



FINAL REPORT (DEVELOPMENT AWARD)

AWARD CODE and TITLE

2019-162 **Western Abalone Divers Association 2020 Quota Setting Workshop:
Opportunity for shared understanding of potential TACC setting processes
by Western Australian Abalone stakeholders**

AWARD RECIPIENT: Basia Lamb and Angus Callander

ADDRESS: Level 1, 56 Marine Terrace Fremantle WA 6959

HOST ORGANISATION: Industry Consultation Unit, Western Australian Fishing Industry Council

DATE: April 2020

ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN

The staff of the Industry Consultation Unit travelled in January 2020 to Port Fairy Victoria to attend the WADA 2020 Quota Setting Workshop to gain an understanding of the Western Zones TACC setting process, and formulate a overview of how to better undertake the workshop in Western Australia, specifically for Area 3 Abalone Fishery. In attending the Workshop, the ICU Staff connected with representatives of WADA, Licence Holders and Divers of the Western Zone, and key members of the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

The key outcomes were the opportunity to witness a collaborative, clear workshop with a Fishery that had reached a co-management stage of development and understanding how a Fishery must change to progress to that position. The techniques used to corroborate anecdotal evidence and the value of strong working relationships with other stakeholders was invaluable for the ICU staff to witness and have inspired the need to develop the way consultation is conducted.

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge the support we received from the Managing Director of the FRDC Dr Patrick Hone, the Senior Portfolio Manager Dr Christopher Izzo, the WADA Representatives Harry Peeters, Dr Duncan Worthington and Craig Fox, and thank the Licence Holders and Divers of the Western Zone for making us feel welcome.

Background

The Western Australian Area 3 Abalone Fishery has experienced a decline in biomass since 2010 due to several potential factors, which were listed in FRDC project 2018-212 '[Establishing an industry recovery strategy for the Area 3 zone of the Western Australian Abalone Managed Fishery](#)'. The Area

3 Authorization Holders saw the need to establish and industry led recovery strategy for the Greenlip abalone (*Haliotis laevis*), and requested the aid of Western Abalone Divers Association representatives Harry Peeters, Dr Duncan Worthington and Craig Fox to aid in the creation of the recovery strategy through project 2018-212.

Since then, an industry recovery strategy has been completed for the Area 3 Abalone Fishery, which is in the process of being implemented. Within the Recovery Strategy, the document highlights the need for two independent facilitators to manage the necessary data collection and the setting of conservative catch arrangements. Industry members requested that the staff of the Industry Consultation Unit fulfil these roles, as the Business Unit already had the capacity to take on the project.

To gain a further understanding of the processes undertaken by the Western Abalone Divers Association to establish their seasonal quota, it was suggested that the Industry Consultation Unit staff members attend the workshop in January 2020 in an observer capacity.

Need

The Industry Consultation Unit has been tasked with undertaking the independent facilitation of the Abalone Area 3 Recovery Strategy, which was developed within FRDC project 2018-212 '[Establishing an industry recovery strategy for the Area 3 zone of the Western Australian Abalone Managed Fishery](#)'. As a critical component of the development of key decision-making practices, it has been proposed that the Industry Consultation Unit attend the Western Abalone Divers Association Quota Setting Workshop, held on the 15th and 16th of January 2020.

Facets of the Recovery Strategy will be modelled off the Western Abalone Divers Association recovery plan, it would be highly beneficial for the Industry Consultation Unit to attend the Workshop and observe the industry lead decision making process.

Objectives

Establish an industry engagement strategy for the WA Area 3 Abalone Fishery based on the approach used, and knowledge gained, by the Victorian Western Zone Fishery and the Western Abalone Divers Association.

Methods

This Development Award was primarily focused on attendance of the 2-day Western Abalone Divers Association 2020/21 Quota Setting Workshop, held on the 15th and 16th of January 2020.

Representatives from Western Australia Industry Consultation Unit – Angus Callander and Basia Lamb (nee Littlejohn) – travelled to Port Fairy, Victoria, to utilize the knowledge and learning from the Western Abalone Divers Association to develop an industry engagement process that will be implemented throughout the recovery period for the WA Area 3 Abalone Fishery – this will be the key output from the Workshop.

During the two day workshop session, representatives from the Victorian Fisheries Authority provided a seminar on their electronic catch reporting system, which would be useful knowledge for those participating in the recovery process – such as the WA Area 3 Abalone Fishery.

Results/Discussion

The two outputs from the Workshop were:

1. The Workshop Summary Document (Appendix One)
2. An industry engagement plan for the Area 3 Abalone Fishery (Appendix Two)

Benefits and Adoption

Attendance at the workshop had dual immediate and long-term benefits. In the short term, this project (in conjunction with the learnings from project 2018-212) provides the basis for industry led decision making in the promotion the recovery of the WA Area 3 Abalone Fishery. This includes the development of the industry engagement plan for the Area 3 Abalone Fishery (Appendix Two). This has been written in such a way that other Australian Abalone Fisheries might be able to take up the strategies within the document.

Moreover, workshop attendance facilitated the transfer of knowledge between abalone jurisdictions and industry stakeholders – namely for the Industry Consultation Unit staff. This will yield long-term benefits in broadening the capacity of the ICU staff for any future consultation with industry.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Summary: Western Zone Abalone Stock Assessment and Quota Setting Workshop 2020-21

Appendix 2: Industry Engagement Plan

Appendix One:

Summary: Western Zone Abalone Stock Assessment and Quota Setting Workshop 2020-21



Western Zone Abalone Stock Assessment and Quota Setting Workshop 2020-21

Welcome and Introduction

Craig Fox - Presenter

Commencement at 9:16 am.

Attendees:

Patrick Hone	Owen Burnell	Sandra Downes
Harry Peeters	Thor Saunders	Len McCall
Craig Fox	Ewan Flanagan	Jamie Espie
Duncan Worthington	Melissa Shubert	Darvin Janssen
Josh Cahill	John Minehan	Kirsten Abernethy
Charlie Cooper	Ali Jalali	Scott McCree
Allan Buck	Mark Aspin	Rick Harris
Dallas D 'Silva	Peter Riddle	Cleve Thiele
Lou Plummer	Jo Plummer	Phil Plummer
Rob Torelli	Kerry Rowe	Luke Rowe
Andrew Rowe	Murray Peterson	Fayeqh Hashemi
Angus Callander	Basia Littlejohn	

Craig Fox opened the meeting and discussed the following:

- Acknowledged attendance of observers and noted guests.
- Advised the extend of the damage caused by the recent and ongoing bushfire crisis, noting that the Mallacoota Co-op was lost, homes of industry members were additionally affected. Stressed the importance to reflect and consider the rest of industry and their current perspectives.
- Advised of the recent change of Management Staff, whereby the Management Officer for the fishery had changed to Mark Aspin.
- Notified the changes to the Abalone Levy that will be effective from 1 July 2020. Rather than funds being delivered to the Abalone Council Australia, the funds will be directed into a designated statewide body to provide the significant funding collected to endeavors of research, marketing development and the like.

- Notified of the near commencement of a trial whereby line caught fish by those with an FBL could be provided for the tourism industry within Port Fairy – this was brought in with the advocacy aid of Harry Peeters and Craig Fox.
- Advised that 2019 was the first year that the VFA has had the confidence to allow WADA to conduct the full stock assessment – noted that the Independent Surveys were still being conducted by the VFA.

Introductory 'round-robin' was conducted.

Dinner invite and request for RSVP.

Signed attendance form.

Housekeeping (lunch) and introduction of the WADA TACC Setting Workshop Chair and Director of the FRDC Patrick Hone.

Overview of the Day

Patrick Hone - Presenter

Objectives

Co-Management Definition: Patrick Hone advised that the WZ was one of the most sophisticated groups that were edging into co-management which was evident with the industry's ability to conduct the stock assessment. He stressed the need to continually evolve, to trust that all stakeholders operate in good faith, and ensure that the science is quality. As a part of co-management, Licence Holders and Divers must continue to educate themselves on what it means to manage a fishery, with knowledge extending beyond fishing practices and into the realm of ecology, biology and reproduction. The education must never stop, and continued improvement must be sought. For successful co-management, there must be a group of skilled people with significant capability. Patrick advised that this Fishery was now a role-model for the wider fishing community and there is significant opportunity to collaborate and share.

Process

Patrick Hone advised the process for the Workshop discussions:

1. Run through the state of each reef code system; and
2. Assess the totality of the fishery in line with the HS and any necessary increases.

He advised that a meeting report will be generated and finalised, which will inform the decision for the quota allocation for the next season. He stressed the importance of accurate minuting and advised that commentary would be recorded in detail.

Recap and conditions from January 2019 Stock Assessment and Quota Workshop

Mark Aspin – Presenter

Mark Aspin provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the current conditions applied to the fishery and the previous discussion from the 2019 Quota Setting Workshop. He covered the following:

- The process tree for the VFA quota setting;
- Abalone Fishery Objectives, noting that the rebuild and maintenance of abalone stocks is paramount, with a focus on secure access;
- Considerations for the 2020/21 TACC, noting the importance of keeping to Target TACC arrangements, ongoing data collection and reporting in conjunction with the positive Harvest Strategy outcomes; and
- Greenlip fishery overview (spatial) catch, noting that all the CEO requirements were met for 2019.
- The 2020/21 Commitments for the VFA (Projects):
 - Review of the Management Plan;
 - Commence Fisheries Regulations 2019 (FEB 2020);
 - VIC E-Catch rollout;

- VMS implementation;
- Continued support for co-management arrangement;
- Facilitation of interstate landing – Discovery Bay fishing (MOU) – sale across state also being considered;
- Translocation and commercial harvesting; and
- Harvest Strategy review.

General Overview of the Western Zone Fishery

Duncan Worthington – Presenter

Duncan Worthington provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the current working arrangements that are undertaken with the Western Zone.

Data Logger Overview: There are three types of logger systems:

- The Succorfish Logger for boat positioning;
- Diver worn Depth Loggers linked to the Succorfish, whereby a combination of the Succorfish Logger and Depth Logger enables the isolation of exactly where the diver is working;
- Data Logger which records the size and amount of Abalone and position the position where the logging occurs.

Duncan noted that only two of the data sets are being recognised and used within the Harvest Strategy (size of fish and size of reef utilised) and the dive events need to be incorporated into the Harvest Strategy (Kilos per Ha per Dive Event). Duncan provided a summary of the data presentation (heatmap), noting that he was able to represent individual dive events, instances of logged abalone, and the tracking of reefcode activity over time and its intensity.

Duncan advised that VMS will be a requirement for 2021, however, he advised that he hopes that the Succorfish unit could be utilised for this purpose rather than using two separate units.

Duncan advised that the new Scilex Measuring Board were now in full use, which allows for real time data of where and when divers are working. He advised that he could implement Geo-fences for the compliance of voluntary closed areas.

Duncan provided an overview of the Geoff Diver Report: Focus on the loss of both the Dianne and Returner vessels. Duncan noted that Succorfish could be used in emergency situations, however, there would need to be a legal instrument for this function (the FRDC is currently creating a template of the legal structure). Consideration would also need to be placed around the concept of Duty of Care, as WADA are the account holders with Succorfish and would hold ultimate responsibility should this be implemented.

Duncan additionally noted that all loggers can be subpoenaed. Individual divers are entitled to their own data however all other data remains confidential.

Stock Assessment and Harvest Strategy Overview

Duncan Worthington – Presenter

Duncan advised that the Western Zone Harvest Strategy 2016-20 was a 30-page document and rather complex, however instructed Licence Holders and Divers to make themselves familiar with it.

Duncan reminded meeting attendees of the function of a reference point, that it is a 'hurdle' that must be met and are based upon the abundance surveys alone.

Duncan provided overview of the mature biomass, noting that the last survey was conducted in January of 2019.

Spatial Management Units (SMU) Assessment and TACC Process Facilitated by WADA Science Advisory

Duncan Worthington – Presenter

Duncan ran through the following data sets for each of the Spatial Management Units:

- Catch and Catch rate (raw and standardised catch rates), Average Catch Per Day;
- Logger Lengths (raw and standardised);

- Survey Unders, Survey Matures and Survey Legals for both current and all survey sites; and
- A summary of the findings.

Duncan provided an overview of the Legal Biomass Estimates and Harvest Fraction Percentage (Table 1, Page 18) within the Harvest Strategy context.

Duncan provided an Action List for 2020 for WADA to undertake, and noted that Keith Sainsbury had requested that the following be implemented:

- Reefcode Report Card – a new indicator explanation key.
- End of the Assessment Report – Catch and catch rate from 1979 onwards.
- Pre-Recruits – All raw, all standardised and current standardised.

Summary and Recommendations

Duncan proceeded to bring up each of the Divers Go-Pro footage and encouraged them to provide their assessment of the current biomass in the areas in which they dived. The tool is useful to provide a visualization of the bottom for those who do not have the capacity or opportunity to see it themselves. Divers provided explanation of the areas, the fish density, the sizes and their reason why they took the footage (if there was a specific reason it was provided).

Duncan led the Target TACC setting process by providing the following data sets:

- Catch Target and Total Catch
- Catch Rate (raw average of diver days and standardised)
- Length of Logger Measured Abalone per/diver day (raw and standardised)
- Survey Indexes for the four SMU with Legal Biomass, Mature Biomass, Undersized Biomass.

Divers then provided comments on how they had experienced the reefcode and what their recommendation was. The Assistant recorded all commentary on a projector to ensure that comments were captured accurately for record keeping purposes.

It is important to note that the active divers who worked the bottom during the year are considered firstly, and then a 'round-robin' is completed to include all stakeholder comments. The group then ensures that the Target is set, and all agree to the decision prior to moving forward to the next reefcode. Comments are recorded on the screen for verification.

During this process, if there were industry issues to be discussed, the meeting would discuss it regarding the reefcode and any general issues that are relevant.

In instances when the trend was showing consistent decline and/or an inability to reach the Target TACC (remotely), it was agreed to implement a decrease to the Target TACC. There was good faith that if a reef code was not showing growth, that remaining or increasing the Target was not in line with the intent to recover the stock.

The Targets, Thresholds and Limits were up for discussion; however, it was agreed that these would remain in place for relevant Reefcodes.

Those with no allocation are completed at the end of the SMU run-through.

Legal Biomass Estimates and Harvest Fraction Percentage

Whilst the conversation is being had and the reefcodes are being set, the Executive Officer Harry Peeters adds up the Target TACCs being set.

Legal biomass reductions effect the harvest fraction percentage.

SMU	Recommended Catch (T)	Harvest Fraction
Julia Percy Island	6	11.54%
Port Fairy	18.7	7.14%
Portland	27.8 + 4.2 = 32	13.56% (No DB)
Warnambool	12	11%
Total	68.7 (Incl DB)	

*DB = Discovery Bay

Summary

Patrick Hone provided his commentary on the Target TACC Setting Process, noting:

- Too much time on catch versus target catch, as the other indicators should also be considered, for example, the biomass and abalone on the bottom.
- There was a problem with the biomass estimate, and Patrick advised that WADA must resolve the issue.
- Both Duncan and Keith had expressed their wish to use more of the data that is being collected, and not omit the information. WADA may need to discuss the policy decision on what data is utilised.
- An issue was raised regarding the prevalence of a native Starfish, a natural predator of Abalone. Patrick stated that data must be collected on the rates of interaction, as 'A-lot' is not quantifiable and does not qualify as a reason to act upon the concern.
- The collection of growth rate and aging data has been a concern, with consideration require as to whether a standardised growth data set needs to be developed. A solution may be that additional data is collected on those reefcodes that are deemed critical.
- The formation of the new Harvest Strategy must be completed in a structured way, as it is a large body of work.

In closing, Patrick suggested that the fishery should strive to complete an industry survey to replace the VFA surveys by 2025, as this would be the marker of a successful transition to co-management.

Meeting close at 3:29pm.



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**INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT PLAN for the Area
3 Abalone Managed Fishery in Western
Australia**

**Basia Lamb and Angus Callander
April 2020**



Industry Engagement Summary

The Industry Consultation Unit will perform industry engagement services with Abalone Area 3 Stakeholders on relevant issues regarding the industry recovery strategy formulated during FRDC Project 2018-212 *Establishing an industry recovery strategy for the Area 3 zone of the WA Abalone Managed Fishery* (the Project).

The following document is an outline of the means by which the Industry Consultation Unit will perform industry engagement services, provide transparent decision-making frameworks and the relevant code of conduct for participating stakeholders.

This Industry Engagement Plan was supported by funding from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) on behalf of the Australian Government through project 2019-162 *Western Abalone Divers Association 2020 Quota Setting Workshop: Opportunity for shared understanding of potential TACC setting processes by Western Australian Abalone stakeholders*. This Plan was informed by consultation with the Executive of the Western Zone Divers Association.

1. Overview of the Industry Consultation Unit

The Industry Consultation Unit was developed through a Service Level Agreement with the Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, tasked with ensuring that consultation services that are both statutory and non-statutory in nature are delivered impartially and independently of any commercial and departmental influence.

The Industry Consultation Unit has broadened its capacity to provide independent facilitation of the Area 3 Abalone Industry Recovery Strategy. Specifically, the Executive Officer of the Industry Consultation Unit will be tasked with determining the necessary level and frequency of engagement with Area 3 Stakeholders for the term of the Industry Recovery Strategy implementation, estimated completion in 2023. This Industry Engagement Plan provides a clear overview of the Industry Engagement Processes and Procedures for the life of the Project. This document will remain in an amendable state to allow for flexibility within the Recovery Strategy.

2. Stakeholder Groups to be Included Within the Engagement Plan

The Business Unit will arrange and facilitate industry engagement services with Area 3 Abalone Stakeholders, of which include the following subsets:

- Authorisation Holders
- Commercial Divers
- Departmental Research Officers
- Departmental Management Officers
- Departmental Compliance Officers
- Relevant approved Observers and Guests

3. Conduct Within Industry Consultation Unit Hosted Meetings

It is expected that all stakeholders participating in all facets of the Industry Recovery Strategy conduct themselves to the standard outlined below when liaising with fellow stakeholders or the Industry Consultation Unit:

- All stakeholders, Industry Consultation Unit staff, and guests are to be treated with respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Participants will be considerate, respectful, and collaborative.
- Participants will communicate openly with respect for others, critiquing ideas rather than individuals. All stakeholders have the right to object constructively.
- Participants will avoid personal attacks directed toward other stakeholders.



- Participants will be mindful of surroundings and of fellow participants. Alert the Industry Consultation Unit staff if a dangerous situation arises or someone is in distress.
- Participants will respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue.

The following behaviors are not tolerated at Industry Consultation Unit hosted meetings:

- Harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination in any form;
- Physical or verbal abuse of any participant; and
- Disruption of Industry Consultation Unit hosted meetings.

4. Decision Making Procedures for Industry

Voting within industry has had considerable contention, with some in industry wishing for a 1 licence 1 vote system, or a stakeholder equalizing system. For the purposes of this Industry Recovery Strategy Project, primary decisions will be made by:

- Commercial Divers regarding the setting of TACC arrangements
- Authorisation Holders regarding structural, governance and Project arrangements
- Departmental Staff regarding viability of voluntary arrangement changes

5. Requirement for Meetings to be Held

During the Project, there will be the requirement for several meeting to be held, either in person or via electronic means. The meetings include:

- Industry TACC Setting Workshop in December/January each year;
- Pre-Season Commencement Meeting in March each year;
- Post Season Commencement Meeting in May each year;
- Mid-Season Meeting in September each year; and
- As required for the purposes of information sharing, troubleshooting, mediation and other services as required.

For the duration of the Project, the Executive Officer of the Industry Consultation Unit will be the independent Chair for each meeting, with which all liaison-based issues are to be directed.

The consultation process undertaken by the Industry Consultation Unit will comprise of non-statutory consultation undertaken with authorisation holders, commercial divers, and department staff, interchangeably or jointly, by the way of 'meetings', 'teleconferences', 'videoconferences' or 'workshops' to provide an opportunity for the exchange of information between Stakeholders and the Industry Consultation Unit.

5. a. When Meetings Are Not Required

All information in regard to the implementation of the Industry Recovery Strategy will be provided through any of the listed means:

- Hard copy post
- Soft copy email
- Soft copy bulletin
- Telephone
- Video
- In person

5. b. Submission of Stakeholder Views

There will be times during the Project whereby Industry Consultation Unit may request that Stakeholders present their views on a matter. Stakeholders will be invited by covering letter with accompanying information to submit their views.

This may include

- Forwarding submissions to the Industry Consultation Unit in writing (paper form) or email (electronic form)
- Discussion within a formal forum or meeting
- Contacting the Industry Consultation Unit by telephone or attending in person

All views received by ways of submission on each fishery will be consolidated into a summary report provided by the Industry Consultation Unit.

6. Industry Consultation Unit Roles and Responsibilities Conducting Meetings

Before each Meeting the Industry Consultation Unit will ensure that:

- Clear set of relevant objectives have been developed
- Specific objectives are set for each agenda item, for information, discussion, action and allocated time are set
- Attendance has been planned to insure there is a valid reason for each person to attend
- Each person has been notified in advance of meeting date and place and the specific topic they have been invited to address
- Relevant meeting information is provided 3 business days in advance of the meeting to ensure that there is sufficient time for it to be read and considered

Each meeting will be Chaired by the Executive Officer of the Industry Consultation Unit and:

- Ensure that the meeting starts on time
- Summarize why each person has been asked to attend (his/her role)
- Review the objectives and agenda
- Define the process to follow



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- Establish the ground rules; e.g. interruptions/side issues
- Ensure there is a consensus on the results, agreement or grounds of disagreement

After the meeting:

- Minutes of the meeting will be distributed to those in attendance or interested parties within 4 weeks from the date of the meeting being held.
- Consultation with those in attendance or interested parties by form of telephone contact or written paper or electronic form inviting response on views of the meeting

Follow up from the meeting:

- Action items to be tracked and followed up
- Progress of action items to be forwarded to those in attendance
- When action items have been completed advise to be forwarded to those in attendance or interested parties advising of closure
- Future meeting dates forwarded to those in attendance or interested parties

6. Record Keeping and right of Access to material

The Industry Consultation Unit will keep all documentation relating to the Project under an electronic records system. Stakeholder have the right to request the provision of paper-based documents, electronic records and email correspondence, however, the Industry Consultation Unit will maintain the right to refuse access at their discretion.

All requests for access to records are to be lodged with the Executive Officer of the Industry Consultation Unit.

Mr Angus Callander
Executive Officer
Email: eo@icu.org.au
Phone: (08) 9432 7702

Mrs Basia Lamb
Project Officer
Email: ea@icu.org.au
Phone: (08) 9432 7711