

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 Central Zone – Queenscliff

Forum Attendance	
Licence class/organisation	No. present
Abalone CZ	11
Abalone Receivers	1
SIV	1

Table 11. Abalone Central Zone

	Issue	Response/Action
Completed actions		
1	Receiver costs currently attributed to licence holders	FV has reviewed abalone receiver costs and will adjust costs to access licence holders and receivers as appropriate for 2015/16.
2	Need a flowchart for abalone product data flow.	A flow chart was provided to industry at the TACC meeting in Jan 2015. It is also available online at http://www.FV.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/commercial-fishing/fisheries-cost-recovery/fisheries-cost-recovery-2013/cost-recovery-forums
3	Transaction fees are paid for licence transfers. Why are they also cost recovered?	FV has reviewed licensing costs for each fishery and re-allocated costs accordingly.
4	Industry should be notified where efficiencies made. Cost savings should be shared.	FV has calculated revised levies for 2015-16 for each fishery following revision of services and associated costs. The resulting amendments will take effect from 1 April 2015.
5	Inspection times are over estimated	FV has reviewed inspection costs and the levies for 2015/16 have been adjusted accordingly. An offset will be provided

		where costs have been overestimated.
Continuing actions		
1	Central zone need a representative body.	FV agreed. Accumulated grants levies are being held and a new body is on the way to being established.
2	Without knowing minimum inspections industry cannot calculate 75% delivery for compliance.	FV agreed that compliance was a service where delivery could not be calculated. This is necessary to protect the confidentiality necessary for an inspection regime and will not be disclosed. FV is open to discussing alternatives if industry can provide them.
3	Sean Buck provided alternative service breakdown for CZ abalone research services (in advance)	FV has provided industry with FTE estimates according to the new service breakdowns and these are concurrent with existing service costs. The cost recovery schedule has been revised to improve the descriptions of deliverables, however the proposed descriptions do not allow for accurate reporting on services delivered.
4	Are the abundance surveys obtaining the right data?	Important to get biomass and trend data. FV will look at best value and alternatives in next review process.
5	Industry needs to be able to understand what services are in deliverable terms.	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.
6	Industry is interested in efficiencies from moving to electronic systems.	FV indicated there would likely be improvements in cost and comprehensiveness as electronic reporting is introduced.
No further updates planned		
1	Why can't the plebiscite occur before the next election?	Resolution of issues will take longer than November. Industry representatives suggested it would not be useful to hold meetings in December or January when entitlement holders come to the TACC forum in February. The Chair of the proposed board will soon write to industry indicating forward process. The Plebiscite was mailed in February 2015.
2	The number of inspections should take into account the number of prior infringements for a fishery.	Risk and intelligence information is used to target and scale inspections. This assessment takes into account the level of infringements in a fishery.
3	The sample size of independent surveys are very low.	Independent surveys provide important time series and a representative sample that is more sensitive to change than commercial CPUE.
4	Economic margins in CZ abalone are the lowest in 35 years.	FV acknowledged the economic circumstances and the need to work to achieve cost effective services.
5	Is it safe to have undersize abalone on the boat (ie picked up by diver and some bumped off or during cleaning)	Although compliance officers can exercise discretion, undersize abalone must be returned to the ocean floor.
6	How do you prepare for inspections?	FV Fisheries Officers have online access to systems containing information. Sometimes inspections are targeted.
7	What reports are generated?	The fishery manager generates an automated weekly report through Abase. A monthly report is also provided from FILS for all 3 abalone zones.
8	Education and Code of Practice for divers and deckhands to understand regulations.	Fisheries officers work with new operators to educate them. FV willing to work with industry on Code of Conduct approach but would be cost recoverable.
9	Abundance surveys are costly. How do we know	The contracts are selected through tender and follow a strict

	we are getting good value?	government procurement regime. Previously based on management plan but now will be according to harvest strategy.
10	Industry questioned the estimation of travel times.	FV indicated they were averaged and that travel time includes more than just getting to and from a vessel (eg finding a vessel can take time).
11	Do the cost recoverable services include outsourcing?	FV outsources the technical components of research services, however internal resources are needed to interpret, validate and manage information.
12	Can industry develop an MOU to employ their own compliance staff?	FV indicated this would not be possible as compliance officers need to have statutory powers to perform certain functions. Industry could employ staff for educational purposes.
13	Subsequent inspections on the same trip should not include pre, post and travel costs.	FV agreed. Estimates will be reviewed but already build in multiple inspections on one trip.