

ROCK LOBSTER MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW STEERING COMMITTEE

RECORD OF MEETING

Meeting No 4, 06 December 2021

Microsoft teams meeting

CHAIR: Jill Briggs

MEETING COMMENCED: 1:00 PM

1. PRELIMINARIES

Present	
Jill Briggs	Chair (Affectus Pty Ltd)
Toby Jeavons	Victorian Fisheries Authority (Executive Officer)
David Reilly	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Jeanne Alard	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Klaas Hartmann	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Karlie McDonald	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Johanne Butterworth-Gray	Seafood Industry Victoria
Lawrence Moore	Recreational fishing representative/ VRFish
Peter Galvin	Scuba Divers Federation Victoria (SDVF)
Wayne Dredge	Industry Member (Eastern Zone)
Ross Bromley	Industry Member (EastRock)
Adrian Meder	Australian Marine Conservation Society
Alex Haberfield	Industry Member (Western Zone)
Matthew Harry	Industry Member (Eastern Zone/SIV rock lobster Director)
Leslie Feast	Industry Member (Western Zone)
Guests	
Apologies	
Ian Knuckey	Fishwell Consulting
Gary Ryan	Industry Member (Western Zone)
Rohan Henry	Independent coastal Indigenous representative
Steven Rust	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Ben Scullin	VRFish

1.1 Welcome and apologies

Jill Briggs, as Chair, stated an Acknowledgement of Country to the traditional owners of the land on which she is located and paid her respect to elders past, present and emerging. Jill welcomed members and observers to the meeting of the Victorian Rock Lobster Management Plan Review Steering Committee (RLMPSC) and noted apologies.

1.2 Overview of meeting Adoption of agenda

The Chair provided an overview of the meeting and the agenda was adopted without any changes. Jill noted that the group will be hoping to sign off on the Vision statement and finalise the risk assessment at today's meeting. The meeting will also cover a review of the existing objectives and strategies table and will involve looking at what we already have in place, if there is anything missing and identifying gaps.

Toby reiterated that the meeting will focus on working on our objectives and strategies to ensure that they are managing the risks that have been identified whilst working towards our vision.

In the new year, hopefully the group will be able to meet in person to review the actions that will sit under the objectives and strategies.

1.3 Review timelines and outstanding actions

Toby provided an overview of the timelines highlighting what the group has already achieved. Meeting 4 will seek to sign off on the Vision Statement, have our risk assessment completed and work on our objectives and strategies to ensure that they are managing the risks that the group has identified whilst working towards our vision.

Toby noted that this will put us in a good position to return in the New Year to work through the actions and eastern zone rebuild strategy. There may be a need to extend the number of meetings held as we have had to attend meetings on-line, noting these have been for a shorter duration. Between now and when we return, IMAS will be reviewing the harvest strategy and undertaking management strategy evaluations to support further discussion. Toby thanked members for their continued support.

Toby confirmed that we have completed all actions from meetings 1 & 2. Toby has completed the consolidated risk assessment table and this has been added to Trello for the committee to review. Toby has also added an updated vision statement for further consideration.

Toby has met with Rohan Henry to discuss the traditional owner risk assessment category and this can now be included within the overall risk assessment process. Toby will add this to the table in Trello and Rohan will complete a final review before ticking off on this.

1.4 Project discussion platform – Trello

The Chair checked in with the group to see how everyone is travelling with the use of Trello. The committee responded that they are becoming comfortable with the platform.

Toby reminded everyone to make sure that they continue to use the platform to communicate any ideas or comments and Toby will collate these, to assist in getting the most out of our meetings. Toby will continue to add the Trello links to any communications he sends out.

The Chair suggested that as we will be having an extended break over Christmas it would be a good idea to send a reminder to the group to check in with Trello and provide the important communications and feedback prior to our next meeting in 2022.

Toby agreed that he will discuss with The Chair to develop a process reminding members to check in with Trello.

2. Reviewing vision statement and risk assessment

2.1 Reviewing the vision

The Chair outlined that we need to review the Vision statement from meeting 3 and Toby's refinement,, to make a decision on the final statement..

Toby presented the two previous statements reiterating that we are looking for the committee to have this finalised today.

Discussion was held around the word "robust" and the group agreed to delete this. The terms "best practice" and "wider community" remained in the statement.

David Reilly raised concerns regarding the term "resource users", looking at the risk assessment this refers at different times to the commercial sector and recreational sector, however does not capture the general consumer. The Chair confirmed with Dave that as we work through the document there will be clarification as to the term 'resource users'. Dave confirmed that would be helpful. The Chair requested Dave to monitor this on behalf of the group, Dave agreed to do this.

Adrian raised concerns that the statement doesn't speak to the core elements of the Vision as well as it did before by removing the outcomes "ecological, economical, social and cultural and healthy resource". Adrian expressed that this makes the refined vision uncomfortably vague in what we want to achieve. Adrian also suggested the sentence "Sustains a healthy resource capable of supporting" should have a resource that is more than capable, does the best job of supporting these that it can.

Toby responded noting that the wording "commercial, indigenous and recreational sectors, fair and reasonable access", has been removed as they are very jargon orientated and not simple or easy to talk too. When we come to working through the objectives and strategies we can look at cover off on these concepts. The vision has been stripped back to values and objectives that encompass ecological, economical, social and cultural and all users, it's all there without going into the detail. Toby suggested the wording "a healthy resource that supports" could address Adrian's final concern around wording of 'capable of supporting'.

Adrian understood Toby's explanation and accepted and was happy with these changes.

The Chair asked for comment for those who had not commented. All members were happy with the changes that are being proposed. Jill confirmed that the vision has now been accepted and finalised and this will be the vision statement that will be detailed in the final management plan.

The final wording for the vision statement:

"A fishery underpinned by best practice management that sustains a healthy resource to support the values and objectives of all resource users and the wider community now and into the future"

2.2 Reviewing consolidated risk assessment

The Chair thanked Toby for adding the consolidated risk assessment table in Trello.

Toby confirmed that he caught up with Rohan Henry and worked through the traditional owner risk assessment. Rohan will be completing a final check to make sure he is comfortable and will then advise Toby who will incorporate into the final consolidated risk assessment.

Toby presented the consolidated risk assessment table detailing the score allocated to each risk and the process by which this was determined. Toby noted that he had also considered the IMAS southern rock lobster bycatch report to assist with addressing concerns regarding by-catch, by-product and TEP species. Toby noted that there were a number of actions detailed in the report to address key risks and that these will be incorporated into the objectives, strategies and actions table. Toby presented the top 20 out of the 60-70 risks that were identified and asked the group for feedback.

Dave asked Toby if there was any discussion around why traditional owners haven't applied for ceremonial take of rock lobster in the past and whether Rohan thinks that this is likely to change or stay the same with increased education and awareness. Toby responded with his understanding that under the Native Title Act and Traditional Owner Settlement Agreement traditional owners can access the resource for ceremonial purposes without the need to acquire a permit. With regard to fishing equipment and daily catch limits, traditional owners are restricted to recreational equipment, unless they have determination under the Traditional Owners Settlement Agreement.

Members shared concerns around "Animal welfare movement" and "Safety – work related injuries" ranking higher than environmental and sustainability issues. Members were in agreement that risks associated with safety and animal welfare need further consideration and potentially be downgraded. Toby acknowledged for 'Safety – work related injuries', the consequence score could be higher given history of loss of life, however the likelihood could be downgraded.

Dave provided some perspective on animal welfare risk using the vessel Geelong Star as an example. Following an onboard observer noting all the interactions with dolphins and seals this business was shut down due to pressure from the public. Dave suggested this fishery may pose a greater risk given there are multiple vessels out there doing the same thing and not reporting. Dave noted that animal activists and public perception is very real, very emotive and there are a lot of people in the Melbourne area who are very environmentally conscious.

Dave also noted that in relation to the 'safety' risk there has been 3 losses of life in the last 20 years. Dave was surprised to see "allocation to a sector" at the bottom of the list. Particularly in relation to the EZ as there is confrontation between the commercial and recreational sector along with the debate about resource allocation increase in coming years, this will become a major risk.

Steven raised concern that if this risk assessment will be publicly available then the wording of the 'animal welfare movement' risk may need to be reconsidered. Dave suggested this could be reworded to 'Interaction with protected species. Toby noted this also needs to consider animal welfare aspects such as sentience and handling.

Adrian noted that impact of the pandemic on industry could be a declining issue through the life of the management plan. Adrian noted Dave's comments in relation the Geelong Star and felt that this was not an appropriate comparison as long as management of the fishery is undertaken responsibly. Adrian agreed with Steven regarding 'Animal welfare' being a red flag to environmental activists and to be careful with the wording of this risk.

The Chair acknowledged comments that had been added into the online chat:

Ross agreed with Lawrence that there are threats to the resource, the fishery and the industry. Loss of life won't close a fishery but it is still a threat to the industry, however bad

recruitment will close a fishery and shut down the entire industry. Ross was surprised that biotoxin risks would have been included as a higher risk to the fishery.

Ross and Leslie queried VFA powers under the Fisheries Act and the ability to manage some of the risks identified. Some of the risks identified may be considered out of scope to include in the Management Plan. Toby noted that if there is a risk of significant concern to the industry, such as interaction with whales, then it is within the VFA powers to change management controls such as fishing season's, gear. Fisheries Notices are commonly used to respond at short notice to emerging issues.

Klaas commented on safety and provided the example of abalone in WA. The ultrashort opening period is set with great consideration for safety of the recreational sector. So maybe in some circumstances it would be a valid consideration.

Joanne felt that there is not enough context around the risks and this could be managed from a more strategic prioritisation process. Dave agreed that maybe we could define the risks under key headings such as environmental, access related or which sector of the community they relate to.

The Chair asked Toby for his comments in relation to the feedback provided by members, particularly with regard to the 'animal welfare movement' and 'safety – work related injuries' and 'loss of social licence' risks. Toby reminded the committee that this list is the consolidated high level list that has been developed following the detailed process through which the group identified risks are each of the risk categories. However, Toby noted that at this point it may be beneficial to re-order and take down a level. Toby noted that the main objective is to ensure that we have captured all of the key risks to the fishery and identify if there are any that we are missing, rather than focusing on the order that they appear.

The Chair, asked for comments focusing on any missing key risks:

Klaas raised his concerns from a biological stock perspective that changes in recruitment, productivity, growth and survival are not represented very well. Toby suggested that this risk could fit under multiple more detailed risks that have been identified such as climate change, fishery resilience, urchin barrens, knowledge gaps, loss of kelp forests and recommended that these be grouped to a higher level.

Adrian was concerned that the risk of the fishery relying on recruitment from other jurisdictions is not addressed. Peter supported Adrian's comments. Toby confirmed that this was addressed, however scored very low and may be outside of the scope of the Management Plan and ability for the VFA to affect change in this space. An objective of managing the fishery is to continue to build the biomass to a more resilient level to reduce vulnerability to change, this may be the best action to mitigate lack of recruitment largely dependent on other jurisdictions.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution and asked Toby if he could rework the risk assessment table to revisit at the next meeting.

3. Reviewing Objectives and Strategies

3.1 Reviewing existing objectives and strategies – Do these adequately manage the risks and work towards achieving the vision? Where are the gaps?

Toby outlined that the focus of the next session will be to review the objectives and strategies that are under the current management plan, whilst taking into account the new

Vision statement and mitigating the key risks that have been identified. The group needs to consider if the existing objectives and strategies address key risks and identify if there are any gaps? Toby clarified that the group is not yet required to focus on the actions under each of the objectives and strategies, and this will be the focus of the next meeting in early 2022.

3.2 Small group workshop session – Reviewing objective 1 and strategies

Objective 1 – Ensure sustainability of the rock lobster resource.

The group all agreed this objective remain as is. There were some minor changes suggested to the strategies as reflected in attached updated Objectives and Strategies table.

3.3 Small group workshop session – Reviewing objective 2 and strategies

Objective 2 – Ensure a fair and equitable allocation of the rock lobster resource.

The group recommended that objective 2 and 3 be combined to read “Maximising community benefit of the rock lobster resource”. There were some minor changes suggested to the strategies as reflected in attached updated Objectives and Strategies table.

3.4 Small group workshop session – Reviewing objective 3 and strategies

Objective 3 – Ensure optimal economic utilisation of the rock lobster resource.

The group determined that objective 3 and 2 be combined, “Maximising community benefit of the rock lobster resource”. This will become a consolidated objective 2. There were some minor changes suggested to the strategies as reflected in attached updated Objectives and Strategies table.

3.5 Small group workshop session – Reviewing objective 4 and strategies

Objective 4 – Cost-effective and participatory management.

The group recommended that objective 4 be refined to read “Ensure best practice and participatory management”. There were some minor changes suggested to the strategies as reflected in attached updated Objectives and Strategies table.

3.6 Small group workshop session – Reviewing objective 5 and strategies

Objective 5 – Maintain the ecological integrity of the fisher ecosystem.

The group recommended that objective 5 be refined to read “Maintain/enhance/sustain the ecological integrity of the fishery ecosystem”. There were some minor changes suggested to the strategies as reflected in attached updated Objectives and Strategies table.

3.7 Workshop session – Detailing new objectives and strategies table

The Chair suggested that Toby update the objectives/strategies table and add it to Trello for the committee to review.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution.

Toby thanked everyone for their contribution and commitment to the process. Toby will make the changes to the objectives and strategies table in line with the recommendations from today's workshop and add to Trello for comment from the committee.

4. Other business

4.1 Committee homework

The committee was tasked with reviewing the updated objectives/strategies table in Trello and adding any further suggestions if they feel anything is missing.

The committee was tasked with actioning the doodle poll for setting a convenient time for everyone to attend the next meeting (in person).

4.2 Closing Comments and next steps

The Chair reminded everyone to login to Trello and look for the updates being provided by Toby. This will require providing any comments regarding the updated risk assessment table, review of the objectives and strategies table and completion of the doodle poll to set a convenient time for everyone to attend the next meeting.

Toby thanked everyone for their contribution and attending meetings online, acknowledging that it is a big day attending 4 hour online meeting. Toby hoped the group will be able to meet in person in the New Year, potentially in early February which will coincide with the RLRAG meeting.

The Chair thanked all members for their participation and attendance, the next meeting TBA following completion of doodle poll.

Meeting concluded at 5pm.

Actions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dave to continue to monitor that the committee defines the term 'users of the resource' and 'the wider community' throughout the Management Plan review process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toby to rework the consolidated risk assessment table and add to Trello
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toby to make the necessary changes to the objectives and strategies table and add to Trello.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toby to send a Doodle Poll to schedule next meeting date
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IMAS to commence undertaking harvest strategy review to inform discussion at the next meeting