



25 January 2019

## **Sustainable, sophisticated and shared western rock lobster resource for WA**

Western Rock Lobster has today provided a submission to the State Government offering to work in partnership to increase the social and fiscal value return from industry to the people of Western Australia.

Chairman Kim Colero said in the submission, provided to Fisheries Minister Dave Kelly, WRL confirmed its rejection of the State Government's ownership of units in the fishery.

"We have made it clear to the Minister that while we oppose the Government taking an ownership stake in the industry, we are genuine in our intent to see an increased social and fiscal return for the people of Western Australia from our State's iconic fishery," he said.

"From the outset of our discussions with the Minister, our industry has repeatedly said that we want to work with the State Government to make more lobster available to the local market and to promote tourism and create more jobs in coastal communities.

"We have previously provided Government with our research, policy work and economic projections to map a sustainable course for the industry's potential growth in the next decade.

"We undertook this work in good faith and in the spirit of partnership. We can only hope the Government is now prepared to honour its commitment to work with us to deliver a better outcome for all Western Australians."

Mr Colero said the WRL submission outlined the WRL's clear policy imperative to ensure the Government undertook a considered and deliberate policy process in relation to any proposed changes to the existing industry.

The submission states the Western Rock Lobster Council Inc., the peak industry body for the Western Rock Lobster industry, remains totally opposed to the vesting of quota and units with the Western Australian Government and recommends, in the interests of industry stability and good government practice, that:

1. The Western Australian Government abandon its plan to nationalise a portion of the Western Rock Lobster industry with immediate effect; and
2. The Western Rock Lobster industry, through submissions to the Western Rock Lobster Council, commits to work in partnership with the Western Australian Government to increase the fiscal and social value the Western Rock Lobster industry delivers to the State; and
3. The Western Australian Government must ensure any increased fiscal and social contribution from the Western Rock Lobster industry does not compromise the industry's future and the growing contribution it makes to the State.
4. The Western Australian Government and Western Rock Lobster Council enter into an agreement that provides the Western Rock Lobster industry with adequate time to develop, assess and, through consultation, validate new policy options. The agreed amount of time afforded to industry for the assessment and consultation process should be commensurate with the degree of change and level of impact.

Mr Colero said the submission outlined in detail the significant failings in the Government's approach to negotiating substantial policy change with the industry and called on the Government to undertake the necessary research and analysis to determine a model to deliver an appropriate increased social and fiscal return from the fishery.

It also confirms industry's desire to continue to make more lobster available to the local market, to support tourism and hospitality initiatives and meaningful Indigenous participation in the industry.

"Generations of hard-working WA families have invested in building a successful export industry and ensuring the Western Rock Lobster is a premium product in the international market," he said.

"We have also ensured that all Western Australians are able to share in the success of the world recognised MSC assessed sustainable fishery by gaining recreational licences which see them enjoy access to a ready supply of lobster to share with family and friends.

"This is a sustainable, sophisticated and shared Western Australian fishery that deserves to be treated seriously by Government.

"We will continue to seek further input from our industry to ensure all our fishers and licence holders have the opportunity to have their say.

"We also look forward to the submissions from other fishery and primary industry stakeholders."

The submission also confirms WRL's clear and unequivocal rejection of the Western Australian Government's Term Sheet on the 21st of December 2018.

"The Government must be clear about its commitment to secure the future success of our industry," Mr Colero said.

"At no stage did the Council ever agree to or endorse the Government's proposed intervention as a unit holder in the fishery.

"Its proposed policy has created enormous uncertainty for industry and capital markets and asset values have already declined dramatically.

"Our members want to secure a long-term solution which is based on proper consultation, research and analysis and which provides security and sustainability in the industry for generations to come."

[View WRL's Submission here.](#)

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