

Cost Recovery Fishery-specific Forums 2014

- Snobs Creek 22 July - Aquaculture
- Queenscliff 25 – Eels, Mixed Fisheries
- Queenscliff 30 July – EZ Rock Lobster, Aquaculture
- Warrnambool 31 July – Mixed Fisheries, WZ Abalone/WZ Rock Lobster
- Traralgon 6 August – Bays and Inlets
- Lakes Entrance 7 August – Bait/Mixed Fisheries, EZ Abalone
- Queenscliff 15 September – CZ Abalone

Overview

In July, August and September, staff from Fisheries Victoria, and the Executive Director of Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV), travelled to 6 sites over 7 days, and met with 87 fishers and their representatives from 22 licence classes during the fishery-specific cost recovery forums. The discussions mainly focussed on services being provided under the new prospective fisheries cost recovery system. In particular, industry was seeking to clarify services for which there was cost recovery, and possible opportunities to reduce costs. The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (FV) explained potential areas for gaining efficiency and cost savings, including where savings could be achieved through a cooperative approach between industry and government. During the forums FV agreed to undertake a number of actions, and to present the issues identified at the forums to the Fisheries Cost Recovery Standing Committee (FCRSC) at its next meeting. The key issues and actions are listed below, and a summary of issues raised by each forum follows.

Abalone & Rock Lobster - Warrnambool

Forum Attendance	
Licence class/organisation	No. present
Rock Lobster WZ	10
Abalone WZ	4
SIV	1
By email	1

Table 7. Abalone Western Zone and Rock Lobster Western Zone

ISSUE RAISED		ACTION / RESPONSE
Completed actions		
1	Industry commented that at sea compliance travel times for WZ abalone and WZ rock lobster were inconsistent.	FV has reviewed and adjusted at sea travel time for WZ abalone and rock lobster accordingly.
2	Travel and post travel times for abalone inspections.	This issue was considered by FCRSC in August 2014. The inclusion of pre and post inspection activities was determined as being included in the inspection definition after being referred to the Minister in October 2014.
3	Restitution of over-charging for Fisheries Services in 2014-15, especially WZ rock lobster fishers.	FV have worked with FCRSC on adjustments for services and revised levies will apply from 1 April 2015. Offsets will be provided where an overestimation of cost existed previously.
4	Apportionment of inspection costs.	FCRSC and FV agreed to set the apportionment of inspections to commercial fishers at 5% at FCRSC#35.

5	Concern about the costs of abalone data input into the Catch and Effort database. Need for it to be closely looked at.	FV has reviewed catch and effort costs for each fishery and re-allocated costs accordingly.
6	Is apportionment of costs for management and science correct between abalone zones? Industry noted the requirements of the Victorian Government Guidelines on Cost Recovery which provide guidance.	FV has provided industry with FTE estimates according to industry provided service breakdowns and these are concurrent with existing service costs for each zone.
7	Concern about abalone research service provision. Lack of accountability for time spent.	FCRSC has considered contestability for cost recoverable services at meetings #35 and #37. Rock lobster and abalone research services have been identified as key candidates. Further discussion will occur through 2015.
Continuing actions		
1	WADA put forward WZ abalone as candidate for App reporting.	FV would raise this with FCRSC.
2	Savings to be made through reporting methods.	FV to do analysis of cost savings for VMS and App for, initially, fisheries which industry identifies as highest priority.
3	Boats having to wait before docking because of the need to prior report.	“Alteration calls” are accepted if there has been earlier reporting of fish numbers. FV will discuss with the FCRSC and the Fisheries IT Reference Group about possible trials using new interfaces for reporting.
4	Consideration of alternative service providers to SARDI for Rock Lobster research. Need better value for money spent and recovered.	FV to review, in consultation with industry, the provision of research services for Rock Lobster. FCRSC has considered contestability for cost recoverable services at meetings #35 and #37. Rock lobster and abalone research services have been identified as key candidates. Further discussion will occur through 2015.
5	Need to rethink how FV reports on performance (eg frequency of reporting, reporting back through SIV).	FV agreed to further consider the process in consultation with FCRSC. A continuing discussion on performance reporting commenced at FCRSC#37 in February 2015.
6	Fishermen keen to hear detail of costs and why they are changing.	FV noted. All services and costs are set out in the service schedules, but note industry concern that there are areas of the schedules that require greater detail. FCRSC agreed that cost recovery would be addressed at existing industry meetings as far as possible in 2015. SIV and FV will coordinate industry discussions to review the cost recovery service schedules in 2015.
7	Industry questioned Giant crab inspection costs and how these can be reduced.	FV will discuss alternative approaches further with industry given the high cost of the current approach to off-shore inspections.
8	Justification for travel times for giant crab inspections.	On-water inspections require boat travel to the edge of the continental shelf and FV leases a larger vessel to undertake these inspections. FV would like to work with industry to introduce on-board electronic applications to reduce costs.
9	Rationalisation of how available Giant Crab money is allocated for compliance.	There is potential for a very large and real compliance risk with giant crab – critical issue is Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) measures. FV keen to work with industry to reduce costs of

		inspections.
No further updates planned		
1	Next steps.	FV advised that it would write up action minutes and circulate. Discussion with FCRSC (meets on 21 August). Following discussions about changes in levy values with FCRSC, would need to include changes in regulations so that they are operative from 1 April 2015.
2	By letter: not enough lead time to attend meeting.	FV recognised that timing of pre-forum material was an issue.
3	Question as to why Government does not pay for industry participation in FCRSC.	FV noted that the Cost Recovery Guidelines indicate that administration costs should be recovered. Currently, only cost of FCRSC meetings recovered.
4	Rock Lobster Management Plan report on the FV website.	FV advised that the report has only recently been put on the web. It can be accessed at http://www.FV.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/fisheries/fisheries-management-plans/victorian-rock-lobster-management-plan/progress-of-actions-in-the-rock-lobster-fishery-management-plan .
5	Provision of information by commercial fishers who observe breaches of fishing regulations.	FV indicated that such action would be valuable. FV's approach to collecting intelligence in order to focus compliance activity. Use of the 13FISH reporting line was encouraged, even though reporter may not see immediate activity – information goes into intelligence analysis.
6	Provision of fishery-specific cost recovery forums.	FV advised that cost recovery presents an opportunity for engagement with industry with services and efficiency being the focus of discussion.
7	Focus on catch and effort monitoring.	Required because key source of information on stocks for most species.
8	Cost recovery in the recreational fishing sector.	FV does not cost-recover in the recreational sector. However, the recreational fishing licence funds go into a trust account, from which the salaries of 13 Fisheries Officers are paid. The trust also funds fishery specific research projects.
9	Limited value of forums on TACC due to fishers' views not being taken into account.	FV does consider all submissions. FV advised that the Management Plans and the available science guide outcomes on Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC).
10	Lack of proper consultation on TACC and Management Plans.	FV does undertake an appropriate consultation process in reviewing TACCs. There is not always consensus with industry. FV committed to work with industry on the management plan.
11	Concern that submissions are summarised before being placed on the FV web site.	The full submissions are all lodged on the FV website, except those where the submitter requested otherwise. In transferring the document to an html format, some changes in style and layout appear; however all content has been published.
12	Rock Lobster Management Plan report on the FV website.	FV advised that the report has only recently been put on the web. It can be accessed at http://www.FV.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/fisheries/fisheries-management-plans/victorian-rock-lobster-management-plan/progress-of-actions-in-the-rock-lobster-fishery-management-plan .

