



Sustainable Fishing - Healthy Seafood Seafood Industry Victoria Inc.

POLICY IN RELATION TO SIV MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV) is the peak body for commercial fishing in Victoria, and represents members involved in the harvesting, processing, wholesaling, retailing and exporting of seafood. SIV has developed this policy in response to increasing accountability for stakeholder engagement with SIV members.

SIV (Seafood Industry Victoria) was formed in 1989 following the demise of the Victorian Fishing Industry Council, which was established under the provisions of the Victorian Fishing Industry Council Act 1979.

In this capacity SIV seeks to represent the views and interests of 451 registered commercial licence holders/quota owners as well as 16 Member Bodies representing farming, processing, wholesaling, marketing, trading or retailing of fish, fish products or other aquatic resources.

SIV's main roles are:

- 1** To present a representative and unified voice for advancing the interests of the seafood industry as a whole;
- 2** To negotiate questions, matters or disputes relating to the seafood industry in Victoria, between members, government departments and other bodies;
- 3** To protect and promote the development of a unified and co-ordinated approach to research into matters of concern to the industry, including those of a biological or marketing nature;
- 4** To educate the general public about the industry as a whole; and,
- 5** Marketing and promotion of fish.

There is an expectation that members of SIV contribute their time and effort in practical ways. This could be responding to SIV when particular advice is sought. The distance and time spent out at sea makes it difficult for commercial fishers to collectively voice their opinions on matters of concern. Therefore it is encouraged that licence holders/quota owners become members of their fishery specific associations. These associations are then encouraged to support and become SIV Member Bodies, to ensure all fishery views are represented.

The capacity of the seafood industry to deal with public issues relates to its ability to speak in an authoritative and influential manner. This requires a peak body which has the support of industry and sufficient resources to act on its behalf, whether to governments, pressure groups or the public.

This Policy Paper provides a background to the issue and a clear policy statement outlining SIV's Position. This Policy Paper should be used by members representing the commercial fishing industry on advisory committees, to clearly put forward SIV policies on relevant issues and hence protect and promote commercial fishers and the seafood industry.

Link to SIV Objectives under the Strategic Plan 2013-2017

- 1.2 Key partner in developing fishery management plans*
- 3.1 Increase partnerships with government*
- 3.2 Improve the consultation process*
- 4.1 Improve and enhance communication*
- 4.2 Engage with members and relevant industry bodies and key sectors*
- 5.1 Support community projects and high value initiatives of benefit to industry*
- 6.4 Provide assistance to sectors*
- 8.1 Pursue changes that enable improvements in industry efficiency*
- 8.2 SIV to provide the role of facilitator*

Policy statement

The SIV Policy position on SIV Member Engagement is as follows;

- On a specific fishery issue, SIV will consult with;
 - The SIV Member Body only, where it represents the vast majority of licence holders; or,
 - Where there is a Member Body that does not represent the vast majority of licence holders, SIV will consult with the SIV Member Body and other licence holders/quota owners; or,
 - Where there is no SIV Member Body, SIV will consult with all licence holders/quota owners¹.
- On an industry wide issue, SIV will consult with;
 - Member Bodies (Voting and Associate), licence holders/quota owners in the first instance;
 - Non-members via the newsletter and website.
- Where SIV undertakes consultation for a third party, it will advise that organisation of its general practices above;
- Additional consultations (for third parties) will be clearly identified to SIV members as being for a particular purpose/organisation;
- Where consultation is required on an urgent basis, SIV staff may only be able to contact members via email. Members should ensure they provide current email contact details, in order for SIV to consult in a rapidly changing environment;
- Where there are differing views, SIV will put forward views of all Member Bodies/licence holders/quota owners including their identity or interests. E.g. SIV may advise both of the numbers of licences as well as the entitlements they represent i.e. % of quota etc.;
- SIV will maintain a register of consultation for all members;
- SIV will also put forward its views where relevant;
- SIV will continue to encourage and assist industry in the establishment of strong industry associations;
- SIV will actively encourage licence holders/quota owners to join through an active, and representative industry association; and,

¹ To the extent licence holders/quota owners have provided SIV with their electronic contact details

- SIV Member Bodies, licence holders and quota owners support SIV as its peak body and is prepared to fund campaigns to achieve industry goals.

Rationale

1. Funding

Industry representation by peak bodies for the seafood industry requires many resources to operate effectively and efficiently. The seafood industry spends substantially less, as a proportion of its industry value, on funding its peak bodies than most other primary industries. Other primary industry groups have well funded peak bodies that act as spokespersons for their members, as well as organising marketing and promotional programs. While the fishing industry is equal to, or larger than some other food industries, in terms of value of production, it has not provided comparable resources for promoting its image or protecting its interests.

SIV as the peak body representing the commercial fishing industry, is currently funded by a levy placed on each licence and quota unit for all licence/quota issued in Victoria. SIV is also funded through voluntary affiliation fees by Member Bodies, and other donations.

If the industry wants a well organised, responsive representation, defence and promotion, then they need to be prepared to fund SIV as their representative.

2. Committee Representation for fisheries management

There is an increasing need for individual industry members to play a greater role in management committees and particularly in regard to resource management. While the resource is managed by government, the success of any management arrangement requires the co-operation of those involved in the seafood industry. Rules and regulations that are developed in close consultation with industry are more likely to be sensible and robust.

Attitudes by those within the seafood industry may be rational from the context of their own individual economic strategy with regard to resource use, but these may often be in conflict with the overall government strategy. Providing the opportunity for industry to become involved and share the responsibility for stewardship of the fisheries resource, the benefits gained will ensure the long-term sustainable commercial harvesting of seafood.

The Victorian *Fisheries Act 1995* outlines the framework and mechanisms through which the seafood industry is represented in regard to management of the fisheries resource. Ultimately the Minister makes the final decision regarding the management of a fishery on advice from the various fisheries committees.

3. SIV's industry representation role

Most individual commercial fishers, wholesalers, processors, and retailers belong to one of the affiliated sector associations or co-operatives of SIV. These associations or co-operatives can have representatives on SIV sub-committees i.e. The Abalone Industry Committee, Victorian Bay and Inlet Fishery Association. These sub-committees address matters referred to by SIV which are relevant to the represented fishery or industry sector. This representation is then used to inform government of industry views on particular matters.

Another way industry is represented through SIV is via the SIV Board. Directors are industry members that are nominated by either Member Bodies or licence holder/quota owners. The SIV Board is responsible for the oversight of the Executive Director and the strategic direction of SIV. SIV Board Directors also constitute the membership of the SIV Finance and Audit Committee. The Finance and Audit Committee is responsible for the oversight of SIV income and expenditure.

4. Communications

The conveying of information from industry committees to individual fishers is essential. The decisions and discussions made at industry committee meetings concern the livelihood of all fishers, processors and retailers, and needs to be promptly and efficiently communicated. The responses of individual fishers also need to be communicated back in the same manner.

The use of emails and electronic newsletters are all important methods of information communication and should be used as frequently as possible. SIV utilizes emails as a speedy and cost effective way of communicating to members. SIV understands that not everyone utilizes this form of communication; however most of the information disseminated by SIV requires a response to matters such as Fisheries Notices, Acreage Releases etc in a short timeframe. Emails are the most effective way to ensure a quick response. Industry should ensure SIV has current contact details to keep the lines of communication open between members and their representative body.

SIV also informs its members of its activities via a monthly electronic newsletter (which can also be used as an advertising medium). The industry representatives on the various sub-committees and fisheries management committees have the important role of conveying the results of discussion and decisions back to the individual fishers.

Refer to the following reference materials:

- *Fisheries Act 1995*
- *SIV Strategic Plan 2013-2017*
- *SIV Approved Protocols*
- *Rules for Seafood Industry Victoria Inc.*

Policy review

- SIV will review this policy, and related documents, every 5 years.
- SIV Members are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be encouraged to be actively involved.

Policy created date 20 August 2013
(Approved by the SIV Board)

Policy review date 20 August 2018

Signatures



Renee Vajtauer
Executive Director