

Chair's Summary

Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council

The Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council (AFAC) held its 29th meeting in Sydney on 14 and 15 November 2023.

A key priority for this meeting was to consider and put forward AFAC's views on the 23 applications submitted to the 2022/23 funding round of the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Fund (AFTF) following a community expression of interest process. AFAC considered the AFTF applications in conjunction with the views provided by the Aboriginal Fishing Trust Expenditure Committee (AFTEC). The applications were reviewed and assessed on the extent of their potential to enhance, maintain and protect Aboriginal cultural fishing or provide economic opportunity for Aboriginal communities associated with the fisheries resource. As done previously, an independent probity advisor was engaged to ensure that the AFTF process, particularly in relation to the operations of AFTEC and the Council, was fair and equitable. Recommendations from the Council will be provided to the Minister in a separate briefing for consideration.

After completion of the AFTF review process, the Council focused on several current matters including discussions on the next reiteration of the AFAC Strategic Plan and the development of a cultural fishing regulation and associated public consultations and the current expression of interest for the four vacant AFAC member positions.

The AFAC was pleased that the Hon. Tara Moriarty, Minister for Agriculture NSW was able to attend the meeting on the second day. The council provided the Minister an overview of the work that AFAC was undertaking including the AFTF review and AFAC Strategic Plan.

Council was also updated on several other key issues including the Hastings and Tweed Local Management plans, the Marine Estate Management Strategy – Initiative 4 (Protecting Aboriginal cultural values of the marine estate) projects, the Cultural Harvest Strategy Framework, the Aboriginal Fishing Business Development Program, and fisheries compliance plan of works.

Wayne

A/AFAC Chair

20 December 2023