



TASMANIAN ABALONE COUNCIL LTD

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DIVER SUB-COUNCIL Annual General Meeting Friday September 5, 2014 The Old Woolstore

MINUTES

Present:

P Richardson (chair), S Anning, M Baker, A Bartle, M Chesterman, B Cobbing, J Dale, M Debnam, M Franklin, A Hansen, G Hughes, D Lisson, M Marriott, J McKibben, R Menadue, G Moroney, P Pyke, B Ransom, S Seabourne, S Sharp, G Woodham. J Freeman (minutes)

Apologies:

B Richardson, J Evans, B Wilson

Welcome:

Paul Richardson welcomed the divers present.

Minutes of previous meeting:

Resolution: That the minutes of the Sub Council Meeting held on February 12, 2014 having been circulated be taken as read and confirmed.

Moved Ben Cobbing seconded Greg Woodham.

Business arising from previous meeting:

Diver economics to be discussed further on the agenda.

Election of Chairman 2014/15:

Paul stood down from the chair while Dean Lisson called for nominations.

Paul Richardson was nominated by Ben Cobbing and seconded by Greg Woodham.

Paul accepted the nomination and was duly elected by the members.

Diver Economics:

Any reduction in TACC means the diver is uneconomic and will be further jeopardised if there is a major cut to the TACC on the West Coast for 2015.

The 'Felmingham Report' states a dive fee of \$10 to be viable; divers should have a good relationship with their quotaholders and negotiate their dive fee.

Central West Boundaries: Matt Bradshaw

Northern boundary changes – there could be an issue with the DPIPWE management system which may not be able to handle some suggested zone changes.

FRAG #3 proposals

- Include in the Central West Granville & Sandy Cape.
- Re-instate the Central West Zones as previously.
- Move the southern boundary back down to Strahan, or manage the fishing without caps.

Messages from FRAG#3 re TAC 2015;

- East Coast – no change
- West Coast – no change
- Bass Strait – no change

Paul requests that any questions or queries about the state of the fishery be put in writing for Paul to bring to the board.

Overcatch; Matt Bradshaw

- Any divers who are within the 20% overcatch;
Matt explained Rule 50 & 51 – all overcatch has to be transferred and can be covered with quota later.
- Currently the 30 day rule is to cover the overcatch with quota within 30 days, *and not able to fish in that zone until covered*. The new option will have 12 months to cover the overcatch.
- DPIPWE is drafting a letter to divers explaining the current rules – with discussion on possible changes.
- DPIPWE is in the process of updating their computer system which will capture all the data.
- Discussion on the 30% over catch of where do the fish go and who owns the fish?
- Divers should have mechanisms in place not to go into overcatch. This is a serious issue and special penalties can jeopardise the livelihood of divers through the loss of license.
- Past rules 10% overcatch – there is a small difference between the divers estimating the real weight of fish.

Motions for the AGM:

Greg Woodham discussed the Dive Sector into the future;

Currently there are a core of 10/15 divers that are viable, in the future there needs to be an incentive for divers to stay in the industry. There is a surplus of 44 divers – do we want a profitable dive sector?

How? Greg has researched how other fisheries have consolidated i.e. the Prawn and Barramundi fisheries.

1. Proposal to create consolidated FLAD's;
 - Two Licenses would be a consolidated 'A' license.
 - One license would be a 'B' license, not a consolidated license = no supervisor.
 - Two 'B' licenses would equal an 'A' license (consolidated).
 - Suspend supervisors while this process is in place.
 - When a 'B' license is sold with another 'B' would make an 'A' license.
 - An 'A' license is fully transferable and can have a supervisor.
 - Current supervisors to stay.
 - Greg has discussed this idea with the Minister and Government leaders.

In Victoria 5 units are attached to each dive entitlement and have a 3 or 5 year contract, future incentive for investment is paramount for renewing boats and equipment.

The canned market is under extreme pressure being stifled by Aquaculture.

2. Alternative proposal 'to cap licenses';

Cap each entitlement by 35 units 19.32t caught on an existing entitlement, or source a second entitlement, ideally own 1 to lease 1.

This motion was previously defeated.

There are 121 FLAD's, as divers retire leasing is \$15,000 or an investment \$150,000.

3. Paul will submit a Motion for the AGM;

Currently there can be 3 supervisors per license per year; there are some new entrants in the industry who are on a month by month basis with no investment in the industry.

Divers working together for a better deal for the sector, all divers are expected to attend the AGM and have proxy votes of members unable to attend.

General Business:

- Confusion on telephone reporting – there have been instances of a considerable amount of time taken to ‘change zones’ on the paperwork - DPIPWE will supply a list of questions and terminology. FAQ. (changing ‘part’ zone report)
- Divers are to phone-in before leaving the wharf or boat ramp. (Prior fishing report)
- New Docket Book;
Team diving declaration.
‘Intend’ rule green or blacklip, or at a certain size, there are always a small number of times where divers can be caught out.

- Salmonoid sector – Dean Lisson

Tassal intends to expand leases in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel and the outside of Bruny and Nubeena due to the nitrogen cap being reached in the current leases.

Block 14 – there has been a substantial drop in productivity with reports that there are no fish in the area, and the bottom being polluted. There are various factors that could be damaging the reef system, and TACL has engaged a scientist to look at the productivity and the quality of the bottom.

Port Esperance harbour has changed since the salmon farms have been in operation.

Footage has been taken of the area currently showing good bottom, south east of Hope Island has a silky bottom with a few abs covered in dust! Sedimentation is detrimental to abalone, the gill structure is sensitive to small particles and they move away to different areas.

The suggested compromise is to draw a line from Scott’s Point to Partridge Island, with no salmon pens south of this line.

Huon Aquaculture has a current lease on Trumpeter Bay, and intends to split the lease and take 1 mile offshore. They also intend to take more leases offshore which are detrimental to Southern Rock Lobster, Abalone and recreational fishers. To increase production of Salmon they need to push out into oceanic areas.

Sedimentation and nutrient overload, along with effluent being discharged out into the water is creating an excreta plume; this in turn creates a Work Safety issue with divers by attracting sharks.

The industry would be more supportive if the pens were located 10 miles offshore, the technology exists; there are new feed boats in operation and the wave action would disperse the sediment quicker and wouldn’t be a navigational hazard.

‘Are divers comfortable with statements from the TACL to the media on the detriment to the industry?’ **AGREED**

- Greg Hughes showed a presentation on his reseeding proposal.

Meeting Close: 11.30am

NEW Actions

Motion for AGM;

1. To limit the current Supervisor rule on fishing licenses from the current three variations a year to one variation every three years'.
2. Proposal to create consolidated FLAD's