



**Eastern Zone Abalone  
Industry Association Inc.**

15<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Nick Gall  
Abalone Fisheries Manager  
Victorian Fisheries Authority  
[nick.gall@vfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:nick.gall@vfa.vic.gov.au)

**Re: Consultation on Draft Fisheries (Abalone Data Logging Systems) Notice 2026**

Dear Nick

The Eastern Zone Abalone Industry Association (EZAIA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft *Fisheries (Abalone Data Logging Systems) Notice 2026*.

EZAIA supports the proposed Notice and endorses the requirement for approved boat-based data loggers and diver activity loggers to be installed and operational across the Victorian Abalone Fishery.

We congratulate the Victorian Fisheries Authority for progressing this important initiative and for demonstrating leadership in strengthening the scientific foundations of fisheries management in Victoria.

For many years, stock assessment reports for the Eastern Zone have consistently identified the need for additional data sources to improve confidence in stock assessments and management advice. Successive reports have highlighted limitations associated with relying heavily on Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) data and have recommended the collection of additional spatial, effort and biological information to support a more robust assessment framework.

In particular, recent stock assessment reports have identified commercial logger data as a critical future data source capable of improving our understanding of fishing patterns, effort distribution and stock dynamics. Similar programs have already been implemented successfully in other Victorian abalone zones and interstate fisheries, where they contribute valuable information to assessment and management processes.





EZAIA has long advocated for improved monitoring and assessment tools that enable management decisions to be informed by stronger evidence. The collection of high-quality spatial and operational data through logger programs will reduce uncertainty, improve confidence in stock assessments and provide a stronger foundation for future quota setting discussions.

We support the VFA's decision to establish these requirements on a mandatory basis. While many industry participants have recognised the value of these systems and willingly participated in previous data collection initiatives, a voluntary approach is unlikely to achieve the consistency and coverage required to maximise the scientific value of the program. A mandatory framework provides confidence that the resulting datasets will be comprehensive, representative and suitable for incorporation into future stock assessments.

**However, EZAIA considers that several important operational matters require clarification before the Notice is finalised.**

Firstly, the proposed logger systems are being introduced to **improve research, monitoring and stock assessment outcomes**. They are not compliance tools. Given the marine environment in which these units will operate, equipment failures should be anticipated as a normal operational risk. Saltwater exposure, corrosion, vibration and general wear and tear are unavoidable realities of commercial fishing operations.

Accordingly, **EZAIA believes that divers should not be financially disadvantaged by equipment failures** associated with approved logger systems. The VFA should commit to meeting the reasonable costs associated with repair, replacement and maintenance of approved units where failures occur through normal use.

**Secondly, EZAIA believes that a failure of a logger unit should not prevent a diver from undertaking lawful fishing activity**, provided the failure has been reported and reasonable steps are being taken to rectify the issue. **Given that these devices are being introduced primarily for research and assessment purposes, it would be inappropriate for fishers to lose fishing opportunities because of equipment malfunction beyond their control.**

Finally, while some fishers have expressed concern that broader consultation did not occur before the proposal was developed, EZAIA notes that the purpose of this Fisheries Notice consultation process is to provide industry participants with an opportunity to raise precisely these types of issues. The consultation period is an important part of ensuring that practical operational concerns are identified and addressed prior to implementation.





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Subject to satisfactory resolution of these matters, EZAIA supports the draft Fisheries (Abalone Data Logging Systems) Notice 2026 and recognises the significant long-term value that improved data collection can provide to stock assessments, quota setting and fisheries management.

Importantly, EZAIA recognises the VFA's commitment to protecting the confidentiality of commercial fishing information and ensuring transparent arrangements regarding data storage, access and use. These safeguards are essential to maintaining industry confidence and support for the program.

The Eastern Zone industry views this initiative as a significant step forward in modernising fishery assessment and management. Better information will ultimately support better decisions. Where data gaps exist, management frameworks inevitably rely more heavily on precautionary assumptions. By improving the evidence base available to managers, scientists and industry, these logger programs will help ensure future decisions are informed by observed fishery performance rather than uncertainty.

EZAIA therefore fully supports the draft Fisheries (Abalone Data Logging Systems) Notice 2026 subject to clarification of three issues outlined above and encourages its implementation as proposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Burvill'.

**Helen Burvill**  
Executive Officer  
Eastern Zone Abalone Industry Association

