



PO Box 156 Deer Park, VIC, 3023

7 November 2025

Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA)
GPO Box 2392, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

RE: PROPOSED FISHERIES (INSHORE TRAWL BYCATCH MANAGEMENT) NOTICE 2025

Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) regarding the 2025 draft Fisheries Notice for Inshore Trawl By-Catch Management. Following are a series of points raised by licence holders that we ask the VFA to consider. The points outlined may not represent the views of all licence holders or stakeholders and we encourage the VFA to consider each submission provided in response to the proposed Fisheries Notice.

Concerns from the VFA regarding fishing pressure on local octopus populations were first raised in 2022. A workshop was held where the recent catch by several Inshore Trawl licence holders was discussed. To SIV's knowledge there is no conclusive science to date showing that octopus populations off the coast of Victoria are currently at risk of depletion.

In 2024, the VFA asserted that it does not possess the authority to endorse trawling for species other than crustacea (i.e. prawn, bug, crab) and by-catch. Parties raised that the VFA had not previously communicated clearly to Inshore Trawl licence holders what the licence could be used for, meaning people may have invested in purchasing a licence or expanded their existing fishing business under the belief that the take of species such as octopus was unconstrained. Since the introduction of the Fisheries Notice 2024 to limit catch of octopus to 100 kg/trip, the operation of some Inshore Trawl licences has changed, whilst their fishery management fees to the VFA have remained the same.

Since the introduction of the Fisheries Notice 2024 some Inshore Trawl licence holders have reported having to discard octopus by-catch when volumes exceed the allowable 100kg on a given day or trip. Discarded octopus could have otherwise entered the seafood supply chain. It is worth

noting that the Inshore Trawl Fishery encounters both Pale and Māori octopus, the latter of which has a life-history that makes it likely to be moderately resilient to fishing pressure (Tasmanian Octopus Stock Assessment 2020/21).

Prior to proceeding with a Fisheries Notice in 2025, SIV asks that the VFA hold a meeting with Inshore Trawl licence holders to present the authority's latest assumptions regarding the status of octopus stocks. This would also provide an opportunity for fishers to comment on recent rates of octopus by-catch. The topic of fishery management fees should also be discussed given the way in which the licence is operated has now changed for some fishers.

For more information on the contents of this document, please contact:

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