

Feedback from Recreational fishers from recreational fishing workshop 6 April 2016

General Comments

- Hardcopy submission form on web is difficult to use
- Consultation not targeting CALD groups.
- Concerns with Emma Johnson's involvement in TARA/expert input – science v activist.
- Not aware of seals being caught on lures in bioregion
- Pittwater focus is wrong – better management. of commercial fishing in Hawkesbury generally. Displaced effort from dioxin ban, mesh netting around charter areas.
- Summary table of TARA in Discussion Paper should have SCUBA listed as an activity.

Digesting the TARA findings... does anything stand out to you or surprise you?

Re the priority threats to the environmental assets

- Commercial fishing →Hawkesbury trawling?
- Marine habitat & assemblages
- Recreational fishing risk level
- Lack of information that has been impeded by DPI by lack of EIS for recreational fishing in NSW. Recreational anglers have been asking for this.
- Situation that “INFERRED” comments re: turtles/seals occur in bio-region is influencing negative comments to anglers in the bioregion.
- What is high risk – 1, 2 or 10?
- Weakness in TARA as “Inference”
- Biggest threat to recreational angling is “inference”
- Why is Scuba diving not listed “specifically” as an activity in summary!
Especially in light of the fact they are a major user group
- Who are also pushing for recreational fish lockout?
- Concerned about high risk assessment in summary given limited high ratings overall (smoking gun for media?)
- Build purpose built fishing platforms “Jetties” for both disabled and non-disabled land-based fishers
- Turtles - stop hats – use pots – in certain areas.
- Circle hooks in shark areas.
- 1. Surprised that recreational fishing categorised overall as a high risk activity given that only one attribute (threatened & protected species) has been given a high risk rating.
- 2. Surprised and disappointed for the basis upon which the high risk rating has been given for recreational fishing interaction with threatened & protected species. Most of the data supporting the high risk rating has come from one Govt agency (National Parks) and is based on inferred evidence eg lures in seals and turtle entanglements.

- 3. The Likelihood of inferred data will be held up as sound evidence based in the future and could be used to drive poor decision making and prejudiced agendas
- 4. Recreational fishing is seen as the easy target to remedy the marine environment/habitat. Whereas the real (high) and serious threats such as stormwater discharge/pollution discharge agricultural runoff etc continue unabated as there is NO political will or imperative to address these high risks

Re the priority threats to the social and economic benefits

- The high risk attributed to all categories could lead to the conclusion that they are unsustainable or at least questionable.
- Income to small seaside towns from travelling anglers, tackle shops, accommodation, fuel etc at risk from inaccurate TARA
- Locked out of areas based on evidence which is not factual, or inaccurate. As stipulated in TARA.
- Information is vague and very generalised, data should be more specific.
- Activities listed in certain categories do not seem to correlate data **years** of recreational fishing **area** provided.
- Overview does not contain data to specifically show why an activity is listed as “High risk”. For “High Risk” activities more information on how it was categorised should have been provided.
- TARA Report flawed should be categorised into different species eg seals, turtles, sharks, into the risk assessment. And if reports from different bioregions are they relevant to the Hawkesbury bio-region.
- Risk assessment on recreational fishing is High – when the “individual charts on the assessment as displayed most risks low – medium but overall has the priority threats marked High. This paper basically saying to reader fishers are a high risk to the environment.
- Recreational boating and boating once again lobbed into high risk – yes, where does a city of 4 million go?
- We would like to know what “marine habitat & assemblages” really means.
- Regarding seals with a lure in its mouth is because it has been caught/hooked by a lure fisherman is not true. This would be caused by a seal eating a king fish or bonito etc that has been caught by a lure and then the seal MIGHT get a lure in its mouth.
- Scuba diving in protected areas eg grey nurse shark zone should be no access to anyone. What research has been done regarding interaction with divers w/ camera flash or just divers alone?
- Why has scuba diving been enclosed & hidden within Tourism etc
- Hawkesbury bioregion will see a huge risk to anglers if any more access is lost to able bodied or disabled anglers
- Increase conflict caused by spatial management changes = lockouts
- Any changes to access will see a reduction in anglers buying a licence = acknowledged by MEMA.
- Financially viability of TRUST FUND at risk.
- How do we measure or prepare for the following? Do we have a baseline?
 - *Tackle sales downturn*
 - *Charter customer downturn*
 - *Boat ownership downturn*

Initiative 1 Improving water quality and reducing marine litter

1.1 Reducing Litter and marine debris

General

What should we do to reduce litter and microplastics in waterways?

- Incentive dollars for return of cans, bottles
- Catchment buffers nets to catch litter etc and regularly service
- Eliminate using plastic bags, get government to introduce diver legislation
- Identify main locations from where litter rubbish is coming from
- Household, shipping

Successful programs

Do you know of any good programs/initiatives that reduce litter in waterways? What do those programs do? Why do you think they are good? Think broadly here – these might include good urban to reduce water impacts, right down to good litter bins and council services

- Cooks River – Community involved in cleaning foreshores on weekends supported by local councils
- Australian land based association – cleanup program
- Cleanup up Australia Day program
- Local Councils Program – nets on stormwater pipe and drainage.

Key Stakeholders

Who are the important organisations or people to have involved in developing initiatives to tackle litter and microplastics in water environments?

- Community or user groups
- State & local Govt
- Keep Australia Beautiful organisation
- Schools

1.2 Reducing water pollution from catchment run-off

New Ideas

What should we do to reduce the impact of pollution from runoff in waterways?

- Use buffer structures, incorporate in stormwater and runoff areas
- Local councils need to be vigilant in enforcing their conditions of developments approved
- Stop the plan to pump raw sewage into the Sydney Harbour

Key Stakeholders

Who are the important organisations or people to have involved in developing initiatives to tackle pollution in runoff water environments?

- State & local Govt
- User of resource ie fisher, swimmer, boater etc
- Schools & universities

- Business and developers

Locations

What land uses are resulting in the main types of pollution? How should pollution and runoff from agricultural land uses be managed?

- Developments in or on or adjacent to waterways
- Clearing of vegetation adjacent to waterways
- Stop it before it goes in. Riparian zone protected. Take appropriate action to plant areas that have no riparian vegetation.

Key Features

Which key features of the environment would you like to see protected and where?

- Habitats, seagrasses – protection from both physical damage and chemicals ie petrol, oils, etc.
- Include large ships & container ships spills, bilge release
- Botany Bay, Sydney Harbour, all shipping ports, Newcastle etc.

Initiative 2 – On ground works for healthy coastal habitats and wildlife

2.1 Rehabilitation works

Should there be a grant scheme or direct State Government funding of onground works?

- Yes both
- Currently there are grants and funding programs which are totally inadequate
- Priorities need to be established and actioned
- Proper coordination between all agencies State & Federal (including Local) is required which does not exist at present.
- Focus on major projects – not lots of small projects that don't necessarily make a significant difference.

If a grants scheme, what is the best method to deliver an onground works grant program?

- Expertise to identify projects on a priority basis and make a value assessment of how to do
- Need measurement of likelihood of success and return on investment
- USA private businesses – consultants can be paid to do onground works. A standard is needed eg trout unlimited
- Tax-driven incentives/concessions for onground works for landowners eg blue carbon/ carbon credits to encourage rehabilitation/mitigation
- Best Practice methodology required

How should priorities for onground works be determined (locations and types of works)?

- Value for money – project must demonstrate pays for itself in economic/social benefits
- Expert panel to assess the best of projects
- Repeatability & Scale-ability
- High impact areas that affect downstream habitat
- Best bang for dollars

What would be a fair fund sharing arrangement for repair of legacy issues such as cleared riparian areas or drainage of wetlands?

- Funding mechanism (not necessarily grants) whereby funds can be sourced by the private/business sector where the investor has return on investment eg people pay to fish an area that has been rehabilitated/sale of commercial fishing entitlements where a dead fishery is generated.

2.2 Urban mangrove management policy

What could we do to prevent illegal urban mangrove clearing?

- Aerial photographing – google earth
- Educate foreshore dwellers on why mangroves need to be there!!
- Increase penalties and enforcement

Would you support a review of existing mangrove policy in urban environments to allow more flexibility and reduce red tape? Include the reasons for your answer or scope of the review

- Yes – but how would the management occur, by whom and what compliance would be used, who pays

2.3 Marine wildlife incident planning and guideline implementation

Reporting

What ideas do you have to encourage voluntary reporting of marine wildlife interactions? One of the actions proposed under this initiative is to improve voluntary reporting of interactions with marine animals by large and small commercial vessel operators, zoos, aquariums and wildlife rescue organisations.

- Better access to boaters and fisher responsibilities eg app – link to Recreational Fisheries APP
- Long Reef is a protected tidal zone – why do fisheries not patrol this area – it is under constant gathering of shellfish etc from various ethnic groups sometimes unaware and poorly sign posted

Incident Action plans

Are there key areas where marine wildlife is at risk that you would like to see included? One of the actions proposed under this initiative is to develop incident action plans for unacceptable wildlife interactions with cetaceans in key areas of the bioregion

- Risk management of **TEPs** is a broad educational process
- Reporting & why
- Action and response – Regulations and Acts cannot hold a person responsible for something they have no control over

Initiative 3 – Marine Research to address shipping and fishing knowledge gaps

Citizen Science

How could the community be involved in citizen science for this initiative?

Who are the important groups already involved in the bioregion and what specific skills do they bring?

- Citizens expect scientists to do this – not amateurs.
- Fishers, spearfishermen – eyes & ears in/around and on the water
- TV Advertising – awareness

Further Engagement

How best should we engage relevant stakeholders in the research?

- Online questionnaires
- Advertising in relevant publications (fishing magazines, forums, Internet)
- Go out and speak to them as they are fishing
- Engage tackle shops – especially multicultural shops

Other Actions

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Increased monitoring
- Better enforcement of current rules – “not more rules” “not lockouts”

Initiative 4 – Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use sharing

Outcome

What outcome would you like to see from this initiative? In answering consider social economic and environment consideration?

- Acknowledge current fisheries management as adequate, changeable, constantly under review
- Sustainable impact on stocks as recreational anglers and heavily regulated
- Too small to have any benefit (Buxom) 10km x 10km.
- Due to population impractical to have large reserves.
- No loss of access for anglers
- Step 1 Baseline data needed:
 - More study on socio-economic impacts for anglers, tackle shops, charter industry
 - Impacts on jobs
 - Questions on benefit of protected areas.

- Closure impacts on 15 spots and 44 spots
- More recreational fishing havens – Lake Illawarra, Sydney Harbour, Pittwater, Hawkesbury, Hunter River
- Exclusion zones around recreational fishing infrastructure. (offshore artificial reefs)
- Use of seasonal closures, gear restrictions.

Social and economic impacts

How could the spatial management initiative effect (+/-) your group/organisations use at the 15 pre-identified and 44 additional sites?

Negative impacts, loss of:

- Safe rockfishing spots (Long Reef), safe kayak spots, safe spearfishing spots.
- Income for charter, guide operators/tackleshops
- Decline on licence sales, threat to viability of TRUST FUND = loss of jobs for fisheries staff/research
- Scuba decreases abundance of fish/conflict
- Loss of safe all weather spots – North Manly, Clifton Gardens, Bare Island
- Loss of easy access for elderly, young, close to public transport
- Impact on health/wellbeing
- Increase stress/anxiety
- Unfairly target NESB anglers

Sites/species/habitats

What additional sites, species or habitats would you like to see specifically considered under this initiative?

- More recreational havens
- Mulloway recovery plan – commercial bycatch issues in bioregion
- Stock enhancement/stocking to continue

Data

Does your organisation manage any environmental, social or economic data layers that could help MEMA develop this initiative further?

- Tagging data – mulloway NEWTAG/ANSA NSW

Evaluation of current management

How adequate and effective do you think current spatial management is in the bioregion (eg aquatic reserves, intertidal protected areas) and how could these be improved?

- Better compliance in Intertidal Protected Areas
- Baseline data is lacking on these current zones

Public Participation

How would you like to see MEMA further engage with stakeholders and the public if spatial management is adopted by the NSW GOVT to enhance biodiversity?

- Re-engage the community with more consultation on considered spatial management options
- Simplified consultative process inclusive of NESB anglers.
- Simplified online process

Other Actions

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Adaptive management strategies rather than lockouts

Initiative 5 – Improving boating infrastructure

What type of issues need to be considered in planning for future boat storage requirements?

- Has to be cheap
- Convenient
- Accessible
- More marinas reduce recreational fishing access and lead to conflict. New Marinas need to be recreational fisho friendly
- Access for kayak owners to store onsite
- 24/7 operational
- Fish cleaning facilities a bonus

Do you have any comments on how the NSW Government can help shape the best mix of boat storage options on busy waterways in the Bioregion?

- Removal of the unfair targeting of boat/trailer parked on streets.
- Should be same rules as box trailers/caravans

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- More boat ramps to reduce conflicts
- Increase parking at existing ramps

Initiative 6 – Reducing user conflicts in Pittwater

What do you think is the best way to reduce user conflict in Pittwater?

- Recognised fishing grounds they can use to leverage compensation
- 3-4 things tied up in issue
- Artificial shallow water reef – off point, net free, line fish only due to concerns with moorings
- Recreational Fishing Havens/dioxins
- commercial fishing reforms
- Reasonable compensation and payout of families, moved out of Sydney Harbour and Pittwater.
 - remove total licence → otherwise move elsewhere
 - netting – main focus? Mud trapping etc and other endorsements – all Estuary General (EG)

- bream traps happy to work with people to address these issues
- not trawling
- netting key issue not trapping
- Fair and reasonable compensation – capital as well as licence value. So no latent effort → movement
- Pushing pros out all the time, change season → open and close season, modify management of EG
- Voluntary buy-out first: start leaving fishery – good offer
- 1% of local seafood stays in Pittwater area – no coop to get back into industry – dozen outlets from Woy Woy south supply seafood
- 13 licences, less than 6 do it in Pittwater?
- Remove netting or manage activity are 2 options → caulerpa management
- Caulerpa closure Part of problem → what is happening with it? Code of conduct – check + clean net
- Local only – Rob Stokes – not an issue for most at table – highly regulated/weather and seasonal conditions
- Commercial fishers banned
- Moorings congested
- Scotland Island – Tailors Pt not congested/wider high use
- Careel Bay – caulerpa

Who should pay for this and why?

- Recreational fishing trust – assist.
- \$16 M commercial fishing reforms
- Stewardship payment to stop location fishing per annum/over set period (eg years) to keep fishers there but avoid areas
Win – Win outcome
- Mesh Netting → non target
 - target bream, trevally, snapper, biddies, luderick, whiting, mullet (Ocean Haul/EG), mulloway, estuary perch, bycatch. eastern Pittwater side near Palm Beach golf course, Mackerel Beach; on weekdays
 - West head, near port marker south of golf course (1km south of Barrenjoey Head).
 - Hungary beach, Hawkesbury – some bycatch on beach.
 - no conflict with ferry operations, some issues with sailors
- Lobsters traps
 - black markers. No 10m section of shoreline that won't have a lobster pot – going to reefs offshore → getting caught in propellers
 - not by catch, guys are good, selective → released alive.
- Mullet targeted and overfished by netters – take spawning and adults in one hit.

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Mooring people → boaters getting hung up on fish traps – need larger floats so boaters can navigate around traps
- Solve caulerpa problem/management of public angst:

- live with it; manage spread via fishing → driving some of the net cleaning etc – Mackerel beach – eastern and western – spread via boating/tidal movement.
- treat and fix or take away damage.
- trapping ok as doesn't affect caulerpa.
- Spatial Management – Long Reef → big issues:
 - commercial divers forcing professional fishers to move – cant interfere with commercial fishers gear.
 - If Recreational Trust money used for Long Reef there will be a hell of a stink!
- Spatial Management – Artificial Reefs: Scuba divers
 - now we can't use if for recreational fishing? Safety issues.
 - videoed & intimidated → no dive closure 500m around
 - only dive only area is HMAS Adelaide
- Greater Sydney survey benchmark → impact of recreational fishers pre-marine park (2005 assessment) – weren't fish there to catch, undersize or lack of skills to catch. Impact on Hawkesbury bioregion was minimal.
- Squid fishing – North Harbour Aquatic Reserve – hasn't been resolved
- Negotiation approach → how improve?
 - previous process was sound – involved all community.
 - not just recreational and commercial fishers, was a community based issue.

Initiative 7 – Improving accessibility

What are the priority sites for wheelchair access?

- Access to boats at all boat ramps
- Land based platforms in estuaries eg Botany bay, Port Hacking
- Davit facilities at pontoons for wheelchairs, risk management required.
- Clifton Gardens
- Anywhere there is suitable public infrastructure
- Pier 1, 2, 3, 4 Sydney Harbour
- Build a purpose built wharf in Sydney, Botany, Port Hacking for recreational anglers

What are other key issues that impact upon your access and how could these be mitigated?

- Boat preparation away from ramps to allow skippers to launch without waiting.
- Spearfishing mainly restricted to sub 25m depths on headlands and shallow reefs. Lockouts take away access and confine it to a smaller area. Also increase conflict.
- Closures of fishing platforms – ie **Balls** Rd Port Hacking, wharves, zoning and fishing restrictions from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Pittwater “Bayview” boat ramp/parking area State Govt owned \$30 a day parking – why other areas Sydney Harbour/Botany Bay free? This \$30 even if you are a ratepayer.

Initiative 8 – land use planning for coasts and waterways

What key issues should be examined as part of a review of the State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)?

- Prepare SEPP for commercial and recreational fishing access similar to oyster SEPP
- Compliant development environmental policies

Do you have any concerns about particular locations or activities in the upper catchments of estuaries?

- Jet skis
- Use of various watercraft, paddlecraft, power and sail
- Boat moorings: implement change on policy of mooring types – from Block & Chain to other
- Cumulative impact of any activity
- New developments on waterways (upstream)

How might the SEPPS best integrate with catchment management plans and strategies?

- Recognise and identify impacts on fishing activities
- Consultation with all user groups

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- SEPP – Recreational and Fishing