Chairperson's Summary
SIV Board Meeting #221 of 29 April 2025
Location: Zoom

SIV Financials
- The FAC was satisfied the financial statements were in order at their April meeting.

Future of Seafood Project Update
- SIV, Seafood Industry Australia and the Blue Economy CRC convened an industry workshop where CSIRO experts presented how different scenarios could impact Victoria's seafood production through to 2040.
- Preliminary results were presented with a focus on Victoria's seafood industry. The study outlined three scenarios: pessimistic, status quo, and optimistic.
- The status quo scenario predicted a 10% reduction in local ocean productivity due to climate change, affecting both wild catch and farmed species.
- There is potential for Victoria's energy sector to reduce access to available fishing grounds.
- A final Futures of Seafood project report is expected in late 2025.

Joint letter to Ministers regarding proposed VFA restructure
- SIV has voiced concerns about the proposed reduction of Fisheries Officers around Port Phillip Bay and Westernport.
- An alternative restructuring proposal from the Fisheries Officer Association has been presented to the Government appointed panel reviewing the proposed restructure.
- SIV has been vocal to the VFA, Minister's office and media on concerns from commercial fishers regarding risk posed to fish stocks from illegal fishing activity and increased black-market.

Commercial Fisheries
- The Draft VFA Wild Catch Strategy
    - The CEO summarised his meeting with Luke O'Sullivan (VFA) to discuss the strategy.
    - The CEO discussed the need for a more detailed action plan from the VFA.
    - The Board agreed that although the strategy provides good high-level principles, it fails to include key performance indicators to measure success.

Draft National Harvest Strategy
- The CEO attended a workshop in Sydney on National Harvest Strategy Guidelines for fisheries.
- The CEO emphasised at the workshop the need for both an economic and social lens in decision-making to ensure the viability of commercial fisheries.
- The draft guidelines were circulated to members via SIVs e-newsletter seeking comment.

Pipi Fishery Mass Die Off
- The CEO addressed the recent unexplained mass pipi die-off and status of the fishery.
- The fishery was tracking well with a quota of 52 tonne prior to late 2023.
- The VFA have dropped the TACC for the 2025-26 fishing year to one tonne to allow fishers to monitor the beach for any signs of stock recovery.
- Testing revealed no bacteria or virus to account for the die-off.

Consumer Membership Project

- The CEO presented a proposal whereby SIV designs a platform where seafood retailers, restaurants can promote offers to consumers. Profits (beyond SIV expenses) could potentially fund grants for environmental projects that benefit seafood producers (and therefore consumers).
- The CEO outlined the necessary components for the proposal to succeed, including a membership delivery method, regular communication with members, a business development manager, partners, and a marketing strategy.
- A preliminary startup budget for H1 FY 2024-25 and estimated ongoing monthly costs were presented along with revenue projections and timelines for key milestones.

Events

- First `Beneath the Surface' Dinner
    - CEO reported on the success of SIV's recent activities, including a dinner at Hogget Kitchen to promote Corner Inlet Seafood.

Hooked on Lakes Entrance and Crayfest

- The CEO discussed SIV's participation in Crayfest and Hooked on Lakes Entrance festivals.
- Both festivals provided engagement opportunities with the public.
- The CEO noted that there was a shift towards highlighting the importance of commercial seafood at these types of festivals, which is now a prerequisite for SIV sponsorship.

Trans-Tasman Lobster Conference

- The CEO emphasised the importance of SIV delivering a high standard conference, from both a reputational and revenue perspective.
- The Board received an update from the conference organising committee, highlighting that early bird registration figures and speaker confirmations were looking good.

Other Business

- Brown & May – Windfarms Meeting
    - Matt and Wayne attended a constructive meeting with consulting firm Brown & May, a UK company that has performed liaison services between offshore wind companies and commercial fishing.
    - Brief overview was provided to the Board.
- Corner Inlet Seagrass Restoration
    - Luke updated the Board on discussions between the Corner Inlet Fisheries Habitat Association and Exxon Mobil regarding potential funding contributions to support seagrass rehabilitation efforts.

Next meeting

June 2025
Roland Roccioletti
Independent Chairperson