

Charting Your Own Course

Building representational capacity
across the Australian seafood industry

Advisory Committee Member Guide

‘Charting Your Own Course’

Advisory Committee Representation Guide

FRDC Project No. 2009/322

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Module 1: Using this self-paced guide

1 Welcome to Charting Your Own Course

1.1 What is advisory Committee Membership?

Advisory committee membership is about being involved in the decision making process that affects how a fishery is managed and / or researched. As an advisory committee representative, you must work with a wide range of stakeholders, many of whom may hold a different opinion to you. To be effective in your role, you will need to know how the seafood industry operates, know how decisions get made; and know what your role in the decision making process is. Just as important, you will need a diverse range of communication skills, tools and strategies to ensure you get your message across effectively.

1.2 About this guide

This guide has been developed to provide an introduction to the key issues and topics relevant to advisory committee membership. The aim of the guide is to provide both new and existing committee members with the knowledge and tools needed to be an effective member.

The guide allows users to find out about being an advisory member at their own pace, and in their working or home environment. New advisory committee members are encouraged to read the guide prior to participating in advisory committee processes. The guide can also be used as a reference for committee members to refresh their understanding of advisory committee processes.

If you need assistance or want any additional information, you should speak with other members of your committee or the committee Chair. Answers to all of your questions might not be able to be provided, but help and support can be found.

1.3 Modules in this guide

| Module | Topics |
|--------|---|
| 2 | Understanding Advisory Committee Membership |
| 3 | Communicating Effectively |
| 4 | Influencing and Building Relationships |
| 5 | Effective Meetings |
| 6 | Charting Your Own Course: Next steps |

1.4 We all see things differently

We all understand and interpret the things around us in different ways. Understanding and respecting each other's views helps us to find common ground, minimising conflict and maximising cooperation. We often do not imagine that other people may see something quite differently to how we see the 'same' thing.

To influence others, advisory committee members need to understand and work with the many different ways people see and interpret the world. It is about working in this context through the range of organisations and people to get decisions and action. The work of a member is built on relationships.

To be an effective member, it is important that you understand that people think differently to you and therefore they may see things differently to you (refer to Case Study 1).

Case Study 1: Advisory Committee members do see things differently!

The example of the 2006 Tasmanian commercial scallop season

In 2006, fishing industry members on the Tasmanian Scallop Fishery Advisory Committee (ScallopFAC) requested access to a known resource of scallops located within the 3nM boundary of the East Coast Shark Refuge Area (SRA), located between Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage. Under Tasmanian Government Policy, scallop harvesting was not permitted in SRA's, unless approved by the Minister. The unanimous position of the ScallopFAC fishing industry members and the Tasmanian Scallop Fishermen's Association was: 1) female sharks would not be present during the proposed harvest period (scientific shark expert advice); 2) they would remove remnant mesh netting, which was left after a scallop enhancement project conducted during the 1980's, from within the SRA boundary in a cost effective manner and with resulting large environmental benefit; 3) the removal of known populations of the introduced marine pest, *Asterias amurens* (Northern Pacific Seastar) from within the SRA would benefit the marine environment; and 4) the harvest of commercial scallops from this region would be of substantial economic benefit to Tasmania.

This unified fishing industry position was not supported by other members of ScallopFAC. The conservation member opposed the proposal based on environmental impact arguments, although they did acknowledge the potential benefits of removing mesh and seastars. The government agency responsible for managing the fishery did not support the proposal as it was in breach of government SRA management policy. The scientific member would not support the request without further information about the movements of sharks and potential impact on the marine environment.

Despite intensive and sometimes heated debate during several FAC meetings, no final consensus could be achieved, and the ScallopFAC Chair determined the issue to be of such importance that a vote was not taken.

The main conclusion of this advisory committee process was that different members 'see things differently; depending on where they are positioned within the decision making process.

1.5 Clarifying a point of view

There are some simple ideas and associated questions that can assist you to understand or clarify the point of view of others.

1. Clarity

Clarity is the gateway to understanding. If a statement from another person is unclear, we cannot determine whether it is accurate or relevant. In fact, we cannot tell anything about it because we don't yet know what it is saying. For example, "everyone agrees with our position". Who is this statement referring to, how do they know they agree?

Questions to ask:

Could you elaborate further on that point? Could you give me an example?

2. Accuracy

A statement can be clear but not accurate. For example, "the fishing industry is taking too much bycatch'. It is quite clear that the speaker thinks this is the case but may not necessarily be accurate.

Questions to ask:

How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true?

3. Precision

A statement can be both clear and accurate, but not precise, as in "Jack is overweight." We don't know how overweight Jack is, one kilo or 50 kilos.

Questions to ask:

Could you give more details? Could you be more specific?

4. Relevance

A statement can be clear, accurate, and precise, but not relevant to the question at issue.

Questions to ask:

How is that connected to the issue? How does that bear on the issue?

How does your answer address the complexities in the question?

5. Breadth

A line of reasoning may be clear accurate, precise and relevant but lack scope, range or context.

Questions to ask:

Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question?

What are practical ways of considering other's viewpoint?

The following dot points provide some practical ways to consider other peoples viewpoint:

- Talk with all stakeholders and freely share information
- Contribute to discussions by stating your ideas and points of view and listening to others' point of view
- acknowledge and understand your own strengths and weaknesses
- acknowledge and use the skill strengths, ideas, and opinions of other advisory committee members
- encourage others to share ideas by asking questions and listening attentively
- always consider the feedback and advice given by others
- phrase your suggestions as questions (e.g. instead of saying "I think we should..." say "What about doing...")
- respect the feelings, views and values of others
- do not avoid conflict – instead address issues or problems in a cooperative way when they arise.

Module 2: Understanding Advisory Committee Membership

2 Understanding Advisory Committee Membership

Learning objectives

- To better understand how public resources are managed
- To understand the role and objectives of advisory committees.
- To discover the key processes that govern and influence decision making.

2.1 Management of a public resources

The Australian seafood industry incorporates a diversity of stakeholders and activities, geographic distribution, high number of species utilised, and by having both a natural resource management (NRM) and primary industries basis for management and development respectively.

The seafood industry operates in a business environment made more complex due to its dependence on access to publicly managed natural resources. These resources are managed for the benefit of the current and future community needs and expectations.

To service the complex needs of the seafood industry and its use of a public resource, government must play a central role. Various federal, state and territory fisheries management agencies have multiple overlapping and discrete jurisdictional arrangements to permit access by resource users.

Fishery managers must balance the needs of the community today regarding seafood and recreational and cultural benefits with expectations about sustainability of the resources and their future uses. Public policy judgements must also be made about the competitive worth of non-fishing demands, such as maritime trade, oil and gas exploration, or marine exclusion zones. Added to this mix are uncertainties surrounding the effects of climate change and variability, that managers and industry

must consider in their decision-making. Accurate, up-to-date information and scientific discovery are crucial to inform all these decisions by managers, fishery users and communities.

The pre-eminent role of the broader public and their regional communities in decisions about the fishery and aquaculture resources brings with it demands for strong science and effective, comprehensive dialogue. Science and awareness are inextricably embedded in the management and governance of fisheries.

As an advisory committee member, you must also balance all these complex issues in your decision making processes.

2.2 Advisory committees

Advisory Committees (or Advisory Groups, Boards, or similar) are generally formed by regulatory agencies, such as Government. Their key **purpose** is to provide either management or research advice to relevant regulatory agencies and their associated Government Minister/s. Each sector of the Australian seafood industry is engaged in one or more advisory committees. For more information about how Tasmanian Fishery Advisory Committees (FACs) operate, see Case Study 2 and Appendix 1.

Members of advisory committees are generally appointed or invited by the agency or Minister responsible for setting them up. Members are generally appointed because they can provide an expert opinion on the business of the advisory committee.

Industry sectors or associations may be asked to make nominations to the appointing agency or Minister. Membership is often diverse, so as to gain the perspectives of key stakeholder groups, and include government, research, commercial and non-commercial sectors, conservation and community representatives.

The **focus** of an advisory committee is normally the best interests of the management of the fishery resource as a whole, rather than sector or individual specific interests, hence appointments are based upon a person's expertise.

Which hat are you wearing?

An important aspect of being an advisory committee member is to recognise your role on that body. More often than not, advisory committees will be set up as an expertise based body. Members of the committee may be required to provide 'independent' expert advice to the regulatory agency or the relevant minister. Under the terms of reference (see below) you may not be *representing* your particular sector, (i.e. not advocating for your sector) but be providing advice because you have individual *expertise* in a particular field.

In some cases, members of advisory bodies will be explicitly appointed as representatives of industry bodies or associations. In such cases, they will likely be duty bound to represent the views of the body which they are representing.

How advisory committees operate: Terms of Reference

Each advisory committee operates under its own rules, usually called the **Terms of Reference** (see Appendix 1). These set out things such as who should be on the committee, what is the committee's role, and who the committee will be advising.

The government or research body responsible for a particular advisory committee usually provides the required resources to support the effective operation of the committee, for example, ensuring a public servant is available to assist the record keeping and logistics of the committee.

Case Study 2: How advisory committees operate

The example of Tasmanian Fishery Advisory Committee's (FAC's)

FAC's are established by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 (The Act)*. The Act empowers the Minister to establish advisory committees to provide information and advice to the minister and to appoint members.

Advisory committees are established for abalone, crustaceans (rock lobster and giant crab), scalefish, scallops and recreational fisheries.

What is the role of a FAC?

The main role of a FAC is to provide the Minister with full and frank advice and information on all significant issues related to the fishery. Legislation provides that the Minister must consult with the relevant advisory committee prior to making a determination on key arrangements such as seasonal closures, gear restrictions and catch limits. However, in practice, the role and work of the FAC is much broader than this.

A FAC is an essential part of the co-management framework for the management of the relevant fishery and acts as a conduit between industry and the Department. The FAC process provides the forum for members and the Department to raise matters of interest to the fishery that may not necessarily be of concern at the Ministerial level.

Some of the key issues that the FAC plays an active role in are the provision of advice and information:

- on research needs and priorities;
- on the annual fishery assessment and stock monitoring;
- during formal reviews of the management plan;
- on the development of management responses to issues; and
- on allocation and resource sharing issues.

There is also an expectation that FAC members will be available to and will engage with other industry and community members to communicate the issues of the relevant fishery.

FAC Meetings

Each advisory committee generally has four FAC meetings each year, depending on the work schedule and current issues. Most meetings are held in Hobart and are held over a full day (or longer, depending on the issues to be discussed). From time to time regional meetings may be held to provide an opportunity for wider industry to meet committee members and get involved in the committee process.

The operation of a FAC and the conduct of FAC members during meetings is guided by the terms of reference for fishery advisory committees. The terms of reference cover a range of issues including conflicts of interest, confidentiality, interactions with the media and standard procedural matters. These ToRs are generic across all FAC's.

FAC's aims to work co-operatively to achieve a consensus view rather than using a majority voting approach, however there may be occasions where this is not possible. In those circumstances the Chair will seek all views of members and these will be forwarded to the Minister for consideration.

Minutes are taken for each meeting and all recommendations and action items are recorded. The Chair also provides the Minister with his/her own summary of the meeting proceedings. All of the Minister's decisions are communicated through the Department and back to FAC members at the appropriate time. FAC recommendations are considered confidential for 10 days from being received by the Minister's office.

FAC meetings are not generally open for casual observers, however, the FAC may hold an open session prior to a meeting or alternatively the Chair may invite people to attend for a specific agenda item where appropriate.

How are people appointed?

The Minister is responsible for determining the structure and membership of a committee and is also responsible for appointing each member. Industry and community members are appointed for the expertise and experience and not as a representative of an area/sector, with the exception of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) and other government recognised fishing body representatives. Committee members are tasked with providing advice as to how the fishery should be managed as a whole, with the interests of the Tasmanian community in mind. Whilst members are not necessarily representative of the industry the Minister has historically appointed people that collectively have a diverse range of experience and knowledge of a fishing sector and fisheries management, and have expertise across the different regions of the relevant fishery.

Members are appointed following an expression of interest process that is co-ordinated through the Department. Expressions of interest are open to anyone. Licence holders are notified in writing and advertising is placed in the major newspapers and in *Fishing Today*.

With the exception of the Independent Chair, FAC members are not paid sitting fees. However members are entitled to travelling allowances when on FAC business at State Service travel rates.

What influences decision making

Although advisory committees are often meant to be the official source of information and advice for governments and ministers to make key decisions concerning a fishery, there are many influences on how decisions actually get made. In addition to direct advice from their Departments, Ministerial decision making can be influenced by individuals, interest groups, industry interests, party policy and electoral pressures.

Advocacy and lobbying

The goals of advocacy and lobbying are similar, but the processes are different.

Advocacy is attempting to cause political action, using methods such as public education and campaigns, with the aim to influence decision makers. **Lobbying** refers to influencing the government and its leaders. Lobbying can be achieved either through direct communications with a legislator or government employees, or through influencing the public to express a particular view to their legislators about an issues.

Advocacy is a broader set of activities aimed to change public opinion or to get public support. An advocacy strategy can include activities such as:

- articles in newspapers
- feature stories about how an individual or group was helped or has benefited from the organisation or action
- distribution of promotion materials

Factors such as advocacy and lobbying directly to Ministers are important parts of our political system. Figure 1 illustrates the broader array of political influences on ministerial decision making.

It is important to recognise that lobbying can reinforce recommendations agreed by advisory committees or, on the other hand, can undermine advisory committees.

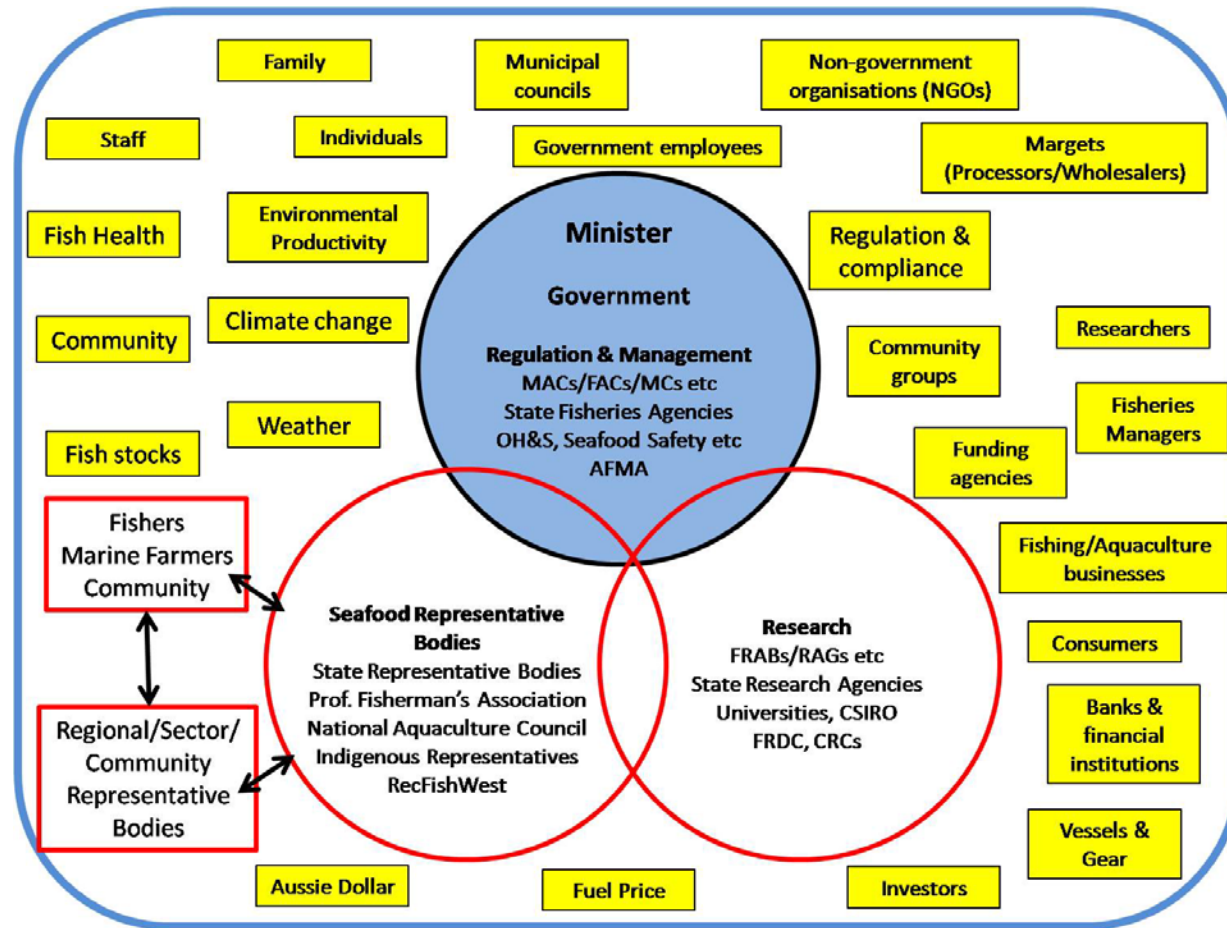


Figure 1. The broader decision-making context for the seafood industry

2.3 Conflict of interest

A **Conflict of interest** is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest. In this instance, the *Primary interest* refers to the principal goals of an advisory committee; while the *secondary interest* includes not only financial (pecuniary) gain but also such motives as the desire for professional advancement and the wish to do favors for family and friends. The secondary interests are not treated as wrong in themselves, but become objectionable when they are believed to have greater weight than the primary (advisory committee) interests.

The *conflict* in a conflict of interest exists whether or not a particular individual is actually influenced by the secondary interest. It exists if the circumstances are reasonably believed (on the basis of past experience and objective evidence) to create a risk that decisions may be unduly influenced by secondary interests.

To avoid a conflict of interest, all advisory members must disclose the nature of the interest to the committee and to the Minister. In Tasmanian FAC's there are established processes for listing **pecuniary (or financial) interests** at each meeting. As an example, Joe Fisher, commercial rock lobster license and quota holder. Member of this Crustacean FAC and the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association. Also holds a recreational rock lobster and abalone licence.

Should any further conflict of interest arise during a meeting, then the affected member should disclose the interest to the meeting and / or remove themselves from the room during discussions – citing they have a conflict of interest with the topic being discussed. There are formal processes in place for determining if a member should “leave the room” during discussions and if they should or should not be involved in any final recommendations.

Summary: Understanding advisory representation

- The seafood industry utilises a public resource, which is ultimately managed by a minister through a government agency.
- An advisory committee's main task is to provide expert advice to regulators and government ministers. Representatives are generally appointed for their expert knowledge.
- Members of advisory committees generally represent a broad array of interests, including commercial and non-commercial, government, science and environmental, amongst more.
- Decision making processes in fisheries management are subject to many different, and sometimes competing influences that must be acknowledged by those involved.

Module 3: Communicating Effectively

3 Communicating effectively

Learning objectives

- To recognise effective communication
- To understand the open and hidden components of communication
- To use verbal and non-verbal communication effectively

3.1 What is effective communication?

Effective communication:

- is two way
- involves active listening
- utilises feedback
- reflects the genuineness of speaker and listener
- is respectful of others
- is free of stress
- is clear

Communication is made up of a broad range of signals. There are:

- *verbal* elements such as the words used
- *vocal* elements, such as the level of voice
- *visual* elements, such as body language

Understanding skills in communication will improve your capacity to effectively present and represent your views. People who are good communicators use appropriate listening, questioning and feedback skills as they collect and organise information. Those who are aware of their interpersonal and communication skills are more likely to achieve outcomes that are satisfying to everyone.

The communication process has 5 main components:

- the **sender** sends the **message**
- the **receiver** pays attention and listens to what is communicated
- the receiver responds to the message
- the sender receives the **feedback**
- the sender sends a further **response** back

3.2 Understanding 'self' in communication

Building trust in communication is one of the most important tools you can develop as an advisory committee member.

Whether we realise it or not, whenever we engage with other people we are already communicating. Awareness of how to communicate effectively and build trust will assist your ability to represent your views and ideas, and get outcomes.

Understanding the process of how people interact will develop your ability to build productive relationships.

It is important to understand there are many different components of communication, some of which you can control, some of which are difficult to control.

- There is readily available information that both you and others know about you.
- There are things that you know about yourself, but may choose to hide from others.
- There are things that others may know about you, but you are unaware of – i.e. certain habits.

Being aware that there are different dimensions to other people and understanding yourself better means you can develop ways of building more trusting and productive relationships.

3.3 Verbal communication

Effective verbal messages:

- are to the point, brief and organised
- are free of jargon
- do not create resistance in the listener

Sending Messages

Our use of language has tremendous power over the type of atmosphere that is created at the problem-solving table.

Words that are patronising, blaming, judgmental or accusatory tend to create a resistant and defensive mindset that is not conducive to productive problem solving.

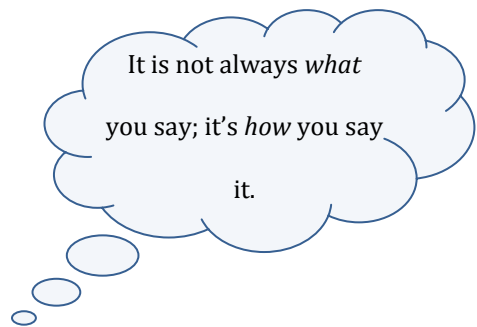
On the other hand, we can choose words that open up the issues and problems and reduce resistance. Phrases such as *"in some districts, people may...."*; *"it is not uncommon for"* and *"for some people in similar situations"* are examples of how this can work.

Sending effective messages requires that we state our point of view on the topic being discussed as briefly and succinctly as possible. Lengthy discussion and complicated explanations are confusing to the listener and the message loses its relevance and impact. Listening to a rambling, unorganised speaker is tedious and discouraging – why would someone continue to listen when there is no interchange?

Don't waste YOUR opportunity to speak effectively

Choose your words with the intention of making your message as clear as possible, avoiding jargon and unnecessary or peripheral information. Adding to a discussion or making a comment during a meeting is your opportunity to help the listener understand YOUR perspective and point of view. Important aspects of communication include:

- **Intensity.** A reflection of the amount of energy you project is considered your intensity. Again, this has as much to do with what feels good to the other person as what you personally prefer.
- **Timing and pace.** Your ability to be a good speaker and communicate interest and involvement is impacted by timing and pace.
- **Sounds that convey understanding.** Sounds such as “ahhh, ummm, ohhh,” uttered with congruent eye and facial gestures, communicate understanding and emotional connection. More than words, these sounds are the language of interest, understanding and compassion.



3.4 Receiving Messages

The key to receiving messages effectively is *listening*.

Listening is a combination of hearing what another person says and engagement with the person who is talking. Listening requires more than hearing words. It requires a desire to understand another human being, an attitude of respect and acceptance, and a willingness to open one's mind to try and see things from another's point of view.

Listening requires a high level of concentration and energy. It demands that we set aside our own thoughts and agendas, put ourselves in another's shoes and try to see the world through that person's eyes.

True listening requires that we suspend judgment, evaluation, and approval in an attempt to understand another's frame of reference, emotions, and attitudes. Listening to understand is, indeed, a difficult task!

Often, people worry that if they listen attentively and patiently to a person who is saying something they disagree with, they are inadvertently sending a message of agreement. This is not true.

When we have a deeper understanding of another's perception, whether we agree with it or not, we hold the key to understanding that person's motivation, attitude, and behaviour. We have a deeper understanding of the problem and the potential paths for reaching agreement.

When we listen effectively we gain information that is valuable to understanding the problem as the other person sees it. We gain a greater understanding of the other person's perception.

3.5 Questioning

An effective communicator asks open-ended questions to get information and clarification. Open-ended questions are ones which can't be answered with a "yes" or a "no". Open-ended questions help focus the speaker on the topic, encourages the speaker to talk, and provides the speaker the opportunity to give feedback. Examples of open-ended questions include:

- **"What more can you tell us about** your experience with turtle excluders?"
- **"Tell us more** about the problems you have with catches."

- **"What kinds** of skills do you think are important for the seafood industry?"
- **"How do you think we can** progress this issue further?"

3.6 Non-verbal communication - Body language

Another name for body language is 'non-verbal communications' and this is how people communicate, face-to-face, aside from spoken words.

Body language is especially crucial when we meet someone for the first time. We form our opinions of someone we meet for the first time in just a few seconds, and this initial assessment is based far more on what we see and feel about the other person than on the words they speak.

The six universal facial expressions

There are six basic facial expressions of human emotion which are recognized around the world. These expressions are innate rather than socially conditioned or learned. They are anger; disgust; fear; happiness; sadness; and surprise (see Table 1).

These six facial expressions have been expanded to include a broader range that includes amusement; contempt; contentment; embarrassment; excitement; guilt; pride in achievement; relief; satisfaction; sensory pleasure; and shame.

A major part of communication is demonstrated through body language. In fact,







93% of how we communicate is non-verbal:

- 55% **body language** and
- 38% is **tone** of voice

This means that **only 7% of inter-personal communication is about actual words!**

The messages we send are not necessarily what we are saying.

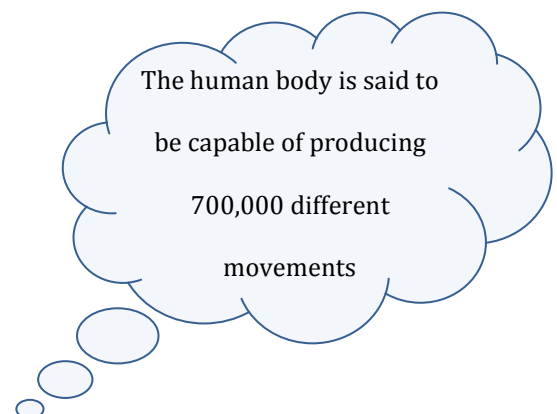
Table 1: The six universal facial expressions of human emotion.

| Emotion | Facial Expression | Schematic |
|-----------|--|---|
| Happiness | Eyebrows relaxed; cheeks raised, raising lower eyelid; corner of lips raised and lips drawn back |  |
| Sadness | Inner corners of brows raised; inner corners of eyelids raised; corners of lips turned down |  |
| Surprise | Eyebrows raised and curved; eyes open wide; jaw dropped; lips relaxed |  |
| Fear | Eyebrows raised and inner corners drawn together; eyes wide open; mouth open but tense (may be asymmetrical) |  |
| Anger | Eyebrows lowered and drawn together; vertical lines between eyebrows; lips pressed together |  |
| Disgust | Inner corner of eyebrows lowered; nose wrinkled; eyelid raised; lower lip raised |  |

3.7 Factors to consider when ‘reading’ body language

It is important to ‘read’ other people’s body language, and to think about what your own body language might be communicating to others.

Just remember that body language is very influential in forming impressions on first



meeting someone and their impression of you! Importantly, understanding body language enables better self-awareness and self-control too.

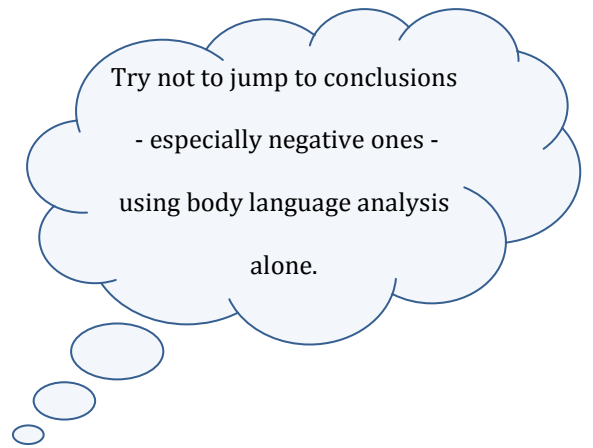
There are a number of factors to consider when reading body language.

Context

Body language in a certain situation might not mean the same in another.

For example:

- Someone rubbing their eye might have an irritation, rather than being tired - or disbelieving, or upset.
- Someone with crossed arms might be keeping warm, rather than being defensive.
- Someone scratching their nose might actually have an itch, rather than concealing a lie.



Sufficient samples

An individual body language signal isn't as reliable as several signals.

Culture/ethnicity

Certain body language is the same in all people, for example smiling and frowning, but some body language is specific to a culture or ethnic group. For example: personal space.

Age and gender

As examples, young men often display a lot of pronounced gestures; older women adopt more modest postures.

Faking/deception

Some people artificially control their outward body language to give the impression they seek to create at the time. For example: a confident firm handshakes, or direct eye contact, are examples of signals which can be quite easily 'faked'.

Boredom, nervousness and insecurity

Many body language signals indicate negative feelings such as boredom, disinterest, anxiousness, insecurity. There is a tendency to imagine a weakness on the part of the person exhibiting them. However, it is often the situation, not the person.

3.8 Tips for successful non-verbal communication

Pay attention to inconsistencies

Nonverbal communication should reinforce what is being said. If you get the feeling that someone isn't being honest or that something is "off," you may be picking up on a mismatch between verbal and non-verbal cues. For example, are they telling you "yes" while shaking their head no?



This woman is looking concerned or worried about something or is she just bored?

Look at non-verbal communication signals as a group

Don't read too much into a single gesture or non-verbal cue. Consider all of the non-verbal signals you are sending and receiving, from eye contact to tone of voice and body language. Are your non-verbal cues consistent—or inconsistent—with what you are trying to communicate?

Take a time out to consider the signals

In stressful or challenging situations, you're more likely to misread other people or send confusing or off-putting non-verbal signals. Once you've assessed the situation, you'll be better equipped to react in a positive way.

The person in the image could be offering warm congratulations or imposing power over another with the double hand clasp.



3.9 Assessing your communication skills

Appendix 2 details an activity that can help you look at your strengths and weaknesses in communication. You can complete this task to gain a better understanding of how you communicate with others.

Summary: Communicating effectively

- Effective communication is the basis for getting positive results and good outcomes with people.
- You can build your communication skills by noticing how you affect others and improving some key habits:
 - Being clearer and more easily understood by others – verbal *and* non-verbal
 - Asking open-ended questions
 - Active listening.
- Take into account non-verbal as well as verbal communication when listening or sending messages.

Module 4: Influencing and Building Relationships

4 Influencing and building relationships

Learning Objectives

- To be aware of the differences between persuading and negotiating;
- To be able to identify and engage advisory members and stakeholders;
- To consider effective ways of building relationships and networks.

4.1 What are persuading and influencing?

Representation has four important elements:

- **Persuading** involves being able to convince others to take appropriate action;
- **Negotiating** involves being able to discuss and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement;
- **Influencing** encompasses both of these;
- **Building relationships** is a key tool in being an effective advisory committee representative.

There are many factors to influencing others, but one of the key ones is:

"People don't resist change, they resist being changed."



If we want to help people change, we have to help them decide the change is in their best interest. We have to *influence* people, not force change upon them.

4.2 Influencing people

Here are five things you can do to help influence change in others.

Respect their perspective

What matters is the perspective and beliefs of the other person. Determine their concerns, fears and assumptions regarding the change. Doing this will definitely help you counter some of these concerns. But the real benefit in truly understanding and communicating that you understand their perspective is that you are demonstrating you value their opinion and they will feel they are a part of a conversation.

Acknowledge their perspective

You may not agree with their assumptions or share their fears and concerns, but you can acknowledge their perspective. Let them know that you understand and respect their point of view.

Speak to their interests

Once you know more about their issues and concerns you can help them see a different perspective. Look for common ground to build relationships. By acknowledging their perspective as a valid one, their mind will likely be more open to considering a new perspective. Talk with them about the differences between your perspectives and why this might be.

Notice people's natural tendencies

Everyone has their own natural tendencies towards change. Some are more open and move more quickly to a new approach or system. Others are more cautious.

Be aware that not everyone will move at the same pace.

Be patient

Give people some time. Let them reflect on what you have shared with them. Give them time to justify a new position in their mind.

Recognise that by giving people time it may also help them "save face" as they begin to advocate a change that they had previously opposed.

4.3 Negotiating with people

There are two basic approaches when negotiating:

- Negotiating to win
- Negotiating jointly

Negotiating to win involves placing too much emphasis on pursuing your own interests to the exclusion of others:

I win: you lose!

It is forcing someone to do what you want them to do and ignoring their interests.

Whilst you might get short-term gain, you will build up long term resentment which can be very disruptive if you ever need to work with these people again.

Negotiating jointly seeks to come to an agreement where everyone gets what they want *at some level*, reaching a compromise and a mutually satisfactory agreement. You need to establish mutual trust, so it requires honesty and integrity from both parties. Both sides work together to come up with a compromise solution to suit everyone's best interests. Each party tries to see things from the other's perspective. Assertiveness is the best way here: being passive or aggressive doesn't help.

Compromise

Although it may not always be possible to reach a mutual agreement, it is important that everyone's opinion is heard and considered.

Agreeing to disagree, even after all attempts at finding resolution should not be viewed as failure. In the end, a decision generally has to be made by an individual, in the case of advisory committees, the Minister. So make sure that your opinion is noted by the Chair should you not agree with others.

Figure 5 is a model that illustrates the dimensions of effectively influencing people. These are all important aspects of working as an advisory committee member where you may be working to influence government officers, researchers, industry members and conservation members.

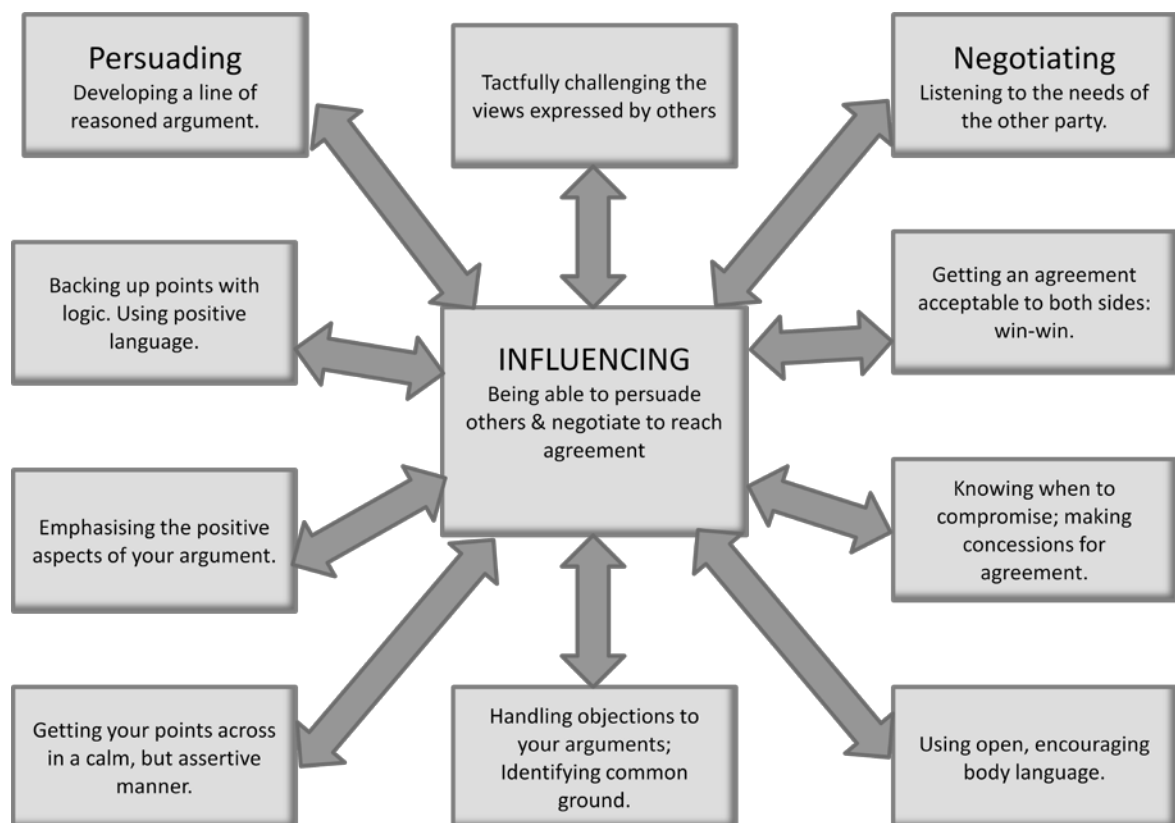


Figure 2: Dimensions of effectively influencing people

4.4 Find out about other committee members

Your role as an advisory committee member will require you to interact with the other committee members. These members will represent a wide range of stakeholder interests, including government employees, scientists and conservationists amongst more. To successfully engage with each member, you need to know more about each. You need to know how they are likely to feel about and react to your position. You need to know how best to engage and communicate with them. You also need to understand that several other members may be representing a considerably different viewpoint to you.

The following case study for a typical Tasmanian Fishery Advisory Committee illustrates the array of member' interests.

Case Study 3: Indicative structure of a Tasmanian FAC

| Member | Pecuniary Interest | Main View Point |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Independent Chair | Nil | Independent viewpoint – facts and summary |
| Industry | Licence / quota holder | Expertise based |
| Processor | Licence / quota holder | Expertise based |
| TSIC | Nil or licence / quota holder? | Expertise and member advocate |
| Fishing Association | Nil or licence / quota holder? | Expertise and member advocate |
| Community & Conservation | Nil or recreational licence | Environmental/community considerations and values |
| Marine Police | Nil or recreational licence | Compliance enforcement considerations |
| Research | Nil or recreational licence | Scientific, biological, ecological considerations |
| Management | Nil or recreational licence | Government policy and legislation considerations |

Key questions that can help you understand the other committee members are:

- What financial or emotional interest do they have in the outcome of a decision?
- What motivates them most of all?
- What information do they want from you?
- How do they want to receive information from you? What is the best way of communicating your message to them?
- What is their current opinion of your position? Is it based on good information?
- Who influences their opinions generally, and who influences their opinion of you? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?
- If they are not likely to be positive, what will win them around to support your point of view?
- If you don't think you will be able to win them around, how will you manage their opposition?

A very good way of answering these questions is to talk to the other members directly – people are often quite open about their views, and asking people's opinions is often the first step in building a successful relationship with them.

Summary: Influencing and building relationships

- Involving and engaging other advisory committee members in the process is essential for getting positive impact and results
- Understanding the perspective of all other members will help you understand their needs and interests and how best to engage with them

Module 6: Effective Meetings

5 Effective meetings

Learning objectives

- To understand the purposes and functions of meetings
- To follow meeting processes and standard meeting practices
- To be aware of your role in creating an effective meeting

5.1 Advisory committee meetings

Once appointed to be an advisory committee member, you will find yourself in meetings. For people new to meetings, the prospect of finding yourself in this unfamiliar environment can be quite daunting. If you understand what's meant to happen and what to do in a meeting, it makes it much easier for you to help provide advice and determine recommendations.

There will generally be about four to five core advisory committee meetings per year. There may also be a number of 'out of session' meetings and sub-committee meetings you are required to attend. The agency responsible for the advisory committee is generally responsible for all the organisation of a meeting.

The following sections provide information about some of the meeting procedures and terminology that you may face during FAC and other meetings.

5.2 The agenda and background papers

Prior to the meeting, an agenda is prepared by the agency responsible for the meeting and circulated to all members. This **agenda** forms the structure of the meeting (see Appendix 2 for a full list and description of common agenda items). The agenda also states where and when the meeting will take place and what matters will be discussed. The agenda contains standard items of business that ensure core

meeting rules are kept. A draft copy of the minutes of the previous meeting and any other relevant background material is distributed at the same time as the agenda.

5.3 Meeting terminology and process

Meeting Rules - Advisory committee meetings are formal meetings, driven by rules. These rules are defined within a statutory binding document. Within Tasmania, these rules are defined within the document “Fishery Advisory Committees – A Guide to Procedures and Terms of Reference” (see Appendix 1).

The **Chair** is the person appointed to run or “chair” the meeting. Most advisory committees will be run by an independent chair. See Box 1 “Thank you Mr Chair” for more detail on the Chair’s role.

The **Secretary** is the person who takes care of the administrative details of the meeting. One of the most important roles of the Secretary is taking “the minutes” of the meeting. In Tasmanian FAC’s this function is provided by an Executive Support Officer provided by the Department.

The **minutes** are the formal record of what happens at the meeting, including main discussions, recommendations and actions that have been agreed to.

The **quorum** is the specific minimum number of members who must be present for a meeting to be allowed to conduct business and make binding decisions. The quorum is defined in the Terms of Reference.

Discussions about specific issues or aspects of a fishery (i.e. setting of TAC’s) will result in a formal **recommendation** which is then passed onto the Minister for consideration.

A request for a “**point of order**” can be used when a member feels that the meeting procedure is not being stuck to and s/he wants the meeting to return to the correct procedure or order. For example, when an individual is speaking totally off the point, another member might ask “on a point of order Chair, the speaker has clearly departed from the agenda’.

When an individual is not sticking to meeting procedure, being rude, interjecting or misbehaving in some way, the chairperson might rule him/her **out of order**. If a person is ruled out of order, they should apologise to the relevant person and the meeting, and retract any inappropriate statements. Furthermore, their comments are not recognized in the minutes as reasonable contributions to the discussion.

The Chair can ask a person to leave the meeting if the person continues to act “out of order” and/or is not prepared to retract statements.

Declaration of pecuniary interests is a formal register held by the committee of all pecuniary interests a member may have that may compromise that members’ objectivity in the deliberative processes of the FAC. There are also procedures in place for declaring any **Conflict of Interest** (see M2 – p10).

A committee and individuals may need to assess if it is appropriate for a particular member to leave the meeting when specific issues and decisions and/or recommendations are made.

5.4 Advisory decision making

The key purpose of advisory committees is to make recommendations concerning the management or operation of a seafood industry. These recommendations are then put forward to the relevant government Minister, who is the person who makes

the decision on what should happen. The advisory process for setting recommendations generally takes a consensus approach rather than a majority rule / voting approach.

Majority Rule and Voting

Generally speaking, when a group votes using majority rule or Parliamentary Procedure, a competitive dynamic is created within the group because it is being asked to choose between two (or more) possibilities. It is just as acceptable to attack and diminish another's point of view as it is to promote and endorse your own ideas. Often, voting occurs before one side reveals anything about itself, but spends time solely attacking the opponent! In this adversarial environment, one's ideas are owned and often defended in the face of improvements (Butler and Rothstein).

Consensus and Cooperation

Consensus process, on the other hand, creates a cooperative dynamic. Only one proposal is considered at a time. Everyone works together to make it the best possible decision for the group. Any concerns are raised and resolved, sometimes one by one, until all voices are heard. Since proposals are no longer the property of the presenter, a solution can be created more cooperatively.

Consensus is the absence of formal objection to a recommendation. This means that while some might not like the proposed outcome, they do not voice formal disagreement and continue to pursue what is often a minority position. Reaching consensus often means that there are compromises from everyone but it ensures that most people feel part of the decision and provides a clear direction for the Minister to make a decision.

If a FAC cannot reach a consensus, then a recommendation will include all viewpoints put forward, and it will be up to the Minister to decide which path or decision to choose. Most Chairs' will attempt to reach a unanimous decision or consensus, and will only put multiple views forward in a recommendation as a last resort.

Box 1. Thank you Mr. Chair.....

“Chairing” the meeting means running the meeting. In the case of advisory committees, an independently appointed individual usually “chairs” the meeting. In meetings people often refer to the person as “Mr. Chair” or “Madam Chair” and will say things like “with the Chair’s permission....”

The Chair’s job is to make sure:

- Previous minutes are approved as a true and correct record
- the discussion stays relevant
- the agenda is followed and stays on time
- people in the meeting are speaking respectfully and constructively
- everyone in the meeting has a chance to give their view
- the group makes a decision by voting or consensus as determined by the terms of reference or similar
- that any decisions, recommendations and agreed actions are recorded in the “minutes”.

A good chairperson is an active chairperson; it is not the chairperson’s job to simply keep a list of speakers and to let them speak one after the other, but rather to facilitate optimum meeting outcomes.

The chairperson should introduce the topic clearly and guide the discussion, especially when people start repeating points or stay off topic.

When a discussion throws up opposing views, the chairperson should also try to summarise the different positions and where possible, propose a way forward.

A good Chair tries to get consensus rather than forcing a vote.

5.5 Typical meeting structure

Common agenda items for FAC's, and their order of discussion are listed below. For more detail about each agenda item, please refer to Appendix 3: What happens at a meeting.

- 1) Opening of the meeting
- 2) Apologies
- 3) Confirmation of Pecuniary Interests Register
- 4) Adoption of Agenda
- 5) Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- 6) Business Arising from Previous Meeting
- 7) Correspondence
- 8) Reports and Updates
- 9) General Business – including discussion on background papers
- 10) Any Other Business
- 11) Close of Meeting

If you need something discussed at the meeting, you can ring or email the Chair and/or Secretary (Government Executive Support Officer) of the meeting to ask if the topic can be listed on the agenda before the meeting. Otherwise, you can request that a topic of interest be addressed in Other Business on the day of the meeting. This request may or may not be granted by the Chair.

5.6 How to prepare for meetings

To be an active and effective member of a meeting, you must make sure you are well-prepared and handle yourself appropriately during the meeting.

Be prepared

Before you attend your first meeting, make sure you understand Terms of Reference for the committee so you can contribute effectively. If you don't understand anything, or have not received an induction, then speak to the Chair.

Make sure you have read the agenda and background papers **BEFORE THE MEETING.**

Be aware of the topics that will be discussed.

Make sure you have thought about the topic.

Conduct yourself professionally in the meeting

Be involved in the discussion. Speak appropriately and clearly in the meeting (i.e. don't ramble on).

Consider all sides of the topic.

Keep your cool.

Be a good listener.

Dress neatly. If you are not sure of the usual dress standard for meetings, then ask the Executive Officer / Secretary or Chair.



After the meeting you need to do a few important things

Make sure the Secretary circulates the minutes and actions.

Start the actions you agreed to take – don't leave it to the last minute before the next meeting and find you are out of time...

5.7 Other FAC business

There may be a need for FAC's to discuss issues and make decisions outside the normal formalities of a FAC Meeting. Such business can be conducted 'out of session', either by phone conference arrangements and / or through email comments.

Summary: Effective meetings

- Meetings are an important way in which advisory committees do business.
They can have different purposes.
- Meetings are run by the Chair along with the Secretary who takes care of the administrative details of the meeting and records the minutes.
- Meetings require a quorum for the meeting to proceed.
- Meetings have a designated and agreed structure, which must be followed.

Module 7: Charting your own course: next steps

6 Charting your own course: next steps

The content of this induction guide has concentrated on giving you the skills and information needed to work effectively in advisory committee processes. It has highlighted that the work of members is nearly all about relationships and communication.

Influencing other people is often more about changing your attitudes and behaviour than it is about changing theirs. Spending time thinking about your own approach and the interpersonal, presentation, communication and assertiveness skills you possess can help you to be more effective in influencing others and getting what you want.

These are skills that you need to hone and develop as an effective representative.

6.1 Other professional development options

If you are interested in further developing your industry representative and leadership skills, there are a number of learning and development programs you can get involved in. Some examples are:

FRDC People Development Program

www.frdc.com.au/communitypeople/people-development-program

The FRDC People Development Program offers a suite of programs, scholarships and bursaries to build leadership, skills, networks and knowledge.

National Seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP)

www.ruraltraininginitiatives.com.au/home/programs/seafood

The National Seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP) is designed for people wishing to take up leadership roles within the seafood industry. These roles may be at a sector level or regional level but participants may also have national and international leadership aspirations. The focus, however, of the program is for participants to develop an understanding of how to impact constructively, resulting in positive outcomes for the seafood industry nationally.

Seafood industry training package (SITP)

www.agrifoodskills.net.au/training-packages/SFI/

SITP incorporates all commercial activities conducted in or from Australia concerned with harvesting, farming, culturing, processing, storing, transporting, marketing or selling fish and seafood and/or fish and seafood products. The skills and knowledge required to undertake work in the industry have been captured in competency standards for the four sectors of the seafood industry.

Leadership and representation are defined skills, or competencies, in the SITP. By completing this training, and then applying what you have learned at meetings, you could have these skills formally recognised - either as stand-alone skills, or as part of a qualification. If this interests you, talk to a Registered Training Provider (RTO).

Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP)

www.rural-leaders.com.au/programs/arl原因

The Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP) aims to produce a network of informed, capable and ethical leaders who are able to work collaboratively to advance the interests of their industries, communities and rural Australia, in general. The program works to improve the capacity of rural leaders to engage wherever a challenge is best addressed and wherever they can contribute most effectively. This may be within communities and industries, in the political arena or in team-based roles.

Informal Learning

Keep learning. Continue to build your networks and seek out new knowledge and experiences. Read or seek information through the web.

Consider developing a relationship with a mentor, who can help you improve your performance in meetings, or develop your leadership pathway.

Most importantly, continue to stay involved with representation because your sector needs good leaders.

Appendices

Fishery Advisory Committees

A Guide to Procedures and Terms of Reference

November 2006

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
Wild Fisheries Management Branch



1 Background

Fishery Advisory Committees (FACs) play an essential role in the management of Tasmania's fisheries by providing the Minister with specialist advice on key fisheries. The various committees are made up of representatives from the major fishing sectors as well as community groups and key advisers on resource management policy, compliance and research.

The FACs play a central role in the development of fisheries policy and their involvement in policy development has improved consultation and contributed to better fisheries management over the last decade. This booklet provides information on the function of FACs and the roles and responsibilities of FAC members and chairs.

2 Role of a FAC

The Fishery Advisory Committees (FACs) are established under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 (LMRM Act)* which states:

- 27 (1) The Minister may establish advisory committees to provide information and advice to the Minister on matters related to the administration of this Act.
- (2) The Minister may appoint any person as a member of an advisory committee on any terms and conditions the Minister determines.
- (3) The Minister may abolish an advisory committee at any time.

FACs are a major source of advice to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water on issues relating to a fishery along with advice from other sources and the General Manager (Primary Industries).

The FAC discusses issues and provides the Minister with possible solutions but ultimately it is the Minister who is responsible for the final management decisions made.

3 Current FACs

There are currently five FACs established by the Minister. They are:

| FAC | Fishery |
|--|--|
| Abalone Fishery Advisory Committee (AbFAC) | Commercial abalone fishery |
| Crustacean Fishery Advisory Committee (CFAC) | Commercial rock lobster and giant crab fisheries |
| Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee (RecFAC) | Recreational fisheries (all species) |
| Scalefish Fishery Advisory Committee (SFAC) | Commercial scalefish fishery |
| Scallop Fishery Advisory Committee (ScFAC) | Commercial scallop fishery |

4 Terms of reference

A FAC provides the Minister with advice on a wide range of issues related to their fishery, including:

- any matter managed under the *LMRM Act*,
- any matter subject to regulations under the *LMRM Act*,
- proposals to make, vary, or revoke regulations under the *LMRM Act*, or to make amendments to the *LMRM Act*,
- management programs for a fishery related to that committee,
- any matter related to the administration of the *LMRM Act*,
- any matter that the Minister refers to the advisory committee for advice or on which the advisory committee believes it should advise the Minister.

5 FAC membership

FAC members are selected by the Minister to provide the committee with the right mix of people to explore fisheries issues and develop possible solutions. A FAC will have as members, people with direct expertise in the relevant fishery, a member from DPIW Wild Fisheries Management Branch, members from the government bodies providing fisheries services (compliance, research) and members with expertise in conservation and other matters as deemed necessary for that fishery.

5.1 FAC Chair

The Minister will appoint a Chair for each FAC who will be independent of the various interest groups and will have relevant expertise appropriate to managing the performance of the committee in conducting its business.

Where a Chair is not available to attend a FAC meeting, the FAC members present will appoint one of the members to chair the meeting.

The Chair is responsible for drafting the resolutions and actions agreed at the meeting so that these can be reported accurately to the Minister. The Chair will also ensure that

the work of the FAC progresses between meetings through consultation with the FAC Secretariat.

5.2 Role of the DPIPWE (Wild Fisheries Management)

The DPIW officer who is the manager of the fishery is also a member of the FAC and participates as a full member in all its activities. They act as the principal channel for information between the FAC and the Department.

The Manager (Wild Fisheries Management) may also attend FAC meetings as an observer and can provide guidance to the FAC on matters relating to other FACs and on the policy position of the Department.

The General Manager (Water and Marine Resources) will ensure that administrative support is provided for the FAC by appointing a FAC Secretariat from the Department.

5.3 *Role of members*

While members are drawn from many interest groups, as FAC members their primary duty is to the community and in developing the best possible solutions for all current and future users of the fishery. FAC members are encouraged to put forward the views of the interest groups they represent but must consider the views of all interest groups in providing advice and recommendations. FAC membership should not be used as an opportunity to serve the group from which they were nominated and the interest of the FAC should be served first.

FAC members must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Able to put views clearly,
- Act in the best interests of the community with regard to managing the fishery rather than as an advocate for any particular organisation or interest group,
- Observe confidentiality and discretion in dealing with the business and outcomes of the FAC,
- Participate in an objective and impartial manner,
- Declare interests and avoid any potential for conflict of interest in FAC affairs,
- Make the necessary commitment of time to ensure that they are fully informed and able to attend meetings,
- Act corporately and be committed to decisions taken by the FAC.

Where a FAC cannot reach consensus on an issue, all views should be submitted to the Minister.

5.3.1 *Appointment*

All FAC members are appointed by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water following nominations by interest groups, expressions of interest in response to public advertisements, direct contact with those who can provide specific expertise and other methods as appropriate. The Minister has the final responsibility for determining the membership.

5.3.2 *Conflict of interest*

A FAC member who has a direct, or indirect, interest in any matter decided or under consideration by the advisory committee must disclose the nature of the interest to the committee and to the Minister.

5.3.3 *Termination of Appointment*

A FAC member may resign by giving written notification to the Minister.

Appointments may also be terminated by the Minister for a variety of reasons including misbehaviour, physical or mental incapacity, inefficiency or incompetence.

Any action by a member that demonstrates their unwillingness or inability to comply with the obligations and responsibilities of FAC members as outlined in this guide may be grounds for termination of appointment.

An appointment may also be terminated if:

- (i) the member has been convicted of an offence against the *Living Marine Resources Management Act (1995)*, or a fisheries offence against any other Act (including an Act of the Commonwealth or another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth), or
- (ii) the member without reasonable excuse fails to disclose a conflict of interest, or
- (iii) the member is absent from two consecutive meetings of the FAC.

5.3.4 *Alternate members*

The Minister will not appoint alternate members. Particular individuals are appointed for their skills and expertise. It is important that FACs have a stable membership to ensure continuity and consistency in decision making and advice. If a member is unable to fulfil their responsibilities then they should resign from the FAC to allow the Minister to appoint a member who can meet the commitments required.

In exceptional circumstances the Chair, at their discretion, may approve a proxy and advise the Minister as soon as practicable.

6 Procedural matters

6.1 Ministerial direction

The FAC is appointed by the Minister to provide information and advice on matters related to the administration of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*.

The Minister may from time to time direct the committee to consider certain issues, seek submissions from relevant bodies or individuals, or to provide specific recommendations.

6.2 Subcommittees

A FAC may establish a subcommittee with or without additional members to advise on particular matters. The subcommittee should be convened and chaired by a FAC member nominated and appointed at a FAC meeting. The subcommittee is solely responsible to the FAC that established it.

6.3 Quorum

A quorum will be five members of the committee including at least three non-government members. If a quorum is not present, a FAC cannot proceed with business.

6.4 Agenda and records

The procedure for the calling of meetings and conduct of business at meetings will be as determined by the committee itself.

A FAC must keep a record of proceedings at meetings, however, individual recommendations or dissent from recommendations will only be recorded at the specific request of members.

6.5 Observers

FACs may seek submissions from relevant bodies, or individuals, and may invite observers to be present during specific deliberations of the advisory committee.

Observers may not attend any component of a meeting without an invitation from the Chairperson.

7 Communication

7.1 Media

FAC members are not to speak to the media regarding their role or provide the media with information that they are privy to as part of their role as a FAC member. Any media contacts should be dealt with by the Minister or the General Manager (Water and Marine Resources) unless the Minister has nominated the FAC Chair to act as the spokesperson on a specific matter.

If a FAC member is dealing with the media as a member of an interest group then they must identify themselves as a member of that interest group and not as a member of a FAC. Similarly, a FAC member dealing with the media as a private individual must identify that they are speaking as an individual.

7.2 Confidentiality

Any formal advice provided to the Minister from a FAC is considered to be confidential for a period of two weeks from the date of issue of such advice except when the Minister otherwise notifies the Chairperson.

Issues of a personal nature or related to specific individuals are to be treated as confidential unless otherwise advised by the Chairperson, with the approval of the Minister.

Subject to the approval of the committee, the Chairperson may rule that certain issues are confidential.

8 Remuneration for members

The remuneration of the Chair and members of a FAC will be determined by the Minister following State Service guidelines. It should be noted that it is a matter of policy that FAC members are not paid sitting fees. The Chair is paid a sitting fee in recognition of the additional responsibility of this position.

Subject to the prior authorisation of the Minister, the FAC Chair and members are entitled to travelling allowances when on FAC business at State Service travel rates.

8 Appendix 2: Assessing your communication skills

This activity helps you to look at your strengths and weaknesses in communication.

There are a series of statements for you to respond to and then score your answers.

The activity is designed to help your look at the communication skills you already have and to provide information about skills you may made need to concentrate on.

Instructions:

For each statement, tick the box that best describes you. Answer questions as you actually are, rather than how you think you should be.

| | Statement | Not at all | Rarely | Some times | Often | Very Often |
|----|---|------------|--------|------------|-------|------------|
| 1 | I try to anticipate and predict possible causes of confusion, and I deal with them up front. | | | | | |
| 2 | When I write an, email, letter or other document, I give all of the background information and detail I can to make sure that my message is understood. | | | | | |
| 3 | If I don't understand something, I ask questions until I have the information I need. | | | | | |
| 4 | I'm never surprised to find that people haven't understood what I've said. | | | | | |
| 5 | I try to think about how the other person will receive my message before I say anything. | | | | | |
| 6 | When people talk to me, I try to see their perspectives. | | | | | |
| 7 | I don't use email to communicate complex issues with people. It may be quick and save time in the short term but I know it won't be an effective way to ensure their understanding. | | | | | |
| 8 | When I finish writing a report, memo, or email, I check for typos etc. Then I put it aside for a while and go back to it later to check that it says what I want to say in the manner I wish to say it. | | | | | |
| 9 | When talking to people, I pay attention to their body language. | | | | | |
| 10 | I use diagrams and charts to help express my ideas. | | | | | |
| 11 | Before I communicate, I think about what the person needs to know, and how best to convey it. | | | | | |
| 12 | When someone's talking to me, I firstly listen actively to understand what they are saying. Then I think carefully about what I'm going to say to ensure they receive my message. | | | | | |
| 13 | Before I send a message, I think about the best way to communicate it (in person, over the phone, in a newsletter, via email). | | | | | |
| 14 | I try to help people understand the underlying concepts behind the point I am discussing. This reduces misconceptions and increases understanding. | | | | | |
| 15 | I consider cultural barriers when planning my communications. | | | | | |

Score interpretation

When you are finished, add up your score in each column. Score the columns by multiplying with the following ratings:

| Rating | Score |
|----------------------|-------|
| Not at all | 1 |
| Rarely | 2 |
| Some times | 3 |
| Often | 4 |
| Very Often | 5 |
| Add your total score | |

| Score | Comment |
|--------------|--|
| 56-75 | <p>You understand your role as a communicator, both when you send messages, and when you receive them.</p> <p>You anticipate problems, and you choose the right ways of communicating.</p> <p>People respect you for your ability to communicate clearly, and they appreciate your listening skills.</p> |
| 36-55 | <p>You're a capable communicator who can communicate well.</p> <p>Take the time to think about your approach to communication, and focus on receiving messages effectively, as much as sending them. This will help you improve.</p> |
| 15-35 | <p>You have skills in communication but you need to keep working on your communication skills.</p> <p>The good news is that, by paying attention to communication, you can be much more effective at getting your message across.</p> |

9 Appendix 3: What happens at a meeting

| Typical Agenda Items | What happens |
|--|--|
| Item 1: Opening the Meeting... | <p>The meeting begins after the Chair declares the meeting opened.</p> <p>The meeting is unable to begin until the Chairperson is satisfied that there is a quorum. Without a quorum, the meeting must be postponed and any decisions or recommendations made without a quorum are not binding.</p> |
| Item 2: Apologies... | <p>The Chairperson states the names of those members who formally notified that they were unable to attend the meeting.</p> |
| Item 3: Confirmation of Pecuniary Interests Register... | <p>All advisory committee representatives must formally state their pecuniary interests relevant to the committee. These are generally recorded in a Table.</p> |
| Item 4: Adoption of the Agenda... | <p>Once the meeting begins, the Chairperson will ask if there are any other items for the agenda – this is the time to raise any important issues for discussion that couldn't be put on the agenda in time for the meeting. Once amended the agenda will be adopted and defines the structure of the meeting.</p> |

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| Item 5: Minutes of the Previous Meeting... | <p>The Chairperson “tables” the minutes of the previous meeting making them open as a topic of discussion. If the members do not agree that the draft minutes are accurate, changes may be suggested. There may be discussion about any major changes, and debate about what was / was not said. Once all amendments are agreed and finalised, the Chair will ask the members to “accept” or “adopt” the minutes, as an accurate record of proceedings.</p> <p>It is not appropriate, at this stage, to indulge in debates on decisions that were made at the previous meeting. Anyone who wishes to alter a recommendation made at previous meetings should wait until the same subject arises in the general business of the current meeting or raise it in "Any Other Business".</p> <p>The most important advice about the minutes of a previous meeting is to make sure you read them before they are discussed and adopted at the next meeting.</p> |
| Item 6: Business Arising from Previous Meeting... | <p>Any reports, pieces of information or actions that were requested at the previous meeting are debated and a decision is made on the appropriate action to take in this item.</p> <p>Often the issues that need following up from the last meeting are already listed in the agenda.</p> |

| | |
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| <p>Item 7:</p> <p>Correspondence ...</p> | <p>Letters that have been sent to or from the committee since the last meeting are tabled and discussed, if the meeting wishes to do so, including any formal notifications or letters of response from the relevant Minister.</p> <p>The Chairperson should summarise correspondence which cover similar issues, or which express similar opinions, and discuss them as a single issue.</p> |
| <p>Item 8: General</p> <p>Business including</p> <p>reports & updates ...</p> | <p>Reports and submissions that have been written for the meeting or include information relevant to the work of the meeting are tabled and debated / discussed.</p> <p>The committee may be required to put forward a recommendation based on discussions or may suggest further information be presented at the next meeting.</p> <p>Relevant stakeholder groups may also provide a verbal update of work / issues since the last meeting – i.e. management update, research update, industry update etc.</p> |

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| <p>Item 10: Any other Business ...</p> | <p>When all items on the agenda have been debated, the Chairperson may call for items not listed in General Business. It is at this point, that members are able to raise issues they feel are important, but were not listed on the agenda.</p> <p>No extremely important or complex issues should be raised unannounced during this part of the meeting.</p> <p>If an urgent matter must be dealt with by the meeting, the Chair should be informed before the meeting begins so a revised agenda can then be drafted.</p> <p>If the Chair feels that any of the issues brought up for discussion are too complex or troublesome, he may call for the topic to be discussed at a subsequent meeting. This could be a special meeting to discuss just that matter, or at the next scheduled general meeting.</p> |
| <p>Item 11: Close of Meeting</p> | <p>Once all the issues have been discussed, the Chairperson advises members of the date and time of the next meeting.</p> <p>The Chairperson should formally “declare the meeting closed”. This means that discussions are no longer recorded, decisions cannot be made and the formal rules of discussion and points of order no longer apply... good manners do though!</p> |

Butler, C. T. and A. Rothstein "On Conflict and Consensus: a handbook on Formal Consensus decision making."
<http://www.ic.org/pnp/ocac/>.