

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON RECREATIONAL MARINE FISHING IN TASMANIA MET AT THE DEVONPORT ENTERTAINMENT AND CONVENTION CENTRE ON TUESDAY 15 JULY 2008.**

**Mr LEN TEMPLE** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Harriss) - Len, thank you very much firstly for making your written submission to us. We do apologise that it has taken us a few months to get around to these hearings after the committee was established but there has been a fair bit happening around Parliament House and we do have a number of other committees that we are on.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Don't worry about that because it has taken five years to get this far - changes of government; too many bureaucrats.

**CHAIR** - Can we get you to speak to your submission? Colin has indicated to me that there are some parts of your contribution today which you would like us to consider in camera.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - At that time, please indicate to us that it is your desire to move into closed session. I get nods from all around the table that we will be happy to accommodate that.

**Mr TEMPLE** - You have this earlier one. Do you understand all that?

**CHAIR** - Members have had that since you have submitted it and have had the opportunity to go through it like every other submission that has been made to us.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Basically that is my argument.

**CHAIR** - It is important for the public record, given that we are recording all of this, that we have your verbal record. This submission will be part of our total record. The submissions are not attached to our report but they are referred to in the report as a written submission. So if we want to refer to it later or anybody else wants to refer to it, this constitutes part of the public record. The reason for all things being recorded, apart from the public record, is to give us some further assistance in fleshing out some of the issues here.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Starting at the beginning and talking about the rock lobster industry, most of the problems created have been from bad management in the past. Proof of that is the fact that quotas had to be brought in to stop a total disaster, the same as happened with the scallop industry. The scallop industry still has not got over it. So that is the first thing. Plus there is the fact that with the latest way the scallop industry is handled, you have the fish that are probably worth \$40 a kilo, having been caught and delivered to within a few feet of the truck. The way that it is handled is one of the things that caused the decline in the industry in the first place, I think. Just bad management, the way that it is handled. They slop around in the wells of the boats. Legs are broken off and so you finish up with the perfect lobster that might have taken 15 to 20 years to grow being

chucked into a bin - broken legs - and then it is worth virtually nothing. Cooking is about all it is good for.

Basically that is where all the problems come from. The main thing we have to talk about I suppose is how to overcome the problem.

**CHAIR** - Particularly, as you are aware, our focus is on recreational fishing. The things that you have mentioned go to the commercial side of what has happened and the mismanagement there but clearly we have a big recreational lobster and scallop-fishing activity in the State. Some, if not many, would contend that it is really important for a recreational fisherman to have plenty of access to both scale fish and shellfish. You are aware of our terms of reference, aren't you?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. What I am talking about will increase the benefit to the recreational fishermen. The other thing that a lot of people do not seem to understand, and mainly those people who have been involved in the fisheries department, is that lobsters breed by age, not by size. That is one of the reasons that along the north-west coast now it is basically a desert as far as lobsters are concerned because being at the top end of the State, a lot of them reach legal size before they have started to breed. That's another one of the problems; they are being slaughtered before they can breed. Once you can bring them up from down - what I am talking about here is farming these fish -

**CHAIR** - Yes, the relocation program.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. Once they get up here, they virtually start breeding straightaway, and that's a benefit to the recreational fisherman. Particularly along the north-west coast, any female that is under about 2.5 kilos they should put back in the sea, at least for the next 10 years, to build up, because there is a desert on the north-west coast, except when you get up to the top end and around the islands. But that's the other thing; the further north you go with shifting the fish, the quicker they grow.

**CHAIR** - Yes. I think most members are aware that the conditions here in the north are it is conducive to faster growth, and that's why the relocation programs were undertaken by the department some years ago as a trial.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes, but the trouble with that is that they are still doing the same thing there that they knew for certain 60 years ago. The thing that annoys me about it is all this money that is being spent on research, doing the same research over and over again, and you will find when you go through 40 or 50 years of research that Joe Blow spent a few million dollars over probably five or 10 years. He finished up, then the next bloke comes along with another lot of research money; he does a little bit and then writes up half of what the other bloke did. You find that all the way through it. When I first started with this, it was 2001.

The other thing with building the numbers up is that the commercial fishermen are going for the lowest cost, best return, and the best return is in the good red lobsters that are in close to shore. There's another issue going on in research and that is to find out whether lobsters stay where they were shifted to. But we knew about 60 years ago that they do. A research lobster that was taken down south and tagged in 1964 was found again in about 1994 still in the same place and it had hardly grown.

When you bring them up here, you've got up to 35 per cent growth - you have at least 20 per cent to 35 per cent. If I can get off the track for a minute - they are talking about bringing lobsters up here from Maatsuyker Island, where they fish them all the time. What they're doing is shifting them from where the commercial fishermen are going to fish again even next year, so what's the point in taking them from where they're already fishing when they could take them from about 150 to 200 kilometres south, knowing the fish are there? If they do, it's only from November to April because of the weather conditions.

There are two places down there that I'm aware of. There are about five million in one place and seven million in another. They do nothing, they just sit there. If I could point this out, if you got a lobster down there which is that much short of the legal size, you're going to be waiting 15 to 20 years minimum. Bring it up here and it takes only three years at the outside. The other thing is that down there only a small percentage is of legal size - only about 8 per cent. The important part is that if you take them too big it's going to be too costly to shift and where are you going to shift? If you take a 5-tonne load at the rates that we found were the most economical, you get 10 715 fish per 5 tonnes. Obviously if you take bigger ones you're going to have less so we have less at the other end. Once those fish were put up here, that's where the recreational fishermen will gain because they will virtually start breeding straightaway.

**CHAIR** - Just on that, though, it wouldn't only be the recreational fishermen who would benefit by such a process. Wouldn't there be the very real potential for commercial fishermen just to clean it out?

**Mr TEMPLE** - No, they can't. The point is, though, this is the best way to get the industry back the way it was when I was a teenager. Even down the Channel - that is where I was bred and born - you could catch crayfish on a fishing line. The way it is now, because of bad management they had to introduce quotas to stop a total disaster and this is the way to overcome it. A fisherman has a quota, say, of 3 tonnes. If they were farmed in the way I am talking about, 135 000 juveniles from down there at that slow growing rate, would produce 100 tonnes of top-quality fish. We know that for every 1 000 fish taken from down there - and sometimes the pots are three-parts full - probably about 8 per cent, no more, is marketable fish. Virtually no-one goes down there.

One of the blokes who was doing some research with the boat, because he is a commercial fisherman, had the copyright and I said to him, 'This is what should happen'. I am talking about a few years ago now. He said, 'I'd like to show that to a financier'. The rock lobster industry now is only an industry for financiers because the fishermen can't afford to buy in. I said, 'What's happened?' and he said, 'I got daggers and knives thrown at me'. He said, 'We were told we'd have our ropes cut' - that is, ropes cut from the pots or their boats. That is the way it is. This was developed originally for the commercial industry to get it back on its feet but the same thing can happen for the recreational fishermen.

Let us say today or tomorrow we go down there and start it straightaway. The rock lobster fisherman is not interfering with the quota system. He has his quota, which, for argument's sake, is 3 tonnes. He might have a quota of 2 tonnes for farm fish, so he's got 5 tonnes. He can't do anything else; he can't take any more and if it is undersize it has to

go back in the sea. They start breeding and it builds up and that's the way it needs to happen.

**CHAIR** - The fish you're talking about down south -

**Mr TEMPLE** - We refer to it as the 'winter run' so that we know what we're talking about.

**CHAIR** - A couple of hundred miles off shore?

**Mr TEMPLE** - About 150 to 200 kilometres due south.

**CHAIR** - Still red fish?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Oh, no, there are all sorts down there.

**Ms THORP** - They become red when they go north.

**Mr TEMPLE** - This is the other stupid part about it; the shallower the water the quicker it will be for them to turn red. If you pick a white one from anywhere and you brought him in close it will take about eight weeks.

**CHAIR** - The quota system which was introduced about 1998-99 or thereabouts, if I am correct, put a heavier focus on the in-shore fishing because there is no incentive now to go out wide and catch the whites. First of all the money is not there; you can't take them because you shoot your quota -

**Mr TEMPLE** - That's right.

**CHAIR** - So we have a heap of whites out there -

**Mr TEMPLE** - You haven't got all that many out there but when you get them they are the big ones, but the Chinese want the red colour. But in any event why have we been so stupid? Why is the industry left in the way it is so that we have to go all that way to get the fish? It just exasperates me.

If you were going to farm and do what I am talking about then the best place to start would be above the forty-second parallel, which is about Swansea. If you take Tasmania's coastline I think there is about 2 000 kilometres. Take about 500 kilometres from Swansea up around the islands and back to say Conical Rocks or somewhere. If you only allow for about 10 kilometres out and you said we will stop at 200 lobsters a square kilometre, that would be probably about a thousand tonnes. That is how stupid and ridiculous it is.

You get commercial fishermen brainwashed by their financiers saying you should not disturb them. Every time they go and catch a lobster they disturb them. They don't keep the lot; they go back into the sea. All those are erroneous arguments; that is all you hear. The main thing is that the financiers are trying to stop anything happening.

The last money that has been used has been there now for two years - about \$2 million or \$3 million. Do lobsters stay where they are released? Yes, they do. Do they change

colour? Yes, they do. A lot of people out there know this and there are a lot of people who are not happy.

So where do you go from here? The other thing about all those fishers down there is that it is like a beef farmer having a heap of store stock but he won't bring them to good pasture to fatten them. That is how stupid it is.

**CHAIR** - So that we can focus, you are on about the sustainability of the stock. You have also gone to some extent to address the current licensing arrangement. We might not have the right licensing for recreational fishermen -

**Mr TEMPLE** - Because the way the industry is now, don't touch the quota system. Let us say that the Government agreed to this. The earliest you could start would be 1 November and say that the first lot has come up here. Because of the economics and the numbers quoted as varying gram weights of the different ones, it would take three years. It drives you mad, but with everything you do with bureaucrats there is a problem. I put the argument to Mr Kons when he was there - and I must give him credit and had he been here it would have been going like that. So what happens? Even if we started on 1 November, it is going to take three years to get your first fish and it really should be four years to get the highest weight, say 450 gms, to what market wants, probably around 1.4 kilos.

**CHAIR** - That is the commercial market?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. It also causes a problem for the recreational side of it. The Government is now making money available for the recreational fishermen, but it is a three-year program. They have known about this for five to eight years, so three years would not give you enough time. What you would have to do is sacrifice a year's growth to meet the three years, which reduces the tonnage back, but it could be done.

**CHAIR** - What about the licences?

**Mr TEMPLE** - There is nothing wrong with the licences.

**CHAIR** - For recreational?

**Mr TEMPLE** - No. Some of the scientists at the university about four years ago were doing something for the Government to advise them on the licences for recreational fishermen et cetera. If you check with the Fisheries Department five or six years ago, they estimated there were 8 000 recreational rock lobster fishermen and that they were taking about 150 tonnes. Then the kerfuffle started about the quotas. When I asked the specific question of the Fisheries department about how many recreational rock lobster fishermen there were they told me it was either 22 000 or 24 000.

**Ms THORP** - It did a bit of a leap.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. I put that argument to one of the scientists who is doing the research and he said, 'It's still the same; a lot of them don't go fishing'. That is the biggest rot out. These are some of the hearsay things that you hear, and I suppose I should not say this, but even the other day when asked how he deals with that problem, a licensed

recreational fisherman said, 'Yes, something has to be done. Divers go down in a wetsuit and just tear the tail off', because once they catch them they are not going to chuck them back. The only way to get over it is if there are more there.

**CHAIR** - You mentioned the scientists you have spoken with. There is no problem in advising us of the sort of people we probably should be speaking to. Are you talking about people like Stuart Thrusher or Jeremy Lyle, people who have been involved in research for years?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes, but mainly he is at Taroona.

**CHAIR** - Yes, at the research centre.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Both nice blokes.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Where do you think the research should be?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Bear in mind I have spent all my life farming and building. It does not matter about the research providing the research is doing something, instead of going over what we have gone over so many times before.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - So in your opinion they're just reinventing the wheel the whole time.

**Mr TEMPLE** - No, they're not even reinventing the wheel.

**Ms THORP** - What are you saying is that things that are known, and once you know them you don't have to keep going over them time and time again?

**Mr TEMPLE** - That's right. I think the big problem is there are too many bureaucrats. It's obvious that they have been running the Fisheries department for the last, say, 50-odd years. The stupidity of their scallop season cost me hugely - I had one of the biggest scallop licences, but because of their stupidity I finished up doing that for nothing.

Going back about 50 years, you would go down the Channel and Oyster Cove, Kettering, Trial Bay, Woodbridge, Gordon and Middleton all had little piers, little jetties, and their boats. There would probably have been 60 or 70 families, like the dairy industry used to be. Most of their boats did not have a wheelhouse, just a tiller. They would catch their load each day, and those small scallop boats only had two dredges at the most out the back. What happened? They let the roachers go in with their coal-fired steamers. The roach steamer had an outrigger out each side.

Bear in mind the scallops were taken back to port every night. The shells went onto the orchards or onto a dump somewhere, never back in the sea. The scallops used to be as thick as the cups on the table over there. You could look over the side and then all of a sudden you'd see them, and away they'd go. They wouldn't go far.

Once you had the steamers with outrigger out each side, and dredges out the back, that was it. They just scooped the scallops on deck and chucked the shells over the side. It took probably no more than about four years to bugger the fishery altogether, and it has

never come right. So they had this brainwave idea for the scallop industry; they'd have a nursery up in Banks Strait. The Tasmanian scallop fishers didn't touch them but the blokes from Victoria did. They came in and got right into them.

**Ms THORP** - If I understand you correctly, your proposition is about building up the rock lobster industry, both commercials and recreationals, because anything that works well to raise the stocks is going to help both groups.

**Mr TEMPLE** - That's right.

**Ms THORP** - What you are suggesting is that there be a specific program of bringing juveniles from the south in the winter run, and seeding them up around the north coast and down the east coast.

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. It's not quite that simple, but that's basically it.

**Ms THORP** - And some basic changes made to when females can be picked out along the north coast. There need to be some variations on sizes and weights -

**Mr TEMPLE** - Keep this in your mind - basically lobsters start breeding from size not age. You could have a little crayfish that is 10 years old and it would be breeding, but you could have one only three years old on the other side and it wouldn't be breeding. The further north you go the faster the growth. I think if you kept in mind - this causes another problem when you think about it - that a lobster grows 5mm to 10 mm a year on average, the same one on King Island would probably grow 20 mm. When you get to Victoria, that is probably why they have none there now.

**Ms THORP** - I understand that. Even if the program you're suggesting doesn't happen, from reading your work it sounds as though you think there are changes that could occur to the way juveniles are currently handled. What would they be?

**Mr TEMPLE** - They can't touch the juveniles until they are legal size.

**Ms THORP** - But they get picked up, don't they?

**Mr TEMPLE** - That is a policing job, I suppose.

**Ms THORP** - What about the treatment of them, say if they get damaged?

**Mr TEMPLE** - That is a whole new ball game. They are saying the requirements are there. Instead of being dumped in the well, coming from down there they would be graded. The various grades would be in containers and then they would be stacked in the well. They have to have water going on them all the time. It would cut the cost down when you came to release them. You would know they had been on such and such and that is the way they'd be stacked in the well.

**Ms THORP** - And they would all be tagged?

**Mr TEMPLE** - For the recreation side of it, every one of them would want to be tagged for another reason. You could not have too many because the Government doesn't give you

enough money. If you get it going you would have them tagged and later on you would give a deal for anyone who caught a fish that had a tag, but you wouldn't know what the tag was. It would be no good putting some other tag on. The way I would see it for the recreational fisherman is you'd have a couple of safari days a year and you'd give a prize - a good deal - to anyone who brought that fish up, provided that it was intact, that it had the tag on it and was caught on the day you were talking about so you would know where it came from. If you researched them, you'd know exactly what happened, when and where. You would know the fish because you would be the only one who would have the tag number. You'd know what the weight of the lobster was when you went there and it was tagged; you'd know where it was because you would have a grid, showing where you had put it. Even if it was only the second year and it came up, that would give you a picture.

**Ms THORP** - So you could tell how much it had grown and how much it had moved?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. The commercial fishermen can still only catch their quota and so they leave the other ones there for the recreational fishermen. This is pretty simple really.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - Len, in your submission you talked about the poorly designed equipment. Do you believe that some of the research dollars might be better spent in looking at how they can improve the quality of the equipment? You talked about the fact that a lot of the produce is lost because it is damaged through the handling process. Can you give me a quick comment about that?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Basically, quite a few processors now will not take them out of the wells because a lot of boats have tanks.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - So there have been improvements in the technology?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. It will get to the stage, I suppose, that processors just will not take them from the wells. But that is another thing. If it is done right and if this commercial farming operation had let us do it, we could soon fix the boats because there would enough money there to fix the boats because where the money is going now is to financiers and probably buying land in Sri Lanka or somewhere.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - Would that be a proposal that you would support, putting some of those research dollars into improving the techniques in getting -

**Mr TEMPLE** - I do not know whether they need research. They only need to tell them.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - That they need to improve their practices?

**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes, you have to smarten up. I bought lobsters at Strahan for a couple of years. The boat had been out for probably four or five days. The perfect lobsters came in and there they were, all in the well and all up one end of the boat. The pub is only two chains away.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - Pretty close?



**Mr TEMPLE** - Yes. So what do they do? There was a net. Just think of it like this. A bloke is harvesting his spuds and he has to get a good price for his spuds. He thinks it would be quicker if he drives in with a front-end loader. It is just pathetic.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - I understand.

**CHAIR** - I think we had better go into our private session.

**Mr PETER SCHULZE** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Harriss) - Thanks for your written submission, Peter. Members obviously have had your submission for all that time, and we apologise that it has taken us a while to get around this, but there are plenty of other things happening around the place these days.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Understaffed and overworked.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - So nothing's changed then.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - Peter, please speak to your submission. Clearly, we will have some questions flowing from that. If you want to expand on what is in your written submission, you are at liberty to do so. Thanks for addressing the terms of reference as you have in your submission. That will be helpful as we consider further where we are going with the whole process.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to speak to it and add a few things as well. Your term of reference 1 is the suitability of TARFish to represent recreational fishers as well. Of course I have pointed out in my submission that they're not properly structured at all; the cold, clammy hand of government or someone has been all over it in terms of its formation and the association rules. The five inaugural members are not really central to the recreational fisher, with the first five put on by, I think, the minister - the Australian Fishing Association, the Australian National Sports Fishing Association, the underwater association, the Tasmanian Game Fishing Association and the Sea Charter Boat Operators of Tasmania.

Then when you look at how you get to become a member, it's pretty easy for commercial interests - straight in - but for a recreational fisher to become a member, there are types of membership criteria and everything else to get in. Then on top of that, which I didn't mention in my submission, is the situation where any new person wanting to come in has to have their nomination signed by two existing members. It is highly undemocratic, even though the objects and rules of the association should be to operate at all times as a fully independent body representing the interests of recreational fishers. So it doesn't stack up as far as that is concerned. Those rules need to be totally redrafted. The recreational fishers feel disenfranchised with it, and I think I gave an example in my submission wherein on one particular issue the representatives of TARFish did see members of the Legislative Council - I think it was on the rock lobster issue where quotas were being introduced, not just for professionals, with which you are very familiar, but for amateurs as well. That wasn't the wish of the amateurs, in my view, all the ones I knew, but nevertheless it was supported by TARFish to the Legislative Council. I think that was a misrepresentation, and I think that flows through the improper structure of the whole organisation.

**CHAIR** - Peter, significantly in your submission you indicate that the establishment of TARFish was not democratic and doesn't fit that criterion today, either, in terms of -

**Mr SCHULZE** - No. I also mentioned that the minister has his own staff of advisers; he has the department as advisers on one of his committees, the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Recreational Fishing, so that's another source of advice he gets, which is pretty well massaged by the bureaucracy and the Government themselves. That is their right, I suppose, to do that to us, but it's an interesting area to go into.

**Mr WILKINSON** - It depends whether you want to be massaged, though.

*Laughter.*

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. This other body, TARFish, should be totally separate and independent and running themselves in a democratic manner, if at all possible.

**Ms THORP** - Are you familiar with the current membership of TARFish?

**Mr SCHULZE** - The inaugural members, not totally, no. It's just the structure of how it's done and the difficulty of others to get in. There are a lot of recreational fishers out there who do feel disenfranchised. There is another association of amateur fishermen. I am not familiar with them.

**Ms THORP** - TASFA.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. The only information I had the other day - I haven't had any dialogue with them in recent times - is that they're not wanting to take over, they're just wanting to get TARFish put right. It is not as though there is a competition on as to who represents them.

**Ms THORP** - What is your understanding of the changes that occurred when the regional committees were closed down?

**Mr SCHULZE** - My general feeling was that it wasn't representing the fishermen anyway and what they were doing, closing down or opening up, wasn't particularly relevant because it just didn't seem to be working on the west coast where there was a branch. It wasn't representing fishermen. Recreational fishermen are very difficult to represent, too; they are a fractious lot and all over the place. One of the problems that I have addressed a bit in the submission today is that so many recreational fishers aren't licensed or listed so it is hard to know who they are, what they are or to have any control or formal communication with them.

**CHAIR** - Or whether they want a voice?

**Mr SCHULZE** - They certainly do if there is a problem. If you try to stop them netting in Macquarie Harbour or something, you hear a voice then.

**Ms THORP** - Or you get 600 turn up at Taranna.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Peter, were you in any way familiar with the west coast representation process on TARFish? That has been disbanded now, the elected local chairman of a subcommittee -

**Mr SCHULZE** - I think it was Mr Grining, wasn't it?

**CHAIR** - Yes, Bill Grining.

**Mr SCHULZE** - I went to some of the meetings that were held there but it didn't seem to work. I don't know why exactly but that group didn't seem to embrace the local recreational fishermen very well. I think there were a few internal differences, that you're always going to get anyway, I think, that caused the fracture.

That is all I wanted to say on the suitability of TARFish. You need that body, it needs to be independent and hopefully it needs to be elected. I will jump to something I said further on in the submission that ties in here. Most of the recreational fishermen aren't licensed to catch cod and so on. It is just line fishing, which is pretty big and you don't require a licence for it. That creates a problem in itself. I personally believe that the possession limits are extremely generous and high for people who don't even have to have a licence - if you look at them listed on the back of the recreational sea-fishing guide you will see that every day you can take 30 flathead. If there are four in a boat, that is 120 flathead and they can take them home and go back and get as many again or do it every day. I think it is extremely generous for no licence. I believe that people who want those possession limits should have to have a licence, be it only \$10 or \$15 or a moderate amount, and that people without a licence should still be allowed to catch these scale fish but in significantly lower quantity. So you have a different possession limit, maybe half or less than those figures there. There is a strong feeling that little kids should be able to have the freedom to go fishing and catch a fish without having to come under a licensing bureaucratic arrangement. I would still preserve that, otherwise you have the nonsense - an unlicensed person can take 10 tuna per person per day on a boat. It is extremely generous on a resource that is diminishing. I just bring that in because it links up with TARFish. If a large number were licensed, particularly the more serious ones who want to take significant catches, then there would be a better mechanism to marshal those people and have them a member of an organisation and make that organisation more democratic at the same time.

**CHAIR** - Given that we don't require licences for scale fishing, reel and line, I have often wondered how a person can know that there is a size limit or a bag limit?

**Mr SCHULZE** - That's how we are now, isn't it?

**CHAIR** - Yes, I know. That is the dilemma I have.

**Mr SCHULZE** - There is a lot of money spent, even out of the Fishwise fund, trying to educate people in that way by departments and people who are interested in the conservation of the species. The book put out is widely distributed and well known.

**Ms THORP** - Also they have the rulers.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, so there is plenty of stuff put around. So there is a bit effort to try to educate them. I guess there is still some ignorance, but I do not think there is that much ignorance. When we look at the compliance side of it, compliance is not that big an

issue. Maybe because we are probably so generous and not catching that number anyway.

**Mr WILKINSON** - I agree with you; I think the majority of people are fairly aware of their catch sizes and limits. These weekend fishers do not come back with, I believe, more than that limit. But you are right, 30 to me is an excessive amount if you have four in a boat. So to get around that, if you do not want to be licensed, you halve that -

**Mr SCHULZE** - Or less. There is still plenty and it still provides that freedom.

**Mr WILKINSON** - In the summer, if they go around the east coast or wherever to do some fishing, they normally have their holidays for seven to 14 days and they give the fish a hiding for that 14 days. They could catch 30 fish over the 14 days and then they do not do much for the rest of the year. How do you think that affects the stock?

**Mr SCHULZE** - I do not think that is too big a worry. I suppose the fewer days on the water the better. There have always been arguments, particularly on the west coast with rock lobster, that in many cases you have to walk for a day before you get to a decent spot. You might only do that once a year and half the time the weather is bad when you get there or they are not running. So for your big day of the year, things are going well one year in three.

I am personally supportive of having the tags issues for recreational, amateur rock lobster people. Like the professional, you buy your licence for a dozen tags or whatever it is and you can go down there and use them all in one day if you want to. There is better control and it balances out things better for the needy and brings the greedy back under control, because at the moment there are big differentials. There are a few taking a very large amount, even within the quota system largely, and a few not.

With the rock lobster, since quotas came in last year for amateurs where they are only allowed to take 10 per cent of the total allowable catch, that puts quota into the lump sum for recreational rock lobster fishermen. Each year there seem to be more people taking out licences. So one might forecast that we will get to a point where amateurs are taking more than that 10 per cent. The department will then automatically alter the rules to bring back the change and say that the catch is reduced in some way, so there is only three or four per day instead of five or something like that. They might do a shortening of the season and there are all sorts of other input controls they could use. That then creates a further problem in that, internally, even at the moment it is not a big deal while there are not big limits being imposed or changes being made, but divers are getting to overrepresented in most arenas - the fellow who can dive and get his fish that way. Divers are only a small percentage of the total number of recreationals, 10-15 per cent, but take about 32 per cent of the fish - and the bigger fish. So, for their buck they are getting a lot better deal. If there are overall constraints coming in then there is going to be, I would suggest, some conflict between those two sectors of the recreational fishermen.

**Ms THORP** - So it might be better off making some kind of differentiation between the two groups now?

**Mr SCHULZE** - That is right. They have bigger yields. They catch a lot more. They get the bigger fish but they just pay the same as anyone else, so maybe those differentials would need to come about. They represent themselves very well in most arenas. They would scream bloody murder if you threatened to limit them in any way.

**CHAIR** - In your submission you made a valid point that TFIC represents professional fishermen and yet predominantly TARFish membership, again, represents professional interests.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes; professional interest is represented but they should be very peripheral, if there at all. They have conflicts of interest - charter boat operators or selling tackle - and in the very rules their pathway in is easier than that of the genuine fisherman.

**Ms THORP** - There is one thing I wanted to ask you about in the rules of TARFish membership. Under 6(1)(a), any incorporated State association can join, any incorporated recreational fishing club or organisation with the membership limits, but then under (c) it says 'a State organisation'. Do you take that to read only one?

**Mr SCHULZE** - I did not read it that way, no, but I did not think about it either.

**Ms THORP** - You would think it would read under 6(1)(a) 'any incorporated State association', under 6(1)(b) 'any incorporated recreational fishing club', and under 6(1)(c) any State organisation representing whatever.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Have to go to Parliamentary Counsel, I suppose.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - Have a look at the second reading speech.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, that is right. What did they mean?

**CHAIR** - So that probably is TARFish, Peter.

**Mr SCHULZE** - You will fix them up, I am sure.

**Mr WILKINSON** - How would you fix them up? You would have to look at the section around membership. What you are saying is that because TFIC are there to represent the professional side of fishing, then TARFish should be representing the recreational fisher.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Therefore would any commercial fisher be allowed on TARFish? What would be your best framework for that?

**Mr SCHULZE** - You would want to make it more difficult for commercial people than recreational people to join, whereas at the moment it is the other way around.

**Mr WILKINSON** - I see.

**Mr SCHULZE** - It is easy for commercials to join and it is hard for the recreational fisherman because he has to be a member of a club, there have to be three affiliated clubs and there have to be at least 40 members and all the rest of it.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Because they would argue, wouldn't they, that just because you are a commercial fisher you might be a recreational fisher as well.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Well they might so it would not exclude them. TFIC is so democratic and self-elected. They are all licensed, they are all members and they can participate. As I said earlier, the problem is that most recreational fishers are not licensed so you cannot get any umbrella of control. Nevertheless, while it is like that you still have to vest the powers in those who do take our licences, which is not balanced in terms of recreational sectors because it is rock lobster, abalone, scallop and so on. Nevertheless, they are the ones who are providing the money, which is a point I will make in a moment, so I guess they are the ones who should be having the say predominantly so that each of those fishing groups should be clearly and wholly represented on that body.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So therefore entry into TARFish for the recreational fisher should be as easy as it is for the commercial fisher?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Easier, because they are the people who should be controlling it and running it. At the moment you would have to limit it to those who already have licences, even though their money has been spent on a lot of other stuff.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So the way you would do that is to increase the licence holders. Your recreational fisher who catches the 30 flathead, for example, should be licensed?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes.

**Ms THORP** - Then they get a vote.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Then they get a vote, then you know who they are and they can be largely controlled and represented properly, otherwise it is an impossible task. If that is not done or that does not win the day or there are not many touting for it, you then have to vest the powers in those who take out licences at the moment. The people who take out rock lobster and amateur recreational licences, you would give them a vote for their two representatives who would be on TARFish. The divers, because they are 10 per cent, I guess they would win one member on there, but they would want three.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Would you have to define what a recreational fisher is?

**Mr SCHULZE** - He is the one with the licence.

**Mr WILKINSON** - And that is how you would define it, 'a fisher who has a licence', whatever the licence might be?

**Mr SCHULZE** - A recreational fishing licence of some form, yes.

**Mr WILKINSON** - By doing that you have a better idea, haven't you, as to exactly how many are out there fishing, full stop?

**Mr SCHULZE** - That is right, and it gives some other benefits, too. In the last report they had difficulty in determining the total catch that recreational fishers take. It would be pretty easy to get it - 600 tonne last year, I think, for fin fish for professional fishermen - but it is not so easy to determine for the others.

**Ms THORP** - Peter, membership of the association, point D talks about the member associations. From my reading, the Australian National Sport Fishing Association person is a professional abalone diver; the Australian Underwater Federation fellow runs a dive shop; the Australian Fishing Trade Association fellow runs the Fishing Connection. We can't find out what one of the other members does; he is a bit reticent about telling us. Of the three regional representatives, one is a charter boat operator and one is a professional underwater photographer.

**Mr SCHULZE** - That was my point. You're right on the money. It's cosy, isn't it?

**Ms THORP** - It seems to be, on the surface.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Mr Chairman, that is point 2 of your terms of reference, the suitability of licensing arrangements. In my submission today I have already covered that the present majority of line fishers don't pay fees, yet a large amount of the licence fees collected from other fishers - that is the rock lobster, abalone and scallop - is spent on the non-paying sector. Does that make this over-collection from the licensed sector and being spent on another sector a tax? You guys are pretty hot on that normally.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - Or a levy.

**Mr SCHULZE** - If you are taking money from one group and spending it on another - while it is an internal thing, it is very clear and distinct. That is the main point I make in terms of the suitability of licensing arrangements. The only other small comment is that money could be saved if the sea fishing licence collections were combined with the inland fisheries licences. That was a small mistake - to have two little empires and two little gods, as we do, is a bit of a nonsense. By bringing this up in other quarters I will get howled down because you mustn't interfere with an empire. The sea recreational fishing licence arrangement, which you would probably be aware of, you tick a box, pay a base fee and then tick a box if you want abalone, scallop, dredge, rock lobster or net and it adds up to a given thing. I would envisage that there would be a box there for catching trout in inland fisheries, too. The collection fees would be better and they would soon split the money up appropriately after it came in. That is just one little point but of course there would be a lot of other money savings if those two groups were to merge and work more closely together in terms of compliance, rules and educating people about the good points of fishing instead of each going their own way. I will not dwell on that, it is a pretty big one, but you guys might research that out a bit more and bring that on.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - In that instance, Peter, are you aware of any other jurisdictions that have separate little 'empires' - your words not mine - or is Tasmania unique in that regard?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Not only that we are unique - I think it is often separated in other areas - but we are also so much smaller and we can't really afford to have all these others. Here



recently we had a situation where we were corresponding with the Inland Fisheries people about seaward limits. There is great confusion; people just don't know where it is Inland Fisheries water and where it's not. They overlap and the rules are varied and that is a big deal in itself - you could spend all day on it. We communicated with them on that because we have to try to get together to resolve it.

They've been trying to get together for years to resolve it, and they have never got anywhere. One of the most recent letters we got back from them, they were a bit unhappy about our looking into these matters without referring the fact to them. So there was apparently a bit of feeling there that we shouldn't be doing certain things and resolving them.

At the moment, there's an issue with the Henty River, for instance, where the sea is. According to the coordinates, the river meets the ocean - according to the book - at the bridge five miles from the sea, which means you're allowed to net five miles of the river and fish it any time of the year without a licence. They have known that for years, and yet their inspector was bluffing people into thinking they were acting legally in booking them and fining them when they knew damned well those people weren't breaking the law.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So they're still booking and fining them?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, and he knew they weren't breaking the law, but they didn't.

**Ms THORP** - Is that still going on?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Not so much, no. I keep everybody informed of their rights now in that area.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Was he informed, do you know? Was the -

**Mr SCHULZE** - I spoke to him when he pulled me up whitebaiting the other day, yes.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So he was aware of it as well?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. He knew that they weren't breaking the law, but he got away with booking them anyway, which just goes to show, not so much that they make a big issue of that, but that the groups should be merged in some way - at least some of their activities, anyway. Collection of fees might be a start, compliance issues and so on.

**Ms THORP** - Whilst you're on compliance, can I just ask about policing? Do you think we have the ideal regime for policing fishing offences?

**Mr SCHULZE** - It's not too bad. Again, the fact that there are separate regimes for inland and sea water is a bit of a nonsense, but if you just look at what we're looking at now, the sea water fishing there, the officers do a pretty good job.

**Ms THORP** - Enough of them?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. I have to say yes because there are too many at times - when you look at the other things that are going on in the community, and the other crimes that are going on around town, and they are booking some poor bugger with an extra fish, it doesn't make sense. Of course the fishing people should be compliant, but what you get for that is not consistent with either the policing or the penalty, Mr Chairman, as you'd be aware.

**Mr WILKINSON** - It's surprising, isn't it, the numbers of police out there? I can only talk about the east coast, but if you go out fishing on the east coast it's amazing how many times you see two police officers on the jetty when you come back in.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, they're doing their job, and it's probably more comfortable if they're doing that than other things.

**Ms THORP** - I suspect it might be variable over different areas of the State.

**Mr SCHULZE** - They put in a good effort, and they do a reasonably good job and an adequate job for the situation, but I guess it's just when you look at other areas of policing that you worry about that - especially when you know they're not going to go much above 1 200 in total establishment.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Sure.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Now we get onto the Fishwise fund.

**Mr WILKINSON** - That was your point, wasn't it, in relation to paying the licence?

**Mr SCHULZE** - That's right, yes. The Fishwise fund is a significant fund. When you look at the budget on it, it's something like 40 per cent of the total fees collected are spent on giving out grants. That does worry me a little bit, I am a bit different than the normal guy, I suppose. One other extreme to go would be to not have this fund at all, and have the fishing licence fees 30 per cent or 40 per cent lower. There is quite a bit of constraint in the way this fund operates in that at recent meetings the Fishwise guidelines - and I don't know who wrote them, but you might look them up sometime - exclude us making grants to be used for ramps, jetties and hardware, and the like. Recently there was application for improvements over at the fishing platform at East Devonport - a fish cleaning table, and so on. But the bureaucrats read out to us, no we can't do that because our guidelines do not let us. I am not sure how regular or true the guidelines are.

**Ms THORP** - There was the argument that it should go through MAST.

**Mr SCHULZE** - MAST do a lot of that stuff but I do not think it should preclude us anyway because it is in the interests of the recreational fishers that these things be done. There are often outstanding things that MAST doesn't do. Then, of course, what it means then our grants are then set up. I do not know why they do it or why it was written that way. I guess the effect of it though is to make more funds available for the department's use on research projects. That is the effect of limiting our expenditure that way. We normally have the department applying for a large percentage of grants from this fund. I was a bit uncomfortable about that, that this is going back to the Government and being spent. But of course it is a legitimate argument that you would need good research and good

information to control a fishery and they are the ones who do the research. I have been on the subcommittee of Fishwise funds. I have been pretty close to a lot of determinations of it and I feel uncomfortable in that in many cases, the people asking for money are sitting in the room and the RecFAC have never really understood conflict of interest and pecuniary interest that I have had to tell them about a few times over the years.

**Ms THORP** - The grant applicants are in the room in another capacity, are they?

**Mr SCHULZE** - No, they put forward their argument.

**Ms THORP** - Their assessment?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, in some cases they have been both.

**Ms THORP** - They have been sitting on RecFAC?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, they are on RecFAC. For instance, we might even have the TARFish representative on RecFAC sitting with us putting forward the reasons why we should be giving them money for a certain project.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Does he or she vote on that as well?

**Mr SCHULZE** - I do not like having votes. We do not tend to have votes in RecFAC.

**Ms THORP** - You have consensus?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, for all this important stuff.

**Mr WILKINSON** - What I am after, with that conflict of interest aspect, I suppose one could argue that the individual association has the ability to put their own -

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes they do.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Then they should not vote on whether they get a grant or not?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, they are not clear-cut voting processes that we have. I am not just picking out TARFish; it is also the department itself. In RecFAC you have to understand that while there are regional representatives, like I am, there are also lot of other members on it and when we have our meetings there are also other odd bureaucrats around the table and they all tend to enter the debate and involve themselves in the decision-making process where we do not take a vote. So a lot of us are quite uncomfortable about this process. But we keep being reminded that, after all, we are the minister's advisory body and we are not there representing recreational fishermen. That is a different role. So we get a little jittery about some of that.

But going back to the other point, some of our members sometimes have been applicants themselves to do certain things for the benefit of the recreational fisher and they want money to bring out a brochure because their employment in life is bringing out brochures or printing newspapers and things. So, that has stopped now and, because there has been

a bit of concern about all this, the department has agreed that we will have a total review of the Fishwise fund and how it operates. So we will be doing our own review of that and I would trust we alter guidelines that do not limit on what we spend money. If they need money for research, maybe 30 per cent of the money available should go to research: let them have it and deal with it and not have us hanging around the room working out what projects should be done.

I am not comfortable with a lot of projects that have been done - for instance, heavy metal contamination in the Derwent Estuary that we have spent money on. There are other players who should have been funding that. Recreational fishers did not cause that. But we have established that there is a significant problem there that needs to be addressed further. So there has been another application for more money and we have not signed on that yet, but I will not be supporting that. I think Zinifex and others should be funding that and so on.

There has also been a lot research done on some species and the habits of bream. To me, bream - well, you cannot even eat the damn things. You catch them and put them back and they are not really a threatened species and I do not think it would matter if they were. To me it is not a high priority of research to be watching all their movements and all that -

**Mr WILKINSON** - They are good fun to catch.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, looks like we've got one.

**Mr WILKINSON** - No, no.

**Mr SCHULZE** - I caught one.

*Laughter.*

**Mr WILKINSON** - One of the interesting things though, Peter, is this: as you say, the money from Fishwise cannot go to research on jetties and ramps; then you have to look at whether it should. My view is yes, it probably should. Then, again, what about, say, dredging the Prosser River because you put the ramps in there and then you cannot get out because of the sand build-up and the bar. For a number of months you have been unable to get out and likewise in other places. So should it go to dredging as well, or is that the job of somebody else?

**Mr SCHULZE** - I am an engineer by profession so I like the harder options. I would like to see it being spent to build a ramp or a platform or dredging or something like that. I always get a bit funny when it is all going to promotion, booklets and signs and these sorts of other things but they have their place.

**Ms THORP** - Did Fishwise pay for those new interpretation signs that are around a lot of the jetties now?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, a lot of them would have been, a lot of them were by grants to different organisations who do that. TARFish is another group who apply for a lot of funds. They tend to put in so many applications each time that the sum of their

applications is more than the money that we have to give out and that gives us a bit of dilemma too. Again, I would rather say a certain percentage of our funds go to them - they have already been funded out of it anyway but they are asking for additional for specific purposes, so a certain amount should go anyway. Maybe they get 40 per cent, research gets 30 per cent and we spend the rest on other stuff out in the countryside rather than us all hanging around in meetings. I do not think we have the expertise or the knowledge and there are all the conflict areas that come into it as well, so when we review it I will be certainly pushing for something a bit different.

**CHAIR** - It seems to me, Peter, that they are two key issues that you have referred to in this submission and that you have also just mentioned. The expertise of RecFAC to make judgment about the various applications, the Fishwise money, and the fact that there ought to be a set allocation made so you do not have to haggle with TARFish or anybody else. Some areas do not need to come because they have their allocation and they can go and work with it.

**Mr SCHULZE** - We haggle once a year on what the percentage cut-up is between the sectors?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr SCHULZE** - So that sounds better - it's a good idea, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR** - It is your idea, I am just summarising it.

**Mr WILKINSON** - He must have read that book on how to make juries see it as it is in your mind so they think they have made the decision.

**Ms THORP** - That is how I operate with my husband!

**CHAIR** - A good idea.

**Mr SCHULZE** - We talk often about having socioeconomic impact studies and the recreational sector like to push this a bit because they feel the total amount spent is so high that it should be given every priority and we spend more money on catching a fish than professional fishermen do and so that should give us a better right to it. Now that is over simplistic and it is more of a complex matter than that. You cannot just add up the amount of money spent on boats and so on because people buy boats whether they go fishing or not and if they are doing it in an inefficient way it is a different thing again. It is a very sophisticated science to do that and it would be a big job. I do not quite know how but it is a sophisticated thing that would require an independent approach by some expert to do it. It is done in other places but the results can be skewed so much either way.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So you believe the information that we have is just a very rough guide as opposed to even a guide?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, and I think there are other factors. I think there is a right and a freedom and propriety about allowing your population to go fishing. That is there regardless of the economic impacts of it. It is a right and something that should never be

taken away. It is a democratic thing we have: we have the right to walk in the bush, go into the countryside and go fishing I think that is the overwhelming thing to me without having to stack up what our sector is worth. You don't want to reduce the commercial sector too much because most of your population relies on them for getting their fish, not by catching it themselves. So there are those other factors that have to be there. It is not a sphere of my expertise, so I didn't want to say too much about that. I reckon it can be left to you guys.

On the question of sustainability, biomass sustainability is one of the terms of reference, isn't it? The department do a good job, I might say, of doing their studies of fish numbers and you probably get some sort of fisheries assessment reports for Tasmanian scale fish. You'd see those sorts of reports, I guess. To me they do a pretty good job doing those and assessing the catch of all the different species, the catch and effort and reduction in species and what we should do and not do. They give us good advice.

We then tend to recommend to the minister. Usually most of our recommendations that go to the minister are adopted when they're along the lines of how people should fish - where, what, why and how many. I think we're a bit over-generous but others don't think that way at all; others push for more and some push for less.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Can I ask why that is? This figure of 120 fish in a boat - let's say the normal boat that goes out has between two to four people, hasn't it?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes.

**Mr WILKINSON** - If it's a fairly small boat, they have at least three lines over the side. So you are looking at 90 fish. A number of people wouldn't take 90 fish in a day.

**Mr SCHULZE** - You're right - 99 per cent aren't getting them, anyway. There are many, and they're not catching those numbers in many cases anyway, and they do it without a licence. Generally they do a reasonable job there, and so on, in terms of how fish are numbering, but on environmental sustainability, what I'd like to say is the sustainability impacted upon by other bigger elements than our catch rates. Offshore seining and fishing in the outer waters by other nations has an indirect but significant impact on the biomass in our waters, and we have no control of that.

The amount of krill now being taken commercially and with the increasing number of whales, which is becoming a problem, is also affecting the fisheries significantly. The number of minke whales is now such that there is a problem. On this committee you look at what is sustainable - in other words, so the species isn't threatened and you take a harvestable amount. Sustainability is the name of the game, whether it's rock lobster or whatever, and so it should be. With the minke whale now - and there are probably something approaching a million of them in the southern waters - a sustainable catch would be thousands.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So you're supporting the Japanese argument?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Well, sustainability has gone out of the window. They are now like a cuddly koala bear, they are an icon species and the argument has changed. People were saying - and they were right to say - the species shouldn't be threatened, you should stop

whaling when that was the case, and that was right. Now that they are coming back in gross numbers, if you are consistent with why you stopped, you'd start again because there's a sustainable catch there for mankind. There are other food problems arising in the world so people would be mad not to take advantage of that, particularly when it's having another adverse impact on other sectors of your fisheries. So provided that it's done in a humane, proper and sustainable way, there is a case for it. Minke whales are another mammal. We kill a lot of mammals, but it's a cultural thing - what you do and don't do - rather than anything else.

The other matter closer to home, the quantity of fish taken in our own water by seals is now very significant. The total fur seal population is now estimated at around 100 000 - this is just the fur seals. With up to 10 per cent of that number in our waters, with each seal consuming three kilograms a day and I might say it's more than that - and they certainly do when they're breeding - then the fish consumed by them in Tasmanian waters is 10 000 tonnes a year. The commercial catch in our State waters is less than 1 000 tonnes a year. If we were to cull 10 per cent of our seals, we would double the amount of fish available to be caught sustainably by our commercial and recreational sectors.

There is an attitude by the do-gooders, or whatever you call them, of 'Oh no, you mustn't do that sort of thing'. Again, it is a bit like the whale thing in principle. If you're talking about biomass sustainability and what is affecting it, and if you're going to do something sensible about it, then you wouldn't be worrying too much about limiting catches and little bits here and there by recreational or commercial sectors. You would be dealing with that as an issue under your control - whales perhaps are not. Looking at the figures and facts from many Internet sites, in southern and eastern Australian seas, there are around 130 000 and they get 300 000 tonnes of fish a year, compared to the total human catch of 200 000 tonnes. This is not just Tasmanian waters; this is in the bigger picture but the seals are still eating more than is available for mankind.

**Mr WILKINSON** - So without proper biomass studies, if one species continues to grow that is going to affect the food chain from top to bottom?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Absolutely; we are part of it all. I just picked out seals because they are a big problem in our waters. Professional fishermen are worried by them. They used to try to control them but now they are considered criminals if they do. That is a very significant factor.

There are mixed feelings within the department and within the research people about that. There is a strong element there that says you shouldn't be touching them. When it comes to Parks and Wildlife and these other groups, there is a reticence to want to get comprehensive detailed figures as in our presentation. I have done some rough estimates to suggest that they are taking 10 times as many as our commercial fishermen. They mightn't be quite accurate but I did the figures to give you the big picture to substantiate that it is a very significant thing. You should be doing a little bit more study on it to get a clearer and more accurate picture of the impact in our own State waters, and then moving on from there and doing something about it.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Fishwise funds could go into something like that.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Oh, yes, I'd vote for that. The only other thing not in my submission and not even on a bit of paper here today is in relation to rock lobster, and I was reminded of that when I came in. The rock lobster quota system has brought in certain problems that you would be aware of. The professional fishermen now fish in shallower and closer waters to get the higher-value fish because you get more per kilogram. You are only allowed to take so many kilograms, so they are not working the 'whites', as they call them, which are out on the shelf. There is a resource going to waste on one hand and being overfished on the other hand. Paul and I told them that years and years ago, didn't we, and it has come about. That is a problem that is recognised pretty well at all levels. It makes it more hazardous for fishermen to come into the shallow areas and it also creates some conflict in certain spots with recreational and professional fishers because they are coming into what we always regarded as our spots. We are wasting resource out on the shelf. The Government is looking to address that matter but when it comes to the recreational fisher there is some impact there. I think I said before that with the rock lobster fishermen there are some who take big quantities, mostly within the regulations, and others who just want a feed a year. I have always supported a tagging system, where an amateur buys his licence and gets his 15 or 20 tags or whatever, and he uses them in the same manner that is successfully operating in the professional sector. If he walks 50 miles down the coast and he has all his tags, there is no reason why he should not catch them all in the one day and bring them home, as indeed the professionals do.

**Ms THORP** - So you get enough for a year, are you saying?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, if it were the season, you would get so many tags when you bought your licence and that would entitle you to so many fish.

**Ms THORP** - That is all you can have.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, that is right. It limits the greedy and enhances the others a little bit.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Do you think they might argue, 'I am going out and putting a few pots in all summer for, say, 20 tags but I will be going out probably 100 times over the summer and all I am going to get is 20'. As you know, when you do drop the pot, every now and then you can pick up three but you have to throw those three back for various reasons. Therefore it puts people off, I think, or it can.

**Mr SCHULZE** - It could well but with the quota system now on rock lobster, recreationals are only allowed 10 per cent of the allowable catch and you are locked in on that. There are increasing numbers of licences being taken out each year and as soon as we go over that 10 per cent the department have indicated they will close in to reduce the catch in that sector. A lot of these pressures are going to come in upon us and we are going to have pressure between the recreational divers for rock lobster and those who just go with rings and pots. The divers are 10 to 15 per cent, perhaps, of the total, but are taking 30 per cent of the recreational catch, and doing easier and getting bigger ones.

**Ms THORP** - So you either make the divers' licences more expensive or give them fewer tags?

**Mr SCHULZE** - That is right. You can buy your 20 tags or 30 tags at an increasing cost per tag. Perhaps there should be - and this applies right across a lot of fisheries -



recreational-only areas. There is a classic example on the west coast. There is a strip of rocks just as you leave Macquarie Harbour out to the lighthouse. You can get there reasonably safely a lot of time in smaller dinghies and that is where the recreationalists get quite a few of their fish. It is a bit sad to see a big fishing boat coming along and putting a whole string of pots there and cleaning it out early in the season. He can go anywhere. He can go way out on the shelf or way down the coast, but the recreationalist is limited. So there are cases like that to look at. I guess that will go through the process of our various committees and various recommendations. It is not central, I do not think, to your inquiry.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Will the whites become a species in themselves, do you think?

**Mr SCHULZE** - No. They have recently done some research on them. They have moved the whites inshore and they changed their colour totally and reverted back. Their eating habits and everything go back to being reds inshore, and vice versa. It might take millions of years but at the moment they have said no. They are exactly the same fish, just living in a different manner.

**Mr WILKINSON** - But people are not going out there to fish them because of the problems and especially with the fuel costs now as well.

**Mr SCHULZE** - I think the government might end up making a separate quota system out there because now with GPS systems and all of that they know where they are and where they are fishing. You just tell by the look of the fish where they come from. So they probably will address that problem.

**Ms THORP** - Can I, if I may, come back to recreational-only areas of the State for fishing? It does have a direct relevance to what we are doing -

**Mr SCHULZE** - I guess so, yes.

**Ms THORP** - because of what is going on at the moment with the imposition of marine parks and the possibility that whole areas of the Tasman Peninsula, for example, might be locked up. I am wondering whether it might appease some of the scientific community if the commercials were locked out but the recreationals could keep coming and take the load off the fishery?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Marine parks are not really relevant to controlling the fisheries and sustainability of fish; that is not the way it is normally done. It is normally done, as the department do it, through some areas being no-fish zones anyway, though nothing to do with a marine park. You have season controls and all these other things to control the fishing sustainability. To overlap that again with a whole different system of marine park is not really appropriate in my view and in the view of a lot of other people. It was something else and another net thrown over the game. There is a lot of work done by the department, groups and everything else on where you should fish, how you should fish, when you should fish, what fish you are allowed to catch and all the rest of it to make sure the sustainability is there. There have been no-go zones for shark nurseries and the rest of it in these areas - all appropriately done and part of this plan. It has done reasonably well without bringing another outside element in and saying we are going to do this for other reasons.

**Ms THORP** - I do not know for sure whether this has occurred but I would imagine that TARFish would have made a submission to the draft management plan for the Bruny bioregion, which is recommending marine parks and no-take areas. I am wondering what your opinion is when the committee is made up of people like underwater photographers and charter boat operators, and whether their position on no-take areas might be a bit -

**Mr SCHULZE** - Seized by commercial interest?

**Ms THORP** - Yes.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, that is right. I think we have a fairly good framework but I suppose there is always the problem with parliament and you guys because you are always looking at the problem areas. It is right to do so and review them and get them fixed but it can make you a little bit negative too, and I find that happened to me. There is pretty good control and pretty good management of the fishery and we bring out these points that need addressing. I do not think you need marine parks to address the issues because it would mean that we have been deficient in the department, the Government and all the State agencies if somebody from the outside has to come in from the Federal area or something to do these things.

**CHAIR** - Have you covered the extra matters that you wanted to?

**Mr SCHULZE** - I have covered most. RecFAC itself, of which I am a member, is an interesting body. Peg Putt would feel being a bit massaged in terms of our direction but that is a dilemma; after all we are a minister's body. They keep reminding me of that.

**Ms THORP** - Is that the one Michael Hanek is on too?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, Mike is on that. Mike is a regional representative I am a regional representative. There are three or four representatives and we tend to feel commonly that we are overwhelmed and influenced by the rest, who seem to be coming from all different directions to what we are.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - What is the number on the committee?

**Mr SCHULZE** - There are about a dozen but there are some who seem to come and go and we are not sure who are members and who are not. I have to keep looking up my book to find out, but we tend to segregate ourselves. So we are regional representatives; we are real recreational people. We have to keep reminding ourselves that we are not in the role of TARFish. We are not supposed to be representing groups or issues; we are there for our joint expertise and diversity of expertise to hopefully give good advice to the minister. We do feel as though, at times, the department is having too much control over us. Maybe that is just a bit of a thing we have but it is something we all should be guarded about.

The scale fishery is up for review. It has to go through Parliament late next year. That is done every five years or something. So that goes through a process, and they have the processes on that chart there. The first step is that major issues are identified, so they

bring out an options paper, then public comment, review, feedback, release of the draft management plan, public meetings and comments again, report and the final approval of fisheries rules. That is about an 18-month process. The first part of the process I see as pretty important - to identify major issues. RecFAC, as well as the other sea fisheries people, have major input there.

Recently, because there has been a change of management, we have not had the meetings. Sometimes we go six or eight months without a meeting and there are always issues to deal with so we feel a bit limited by that. They felt that we could put in our individual concerns to the department and they would include them in the options paper. I personally didn't feel that was correct. It wasn't following the process. If you don't have a meeting and discuss it and hone it and kick it around, it is not an appropriate or proper input. So I have been a bit of a nigger in the woodpile by saying, 'You're not following the process. It's not legitimate and we have to have a meeting'. They say, 'But we don't have time'. I think the last information I got back after two or three memos to the department and the chairman of the committee, Ben Marris, they were deciding to have a meeting. As you would know in these processes, the person who sets up the agenda and items in the first place and gets to put that out tends to have a big influence on the final outcome at the other end.

**Mr WILKINSON** - He's got a fair idea of what the outcome might be.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. It's no good saying, 'Oh yes, you'll get a chance later on', you are really pushing it up hill.

**Ms THORP** - Has RecFAC had a bit of a role in the calamari and the banded morwong stuff?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes, the whole thing. We get a lot of information. We deal with a lot of issues and we have fairly big agendas.

**Ms THORP** - That is going through that process now - it's fairly well through, isn't it?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. Now and again you get problems come up with the banded morwong and others where you have to make changes to the rules before the next plan is complete and there are processes to do that. The minister can make alterations if suddenly something is under threat or he can close certain things without reference to anyone if he feels there is a problem.

**CHAIR** - Peter, what is your view on the layers of committees we have - TARFish and RecFAC? In some respects it seems to me that they are both advisory in one way or another to the Government. Do we have too many layers?

**Mr SCHULZE** - When I first go onto this committee I thought, 'I thought this was the one that was the recreational people who were going to advise the Government. There was something else in place when I first joined - not TARFish, but an equivalent body. That always seems to be kept moulting around the place in such a manner as the Government doesn't elect our tier. My view is that the Government seems to want to maintain control of the recreational fishing sector and not let them get off the leash or threaten to vote the Government out if they don't change the rules. By the mechanism of changing them and

changing the rules and moving them around, they have sterilised them a bit from having a good input. When I was first put on this committee - normally I am bad news with the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Greens and most bureaucrats - Daryl Gerrity asked me to go on the RecFAC committee and I said, 'Yes, but I don't have a hope in hell after what I've done to people'.

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - What, held them accountable?

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. He said, 'Oh no, if you can get on, would you join it?' and I said, 'Oh yes, it would be interesting'. I said, 'How can you that?' He said, 'The minister has promised me faithfully that there will be a west coast representative. I've had it confirmed by him that we're going to have our representative and you're the only nomination.'

*Laughter.*

**Mr SCHULZE** - So after increasing the size of RecFAC four months later I was on.

**CHAIR** - But you just said that all these parties disagreed with that process but you were the only nomination.

**Mr SCHULZE** - When I got on I thought, 'Am I on the right body? Am I representing the recreational fishers as I thought I was?' There was an uncertainty about what we were. We tend to want to represent our recreational fishers and their issues, as I do. You can still net in Macquarie Harbour of a night, so we still have our little influences here and there. Technically we're told, 'No, you're not that' - as I said before, we're just a body of people with knowledge to give the minister sound advice and not representing recreational fishers as this other body. There is some overlap and worry there. But having been on this body, we do a lot of work and I think we are a valuable tool to the minister and the whole system. What I first thought there's two lots of machinery, one have changed their mind. As long as you join the club, you always support it, don't you?

**Mr WILKINSON** - I don't know. Not really.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Again there's that enigma that we always have with the minister's advisory body. From time to time I have been reminded that that's what I'm there for - we are his people and not independent soldiers just trying to run around changing everything. I would say it is significant that 90 per cent of advice we put forward to the minister is acted upon and he looks for it to come from that sort of quarter.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Sitting back, that's not bad, is it, if 90 per cent of what you put forward is acted upon.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. Technically, I suppose the agendas tend to be set for us a little bit.

**CHAIR** - Some things never change.

**Mr SCHULZE** - That's right.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions of Peter, members?

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - No. I'm just pleased that accountability is still alive and well.

**CHAIR** - Anything else coming up, Peter?

**Mr SCHULZE** - No, I'm just pleased that you guys are looking into this matter, and I'm just hopeful that particularly helping TARFish - it has been difficult for TARFish - being a better body to represent the interests of fishermen.

**Ms THORP** - It's an opinion, if I may. The changes to the rock lobster fishery management - do you think that was a good decision?

**Mr SCHULZE** - No, I don't. I still have other thoughts in regard to that, but now we have that, there are other means by which we can deal with it if they'll go through the process. If we do run out of reasonable take because of these restrictions and more baby boomers coming out wanting to catch rock lobster, then there should be a process where the recreational sector buys quota back from the commercial sector with their own funds or with help from other quarters. After all, quota is a total commercial saleable thing that overseas people can buy outside Australia.

The Government and the department and the bureaucrats seem to hate this buy-back process in any form, not just in, say, that quarter. I think that would be a very worthwhile facility to have, so if we're running short we just buy. Commercial fishermen, they sell their quotas to all and sundry, and it shouldn't be any skin off their nose to find that some of these are going to that sector. After all, it was the quota.

**Ms THORP** - Rather than put extra imposts on the recreational fisher.

**Mr SCHULZE** - Yes. Rather than pushing them down smaller and smaller.

**Ms THORP** - It makes sense, doesn't it?

**Mrs RATTRAY-WAGNER** - It's a win-win for everyone really.

**Mr WILKINSON** - Fishwise resources - buy back a bit of quota!

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much, Peter.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**