CHAIRMAN’S SUMMARY

1. Welcome

1.1. Forum proceedings

The Chairman welcomed participants to the 2014 Western Zone Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Total Commercial Catch (TACC) Forum. The proceedings for the Forum were outlined and comprised fishery management discussions, a presentation of the latest stock assessment results for each fishery against the decision rules, a discussion on the proposed TACCs under the harvest strategy for 2014/15, and discussions regarding the implementation of a new cost recovery system.

1.2. Adoption of agenda

Participants endorsed the agenda as circulated.

WESTERN ZONE ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY – MANAGEMENT & STOCK ASSESSMENT

2. Fishery Management

2.1. Fishery management plan actions

An annual progress report on implementation is required under the Rock Lobster Fishery Management Plan. For the first time, Fisheries Victoria provided a full overview of progress against the actions contained within the Plan. The Plan describes 57 actions and since its implementation in 2009, 41 have been completed or are ongoing. Fisheries Victoria reported that the incomplete actions related to establishing a robust estimate of recreational catch, establishing a Management Advisory Forum and changing existing regulations to i) set a winter closure and ii) require quota deductions from catch stored in coffs and wet wells.

Industry expressed some dissatisfaction with the report and progress on issues such as the establishment of a MAC and suggested it was symptomatic of past communications with industry. Industry further noted that there was insufficient detail to make meaningful comments on how each action had, or had not, been adequately addressed. Fisheries Victoria stated that, in accordance with the requirements of the Fishery Management Plan, it would publish on the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) website a report outlining progress in implementing each action. Industry, in noting that there was insufficient detail and time available to continue the discussion, reserved the right to make further comments on the actions.
once the detail has been posted and considered. Where appropriate, industry and SIV will work with the Department to address actions where these stakeholders have lead responsibility.

**Action 1: Fisheries Victoria to prepare and post on the DEPI website a report based on progress with the actions taken to address the management objectives and strategies listed on pages 29-44 of the Victorian Rock Lobster Fishery Management Plan.**

The Forum was advised that Fisheries Victoria is developing a template for use as a ‘blueprint’ for Fisheries Management Plans. It was agreed that this template would be made available for industry to comment.

**Action 2: DEPI to make the new management plan template available to industry for review and comment.**

Fisheries Victoria acknowledged that having an accurate estimate of recreational catch to use as part of the stock assessment and, subsequently, the annual TACC setting process, has been a concern for the commercial sector for some time. A detailed and scientifically designed survey has now been developed by Fisheries Victoria that focuses on five key recreational species (abalone, rock lobster, snapper, King George whiting and black bream). Funding is currently being sought to undertake the project. While the project is a priority for Fisheries Victoria and VRFish, it was noted that there are many other calls on Government funding and a shrinking budget; consequently, this work will have to compete for funding with other priorities.

Industry requested that a timeline for the ‘estimation of recreation catch’ project be developed and that the timeline and a copy of the proposal be provided to them for comment.

**Action 3: Fisheries Victoria to provide industry with a copy of the proposal for assessment of the recreational catch for review and comment**

Fisheries Victoria noted that the remaining outstanding actions would be part of the upcoming review of the management plan and stated there was a willingness to establish a management Advisory Committee (MAC), which may initially be formed as the committee to lead the review.

2.2. **Fishery Management Plan Review**

Fisheries Victoria stated its intention to review the plan, commencing in the next few months and that details of the scope of the review were still under development. To assist this process, Fisheries Victoria will establish a review committee with representatives from industry, Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV), VRFish, fisheries management and other experts as required. Input and experience from other jurisdictions will be utilised as appropriate. The first task of the committee will be to develop a set of principles to guide the review and stakeholder expectations and define a timeline.

**Action 4: Fisheries Victoria to develop a detailed timeline for the review process and update of the current RL plan as soon as possible and advise industry.**
3. Compliance Report

Fisheries Victoria presented an overview of the compliance activities over 2012/13 for both the commercial and recreational sectors, including the type and number of inspections carried out, detection rates and compliance issues.

**Commercial sector.**

In the Western Zone, 210 inspections of commercial operations were carried out at landing and 62 at sea. In the Eastern Zone, 46 inspections of commercial operations were carried out at landing and six at sea. The rate of compliance with regulations was at 90% for both zones.

Where commercial non-compliance was detected, the offences included take of undersize animals, fishing in a closed season or closed area, breach of licence conditions, exceeding quota or pot allowances and incorrect identification of gear.

**Recreational sector**

Across Victoria, there were 181 at sea inspections and 420 on land inspections of the recreational sector, with compliance rates of 94% and 91%, respectively. The main offences included failure to mark the tail fan, exceeded catch, illegal equipment, taking undersize animals, incorrect identification of gear, fishing in marine parks and sanctuaries, and not possessing a recreational fishing licence.

Industry participants at the forum requested that:

- for future presentations, a differentiation be made between the offences that threaten the resource versus those that are considered ‘administrative offences’; and
- if particular types of offences are repeatedly being detected, that Fisheries Victoria provide guidance to industry in the form of a rationale about why the regulation is important so that fishers understand the context and reasoning behind the rule.

**Action 5: Fisheries Victoria to review the format of compliance reporting.**

4. Presentation of Western Zone Stock Assessment

4.1 **Stock assessment results**

Dr Adrian Linnane presented results of the 2012/13 stock assessment, drawing attention to the major points as summarised below:

- In 2012/13, the TACC of 260 tonne was fully taken for a fourth consecutive season.
- The effort (483,000 potlifts) needed to catch the 2011/12 TACC was marginally (2%) above the effort expended 2011/12.
- Catch rate trends are broadly similar for nominal and standardised data.
- To determine the standardised catch per unit effort (CPUE), catch data is standardised by region, depth, year, month and vessel-fisher combination.
- Nominal and standardised CPUE have increased by 43% and 30%, respectively, from the low in 2009/10. Nominal CPUE for 2012/13 was 0.53kg/pot-lift and standardised CPUE was 0.43kg/pot-lift.
• When examined by regions, the highest catch rates are from the Warrnambool region and are the highest seen since the introduction of quota in 2001.

• The current increases in CPUE are due to a slightly above average level of recruitment to the 60mm carapace length (CL) class in 2008/09.

• Trends in puerulus abundance are used to check the accuracy of the model-estimated recruitment to 60mm CL (puerulus abundance is not a component of the model). On average, it takes two years for puerulus to reach 60mm CL so the puerulus trend line is moved forward two years to determine its consistency with the recruitment trend line. The results show a conclusive agreement in trends, which indicates that the puerulus collectors are effective and that the model is estimating recruitment trends correctly.

• Recruitment to the 60mm CL size class decreased in 2009/10 has been below the long-term average since that time.

• Data from the fixed-site surveys (closed escape gaps) indicate that the abundance of males and females below the legal minimum length has been decreasing since 2011/12. Abundance of males and females above the legal minimum length has increased over the same time period as a result of the higher level of recruitment in 2008/09.

• Data from the onboard observer program shows a reduction in both undersize and legally-sized rock lobster between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

• Growth data has shown that rock lobsters take approximately six years from settlement to legal minimum length in the Western Zone but five years in the east.

• Western Zone recruitment trends are consistent with trends in the Southern Zone of South Australia.

Dr Linnane provided an overview of the stock assessment model used to estimate the annual available biomass of rock lobsters in each zone. He explained that there are three main components to the model: recruitment, growth and mortality (i.e. extractions through natural mortality and fishing). The model estimates the level of recruitment to the 60mm CL size class using mean size data from commercial logbooks and length-frequency data from fixed-site surveys and onboard observer sampling. Growth rate is estimated from data collected through the tagging program.

The model estimates the number of lobsters in each size class and then uses the length-weight relationship to estimate the total weight of available lobsters (i.e. biomass).

With the available biomass estimated, the model then samples from the long-term recruitment time series at the 60mm CL size class to project forward in time at a catch level that will allow biomass levels to reach the target reference point by 2020/21.

Based on the decision rules specified in the rock lobster fishery management plan, the TACC is set at this catch level for the next season to ensure that catches are maintained on the target trajectory to allow biomass rebuilding to occur by the 2020/21 timeframe.

For more information on stock assessment modelling, Dr Linnane recommended information produced for people in the fishing industry by Fishwell Consulting. This information can be found using the following links:

https://www.youtube.com/user/FishwellConsulting
A number of concerns regarding data collection and analysis were raised by industry participants at the Forum. These are detailed below and responses are recorded in italics:

- The validity of data collected through the fixed-site survey program is compromised because the ground has already been fished heavily by the time the surveys are undertaken.

  The stock assessment model accounts for depth and time of year and the focus is on the long-term time series, rather than a single point in time. In addition to the commercial pots used in the survey, research pots are also used in order to get a thorough distribution of data from the fishery. The voluntary catch program (fishers record everything caught in a predetermined number of pots every fishing trip) being discussed at the Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Resource Assessment Group (RLRAG) and by industry may assist in lessening the concerns with the current data collection programs.

- The model and the standardisation cannot identify changes in fishing practices from year to year, which is leading to inaccurate stock estimates. In the past few years there has been an effort shift to inshore areas due to the demand and higher prices for ‘red’ lobsters and offshore grounds, which account for a third of the fishery, are being left untouched.

  The standardisation accounts for depth and the model has a ‘year effect’ that picks up changes in catch and activity between years.

- The standardisation of depth is wrong. The 40m separation of inshore and offshore should be replaced by 60m.

  The RLRAG investigated depth characterisation during the deliberations about standardisation a number of years ago. Depth was broken down into 20m categories and it was determined that the 40m cut-off was appropriate. It was agreed that SARDI will re-examine the standardisation and depth parameters used in the current stock assessment process.

**Action 6: SARDI to re-examine the standardisation and depth parameters used in the current stock assessment process**

- A decision-making process is needed when the RLRAG is unable to reach a consensus on a particular issue and industry positions need to be clearly recorded.

  The Forum agreed that when a consensus is not reached within the RLRAG, the issue will be progressed to the Executive Director Fisheries Victoria for decision until such time as the MAC has been established. The MAC will then be responsible for resolving lack of consensus or disagreements and providing advice to the Executive Director.

**Action 7: Fisheries Victoria and the RLRAG to review governance arrangements for the formulation and delivery of scientific advice**

- Some industry participants believe that the stock assessment is wrong and that the TACC should be set on what is known rather than on future predictions. The use of a biomass target is unnecessary and that a more satisfactory criteria would be that catch rates are increasing.

  The management plan and the standardisation process were developed with industry participation.

- The size limit in South Australia should be made to be consistent with that in Victoria.

  An action from the Eastern Zone TACC Forum was for the Fisheries Victoria to raise this issue with the South Australian Government.
4.2 Application of decision framework

Using the decision framework, the status of the stock against the performance criteria in the management plan was assessed as follows:

- Step 1: Is the egg production estimate above the limit reference point?
  - Egg production was estimated to be 74% of $B_{2001}$, which is above the limit reference point of 35% of $B_{2001}$.

- Step 2: Is the available biomass at the target reference point?
  - The available biomass is not at the target of 159% of $B_{2001}$; it is estimated to currently be at 75%.
  - Because the available biomass is not at the target, a TACC must be set to achieve the target by 2020/21.
  - **The TACC that achieves the target with a 50% probability is 230 tonne** (a decrease of 30 tonne from 2012/13).

- Step 3: Is the two-year trend in raw CPUE consistently contradicting the two-year trend in model-estimated available biomass?
  - The two-year trends are not contradicting each other.

5. TACC Discussion and Forum Recommendations

Industry participants at the Forum had a number of views on the requirement to set a TACC of 230 tonne for the 2014/15 season to achieve the biomass target. These views were as follows:

1.) The majority of industry participants indicated that the TACC should be left at the 2013/14 level of 260 tonne as the catch will maintain an adequate rebuild rate and reach the target biomass level, albeit within a longer timeframe.

2.) A substantial number of industry participants indicated that the TACC could be increased because the fishery is sustainable at much higher levels of TACC.

3.) A small number of industry participants supported a reduction of 30 tonnes and setting the TACC at 230 tonne in accordance with the model output and decision rules. The price for product is currently low so it was considered that it is the appropriate time to act conservatively and get the fishery to a higher CPUE more quickly.

Industry representatives reiterated their view that the biomass target prescribed in the management plan had never been agreed to by industry and that the fixed target for the biomass rebuild was the root cause of the recent fluctuations in TAC. In addition, industry noted that:

- as the time to achieve the target biomass shortens, the fluctuations in TACC will become more extreme and is another reason why the majority of industry does not support the current harvest strategy; and
- as the fishery is sustainable and egg production is protected, the TACC determination should be a purely economic consideration.

Dr Linnane agreed with the view of industry that the form of harvest strategy used in Victoria was prone to lead to frequent changes in the TACC.

Fisheries Victoria stated that the process to develop and implement the management plan was robust. Members of industry were involved in the development and all licence holders had the
opportunity to comment on the draft when it was sent out for public comment. The plan was then signed off and implemented by the Minister.

Fisheries Victoria considered that it had not been presented with valid reasons to deviate from the management plan in setting this year’s TACC. A clear statement had been made that the standardisation process will be examined and that a review of the management plan is timely as it has been in place for five years.

Industry members queried the scope of the review and asked if it was plausible for a completely new framework without the constraints of a target to be developed as a result of the review. Industry also asked what it could do to over the next year to get the review done.

Dr Linnane cautioned that the process undertaken in South Australia to develop a new harvest strategy took over two years, with many meetings and a significant time dedication from all involved.

Fisheries Victoria indicated that it would be developing a Terms of Reference to guide the process and that timelines and responsibilities would be outlined as part of the document. It was possible for the issues raised in the Forum to be included in Terms of Reference for the management plan review.

The Chairman summarised the discussions:

- There is one TACC option using the decision rules in the management plan.
- Fisheries Victoria has stated that it has not been presented with valid reasons to deviate from the management plan and decision rules;
- There is little industry support for the quota reduction because it is considered that the fishery is sustainable and rebuilding at the current TACC;
- Industry has concerns with the standardisation, specifically the depth strata categories and the perceived inability to detect changes in fishing practices;
- The governance arrangements of the TACC Forum and the decision-making process and the RLRAG need to be strengthened, particularly the decision making process when a lack of consensus is evident and the recording the views of all members;
- Industry consider the biomass target to no longer be appropriate as the biomass is rebuilding at a reasonable rate; and
- There was a divergence of views from industry members at the Forum regarding what the TACC for 2014/15 should be.

The Chairman noted that the issue of diverging opinions and a lack of consensus was discussed at the Eastern Zone TACC Forum. There is an absence of a mechanism to resolve divided opinion and hence a governance framework is required (based on e.g. voting/majority/polling/ weighted for quota holding versus licence etc).

Industry participants requested that the meeting summary include the timeline for setting the TACC. The process is as follows:

- After the TACC Forums, letters are sent to licence holders and relevant stakeholders seeking comment on the draft Further Quota Order (which details the TACC amount and the kilogram value of a quota unit) in late April;
- The consultation period is for three to four weeks;
• Comments are considered by DEPI and a recommendation is made to the Minister (or delegate) in late May;
• Letters are sent in early June to licence holders and relevant stakeholders with the final decision on the TACC. Letters to licence holders will include licence renewals. Letters will be dispatched on 6 June 2014.
• The 2014/15 season commences 1 July 2014.

6. Cost Recovery

At the direction of the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries Victoria is implementing a new, prospective cost recovery system from 1 April 2014 in consultation with the Fisheries Cost Recovery Standing Committee (FCRSC).

Mark Edwards, Director Policy & Licensing, Fisheries Victoria provided an overview of the new approach, the rationale for implementing it. A description of specific services to be provided to the fishery and attendant costs, which determine Fishery Service levies (i.e. management, research, compliance and administration), was provided.

It was stated that the new system provides for much greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of cost recoverable services to commercial entitlement holders and greater opportunities for consultation with industry on the nature and extent of services provided. Reporting to industry at forums such as this is a critical part of the process and a number of key matters were described:

- Why cost recovery from the commercial sector (wild-catch & aquaculture) is Government Policy.
- How the previous system was flawed and unreliable.
- How the new cost recovery system will work.
- A number of concessions and other ways the new system has been designed to assist industry adjust to the proposed new levies

Rationale

In August 2012, the Minister advised the Chair, FCRSC that he would defer the implementation of the prospective cost recovery system for 12 months. The Minister instructed the FCRSC to develop and implement a new, simpler, forward-budgeting cost recovery system by 1 April 2014 that corrected the under-recovery of costs from the commercial sector.

Cost recovery is government policy, and is based on the Department of Treasury and Finance guidelines. The Victorian Government is committed to cost recovery because it is considered that the broader community (all tax payers) should not pay the costs of services that are provided because of the operation of the commercial fishing sector.

Previous system

Problems with the previous cost recovery system included:

• industry had little say in what services were provided;
• it was complex and retrospective: levies were set for the coming year using information provided by FACS (the staff time recording system) on time spent on recoverable
activities in the preceding year. Industry had limited discussion through the FCRSC with the Department on the services to be provided;
  • it lacked transparency on what services were provided and how levies were derived;
  • there was significant under-recovery of the cost of providing commercial fishery services as over time because the activities recorded under FACS were an increasingly poor match to the actual services delivered, the cost of those services and the levies that were derived from the system.
  • In December 2012 the Minister said this matter had to be resolved.

New system
The new system is:
  • Forward looking: it provides the ability to forecast the nature and level of services to be delivered and charge levies on that basis. It encourages discussions with industry about the services the Government will provide are going to provide, the levies required to deliver these services and how the delivery of services can be refined.
  • Principled: it aligns with the Department of Treasury Cost Recovery guidelines.
  • Transparent: performance measures are established for each fishery.
  • Accountable: there is quarterly reporting on the delivery of services at a fishery level.
  • Consultative: comprehensive consultation on what services are provided and what the associated costs are.

Transition and concessions
The new system is being implemented over three years commencing 1 April 2014, with the first two years considered as trial years. The Minister has agreed to a number of concessions to assist with the transition. These include:
  • Increased levies being phased over 3 years at a rate of 30%, 30% then 40%.
  • For compliance, only recovering for commercial inspections, i.e. no cost recovery for surveillance or investigations.
  • No cost recovery for preparation of fishery management plans.
  • Adjusted recovery rates for selected fin fish fisheries.
  • Small operator concession - $500 per licence for licence categories where average production over three years is less than 500kg (generally applies to bait licence categories and some aquaculture categories).

Industry Consultation
The FCRSC was established to advise the Government on the operation of a new cost recovery system, and over a period of 18 months, provided advice on the design of an improved system. The FCRSC comprises:
  • An independent Chairperson;
  • Four members nominated by Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV) who represent the commercial wild-catch sector;
  • One member nominated by SIV representing the aquaculture sector; and
  • The Executive Director of SIV

The FCRSC will continue to provide oversight and advice to the Minister on the system’s operation. DEPI will report quarterly report to FCRSC and entitlement holders on service
delivery; there will also be fishery-specific consultation to allow discussion with industry on the key activities and deliverables/milestones listed in the schedules.

Rock Lobster & Giant Crab services

In the rock lobster and giant crab fisheries, Fishery Service levies are charged for the following services:

- Management
- Education and enforcement (only commercial inspections)
- Research
- Administration (licence, quota and cost recovery)

There are also levies for:
- FRDC
- SIV

Research and compliance costs make up the majority of the levies in the Rock Lobster fisheries.

The research component is currently contracted to the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the services provided include:

- Annual fixed-site survey
- On-board observer program
- In-port catch sampling
- Puerulus collector sampling
- Data management (entry, validation, monthly catch & effort reporting, data summary report, data extraction and provision of advice as needed)
- Analysis of all data (catch & effort logbooks, observer and fixed-site survey data, puerulus monitoring data)
- Model outputs for harvest decision rules
- Participation in management and RL RAG meetings.
- Preparation of annual stock assessment reports
- Preparation of annual fishery status reports
- Presentation of stock assessment model outputs, analysis and interpretation
- Analysis of resource status
- Ad hoc information requests

Industry will have the opportunity to have input into the renewal of the research contract.

Fisheries Victoria distributed documents detailing the schedule of cost recoverable services, which included service functions, deliverables and projected operating costs for 2014/15. These documents will be used as the basis for moving forward to the implementation of the new system and will become more detailed over time. The levies for future years may change as a result of ongoing discussions with industry about the nature and extent of services provided as captured in the service schedules.

Industry participants raised a number of issues:
• Concern with the lack of consideration regarding the aggregate burden on industry of the many other fees and levies required to be operational (PrimeSafe etc).
• The level of detail captured in service schedules.
• The magnitude of levy increases and a desire for more information to better understand how the costs are derived.
• A clear definition of surveillance and inspections. [This is currently in development by Fisheries Victoria.]
• The high cost of research and desire to explore ways to reduce these costs.
• Industry requested that Fisheries Victoria develop a levy calculator that projects costs over the next two to three years that industry can use for businesses planning purposes. [This is currently in development by Fisheries Victoria.]

Industry expressed concern that the current level of information on the services to be delivered and cost reviewed was inadequate in many dimensions. VRLA President Markus Nolle noted that he has been, and will continue to be, in intensive discussions with Fisheries Victoria concerning cost recovery, to address the concerns raised. Fisheries Victoria re-affirmed its commitment to working closely with industry to provide transparency and clarity, including over the issue defining commercial inspections.

Fisheries Victoria concluded this section by acknowledging the issues raised by industry, that implementation of the new system is a substantial change for both industry and the Department, and the process is ongoing so continued industry participation through the FCRSC and future fishery-specific meetings was vital.

GIANT CRAB FISHERY – MANAGEMENT & STOCK ASSESSMENT

7. Fishery Management

Although not discussed at the TACC Forum due to time constraints, Fisheries Victoria has made the commitment to review the Giant Crab Fishery Management Plan.

8. Presentation of Giant Crab Stock Assessment

8.1. Stock assessment results

Dr Linnane presented the 2012/12 stock assessment of the Giant Crab Fishery.

• The total catch of giant crab by all fishers in the 2012/13 quota year was 10.2 tonne. The catch from fishers targeting giant crab was 8 tonne.
• The number of fishers operating in the fishery has decreased.
• The CPUE of fishers targeting giant crab was 0.24kg/24-hour pot-lift, which is a marginal increase from the 2011/12 CPUE of 0.20kg/24-hour pot-lift.
• Based on the current decision rules in the management plan, which uses the indicator of kg/24-hour pot-lift, the CPUE has been below the trigger for the past four seasons.

8.2. CPUE and soak time analysis
Dr Linnane described the discussions that had been taking place through the RLRAG regarding the relationship between soak time and catch rate in response to claims that recent increases in soak time could be causing a bias to CPUE. Currently, the giant crab CPUE standardisation is designed to standardise for the variation in the number of days pots are left in the water and the effectiveness of those pots to catch crabs. When pots are hauled within seven days, the giant crab CPUE is calculated based on the actual number of days pots are in the water. When pots are left for more than seven days, the calculation is capped at seven days.

The RLRAG asked the SARDI to undertake a preliminary investigation to examine the relationship between soak time and CPUE. Results of that investigation were presented to the RLRAG at its last meeting on 26 February, and showed that, based on the data set chosen, soak time and catch rate increased in a linear relationship up to four days after which time bait became ineffective.

After the RLRAG meeting, SARDI and Fisheries Victoria conducted intensive analyses of the data and tested a range of scenarios with a variety of data sets (e.g. i.) the full time series, ii) since introduction of size limit, iii) since introduction of soak time reporting etc).

Results indicated that a CPUE calculation incorporating a soak time cut-off as well as an indicator (a number) describing the relationship between CPUE and soak time was the most appropriate methodology. Results suggested that the soak time cut-off was dependent on which data set was used and that between four and seven days was applicable.

Fisheries Victoria noted that these results needed to be considered and discussed by the RLRAG and a recommendation made to the Executive Director Fisheries Victoria.

Industry requested that the terminology used to describe the CPUE be changed from kg/24-hour pot-lift to kg/24-hour soak day as the latter was more accurate.

9. TACC Discussion and Forum Recommendation

Recalculated CPUE time series, using four-day and seven-day soak times, resulted in the trend line remaining above the trigger limit (recalculated accordingly) but steeper declines in CPUE between 2006/07 and 2009/10. The CPUE fell below the limit reference point in 2011/12 but increased in 2012/13.

In recognition of the ongoing work being undertaken through the RLRAG, Fisheries Victoria suggested rolling over the current TACC arrangements and therefore recommended keeping the conditional 9 tonne TACC in place for 2014/15.

Industry members asserted that the giant crab stocks are healthy, that Victoria and Tasmania experienced good catches this year, and that inconsistent supply caused by management arrangements resulted in lost markets.

Industry sought a TACC of 12 tonne for 2014/15 and stated that without that amount, export markets to China may not survive.

Industry noted that the current 9 tonne TACC may not be fully taken due to the lack of a market.

Industry requested that the size limit for males be changed to be equivalent to that in Tasmania (i.e. from 150mm carapace to 140mm).
Industry also requested that a data sharing arrangement be established between Dr Andrew Levings and Fisheries Victoria.

Action 8: In relation to giant crab, Fisheries Victoria will:

- Continue to seek advice from the RLRAG regarding the CPUE determination.
- Examine the additional data recently received from fishers in accordance with their licence conditions.
- Consider the size limit difference between Victoria and Tasmania and the implications of increasing the Victorian limit for male giant crabs.
- Consider the appropriateness of releasing data to external persons, the suitable avenue for those requests to be made (i.e. through the RLRAG and in relation to work being undertaken by the RLRAG) and the nature of confidentiality agreements that would be required.

The Forum did not make a specific recommendation on a TACC for 2014/15.

The meeting concluded at 5pm.