

# WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER COUNCIL



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2010

Our Commitment

*“To be the stewards of the  
Western Rocklobster resource.”*

Prepared by the Western Rocklobster Council  
February 2006 and revised November 2007

# INTRODUCTION

## THE INDUSTRY IN THE FUTURE

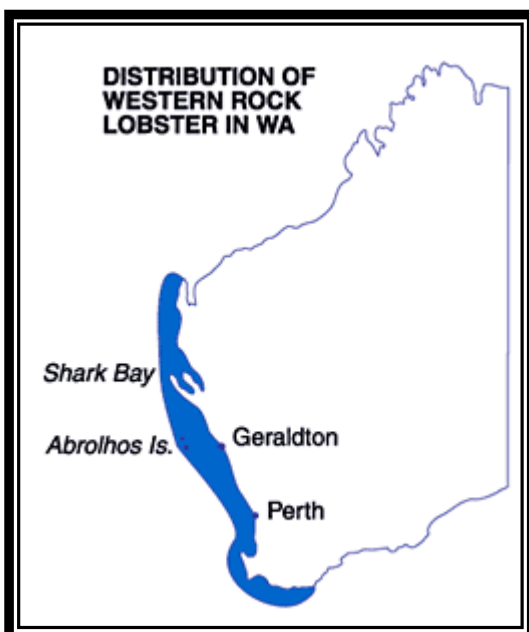
The Western Rocklobster Fishery (WRLF) will change significantly over the next 5 years. The changes will be the result of a cohesive industry implementing innovative and well planned strategies that address the key challenges that face users of a community owned resource in a global economy.

## OUR INDUSTRY CURRENTLY

The Western Rocklobster fishermen in partnership with the wider community have a long and proud history of effective management of the rocklobster resources for the benefit of all Western Australians.

The environmental credentials of the fishery are second to none. Western Rocklobster was the first fishery in the world to achieve Marine Stewardship Council Certification as a healthy and well managed fishery. The long established partnerships between the fishermen, Department of Fisheries researchers, Government managers and environmental groups have laid the foundations for future sustainability and profitability of the industry.

The fishery extends from Shark Bay to Augusta, and is the most valuable single species fishery in Australia, worth between \$200-400 million annually. The sustainable catch is estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000 tonnes per year, although the size of the actual catch has varied between 8,000 tonnes and 14,500 tonnes, with an average of 10,500 tonnes. The Western Rocklobster fishery makes up nearly 20% of the total value of the Australian fisheries, and employs in excess of 10,000 people. There are currently 500 Managed Fishery Licence (MFL) holders in the Western Rocklobster industry, represented by the Western Rocklobster Council.



## MEETING THE CHALLENGES

Managing and responding to change is one of the biggest challenges facing the industry. The current cost-price squeeze and proposed changes to the management system means the industry is continually responding to significant demands on their resources to address these changes. Consequentially, the industry has to be:

**Visionary** in identifying the challenges,  
**Strategic** in planning to meet the challenges,  
**Cohesive** in implementing its responses; with  
**Leadership** to continue to invest in and develop the natural leadership that exists.

Many issues outside the control of the industry will impact on the future of the lobster industry in Western Australia. The challenges and opportunities that will shape the future of the fishery exist on dramatically different scales including global, national and regional. The drivers for change can be economic environmental and sustainability or community based.

## OUR MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Western Rocklobster Council itself has recently undergone a change in its structure and membership. In the past the Council could have been described as an association of Associations. The inaugural membership of the Council was 13 Incorporated Professional Fishermen's Associations:

- Central West Coast PFA;
- Dongara PFA;
- Fishing Industry Women's Association of WA
- Fremantle PFA;
- Geraldton PFA;
- Kalbarri PFA;
- Leeman PFA;
- Seabird and Ledge Point PFA;
- Southwest Coast Professional Rocklobster & Wet Fisherman's Association;
- United Mid West Fishers Association;
- United Seafood Producers Association;
- Western Australian Rocklobster Fishers Federation;
- Western Rocklobster Development Association;
- Zone C PFA.

The Board of the Council agreed to move from an "association of associations" to a direct membership model. The membership of the Western Rocklobster Council is now the holders of Managed Fishery Licences in the Western Rocklobster Managed Fishery. In 2005 the membership of the Council was 545 MFL holders. These members are represented by 12 democratically elected Board Members, including three from each of the Northern Zones and six from the Southern Zone.

## THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

The Western Rocklobster Council represents the catching sector at all levels of Government as the peak body for the industry. Typically, the Council provides advice and consultation to stakeholders in the fishery, facilitates discussion with industry groups on various issues including recently Integrated Fisheries Management, the Wetline Review, the Capes Region Code of Conduct, and the upcoming Alternative Management System Review.

The Council is also involved with lobbying Government and stakeholder groups, fostering research and sourcing funds for industry projects.

## OUR OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

This plan deliberately focuses on strategic issues and is intentionally general in its approach and presentation. It addresses 7 key planning areas as identified and prioritised by the industry:

1. Ensuring a strong effective Board,
2. Sustainable development of the industry
- 3. Maintenance of resource access and property rights,**
4. Increases in profitability,
5. Improved community relations,
6. Enhanced market development
- 7. Improved safety and training**

For each key planning area, the objectives are documented below:

- 1. Ensuring a strong effective Board, which means**
  - An effective Peak Body that is accountable to its members and adds value to funds invested and has broad based support from industry.
  - To develop structural linkages from industry stakeholders to PFA's, WRLC, WAFIC and RLIAC
  - *To create a single, holistic WRL industry organisation*
  - Corporate governance and performance reporting to stakeholders
- 2. Sustainable development of the industry, which means**
  - Members take the lead in ensuring the long term sustainability of the lobster stocks in co-operation with Government.
  - Continued support for further knowledge of the ecological effects of rocklobster fishing on the broader ecosystem.
  - Continuing to build on baseline data of the social value and economic impacts of the rocklobster industry on fleet hosting communities in WA.
  - Increased industry profitability through the identification of productivity gains and the adoption of new technology or best practise systems of work that reduce input costs and increase investment returns.
  - Outsourcing research and/or building cooperation with other research providers.
  - *To devise a single, succinct annual strategic plan for R&D*
- 3. Maintenance of resource access and property rights, which means**
  - Providing investment confidence for industry stakeholders by progressively strengthening the rights-based approach to fisheries management.
  - Working to ensure management strategies and policy development in the fishery progressively strengthens the "bundle of rights" of licence holders in the WRLF.
  - Representing the interest of the lobster industry in Marine Park planning processes that will impact on the licence holders in the WRLF.
  - Working with Government to ensure the potential for rocklobster aquaculture is harnessed and developed in partnership with the existing wild capture fishery.
- 4. Increases in profitability, which means**
  - Continuing scrutiny of the cost recovery process and strategic expenditure of resources in key programs.
  - *To coordinate the investment by industry stakeholders*
  - Supporting and developing innovative ways to increase the value of the product.

5. **Improved community relations**, which means

- Continuing to build community confidence in the sustainable management of the Western Rocklobster resource through community, industry, and Government partnerships.
- Continuing to educate community members about the environmentally sustainable and responsible fishing practises in the industry.
- Building confidence in other users of the marine environment of the world's best practise occurring within the lobster fishery.

6. **Enhanced market development**, which means

- Sharing the benefits of market development outcomes across the supply chain.
- Promoting the Western Rocklobster as premium quality product around the world.
- Increasing domestic promotion of the Western Rocklobster Fishery.
- Developing an innovative marketing strategy for the WRL resource.
- Assisting with innovation and value adding to raw materials.

7. **Improved safety and training**, which means

- Continuing to provide a safe work place for all participants in the fishery.
- Continuing to invest in the education and training of all participants in the industry.
- Continuing to develop career path opportunities through the fishing industry.

## BUSINESS PLAN

Within each key objective, the goals outlined above have been prioritised, with a basic estimation of the resources required to achieve them, and the outputs by which they can be measured

ENSURING A STRONG, EFFECTIVE WRLC			
Objective	Goals	Priority	Outputs
An effective peak body that is accountable to its members, and provides advice and leadership to the industry.	Become a more professional and democratically elected board that represents the interests of its members.		More than 50% return on voting forms, nomination of 12 board members at each election, increased response rates for each election.
	Develop a stronger and better supported, geographically based system of Professional Fisherman's Associations that provide information to the elected board of the Western Rocklobster Council.		Increased attendance at PFA meetings by industry members and increased communication levels and participation of Board members at PFA meetings.
	Become a more effective, professional and accessible management team strategically located to maximise the return on investment by industry.		Expansion of staff to include a person based in Geraldton, and an increase in Perth staff.
Achieve a high level of knowledge within the political system of the impacts of policy decisions on the industry at state federal level.	Increase the level of knowledge within the political system of issues and the impacts of policy decisions on industry.		
Communication	<p>Newsletter</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Email list</p>		<p>Inclusion of regular newsletter sections in the bi-monthly pro west magazine.</p> <p>Increased "hits" and usage of website</p> <p>Continual expansion and addition to stakeholder lists (incl email and postage lists)</p>
To develop structural linkages from industry stakeholders to PFA's, WRLC, WAFIC and RLIAC	To provide a communication and extension channel in tandem with individual projects to ensure maximum awareness of the R&D undertaken to facilitate adoption of outputs.		Maximise effectiveness of R&D plan
<b>To create a single holistic WRL industry organisation</b>	<p>To foster industry communication, representation and development.</p> <p>Increasing the governance within the industry, making all elements more accountable and detailing the roles and responsibilities of each member of the fishery's community.</p>		<p>Annual industry planning meeting with all key stakeholder groups in the fishery to develop annual holistic plan for the industry incorporating plans for biology, research, management and marketing elements of the fishery.</p> <p>Management and facilitation of Government based initiatives affecting industry (e.g. alternative management systems)</p>

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY			
Objective	Goals	Priority	Outputs
Members take the lead in ensuring the long term sustainability of the lobster stocks in co-operation with Government.	Increased industry involvement in decision making initiatives		Utilizing the “ <i>Decision rules framework</i> ” (FRMP 212) continue to maintain the biological indicators for the fishery at or above the healthy levels.
	Develop an extremely high level of knowledge of Rocklobster stocks through co-operation and support between researchers and fishers.		Increased participation in log book and other research programs by industry members. Currently, participation is at 30-35%.
	Support for independent third party accreditation of the fishery.		Extension of MSC Certification for a further term
Continue to support further knowledge of the ecological effects of Rocklobster fishing on the broader ecosystem.	Further industry knowledge of the ecosystem effects of their fishery.		Utilise and act upon advice and findings from research projects and ecological effects of fishing Scientific Reference Group in decision making processes.
Continue to build on baseline data of the social value and economic impacts of the Rocklobster industry on hosting communities in WA.	Increased cooperation and participation of the industry and broader community in the socio-economic research.		Extension of project outputs within community
<b>To devise a single, succinct annual strategic plan for R&amp;D</b> .	Coordinated research effort providing for the first time a cohesive strategic direction aimed at building the value of what was once recognised as “the world’s best managed fishery”.		Disseminate R&D plan across WRLF to ensure stakeholder support and eventual uptake of project outputs/findings i.e. improved extension element to all R&D

<b>MAINTENANCE OF RESOURCE ACCESS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
Provide investment confidence for industry stakeholders by progressively strengthening the rights based approach to fisheries management.	Develop and access an efficient, accurate and cost effective register of unit holders		Support the development and implementation of unit register for Rocklobster authorisations and entitlements as an annually updated register detailing ownership and lease information of rocklobster units.
	Establish principals of intra-sectoral allocations and equity between and within the zones in the fishery.		Development of an industry position statement document outlining proposed intra-sectoral allocations Provision of formal submissions to all phases of the IFM consultation process
Work to ensure that management strategies and policy development in the fishery progressively strengthen the bundle of rights of unit holders in the WRLF.	Increased security and certainty to resource allocations between stakeholders.		Support the Integrated Fisheries Management Process and update stakeholders regularly on the outcomes of the IFM process and seek industry views prior to provision of all formal submissions to IFAAC.
	Establish and maintain principals of intra sectoral allocations and equity between and with the zones in the fishery.		Formal submissions of industry position to IFAAC at each consultation phase
Represent the interest of the lobster industry in marine planning processes that impact on the unit holders in the WRLF.	Recognition of the high level of scientific knowledge and the success of management strategies in the WRLF.		Acknowledgement and inclusion of MSC certification requirements in Marine Park Planning process- overlap of areas
To work with Government to ensure that the potential of Rocklobster aquaculture is harnessed and developed in partnership with the existing wild capture fishery.	Source and maintain equity in the allocation and utilisation of the resource for all aspects of puerulus harvest and aquaculture of lobsters.		Work with policy makers to ensure that the government policy on access to Rocklobster resources is consistent with existing allocation principals. Develop allocation principles for puerulus in conjunction with IFM principles.
<b>INCREASES IN PROFITABILITY</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
Continued scrutiny of the cost recovery process and strategic expenditure of resources in key programs.	Improve efficiency, transparency and accountability of Rocklobster programs and fee and licensing costs.		Active participation in the reformed RLIAC finance sub committee and the sub committee's working group to attend meetings and provide submissions and input into budget and financial discussions and consultation processes
<b>To coordinate the investment by industry stakeholders</b>	To ensure outcomes detailed in the strategic plan are achieved.		Maximise return on industry investment in R&D
Support & develop innovative ideas to increase product value.	See market development investment platform		Facilitate the transfer of latest technological advances and information to the industry through workshops,

			conferences and meetings. Improved financial return for fishers.
<b>IMPROVED COMMUNITY RELATIONS</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
Continue to build community confidence in the sustainable management of the Western Rocklobster Resource through community, industry government partnerships.	Increased communication of information to the public utilising appropriate media .		Work with PFA's to develop industry initiatives for "hot" issues,, refine and update industry codes of conduct, engage in "clean up" days and promote best practise standards
Continue to educate community about the environmentally sustainable and responsible fishing practises in the industry.	Build a network of local festivals and celebrations to increase the profile of the industry.		Commencement of an annual Fremantle Rocklobster Festival, and assorted other industry festival days
Build confidence with other users of the Marine environment of the world's best practise within the lobster fishery.	Reduce conflict between stakeholders sharing the marine resources		Development and implementation of a Code brochure and information sheet for an industry wide Code of conduct for professional fishermen detailing world's best practise.
	Build expectation within the community about what is normal and expectable practise within the fishery.		Showcase industry achievements in media and through the website
<b>ENHANCED MARKET DEVELOPMENT</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
Develop innovative marketing strategy for the WRL	Increase involvement of the catching sector in market opportunities  Maximise return on investment in marketing as a result of having a single WRL industry organisation		Participate at strategic level with the National Food Industry Strategy, Seafood Enterprise Alliance and National Aquaculture Council Action Agenda Projects  Unified approach to marketing
Promote the western Rocklobster as premium quality product around the world.	Assess the opportunities that may flow from the various programs and projects targeting greater value from the existing product.		Apply to Government agencies of strategic countries to investigate and identify current and future markets
Domestic promotion of the Western Rocklobster Fishery.	Assess the opportunities that may flow from the various programs and projects targeting greater value from the existing product.		Increased domestic consumption of commercially caught Western Rocklobster
Shared benefits of the outcomes of Market Development across the supply chain.	Develop an investment strategy that shares the cost of market development as well as the benefits across the sectors.		Support and promote the Global Lobster Database and findings through industry
Assist with innovation and value adding to raw materials.	Greater industry involvement and input into the processing sector		Assess the opportunity for a Seafood industry CRC bid focused on improving post harvest processing

			technology and marketability of value added products
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<b>IMPROVED SAFETY AND TRAINING</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
Continue to provide a safe work place for all participants in the fishery.	Reduced number of OH&S incidents and increased training opportunities		Work with the existing program within WAFIC to further refine and keep update the OH&S Code.
Continue to invest in education and training of all participants in the industry.	A greater investment in the leadership capacity within the industry		Provide opportunities and representatives to attend coaching and leadership programs, starting with the Board of Directors
	Greater participation in industry training programmes		Work with the existing program within WAFIC to deliver training to the industry
	Increase industry awareness of the funds and service providers that are available to deliver targeted and relevant training		Annual survey of representative sectors of WRL to gauge the status of education & training programs
Continue to develop career path through the fishing industry	Increased employment opportunities and more relevant education in the fishing and marine aspects derived from secondary and tertiary education programs		Work with the existing program within WAFIC to refine and develop industry based curricula for training organisations