



Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc
9 Thompson Drive
Tathra, NSW. 2550

Sustainable future fishing for trout and native fish

Re: Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct Draft Master Plan

The Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc (MAS) of NSW is a voluntary organisation primarily concerned with the development and maintenance of freshwater fisheries in the south-eastern sector of NSW. The MAS is a primary stakeholder with the NSW Department of Fisheries. The MAS has been in existence for over 70 years and participates with NSW Fisheries in: the stocking of freshwater lakes and rivers with trout and native fish, maintenance of habitat, and policy and legislation development that affects fishing in NSW. The MAS is the pre-eminent organization concerned with angler access to rivers and lakes for the Snowy Mountains / Monaro Region of NSW. The MAS has 19 Branches with over 600 members and is a foundation member of the NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers Inc.

Each year members of the MAS stock over 300,000 trout into the waterways of the Snowy Mountains / Monaro Region. This is done on a purely voluntary basis with our members contributing their own time, vehicles and fuel to keep the waterways of this region adequately stocked for the public's benefit.

Having considered the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct Draft Master Plan (The Plan) we offer the following comments.

Firstly, the membership of the MAS is very disappointed that they were not consulted in the development of The Plan. At the beginning of the process, I was contacted by the planners and asked if the MAS would like to contribute. We indicated that we would be pleased to do so as we believe we have much to offer. I was given the name of a person who, it was said, would contact me. After a few months of no contact, I rang the number I was given only to be told that the person who was going to speak to the MAS had moved on. I was informed we would be contacted. Even after two more approaches the MAS was shunned.

Secondly, the membership of the MAS is extremely disappointed with the lack of vision for recreational fishing in The Plan. The Plan states "This Master Plan highlights diverse opportunities for both tourism and..." We note that considerable emphasis is placed on bicycle riding and skiing throughout The Plan to the exclusion of just about everything else. While the MAS focus is trout fishing in the region it seems to us that there are many other opportunities that have not been considered. While bicycle riding is certainly a growing pastime, it seems that the authors of the plan have looked at it through rose-coloured glasses and it has become the panacea for the region. The MAS points out that the Jindabyne area does not and will not have a mortgage on areas to build first class bicycle riding infrastructure. We are already seeing many other Councils build and promote bicycle riding in their areas. However, this is not a reason not to pursue the vision, but we wonder why recreational fishing has been ignored in The Plan when it offers uniqueness beyond bicycle riding.

We point out that unlike bicycle riding the Snowy Mountains has unique trout fishing throughout. No other region in NSW can recreate the recreational trout fishing that is on offer in the region. Currently, the region supports considerable numbers of recreational anglers annually and there is great potential to expand this, but The Plan has failed to recognize this. While climate change is a direct and immediate threat to snow skiing, lakes like Jindabyne will continue to provide trout fishing opportunities well into the future. The depth of the mountain lakes suggests that they will continue to provide suitable conditions for cold water species well into the future and certainly beyond the failure of snow fall.

The Plan states that “Once made, it will be a statutory planning document...provides vision and principles”. If the principles that support a vibrant recreational fishery are not included in The Plan, we fear that trying to incorporate them later will be fraught with unnecessary difficulty. Therefore, to assist the planners the MAS makes the following points in the hope that they will be incorporated in The Plan.

Western Lake Jindabyne Sub-Precinct

We note that a large area of Western Lake Jindabyne is slated for considerable development. The MAS points out that we have been successful in negotiating with Snowy Hydro for a \$5 million investment in the Gaden Trout Hatchery as a recreational fishing offset for the Snowy 2.0 Project. The planning for the new infrastructure at the hatchery is well underway. This investment will allow the hatchery to maintain production in the face of climate change and support a vibrant trout fishery in Lake Jindabyne and the rest of the region.

A significant part of this investment will be the building of a pipeline from Lake Jindabyne which will draw water from the Lake at Hatchery Bay up to the hatchery. This pipe will require an easement through the Western Lake Jindabyne sub-precinct, but no mention is made of it. There is a strong chance that The Plan will be finalized before the hatchery infrastructure is approved or completed. We consider it appropriate that the pipeline easement be included to ensure all parties are aware and can cater for it now and into the future.

The MAS notes that the Western Lake Jindabyne sub-precinct includes all of Hatchery Bay, which is an important land-based recreational fishing area. We note that while the plan talks about water access, this is not defined. We note that The Plan mentions a pontoon, but nothing about fishing or what the access will look like. The Plan does not reveal if access to the lake will be free and unencumbered or if it will be controlled through the residents and parks slated for the area. The Plan does not guarantee free access and we are concerned that this area and East Jindabyne will be locked up by developers who will scramble to dominate the waterfront and limit free access. We note that the comments made here are also valid for the East Jindabyne Sub Precinct which we discuss below.

Because The Plan indicates significant development in this area it is reasonable to assume that residents as well as visitors would like to be able to utilize the lake in a multitude of

ways. Boating will be popular. The MAS recognizes that there is a concrete boat ramp on the southern edge of the lake, but anglers currently launch from Hatchery Bay, especially in windy weather. Most boats used on Lake Jindabyne are less than 4.5 metres in length. It is important to note here that Lake Jindabyne has a long northerly fetch which can create adverse boating conditions on a regular basis for those launching at the main ramp, but in these conditions Hatchery Bay is sheltered by Hiawatha point and provides safer fishing. Also positioning a ramp here will alleviate congestion at the main ramp and will discourage ad hoc launching which can see boaters creating new tracks and getting bogged which will surely occur when the population reaches the expected 11,500 residents and increased visitation. Seeing as though The Plan mentions a pontoon, we consider it appropriate that it should also mention an all-level boat launching ramp with adequate parking and free vehicle and pedestrian access for all and define exactly what water-side access really means.

East Jindabyne Sub-Precinct

Again, the MAS is disappointed that recreational fishing seems to have been totally dismissed as an activity in this sub-precinct. Unlike the western sub-precinct this precinct will be developed as a totally residential area. Already we have seen an application lodged to close the crown roads in the area as a pre-cursor to planning approval. The MAS has objected to these proposed closures to the Lands Department.

We note that there is a proposed “shared path” in the vicinity of the crown roads proposed for closure which branch off the Old Kosciuszko Road. The Plan is vague on what shared path means. Our assumption is that it will mean the same as the current shared paths which are primarily for bicycle riders. If this is so the MAS considers it totally inadequate and unfair. As this is a crown road and is currently used by vehicles to access this sheltered bay for fishing, we contend that, in this case “shared path” should be amended to “shared access” and defined to include motor vehicles (with adequate parking provided) so that anglers and others can access the lake with minimal effort. This is important for the elderly and those with disabilities.

We note that there is a proposal for a boardwalk and jetty within the sub-precinct, but once again there is no mention of boating. As mentioned under the Western sub-precinct, the main boat ramp is across the lake. Having to travel to this ramp to fish the eastern shore will be difficult for small craft in adverse weather. We urge The Plan to be amended to include an all-level boat launching ramp at the East Jindabyne sub-precinct.

Fishing Trails.

In The Plan there are numerous plans for pathways / trails. We note that while some of these are adjacent to waterways’ the potential for fishing trails has not been explored. The MAS works with NSW Fisheries to stock areas with fish for the public. At present we stock selected waterways with larger hatchery brood fish to create “trophy” waters for the public to fish. After completion of the Gaden Trout Hatchery upgrade we will be able to expand this concept. It would be good to see some recognition in The Plan for this concept. While the Fishing Trails mentioned here would be open to walkers and possibly bicycle riders, the destination ends or passes a significant fishing venue. This system of

fishing pathways will be a valuable drawcard for accommodation and tourism providers to use and offers something special at the destination beyond the visual.

Summation

Overall, the MAS recognizes the broad intention of The Plan, it is just frustrating to us that 1). We were not consulted when promised and 2). Recreational fishing has been ignored throughout The Plan.

At 3.5 Prospective Developments it states, *“During consultation, stakeholders and resort operators indicated a desire to provide additional skiable terrain to increase the capacity of the existing ski network and provide high amenity experiences to visitors.”* While the ski industry has been consulted and its comments taken seriously and incorporated in The Plan, the multi-million dollar industry of recreation fishing has been ignored. We are perplexed by this decision and are at a loss to understand why this significant sector has been ignored and not invited to contribute its plans to *“increase the capacity of the existing fishing network and provide high amenity experiences to visitors”*.

We do not want to see a loss or restriction to the current excellent access to the lake foreshore. Much of the foreshore access is restricted through private land holdings or requires a fee through the Kosciuszko National Park, the current few free public access places must remain in the public domain and provide adequate provision for parking and the disabled.

We are keen to see the boat-launching areas mentioned included in the plan as a minimum. The increased numbers of residents and visitors will see a significant increase in pleasure boating, water-skiing and fishing and the one ramp at present will not meet future requirements (noting that the Kalkite rock ramp is available but restricted). As noted for other sectors, providing upgraded and event specific infrastructure will be a catalyst to encouraging more residents and visitors to the region and developers who intend on making large profits from the proposed developments can be advised by The Plan that they will be expected to provide adequate boating infrastructure.

Hopefully these comments will inspire the planners to look seriously at the significant opportunities provided by the wonderful trout fishing in the Snowy Mountains and include opportunities in The Plan to support the recreational fishing industry.

Yours sincerely
Steve Samuels
President
Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc
8 August 2021.