

Media Statement released 9th June 2011

Area Management Controls Missing

Public submissions on the Draft Rock Lobster Management Plan closed yesterday and TARFish believes the proposed measures will help address the stock issues facing the industry only if there are some management controls at a regional or area level that will ensure any fish left in the water by the recreational sector will remain in the water in support of the basic premise of rebuilding stocks for our collective future.

TARFish CEO Mark Nikolai said at the release of the Draft Management Plan in April that TARFish were pleased Minister Bryan Green had followed the best available scientific knowledge and scenario modelling developed by the IMAS - Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (formerly TAFI) in support of a sustainable fishery.

It is well known that the rock lobster fishery in Tasmania, and other areas around Australia, is experiencing very challenging times. Greatly reduced rock lobster stocks have been driven by a number of factors including below average small rock lobsters settling in Tasmania, warming coastal waters and the impacts of marine pests such as *Centrostephanus rodgersii* (Long Spined Sea Urchin).

Throughout the review process TARFish have consistently called on the government to implement a package of management measures that are:

1. Fair and equitable across all stakeholder groups
2. Designed to “leave fish in the water”, and
3. Focused on the problem areas such as the East and South East Coasts

Whilst the proposed changes generally align with what we have been indicating to government, without area management controls in place at the time the Rules are changed in November there is no doubt the efforts of all stakeholders to rebuild stocks will be compromised, particularly in the problem areas on the East and South East coasts.

As part of the current Rules Review process Area Management Controls have been flagged by government as a future management planning process however TARFish call on the government to include Area Management Controls in the current review process otherwise TARFish believe Rock Lobster stock levels will continue to fall.

Contact Mark Nikolai, Chief Executive Officer on 0403 868 004 or 1300 665 225 for further information.

TARFish is the independent, government recognised peak body looking after the interests of recreational marine fishers in Tasmania.