



Victorian Rock Lobster Committee (VRLC) Meeting #6 – 18 May 2023

Location: Zoom Meeting

Chairperson's Summary

This was the sixth meeting of the Victorian Rock Lobster Committee.

Key items discussed included:

- Trans-Tasman Rock Lobster Conference
- Clean Green Program
- 2023/24 TACC & fee relief
- Compensation for seismic surveying
- Export Trade
- Marine Stewardship Council

Trans-Tasman Rock Lobster Conference

- Unanimous support for Chair and SIV CEO to attend upcoming conference.
- Unanimous support for conference sponsorship.
- Bursary opportunities to be advertised across all licence holders for expressions of interest.

Clean Green Program

- Program to train and maintain industry operations at world's best practice standards.
- Opportunity for SIV to undertake administration of the program if resources allow and funding is deemed adequate.

2023/24 TACC & fee relief

Eastern Zone TACC

- Rock Lobster Resource Advisory Group (RLAG) noted that whilst PRI is recovering from the recent historical low period it was still only just met.
- Given the extended history of stock issues in this zone, RLRAG advised caution when considering the TACC.

Western Zone TACC

- The key trends in the Western Zone have continued to show improvement.
- The current harvest strategy specified that a TACC increase was available, however this would have exceeded the target exploitation rate by more than 10 percent.
- RLRAG recommendation to adjust the TACC slightly to align with the rebuilding plan under the new DRAFT revised harvest strategy.

Eastern Zone Fee Relief

- In support of the EZ pursuing a stronger rebuilding plan, the VFA committed to providing an adjustment to licence fees for the upcoming quota period.
- Total \$149 K fee relief provided to the EZ whilst a precautionary TACC and review of the cost recovery model is undertaken - \$50 K waiver plus reduced research/compliance.

VRLC responses

- No objection raised about TACC outcomes (EZ - 21 Tonnes, WZ - 142 Tonnes)
- Unanimous VRLC agreement that EZ fee relief is a very positive result. Recognition given for SIV's role in advocating for maximum fee relief.

- Given the reduction in data collection to allow for greater fee relief, EZ licence holders should support more voluntary data collection to inform robust management of fishery.

Compensation for future seismic surveying

- SIV to look at past and proposed frameworks for quantifying displaced fishing effort/catch.

Export Trade

- There remains a lack of clarity on the status of current conversations between Australian and Chinese trade officials.
- SIV to work with SIA on obtaining more information on trade discussions and have confidence that lobster is an area of focus.

Marine Stewardship Council

- Feedback from Port Visits included requests from industry regarding what the long-term cost/benefit of MSC might look like.
- VRLC to request insights from SRL Ltd.

Next meeting: August 2023

Wayne Dredge
VRLC Chair