

**Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee
Outcomes, Meeting 39
17 November 2011
Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence**

Attendees

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Bruce Schumacher | Chair, RFFTEC |
| Max Graham | Region 1 |
| Ron Butler | Region 2 |
| Ron Croker | Region 3 |
| Ian Ward | Region 4 |
| Tom Williams | Region 5 |
| Debbie Lennon | Region 6 |
| Richard Ping Kee | Region 7 |
| Kevin McKinnon | Region 8 |

Meeting declared open at 9:00am

1. Chairs Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Peter Turnell, Director Recreational and Indigenous Fishing. Mr Doug Joyner, RFFTEC representative from the Australian Fishing Tackle Association, has recently resigned from the Committee. Action item: That a letter be forwarded to Mr Joyner expressing appreciation for his input and advice on RFFTEC.

3. Confirmation of outcomes from previous RFFTEC meeting

The draft outcomes of the 38th RFFTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting. **Moved:** Tom Williams **Seconded:** Richard Ping Kee Carried.

4. Action Items from meeting 38

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

5. Correspondence received

No incoming correspondence since the last meeting.

6. Chairperson (ACoRF, RFSTEC and RFFTEC) meeting with the Minister for Primary Industries

The chair advised that he had met with the Minister on 3 November 2011 to discuss a range of recreational fishing issues, including:

- relocation of staff from the Cronulla Fisheries Centre
- ACoRF's previous recommendation for the recreational fishing fee to increase in line with CPI
- current progress of the bag and size limit review and the importance of the implementation of urgent management action for key species such as mulloway
- the recent deployment of the State's first offshore artificial reef, including proposed expansion of the program to other regional areas.

- DPI's previous commitment to fund site maintenance and overhead costs at Gaden Trout Hatchery and the Trust commitment to fund fish production costs. The chair reported that the Minister confirmed support for this arrangement.

7. Recreational Fishing Guides

DPI advised that production of the 2012 saltwater and freshwater recreational fishing guides had been completed and the guides were currently at the printers. It was noted advertising currently takes up around 30% of the guide, which has increased over recent years. It was reported that previous feedback on the 2011 guides indicated that this relatively high percentage of advertising in the guide may detract from display of key messages and information. RFFTEC supported DPI reviewing the financial benefits of advertising versus the display of content within the guides. It was noted that a revised proposal may be submitted at the next meeting.

8. Communications strategy for recreational fishing

The department is developing a communications strategy for recreational fishing which will outline refined methods to promote recreational fishing rules, responsible and sustainable fishing practices and Trust funded programs.

9. Recreational Fishing Trust update and new Freshwater Trust applications

DPI advised that the Department is currently liaising with the Department of Commerce regarding ongoing pricing for administration of recreational fishing licences through the Government Licensing Service. It was noted that electronic licence sales now represent 40% of total licence sales.

The status of the Freshwater Trust was provided at the meeting. Meeting reports for Trust funded programs were submitted by project managers to enable committee members to review progress of projects prior to the meeting. A summary table of projects completed since the last committee meeting was provided to committee member prior to the meeting for their review. A number of applications have been received by DPI since the last meeting.

New Trust project applications (large and small grants) supported for funding by the Freshwater Trust are listed in Table 1. New Trust applications not supported for funding by the Freshwater Trust are listed in Table 2.

Habitat grant applications

An update on status of progress of previously funded habitat grants was provided. A different applicant is seeking to undertake the project titled "Restoring fish habitat within the Macquarie River" funded in 2010/11. Action item: RFFTEC requested that a project variation for the project titled: "Restoring fish habitat within the Macquarie River" be submitted to the Committee out of session.

The habitat grants technical assessment panel previously met to assess habitat grant applications for funding during 2011/12. New habitat action project applications supported for funding by the Freshwater Trust are listed in Table 3. New habitat grant project applications not supported for funding by the Freshwater Trust are listed in Table 4.

It was noted that \$5,000 had been set aside from within the existing Habitat Action Program budget to provide funding for small habitat grant projects (e.g. up to \$1,000 per project) with low document funding agreements to reduce red tape. RFFTEC requested that these projects be referred to the technical assessment panel for assessment prior to their consideration by the expenditure committee.

DPI advised that the University of Wollongong had submitted an application to RFSTEC for developing a cost effective state wide expenditure survey method to measure the economic contribution of the recreational fishing and charter fishing sector in NSW. RFSTEC recommended that the funds from the Saltwater (\$120,000) and Freshwater (\$30,000) Trusts and Charter Fishing Trust (\$75,000) previously approved for the DPI statewide economic survey project be reallocated to this application as a project variation. It was acknowledged that the previous program had not yet commenced and had similar objectives to the proposed study. The remaining funding of \$17,550 required for the new program should be funded from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust. RFFTEC supported this approach. **Moved:** Richard Ping Kee Seconded: Ron Croker. Carried.

10. Project updates - presentations

a) Freshwater angler access - DPI has been developing an access strategy to address access issues on a river reach basis and to provide anglers with information that will assist them in accessing rivers. Web delivery of these access locations and site details is planned in the future. DPI continues to review National Parks reserve referrals and associated plans of management.

The project officer from the Recreational Fishing Alliance involved with the Angler Access project advised he was co-ordinating the reservation and vesting of Crown Reserve lands with significant recreational fishing interest to the RFA Crown Lands Trust for ongoing access and usage by anglers. Crown reserves currently under investigation were discussed. A number of applications for vesting of Crown reserves for angling have been submitted to the Crown Lands office for gazettal. A manual explaining the process of vesting of Crown lands is being prepared. A communication strategy is also being developed for the program.

b) Freshwater native fish research – An update on the movements and habitat use of catfish and bass from within the Clarence River catchment and Murray cod from within the Macintyre and Dumaresq River catchments was provided. It was noted that a total of 260 fish have been implanted with acoustic tags over the last four years. An array of 70 acoustic listening stations has been established to detect these tagged fish. Preliminary assessment of the Dumaresq and Macintyre data suggests that there has been a considerable change in the fish community in the Dumaresq River since the 1 in 20 year flood experienced in the system earlier this year, and that there is a considerable difference in the fish communities between the two river systems.

The age / growth of fish collected from the Edward / Wakool systems after the 2010 floods, was also presented. A total of 230 Murray cod (90-1250 mm TL) otoliths have been sectioned and aged. Cod collected under the legal size limit of 60 cm ranged in age from 1-12 years old. Fish over one metre ranged in age from 11 to 34 years old.

c) Bass stocking modelling – An update on the development of a model for best stocking practice in bass impoundments by examining growth / survival of juvenile bass under various stocking densities was provided. The results of model simulations run on the Australian bass fisheries in Brogo, Danjera, and Flat Rock Dams was also presented. The model provided quantitative advice for determining stocking density and showed that stocking fish at differing levels will affect the overall status of the recreational fishery.

d) Future Murray cod research – A Murray Cod Fishery Management Group (MCFMG) has been formed consisting of inland managers and researchers from relevant states and

territories as well as a representative from the Murray Darling Basin Authority. Mr Matt Barwick has been appointed as the Executive Officer of the MCFMG. Mr Barwick will be responsible for the development of the MCFMG communication plan and the preparation of various MCFMG collaborative research funding applications. One of the priorities for research identified at a recent MCFMG meeting was a need to determine the extent of larval recruitment of Murray cod post spawn.

Action item: That Mr Matt Barwick be invited to attend the next RFFTEC meeting to discuss Murray cod research priorities and programs.

11. General Business

2011 Fishers for Fish Habitat Forum - Mr Kevin McKinnon submitted a report on the outcomes of the Fish Habitat Forum meeting held in Tamworth on 20-21 May 2011.

12. Next Meeting

1 & 2 of May, 2012.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.00 pm

Action items – RFFTEC 39th meeting

| Action items | Team Responsible | Status |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| That a letter is forwarded to Doug Joyner, former RFFTEC representative, expressing appreciation for his input and advice on expenditure related matters. | Recreational Fisheries Programs | Completed |
| That a project variation for the project titled: “Restoring fish habitat within the Macquarie River” is submitted to RFFTEC from the Conservation Action Unit out of session. | Conservation Action Unit | Completed |
| That Mr Matt Barwick, Executive Officer of the Murray Cod Fishery Management Group be invited to attend the next RFFTEC meeting to update the expenditure committee on research priorities for the Murray cod fishery in NSW. | Recreational Fisheries Programs | Completed |

i) **GENERAL PROGRAMS**

Table 1: New Trust Applications supported by RFFTEC for funding

Platform: Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| <p>Removal and remediation of Bangate Bridge Weir, Narran River, NSW Removal and remediation of the Bangate Bridge Weir on the Narran River to improve passage for native fish to access habitat necessary for improved native fish populations. Motion: The expenditure committee <u>supported funding</u> for this project. Removal of an existing in stream barrier was considered important for recreational fish species passage within the catchment Moved: Max Graham Seconded: Ian Ward Carried.</p> | Sydney Aquarium Conservation Fund | \$5,000 | \$0 | \$0 |

Platform: Recreational fishing education

Small projects

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--|---|---------|---------|---------|
| <p>Brighter Access Fishing Skills Club To provide recreational fishing information and education via practical application for a group of people that would normally not be able to access and be included in the sport due to physical disability. Motion: The expenditure committee <u>supported funding</u> for this project. Moved: Kevin McKinnon Seconded: Ron Butler Carried. Note: Funding was reduced from \$10,000 to \$2,800 to provide for weekly sessions with the members and a training day for a full day workshop. It was not proposed to provide funding for instructor's wages.</p> | Inverell Disability Services Inc. T/A Brighter Access | \$2,800 | \$0 | \$0 |
| <p>Securing better outcomes for native fish and recreational fishing through the Murray Darling Basin Plan To coordinate a public campaign to promote the interests of NSW recreational fishers within the Murray Darling Basin and ensure the social and economic interests of fishers are taken into account during the development of the MDB plan. Moved: Debbie Lennon Seconded: Richard Ping Kee Carried. Note: RFFTEC ratified out of session support for this project.</p> | NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers | \$4,500 | \$0 | \$0 |

Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| An assessment of the trout population within the New England To assess the success of trout stocking in the New England region around Ebor. Motion: The expenditure committee <u>supported funding</u> for this project. Moved: Kevin McKinnon Seconded: Ron Butler Carried. Note: This project was considered to value add to existing research into distribution of trout stocking in the New England tablelands and impact of stocking on threatened amphibians within the Styx River catchment. | NSW DPI | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 |

Platform: Fishing access and facilities

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Wee Jasper weed control stage 1 To improve access along the Goodradigbee River and Micalong Creek at Wee Jasper so as to enhance the recreational fishing activities for this section of water body. Motion: The expenditure committee <u>supported funding</u> for this project as it would install 3 stiles over fence lines, expand the existing access track along the rivers edge and remove stands of blackberries along the river, to provide better access for recreational fishing. Moved: Max Graham Seconded: Ian Ward Carried. | Wee Jasper Reserve Trust | \$11,500 | \$0 | \$0 |

Table 2 – New Trust Project Applications *not supported* by RFFTEC

Platform: Fishing access and facilities

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|--|--|-----------|----------|-----------|
| <p>Increasing recreational fishing access to the Murray River To provide year round recreational access to the Murray River and its tributaries through the construction of three swing footbridges. Motion: RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project as construction of footbridges was considered to be a general public amenity and local Council should have funding responsibility for these types of projects. Moved: Ian Ward Seconded: Tom Williams Carried.</p> | Parklands Albury Wodonga Ltd | \$101,000 | \$71,000 | \$137,000 |
| <p>Tocumwal Angling Club clubhouse To complete the building of a clubhouse / storage facility to accommodate club plant and equipment and to hold meetings and host visiting angler clubs. Motion: RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project. The Committee considered the construction of fishing club facilities to be the responsibility of the fishing club. Moved: Richard Ping Kee Seconded: Debbie Lennon Carried. Mr Kevin McKinnon abstained from voting on this proposal.</p> | Tocumwal Angling Club | \$11,800 | \$0 | \$0 |
| <p>Yass Weir, Meehan St Fishing Ramp To provide fishing access to the top end of the Yass Weir once the raising of the weir wall is completed. RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project. Improving boating access to the river above the dam wall was considered a funding responsibility of Council as a condition of approval under the existing Operational Environmental Management Plan. It was noted that this development had been considered through the Better Boating Program. Moved: Ron Butler Seconded: Ron Croker Carried.</p> | Yass Valley Council | \$21,800 | \$0 | \$0 |
| <p>“The Biggest Trout in the World Restoration Project” which will save the “Big Trout” at Adaminaby NSW. To rejuvenate and repaint the Big Trout at Adaminaby to restore it to original condition. RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project. RFFTEC noted that this application may be more applicable for funding through Destination NSW - Tourism and Snowy Hydro. A revised budget of up to \$2,000 could be considered upon re-submission following investigation of these additional funding sources. Moved: Tom Williams Seconded: Debbie Lennon Carried.</p> | Monaro Acclimatisation Society and Lake Eucumbene Chamber of Commerce | \$18,000 | \$0 | \$0 |

Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <p>Recreational fishing in impoundments: optimising research methods and understanding the influence of blue-green algae and other environmental factors on catch rates and fishing quality This project examines recreational fishing in NSW impoundments and aims to determine the impact of blue-green algal blooms and other environmental factors on fishing quality and the overall fishing experience. RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project as it was not considered a high freshwater recreational research priority at this time. Moved: Kevin McKinnon Seconded: Ian Ward Carried.</p> | University of Western Sydney | \$19,750 | \$19,865 | \$0 |
| <p>Dietary overlap of rainbow trout and carp in a listed trout stream and the potential impact on trout fisheries This study will examine competition for food resources between carp and trout and the implications and management options for recreational fisheries. RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project. RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project as it was not considered a high freshwater recreational research priority at this time. Moved: Kevin McKinnon Seconded: Ian Ward Carried.</p> | University of Western Sydney | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 |
| <p>Diet and connectivity of redfin populations in the Cudgegong River and Burrendong Dam, central NSW This project will gather information on redfin populations (diet size structure and connectivity) in the Cudgegong River and Burrendong Dam to aid in improving fisheries for trout and natives. RFFTEC <u>did not support</u> funding for this project as it was not considered a high freshwater recreational research priority at this time. Moved: Ron Butler Seconded: Max Graham Carried.</p> | University of Western Sydney | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 |

ii) HABITAT ACTION GRANTS PROGRAM

Table 3 – New Trust Project (Habitat Action Grants) Applications *supported* by RFFTEC

Platform: Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cushans Reserve rehabilitation project Rehabilitation of a badly degraded public reserve on the bank of the Namoi River some 4 km from Gunnedah. Work will involve bank stabilisation, invasive weed control, fencing, track work and planting of trees and shrubs. | Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group | \$13,600 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Talbragar River fish and riparian expression session Removal of a high priority Talbragar River fish passage barrier, installation of a new “fish friendly” river crossing and associated riparian rehabilitation works including fencing to exclude stock and replanting of endemic tree species in degraded riparian zone. | Dunedoo Area Community Group (Landcare) | \$40,000 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Talbragar River resnagging Installation of snags in a section of the Talbragar River that has a history of snag removal and fencing of the banks to totally exclude domestic stock from the waterway. | Dunedoo Area Community Group (Landcare) | \$10,000 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Cumbijowa Recreation Reserve habitat fencing Erect stock proof fencing along approx 1.7km Lachlan River fronting a River Red Gum Forest within a Crown reserve. Five gates and two styles are proposed to be installed to maintain fishermen and recreational access to the river. Signage will be installed to promote and explain the program. Weed control will be undertaken to encourage native regeneration. | Cumbijowa Public Recreation Reserve Trust | \$13,500 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Queanbeyan River restoration - restoring native fish habitat in the Queanbeyan River This project aims to improve native fish habitat through resnagging and rehabilitation of the riparian zone on the Queanbeyan River. The project connects with and extends on the recently completed Queanbeyan Traditional Owner River Restoration Project (upstream of this project site). | Capital Region Fishing Alliance Inc | \$21,950 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Keeping big fish moving in the Little River This project aims to provide fish passage at the Obley Gauging Station Control Structure, a low level weir on the Little River, NSW. | Yeoval Fishing Club | \$25,750 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Banks for Bass This project aims to provide stream stabilisation works (1 km) on the south east bank of Macquarie Rivulet at the confluence of Marshal Mount Creek. The works will include stream structures to reduce flow, fencing to restrict cattle access and tree planting to assist stabilisation. | Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority | \$10,200 | \$0 | \$0 |

Motion: The expenditure committee supported funding for these project. **Moved:** Ian Ward **Seconded:** Max Graham **Carried.**

Table 4 – New Trust Project (Habitat Action Grants) Applications *supported* by RFFTEC

| Project Title | Organisation | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|---|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Toogimbie IPA wetlands lippia control Address the spread of Lippia (phylus sp), a declared noxious weed, across a 2000 ha floodplain wetland area of Toogimbie Indigenous Protected Area. | Nari Nari Tribal Council | \$38,340 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Yass Dam riparian revegetation Undertake revegetation of riparian zones of the Yass Dam to improve water quality and fish habitat in the Yass River. The project will involve planting of native vegetation in accordance with the Yass Dam Operational Environmental Management Plan OEMP. | Yass Valley Council | \$40,000 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Rehabilitation of fish habitat in the Lachlan River The project aims to rehabilitate an area of the Lachlan River close to the Cowra CBD and major sporting grounds. The project will increase usage of the area by local anglers and encourage visitation by the general public. | Cowra Shire Council | \$30,000 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Beemery resnagging project Reinstate at least 20 large woody habitats at priority site/s through the middle reaches of the Brewarrina to Bourke Demonstration Reach on the Barwon-Darling River. | Western catchment Management Authority | \$29,352 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Wetlands for fish - Deni Wetland Restoration The RSL fishing club will increase the awareness of native fish and the importance of their habitats in the Murray catchment. In collaboration with Deniliquin Council, Murray CMA, and NSW DPI, we will create a 3 ha wetland restoration demonstration area to highlight the importance of wetlands (their restoration) and large and small-bodied fishes role in the food chain. | Deniliquin RSL Fishing Club | \$9,050 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Rehabilitation, restoration and conservation of Fort Courage Revegetation works around our park, managing weeds and improving the habitat of the area. Reduce erosion and create wildlife habitat along the banks of the Murray River at Fort Courage. | Wentworth Angling Club Inc | \$14,250 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Yass Dam riparian revegetation Undertake revegetation of riparian zones of the Yass Dam to improve water quality and fish habitat in the Yass River. The project will involve planting of native vegetation in accordance with the Yass Dam Operational Environmental Management Plan OEMP. (Full copy available on request). | Yass Valley Council | \$40,000 | \$0 | \$0 |

Motion: RFFTEC did not support funding for these projects. **Moved:** Debbie Lennon **Seconded:** Ron Croker **Carried.**