

Minutes

Lobster Industry Working Group (LIWG) Meeting 29.10.2024

Details

Location: Zoom

Date/time: 29 October 2024
2pm-4:45pm

Chairperson: Simon Clark (DPI)

Additional DPI Staff

1. Josie Krause (DPI Commercial Management)

Observers

1. Scott Westley
2. Kris Cooling (FRDC)

Members Present

1. Daniel Stewart (Industry R1)
2. Noel Gogerly (Industry R2)
3. Mark Cranstone (Industry R4)
4. Mark Horne (Industry R5)
5. Geoff Liggins (DPI Research Scientist)
6. Damian Young (DPI Executive Officer)
7. Ben McCulloch (CommFish)

Apologies

1. Lee Monin (Industry 3)
2. Oliver Wady (Recreational)
3. Matt Cartwright (Compliance)

October 29 Tuesday, 2pm

1. Welcome, apologies and introductory remarks

The Chair welcomed members and DPIRD representatives, acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land and noted the apologies for the meeting.

2. Confirmation of final minutes from previous meeting

The draft minutes from meeting held 22 May 2024 were emailed to members 27 June 2024 and reviewed out of session.

RESOLUTION Members confirmed the minutes from meeting 22 May 2024 as accurate.

The Chair reviewed the following outstanding actions from the 22 May 2024 meeting with the group.

Action 4.5 – refer to section 8(f).

Action 4.8 – DPIRD advised members to complete their catch reporting correctly and any potential catch allocation processes with respect to octopus would be determined by the Government of the day. The Government may or may not choose to set up an independent allocation panel, who would then recommend any allocation process.

Action 4.9 – The Chair committed to seeking departmental approval for the group to hold the annual May meeting face-to-face, and advised the tentative date for the next TAFC meeting is 22 May 2025.

Action 4.10 - refer to section 6.

Action 4.11 – DPIRD advised this item would be deferred until a future meeting.

Action 4.14 - refer to section 8(d).

Action 4.15 – refer to section 8(b).

Action 4.16 – refer to section 8(e).

ACTION 4.17 DPIRD to share the octopus Identification guide compiled by Karina Hall with industry.

3. Lobster Industry Working Group Terms of Reference and membership update

During the May 2024 LIWG meeting, members recommended some proposed amendments to the ToR, notably:

- a) Inclusion of action/s to be followed against any member who misrepresents their role on the working group or breaches the departments code of conduct
- b) Inclusion of the Commfish NSW Lobster fishery member on the LIWG as a non-voting member
- c) Clarification observers are confined to attending face to face working group meetings.
- d) References to the NSW Department of Primary industries (DPI) be updated to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)
- e) References to Deputy Director Fisheries be updated to the Executive Director DPIRD Fisheries.

Members were provided a copy of a draft ToR that included the amendments above and were advised they have a two-week timeframe to provide any additional feedback.

Resolution Pending review of any additional feedback the draft amended ToR are accepted as final and are to be published on the DPIRD website.

4. Tags for the 2024/25 fishing period

Members were advised an additional 55,000 tags have been ordered for the 2024/25 fishing period TACC of 200 tonnes, which is consistent with the number of additional tags ordered for the 2023/24 fishing period.

5. Lobster Industry Regulation Changes

DPIRD advised the 2 proposals supported by members to proceed to regulatory change at the May 2024 meeting have now been included in the next batch of broader fisheries regulation changes and that as an interim measure a section 37 Order was approved 23 August 2024 to allow endorsement holders to lease greater than twice the quota they hold. It was noted that due to the transition of the digital system, until amended, any transfers greater than double the original shareholding would be required to be done manually.

6. LIWG meeting 22 May 2024 cost breakdown

DPIRD provided a breakdown of the cost to hold the previous face-to-face meeting 22 May 2024.

Members again expressed the importance of the face-to-face meeting and the benefit of attending the Total Allowable Fishing Committee (TAFC) meeting as a group the following day, regardless of it being a face to face or Video conference meeting. The DPIRD Research Scientist also expressed the importance of being able to present their report in a face to face meeting format.

Members discussed options to condense the LIWG and TAFC meetings down to a single day, however this was not supported as members deemed the additional time during a face to face meeting is too valuable and productive to the group.

RESOLUTION DPIRD to request a face-to-face LIWG meeting in conjunction with the TAFC meeting for May 2025.

7. Online reporting development

Member were advised that following the May 2024 meeting, DPIRD co-ordinated a small working group meeting between attendees Scott Wesley, Mark Cranstone, Program Leader Business Analytics and the Lobster fishery manager to discuss the future online reporting requirements for the Lobster fishery.

Scott Wesley and Mark Cranstone advised members work was progressing, and Program Leader Business Analytics continues to engage with them on the development of the new interface. They also committed to notify the group once the interface is ready for testing to allow members to provide their feedback.

ACTION 4.18 Program Leader Business Analytics to be extended an invitation to the next LIWG meeting to provide an update on development of the new online reporting interface.

8. General Business

a. Peak Body Update

The Chair advised members the NSW Wild Harvest Fishers Incorporated (NSWWHF) has been established as the peak commercial fisher's industry body, who recently appointed Christopher Melham as the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation. Members were also advised NSWWHF are currently undertaking a membership drive and aim to hold new board member elections in the near future.

b. MSC Process

Members were advised the NSW Commercial Fishing Industry Association currently holds the MSC certificate on behalf of the Lobster fishery, however the organisation is currently being wound up, and the new peak body, NSWWHF is not in a position to hold the certification at this time.

Members discussed the appetite and opportunities for maintaining the MSC certification and what body should hold the certificate into the future. Members raised concerns of potential

administration burden if the certificate was to be held under the NSW Lobster Association Ltd and recommended DPIRD hold the certification in the interim.

FRDC Extension Officer (NSW), Kris Cooling discussed the opportunities and barriers relating to seeking funding from FRDC to support the MSC audits and inclusion of the MSC logo on Lobster tags. He committed to provide support as practical.

DPIRD discussed the costs involved with MSC audits and including the MSC logo on lobster tags and the potential to include it as part of the management charge.

ACTION 4.19 DPIRD to apply to hold the MSC Certificate on behalf of industry.

ACTION 4.20 DPIRD to provide a draft budget that includes costs attributed to the annual MSC audit and inclusion on the MSC logo on the tags for consideration.

c. Seafood Trade Advisory Group (STAG) and National Working Group

The NSW Lobster fishery representative on the STAG provided members with an update on the process being undertaken to reestablish access into the Chinese market.

Members were advised additional sampling of the hepatopancreas and ovarian tissue may be required, and that other jurisdictions have already undertaken this testing on their lobsters.

Members were provided an estimate of the cost required to undertake this sampling and advised a funding request has been submitted to FRDC.

The NSW Lobster fishery representative committed to update the group on the outcome of the funding application and developments from future STAG meetings subject to confidentiality requirements.

ACTION 4.21 The NSW Lobster fishery representative on the STAG to provide DPIRD with an update to send out to members.

ACTION 4.22 Kris Cooling (FRDC) to advise DPIRD if the funding application includes the cost to test both hepatopancreas and ovarian tissues.

d. 2-hour catch report timeframe

Members discussed a request from a shareholder to increase the catch report timeframe from 2 to 2.5 hours to allow them to comply with the reporting requirement when operating from a trailer boat in waters outside their home port.

Members agreed to discuss the matter further at a future meeting when fisheries compliance are in attendance.

ACTION 4.23 DPIRD to investigate authorisation provided under the previous permits and confirm if this option is legally permitted under the current regulations.

ACTION 4.24 DPIRD to reach out to the stakeholder to provide additional background regarding their circumstances.

e. Marking buoys on lobster trap

DPIRD advised members the Lobster SMP regulation requires a buoy to display the number allocated to the endorsement holder by NSW Fisheries for use on the trap i.e., fisher's registration number. However, for traps used in other fisheries (i.e., Estuary General and Ocean Trap and Line) the relevant fishing business number must be displayed on the buoy of the trap. Members confirmed following the removal of boat licencing requirements i.e., LFB's, the vast majority of fishers now use the fishing business number on their buoys and stated the marking requirement for buoys has become confusing.

In response to comments that members who work in groups may lift another businesses' traps, DPIRD advised members fishing business owners can change the nominated fisher online in real time using Fisher Direct. The nomination can be changed again every 12 hours thereafter, meaning should the fishing business number be displayed on the buoy, business owners can change a nomination and have the newly nominated fisher work gear already set.

RESOLUTION The fishing business number to be displayed on the buoy.

ACTION 4.25 DPIRD to amend the regulation to require the fishing business number followed by the letter "L" to be used to mark the position of a Lobster trap.

f. Discuss the benefits and costs of lowering the minimum shareholding to support new entrants

Discussion deferred until the next face to face meeting.

g. Other business

Members raised two questions for discussion regarding harvest strategies:

1. How is this season's Lobster catch tracking compared to last season?
2. Has there been any signs of interference from Octopus down south again this season?

The DPIRD Research Scientist advised this season catch is currently sitting at the same level as it was last season i.e., approximately 33 tonnes and it was too early to gauge if octopus were impacting catches again this season as most fisher's have only just begun to set their deepwater lobster traps, which is where octopus interaction was most significant last season.

Next Meeting:

To be advised, preferably at least two weeks prior to Christmas.

ACTION TABLE

No.	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
22 May 2024			

4.5	Discuss the benefits and costs of lowering the minimum shareholding to support new entrants at the next meeting.	All	Ongoing
4.7	LIWG to provide DPI with export sales and price information for inclusion in next year's management report.	LIWG	Ongoing
4.8	DPI to provide a response on any potential future allocation processes with respect to Octopus.	DPIRD	Completed
4.9	DPIRD to request a face-to-face LIWG meeting in conjunction with the TAFC meeting for May 2025.	DPIRD	Pending
4.10	DPI to provide members a breakdown of costs spent on the 22 May 2024 meeting.	DPIRD	Completed
4.11	DPI to invite a DPI fisheries service's staff member to the next meeting to discuss options to streamline the process for issuing additional tags.	DPIRD	Deferred
4.14	The 2-hour catch report timeframe to be discussed further at the next meeting.	All.	Ongoing
4.15	Discussion on the MSC accreditation to be included as agenda item at the next meeting	All	Ongoing
4.16	Add agenda item to next meeting on whether there is a process that may allow shareholders permitting non-authorised fisher (other lobster fishers) to pull their traps	All	Completed
4.17	DPIRD to share the octopus Identification guide compiled by Karina Hall with industry.	DPIRD	Pending
4.18	Program Leader Business Analytics to be extended an invitation to the next LIWG meeting to provide an update on development of the new online reporting interface.	DPIRD	Pending
4.19	DPIRD to apply to hold MSC Certificate on behalf of industry in the interim.	DPIRD	Pending
4.20	DPIRD to provide a draft budget that includes costs attributed to the annual MSC audit and inclusion on the MSC logo on the tags for consideration.	DPIRD	Pending
4.21	The NSW Lobster fishery representative on the STAG to provide DPIRD with an update to send out to members.	DPIRD	Pending

4.22	Kris Cooling (FRDC) to advise DPIRD if the funding application includes the cost to test both hepatopancreas and ovarian tissues.	DPIRD	Pending
4.23	DPIRD to investigate authorisation provided under the previous permit and confirm if this option is legally permitted under the current regulations.	DPIRD	Pending
4.24	DPIRD to reach out to the stakeholder to provide additional background regarding their circumstances.	DPIRD	Pending
4.25	DPIRD to amend the regulation to require the fishing business number followed by the letter “L” to be used to mark the position of a Lobster trap.	DPIRD	Pending