

**ABALONE COMPLIANCE WORKSHOP
VFA OFFICE QUEENSCLIFF
2nd NOVEMBER 2017
10.45AM- 2.15PM**

Record of meeting

1. Welcome

Dallas D'Silva opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

2. Aims and objectives

The aim of the workshop was explained as primarily about co-management and knowledge sharing between industry and the VFA. It is planned to hold this workshop every few years. The VFA plans to hold a rock lobster compliance workshop next year.

The PowerPoint presentations for the day will be circulated to industry for broader distribution to fishers.

Action: VFA to distribute PowerPoint presentations to industry.

3. Fisheries management overview

Kate Simpson provided an overview of the legislation and management framework for Victoria's abalone fishery. The management plan is expected to be reviewed in 2018/19. The harvest strategy, which will guide quota setting and monitor fishery performance, is well advanced and will be tested in the coming months. The key focus is on rebuilding abalone stocks.

The *Fisheries Regulations 2009* are set to expire in February 2019. Work is expected to commence on reviewing and drafting new regulations in 2018. Industry is encouraged to identify areas in the regulations they would like reviewed by the VFA.

The commercial fishery handbook is a new initiative and a draft is expected to be completed by the end of the year. It will cover abalone and be a useful tool for fishers by explaining how regulations and policies will be applied by the VFA.

Action: Industry will be provided a draft of the handbook for comment, especially divers as one of the main user groups.

4. Commercial abalone compliance overview

Ian Parks provided a summary of abalone compliance operations over the last 12 months and noted the increase in compliance in the commercial fishery from 2016 to 2017. The VFA adopts a risk based approach.

5. Industry presentation and priorities for compliance

Malcolm Petrie provided an overview of industry perspectives on abalone compliance. The abalone industry is adopting a range of new technologies to help assess and manage the resource.

The need for at sea inspections was questioned by industry. Ian Parks explained the rationale is to help inspect catch and size limits. These inspections are conducted infrequently and using caution by the skipper of the vessel. Communication between the officer and deck hand is critical. Divers are only asked to surface if absolutely required. The safe work procedure was tabled by Paul Shea.

Action: The at sea inspection procedure will be recirculated to the industry by the VFA.

Industry queried the management arrangements for fishing of greenlip abalone once a blacklip abalone SMU is reached.

Action: Industry and the VFA agreed to further discuss this matter out of session.

Kaz Bartaska explained his vision for the fishery and how regulations need to also consider the market and consumer demand. Kaz would like to grow the domestic market for abalone. The VFA supports this concept.

A question about the 10kg carry over was put forward by industry and how this works for a diver working multiple quota units on a day. The VFA explained it does not monitor catches against different quota units.

Action: Industry and the VFA agreed to further discuss this matter out of session.

Industry asked if standard bin weights could be adopted as this would simplify catch weighing and reporting. The VFA agreed to review this matter in consultation with the industry.

Action: The AIC to write to the VFA request a review and consider if standard bin weights could be introduced.

6. Recreational abalone fishery compliance overview

Rod Barber provided an overview of recreational fisheries compliance across the state. Compliance rates are generally low. The central Victorian waters closed season and bag limit changes, now a decade old, have been a major factor in reducing illegal take and rebuilding stocks of abalone in inshore areas.

7. Unlicensed abalone compliance overview

Chris Angwin provided a summary of recent compliance work targeting unlicensed sector, including catching and illegal processing. Operation Quantum was a highly successful piece of work targeting an organised syndicate of abalone crime. Operation Talon and Apache were other highly effective operations conducted by VFA staff. Industry congratulated the VFA on these operations.

8. Summary and meeting close

The meeting closed at 2.30pm and Dallas thanked everyone for attending.

It was agreed the information presented by the VFA has been valuable to industry. VFA staff have also benefited from hearing industry perspectives on how fisheries regulations are enforced and how we can work together in future.

The draft record of the meeting will be circulated to the AIC.

Key actions and outcomes will be progressed by the VFA and industry. SIV will also be included in these deliberations.