

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.

1. Aquaculture – Snobs Creek

Forum Attendance	
<i>Licence class/organisation</i>	<i>No. present</i>
Aquaculture (PL-Salmonids)	4
Aquaculture (PL-Indoor intensive)	2
SIV	1
By email (CL-Other)	1

Table 1. Aquaculture (Salmonids, Indoor Intensive, Tourism, Warm Water Finfish, Ornamentals, Yabbies)

	ISSUE RAISED	ACTION/RESPONSE
Completed actions		
1	How do aquaculture businesses in other states pay their FRDC levies?	All states and territories (except Queensland) contribute 0.25% or more of GVP to FRDC for aquaculture services.
2	We always return our production returns so why do we pay for those who don't? Poor compliance is punished but why isn't good compliance rewarded?	FCRSC considered creating incentives for good compliance at FCRSC#37. It was agreed that a multi-tier levy system would not be efficient for providing a reduction in costs. Other mechanisms to support good compliance are possible. The use of 13FISH was encouraged.
3	What are the non-staff costs for licence administration?	The non-staff costs for licence administration in aquaculture licence classes cover the cost of producing and posting the licence in hard copy. This amounts to \$1.66 per licence.
4	Concern that aquaculture inspections are being performed by compliance officers, with insufficient knowledge of aquaculture How many officers are	Nearly all of them. FV recognised that Fisheries Officers need to know the species they are looking for.

	trained in aquaculture inspections?	
5	How many inspections do you do in a day? Industry raised issue of spreading disease between enterprises if multiple inspections occurred.	Usually only one. Multiple inspections may result in savings from conducting single inspections. FV has included steps to address cross contamination into the inspection protocol for Aquaculture.
Continuing actions		
1	Aquaculture farmers indicated that they preferred receiving information electronically by email or website that contains the necessary information.	FV agreed to provide website links to FCRSC, quarterly reporting and service schedules as a follow up to the meeting.
2	What we want to see is the return on our cost recovery investment	Cost recovery services support the provision of statutory services. These services ensure compliance with the regime. The purpose of the forums is to discuss the services in detail and to look at ways where services can be made more efficient.
3	SIV indicated it was willing to represent Aquaculture.	Industry indicated that Salmonids currently have representation on SIV. Discussion is underway to have an aquaculture group formed under SIV.
No further updates planned		
1	Concern that confidential information is shared	Data sharing arrangements exist between Fisheries Victoria and other government agencies. Individual data is not published or shared more generally.
2	Why is it necessary for aquaculture on private land to do returns?	FV indicated that production data is important for managing illegal markets, checking licence conditions, resource allocation for government services, data provision requirements to Commonwealth and support for sector.
3	How many officers are doing inspections?	Five stations, two officers per station (10). Two officers are required per inspection.
4	Why does industry have to pay for travel to and from inspections?	For aquaculture, Fisheries Officers mostly try to organise appointments before inspecting sites to ensure multiple visits are not required. In certain cases unannounced inspections may be required but this is not the usual scenario. Aquaculture travel time is fairly predictable and varies only with the distance to the site (not the time to locate it).
5	How can compliance costs be reduced?	Compliance of aquaculture licences is generally good. Industry can help by supplying FV with information on illegal activity. Calls can be anonymous and the 1300FISH hotline is an appropriate mechanism for this.
6	Isn't there doubling up in the checking of C&E reports ie C&E do it then compliance do it?	No. The C&E unit are responsible for entering data and checking accuracy. It does not progress to compliance until an issue arises and gets escalated.
7	Why have the FRDC costs increased from previous years?	Production has been underestimated. For the past 5-6 years the FRDC levy component has only been adjusted by CPI and has not been the appropriate portion of the GVP. FRDC levy is now being calculated as 0.25% of current GVP.
8	Why is the small % of property dedicated to aquaculture heavily monitored with high standards required while agricultural runoff is not managed?	Water quality is monitored and regulated by EPA. Aquaculture is regulated by Fisheries Victoria. Each regime (and costs) is implemented independently.
9	Aquaculture Crown Land – Other was not on forum schedule	FV noted and apologised for oversight.