

# Valuing Victoria's professional fishing and aquaculture industries

The far west region is one of the Victoria's most productive and economically important fishing regions. Opportunities exist to build links between the industry and the tourism and hospitality sectors.



Far west fisheries make **significant economic contributions**

**\$41.7m**  
the added value  
professional fisheries  
contributed to the far west  
region in 2016/17

**352**  
the number of  
**full-time jobs**  
professional fishing  
provided in the far west  
region in 2016/17



Victorians prefer  
**local seafood**

**90%**  
say it's important to  
**produce seafood**  
in Victoria and **reduce**  
**reliance on**  
**imports\***



Consuming seafood is part of  
**travelling the**  
**Victorian coast**

**81%**  
of Victorians say  
eating **local seafood**  
is an important part of their  
**coastal holiday**  
**experience**

**88%**  
of tourism operators say  
the fishing industry adds to the  
**local character**  
**of towns**



The fishing industry voluntarily  
**collaborates** in research  
and projects to **improve**  
**environmental health**

**100%**  
of the far west's main  
fish stocks are classified as  
**'sustainable'**



Fishing contributes to the  
**sense of identity**  
in far west coastal communities

**83%**  
of residents agree fishing is  
important to their  
**cultural heritage**  
and **community**  
**identity**

# Valuing Victoria's professional fishing: measuring economic and social contributions in Far West Victoria

**Far west Victoria is one of the state's most productive fishing regions. The home ports of Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Portland support a diversity of professional fishing, including abalone, pipi, Southern Rock Lobster, Wrasse, Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark, and Southern Squid. Inland, there is eel. It also has a regional processing, wholesale and retail sector for rock lobster, abalone, squid and finfish. The far west accounted for 14% of the 15,032 tonnes of seafood professionally caught in Victoria in 2016/17. Over past decades the fishing fleet and associated industries have contracted, mainly due to restructuring and quotas. Nevertheless, the industry still makes important contributions and is looking for opportunities to grow sustainably.**

## Valuing Victoria's wild-catch fisheries and aquaculture industries

A research project conducted by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) for the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, investigated how the Victorian fishing and aquaculture industry contributes to the wellbeing of regional communities, and to Victoria overall. The study found the industry in the far west region contributes to regional community wellbeing in five main ways:

- economic diversity and resilience
- food supply
- tourism and recreation
- environmental health
- social fabric

### Economic diversity and resilience – Far west fisheries make significant economic contributions

- Professional fisheries contributed \$41.7 million of added value to the far west in the 2016/17 financial year.
- Professional fisheries accounted for 352 full-time jobs in the region in that period.
- Far west fisheries provide important flow-on economic activity and jobs, locally and in Melbourne.
- The industry supports a range of business and job opportunities, from on-the-boat work through to businesses that service the industry, along with supply chain, tourism and hospitality operations.
- 81% of fishing community residents believe the industry supports their local economy and provides jobs

### Food supply – local seafood is in demand

- Far west fisheries produce premium seafood such as rock lobster, wild-caught abalone and a diversity of other seafood.
- 90% of Victorians believe it is important to produce seafood in Victoria and reduce reliance on imports.
- 62% of the hospitality sector surveyed says demand for local seafood is growing.
- 96% of the hospitality sector say customers want to know the origin of their seafood.

### Tourism and recreation – The seafood industry is part of the coastal travel experience

- 88% of Victorians expect to eat local seafood when visiting the coast.
- International visitors, particularly from Asia, are the group of visitors most interested in eating local seafood.
- 69% of Victorians holidaymakers surveyed enjoy watching commercial fishers at work.
- Professional and recreational fishing are often portrayed as being at odds. However, the study found evidence they positively intersect, through shared interests, infrastructure and water safety.

### Environmental health – The industry helps manage fish stocks and the marine environment

- Data collected by the industry helps manage commercial and recreational fisheries sustainably.
- In the far west, 100% of the region's main fish stocks assessed are sustainable.
- The far west industry undertakes voluntary practices to improve stocks and the marine environment – for instance, industry-led data collection has contributed to the recovery of abalone stocks after being devastated by disease in 2006

### Social fabric – Fishing contributes to the sense of identity in far west coastal communities

- 83% of residents from coastal towns surveyed agree fishing is important to heritage and identity.
- Far west fishing businesses support and donate to local events and charities.

For more information, see: [uts.ac/VictoriaFisheriesAquaculture](https://uts.ac/VictoriaFisheriesAquaculture)

Victoria's fisheries and aquaculture: economic and social contributions FRDC Project No 2017-092

Source: Valuing Victoria's Wild-Catch and Aquaculture Industries, UTS

\*Percentages are from survey responses

