

INITIATIVE 6

Reducing user conflicts in Pittwater



What are the community benefits associated with Pittwater?

As for many other areas in the marine estate, Pittwater estuary at the mouth of the Hawkesbury River provides a variety of community benefits. The waters of Pittwater support marine biodiversity, and the natural beauty of the waterway provides enjoyment for residents and visitors alike. The natural beauty and views of Pittwater provide great scenic amenity and add value to residential properties. Recreational fishing, leisure boating, charter boats, kayaking, sailing and swimming are all popular activities in Pittwater. The estuary provides a place for people and communities to socialise and lead an active, healthy lifestyle.

Economic benefits include providing income for locals through industries such as tourism and support services associated with boating and recreational fishing. Pittwater is a focal point for boating and recreational fishing and currently supports commercial fishing activities as part of the Estuary General fishery.

What are the priority threats and stressors?

THREATS/ACTIVITIES	STRESSORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Resource-use conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Equitable resource sharing issuesOvercrowding/congestion.

There is evidence of social conflict between commercial fishing and other groups in Pittwater, such as a community petition to have commercial fishing banned in Pittwater and ongoing opposition to commercial fishing in the Pittwater estuary from a range of recreational fishing groups. Resource-use conflict presents a high risk to the social benefits associated with participation, enjoyment, and cultural heritage and use, and a high risk to the economic benefits associated with intrinsic and bequest values. Resource-use conflict also presents a moderate risk to direct economic values.

How could this initiative help?

The objective of this initiative is to reduce resource-use conflict between commercial fishing and other user groups in Pittwater.

Commercial fishing contributes to local seafood supply, and commercial fishers have existing use rights to operate in NSW waters including Pittwater. Management controls such as closures to netting on weekends at popular recreational areas such as Coasters Retreat and The Basin have been implemented to reduce resource-use conflict, but there are still community concerns about the continuation of commercial fishing in Pittwater.

Under this initiative options and sources of local funding or market-based mechanisms will be explored to buy-out or compensate commercial fishers for any negotiated loss of access rights. Market mechanisms could include, for example, one-off payments or annual stewardship payments to avoid fishing in certain areas at certain times of the year amongst other options.