



31st March 2022

Dear LMRMA Review Panel,

REVIEW OF LIVING MARINE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the consultation session on the 4th March 2022 as part of the review into Tasmania's Living Marine Resources Management Act.

Arrangements for seafood tourism activities

Since 2013 Pennicott Wilderness Journeys has operated Tasmanian Seafood Seduction cruises under the authority of a permit. This allows us to operate commercial cruises where local Tasmanians and interstate/overseas visitors can have the experience of seeing wild abalone and sea urchin harvested fresh from the water. This catch is then prepared, cooked and served onboard the boat with pre-purchased rock lobster, oysters and premium Tasmanian produce and beverages. Tasmanian Seafood Seduction was recognised as Australia's Best New Tourism Product 2014 and it has delivered significant global promotion for Tasmania's seafood industry by featuring as a hero product by overseas travel agents, Tourism Tasmania and Tourism Australia.

Permit arrangements have been instrumental in facilitating this type of activity which has brought significant economic benefit to Tasmania. Our permit allows authorised Pennicott Wilderness Journeys employees to snorkel for abalone and sea urchin on a tour. We are able to do this in line with the recreational season which currently provides all-year round access to harvesting abalone (unless an area is closed for biosecurity reasons). The permit also allows us to catch rock lobster and scalefish however we have not engaged in this as yet. Instead we take live rock lobster which have been purchased from commercial processors.

All of our abalone catch comes from commercial abalone quota units and we are diving under the authority of a Fishing Licence (Abalone Dive). These licences have come at a significant cost for my business but we believe it is important to respect the existing commercial industry that is in place. Whilst this is a commercial activity, it is more recreational in nature. We only catch what we need for the people on the cruise, as our permit requires everything to be consumed onboard (as it cannot be taken off the boat, sold or gifted). Our permit restricts us to maximum of 8 sea urchin and 4 abalone per cruise with 12 passengers. At the end of each year we leave uncaught abalone in the system, because abalone quota units cannot be split and we are subject to a maximum of 4 abalone per cruise. We believe these arrangements are appropriate, sustainable and are supported by the industry.

We are aware that others have sought and obtained permits for seafood tourism experiences since Tasmanian Seafood Seduction was established. In general these involve serving of pre-purchased rock lobster and abalone rather than taking them from the water. We believe any commercial tourism activity that involves taking abalone, sea urchin or rock lobster from the water must be done under the authority of a commercial fishing licence and deducted from commercial quota.

Those that do not hold appropriate licences or permits should be strongly prevented from allowing commercial activities to occur, and it is unacceptable for commercial activities to be undertaken by having participants obtaining recreational licences. Activities of a commercial nature must be done under commercial licences.

If the Act seeks to create a framework to regulate or permit more commercial tourism activities, we believe that:

- Any tourism fishing activities should be regulated through a permit system, as this will enable the Government to maintain control and ensure these activities are conducted appropriately.
- Before a permit is granted, operators should have to demonstrate they have an existing reputable business in place within Tasmania and provide the Government with confidence that they fit and proper person who can comply with the requirements of a monitoring regime.
- Ideally operators should have to demonstrate a history of involvement with the Tasmanian tourism industry or seafood industry before being granted a permit.
- The existing system of tourism operator telephone reporting and logbooks should be maintained.
- Appropriate fees should be set in order to ensure the State is getting an economic return for the activity.
- Consultation should occur with existing permit operators and commercial seafood industry stakeholders before the regulatory arrangements are finalised.

We believe that seafood tourism activities have been extremely beneficial for Tasmania and they should be allowed to continue. However it is crucially important that we ensure that a strict compliance and monitoring regime is in place to ensure these activities are managed sustainably for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

Penalties

Having strong penalties is an important deterrent to ensure that everyone respects the rules that are in place to ensure that abalone and rock lobster can be managed sustainably. In our view the current penalties should be strengthened for instances where people are knowingly flouting the rules with wilful and deliberate disregard for fisheries rules should be subject to significant fines that can be issued easily.

Recreational Abalone

We believe the current limit of 10 abalone for recreational licence holders is too generous and should be reduced to 5 in order to facilitate sustainable management of the fishery. Five abalone per person is plenty for recreational use.

We thank you once again for the opportunity to participate in the review process.

Kind Regards,



Robert Pennicott
Managing Director