



An investigation of recreational fishing peak bodies in Western Australia, Victoria and Northern Territory to identify insights into models of success

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Responsibility for all views expressed and any remaining errors and omissions lie with the author.

Executive Summary

Recreational fishing is considered a cornerstone of the Tasmanian, and could be argued, the Australian, way of life. Recreational fishers are typically represented by a state-based recreational fishing peak body, reflecting the predominantly state-based management of these fisheries.

In 2021, the Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc. (TARFish) identified that its current form and mode of operation is uncertain and not sustainable in the long term and, most importantly, could better meet the needs of recreational fishers in Tasmania by improving its capacity and capability.

To support organisational renewal, TARFish sought to understand the traits and/or conditions that contribute to a successful peak body model to better meet the needs of Tasmania's recreational fishers.

Through the TARFish CEO's directorship on the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF), it was evident that, across Australia there was a significant disparity in the operating models and levels of success achieved by state based peak organisations. From Queensland where there is no single effective state-wide recreational fisher representative organisation, to Western Australia with Recfishwest providing a broad range of services to recreational fishers, it was evident that there was a need to understand the different models of success for state based recreational peak bodies so that learnings could be applied in a range of jurisdictions according to their needs and constraints.

By investigating three current successful recreational fishing peak body models, the success factors, benefits, and risks, together with how it was achieved, over what time frame, and potential future growth planned by each organisation, insights could be distilled.

The investigation examined Recfishwest (Western Australia), Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body Ltd (VRFish) (Victoria), and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) (Northern Territory) in terms of:

1. Organisational structure, governance, and length of operation (maturity)
2. Advocacy and lobbying approach and outcomes
3. Program and service delivery, including partnerships
4. Membership value, types, and quantum
5. Funding source, security, and quantum
6. Relationships with key stakeholders and State Government
7. Community perception of organisation
8. Consideration of how each body determines the priorities and research and development needs of recreational fishers

An important feature of the development of the project was consultation. The project was developed in consultation with key stakeholders: the TARFish Board, the Tasmanian Government, ARFF directors (as representatives of the recreational fishing sector nationally and a secondary user of the outputs of the research), and the specific jurisdictions to be studied - Victoria (VRFish), Western Australian (Recfishwest), and Northern Territory (AFANT). Undertaking targeted consultation ensured alignment with TARFish's strategic objectives, the Tasmanian Government's 10-year Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy, and the needs of other jurisdictions inclusive of the national peak body, that may benefit from the research.

The investigation used a combination of desktop research, literature review and interviews with peak body CEO's, government personnel and other stakeholders to identify insights and from that provide recommendations on preferred model(s) to work towards in the context of TARFish's current state and future aspirations.

The investigation found that there is a strong correlation between a government's progress toward co-management and how the government perceived or valued the peak body, and the roles and functions undertaken by the peak body.

Regardless of where the peak body sat on the spectrum of the four fisheries co-management models (centralised; consultative; collaborative; delegated), the critical success factors to move from one model to another appear consistent. The critical success factors include: (i) the preconditions, (ii) catalysts for change, and (iii) key insights (which includes reducing risk from barriers to change).

Additionally, the combination of success factors identified for each organisation investigated aligned with the organisations performance of management functions as identified in Neville (2008) in relation to where the organisation sat on the spectrum of co-management.

Based on the insights identified in the investigation, specific recommendations are provided for the TARFish Board for each of the factors investigated.

More broadly, the research is likely to provide valuable insight for recreational fishing peak bodies and potentially commercial fishing peak bodies, to consider their own organisational structure and function. This may be further supported and enabled by:

1. National benchmarking process that assesses both government and peak bodies against the functions identified in Neville (2008) "Change in performance of functions through management types" every 3-5 years.
2. Development of a guiding document and self-assessment tool to assist organisations to identify and understand what the current critical success factors are for their jurisdiction.
3. Development of criteria (including assessment against the guiding document above) and funding to support peak bodies that are seeking to change their model of operation. This would ensure that there is equity of access, sufficient organisational capacity available through the change process, and enable use of external consultants to assist boards. This could contribute markedly to the success rate for organisational change.
4. Supporting recreational fishing peak bodies to undertake bi-annual 'organisational exchange' to specifically discuss the seven factors discussed in part 2 of this report. Leadership should be added as an eighth.

Keywords

Peak Body, Recreational Fishing, Recreational Fishers, Governance, Co-Management, Membership, Advocacy, Funding, Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing, TARFish, Tasmanian Government, Recfishwest, AFANT, VRFish, RecFishSA

1 Introduction

The Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc. ([TARFish](#)) has existed since 2004 and has not changed significantly since 2009 with the membership, structure, and activities consistent with those described by Plowman (2013). The organisation currently:

- is responsible for representing recreational marine fishers;
- operates under a service level agreement with the State Government that will expire in 2024;
- has an 8-member board under the guidance of an independent Chair. The board is made up of nominees from its member organisations (4), regional representatives (2) and expert members (2). The board has 1 female member and no members under 45 (at the time of reporting);
- has an “Executive Committee” made up of the Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary (with the CEO permitted to act as secretary but without voting rights) that can decide on any matter of the organisation; and
- delivers no programs or services to the recreational fishing community apart from advocacy.

The TARFish Board undertook an informal board and organisational review in 2020-21 and identified that its current form and mode of operation is uncertain and not sustainable in the long term and, most importantly, could improve its capacity and capability to better meet the needs of recreational fishers in Tasmania.

Specifically, some fishers expressed the following views regarding TARFish:

- The Board is not sufficiently representative (no elected board members).
- The organisation does not “do anything” for recreational fishers.
- The organisation is not sufficiently engaging with recreational fishers.
- There are no perceived benefits of membership.
- The organisation is not independent due to its primary funding source (Tasmanian Government).

From this, the TARFish Board determined to undertake a process of organisational renewal but it was not clear what “success” would look like, what makes it possible, and a pathway to achieve it.

To support a greater understanding of how to undertake a process of organisational renewal and determine a preferred operating model, TARFish sought to understand the factors of successful peak body models to better meet the needs of Tasmania's recreational fishers. Specifically, the Board were interested in better understanding what organisational structure and governance framework would enable the organisation to:

1. Increase membership
2. Increase effectiveness of advocacy
3. Increase funding security and quantum
4. Improve standing amongst recreational fishers and the Tasmanian community more broadly.

To do this, a review of other Australian recreational peak bodies that may be considered “successful” was undertaken with the intention on reporting to the TARFish Board on the findings, including recommendations that the Board could act upon.

2 Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- Identify the combination of organisational and external/other factors that lead to the success of the specific model under investigation.
- Identify organisational and external risks that may act as a barrier to successful models of operation, and where possible, identify methods used to overcome barriers or reduce risks.
- Identify pathway (milestones) and critical success factors when moving from one model of operation to another.
- Understanding the role that funding source, quantum and security has on model selection/evolution.
- Consider how each body determines the strategic needs and research and development priorities for recreational fishers.

3 Method

The project used qualitative investigation methods to analyse existing literature and gather information, primarily from interviews, together with supporting documentation where available.

Specifically, the report combined a literature review, interviews with Government and Peak Body personnel and a workshop of the participating peak bodies. This process is described in greater detail below.

Preparatory stage: Identifying and selecting peak bodies to examine, scoping of investigation

At the time of commencing this work, Australia had three recreational fishing peak bodies (excluding TARFish) that had service level agreements (or similar) with their respective state governments and had a paid Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Executive Officer (EO). These two elements together with demonstrated support of recreational fishers (through membership or ability to access) and clarity of purpose of their organisation were the primary considerations for selection. The peak bodies that were selected as a result were Recfishwest (Western Australia), Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body Ltd (VRFish) (Victoria) and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) (Northern Territory).

The initial discussions with the three organisations, and review of publicly available information from their websites, quickly identified that they had quite different scales, modes of operation, work programs, organisational structures, and governance.

[Recfishwest](#) was notable for the quality and availability of information about the organisation and apparent quality of governance. It was also evident they had significantly higher levels of funding and were offering a range of programs and services.

[AFANT](#) operating in a state with a strong recreational fishing culture, was notable for the effectiveness of its working relationship with both executive and bureaucratic government.

[VRFish](#) exhibited high quality communication and capacity to engage with and mobilise recreational fishers in support of its advocacy program.

From those initial discussions with the three organisations and review of publicly available information from their websites, the broad areas, or factors, for investigation were identified. These were:

- **Structures and governance:** organisational structure and governance, capacity to deliver programs and services
- **Operational:** Advocacy, programs and services delivery, communication
- **Funding:** how much, from where, how secured, how retained
- **Support and perception:** how the organisation is valued amongst recreational fishers, how are they reached
- **Relationships:** with government and key stakeholders, effectiveness

Stage 1: Literature review

A number of research reports, prepared over the last fifteen years, were used to:

- Consider current and historical examination of similar topics including examinations of peak bodies within the fishing sector (both commercial and recreational), fisher engagement and co-management.
- Identify themes or insights to inform the subsequent interview structure and later stages of the project.
- Assist in identifying a structure to present information in a report.

Publicly available information for each of the subject jurisdictions was sought. This was primarily through web search and review of peak body websites. Specifically:

- Organisational governance documents such as rules and policies
- History of each organisation and how it had changed in their structure and function over time
- Current organisational structure
- Public reporting (what information is shared with members and/or the public)
- Social media presence and approach
- News media reporting to inform understanding of advocacy approach.
- Legislation, government policies and government reports.

The literature review informed the development of the discussion guide used in Stage 2 (Interviews with CEOs of each of the peak bodies) and Stage 4 (Interviews with key government personnel and sector experts) of the project.

Specifically, the literature review identified the seven factors to guide examination of the organisations so that the specific elements under each that improved the likelihood of being a successful organisation could be identified.

The seven factors:

1. Organisational structure, governance and length of operation (maturity)
2. Advocacy and lobbying approach and outcomes
3. Program and service delivery, including partnerships
4. Membership value, types and quantum
5. Funding source, security and quantum

6. Relationships with key stakeholders and State Government
7. Community perception of organisation

Consideration of how each body determines the priorities and research and development needs of recreational fishers was also included in the investigation.

The seven factors were then used to form the structure of the investigation and final report structure.

Stage 2: Interviews with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) at each of the peak bodies

One-on-one interviews were conducted with the Chief Executive Officers at each of the subject organisations.

A discussion guide was prepared for the interviews. An example discussion guide for the CEO interviews is provided as Appendix 1. The discussion guide was provided prior to the interview to allow participating CEOs to prepare.

The interviews were not limited to the questions contained in the discussion guide to facilitate breadth of feedback and to allow matters to be discussed that may not have been contemplated when the discussion guide was developed and/or allow discussions to address potentially state/organisation specific issues.

In addition to the formal interview process, there had also been preliminary conversations and then follow up conversations to clarify information.

The output from stage 2 was the development of preliminary insights from the project.

Stage 3: A group workshop with the Chief Executive Officers to discuss and refine initial insights

A one-day workshop was held in Adelaide to consider the preliminary insights against each of the seven variables identified. The aim of the workshop was to:

1. Check on the accuracy of the authors understanding that informed identification of insights
2. Validate the insights
3. Determine the commonality of specific insights
4. The links between insights
5. Identify any other insights not yet identified
6. Identify insights that were not supported.

The workshop was facilitated by an independent facilitator.

Notably, the workshop facilitator had good understanding of the history and current operation of the peak body in South Australia. This was instructive and provided a basic understanding of a fourth jurisdiction to assist the project.

The output of Stage 3 was a further development of the preliminary insights from Stages 1 & 2.

Stage 4: Interviews with key government personnel and other sector experts.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with key government personnel and other sector experts in the relevant state jurisdictions. The interviews included a combination of fisheries or marine resource managers and policy officers, and deputy secretaries and other sector experts with specific knowledge of the jurisdiction.

A discussion guide was prepared for the interviews. An example discussion guide for the government/stakeholder interviews is provided at Appendix 2. The discussion guide was provided prior to the interview to allow participants to prepare.

The output of stage 4 was to provide an alternate perspective and understanding of the insights identified and seek insights that relate specifically to interaction with government and stakeholders.

Stage 5: Report writing and early extension

A draft report was prepared and reviewed by the TARFish Board as the primary stakeholder. Early extension of the draft report included: presentation at the World Recreational Fishing Conference in Melbourne in February 2023, and presentation to the New South Wales working group on the future of a peak body in that jurisdiction in early 2024. Further extension will be undertaken with stakeholders following the release of the final report.

4 Summary of findings

What makes each organisation successful?

The seven factors listed below were developed from the preliminary discussions and literature review and used to investigate and frame the success of each organisation.

1. Organisational structure, governance, and length of operation (maturity)
2. Advocacy and lobbying approach and outcomes
3. Program and service delivery, including partnerships
4. Membership value, types, and quantum
5. Funding source, security, and quantum
6. Relationships with key stakeholders and State Government
7. Community perception of organisation

The project attempted to identify the combination of success factors associated with each organisation. Whilst not a complete list, the table identifies the success factors of each organisation based on the interviews with each organisation coupled with a review of their respective websites documentation and other non-public documentation, such as service level agreements, provided by the organisation. The interviews with key government personnel further informed consideration of the success factors identified, particularly as it related to organisational governance, advocacy and lobbying approach, funding, and relationship with the State Government.

Table 1 Summary of findings

	Recfishwest	VRFish	AFANT
1. Organisational structure and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly developed governance framework (ASX level) reviewed and updated regularly - High calibre board members - Board works on strategy and corporate governance, not inside the organisation - High levels of transparency - Government funds governance improvements - Use of reference groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent improvements in board structure (gender diversity and expert membership) - Government mandated governance improvements to constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strength of governance 'in practice' driven by formal training of all board members - Board member charter - CEO leadership and focus on governance
2. Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity of roles and obligations under legislation, policy and service level agreement - Quality of advice, including alignment with organisations objects and purposes. - Ability to communicate with and consult large proportion of recreational fishers - Developed positions on issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy and plan - Regular survey of fishers to inform strategy and plan - Ability to mobilise membership on issues - Ability to communicate with a large proportion of recreational fishers - Political capability of CEO - Developed positions on key issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship of CEO with Minister and Director of Fisheries - Solution focussed approach to engagement with government - Well established government processes increase transparency in dealings - Ability to communicate and consult with a large proportion of recreational fishers - Relationship with tackle shops
3. Program and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has in-house research and project management capacity - Regularly manages and supports a range of projects including stock enhancement and research - Primary focus is on delivering programs and services of value to recreational fishers - Programs are highly visible to a broad range of fishers and fishing sub-groups - Provides advice to the state government regarding investment in recreational fishing with demonstrable influence on government decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited capacity for program or service delivery (but aspiring to increase capacity for greater service delivery) - Has worked with partner organisations, assisting with their expertise in extension and community engagement in particular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly visible programs with fishers (considered critical to success) - Partners with other organisations such as OzFish Unlimited to develop expertise and leverage capability of the other organisation - Program and service delivery consistent with organisational capacity (noting efficient human resource use a high priority when considering program and service delivery) - Provides advice to the state government regarding investment in recreational fishing with demonstrable influence on government decision-making

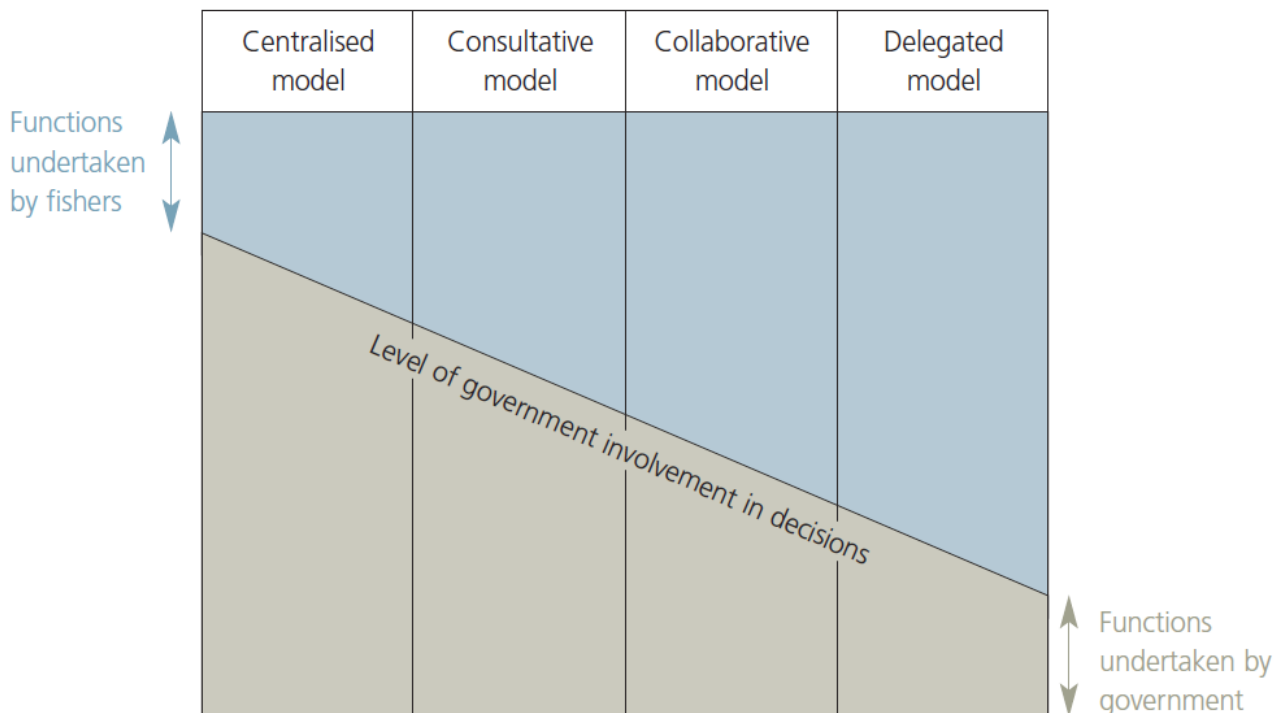
Cont...

	Recfishwest	VRFish	AFANT
4. Membership (incl. partnerships and collaboration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in board elections (legitimising effect) - incl. electronic voting - Licensed fisher contact information pass through - Using range of partnerships to deliver outcomes and leverage significant additional funding (including from outside sector) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in board elections (legitimising effect) - Angler clubs membership provides access to fishers - Licensed fisher contact information pass through - Working with partners on shared advocacy to 'outsize' influence on decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in board elections (legitimising effect) - Annual membership validation - Clubs membership provides access to large pool of fishers - Partnering with organisations to increase technical expertise and develop project capability
5. Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure primary funding stream from "fishing from a boat" licence fees - Arrangements transparent to fishers - 5-year agreement - Capacity to leverage significant secondary funding - Formal recognition as an 'active recreation' provides additional opportunity to leverage further funds from government (outside primary industries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient funding to run lean organisation (noting that funding is not directly linked from the current state-imposed recreational fishing licences) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient primary funding from state government to run lean organisation (there is no recreational fishing licence in the NT) - Value placed on recreational fishing by government - Stability of primary funding from government - Capacity to leverage significant secondary funding
6. Relationship with state government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supported by high quality governance - Clarity of roles and responsibilities - Early engagement in decision making - Connection to a wide base of recreational fishers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political effectiveness of CEO - Ability to mobilise fishers on key issues gives 'weight' to organisation - Recognised by the Department of Sport and Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solutions focussed approach by CEO - Strong relationships with Executive and Bureaucratic government - Value placed on recreational fishing by government
7. Recreational fisher perception of organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive/positive initiatives delivered by organisation such as fishing clinics - Regular communication of outcomes - Recognition of the importance of communication - Licensed fisher contact information pass through to increase reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO very active with fishers - Survey of fishers on their perception of the organisation's performance - Use of a range of communications channels - Licensed fisher contact information pass through to increase reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of mainstream media and online communication - Relationship with tackle shops

Critical success factors when moving from one model to another

From the organisations investigated, a strong correlation between a government’s progress toward co-management and how the government perceive or value the peak body, and the roles and functions undertaken by the peak body was identified. Co-management is defined as “an arrangement in which responsibilities and obligations for sustainable fisheries management are negotiated, shared and delegated between government, fishers, and other interest groups or stakeholders.” (Neville 2008). Neville (2008) goes on to identify four fisheries management models, from highly centralised to de-centralised decision making and functions along a spectrum, as shown below.

Figure 1 Fisheries Management Models (Neville 2008)



From the organisations examined, regardless of where the peak body sat on the spectrum of the four fisheries management models, the critical success factors to move from one model to another appear consistent. The critical success factors include: the preconditions, catalysts for change, and key insights (which includes reducing risk from barriers to change). Neville (2008) identified a range of pre-conditions that could assist organisations assess the potential functions that could be delegated and that they typically must be satisfied for movement towards co-management to be successfully implemented. In addition, Neville (2008) also identified co-management drivers (which is termed ‘catalysts’ in this report) and that they typically fall into two categories, process driven (a more effective process of management) and cost driven (potential for cost savings) and underlying both is usually conflict between parties. The key insights have been drawn specifically from the organisations investigated in this report and therefore relate to recreational fishing peak bodies.

Essential pre-conditions

There is strong commonality between the essential pre-conditions identified in Neville (2008) and those described below. The pre-conditions below were identified from the interviews with the peak bodies and key personnel from the state governments as well as the literature review including Plowman (2013).

1. Political will at Executive Government level (Ministerial leadership)
2. Expressed government intention to move toward co-management
3. A legislative framework that enables delegation of powers to the peak body
4. A fisher organisation that recognises the need to change and is willing to undertake change
5. A fisher organisation with high quality governance framework and a structure that is fit for purpose
6. A fisher organisation with sufficient resources and skills to implement and deliver services, or an ability to negotiate and attract such resources
7. A fisher organisation that can effectively negotiate with government
8. Fishers that want and has the capacity for greater participation in fisheries management

Catalysts for change

Having a catalyst for change increases both the rate and breadth of change to a new model. Without a catalyst, change can still occur but is likely to be incremental and iterative.

1. Change of government or minister
2. Change of government structure
3. Legislative review or new legislation, changes to policy
4. Crisis or serious fisheries management issue(s)
5. Renewal of agreement/funding of the peak body
6. Dissatisfaction (including lack of trust or perceived poor performance) with the peak body

Barriers to change

Barriers to change can prevent, delay or slow progress to a new model. They are typically the inverse of the catalyst for change.

External

1. No ministerial or government will to change
2. Legislation or policy inability to facilitate change
3. Stable and effective fisheries management

Internal

4. A peak body board or committee that is not receptive to change
5. Lack of trust or perceived poor performance of the peak body amongst recreational fishers
6. Limited organisational capacity and/or capability to commence and support the change process
7. Lack of effective organisational leadership within the peak body
8. Funding source, level, and security

Key insights

The pre-conditions and catalysts for change described earlier in this section frame the “what” – what an organisation is currently, what it wants to be, and what may enable change or get in the way.

The key insights frame the “how” – how do we make change happen successfully.

The key insights have been drawn directly from the interviews with the organisations and refined during the workshop. Some participants were already familiar with the work of Neville (2008) and the influence is evident when the insights are considered in the context of the broad steps toward implementing co-management.

There was general agreement amongst the peak bodies investigated that the insights provide practical and applicable guidance for recreational fishing peak bodies.

1. Assess the organisation against the pre-conditions and catalysts for change together with the organisations performance of management functions as identified in Neville (2008) to identify if the organisation is well positioned to undertake a change to a new model
2. Focus on building a “solutions focussed” relationship between the organisation and the Minister and Department
3. Use an external consultant to guide and inform the Board through change
4. Develop a proposal on organisational change to government based on purpose and program rather than a funding focus
5. Have a transition plan to new model and organisational structure – this may include a staged approach over time to a preferred end-goal
6. Seek additional funding support for the change process to ensure that it is sufficiently resourced to ensure a successful transition

5 Discussion: Understanding the success factors across the three jurisdictions

This section discusses each organisation under the following key factors that were identified through the literature review (Stage 1):

1. Governance
2. Advocacy
3. Program and service delivery
4. Membership (including partnerships and collaboration)
5. Funding
6. Relationship with state government
7. Community perception of organisation
8. Research needs and priorities

Governance

High quality corporate governance is often linked to improved organisational performance and vice versa – poor governance practices place an organisation at risk of failure. A framework of robust corporate governance policies and practice should provide transparency and accountability to members, funding partners and stakeholders more broadly. For the purpose of this report, governance is considered under board structure and membership, constitution and governance framework, and the operational practice of governance.

Board structure, composition, and remuneration

Table 2 Board structure, composition and remuneration

Recfishwest	VRFish	AFANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 members • 5 elected, 3 skill-based appointments • Chair elected by Board members • Sub-committees for finance and risk, communication, governance, nomination and remuneration • 2 women, 6 men • Chair and sub-committee chairs remunerated. Total pool for remuneration set by membership each year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 members, • 6 elected, 3 skill-based appointments • Chair elected by VRFish members • No sub-committees • 4 women, 5 men • Not remunerated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 members, • All elected • “Experts” must be members and be elected • Can also have ‘delegates’ of fishing clubs • Elected office bearers • 3 women, 8 men • Not remunerated

Recfishwest

Observations from Recfishwest include:

- Board focused on strategy, risk and finance and does not have an 'operational role' within the organisation. This is enabled by establishing reference groups for specific issues as required.
- The Board had reduced in size from an initial 16 members (which included regional representatives) at the time the organisation first signed its service level agreement with the state government. Such a large board was considered too cumbersome to be effective in its role and was subsequently reduced some years later when its constitution was reviewed and updated.

VRFish

Observations from VRFish include:

- Some board members involve themselves in operational matters due to high level of interest and reflects the clubs and association heritage. This has led to a passionate board though may be characterised as less skilled in terms of organisational governance.
- A ministerial directive required VRFish to achieve a minimum of 50% female board members with access to grants predicated on the minimum 50% female composition. It was felt that the benefit of gender balance created renewed energy and improved calibre of board members.

AFANT

Observations from AFANT include:

- A large board size introduces greater complexity and does not necessarily increase the skill or performance of the board.
- Considers member election of board members an important aspect of their governance.
- Upskilling board members has been a focus for the organisation with:
 - All board members undertaking cross-cultural training
 - Most board members undertaking one of AICD director training or ICDA or Local Government Institute of Australia, or governance courses run regularly by the Department of Sport and Recreation
- Currently reviewing board structure to increase expert members which is expected to increase overall board and organisational performance.

Governance (constitution and policy)

Table 3 Governance (constitution and policy)

Recfishwest	VRFish	AFANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (last updated 2018) • Broad suite of policies that reflects aspects of both the ASX Corporate Governance Council’s Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations, and the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Not-For-Profit Governance Principles. • Constitution and governance policies publicly available from website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (last updated 2021) • Limited number of policies, some recently updated, others outdated but do exist. • Constitution and annual reports publicly available from website • Governance policies not publicly available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (last update 2019) • Limited number of policies with a number currently under development • Annual reports publicly available from website • Constitution and Governance policies not publicly available

Recfishwest

Observations from Recfishwest include:

- Transparency of governance and reporting a critical success factor in developing trust amongst members and key stakeholders and particularly the state government.
- Board leadership in maintaining high level of corporate governance a factor in organisational performance.
- A strong emphasis on regular review and updates of governance to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Government commitment and investment to facilitate continuous improvement in governance of organisation influential in improving governance arrangements and organisational performance (i.e. seen to be of value to government).
- Development of an organisational risk matrix to guide focus for governance improvements prepared and regularly reviewed.
- Current state of governance has been an iterative process and noted that the organisation had a transitional constitution as it migrated to its current board structure and constitution.
- Use of a qualified external consultant to develop an on-boarding and transition plan for the board to aid change considered a critical success factor.
- Reference groups were considered a critical success factor – keeps board out of day-to-day operations and/or issues management, particularly as it relates to advocacy.

VRFish

Observations from VRFish include

- VRFish was the subject of an independent government review in 2020 and specific recommendations to strengthen organisational governance were made. Implementing the recommendations became pre-conditions of their new funding agreement and included matters such as:
 - Updating constitution to reflect best practice Australian Institute Company Director guidelines
 - Changing the board structure and increasing expert membership
 - Facilitating board renewal to ensure the board represents the needs of the range of fishers, with broad expertise and cultural diversity.
 - Increasing female representation
- VRFish responded to Government requests to update and felt the board was more effective and representative.
- High level of communication between Chair and CEO, some communication with other board members outside of formal board processes if engaged in specific issues.

AFANT

Observations from AFANT include:

- Board performs consistently with good governance principles driven by training of board members and that governance performance is beyond that of its current range of policies.
- There is reliance on the Executive Officer (not the board) to drive formal governance framework and policy development.
- Development of board member charter and other supporting documents seen as critical success factor in attracting and retaining high calibre board members and dis-incentivising agenda-driven or activist applicants.
- High level of communication between Chair and CEO, some communication with other board members outside of formal board processes if engaged in specific issues.

Governance - Contribution to success

The contribution to the success of the organisations is summarised below.

- Board structure and composition:
 - Smaller boards (9 or less) were considered more effective.
 - Exclusively ‘representative’ boards (either organisational or regional) were seen as less effective.
 - Expert members were considered a key asset to the organisation – particularly when internal resourcing is lower.
 - Upskilling board members through director training and other training such as cross-cultural training facilitated improved organisational performance.
 - Board diversity improves organisational performance.
 - Government mandated changes to board structure and/or composition may facilitate swifter improvements in board diversity and renewal.
- Governance (constitution and policy)
 - Higher quality governance framework leads to improved organisational performance and reduced risk.
 - The quality of corporate governance related directly to the ability to attract and retain high calibre board members.
 - Independent expert consultants can aid the organisation through governance improvements and particularly if the change is expected to be significant.
- Other:
 - The quality of corporate governance related directly to the effectiveness of the relationship with the state government, this is further explored in the section titled Relationship with State Government.
 - Governance should be regularly reviewed and updated taking a risk-based approach and assessed for ‘fit for purpose.’
 - Leadership by the organisation’s Chair and/or CEO can lead to improved governance.

In terms of risks, it was found that:

- The need for board members to work inside the organisation decreased with improved governance.
- Training can mitigate some risk for organisations with less developed formal/documented governance framework.
- Organisational risk increases when governance is not regularly reviewed and updated.
- Specific government support/resourcing to review and update governance reduces risk to both parties.
- Independent expert consultants can improve the likelihood of successful implementation of governance improvements/changes.
- Board stagnation (low turnover of board members, lack of diversity) increases the risk to organisational performance where there is reduced attention to regular governance improvements and organisational strategy review processes.

Advocacy approach and outcomes

The primary role of a peak body is advocacy. Advocacy in the context of a recreational fishing peak body can be loosely defined as trying to influence the decisions of a government or other authority in support of the rights and aspirations of recreational fishers. Aspects of advocacy include:

1. Representation to government, other decision makers and other stakeholders that can influence government decisions
2. Research, policy development, and advice to government
3. Information dissemination to recreational fishers and the sector generally
4. Fisher consultation and coordination within the recreational fishing community

The tables below describe each organisation on the aspects listed above.

Recfishwest

Table 4 Aspects of advocacy for Recfishwest

Aspect	Description
1. Representation to government/influencing government decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be characterised as ‘operational’ – influencing decisions is typically through established processes within department with interaction between the two organisations occurring at a range of levels. • Until recently, it had been relatively rare for the organisation to escalate issues to Executive Government (Minister/Premier).
2. Research, policy development, and advice to government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-resourced organisation that has in-house researchers and policy officers. Advice to government is considered and evidence based.
3. Information dissemination to recreational fishers and the sector generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly developed fisher communication through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-news to members ○ Social Media ○ News media ○ Forums ○ Other • Considered to be a critical success factor.
4. Fisher consultation and coordination within the recreational fishing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the integrated Fisheries Management Policy (2009) and the legislation, it was the intent of the state government to “de-politicise” fisheries decision making. • Recfishwest, via their service level agreement with the government, are directly responsible for consultation with recreational fishers. This function is not undertaken by the government. • Through legislation and policy, there are a range of points, commencing early in decision making processes, that provide for recreational fishers to be consulted. This typically means that decisions consider the views of recreational fishers early and issues are also identified early. • Recfishwest presents the outcomes of the consultation on a matter to government including the organisation’s position. • According to Recfishwest, this process has been largely successful as it is well understood and predictable. However, recently there have been some limitations exposed under the policy framework particularly as it relates to resource allocation. • Establishment of board sub-committees for major issues with recreational fishers on the sub-committee and reporting directly to the Recfishwest Board considered a useful tool.

Table 5 Aspects of advocacy for VRFish

Aspect	Description
1. Representation to government/influencing government decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be characterised as highly political with interactions typically at Executive Government level on key issues. Operationally, the organisation is more akin to a lobby group. • Relatively recent improvements in engagement with the Victorian Fisheries Authority to improve understanding of key issues for recreational fishers. • Regulatory impact statements can assist the organisation to identify specific impacts on recreational fishers, particularly on matters outside of fisheries (e.g. water management).
2. Research, policy development, and advice to government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive participation in Regular ‘advocacy’ surveys undertaken of recreational fishers to guide planning and activity. • Well-developed advocacy strategy in place. • Campaigns are planned and executed.
3. Information dissemination to recreational fishers and the sector generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly developed fisher communication through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-news to members ○ E-news to subscribers (non-members) ○ Social Media ○ News media ○ Via clubs ○ Significant levels of direct engagement • Considered to be a critical success factor.
4. Fisher consultation and coordination within the recreational fishing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisher consultation is primary responsibility of CEO. • Fisher consultation is not a requirement of primary funding agreement, i.e. not required to gather fisher views and present to government. • Government has “fisheries management committees” with representatives from indigenous, commercial and recreational sector (typically more commercial than recreational representatives on committees). Current process often results in issues being escalated to executive government. • Government considers VRFish to be one organisation in an ‘ecosystem’ of recreational fishing organisations and influencers, this has the effect of diluting the influence of VRFish.

Table 6 Aspects of advocacy for AFANT

Aspect	Description
1. Representation to government/influencing government decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly engaged with both Executive Government and the Department. • Representations are framed within a problem solving or solutions context to reduce potential conflict. • High meeting frequency with Minister (informal) and Director of Fisheries allows for early issue identification and resolution. • Each fishery has a management plan with embedded harvest plan, research plan, and communication and engagement plan. This facilitates a 'process' approach to representation that is transparent, predictable and well understood. • Notably, AFANT was a government acknowledged partner in preparing the "NT Recreational Fishing Development Plan 2012-2022"
2. Research, policy development, and advice to government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular participation in government policy development • Regular 'advocacy' surveys undertaken of recreational fishers to guide planning and activity. • Well-developed advocacy strategy in place • Campaigns are planned and executed
3. Information dissemination to recreational fishers and the sector generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-developed fisher communication through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-news to members ○ Engagement with tackle shops (typically also corporate members of AFANT) ○ Frequent and regular news media ○ Social Media ○ Lower levels of direct engagement due to resource constraints • Considered to be a critical success factor
4. Fisher consultation and coordination within the recreational fishing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisher consultation is typically issues based with AFANT providing fisher views to the government. • Works closely with tackle shops to gain understanding of fisher sentiment on matters. • Considered vital that organisation collects and presents consultation outcomes to government and to aid position development for organisation. • Government has "fisheries management advisory committees" (MACs) with representatives from indigenous, commercial and recreational sector. Attendance at MAC's takes up majority of CEO resource.

Advocacy - Contribution to success

In terms of contribution to the success of the organisations, the level and type of success was predicated on the outcomes being sought by the organisations and was influenced by the relationship with state government at the time. Overall, it could be seen that:

- Early involvement of the organisation in decision making processes led to:
 - (1) better decisions for recreational fishers,
 - (2) less conflict in decision making,
 - (3) the ability to consult with recreational fishers in a meaningful way
- There was less likelihood for conflict-based decision-making when there was a perceived respectful and valued relationship between the organisation and the government.
- The existence of good quality policy and processes for decision making reduced the potential for conflict-based decision making and advocacy 'campaigns' seen as a last resort when they are in place.

- Collecting and presenting consultation outcomes to government is core business.
- Advocacy that is evidence-based more likely to be successful.
- It is important to understand the issues that matter to recreational fishers through regular checks such as surveys by the organisation.
- Limited resources, particularly for VRFish and AFANT, results in considered choices being made in terms of:
 - Method(s) of fisher engagement and communication (information dissemination)
 - The number and potential success of campaigns undertaken
- Being an ‘advocacy only’ organisation increased the political nature of the organisation.
- As representative organisations, it is important to develop policy for the majority and/or middle view.

Program and Service Delivery

The programs and services delivered by the peak bodies investigated varied considerably. It appeared that the degree to which the respective recreational peak body led the delivery of programs and services to recreational fishers is consistent with the jurisdictions progress towards co-management.

Based on the four fisheries management models (Figure 1) identified by Neville (2008) both AFANT and VRFish could be considered as operating in a ‘consultative’ fisheries management model and Recfishwest in a ‘collaborative’ model. The linkage between fisheries management model and the performance of roles and functions of the peak body is explored later in this report in the section titled ‘Relationship with State Government’.

This section explores the programs and services offered by each organisation and how they contribute to the success of each organisation. The information for this section is based on the interviews with the peak bodies undertaken in Stage 1 of the project and developed over Stages 3 and 4.

Recfishwest

Recfishwest has a well-developed and broad range of programs and services it provides to support recreational fishers and fishing in Western Australia.

Table 7 Summary of Recfishwest programs and services

Type of program or service	Description
Management / participation in project funding allocation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recfishwest assesses all applications and provides a recommendation to the Government on projects for funding for the State Government’s Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund (RFIF) – which represents 25% of licence revenue. The RFIF provides opportunities for individuals, research institutions, clubs, organisations or community groups for projects and research that directly benefit recreational fishing.
Fisher learning and development, stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers a program of fishing clinics throughout WA. The fishing clinics are supported by funding from SunSmart (this is further described in partnerships and collaboration) • Research extension to improve marine literacy (e.g. Fishing for Science program).
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recfishwest have in-house research capacity to deliver projects and lead data collection.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners with research providers, government agencies and other not-for-profit organisations to ensure that appropriate research and data collection is undertaken. • Research projects have included recreational fisher participation in data collection (e.g. Peel Reef Vision), fish tagging, and research extension to improve marine literacy (e.g. Fishing for Science program).
Habitat and conservation (including stock enhancement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recfishwest oversees projects which restore, enhance, and create new habitat for fish. • Has a commercial partner (Daiwa) to deliver fish stocking programs. • Recfishwest has undertaken a range of infrastructure projects including a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) trial program. • Recfishwest has managed artificial reef projects with project partners such as the petroleum sector and which included use of decommissioned equipment. • Sources of funding for projects/programs include the RFIF, community grants program and other government departments (e.g. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)) as well as partnerships with other non-government and commercial organisations.

VRFish

VRFish did not have a developed program of services and projects being delivered to recreational fishers and largely focused on advocacy activities.

Table 8 Summary of VRFish program and service delivery

Type of program or service	Description
Management/ participation in project funding allocation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRFish participates in project funding allocation processes through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Better Boating Victoria dredging and maintenance grants assessment committee. VRFish communicates information to fishers regarding specific projects. ○ Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) small and medium grants working group participation. • VRFish works collaboratively with the Boating Industry Association (BIA) to secure greater and better investment in fishing infrastructure.
Fisher learning and development, stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No programs or services delivered.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the peak Covid-19 period, VRFish received a Recreational Fishing Licence Grant for a Striped Trumpeter fish frame collection program. The program was needed to inform stock understanding for a fishery that was increasing in popularity amongst recreational fishers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRFish managed the funds on behalf of research partners. In addition, VRFish led communication with fishers (why program was needed and how to participate, and program outcomes).
Habitat and conservation (including stock enhancement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRFish has partnered with external organisations such as OzFish Unlimited to communicate and engage with recreational fishers on specific habitat restoration projects. The aims of fisher engagement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase volunteer participation in the program amongst VRFish members ○ Communicate the benefits and outcomes of the program • VRFish did not deliver any of the on-ground habitat restoration activities and did not receive project funding for engagement activities.

AFANT

AFANT has been working towards growing its capacity/capability to deliver programs and services to recreational fishers in recent years.

Table 9 Summary of AFANT program and service delivery

Type of program or service	Description
Management/ participation in project funding allocation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has influence over expenditure from state government grants program with decisions being made in consultation with AFANT.
Fisher learning and development, stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of fishing events such as Gone Fishing Day.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFANT manages the Barramundi tagging program in the NT. The program is supported by a commercial partnership with Reidy's Lures.
Habitat and conservation (including stock enhancement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFANT overseas habitat and conservation projects and works in partnership with OzFish Unlimited. Examples of projects include the recent tackle bin initiative. The OzFish partnership includes an OzFish project officer embedded in the AFANT organisation.

Program and Service Delivery - Contribution to success

In terms of contribution to the success of the organisations, it was the shared view of the organisations that:

- Delivering programs and services that are of value to recreational fishers was considered to improve the credibility and value of the organisation to recreational fishers. Assessing what is valued by recreational fishers is informed by fisher surveys (e.g. [National Recreational Fishing Survey](#)), social media, direct engagement/feedback from fishers, and feedback from fishing stakeholders such as the fishing trade and tackle shops. Examples include FAD's, restocking and fish tagging.
- Programs and services that reach a wider fisher audience (i.e. fishers that may not be as avid or engaged in management) and that provide a positive context for engagement (i.e. not only

engaging with fishers on “issues”) are important to aid the organisation to increase awareness of the organisation amongst fishers and increase the breadth of feedback that is received by the organisation. Examples include fishing clinics, habitat restoration, citizen science.

- Program and service delivery by a peak body can facilitate greater attraction of funding, sponsorship, partnerships, and participation from diverse non-government entities than government-led programs and services. Examples include fish-tagging, restocking, and the artificial reef project in Western Australia.
- Programs and services must be visible and relevant to recreational fishers (they are aware of and see value in them).
- Demonstrated success of the programs must be shared with recreational fishers and funding partners.
- Peak body delivery of programs and services may be better received by recreational fishers (i.e. fishers delivering for fishers).
- Partnering with research organisations, commercial and other non-government organisations on program and service delivery is an effective way of developing experience and capability within the organisation.
- Organisations should target programs and services that use resources efficiently, i.e. “bang for buck.”
- It is important to demonstrate the role the organisation has in influencing how funds are invested in recreational fishing projects, programs, and services so recreational fishers can see they are being represented, and that their representative organisation has influence.
- There is demonstrated capability and interest amongst peak bodies to deliver programs and services beyond what was currently being delivered.
- Stewardship programs were of interest to peak bodies and considered a likely area of program growth and opportunity.

In terms of risk, it was found that:

- When an organisation is capacity constrained, delivery or participation in major programs/service delivery can lead to human resources being oversubscribed, which may have flow on impacts to the usual operation/tasks of the organisation.
- Management or participation in programs/service delivery should be assessed based on the returned expected ‘value’ that is likely to be achieved. Returned values can include:
 - improvements to fishing experience
 - visibility of the organisation amongst recreational fishers (how many recreational fishers can be reached/engaged)
 - ability to convey relevant messages to recreational fishers effectively
 - financial cost of participation
 - opportunity cost of participation (what work cannot be done or is delayed)
- Taking on programs and service delivery, without a strategy and clear objectives can lead to program and service failures.

Membership

All jurisdictions under investigation offer combinations of paid and unpaid membership programs. Membership includes individual or club membership. This section also discusses partnerships and collaboration as well as access to non-members.

Individual members were generally considered to be higher on the avidity scale and may also hold strong views on recreational fishing. Both Recfishwest and AFANT specifically noted the importance of representing all recreational fishers, not just members. This is reflected in each organisation’s constitution and governance framework.

It is important to understand the role that membership plays for the organisation and what value that delivers. The tables following show the types, benefits, membership number and revenue for each organisation.

Recfishwest

Table 10 Recfishwest Membership

Types	Standard	Premium
Annual renewal fees	Free	\$10
Benefits	Receive 'members first' and monthly e-news, fishing reports and updates	Standard + eligibility to vote at AGM + car sticker
Members	140,000	2,000
Revenue (approx.)	\$0	\$20,000 p.a.

Premium membership was highly valued by Recfishwest due to perceived legitimising effect, driven predominantly by their role in electing board members (5 of 8 members are elected). Voting at the AGM for board elections is voluntary. The number of members voting quadrupled when the organisation went from paper based to electronic voting. This suggests that simplicity and being able to vote quickly (then and there) increases the number of eligible members voting at elections.

Recfishwest establishes Reference Groups for specific policy and management issues and currently has two reference groups. A prerequisite of becoming a member of a reference group is membership of Recfishwest. A feature of the reference groups is that they provide policy advice direct to the Recfishwest Board, not to the management of the organisation. This facilitates direct engagement between recreational fishers and board members and allows the board to receive the unfiltered views of the committee regarding the topic of the committee. In addition, reference group members are more likely to nominate as a board director than the general membership and effectively provides a pathway to board membership.

VRFish

Table 11 VRFish Membership

Types	Individual		Club
	Standard	Premium	Member
Annual renewal fees	Free	\$25	\$0
Benefits	Receive 'members only' surveys and 'members first' e-news	Standard + eligibility to vote at AGM	Members of clubs may nominate for board positions, vote at AGM, participate in committees
Members	280	10	142 clubs (with ~20,000 club members)
Revenue	Negligible		\$0

Membership was valued by VRFish due to perceived 'legitimising effect', driven predominantly by their role in electing board members. The basis of VRFish membership is the strong club heritage in Victoria. Club membership delivers almost 20,000 members to VRFish. This means that any person that is a member of a fishing club automatically becomes a member of VRFish. They have the same benefits as a paid premium member.

The individual membership, both standard and premium, is relatively new and was developed so that VRFish could engage with more fishers, not just club members.

The potential for an independent funding stream from their primary government funding was viewed as an opportunity to undertake activities not permitted from being funded from their primary funding source. This includes legal action and lobbying campaigns.

VRFish has identified future potential in a member loyalty program, similar to a commercial type membership program but had not formally explored the business case at the time of writing.

AFANT

Table 12 AFANT Membership

Types	Individual	Club
Annual renewal fees	\$30	Tiered annual renewal based on number of members of club: 500+ = \$800 200-499 = \$500 Under 200 = \$200
Benefits	Receive 'members first' e-news, 'member-only', participation in AFANT tagging program, vote at AFANT AGM. Key chain and membership sticker Annual prize draw	Same as individual benefits
Members	250	10 clubs (with ~2,500-3,000 members) Note: members of clubs become individual members of AFANT
Revenue (approx.)	\$7,500 p.a.	\$7,500 p.a.

Membership was valued by AFANT due to perceived 'legitimising effect', driven predominantly by their role in electing board members.

AFANT has an automated annual renewal system on an 'opt-out' basis. The annual renewal of membership provides a continuous validation of membership. In the view of AFANT, the 'opt-out' system simplifies membership renewal and increases member retention as a result.

Licensed Fisher contact information pass-through

States that have broad-based fishing licences (fishing from a boat licence in Western Australia and a rod and line licence in Victoria), have 'pass through' arrangements of fisher information and specifically email contact information with their respective governments. This involves fishers selecting a 'check box' at the time of licence renewal that gives permission for their name and email address to be provided to the organisation. This has dramatically increased the capacity for the peak bodies to reach a broad range and high number of fishers via email and was seen as a major asset to Recfishwest and VRFish. In the case of VRFish this equates to well over 70,000 fishers, representing about 7% of all recreational fishers in Victoria. In the case of Recfishwest this equates to over 140,000 fishers or about 23% of all fishers.

It was the shared view of Recfishwest and VRFish that communicating with fishers that are non-subscribing members was important mechanism to disseminate information and an opportunity to receive broad ranging views to aid policy development. In addition, it was noted that over-communication with this group can be counter-productive and should be used cautiously.

Membership - Contribution to success

In terms of contribution to the success of the organisations, it was the shared view of the organisations that:

- Peak bodies should continue to represent all recreational fishers not only members.
- Delivering on commitments to membership was essential for organisational reputation and success of member program overall.
- Free membership was still valid membership, particularly when required to renew.
- It is important that members are aware they are members.
- Having members gave them the ability to access and communicate directly with recreational fishers. This was perceived as having very high importance.
- Members provide organisational legitimacy through participation in voting at the AGM for board members.
- Using contemporary technology to manage membership (including voting) and communication were significantly more effective in terms of participation and engagement.
- Club membership (for VRFish and AFANT), provided access to a much larger pool of individual members.
- “Pass-through” arrangements by permission of licensed fishers dramatically increased the number and breadth of recreational fishers that can be engaged with.

In terms of risk, it was found that:

- The ability to manage data security and member privacy must be demonstrated and regularly reviewed.
- Quality governance and clarity of constitutional objectives reduced the likelihood of the organisation’s board becoming dominated by ‘activists’ and interest groups.
- Representing all recreational fishers as well as members reduced the likelihood of the organisation’s policy development and advocacy becoming dominated by ‘activists’ and interest groups.
- If paid membership is in place, annual fees should not act as a barrier. Pricing should reflect both value proposition and capacity to pay.

Partnerships and collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration were seen as important organisational drivers for all three organisations despite the diversity of purposes, scale, and deliverables. The partnerships and collaborations of the three organisations are described below.

Recfishwest

Recfishwest has a well-developed partnership program across a range of activities and projects, including:

- Partnerships with other waterway users (e.g. oil and gas) for improved recreational fishing opportunities
 - This type of partnership has typically been to install fishing-related infrastructure through the re-use of obsolete equipment from industry. It supports improved fishing opportunities and assists the partner to deliver on their sustainability and community obligations.
 - The benefits of this type of partnership include:
 - avoiding significant cost to fishers (via the government) for the type of infrastructure installed;
 - additional infrastructure is provided that may not have been otherwise (due to cost/availability); and
 - development of infrastructure project management capacity and skill.
 - To reduce risk of perception that the organisation becomes 'captive' to the partner business or sector, projects are specific and discreet (funding is project specific), and contracts do not limit the organisation's ability to promote or advocate on any issue.
- Partnerships with organisations to deliver on specific strategic objectives of the organisation
 - This type of partnership assists the organisation to 'outsize' its program delivery by leveraging funding support of a partner organisation to achieve shared goals. An example of this is the partnership with SunSmart. Through the partnership, Recfishwest is supported to run fishing clinics and SunSmart is able to reach a target audience with relevant sun smart health messages. This type of partnership reflects clear organisational alignment that delivers mutual benefit.

VRFish

VRFish does not have any partnerships currently as it is their view that their current primary funding agreement restricts any other activity than that prescribed in their government funding agreement. As a result of this limitation, VRFish confines itself to partnering through activity-based collaborations. For the purpose of this report, a collaboration is an informal working relationship or network.

VRFish has developed collaborations to support advocacy on specific issues. The view of VRFish is that the professionalism of the organisation is demonstrated when a joint approach can be made to government on a specific issue on the basis that VRFish can work with other organisations that may (at other times and on other issues) have disparate views to VRFish. It is also considered more likely to be successful because the approach demonstrates unity of position on an issue from a range of perspectives and representatives of different users or stakeholders.

VRFish coordinated advocacy with the Boating Industry Association of Victoria (BIAV) on their “ramp rage” advocacy campaign that secured significant infrastructure investment commitments as a result.

This mode of developing a shared position amongst both complimentary and competing users of a resource to reach an acceptable outcome appears a logical approach particularly when the organisation is heavily constrained as in the case of VRFish in terms of available funding to undertake advocacy campaigns

AFANT

AFANT, is in a growth phase of its partnership program. Initially AFANT partnered with OzFish Unlimited to deliver a significant multi-year research project. This enabled AFANT to receive the technical support from OzFish to undertake its first major project. This initial project also enabled the organisation to develop its capability and experience.

Partnerships and collaboration - Contribution to success

In terms of contribution to the success of the organisations, partnerships, and collaboration play an important role but the specifics of that importance varied based on the organisations scale and maturity and, in the case of VRFish, contractual obligations.

Insights and risks identified include:

- Partnerships with industry can achieve significant funding and direct fisher benefit.
- To reduce the potential risk of becoming captive to a large funding partner, clear governance arrangements and contracts that protect the independence of the peak body are needed.
- Broad consideration of partnerships with out-of-sector but aligned organisations and brands can assist both organisations to meet their strategic aims if well considered.
- To reduce the risk of poor alignment, a deep understanding of the values and behaviours of recreational fishers is needed, as well as clear strategic goals identified from the outset.
- Working with other organisations can lend credibility and/or expertise when commencing or growing a partnership program on limited resources.
- Developing a range of partnerships as the organisation grows and matures and reducing reliance on a single partner will reduce the risk to the organisations independence and will broaden the perception amongst fishers of the organisations scope and capability.
- Developing collaborations or coalitions for specific advocacy issues (shared advocacy platform) can ‘outsize’ influence of any of the individual organisations. Having a documented platform and agreed advocacy actions reduces the likelihood of duplicated effort whilst retaining clarity of message.

Funding

The source of income and quantum of annual funding of the peak bodies investigated varies significantly. Funding for each of the organisations is achieved through a combination of sources but is driven primarily from direct government funding (primary funding). There are a range of mechanisms and requirements attached to the primary funding source for each jurisdiction as shown later in this section.

Secondary funding is derived from one or more of: membership, fishing projects/programs, other government funding, research projects and sponsorship.

Membership income refers to income derived from the sale of individual, club, or corporate membership.

Fishing projects refers to funds received to manage minor or major projects that is not research. It includes a wide range of projects, for example, to promote inclusive fishing, provide weather information, install, and manage tackle bins at fishing spots.

Research projects refers to funds to undertake, participate in or extend research.

Other government funding refers to funding, typically from other government departments than the department of fisheries, for a wide range of reasons and/or activities. Examples include, to support governance improvements within the organisation, to deliver programs that support mental health, and to engage under-represented sections of the community to facilitate participation.

Sponsorship refers to income or benefits derived from a commercial agreement between the peak body and a commercial partner.

Primary funding

Direct government funding to each organisation is provided under a legal instrument, over a set period, for either a fixed amount or variable amount (if taking a percentage of licence fees).

The table below identifies the instrument, mechanism, and quantum of funding for each jurisdiction.

Table 13 Peak body primary funding

Item	Recfishwest	VRFish	AFANT
Instrument	Service Level Agreement	Grant funded with schedule of agreement for specific activities to be undertaken and meeting KPI's	Grant funded with schedule of agreement for specific project delivery
Duration	3.5 years	2 years	5 years
Mechanism	15% of fishing from a boat licence fees	Notionally 5% of rod and line licence but on 2-year fixed contract	Direct negotiated amount
Quantum (per annum)	~\$1.4 million	\$440,000	\$295,000

The legal instrument to establish primary funding is specific to each jurisdiction and are broadly described below:

Table 14 Description of instrument deliverables for primary funding

RecFishWest	A Service Level Agreement (SLA) directly negotiated with the Minister. The SLA sets out the services to be provided which includes undertaking most consultation with recreational fishers and collating feedback to provide to government to assist decision making.
VRFish	A Grant Deed that stipulates specific key performance indicators (KPI's) for the organisation. The KPI's relate directly to advocacy activity (e.g. number of social media posts per month). Further conditions relate to governance requirements.
AFANT	A Grant Deed that requires completion of two projects. Specifically: (1) provide representation on management committees (MACs) and respond to government requests and (2) provide support to citizen science program(s). Specific funding is provided for 'office support'.

The wide range of annual primary funding is linked principally to an agreed set of deliverables which vary in complexity and specificity.

Both AFANT and VRFish believe that current funding is at the lower end of what is required to operate as a peak body. VRFish noted that “we get less funding than Table Tennis Victoria” whilst representing an order of magnitude larger group of participants. AFANT noted that there had not been an increase in funding since 2003. Recfishwest noted primary funding had been falling for their organisation until COVID-19 lock downs in 2020, which resulted in an increase in the sale of fishing licences and therefore increased primary funding.

The observations made by Recfishwest, VRFish and AFANT raises a number of interesting questions (shown below) which were discussed jointly at the workshop.

1. Should peak bodies use primary funding per fisher as a metric to determine the quantum of primary funding that is provided?
2. Is organisational risk increased by agreements that are linked entirely to licence fees?
3. What other funding benchmarks outside the recreational fishing sector could be relevant?

Table 15 below shows the per fisher funding received in each jurisdiction.

Table 15 Primary funding per recreational fisher

	RecFish West	VRFish	AFANT
Number of rec fishers	619,000 [^]	1,114,000 [*]	37,000 ^{#1}
Primary funding per annum	\$1.2m	\$440,000	\$295,000
\$ per fisher	\$1.94	\$0.39	\$7.97

Notes:

[^] sourced from Ryan KL, Hall NG, Lai EK, Smallwood CB, A. Tate, Taylor SM, Wise BS 2019. Statewide survey of boat based recreational fishing in Western Australia 2017/18. Fisheries Research Report No. 297, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia.

^{*}sourced from Earnst & Young 2020 The economic value of recreational fishing in Victoria Final Report, Better Boating Victoria and Victorian Fisheries Authority, Victoria

[#] sourced from L. D. West, K. E. Stark, K. Dysart, J.M. Lyle 2022 Survey of recreational fishing in the Northern Territory: 2018 to 2019, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Northern Territory.

As seen in

¹ This is resident fishers of the Northern Territory, it is likely that interstate and overseas fishers would more than double this figure.

Table 15, there is a huge variation in the per fisher funding across the jurisdictions. Discussion with the jurisdictions identified that are likely a combination of factors that influence the level of primary funding, including but not limited to:

- the combination of programs and services provided by the peak body (the role the peak body is occupying),
- recognition from governments for primary funding to meet a minimum requirement to operate so smaller jurisdictions, like the Northern Territory, will therefore have a higher per fisher investment,
- the value placed on the activity of recreational fishing by the state government in the jurisdiction,
- the level of trust/respect for the peak body,
- maturity and scope of organisation in terms of program and service delivery leading to efficiencies (doing more with less), and
- limiting funding to limit organisational capacity, particularly if programs and services are delivered by the state government to avoid duplication.

Whilst at first glance the dollars per fisher metric may appear an easy one to inform discussion between the peak body and government when negotiating primary funding, it appears less relevant when the combination of other factors identified above are considered. Notably, jurisdictions with primary funding linked to licence fees (either within an agreement or notionally) did not result in higher funding levels per fisher.

It would also suggest the start point for negotiating a new or amended primary funding agreement should commence from a purpose and program focus rather than a funding focus, such that funding is linked to service delivery.

The mechanism used to determine the primary funding agreement varied across the jurisdictions.

In the Northern Territory, where funding is for project delivery and fixed for the life of the agreement, there are high levels of certainty and understanding of deliverables. However, the agreement does not allow for CPI or other increases. Viewed in the context of a longer agreement (>5 years), there may be an overall erosion of 'real' funding over the term. The inclusion of stepped increases over longer term agreements may mitigate this risk, conversely, structuring the organisation's program and services to be well within the financial capacity of the annual funding in the early years of the agreement would also mitigate the risk.

In Victoria, the funding agreement is short (<3 years) and creates a high level of uncertainty for future funding. It is notionally attached to the rod and licence fee but there is no certainty provided by that, merely an understanding of how the quantum was arrived at. Further, the agreement is highly prescriptive and more reminiscent of a contractor agreement that sets out the specific activities the organisation undertakes each month. This is unusual and appears to reduce the autonomy of the organisation.

In Western Australia, the funding is entirely linked to fishing from a boat licence fee. This provides a higher level of certainty but only when fishing licence numbers are relatively stable. If fishing licence numbers or revenue from licences fall (e.g. due to reduced fee rates or a failure for licence fees to keep up with inflation), the organisations income in real terms also falls. This may create risk and uncertainty based on an inability to appropriately forward plan and may also have implications for staffing levels. It would seem prudent to have a funding "floor" built into an agreement that is entirely linked to licence revenues to ensure continuity and certainty over the life of the agreement – noting that it is 3.5 years.

From wider discussion with industry experts and government representatives in addition to the jurisdictions themselves, it was a widely held view that licence fees are the only way that an organisation can be funded effectively. This view was formed on the basis that it provided the primary funding of the peak body in a transparent way that was well understood by recreational fishers. This in turn was believed to increase the perceived independence of the organisation. In Western Australia for example, it was Recfishwest's view that fishers accepted a fishing from a boat licence in large part because they felt they would be better represented to government, receive improved services and projects, and that it was the peak body, rather than the government, delivering many of the services.

The length of agreement was discussed collectively and typically, a minimum of 3-year agreement was preferred to enable the peak body to strategically plan and deliver its program of advocacy and other services. It also provided certainty to recruit and contract an Executive Officer. Shorter terms, as in the case of Victoria, involved a highly prescriptive schedule of activities and led to limited capacity to grow or evolve the organisations capacity and capability. In addition, a shorter term meant that the organisation was necessarily focussed on the next agreement during the term of the current one due to the high level of uncertainty of future funding. This may divert time and attention away from undertaking the activities and services of the organisation during the current term.

There was some perceived political and reputational risk from having funding agreements reached with the department with which their organisations advocacy involves. That is, having the agreement with the Minister and/or Department responsible for recreational fishing. This risk could be mitigated through a range of measures including but not limited to:

- Transparency in the funding agreement (such as in Western Australia where it is a set per cent of the licence fees)
- Having agreements made with an alternative agency (e.g. Department of Premier and Cabinet or Sport and Recreation)
- Having agreements with a number of agencies
- Independently managing the funding via an independently administered trust or other mechanism.
- Funding agreements that specifically address independence and clearly set out the roles and obligations of both parties.

In addition, the asymmetrical nature of the agreements where the quantum represents a small amount to the funding department but a major part of the organisation being funded, can create a power differential and influence behaviour/decisions of both parties. It may also increase the role and influence of individuals involved in the process. This risk may be reduced through a range of measures including but not limited to:

- government policy regarding funding of peak bodies
- benchmarking
- using independent panels or similar to develop the agreement

On balance, given the contributions they make, peak bodies appear to be a relatively cheap and efficient expenditure for government across a range of different models of operation.

Secondary funding

Secondary funding is derived from one or more of: membership, projects, research and sponsorship. Relative to primary funding received, secondary sources of funding ranged from less than 1% to over 100%

of primary funding. Table 12 shows the estimated secondary sources of income compared with primary income.

Table 16 Estimated secondary sources of income compared with primary income

Source	Recfishwest	VRFish	AFANT
Primary income	\$1.4m	\$440,000	\$295,000
Secondary income (excl. membership)	\$1.4m	\$0	\$200,000
Membership	~\$25,000	Negligible	\$10-15k

As can be seen above, when secondary sources of income were substantial (greater than 50% of primary income), it was predominantly derived from additional grants, research and sponsorship with membership making up only a very minor source of income. It was the collective view of the organisations that membership programs are complex and would require significant resource and expertise to develop a commercial approach to a member value proposition. That is, membership provides a suite of benefits to the individual that is of value to that member to generate expenditure of discretionary funds. It was considered that a commercial membership program did not represent ‘core business’ to the organisation but it no way diminished the important role that membership played to the organisation in their current forms. This is discussed in the previous section.

What the table above demonstrates is that peak bodies that have an expressed intention to deliver projects, programs and services to recreational fishers (in addition to their advocacy role) have significant capability to leverage additional funding.

The source of secondary funding is also varied and includes: Commonwealth Government, State or Territory Governments, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), private sector sponsorship and partnerships, and from other not-for-profits (for program delivery).

It was the jointly held view of Recfishwest and AFANT that there is significant capability within the recreational fishing sector and specifically the peak bodies to leverage funding but that it can be constrained by the organisations capacity.

It would appear logical for primary funding agreements to consider support for peak bodies to proactively seek secondary funding streams that support outcomes for recreational fishers. This is particularly important for peak bodies that intend to provide programs and services. Overall, Recfishwest and AFANT were of the view that access to primary funding from governments was critical to leverage secondary project funds.

Interestingly, being formally recognised as an “active recreation” by the Government was a significant advantage to Recfishwest but to a lesser extent with VRFish due to the terms of its current primary funding agreement. The formal recognition in Western Australia expanded the potential funding that could be achieved by the organisation. Recfishwest through the Department of Sport and Recreation (not the Department of Fisheries which provides the primary funding) receives funding support for the purpose of organisational sustainability which relates to the governance and operation of the organisation. It also permits the organisation to apply for various grant programs administered within that department. The Government of South Australia has also now recognised recreational fishing as an active recreation and RecFishSA has an agreement with multiple departments to undertake services.

Risks associated with secondary funding derive from the lack of certainty that typically attaches to secondary funding. Fluctuations that are likely to occur when projects conclude, or the organisation is unsuccessful in seeking secondary funding for projects. Conversely, risks also arise when there is a rapid increase of secondary funding. This may result in over or understaffing (capacity issues), cash flow management issues, and issues with capability mix. There are a range of risk mitigation options that may include:

- Building secondary funding programs more slowly.
- Targeting secondary funding opportunities that are consistent with organisational strategy and leverages organisational capability and capacity.
- Having project management skills within the organisation.
- A secondary funding program that seeks to overlap project or program periods to avoid large fluctuations in funding.
- A secondary funding program that seeks funding from a range of sources.

Funding - Contribution to success

Funding was one of the foundations of success for the organisations investigated. Without funding, the organisations would not have the leverage base to secure other (secondary) funding or volunteer capacity to sustain the organisation over an extended period at a professional level. Overall, peak bodies appear to be a relatively cheap and efficient expenditure of government across a range of different models of operation.

Insights and risks identified include:

Primary funding

- Funding on a “per fisher” basis was not considered the best model to determine primary funding.
- A “purpose and program” approach to primary funding negotiation leads to better quality agreements.
- The existence of a broad-based fishing licence may increase the availability of primary funding to a peak body at the same time delivering greater transparency, independence, increased funding certainty, capacity to deliver programs, projects and services, and better advocacy to government.
- Funding floors (base funding level) and staged funding increased over longer agreements can mitigate organisational risk.
- Preferred funding agreements were between 3 and 5 years as they provide greater certainty.
- Organisational reputation may be negatively impacted by funding agreements reached with departments that they may need to advocate against. There are a range of options to mitigate the risk.
- Risk to the organisation and the government may be increased by the asymmetrical nature of the agreements. There are a range of options to mitigate the risk.

Secondary funding

- Access to state government primary funding was critical to leveraging secondary funding.
- Peak bodies with an expressed intention to undertake projects or offer programs and services to recreational fishers have sufficient capability to leverage additional finding from a range of sources.

- Capability to leverage additional funding in organisations exists but can be constrained by capacity. This limitation could be offset through conditions in a primary funding agreement that makes explicit provision for an organisation to proactively seek secondary funding or be built into secondary funding agreement (i.e. salary support for project specific staff) where possible.
- Recognition as an 'active recreation' in the jurisdiction increased the breadth of access to secondary funding, particularly for health and wellbeing (including mental health) initiatives, and improving participation of under-represented sectors of the community by reducing barriers to participation.
- Funds from organisational membership was low and insufficient to sustain any of the organisations investigated.

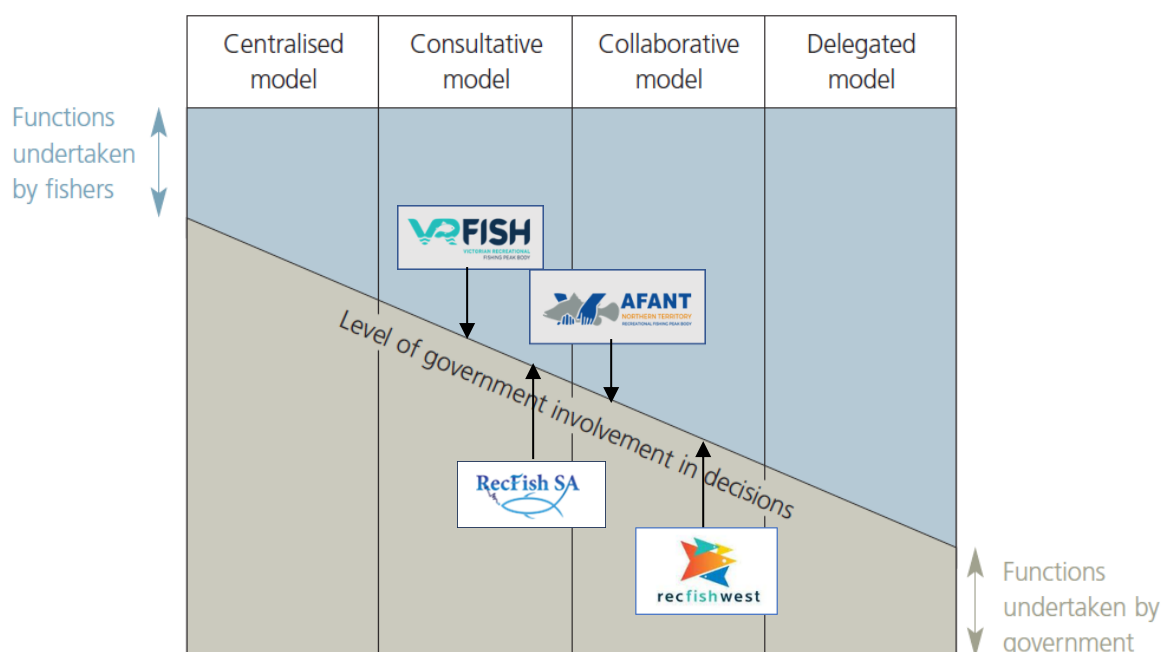
Relationship with State Government

The relationship between the peak body and state government is intrinsic to the effectiveness of the organisation. More than that, the state government's model of fisheries management effectively determines the available functions or 'space' that the peak body can occupy. This is one of the clearest findings from this project. Specifically, there is a strong correlation between the government's progress toward co-management and how the government perceived or valued the peak body, and the roles and functions undertaken by the peak body.

Co-management is defined as *"an arrangement in which responsibilities and obligations for sustainable fisheries management are negotiated, shared and delegated between government, fishers, and other interest groups or stakeholders"* (Neville 2008).

Figure 2 below shows the level of government involvement in decision making and functions undertaken by government reducing as fisher involvement increases progressing through each of the four fisheries management models.

Figure 2 Levels of parties' engagement in decision-making under the four types of fisheries management model (source Neville 2008 (pp9))



Using the feedback from both government participants and the peak bodies, the relative positions of each peak body is shown on the spectrum of fisheries management models in Figure 2 above and is based on the performance of functions through management types as set out in Neville (2008). Neville (2008) breaks down the fisheries management function into six areas:

1. Administration
2. Compliance
3. Research and development
4. Monitoring and assessment
5. Management planning
6. Communication and extension

The six areas are then broken down into sub-functions and for each of the fisheries management models and identifies who performs the function – the government or fishers, or both. This is a useful tool for any peak body or government to assess itself and understand where on the co-management spectrum they are.

RecFishSA has been included in this section based on its recent funding grant from the state government and that it provides an opportunity to discuss the conditions for an organisation to progress along the spectrum and the drivers towards co-management.

Existence of co-management drivers

Neville (2008) developed a list of common drivers towards co-management (Appendix 3). Co-management drivers can be described as the circumstances or influences that can enable progression toward co-management.

This section considers the drivers of co-management that existed and influenced progression toward co-management for Western Australia and South Australia. The circumstances are described for each jurisdiction and then the specific drivers are identified. This information is based on discussions primarily with government representatives but also other industry experts and current and former members of the respective peak bodies.

It is important to note that the existence of co-management drivers enable (but do not guarantee) progression along the spectrum of co-management models. The presence of co-management drivers does not necessarily result in the achievement of co-management but rather progression towards it.

Additionally, it appears that the greater the number of drivers increases the likelihood of progression toward co-management.

Whilst none of the organisations studied are operating in a fully delegated fisheries model, the drivers towards co-management (that currently exist for South Australia and existed for the progression of Recfishwest (~2010 – onward)) are influential in determining how far the progression toward co-management is during the period of change and therefore the scope of the organisation's services and programs to recreational fishers.

Western Australia

Between 2008 and 2010, the WA Government had a whole of government program of reducing boards and committees to reduce cost and increase efficiency. In addition, there was a policy of 'cost-recovery' for commercial fisheries (later expanded to recreational fishing) and a drive toward streamlining consultation

and engagement across all fishing sectors. At that time there were 13 fisheries management committees. The Minister at that time, Norman Moore, was a catalyst for the change and clearly articulated he wanted co-ordinated and streamlined advice. This view and policy flowed through to the development of the new Aquatic Resources Management Act that provided formal recognition of one commercial and one recreational fishing peak body. When coupled with the cost-recovery model (including the introduction of a recreational fishing from a boat licence), this put in place the drivers that facilitated a clear progression toward co-management.

South Australia

In 2018, the State Government commenced a review of representative organisations including RecFishSA. Following the review, RecFishSA was de-funded, and a Ministerial Fishing Advisory Council was established. During this time the government did not recognise the peak body and RecFishSA operated on an unfunded volunteer basis and continued to act on behalf of recreational fishers.

In the lead up to the 2022 state election, RecFishSA developed a value proposition (purpose and program) for the peak body that included formal recognition of recreational fishing as an active recreation and recognition of the sector as a key tourism stakeholder.

Following the election, the incoming Labor Government re-funded RecFishSA and recognised it as a peak body again. The Government had decided to move to a new model of sector engagement and advice, replacing a wide range of interest groups with a single peak body for recreational fishing. Financial support has recently been provided to RecFishSA to undertake consultation with recreational fishers, and support programs for active recreation participation. The Ministers Recreational Fishing Advisory committee was disbanded. The key drivers for the government to re-structure its model was: the need for sector allocation across a range of fisheries; a commitment to co-management in legislation and policy; and an increase in the value placed on recreational fishing as a key tourism stakeholder; and its health benefits as an active recreation.

Notably for both examples, a change in government and/or Minister was a catalyst for change.

The table below shows the drivers present for both Western Australia and South Australia

Western Australia	South Australia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced necessity for political decision making - Reduced conflict, improved trust and better working relationships among managers and fishers - Increased transparency of management costs and service delivery - Potentially lower costs of fisheries management - Improved acceptance and compliance with management decisions - More inclusive and transparent decision making - Increased opportunity for capacity building and skills development in organisations - Improved cooperation amongst fishers - Expanded extension and education opportunities across the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced conflict, improved trust and better working relationships among managers and fishers - Enhanced culture involving a genuine partnership, shared responsibility and improved stewardship outcomes - Improved acceptance and compliance with management decisions - More inclusive and transparent decision making - Increased opportunity for capacity building and skills development in organisations - Improved cooperation amongst fishers - Opportunity to highlight the economic and social importance of flow-on impacts of recreational fishing both marine and fresh water

As can be seen from the table above, there was a significant number of drivers present for both jurisdictions at the time that change took place and resulted in them shifting along the co-management spectrum – but not achieving co-management.

Notably, in Western Australia, nearly 15 years later co-management has not been achieved. From the interviews, it appeared there was a general view that operating in a collaborative management model was largely effective with neither the government nor the peak body pushing for full co-management. It should be noted that co-management requires participation of all sectors and the interviews did not explore in any detail what influence the role, if any, the commercial sector peak body and indigenous sector were having on the current state of fisheries management.

Characterising the current relationship between the peak body and state government

This section summaries how the peak body and the government characterised their current relationship.

Recfishwest

The relationship was considered by both parties to be mature and respectful, aided strongly by:

1. Existence of established processes of engagement and decision making
2. Early engagement of either party on issues and decisions
3. Clarity of roles and obligations including delineation between the provision of advice and presenting consultation feedback
4. Connection to a wide base of recreational fishers that enabled broad consultation and representation of recreational fisher views.
5. The high quality of governance at Recfishwest

Recfishwest was characterised as being at the higher end of maturity in terms of governance, capacity and professionalism and was independently audited against their service level agreement with government. The relationship across a range of levels of government was further characterised as professional.

Low staff turnover and sufficient staffing at Recfishwest reduced the reliance on relationships with the CEO exclusively and therefore reduced the risk of decisions that may be subject to personality considerations which may take place in smaller organisations. Typically, the relationship between government and Recfishwest was maintained at an organisational level (led by the CEO) with little interaction between the Recfishwest Board and both bureaucratic and executive government. It is likely this approach reduces the risk of political decision making.

Importantly, the ability for Recfishwest to advocate against government decisions remains and is enshrined in their service level agreement. The independence of the peak body was considered an important aspect of the working relationship, with Recfishwest operating on a 'firm but fair' premise in its dealings. This was recently tested during the proposal to close the demersal fishery in Western Australia. Even at the height of the conflict, both parties continued to act with professionalism and were able to sustain communication. Importantly, Recfishwest was also able to secure identifiable outcomes for recreational fishers by providing science-guided advice to both executive and bureaucratic government and demonstrated their ability to engage with a broad range of recreational fishers.

Notably, in Western Australia, Ministerial decisions are informed by two pieces of advice – advice from the department and advice from the peak body that is informed by stakeholder consultation.

It is the view of Recfishwest that the quality of their advice, their ability to broadly consult and most importantly the quality of their governance facilitates the effectiveness of their organisation and the strength of its relationship with Government. The quality of the organisation's governance is considered a critical success factor and specific reference was made to the importance of the objects and principals of their constitution to guide and inform all positions and action.

VRFish

The relationship between the Government and VRFish includes the Executive Government (the Minister) and both the Department and the statutory authority, the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), which is responsible for: fisheries management, underpinning science and all service delivery for the sector as an active recreation.

Noting the position of VRFish on the spectrum of fisheries management models in Figure 2, the relationship reflects a less devolved nature of management.

The Government perceives VRFish solely as an advocacy organisation and as one voice within a broader 'ecosystem' of organisations and influencers in recreational fishing despite its recognition as a peak body. The government places value on the range of views within the sector and views VRFish as a connector to a cohort of recreational fishers and particularly avid fishers. This model allows the Government to satisfy its obligations to consult recreational fishers under its current legislation whilst retaining a fisheries model that is close to the centralised co-management model. Interestingly, VFA holds the view that services to recreational fishers are delivered better and more efficiently by government.

The value ascribed to VRFish by government is largely from its ability to advocate and having a non-government voice available to recreational fishers noting the distrust in government organisations. In effect, they view VRFish's ability to provide information on behalf of government but not delivered from government to be important. It was also considered important for media to have an alternate, non-government recreational fishing contact.

VRFish is viewed by government as an independent organisation and whilst here are no formal processes to engage with VRFish, apart from being included in formal consultation for the recreational fishing sector, the relationship was considered to be strong and open and that this was largely driven by the personalities involved. This highlights the increased reliance on personality-based engagement with the sector organisation when the organisation has relatively low capacity levels, and potentially lower quality governance.

There were significantly lower levels of trust evident on both sides from the discussions undertaken relative to the discussions with both Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. This may be improved by strengthened governance of VRFish.

There was little to no evidence of the co-management drivers that would support VRFish taking on an expanded role in the delivery of projects, programs and services to recreational fishers.

AFANT

As the smallest jurisdiction investigated, it is not surprising that the relationship is less formal and driven strongly by the relationships between the Minister and Chair/CEO of AFANT, and the Director of Fisheries and the AFANT CEO.

AFANT partnered with the government to develop the recently released “NT Recreational Fishing Development Plan 2023-33” and delivers the Barramundi tagging program which informs the stock assessment.

Further along the co-management spectrum than VRFish and RecFishSA, AFANT’s relationship with government could be characterised as that of a “trusted adviser.” This characterisation was largely predicated on a view that AFANT was solutions focussed when engaging with both executive and bureaucratic government together with the value placed on recreational fishing by the current government. This approach has delivered a relationship that was described as professional and stable. However, it highlights the reliance on AFANT’s CEO and Chair to develop and maintain the relationship with government and reinforces the importance of recruiting for ‘personality’ as well as skill when relationship reliance is high.

Given the stability of the relationship (and funding) over successive governments there was little evidence for co-management drivers to act as significant catalyst for change. Change or progression along the co-management spectrum is likely to be incremental unless additional catalysts for change become present.

Relationship with State Government - Contribution to success

This section has been framed in the context of co-management as it effectively determines the available functions or 'space' that the peak body can occupy. Several elements appeared to determine an organisation's ability to increase its engagement in decision making and service delivery:

1. Ministerial leadership
Increases the speed and scope of change when progressing through the co-management spectrum. It can be the catalyst for change.
2. Enabling policy and legislative framework
This can include formal recognition of peak bodies (including the activity of recreational fishing as a sport or active recreation), policy on co-management, and articulated returns to community from the fishing resource in legislation for example.
3. Governance
Organisational governance is the first step and foundation of any progression. There is a relationship between the standard of governance, including its practice, maintenance and improvement and an organisations level of engagement in decision making and service delivery.
4. Professional working relationships with executive and bureaucratic government and solutions focus
A "solutions focus" rather than a "battle" approach appeared to be more successful more often. This was enabled by one or more of: early engagement in decision making by the government, the relationships of the peak body CEO with key government personnel, the presence of clear positions held by the peak body, and robust governance. It is further supported by the ability of the organisation to consult broadly and present consultation outcomes to government.
Governments that are receptive to input and views of the peak body facilitated greater support for decisions. It also appeared to separate a "peak body" from an "advocacy organisation."
Disagreements occur regularly between government and the peak bodies. Reliance on multiple sources of advice (in addition to the peak body) increases when value placed on the peak body is lower.

Community perception of organisation

Community perception of an organisation can influence how effective it is in terms of its capacity to reach a broad range of recreational fishers, to be considered a trusted source to receive and exchange information, as well as how influential it is when advocating or delivering programs and services. Perception is not simply awareness; it is the regard that the organisation is held in.

Whilst all three organisations recognise the importance of recreational fisher and wider community perception, there was no formal tracking in any jurisdiction. The organisations relied on informal indicators.

Recfishwest

In the opinion of Recfishwest, several factors were considered necessary to building and maintaining positive regard for the organisation:

1. Proactive and positive initiatives delivered by the organisation such as fishing clinics. This enabled the organisation to reach a broad range of fishers and to be seen to be delivering an important service to the sector.
2. Delivering outcomes that are important to recreational fishers. From an advocacy perspective the organisation focussed clearly on a small number of key issues, articulated the outcome being sought (through policy positions for example), and progressively worked toward achieving them. The view was that “success breeds success.”
3. Importance of maintaining focus on the purpose and objects of the organisation and being guided by strategy and science. This enables the organisation to remain consistent and focussed, particularly when there are critics.
4. Direct access to fishers. The ability to reach a broad range of fishers directly, is vital to commencing and then building an understanding of the organisation. This has been supported by the pass through of fisher contact information (name and email) from the state government when purchasing a state fishing from a boat licence. It is worth highlighting that more fishers “opt in” in Western Australia than in Victoria. In addition, having sufficient staff to directly engage with fishers and receive feedback was an important aspect of their communication.

Awareness of the organisation or attitudes toward the organisation are not currently measured.

VRFish

As an exclusively advocacy-based organisation, the perception of the organisation increases in importance as it relates directly to the ability to ‘mobilise’ fishers to a position or cause. This is reflected in how they track and monitor various activities currently.

VRFish:

- Track fisher awareness of the organisation (currently at 69%)
- undertake a survey of fishers on their perception of the organisation’s performance
- track the performance of various communications channels monthly
- Have a media plan to retain visibility amongst fishers of the issues the organisation is working on.

In addition, VRFish undertakes an annual advocacy survey to guide the organisations activities and ensure alignment of activity with the key issues for the sector. The organisation also has a documented advocacy strategy.

Whilst VRFish has the most considered program to understand the perception of the organisation, there was some concern expressed that the VRFish Board do not place high value on the organisation’s reputation, and in turn, there is the potential for organisational risk that arises from a poor reputation.

AFANT

AFANT uses indicators of organisational reputation and awareness. For example, the AFANT Facebook page is followed by the equivalent of approximately 20% of the recreational fishing population in the Northern Territory which suggests a high level of awareness.

Given the capacity constraints of the organisation, there is less direct fisher and community engagement than both Recfishwest and VRFish. Nevertheless, AFANT recognises the need to maintain visibility for the organisation and does so by:

- Regularly engage with the three main tackle shops. This enables the organisation to receive feedback on issues as well as share information on the organisations performance.
- Use of mainstream media, predominantly radio, to ensure wide dissemination of information. AFANT has a weekly radio slot on the local ABC and commercial radio stations. This was considered to be central to how fishers received information and perceived the organisation.
- Direct electronic communication with fishers via email. Regular broadcast emails to fishers was considered both efficient and effective.

Social Media

Social media continues to grow in use and influence amongst recreational fishers and the community more broadly as a source of information. Like many peak bodies, the organisations investigated were evolving their social media presence and recognised that there are risks and limitations from using it but also that it could no longer be avoided. In general, it was acknowledged that:

- Social media can be resource intensive in terms of generating content and to monitor and moderate. Choices around frequency of use and types of content were made by each organisation based on perceived utility and capacity.
- Social media expertise is typically less developed in smaller organisations
- Social media is constantly evolving and the number of ‘likes’ on a post can no longer be used as validation of a post. This makes it difficult to gauge the sentiment of the page followers in some instances, particularly when engagement through comments is low.
- There is a general view that a peak body cannot “win” on social media. This view was held for a number of reasons: (1) capacity to engage; (2) the need to be balanced and accurate means that the organisation may not be as quick to respond as social media demands; and (3) users are more likely to be combative.

Community perception of organisation - Contribution to success

The workshop held with the peak bodies clarified the collective insights from the communication activities and approaches as described above.

1. A strong focus on quality communication with fishers is essential to organisational reputation.

It is important to appropriately curate content and be deliberate when communicating to ensure it is effective and to “make every bit count.”

2. Communication modes and methods should align with organisational capacity.

Direct engagement with fishers will always be the gold standard of communication; however, when capacity is constrained, organisations must tailor communication effort to achieve greatest level of effectiveness – this may include use of mainstream media, third parties (e.g. tackle shops), direct electronic communication, and social media.

3. Ability to directly communicate with a broad range of fishers

Access to recreational fishers through the pass through of contact information from government (where a licence exists) materially improves ability to directly reach a broad range of fishers, not just those that are already engaged through other mediums such as social media.

4. Delivering proactive and positive initiatives such as fishing clinics increases value of the organisation to the sector.

Enables the organisation to reach a broad range of fishers and to be seen to be delivering an important service to the sector.

5. Communicate achievements regularly

Communicating activities of the organisation is not sufficient to support positive regard for the organisation. Regard is built from demonstrated achievements that align with the views of the fishers.

Consideration of how each peak body determines the priorities and research and development needs of recreational fishers

Across all three organisations investigated, determining research and development needs and priorities of recreational fishers was ad hoc and there were no formal processes of engagement with recreational fishers to develop them evident.

All three peak bodies participated in processes established by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) or government where available. This includes the state-based Research Advisory Committees (RACs).

Both AFANT and Recfishwest had led or participated in research projects.

Importantly, the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) has recently reached agreement with the FRDC to develop a mechanism – RecResearch – that will identify national research priorities for the sector. A workshop to commence the project was held in late 2022 with ARFF member organisations including state peaks and national recreational fishing representative organisations having input. In 2023, ARFF developed a research priority strategy which has since been used to guide its recommendations on recreational fishing research priorities for the FRDC.

As this project is at inception, it is not yet clear what outcomes will be achieved from the new process however, the opportunity for the sector to develop research and development priorities collectively should not be underestimated.

If peak bodies and governments are committed to progressing toward co-management, it would be logical that supporting research facilitated through the RecResearch mechanism. Recommendations to support this are included in Section 7.

6 Implications for TARFish

By understanding the factors that lead to the relative success of different peak bodies, TARFish will be able to consider the next steps to evolve as an organisation – both in terms of structure and function – to better meet the needs of Tasmania's recreational fishers. This section makes suggestions for TARFish, and the Tasmanian Government to consider.

Current Situation

TARFish has existed since 2004 and has not changed significantly since 2009 with the membership, structure and activities consistent with those described by Plowman (2013). The organisation currently:

- is responsible for representing recreational *marine* fishers only (does not include fresh water which is represented by Anglers Alliance) this is the only jurisdiction where it is split between fresh water and marine fishers. Fisheries management in Tasmania is also split between fresh water and marine with different management structures and legislation for both. There has been some discussion recently regarding the potential to bring the two government fisheries management structures and processes closer together but there is currently no formal government policy position on this.
- operates under a service level agreement with the State Government that will expire in 2024. Since 2009, TARFish has operated on service level agreements with the State Government of varying durations – from 1-3 years typically.
- has an 8-member board under the guidance of an independent Chair. The board is made up of nominees from its member organisations (4), regional representatives (2) and expert members (2). The board has 1 female member and no members under 45. All board members, apart from the current Independent Chair, are voluntary.
- has an “Executive Committee” made up of the Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary (with the CEO permitted to act as secretary but without voting rights) that is able to make a decision on any matter of the organisation.
- has a paid CEO.
- has free membership for individual fishers with current membership estimated at around 2,500 (reduced from 3,500 following the organisations first database clean). Individual members have no voting rights and receive regular newsletters and access to member-only surveys. Foundation member organisations pay an annual membership subscription of \$300 that permits them to have a nominee to the Board. Not all foundation member organisations opt to take a seat on the Board despite maintaining membership.
- delivers no programs or services to the recreational fishing community apart from advocacy.
- Has a strategic plan that is currently under review for renewal in 2024.
- Engages and communicates with recreational fishers predominantly through its newsletter, participation in news media, via social media and attendance at events such as AGFest.
- Does not receive pass-through information from licenced fishers (around 20,000 fishers). Fishing licences in Tasmania are for specific fish and gear types. There is no generalised rod and line licence in Tasmania.
- works with partners such as OZFish Unlimited where possible under capacity constraints and in early stages of development.

- developing a relationship with a new Minister and regularly interacts with departmental staff regularly at a range of levels.
- Is the government recognised peak body for marine recreational fishers in Tasmania.

There is a Ministerial Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RecFAC) and TARFish also sits on that.

TARFish was examined as a case study (Plowman, 2013) and the report's assessment, conclusions and recommendations remain consistent with what is proposed later in this section. To provide context to this comparison, several excerpts from the 2013 case study report are shown below.

Governance:

"The Management Committee is comprised of 8 persons, all male... associate members can attend Management and Executive meetings by invitation, though this rarely happens. AGMs and Management Committee meetings are closed. Management Committee members reside in the Hobart region and attempts to broaden geographic representation have so far not been successful".

"The full Management Committee meets bi-monthly. It is not clear why there is an executive committee of four who are a subset of a management committee of eight. Decision-making in TARFish is seen as more centralised than desirable, falling short of the aspirations of the 'committee composition policy', as published on the TARFish website. There is a perception that the management of the association is 'comfortable' and could do with some invigoration and fresh ideas. There is a perception that the association would benefit from a clearer definition of roles of each of the Executive and Management Committee members, so people better understood their responsibilities. And there is a perception that a review of the association's system of governance and an independent evaluation would be appropriate."

"Because of the very small membership pool, and the time demands placed upon the willing few, there is little new blood in the association. Rotation of responsibilities and roles within the Management Committee has occurred. There is no leadership succession planning, and so leadership of the association is both stable and vulnerable. It is perceived that this absence of new blood can only be addressed by amending the Constitution to permit opening up of the decision processes to associate members, and also to people who represent different age groups, as a way of getting some younger ideas."

Membership:

"TARFish also has 'associate members', recreational fishers with no necessary particular associational affiliation. 'Associate membership' is free to the general public; any person is eligible to be on the associate membership list and receive the digital or posted newsletter. There is no annual membership renewal. Once entered, people remain on the data base. There is conjecture whether these people are actual 'members', given that they pay no membership fee and have no voting rights; nor are they perceived to have any substantial say in the conduct of the association. There are 2,250 'associate members' on the data base, representing the 125,000 recreational fishers in Tasmania."

Community perception and organisational role:

"Management Committee members acknowledge lack of clarity as to whether TARFish is a peak body or a representative body, and what its actual role should be in either case. It purports to be a peak body for five member associations, and it also purports to be the representative body for all of its associate 'members' and for all marine recreational fishers in Tasmania. Yet, it also acknowledges that its existence and role is not yet widely known among recreational fishers."

"TARFish sees its role in providing information (through the newsletter and website), representing the interests of members and associate members to government and advocating on their behalf. There is a view that TARFish could better serve its 'associate members' and the recreational fishing public by establishing mechanisms to assess their interests, issues and needs and incorporating those into its strategic direction."

“In terms of marketing, TARFish works hard to market itself to the recreational fishing sector, both the general public and the known recreational fishing groups. While TARFish is known to those groups, it is less known to the broader recreational fishing public. Greater media exposure is seen as desirable.”

Relationship with Government and effectiveness:

“TARFish has successfully positioned itself as the representative body that the Minister and government talks to. Yet interviewees do not regard it as being particularly successful in its attempts to influence government and they would like to see it more willing to take a policy position up to the government, as opposed to its present passivity.

Funding:

“The association receives an annual grant of \$130,000 per annum... this income is a two-edged sword. Interviewees acknowledge that TARFish is highly sensitive to its government patron, thereby inhibiting its published desire to be an independent voice and potentially muting any public policy pronouncements. Interviewees also recognise TARFish’s vulnerability to the potential of Government funding cuts and are keen to see independent sources of funding established.

Under its funding arrangements with government, TARFish is obliged to report against a number of key performance indicators or KPIs. There is a perception that the accountability of the association would be strengthened if its evaluation was conducted externally and independently. There is also a perception that the Constitution of TARFish should also be reviewed to remove factors that may be limiting its diversity and growth.

Challenges identified:

“Challenges facing TARFish include leadership succession, broadening its Constitution, clarification of its role in serving its various constituents, installing a more transparent system of governance, and broadening its funding base.”

Reading Plowman (2013) was as insightful as it was frightening. This project to investigate successful models of operation for peak bodies commenced in late 2021. In a decade, how can the needs of the organisation remain effectively the same? The alignment of the needs of the organisation then as now is instructive. If the TARFish Board of 2013 had the Plowman (2013) report, it is unclear why the recommendations provided were not acted upon in a deliberate and staged way. Being aware of the need for change and understanding what needs to change does not appear to be a sufficient catalyst for change to be made, suggesting other barriers might have existed.

It is logical to conclude that the essential pre-conditions and catalysts for change must exist before an organisation can change. If barriers to change also exist, it can prevent change from occurring even if pre-conditions and catalysts are present. For example, TARFish in 2013 may have lacked a critical mass of critical success factors, such as:

1. There were few pre-conditions for change
2. There was no catalyst for change
3. The barriers to change existed.

It would therefore follow, that the changes at TARFish since 2013 would be incremental and iterative. And they have been. On this assessment, TARFish has changed very little since then.

What has changed is organisational leadership, with a mix of new and long-standing board members, greater regional representation and expert membership and a (relatively) new Independent Chair and CEO (the author of this report). The need to change is well understood by the current Board but what is less certain is, what to change into and how to get there.

Plowman’s (2013) concluding lines are these:

“No association is perfect. Many of the imperfections of an association are within its capacity to fix. However, it is unlikely this will occur unless an association adopts a culture of performance management (a logical extension of goal setting) and continuous improvement. Associations that constantly place every facet of themselves under review, and engage all of their members in that process, remain fluid and adaptable; able, in most cases, to withstand any shocks the external environment throws at them.

Nothing is forever. There are very few associations anywhere in the world that are over 100 years old. Associations form because of a felt need, respond to that need, then either reinvent themselves in some continuous fashion as circumstances change or they die. And, unless they have adopted a deliberate process of performance measurement and continuous improvement, that death is inevitable. The culture becomes ossified; the external world changes, and the association fails to adapt.

TARFish in 2024, whilst not dissimilar to the organisation of 2013 has the benefit of understanding previous research into the area and the critical success factors to change operating model and move from an advocacy-only organisation to one that delivers programs and services for recreational fishers.

The timing and external pre-conditions (co-management drivers) shown below indicate that the time is right to facilitate change: From investigation, it can be seen that:

1. A new Minister has taken over the fisheries portfolio.
2. The Tasmanian Government has an expressed intention to move towards co-management, including in the relatively recently released 10-year Recreational Fishing Strategy.
3. There is a review of the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 (LMRA) currently underway with the potential for new or significantly amended legislation which is expected to include greater recognition of the rights and aspirations of recreational fishers.
4. There is increased competition for resources amongst sectors across a range of fisheries and other user groups.
5. The TARFish Board recognise the need to change and is willing to undertake it and believe they can effectively negotiate with government and have sufficient skills to implement and deliver services, or an ability to negotiate and attract such resources.
6. There is a desire for recreational fishers to have greater participation in fisheries management and the current opportunities, particularly given the perception of TARFish and that the Minister’s Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee, does not appear to be adequately meeting the participation needs of recreational fishers.

This combination creates an opportunity to redevelop the organisation. The TARFish Board supports progression toward co-management and, in the short to medium-term, working towards a collaborative fisheries management model in Tasmania. Some progress has already been made since the commencement of this project and where recommendations have been completed or commenced are identified in the table below.

Based on the previous sections of this report, a number of recommendations are provided to TARFish for consideration:

	Recommendations
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Retain an expert consultant to assist board through change process ^- Upskill current board members with directorship training ^

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a governance renewal process including^: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o New board composition that includes member elected board members and removes executive committee o New constitution that meets AICD standard and better reflects the purpose and objects of the organisation o New and/or improved governance policies - Seek government support for governance improvements and potential inclusion in any future funding agreement^ - Engage with foundation members (through the independent consultant) to assist design and development of new governance framework^
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership voting rights for board member elections - Seek pass through of licensed fisher contacts^ - Membership revitalisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review membership value proposition o Validate membership*** o Use technology to manage membership (including annual membership renewal and voting)^
Program and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop proposal to government based on an expanded purpose and program, and use this as basis for an ongoing funding agreement - Investigate potential of having one peak body for both marine and freshwater, noting Tasmania is the only jurisdiction where this division is made. - Work with external partners when technical expertise required or to develop internal capability - Expand role in fisher consultation^
Relationship with Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve governance framework as described above^ - Support a 'solutions focus' with number and range of policies^ - Seek earlier engagement in decision making^ - Engage with Minister and key government personnel more regularly through the Chair and CEO. ^ - Seek formal role in consultation with recreational fishers^

Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop periodic advocacy surveys for fishers to guide position development and advocacy priorities - Ensure adequate time and opportunity to consult fishers is facilitated in decision making timelines^ - Develop closer working relationship with tackle shops^
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake investigation of current funding of sector including revenue generated from all license and other fees to assist discussion on future funding models with a view to increasing independence and security of funding stream^ - Seek new primary funding agreement based on 'purpose and program' proposal^ - Seek recognition of recreational fishing as an 'active recreation' to broaden potential for secondary funding*** - Seek suitable projects to leverage further funding (including through partnerships)^
Perception of organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved use of mainstream media and online communication^ - Strengthen relationship with tackle shops^ - Seek opportunities for increased direct-fisher engagement^ - Member elections

^ commenced

****** completed***

7 Recommendations

From this project, it appears there are opportunities for further research and development that may assist recreational fishing bodies, other sector peak bodies and governments to consider the many aspects discussed in this report and include:

1. National benchmarking process that assesses both government and peak bodies against the functions identified in Neville (2008) "Change in performance of functions through management types" every 3-5 years.
2. Development of a guiding document and self-assessment tool to assist organisations to identify and understand what the current critical success factors are for their jurisdiction.
3. Development of criteria including assessment against the guiding document above to assist peak bodies to objectively understand their capacity to change their model of operation. This might provide the basis to seek funding to support peak bodies that are going through a change process. This would ensure that there is equity of access, sufficient organisational capacity available through the change process, and enable use of external consultants to assist boards. This could contribute markedly to the success rate for organisational change.
4. Support recreational fishing peak bodies to undertake bi-annual 'organisational exchange' to specifically discuss the "seven factors" that were identified in Stage 2 and discussed in section 5 of this report. 'Leadership' should be added as an eighth aspect given its importance.

Further development

This project does not fully solve or address all TARFish's organisational objectives to grow the organisations membership and influence, to be a strong viable organisation and to be a trusted and respected organisation that delivers results for recreational fishers. There are many instances where a recommendation is to undertake a further body of work. It does not resolve the timeline for action nor identify a preferred order of action to address. The development of additional recommendations for the TARFish Board post review of this report will be necessary to make decisions.

There are important considerations for the Tasmanian Government in terms of the Living Marine Resources Management Act (1995) Review, policy settings regarding co-management, together with commitments made in the 10-year Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy.

8 Extension and Adoption

The implications for TARFish have been provided to the TARFish Board as a presentation. Many of the implications have already been progressed by the TARFish Board.

A short presentation titled “Understanding the drivers of successful peak bodies” was given at the World Recreational Fishing Conference in February 2023.

Further extension is planned including:

- Presentation to senior Tasmanian Government Representatives
- Presentation to Tasmanian Primary Industries Minister
- Presentation to Tasmanian opposition Leader and Shadow Minister
- Communication with TARFish members and recreational fishers

The final report will also be provided to all state peak bodies and ARFF.

Noting recommendation 4, it would be useful to schedule a workshop at the next national recreational fishing conference to facilitate organisational exchange based on the 7 factors.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Discussion guide example (organisation)

1. Organisational structure, governance, and length of operation (maturity)
 - a. History of organisation
 - b. Pros and cons of current board structure, appointment to and governance
 - c. Board remuneration (if any), stipends etc
 - d. Description of relationship between Board and CEO/other Executive
 - e. What board powers, if any, are delegated to an Officer of the organisation or committee? Is there any formal arrangement in place and copy of documentation to support if available?
 - f. What organisational policies exist to support good governance and effective operation of the organisation?
 - g. How are your strategic plans developed and what level of engagement does the board have in that process?
 - h. What is the 'minimum' skill set needed by the EO and Board to fulfill obligations? What policies and processes do you have to determine skill matrix?

2. Advocacy approach and outcomes including independence (perceived and actual)
 - a. How are advocacy topics agreed to by the organisation?
 - b. Are strategic plans used to guide action? How often are they prepared and reviewed?
 - c. How successful have you been/are you in this regard – key wins and factors that led to them. What has been learnt from failures and their cause?
 - d. What relationships do you consider critical to success and how are they managed?

3. Program and service delivery, including partnerships
 - a. What types of programs or projects are delivered by your organisation?
 - b. How are they selected and delivered (including partnership delivery, alignment to org strategy and values etc.)?
 - c. What do you see as the greatest areas of opportunity for your organisation in this regard?
 - d. Have there been any unsuccessful programs/projects? If so, why did they fail / what were the factors?

4. Membership value, types and quantum, cash flow generated from membership
 - a. General member program information
 - b. How did your membership program develop?

- c. Do you generate income from it, and if so, what proportion of total organisational income does this represent?
 - d. How has it grown (or shrunk) in recent times and what are the critical success factors in your view?
 - e. How have you or do you develop your member value proposition?
5. Funding source, security and quantum – what is the history to this, what level of security do you have?
- a. What is your primary source of income? What is its source and how does it reach your organisation (i.e. are there any other parties involved?). What level of security do you have for that funding source?
 - b. Do you have an SLA or other agreement with state government - discuss terms/value, how negotiated etc.?
 - c. What do you consider the minimum amount to run the organisation?
 - d. What is your budgeting process and who is involved in it?
6. Relationships with key stakeholders and State Government
- a. Who do you consider key stakeholders?
 - b. How are they managed, by whom?
 - c. What are considered the biggest determinants of the successful working relationships and how are these managed?
 - d. What could your organisation do more of or do differently to improve them?
7. Community perception of organisation
- a. What is the current community perception of your organisation (members, fishers, other waterway stakeholders, wider community)?
 - b. Is it measured and how has it tracked? What are the indicators used to understand this?
 - c. How important is it considered by the Board?
 - d. What influence does it have on effectiveness of your organisation particularly in terms of advocacy?
8. Legislation and policy (State Government)
- a. What are the key pieces of legislation that govern recreational fishing? How are recreational fishers rights/aspirations recognised?
 - b. What other State Government policies or strategies govern the approach to recreational fishing?
9. Future focus – what are your aspirations for the organisation and how will they be achieved/progressed in coming mid-term (3-years)

10. Research – how does your organisation develop research priorities for recreational fishers – does it work? Why? How could it be improved?
11. Any other discussion items considered relevant
12. Are there any specific examples or case studies you have to further evidence any of the previous discussion items?

Appendix 2: Discussion guide example (government)

1. How would you describe the role of your recreational fishing peak body?
2. What value does your government place on engagement with the recreational fishing peak body and how is that value evidenced? For example, meeting frequency and at what level (include Executive Government), service level agreements, participation in decision making, co-management opportunities, service delivery by peak body.
3. How would you describe your governments service delivery regarding recreational fishing?
 - a. Management only (i.e. services that could be considered “promotional” or non-core are outsourced to other orgs)
 - b. Management and some service delivery
 - c. All management and service delivery
4. How would you describe the operation of your main marine recreational fisher peak body?
 - a. Straight advocacy (i.e. likely to have adversarial elements, less likely to be an active participant in government processes, advice only requested when required by legislation/rules etc.)
 - b. A combination of advocacy and participation (invited to actively participate in government processes and views considered valued)
 - c. A combination of advocacy, participation and service delivery (i.e. the government has chosen to devolve certain activities to the peak body to administer/run)

What do you think are the current advantages and disadvantages of that mode of operation? What would you change in order to improve it?

5. Expanding on this, how is the peak body or recreational fishers as sector participants recognised in:
 - a. Legislation
 - b. Management plans and harvest strategies
 - c. Management or Ministerial Committees
 - i. If there are management or Ministerial committees, is peak body representation limited to participation only or are they also providing advice separately? What is the relative weights of that information and why?
6. When developing or reviewing legislation/policy/management plans etc. what would you say are the critical elements to consider in terms of:
 - a. The role the peak body will play
 - b. The relative importance placed on recreational fishing
7. The recreational fishing peak body in your jurisdiction covers both salt and fresh water
 - a. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this model in terms of:
 - i. organisational efficiency and capacity

- ii. funding
 - iii. simplicity/complexity of relationship with single entity
 - iv. linkages between the two as the fresh and saltwater systems/fisheries are connected
8. Generally, how would you describe the effectiveness of the recreational fishing peak body? What has led you to that view?
- a. Check in on overall advocacy approach and how that is managed within Government – particularly when there is conflict.
 - b. What do you think are the critical elements of an effective working relationship?
 - c. How would you compare it to the commercial sector bodies or in different sectors (e.g. other community-based peak bodies)?
9. How would you describe the Government’s relationship with the peak body? How did it get there? Consider:
- a. Level of trust/respect (transparency of relationship)
 - b. Capacity and capability of organisation – e.g. are they well meaning volunteers but not got the right governance in place?
 - c. What are the critical factors that have shaped it and over what period?
 - d. When there are issues or conflict, how are they approached or resolved?
10. Do you consider the advice and/or operation of the peak body to be “independent” of government? Why have you formed that view?
11. Funding support:
- a. What level of funding support is provided by the government:
 - i. Annual funding
 - ii. Project funding
 - b. How is it calculated and what is the source of funds (e.g. % of licence fees, from consolidated fund etc.)?
 - c. Do you have an agreement for that, over what term and how is it evaluated?
 - d. Do you have any plans to change it in the future?
12. If you were to take the “next step” in terms of that relationship:
- a. What would that look like?
 - b. What are the risks and benefits?
 - c. What are the policy/legislation settings of government that would need to be in place?
 - d. What are the funding streams or settings that would enable it?

- e. What would you need to see from the peak body to give you sufficient confidence to take that next step? E.g. governance framework, board capacity and capability, efficiency of service/project delivery?
- f. How likely is it and over what time frame?

Appendix 3: Common drivers towards co-management

Common drivers towards co-management	Sectors to which they are relevant
Enhanced culture involving a genuine partnership, shared responsibility and improved stewardship for common outcomes	All sectors
Reduced conflict, improved trust and better working relationships among management and fishers	All sectors
Reduced necessity for political decision-making	All sectors
Increased transparency of management costs and service delivery	All sectors
Potentially lower costs of fisheries management	All sectors
Greater scrutiny of the existing regulatory approach and opportunity to develop more cost effective and accountable management	All sectors
Improved acceptance of and compliance with management decisions	All sectors
More inclusive and transparent decision-making	All sectors
More flexible and adaptive management in “real time”	All sectors
Improved ability to innovate and respond to industry development needs	All sectors
Increased opportunity for capacity building and skills development in organisations	All sectors
Improved public perception of industry	Commercial and recreational sectors
Improved cooperation among fishers	Commercial and recreational sectors
Improved investment climate for fishers	Commercial sector
Opportunity for better social outcomes via improved work/life balance	All sectors
Opportunity to highlight the economic and social importance of flow-on impacts of recreational fishing, both marine and freshwater	Recreational sector
Chance to implement and have recognised environmental management systems and codes of practice	All sectors
Expanded extension and education opportunities across the community	All sectors
Opportunity for finer-scale regional (or spatial) management	All sectors