**RFGWG Meeting #45 of 25 November 2020**

**Recreational Fishing Grants Working Group Meeting #45**

**Location: ZOOM Meeting**

**Chairperson's Summary**

This was the 45th meeting of the Recreational Fishing Grants Working Group.

Key items discussed included:

* RFL 2019-20 Report to Parliament
* RFL Sales Update
* 2020-21 RFL budget and expenditure forecast
* RFL funded Education and Enforcement Outcomes
* Fishcare Victoria – RFL annual base funding and large grant outcomes
* VRFish – RFL annual base funding and large grant outcomes
* RFL Intermediate Grants Program
* RFLTA 20 Year Milestone

**RFL 2019-20 Report to Parliament**

The Working Group were advised that the 2019-20 RFL Trust Account Report to Parliament had been signed off by the CEO, VFA and the Secretary, DOT, and had been audited by VAGO. The report was expected to be tabled in the sitting week beginning 10th December.

**RFL Sales Update**

The Working Group were provided with an update on the sales of Recreational Fishing Licences across 2020, with comparisons to monthly sales in 2018 and 2019. Licence sales have been impacted considerably by bushfires in the first few months, and particularly around the Easter period in April. Following this there was an above average peak in sales across May, June and July, however Covid 19 related restrictions had impacted licence sales in August and September.

**2020-21 RFL budget and expenditure forecast**

The Working Group were advised that the estimated income into the RFL Trust Account for 2020-21 was around $8,330,000, and the estimated expenditure was likely to be $8,260,000. A discussion followed that reinforced the view that the Working Group’s primary role is concerned with the assessment of grant applications and making recommendations on what applications should be funded, however the group also has a role to understand and provide comment on what else RFL funds go towards from previous group decisions or Ministerial direction.

**RFL funded Education and Enforcement Outcomes**

The Working Group were provided with a presentation which captured how funds that are disbursed annually from the RFL Trust Account are utilised by the VFA’s Education and Enforcement Division.

**Fishcare Victoria – RFL annual base funding and large grant outcomes**

The Working Group were provided with a presentation on how the annual base funding that is provided to Fishcare Victoria is utilised and the outputs and outcomes that are achieved as a result.

An update was also the RFL large grant funded ($127,200 over two years) ‘All Ability Clinics - Fishing is for EVERYONE!’ program, and the ($60,000 over one year) ‘Fishcare Responsible Anglers Academy’ program which was to deliver an education program which will engage with over different 50 schools and deliver over 250 responsible ﬁshing workshops. The progress of both programs had been severely hampered by Covid-19 related restrictions over the last few months and a project variation would need to be lodged to seek a time extension on both projects.

**VRFish – RFL annual base funding and large grant outcomes**

The Working Group were provided with a presentation on how the annual base funding that is provided to VRFish is utilised and the outputs and outcomes that are achieved as a result.

An update was also provided on the RFL large grant funded ($24,132 over two years) ‘Striped Trumpeter Pilot Study’ project and advised that fish frame collection sites had been established in Warrnambool and Portland however offshore conditions and Covid-19 restrictions had restricted fishing for trumpeter over the 2020 season.

**RFL Intermediate Grants Program**

The Working Group were advised that the VFA was still waiting for Ministerial approval to launch the Intermediate Grants Program, however this was expected to be obtained very soon.

**RFLTA 20 Year Milestone**

The Working Group were advised that 1 April 2021 will mark the 20-year anniversary of the operation of the RFL Trust Account, and the VFA was making plans to commemorate this event. Some options that have been discussed include holding a special recognition event with key stakeholders and producing a series of small video clips to use in social media and other formats to acknowledge significant investments into improving recreational fishing across the last two decades.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday 20 March 2021

David Grisold

Chairperson

Recreational Fishing Grants Working Group