



**Recreational  
Fishing Trusts**

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

**Minutes**

**16<sup>TH</sup> RFFTEC MEETING  
29 May, 2003**

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

**Sixteenth Meeting of the NSW  
Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee  
Minutes  
29.5.03, 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 (observer)
Doug Joyner	Region 2
Steve Tooley	Region 3
Elizabeth Brodbeck	Region 4
Keith Woolbank	Region 5
Debbie Lennon	Region 6
Richard Ping Kee	Region 7
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8

**NSW Fisheries (observers)**

Mr Paul O'Connor, Director Fisheries Services  
Dr Andrew Sanger, Regional Manager Fisheries Services Western  
Mr Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager (Inland)  
Mr Cameron Lay, A/Senior Conservation Manager, Habitat  
Mr Craig Watson, Fisheries Manager Recreational Fisheries  
Ms Milly Hobson, A/Conservation Manager, Habitat  
Ms Dee McElligot

## **Business**

Chair's introduction

Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting

Action Items from previous minutes

## **Agenda Items**

1. Current Freshwater Trust Fund budget position, budget deliberations, review of existing framework and forward planning (Cameron Westaway)
2. Freshwater trust project account reports (Cameron Westaway)
3. Recreational fishing licence sales (Craig Watson)
4. Renewal of existing trust funded programs (Cameron Westaway)
5. Consideration of budget proposal for Gaden Trout Hatchery Capital Works (Cameron Westaway)
6. Freshwater Trust budget recommendations and allocations for the 03/04 financial year (Cameron Westaway)
7. Proposals for budget expenditure via an existing freshwater trust funded program - Small Grants Program (Craig Watson)
8. Proposals for budget expenditure via an existing freshwater trust funded program - Habitat Restoration Program) (Milly Hobson)

## **Other business**

- Next meeting
- Date and location

## **Meeting close**

## **Chair's welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) and noted a full agenda for the meeting.

## **Minutes from the previous meeting**

### **Recommendation**

The draft minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## **Action items from the previous meeting**

### **Issue**

LP Dutton Hatchery Water Temperature review

### **Outcomes**

The NSW Fisheries executive has given careful consideration to the issue of a recirculation system for broodstock at the LP Dutton trout hatchery at Ebor and has advised that none of the proposals reviewed offer sufficient cost benefits to warrant the proposed initial capital investment or recurrent expenditure. It is also believed that the technical solutions proposed are not without some inherent risk of equal or possibly greater magnitude than the conditions under which the hatchery is currently managed.

Accordingly NSW Fisheries will be recommending to the Minister that the current incremental changes and improvements be given a period of years to demonstrate their effectiveness before any further consideration is given to this matter. The Chair advised that this matter is now closed.

### **Issue**

Stocking of Tallowa Dam with Australian bass

### **Outcomes**

The NSW Fisheries Office of Conservation staff involved with the Tallowa project have requested that bass stocking be delayed until post-fishway monitoring is completed. Following completion, it is hoped that bass stocking at Tallowa dam will be unwarranted as a result of the effective operation of the fishway. Suggestion has been made that chemical-batch marking technology could be used to differentiate between hatchery bred and stocked fish and naturally occurring juvenile bass that have successfully ascended the fishway. NSW Fisheries advised that although this method has great potential, the technology is still in the developmental phase.

**Outcomes continued**

In the meantime, NSW Fisheries will approach Southern bass fishing club to clarify the extent of the planned fishway monitoring program, provide a time-line for fishway construction and outline existing population survey results.

**Recommendation**

NSW Fisheries to set up a meeting with Southern bass fishing club in relation to this issue

**Agenda Item 1****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Current Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust fund budget position, budget deliberations, review of existing framework and forward planning

**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 number of issues relating to the trust have arisen over the past few years. These issues include:

- Program Budgets in excess of revenue
- Historic high carryovers, which are not expected to continue.
- Potential for Trust fund to approach negative figures if savings are not made over the next several years
- Need to set clear program priorities
- Meeting scheduling
- Project applications

In order to address these issues, NSW Fisheries is proposing that the Trust fund consider savings across programs. A brief discussion paper is attached which reviews the current procedures for trust fund programs with a view to developing a consistent policy framework. Issues such as timetabling of budget rounds, long term funding priorities, project application and reporting requirements and project overlaps, redundancies and cost savings will be considered as part of this process.

### **Current Trust Fund Position**

Since the decision was made to introduce the general recreational fishing fee, income to the freshwater trust fund has been maintained at \$2.5 million per year. The freshwater trust fund has a program budget of \$3,347,900 for the financial year ending 30 June 2003 with predicted carry over in unspent project allocation of \$616,050. The 03-04 program budget for ongoing programs is \$3,388,500 requiring an allocation of \$2,815,500 for a balanced budget.

If savings are not made and significant carryovers do not occur, then the Trust may be in debit within two years. In putting forward budget proposals for ongoing projects, (agenda item 4) NSW Fisheries has also included potential cost savings for several of the larger projects, which the Committee may wish to consider. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to identify savings in other areas.

### **Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries noted that historical carryover of unexpended funds in existing projects has contributed substantially to annual funding requirements. However, this carryover of funds is not expected to continue as many programs were now well established and expected to meet their full budgets over the coming financial year. Therefore, the overall program budget needs to be reduced to match the fixed revenue amount of \$2.5 million per annum.

NSW Fisheries referred members to a discussion paper on freshwater trust fund strategic issues. The paper proposed a review of current procedures including the clarification of roles and responsibilities of expenditure committees, the timetabling of budget rounds and the setting out of specific funding priorities. The strategic plan would also provide a framework to enable consistency in the management of the freshwater and saltwater trust expenditure committees, budget programs and application and assessment process for new projects. All trust fund projects will be operated under the same agreement. RFFTEC considered the issues raised in the discussion paper and supported the development of a consistent and transparent approach to the management of committee operations, budget processes and projects.

**Outcomes continued**

RFFTEC raised the issue of cost recovery on trust funded programs. NSW noted that cost recovery on trust funded programs is 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. The cost recovery is equivalent to 88% of the total salary budget. Cost recovery includes 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). Operation costs are determined on a project by project basis.

**Recommendation**

1. That a subcommittee consisting of the Chair, members of RFFTEC & RFSTEC and NSW Fisheries staff be formed to look at trust fund strategic issues and to develop a consistent and transparent approach to the management of committee operations, budget processes and projects. Nominated RFFTEC representatives are Doug Joyner and Elizabeth Brodbeck.

**Agenda Item 2****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Freshwater Trust Project Account reports.

**Background**

Project reports outlining expenditure for freshwater trust funded programs during 02-03 will be presented for the information of the Committee. The project statements will outline project costs attributed to capital works, operating expenses, salaries and overheads for freshwater programs till April 03.

**Outcomes**

Copies of the freshwater trust quarterly project account reports were distributed. Members were advised to contact NSW Fisheries out of session with any queries on the account reports.

**Recommendation**

Noted

**Information**

Recreational Fishing Licence sales

**Background**

The amount of money collected from the recreational fishing fee from 1 July 2002 to 30 April 03 was nearly \$6.4 million. 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

14,000 three year licences (4.0%);  
162,038 one year licences (46.3%);  
55,478 one month licences (15.9%);  
108,381 three day licences (31%); and  
10,030 prepaid three day licences (2.9%).

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 distributed to members at the meeting. It was noted that the one-year and three-day licences were the preferred types of licences bought by anglers. From July 2001 to March 2003, a total of 811,497 fishing licences were sold, made up of 35,887 three-year, 374,043 one-year, 128,404 one-month and 273,163 three-day and pre-paid licences.

RFFTEC discussed the possibility of removing the option to purchase a 3-day licence to maximise the amount of revenue accrued to the recreational trust. The abolition of the 3-day licence would allow the potential accrual of a further \$150,000 p.a in revenue, as the 3-day licence buyers would be obliged to opt as a minimum for the more expensive one-month licence.

**Recommendation**

That the Chair write to the Minister of Fisheries seeking the abolition of the 3-day licence, to provide for a potential accrual of an additional \$150,000 p.a in licence revenue, from increased sales of the one-month fishing licence.



**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing programs

**Background**

RFFTEC has supported a number of programs over the five 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.

A brief summary of programs funded in 02-03, which are seeking new budgets in 03-04 is provided in agenda items 4a to 4o to assist the committee's deliberations. This information is provided to update new members on the range of funded projects, which are seeking renewal.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries asked the Committee to consider renewing the funding for the existing trust fund programs listed in agenda items 4a-4o and the possibility of funding for one new project (agenda item 5). These projects were discussed in more detail under specific agenda items, to assist the committee in its deliberations. Four project items also provide alternative funding arrangements for the purposes of bringing the overall program budget towards a revenue neutral position.

**Recommendation**

Noted by the Committee.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Enhanced departmental fish production

**Background**

RFFTEC has supported provision of \$304,500 per annum for enhanced fish production at departmental hatcheries. 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.

Funding has been allocated to four departmental hatcheries - Port Stephens (Australian bass), Narrandera (Murray cod, golden perch, silver perch, and trout cod), Jindabyne (brown trout, rainbow trout, Atlantic salmon, brook trout) and Ebor (rainbow trout and brown trout). Support for these hatcheries, as well as Grafton (silver perch) will be considered in the forthcoming year.

**Outcomes**

Enhanced government stocking provides for the supply of the most important freshwater recreational species including trout, salmon, Australian bass, Murray cod, golden perch and silver perch. Production levels at Government hatcheries had been maintained at very high levels and a record number of fish had been released during the 02-03 season. Over 7.2 Million fish were stocked from Government hatcheries in the 2002-03 season comprising 4.9 salmonids and 2.3 million natives.

NSW Fisheries requested that RFFTEC consider renewal of the Enhanced departmental Fish Production program budget at the existing funding level of 304,500 for the next year (03-04), with an estimated allocation of \$304,500 (no carry-over of funds are expected from this program during the 02-03 year).

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget for the enhanced fish production project of \$304,500 with an estimated allocation of \$304,500, during the 03/04 financial year.

**Issue**

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

**Background**

The dollar for dollar stocking program has been enthusiastically supported by angling groups and other community organisations since its introduction. The program has supported stocking of Murray cod and golden perch into inland rivers, and Australian bass into coastal rivers in NSW on a dollar-for-dollar matching funding basis.

Funding of \$200,000 per year has been available on the basis of \$140,000 for inland native fish (Murray cod and golden perch) and \$60,000 for Australian bass. The expression of interest for the dollar for dollar program for the 03-04 year has just been released.

**Outcomes**

The Dollar-for-Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program provides matching funds to community organisations to purchase native fish from private hatcheries for public stocking. The program supports the efforts of local communities in the stocking of high value native fish species and provides additional support for the development of regional aquaculture industries. The take up of funds for inland native fish has generally been good. However, this year a carry-over of \$57,000 is expected due to some shortfalls in the supply of bass in northern NSW and golden perch in north western NSW.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider renewal of the purchase of fish from private hatcheries program budget at the existing funding level of \$200,000 for the next year (03-04), with an estimated allocation of \$143,000.

The Chair raised the issue of fish translocations across regional genetic boundaries. NSW Fisheries noted that the genetic protocols that apply for dollar-for-dollar stockings will remain in place.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$200,000 for this project with an estimated allocation of \$143,000, during the 03/04 financial year.

**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 plays a key role in other freshwater fisheries endeavours such as community liaison, correspondence with fishing clubs and other key stakeholder groups, collation of submissions on key freshwater management issues and the updating of freshwater fishing publications. The freshwater recreational management program also funds the children's fishing clinic program at departmental hatcheries and the freshwater advisory signage program.

**Outcomes**

The freshwater recreational management position is responsible for management activities associated with the co-ordination of the community and government fish stocking programs, the small grants program, the freshwater recreational fishing fee consultative body and the children's hatchery fishing clinic program. NSW Fisheries requested that RFFTEC consider renewal of the freshwater recreational management program budget at a funding level of \$222,000, with an estimated allocation of \$211,000 for this project for the 03/04 financial year.

RFFTEC queried the expenditure of funds on Committee expenses. NSW Fisheries advised that RFFTEC travel and other Committee expenses constitute part of the freshwater recreational management budget. RFFTEC requested that a separate cost centre be set up for committee expenses, with the average annual cost of meeting expenses to be transferred from the freshwater recreational management program into the new cost centre.

RFFTEC recommended a reduced budget for the freshwater recreational management program from \$222,000 p.a. to \$217,000 p.a. This reduction corresponds to the streamlining of committee meetings in line with the recommendations of the strategic plan discussion paper (presented under agenda item 1).

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$217,000 for the freshwater recreational management program with an estimated allocation of \$206,000, for the 03/04 financial year. RFFTEC requested that an additional cost centre be established from within this program to reflect committee meeting expenses.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Fishing fee administration

**Background**

The administration of the licensing system involves a wide range of data entry services, management of funds, support for licence sales agents, support for fisheries officers and recreational fishers in maintaining a library of licence records, and maintaining financial records to satisfy treasury and auditing requirements.

NSW Government has committed to a licence fee administration ceiling of 10% of income. Income to the freshwater trust is currently fixed at \$2.5 million.

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 02-03 year.

**Outcomes**

The administration of the licensing system involves a wide range of activities such as the processing of returns per month, distribution of licence books, issuing of phone licences, internet licences and replacement licences, support and general services to clients and the maintenance of financial records.

RFFTEC discussed the possibility of issuing renewal notices and plastic licences to recreational fishers. NSW Fisheries advised that the NSW Government is committed to keeping administration costs below 10% of licence funds generated. NSW Fisheries cautioned that it is unlikely that these options are practical in the near future without compromising the 10% administration limit. Nevertheless, NSW Fisheries is continuing to review options for improving the fishing fee receipt and licence support services.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$250,000 for licence administration with an estimated allocation of \$250,000, for the 03/04 financial year. RFFTEC asked for the sub-committee established under agenda item 1 to look into cost effective options for better licence support services.

**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.

The Wellington and Cooma/Jindabyne officers currently operate as mobile positions, providing support for other officers throughout their respective zones (Central West and Southwest zones). The other four positions are currently located with core funded District Fisheries Officers in two person districts.

Additional operational support has also been provided to all inland fisheries officers from the trust allocation. This support has been used to fund targeted operations on illegal activities in a range of fisheries and locations. These include operations on Murray crays, trout, the Murray cod closed season, illegal commercial fishing and so on. Targeted operations conducted by trust funded Fisheries Officers and core funded officers conducted for 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; licence offences. Operations conducted in all inland areas, including Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers, inland impoundments, Darling River and tributaries, highland trout waters

Expenditure on equipment in previous years has increased the range and quality of equipment available to inland fisheries officers substantially. With a relatively stable workforce in the inland and good quality equipment, the need for upgrades or replacement of gear has been minimal during 02/03.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that a proposal to increase the inland fisheries officers' budget by \$17,000 (from \$608,000 p.a. to a new funding level of \$625,000 p.a.) has been received from the Fisheries Services Division. The increase is due to a 5% salary increment. An alternative to this proposal is to reduce the number of inland fisheries officers from six to five. This represents a potential cost saving of \$90,000 (from \$625,000 p.a. to \$535,000).

**Outcomes continued**

A carry-over of funds of \$18,000 is expected from this program during the 02-03 year.

RFFTEC queried whether higher duties allowances for trust funded officers were paid by the trust or were sourced from core funds. Paul O'Connor and Dr Andrew Sanger (NSW Fisheries) confirmed that any higher duties allowances for trust funded officers will be payed for out of core funds. RFFTEC did not support a reduction in the number of inland Fisheries Officers.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved budget of \$625,000 with an estimated allocation of \$607,000, during the 03/04 financial year.

**Agenda Item 4f****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Fishcare Volunteers

**Background**

The Fishcare Volunteer program constitutes a state co-ordinator's position, with five regionally based education officers appointed. Two of these positions are located at inland locations (Tamworth and Albury). The state co-ordinators position is jointly funded by the saltwater and freshwater trusts. The two inland education officers' positions are funded by the freshwater trust. These positions are based at Tamworth and Albury.

The education officers are responsible for the training and support of Fishcare volunteers in regional areas. Education officers also provide support to other advisory programs, including fishing clinics, school visits, community group presentations, and displays at major advisory shows. Regional NSW has shown outstanding support for the program which has expanded the program to 14 areas (Snowy Mountains, Armidale, Bathurst, Yass, Grafton, Braidwood, Nepean, Orange, Cowra, Wagga, Corowa, Mudgee, Scone, Tamworth) and a total of 132 volunteers.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider these proposals and recommend on a preferred funding option for the Fishcare program. No carry-over of funds are expected from this program during the 02-03 year.

**Outcomes**

A proposal to increase the Fishcare Volunteer program budget by \$83,000 (from \$306,000 p.a. to a new funding level of \$389,000 p.a.) was received from the Communications Division to account for penalty rates, training and travel rates of staff. Duties undertaken by inland education officers to date have reflected an average of 18 weekends worked out of a possible 24 weekends, considerably more weekends worked than anticipated at the beginning of the year.

An alternative to this proposal is to reduce the number of inland education officers from two to one, giving a new budget of \$280,000. This represents a potential cost saving of \$109,000 (from \$389,000 p.a. to \$280,000). The reduction of two inland education officers to one would reduce the scope of the program on the inland and the number of volunteers being serviced and could impact on other education services such as the hatchery fishing clinic's and schools programs. The one education officer would need to be stationed in the central west area.

A number of issues were raised by Committee with regard to the management framework of the Fishcare volunteer program. Paul O'Connor suggested that the sub committee established under agenda item 1 could work through these issues out of session.

**Recommendations**

- RFFTEC approved a Fishcare Volunteer program budget of \$280,000 with an estimated allocation of \$280,000, for the 03/04 financial year.
- That the subcommittee established under agenda item 1 work through the issues associated to the Fishcare Volunteer program, with a view to assessing the management framework of the 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. NSW Fisheries has received eleven small grants program applications for funding during the 03-04 expression of interest round (see table page 26). These have been circulated to members out of session and 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. A carry-over of \$14,000 is expected from this program during the 02-03 year. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC approve a budget of \$20,000 with an estimated allocation of \$6,000.

**Outcomes**

The small grants program allocation has been set at \$20,000 per annum. Funding proposals are limited to \$5,000 and should be matched by funds from the applicant or other sources. RFFTEC has previously supported the expenditure of \$6,000 from the Small Grants Program during the 02-03 financial year for two projects, the Manilla Fishing Club hatchery and the Lake Canobolas Fishing Platform.

Eleven applications for funding during the 03-04 year were received and were considered by members later in the meeting. Successful applicants will be required to provide proof of expenditure to the committee at future meetings.

RFFTEC confirmed its support for the small grants program and recommended that the budget be renewed at the existing level.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$20,000 with an estimated allocation of \$6,000, during the 03/04 financial year.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Freshwater Recreational Research projects.

**Background**

A number of freshwater recreational research projects have been funded for the last three years. These projects have included:

- Experimental assessment of two new methods for marking hatchery produced trout and native fish;
- Development of batch marking protocols for one of these methods (alizarin complexone marking);
- Assessment of the success of stocking of trout into selected impoundments (ongoing);
- Assessment of the success of stocking trout into selected rivers (ongoing);
- Assessment of the success of stocking native fish into selected impoundments (ongoing);
- Monitoring of angler catches at selected fishing competitions rivers and lakes in coastal, highland and inland lowland catchments (ongoing);
- Monitoring of spawning runs at major highland trout fisheries (ongoing);
- Experimental assessment of hooking mortality in silver perch using different hook and gear types

Several scientific papers have been submitted for publication, as well as a number of popular reports in angling magazines. Staff have presented many oral presentations at angling clubs meetings, scientific meetings and other public gatherings to publicise the results of their work. There is a strong expectation that a number of the above research projects will continue, and that additional projects will be included in the work program of the freshwater recreational research group. This research capacity will be particularly important in order to fill some of the knowledge gaps that may be identified in the recreational fishing and freshwater stocking fisheries management strategies.

**Outcomes**

Scientific staff are conducting research into the effects of stocking. Benefits include a more efficient stocking policy by identifying areas requiring stocking and conversely identifying waterways where the fish population is self-maintaining. Identification of the important fisheries will allow concentration of effort to maintain these as recreational fisheries. Some aspects of this program might be able to be outsourced in the future on a contract basis, to improve operational efficiency.

**Outcomes continued**

NSW Fisheries advised that a carry-over of \$127,000 is expected from the effects of stocking program and a carry-over of \$120,000 is expected from the freshwater monitoring program during the 02-03 year. The previous trend for significant carry over in these two projects has continued during the 02-03 financial year. As a result, NSW Fisheries has re-configured the program budgets at funding levels of \$160,000 p.a. and \$150,000 p.a. for assessment of stocking success and for freshwater monitoring respectively. This represents a substantial budget saving of \$196,000. Therefore, NSW Fisheries requested that RFFTEC approve budgets of \$160,000 for the effects of stocking and \$150,000 for freshwater monitoring projects with estimated allocations of \$33,000 and \$30,000 respectively.

NSW Fisheries noted that in addition to the existing technical officer, a scientist would be appointed full time to manage the anglers catch research program. RFFTEC asked for catch cards to be modified to allow for information on weather conditions to be recorded. NSW Fisheries agreed to review the information on catch cards and would arrange for the necessary changes to be made to incorporate climatic factors.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved budgets of \$160,000 and \$150,000 for Effects of Stocking and Freshwater Monitoring projects with estimated allocations of \$33,000 and \$30,000 respectively, during the 03/04 financial year.

**Agenda Item 4j****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Weir Removal Program

**Background**

RFFTEC has have previously recognised the importance of addressing the issue of fish passage through providing funds for the assessment of 3,200 licensed barriers throughout NSW. This was followed with the funding of a Project Officer (Weir Removal) to carry out detailed assessments of barriers recommended for decommissioning and facilitate the process of weir removal. Both initiatives have brought significant improvements to our management of freshwater systems through the creation of a barriers database and allowing the identification of priority sites for decommissioning.

Several State Water owned structures have been removed on the Gunidgera Creek system in the Namoi catchment. Several road crossings in the Gwydir catchment have also been removed.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that a proposal to increase the weir removal budget by \$24,000 during the 03-04 year (from \$102,000 p.a. to a new funding level of \$126,000 p.a.) and by an additional \$7,100 during the 04-05 year and \$7,100 during the 05-06 year had been received from the Office of Conservation.

An alternative proposal was to close the project cost centre and combine this program with the existing north west conservation manager's position. With an increase in the habitat manager's budget to recover some of the costs associated with the reduction of the full time inland staff from 3 to 2, this would create a potential cost saving of \$72,000 from the proposed budget.

The Committee expressed its strong support for the weir removal program. Richard Ping Kee and Doug Joyner highlighted that the program had been attracting funds from other sources for the removing of impediments to fish passage. The Committee showed support for the merging of the two programs but stressed the need for the northern inland conservation manager to continue weir removal duties, in order to build on the achievements to date.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the combining of the weir review project within the regional habitat manager's program, (budget for the existing weir review program to be zero), on the condition that the duties of the north western conservation manager be focused on weir removal.

**Agenda Item 4i****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Renewal of ongoing program - Inland conservation managers

**Background**

Two Conservation Managers have been funded by the freshwater recreational fishing licence to undertake fisheries habitat management and conservation responsibilities in the north-west and south-west of NSW for a three-year period.

Since these positions commenced there has been a considerable increase in the awareness of inland native fish conservation issues by the general public and local council areas.

**Background continued**

Each Conservation Manager has worked with angling groups, the general community, local councils, and other government agencies to mitigate the impacts of developments on fish and fish habitat, promote the rehabilitation of degraded habitats and promote sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices.

**Outcomes**

Conservation managers are responsible for the development of Fish Habitat Action Plan, ensuring that environmental flows are targeted towards native fish populations and habitat enhancement, applying for, or assisting community groups to apply for funding to protect and rehabilitate fish habitats and ensuring the effective and efficient expenditure of the Fish Habitat Grant Program (see agenda item 4l).

A proposal to increase the inland conservation manager's budget by \$38,000 (from \$254,000 p.a. to a new funding level of \$292,000 p.a.) has been received from the Office of Conservation. The increase is due to a 5% salary increment. No carry-over of funds are expected from this program during the 02-03 year. Alternatively the project could be increased by \$16,000 to compensate for the additional costs following incorporation of the weir review project into the north western conservation manager's position (refer to agenda item 4j).

RFFTEC recommended the second budget option - to increase the project budget by an additional \$16,000 (of the revised project budget of \$292,000), to compensate for any additional costs incurred through the rolling of two programs into one.

The Gwydir Oral History Project has been completed and the book "Fish Everywhere: An oral history of fish and their habitats in the Gwydir River" is set to be officially launched at the Moree Shire Plains Gallery, Moree on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> of June. The north western conservation manager (Sharon Molloy) has been involved in steering this project through to it's fruition. Copies of the book were distributed to members of the Committee.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$308,000 with the incorporation of the Weir review program.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Eastern Freshwater cod stocking

**Background**

Eastern cod is listed as 'endangered' under the Fisheries Management Act 1994. Some breeding and stocking has been undertaken since 1989, but the program has only become a significant recovery action since 1997 when Booma Fisheries, a privately operated hatchery near Dorrigo, developed cod breeding techniques which can produce the quantity of fingerlings required for an effective conservation stocking program.

Since 1997, Project Big Fish Inc, a group of concerned anglers from the North Coast region, have actively raised funds from both community and corporate sources to significantly contribute to the stocking program. The effective restocking of eastern cod within their former range is identified as a key action under the Eastern cod Recovery Plan, whose ultimate objective is to recover the species to a level of security in nature so that it's conservation status can be revised from 'endangered' to 'vulnerable' and eventually de-listed. While eastern cod cannot currently be considered a recreational species due to its endangered status (hence totally protected), it is expected that a concerted effort towards stocking and other recovery actions may eventually see the species removed from the threatened species listings and some level of recreational angling introduced.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that Booma Fisheries had experienced a shortfall in production during the 02/03 year as a result of the drought. However, those eastern cod fingerlings that were available were stocked in January into the Orara River near Glenreagh, except for approx. 500 which were released into Karangi Dam and 180 which were retained for analysis relating to; mark retention, growth rate and genetics.

NSW Fisheries requested that RFFTEC consider the renewal of funding for the eastern cod stocking program for the second year of the three-year program (funding finishes at the end of 04-05) at a funding level of \$20,000 with an estimated allocation of \$8,000.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$20,000 for the eastern cod stocking program, with an estimated allocation of \$8,000, during the 03/04 year.

**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program – Fish Habitat grants 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. A similar project is being supported by RFSTEC for marine/estuarine habitat restoration in the Clarence catchment.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that an expression of interest to undertake habitat rehabilitation projects funded by the habitat restoration program during the 02-03 year was advertised in March 03. Seventy applications for funding were received and have been assessed and ranked against specific criteria. These were presented to the Committee for consideration for funding under agenda item 8.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC confirm funding support for the habitat restoration grant program for the second year of the three year program (funding finishes at the end of 04-05), at a funding level of \$100,000.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$100,000 for the Fish Habitat Grants program with an estimated allocation of \$100,000, during the 03/04 financial year.

**Issue**

Reallocation of funding for ongoing program - Fish stocking fishery management strategy and associated environmental impact statement.

**Background**

The project commenced in March 2002 and is scheduled to finish in March 2004, or the 03-04 financial year. By the end of July 2003, it is expected that six of the twelve stages in the fish stocking fisheries management strategy process will have been completed. These include a review of the existing fishery and the highlighting of associated issues, the consultation of stakeholders and committees on these issues, holding of a series of regional meetings to make the broader community aware of the issues and the FMS/EIS process, the preparation of the draft Fishery Management Strategy in consultation with the stakeholders and committees, the preparation of the draft EIS for Peer Review and the presentation of the revised draft EIS to Fisheries Resource Conservation Advisory Council, the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Management Planning Committee, PlanningNSW, Environment Australia, and the advisory councils for comment prior to finalising the strategy for public exhibition.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries is currently preparing a fishery management strategy for fish stocking in NSW inland waters in consultation with Recreational Fishing Freshwater Management Planning Committee and other advisory groups. This strategy will ensure the continued involvement of anglers in a well-managed premier fish stocking program and will set out the proposed policies and administrative arrangements that will guide all fish stocking activities in NSW inland waters in coming years.

RFFTEC has previously committed to fund the project over three financial years (02-05), however, the timeline for completion of the EIS was prior to the commencement of the 04-05 financial year. To meet this timeline, and to recover some of the costs from the 02-03 year, NSW Fisheries requested that RFFTEC consider the allotment of the remaining \$280,000, for the upcoming 03-04 year. No carry-over of funds are expected from this program during the 02-03 year.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget for the fish stocking fishery management strategy and associated environmental impact statement project of \$280,000 with an estimated allocation of \$280,000, during the 03/04 financial year.



**Issue**

Renewal of funding for ongoing program - Recreational fishing fishery management strategy and associated environmental assessment.

**Background**

By the end of June 2003, it is expected that a description and review of the existing recreational fishery will have been completed along with a preliminary risk assessment of the fishery. It is also anticipated that a Recreational Fishing Saltwater Management Planning Committee will have been formed to assist in the development of the draft Recreational Fishing Fishery Management Strategy.

**Outcomes**

The recreational fishing fishery management strategy will set out the proposed guidelines and administrative procedures that will govern all recreational fishing activities in NSW in coming years. This project is still in the early stages of development. Hence, the first years approved funding has not been drawn down at this point. Therefore, a full carry-over of funds (\$125,000) is expected from this program during the 02-03 year.

NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC confirm support for the second year of the two year project (funding finishes at the end of the 03/04 year) at a funding level of \$125,000.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$250,000 for Recreational fishing fishery management strategy and associated environmental assessment project with an estimated allocation of \$125,000, during the 03/04 financial year.

**Issue**

Closure of funding for current programs – economic survey of recreational fishing, bass habitat mapping program, billboards project

**Background**

RFFTEC previously supported a budget of \$65,000 per annum for the economic survey of recreational fishing. No funding for has been expended during the 02/03 financial year for this program. An economic assessment of recreational fishing will be carried out as part of the recreational fishing environmental impact assessment process. Thus, NSW Fisheries requests that RFFTEC consider closing this project to avoid duplication and overlaps. The \$65,000 in unspent allocated funds will be returned to the trust account.

The tenure of funding for the other two 2-year projects (bass habitat mapping and billboards) have now expired (funded during the 01-02 and 02-03 financial years). The billboards project involved the installation of ten billboards across regional NSW during the early implementation phase of the general recreational fishing fee. The billboards gave advice on the need to purchase a recreational fishing licence, prior to fishing. The billboards were erected in prominent locations adjacent to major roads and around border areas. The project was dually funded between the freshwater and saltwater trusts.

The bass habitat mapping program is expected to be completed later in the year. The delay in the completion date is due to an inability to finish off fieldwork in the upper Macleay River due to lack of water. This delay is in part compensated by the fact that certain riverine features (e.g. pump offtakes) that would have been obscured are now readily visible and their presence has been logged. The Macleay and Shoalhaven, because of their relatively small size, were the rivers of choice to initiate field trials of the newly acquired and interfaced equipment. Once these rivers are assessed (the major portion of the project), the Hawkesbury River survey will commence. The final outcome of this program will be presented to Committee members at a future meeting.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries is seeking RFFTEC's approval to close the economic survey project and to the return the \$65,000 in unspent funds to the trust account. Funding for the other two programs expires at the end of the 02-03 financial year.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved the closure the economic survey project and the return of \$65,000 to the trust fund. Other project retirements noted.

**Agenda Item 5****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Consideration of budget proposal for Gaden Trout Hatchery Capital Works

**Background**

Local anglers and fishing groups have expressed concern that no substantial recreational fishing licence revenue funds have been expended on capital improvements at the Gaden Hatchery. They believe that previous Minister's have made commitments to improve the hatchery and had committed licence funds, as well as funds from the sale of a NSW Fisheries house in Jindabyne.

A Department of Public Works and Services report put forward a project budget of \$1.1 million for the construction of new hatchery and administration buildings at the Gaden Hatchery. An Asset Acquisition proposal was subsequently prepared for Treasury seeking \$370,000 for the construction of a hatchery only. The proposal was not approved. NSW Fisheries is investigating alternative avenues for replacement buildings to meet both hatchery and administration requirements. New work estimates have been obtained for the construction of a suitable hatchery shed and separate accommodation building of \$140,000 and \$200,000 respectively. Fit out of the hatchery will require a further \$50,000 to \$80,000 however, once the shed is completed this can be completed over several years.

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that whilst improvements to hatchery infrastructure have been carried out at the production facilities at Narrandera and Ebor in recent times (e.g. broodstock holding facility, Narrandera, new hatching shed and pond improvement works, Dutton), the actual hatchery building at the Gaden hatchery been in place for some fifty years. The existing hatchery building is not large enough to cater for the existing and increasing long term demand for trout fry and fingerlings for stocking. NSW Fisheries sought \$100,000 in seed funding from the Trust in order to leverage alternative funding for the hatchery building and fitout. Funding for the administration building will be sought from consolidated revenue sources.

RFFTEC sought clarification of the funding arrangement for the existing enhanced fish production program. NSW Fisheries advised that the enhanced fish production program is fully committed to several salaries (staffing levels increased to meet extra demand), operating costs including stocking costs, overtime and temporary assistance at hatcheries during peak periods and additional food costs.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC approved a budget of \$100,000 in seed funding over a period of two financial years (\$50,000 in each year) to support the redevelopment of the Gaden hatchery shed, with an allocation of \$50,000 during the 03/04 financial year.

**Agenda Item 6****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Freshwater Trust budget recommendations and allocations for the 03/04 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.

### Background continued

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 balanced budget. Budget forecasts for coming years will also be presented.

### Outcomes

A draft budget table was developed in consultation with RFFTEC. The budget table listed the levels of expenditure for ongoing programs and the new proposal as recommended by the Committee, during deliberations at 4a-4o and 5 (above). Budget figures were evaluated against available funds within the Freshwater trust and were found to align with a balanced budget.

Budget calculations were also presented for those programs that had been recommended to continue beyond the 03/04 financial year. The budget recommendations from RFFTEC are summarised in Table 1.

### Recommendation

Table 1: *Budget and expenditure from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Fund, 03/04 financial year as approved by RFFTEC*

<b>Program</b>	<b>02/03 predicted carryover (\$'000)</b>	<b>03/04 supported budget (\$'000)</b>	<b>03/04 allocation (\$'000)</b>
Purchase of native fish from private enterprise	57	200	143
Enhanced Government fish production	0	304.5	304.5
Freshwater recreational management	11	217	206
Fishcare volunteer program	0	280	280
Licence administration	0	250	250
Inland fisheries officers	18	625	607
Regional fish habitat (inland)	24	308	284
Weir removal / fish passage	0	0	0
Effectiveness of stocking program	127	160	33
Angler catch monitoring	120	150	30
Angler expenditure survey	65	0	-65
Small grants program	14	20	6
Impoundment access / fishouts	25.05	25.05	0
Bass habitat mapping	18	18	0
Fish habitat grant program	0	100	100
Eastern cod stocking program	12	20	8
Fish stocking fisheries management strategy contingency	0	280	280
Recreational fishing fisheries management strategy contingency	125	250	125
Gaden trout hatchery	N/A	50	50
<b>Total (\$'000)</b>	<b>616.05</b>	<b>3,257.5</b>	<b>2,641.5</b>

**Issue**

Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by Recreational Fishing Trusts and the small grants program

**Background**

An expression of interest inviting submissions for projects funded by the small grants program was conducted in March 03. The small grants program enables fishing clubs, councils and other community members to submit freshwater and saltwater proposals for small, local or regional projects to enhance recreational fishing. Funding proposals are limited to \$5,000 and should be matched by funds from the applicant or other sources. The small grants program allocation has been set at \$20,000 per annum.

Eleven applications for funding have been received and have been circulated to members out of session for consideration (refer to following summary table). Proposals for the Small Grants program will be assessed by the Committee at the meeting. Successful applicants will be required to report to the expenditure committees on a regular basis.

Also consider correspondence to the Chair from Ian Andrews, President of the Institute of Freshwater Anglers regarding angler access points. The correspondence states that RFFTEC should consider allocating funds towards the development of a map of angler access points.

**Outcomes**

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.

Supported programs were generally considered to be a high priority for fisheries management with direct benefits to recreational fishing. Programs that were not supported were considered to be too costly, low priority for recreational fisheries management or of minimal benefit to recreational fishing. A summary of each small grant application is included in the Appendix. The recommendations of the Committee for each program are summarised in Tables 1 & 2.

### Outcomes continued

With respect to the correspondence from the Institute of Freshwater Anglers regarding the mapping of angler access points, NSW Fisheries is preparing an access guide to NSW impoundments which details basic information sought by anglers, for example, impoundment stocking histories, directions to impoundments and amenities provided. It may be possible to expand this to include the mapping of access to rivers and streams and the locations of Travelling Stock Routes. Therefore, NSW Fisheries will write to the IFA with the aim of incorporating it's proposal into the wider angler access guide and suggesting a possible small grants application to cover the costs associated with the printing of this guide.

### Recommendation

Table 1: *Programs supported by the Committee to be funded from the small grants program, 03/04 financial year*

Project title	Project proponent	Recommended funding level, 03/04 year	Funding conditions
Tamworth Native Fish Hatchery (non profit community fish hatchery)	Mr Geoff Simpson	A rate of 50% up to a maximum of \$5,000 based on the number of fish stocked, over the 03/04 season.	Funding for this project to be incorporated into the pre-existing Dollar-for-Dollar Native Fish Stocking program (purchase of fish from private hatcheries).
Manilla Fishing Club Hatchery (non profit community fish hatchery)	Mr Ian Ward	A rate of 50% up to a maximum of \$5,000 based on the number of fish stocked, over the 03/04 season.	Funding for this project to be incorporated into the pre-existing Dollar-for-Dollar Native Fish Stocking program (purchase of fish from private hatcheries).
Repairs to pontoon, boat ramp, BBQ facilities & amenities block Bells Bay Camping Area, Toonumbar Dam	Kyogle Fish Acclimatisation Society	\$2,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement Funding to be used for boat ramp and pontoon maintenance works only (funds not to be used to repair BBQ or picnic shelters), with a provision that matching funds are sourced from the Kyogle Shire Council.
Marsden weir re-development project	Phil Hunter, Goulburn City Council	\$5,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Eastern freshwater cod sampling	Anthony Moore, Southern Cross University	\$4,800	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement. Project to provide information on the extent of wild bass populations in the upper Clarence system, as part of this research

**Recommendation (cont.)**

Table 2: *Programs not-supported by the Committee for funding through the small grants program*

<b>Project title</b>	<b>Project proponent</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Tables / seating, amenities block, fishing brochure, fish farm business plan	Walgett Shire Council	Does not meet guidelines – does not enhance recreational fishing, amount requested in excess of small grants project limit.
Hatchery infrastructure - private hatchery, Frogmore	Bradford Corcoran	Does not meet guidelines – no previous public stocking history, future commercial enterprise.
Upgrade of boat ramp, mooring and trailer parking facilities	Howlong Anglers	Does not meet guidelines – does not enhance recreational fishing. Project to be re-directed to the foreshore development committee (NSW Waterways) and Council
Fishing Clinics and seminars (joint saltwater trust proposal)	David Hodge	Does not meet guidelines – commercial enterprise, not supported by the saltwater trust
Carp brochure	Adrian Wells (Murray-Darling Basin Commission)	NSW Fisheries to investigate other avenues to assist with this project.
Investigation of the distribution, abundance and biology of the noxious fish banded grunter in the Clarence River system	NSW Fisheries (joint Saltwater Trust proposal)	Not supported by the saltwater trust.

**Agenda item 8****Milly Hobson****Issue**

Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by Recreational Fishing Trusts and the habitat restoration program

**Background**

The Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust Expenditure Committee has previously supported the expenditure of \$100,000 for aquatic habitat protection and restoration. The purpose of the habitat rehabilitation grants program is to provide “on-ground” habitat rehabilitation of fish habitats. Projects will be carried out by a range of stakeholder groups such as angling clubs, local councils and Rivercare and Landcare groups in collaboration with conservation staff from NSW Fisheries.



### **Background continued**

Proposals for the Fish Habitat Grant Program will be presented to the Committee for consideration, prior to the allocation of funding. Successful applicants will be required to report to the expenditure committees on a regular basis. Participants in the program must demonstrate that they have been able to gain matching funds, either by in-kind donations or cash, to support the proposed project.

An expression of interest inviting submissions to undertake habitat rehabilitation projects funded by the habitat restoration program was advertised in March 03. Seventy applications for funding during the 02/03 year were received.

### **Outcomes**

A summary document of Fish Habitat Grant program applications was distributed amongst Committee members. Applications have been assessed by staff from the NSW Fisheries Office of Conservation and were ranked against specific criteria. NSW Fisheries recommends that thirteen projects be considered as possible options for funding through the Fish Habitat Grant program.

A map of grant application sites recommended for approval was distributed amongst Committee members. The funding base for projects was wide spread, incorporating the Lachlan, Macquarie, Namoi, McIntyre Murrumbidgee, Clarence, Wilson, Shoalhaven and Tuggerah catchment areas. A total funding of \$93,871,50 is recommended with an inkind contribution of more than \$217,000.

The thirteen projects recommended for funding by NSW Fisheries were supported by RFFTEC. These projects are summarised in Table 1.

### **Recommendation**

*Table 1: Programs supported by the Committee to be funded from the Fish Habitat grants program, 03/04 financial year*

<b>Project title</b>	<b>Project proponent</b>	<b>Recommended funding level, 02/03 year</b>	<b>Funding conditions</b>
Goobang and Buggan Creeks (Lachlan River) – Willow removal	Mid-Lachlan & Wallamundry Creek Water Users (Alan Strange)	\$10,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
McIntyre River weed removal	Masterman Range Landcare Group / Graman Fishing Club	\$8,085	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement

*Table 1 continued: Programs supported by the Committee to be funded from the Fish Habitat grants program, 03/04 financial year*

Shoalhaven rehabilitation	Shoalhaven City Council	\$9,996	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Peel River riparian rehabilitation, Tamworth	Tamworth City Council	\$8,400	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Pelican Creek rehabilitation	Lismore City Council (Gary Hernsworth)	\$10,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Wilson River rehabilitation	Rollands Plains Landcare Group	\$6,610	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
South Creek rehabilitation	Greening Australia	\$10,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Vertical slot fishway research proposal	Rex Glencross, Andrew Boulton & Richard Faulkner	\$10,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Murrumbidgee River riparian rehabilitation, Hay	Nari Nari Tribal Council	\$4,450	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Coolongbook River rehabilitation	Great Lakes Council	\$10,000	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Macquarie River riparian rehabilitation, Narromine	Ross Bignall	\$1,300	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Clarence River riparian rehabilitation	Stephen Ross	\$4,770	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement
Murrumbidgee River riparian rehabilitation, Narrandera	David Coddington	\$260.50	As per guidelines of recreational fishing trusts project funding agreement

### **Other business**

#### **Issue**

Commencement of the Tallowa Dam high fishway project

#### **Discussion**

Mr Steve Tooley sought clarification on the time-line for construction of the Tallowa Dam high fishway project, Shoalhaven River. NSW Fisheries advised that the Sydney Catchment Authority board has approved funding for the Tallowa Dam fishway and is expected that the detailed design and construction phase will occur in 2004. The fishway will be operational soon thereafter.

**Issue**

Habitat auditing by Fisheries Officers

**Discussion**

Mr Paul O'Connor discussed the possibility of incorporating a formalised habitat assessment component within the to the general field duties of Fisheries Officers, to assist in the auditing of environmental features and to identify possible habitat management issues. RFFTEC showed support for this concept.

**Next Meeting**

The next RFFTEC meeting was scheduled for Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2003 at the Gaden Trout Hatchery, Jindabyne.

Meeting concluded at 2.35pm. Informal discussions were held on the management issues to be addressed by the RFFTEC / RFSTEC sub-committee.

## Appendix Summary of Small Grants Program proposals

### **Proposal:** *Tamworth Native Fish Hatchery*

**Background:** The Tamworth Native Fish Hatchery Association was formed in 1996 as a joint enterprise between local fishing clubs and the Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School. The hatchery was established for the purpose of producing fish for public stocking into the Peel River and to provide an aquaculture facility and training site for secondary school students. The Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School has been issued with class H (hatchery) permit to produce golden perch, Murray cod and silver perch. The hatchery site works to date have been financed by family fish out days, raffles, donations of money, materials, and time by local businesses and tradesmen. Assistance has come from NSW Fisheries at Narrandera and Grafton through the provision of technical advice on design, construction and operation. Currently, seven dams are completed with an estimated volume of 11 megalitres, comprising a supply reservoir at the top, 5 breeding ponds and an overflow / collection dam at the bottom. All underground drainage trenches are completed with pipes in place. Inflow water pipes are completed and all valves, monks and headwalls have been purchased and put in place. Electricity has been run to the top of each monk to enable the use of aerators on each plankton pond. Three spawning tanks and three hatching tanks have been acquired for the laboratory and power, water and air has recently been installed above each tank for heating and aeration. All man-proof fencing around the hatchery is completed. Turtle proofing materials have also been acquired and fencing is completed.

**Funding sought:** The Tamworth Native Fish Hatchery is seeking funding through the small grants program to cover the cost of site works - to date more than \$40,000. A maximum of \$5,000 dollars in funding per project is available for small grants proposals.

### **Proposal:** *Manilla Fishing Club Hatchery*

**Background:** The Manilla Hatchery is a non-profit community aquaculture facility, established by the Manilla Fishing Club for the purpose of producing fish for public stocking into local dams and rivers. The community hatchery has been operating for around 20 years. It consists of four breeding ponds and three plankton ponds, which were constructed by the Manilla Shire Council. Club volunteers carried out the necessary work to complete and set up operations, with technical assistance from NSW Fisheries. The Manilla Shire Council owns the land on which the hatchery is located. Raffles and donations of money from fishing clubs finance current hatchery operations.

**Funding sought:** The Manilla Fishing Club hatchery is seeking an ongoing allocation of \$7,000 in small grants funding (03/04,04/05, 05/06 years). A maximum of \$5,000 dollars in funding per project is available for small grants proposals.

### **Proposal:** *Healthy Fish – Good Fishing – Happy Fisherman*

**Background:** Mr Bradford Corcoran is seeking funding support from the Small Grants Program for capital works costs associated with the completion of a private fish hatchery at Branita Heights near Frogmore (Boorowa). The hatchery site is at stage 1 of a 3-stage development. Observation and breeding tanks and incomplete. Seven turkey nest ponds are to be built over the course of the next four years. Mr Corcoran currently has an extensive land based aquaculture permit from NSW Fisheries to produce inland native fish species, although appears not to have successfully spawned or reared these species from his facility at this stage. At such time, Mr Corcoran plans to release the progeny of successfully spawned stock fish into public waterways, and to continue to do so over a four-year period, or during the initial phases of hatchery development.

**Funding sought:** Mr Corcoran is seeking funding through the small grants program to cover the cost of site works to do with the observation / breeding ponds. The amount requested is \$3,500 during the 03/04 year and \$5,000 per annum for two years thereafter.

**Proposal:** Walgett Shire Council

**Background:** The Walgett Shire Council is seeking financial assistance under the small grants program to complete the establishment of tables, seats and amenities facilities at three public reserves on the Barwon and Namoi Rivers near Walgett and Collarenebri. The areas are well used by recreational fishers and campers and provide points of access to the water. The proposal includes a marketing component, which will involve the production of a fishing brochure to promote fishing and tourism in the local area. The Council is also seeking funding to develop a business plan for a local aquaculture facility.

**Funding sought:** The Walgett Shire Council is seeking contributory funding for on-site works - total \$15,000 (03-04 year), which includes the establishment of amenities facilities listed above, plus costs attributed to the promotion & marketing campaign. Walgett Shire Council has committed \$5,000 for the project and community groups will provide in-kind support through labour and some materials, valued at \$7,500. The Council is also seeking \$10,000 in funds to develop a business plan for a fish farm. A maximum of \$5,000 dollars in funding per project is available for small grants proposals.

**Proposal:** Kyogle Fish Acclimatisation Society

**Background:** The Kyogle Fish Acclimatisation Society is seeking financial assistance under the small grants program to repair a boat ramp and pontoon and improve amenities facilities (BBQ's, toilets, shelters etc..) at Bells Bay Camping Area, Toonumbar Dam (Kyogle). The area is well used by recreational fishers and campers and provides points of access to the water.

**Funding sought:** The Kyogle Fish Acclimatisation Society requests contributory funding to cover the costs of on-site materials - total \$2,000 (03-04 year) to be used in the repair and maintenance of camping ground facilities. Society members will provide in-kind labour support for the project. Although not identified in the application, a possible alternative source of funding is the Kyogle Shire Council, the managing authority of the dam.

**Proposal:** Howlong Anglers Club – Upgrade of Memorial Park Boat Ramp, Howlong

**Background:** The Howlong Anglers Club is seeking financial assistance under the small grants program to upgrade boat ramp, mooring and trailer park facilities (and possibly picnic and BBQ facilities) at the Memorial Park boat ramp, Howlong. The area is well used by recreational fishers and boaters and provides a point of access to the water.

**Funding sought:** The Howlong Anglers Club is seeking contributory funding to cover the costs of on-site materials for boat ramp and trailer parking extension works and to extend the mooring facility and retaining wall - total \$2,000 (03-04 year) The application mentions that improvements to BBQ and picnic facilities are also required, although does not clarify if freshwater trust funds are to be used for these additional works. Members of the Howlong Anglers Club will provide \$2,000 in matching funding and in-kind labour support for the project. The Howlong Council has been approached for an additional \$2,000 for the project.

**Proposal:** *Marsden Weir recreational fishing development project*

**Background:** The Goulburn City Council is seeking contributory funding to re-develop the foreshore area of Marsden Weir, located on the Wollondilly River near Goulburn.

The foreshore redevelopment project will involve the installation of a pontoon, jetty and gangway, the production of 10,000 fishing brochures promoting the benefits of fishing and tourism in the local area, the erection of four fishing signs, the organisation of a fishing event and a community marketing campaign designed to promote the Marsden Weir re-development and local fishing and tourism opportunities. The project is expected to commence in September or October 03 and will carry through until October 04. The area surrounding Marsden weir is not well used by recreational fishers at present and access to the water is limited. However, the Council plans to improve public access arrangements by opening the area for recreational activities on weekends and on public holidays and by improving access to the shoreline.

**Funding sought:** The total cost of the project is \$11,143. The Goulburn City Council is seeking funding from the Small Grants Program for the component of the re-development that deals with to installation of the pontoon, jetty and gangway at Marsden Weir, and the production of the fishing brochures. The total amount requested from the freshwater trust is \$5,000. The other aspects of the project will be payed for by the Goulburn City Council and by other sources.

**Proposal:** *Fishing Clinics and seminars (joint Saltwater Trust proposal)*

**Background:** Mr David Hodge has applied for funding support to build on an existing fishing clinics and seminars program run at various trade and boat and tackle shows across NSW. The project will provide demonstrations in the use of various types of lures and spinning tackle by means of a large glass tank, known as the Yamaha Supertank. The project will also provide education and advice on useful fishing techniques (methods of line rigging and casting) and on conservation and ethical fishing practices (catch and release fishing, choice of appropriate tackle etc..).

**Funding sought:** The project is budgeted for a three-year period. The proponent is seeking a total of \$21,000 during the 03/04 year, which is to be split as \$16,000 from the saltwater trust and \$5,000 from the freshwater trust (total \$21,000, 03/04 year), and a total of \$19,000 for the two financial years thereafter.

**Proposal** *Carp Brochure*

**Background:** Mr Adrian Wells of the Murray-Darling Association is seeking contributory funding towards the development of a carp brochure aimed at increasing community understanding and knowledge of the environmental impacts of carp and other introduced fish.

**Funding sought:** The total cost of the brochure (design, printing of 10,000 copies, promotion and circulation) is budgeted at \$10,600. The Murray-Darling Association is seeking a \$5,000 grant from the freshwater trust to contribute towards this project. The additional \$5,100 required will be provided by the Murray-Darling Association and the Natural Heritage Trust.

**Proposal** *Investigation of the distribution, abundance and biology of the noxious fish banded grunter in the Clarence River system*

**Background:** Dr Bruce Pease (NSW Fisheries) has applied for funding support from the saltwater and freshwater trust to investigate the distribution, abundance and biology banded grunter in the Clarence River system, with the aim of preventing the further spread of this species throughout NSW.

**Background (continued):** Field survey work (fish sampling, habitat assessment measures) will be conducted to determine the distribution, population status and potential impacts of banded grunter. Catch information will also be sourced from recreational anglers. The project includes a community education component involving organised fishing competitions that target banded grunter and verbal presentations to participants, which will provide general information about the species and its associated threats to other aquatic life.

**Funding sought:** The total budget for the three year project is \$162,000. A total of \$101,000 is sought from the saltwater trust over the three year period. \$15,000 is sought from the small grants program as contributory funding over this three-year period (\$5,000 per year for three years). The remaining project costs will be funded by NSW Fisheries.

**Proposal** Eastern freshwater cod research

**Background:** In 1999 the Centre for Animal Conservation Genetics at Southern Cross University commenced research into the endangered eastern cod to determine the genetic composition of the remaining wild cod populations and to determine if the captive breeding and subsequent stocking program is maintaining remnant genetic diversity. This research was supported by a grant of \$25,000.00 from the Recreation Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee at that time. Over three hundred samples were collected during this study from locations throughout the Clarence and Richmond Catchments including Mann, Nymboida, Guy Fawkes, Sara and Orara Rivers along with Washpool and Dundahra Creeks. The original research has recently been completed and an interim report submitted to NSW Fisheries.

The results so far have indicated that eastern freshwater cod have very low levels of natural genetic diversity, which has resulted from a significant population bottleneck. Historically, it is known that the population was reduced significantly in abundance and distribution by the 1930's. However, the bottleneck detected was several thousand years ago and not during the last century as expected. In addition, the study revealed that the populations with the highest levels of genetic diversity were the most remote populations. Also of particular note, the study came to distinguish historical population bottlenecks from contemporary ones, which allows researchers to separate older, natural bottlenecks from more recent human induced bottlenecks. The genetics study had a very comprehensive sampling strategy across both the Clarence and Richmond catchments. However, the previous study found other populations in highly remote locations in the upper Clarence catchment. These remote populations are likely to be more significant for the maintenance of genetic diversity and for overall species persistence. Moreover, if the breeding program is to continue, it will be imperative to source broodstock and the remnant genetic material they contain, from in these remote populations.

Hence, this present study proposes to sample from extant remnant populations of eastern freshwater cod in remote locations of the Clarence River catchment and to collect biological and ecological information on eastern freshwater cod from remote extant populations in the Clarence catchment.

**Funding sought:** The total cost of the one-year project is \$14,387. Mr Anthony Moore of Southern Cross University is seeking \$4,800 from the small grants program in contributory funds. Additional costs for the project will be supplied by Southern Cross University and from other sources. This project is based on volunteer research. The grant seeks costs involved in gathering further samples and additional data only.

**16<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC Meeting – 29 May 2003**

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Agenda items</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status / Comments</b>	<b>Team responsible</b>
1	Action items from previous meeting	NSW Fisheries to set up a meeting with Southern Bass fishing club in relation to the time-line for construction of the Tallowa Dam High Fishway	Pending	Conservation branch
2	1: (Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Fund budget position), 4d (Fishing Fee administration), 4f (Fishcare Volunteers)	That a sub-committee consisting of the Chair, two members of RFSTEC, two members of RFFTEC (Doug Joyner, Elizabeth Brodbeck) be established to look into trust fund strategic issues, the structure of the Fishcare Volunteer program and cost effective options for licensing services	Pending	Chair/Rec.Mgt/ Communications branch
3	3: Recreational Fishing Licence sales	That the Chair write to the Minister for Fisheries seeking the abolition of the 3-day fishing licence	Pending	Chair/Rec.Mgt
4	4c: Freshwater recreational management program	That a new cost centre be established for annual committee expenses. Monies to be transferred across from the existing freshwater recreational management program budget	Pending	Finance/Rec.Mgt
5	4e: Inland Fisheries Officers	NSW Fisheries to reimburse the freshwater trust with the amount payed in higher duties allowances for the Fisheries Officer at Inverell	Pending	Recreational Management
6	4h: Freshwater recreational research	NSW Fisheries to review the information on anglers catch cards with a view to incorporating information relating to weather conditions on these cards	Pending	Recreational Mgt/Recreational Freshwater research



**16<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC Meeting – 29 May 2003 (continued)**

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Agenda items</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status / Comments</b>	<b>Team responsible</b>
7	4j: Weir review program	NSW Fisheries to modify the workplan of the existing northern inland conservation manager to ensure that the position remains focused on weir review duties	Pending	Conservation branch
8	6: Draft expenditure budget for the Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust fund.	Budget recommendations forwarded to ACoRF for ratification. Ministerial briefing seeking endorsement of the recommendations from ACoRF regarding expenditure of funds from the Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust for the 03/04 year.	Budget recommendations ratified by ACoRF on 3 June 03. Ministerial briefing on budget expenditure <i>in prep.</i>	Recreational Management
8	7: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the small grants program	Correspondence to applicants on the outcomes of their funding proposals.	Pending	Recreational Management
9	8: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the fish habitat grants program	Correspondence to applicants on the outcomes of their funding proposals.	Pending	Conservation branch

**15<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC Meeting – 6 February 2003**

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status / Comments</b>	<b>Team responsible</b>
1	LP Dutton Hatchery Water Temperature review	Chair to write to Minister seeking advice on potential for capital for improvements for Dutton Hatchery	Completed. Letter from Director received in relation to this matter.	Chair/Recreational Management
2	Other Business (stocking of Tallowa Dam with Bass))	NSW Fisheries to consider whether stocking of bass in Tallowa Dam can resume without compromising research into effectiveness of future fish way.	Completed. Letter from Dr Dean Gilligan received in relation to this matter.	Rec Management / Conservation Branch