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**11.2 ROCKHAMPTON RECREATIONAL FISHING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE NO.1**

**File No:** 8026  
**Attachments:** 1. Improving Recreational Angling in the Mt Morgan No.7 Dam Project  
2. Crystal Bowl Monitoring Program Proposal  
**Authorising Officer:** Peter Kofod - General Manager Regional Services  
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**SUMMARY**

*The Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategy has had early success with the State Government announcing the funding of a four lane boat ramp and pontoon at North Rockhampton. Most of the 35 projects outlined in the strategy have also progressed, particularly environmental focused projects such fish habitat rehabilitation projects and monitoring programs. Request for funding from Council is being made through this report to partner in environmental programs in the Fitzroy River and the Mount Morgan No.7 Dam.*

**OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council:

1. receives the report;
2. allocates \$91,000 over three years in the draft budget process to co-fund a joint project with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to improve recreational fishing through environmental fish habitat enhancements in the Mount Morgan No.7 Dam; and
3. allocates \$10,000 in the draft budget process to co-fund the Crystal Bowl Monitoring Program in the Fitzroy River. Noting that this agreement will also permits Council to use the Crystal Bowl forecasting tools within its Rockhampton Regional Council's Fishing oriented webpages/digital space.

**COMMENTARY**

The Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategy (the Strategy) was endorsed by Council on the 13 September 2016 and this strategy moved into immediate implementation.

Implementation of the Strategy

To implement the Strategy a taskforce engagement technique was employed. Three taskforce groups were established including: a Marine Infrastructure Taskforce Group, a Business & Marketing Taskforce Group and a Fishery & Catchment Management Taskforce group.

The membership on these groups is directed by the aim of the group. Groups generally include Councillors, Council officers, Natural Resource Management organisations, State Government representatives, user group representatives, business representatives, environmental groups and community representatives.

Innovative environmental projects seeking co-contribution

- Improving Recreational Angling in the Mt Morgan No.7 Dam Project (Attached No.1)

This project has been developed by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) with the Department seeking co-funding from the Council and the Fishing Research Development Corporation (FRDC) for its implementation. Dr Andrew Norris (DAF Senior Fisheries Biologist) will lead the project with Council as a key stakeholder in the review of the habitat enhancement plan.

DAF has selected four freshwater locations across Queensland that it proposes to implement projects of this type. Mount Morgan being one of these locations.

The aim of this project is to improve recreational angling through the implementation of fish habitat enhancements in the dam. This will provide shelter for a variety of fish as they go through their life cycles.

Habitat enhancements can include: fish hotels (made from timber), porcupine cribs (made from timber), brush habitats, tree habitats, rock habitats and PVC habitat structures. Note that the type of habitat used and the habitat enhancement sites would be discussed and agreed to with FRW and Council before implementation.

Implementing this project will assist the regular releases of fingerlings by the Mount Morgan Promotion and Development (MMPAD) group through the likelihood of increasing survival rates because of improved habitat.

Apart from improving the habitats that fish live in this innovative project aims to also increase angler based tourism in Mount Morgan and improve local amenity.

The target market from a tourism perspective would be both Grey Nomads and the niche market of Kayak / Canoe fishing. Mount Morgan would also be established as a back-up fishing location if wind speeds were excessive along the coast / river areas.

#### Budget

	<b>Total operating</b>	<b>Requested from RRC</b>	<b>Other stakeholders (including FRDC)</b>	<b>DAF in-kind</b>
Year 1	\$72,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$75,000
Year 2	\$51,000	\$26,000	\$25,000	\$62,000
Year 3	\$58,000	\$29,000	\$29,000	\$79,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$181,000</b>	<b>\$91,000</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$216,000</b>

It is proposed that the project commence in the 2017/18 financial year, with the project being implemented with the following milestones:

- 2017/18 Baseline surveys - spring
  - Development of a habitat enhancement plan
  - Habitat construction and installation
  - Post habitat enhancement survey 1 - autumn
- 2018/19 Post habitat enhancement survey 2 - spring
  - Habitat construction and installation - ongoing
  - Post habitat enhancement survey 3 - autumn
- 2019/20 Post habitat enhancement survey 4 – spring
  - Habitat construction and installation - ongoing
  - Post habitat enhancement survey 5 – autumn
  - Data analysis and final reporting

- Crystal Bowl Monitoring Program in the Fitzroy River (Attachment No.2)

The aim of this program is to monitor Barramundi, Threadfin and other key species within the Fitzroy River and Port Alma areas providing Council and the community with information on stocks through real time tracking and forecasting.

This program utilises a citizen science model to collect data from volunteer taggers and tagging groups such as Captag and Suntag.

The Crystal Bowl program has been in operation for seven years and seeks funding from a variety of sources. InfoFish has requested Council contribute \$10,000 with this year's program total being \$64,300.

Council will benefit from the financial contribution through:

- Obtaining independent information to help inform the Council, Fishery & Catchment Taskforce Group and the Local Fish Restocking Group of the fish stocks in the Fitzroy River and Port Alma areas.
- Providing key information to help direct the amount of marketing spend in promoting the Region as a Barramundi and King Threadfin destination in 2018 and 2019.
- Gaining access to Crystal Bowl online forecasting tools that can be used in marketing efforts through Council controlled web pages.
- Delivering on a key project within the Strategy – Fisheries Management Plan – Project: Independent Monitoring of Fish Stocks.

Update on all plans within the Strategy

Marine Infrastructure Plan - Future water based infrastructure such as boat ramps

Project	Update	Priority allocated
New North Rockhampton Boat Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat ramp and pontoon funded by the Department of Transport and Main Roads through the Marine Infrastructure Fund (DTMR) with an anticipated construction start timeframe of 2017/18.</li> <li>• DTMR will request Council to sign a deed of agreement to partner in the project with Council expected to fund the adjoining car park and associated facilities.</li> <li>• Council officers to discuss with DTMR and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines land tenure as the proposed boat ramp intersects a section of unallocated state land.</li> </ul>	Very High
Little Cum-Ingham Car and Trailer Parking Extension (Quay Street Boat Ramp)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed design for the extension of the car and trailer parking programmed for 2017/18.</li> </ul>	Very High
New/Relocated Port Alma Boat Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with the Gladstone Ports Corporation and DTMR are taking place in relation to draft concept plans and how to progress the project.</li> <li>• High level community consultation with local community outlining progress had been undertaken in 2016.</li> </ul>	Very High
Ski Gardens Boat Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat ramp and pontoon funded by the DTMR through the Marine Infrastructure Fund for construction in 2017/18.</li> <li>• Initial concept designs developed for the car park and parkland area adjacent to boat ramp.</li> </ul>	Medium

Fitzroy River Navigation Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial discussions with the Harbour Master have taken place regarding river navigation, hazard markers and potential marine infrastructure.</li> <li>The Harbour Master is in the process of designing a new mooring system to assist the development of marine infrastructure in the Fitzroy River.</li> <li>From initial discussions with the Harbour Master there are potential opportunities to establish additional moorings focusing on attracting sea faring travellers otherwise known as Blue Nomads. Additional moorings could also be used by the general public. A report will be developed for Council's consideration.</li> </ul>	Medium
Improve facilities Larcombe Street Boat Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preliminary concept design programmed for 2019/20.</li> </ul>	Low

## Marine Infrastructure Plan - Land Based Infrastructure such as fishing platforms

Project	Update	Priority allocated
North Rockhampton Fishing Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept designs being drafted for Queens Park, Donovan Park and The Common (adjacent to the North Rockhampton Boat Ramp).</li> <li>Once developed concept designs will be reviewed by the Marine Infrastructure Taskforce group and the Harbour Master for comment.</li> <li>From initial discussions with the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service Centre (Department of Justice and Attorney General Department) a youth intervention program can be initiated to assist with small scale maintenance and construction projects to assist the fishing platforms program.</li> <li>A prioritisation process will also be undertaken to rank the order of development of all land based fishing platforms with a report to be developed for Council's consideration.</li> </ul>	Very High
South Rockhampton Fishing Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept designs being drafted for Littler Cum-Ingham, Under the Neville Hewitt Bridge, Wharf Street (Depot Hill) and Gavial Creek.</li> <li>Concept designs to be reviewed by the Marine Infrastructure Taskforce group and the Harbour Master for comment.</li> </ul>	Very High
Outer Reaches Fishing Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preliminary concept designs programmed for 2017/18.</li> </ul>	High
Rockhampton City Jetty Upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DTMR were notified through the Queensland Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study process that better jetty facilities were required in the Rockhampton Region for non-trailer loaded vessels.</li> <li>It is expected that findings from this study will be</li> </ul>	High

	<p>expected in the first quarter of the calendar year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proposed site will be including in the Draft CBD Redevelopment Plan.</li> </ul>	
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## Business Development and Support Plan

Project	Update	Priority allocated
Fishing Tourism Industry Partnership Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial engagement with a variety of Government Agencies (such as the Department of State Development) and appropriate stakeholders has taken place through the Business and Marketing Taskforce Group.</li> <li>• Further discussion of this program will be completed in February/March.</li> </ul>	Very High
Business Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various potential businesses that have approached Council have been provided service support with respect to Council plans, directions and local knowledge.</li> <li>• Potential business opportunities/gaps in the market place have been identified and fact sheets are being developed. Fishing Tour/Charter Operator fact sheet is being prioritised with additional facts sheets to be rolled out including, Fishing Lodges, Houseboats, BBQ Boats, boat leases etc...</li> </ul>	Very High
Business Development	<p><u>Reaney Street Boat Lease Proposal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently the Fitzroy River has no boat lease for short term use which limits the recreational fishing tourism product.</li> <li>• Initial discussions with TMR have indicated that the Reaney Street Boat Ramp could potentially accommodate a boat lease arrangement.</li> <li>• It is envisaged that the parkland adjacent to the existing car park area could be used for the storage of vessels. As this would constitute a change of use a material change of use (MCU) process would need to take place.</li> <li>• A report on the subject will be developed for Council's consideration.</li> </ul>	Very High
Market Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial research on local fishing behaviour was completed in the Boating and Fishing Survey by Rockhampton Regional Council in 2016.</li> <li>• A market research study will be developed with the economic modelling project.</li> </ul>	High
Economic Modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aim of the project is to inform decision makers of the current economic benefits and the potential economic benefits from implementation of the Strategy.</li> <li>• This study could also be used to help track the economic progress of the Strategy as it is implemented.</li> <li>• There has been initial discussions with CQU on what</li> </ul>	High

	would be required to create such a model.	
Tourism Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some high level target markets have been identified such as sports fishers from Brisbane and the South East Corner however a significant amount of further work is required to develop a seamless tourism experience.</li> </ul>	High

## Marketing and Promotions Plan

Project	Update	Priority allocated
Strategic Marketing Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a strategic marketing plan has begun including the development of a draft brand. Engagement with stakeholders on the brand story will be undertaken in the next month.</li> <li>It is imperative that the Strategic Marketing Plan and the implementation of Marine Infrastructure such as boat ramps occur hand in hand to ensure that the Region builds on tourist numbers whilst meeting their expectations.</li> <li>DAF allocated funding towards promoting the Net Free Zones when the regulation was put in place in 2015. Approaches to DAF are being made enquiring as to how the Council can access this funding.</li> <li>It is anticipated the Strategic Marketing Plan will be delivered in the April-June quarter of this year.</li> </ul>	Very High
Preliminary Digital campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media outside of Council's direct control is already starting to promote the Region's Barramundi and King Threadfin fishing.</li> <li>A tailored social media campaign will be prepared and delivered to build the Region's fishing branding in July-September.</li> <li>It is imperative that this be integrated into marketing platforms that have been endorsed and are to be delivered including OSCAR.</li> </ul>	Very High
Rockhampton Region Fishing / Barramundi website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website pages are in development and are expected to be launched in February 2017.</li> </ul>	Very High
Rockhampton Region Barramundi / Threadfin marketing campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A significant marketing campaign in 2017 tailored to target markets and product development will be implemented.</li> <li>It is anticipated that this will occur in July-September quarter this year.</li> </ul>	High
Fitzroy River Fishing Tournaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of existing tournaments will take place in 2017 with potential tournaments being discussed.</li> <li>Existing tournaments include: the Bass Nation (September), Women That Fish (September) and Barra Bounty (October).</li> <li>Potential tournaments being discussed include: Family</li> </ul>	High

	Fishing Tournament (April) and the Golden Gills (Mount Morgan). Note that Council has allocated \$20,000 in the 2016/17 budget for an additional Mount Morgan event. Further discussions on the Golden Gills tournament will be undertaken in February.	
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## Fisheries Management Plan

Project	Update	Priority allocated
Development of the Voluntary Code of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A draft voluntary code of practice has been developed in line with ecological sustainable practices. The main message of the code is to take a feed not a fridge full.</li> <li>A communications plan is being developed to assist with the roll out of the voluntary code of practice.</li> </ul>	Very High
Fisheries Management Rule Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to scientific investigation Council has requested (September 2016) that DAF considers a change to regulations allowing catch and release for Barramundi in the Rockhampton Net Free Zone (NFZ) including the freshwater side of the river during the closed season in areas that are well outside of spawning grounds. As any credible scientific investigation on whether this would have a detrimental impact on the fish stock is limited Council is seeking further research to be completed in this field.</li> </ul>	Very High
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An adequate compliance program to safeguard fish stocks in the Fitzroy River and Port Alma is necessary.</li> <li>Council has requested DAF increase the amount of fisheries compliance officers in the Region to ensure a significant deterrent. Another solution offered by Council to DAF is to increase powers to through an Indigenous Sea Rangers Program through the State Government. To be successful these Rangers would require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The powers of investigation and issuing fines from a fisheries perspective.</li> <li>Work with various stakeholders to implement fish habitat enhancement projects.</li> <li>The ability to undertake works to keep the river system clean.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Very High
Independent monitoring of fish stocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Fishery &amp; Catchment Management Taskforce Group has reviewed all fish monitoring activities in the Fitzroy River and identified potential research gaps.</li> <li>A recommendations list for the monitoring program has been created and is undergoing review by group members. Within the Strategy it is outlined that InfoFish be enabled as an independent agency to monitor barramundi and king threadfin stocks. This organisation has independently accrued \$54,300 for the research and is seeking \$10,000 from Council to undertake this research. The proposal attached (Attachment 2 RRC Crystal Bowl proposal) also allows the Council to utilise</li> </ul>	Very High

	real time dashboards for use in the Rockhampton Region Barramundi website and for marketing purposes	
Operation: Take out Tilapia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is noted by the Fishery &amp; Catchment Taskforce Group that better monitoring efforts are required to assess the successfulness of tilapia eradication programs.</li> <li>Further discussions on advancing tilapia eradication programs will be undertaken.</li> </ul>	High
Education program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There has been initial work completed to scope out the type of education program to promote catchment sustainability and teaching of the importance of the fishery.</li> </ul>	High
Fisheries Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work has been undertaken on a more formal Management Plan for the Capricornia area as the current focus is on developing a voluntary code of practice and engaging with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on the aims of the Strategy.</li> </ul>	High
Restocking program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will be assessed after the wet season whether a restocking program above the barrage is needed for 2017.</li> </ul>	High

## Freshwater and Estuary Ecology Plan

Project	Update	Priority allocated
Improving ecosystem health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DAF have developed a project proposal for the Rockhampton Regional Council called "Improving Recreational Angling in the Mt Morgan No.7 Dam". This project focuses on installing fish habitat enhancements in the dam to help improve the environment that fish live in. This would be delivered over a three year period with DAF leading the project. To ensure that there are no compromises to the dam wall integrity or water quality FRW will be engaged by DAF in the development of the habitat enhancement plan, this would also be brought to Council for adoption.</li> <li>Recent advocacy by Council has been undertaken to support local projects being led by other organisations in the areas of fish habitat research and fish habitat rehabilitation.</li> </ul>	Very High
Ecosystem Health Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has noted supported for the Fitzroy River Partnership for River Health project</li> </ul>	High
Indigenous Sea Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial meetings with the Department of Environment Heritage and Protection have been undertaken to explore the Indigenous Sea Ranger program.</li> <li>Through the Green paper on Fisheries Management Reform in Queensland Council recommended that DAF implement Indigenous Sea Rangers to assist with compliance efforts in the Fitzroy River and Keppel Bay</li> </ul>	High



	<p>areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further investigations are being undertaken on how Council areas in Far North Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia engage with indigenous rangers.</li> </ul>	
Protecting important habitat areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Government on the 30 September 2016 declared an extension to Fitzroy River Habitat Area. The size of this area is now 77,878 hectares. Council provided a letter of support to the extension noting that Council would seek to improve boat ramp areas to access the Fitzroy delta. This declaration is a major milestone in protecting a significant habitat area.</li> <li>• The Fishery &amp; Catchment Taskforce group will go through a mapping process to identify other important fish habitat areas in the Rockhampton Region.</li> </ul>	High
Urban waterway management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This project area aims to support projects/program that provide opportunities for the community to participate in improving urban waterway health. There has been meetings to discuss what role Council could play in this area and what projects to support. Further work is required in this area.</li> </ul>	High
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial meetings have been undertaken to explore education programs that increase community awareness regarding local ecosystems. Further meetings will take place with organisations such as the Fitzroy Basin Association to identify education gaps.</li> </ul>	High

## BACKGROUND

The Queensland State Government in 2015 declared Net Free Zones (NFZ) in three locations across the State. The NFZ is a ban on the use of gill netting of fish in these areas.

The Fitzroy River and a significant proportion of Keppel Bay is one of three NFZs with the others being recently regulated in Mackay and Cairns.

This provides the Rockhampton Region with a unique opportunity to create a new tourism destination product for Central Queensland through recreational fishing tourism.

To take advantage of this opportunity, Council Officers developed a comprehensive strategy addressing infrastructure, marketing, business development, fisheries management and the ecology/environment. The Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategy was endorsed by Council on the 13 September 2016.

## PREVIOUS DECISIONS

### 4 NOVEMBER 2015 INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends Council proceed with the preparation of a Marine Infrastructure and Development Plan / Strategy.

**Moved by:** Councillor Fisher

**Seconded by:** Councillor Smith

MOTION CARRIED

### 9 JUNE 2016 COUNCIL RESOLUTION

THAT a community engagement process be undertaken for the Draft Rockhampton Region Recreational Fishing Development Strategy document.

**Moved by:** Councillor Williams

**Seconded by:** Councillor Fisher

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**13 SEPTEMBER 2016 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

THAT Council adopts the Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategy.

THAT Council directs a draft implementation plan be finalised for the Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategy.

THAT Council approves the drafting of a boat ramp proposal for North Rockhampton by the Council to begin the Department of Transport and Main Roads project process.

THAT Council works in cooperation with the Gladstone Ports Corporation to develop a boat ramp proposal for the Port Alma area with an aim of submitting a boat ramp proposal to begin the Department of Transport and Main Roads project process.

**Moved by:** Councillor Williams

**Seconded by:** Councillor Wickerson

MOTION CARRIED

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The Improving Recreational Angling in the Mt Morgan No.7 Dam Project will cost Council \$91,000 over three financial periods (2017/18 - \$36,000, 2018/19 - \$26,000 and 2019/20 \$29,000) if approved through the draft budgeting process.

The Crystal Bowl Monitoring Program in the Fitzroy River will cost Council \$10,000 in 2017/18 if approved through the draft budgeting process.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed joint project with DAF to improve recreational fishing through environmental enhancements in the Mount Morgan No.7 Dam will require resources from FRW to review the habitat enhancement plan. The responsibility for the creation of this plan and its implementation will be with officers from DAF.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

Assessment of potential habitat structures and sites in the Mount Morgan No.7 would firstly be completed by DAF officers before a review process completed by FRW. This will ensure that the dam integrity and water quality will be maintained.

**CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN****Economy – Strategic Planning – Manage the strategic planning functions of Council**

*Promote the sustainable development of natural and physical resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.*

**Economy – Economic Development – Provide strategic development on regional matters**

*Collaborate with government agencies to identify and foster the development of new industries in the Region.*

**Living, Learning & Leisure – Parks & Open Space – Provide and maintain an open space parks network and recreation facilities**

- *Plan for appropriate open space within the Region.*
- *Provide developmental programs for sporting and recreational groups.*

**CONCLUSION**

The Rockhampton Regional Council has cast the line to develop the recreational fishing tourism industry for the Region.

Whilst the iconic Barramundi and King Threadfin in the Fitzroy River is a major focus of the strategy opportunities across the Region to develop a diversified tourism product require investment.

The implementation of fish habitat enhancements in the Mount Morgan No.7 Dam is aimed at improving the environments that fish live in from an ecological sustainability point of view whilst improving recreational angling in Mount Morgan No.7 Dam.

The Dam provides a unique marketing proposition, the speed restrictions on the Dam can be utilised to an advantage through the marketing of the Dam for Kayak / Canoe fishing. This could be used as a lure for Grey Nomads who venture to Central Queensland for the Winter to spend time in Mount Morgan.