|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| image of association logo | **Victorian Rock Lobster Association Inc.**PO Box 133Apollo BayVic, 3233ABN: 83 100 473 602 |

19 April 2017

Ms Melissa Schubert

Rock Lobster Fisheries Manager

GPO Box 4509

Melbourne

VIC 3001

Dear Melissa,

**RE: Proposed fisheries (Rock Lobster Tagging) notice**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on behalf of the Victorian Rock Lobster Association (**VRLA**) regarding the proposed fisheries (Rock Lobster Tagging) notice, as per letter from Travis Dowling (ED, Fisheries Victoria) dated 22/03/2017.

Firstly, let me congratulate yourself and Fisheries Victoria more broadly, for making a genuine commitment towards quantifying the aggregate recreational catch of one of our key priority species here in Victoria; southern rock lobster. As commercial fishers, the sustainability of our marine resources is our prime concern. Creating a record and developing a reliable (spatial and temporal) understanding of the recreational take of rock lobsters will greatly improve our collective ability to credibly claim that this premium resource is being sustainably managed for current and future generations. This will also provide for more informed discussions regarding resource allocation policies.

This initiative will also provide a platform on which to address one of the key findings of the Productivity Commission (Draft Report), August 2016 on Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture (p2), namely;

*“A developing issue is weak knowledge of the impact of increasingly successful but unmanaged recreational fishing on some high-value fish stocks”.*

For Victoria, this is especially relevant considering the Government’s “Target 1 Million” (recreational fishers) plan, and the inevitable commensurate increase in recreational fishing effort and take that will follow this (in the order of) 25% targeted increase in recreational fishing participation.

As such, we look forward to the successful implementation of this program which clearly has the potential to meet these important needs.

Yours sincerely,

Markus Nolle

**President, VRLA**