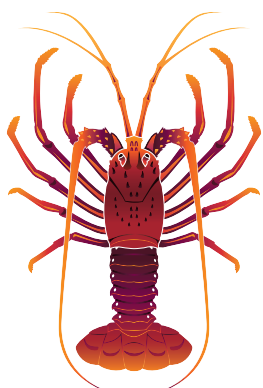


# 2024/2025 Annual Report



Western  
**ROCK  
LOBSTER**

World leading sustainable fishery



# WA Fishery Map







# Our Mission

OUR MISSION IS TO ENSURE  
THAT THE WRL FISHERY IS  
RESPECTED AND RECOGNISED  
AS AN ICONIC GLOBAL  
LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE  
FISHERIES MANAGEMENT.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# From the Chair



A significant focus of the Western Rock Lobster Council (WRL) since the Western Australian Government's decision not to proceed with the implementation of the Aquatic Resource Management Act 2016 (WA) has been on ensuring members interests are optimally represented in the upcoming Fisheries Resources Management Act 1994 (WA) reform process.

Prior to the recent Western Australian election, WRL worked with the other seafood peak bodies and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to establish a principles framework that will guide this reform process. The framework goes to issues of statutory protection of quota, sustainability and evidence-based resource management, economic efficiency and social license. As a result of persistent advocacy from WRL and ultimately a public campaign by Fishing Families Inc. with respect to statutory protection of quota, the re-elected Government has committed to adopting the full principles framework, bar the requirement for mandatory reporting by commercial, recreational and customary fishers when the sustainability of a fishery is deemed to be at risk.

Since the election, WRL has commissioned an independent review of relevant sections of the current fisheries legislation and established an internal Strategic Advisory Group that is comprised of renowned fisheries policy, commercial and financial experts that will provide advice to WRL throughout DPIRD's formal reform consultation process, ensuring the best possible outcome for members.

Throughout the four-year Chinese ban on Australian lobster imports, the Lobster Working Group collaborated extensively with the Commonwealth Government to resolve a range of issues that led to the resumption of trade. This process demonstrated the value of Australian lobster sectors working collaboratively on issues of common interest and the importance of ongoing engagement with the Commonwealth. Since, several proposals for a national lobster peak body have been floated by various stakeholders. WRL continues to engage in these discussions. But, rest assured, it will only consider models that are in the best interests of our members, and which add significantly to the advocacy and services already provided by WRL.

In 2025-26 WRL will renegotiate its funding agreement with DPIRD. With increasing cost pressures and greater demands being placed on WRL's advocacy, member services and industry innovation capabilities, WRL is

keen to ensure that the outcome is equitable and of optimal utility to WRL.

WRL has continued to grow its DECK professional development program and partnership with the Clontarf Foundation. Back of Boats has continued to perform its important local market access function, despite some concern that its efficacy may be impacted by the resumption of trade with China. It is vitally important that members continue to support initiatives that underpin future industry leadership and license to operate.

It is also important to recognise initiatives that are driven by our industry outside of advocacy by other organisations that are designed to promote, celebrate and preserve the heritage of our iconic industry. Examples include the Geraldton Shore Leave Festival and the Blessing of the Fleet in Geraldton and Fremantle, as well as initiatives that document the colourful history of the industry such as Susanna Iuliano and Maria Amato-Gorman's publication Blessing of the Fleet: A History of Fremantle Festa. WRL financially supports several such initiatives and will continue to do so.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate and welcome the new Western Australian Fisheries Minister, Hon. Jackie Jarvis, MLC. I would also like to acknowledge and formally thank former Director General of the Department of Fisheries, Peter Rogers, who has been a phenomenal supporter, advocate and trusted advisor to the western rock lobster industry for many years and who has recently announced his formal retirement from working life.

I would like to extend my profound gratitude to the entire WRL team, who maintain an unwavering focus on serving our members and who all go 'above and beyond' in that endeavour.

Most of all, I would like to thank the 740 western rock lobster managed fishery license holders and the Professional Fishing Associations, without whose ongoing support, engagement and guidance, WRL would be lost at sea.

I trust that you will find this annual report informative and wish you a prosperous and safe 2025-26.

**Russell Barnett**  
Independent Chair



# From the CEO



The most significant event for the western rock lobster industry during the 2024/25 financial year was the Christmas Day re-opening of the China market for all live Australian rock lobster, except tropicals. The shutting down of the industry in January 2020 due to Covid followed by the closure of the dominant China market in October 2020 resulted in the Gross Value of Production (GVP) for western rock lobster dropping rapidly from a record high of \$433M in 2017/18 under a Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) of 6300 tonnes to a low of \$209M in 2022/23 with an annual TACC of 6615 tonnes.

The 2024/25 financial year season was the second consecutive TACC of 7300 tonnes and achieved a GVP of \$383M. However, a conservative decision was made to lower the 2025/26 TACC to 6800 tonnes to maintain the fishery in the upper quartile of the modelled maximum economic yield (MEY) range. This reduction in MEY primarily resulted from revised stock assessment inputs given the levels of puerulus settlement have been below average at numerous locations over the past few seasons and it has been almost 10 years since there was a coast-wide above average spike in puerulus settlement, most likely associated with unfavourable environmental conditions. Concerns also remain with marine heatwave conditions now appearing more frequently and severely. That said, legal biomass, egg production and catch rates remain well above historical levels which is modelled to continue under the new TACC setting.

The re-opening of the China market has resulted in the average beach price increasing to \$72/kg from \$54/kg in the previous year, providing financial relief for our members and the communities they support. However, the increasing costs of production such as fuel, bait and government fees, together with labour availability, continues to significantly impact our almost entirely family fishing businesses. Unfortunately, these pressures have once again forced smaller scale fishers to exit the industry and reduced the number of boats in our industry from 207 in 2023/24 to 197 in 2024/25. Fleet consolidation continues to be a concern for WRL

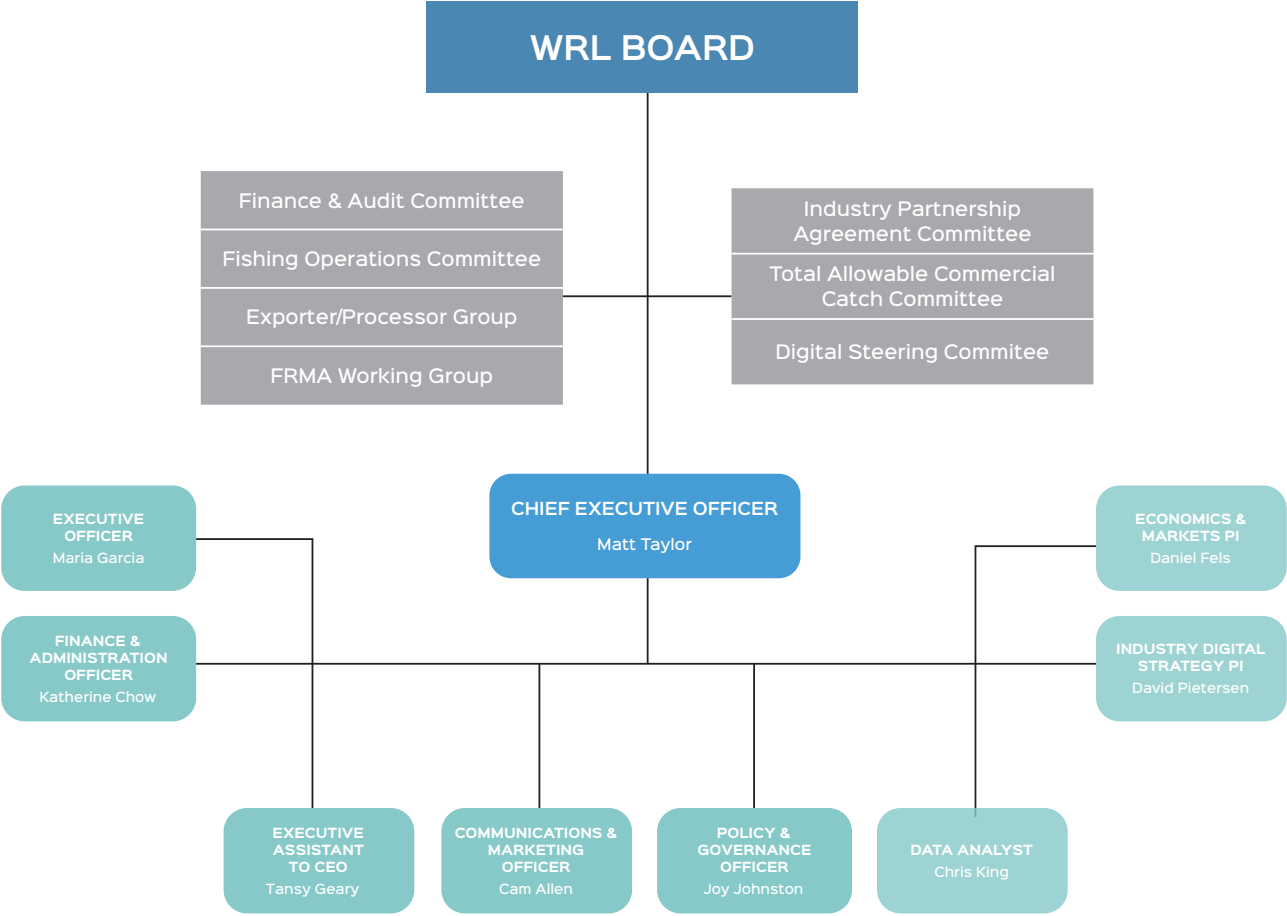
with limited capacity and few levers to restrict those powerful economic forces.

WRL's Industry Partnership Agreement (IPA), through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), continues to pioneer nationally significant initiatives and deliver great benefit to our members, the broader seafood industry and the Western Australian community. The ~\$10M research, development and extension portfolio is focussed on achieving industry's best opportunities and mitigating our greatest risks. Digital transformation is our flagship program with recent accomplishments including a member's services platform through a portal, catch recording application and subsea data collection. The Biology, Behaviour and Ecology program is focussed on understanding the changes in our environment to better predict recruitment and manage impacts. The other programs include Economics and Markets, Community Engagement and Education, and Whale Research, while prominent projects include minimising plastic use and efficient methodologies for habitat mapping.

I would like to thank all the WRL staff for their commitment, achievements and professionalism in successfully representing our industry's best interests at local, state and national levels. I would especially like to acknowledge Katherine Chow for her milestone of 10 years of amazing service and dedication to WRL and our industry. We are a model peak body with a great culture and I am proud of our leadership.

**Matt Taylor**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Organisational Structure





# The Board



**Bruce Cockman**  
Deputy Chair,  
Northern Zone



**Fedele Camarda**  
Deputy Chair,  
Southern Zone



**Justin Pirrottina**  
Director,  
Northern Zone



**Jared Groom**  
Director,  
Northern Zone



**Matthew Fong**  
Director,  
Northern Zone



**Peter Stanich**  
Director,  
Southern Zone



**Stephen Minutillo**  
Director,  
Southern Zone



**Mat Thompson**  
Director,  
Southern Zone

## Independent Directors



**Russell Barnett**  
Independent Chair



**Bradley Gannon**  
Independent Director

# The Executive Team



**Matt Taylor**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



**Maria Garcia**  
Executive Officer



**Katherine Chow**  
Finance &  
Administration  
Officer



**Cameron Allen**  
Communications &  
Marketing Officer



**Joy Johnston**  
Policy & Governance  
Officer



**Tansy Geary**  
Executive Assistant  
to the CEO & Board  
liaison

## Industry Research Programs



**Daniel Fels**  
Economics &  
Markets PI



**David Pietersen**  
Industry Digital  
Strategy PI



**Chris King**  
Data Analyst PI





# Strategic Plan 2024-2027

**The Western Rock Lobster Strategic Plan assists our members, stakeholders and community by concisely communicating our vision, mission and objectives. This enables these stakeholders to understand the future direction of WRL as an organisation and where we aim to guide our industry.**

Strategic Plans help organisations develop proactive strategies that assist the organisation to operate within changing environments and any prevailing risks. This is no different for Western Rock Lobster. Consequently, underpinning the Strategic Plan is WRL's Risk Management Framework. This framework enables the organisation to document, manage, monitor, review and update strategic, corporate and project risk information in full alignment with the strategic plan.

## Our Vision

By 2027, WRL will have the full confidence of government, the community and members, as a well-resourced, self-funded peak body engaged in advocacy and co-management for improved resource security.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure that the WRL fishery is respected and recognised as an iconic global leader in sustainable fisheries management.

## Our Objectives

1. Secure resource access and rights.
2. Ensure WRL is self-funded and well-resourced to deliver high quality advocacy and co-management of the resource.
3. Collaborate and invest in targeted Research & Development and technology to drive maximum economic yield and maintain market competitiveness.
4. Ensure the social licence to operate is supported by government, community and industry.
5. Support industry for market development.

## Our Priorities

1. Achieve greater resource access security through legislative change.
2. Review the strategy for securing independent funding.
3. Identify and implement new digital applications to improve efficiency and better decision-making across the value chain.
4. Conduct a project that demonstrates WRL's ability to co-manage the resource e.g. unit registry, quota trading platform, shallow water survey, lobster tagging program.
5. Seek additional funding for industry to identify and develop new and existing markets.



“ THE WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY  
IS AN ICONIC LEADER IN  
SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ”



# Western Rock Lobster Key Risks

## The Top 6 Risks



1

Strategic

### Loss of access to fishing grounds and marine resource

Lack of resource access security and concomitant stability for fishery management resulting in uncertainty and volatility for the industry, potentially eliminating commercial viability for the industry.

Risk Rating: 16

2.

Environmental

### Environmental impacts on resource which affect resource sustainability

Climate change, offshore development, coastal development, other sector fishing and maritime transport activities all affect the marine environment, biodiversity and lobster population and are a high risk to the sustainability of the resource.

Risk Rating: 16

3.

Strategic

### Failure to achieve the industry legislative reform agenda

Failure to achieve implementation of Industry Principle 3 (resource access security) and other Industry Principles through the FRMA review process. Loss of stability, independence and surety of industry funding could result in industry damage, uncertainty and volatility, ultimately resulting in an unsustainable or unviable fishery and loss of mandate to represent.

Risk Rating: 12

4.

Operational

### Failure to achieve maximum economic yield from the resource

Failure to monitor, research, develop and implement relevant new and current strategies to address resource impacts of fishing, and fisheries management actions, may result in loss of resource in the fishery and threaten its ability to achieve MEY, threatening the sustainability of the industry.

Risk Rating: 12

5.

Strategic

### Inability to diversify markets, resulting in continuing reliance on a limited number of markets

Industry highly exposed to a market collapse leading to falling prices and oversupply financial instability. Industry is not ready and immediately capable to supply alternative markets should the dominant market close. Shifting to new markets will require major investment, resulting in increased debt and skill shortages, which would impact Processors' business viability.

Risk Rating: 12

6.

Reputational

### Inadequate industry representation

Loss of recognition as the industry peak body due to failure to maintain high standards of representation. Not addressing current and emerging matters relevant to the industry may result in loss of community and member trust in the industry and/or its peak body, affecting industry development and research funding, MSC Certification of the fishery and standing to attract research and membership funds.

Risk Rating: 12





Western  
**ROCK  
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World leading sustainable fishery



# Sustainability

## Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The western rock lobster fishery was the world's first fishery to be certified as ecologically sustainable in line with MSC standards in 2000, which recognises the high environmental values and sustainable practices maintained by members. 25 years later the fishery has an unblemished record of MSC certification. In January 2025, a clear audit report noted that stock continues to be at a very high state, achieved with the support of the fishery ongoing comprehensive monitoring and assessment.

The MSC Fisheries Standards have three essential principles to which WRL is strongly committed:

- Sustainable Fish Stocks. Fishing must be at a level that ensures it can continue indefinitely and the fish population can remain productive and healthy;
- Minimising Environmental Impact. Fishing activity must be managed carefully so that other species and habitats within the ecosystem remain healthy; and
- Effective Fisheries Management. MSC certified fisheries must comply with relevant laws and be able to adapt to changing environmental circumstances.

All MSC conditions being managed by the fishery were closed at the 2025 audit following finalisation of the new harvest strategy, completion of the ecological risk assessment, a satisfactory review of compliance systems and data, and a significant reduction in the use of New Zealand blue mackerel (NZBM) for bait.

WRL continues to maintain specific measures designed to ensure western rock lobster is a sustainable resource and secure its MSC certification including:

- Periodic Harvest Strategy reviews;
- Annual stock assessments;
- Limited vessel licenses and pot numbers;
- Annual commercial catch quotas;
- Harvest levels that increase stock yearly;
- Size limits on legal lobsters for breeding;
- Developing and using low-impact fishing gear;
- Implementation of new tech for protecting endangered species;
- Gear modifications to reduce whale entanglement;
- Reduced pot numbers during whale migration;
- Mandatory whale sighting reports during migration;
- Focus on removing industry plastics; and
- Development and use of sustainable bait sources, including exemption to allow use of bovine material, skin or hide until June 30, 2027.

Industry compliance is further strengthened by the MSC Chain of Custody certification awarded to the four largest western rock lobster Processors: Geraldton Fishermen's Co-operative, Indian Ocean Rock Lobster, KB Food Co. and Bluwave. Together, they represent 97% of the market share. This certification is globally acknowledged as the leading standard for providing wild-caught, sustainable seafood.





## Stock Assessment

The annual Western Rock Lobster Stock Assessment is conducted following the completion of the puerulus settlement season. The 2024 stock assessment was made available to members via email in July 2024, was used to inform Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) Committee deliberations in October, and discussed in detail by DPIRD's scientists at industry's Annual Management Meetings in November before being considered by the WRL Board. The Board recommendation of the TACC to the Minister for Fisheries is based on this process.

Over the past three years, puerulus settlement has been consistently low, leading to reduced recruitment into the legal stock. While egg production and total biomass remain high, both indicators appear to have peaked. To maintain sustainability and align with the agreed Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) framework, the Minister has

approved the WRL recommended reduction in the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) from 7,300 tonnes (2023/24 and 2024/25 seasons) to 6,800 tonnes for the 2025/26 season.

Catch per unit effort has declined but remains historically strong at approximately 4 kg per pot lift. Fishing effort and operational costs have increased, while the number of active vessels has continued to decrease. The full stock assessment is available to members on the WRL website.





# Resource Access Security

Resource Access Security is central to Western Rock Lobster's (WRL) Strategy for Security, Independence, and Community Connection.

Recognised as a key risk to the industry and the fishery, resource access security remained a major focus throughout the year. It featured prominently in member communications and stakeholder engagement, including at national forums such as the Seafood Directions conference in Tasmania, where the WRL Chairman's well-attended presentation addressed this critical issue.

Resource Access Security was a key commitment which WRL sought from all political parties contesting the 2025 State elections and was a primary aspect of joint fishing industry submissions to government regarding the proposed review of the State Fishing Policy and Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA).

Resource Access Security remains vital for preventing spatial squeeze in the fishery and underpins sustainable industry investment and commercial viability. Consequently, fishing industry Principles developed for review of the State fishing policy and FRMA include a specific Principle addressing industry needs for resource access security, which requires that resource and access entitlements are secured by registration, are enduring, cannot be diluted, are assignable and protected at law.

Although the Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016 (ARMA) aimed to enhance resource

access certainty, its impending repeal and the subsequent government focus on amending the FRMA, threaten resource access security and compensation for loss of access. Protecting the western rock lobster resource and ensuring secure access to the resource is becoming increasingly challenging as interest in ocean and coastal industrialisation grows. Western Australia faces threats from new offshore and coastal energy projects, marine parks, carbon sequestration and seismic activity.

These developments demand extensive engagement due to inadequate consultation and assessment processes for offshore developments, including marine parks and energy sector projects. WRL have maintained a proactive approach to ensuring collective action for commercial fishers' resource access, with consideration of the potential cumulative impact of these various projects at the forefront of all engagement with project proponents.

Fundamental to resource access security, compensation remains an important issue which is inadequately addressed by current legislation and protocols. WRL, along with other peak industry bodies consider that the FRMA review process must acknowledge the rights of fishing industry members to claim compensation and have agreed an appropriate Principle for the FRMA review: compensation will apply where there is a sectoral re-allocation; or a reduction in resource access by means other than for resource sustainability.

# Fisheries Legislation

In June 2024, following years of industry preparation to replace the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA) with a modern legislative framework designed to legally recognise resource access security and implement other legislative improvements, the implementation process was derailed by government withdrawal from the process and their commitment to maintaining the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA) as the primary fisheries legislation for WA.

The WRL Board identified this as a major threat to members and the fishery's future. This issue was discussed widely with members, including during the 2024 Coastal Tour, Annual Management Meetings and industry forums.

WRL collaborated with other commercial fishing peak bodies to formulate a unified industry position in response to the repeal of the Aquatic Resource Management Act (ARMA).

Government prepared terms of reference for the amendment of the FRMA which explicitly excluded all key industry requirements such as resource access security, compensation and improved certainty of policy application to fisheries. Subsequent draft Principles for the review of the FRMA issued by DPIRD also failed to meet industry needs.

In response to the state-issued Principles upon which the Minister's proposed State fishing policy

and legislative amendment is to be predicated, WRL and other fishing peak bodies collaborated to identify broad Principles for the State fishing policy and FRMA review. Together, industry sought commitment to the Principles from the parties contesting the March 2025 State elections. WRL also joined with WAFIC in seeking support from elected parliamentarians for a range of specific election commitments, designed to secure a resilient and sustainable commercial fishing industry in Western Australia. The Principles have obtained support from a wide range of political representatives.

WRL continues to explore all options to secure resource access and protect the fishery from spatial squeeze threats including review of legislative provisions for resource access security in Commonwealth and other jurisdictions.

Following the State election, WRL welcomed Minister Jarvis' appointment to the fishing portfolio and has since been active in engaging with Industry, the Hon. Minister and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to prepare for meaningful engagement in the government review process. WRL is committed to working with other industry peak bodies, specialist advisory groups and the government to achieve better outcomes for the seafood industry and community.

# 15 Policy Principles for FRMA Amendments

In June 2024, the then Minister for Fisheries announced government would repeal ARMA and instead commit to maintaining the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA) as the primary fisheries legislation for WA. A process for this review was proposed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) in the subsequent months. WRL and other peak fishing bodies convened to formulate a unified industry position in response to the basis upon which the Minister proposed the revised State fishing policy and legislation be predicated.

These collaborations resulted in a collective position on a set of Principles to guide the review of both the State fishing policy and the FRMA, necessary to secure the future of the resource and the fishing industry in Western Australia.

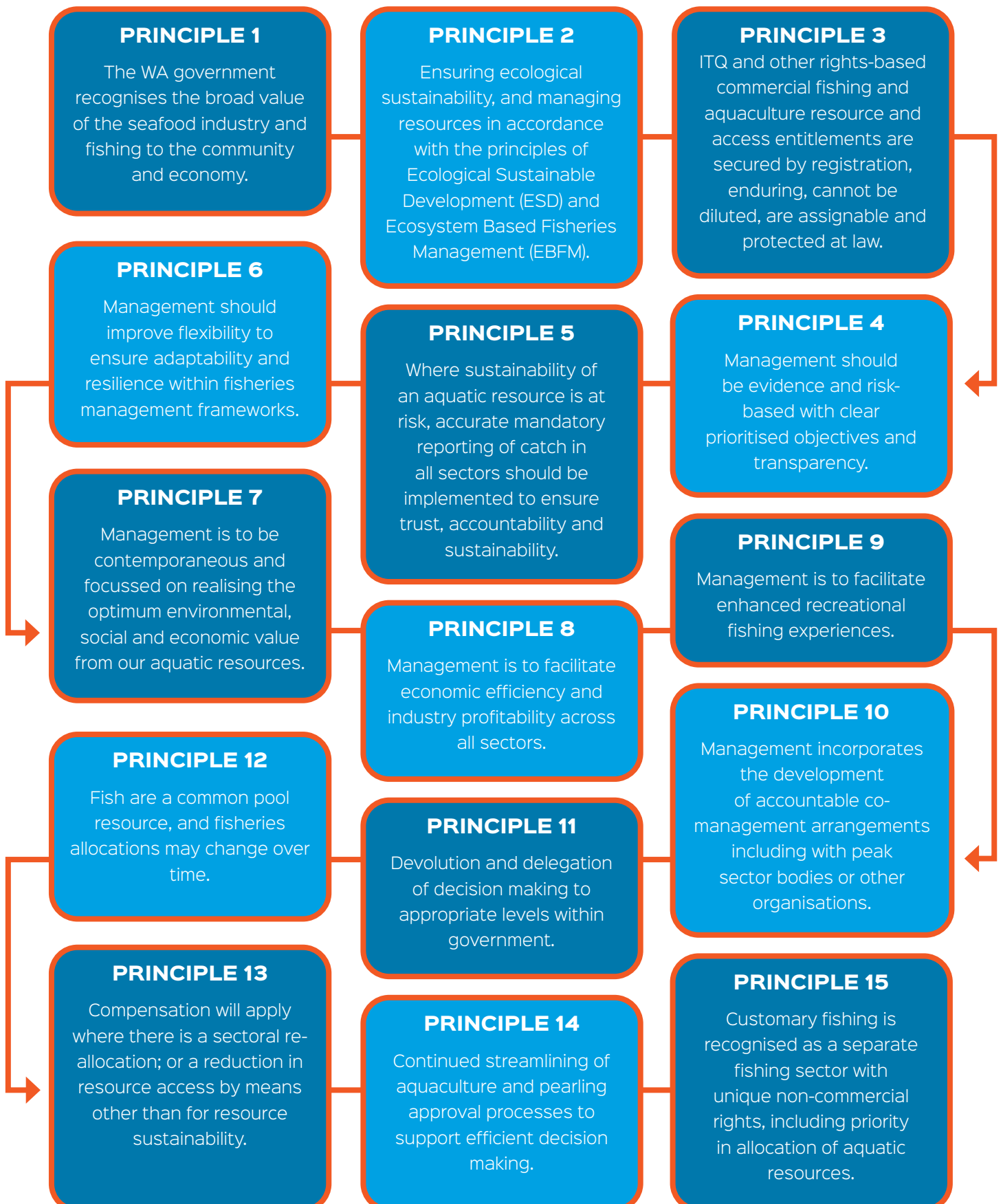
WRL and other industry peak bodies sought commitment to the Principles from all political parties contesting the 2025 State elections. WRL has worked tirelessly to educate decision-makers on industry needs and to promote the Principles, particularly focusing on resource access security. WRL also engaged an external consultant to assess community support for sustainability reporting of catch by all sectors including recreational fishers. This is an important consideration for sustainable management of aquatic resources which survey results showed are overwhelmingly supported by the community.

The resultant Industry Principles articulate the basis of industry commitment to engagement in the review and development of WA's fishing policy and legislative framework. In these Principles "management" refers to the process of dealing with or controlling fishing in WA.





## FISHING INDUSTRY PRINCIPLES FOR FRMA AMENDMENTS





# Spatial Squeeze

## Offshore Wind Farming

WRL remains firmly opposed to offshore wind farming within the WRLMF, advocating instead for land-based alternatives. Concerns include potential impact on fishing access, lobster lifecycle and environmental integrity due to contamination, noise, and habitat disruption.

In 2024, WRL actively engaged in consultations regarding a proposed offshore wind zone near Bunbury, submitting formal responses to both the initial proposal and the subsequent Senate Inquiry into the consultation process. In August 2024 an amended site was declared suitable for wind farming off the coast near Bunbury. Despite amendments to the proposed site, WRL maintains that insufficient scientific and economic analysis has been conducted to justify its declaration.

No feasibility licence applications have been sustained to date, but WRL continues to monitor developments and work with DPIRD and stakeholders to protect members' resource access rights. WRL's position paper, released in late 2023, is available on the WRL website.



## Murchison Green Hydrogen (MGH) Plant

WRL is deeply concerned about a proposed green hydrogen plant near Kalbarri that plans to export ammonia by sea. An accidental ammonia leak could be devastating to the marine environment and fishery. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) require MGH to lodge an Environmental Review Document (ERD) addressing concerns about potential impacts on benthic communities, coastal processes, marine quality, and fauna. The ERD was expected to be submitted in December 2024 and open for public comment for four weeks. This did not occur and WRL will collaborate with government and industry stakeholders to identify shared concerns and will submit a detailed response to the EPA once the ERD is released for comment.

## Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant

WRL is a member of the Water Corporation Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant Community Reference Panel and participated in project briefings and meetings regarding the plant's planning and construction during the year. In June 2025, WRL received detailed information regarding the marine construction aspect of the project including marine works and tunnelling. The work will occur between November 2025 and May 2026. WRL consulted with DPIRD before providing comment to the project and will maintain direct engagement with the project team in relation to mitigation strategies.



## Marmion Marine Park Expansion

In 2022, the government proposed expanding the Marmion Marine Park with fishing exclusions. WRL actively opposed the plan during consultations, citing a lack of scientific evidence for restricting access, based on habitat or biodiversity concerns. WRL cited the fishery's net positive impact on biodiversity through bait-driven food chains and highlighted its MSC certification and environmental risk assessments confirming no habitat damage.

WRL and other stakeholders viewed the consultation process led by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) as fundamentally flawed. WRL sought further engagement, raised concerns with the Minister, and advocated for transparency and proper scientific, environmental, and heritage assessments. WRL also promoted the concept of sustainable fishery marine parks that recognise certified fisheries' role in ecosystem protection.

After completing the scheduled number of consultations, the government postponed the release of proposed sanctuary zones until after the 2025 election, with no further information released to stakeholders. WRL continues to advocate against exclusion from marine parks and remains ready to re-engage in the process when DBCA resumes planning.

## Carbon Sequestration

In June 2024 an offshore area south of Dongara, was declared an Identified Greenhouse Gas Storage Formation by the Commonwealth Minister for Resources, under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006. Registration allows the area to be used to store a maximum of 13.4 Mt of >95% CO<sub>2</sub> from a single well head. The impact of carbon sequestration activities on benthic species and their environment is not well known. However, WRL are concerned that exposure to CO<sub>2</sub> leakage over a long period would have a significant impact on lobster mortality. WRL will engage with the proponent once impact modelling and details of the project are provided.

## Seismic Survey Activity

Pilot Energy intends to conduct the Eureka 3D Marine Seismic Survey near Dongara in early 2026. The survey area coincides with part of the carbon sequestration area for which Pilot Energy have a joint venture. Following extensive member consultations, WRL, DPIRD and Pilot Energy agreed to a research program to assess potential localised impacts of seismic activity on lobster. WRL has also been negotiating an amended compensation protocol to better reflect fishery needs in the event of seismic-related impacts.



# Industry Digital Strategy

## A Digital Future for Western Rock Lobster

This year has marked significant progress in our digital transformation journey, with the Western Rock Lobster Council (WRL) implementing practical technology solutions that benefit fishers, strengthen our industry and ensure the long-term sustainability of this precious resource. Our digital initiatives are proving that innovation and tradition can work hand-in-hand to create a stronger future for Western Australia's iconic rock lobster fishery.

## Real Progress Through Practical Technology

The past twelve months have seen us move from planning to action, delivering tools that make an immediate difference to how our fishery operates. We've focused on developing solutions that solve real problems for fishers while meeting the expectations of modern seafood markets. The response from industry members has been encouraging, with many embracing these new technologies and providing valuable feedback to shape ongoing development.

## Key Achievements This Year

### Member Portal Launch

We successfully brought all member information and systems together into a single, easy-to-use web platform. This central hub saves time and reduces frustration by eliminating the need to navigate multiple systems.

### FishOps App Development

Work is well underway on this mobile application for iOS and Android devices. When complete, FishOps will give fishers one simple tool for:

- Planning fishing trips
- Executing fishing trips
- Recording catches
- Tracking costs
- Accessing historical data and reports.

The app is being designed with direct input from fishers to ensure it meets their needs on the water.

### Subsea Data Collection Pilot

We've equipped two vessels with innovative technology to automatically measure:

- Pot depth
- Water temperature
- GPS Location.

This partnership with the Fisheries Ships of Opportunity (FishSOOP) program is providing valuable data about our fishing grounds to fishers and the scientific community while requiring minimal extra effort from crews.

### Lobsters Scanning Technology

A prototype scanning device under development represents an exciting leap forward. When fully developed, it will instantly assess each lobster's:

- Size
- Weight
- Quality
- Unique identifying features.

This information helps make quick, accurate decisions at sea while creating a digital record that follows each lobster through the entire supply chain.

### Fishing Gear Tracking

WRL has designed and costed a system using RFID tags to identify individual pot sets. This will help fishers:

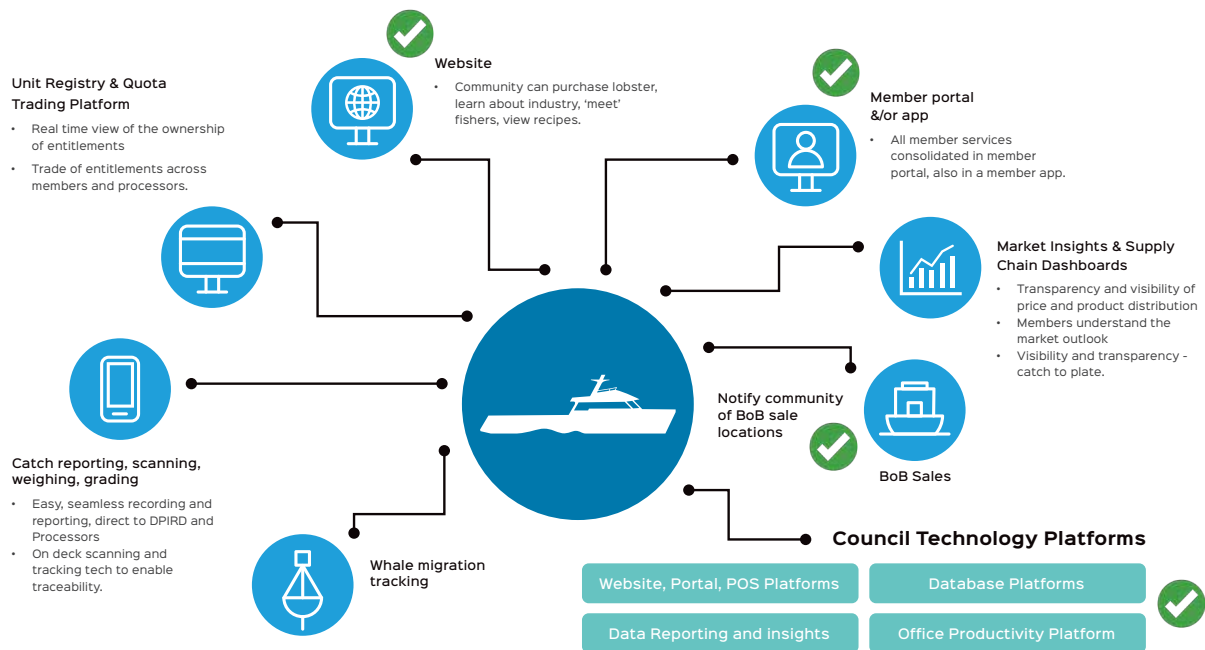
- Track gear performance
- Make informed decisions about equipment maintenance and replacement.

## Why This Work Matters

These projects deliver real benefits across our industry:

### For Fishers:

- Less time spent on paperwork and administration
- Better information to plan and execute fishing trips
- Tools to track costs and improve operational efficiency
- Reduced compliance burden through enhanced catch recording.



### For the Fishery:

- More accurate data for sustainable management
- Improved understanding of fishing grounds
- Stronger evidence of our sustainability credentials
- Better ability to respond to changing conditions.

### For Markets:

- Reliable proof of our lobster's origin and handling
- Transparent supply chain information
- Digital records to support premium positioning
- Faster response to buyer requirements.

### For the State of Western Australia:

- More accurate, real-time data helps inform stock assessments and quota decisions
- Better catch data supports evidence-based policy making
- Long-term trends become easier to identify and analyse
- Early warning systems can detect changes in fishing patterns or stock health
- Industry resilience improves through better data utilisation.

### For Environmental Stewardship:

- Precision fishing data helps protect sensitive habitats
- Bycatch reduction becomes measurable and verifiable
- Climate impacts can be monitored through sensor networks
- Sustainability claims gain scientific backing

None of this progress would be possible without strong partnerships. We're grateful for:

- The ongoing support from the WA Minister for Fisheries
- Practical guidance from DPIRD experts
- Research funding and expertise from FRDC
- The willingness of fishers to trial new technologies
- The leadership of our steering committee chaired by Brad Wearn.

The mix of industry knowledge, government support and technical expertise ensures we develop solutions that work in the real world of commercial fishing.

### Conclusion

The Western Rock Lobster industry has always been at the forefront of sustainable fishing practices. Our digital transformation builds on this tradition, using modern tools to solve age-old challenges in new ways. This year's achievements demonstrate what's possible when we combine innovation with practical fishing knowledge.

As we move forward, we remain committed to technologies that:

- Make fishers' jobs easier
- Strengthen our sustainable practices
- Maintain our premium market position
- Protect the long-term health of the fishery.

The digital future of Western Rock Lobster is taking shape and it's one we can all look forward to. With continued collaboration and a focus on practical solutions, we're confident our industry will remain strong, sustainable and successful for generations to come.



“ AUSTRALIA’S RE-ENTRY INTO THE LIVE CHINA MARKET HAS SEEN (ACCORDING TO CHINA IMPORT STATISTICS) 4.1 MILLION KILOGRAMS OF AUSTRALIAN PRODUCT IMPORTED IN THE FIRST 5 MONTHS OF 2025. ”

## Market Situation

The first half of the year saw rising levels of anticipation for the reopening of the live lobster trade to China of Australian lobster that had been in limbo for over four years. Through that period, trade largely followed the patterns established over the previous few years, with Western Australian beach prices reflecting the lower market prices and increased supply chain imposts associated with exporting to alternative markets – mostly live markets being predominantly Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vietnam, and to a far smaller extent frozen markets mostly China, the USA and Japan.

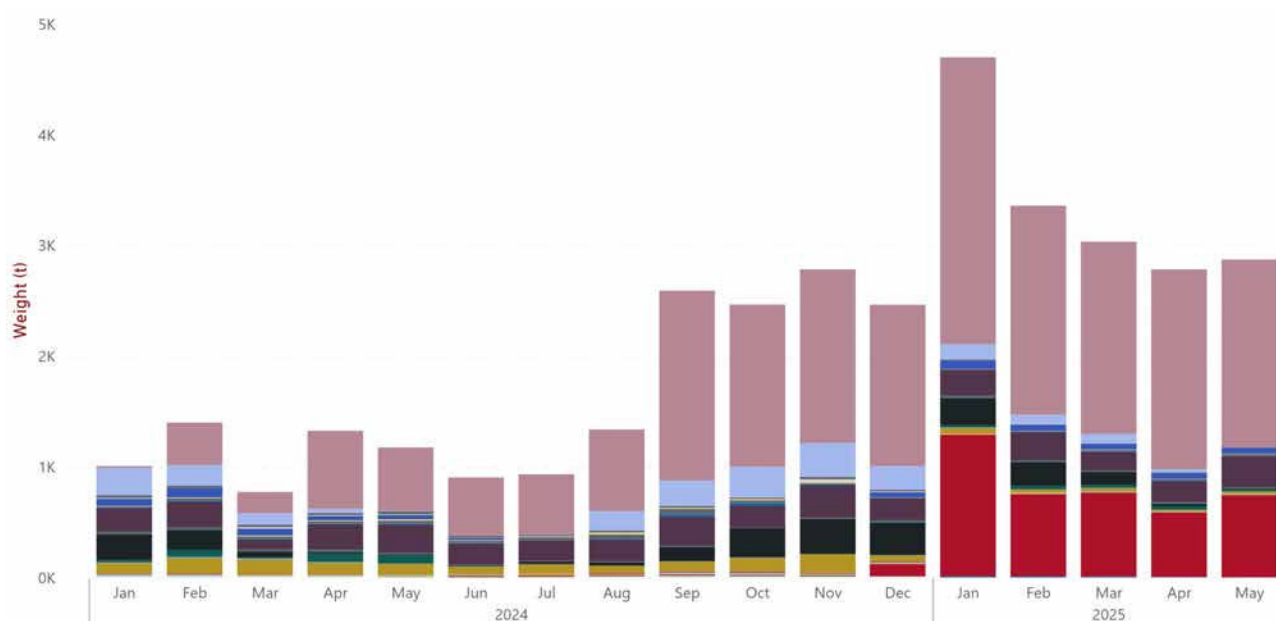
When the direct live lobster trade with China resumed in the last week of 2024, Western Australian exporters were quick to respond, shipping 138 tonnes of live product direct to China – the first live shipments since October 2020. From the start of 2025, the Australian lobster trade as a whole has largely pivoted strongly to live exports direct to China, with exports to other countries reducing to lower volumes, together with diminished quantities being taken by the domestic market.

Western Australian lobster exports for the year to date stand at 94.3% live, while exports of Southern rock lobster (from Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia combined) stand at 99.9% live.

Currently, Western Australian live product is largely being sent direct to China, albeit not at the 95+% reliance on the China market that prevailed prior to October 2020. 73% of Western Australia’s live exports were sent direct to China in the first part of 2025, 17% to Hong Kong, 5% to Taiwan, 2% to Singapore. Within that 73% of product designated as exports to China, 26% entered via Fujian, 24% via Shenzhen, 13% via Hong Kong and 9% via Guangzhou. The average live export price for 2025 to the month of May is AUD \$72 per kilogram.

Southern rock lobster has leaned harder into the China live market than Western, since the resumption of the direct live trade. 91% of Southern rock lobster live exports in the first part of 2025 were directed to China and 6% to Hong Kong. Within that 92% of product designated as exports to China, 58% entered via Shanghai, 19% via Guangzhou and 11% via Beijing. The average southern rock lobster live export price for 2025 to the month of May is AUD \$101 per kilogram.

The observed differences in relative import volumes by region for Western and Southern rock lobster are indicative of market preferences within China and reflect pre-COVID import patterns.



The Australian re-entry into the live direct trade with China was into an already-softening market for all live spiny product. Average unit prices for imported New Zealand live lobster, that peaked at \$101 USD per kilogram in 2021, slid to \$86 by 2024 (with an absence of live direct Australian lobster), while the 2025 year to date average is \$66. For context, the average unit price year to date for live Australian lobster (including western and southern) is \$54 USD.

Of note in the Chinese import statistics is the rapidly growing prevalence of farm-grown Vietnamese product to become, by far, the highest volume origin of live spiny lobster imported into China. After several years of seeming boom then crash, China import statistics showed an average 1.5 million kilograms per month of live lobster import from Vietnam in the last 4 months of 2024. The first 5 months of 2025 have seen that level of imports consolidate, averaging 2 million kilograms per month for the first 5 months to end of May, indicating a healthy level of market acceptance.

The above graphic, taken from the Trade Statistics section of the WRL website, shows 17 months of live spiny lobster imports into China. The graphic shows the re-entry of Australian live lobster imports (the bright red bars) to China, and the scale of live lobster imports from Vietnam (the light pink bars).

To put this in another context, Australia's re-entry into the live China market has seen (according to China import statistics) 4.1 million kilograms of Australian product imported in the first 5 months of 2025. Imports from Vietnam in the same period totalled 9.7 million kilograms. The two products certainly occupy different price positions in the markets (import unit price of Australian product averaged \$54 USD/kilogram, versus Vietnamese product which, at \$33; is the cheapest live lobster on the market) but the future expectation should consider that the availability of large volumes of good quality ranched product might have potential to reduce the upside for Australian export values.

# Maximum Economic Yield Model and Industry Benchmarking

In June 2022, the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) Committee endorsed the first version of the West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery Maximum Economic Yield model. The MEY model is updated periodically to help inform the TACC process.

We define 'Maximum Economic Yield' or MEY as the catch or effort level that maximises profit for the fishery as a whole over a number of seasons. Maximum profit happens at the point when there is the largest difference between total revenues and total costs of fishing. MEY is informed by a sustainable catch framework, including the stock assessment which itself is updated annually by DPIRD. In most cases, MEY will be associated with a lower catch level (a higher level of biomass) than that associated with MSY (Maximum Sustainable Yield). MEY, along with other inputs and considerations, are used to inform TACC recommendations to the Minister for Fisheries.

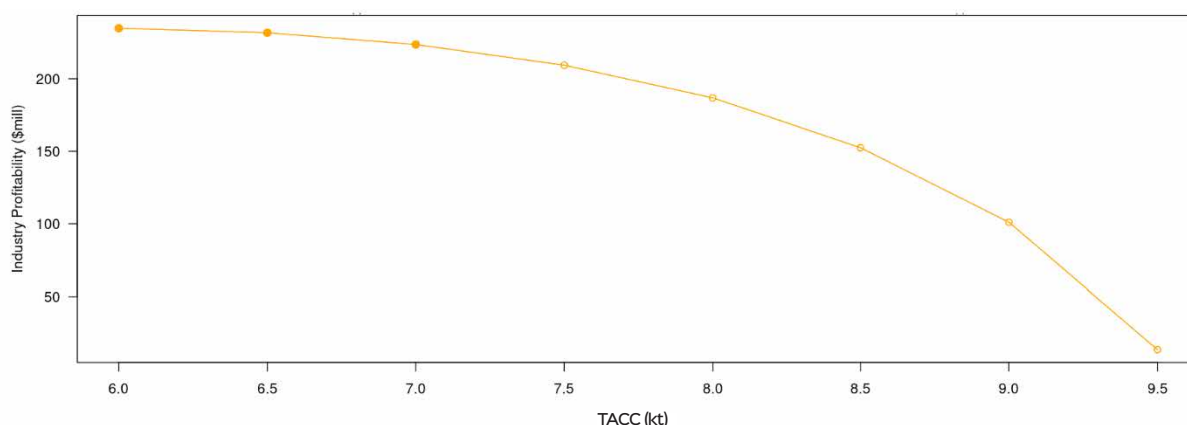
The MEY model provides an economic evaluation tool that considers the costs of fishing, lobster biomass levels, expected catch rates and expected long-term price responses to long-term changes in supply (changes in annual quota). As an evaluation tool it can be used to assess ongoing impacts of changing quota and the expected profitability of industry.

The DPIRD stock assessment model projects lobster biomass levels and projected catch rates under different quota scenarios. For each level of quota, the assessment model is projected out 5-plus years, so the resultant biomass levels could be considered an equilibrium level, or in other words, the biomass that would be present if the fishery remained at that level of catch for an extended period.





The diagram below illustrates the outputs of MEY modelling with the TACC Committee's inputs.



The fishing cost components of the model are based on data collected through benchmarking interviews by the Western Rock Lobster Council with commercial lobster fishers for the season ended June 2024. This data represents an important resource for the TACC Committee and also for fishers, particularly those who participate in the program.

The revenue elements of the model are based on two western rock lobster products (live and frozen) and their projected long term expected annual product mix and beach-price pricing outcomes, based on the experience and views of the five Processors (99% market share) on the TACC Committee.

Versions of the model operate in Microsoft Excel and app environments, highlighting responses in the industry profit function to changes in user inputs - a link to the app can be found on the WRL website.

The Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) Committee met during February 2024 to deliberate and recommend a TACC for the 2024-2025 season. The Committee noted the impact of the updated stock assessment; the effect of increased fishing costs; and the resumption of the live direct trade to China. The Committee recommended a TACC of 7,000 tonnes (the highest catch within the MEY model range and a reduction from the 2024-2025 TACC of 7,300 tonnes).

After being put to industry for consultation, the WRL Board submitted a recommendation of TACC at 6,800 tonnes for the 2025-2026 season to be put to the Minister.

# Community & Industry Engagement

## Strengthening Connection, Trust and Industry Identity

In 2025, Western Rock Lobster (WRL) launched its Community and Industry Outreach Program – an evolution of the successful Communication, Education and Engagement Program 2022-063. This earlier program laid the foundation for improved internal and external communications, deeper stakeholder engagement, and a stronger social license to operate. The new strategy builds on that momentum, bringing a refreshed focus to how WRL connects with both the community and the wider seafood industry.

At its core, this communications strategy reflects WRL's commitment to long-term sustainability and industry resilience. Guided by research and aligned with WRL's Strategic Plan, the program is designed to respond to an ever-changing social and economic environment through innovative engagement approaches and data-driven insights. It aims to position WRL as not only a leader in sustainable fisheries but also a trusted voice in the community.

By weaving tailored storytelling, interactive education campaigns and enhanced digital communication into every touchpoint, the strategy seeks to create meaningful, emotional connections between the public and the industry. Ultimately, it's about building lasting trust and recognition – ensuring that Western Australians understand, value and support their world-class lobster fishery.

## Community Events

Over the past year WRL has engaged in key community events to promote the western rock lobster industry.

### Shore Leave 2025

Western Rock Lobster returned as a Presenting Partner at the 2025 Shore Leave Festival in Geraldton – a highlight on the Mid West's cultural

and culinary calendar. The festival offered the perfect platform to showcase the vibrancy of WA's seafood industry and the unique connection between fishers and the local community.

WRL was front and centre at several signature events across the five-day festival. The Abrolhos Islands Long Table Lunch (Thursday, 24 April) treated guests to an unforgettable dining experience, pairing WA's finest seafood – especially Western Rock Lobster, with panoramic ocean views. Each evening from 23–27 April, WRL also hosted sunset Back of Boat BBQs at The Helm, serving up freshly grilled lobster to the public slathered in garlic butter and prepared by expert chefs.



The standout public activation was the Back of Boat BBQ and Cray Cook-Off at the Beach Price Markets on Saturday, 26 April. Festival goers had the opportunity to buy live lobsters directly from the fisher, then watch them expertly prepared on-site – or take them home with recipe ideas from WRL's Lobster Tale cookbook. The event was a resounding success, drawing healthy crowds and creating a meaningful opportunity for the public to engage with the fishery, meet the faces behind the catch, and taste the freshest lobster WA has to offer.

Beyond the food, WRL used Shore Leave as a platform to educate the community about the fishery's world-leading sustainability credentials and promote the value of supporting local, responsibly sourced seafood. Through storytelling, signage, and face-to-face conversations with fishers, the event helped strengthen public understanding of the industry's commitment to protecting marine environments, maintaining healthy stocks, and ensuring the longevity of this

iconic WA fishery. The festival served not just as a celebration of seafood, but as a powerful tool to build community connection, inspire pride in our coastal heritage, and champion Western Rock Lobster as a premium, sustainable local product.

## Collaboration and Partnerships

### Clontarf Foundation

WRL continued its partnership with the Clontarf Foundation, reaffirming its commitment to supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men through meaningful engagement, education, and career pathways. In the first half of 2025 WRL participated in key Clontarf events including the Leadership Morning Tea and the Clontarf Cup Football Carnivall. These served as valuable opportunities to connect with students, build visibility, and foster relationships with Clontarf staff and mentors.



The Geraldton Employment Forum, in August 2025, provided direct industry insights to students considering life after school. This partnership extends far beyond sponsorship; it's a long-term commitment to creating impact through hands-on learning experiences such as vessel tours and Processor visits, regular communication via WRL's Clontarf Champion and ongoing collaboration. Together, WRL and Clontarf are working to ensure the next generation sees real opportunity and representation within WA's seafood industry.

### Seven West Media

WRL's partnership with Seven West Media continues to deliver strong results, particularly through the annual WA's Best Lobster Restaurant Competition. Since its inception during the 2021 WA Cray Day campaign, the competition has grown into a major celebration of WA seafood, supporting



local dining and fostering community pride. In 2025, the campaign embraced a digital-first approach to maintain momentum following a quiet Easter, leveraging WRL and Back of Boat platforms to reach new audiences. With over 800,000 print impressions and more than 400,000 digital views, the campaign achieved strong engagement and drew in more than 1,200 public votes across 40+ venues.

Beyond promotion, this collaboration has helped position Western Rock Lobster as a key part of WA's food identity. Strategic messaging across digital and traditional platforms reinforced the fishery's sustainability and accessibility, while showcasing its connection to local restaurants and chefs. Venues like The Lobster Shack have become ambassadors of this mission, offering the public a direct link to the source of their seafood. Together, WRL and Seven West Media continue to elevate the lobster industry's profile and build lasting connections between community, cuisine, and the coast.

### West Australian Good Food Guide

WRL continued its partnership with the Western Australia Good Food Guide (WAGFG) Awards in 2025, marking its third consecutive year of involvement and the final activation



of the 2024 collaboration. Held at The Rechabite in Northbridge on 24 February, the prestigious event celebrated WA's top culinary talent, venues, and hospitality professionals. A highlight of the evening was the feature dish showcasing Western





Rock Lobster, crafted by some of Perth's leading chefs—shining a spotlight on the premium quality of local seafood and its integral role in WA's vibrant food scene.

As Presenting Partner of the Best Pub category, WRL received prominent visibility on the night, with branding and acknowledgements woven into the event's presentation. The partnership also included a dedicated editorial spread in the WAGFG publication, reinforcing the connection between the lobster industry and WA's dining culture. Through this collaboration, WRL continues to strengthen ties with chefs, venues, and diners—building pride in local produce and deepening community appreciation for Western Rock Lobster.

### **Fremantle Fishing Fleet Association**

As part of our ongoing commitment to celebrating fishing heritage and strengthening community connections, Western Rock Lobster (WRL) proudly partnered with the Fremantle Fishing Fleet Festival Association for the 2025 Fremantle Heritage Festival. Held at the historic Running with Thieves venue, the event honoured the rich legacy of the Fremantle Fishing Fleet – dating back to 1948 – and celebrated the stories that continue to shape our coastal identity.

The evening featured a moving presentation on the evolution of the Blessing of the Fleet, complemented by powerful reflections from WRL Director and long-time fisher Fedele Camarda. Speaking as a proud member of a multi-generational fishing family, Fedele highlighted the importance of honouring the past while fostering a deeper understanding of our industry's cultural roots among future generations.

Looking ahead, WRL is proud to continue supporting the Blessing of the Fleet events in both Fremantle and Geraldton as a formal sponsor. By working alongside local families and organisers, we aim to keep these traditions alive – strengthening community spirit, celebrating the contribution of fishers, and ensuring that the values at the heart of our industry continue to inspire pride and connection across generations.

### **WRL and Back of Boat Websites**

The [westernrocklobster.org](http://westernrocklobster.org) and [backofboat.com](http://backofboat.com) websites continue to play a vital role in connecting Western Rock Lobster (WRL) with members, stakeholders, and the wider public. Recent improvements include a restructure of the WRL website's 'Instruments of Exemption' section to ensure exemption notices are up-to-date and accessible, while the Competition page on [backofboat.com](http://backofboat.com) was enhanced to support the WA's Best Lobster Restaurant campaign in partnership with Seven West Media—driving increased traffic and engagement.

Ongoing work is focused on improving content clarity, usability and educational value across both platforms. New content continues to be added, with educational resources frequently featured in WRL's social media. Looking ahead, WRL continues to extend the functionality of the WRL Members Portal, with proposed additions like the 'Wharf Talk' Closed Community Forum, integration of Social Media feeds, WRL App 'FishOps' access, updated FAQs/videos and general members' tools, all aimed at creating a more functional and user-friendly digital experience for the lobster community.

# Industry Partnership Agreement

Western Rock Lobster Council's (WRL) Industry Partnership Agreement (IPA) with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) continues to deliver coordinated, strategic investments that align with industry and government priorities. The IPA supports a shared investment model that enables WRL to collaborate with DPIRD, researchers, and stakeholders to deliver practical outcomes across the fishery.

In 2024–25, WRL progressed several programs under the IPA, including the flagship **Digital Transformation Program**, which entered its second phase. This program continues to modernise the industry's operations through integrated, user-friendly digital systems for data recording, quota management, compliance, and environmental monitoring strengthening co-management, efficiency and traceability.

Key innovations include a catch recording application with GPS located pot pulls and advanced analytics for trip planning and cost control. In collaboration with initiatives like FishSOOP, the program also introduces new environmental data collection to support science-based decision-making. These developments are delivered through the WRL Member Portal, which will also support safety training, real-time alerts, and streamlined compliance.

The second phase of the “Understanding the **Economics and Markets Program**” continues to improve the Maximum Economic Yield model and benchmark data to support decision-making. It also provides insights into the impacts of trade disruptions and evolving market dynamics, helping to ensure long-term industry sustainability.

WRL also launched the **Community and Industry Outreach Program**, building on two previous communication programs to strengthen the industry's community connection and social license. The program engages members and the broader community through storytelling, seasonal competitions, school-based outreach, and Back of Boat events. Digital content and interactive materials aim to improve transparency

and deepen community connection. Evaluation tools, such as a community perception survey and member engagement studies, will guide strategic refinement. The program also supports industry capacity building, with skills development in content creation, digital communication, and stakeholder engagement. Scalable models will be shared across other fisheries, contributing to broader sector resilience.

WRL also undertook a project focused on **minimising plastic** use across the western rock lobster industry. The initiative identified where plastics are used across the full supply chain (such as gear, packaging and processing) and explored practical and more environmentally friendly alternatives. Reducing industry reliance on plastic not only aligns with growing community expectations but also supports ocean health and sustainable resource management. Findings from this work lay the groundwork for potential future trials and implementation of preferred alternative materials under a proposed Phase 2, further reinforcing WRL's commitment to environmental leadership and responsible fishing practices.

Additional research continues under the **Biology, Behaviour and Ecology Program**, with a focus on key sustainability drivers such as understanding and predicting puerulus settlement, marine heat waves and climate-related shifts in adult lobster distribution.

Meanwhile, the **Whale Entanglement Mitigation Program** supports targeted research to reduce interactions between fishing operations and whales. This includes improved understanding of whale migration, gear modification trials, and enhanced training for safe disentanglement. These proactive efforts reflect the industry's commitment to coexistence with marine fauna and long-term environmental stewardship.

For more information on WRL-FRDC partnership programs, visit

**[westernrocklobster.org/ipa](https://westernrocklobster.org/ipa)**.

# The Development Education Capacity Knowledge (DECK) Program

## Building Knowledge and Capability in the Western Rock Lobster Industry

In October 2024, Western Rock Lobster (WRL) hosted its sixth annual Development Education Capacity Knowledge (DECK) Program, an engaging two-day event designed to strengthen skills, expand knowledge and build meaningful connections across the industry.

Held at the Geraldton Multipurpose Centre from Midday 15 October to Midday 16 October, the forum featured a wide range of presentations and insights tailored to the needs of commercial fishers, skippers, deckhands, and members throughout the supply chain.

Highlights from the 2024 program included:

- Jen Hanrahan (Business Adviser, SBDC Regional) delivered an informative session on Cash Flow and Succession Planning, offering practical strategies for long-term business resilience
- Kristin Hoel (Project Manager, OceanWatch Australia) presented Disentangling a Whale of a Challenge, which explored novel gear modifications to mitigate whale entanglements
- Other key sessions addressed:
  - ◇ The impact of climate change on lobster habitats.
  - ◇ Australia's evolving trade dynamics following the 2020 China ban.
  - ◇ Safety advancements and emerging market trends.
  - ◇ Technology's role in shaping the future of the fishery.

Beyond the learning sessions, participants enjoyed a relaxed dinner at Laian Restaurant – an ideal opportunity to connect with peers and key industry figures. Special guests included Hon. Don Punch MLA, Minister for Fisheries, and Heather Brayford, Director General of DPIRD. The evening created space for valuable conversations around policy, industry development and collaborative progress.

The 2024 DECK Program welcomed 26 participants from across the WA coastline – including Fremantle, Dongara, and Geraldton. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of attendees indicating they would recommend the experience and attend again.

Many past participants have since taken on more active roles within the sector, attending Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA) meetings, nominating for the Fishing Operations Committee, participating in national and international conferences, and pursuing other leadership opportunities.

The program is open to all WRL members and is provided free of charge. Financial support is available for travel and accommodation, ensuring that the experience is accessible regardless of location. The 2025 DECK Conference will be hosted at the Fremantle Sailing Club on Wednesday 5 November and Thursday 6 November 2025.











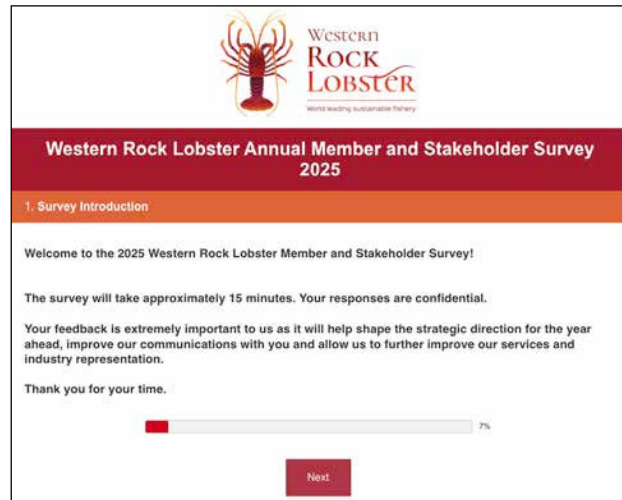
# Annual Member and Stakeholder Survey

WRL's Annual Member and Stakeholder Survey helps our organisation monitor progress under our strategic plan, ensuring that we are maintaining confidence, sustainability and good governance in the western rock lobster industry.

In August this year, WRL conducted its eighth Annual Member and Stakeholder Survey. The survey assists our organisation measure our industry's attitude regarding economic confidence, investment appetite and membership satisfaction. The annual survey also allows WRL to collect data about the views of its members and stakeholders on the current management of industry affairs, communications and governance as well as future priorities of the western rock lobster industry. Repeating this survey annually allows WRL to assess changes in sentiment over time and react to emerging areas of concern or opportunity.

A key objective for WRL is to proactively manage industry risk, reputation and development. In order to build an ongoing indicator, the survey asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of a range of industry management activities including representation, communications and interaction. This year's survey reflects that industry confidence in WRL to proactively manage industry risk, reputation and development has been recorded as 68% for this year, 8% down from the previous year. This may be derived on member dissatisfaction with the TACC being reduced to (by 500 tonnes) the first time this has occurred.

The western rock lobster industry's ability to attract and retain investment is identified in WRL's strategic plan. As in previous years, the questions surveyed our members' short and medium-term levels of confidence in the economic outlook of our industry. The results indicate members' confidence has risen marginally to 59% from last year's result of

The screenshot shows the introduction page of the Western Rock Lobster Annual Member and Stakeholder Survey 2025. At the top is the Western Rock Lobster logo with the tagline 'World leading sustainable fishery'. Below the logo is a red banner with the survey title. The page is titled '1. Survey Introduction'. The text welcomes participants to the 2025 survey, states it will take approximately 15 minutes, and assures confidentiality. It emphasizes the importance of feedback for shaping the strategic direction for the year ahead. A progress bar shows 7% completion. A 'Next' button is at the bottom.

56%. There has been virtually no change in terms of expected equipment investment or employing additional staff compared to the previous year.

Lastly, the survey results indicate that the highest rated priority tactics for maintaining a strong economic outlook are all very close and consistent with previous years. However, the order of priority has changed this past year with 'resource access security' now top of the list, with 'maintaining a well-managed quota' in 2nd, 'ensuring a strong working relationship between government and industry' moving up to 3rd and 'ensuring access to the resource remains Australian owned' has dropped from the top priority last year to only 4th this year.

WRL releases the full Annual Member and Stakeholder Survey Report just prior to Christmas each year.



# Back of Boat Lobsters

The Back of Boat (BoB) initiative continues to grow as an effective example of community engagement within Western Australia's seafood industry. Launched in September 2020 through a partnership between Western Rock Lobster (WRL) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), the program enables the public to buy live lobsters directly from local fishers at the wharf - delivering unbeatable freshness, value, and a chance to meet the people behind the product.

Since its inception, more than 300,000 high quality, ultra fresh local lobsters amounting to more than 180 tonnes, have been sold to the WA public across 21 coastal ports, from Kalbarri to Mandurah, with 109 commercial vessels taking part. To meet rising demand, daily landing caps have increased from 100 to 999 lobsters. The initiative continues to build momentum through seasonal activations, with December 2024 alone seeing over 25,000 lobsters sold across the state. These events not only bring the community closer to the industry but also provide a platform for storytelling, recipe sharing, and deeper public understanding of WA's world-class seafood.

Central to BoB's success is its dedicated online portal, [backofboat.com](https://backofboat.com), which continues transforming how customers interact with the program. Designed for convenience, the portal allows users to browse upcoming sales, pre-order lobsters and select preferred pick-up locations. Over 1,300 orders for nearly 8,000 lobsters, were processed online in December 2024 alone. This seamless digital experience complements the personal connection built at the wharf and WRL continues to enhance the system based on fisher feedback—ensuring it remains easy to use, reliable and beneficial for both customers and participating fishers.

Beyond providing a convenient way to purchase premium seafood, Back of Boat serves as an important tool for promoting sustainable fishing practices. By increasing transparency and encouraging direct consumer engagement, the initiative helps demystify the commercial fishing industry and builds broader community trust. WRL has also used BoB events as opportunities to educate customers about the lifecycle of lobsters, the fishery's strict sustainability measures and the value of supporting local. These educational interactions, combined with an emphasis on freshness and locally sourced, creates a sense of pride and connection among Western Australians for their iconic seafood industry.

Looking ahead, WRL remains committed to expanding the Back of Boat program to new locations and continuing to onboard more vessels into the system. Planned improvements to the online platform will include enhanced mobile responsiveness, more fisher profiles and greater integration with WRL's communications channels.







# BACK *of* BOAT

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER





# Financial Reports



Western Rock Lobster Council Inc

## Financial Reports

For the year ended 30 June 2025



# Directors' Declaration

The director(s) have determined that the company is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The director(s) of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, present fairly the company's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements; and
2. In the director(s)' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



Independent Chair  
**Russell Barnett**



Chair, Finance & Audit Committee  
**Mat Thompson**

# Independent Auditor's Report to The Members

For the year ended 30 June 2025

## To the Members of Western Rock Lobster Council Inc

We have audited the financial report of Western Rock Lobster Council Inc. ('the Association'), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of comprehensive income, appropriation statement and statement of cash flows for the year 30 June 2025 then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of Western Rock Lobster Council Inc. has been prepared in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year ended 30 June 2025; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, and the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015.

## Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the registered entity's financial reporting responsibilities under the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

## Responsibility of the Responsible Entities for the Financial Report

The directors of the Association are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015 and the needs of the members. The Associations' responsibility also includes such internal control as the responsible entities determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so. The directors are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.



## Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of responsible entities' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with responsible entities regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Name of Firm: Stirling Auditors

Name of Director: En Khong

Address: Suite 5, 216 Stirling Highway,  
Claremont WA 6010

Date: 15 August 2025



# Statement of Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2025

		2025	2024
	Notes	\$	\$
<b>INCOME</b>			
DPIRD Direct Funding		403,807	411,371
2020-059 RD&E (New)		60,000	100,000
FRDC - IPA Project Funding		1,671,452	1,447,100
Industry Levy		439,800	220,200
IPA Management Fee		42,034	21,747
Loss/ Gain on Sale of Asset		-	8,911
Other Income	2	149,432	-
MSC Grant		-	44,645
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>2,766,526</b>	<b>2,253,974</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>			
Interest Income		43,038	38,449
<b>GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES</b>			
Small Business Hardship Grant		-	5,000
<b>TOTAL GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>5,000</b>
<b>TOTAL OTHER INCOME</b>		<b>43,038</b>	<b>43,449</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>2,809,563</b>	<b>2,297,423</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Chair, Directors and Independent Director Fees	3	87,168	79,808
Depreciation		41,077	33,026
Employment Expenses	4	302,888	353,269
Industry Levy Expenses	5	406,913	355,064
IPA Project Expenses	6	2,169,095	1,758,584
Operating Expenses	7	206,407	231,873
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>3,213,548</b>	<b>2,811,624</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>		<b>(403,985)</b>	<b>(514,201)</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

# Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2025

		2025	2024
	Notes	\$	\$
<b>RESERVES</b>			
Retained Earnings		954,178	1,358,163
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>		<b>954,178</b>	<b>1,358,163</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	8	1,022,314	993,680
Reimbursement		21,513	11,572
Trade and Other Receivables	9	-	332,328
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,043,827</b>	<b>1,337,580</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	10	98,398	126,328
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>98,398</b>	<b>126,328</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,142,225</b>	<b>1,463,909</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Provisions	11	126,287	102,300
Trade & Other Payables	12	50,916	31,647
GST		10,844	(28,201)
Taxation		-	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>188,047</b>	<b>105,745</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>188,047</b>	<b>105,745</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>954,178</b>	<b>1,358,163</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

# Appropriation Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Notes	\$	\$
<b>RETAINED EARNINGS AFTER APPROPRIATION</b>		
Retained Earnings at Start of Year	1,358,163	1,872,365
Profit/(Loss) Before Taxation	(403,985)	(514,201)
Retained Earnings After Appropriation	954,178	1,358,163

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.



# Statement of Cash Flow - Direct Method

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Notes	\$	\$
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Receipts from grants	149,432	-
GST	4,428	(1,973)
Cash receipts from other operating activities	2,660,131	2,288,512
Cash payments from other operating activities	(3,172,472)	(2,778,598)
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(358,480)</b>	<b>(492,059)</b>
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Other cash items from investing activities	316,721	1,209,712
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>316,721</b>	<b>1,209,712</b>
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Other cash items from financing activities	77,864	17,224
<b>NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>77,864</b>	<b>17,224</b>
<b>NET CASH FLOWS</b>	<b>36,104</b>	<b>734,877</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	860,163	125,286
Net change in cash for period	36,104	734,877
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	896,267	860,163

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2025

## 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

The director(s) have determined that the company is not a reporting entity and accordingly, this financial report is a special purpose report prepared for the sole purpose of distributing a financial report to members and must not be used for any other purpose. The director(s) have determined that the accounting policies adopted are appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis and under the historical cost convention, except for certain assets, which, as noted, have been written down to fair value as a result of impairment. Unless otherwise stated, the accounting policies adopted are consistent with those of the prior year.

The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of the statements are as follows:

### Goods and Services Tax

Transactions are recognised net of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

## 2. Other Income

Other Income

### TOTAL OTHER INCOME

2025	2024
\$	\$
149,432	-
<b>149,432</b>	<b>-</b>

\$148,707 represents internal charges to recover office rent costs for staff working on externally funded IPA-related programs. The balance of \$725 relates to the electricity grant received from the Small Business Development Corporation.

## 3. Chair, Directors and Independent Directors

Board Diem

Chair Honorarium

Independent Directors

### TOTAL CHAIR, DIRECTORS

### AND INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS

17,937	40,000
54,231	24,808
15,000	15,000
<b>87,168</b>	<b>79,808</b>

The Chair's remuneration was increased to \$60,000 per annum effective from September 2024, in line with the recommendation and board approval. The board agreed by consensus that the Chair has dedicated significant time, expertise, and contributions to the organisation.

Directors receive \$5,000 per annum, paid quarterly from November 2024, inclusive of superannuation.



#### 4. Employment Expenses

Salaries & Wages

Superannuation

**TOTAL EMPLOYMENT EXPENSES**

2025	2024
\$	\$
261,542	315,490
41,346	37,779
<b>302,888</b>	<b>353,269</b>

The Salary & Wages and Superannuation are a proportion of the expense.

#### 5. Industry levy

Management and Projects

MSC Audit

Promotion, Media and Communication

**TOTAL INDUSTRY LEVY**

267,574	125,354
16,134	15,360
123,205	214,350
<b>406,913</b>	<b>355,064</b>

#### 6. IPA Project Expenses

Project – 12th ICWL

Project – Communications, Education and Engagement 1

Project – Western Rock Lobster Community and Industry Outreach Program

Project – 2021-030 Digital Transformation

Project –2024-052 Digital Transformation (Phase 2)

Project – Understanding the Economics and Markets

Project – 2020-059 RD&E

Project – 2020-060 WRL Professional Industry Development

Project – 2020-062 Minimising Plastic (Phase 1)

Provision for Leave Expense

Superannuation

**TOTAL IPA PROJECT EXPENSES**

42,522	11,620
11,658	288,087
121,547	-
532,501	1,151,188
765,273	-
231,725	151,601
253,101	89,643
51,370	27,627
1,839	3,267
17,313	(357)
40,246	35,907
<b>2,169,095</b>	<b>1,758,584</b>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2025

## 7. Operating Expense Breakdown

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Memberships	2,176	-
Travel	66	-
Travel - Interstate/Overseas	-	324
Travel - WA	876	1,656
Accounting/Audit	4,225	3,233
Bank Charges	574	1,081
Communications Strategy	-	6,334
Fringe Benefits Tax	7,678	6,416
Gifts	1,344	2,446
Insurance	16,991	18,784
Meeting Expenses	3,755	5,242
Mileage	-	79
Motor Vehicle Expenses	7,809	5,332
Office Equipment and IT	16,403	13,739
Postage	117	528
Printing and Stationery	5,139	5,931
Provision for Leave Expense	6,674	32,328
Rent	71,009	69,943
Staff Amenities	5,578	4,344
Subscriptions	50,709	46,900
Telephone	5,220	6,374
Training	64	248
Travel & Accommodation	-	613
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE BREAKDOWN</b>	<b>206,407</b>	<b>231,873</b>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.





## 8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
ANZ Business Online Saver	65,255	49,768
ANZ Cheque Account	52,079	54,666
ANZ FRDC Fund	60,299	60,421
ANZ Online Saver	4,298	5,496
ANZ WRLC 1916	252	23,258
ANZ Term Deposit #1 May 2021	85	-
ANZ Term Deposit #2 May 2021	85	-
ANZ Term Deposit 1	419,945	400,000
ANZ Term Deposit 2	419,945	400,000
Industry Fighting Fund Savings	23	23
Industry Fighting Fund Trans	47	47
<b>TOTAL CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>1,022,314</b>	<b>993,680</b>

## 9. Trade and Other Receivables

### CURRENT

Trade Debtors	-	332,328
<b>TOTAL CURRENT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>332,328</b>

### TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

<b>-</b>	<b>332,328</b>
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## 10. Property, plant and equipment

### MOTOR VEHICLES

Motor Vehicles At Cost	67,319	67,319
Accum. Depr. Motor Vehicles	(27,348)	(14,025)
<b>TOTAL MOTOR VEHICLES</b>	<b>39,971</b>	<b>53,294</b>

### OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Office Equipment At Cost	85,183	72,036
Accum. Depr. Office Equipment	(85,183)	(72,036)
<b>TOTAL OFFICE EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

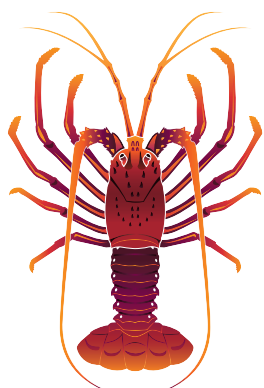
For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS</b>		
Property Improvements	169,458	169,458
Accum. Depr Property Improvements	(111,031)	(96,424)
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<b>58,427</b>	<b>73,034</b>
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>98,398</b>	<b>126,328</b>
<b>11. Provisions</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Provision for Leave	86,536	79,862
Provision for Leave (IPA Projects)	39,751	22,438
<b>TOTAL CURRENT</b>	<b>126,287</b>	<b>102,300</b>
<b>TOTAL PROVISIONS</b>	<b>126,287</b>	<b>102,300</b>
<b>12. Trade and Other Payables</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Amounts Withheld	21,418	19,572
ANZ Credit Card	7,806	7,797
Superannuation Payable	10,624	-
Trade Creditors	11,068	4,278
<b>TOTAL CURRENT</b>	<b>50,916</b>	<b>31,647</b>
<b>TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES</b>	<b>50,916</b>	<b>31,647</b>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.







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World leading sustainable fishery

Phone: (08) 9432 7722  
info@westernrocklobster.org  
28 Mews Road, Fremantle WA 6160

[westernrocklobster.org](http://westernrocklobster.org)