



Victorian Rock Lobster Committee (VRLC) Meeting #1 – 2 September 2022

Location: Zoom Meeting

Chairperson's Summary

This was the first meeting for the newly formed Victorian Rock Lobster Committee.

Key items discussed included:

- Overview of previous status of SIV RLSC
- Objectives of the new SIV RLSC
- Strategy for meeting objective of the VRLC
- Governance and industry communication process for SIV RLSC
- Emerging issues for RL sector
- Vic Pot Design Project

Previous status of SIV RLSC

- The VRLC welcomed all members to the first meeting of the newly formed Victorian Rock Lobster Committee.

Objectives of the new SIV RLSC

- The VRLC noted its Terms of Reference and that it has been established as an Industry Committee under SIV.
- The VRLC agreed to work in a collaborative manner, seeking to ensure that all stakeholders that have an interest in the fishery be consulted and involved in the determination and provision of advice to SIV, Government and/or the VFA. This approach will result in the best outcome for all stakeholders.
- The VRLC agreed that its objectives are:
 - To act in the capacity of:
 - an industry management advisory committee (MAC) to provide advice to SIV, Government Ministers, the VFA Board, executives and staff of the VFA and other stakeholders on matters pertaining to the management of the Victorian rock lobster industry, and
 - an industry administrative committee to oversee a program of rock lobster industry related work including, but not limited to: research, development, promotion or other projects relevant to the Southern Rock Lobster Fishery in Australia.
 - To work collaboratively with other committees and entities in identifying options and opportunities for maximising benefits for commercial rock lobster fishers in the Southern Rock Lobster Fishery in Australia.
 - To support the Southern Rock Lobster Fishery in Australia to value add and market southern rock lobster in such a way that members practices and products are recognised as world-class.
 - To ensure sustainability, while maximising economic and social rewards for participants of, and communities supporting, the Southern Rock Lobster Fishery.

- To promote the interest of the Victorian Rock Lobster industry as participants in the Southern Rock Lobster Fishery in Australia.
- To make recommendations to the SIV Board on matters being considered by the Committee to support the Victorian Rock Lobster industry.
- To support and collaborate with SIV in its aims and objectives and to avoid duplication or conflict with activities of that body.
- To publish such newsletters and other documents as the Committee feels appropriate.

Strategy for meeting objectives of the VRLC

- The VRLC agreed that the committee was to meet on a monthly basis to discuss any issues raised by industry.
- The VRLC agreed, in line with its stated intention to involve all stakeholders that have an interest in the sustainable management of the fishery, that the VRLC may co-opt persons onto the committee to provide advice/input/expertise, noting that such a person is not a committee member and has no voting rights.
- The VRLC agreed that the committee is the right environment to have robust discussions and to explore different points of view, however that once the committee makes a decision, all members should fall in behind that decision and champion that decision within industry.
- The VRLC discussed a range of revenue raising options including the potential for a voluntary levy on rock lobster fishery members noting that a compulsory levy was already allocated to SIV, via Fisheries Regulations.
- The VRLC noted that all monies, funds or like raised by the VRLC, required to run the committee and the program of work under its direction, shall be held by SIV and must be utilized and managed in a manner consistent with SIV Rules, these VRLC Rules and the expectations of due-diligence, accountability and transparency.

Governance and industry communication process for SIV RLSC

- The VRLC noted that any administrative support would be provided to the committee by SIV.
- A Chair summary of the meeting will be published on the SIV website.
- The VRLC agreed that the SIV CEO will act as Secretary and Executive Officer to the committee, whilst Alex Haberfield was appointed Treasurer.

Emerging issues for the RL sector

- The VRLC noted that industry members are eager to be kept informed on matters pertaining to the lobster fishery.
- The VRLC noted that some licence holders in the Eastern Zone were unhappy with the perceived inequality in cost recovery levies charged by the VFA in comparison to the Western Zone.

Vic Pot Design Project

- The VRLC noted that there is a project currently underway to investigate, develop and trial a Rock Lobster pot, specifically designed for the Victorian rock lobster industry.
- The project objectives are to:
 - Reduce pollution caused by cray gear by 20%;
 - Increase cray pot catch efficiency by 20%;
 - Reduce cray pot wildlife interaction by 20%;
 - Decrease the number of pot lifts in each zone by 20%; and

- Decrease interaction with other users of Victorian waters by 20%.

The VRLC noted that a more detailed update on the project will be provided at the next VRLC meeting.

Next meeting: 29 September 2022,

Wayne Dredge
VRLC Chair