

Rationale for setting the 2025/26 Western Zone of the Victorian Abalone Fishery 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 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 Western Zone of the Victorian Abalone Fishery for 2025/26.

Western Zone

- a blacklip abalone TACC of 42.5 tonnes;
- a greenlip abalone TACC of 1.05 tonnes; and
- legal minimum sizes for blacklip abalone and greenlip abalone.

The Western Abalone Divers Association and the VFA continue to work together with the objective of rebuilding the abalone biomass in the zone. The draft harvest strategy in conjunction with a weight of evidence stock assessment approach informed the decision.

Considering the stock assessment, diver observations provided during the TACC workshop and responses received during public consultation, a 700 kilogram increase from the previous quota period will be implemented for the 2025/26 season.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Luke O'Sullivan".

Luke O'Sullivan

Director Fisheries Management and Boating
Victorian Fisheries Authority

23/06/2025