

Summary of angler representation in NSW

Prepared by the NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers on behalf of the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW, January 2009

There are angling advocacy organisations at all levels in NSW, from small local clubs up to a national body recognised by the Federal government. Anglers usually tackle fisheries issues firstly via local fishing clubs. If they cannot resolve the issue (or if an issue has state-wide ramifications), clubs can escalate the problem to an umbrella organisation or peak body.

Following are the main organisations anglers should be aware of (and should be part of), starting at the national level and then working through the various NSW organisations.

Representation at the national level

Recfish Australia (Recfish)

Formed in 1983, Recfish is the peak national body for recreational and sport fishing in Australia. Its mission is to act with 'One voice promoting sustainable fishing and representing recreational fishers at a national level.' Its members are:

- AFANT (Amateur Fishermen's Association of Northern Territory)
- NSWACoRF (New South Wales Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing)
- Recfishwest, (Western Australian Recreational & Sportfishing Council)
- TARFish (Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing)
- VRFish (Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body)
- ANSA (Australian National Sportfishing Association)
- AUF (Australian Underwater Federation – Spearfishing Commission)

In the past partial funding for Recfish has been provided by the Federal government but the current Federal Labor government discontinued that funding, so Recfish operates on limited remaining funds. The Recfish board meets quarterly or more often if necessary and an Annual General Meeting and Conference is held each year. Recfish Australia is responsible for several national initiatives including the National Code of Practice for Recreational and Sportfishing, the National Environmental Assessment of Fishing Tournaments (NeatFish) and Recfishing Research – a joint initiative between the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and Recfish Australia to identify areas for research, development and extension for recreational fishing. Recfish Australia has been very instrumental in dealing with national priorities such as marine protected areas and the involvement of recreational fishers; review of shark and threatened species recovery plans and management of Commonwealth fisheries. Recfish Australia generally does not get involved in state matters unless requested by their state member organisations. The website is www.recfish.com.au.

Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy Advisory Committee

In 2007 the Federal Labor government announced the formation of the Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy (RFIDS) Advisory Committee with a \$2 million dollar budget to develop a national strategy for recreational fishing. The Committee has 10 members appointed by the government, chosen from people nominated from within the recreational fishing sector.

The strategy will provide opportunities for the recreational fishing industry to: advise the minister on the review of the 1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy and the development of the RFIDS; advise the minister on specific initiatives that encourage the promotion of sustainable fishing, education and awareness for children and angler communities, together with best practice environmental standards for recreational fishing;

work closely with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to invest in leadership training and education and awareness campaigns for the recreational fishing industry.

More information is available at <http://www.daff.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/rfids>

State level—government bodies and advisory councils

NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI)

Recreational fishing in Australia is mostly governed by the States, not the Commonwealth. In NSW that means the NSW DPI, the department previously known as NSW Fisheries, which is responsible for commercial, aquaculture, recreational saltwater and freshwater fishing as well as habitat and species protection. This department works closely with major recreational fishing groups. DPI has the responsibility of ensuring compliance with various fishing and environmental laws. Website is www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

NSW Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF)

A council appointed by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries to provide advice on recreational fishing and expenditure from the recreational fishing trusts. Committee vacancies are advertised and the Minister selects members according to their experience and connections in the recreational fishing scene, with a view to having a wide range of fishing types and areas represented. ACoRF is also the NSW member of the national body, Recfish Australia. ACoRF usually meets three times a year. Website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/licence-fee/trusts

Recreational Freshwater Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) and Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFSTEC)

Two advisory committees appointed by the Minister for Primary Industries to provide advice on priorities for expenditure from the trusts that hold the income from angling licences. The trusts are an extension of ACoRF but are made up of different members. The trusts' advice is handed up to ACoRF before it goes to the Minister. Vacancies are advertised and the Minister selects members according to their experience and connections. The Trust Expenditure Committees usually meet three times a year. Websites www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/licence-fee/trusts/rfftec/about-rfftec and www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/licence-fee/trusts/rfstec/about-rfstec

Also see reports at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/licence-fee/trusts/trust-fund-reports

Trout Allocation Committee

A NSW DPI administered committee made up of representatives of the NSW DPI and delegates nominated by each of the trout acclimatisation societies. The NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers also has a seat on this committee. Meets annually to plan trout stocking strategies.

Snowy Lakes Strategy Committee

A NSW DPI administered committee made up of representatives of the NSW DPI, the trout acclimatisation societies, NSW CFA, Snowy Hydro, local chambers of commerce and local shire councils and the local fishing businesses and media. The Committee usually meets annually to plan trout stocking strategies in the Snowy Mountains Lakes of Jindabyne, Eucumbene and Tantangara. The Committee has been successful in developing an effective stocking regime based on scientific surveys and advice from anglers, leading to noticeable improvements in lake fishing in the region.

Peak bodies and umbrella organisations (composed of fishing clubs and associations of fishing clubs).

Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW (RFA)

The RFA is the peak representative body elected by recreational fishers, made up of salt and freshwater angling associations in NSW such as the Australian National Sportfishing Association (NSW Branch), New South Wales Fishing Clubs Association, New South Wales Council of Freshwater Anglers and the NSW Underwater Skindivers and Fisherman's Association. The Alliance meets quarterly. Individual (non-voting) membership is also available. Website is www.rfansw.com.au

ANSA NSW (NSW branch of Australian National Sportfishing Association)

ANSA is a large national network of clubs, branches, State and Federal bodies. It has over 200 clubs nationally and is very active in recreational fishing representation at all levels as well as in keeping track of records and other recreational fishing activities. ANSA NSW is a member of the RFA of NSW and at national level ANSA is also a member of Recfish. Website www.ansa.com.au

NSW Fishing Clubs Association (NSW FCA)

The NSW FCA is the oldest and largest affiliation of fishing clubs in Australia—it has just under 300 member clubs. Most of these are saltwater but some are inland based, and the coastal club members are usually involved in freshwater fishing as well. It is a member of the RFA of NSW. Website www.nswfca.com.au

NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers

The peak body for freshwater angling clubs and associations with 28 member organisations. Has an effective relationship with government departments and national recreational fishing organisations. The NSW CFA has achieved much for freshwater anglers' rights, better management practices and fishing regulations. The Council meets quarterly. Individual (non-voting) membership is also available. The Council is a member of the RFA. Website at www.freshwateranglers.com.au

NSW Underwater Skindivers and Fisherman's Association (USFA)

The Underwater Skindivers & Fisherman's Association Inc is devoted to the development, promotion and protection of spearfishing as an ecologically sustainable method of fishing. It offers a forum for information exchange via a website and knowledge base from many dedicated members. The USFA mainly represents members from New South Wales but is affiliated with the Australian Underwater Federation, the national body. The website is www.usfa.com.au.

Acclimatisation societies

These associations are recognised in NSW fisheries legislation and include Monaro Acclimatisation Society, Orange Trout Acclimatisation Society, Central Acclimatisation Society, Council of Southern Districts Angling Clubs and New England Trout Acclimatisation Society. All of these (except New England) are members of the NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers. Each acclimatisation society is made up of a number of district branches. The acclimatisation societies are very active in local fishery and habitat issues and have a key role assisting NSW DPI in stocking trout and native fish in streams across the state. All acclimatisation societies are on the Trout Allocation Committee.

Native Fish Australia (NFA)

This is a national association 'open to anyone who cares about the well-being of Australia's native freshwater fish and the rivers, streams and other waterways that they inhabit'. In NSW its branches include Bass Sydney, Hunter Native Fish, NFA Far North Coast and affiliated clubs are Southern Bass and Far West Anglers Association. The website is at www.nativefish.asn.au.

ECOFishers

ECOFishers has nine branches, all on the coast. Anglers can join the branches or join the state body directly if there is no branch in their area. Their slogan is “Conservation through sustainable use. Making people part of the solution.” Website www.ecofishers.com

Political parties

The Shooters Party

The only political party with elected members in the NSW Parliament with a direct interest in recreational angling is The Shooters Party. It has two members in the Legislative Council (the Upper House of the NSW Parliament)—Roy Smith and Robert Brown. Its policy statements (found on its website www.shootersparty.org.au) include policies on angling and access rights. Other parties have existed in the past such as the Outdoor Recreation Party and The Fishing Party but none of these has managed to get representatives elected in the current Parliament.

This note was prepared by Peter Gibson, NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers. All corrections and suggestions to make this information more complete or up-to-date are welcome and can be sent to petergibson@petergibson.com.au.