Chairperson's Summary

SIV Board Meeting #220 of 20 February 2025
Location: Zoom

Draft VFA Wild Catch Strategy

- SIV requested the VFA provide a 5-year strategic plan for development of wild catch fisheries.
- Board agreed for the SIV CEO to highlight to the VFA
    - A requirement to relate the aims and objectives of the strategy back to the objectives of the Fisheries Act (1995), particularly in relation to the development of commercial fisheries and the promotion of sustainable commercial fishing.
    - The strategy should focus on tangible outcomes and KPI's that the VFA can deliver in relation to understanding the resource, responding to market pressures and providing commercially viable opportunities for small businesses to harvest local seafood for the community.

Proposed Levy Reform

- The VFA convened a 'Working Group' in September 2024 to advise on potential reform in how costs associated with fisheries management are recovered from commercial fishing Access Licence holders.
- The SIV CEO provided a summary on the legal advice requested by the Board at the last meeting.
    - Moving to a GVP model is potentially possible
    - A regulatory impact statement process would need to occur that includes public consultation
- As the process went on it became evident to SIV that the complexity and ramifications of levy reform required a more thorough and professional examination than the Working group could provide.
- The SIV CEO updated the Board that, upon agreement with the SIV Chair and in recognition of the Board's position, he had resigned from the Working Group process prior to Meeting 7.

Sydney Rock Oyster Workshop (Gippsland Lakes)

- The CEO was invited to have a look at trial leases in Gippsland Lakes and participate in a workshop at the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) offices to discuss next steps for the project.
- The growth rate of trial oysters since October and their current condition was impressive.
- A key outcome of the discussion was to provide advice to inform the design of further trials.
- Stakeholders are working closely (including with ports and local council) to address certain issues.
- SIV has expressed interest in remaining on the advisory committee for future trials.

Strategic Plan – Response to Board feedback at Nov Check-In

- CEO provided a summary of progress against action areas
- Advocation and Communication.
    - Information exchange with other State Peak Bodies
    - Podcast referencing lobster industry being developed
    - Code of Conduct for Corner Inlet
- Thought Leadership & Promotion
    - Festival participation and social media posts to build community support
    - Trans-Tasman Lobster Conference
- Strength & Resilience
    - Grants to support local beach clean ups.
    - Victorian Shanghai Seafood Expo and associated delegate tour.
    - Joined Skills Victoria's Industry Advisory Group (IAG) for Primary Production.
    - Developed careers booklet and distributed to career counsellors.

Research & Development

- The CEO provided update on progress of the FRDC seismic survey risk assessment project.
- The first draft of the report is to be available in the next few weeks for initial feedback.

Trans-Tasman Lobster Conference – Draft Program

- Board reviewed the draft program. No concerns raised.
- Positive feedback has been received on sponsorship opportunities. Several sponsors locked in.
- In the process of reaching out to prospective speakers/presenters.

Other Business

VFA proposed restructure

- Concern raised by members around a significant reduction in enforcement roles resulting in lack of oversight of the marine resource, and what that means for black market trading of seafood and overfishing the resource.
- Board unanimously agreed that the restructure is of great concern to industry and needs further action to ensure SIV and industry are heard.
- Board endorsed a draft media statement stating SIV's position.

Next meeting

April 2025

Roland Roccioletti
Independent Chairperson