support for a reminder notice/renewal system to be implemented from the angling community. The reminder notices are sent to freshwater and saltwater anglers and the system is considered an essential service to anglers. It also has the potential to substantially raise the level of total income by encouraging anglers to renew their licences when they expire, not when they next go fishing. The database is also essential for compliance checks of recreational anglers and for issuing replacement licences. The database has proved valuable in a number of research surveys, particularly the National Angling Survey which was recently released (July 2003). This is the first comprehensive survey conducted in Australia and has provided the first accurate estimate of catch and effort in NSW. This information is providing valuable input to the assessment of the impacts of angling (as part of the Recreational Fishing FMS process) and the determination of appropriate management strategies to ensure sustainable harvesting. It is planned to repeat this survey periodically to update total catch estimates.

The database has also been used in an expenditure survey of Sydney's recreational fishers (funded by Saltwater Trust), which was recently completed. This survey has determined the expenditure of Sydney anglers in the metropolitan area and in coastal towns. This information highlights the importance of recreational fishing to the economy. The Database program has been fully funded by the Saltwater Trust since its implementation. However, the benefits of the program such as the reminder notice are statewide and the Saltwater Committee has requested that pro-rata (30%:70%) funding for program be obtained from the Freshwater trust in 2004/05.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider pro rata funding of \$24,000 from the Freshwater Trust for the ongoing recreational angling database program. The Saltwater Expenditure Committee will consider funding of \$56,000 towards the program on 6 April 2004.

**Outcomes**

The Licence Research Database was developed in March 2001 after the introduction of the general 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 and expenditure surveys.

The information had proved valuable in a number of research surveys, particularly the National Angling Survey, which was released in July last year. The database had been used in expenditure surveys of NSW anglers funded by the Saltwater Trust aimed at determining the importance of recreational fishing. The database was also essential for sending out reminder notices to one and three-year licence holders, which commenced in April 2004.

There had been strong support for a reminder notice/renewal system from the angling community. The reminder notice system was fully funded by the Saltwater Trust and was considered an essential service to anglers. It also had the potential to substantially raise the level of total income by encouraging anglers to renew their licences when they expire, not when they next went fishing. The database was also essential for compliance checks of recreational anglers and for issuing replacement licences.

The Database program had been fully funded by the Saltwater Trust since its implementation, however given the benefits of the program were statewide, the Saltwater Committee had requested that pro-rata funding for this program be obtained from the Freshwater trust in 04/05 (30% freshwater, 70% saltwater).

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the renewal of the recreational angling database program at a funding level of \$24,000, with an estimated allocation of \$24,000.



**Issue**

The following programs – fish stocking environmental impact statement, recreational fishing environmental impact statement, bass habitat mapping, impoundment access and statewide angler survey require no further allocations. Some of these programs have small carry-overs which will be expended over 04-05.

**Outcomes**

Mr Cameron Westaway noted that funding for a number of programs: fish stocking environmental impact statement, recreational fishing environmental impact statement, bass habitat mapping, impoundment access and statewide angler survey would be concluded at the end of the 04/05 year.

Mr Paul O'Connor handed out a summary of total expenditure for the fish stocking environmental impact statement. The freshwater trust contribution has been heavily subsidised by Government and other sources.

**Recommendation**

Noted by the Committee.

## **Agenda Item 5 Bryan van der Walt / Cameron Westaway / Craig Watson**

### **Issue**

Expression of Interest for trust fund applications, new trust fund project proposals and proposals for funding through the existing Small Grants Program

### **Background**

The Recreational Fishing Trusts fund programs for the benefit of recreational fisheries. NSW Fisheries usually undertakes an advertising campaign calling for programs to be funded by the Trusts. In the past, many applications have been received by NSW Fisheries and deemed inappropriate for Trust funding by the expenditure committees and not supported.

This year a more targeted advertising campaign was undertaken. An expression of interest for applications was mailed to councils, fishing clubs and organizations and universities to encourage the submission of higher profile applications that specifically benefit recreational fishing programs and directly enhance angler catch. A poster was also developed and distributed using licence agents, Fisheries Officers and Fishcare Volunteers to target the common angler. The closing date for applications was 26 March, 2004. Submissions will be assessed by Committee members at the meeting.

### **Outcomes**

RFFTEC considered new general freshwater applications for funding (> \$5,000 per project) and funding applications submitted through the Small Grants Program. The Committee discussed each application and made one of the following recommendations:

1. Program to be supported by the trust,
2. Program not supported by the trust,
3. Funding decision to be deferred pending further information

No new general freshwater applications for funding were supported. Small grants programs supported were generally considered to have direct benefits to recreational fishing and were consistent with priorities for fisheries management. Programs that were not supported were considered to be too costly, low priority for recreational fisheries management or of minimal benefit to recreational fishing. One small grants project was deferred as more information was required.

Three small grants projects were approved for funding during the 04-05 year: Lake St Clair Fishing signs – Singleton Fly Fishing Club (\$333,18), Fish Cleaning Facilities along the Gwydir River – Bingara Anglers Club (\$5,000) and Fish Tagging within the Shoalhaven Catchment – Southern Bass Fishing Club (\$2,800) – total \$8.133. The recommendations of the Committee for each program are summarised in Tables 3 & 4.

## New applications for funding, 04/05 financial year

**Table 3: General freshwater projects**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Proponent</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Funding request</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Recreational Licence Advisory Support	NSW Fisheries	To provide additional fishing licence advisory services to anglers	\$13,450 (freshwater) \$31,382 (saltwater)	Not supported. Does not enhance recreational fishing.
Population structures and the genetic implications of stocking native fish	University of Sydney	To preserve the genetic diversity within two fish species and to inform on the genetic implications of stocking	\$15,000	Not supported. Potential duplication of research already being carried out under the Fish Stocking EIS.
Re-circulation system at Dutton hatchery	New England Trout Acclimatisation Society	To install a water re-circulation system at Dutton hatchery to address water quality issues	\$200,000	Not supported. Formal trust fund submission required.
Do anglers drop out?	Pepperell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd	To determine the impacts of the recreational fishing licence on fishing behaviour	\$16,350 (freshwater) \$38,150 (saltwater)	Not supported. Does not enhance recreational fishing.
An expenditure survey of native species fishing in south west NSW	Dominion Consulting Pty Ltd	To determine the economic importance to south west NSW of recreational fishing for native fish	\$84,453	Not supported. Does not enhance recreational fishing.
Fishing Clinic Seminars and Workshops	David Hodge	To conduct fishing clinics and seminars at the New England Institute of TAFE	\$12,500 (freshwater) \$12,500 (saltwater)	Not supported. Commercial interest.

**Table 4: Small grants proposals**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Proponent</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Funding request</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Impact of water transfers on fish communities – Cudgegong River	University of Wollongong	To sample fish populations below water releases on the Cudgegong River between Windamere and Burrendong dams	\$2,855.5	Deferred. Methodology to be revised in consultation with relevant research staff of NSW Fisheries prior to re-submission.
Reconstruction of a boat ramp	Wentworth Anglers Club	To reconstruct a boat ramp at Fort Courage near Wentworth	\$4,200	Not supported. Refer applicant to WADAMP, NSW Waterways.
Lake St Clair fishing signs	Singleton Fly Fishing Club	To provide two recreational fishing signs at Lake St Clair	\$333.18	Supported. Information on sign to be approved by freshwater manager, prior to publication. Trust logo to be incorporated.
Fish Cleaning Facilities & Litter prevention along the Gwydir River, Bingara	Bingara Anglers Club	To erect 3 fish cleaning tables and rubbish bins at public reserves along the Gwydir River near Bingara	\$5,000	Supported on a dollar for dollar basis by Council. Trust logo to be incorporated. No funding for bins. Council to install bins and maintain.
Extensions to a boat ramp at Braemar Bay, Eucumbene Dam	Braemar Bay Holiday Park	To extend a boat ramp at Braemar Bay, Eucumbene Dam	\$2,000	Not supported. Refer applicant to WADAMP, NSW Waterways.
Installation of BBQ's at Talbingo Spillway	Talbingo Fishing Club	To install two Barbeques at the public reserve adjacent to the Talbingo Dam spillway	\$2,500	Not supported. Small grants program does not extend to installation of BBQ's as they do not enhance recreational fishing.
Fish tagging within the Shoalhaven Catchment	Southern Bass Fishing Club	To establish a population of tagged bass within the Shoalhaven catchment and monitor the movement of re-captured fish	\$2,800	Supported. Co-operative approach between NSW Fisheries researchers and anglers.

**Agenda item 6****Cameron Westaway, Bryan van der Walt****Issue**

Final Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Fund Position, budget recommendations and allocations for the 04/05 financial year.

**Background**

A draft budget table will be prepared and presented to the Committee for consideration, based on the recommendations of RFFTEC for renewal of funding for existing projects and consideration of a new proposal 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 a desired budget outcome. Budget forecasts for coming years will also be presented. The Trust Fund position of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust will be summarised, based on outcomes of deliberations from agenda items 4a-4p.

**Outcomes**

A draft budget table was developed in consultation with RFFTEC. The budget table listed the levels of expenditure for ongoing programs as recommended by the Committee, during deliberations at 4a-4p. Budget figures were evaluated against available funds within the freshwater trust and were found to align with a balanced budget.

**Recommendation**

Table 6: *Budget and expenditure from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Fund, 04/05 financial year as approved by RFFTEC*

<b>Program</b>	<b>03/04 predicted carryover (\$'000)</b>	<b>04/05 supported budget (\$'000)</b>	<b>04/05 allocation (\$'000)</b>
Dollar for dollar native fish stocking	0	225	225
Enhanced Gov. fish production	0	304.5	304.5
Freshwater recreational mgt	0	160.4	160.4
RFFTEC meeting expenses	6	18	12
Fishcare volunteer program	90	268.1	178.1
Licence promotion	0	21.6	21.6
Fishing guides and fishing clinics	0	68	68
Licence administration	0	250	250
Inland fisheries officers	0	625	625
Regional fish habitat (inland)	28	280	252
Eastern cod conservation stocking	13	0	-13
Effectiveness of stocking program	30	160	130
Freshwater tournament monitoring	7	150	143
Small grants program	4.4	20	15.6
Fish habitat grant program	-13.8	100	113.8
Gaden trout hatchery	50	100	50
Recreational angling database	0	24	24
<b>Total (\$'000)</b>	<b>214.6</b>	<b>2,774.6</b>	<b>2,560.0</b>

## Other business

**Craig Watson**

### **Issue**

Recreational Fishing Licence sales

### **Background**

More than 1,000,000 recreational fishing licences have been sold between July 2001 and January 2004. Please note that agent returns are still being collected. The number of the different types of licences sold during this period are as follows:

Approximately

49,943 three year licences (4%);

538,056 one year licences (46%);

183,316 one month licences (16%);

368,856 three day licences (31%); and

35,060 prepaid three day licences (3%).

A report of monthly licence sales since the implementation of the licence will be distributed to members at the meeting.

### **Outcomes**

A report of monthly licence sales since the implementation of the licence was supplied within the agenda folders, for the information of Committee members.

### **Recommendation**

Noted.

**Craig Watson**

### **Issue**

Quotes for fish stocking signs

### **Background**

At the last RFFTEC meeting, NSW Fisheries advised the Committee that costings and options for the installation of freshwater fish stocking signs would be obtained for this meeting. Quotes for the printing of freshwater signs and options for freshwater sign installation will be discussed with members at the meeting.

**Outcomes**

Quotes and options for stocking signs were discussed. NSW Fisheries suggested that \$6,000 could be set aside from within the existing freshwater recreational management budget during 04/05 to commence this program. Signs would be installed at prominent positions at the major stocked impoundments. Site inspections would need to be carried out to by NSW Fisheries staff to determine the most suitable spots to erect the signs. These would be installed gradually, once relevant council or State Water approvals had been obtained. Signs would be attached to existing posts where applicable.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC supported the expenditure of \$6,000 from within the existing freshwater recreational management budget for the installation of stocking signs at major dams in NSW.

**Craig Watson**

**Issue**

Licence project page on website

**Background**

NSW Fisheries has recently updated the licence projects page of the NSW Fisheries website to make it easier to find out how licence fees are being used.

**Outcomes**

Licence project information can be found under one separate page the NSW Fisheries website, with links to the various freshwater and saltwater programs. This page includes a list of project allocations. Details can be found under [www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/lol/where.htm](http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/lol/where.htm)

**Recommendation**

Noted.

## General business

### Issue

Impoundments access (Rodney Tonkin)

### Discussion

Rodney Tonkin advised that the Council of Freshwater Anglers would be willing to promote and contribute to documentation on impoundments access for freshwater anglers. John Diplock advised that work was continuing on the publication of a book on access to all the major impoundments in NSW. The guide would detail basic information on impoundment stocking histories, directions to impoundments and amenities provided at dams. A database with the relevant information was being compiled. The next task would be to document fishing access in rivers. NSW Fisheries would welcome any involvement from the Council of Freshwater Anglers with this task.

### Issue

Illegal fishing activity - report card for anglers (Rodney Tonkin)

### Discussion

Rodney Tonkin advised that Fisheries Victoria had produced a credit-card sized illegal fishing reporting card for use by members of the public. On suspicion of illegal fishing activity, the card could be filled out discreetly and submitted to the relevant fisheries office for follow-up compliance. The card provided a means for contributing to the overall effective operation of Fisheries Officers and provided an extra step to reporting illegal activity than by phone alone. Rodney Tonkin suggested that a similar card could be produced by NSW Fisheries to assist and augment the work of compliance officers in NSW. A Fisheries Victoria reporting card was distributed amongst Committee members. NSW Fisheries agreed that the reporting card was a good initiative and would look into the viability of adopting a similar approach in NSW. NSW Fisheries would discuss this option with relevant compliance staff and would report back to the Committee at the next meeting on this issue.

### Recommendation

That the option of producing an illegal fishing activity wallet sized report card for anglers be discussed with relevant compliance staff and at the next ACoRF meeting. NSW Fisheries to report back to RFFTEC on this issue at the next meeting.



**Issue**

Plastic coated fishing licences (Rodney Tonkin)

**Discussion**

Rodney Tonkin discussed the feasibility of developing plastic coated fishing licences. NSW Fisheries was currently looking into cost effective options for a better licence receipt. A discussion paper on the recreational fishing licence was being prepared for public comment. The paper would canvass the options for plastic coated fishing licences.

**Issue**

Cost recovery on trust funded programs (Rodney Tonkin)

**Discussion**

Rodney Tonkin raised the issue of the 88% cost recovery on trust funded programs. NSW Fisheries advised that cost recovery included salary on costs (e.g. payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, recreation long service leave etc.) and general overheads (e.g. accommodation, freight, cartage and postage, IT associated costs, corporate support, communication costs etc). Cost recovery on trust funded programs was withdrawn as a lump sum amount based on the total salary budget. The amount of cost recovery on any salary unspent at the end of the financial year is reconciled to the trust account and carried forward into the following year.

**Issue**

Stocking success research (Rodney Tonkin)

**Discussion**

Rodney Tonkin discussed the issue of survival rates of stocked fish. NSW Fisheries advised that in conjunction with stakeholders, an environmental impact assessment of fish stocking in NSW was being completed. The EIA highlighted a need for further research into the success and impacts of stocking. A review of the current stocking success research program would occur in October 2004 to refine objectives in future years, which would address this issue.

Mr Tonkin discussed the possibility of applying for additional funding for stocking success research, through the Council of Freshwater Anglers. NSW Fisheries advised that an application for funding can be submitted to the freshwater expenditure committee at a future meeting, for consideration of members. NSW Fisheries will circulate an application for trust funding to Mr Tonkin with the draft minutes.

**Issue**

Cleaning of catch at sea (Debbie Lennon)

**Discussion**

Debbie Lennon queried the rules relating to the cleaning of catch at sea. NSW Fisheries advised that fish could not be beheaded or tailed at sea, but could instead be gilled, gutted and scaled. This was to enable species identification by Fisheries staff. Fish can be cleaned onshore at a fish cleaning facility.

**Issue**

Taking of Murray cod in Lake Mulwala (Debbie Lennon)

**Discussion**

Debbie Lennon queried the effects of angling on Murray cod at Lake Mulwala and the breeding status of the species. NSW Fisheries advised that Murray cod are not stocked at Lake Mulwala. There was generally good natural recruitment of Murray cod at this site, however the drought may have hampered the success of natural spawnings. NSW Fisheries would look at the population structure recorded through the anglers catch research (tournament monitoring) program and report back to the Committee at the next meeting on this issue.

**Issue**

Number of rigged lines permitted for use by anglers (Steve Tooley)

**Discussion**

Steve Tooley queried the regulations regarding the rigging of fishing rods when fishing in freshwater dams against saltwater areas. NSW Fisheries advised that 2 rods rigged for fishing were permitted when fishing in freshwater impoundments. Additional gear cannot not be rigged and should be stowed. When fishing in saltwater areas, four rods rigged for fishing are allowed.

**Next meeting**

The next RFFTEC meeting was scheduled for the Tuesday 10th of August, 2004 at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre, Cronulla.

Meeting concluded at 3.30pm.