

### DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING

Meeting #33, 2 December 2021

Microsoft teams meeting

**CHAIR:** Ian Knuckey

**MEETING COMMENCED:** 9:00am

## 1. PRELIMINARIES

<b>Present</b>	
Ian Knuckey	Chair
Toby Jeavons	Victorian Fisheries Authority (Executive Officer)
Klaas Hartmann	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
David Reilly	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Lawrence Moore	Recreational fishing representative/ VRFish
Rafael Leon	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Wayne Dredge	Industry Member
Ross Bromley	Industry member
Chris Padovani	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Karlie McDonald	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Rohan Henry	Independent indigenous representative
<b>Guests</b>	
Robert Timmers	Latrobe Valley Scuba Club
<b>Apologies</b>	
Joanne Butterworth Gray	Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV)
Caleb Gardner	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Ben Scullin	VR Fish
Markus Nolle	Industry member
Mark Pechers	Industry member
Gary Ryan	Industry Member
Peter Galvin	VRFish
Zeb Johnston	Industry

### 1.1. Welcome

Ian Knuckey, as Chair, stated an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members to the 33rd meeting of the Victorian Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Resource Assessment Group (RLRAG). Ian noted the apologies to the meeting. All people present introduced themselves and stated any conflict of interest. Chris Padovani introduced himself to the group as Acting Director of Fisheries, Management, Policy, Science and Licencing. Rob Timmers is attending as an observer from the recreational sector. Ian acknowledged and thanked Marcus Nolle for many years of attendance and input not the RLRAG. Ian Knuckey updated his registered list of interests, noting he has been contracted by the VFA to complete an Ocean Scallop survey.

#### Action:

- Toby to compile a register of members interests to attach as an appendix to future minutes

## 1.2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without any changes, noting that Wayne Dredge would present the SRL update in place of Marcus Nolle.

## 1.3. Minutes and actions from last meeting

Ian noted that a final copy of the minutes of the last meeting had been circulated via email. As a matter of process, the RLRAG endorsed the minutes to record that they were a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

Progress against the outstanding actions were summarised as follows:

- Klaas to undertake MSE to inform discussion on altering LML – **To be addressed at February RLRAG** – Klaas has a PHD student who will investigate this factor and provide an update to the group.
- Toby to contact App developer to make reporting of the sex of rock lobsters mandatory – **Complete**
- Dave to run through lobster reporting consistency at TACC forums – **At port meetings 2022.**

### Stock assessment report

- Klaas to include the standardisation process accounting for changes in spatial shifts for comparison during analysis of voluntary data – **Complete.**
- Klaas to include industry considerations when analysing CPUE during upcoming assessment – **Complete.**
- Klaas to investigate weather information available from Dan Ierodionou to be considered as part of stock assessment process – **Agenda item 6.1.**
- Klaas to investigate moving the 145 boundary of the Eastern Zone to the 22 line and adding a line along the 149 line. Klaas to also consider the implications for assessment in moving the boundaries – **To be completed at February RLRAG.**
- Klaas to put together timeline of key events/changes that have either resulted in efficiency gains or potentially influence the catch rate time-series (i.e., New technology, COVID, China Trade ban etc) – **To be included in updated draft. Include details from document circulated by David Reilly.**
- Klaas to provide clarification in next stock assessment report of why egg production is declining, however biomass is increasing – **To be included in updated draft.**
- Klaas to look at impacts of fishery contraction and change in catch rates through time of in-shore/off-shore stock – **Agenda item 6.2.**

### **The following actions remained outstanding:**

#### Review of Harvest Strategy – To be completed at February RLRAG 2022 to inform RLMP review

- Klaas to model different levels of PRI and likelihood of breaching limit reference point. Analyse and present alternatives with PRI uncertainty and change and rolling average approach.
- Klaas to develop a strategic plan for tag recapture program based on findings of growth sensitivity analysis.
- Klaas to incorporate alternative LML's as component of work in developing an MEY approach to fisheries management.

- Consideration of formally adopting a new method to calculate egg production.
- Klaas to consider including concept of a sliding PRI scale (including above a threshold on the CPUE/TACC table) as part of the Harvest Strategy review.
- Klaas to provide examples of Target Reference points at RLMPSC – To be completed at next RL MP review meeting.
- Investigating a vessel efficiency factor. Klaas to consider a review of catch rate data from fishers who have maintained consistent practice with minimal uptake of technology in comparison to fishers who have adopted technology to improve efficiency – **Klaas to complete for February RLRAG.**

#### Stock Assessment

- Klaas to review growth estimates of large lobster in the Eastern Zone – **Outstanding.**

#### Model development – Ongoing

- Klaas to investigate MEZO projection/harvest strategy evaluation function – If funding is pursued.
- Rafael to investigate temporal relationships – Outstanding.
- Decision to be made on final position on which model to adopt going forward following completion of new WRL model in 2021.
- Klaas to provide further updates on WRL model development and circulate out of session.
- Next RLRAG Klaas to provide ARL demo and findings to assist discussion with which model to take forward.

#### Other business

- Matt to take DRAFT biotoxin Management Plan to SRL.
- Ross to follow up with Matt and SRL – Mark Peychers had concerns with timing of quarantining catch when sentinel species showed signs of toxins and timing of closure. This will be updated in reviewing the DRAFT plan.

#### Research projects

- Klaas to contact Katie Creswell to inform discussion of South Easterly weather patterns and their impact on productivity in Victoria – **Project to kick off again early 2022.**
- Klaas to provide update to research project investigating the impact of larger lobster keeping smaller lobster from pots – **SA has no interest in continuing. IMAS putting together revised project plan to consider pursuing.**

#### Data collection

- David and Toby to consider data collection requirements that are mandated/overlap with the voluntary data collection program and be presented in future when transition from Vic-eCatch has settled – **Analysis to be undertaken in early 2022.**

#### Puerulus monitoring program

- David to progress engaging with Southern Otway Landcare Network (SOLN) – **To be addressed under Agenda item 3.1.**

#### Giant Crab

- Provide update on continued progress against review of Harvest Strategy – **Pending finalisation with further clarification of reporting inconsistency.**
- Toby to provide update on GC research project – The project has successfully received an extension to include the Western Australian crystal crab fishery. This will enhance overall

robustness of the unit and test extension possibilities to other species, potentially including rock lobster.

Further actions arising from Meeting33 are outlined in the attached 'Actions List' circulated with the meeting minutes.

## **2. MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

### **2.1 Management Plan review**

Toby provided an update on the rock lobster management plan review process. The fourth steering committee meeting will be held on Monday next week. The group is making good progress in refining a vision statement for the fishery, undertaking an ESD risk assessment and commencing a review of the objectives, strategies and actions in the existing plan. Toby encouraged those not involved in this process to get in touch with industry representatives of Matt Harry, Ross Bromley, Wayne Dredge, Gary Ryan, Alex Haberfield and Les Feast.

### **2.2 Recreational tagging program update**

Toby provided an update on the recreational rock lobster tagging program. The new GoFishVic reporting program was launched on November 16. The program is now fully digital. Recreational fishers no longer need to order, possess, and affix plastic tags. The new GoFishVic reporting platform has many more features making this a far more engaging platform that can be used to enhance fishing experience. Users can now access all their personal data, catch rates, add photos, and share via social media. Further enhancements to the platform in planned releases from December and January will continue to fix some minor clunky reporting steps and build functionality including a personal lobster season diary, weather information, group reporting functionality and club functionality.

Fishers have 7 days to report their catch and are required to register their intent prior to targeting lobster (once per season).

The VFA are working closely with IMAS to develop a new measuring device to assist in more accurate length reporting. Reporting on sex of lobster is now mandatory for all users.

Toby extended his gratitude to IMAS for their work in undertaking an independent review of the rock lobster tagging program. Whilst the review has not yet been completed, the team has been in regular discussion with the VFA, and their work is actively shaping the current RL tagging review process.

Karlie provided an update that the FRDC report has been delayed by two weeks and may get caught up in Christmas time. Karlie thanked the steering committee for their feedback and input.

There was some concern by recreational RAG members that the updated App was more difficult to use and needed to be improved to address this issue. Lawrence queried the requirement to reconcile tags as per old system. Toby confirmed this is no longer required.

## **3 Monitoring program update**

### **3.1 Update on puerulus sampling trial**

David Reilly provided an update on the new puerulus collection trial in Apollo Bay. New collectors were installed in Apollo Bay on 5 November and will be serviced monthly with the assistance of Southern Otway Landcare Network. The new method will be serviced with cross-over to existing

program to undertake comparison studies. Significant benefits of the new system include cost savings with no diving required and deployment from a vessel. This aspect provides cost-effective potential for expansion to increase spatial scale of monitoring. Rob Timmers offered his assistance with trialling in the East following the Apollo Bay trial. **David Reilly to follow up with Rob.**

### 3.2 Data summary 2020/21

David presented an overview of the data collection program for the 2020/21 assessment period.

In the Eastern Zone, a total of 773 lobster were sampled. This is well below the target of 2500 lobsters. There has been a large drop in the voluntary logbook data with only one vessel contributing information.

As a positive, an increase in PRI was observed across all fixed sites in the Eastern Zone.

Members noted that the reduced voluntary logbook data has been influenced by lack of fishing due to market price and catch rates. The VFA will look at further incentives to improve the amount of voluntary data collected.

In the Western Zone, a total of 9,742 lobster were sampled. This is well above the target of 5000 lobster. However, again there was a decrease by 70% of voluntary logbook data. All eight fixed sites were sampled. Differing PRI results were observed across the sites but overall, there was generally improving trends. There was a record numbers of undersize lobster in the Apollo Bay region, particularly at the 9-mile. Warrnambool had a small decline in numbers of undersize across both sites. The Portland region generally showed increasing PRI other than Discovery Bay East.

The RAG noted the improved indications of recruitment, particularly in the Eastern Zone.

## 4. Rock lobster stock assessment results

### 4.1 Standardisation considerations – Accounting for behaviour shifts

Karlie presented an analysis of different factors that influence standardisation, particularly related to Covid-19. This includes timing of catch within the season, spatial shifts, changes in depth, change in fleet composition, change in targeting and vessel efficiency.

For this season, the timing of catch had minimal impact. However, changes have been noted on active operators and inshore/offshore fishing in the Eastern Zone.

Members noted continuing dynamics of the Chinese market as a key driver in changed fishery dynamics.

### 4.2 Presentation of DRAFT 2020/21 stock assessment results

#### Western Zone assessment

Karlie presented an overview of the Western Zone stock assessment report.

Catch and effort has slightly increased. Effort increased by 15,000 pot lifts and catch by 32t. Both nominal and standardised CPUE has increased.

A comparison of CPUE by number of lobster and by weight of lobster was provided. Both indicators were tracking consistently.

Portland region – Catch and effort increased. Portland had the highest catch of all regions in West. Standardised CPUE slightly declined where nominal CPUE slightly increased.

Warrnambool – Catch has been consistent over the past few years. Effort has decreased slightly. Approximately 44t was taken during 2020/21 season. Catch rates increased.

Apollo Bay – Decrease in catch and decrease in effort. 48t taken from Apollo Bay region. Both nominal and standardised CPUE increased.

### Length Frequency results

There is a strong pre-recruit signal coming through that has strengthened compared to previous years with positive trends across both male and female.

Voluntary length frequency information is significantly down in comparison to recent years. 70% decrease from 2019/20 data.

### Western Zone PRI

The observer program and fixed site results formally determine the PRI. Voluntary logbook data and fishers' logbook data are considered informally to compare trends.

The combined PRI now sits at 1.9 which is above the PRI trigger reference point that enables a TACC increase based on the harvest strategy.

Fisher logbook data shows a decline in number of reports across the zone, however an increase in total number of undersize per pot lift. The voluntary undersize data also shows an increase in numbers of undersize lobster.

### Model outputs - Biomass estimate

Exploitation rate slightly increased to 31 percent.

Estimated available biomass slightly decreased.

### Model outputs - Egg production

Egg production has decreased slightly. At the February RLRAG, discussion was held around improving the method to calculate 90% confidence levels. The actual egg production proportion reported in assessment is based on a different egg production calculation than is used to calculate the 90% confidence limits. This provides quite different estimates: 22.4% from the older method used previously, compared to about 29% from the method used to determine the confidence limits. Ian suggested that more context be provided in the report so that the reader can understand why there is a difference in the method results and which is more correct to be used into the future.

It was pointed out that the methodology behind existing egg production method was not provided when IMAS took over the stock assessment contract. The assumptions behind existing method are

unclear. The RLRAG discussed the most appropriate approach moving forward and it was pointed out that the more recent approach with the 90% confidence limits aligns more correctly with the SAFS method used by other jurisdictions. This approach is consistent with Tasmania, however unsure of approach with South Australia. It was agreed that future stock assessment reports would focus on the new method but continue to include the older single egg production point time-series for historical context. A clear summary of the differences in methods and the reason for the transition will be included in the stock assessment report. It was agreed that the updated stock assessment report should include a plot with lower 90% confidence limit to be shown as well as median over time so that it aligns with the harvest strategy requirements.

### Eastern Zone

Catch decreased by 11t on previous year, effort decrease by 22,000 pot lifts. Recent nominal and standardised CPUE are trending differently. Nominal CPUE decreased, however standardised increased.

Karlie clarified that this is because some fishers who have not been fishing over past few years are still counted in the model due to the number of records they have contributed, however this season these fishers have undertaken a lot more fishing, with their catch rates relatively low compared to overall fleet. The fishers with typically higher catch rates have stepped back this season and this has driven nominal CPUE down. The standardisation process corrects for this process and shows an increase in CPUE.

Queenscliff region – 16t taken in 2020/21. Decrease in effort. Nominal and Standardised CPUE increased.

San Remo – Decrease in catch and effort in San Remo region. 8t taken from this region with both nominal and standardised CPUE decreasing

Lakes Entrance – Very little catch from this region in 2020/21 assessment period. Less than 1t taken and effort significantly decreased. The nominal CPUE had reduced, however standardised value remained stable.

### Length Frequency

All sites have fewer records compared to last year. Unfortunately, not seeing large pulse as seen in the Western Zone. Observing more individuals in undersize classes.

### PRI

The observer program and fixed site results formally determine the PRI. Voluntary logbook data and fishers' logbook data are considered informally to compare overall trends.

Combined PRI remains below reference point of 0.32 undersize per pot lift with PRI currently at 0.26 undersize per pot lift.

A large decline in voluntary data has been observed. Only 11 lobster sampled in the Eastern Zone for the 2020/21 period. The number of undersize reported decreased slightly, however the total numbers of undersize lobsters observed increased.

## Model outputs – Estimated available biomass

Estimated available biomass increased slightly to 177t, which is up from 172t. Exploitation rate has dropped to 11.4% due to decrease in effort over 2020/21 assessment period.

Wayne questioned whether the increasing biomass is related to more fish left in the water (as a result of COVID-19 and markets) or results from recruitment. Klaas clarified that the model combines all the different elements to present the estimated biomass therefore considering both recruitment and decrease in catch.

## Egg production

Egg production has declined over the last several years. This year it has stabilised slightly.

### Action:

- **Klaas to include further context around egg production 90% confidence levels**
- **Updated stock assessment report to include plot with lower 90% confidence limit and median over time.**
- **Klaas to include review of egg production time series as part of Harvest Strategy review**

## **4.3 Consideration of results and sector perspectives**

### Western Zone perspective

No Western Zone industry representatives were present to provide comment.

Toby passed on members perspective that some western zone fishers would like to continue to build catch rates and bank the increasing biomass (by not increasing the TACC) until improvements in market conditions.

Wayne supported the members comment in that it would be better to bank the biomass as the PRI is only just above the trigger and exploitation rate is pushed to the limit.

Ian queried if it would be worthwhile to run a 1-year forward projection to ensure that an increased TACC does not enable the fishery exploitation rate to go above the agreed upper limit.

### Action:

- **Karlite to include 1-year forward projection to ensure that target exploitation rate is not breached**

Discussion was held regarding the frequency with which we step away from the TACC-CPUE decision matrix in the harvest strategy. Members noted that we need to make sure harvest control rules are achieving what they set out to do. There seems to be an industry perspective that the decision rules are currently not precautionary enough. If the reference point is valid, there should not be concern about taking an increase. Ian noted that there are a variety of opinions across industry. Toby noted that there is an intention to shift to a rolling average PRI to increase robustness.

### Eastern Zone Perspective



Members noted that the increase in CPUE is due to less fish taken out of the water over the last assessment period and that the TACC should stay where it currently is. If anything, concerns were raised that the TACC is still too high.

Ian noted that the length frequency distributions do not look good at all with very few smaller rock lobster coming up. He was concerned about continued lack of recruitment into the Eastern stock.

Recreational members noted that they are seeing small signs of improvement, but not substantial. No divers reporting very small sizes. It was also suggested that fewer mature lobster are being observed, however there is a noticeable increase in small numbers of lobsters in comparison to the last 10 years.

Ross questioned if the TACC process considers the total mortality when including recreational catch. Karlie confirmed that the catch from the recreational sector is included in the assessment. This has been improved through inclusion of actual catch estimates. Generally, the catch from the recreational sector has been at a range that it is not a concern.

## **4.4 Application of harvest strategy**

### **Western Zone**

Decision rule 1 is satisfied as the lower 90% confidence interval for egg production is above the 20% limit reference point.

Decision rule 2 is satisfied with standardised CPUE increasing from 0.67 kilograms/pot lift to 0.68 kilograms/pot lift in 2020/21.

Decision rule 3 is satisfied as the PRI is above the trigger reference point at 1.81 undersize/pot lift.

A direct application of the decision rules in the harvest strategy specifies that the TACC can increase to the 0.65 - <0.70 CPUE band resulting in a 270t TACC

### **Eastern Zone**

Decision rule 1 is satisfied as the lower 90% confidence interval for egg production is above the 20% limit reference point .

Decision rule 2 is satisfied as the current CPUE has increased from 0.374 kilograms/pot lift to 0.43 kilograms/pot lift in 2020/21 which is at the 51t TACC band.

Decision rule 3 is not satisfied as the PRI remains below the trigger reference point at 0.26 undersize/pot lift.

While the CPUE of 0.43kg/pot lift is within the threshold corresponding to a higher CPUE band than that for the current TACC, the PRI rule in the harvest strategy prevents an increase in TACC.

## **5 Giant Crab stock assessment results**

Klaas provided an overview of the giant crab stock assessment for the 2020/21 period.

### **5.1 Presentation of DRAFT 2020/21 stock assessment results**

Klaas presented the long term catch graph. This shows the significant catch period through the 1990's followed by declining catches. Typically, the TACC has been binding since 2012/13.

Catch rates declined through the late 2000's leading to a TACC revision. The RAG noted that there had been a compliance issue in the fishery that had brought into question the veracity of the effort data in recent years. To potentially account for this issue, Klaas presented a corrected CPUE together with uncorrected CPUE. The uncorrected CPUE appeared to show an increasing trend from 2010/11. It was noted that this trend did not correlate with the Tasmanian assessment and resulted in a change to SAF's reporting process whereby jurisdictions reporting separately. The corrected red line showed the CPUE trend line decreasing from the period the correction has been applied.

Ultimately the RAG agreed that the corrected time-series should be used. This is more precautionary, given the uncertainty regarding effort levels and there was more confidence in the recent years' data in regard to correction. There remained some uncertainty as to when it should have started being applied. Currently it is first applied in 2013/14.

Soak-time and number of pot lifts has been altered in the corrected trend line.

Long term, the CPUE is very low and only just above the point of management intervention.

Klaas noted that due to lower catches, the thresholds for data included in the assessment have been lowered.

Klaas to rename axis of CPUE graph to 'Kilograms per adjusted pot day'.

David noted that the improvement observed from 2011/12 was about the time that soak some was standardised in the assessment that resulted in increase in standardised CPUE. Klaas to include in the report.

## 5.2 Consideration of results and sector perspectives

No further discussion from RLRAG members.

## 5.3 Application of Harvest Strategy

2020/21 assessment period was down at 0.55kg/pot lift day. This is only slightly above the LRP and the RAG indicated concern about the status of the stock. The RAG noted that in consideration of the lower recent CPUE following correction, management action had previously been undertaken to reduce the TACC to 7.5t for the 2021/22 quota period. The RAG agreed that the TACC should remain at this level for the 2022/23 quota period.

### Action:

- Klaas to rename axis of CPUE graph to 'Kilograms per adjusted pot day'.
- Klaas to include timeline of changes in fishery in the assessment report including changes to standardisation process etc

## 6. STOCK ASSESSMENT CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

### 6.1 Incorporating weather information into stock assessment

Klaas provided an overview of the potential impacts of weather on fishing activity including catch rate, catchability, recruitment, and growth.

Klaas noted that a preliminary analysis on CPUE is planned for early 2022 using data from:

- 2.5 years of in situ mooring data from Deakin University
- NOAA Wavewatch111 (1999 to present)
- Bluelink ocean reanalysis (1993 to present)

**Action:**

- **Klaas/Karlie to undertake preliminary analysis of data to detect any impact from weather on catch rate in Victorian fishery**
- **Toby to include 'weather theories' as an agenda item for port visits to inform analysis**
- **Wayne Dredge to provide overview of weather pattern assumptions to IMAS**

Klaas requested that if there are any theories that industry members would like to be tested to please put forward. Toby will add as an agenda item to be discussed at upcoming port meetings.

Ian noted potential cross-over with IMOS project being developed to use fishing vessels as “ships of opportunity” for collection of oceanographic data. Klaas added that Dan Ireodiaconou’s data is also feeding into IMOS.

## 6.2 Inshore/offshore historical change in catch rates

Karlie presented an overview investigating inshore/offshore changes in historical catch rates.

The Western Zone is managed at a zonal level, however there is no consideration of depth at a management level. The assessment does include both regional and depth boundaries. Industry has previously expressed interest in pursuing an inshore/offshore fishery but it is not currently highlighted as a priority issue.

An analysis of inshore/offshore catch showed less variability than expected. Substantial amount of catch still coming from offshore region with approximately 94t on average taken from offshore zone over past 5 years. 71% of effort dedicated to shallow area and this has been consistently at this level over past 5 years.

The majority of the offshore catch is from the Portland region, with less than half of this taken in both the Apollo Bay and Warrnambool regions.

In the Eastern Zone, approximately 91% of catch comes from the inshore shallow area.

For consideration by RLRAG members:

### **Is the assessment adequate for consideration of inshore / offshore differences?**

Klaas noted that the actual shifts in effort is not as significant as was perceived. Dave noted that since the TACC has become binding in about 2010, there has been a shift to the inshore fishery, and this has since remained relatively stable. Industry noted that operators with large quota allocations may continue to depend on the offshore fishery for the higher catch rates to catch their quota.

It was noted that spatial resolution of reporting (by grid) makes it difficult to split catch and effort for grids that encompass both inshore and offshore depth.

Klaas mentioned that we will keep a watching brief in the form of a histogram comparing mean depth distribution over past years.

### **What incentives are there to fish offshore?**

Toby clarified that this discussion was undertaken at the last RLRAG and there was a clear preference to maintain flexibility and let the market forces dictate fishing. Further, David Reilly had highlighted concerns in overcomplicating assessments that were raised from South Australia.

Ultimately, members agreed there was no requirement to change the current assessment method with respect to inshore/offshore fishing but noted that if market conditions change there may be a need to readdress this consideration.

**Action:**

- **Klaas to incorporate depth histogram showing mean depth distribution over past/recent years**

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS

### 7.1 SRL update

Wayne as a board member of SRL provided the following update to the RLRAG:

- SRL still working on subsidising freight.
- Colin Buxton will be stepping down as chair.
- MSC certification being pursued through SRL. Potentially may be commonwealth funding available to progress. Egg production, recruitment and TEPS interactions as per previous mock assessment continue to be a hurdle.
- Proposal for an ARL association to be formed to combat China market situation. However there has been some opposition due to merging WRL and SRL.
- New pot trial through SIV project.
- Looking further into survey into Cadmium.
- SRL IPA with FRDC is up for renewal.

Klaas also looking at modelling project to look at whether a rebuilding strategy would result in significant changes as per MSC methodology. Klaas questioned whether Vic would like to be included in this process. The RLRAG endorsed Klaas including Vic in this approach. Members noted cross-over with completing management plan review

**Action:**

- **Klaas to include Victoria in testing MSC required rebuild strategy for Victoria**

### 7.2 WRL model development

Klaas provided an update on development of the Australian Rock Lobster (ARL) model that has been funded by Western Rock Lobster Industry. Klaas noted that resources have been allocated to progressing application of the model for the Victorian fishery and he can present at the next RLRAG.

Genevieve Phillips has spent the past week in Western Australia on sorting out issues with how the model is working. Model is now working, however requires tweaking to Victorian requirements. The model is not yet at a point to show results. Completion date is due and hope to show more in this space early in the new year.

### 7.3 Membership renewal

Toby noted that the RLRAG is due for renewal of membership. Two positions will be vacant with Markus Nolle and Mark Peychers stepping down. Toby to undertake membership renewal seeking confirmation from members that they would like to be reinstated and expressions of interest to fill vacancies.

**Action:**

- **Letter of thanks to Mark and Markus**
- **Toby to complete membership renewal**

### 7.4 2022 workplan

Toby presented a draft 2022 workplan of which will be circulated to members for further review and input.

The key focus for 2022 will be completing a review of the rock lobster management plan and harvest strategy.

The next RLAG meeting will be scheduled for February 2022.

**Action:**

- **Toby to circulate workplan and set meeting dates for 2022**

Ian provided opportunity for any further comments from the RLAG.

Rob Timmers suggested that the RLAG consider tying the RecFish App in with the Victorian Marine Park Association fish count. This program is into its 17<sup>th</sup> year and presents an opportunity to add citizen science to consider in assessment.

Rob also raised concerns around the new GoFishVic App. Rob is challenged with robustness of data and the 7-day reporting and would like to reintroduce the phone survey program for this season. Rob views this as being a valid tool that was successful. Karlie noted that the FRDC report will be available in the next few weeks that will present the comparison study between the two methods for estimating recreational catch.

Several comments were raised regarding the decision to commence with the 7 days reporting requirement. Toby clarified that this is a significant improvement on the previous requirement to only report before the end of the season. The VFA acknowledges that there have been significant changes in asking fishers to report their catch for the first time when the program was introduced, and further changes with transitioning to a digital program. Throughout the transitional period there is a strong focus on education with the requirements of the new program. 7 days was seen as providing reasonable time for fishers to comply with reporting.

**Action:**

- **Rob to provide contact to David Reilly to consider the VNPA fish count information**

Meeting concluded at 12.45pm.