

RECORD OF MEETING

Meeting #5, 26 May 2025

Online

CHAIR: Ian Knuckey

MEETING COMMENCED: 2:30 pm

Present	
Ian Knuckey	Chair
Ewan Flanagan	Victorian Fisheries Authority / Executive Officer
Klaas Hartmann	Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
Anthony Ciconte	Giant Crab Fishery industry member
David Reilly	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Melissa Schubert	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Apologies	

1. Preliminaries

1.1. Welcome

Ian Knuckey, the Chair, opened the meeting and advised that this is a sub-committee of the Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Resource Assessment Group (RLRAG). Outcomes of the meeting will be reported at the next RLRAG meeting.

2. Final Review

2.1. Review of Consultation Submissions

Ewan Flanagan provided a summary the three submissions received during consultation, as outlined below:

Individual	Summary of Submission
Craig Starritt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns raised for giant crab stocks, which requires a greater need for conservative management• There is a need for a pre-recruit index to better understand stocks
Anthony Ciconte	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under Level 1, the wording should reflect the ability to increase up to 10.5 tonnes and be capped beyond that
Anthony Olver Will Olver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the fishery currently operating at Level 2 of the draft harvest strategy?• It is unfair that catch per unit effort (CPUE) data is used for moving the total allowable commercial catch (TACC) down but cannot be used as a tool to increase the TACC.• Four years of verified catch data has now been collected and, during that time, 50% of catch has been returned to the water due to high grading practices. Based on this information, the TACC should be set at 10.5 tonnes.• Given there is one operator, if that operator can't go to sea, there will be a complete lack of data fed into the CPUE model.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What happens in these circumstances, noting biomass will be left in the water?

2.2. Summary of key discussion points

1. Clarification regarding the 8.5 tonne starting TACC comparative to the capped Level 1 TACC of 10.5 tonnes.

- No increases in the TACC are permitted under Level 1 based on the low level of data available to make informed management decisions.
- Currently, the fishery only requires verified length-frequency data to proceed to Level 2, under which, TACC increases are permitted.
- A 10.5 tonne TACC under Level 1 would only occur in circumstances where the fishery had progressed to Level 2, gained TACC increases, and then returned to Level 1.
- The sub-committee considered an alternative solution of capping the Level 1 TACC at 8.5 tonnes for the life of this harvest strategy.

Consensus was reached to maintain the current wording and TACC cap.

2. Query that if the fishery was to experience little to no fishing activity over the next two seasons, how would this impact quota management decisions.

- Under these circumstances the fishery would remain at Level 1 and the TACC would be set based on best available information.
- Should the fishery remain unfished for any period greater than one season, resulting in no fishery-dependent data, the sub-committee agreed that it would be inappropriate for the harvest strategy to prescribe that the TACC remain at 8.5 tonnes.
- An assessment at the time would need to consider all available information, in order to make an informed decision.
- It was noted that a reduced exploratory quota would likely need to be implemented when fishing resumed in such circumstances.
- The group discussed specifying this amount in the harvest strategy, with consideration given to a 50% reduction.

Ultimately, the group agreed that it was not practical to prescribe a value in this document.

3. Final Endorsement

A consensus was reached that the final harvest strategy remains as per the version released for public consultation. The sub-committee fully endorsed implementing this strategy immediately.

The Chair called the meeting closed at 16:00.