

REPORT: Meeting between Minister Shane Jones, Ministry Officials and recreational fishing representatives.

Meeting date: 8 March 2025, 11:25am-1:20pm

Location: Havelock, South Island

For: New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Fisheries Management Standing Committee

Attendees: Officials - Shane Jones (Minister of Oceans and Fisheries) Lucy Bennett (Shane's Press Secretary), Dot Jones (Wife of Shane Jones), Dan Bolger (Deputy Director General Fisheries New Zealand) Alex Kroch (Fisheries New Zealand).

Recreational fishing representatives - Larncce Wichman (Chairman & Fish Mainland), Daryl Crimp (Delaware Bay Action Group, Fish Mainland), Reid Forrest (Dawnbreakers Fishing Club & Delaware Bay Action Group), Tim Robinson (Delaware Bay Action Group & Mapua Boating Club), Tony Orman, Bridgette Orman, Jennifer Bedford, Aaron Hodson (Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association), Andrew Johnson (NZSFC Senior Vice President), Mark Connor (NZSFC Zone 7 Board delegate and Co-chair of NZSFC Fisheries Management Standing Committee), Josh Barclay (New Zealand Underwater Association Board member and Environmental Officer).

1. Minister Jones discussed the [proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act](#) that were announced on 12 February 2025 and advised that this meeting was about hearing from the recreational fishers.
2. The Minister expressed his appreciation for Larncce Winchman (Chairman & Fish Mainland) being his eyes and ears on South Island fisheries matters for a long time. Jones advised that he wished for Larncce to be his 'one point of contact' for South Island matters to do with recreational fishing.
3. Larncce invited Mark Connor (NZSFC) to lead off where Mark discussed the complexity of the proposed reforms.
 - a. The commercial fishing leaders have had many months to develop these with Ministry officials and no input from the public sector. The recreational fishing representatives require more time to respond.
4. Mark confirmed to the Minister that NZSFC had already requested a one-month extension to respond to the proposals, and he agreed when asked if more time was needed.
 - a. When asked by the Minister's press secretary if a two week extension is enough time, Mark advised he had no mandate to make that call.
5. Daryl Crimp (Fish Mainland) discussed long and ongoing concerns over two boat ramps in the Nelson area including Delaware Bay, including concerns with;
 - a. Public access

- b. Local iwi/hapu opposing public access
 - c. Local councils have tried to resolve this with no resolution to date.
 - d. Fish Mainland seeks government intervention.
 - e. Minister Jones said he would discuss it with his colleague, Chris Bishop, to explore changes to the RMA to make access a permitted activity at a national level. Some discussion then ensued.
- 6. Josh Barclay (NZUA) expanded discussions about the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act;
 - a. Josh advised that there had been indications at the Press Conference announcing the launch of the consultation, that there were further reforms to come. He made the point that it was challenging to meaningfully comment on these reforms without knowing what else is potentially coming
 - b. Minister Jones advised that industry is working on some further reform proposals, independently from the Minister but didn't know anything more about the proposals. He believes that industry has also approached David Seymour about further reform proposals.
 - c. Dan Bolger (Fisheries NZ) advised that Fisheries NZ are providing further information for industry consideration.
- 7. The Minister advised that the proposed amendments are not "everything that he and industry wanted". There were some amendments that Cabinet did not sign off on and therefore hasn't been included in the proposal document.
- 8. Andrew Johnson (NZSFC) advised that Section 21 of the Fisheries Act requires the Minister to make an allowance for non commercial fishing before setting a Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC). The NZSFC has concerns about how Management Procedures can be administered while also giving full effect to the intent of Section 21.
 - a. Minister Jones responded that there is no intent to change the meaning and intent of Section 21.
- 9. Daryl Crimp introduced a proposal to add recreational fishers to the Quota Management System (QMS) for SNA 7 - as a trial. His reasoning was;
 - a. By introducing an allocation for recreational fishing in SNA7, this would:
 - i. Allow recreational fishers to have their fair proportion of the fishery allocated to them
 - ii. Allow for any uncaught allocation (Annual Catch Entitlement, we assume) to be leased to commercial fishers which would generate revenue that could be used to fund the development of a professional representative organisation.
 - b. Reid Forrest (Delaware Bay Action Group) provided further support to both the allocation proposal and the need for a professional representative group.

- i. Andrew (NZSFC) advised there are already well established and democratically elected and mandated organisations in NZ representing recreational fishers in a remarkably professional manner - i.e NZSFC, that is 68 years young, constituted and democratic, representing 56 affiliated clubs with 36,000 members nationwide.
 - ii. Larnce commented that the Pelorus Boating Club had voted not to affiliate with the NZSFC and that there was concern from South Island clubs that they do not receive any support from the NZSFC e.g. Tautuku Fishing Club.
 - iii. Mark Connor advised that this matter ought to be discussed after the meeting.
 - c. Bridget Orman (MRFA) added that she does not support the proposals as it could restrict recreational fishing.
 - i. Larnce added that this proposal would not restrict recreational fishers from going fishing as the recreational catch is not reported.
 - ii. Andrew (NZSFC) advised that Larnce's statement is untrue, agreeing that the proposal would restrict recreational fishing when the quota allocated was caught.
 - d. Andrew advised that introducing recreational fishers into the QMS would represent a fundamental change to how fisheries are managed in NZ.
 - e. Minister Jones added that recreational fishers are like bickering hapu, and said he couldn't support a proposal like this without a mandate from an election campaign. He added that if there was to be a proposal like that put forward there would need to be an organisation or group championing it.
 - f. Fish Mainland tabled a document summarising their organisations proposals and gave it to both the Minister and Dan Bolger (FNZ).
10. Larnce Winchman discussed the Fish Mainland reporting app, and how they have developed this app on a trial basis in Blue cod fisheries. Fish Mainland suggested rolling out the use of the app to all South Island recreational fisheries.
- a. Andrew (NZSFC) asked what the purpose of the app would be given the structure of the Fisheries Act requires under Section 21 that the Minister makes an allowance for recreational catch. What is the point in such a reporting system? NZSFC mentioned the below statistics during this discussion;
 - i. The inshore commercial reporting landings nationwide are about 78,000 tonnes from about a 145,000 tonne TACC.
 - ii. The recreational allowances are no more than 13,000 tonnes. The 2023 National Panel Survey estimated nationwide recreational catch to be 5,300 tonnes.
 - iii. The recreational allowance is no more than 10% of the TAC; it's actually 7.6%.

- iv. Recreational catch is no more than 10% of the commercial catch, according to the 2023 National Panel Survey it's 1.6% (including finfish and shellfish within the EEZ)
 - v. So what is the point in more fine scale reporting? The Act requires the Minister to make an allowance and it's clear from the National Panel Survey that 10% (the sum of the allowances nationwide) is reasonable. So why not just take a conservative approach.
- b. Larnee Winchman advised that Ian Tuck and other officials (FNZ) have indicated that the data from the self reporting app is "high quality" and they can easily extrapolate it to form accurate harvest estimates which could be used for Stock Assessment purposes.
 - i. Andrew (NZSFC) responded that Fisheries NZ supports the National Panel Survey and the harvest estimate data extrapolated from it.
 - ii. NZSFC questioned Fish Mainland asking - What is it that you think you will find out from the voluntary reporting app data? Is it going to show more or less recreational catch? - To which Larnee answered that the reporting will show more catch.
 - iii. NZSFC advised that this is why recreational catch is set as an allowance and there was a need to be conservative.
 - iv. Josh (NZUA) raised concerns with the practical application of the app reporting system.
- c. Mark (NZSFC) observed that he has served on several working groups where Fish Mainland representatives have mentioned the self-reporting app. MPI science representatives have replied on every occasion that the App data is not reliable and is too easily manipulated. MPI did not think the data would be of any use for them to be able to use.
- d. Josh advised that the NZSFC recent attendance at the World Recreational Fishing Conference saw widespread admiration and respect expressed for the NZ Recreational Harvest Estimation Methodology (which of course includes includes the National Panel Survey and several other processes) Josh went on to say that investing in recreational self reporting would be more money spent to produce lower quality results.
- e. Minister Jones asked what recreational fishing representatives would recommend;
 - i. NZUA recommended that Fisheries NZ expand the National Panel Survey and Ramp Survey particularly in the areas where there was concern about low quality information.
 - ii. Fish Mainland recommended the self-reporting app. Advising that the National Panel Survey is expensive to run and is only completed once every 3-5 years and the app would allow for more accurate up to date reporting of catch levels. He then went on to suggest that reporting would need to be mandatory and that licensing would need to be considered.

- iii. The Minister mentioned that a license to fish for trout in the South Island already existed. However he added that Winston Peters had advised him against supporting recreational licensing. Jones stated that if recreational fishing representatives support licensing then he is happy to support it.

11. Tim Robinson reiterated the need to help recreational fishers with boat ramp access issues.

- a. Set net ban - because of the threat to Maui dolphins, Tim can no longer set a net in his estuary. He acknowledged the need for the set net ban off the coast however the dolphins don't really come into the estuary and can there please be some relaxation.

12. Reid Forest discussed the blue cod spawning closures and reopening the blue cod season times.

- a. Tony Orman advises that the spawning closure is not aligned with the actual spawning time.
- b. Reid suggested that the closure be extended over the Christmases period to offer further relief .
- c. Mark advised that if there is to be an extension to the closure it will have to apply to commercial fishers as well.

13. The Minister stated that he needs to meet in the Tai Tokerau with recreational fishers and Scott Macindoe. The Minister requested Andrew (NZSFC) to organise it.

14. Tony Orman commented that material provided to officials does not appear to be actioned or made available to the Minister.

- a. Alex assured Tony that the information and discussions are compiled into the information that is presented to the Minister.
- b. To which Minister Jones said that if you have concerns please email them directly to him.

15. Minister Jones then reiterated that he wants one point of contact for recreational fishing matters in the South Island and that is to be Larncé who he has known for a long time and has built a trusted relationship with.