

RLRAG #47

VFA Management Presentation

3 September 2026



Ewan Flanagan

Agenda

Item	Description	Lead	Timing
1.	Preliminaries		
	1.1 Welcome and apologies	I Knuckey	10:00 – 10:15
	1.2 Overview of meeting and adoption of agenda	I Knuckey	
	1.3 Minutes and actions from last meeting	E Flanagan	
	1.4 Minutes and actions from 2025 PRI Review Meeting	E Flanagan	
2.	RLRAG Structure		
	2.1 Membership responsibilities and structure	I Knuckey	10:15 – 11:15
	Morning Tea		11:15 – 11:30
3.	Management Update		
	3.1 2026 commercial port meetings summary	E Flanagan	11:30 – 12:00
	3.2 Export approvals update	E Flanagan	
4.	Monitoring Program Review		
	4.1 Overview of program	D Reilly	12:00 – 12:45
	4.2 Considerations for efficiencies		
5.	Australian Lobster Model Update		
	5.1 Update and proposed introduction	K Hartmann	12:45 – 13:15
	Lunch		13:15 – 13:45
6.	Eastern Zone Pre-Recruit Index Review		
	6.1 Role of PRI in the harvest strategy	K Hartmann	13:45 – 15:15
	6.2 Review of recent data and ongoing trends	K Hartmann	
	6.3 Larval dispersal analysis	K Hartmann	
	6.4 Recent on-water observations	Industry members	
	6.5 Determination of next steps regarding PRI	All	
	6.6 Summary of outcomes	I Knuckey	
7.	Other Business		
	7.1 SRL update	W Dredge	15:15 – 15:45
	7.2 SIV update	M Wassnig	

Actions – Meeting 46



Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1. VFA to circulate the draft minutes.	Ewan	March	Completed
2. Ewan and Ian to meet and discuss possible structure of induction meeting for RLMAC and RLRAg.	Ewan	April/May	Completed
3. VFA to provide education to fishers on bycatch requirements at the upcoming port meetings.	Ewan/David	2026 Port Meetings	Completed
4. David to lead a review of the monitoring program at the next RLRAg, detailing all current data collection methods, to identify any areas for efficiencies and/or improvements. David to provide supporting papers prior to that meeting.	David	Next RLRAg	Agenda Item 4
5. Klaas to present Australian Lobster Model development at the next RLRAg meeting.	Klaas	Next RLRAg	Agenda Item 5
6. Klaas to present a simplified historic catch rate analysis at the upcoming port meetings.	Klaas	2026 Port Meetings	Completed
7. VFA and VRFish to discuss options to improve community engagement the Recreational Rock Lobster Reporting Program.	VFA / VRFish	Next RLRAg	Ongoing
8. SIV to provide feedback to RLRAg regarding discussions for voluntary data collection by Giant Crab fishers.	Matt Wassnig	Next RLRAg	Update today

Actions – 2025 EZ PRI Review



Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1. Request a more detailed review of the larval dispersal data specific to the period associated with low PRI.	Klaas	RLRAG 46	Completed
2. Reconsider pot sampling program in collaboration with George, Matt Harry and Wayne.	Klaas / David	RLRAG 46	Update today
3. Anthony to investigate private research survey.	Anthony Ciconte	RLRAG 46	Outstanding / unknown
4. Contact Eastern Zone fishers to encourage participation in voluntary data collection program.	David / Matt Wassnig	RLRAG 46	Update today
5. Outcomes of meeting presented to RLRAG (electronically) for endorsement.	Ewan	July	Completed
6. RLRAG recommendations presented to VFA for consideration.	Ewan	October	Completed

2026 Port Meeting Summary



Rock Lobster – Eastern Zone (Apollo Bay and San Remo)

1. Support for the current harvest strategy and TACC level
 - Fishers noted positive signs during 2025/26 season
2. Notable increase in the number of undersized lobster observed across the zone
3. Support for changes to management of Eastern RL but likely to only impact specific areas
4. Strong support to require recreational reporting to occur at the place of landing
5. Concerns for significant reduction in compliance statistics
6. Availability of leased quota is likely to impact the ability to collect length-frequency data
7. Need to consider reduction in pot numbers or mandatory soak time

2026 Port Meeting Summary



Rock Lobster – Western Zone (Apollo Bay, Port MacDonnell and Port Fairy)

1. Mixed support for TACC recommendation

- Significant number of licence holders supported a quota increase prior to the meeting
- Several supported maintaining the current TACC and rebuilding plan
- Outcome of meeting – majority supported seeing through the harvest strategy and rebuilding plan, noting that a review will commence in 2027

2. Strong support to require recreational reporting to occur at the place of landing

3. Concerns for significant reduction in compliance statistics

4. Proactive responses to seal exclusion device requirements as part of export accreditation renewal

5. Monitoring Program Considerations

- Recommendation by some to reduce pot allocations to a maximum of 60-70 pots
- Recommendation for fixed sites to be charged at a fixed rate + operating costs

2026 Port Meeting Summary



Giant Crab (Online and Apollo Bay)

1. Desire to review current pot limits as part of next management plan review
2. Anecdotal suggestions that catch rates were lower during 2025/26
 - Perspective of new and existing operators
3. Willingness to commence length-frequency sampling

Export Approvals Update



Rock Lobster

- **Approval granted for the maximum period of 10 years**
- **Unconditional other than the standard annual reporting requirements**
- **DCCEEW noted the strength of the harvest strategy and rebuilding plan**
- **During the application, concerns were raised regarding risks to fur seal populations**
 - Requirement for seal exclusion devices to be fitted when fishing near colonies
 - Proactive response from industry in adhering to these requirements
 - New requirements were formalised via Fisheries Notice on 1 July 2026

Export Approvals Update



Giant Crab

- **Approved granted for a five-year period**
- **Shorter approval based on:**
 - Depleted stock status
 - Underreporting of bycatch, despite recognition that the electronic monitoring program is working to improve this
- **Unconditional other than the standard annual reporting requirements**
- **Approval incorporates two recommendations:**
 1. Periodically increase the proportion of electronic monitoring system data that is reviewed to validate logbook-reported discards of the target species.
 2. Conduct research into post-release mortality of giant crab to provide confidence around the expectation that post-release survival is high