

Rationale for setting the Central Zone of the Victorian Abalone Fishery's 2023/24 total allowable commercial catch

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) uses a multiple-lines-of-evidence approach to assess the state of the abalone resource and set the annual total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for each of the three commercial abalone zones.

The information considered in arriving at the TACCs includes:

- *Fishery dependent information*: catch history, catch per unit effort (CPUE) and diver observations; and
- *Fishery independent information*: independent dive survey data that includes pre-recruit and recruit abundance.

Following a comprehensive consultation process including a workshop and public consultation period, I have made the following decision on the TACC for the Central Abalone Zone for 2023/24.

Central Zone

- a blacklip abalone TACC of 213.1 tonnes;
- a greenlip abalone TACC of 3.4 tonnes; and
- to set legal minimum sizes for blacklip and greenlip abalone.

The Abalone Victoria Central Zone (AVCZ) and the VFA continue to work together with the objective of rebuilding the abalone biomass in the zone. Due to the known complexities with the current DRAFT harvest strategy and performance indicators, a weight of evidence approach to the TACC decision has been made for the past 3 years.

Considering the stock assessment, diver observations provided at the TACC workshop, and responses received during public consultation, a 27.6 tonne reduction from the previous quota period is in place for the 2023/24 season.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Travis Dowling".

Travis Dowling
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority

10 / 05 / 2023