

# ABALONE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING FINAL OUTCOMES

Tuesday 6 November 2007 (1:00 pm to 5:00 pm) Cronulla Fisheries Centre

Agenda Item	Outcome	Action Item	Time	Responsibility																																		
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>1(a)</b></p>	<p><b>PRELIMINARIES</b></p> <p><b>Welcomes and Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed all members and observers to the meeting, which commenced at 1 pm.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the representative from the NCC, Ms Giselle Firme.</p> <p><b>Attendance</b></p> <table data-bbox="344 675 1099 962"> <tr><td>Warren Martin</td><td>Chairperson</td></tr> <tr><td>Dianna Watkins</td><td>NSW DPI</td></tr> <tr><td>Garry Warren</td><td>Industry</td></tr> <tr><td>Jim Miller</td><td>Industry</td></tr> <tr><td>George Chung</td><td>Industry</td></tr> <tr><td>Denis Luobikis</td><td>Industry</td></tr> <tr><td>Steven Hunter</td><td>Industry</td></tr> <tr><td>Giselle Firme</td><td>NCC (appointment pending)</td></tr> <tr><td>Nathan McNamara</td><td>NSW DPI Secretariat</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Observers</b></p> <table data-bbox="344 1018 1106 1233"> <tr><td>John Smythe</td><td>SARG Representative</td></tr> <tr><td>Wendell Weston</td><td>Abalone Stakeholder</td></tr> <tr><td>Duncan Worthington</td><td>Abalone Stakeholder</td></tr> <tr><td>Ian Cartwright</td><td>TAC Committee Chairperson</td></tr> <tr><td>Jackie Gerard</td><td>SARG Secretariat</td></tr> <tr><td>Peter Turnell</td><td>SARG Co-ordinator</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <table data-bbox="344 1294 1234 1361"> <tr><td>Peter Plunkett</td><td>Recreational Representative</td></tr> <tr><td>Nick Schroder</td><td>NSW DPI, Compliance Representative</td></tr> </table>	Warren Martin	Chairperson	Dianna Watkins	NSW DPI	Garry Warren	Industry	Jim Miller	Industry	George Chung	Industry	Denis Luobikis	Industry	Steven Hunter	Industry	Giselle Firme	NCC (appointment pending)	Nathan McNamara	NSW DPI Secretariat	John Smythe	SARG Representative	Wendell Weston	Abalone Stakeholder	Duncan Worthington	Abalone Stakeholder	Ian Cartwright	TAC Committee Chairperson	Jackie Gerard	SARG Secretariat	Peter Turnell	SARG Co-ordinator	Peter Plunkett	Recreational Representative	Nick Schroder	NSW DPI, Compliance Representative			
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1(b)  1(c)	<p>Agreement on Agenda for 6 November 2007</p> <p>The Chairperson advised the Committee that discussion on Agenda Item 3 will take priority. If time is available, the Committee will proceed through other items on the agenda.</p> <p>AbMAC agreed to the agenda change</p> <p>Confirmation of final draft outcomes from AbMAC meeting held on 27 September 2007.</p> <p>AbMAC did not discuss this item</p>			
1(d)	<p>Matters raised within Other Forums</p> <p>AbMAC did not discuss this item</p>			
<b>2</b>  2 (a)	<p><b>BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Correspondence sent and received list since the previous AbMAC meeting held on the 27 September 2007.</p> <p>AbMAC did not discuss this item</p>			
2 (b)	<p>AbMAC Action list</p> <p>For information only</p> <p>AbMAC did not discuss this item</p>			

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3	<p><b>SPECIAL ABALONE RECOVERY GROUP (SARG)</b></p> <p>A paper 'Outline of SARG submission to Minister' was provided to AbMAC in confidence to obtain AbMAC's comments. Comments from AbMAC on SARG's submissions are provided in attachment 1.</p> <p>The ABMAC members sought advice from the Chairman as to whether the report would be circulated to AbMAC prior to its submission to the Minister.</p> <p>AbMAC provided valuable inputs to SARG on all issues raised in the SARG paper. The Chair thanked AbMAC members for contributions.</p>	<p>The Chair to advise AbMAC member as to whether the SARG recommendations will be circulated to AbMAC prior to its submission to the Minister.</p>	<p>Within one week</p>	<p>Chairman</p>
4 4 (a)	<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p>Committee member updates</p> <p>Due to time constraints, Committee member updates were not provided. Committee members will have the opportunity to provide an update at the next AbMAC meeting.</p>			
5	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>No date was scheduled for the next AbMAC meeting but several industry members indicated there is an urgent need to have an AbMAC meeting to resolve outstanding matters in the near future.</p>	<p>AbMAC members to be requested re availability in early 08 for an AbMAC meeting</p>		<p>Secretariat</p>
	<p>The Chairman thanked AbMAC members and observers for the attendance and level of participation.</p> <p>Meeting close: 5:00 pm.</p>			

### **ITEM 3-SPECIAL ABALONE RECOVERY GROUP (SARG)**

A paper 'Outline of SARG submission to Minister' was provided to AbMAC in confidence to obtain AbMAC's comments. Comments from AbMAC on SARG's submissions are provided in red.

#### **ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED BY SARG UNDER TOR #01**

1. Identification of stakeholders' concerns with the current methodology.

The need to address those differences of opinion from surveys through to the model and the application of the model.

The need for stronger formal collaboration (through a working group or similar) to progress science and research issues.

Recognition of the objectives of commercial diving operations versus independent surveys.

Industry believes there is a need to move away from biomass assessments towards more understandable indicators.

2. The costs of establishing and maintaining a more cost effective and appropriate stock assessment framework.

The level and recognition of in-kind contribution from industry collection/data.

The need to identify costs for establishment, changeover costs and net maintenance costs that should be cheaper overall.

3. Indices used in the current methodology under ToR #01(a) which require attention, include performance measures for a sustainable NSW abalone fishery, and acceptance of defined "Limit" and "Target" reference points.

Agreement on the need to develop new performance indices (target reference point).

Application of wider use of reference points (social, economic, marketing etc).

4. The transition from the current stock assessment approach to one of finer scale (i.e. one that seeks to improve the spatial management of the fishery for example, industry managing within regional caps), with use of industry based data management reinforced with appropriate Departmental/independent audit and verification processes.

Rapid, co-operative and cost effective transition from current assessment approach to Finer Scale Management (FSM).

Processes for determination of industry based resourcing.

#### **SARG'S VIEWS ON WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE WAY FORWARD ON ToR #01**

A two stage process, with an appropriate transition strategy involving:

1. Improvements to the existing stock assessment indices and QA/QC arrangements to provide better focused and continuous information to better inform the TACC setting and management process;

Concern over the access to, validity and currency of stock assessment input data.

Development of new, finer scale stock assessment policies and operational protocols to overcome the current universal broad scale harvest strategy across NSW abalone fisheries; through

Clear definition of FSM.

Rapid, co-operative and cost effective transition from current assessment approach to FSM.

Leadership and cohesiveness within industry and associated costs.

Lessons have been learnt in other states in relation to voluntary measures.

The development of a regulatory tool to allow for industry to move towards FSM (eg. Clarence prawn fishing season).

The costs of implementing regulatory tools and establishment of the framework. The need for a transparent process of calculating the costs.

Simplification, rather than increased complexity in management.

2. Extensive use of industry in application of modern technology for information and data management reinforced with appropriate audit and verification processes, as part of an overall move to Finer Scale Management approaches. (Comments in ToR #03 provide additional detail).

#### **SARG'S VIEWS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCH PROGRESS ON ToR #01**

The Department and Industry work in collaboration to respond to SARG recommendations on:

1. Improvements to the existing stock assessment, indices, processes and QA/QC arrangements;
2. Development of new, finer scale stock assessment policies and operational protocols; and
3. Future accountabilities and obligations of the department and industry to advance successful implementation of finer scale management of the fishery.

Possibility of catch plan for 2008.

## **ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED BY SARG UNDER ToR #02**

1. Basis of initial policy;

Conservation and biological issues associated with size limits

Initially driven by industry. 115mm considered to be optimum size limit in NSW before pre organised illegal fishing.

2. Other Australian fisheries approach;

Variable size limits, both above and below NSW current MSL.

Management is directed to market demands

3. Principles for management of stock size;

Marketing issues with implementation of increase in size limit.

Implications on illegal fishing

4. Impact of variable size limits to the recreational sector; and

5. The need for policy determination on implementation of size changes.

## **SARG'S VIEWS ON WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE WAY FORWARD**

An immediate policy decision for Region 1 to 6

Resolution of the process for implementation of size changes

A policy decision framework under an adaptive management approach rather than a structured plan to investigate the feasibility.

## **SARG'S VIEWS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCH PROGRESS ON ToR #02**

An adaptive approach that will "pick the eyes out" of other approaches and adapt them to the NSW fishery.

Finalisation of the 2007 Region 2 structured fishing programme.

The commencement of structured fishing programmes in Region 1 North and Region 2 managed collaboratively by DPI and the Industry as a pilot program in 2008.

An immediate submission from SARG to the Minister on an interim size policy to be applied as soon as possible, using the most appropriate mechanism to achieve that end. SARG's recommendations in that submission with respect to minimum sizes will seek endorsement that:

The minimum size limit for abalone taken from the area of region 6 (Wonboyn to Cape Howe) be increased by 2mm on 1 January 2008 and subsequently by a further 3mm on 1 July 2009;

Timing of staged increase depending on stock status. The intent is to increase to 120mm when the stocks are appropriate and when industry is confident in the process.

Recommendations on Region 1 S (await results of survey);

Consider access into Region 1 (south) in sub-zones where the survey has been completed.

Any structured fishing in Region 1N and Region 2 should be done under a 117mm MSL, and that further size limit increases implemented (with the intent of moving to 120mm) depending on the results of the current and planned fishing surveys;

## **Region 1 (north)**

Industry members of the AbMAC consider that Region 1 (north) survey should be conducted at 115mm.

Industry members of the AbMAC consider stock variable growth rates in Region 1 (north) and that at a 115mm MSL abalone already spawn several times prior to capture. Weather limitations also apply in this area.

DPI believe 117mm minimum for structured fishing survey.

Differences of opinion within industry for size limit increase in Region 1 (north).

## **Region 2**

Concern that catch will target faster growing areas in this Region if increased to 117mm.

DPI believe 117mm minimum for structured fishing survey.

Industry members of the AbMAC consider that Region 2 survey should be conducted at 115mm.

Industry members of the AbMAC consider stock variable growth rates in this region and that at a 115mm MSL abalone already spawn several times.

Differences of opinion within industry for size limit increase in this region.

For Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6 (north of Wonboyn) the minimum size limit be increased by 2mm on 1 July 2008 with the intent of moving to 120mm on 1 July 2009;

Industry members of the AbMAC do not support uniform increase to 117mm in these Regions.

Industry members of the AbMAC raise concerns over uniform application of 120mm MSL in Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6. Same concerns as listed above in Region 2.

Processors can assist in provision of statistical information on size limits of abalone.

In recognition of variable growth rates, and based on available data, a system of fishdowns may be considered in selected areas;

May be useful in broad areas of stunted/slower growing stocks or for environmental emergency events.

Majority of industry do not support the use of fish downs.

Seek funding for collection of productivity/growth information to improve data input into decisions on variable size limits

Industry in-kind support funding for increased collection/management of growth/productivity information/data.

### **ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED BY SARG UNDER ToR #03**

The key issues under consideration by SARG raised through the above process and which are alleged to create levels of impediments (although of different magnitudes) within current management practices and therefore require the following actions:

#### **Institutional**

1. To improve awareness of the significance of and agree on management principles and the influences from the application of a precautionary principle driven management strategy within a risk driven commercial abalone market;
2. To rebuild effective communication and professional collaboration between industry and DPI, including through AbMAC;

Utilising working groups consisting of both industry and DPI representatives to report to the ABMAC.

3. To advance resolution of policy in relation to diver numbers; and

Not a SARG issue.

4. To improve coordination, using a whole of Department approach to fisheries management (especially between research, managers, compliance).

Industry would like to have one designated senior fishery manager to implement the SARGS recommendations.

#### **Financial**

To address the cost structure of the fishery (currently under a framework developed under IPART), rebuilding will require relatively conservative TACCs for some time, making the current assessment and management framework unaffordable under current government policy.

The Industry members of the AbMAC advised that the Abalone Fishery would like to adopt the fees and charging policy applicable to the other 5 share management fisheries.

The run of concessions given to the management charges are insignificant and a review of the charges/policy is needed.

The Keniry report has previously made recommendations relating to the management charges of the Abalone Fishery.

#### **Fishery Operational Management**

To establish agreed policies/protocols/arrangements for management of access and harvest levels for regions which exhibit significant stock depletion, and/or disease presence using experiences with recent closures of Regions 1 and 2;

To develop new, finer scale stock assessment policies and operational protocols to overcome the impediments of the current universal broad scale harvest strategy across the NSW abalone fishery;

To address illegal fishing through increased penalties (indictable offences), more coordinated (industry and compliance) efforts to combat fishing theft and a review of available government resources (including police) and equipment; and

To introduce of modern information and data management practices including (1) "proving up" of technology and protocols for data collection, archival, access and exchange; (2) intellectual property aspects relating to data ownership, privacy and security; (3) funding arrangements between government and industry.

Industries capacity to provide financial resources into the FSM process.



### **SARG'S VIEWS ON WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE WAY FORWARD ON ToR #03**

SARG holds the view that there should be a mix of short and longer term priority recommendations on each of the issues.

#### **Short term priorities**

With regards to FSM, without financial resources, it will not occur, making decisions on spatial management arrangements difficult.

Short term size limit increase south of Wonboyn

Access into regions 1 (north) and 2 through a structured commercial fishing program as soon as possible.

Illegal fishing sanctions

Industry would like to have one designated senior fishery manager to implement the SARGs recommendations.

### **SARG'S VIEWS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCH PROGRESS ON ToR #03**

DPI to endorse or reject as appropriate the recommendations of the SARG with respect to future management directions;

Open and transparent justification from DPI on recommendations made by SARG

Concerns about resourcing levels within DPI to absorb any additional work.

Accountabilities for progression of the recommendations must be assigned to individual managers within DPI;

Co-ordination of recommendations

Industry needs to be more inclusive, proactive and structured in presentation of its positions within the AbMAC forum, focusing only on major issues.

Develop a working group