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# RLRAG #44

## VFA Management Presentation

3 March 2025



Ewan Flanagan

# Agenda

| Item               | Description  | Lead        | Timing        |
|--------------------|--|-------------|---------------|
| 1.                 | <b>Preliminaries</b>                                   |             |               |
| 1.1                | Welcome and apologies                                  | E Flanagan  | 10:00 – 10:15 |
| 1.2                | Overview of meeting and adoption of agenda             | E Flanagan  |               |
| 1.3                | Minutes and actions from last meeting                  | E Flanagan  |               |
| 2.                 | <b>Compliance Report</b>                               |             |               |
| 2.1                | Rock lobster inspections summary                       | S Fletcher  | 10:15 – 10:45 |
| 3.                 | <b>Management Update</b>                               |             |               |
| 3.1                | 2025 port meetings                                     | E Flanagan  | 10:45 – 11:30 |
| 3.2                | VFA restructure proposal                               |             |               |
| 3.2                | Overview of 2024 RLRAG discussion topics               |             |               |
| 3.4                | Draft Giant Crab Harvest Strategy progress             |             |               |
| 3.5                | Recreational Reporting Program season update           |             |               |
| <b>Morning Tea</b> |  |             | 11:30 – 11:45 |
| 4.                 | <b>Monitoring Program Update</b>                       |             |               |
| 4.1                | Fixed site surveys and voluntary pot sampling          | D Reilly    | 11:45 – 12:00 |
| 4.2                | Vessel survey update                                   |             |               |
| 5.                 | <b>Rock Lobster Stock Assessment Results</b>           |             |               |
| 5.1                | Presentation of 2023/24 stock assessment results       | K Hartmann  | 12:00 – 12:30 |
| 5.2                | Application of harvest strategy                        |             |               |
| 5.3                | TACC recommendation                                    |             |               |
| 6.                 | <b>Larval Dispersal and Connectivity Project</b>       |             |               |
| 6.1                | Project Update   | K Cresswell | 12:30 – 13:30 |
| <b>Lunch</b>       |  |             | 13:30 – 14:00 |
| 7.                 | <b>Giant Crab Stock Assessment Results</b>             |             |               |
| 7.1                | Presentation of draft 2022/23 stock assessment results | K Hartmann  | 14:00 – 14:30 |
| 7.2                | Application of Harvest Strategy                        |             |               |
| 7.3                | TACC recommendation                                    |             |               |
| 8.                 | <b>Other Business</b>                                  |             |               |
| 8.1                | SRL Ltd update   | W Dredge    | 14:30 – 15:00 |
| 8.2                | SIV update   | M Wassnig   |               |
| 8.3                | Coastal Indigenous Member update                       | N Barry     |               |

# Actions – Meeting 43



| Action  | Responsibility | Timing                |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Draft minutes to be circulated for review.   | Ewan           | December              |
| 2. VFA to seek costings to include voluntary data collection in eCatch.   | David          | February / March      |
| 3. VFA to meet with Ben Scullin (VRFish) to consider improvements to communications with recreational rock lobster fishers.                                     | Ewan           | January / February    |
| 4. Ewan to request a compliance representative present, or provide for presentation, compliance statistics at the next meeting.                                 | Ewan           | Next meeting          |
| 5. Katie Creswell to present a summary of the final report for the larval dispersal project at one the next two RLRAGs  | Klaas          | February / June RLRAG |
| 6. VFA to review voluntary logbook undersize data.  | David          | February / March      |
| 7. Amend the draft Giant Crab Harvest Strategy to provide explanation outlining the difference between the cap of 10.5 tonnes in Tier 1, and the starting TACC. | Klaas          | January / February    |
| 8. RLRAG members to submit feedback on the draft harvest strategy by a date set by the RLRAG Executive Officer.   | Ewan           | December              |
| 9. VFA to create a vessel survey draft form in collaboration with the Chair.  | David          | February / March      |
| 10. OzLob model update to be presented at an upcoming RLRAG   | Klaas          | June                  |
| 11. Annual summary of previous meeting topics to be presented at February/March RLRAG   | Ewan           | February/March RLRAG  |

# 2025 Port Meetings



| Port                   | Location   | Date               | Time             |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|
| <b>San Remo</b>        | San Remo Fishermans Co-op<br>170 Marine Parade, San Remo       | Monday, 31 March   | 12:30pm – 2:30pm |
| <b>Queenscliff</b>     | Queenscliff VFA<br>2A Bellarine Highway, Queenscliff           | Tuesday, 1 April   | 2:00pm – 4:00pm  |
| <b>Port MacDonnell</b> | Port Macdonnell Golf Club<br>Elizabeth Street, Port Macdonnell | Wednesday, 2 April | 3:00pm – 6:00pm  |
| <b>Port Fairy</b>      | Charlies on East<br>4 Hughes St, Port Fairy                    | Thursday, 3 April  | 2:00pm – 5:00pm  |
| <b>Apollo Bay</b>      | Marrar Woorn Community House<br>6 Pengilley Ave, Apollo Bay    | Friday, 4 April    | 1:00pm – 4:00pm  |

# VFA Restructure Proposal



- Organisational restructure presented to staff on 13 February
- Proposed changes include:
  - Closure of 5 existing fisheries officer stations to be replaced with 3 community hubs
  - Significant reduction in fisheries officers around Port Phillip Bay and Western Port Bay areas
  - Greater focus on education and public engagement
  - Reductions in science, management and licencing teams
  - Overall reduction in approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of total VFA staff

# 2024 RLRAG Meetings



## Key Discussion Items - March

### 1. Recreational Tool Development

- RLRAG member feedback and trial
- Trial distribution to recreational fishers

### 2. Recreational Reporting Program

- Updated season results – ongoing throughout year

### 3. 2022/23 Stock Assessment Results

- Consideration of results and subsequent TACC recommendation for RL and GC
- 2022/23 monitoring program results
- Review of RL rebuilding trajectory for each zone again draft harvest strategy

### 4. Australian Rock Lobster Model (OzLob)

- Stock assessment comparison between OzLob and current model
- Trends between models were found to be consistent despite significantly higher biomass estimate under OzLob

### 5. Rock lobster hatchery presentation

- Proposal to investigate options to improve biomass
- Consideration to translocation of puerulus and land-based aquaculture facility

# 2024 RLRAAG Meetings



## Key Discussion Items - June

1. **Summary of key items raised during 2024 port meetings**
  - RLRAAG feedback and trial
  - Trial distribution to recreational fishers
2. **Rock Lobster Management Plan update**
  - Discussion regarding amendments to final plan submitted to minister, specifically relating to the removal of the TARC
  - Subsequent effects on the harvest strategy
3. **Draft giant crab harvest strategy development update**
  - Developed by sub-committee of the RLRAAG
4. **FRDC Enhanced Data Collection project**
  - Overview and update of project investigating 3D camera technology for length-frequency data collection
  - Primary focused on giant crab offshore fishery
5. **Larval Dispersal and Connectivity project**

# 2024 RLRAG Meetings



## Key Discussion Items - December

1. **Recreational Reporting Program**
  - 2023/24 Season Results
2. **2023/24 Monitoring Program results**
3. **Recreational rock lobster tool update**
4. **2023/24 Preliminary Stock Assessment Results**
5. **Overview of final draft for new giant crab harvest strategy**
  - Feedback requested from members regarding final product
6. **Vessel efficiency discussion**
  - Members asked to consider ongoing priority of this research
  - Recommendation to send out simple survey with licence renewal

# Giant Crab Harvest Strategy Review



## Progress Update

- Feedback from RLRAAG members endorsed draft
- Final editing in progress
- Submission to VFA executive shortly
- TACC recommendation to follow draft strategy

# Recreational Reporting Program



2024/25 Season Update – 15 Feb 2025

|                               | Total | East  | West  |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Total Registered Users</b> | 1,767 |       |       |
| <b>Total RL Caught</b>        | 1,784 | 766   | 1,018 |
| <b>Total Male</b>             | 1,262 | 482   | 780   |
| <b>Total Female</b>           | 522   | 284   | 238   |
| <b>Average Length (cm)</b>    | 14.56 | 14.83 | 14.36 |
| <b>Average Weight (kg)</b>    | 1.64  | 1.76  | 1.55  |
| <b>Total Weight (kg)</b>      | 2,924 | 1,351 | 1,573 |

# Recreational Reporting Program



Comparison to last season's results to date

## Comparison - Mid Season Results

