



# AVCZ MEMBER NEWSLETTER

December 2019

## Membership Update

Thank you to those of you who have updated your memberships since the last newsletter. AVCZ now represents close to 90% of quota holders and around 60% of divers.

## November 2019 FRAG

The November FRAG was held in Frankston on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The new FRAG Chair Dr Ian Knuckey conducted the meeting exceptionally well providing a balanced and constructive forum where all attendees were provided the opportunity to have input. There was a good turn out of both owners and divers, with over 20 people attending. Dr. Cameron Dixon presented the results of the stock assessment that he and Dr. Cathy Dichmont undertook. CPUE across the entire zone has remained relatively stable. Under the draft harvest strategy, 4 SMUs were recommended for increased catch, 4 were recommended to keep catches stable, and 3 recommended a reduction in catch. (Port Phillip Bay no catch allocation so not assessed under HS). Final TACC recommendations will come from the workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 where I hope to see as many of you as possible.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 Industry Meeting

On 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 AVCZ will be running an industry meeting where all quota holders, divers and deckhands are welcome to attend. The meeting will run from 1:30pm

and be held at the same location as the TACC workshop (Harbour View Motor Inn Hastings). At the meeting we will provide a recap on the November FRAG and discuss the industry position on SMU target allocations.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Jan TACC Forum

I am sure you have all received correspondence from Mark Asplin the Abalone Fishery Manager regarding the TACC setting forum. Proceedings will take place at the same location as last year (Harbour View Motor Inn, Hastings, Vic). Lunch will be provided on the day. For any additional information please contact Mark Asplin.

## Diver Observation Survey

A reminder to all divers that AVCZ strongly encourage you to complete the survey after each days diving. There is a link to the survey on the front page of the AVCZ website [www.abalonevictoria.com.au](http://www.abalonevictoria.com.au) alternatively, you can access the survey directly at [www.diverobservations.com](http://www.diverobservations.com). Completing this survey after each days diving helps to correlate what you are seeing on the bottom with the scientific data used in stock assessments.

## Size Limit Review

AVCZ have just received written correspondence from VFA CEO Mr. Travis Dowling regarding LMLs for the 2020/21 season.



Based on the aforementioned letter, VFA plan to increase Shipwreck to 130mm, Otway to 125mm, Back Beaches to 119mm, Flinders and Phillip Island to 112mm.

LMLs are an extremely divisive issue in the central zone fishery. Whether you personally support or do not support the increases, we need to ensure that we are utilizing the best available science to inform decision making. As a result, AVCZ are planning to undertake updated size at maturity research during 2020 to help improve our understanding of the resource.

### **Native Title Claim**

There is no additional information to provide regarding the native title claim at the moment. As stated previously these things are incredibly slow. As soon as any new information comes to light AVCZ will inform fishery stakeholders.

### **2019 Annual General Meeting**

The 2019 AVCZ Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November at the Melbourne Seafood Centre. As most would be aware by now, Warren Threlfall was elected as an industry director on the AVCZ board. Other items discussed at the meeting included AVCZ financial audit, business plan, annual budget, key achievements for 2019 and details of key focuses for 2020. AVCZ would like to thank Peter Johnston for the many years he has contributed to representing abalone industry stakeholders in the Central Zone.

### **Sample Collection for AVG Testing**

This project was a fantastic example of what can be achieved through good cooperation. The project was initiated by Agriculture Victoria, with approximately 300 abalone being collected from across all Victorian zones to test for AVG virus and *Perkinsus* disease. The Central Zone contributed 88 samples from 11 SMUs with the cooperation of 6 divers, and an additional 2 divers willing to offer assistance with collection if required. The support received from divers for this project was fantastic, with the final scientific report from Agriculture Victoria expected to be provided in early 2020. Upon publication, AVCZ will distribute the report to all stakeholders for information. I would once again like to thank all the divers involved with collection, your assistance is greatly appreciated.

### **Lastly.....**

The AVCZ board would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year. In addition, I would like to thank everyone for their assistance in helping me to get up to speed on all Central Zone related matters. The cooperation and support I have received from both quota holders and divers has been fantastic and I am looking forward to getting a number of really beneficial projects underway with the help of you all in 2020.

Best Regards,

**Josh Cahill**

Executive Officer  
Abalone Victoria (Central Zone)