

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.

Mixed Fisheries - Lakes Entrance

| Forum Attendance | |
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| <i>Licence class/organisation</i> | <i>No. present</i> |
| Wrasse | 1 |
| Ocean Access | 7 |
| Inshore Trawl | 7 |
| Rock Lobster EZ | 3 |
| Ocean Scallop | 3 |
| Bait (Sydenham Inlet) | 2 |
| Bait (Gippsland Lakes) | 3 |
| VSFA | 1 |
| SIV | 1 |

Table 9. Bait Fisheries, Ocean Access, Inshore Trawl, Ocean Purse Seine, Ocean Scallop

| | ISSUE RAISED | ACTION / RESPONSE |
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| 1 | Stock levels in the Gippsland Lakes bait fisheries – concern about pollutants going into the lakes (from fertiliser application and fire retardants). | FV advised that other agencies have responsibilities in relation to pollution in the lakes. FV advocates for fisheries where and when possible, including areas within DELWP responsible for water management. FV advised that it would look again at the bait catch and effort data from the lakes. |
| 2 | Need to consider the “user pays” approach (eg. PrimeSafe model). | FV noted suggestion. |

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| 3 | In-shore trawl managed as one fishery across the state – possibly need to split into 3 areas as costs are driven from one area. | FV has identified this as one of the matters for further discussion with SIV. First step is to identify priority areas for action. |
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| Completed actions | | |
| 1 | Problem of latent effort in the ocean fisheries. | FV advised desirably all entitlements should be transferable but in some fisheries latent effort is problematic to providing transferability. FV has agreed to discuss with SIV about improving the management of the wrasse fishery (particularly to address latent effort). |
| 2 | Quarterly reporting against deliverables. | <p>Reports on quarters 1-3 of the 2014/15 licensing year have been published on the FV website at http://www.FV.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/commercial-fishing/fisheries-cost-recovery/cost-recovery-quarterly-reporting</p> <p>Further reports will be added to this website as they are made available.</p> |
| Continuing actions | | |
| 1 | Implementation of VMS in these fisheries. | FV advised that it was currently considering fishery priorities for trials of VMS and other means of electronic reporting, in collaboration with the Fisheries IT Reference Group. |
| 2 | Only 20-30% of the Ocean Access fishery licence holders are active. Licences are not transferable. Government responsibility for keeping supply of fresh fish to the local market. Trip limits on some species (eg. gummy shark) too low. | FV recognised that trip limits are not an efficient way of managing take. FV has recorded a number of issues to work through in the commercial sector, which it will do with SIV in the first instance. |
| 3 | Ability to put licences in “abeyance” when they are not being actively worked, thus saving on levy payments. | There is no provision to put licences “in abeyance”. Levying for services is based on holding an access licence in a fishery. FCRSC considered non-active licences at meetings #36 and #37. It was agreed that services where inactivity may result in a difference to costs, this was already accounted for. Where no difference in costs resulted, FCRSC agreed that non-active licences should continue to pay a levy for that service as inactivity was a voluntary decision. |
| 4 | Research function expense. | <p>FV acknowledges relative high cost of research, including surveying. Out-sourcing of research is an option where there are suitable suppliers who can deliver at lower cost.</p> <p>FCRSC has considered contestability for cost recoverable services at meetings #35 and #37. Rock lobster and abalone research services have been identified as key candidates. Further discussion will occur through 2015.</p> |
| 5 | Working relationship between fishers and Fisheries Officers. | FV acknowledged that good relationships are desirable, but Fisheries Officers are obliged to work to achieve compliance with the fisheries legal framework. |
| No further updates planned | | |

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| 1 | Prior reporting by recreational fishers. | FV advised that it would generally not be practical. |
| 2 | Prospect of quota on take of prawns and bugs, and take limits on other fisheries. | FV advised that there is no active consideration of changing management of prawns or bugs. However, there are issues across Victoria for a large number of licence classes, ineffective controls on take, lack of transferability, etc. |
| 3 | It was difficult to consider the figures in the schedules due to the delayed release of information to industry. | FV acknowledges there was a delay in circulating the revised service schedules prior to the forums; however the original service schedules were available on the FV website from June 30 2014. While some FTE values and costs for compliance changed under the revisions, the majority of costs, and all services, did not alter from this time. |
| 4 | Public reporting of the names of offenders against the Fisheries Act and regulations. | FV advised that its current policy is not to name offenders, but it could reconsider the matter if it was requested by the sectors (commercial and recreational). |
| 5 | Auditing of catch and effort data. | FV noted prospect of audit data being made available to fishers, and advised that it is happy to discuss further. |
| 6 | Consistency of scallop catch and effort data in different publications. | If industry can point out where inconsistency exists FV will investigate. FV agreed to look at the accuracy of data provided to the Commonwealth. |
| 7 | Need to consider that not all fishers or operators have IT capability. | FV noted issue. |
| 8 | Need for fine-scale management in some fisheries. | FV pointed to the development of IT applications in support of finer scale management. |
| 9 | Cost of Catch and Effort data processing. | FV acknowledged that attribution of costs between fishers was an issue, especially where there are nil returns over a significant period. FV recognised that paper-based systems are more expensive and is looking at IT applications that could mean less data entry undertaken by Catch and Effort staff – thus lower costs. FV will consider issuing of logbooks on request, but pointed to the need to have books available. |
| 10 | How does FV demonstrate that it takes appropriate note of industry submissions (eg Scallop TACC setting)? | FV considers all submissions in developing advice. FV pointed out that the Minister or his delegate is the final decision maker in relation to matters like TACC – they are not obliged to agree with any particular submissions. Decision making is not a consensus or voting process. Submissions are put on the web unless individual submitters ask that their submission not be put on the web. |
| 11 | Consultation process. | FV agreed to the topic of “how to consult” being placed on the agenda for the meeting of the Ocean Scallop industry with Fisheries Management. |
| 12 | Cost recovery for Fishery Specific Forums, and contribution from the recreational fishing sector. | FV advises that there is nil cost recovery for the forums - they are seen as an important element of the cost recovery administration process. The recreational fishing sector is not a part of the cost recovery process. |
| 13 | Fisheries Management meetings and cost recovery. | FV considers that meetings about management of commercial fisheries are cost recoverable. |

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| 14 | Daily recording of catch and effort data. | FV advised that it was a requirement for rock lobster, but for other fisheries the requirement for recording was generally at landing (daily recording is highly preferable for obtaining accurate data). |
| 15 | Prevention of illegal fishing. Industry suggested that illegal operators would always find a loop hole in regulations, and good operators had to bear the cost of bad ones. | FV advised that compliance costs could be reduced over time by legal fishers report breaches or questionable behaviour. Use 13 FISH reporting line. Compliance services protect the rights of legitimate operators. |
| 16 | Need to charge recreational fishers more as they benefit from removing illegal behaviour, in accordance with the number of inspections performed on recreational and commercial vessels. | FV advised that the recreational fishing trust account funds 13 Fishery Officers annually. The commercial sector does not pay for surveillance, investigation and intelligence compliance services – which are high-cost activities. |
| 17 | Recreational fishers target particular spots along the coast for different species to the long-term detriment of commercial fishers and the fishery. | FV acknowledged the significant pressure of recreation fishers and targeting of specific species. |
| 18 | Catch and release and high-grading is another recreational fishing related issue. | FV noted industry comments and advised that it is grateful for any information that can be provided. |
| 19 | Recreational fishers taking more than commercials in some areas. | FV acknowledged that this is the case for some species eg snapper in Port Phillip Bay. FV seeking to undertake another state-wide survey of recreational fishing. |
| 20 | Recreational fishers make significant contribution to regional economies. Should be a level playing field. Could use tags to control recreational take of rock lobster. | FV noted the industry views expressed about recreational fishing. |
| 21 | Concern that in the Ocean Access fishery, most illegal take occurring near PPB, but eastern part of the fishery required to pay as much as the PPB fishers. | FV advised that inspection costs are spread across all participants in the fishery. |
| 22 | Payment by commercial fishers for education. | FV advised that the commercial industry education services were removed at request of industry. |
| 23 | Education included in on-shore inspections. | FV agreed that there is an advisory component of inspections. |
| 24 | Transparency of costs is one thing, but affordability is another. Impact of relinquishment of significant numbers of licences. | FV advised that affordability was one of the principles adopted by FCRSC. Need to consider tailoring of services and level of risk in deciding on level and type of services provided. |
| 25 | Concern that total of all government costs, including Primesafe and fisheries cost recovery, as well as mooring, boat registration and surveys, are putting Victoria's commercial fishing sector at a competitive disadvantage. | FV acknowledged that there was a range of costs that industry must meet. FV is focussing on improving the efficiency of fisheries services, as a means of reducing costs. |
| 26 | Concern about the costs of inspections generally. Lack of industry support for some components of inspection costs eg. travel. | FV acknowledged that inspection cost as significant, especially the travel component when undertaking on-water inspections. This issue was considered by FCRSC in August 2014. The |

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| | | inclusion of pre and post inspection activities was determined as being included in the inspection definition after being referred to the Minister in October 2014. |
| 27 | VSFA representative wished it to be noted that there is no "SIV Levy" and that is a "Grants Levy" that is used provide funding for SIV. | FV acknowledged that was correct, but noted that it is commonly called the SIV levy. |
| 28 | Some industry members raised concern about SIV levy, while others voiced support for SIV. | FV advised that the government sees real value in having a representative organisation. SIV representative would be happy to discuss any issues. |
| 29 | How much will it cost to be licenced to fish licenced next year? | FV advised that the full cost included renewal fee, SIV levy, FRDC levy and cost recovery levies for Fisheries Services (Research, Compliance, Fishery Management and Administration). A levy calculator is available on the FV website at http://www.FV.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/commercial-fishing/fisheries-cost-recovery/fisheries-cost-recovery-2013/levy-calculator |
| 30 | FV doesn't seem to take action in relation to 13 Fish reporting. | FV advised that Fisheries Officers will not visit the site of all reports but information may still be valuable in undertaking the FV intelligence gathering function. FV will take steps to ensure all reports to 13FISH are acknowledged as received. |
| 31 | Concern about the estimated percentage of commercial versus recreational take in the calculation of cost recovery in the Gippsland Lakes and Ocean Access fisheries. | FV re-iterated that it was seeking to do another state-wide study of recreational take, which would, amongst other things, assist in using a more accurate estimate of percentage recreational take in all fisheries. |
| 32 | Need to monitor recreational take of rock lobsters more closely. | FV acknowledges the concern expressed. The best way for commercial fishers to assist is use the 13FISH number to report unusual fishing related activity. |