Final Report

Project Title: A program to enhance membership participation, association health, innovation and leadership succession in the Australian fishing industry (Short title - Healthy Industry Associations and Succession)

FRDC Project 2011/410

Principal Investigator
Dr Ian Plowman
Ph – 0417 705 489
Email – ian@plowman.com.au

Co Investigator
Neil MacDonald
Ph – 0409 559 995
Email – neil@nmac.com.au

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Enquiries should be addressed to:
Dr Ian Plowman,
30 Duke Street,
TOOWONG, Qld 4066
Australia
Email: ian@plowman.com.au
Phone: +61 7 3870 2231

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The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation plans, invests in and manages fisheries research and development throughout Australia. It is a statutory authority within the portfolio of the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, jointly funded by the Australian Government and the fishing industry.

The task is not so much to see what no one has yet seen. It is to think what nobody has yet thought of, about that which everyone has seen.

Arthur Schopenhauer, 1813

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Principal Investigator Ian C. Plowman

Address 30 Duke Street,
TOOWONG, Qld 4066
Ph. 61 7 38702231

Objectives

1 Identify the current health of industry associations particularly with respect to attracting and retaining members, nurturing participation, fostering innovation, developing leaders and embedding succession.

2 Identify characteristics of healthy industry associations with a view to understanding strategies of engagement, participation, innovation and leadership renewal.

3 Provide recommendations on appropriate legal structure and constitution that will ensure succession whilst protecting office bearers from personal culpability.

4 Provide a set of action-research tools which foster home-grown strategies for engagement, participation, innovation and leadership renewal.

5 Provide a set of conversation tools that radically enhance engagement, participation, innovation and leadership renewal.

6 Engage with industry peak bodies, sector associations and members exposing them to these ideas and tools and giving them practice in their use.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

The project outputs have contributed to or will lead to the following outcomes:

- Media and web-based materials announcing the project.
- Reports, each peak industry sector specific, on the level of engagement, innovation, participation, leadership and succession in each Sector. [Note: With the approval of the FRDC, a single report, relevant to all sectors, has been produced.]
- Legal advice on the constitutional format most likely to foster leadership renewal and succession. This will enable any association to amend their constitution accordingly. [Note: Although this was an original objective, it was waived, based on legal advice. Model rules dictated by the legislation of each State and Federal jurisdiction are included in the Appendices.]

- A resource kit and DVD/CD containing (a) case studies on more innovative and resilient associations that are proactive in their succession-planning, (b) legal advice on amendments to constitution to foster leadership renewal and succession [Legal advice waived.] (c) tools and techniques (‘Meetings without Discussion’) for improved conversation and hence engagement of newer, quieter and less confident fishers [in the appendices]; (d) a model of action-research/continuous improvement/innovation [in the appendices] , and (e) a model for monitoring and evaluation.[in the appendices]
- A set of guidelines to facilitate the extension of this resource kit to subsidiary industry associations.
- A minimum of seven workshops nationally.
- A series of media articles giving both tools and examples of successful behaviour change, adaptation, innovation, and succession.
- Presentation of summary project outputs at ‘Seafood Directions Conference 2013'.

The People Development Program plan 2008 - 2013 identified the goals of "enhance industry leadership within all sectors" and "build industry capacity to drive change to achieve goals".

A range of drivers including (i) the shortage of industry leaders, (ii) the urgent need to develop people's skills to effectively contribute to debates, policy development and resource management, (iii) the need for development of skills to enhance business profitability and sustainability and (iv) learning from other industries that have embraced a culture of knowledge and innovation. These areas were identified as needing capacity building within the industry.

The inability to attract, train, engage and retain leaders in fishing industry bodies is critical to organisational failure, together with falling numbers of industry participants and the aging of the industry's workforce. How to invigorate organisations to embrace an innovative culture, build leaders and provide them with capacity to apply those skills is critical to the future of the seafood industry.

While the question of leadership is an obvious issue for the seafood industry, less obvious is the fact that leaders are much more likely to emerge from industry associations that (i) are themselves healthy enough to attract and retain members, and (ii) have the capacity to grow responsibility and confidence among the broad membership.

So this project sets out to examine those characteristics that lead to healthy industry associations, which can attract and retain members, which share responsibilities broadly so that leadership can emerge naturally, and which have a conscious policy of leadership succession. In pursuit of these goals, the project, in addition to examining Australian seafood industry associations, chose to look outside the Australian industries (aquaculture, wild-catch, and recreational) and examine several overseas industry associations as well as a number of land-based Australian primary industry associations. Twenty two case studies were conducted.

Within the Australian seafood industry, our research design sought to examine twelve associations, drawn from wild-catch, aquaculture, and recreational. Within each of those sectors, the research sought to examine peak, regional and local level associations.

The research began with desk research, using university data bases to seek out literature and research that identified characteristics of healthy and resilient voluntary member-based associations. Those characteristics were then developed into an interview format.

Within the sector parameters of the research design, associations were approached with an invitation to participate. In-depth interviews, averaging 1.5 hours each, were then conducted, one-on-one, using phone or Skype, with a number of knowledgeable association members. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analysed. A confidential subsidiary report was provided to each participating association, while general themes, ideas and principles that emerged became the basis for the overall research report.

The interviews revealed that there are two sets of factors that underpin healthy industry associations and leadership succession. The first are external to the association and largely outside of its influence. These include economic, social, and political factors. The second are internal to the association and within its power to address. The report addresses both, with more emphasis on the latter.

Interview topics included age of the association, average age of members and the age-range, diversity within the membership (including gender), purpose, vision or charter of the association, the machinery of management and governance, how membership is defined, capacity to absorb new members and lose old ones, freedom from cliques and sub-groups, having a code of conduct and a conflict resolution protocol, the nature of benefits and services provided to members, the internal capacity (including personnel, finances and time) to deliver those benefits and services, the level of marketing, public relations and political influence, decentralisation of decision-making, freshness of management and leadership, the quality and methods for both internal and external communication, and the extent to which the association measures and monitors its performance with a view to continuous improvement. Interviewees were also asked to identify (a) major challenges that their association faced, and (b) ideas for strengthening the health of their association.

With 68 interviews spread over twenty two case studies, many associations, though not all, would regard themselves as healthy. All associations suffer from an aging membership, with too few people shouldering the load. Most struggle to attract new members, particularly younger members, and only one of the associations had a deliberate policy of leadership succession. Only a small number of the associations examined had a deliberate policy of growing future leaders through allocation of responsibilities to even the newest members.

Emerging patterns from the literature review and the interviews suggested a host of recommendations that might be adopted by any association that wishes to be healthier, more robust, and grow its own future leaders. Where there are multiple levels of association (say local, regional, national), a deliberate leadership succession plan, that includes an exit strategy for all incumbent leaders, will thereby ensure available skilled and knowledgeable representation at the next level. The same deliberate exit strategy will provide leadership opportunities to all of those younger and newer association members in whom the industry and the association have invested through leadership training.

The Appendices in the Report include a number of tools and techniques for improving association health. These include tools for action research, for continuous improvement, for monitoring and evaluation, and for participative decision-making.

This project has described data, methods, analyses and empirical management measures for understanding the critical characteristics of voluntary member-based industry associations. Through its extensive recommendations, it provides a pathway to improved health and leadership succession for any association. The work contained in this report has national significance for voluntary member-based associations of any type, within the Australian seafood industry or beyond it.

KEYWORDS: Industry associations, leadership, leadership succession, member engagement, responsibility sharing, action research, continuous improvement.

Authors: Ian Plowman is a clinical and organisational psychologist, facilitator and social researcher who works with individuals, organizations, industries, communities and government agencies. He holds a Doctorate in Management, an Advanced Master's Degree in Business Administration, a Master's Degree in Organizational Psychology and an Honours Degree in Clinical Psychology.

Based on his combined academic and professional background, Ian helps his clients to develop skills and awareness to raise their levels of creativity and innovation. His philosophy is to help others to help themselves. See www.plowman.com.au

Neil MacDonald is a natural resource management consultant specialising in fisheries with extensive experience in government and in industry support services. Neil has worked with a range of sector, state and national groups that represent seafood industry interests to enhance their capacity to better deliver support and services that improve the outcomes for fishers. Neil currently works with a range of industry groups to enhance their performance as representative bodies within co-management frameworks and improving governance of associations. See http://www.linkedin.com/pub/neil-macdonald/10/41a/216.

Illustrator: Pam Walpole is a multi-award winning sculptor, painter, cartoonist and illustrator who has held solo and group exhibitions in both painting and sculpture. Past President of the Society of Sculptors, Queensland, Pam studied Commercial Illustration and Design at the Queensland University of Technology before completing a Diploma in Fine Art at the Brisbane Institute of Art. Pam's work is represented in public, private and corporate collections throughout Australia and overseas. See http://www.pamwalpole.com.

2. Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the financial support of the FRDC. We thank the industry steering committee for guidance and helpful suggestions. And, most of all, we thank the interviewees who so freely gave us their time and their wisdom.

3. Background

The People Development Program Advisor group has identified the development of innovation and succession within Industry bodies as a critical area for development.

This project specifically addresses Program 4 - People Development Goals and Objectives, in particular: 1. enhance industry leadership within all sectors, and 2. build industry capacity to drive change to achieve goals.

This project will specifically address a number of significant drivers including:

1. The shortage of industry leaders in all sectors of the industry,
2. The urgent need to develop people with the skills to effectively contribute to a range of debates and policy development,
3. The shortage of opportunities to develop skills to directly improve business profitability and sustainability,
4. The fishing industry will learn from other industries that have embraced a knowledge and innovation culture, and ….
5. The industry is geographically dispersed and fragmented and needs opportunities to learn within and across sectors.

This project addresses Strategic Objective 2 - Build Industry Capacity to Drive Change to Achieve Goals. The project will have outputs that specifically address the following strategies:

1. Investigate skill needs to build committee competence and confidence,
2. Invest in industry capacity to drive change,
3. Invest in projects that improve succession within industry, and ….
4. Identify and address impediments to individuals taking on representational and leadership roles at local and sector levels.

Leadership development supports the training and exposure to a broad range of skills to enhance the capacity of future leaders. However there may be a number of institutional and personal impediments to the identification and development of future leaders. In order to attract, encourage and build a pathway for future leaders there needs to be provisions to ensure fishers are supported in engaging with their representative bodies and see themselves as being able to contribute to healthy organisations.

The structured administrative mechanisms that exist within peak and sector bodies have a direct influence on the level of engagement with the fishers represented. Where an organisation is seem as effective, with the human and organisational capacity to communicate with its members and represent their interests to other groups - such as management agencies, advisory committees, other sector or representative bodies, then it is more likely to be attractive to its members and more likely to attract fishers to be involved in that body's range of activities.

The ability to attract new or younger members and to provide a pathway for increased skills and involvement will lead to renewal and innovation in representative bodies that are then able to lead their sectors in both engaging other stakeholders and interests, as well as building the services and facilities that can be offered to members. Critical to attracting members is the capacity for the organisation and its current leaders to recognise and reward the thoughts and views of new or formerly less active members and consequently empower them to take on leadership roles into the future.

While much is talked about leadership development, often there are subtle and institutional impediments to those who bring new ideas or propose a change of emphasis or direction. These unintended impediments needs to be removed and organisational design, practices and procedures, together with individual encouragement and development, are keys to encouraging fisher engagement and growth in industry bodies.

4. Need

The need for improved leadership development and effective leadership succession to enhance innovation within industry businesses and associations has been acknowledged in numerous reports and industry plans. While the need for innovation is recognised, the industry also needs simple action-research models that enable them to do it.

The People Development Program plan 2008 - 2013 identified, among others, the goals of "enhance industry leadership within all sectors" and "build industry capacity to drive change to achieve goals".

A range of drivers including (i) the shortage of industry leaders, (ii) the urgent need to develop people's skills to effectively contribute to debates, policy development and resource management, (iii) the need for development of skills to enhance business profitability and sustainability and (iv) learning from other industries that have embraced a culture of knowledge and innovation. These areas were identified as needing capacity building within the industry.

The inability to attract, train, engage and retain leaders in fishing industry bodies is critical to organisational failure, together with falling numbers of industry participants and the aging of the industry's workforce. How to invigorate organisations to embrace an innovative culture, build leaders and provide them with capacity to apply those skills is critical to the future of the seafood industry.

Building capacity to represent the interests of the industry and their fishery to government, to the community and to consumers is critical to commercial fishers (wild-catch and aquaculture), while similar skills are essential to empower recreational and indigenous fishers to be able to contribute to the management and research debates that underpin long term sustainability. Building this capacity begins at the most basic level, namely **helping the young, the new and the less confident find a voice within their association**. It is here that the greatest gains in participation and leadership can be achieved.

5. Objectives

1 Identify the current health of industry associations particularly with respect to attracting and retaining members, nurturing participation, fostering innovation, developing leaders and embedding succession.

2 Identify characteristics of healthy industry associations with a view to understanding strategies of engagement, participation, innovation and leadership renewal.

3 Provide recommendations on appropriate legal structure and constitution that will ensure succession whilst protecting office bearers from personal culpability. [Note: following agreement with FRDC, the original objective of obtaining legal advice has been waived. State and Territory legislation provides adequate guidance on model rules, and URLs for each jurisdiction are contained within the report.]

4 Provide a set of action-research tools which foster home-grown strategies for engagement, participation, innovation and leadership renewal.

5 Provide a set of conversation tools that radically enhance engagement, participation, innovation and leadership renewal.

6 Engage with industry peak bodies, sector associations and members exposing them to these ideas and tools and giving them practice in their use.

6. Methods

The intent of the research was to ensure that the three seafood sectors of wildcatch, aquaculture, and recreational fishing were all represented. Further, the intent was to examine local, regional (or mid-level) associations, along with peak bodies. To gain a comparison, the research also looked at Australian associations in the land-based primary industry sector along with a number of overseas seafood associations.

In consequence, the research examined 22 separate associations, as outlined in the attached table. (See overleaf)

Before conducting the primary research on these case studies, the project began by looking at already published research papers that provide insight into healthy voluntary member-based associations and leadership succession. A search of the ProQuest data base through the University of Queensland revealed hundreds of articles on the topics, though none were found specific to seafood industries. Twenty eight promising research papers were downloaded for detailed examination. Key themes and ideas were then extracted, to be used later during analysis of the primary data.

The literature review also surfaced earlier work by one of the two authors of this Report. Plowman (2004), in a partnership piece of research sponsored by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and the University of Queensland, examined the health of a number of Australian land-based primary industry associations. In 2008, the FRDC commissioned van der Geest and MacDonald to investigate barriers to fisher engagement with associations. Other useful research and publications pertaining to healthy groups also surfaced during the literature review.

Drawing on the literature review and desk research, a draft interview questionnaire was developed. Following trial and suggestions from the Project Steering Committee, the primary data capture began.

Starting with our broad research plan to capture a cross-section of the Australian seafood industries, specific associations were invited to participate. Those that indicated willingness were invited to provide the contact details of ‘wise owls’; people who had a detailed understanding of their particular association and their industry. Four interviewees were selected for each of the 12 Australian seafood associations, while two interviewees were selected for each of the overseas and the Australian non-fishing associations.

This resulted in a pool of sixty eight interviewees.

Research Design – Participating Associations

Association	Sector	Type	Note
National Aquaculture Council	Aquaculture	National peak body	
Queensland Aquaculture Industry Federation	Aquaculture	State body	
Australian Prawn Farmers Association	Aquaculture	Producer-level body	
Western Australian Fishing Industry Council	Wildcatch and Aquaculture	State peak body covering a range of different fisheries	Does not represent recreational sector
Western Rock Lobster Council	Wildcatch	Lobster specific state commodity body	
United Mid-West Fishers Association	Wildcatch	Producer-level body for rock lobster	
Wildcatch Fisheries South Australia	Wildcatch	State peak body for wildcatch	
Southern Fishermen’s Association	Wildcatch	A regional body	
South East Professional Fishermen’s Association	Wildcatch	Producer-level body	
Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing	Recreational	State peak body	
TAS Aust National Sportsfishing Assoc	Recreational	Fisher-level body in Tasmania	
SA Aust National Sportsfishing Assoc	Recreational	Fisher-level body in South Australia.	

New Zealand Seafood Industry Council	Wildcatch and aquaculture	National peak body	
Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance	Aquaculture	National peak body	
Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association*	Aquaculture	Producer-level body	
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, North East Branch – UK	Wildcatch	Regional branch of national peak body	
CaneGrowers Australia	Sugar cane	National peak body	
CaneGrowers Tableland	Sugar cane	Producer-level local body	
Traprock Group	Agriculture	Producer-level body	This association formed specifically to cater for fine wool producers in a specific geographic area. It now caters for all agriculture in the region.
Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Association	Cotton	Producer-level body	
Northern Territory Horticultural Association	Horticulture	State level peak body	
Northern Territory Agricultural Association	General agriculture (not grazing)	State level peak body	

Each of the twenty two associations was then allocated to one of the two researchers. Taking one case study at a time, potential interviewees were contacted to arrange a suitable time for the interview. They were also forwarded, electronically, the interview format in advance.

Apart from two interviews which were conducted face-to-face, all interviews were conducted by phone or Skype. Each interview, which averaged 90 minutes in length, was digitally recorded using software known as 'Pamela'. The resulting MP3 audio-file was then placed in DropBox to be accessed by a cyber-secretary to create an interview transcript as a Word document. That draft interview was then emailed to the interviewee with a request that (a) they make any editorial changes they wished, and (b) they authorised its use in a subsidiary report to their own association and extracts to be used in the main research Report. No identities of interviewees were revealed within associations or beyond.

When all interviews were complete for any particular association, a draft report was completed for that association. The draft report was structured on the interview questions and was liberally populated by respondents' quotes. In addition, each draft report contained a front-end summary of that particular association, describing its health, issues of leadership and challenges faced. The recipients of the specific association draft report were invited to make any editorial changes or correction of errors. They were also requested to (a) approve that their association be identified in the main research Report, (b) to approve the use of the front-end summary as a case study in the main research Report, and (c) to approve the use of quotes from their association report in the main research Report.

None of these individual association reports have been made available to any other party.

At the conclusion of the data capture and analysis, it was clear that most associations had both strengths and weaknesses. None might be said to represent a perfect role model for others, though some came close. It was then decided to write two further case studies, fictitious ones, that illustrated what a very healthy seafood industry association might look like. Case Study 23, Perfect Ports Association, and Case Study 24, Seafood National Peak Body, are the result. Both are offered to stimulate thinking and conversation.

The main research report 'evolved' as a working document over the life of the research. Beginning with useful concepts identified in the initial literature review, each case study, as it was completed, contributed further substance. This involved subjecting each interview to discourse analysis in order to identify emerging themes and patterns. Over the 12 months that it took to complete all interviews and case studies, the emerging draft generic Report was forwarded monthly to the FRDC and to members of the Project Steering Committee to keep its members informed of the progress of the project and to invite their comment.

During the twelve months of primary research, appendices were added to the emerging draft generic Report, layout was improved, and illustrations, provided by a professional cartoonist, added. The report was then prepared in the final FRDC-prescribed format, resulting in a 585 page document.

Research findings were conveyed to and tested with industry representatives in day-long workshops conducted in each of the six States and the Northern Territory.

7. Results/Discussion/Recommendations

The research is based on 68 personal interviews conducted with knowledgeable members of the participating associations, using a structured interview process. The interviews addressed the topics as they appear below.

Age of the association:

Associations have a life cycle that follows a predictable rhythm. Recognising, acknowledging and understanding where an association is within its life cycle can lead to greater understanding by those charged with its management.

> **Recommendation 1:** Recognize that lifecycle stages and energy cycles are natural for any group, to acknowledge their inevitability, and to seek to identify where they are at any point in time in order anticipate the coming phase.

Average age of members and the age range:

Associations need to be in a state of constant renewal. This means replacing older retiring members with younger ones. High costs of entry into the industry, coupled with conditions of eligibility for membership, are increasingly barriers to entry for potential younger members. Those contributing sweat equity need to have a say in their future. Further, younger people have a different attitude and set of expectations in relation to associations that makes their engagement more challenging. So, in order to survive, associations and industries need to be increasingly creative in their endeavours to attract and retain younger members.

> **Recommendation 2:** Encourage, by whatever means possible, younger people to join and to become active participants in the association. Alter the membership rules so that those with sweat equity have a say in their own future. Ask younger industry members what they might seek from an industry association and tailor the association membership eligibility and benefits accordingly. And it will also mean having different expectations of the level of engagement that might be possible and a greater range of means, particularly digital, of maintaining that engagement. Although this recruitment task will rarely be easy, the task is vital to the future of any industry and/or any association.

Gender/diversity mix of association members:

Society is enriched by diversity. Our research found that all of the fishery associations examined had substantial over-representation of males in the membership and on the Boards. Women - although they probably don't hold the fishing licence - are likely to be active partners in the majority of small family fishing businesses. Engagement and enrolment of women is but one of the many avenues of diversity with which associations might be enriched.

Recommendation 3:

a. Recognise the natural tendencies within different industry sectors to be homogeneous or otherwise.
b. Recognise the natural tendencies within different industry sectors to be conservative or otherwise.
c. Women make up slightly over 50% of the Australian adult population. Assuming that the Australian aquaculture and fishing industries have a similar gender distribution – considering both licence-holders and partners, the 50% is an appropriate membership target for all associations to strive for. Targeting the partners of male members, through provision of activities and benefits that might appeal to women, makes this challenge quite realistic.
d. Seek to have a minimum of two women members on the Board.
e. Take steps to maximise diversity of age, skill, and experience within the association and on the Board.

Purpose, vision, or charter of the association:

An association's purpose or charter is the mast-head around which members gather. It is the beacon towards which they collectively sail. It is the collective aspiration for which people are willing to put in dollars and time. And members will continue making those inputs provided the value that they gain is greater than their input costs. Since the external environment is in a constant state of flux, the purpose of an association also needs to be dynamic and under constant review to meet the changing circumstances and the changing needs of its members.

Recommendation 4:

a. Cater for the three social needs of members, namely social need, need for achievement, and need for power.
b. Publish the association's purpose or charter so that all members have a clear and shared understanding of what the association is there to achieve.
c. Revisit annually that purpose or charter. This should be done by the executive, in consultation with members, to ensure it continues to be appropriate or relevant.
d. Include the association's purpose as a header or footer on all association correspondence (including every meeting agenda, and all emails), thereby ensuring this stays front-of-mind.
e. Use the association's purpose or charter to tell the world what business the association is not in. Therefore the purpose or charter serves as a filter in determining what activities the association chooses to undertake or declines. Hence the

association should only undertake activities that clearly fall within its charter or purpose. Further, the relative importance of potential association activities can be determined by assessing how well each contributes to the published charter.

f. Use the association's charter or purpose as the conscious beacon to which all the association's efforts are deliberately focused.

A means of organisation, defined roles and responsibilities:

Once it understands its purpose, an association needs the means to move towards that purpose. This means that people need to do something, to carry out particular responsibilities in a co-ordinated and efficient way. It is more likely that the association will achieve its purpose when its machinery of governance and subsidiary roles are logical, documented, co-ordinated and subject to regular monitoring and review. (See also Recommendations 25 and 26).

Recommendation 5:

a. Establish an additional formal Board role – that of Monitor, a person whose primary role it is to keep an eye on and regularly report on the effectiveness of an association's governance and operations.
b. Document the roles of the Board, each executive member, executive officer and paid employee of the association. Create key performance indicators (KPIs) for each. These are essential, legally and philosophically, for the role of any paid employee. It is only against documented KPIs that a person's performance can be assessed. Likewise for the Board and each executive position.
c. Aggregate all of the roles to get an understanding of what those pooled responsibilities would deliver and then compare with the association's published purpose and charter. Adjust either roles or charter accordingly.
d. Establish in advance impersonal policies to be invoked in any situation that has the potential to become personal or partisan. Be guided by impersonal and transparent policies and procedures instead of personalities.
e. Ensure the broadest possible distribution of responsibility, including sharing of responsibilities across the membership, having a back-up for every key position and a succession plan in place. (See Recommendation 18 for more on this.)
f. Consider rotation of responsibilities, outside of the formal roles. For example, a different Board member might act as Chair for each meeting, thereby broadening the experience base of the Board.
g. Examine the role statements to ensure no areas of role overlap, role underlap, role neglect, or role concentration.
h. Adjust as determined by recommendations (a) and (b).

i. Examine the legislation under which your association is governed with a view to exploring how the requirement of the law can be adhered to whilst creatively altering your association's operating and meeting procedures to make them less formal and time consuming and hence of greater interest to younger potential members.
j. If the Constitution seems in any way to be inhibiting the effective conduct of the association, change it. Or have the Board create a bi-law to better serve the association.

A means of defining membership:

Associations are systems with an invisible non-physical boundary. That boundary is defined by who is 'in', and who is 'not in'. How membership is defined can be crucial to the strength of an association, including the contribution expected in exchange for membership. **Too many associations define membership by the payment of dues, while too few specify expectations of in-kind support at the time of joining**. Some associations have different classes of membership and different levels of voting over its affairs. Too few allow those contributing sweat equity to the industry to join or have some say in the associations. Protecting member benefits from non-members is an issue for some associations, though not others. How the industry or community itself is defined has implications for value-chain membership, and, in turn, for the clarity of its focus.

Recommendation 6:

a. Specify the value proposition to current and potential members gained in exchange for their membership fee.
b. Consider, at the time of a new member's joining, the in-kind expectations that the association has for its members in order to share the load commensurate with the benefits.
c. Examine their boundary strength with a view to ensuring benefits flowing to members cannot be accessed by non-members. There may, of course, be some associations that exist for the benefit of their industry as a whole. If that is their purpose, then this recommendation does not apply.
d. Consider the pros and cons of broadening the membership base to embrace the whole value-chain, including those contributing sweat equity.
e. Consider having different classes of membership with different financial arrangements and different voting rights. Where this occurs, it is essential that the definition of each category is clear and logical, and that the commensurate fee and voting rights are widely regarded by all categories of members as appropriate.
f. Recognise that the more the association diversifies the membership base, the more difficult it is to find commonality of purpose.

Capacity to absorb and lose association members:

Two potential risks for an association are (a) that it is damaged by the loss of a key person, and (b) that it is unsettled by the arrival of new people, who might bring in challenging ideas. Healthy associations acknowledge both and have processes in place to minimise both risks.

Recommendation 7:

a. Examine the contributions made, and the knowledge held, by particular members to ensure that the association does not have an avoidably high dependency upon any particular individual or individuals.
b. Where there is high dependency upon any one individual, then put in place a process whereby key responsibilities can be shared in order to grow knowledge in others. Some form of mentoring process might be required.
c. Examine the association's boundary strength to ensure that potential new members are aware of the association's existence, understand what is required of them for membership to be granted, and who feel welcomed and included when they meet the entry requirements.
d. Position the association as worth belonging to, with more benefits accruing through belonging than not belonging. Further, consider that applications for membership require Board approval and that approval be conditional upon the potential member being willing to make an in-kind contribution within the first 12 months, in addition to their membership fee.
e. For potential members, the decision to join is tentative. Paying attention to the feelings and needs of potential members is an area where a little investment can reap large rewards.
f. Pay attention to the needs and feelings of current members. For present members, their level of engagement and commitment is variable. Less investment is needed to retain a current member than to recruit a new one. Yet paying attention to the feelings and needs of current members is often poorly done, and can generally be done better at very little cost.

Freedom from cliques and subgroups

Political subgroups are damaging to the health of an association. Sub-groups can be closed to others in the association; they sometimes share information and privileges which are quarantined from other association members or they pursue agendas separate from the overall interests of the members

Recommendation 8: Conduct an honest and frank self-assessment to ensure that there are no cliques in the executive or general membership, and, where there are, actively confront and discourage them.

A code of conduct.

An association is like a group of musicians. Unguided, it just makes a lot of noise. Aided by a shared musical score and guided by a conductor, that noise becomes beautiful music. All that is required is to spell out what is expected of people so that their joint efforts are in harmony. And the music is even more enjoyable if the code of conduct is designed by the members themselves. Because then they understand and own it. Codes of conduct can be strengthened by having incentives to comply and disincentives not to. And natural justice requires that there must also be a process and avenue of appeal.

Recommendation 9:

a. Generate and publish widely a code of conduct expected of members. Consider developing a subsidiary code of conduct for the Councillors or Directors.
b. Manage behaviours against that code. See 'Graded Interventions' in **Appendix 10** for details.
c. Review the Code of Conduct annually, tweaking it if necessary. This not only ensures it continues to be relevant; it also means that it remains fresh in people's minds.

Capacity to deal with discontent and resolve conflict between members:

Conflict in associations is healthy. It is only through conflict, no matter how robust or how mild, that members of a social group establish a 'pecking order'. It is also commonly the way that people express their passions. So it should not be suppressed. Yet, unless managed under an impersonal and equitable process, it can be destructive.

Recommendation 10:

a. Recognise that conflict is normal and that it should not be discouraged.
b. Develop a graded conflict resolution protocol and make its existence known to members.
c. Encourage the use of this protocol early, as soon as a dispute or conflict becomes apparent. See 'Conflict Resolution Protocol' in **Appendix 3** for details.
d. Create a third-party grievance mechanism and 'court of appeal' aimed at constructively resolving disputes and reducing the inevitable disunity that occurs in its absence.

Goods, services, and benefits back to members:

Members make a financial and sometimes in-kind contribution in order to receive perceived value. What members seem to value includes taking a collective voice to government, seeing their association in the media on their behalf, negotiations with processors and service providers in order to provide members with greater financial value, acting as a broker for goods and services, benchmarking between members, and being a direct provider of relevant information. Central to voluntary members continued involvement is their perception that value received is greater than input cost.

Recommendation 11:

a. 'Sell' to members the concept that the association is a natural extension of their business, seeking to provide benefits for each member that they cannot obtain alone.
b. When be providing 'representation', be sensitive to the likelihood of multiple opinions from members, and how best to honour all of those voices.
c. Survey, as part of an annual audit, the association's members to determine their priorities with respect to goods and services required, whether presently provided or not and their level of satisfaction with their association.
d. Survey, as part of an annual audit, potential members to determine (a) what goods or member services would need to be provided in order to entice them to join, and (b) what they would be prepared to contribute to the association, financially and in-kind, in order to obtain those benefits.

Performance capacity:

Associations need internal capacity to carry out their objectives. That capacity is multifaceted. Most frequently mentioned is having access to sufficient funds. In many associations there are less funds than are deemed necessary to do the work the association desires. Equally scarce is manpower, the willing bodies with the time and energy to contribute. Those few who do step up to the task are rarely sufficiently reimbursed for their time and their burn-out is a professional risk. Having a Board with sufficient managerial expertise is just as important, though less recognised. Having dedicated staff can ease the burden on volunteers, though Boards need to take care not to expect everything from the staff. The EO is commonly in the centre of information flows, so sometimes the EO can try to do too much, risking burn-out themselves. In fewer cases, the EO can become the dominant figure in the association, with the Board being a subsidiary to the achievement of the EO's wishes. Building the personal and professional capacity of all key people, be they executive members or paid staff, is an investment that can reap considerable dividends in the capacity of the whole association.

Recommendation 12:

a. Assess, as part of an annual audit, delivery capacity (human, financial, technological, etc.) with a view to ascertaining the sufficiency of that capacity to deliver on the purpose of the association and the goods or services the members expect. The monitoring and evaluation framework offered in **Appendix 4** will be beneficial here.

b. Put in place strategies to build capacity, financial, human, and technological, and to review those strategies annually.

Marketing/public relations/lobbying/political influence:

Associations are systems that depend upon the external environment for their ongoing survival. That external environment contains a number of threats and a number of opportunities. Healthy associations are conscious of those external threats and opportunities and use a number of means to try to influence them beneficially. The most obvious and common means is lobbying, getting into the ear of government with a view to having government act in the interests of the association and its members. Another is public relations; using the media in ways that are designed (a) to show members that their association has clout, and (b) to maintain the 'social licence to operate' is the eyes of the general public. Marketing can occur in the narrow sense, encouraging direct purchase of product, or in the broader sense of public relations.

Recommendation 13:

a. Invest in the development of expertise and the cultivation of relationships with those authorities, commonly government, best placed to ward off those threats. The higher the level of external threat, the more important it is for this investment.
b. Recognise that your members have varied opinions on a topic and therefore represent all of those views faithfully and proportionately.
c. Because lobbying and political influence are externally directed, and therefore potentially invisible to members, it is vital to keep members informed of these efforts on their behalf.
d. Because the court of public opinion can be a harsh and ill-informed judge, healthy associations keep an 'ear-to-the-ground' with respect to public perception threats, and have a media relationship ready to swing into action if needed.
e. Associations, through their collective member capacity, have a greater capacity to ensure supply than any individual. Therefore collective marketing can be commercially beneficial. It is recommended that associations give consideration to this option.
f. Build relationships with other associations and third parties where there is an alignment of interests and join forces for mutual benefit.

Membership strength:

Associations need members. The higher the percentage of potential members an association has, the more legitimate it can claim to be, in the eyes of external stakeholders, such as government. Further, the more members an association has the stronger is its financial and resource base. All but one of the associations in this research had a stable or declining membership. Members disengage when they do not see personal benefit. Numbers of members drop as enterprises engage in economies of scale, or active licence holders become investors. And membership numbers can rise or fall with the perception or otherwise of external threats, while member levels of optimism/pessimism about the future for their industry follows a similar pattern.

> **Recommendation 14:** Assess, as part of an annual audit, (a) the number of potential members, (b) the number of actual members, (c) the trends in the number of potential members over the past five years, (d) the trends in proportion of actual to potential members over the past five years, and the reasons underpinning each of those numbers.

Learning new skills and adopting new technologies:

Individuals and enterprises need to keep abreast of new information and new technologies that can enhance their business. The fishing and primary industry sectors have a limited propensity to take up new ideas and skills. Older people are similarly reluctant. It is a responsibility of Board members to role model, to their members, their willingness to stay up to date with information, technologies and skills. It is also a responsibility of the Board to nurture the skills and confidence in younger/newer members as well as the capacities of any paid staff.

A shortcoming in some associations is to nominate and support younger members in leadership development and then not create a leadership vacancy within which the newfound skills, confidence and enthusiasm can blossom.

Recommendation 15:

a. The Board to initiate an annual assessment of emerging and relevant skill-sets, information and technologies with a view to bringing these to the attention of their members and making them easily accessible.
b. The Board to be alert to ad-hoc opportunities for information or skill development sessions that may present themselves in your State or region with a view to bringing these to the attention of their members and making them easily accessible. Note that some of these opportunities may be from sources outside of your industry, yet have relevance to it.
c. Consider making it mandatory for all nominee or recent appointee Board members to undertake professional training, such as offered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Other comparable courses or self-help resources are also available.
d. Be alert to the opportunities for coaching/growing younger and/or newer members and then providing them with appropriate responsibilities. Being included builds people’s confidence and skills and hence their willingness to engage more actively in the business of the association.

e. Continue to invest in the personal and professional development of any paid staff.

Decentralisation of decision-making:

Most associations perceive themselves as being open to participation by ordinary members in their decision-making. Yet there are barriers to that participation, some of which may not be obvious. Decision tools may be less sophisticated than is desirable, and there may be lack of diversity in the decision-making team, reducing the quality of those decisions. Better decision-making tools than those commonly used in associations are available.

Recommendation 16:

a. Ascertain, as part of the annual audit, the level of consultation with ordinary members prior to major decisions being taken and the level of satisfaction by members with the association's decision-making processes.
b. Look at, as part of the annual audit, the reasons some members are less active in their participation in decision-making, with a view to removing those barriers.
c. Inequality of knowledge is one of the biggest barriers to participation. An association to put in place active processes to share critical knowledge as broadly as possible.
d. Consider how the association's decision processes could be broadened to allow for greater input from the eight potential stakeholder groups, including producers themselves. (See the body of the Report for explanation of these eight stakeholders.)
e. Consider the value of increasing diversity through value-chain membership.
f. Consider the adoption of participative decision processes, such as those outlined in **Appendix 5**.

Openness to new ideas:

Associations vary in the extent to which they perceive themselves open to new ideas. Traditional wild-catch fisheries tend to be more conservative than aquaculture fisheries. There is a correlation between level of education and propensity to innovate. There is a correlation between the age of an industry and propensity to innovate; multi-generational industries are naturally (and unconsciously) more conservative. There is also a correlation between youth and propensity to innovate. And there is a correlation between looking outside the square and propensity to innovate.

Recommendation 17:

a. Conduct an annual brainstorm amongst current or potential members for new ideas presently in use elsewhere that might have application to their association. Any signal from the association that 'new ideas are welcome here' can only be beneficial with respect to member participation and association resilience.

b. Recognise the correlations between, on the one hand, levels of education, youth, diversity of networks, and travel and, on the other hand, propensity to innovate, seeking every opportunity to enhance those factors.
c. Recognise that new members, not yet absorbed into the culture of the association, are able to observe things about the association that established members cannot see. Yet, as new members, they are generally hesitant about revealing what they observe, unless invited. These fresh eyes make every new member a potential source of new ideas.
d. Consider inviting outsiders to any association meeting, event or conversation with a view to tapping into the wisdom of those outsiders.

Freshness of management and leadership:

Humans have a psychological need for hierarchical structures within which they can associate and which they expect to address their needs. The need to be a follower automatically creates a demand for leaders which carries responsibility and privilege. Leaders need to be found, (a difficult task); they need to be mentored and nurtured (a neglected task). Election cycles are generally annually, though in some cases every two or three years. Few positions have fixed terms, and there is rarely a contest over Board nominations. Board composition is generally monocultural. It is acknowledged that the heavy burden of leadership renders the role unattractive.

Recommendation 18:

a. Invest in a deliberate strategy of nurturing and mentoring members to share the leadership burden and then easing them into positions of responsibility.
b. Consider changing its constitution to mandate fixed and non-renewable terms for all executive positions.
c. Consider two-year elected terms, with split-half annual elections.
d. Consider that, for any elected position, there is (i) an apprentice in waiting – e.g. a secretary-elect, (ii) an incumbent, and (ii) an immediate past incumbent – who can act as mentor and back up to the previous two.
e. Consider changing the entry rules so that fixed-term participation in executive roles is part of the membership obligation.
f. Change the model rules to permit and encourage rotation of responsibilities, such as chairing meetings, or recording minutes.
g. Change the association's cultural norms to allow and encourage leadership to emerge from any quarter.
h. Consider increasing the diversity of the Board through the inclusion of independent directors.

i. Any association that is a member of a higher level association, peak body or similar, to adopt a deliberate policy of growing future leaders to represent them in these forums.
j. Adopt an exit strategy for all current leaders and Board members, thereby freeing them up for higher level representation.
k. Recognise that any association at a regional or peak level has a strategic responsibility to nurture and grow future representation in the associations below them.

New blood:

Our industries are struggling to attract new blood into their associations. Yet, there are potential members coming through the industry, often the offspring of current industry members. Whilst acknowledging there are a number of barriers to entry to our industries and our associations, there are many suggestions as to how engagement and participation of new and potential members might be nurtured. New blood might also be found if associations broaden their membership base, particularly within a value chain.

Recommendation 19:

a. Undertake a demographic profile of (a) all potential members, and (b) all current members, and (c) recent departing members, to better understand who joins and why, who leaves and why, who else might be attracted to the association.
b. Build the base.
c. Do all in the association's power to seek out diversity in its membership base, to extend a welcoming hand to any potential members who are 'different'. It is this diversity that is the best predictor of innovation.
d. Consider broadening the membership to include (a) the eight stakeholder groups, and (b) all dimensions of the value chain.
e. Codify the association's policy towards the attraction, engagement, induction and retaining of new members, and the growth of established members into positions of civic responsibility. In other words, there could be a specific policy pertaining to each of the eight stages of 'growing' people.

Sharing responsibilities:

Associations are voluntary organisations that are more resilient when the load is widely shared. When the responsibility is carried by the few, an unconscious knowledge barrier is established between those few and ordinary members. Yet the benefits of association membership need to be emphasised so that people see the association as a natural extension of their business. Through sharing the load and growing the confidence and capacity of their members, an association can strengthen its own capacity to deal with external opportunities and threats.

Recommendation 20:

a. Review the present governance structure with a view to assessing how widely responsibility is being shared.
b. Establish a deliberate governance policy of responsibility sharing and rotation, so that all key positions have at least two Board members experienced in them.
c. Establish a deliberate policy of responsibility sharing, with a target of engaging every member, not just financially, but also in terms of their ideas and efforts. Division of responsibilities into a series of sub-committees provides a structure whereby a large percentage of members can each be part of one of these sub-committees.
d. An association, in courting new members, to outline not just the benefits of belonging, but also the responsibilities expected of each member in exchange for those benefits.
e. An association, as a matter of policy, will allocate to a new member, at the very outset, a small task, the undertaking of which helps a new member feel they are contributing.
f. Endeavour, as a matter of policy, to grow each and every member through gradually increasing their responsibilities.
g. Establish a communication policy that clearly conveys to every member the personal and enterprise benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, that membership brings. The objective is to position the association as being a natural extension of, and inseparable from, the member's own enterprise.
h. An association that employs an executive officer to ensure that their EO is working strategically, under the guidance of the Board, and not making themselves a martyr to the cause or the sole repository of critical information and networks.

Spare/Slack resources:

Slack resources allow an association to afford to purchase innovations, absorb failure, bear the cost of instituting innovations, and explore new ideas in advance of actual need. Innovation and adaptability can only come about through trial and error. Hence ideas can blossom when people and the system have spare capacity within which they can experiment, trial, and 'play'. Surplus time, resources, dollars, or available people are necessary for creative ideas to be explored. When our resources are stretched, we do not have the capacity to explore new ideas.

Recommendation 21: Consider quarantining a percentage of funds/time/other resources, say 5%, from operational use, to establish a pool that is to be invested, under guidance from the Board, in speculative strategic opportunities. This pool could be held separate from the resources required for routine operational matters. Rather, this pool is deliberately allocated to endeavours that have an unknown likelihood of success and might well 'fail'. Like an infant invariably falling over as it learns to walk, 'failure' is an essential component of innovation and progress.

Boundary clarity:

This issue may not apply to all associations. Industry associations can be peak bodies, sector bodies and local industry associations. Together these form a pyramid structure, and each association has its own specific roles and responsibilities. At the boundaries, sometimes there is confusion and conflict over who is responsible for what.

Recommendation 22:

a. Recommendation 4 applies here, this time at the scale of the association. Watch out for role overlap, role underlap and role neglect when comparing the responsibilities of associations operating at different levels.
b. Push responsibilities to the lowest level at which they can appropriately be dealt with.
c. Have a written document that (a) acknowledges and declares the responsibilities that fall to each, and (b) a process for resolution should ambiguities and disputes arise.
d. Each grass-roots association is responsible, as part of its exit strategy for all incumbent Board members, for providing appropriate representatives for the next level of the association.
e. Any Board or Executive sitting in a peak body role to recognise where their new responsibilities now lie.
f. Review, as part of its annual strategic plan, the value the association gets from any partner associations, and to assess the extent to which they are providing adequate support for those partners, their strategic allies.

External communication:

Environmental scanning and extra-associational activities of members can bring innovative ideas. Innovative associations exchange information with their external environments. Through talking to people completely outside of the industry association, ideas can be exchanged with a resultant benefit to adaptability, sustainability and innovation.

Recommendation 23: Adopt a deliberate policy of engagement with the outside world with a view to establishing relationships with suppliers, fostering markets and sourcing new ideas.

Internal communication:

Internal communication facilitates dispersion of ideas within an organization and increases their amount and diversity, which results in cross fertilization of ideas. It also creates an internal environment favourable to the survival of new ideas. The greater the level of communication between association members and/or the association executive, the higher the level of sustainability, adaptability and innovation. Internal communication might be face-to-face, emails, teleconferences, newsletters, websites, etc. Communication might be from the association itself out to its members. It might be from the members back to the association. Or it could be between association members. Further, internal communication can be formal or informal.

Recommendation 24:

a. It is desirable for any group to begin its life with members in a face-to-face workshop, establishing a sense of inclusion as well as protocols for internal communication.
b. Once interpersonal relationships have been established (though not before) other forms of internal communication, including a range of digital tools, can be brought into play.
c. As much effort needs to be put into mechanisms whereby members can communicate with their association as is put into the association's communication with its members. To ensure the messages are received, aimed for multiple methods, multiple times.
d. Shared language can be developed through the sharing of stories. By having older members share their oral histories, newer members developed an increased appreciation of the work of the association that preceded them.
e. Include, as part of an annual audit, an internal survey of member's satisfaction with the frequency, content and media of internal communication, seeking suggestions for improvement.

Performance measurement:

Healthy industry associations have a purpose and a series of goals that direct all activity. Further, healthy industry associations monitor and evaluate association performance against that purpose and goals. The more frequently this is done, the more this is operationalised as normal practice, the smaller the adjustments that will need to be made.

Recommendation 25:

a. **E**stablish annually your association's 'big rocks' – the strategic goals to be achieved.
b. Decide upon what will be measured. The ideal is multiple measures, using multiple methods, taken multiple times…
c. Create the role of Monitor whose role it is to report, for both short-term events (such as each meeting) and long-term events (such as each year's program) on 'what worked?', 'what didn't?', 'suggestions for improvement' and 'what can be learned from these observations'.
d. Ensure the necessary **resources** are in place, **activities** planned and undertaken, desired **effects** identified, **goals** nominated and **end-state** or **vision** described and agreed.
e. Adjust as required.

Continuous improvement:

Healthy associations are constantly reflecting on their own performance and looking for ways to improve. This is a deliberate and conscious strategic activity aimed at enhancing the association's performance and ensuring its survival.

Recommendation 26: Adopt a process of continuous improvement. The Experiential Learning Cycle, offered in **Appendix 8**, provides a conceptual framework for continuous improvement. It is exactly the same model that an association can use for Action Research (discussed elsewhere in this Report).

Financial considerations:

An **i**ndustry association needs funds in order to carry out its business. Those funds, which may come direct from members, or from other sources, are sometimes adequate for the association to conduct all of its desired activities. Sometimes the funds are inadequate.

Recommendation 27:

a. Conduct an annual audit of the association's financial affairs with a view to assess its capacity to fund the forthcoming year's program of work.
b. Where the funds are insufficient, the association has three possible choices: (i) raise more funds to meet its work aspirations, (ii) reduce its work aspirations to meet the available funding, or (iii) where the expenditure is regarded as necessary, urgent, and one-off, perhaps to go into debt for an agreed period, supported by a plan to get back to surplus. Any of these three courses of action would be of considerable gravity and not undertaken without the blessing of the full membership.
c. Avoid dependence upon government funding. Where associations do receive government funding, establish a strategy for weaning the association from this dependency.
d. Aim for direct allocation of funds from members to association.
e. Pitch the funding at a level that (a) members can presently afford, and (b) that is sufficient for the association's present goals.
f. Avoid flat-fee funding. Aim instead to pitch membership fees as a percentage of turnover. Avoid a direct relationship between fees paid and level of association influence.
g. Aim for some separate sources of income, provided they don't distract. For example, what skills or resources do members hold that might be contracted out through the association, to benefit both association and member?
h. Set an annual set of objectives, an accompanying budget and seek funds and set fees accordingly.
i. Aim for a minimum of 12months reserve.

Major challenges

Perceptions of major challenges varied considerably. Interviewees were more inclined to talk of challenges facing the industry, more so than those facing the associations. Some themes emerged frequently. Among them are industry stagnation or decline, financial fragility, difficulties in attracting new blood, particularly into leadership roles, green tape, marine parks, and resource access.

Recommendation 28

a. As part of its annual strategic plan, identify the four areas of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
b. In response to each of these four, (a) change the association to maximise its exploitation of any or all of these four, or (b) try to influence any of these four to maximise the benefit to the association or to minimise the cost.

Suggestions that will lead to a healthier association.

Interviewees varied considerably in their suggestions for fostering a healthy industry association. Some common themes include the need for new blood in the governance structures, healthy informed participating membership, including those whose contribution is sweat equity, fresh and progressive leadership, valued goods and services delivered to members, financial stability and professional systems of governance.

Recommendation 29

a. Identify, for your association, members of the eight stakeholder groups or people who might speak for them.
b. Independently invite members of the eight stakeholder groups to provide ideas on improving your association.
c. Pool and publish those ideas.
d. Act on those that have the greatest strategic value.

External contextual factors

In addition to the internal contextual factors listed and discussed in the main body of this Report, there are a number of external factors that impinge upon society generally and therefore impact directly or indirectly on an association's capacity to build long term viability.

Recommendation 30: Identify and acknowledge these threatening external factors and find ways to either (a) minimise or neutralise their negative effect upon the association, or (b) creatively turn these trends to the association's advantage. **Recommendation 28** also applies here.

8. Benefits and Adoption

Benefits and adoption	Identify the sector(s) of the industry and/or community that will have benefited directly from the research. Quantify the difference in terms of prices (*e.g.* quality, market penetration, user satisfaction), costs (*e.g.* productivity), non market benefits and/or catch that the adoption of the research results will make. State how benefits and beneficiaries compare with those identified in the original application. Describe adoption of the research by the identified beneficiaries.

The outcomes from this research have been presented in a series of workshops, with one workshop in each State or Territory where there is an aquaculture, recreational and wildcatch fishing representative body.

The feedback from the Workshops is reported in Appendix 16 of the full Report and represent the range of thoughts and the learning that can be taken from this research when members of fishing industry associations have the opportunity to be exposed to the research. There is further demand, beyond those that attended the Workshops, for the presentation of the findings of the research, but given the traditional challenges of distance and seasonality of various industry sector activities which meant that some that were very interested in the researches findings were not able to participate in the limited workshop program.

There are many groups that are either seeking to establish themselves to better represent remote or regional industry groups or which are active but are seeking greater improvement in their governance and organisational effectiveness. Industry associations at all levels within Australia are increasing facing the challenges of how to identify the needs of and represent the interests of their members. The means to achieve this has been recognised by those that have participated in the research extension program to date.

A series of brief articles outlining the research and its findings have already been used by several industry associations to introduce the concepts from the research to their members.

The associations that have participated in the learning and adoption of this research are reported in Appendix 16.

The research has also attracted attention from Government fisheries management agencies and is providing a basis for evaluating the capacity and standards of performance that industry associations should adopt in order to demonstrate their capacity as effective representative bodies to be engaged in the co-management processes adopted in the various jurisdictions.

The FRDC has recently commissioned a project to investigate the establishment of an industry peak body for the State of Queensland. One of the authors of our Australia-wide project has been supporting that more recent Queensland project. Further, there is currently before the FRDC an application to investigate the establishment of a NSW industry peak body. Both of the authors of our Australia-wide project are listed as contributors to that State project. And following the exposure by some of their members to new meeting skills, introduced as part of the State by State workshop roll out of our research findings, the WINSC has requested a meetings skills workshop as an adjunct to the 2013 Seafood Directions Conference.

9. Further development

This research has been funded by the industry through their FRDC contributions and matching Commonwealth funds and its content substantially provided by industry members. The findings from this research are being provided in a variety of formats, some concise, others far more detailed. The recommendations from this research, if applied as suggested, will lift the health of any industry association. The industry itself is responsible for considering the application of these ideas into every association. How might this be done?

The industry has a number of leading agencies of which the FRDC is one. The industry also provides leadership training programs. Both represent points of leverage, as do government agencies. Any industry sector or association seeking support needs to be confronted with the question: ‘Have you applied these recommendations?’ Leading agencies, governments and training programs need to think hard about the value of providing support to any association that answers ‘No’ to this question. Associations that are unable to help themselves are unlikely to be the best investment targets.

The demographics of the industry are changing. There are an increasing number of licence holders who are no longer active fishers. They are now investors. Those who are active fishers are increasingly aging. The number of younger licence holders entering the industry is in decline. The number of family-based enterprises is also in decline and the number and size of corporate players are increasing. And these corporates are not necessarily Australian owned. As a collective result of all of these factors, the current governance structures of the industry, largely built around associations, must inevitably change, perhaps dramatically.

These factors emerged as a result of the present research. They were not its central focus. We recommend that research is needed now into the factors that will potentially shape the future of the Australian seafood industry in the next ten to twenty years. If we are aware of the opportunities, the favourable winds, the squalls and reefs ahead of us, we then have a choice to steer a more judicious course.

10. Planned outcomes

Planned outcomes

Describe how the project's outputs will contribute to the planned outcomes identified in the application. Describe the planned outcomes achieved to date.

[Our application did not specify any outcomes. We specified the outputs below.]

The beneficiaries of research outputs will be the whole industry. Outputs will include:

- Analysed and interpreted data exploring reluctance of fishery members to engage with their association or step into representative roles.
- Analysed and interpreted data on innovation within associations.
- Insights into other non-fishing industry associations and how they maintain membership, leadership and succession.
- A set of legal / constitutional recommendations to embed leadership renewal and succession.
- A package of action-research tools for use by any association to foster innovation.
- A package of action-research tools that foster effective member engagement and participative conversations.

All of these outputs, with the exception of the legal/constitutional recommendations (which were waived with FRDC approval) are in the full final report.

11. Guidelines to facilitate extension and adoption of this resource kit to subsidiary industry associations.

We have conducted workshops in 7 locations. [See **Appendix 16** for reports and feedback on each of these workshops.] We have provided a summary presentation of our research findings at the 2013 Seafood Directions National Conference. We have produced various versions of our research report, some shorter, some longer, together with 28 short articles suitable for industry news-letters. We have provided a digital copy of our report to each participating association, on a CD containing all versions plus the media articles. We have produced 150 of these CDs for distribution through the FRDC. All material generated by the research will be available of FRDCs website.

The seven workshops conducted across the country confirmed the value to the industry of new and more engaging meeting processes and techniques. At the 2013 Seafood Directions Workshop, we offered a workshop specific to the acquisition of these tools, which are also outlined in Appendix 5.

There are a number of agencies, such as the FRDC and various levels of government, which interface with industry associations. This present research needs to be 'front-of-mind' when they are working with industry associations. Any association that seeks support needs to be asked: 'Are you implementing the recommendations from this research?' Where the answer is 'No', the agency should think very hard about the value of continuing to support that association.

You cannot strengthen the weak, by weakening the strong. You cannot help men by doing for them that which they should be doing for themselves.

Abraham Lincoln.

12. Summary Conclusion

Australian fisheries are natural systems. Yet the Australian seafood industry is first and foremost a social system. That large system is broken down into industry sectors. It is further broken down into industry associations and then down to individual enterprises then individuals. Each of these systems is nested in larger systems. At the heart are ordinary people, individuals who decide whether or not to invest their precious time, energy and money into their industry.

So the story of 'Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession' is a story about human behaviour, human strengths and human weaknesses.

The array of systems within which any industry associations is embedded has factors that impact upon any association. Some of these factors lie within an association and are in its capacity to influence. Some of those factors lie outside of the association and, if acting alone, are beyond its capacity to influence. Yet, when acting in conjunction with other associations, up to the level of a national peak body, the influence capacity increases.

All objectives of this project, with the exception of obtaining legal advice on associations, have been met. This research offers 30 sets of recommendations that will strengthen the health of any association, and raise considerably its capacity to recruit and grow new leaders. Importantly, almost none of these recommendations require financial outlay. Equally importantly, every one of the recommendations requires individuals to change behaviours; behaviours that may have become embedded unconsciously perhaps for generations. So can the individuals within associations make these changes in behaviour?

There is an old adage that says: *'Whether I believe I can or I believe I can't, I'll be proven right!'*

13. Participating associations:

We are extremely grateful for the support of the associations listed below and the 70 dedicated people who freely shared their experiences, perceptions and wisdom during the interviews. Without their generosity this research would not have been possible.

No	Association
1	National Aquaculture Council
2	Queensland Aquaculture Industry Federation
3	Australian Prawn Farmers Association
4	Western Australian Fishing Industry Council
5	Western Rock Lobster Council
6	United Mid-West Fishers Association
7	Wildcatch Fisheries South Australia
8	Southern Fishermen's Association
9	South East Professional Fishermen's Association
10	Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing
11	TAS Aust National Sportsfishing Assoc
12	SA Aust National Sportsfishing Assoc
13	New Zealand Seafood Industry Council
14	Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance
15	Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association*
16	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, North East Branch – UK
17	CaneGrowers Qld
18	CaneGrowers Tableland
19	Traprock
20	Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Association
21	Northern Territory Horticultural Association
22	Northern Territory Agricultural Association
23	Perfect Ports Association*
24	Australian Seafood National Peak Body*

Please note: This Report draws from twenty two participating associations listed above. Each has given approval for their associations to be identified. As an aid to readability, the numeric code of each association is applied to all quotes from that association.

* The last two associations on this list do not exist. They are a fictitious ideal offered to stimulate thinking.

14. Introduction:

This research was commissioned by the Fisheries and Research Development Corporation (FRDC).

The FRDC recognises the importance of leadership development and has invested heavily in the development of future industry leaders. Yet, within individual associations there may be invisible reasons why this investment is less than fruitful.

The structure and administrative mechanisms that exist within peak and sector bodies has a direct influence on the level of engagement with the fishers represented. Where an organisation is seen as effective, with the human and organisational capacity to communicate with its members and represent their interests to other groups - such as management agencies, advisory committees, other sector or representative bodies, then it is more likely to be attractive to its members and more likely to attract fishers to be involved in that body's range of activities. Conversely, where members feel that their association is not effectively run, or that ordinary members do not have a voice, those ordinary members disengage.

The ability to attract new or younger members and to provide a pathway for increased skills and involvement will lead to renewal and innovation in representative bodies that are able to lead their sectors in both engaging other stakeholders and interests, as well as building the services and facilities that can be offered to members. Critical to attracting members is the capacity for the organisation and its current leaders to recognise and reward the thoughts and views of new or formerly less active members and consequently empower them to take on leadership roles into the future.

While much is talked about leadership development, often there are subtle and institutional impediments to those who bring new ideas or propose a change of emphasis or direction. These unintended impediments need to be identified and then removed. So organisational design, practices, procedures and development are all key to encouraging fisher engagement, leadership succession and growth in industry bodies.

Hence the full title of the FRDC-sponsored project is: *A program to enhance membership participation, association health, innovation and leadership succession in the Australian fishing industry* (Short title - Healthy Industry Associations and Succession).

There are three major sectors in the Australian fishing industry: commercial (including wild-catch fishing and aquaculture), recreational fishing, and Indigenous customary sector. In addition, there are a large number of fishery or species specific sectors. Our research design sought to tap into the commercial and recreational sectors at three levels: peak body, sector body and local body. Further, the research design sought to tap into four different Australian

States. The researchers recognised the merit in learning from other associations outside of the Australian fishing and seafood industries. So, in order to gain insights valuable to the Australian fishing and aquaculture associations, the research also examined four seafood associations internationally, as well as six case studies on Australian primary industry associations that lie right outside of the sea-food industry. In total, the research created twenty two case-studies of which 12 are from the Australian seafood industry, four international, and six other primary industry associations, drawn from horticulture, animal husbandry, and broad-based cropping.

15. Emerging insights

As the research proceeds, certain insights emerge, insights that go beyond the initial research parameters. These insights are a distillation of what people told us, revealing the unconscious and underlying patterns. These researcher insights are written at the completion of all twenty two case studies.

Interest in joining an association is, for a potential new member, always tentative. First impressions will often determine a person's decision to engage or not.

Associations are first and foremost social systems. They are a collection of volunteers gathered into an entity that seeks to serve the collective interests. Yet the participation of each person is a totally individual decision. Members are free to engage or disengage at any time. If the association is serving the unconscious needs of each individual, that individual is more likely to stay engaged. The more an association meets a person's interests, the more engaged they are likely to be. The reverse is also true.

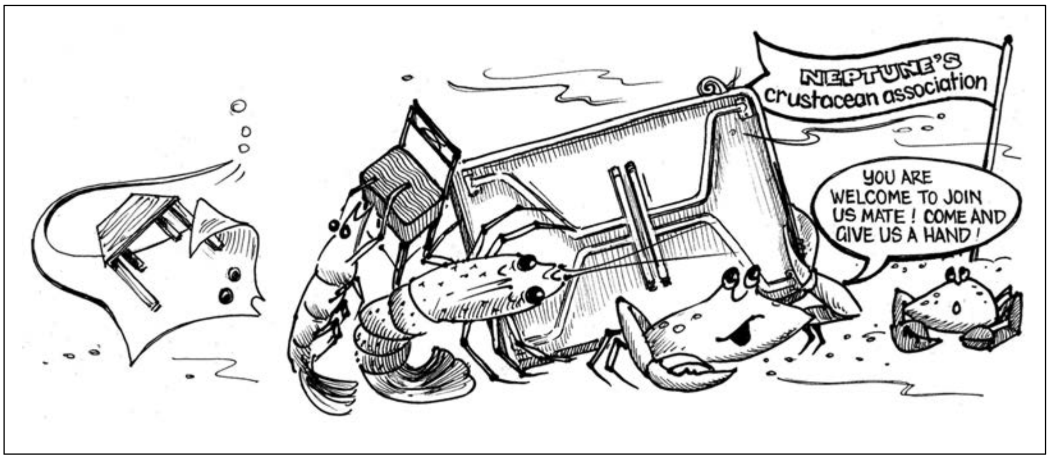
There are individual differences in people's needs. Those needs fall into three broad categories: need for affiliation (social need), need for achievement, and need for power/status. We each have all three needs within us, though one is stronger than the other two. An association might be adequately serving the needs of one individual whilst not satisfying the needs of another. We found some associations whose strength was in serving the social needs of members; we found some associations whose primary focus was aimed at achievement of strategic goals; we found some associations that principally served to satisfy the need for power/status of a few.

Interest in joining an association is, for a potential new member, always tentative. First impressions will often determine a person's decision to engage or not. Yet paying attention to the feelings and needs of a potential new member was explicitly expressed by only one association. We suggest it is an area where very little investment can return high rewards.

One way of helping a new person to feel included and welcome is to give them a small job, not to be done alone, but shoulder-to-shoulder with existing members.

Associations are vehicles intended to protect and enhance members 'rights'. Yet like a coin that has two sides, 'rights' cannot be claimed without a commensurate contribution of 'responsibilities'. A new member is often 'sold' on the basis of their 'rights', Yet, very few associations, at the point of signing up a new member, outline the responsibilities expected of a new member, beyond the fee that is payable. Yet, it is rarely money that causes associations to thrive or fail; it is the capacity to shoulder the responsibilities.

People, who choose to join an association, start from a psychological position of asking themselves whether or not they want to be included; by assessing whether or not they are made to feel welcome. One way of helping a new person to feel included and welcome is to give them a small job, not to be done alone, but shoulder-to-shoulder with existing members. Something as simple as: 'Can you give me a hand to set-up the tables, please mate?' People are happy to be asked. It gives them something to do, that dissipates their nervous energy as an 'outsider', suddenly making them an 'insider'.



Most associations ask nothing of their ordinary members, other than a membership fee, until the AGM. At the AGM, people with very little exposure to the inner workings of the association, are asked to nominate for positions on the Board, to suddenly step into an unknown arena of knowledge, time commitment and responsibility. For most, this is a step too far. For associations that adopt a deliberate strategy of sharing responsibility and growing people from Day 1, finding office bearers is far less difficult.

The success of an association is often dependent upon the personal skills of certain competent and dedicated individuals. Put a different person with a different skill set into a particular role and the results could well be quite different. Where the success of an association is dependent upon particular personalities, the association is vulnerable. Reduction in that vulnerability can be achieved by converting anything that requires strength of personality into a process or procedure that is transparent and impersonal. Codes of conduct and conflict resolution protocols are good examples.

Associations are social groups. Social groups can develop their own culture, an unconscious suite of behaviours that guide the behaviour of everyone whilst they are in the group. The cultural norms of behaviour within the group are often different from the behaviours that are otherwise normal for any one of their members outside of the group. Think Federal Parliament. So where the group culture is caring and supportive, a new member will learn to be caring and supportive whilst in the group, even where that is not their normal behaviour.

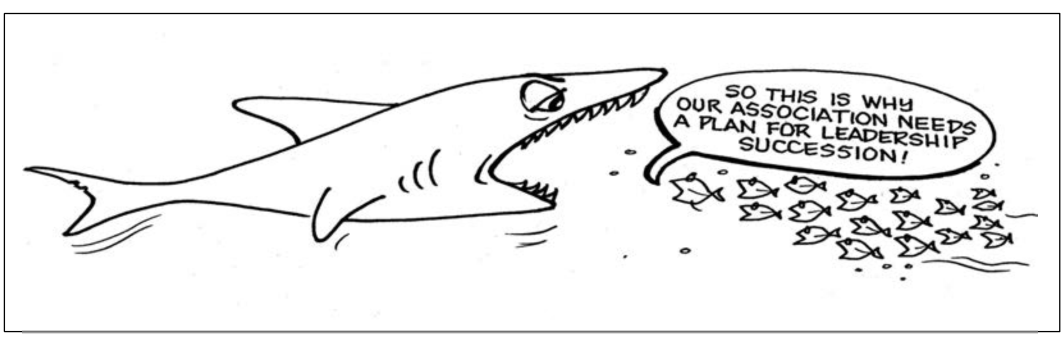
Similarly if the culture is perceived to be autocratic, a new President will learn that behaviour as expected, even where that is not their normal style. The culture within a group is often established by one or two influential members. Surprisingly, once established, the culture of a group will endure, long after those influential individuals have departed. So, for example, an authoritarian leadership style can be perpetuated by people who are not, in other settings, authoritarian. Rarely is the culture, how we do things around here, challenged or questioned.

The culture of a group tends to be invisible to established members. However, it is very visible to new members, who come with fresh eyes. If the culture says: 'New ideas are welcome', people will learn to contribute. If the culture signals (and many do) that new ideas are not welcome, they are unlikely to be forthcoming.

Leadership within associations is a two-edged sword. It is an act of civic responsibility. It is also an act of denying someone else the opportunity to gain civic experience. The more that civic experience is shared, the healthier is the association. Leaders acquire confidence, experience and knowledge. The longer they are in the role, the more of each they acquire. And these three facets of leadership are barriers to anyone else stepping into the role. The longer that leaders are in the role, the higher the barrier to succession. Leadership bestows status, bringing social reward to those for whom this is an important motive. And the more this is the case, the weaker is the association. Sure, new people cannot do it as well as experienced people. That will always be a universal truth. It should never be an excuse not to give someone with less experience an opportunity to hold an important association role.

For associations that adopt a deliberate strategy of sharing responsibility and growing people from Day 1, finding office bearers is far less difficult.

It is the culture of some associations that leadership is a privilege and responsibility to be shared. As a result, there is a regular turn-over of leaders. Other associations have a culture in which leadership is tightly held by a few over a lengthy period. None of the associations we reviewed had an exit strategy for its leadership. None of the associations we reviewed had a conscious leadership succession plan. Only a very few of the participating associations had fixed and non-renewable terms for executive roles.



The absence of anyone to succeed them is the rationale for incumbent leaders' failure to step down. It is a questionable rationale, not because it isn't true, but because it guarantees it is true. It is the failure by the leadership to invest in follower development, confidence and knowledge, the failure to grow tomorrow's leaders. And that is commonly underpinned by a culture within which failure to foster shared responsibility from Day 1 is the root cause.

With respect to the benefits gained by members in belonging to the association, a large number of interviewees talked of the association delivering 'value'. Despite the wide recognition of this being an association's primary function, we came across only one association that 'sold' itself to potential and current members on that basis. There are two 'unique selling propositions' (USPs – marketing jargon) that associations could be making explicit to a potential member. The first is that the association is a natural extension of your business, and is a vehicle that adds value to that business. Second, *'Here is the value that the association adds to your business'* – explaining in financial and non-financial terms what each member is getting in exchange for their membership subscription and in-kind contribution. (For recreational fishing associations, there are non-financial USPs that are just as valid). If an association finds itself unable to make this market pitch because it is not adding that level of value, it should seriously consider winding up.

What are our objectives for the year? What funds are required to achieve those? What quantum of fee is therefore required from each member?

Most associations commenced due to some particular opportunity or threat (normally the latter) that was better handled collectively. Over time, the circumstances may change, rendering the association less clear about its direction. Healthy associations consult actively and regularly with their members as to the appropriate purpose for their association. When it is the current membership that establishes the purpose, they are more likely to own it. And when that purpose is broken down into a number of strategic goals, then the association has some specific targets towards which it can be proactive.

Associations usually begin as a coalition of volunteers with shared interests. The increasing complexity of the world in which associations operate changes the skill sets required. So associations that survive that increasing complexity can only do so by becoming more professional. That often means employing part-time or full-time professional staff. Further, associations often seek to deal with governments. And governments are less and less willing to deal with amateur organisations. The 'big-end-of-town' is much more comfortable talking with the 'big-end-of-town'. This is another reason why the more successful organisations engage full-time professional staff, able to talk with government eye-to-eye. And this increasing complexity of an association's business can lead to ordinary members disengaging from the association, at least psychologically, since they find themselves unable to keep abreast of the complexity, preferring instead to defer to the professional staff the association has engaged for that very purpose.

The budget of an association should be subsidiary to its purpose. Not the other way round. That means that the subscription need not be fixed. Rather the conversation goes as follows: What are our objectives for the year? What funds are required to achieve those? What quantum of fee is therefore required from each member?

Associations that are not funded directly by their members are at risk. Particularly vulnerable are associations funded by government. "He who pays the piper calls the tune". Association 'members' who are not directly financing their association are less likely to be committed to 'their' association, and the association is less likely to be committed to them. Governments often create and/or support associations in order to have a united voice with whom to communicate and consult. Yet, like any good 'parent', it is government's responsibility to wean the association 'child' from the government funding 'teat' and to foster the internal capacity of associations. And it the association's responsibility to seek such weaning. As Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have said:

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong;
You cannot help people by doing for them what they can and should be doing for themselves.

No association is perfect. Many of the imperfections of an association are within its capacity to fix. However, it is unlikely this will occur unless an association adopts a culture of performance management (a logical extension of goal setting) and continuous improvement. Associations that constantly place every facet of themselves under review, and engage all of their members in that process, remain fluid and adaptable; able, in most cases, to withstand any shocks the external environment throws at them.

Nothing is forever. There are very few associations anywhere in the world that are over 100 years old. Associations form because of a felt need, respond to that need, then either reinvent themselves in some continuous fashion as circumstances change or they die. And, unless they have adopted a deliberate process of performance measurement and continuous improvement, that death is inevitable. The culture becomes ossified; the external world changes, and the association fails to adapt.

16. Literature review

In our original proposal to the FRDC for this project on healthy industry associations and leadership succession, we offered to conduct desk research on innovative industry associations, fishery and others, to determine what could be learned.

To this end, we began with a search through the University of Queensland of the international database ProQuest Social Science Journals, under the key words of 'voluntary associations' and 'leadership succession'. This revealed hundreds of articles from which we extracted a number that seemed helpful. We did not find any articles specific to fishing associations.

The ideas extracted provide a theoretical canvas against which the twenty two case studies can be better understood. Extracts and comments drawn from this literature review appear throughout the Report. A list of references is offered at the end of this Report.

17. Definitions

To avoid potential ambiguity and uncertainty, it is useful to define the key terms used in this Report. Of particular importance are the terms, *association*, *conservatism*, *creativity, fitness, health, innovation, resilience, social capital, system* and *succession.* Other important terms in this report will be defined at the points at which they first occur.

For the purposes of this Report, an *association* is a not-for-profit incorporated legal entity, operating on behalf of its members, who pay, directly or indirectly, a membership fee as one of their conditions of membership. All associations examined for this research served the interests of one or more sectors of the fishing and aquaculture industries, or, for comparison purposes, a number of non-fishery primary industries.

Conservatism, according to the Collins English dictionary means: 1: Opposition to change or innovation; or 2: A political philosophy advocating the preservation of the best of the established order of society and opposing radical change. Plowman (2009) reveals that human evolution has prized and rewarded conservatism over innovation for the past 90,000 years; yet today innovation is more necessary than ever.

Feist, (1998) defines *creativity* as thought or behaviour that is regarded by others to be both original and useful. Creativity is an inseparable part of radical innovation; the latter is impossible without the former. In other words, radical innovation is the operationalization of creativity. To suggest that a person is innovative is to suggest that they are creative and can put that creativity into operation, or that they can put into operation someone else's creativity.

Fitness is used in an evolutionary sense. Any organism, be that a fish, a person, an association or a nation, survives and thrives because it is compatible with its external environment. It is the external environment that provides the inputs that enable the organism to survive. Any organism is also competing with other organisms for those external inputs. So successful organisms are often those that create their own ecological niche, a particular habitat in which they are specialised, to reduce competition for those essential inputs. This strategy can be locked in when the external environment is stable. However, for associations to maintain fitness (namely the 'fit' between the organism's characteristics and the external niche environment – camouflage is a good example), when the external environment changes, the association needs to change too. For associations, what this means is that yesterday's successful way of operating may no longer be appropriate for today or tomorrow.

The term *healthy,* as used in this Report and the research that underpins it, refers to those conditions within an association, both immediate and long term, that are supportive of its capacity to do its job, to maintain its 'fit' with the external environment, and which lead to member satisfaction. In contrast, an *unhealthy association* is one its members are less willing to support, which is no longer receiving the blessing of the external world, which is no longer able to compete for scarce and diminishing resources, and/or which is unable to make continuous adjustment necessary for goodness of fit.

Innovation concerns those behaviours and social processes whereby individuals, groups, or organizations seek to achieve desired changes or to avoid the penalties of inaction (West & Anderson, 1996). Damanpour (1991) refers to two distinct forms of innovation: *radical innovation* which produces changes in idea, activity or process and represents a clear departure from existing practices; and *incremental innovation* which results in little departure from existing practices. Kirton (1994) has a similar notion when he differentiates between *innovation* – doing things differently, and *adaptation* – doing things better. Successful innovations are those that strengthen the 'fit' between the organism and its external environment.

This report embraces the Damanpour concepts of innovation, from the radical to the incremental. Of core interest is the question of why some associations are thriving through initiation or embracing of change, whilst others seem reluctant or unable to embrace the necessary behavioural change.

The terms *creative* and *innovative* are sometimes used interchangeably. We suggest that creativity lies within an individual. It begins with an idea in someone's head. That idea is then given expression either via words, behaviour or artefact creation. An industry or its association can never be creative, only an individual or individuals can be. Innovation is what occurs in turning that creativity into something of use. The process of innovation can be done by one or many. Hence it is possible for an individual to be creative but not innovative (since they can have an idea that they express but do not operationalize); it is possible for an individual to be innovative but not creative (since they can operationalize someone else's idea); it is possible for a group to be innovative, but not for it to be creative. The potential confusion between the terms *creative* and *innovative* is widespread. For example, the adoption literature describes the various stages through which an idea is taken up by a population, where the stages are collectively known as the adoption curve. Those who originate an idea are known as *innovators* (Rogers, 1995). In the sense that the terms are being used in this report, they might more appropriately be called *creators*. So creativity is actually a subset of the innovation process. We can have creativity without innovation but we cannot have the reverse.

Resilience is a term that is currently in vogue. According to the Collins English dictionary, it means returning to the original form or position after being bent, compressed, or stretched. So a resilient association is one able to recover after a set-back. Note that an association can be resilient though not innovative. An innovative association would, after a set-back, and unlike a resilient association, emerge in somewhat different form.

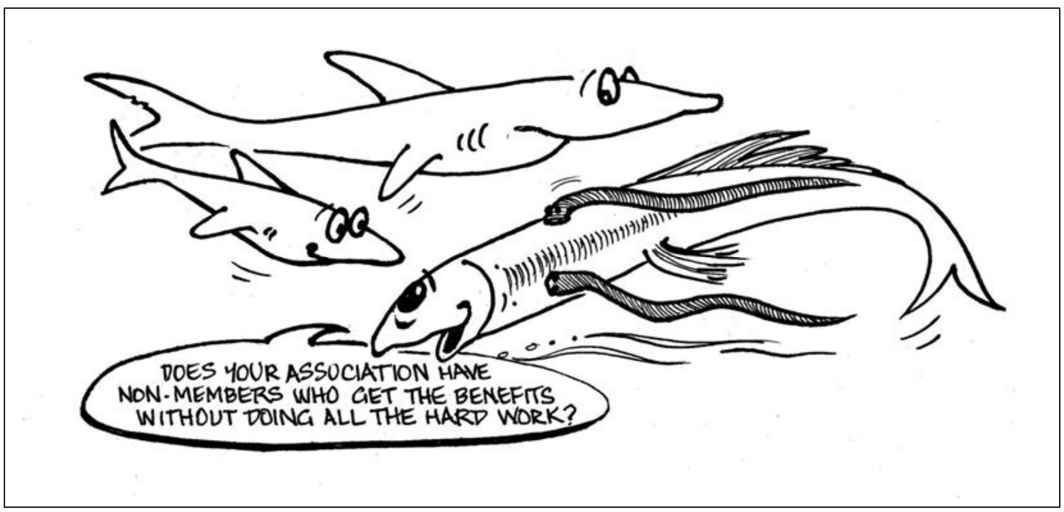
Social capital is a term that parallels 'working financial capital' (the amount of money one might have in the bank) or 'physical capital' (the value of one's boat and associated professional equipment). *Social capital* is more intangible and refers to the networks of people that collectively might add value to an individual, an association, or a community. Putnam (2000) coined the term *social capital*, and suggests it comes in two types: (i) *bonding social capital* – the extent to which one has very strong local ties, and (ii) *bridging social capital* – the extent to which one has networks that extend remotely, both geographically and across disciplines and interests. The glue that gives effect to social capital, either bridging or bonding, is 'trust', the confidence that other members of the network will behave in a predictable way. In other words, social capital is an expression of relationship confidence (Brettell, 2005). Both aspects of social capital are always at play, because individuals operate within nested hierarchies of identity that allow them to locate themselves in different communities at different times (Brettell, 2005). It is possible for some associations to have high bonding social capital and low bridging social capital. The reverse is also possible. And some would have both. Plowman, Ashkanasy, Gardener and Letts (2004) found that bridging social capital is a stronger predictor of innovation, and that strong bonding social capital is an inhibitor. Why? Because bonding social capital drives group conformity and blocks individual creativity and hence innovation. Groups with high bonding social capital are often conservative, and members place a higher value on belonging than they do on doing something that no-one else is doing.

Social licence is a term that has come into prominence in the last decade, particularly in the resource sector. The 'court of public opinion' can be a harsh assessor of the rights on any enterprise to carry on its business, particularly when that business involves the extraction of a community resource, or having an impact upon the environment. By virtue of the pressure that the general public can bring to bear on political systems, on regulators, and on legislation, any enterprise can find its '*social licence to operate*' is threatened or even removed. An enterprise, an association or an industry can protect its social licence by being alert for early public relations signals, addressing emerging issues internally before change is forced externally, and by maintaining a positive and proactive image in the media.

Sweat equity is a different form of equity than financial equity, Whilst the latter refers to one's legal right to ownership of something tangible or intangible, such as a fishing licence, the term *sweat equity* is used in relation to an arguable moral right to something tangible or intangible. For example, a licence or quota holder has financial equity in a particular fishery; a skipper or deckie who hold no licence or quota rights might argue on their moral right to *sweat equity* by virtue of the work they put in. Any enterprise needs both form of equity to survive.

Any association is a *system*. A system is defined by its attributes. Its identity is created by its having a clear *boundary* between itself and the environment within which it exists. The system extracts *inputs* from its external environment, treats those inputs with *internal processes* that result in benefit to the system, and then deliver *outputs* back into the external world. Those outputs are what often encourage the external world to continue to provide inputs. And every system, be that a fish, a human, or an association, is always under threat from the external world. So a healthy association is one that is able to attract sufficient inputs, has a clearly defined boundary it is able to protect, has efficient and effective internal processes that are beneficial, and which delivers valued outputs back into the external world. And it can do all of this whilst adjusting to changes both internally and externally.

Succession, in this document, is the term used to describe renewal of association leadership. It is the process within which new members are welcomed, grown in confidence and experience, are offered greater responsibility to the point where they are willing and able to step into a leadership role. Since all associations exist in a hierarchy (think local commodity bodies, to regional or sector bodies, to peak bodies), succession is also the process whereby leaders at one level are promoted to be representatives at a higher level, and so the process of succession continues.



In order to be *healthy,* an association requires some blend of *conservatism* (stability), *resilience*, the capacity to bounce back after a set-back, and *innovation*, the capacity to change and adapt to emerging circumstances. A prerequisite to *health* is the capacity of an association to maintain its *fit* with the external environment upon which it totally depends.

18. Internal contextual factors

Because an association is a *system*, as defined earlier, it has a boundary, it has inputs from the external world, it has internal processes, and it has outputs that it delivers back to the external world. For any association executive or membership wishing to enhance the health of its association, the prayer of St Francis of Assisi is instructive:

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Based on the definition of system, association executives have more influence over issues that are internal than over issues that are external.

Damanpour (1991) conducted a meta-analysis of forty six research articles on organizational innovation, examining internal contextual factors that appeared to be supportive. Table 1 illustrates the internal contextual factors that his research found to foster innovation in organizations.

Table 1: Contextual factors that foster innovation in organizations.

Characteristic	Reasons for Contextual Importance in Fostering Innovation
Availability of a Variety of Specialists	A greater variety of specialists would provide a broader knowledge base and increase the cross-fertilization of ideas.
Clusters of Specialists	Coalitions of professionals in differentiated units can cross fertilize with like minds and increase their leverage for influence.
Continuing Professional Development	Increases boundary-spanning activity, self-confidence, and a commitment to freshness and growth in ideas and practices.
Informality	Flexibility and low emphasis on rules facilitate innovation. Low formalization permits openness, which encourages new ideas and behaviours.
Decentralization of Power and Decision Making	The concentration of decision-making authority prevents innovative solutions, while the dispersion of power is necessary for innovation. Participatory work environments facilitate innovation by increasing organizational members' awareness, commitment, and involvement.
Managerial Attitude Towards Change	Managers' favourable attitude towards change leads to an internal climate conducive to innovation. Managerial support for innovation is especially required in the implementation stage, when co-ordination and conflict resolution among individuals and units are

	essential.
Freshness of Management and Leadership	The longevity of managers in their jobs provides legitimacy and knowledge of how to accomplish tasks, manage political processes, and obtain desired outcomes. In contrast, new management and leadership can usher in new ideas.
Technical Knowledge Resources	The greater the technical knowledge resource, the more easily can new technical ideas be understood and procedures for their development and implementation be attained.
Administrative Intensity and Capacity	A higher proportion of administrative capability facilitates innovation because the successful adoption of innovations depends largely on the leadership, support, and co-ordination that managers and infrastructure provide.
Slack Resources.	Slack resources allow an organization to afford to purchase innovations, absorb failure, bear the cost of instituting innovations, and explore new ideas in advance of actual need.
External Communication	Environmental scanning and professional activities of members outside of the association can bring innovative ideas. Innovative organizations exchange information with their environments effectively.
Internal Communication	Facilitates dispersion of ideas within an organization and increases their amount and diversity, which results in cross fertilization of ideas. Also creates an internal environment favourable to the survival of new ideas.

Mulligan (1988) identified what he sees as the reasons for forming a group or an association. The benefits of the collective include:

(i) Tackling tasks and producing results beyond the capacity of an individual,

(ii) Making more efficient use of resources,

(iii) Minimising responsibility on any one member for achieving the desired outcome. In other words, sharing the load,

(iv) Increasing levels of commitment, since members keep each other motivated,

(v) Reducing the probability of mistakes through shared judgement,

(vi) Producing solutions that are more creative,

(vii) Easing the sense of isolation of individual members and meeting their social needs for belonging.

Yet Mulligan also points out that belonging to a group or association also can have a downside. Issues to consider include:

(i) Groups can expect conformist or compliant behaviour,

(ii) Personality clashes,

(iii) Group functioning at the level of the lowest common denominator,

(iv) Inappropriate dominance by some members.

In order to improve group health, Mulligan recommends the following:

(i) A common purpose, something to help the group be homogenous and cohesive.

(ii) A means of organisation that helps in the achievement of that common purpose.

(iii) Common recognition by members of group boundaries: who belongs, who doesn't and how is membership decided.

(iv) Capacity to absorb and lose members without damaging the group's identity.

(v) The ability to adapt and grow through the various energy cycles, without losing integrity and direction,

(vi) Freedom from cliques and sub-groups,

(vii) Individual members who are valued for their individual contributions whilst being guided by group norms or codes of conduct,

(viii) The capacity to face discontent and resolve conflict between members.

Plowman et al (2004) examined a number of Australian primary industry associations in order to understand the factors that made them more innovative. That research used the Damanpour characteristics as a base. Additional factors, all internal, emerging from that research that proved important for group health include:

(i) Age of the association. Associations, like humans, have a natural life cycle that moves from the high energy and optimism of beginnings through the steady performance and confidence of maturity to the decline of old age.

(ii) Average age of members. The average age of members is strongly correlated with the speed with which an association can take up new ideas and its willingness to risk.

(iii) Diversity of membership. The more diverse the members in gender, age, experience, ethnicity, education, etc., the more innovative and healthy an association can be. Too much diversity, however, can destroy the homogeneity that brings a group into being.

(iv) Goods, services and benefits to members. This characteristic should be central to why an association exists. It is the tangible evidence of delivering on its purpose, or on the expectations of its members.

(v) Marketing/public relations/lobbying/political influence. Whilst goods and services are the concrete benefits an association might deliver its members, an invaluable intangible is negotiating the right to exist for the association, its industry and its members. This can be done through (a) marketing, where the association 'sells' goods and services to the broader world in exchange for a benefit; (b) public relations, where the association negotiates with the broader world its 'social licence' to exist (since adverse public opinion can be detrimental to a group), and (c) lobbying or political influence, where the group seeks to influence external powers in ways that are favourable to the group.

(vi) Membership strength. The percentage of potential members that are actual members talks to the legitimacy of the association's voice.

(vii) Sharing responsibilities. Whilst members expect their association to provide them with individual benefits, it cannot do so unless the members contribute the necessary responsibilities, both financially and in-kind.

(viii) Boundary clarity. This characteristic is particularly important where there are several or more associations with potential for overlapping or competing interests or responsibilities.

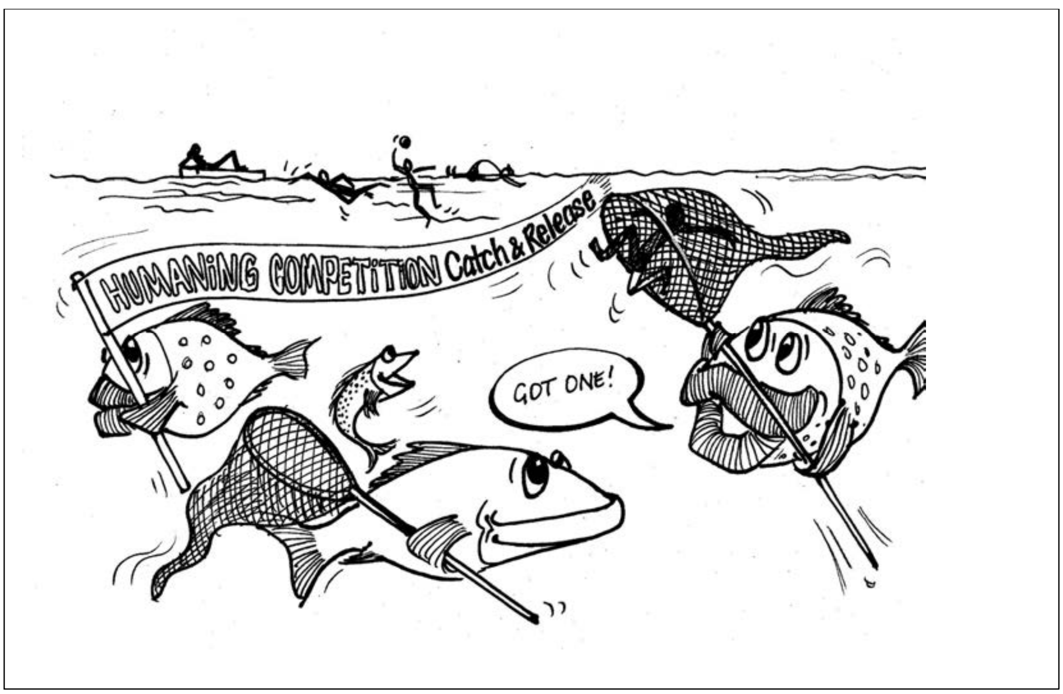
(ix) Performance monitoring. Healthy associations not only have a purpose to which they are headed, they also monitor and evaluate performance in order to know how well they have done. They also monitor the external environment for opportunities or threats that may require a shift in internal behaviour.

(x) Continuous improvement. Also known as 'action research', continuous improvement is the conscious process of deliberately seeking to improve everything the association does. This includes constantly scanning the environment, making small adjustments to better its performance.

In our current research, on which this paper reports, we used a semi-structured interview questionnaire, based on Damanpour's (1991) meta-analysis, combined with suggestions by

Mulligan (1988) and Plowman et al (2004), to examine the contextual factors pertaining to healthy industry associations. This full list of contextual factors in captured in Table 2 below.

Our research design involved targeted associations that were invited, through their Chairperson or Executive Officer, to participate. Interviewees were people identified by that contact person as having a thorough understanding of the industry and the association that serviced it. Where possible interviewees were also chosen for their diversity of views: gender, age, length of time in the industry and were members / beneficiaries of an organisation rather than employed or contracted resources. It is these people who were invited to take part in a one-hour-plus taped interview. All tapes were transcribed, almost verbatim – slight editing changes being made to protect identities where appropriate or to improve readability. Qualitative comments were summarised across all interviewees for each question and compiled into a single document which captured the qualitative and quantitative health status and trends of the association. This summary document, the average length of which was 40 to 50 A4 pages, was then sent back, as a confidential draft, to one or two interviewees, to check on material accuracy and appropriateness. Emerging themes and supporting quotes were then extracted for inclusion into this aggregated generic Report. Contributing associations are identified except where what is being reported might show that association in poor light. In such cases, association identity is removed or disguised.



19. Interview data

Each interviewee was asked 30 interview questions, where each question explored an area of health for that industry association. They were invited to provide a score for each question, ranging from (1) very inadequate, to (7) very adequate. They were also invited to comments on changes to the question issue over the past five years. Trend scores range from (1) increased considerably, to (5) declined considerably. Interviewees also made comments in relation to each question topic.

It needs to be stressed that the interviewees were offering subjective perceptions of the health of their association that are reflected in their scores; they were not necessarily comparing their association with any other association. They were merely comparing their perceptions with what they regarded as desirable. A very healthy association which also perceives lots of things that need to be done may score itself harshly. A very conservative association with a limited view of possible improvements may score itself generously.

Each interview was digitally recorded, transcribed, and a Word file emailed back to each interviewee, giving them an opportunity to review the transcript and make any editorial changes. Interviews data were then combined into a single report for each participating association. Individual association reports were not shared outside of each association. Each individual association report included an association overview, a summary of what interviewees told us.

With the approval of the participating associations, those association overviews then became a case study in this overall research Report. In addition, selected quotations were extracted from individual reports, clustered by interview question. It is the pictures and patterns that emerge from these clusters that provide the substance of this research Report.

Listed below are the topics around which the interviews were conducted.

Table 2: Internal contextual factors that foster healthy associations.

Characteristic	Reasons for Contextual Importance in Fostering Association Health
Age of the association	Associations have a life cycle that begins with high energy and growth, moves to maturity, and then into decline. Renewal is possible.
Average age of members	The younger the average age of members, (a) the greater the willingness to take risks, (b) the higher the likely level of education, and (c) the greater the digital technological sophistication. Conversely, the younger the average of members, the more difficulty in obtaining participation and commitment.
Diversity, particularly gender	The closer an association gets to equal gender participation, the healthier in terms of compassion, empathy, and collaboration.

Clarity of purpose	The greater the expressed clarity of purpose of an association, the more focussed its efforts.
A means of organisation	Defined roles and responsibilities ensure clarity and accountability of effort.
A means of defining membership	Healthy associations provide benefits to their members and manage to do so in a manner that is not available to non-members. The distinction between members and non-members is clear.
The capacity to lose or absorb association members.	Healthy associations are (a) not excessively dependent for their existence on any individual(s), and make themselves resilient to the loss of key people. Nor are they closed to non-members wishing to join.
Freedom from cliques or sub-groups	Healthy associations are free from cliques or sub-groups who wield unequal power or who have access to privileged information from which ordinary members are excluded.
A code of conduct	Healthy associations have a published code of conduct that prescribes the behaviour expected of members.
Capacity to deal with discontent and resolve conflict between members	Healthy association recognise that conflict is normal and have established protocols in place to deal with it openly and constructively.
Goods, services, and benefits to members	Healthy associations attract members because the association delivers to its members goods, services and other benefits that members desire and are unable to obtain alone.
Performance capacity	Healthy associations have the necessary infrastructure and funds to conduct the associations espoused business and deliver the benefits that members expect.
Marketing/public relations/lobbying/political influence	Healthy associations are successful in influencing the external world to look upon them favourably, or at least treat them with respect.
Membership strength	Healthy associations attract, as members, a large proportion or all those individuals, enterprises, or subsidiary bodies that they would choose to have as members, or who would be potentially eligible. The greater the proportion, the greater the legitimacy of the association's voice.
Learning new skills and adopting new technologies	Healthy associations ensure that they, and their members, keep up with emerging technologies and master the necessary skills to do so.
Decentralisation of decision-making	Healthy associations ensure a broad consultative and decision-making base. The concentration of decision-making authority prevents innovative solutions, while the dispersion of power is necessary for

	innovation. Participatory decision environments facilitate innovation by increasing members' awareness, commitment, and involvement.
Openness to new ideas	Healthy associations are not locked into fixed views or ways of operating. Rather they are willing to be challenged by and to be receptive to new ideas from any source.
Freshness of management and leadership	Healthy associations are alert to the dangers of leadership staleness and encourage a deliberate policy of leadership renewal, independent of personalities.
New blood	Healthy associations maintain vitality by a deliberate policy of seeking new members, particularly those who are new to the industry.
Sharing responsibilities	Healthy associations ensure that responsibilities are broadly spread across the membership base rather than falling to a few, and that those responsibilities are rotated.
Availability of spare capacity/slack resources	Healthy associations can be innovative, and have the capacity to respond to opportunities or threats, only if their capacity is not already stretched.
Boundary clarity	A healthy association, that is one of a number of affiliated associations, has a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each, so that there are no ambiguities of responsibility.
External communication	Healthy associations adopt a deliberate policy of continually communicating with the greater external world with a view to seeking out ideas for possible adoption.
Internal communication	Healthy associations adopt a deliberate policy of active communication internally, using multiple methods, both between members and between members and the association.
Performance monitoring and evaluation	Healthy associations set themselves goals and monitor how they are travelling. Areas for assessment could include all of the characteristics in this table.
Continuous improvement	Healthy associations are not static. They actively seek to improve all aspects of what they do through a program of continuous improvement.

It is not suggested that this list of contextual factors is exhaustive. It is merely a list of characteristics suggested by the literature. Readers will doubtless think of other factors which, for any particular association, might be equally or even more important.

Each of these listed internal contextual factors pertaining to industry association health is now considered in greater detail. Quotations drawn from the twenty two case studies illustrate points being made.

Age of the association

How old is this association?

The age of an association can have a bearing on its performance. Any group goes through a series of life-cycle stages (Tuckman, 1965). The first, 'forming', is characterised by high energy and enthusiasm, a period in which people are generally very civil, cordial, and polite. It is also a period in which there are no clear rules or clear roles. The second stage, known as 'storming' occurs when people start jockeying for influence, start determining roles and have spirited discussions as to purpose and procedures. It can be a period during which the high aspirations of the 'forming' stages are given a cold dash of reality. Eventually the angst of 'storming' settles down, roles and procedures become clearer, and the 'performing stage' begins. This period is one of productivity. As the group matures, the excitement can be replaced by procedural tedium and the energy wanes. Some members decide to leave or the group makes a decision to cease, triggering a period of 'mourning', where members reflect, often through 'rose-coloured glasses' on the good times had and the camaraderie now lost. At this point the group can cease altogether. Or new people might step up, or a new crisis emerges, and the whole cycle begins all over. So it is not uncommon for any group to go through these stages multiple times. Note that, with the entry of just one new person, a group may revert to the 'storming' phase, as the new person endeavours to find their place.

A group might be considered as being in a growth phase, a stable mature phase, or a declining phase.

Some group members may become alarmed as the group transitions from the warm glow and optimism of 'forming', to the sometimes unpleasant tussle of 'storming', the jockeying for positions of influence. Attempts can be made to suppress this 'storming' stage, moving straight to 'performing'. However, 'storming' should never be suppressed, since it only goes underground, 'white-anting' the group's efforts before breaking out into something far more nasty than may have otherwise been the case. So rather than be suppressed, the 'storming' stage should be encouraged. The quicker this stage runs its natural course, the quicker the group can move on to 'performing'.

Another way to think of the lifecycle of a group or an association is through the concepts of 'entropy' (growth), through to 'maturity' (stability) and 'atrophy' (decline). So a group might be considered as being in a growth phase, a stable mature phase, or a declining phase. And which phase a group or association is in is a function of the energy expended. The default option for any association is death, and for this not to occur, energy must be expended. So an association comes into being through considerable expenditure of energy fuelled by a sense of optimism for what might collectively be achieved. Once established, an issue for any group or association is: 'what does it have to do to stave off atrophy and death?'

> *On generational change, I think, at 49, I'm the oldest one on the Board now, which is very disconcerting [to me]. When I first joined the board I was about 28. I was the youngest person on the Board. The average Director age has dropped because we lost a lot of the older members about three years ago; went through a bit of renewal. (4)*
>
> *I think it's just a general agricultural age thing. We're getting old; our members are too. (19)*
>
> *Well properties being sold, members retiring. Some of the members are getting a little tired as well. I guess they've been doing it for so long, and I guess you do get tired. (19)*
>
> *When I first joined I was 31 and a lot of us were, and now we're 50. So there's a function of average age of members that affects the association's vitality and energy. (19)*

It might well be asked: 'How long is an association's life cycle between its creation and its actual death?' This question has no definitive answer, since it depends upon (a) the value that a group provides to its members, in exchange for which its members are willing to continue to invest; (b) the effectiveness of that investment, as well as the association's internal processes, in keeping the association alive; (c) the nature of the external environment within which both the association and its members exist, and the external pressures brought to bear on the association and its members and (d) the speed of responsiveness to any external changes, be they opportunities or threats.

> *It seems to go through cycles. What I mean is that there was formerly a quite strong peak industry body. That could have been because of the issues at the time. And then we went through some rather prosperous years, so everybody decided that they would just coast along, do their own thing and it became quite cosy. (7)*

Humans often have a predisposition to emotionally applaud the entropy or growth phase of an association or group, yet a tendency to fight the notion of atrophy or decline. Like the human life cycle, death is a natural part of the rhythm. Associations will come into existence and thrive when there is a clear need for their existence. They will cease when there is insufficient member energy, when the reason for their creation has passed, or when the challenges imposed by a constantly changing external environment are greater than the association can bear.

A signal that an association is in decline is when it struggles to find people to fill positions of responsibility.

So, sometimes, the best thing an association might do is to acknowledge that it may be coming to its natural end, and to celebrate accordingly; to celebrate the great things it has achieved on behalf of its members and to celebrate the efforts of those who made the achievements possible. And a signal that an association is in decline is when it struggles to find people to fill positions of responsibility.

Within the third phase of the association lifecycle, 'performing', there is an energy cycle. This energy cycle occurs for every event an association conducts, be that a meeting, a seminar or a workshop. The energy cycle includes *nurturing*, when people help each other and share information; *energizing*, when members suggest, challenge, decide, plan and prepare; *performing,* when the energy of members is directed towards execution of the task; and finally *relaxing*, when group members debrief, relax, and celebrate their achievements. This cycle follows the natural ebb and flow of people's energy. So it is natural for there to be always high and low energy points in a group.

In partial summary: Associations have a life cycle and energy cycles that follow a predictable rhythm. Recognising, acknowledging and understanding where an association is within those cycles can lead to greater understanding by those charged with its management.

> **Recommendation 1:** Recognize that lifecycle stages and energy cycles are natural for any group, to acknowledge their inevitability, and to seek to identify where they are at any point in time in order anticipate the coming phase.

Average age of members and the age range

What is the average age of members and what is the age-range?

People are social animals who like to associate with people who are similar. So an association where the average age is 50 and the aged spread is 40 to 60 is unlikely to attract 25 year olds. Yet the survival of our association and our industry requires that it is constantly renewing itself through attracting younger members. And those younger members need to feel welcome and feel that this is a social group with whom they can identify.

There is reluctance among Gen X and Gen Y people to make any long-term commitments or to take on responsibility.

All else being equal, youth correlates with innovation due to exposure to higher levels in both education and technology. There is an inverse relationship between age and willingness to take risks and test new ideas. Older people are, on average, more risk averse since they perceive themselves less able to recover from set-backs. Conversely, younger people are, on average, more willing to take risks and explore options. So the average age of an association's member base, particularly its executive, will be indicative of its risk willingness or otherwise.

> *There will always be members that will never take up new technology. It seems to be in an aging population in farming that you get that. If we're running courses, it's normally the younger ones that are there. (18)*

On the other hand, younger people are less inclined to sign up to membership of associations (van der Geest & MacDonald, 2008). There is reluctance among Gen X and Gen Y people to make any long-term commitments or to take on responsibility (Plowman & Winn, 2009). This lack of willingness by younger people to join associations is in marked contrast to those of the 'baby-boomer' generation for whom civic responsibility was always widely accepted. Hence, associations of all types, whether industry-based, profession-based, community-based, or faith-based commonly find themselves with an aging membership and an inability to attract younger members.

This demographic shift is, in part, explained by an economic shift. It was common among baby-boomers for the male to be the bread-winner and the female to look after domestic responsibilities. As a result, people had more time to invest in voluntary associations. This spread of responsibilities is extremely uncommon today in the younger generation, particularly in Western societies. Increased costs of living, particularly mortgage costs, coupled with the expectation of instant material gratification, means that today, it is more common for both adults in a household to be either employed or seeking employment. Women no longer regard themselves as solely committed to being a home-maker. Their aspirations are often the same as men's. Younger adults are more likely to be time-poor, financially strapped, committed to higher educational goals and career aspirations and with fewer peers engaged in civic participation. So they have fewer role models in relation to association membership.

It is the natural task of every parent to try to provide for their children, to give them every opportunity to establish a productive life. And most parents are successful in that endeavour – levels of education being an example. Our grandparents were citizens of a district; our parents were citizens of a State; our children are citizens of the world. The options that younger generations have available to them are often vast. So any industry or any association that seeks to attract younger members does so in the face of fierce competition from alternative options, often on a global scale.

Any industry or any association that seeks to attract younger members does so in the face of fierce competition from alternative options, often on a global scale.

In 2009, one of the authors of this present research was commissioned to investigate the willingness of young rural people to join a membership-based social association. Without claiming that the findings of that research will necessarily apply to younger people in fishing, aquaculture, or other forms of primary production, some of the major findings from that 2009 research (Plowman & Winn, 2009) include:

- The drift from primary industries and from the bush generally in pursuit of education, employment and social networking opportunities is particularly prevalent for people in their teens through to their early thirties, thereby threatening the long-term viability of rural industries and rural communities.

- A shrinking rural population, reluctance to take on organisational roles, poverty of time, cost of travel, and the alternate availability of digital capacity to access information and maintain social contacts all mediate against the viability of an old-style social association.

- The digital world can provide much of the informational and network needs of young rural people. Facebook appears to be a generally favoured networking tool but latest web technology can bring communication, meeting and information tools into the home (e.g. NING social networking software).

- The needs of young rural people are more likely to be met by some form of network that bears little resemblance to organisations of the past.

- Providing socialisation opportunities in an informal setting appears preferable to anything formal that has structures, roles and responsibilities.

- With a desire to learn by doing and with a throw-away mentality, young people are looking for opportunities that are flexible, dynamic, and short-term. In contrast, evidence suggests they will avoid opportunities that involve formality or responsibility.

- There is ambivalence towards any organisation or network that requires a subscription or membership fee. Existing networks tend to be free or with a very low subscription.

- Generation Y people are more attracted to a yarn, a free feed and a beer; and that, conversely, if there was a meeting to attend, 'they'd run a mile'.

Some quotes from that 2009 research are instructive:

- *My generation now is so time poor that I can think of nothing worse at the moment than having another organisation, something else to be involved with. None of us have any enthusiasm to be part of another group. With the technology today, we can pick things up, then put them down. When you need someone, you've got that touch-point there, but not necessarily taking on responsibility.* [A Gen-Y interviewee]
- *Young people are not looking for an organisation to join. They move on. Youth are looking for new experiences; they do not want to be tied to an organisation or to any sort of responsibility.* [The membership officer of a major rural lobby group.]
- *' the factors that keep young people in regional and rural Australia are opportunities for satisfying employment, a reasonable level of income, and first and foremost a social outlet or some form of support network.* [A young rural interviewee]
- *If you said we were going to put on a beer and bikkies and have a guest speaker for twenty minutes, you'd get heaps and heaps of people. But if you said we were going to have a meeting for three hours, people wouldn't come. And I find that these days there is more informality, unless you are on a Board or in some form of governance role. A lot of young people's functions seem to be around beer. Even at AgEquip two weeks ago, the only way we were going to get members to come and to meet each other was to put on free beers and nibblies. Because otherwise they just wouldn't come. And that is the way life is in rural Australia. It is all about food and drinks. [A young rural leader.]*
- *People just love to get something for free. And it signals that they will not be under any pressure. Which perhaps comes back to the Gen Y thing of avoiding responsibility, avoiding being put into a situation that you can't worm your way out of. [a young rural person]*

- *You can get a group of young people to sit around for a chat and have it as a social networking sort of thing, people will turn up. If you put the word 'Meeting' in there, which probably infers structure and order, people will roll their eyes and say 'I think I'm busy that night'.*
- *I'd suggest that one of the reasons that young people may not want to join an industry network is because there are formal meetings. They get really bored with that. They don't want to deal with making a motion to the chair; they want to say what they want to say, when they want to say it. All those old-fashioned formal meeting rules, I don't think that is where young people want to be in terms of networks.*
- *Because we are agri-political, we have always had difficulty getting new blood, particularly young growers to actually put their hand up and take on a representative role. [Comment from the membership officer of an agri-political association.]*

Youth are looking for new experiences; they do not want to be tied to an organisation or to any sort of responsibility.

One of the advantages that younger people have is that they are more likely to be 'digital natives', a term used to describe people born into the digital age and who take to modern digital technologies like a duck to water. Baby boomers are defined as 'digital immigrants', people who were not born into the digital age, who have to unlearn old technologies and take up new technologies. On average, the younger the adult, the faster their rate of take-up of and comfort with digital technologies. See also the topic on 'New Blood', later in this document.

Further, baby-boomers regard face-to-face events as the primary method of social engagement; and for sourcing information. Younger people are blessed with diverse social digital media for their engagement, with face-to-face being just one of many means of maintaining connection. And digital access to information is now instant and global, diminishing substantially any felt need for membership-based associations as information sources.

I know if you're apprehensive about anything and you're not very confident, it's very, very daunting getting on those committees.

Open source access to information is almost a given in the digitally savvy younger generations. Free downloads of music, film and software are expected, and piracy of proprietary information is the norm. The notion of paying for information is increasingly obsolete, and hence the idea of paying an association membership fee is increasingly problematic.

There is also a generational issue here. Many enterprises are multigenerational, with younger family members working in the enterprise of their parents or older people. This generational difference can have implications for the level of involvement of younger members.

[From a young Board member] The other big thing that I'd urge other associations to do is give the new guys support, because ***you could easily feel out of place****. It's very daunting – I'm a fairly outgoing person, but I* ***know if you're apprehensive about anything and you're not very confident, it's very, very daunting getting on those committees****. Because essentially, these guys that have been on there for a while are legends. They're the ones that have been in the industry for a while and done all the new stuff. They're in all the books that you read when you're going through. So to get on a committee with them, and you sit there and try to tell them what you think is new and how you think you should do it; it's very daunting. (3)*

An issue we also have in the Fishing industry is that we have a lot of family businesses. ***I've had personal experience with young people coming in, but they maybe feel a little bit reticent because they don't want to take an opposing view to an older family member or well-established people in the industry.*** *So I do think we can encourage our younger participants in the fishing industry just to equip them to be confident with entering into those associations and feeling like they can have a say. (4)*

As long as Dad's going to the meetings, and he's doing the stuff, then the kids don't really become active.

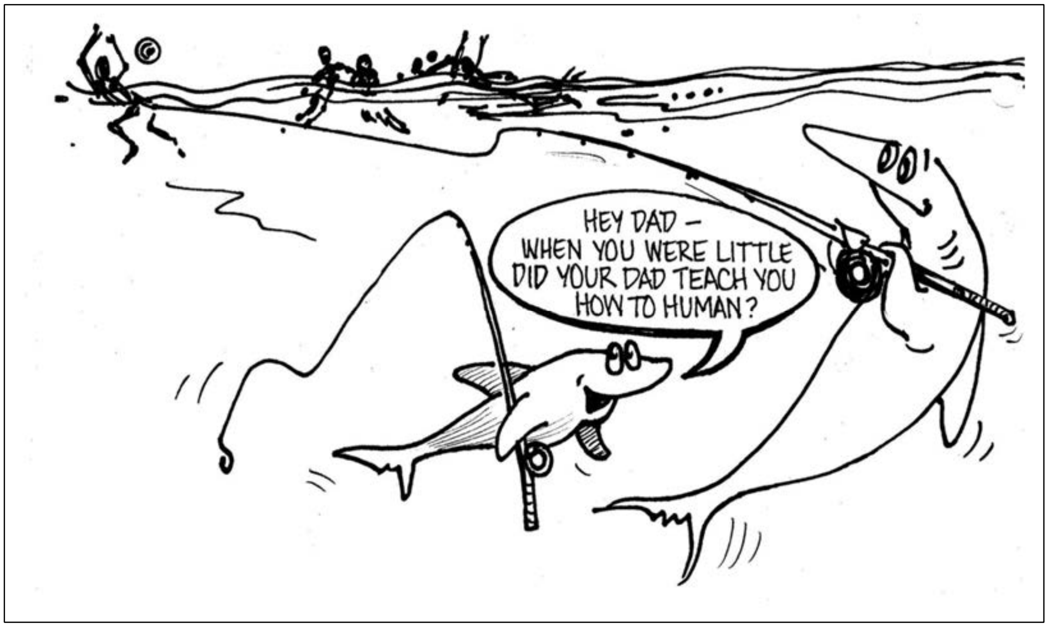
Average age of the Western Australian fishing industry I would say would be plus 50 and its only starting to turn around in the last 5 five years that you've got new entrants coming in. *You've got sons coming through or people biting the bullet like I did and investing in. The investing in side of things is probably a bit lower than family coming through but there's an older generation that's just on the brink of retiring and handing over to younger blood and that younger blood has been represented on the Board of [our peak body]. (4)*

There are quite a lot of younger people coming through, as in the Fathers are retiring. And ***of course they're listening to what their Father says, but they've got their own ideas too****. So I'd love to see that. (9)*

The next generation of guys coming through have a different mindset to the current / outgoing generation *in terms of the current generation is really focussed on fishing. In the offseason, the focus was still on fishing / maintenance etc. I think a lot of the focus is shifting – but* ***younger people have younger families that they want to spend time with****, or they have other priorities and business interests in their life as well, and the focus is not necessarily on fishing. (9)*

As you can join as a member for free with [association], it can range from 8 years of age right through to 99 years. (10)

One of the things that I've witnessed over a number of years (and it was largely the same with myself) that ***as long as Dad's going to the meetings, and he's doing the stuff, then the kids don't really become active.*** *(20)*



I've got busier, I know that much! ***I suppose it depends, too, where people are in their life. I know for myself, I have a young family****, where if you're on the Board with other members who have got an older family, it's much easier, I would think, to get away, out and about. (10)*

I'll qualify this by explaining that [the association in our State] is a little different to the other [State association] branches. ***We only accept family memberships. For instance, if you join, you would join yourself, your partner, and any children.*** *So that drops the average for good reason. That said, the average age would be early - to mid-30s. That's one of the reasons we did it. (11)*

We're always trying to get younger staff to come with us, but of course they expect the world, they want fixed hours and high pay. And you can only base your business on how much you're selling into the market and what your costs cover etc. Whereas you're into a younger generation that doesn't like physical work. They like set hours and big money in the oil industry – oil and gas, which is starting to play big roles here. (15)

I've been fisherman since I left school. I left school at 15 and a half, 16 years. I'll be 52 this year so that's – whatever that is, 36 years, but actually was fishing with my father since the age of nine. (16)

Multigenerational involvement can have an additional unintended consequence for industry association. Plowman et al (2004B) found that first generation industries had stronger associations because peers were the primary source of information. And so new industries were more collaborative. When the second generation started coming through, there was a tendency for that external networking to drop off, since other family members, particularly the older generation, were the source of guidance.

> *Look, we could want to have new blood in there but it's pretty well a closed shop now. As I said, there's a lot of people in there that have lost interest and, as the fleet shrinks,* ***there's no new young owner operators who have got the fire in their belly and who want to come out and make a difference.*** *(6)*

> *We're probably all getting pretty old in this industry now. It's a very lopsided industry. You thinking nobody is getting older but you're in like a time capsule and everyone is getting old together, you just don't realise it. Maybe as a representative it tends to be fishermen like ourselves as we are getting a little too old for going to sea; you spend more time sort of on the political side. The younger fishermen say they haven't got the time to get involved. I was the same when I was younger; I didn't want to. (16)*

In our present research, we found two associations where one of the membership parameters was age. In one case, Board members had to be less than 70 years of age. If not, they were restricted to one year elected terms, whereas younger colleagues had three-year terms. Their renomination was not automatically accepted; they had to expose themselves annually to a full member vote.

A second case placed an upper limit of age 35 on the membership.

> *I know of one association in growing [commodity] down south that have actually got an age limit on it.* ***If you're over 30/35, they don't want you****. I look at that a couple of ways. It puts a limit on how long you get stuck in there, a bit like the fixed terms. You can say, 'If I don't get in and contribute soon, I'm not going to have the opportunity to do that.' I heard it was reasonably successful, so it's a different way of looking at it. (20)*

A younger Board member acknowledges the need for mutual respect across the age spectrum.

> ***No fire in the belly because they've passed 50 and cruising towards retirement.***

> *The younger guys have to pull their weight as well.* ***The whole new generation out there likes getting something for nothing, and it comes across that way fairly strong as well.*** *And some of these older guys have been in it for a long time, and they're still putting in a lot of effort to try to make things right. And if you don't go toe to toe with them, they're not going to give you the time of day, basically. So it definitely goes both ways: it's a bit of acceptance from the older guys, and a bit of enthusiasm from the younger guys. Respect as well, that's another big one.* ***The new guys have to really respect the older guys.*** [Comment by a younger Board member] *(3)*

> *Part of the problem, though is just keeping people motivated and on the Board.* ***I'm worried that some of our younger members aren't sufficiently motivated. Because it is a political***

> ***association, we get a lot of criticism.*** *(4)* [Inferring that younger people avoid Board responsibilities because they have no wish to be criticised.]

Whilst younger people may be less willing to join associations, and become active participants in their industry, at the senior end, older people inevitably start to withdraw from industry involvement as they approach retirement. Whereas younger people think in terms of 'opportunity ahead', older people think in terms of 'time left'.

> ***There's an older demographic in there now. A lot of them are quite comfortable with what they're doing and they're just happy to plod along*** *and don't really care about the bigger picture. (6)*

> *The average age would be in their fifty to sixties. (7)*

> *There would be very few under the age of forty that haven't gotten in due to second generation situations, like pretty much become directors of their family companies. In their own right, if they've actually purchased licenses, there would be very few under the age of forty. I would say the actual range would be forty to sixty or seventy. (7)*

> ***A lot of the people in our industry are ageing and are less likely to take up new technologies****. They often do in their business but not necessarily their personal life. Like they'll have the latest GPS, or whatever it is, on their boat but when you ask if they can run a computer and sit in on a Skype conference or something, they wouldn't know what you're talking about. (7)*

Somehow, we've got to get the membership up and get more people involved. Other than that, it's just going to die.

> *It's really hard to get younger people to come on. And I find that younger people are smarter than us older volunteers that run it for nothing. For years we haven't accepted any money to run our associations. Whereas* ***the younger ones just won't do it unless they get a sitting fee or their costs are paid.*** *So I think if you want younger people to take part in this, you're going to have to look to some sort of fee. (8)*

> *They come when they're a bit younger, and when they're older they leave. (9)*

> *As the young ones get a bit older, they seem to get more involved. When they're young, they just let it run. (9)*

> *It might be nice that we get some younger guys in here, but the other side of it is,* ***you want mature younger people; not the young people that don't really care.*** *(10)*

> *The age of the membership is the key to it. They're sort of more relaxed and more focussed on social fishing compared with competitive. (12)* [An association whose purpose is built around fishing competitions.]

> *I think* ***there's a huge problem with the aging workforce we have in the catching sector in particular, and it's becoming very difficult to attract young people into working as fishers*** *and*

I think we need a real effort in that area to get people into the industry. ***Our industry leaders are also aging****. (13)*

No fire in the belly because they've passed 50 and cruising towards retirement.

I would say the majority of the members would be above 40, would definitely be above 45. You have got some younger entrants coming in, but in all fisheries now to get established is really hard. You have to be coming in on the back of like a family business or it's really hard to get started. But there isn't that many like 20, 25 year olds, I would say there's vast majority of membership is 40, 45 plus. (16)

There's no one my age; like I'm 31 and I'm the youngest member*, I'm pretty sure. And there's no one my age in the area that owns a property. (19)*

While there is a perception that there are fewer young people in the industry, and even fewer in associations. There may be a distortion in that perception. It used to be the case that active fishermen were the licence and quota holders. This is increasingly less the case, with many quota holders and licence holders moving to retirement or being outside investors all together. These non-active people then lease out their rights to younger active skippers, who supported by deckies, may have no financial equity in the industry, and therefore limited voting rights or say in its direction, still have all of the sweat equity.

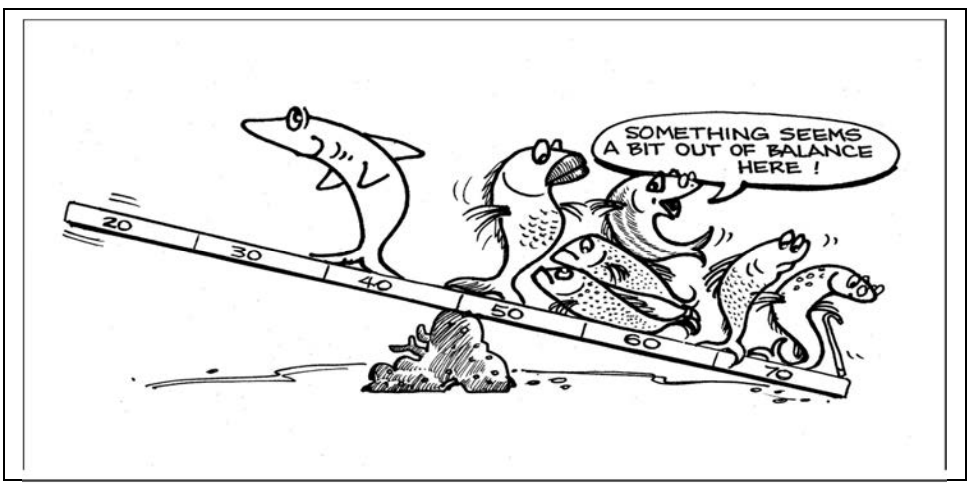
In many ways, the recruitment of younger members into an industry and into an association is the most important work that can be done. And the task is perpetual. Whilst the genesis of this research was the question of leadership succession, it is our opinion, as researchers, that leadership succession is secondary to new member recruitment. Without younger people getting exposure to your industry, and gaining an appreciation of its benefits or challenges, cutting their teeth on small lower levels of civic involvement, there will be no future leaders and no industry to lead. And without giving the present generation of sweat equity contributors a say in their future, industry death will be inevitable.

Somehow, we've got to get the membership up and get more people involved. Other than that, it's just going to die. I think that's the only thing, as an association, we should be looking to do. We could say that the committees going well and all this, but the committee's only there until it dies. Without the members, it dies. That's why I think that's all they should be concentrating on; getting more members somehow. (12)

Membership is declining. We've failed as an organisation to encourage young people along, and when we have, they're there for a short time and disappear elsewhere. (12)

In partial summary: Associations need to be in a state of constant renewal. This means replacing older retiring members with younger ones. High costs of entry into the industry, coupled with conditions of eligibility for membership, are increasingly barriers to entry for potential younger members. Those contributing sweat equity need to have a say in their future. Further, younger people have a different attitude and set of expectations in relation to associations that makes their engagement more challenging. So, in order to survive, associations and industries need to be increasingly creative in their endeavours to attract and retain younger members.

Recommendation 2: Encourage, by whatever means possible, younger people to join and to become active participants in the association. Alter the membership rules so that those with sweat equity have a say in their own future. Ask younger industry members what they might seek from an industry association and tailor the association membership eligibility and benefits accordingly. And it will also mean having different expectations of the level of engagement that might be possible and a greater range of means, particularly digital, of maintaining that engagement. Although this recruitment task will rarely be easy, the task is vital to the future of any industry and/or any association.



Case Study 1: The National Aquaculture Council

The National Aquaculture Council (NAC) is a peak body representing the majority by both number of producers and by volume of aquaculture in Australia. Its origin was in the early 90s when the FRDC convened the National Aquaculture Industry Working Group and that then created an entity called the Australian Aquaculture Forum which had a loose affiliation with the Australian Seafood Industry Council at the time. The Australian Aquaculture Forum then evolved into the National Aquaculture Council in the late 90s.

Current membership of eleven commodity associations includes peak bodies representing prawns, salmonoids, oysters, barramundi, abalone, mussel as well as the Tasmanian and South Australia State Aquaculture Councils, two major aquaculture feed suppliers, and the Sydney Fish market. Until recently the NAC also had tuna and pearl sectors but they've allowed their membership to lapse for financial reasons. NAC is also a representative organisation of the FRDC. So the NAC is a peak body whose membership is already the peak bodies of the various aquaculture sectors.

NAC is one of the organisations nationally representing or serving the seafood industry. While the wild catch industry has a large number of players, aquaculture has a much smaller number of participants. Yet, aquaculture accounts for about 50% by value of the overall seafood industry in Australia.

Gender/diversity mix of association members

What is the gender mix of the membership?

The issue of gender is an issue of diversity. The greater the diversity of a membership base, whether that diversity be age, background, experience or gender, the higher the level of creativity and innovation that is possible.

Yet, women are commonly underrepresented, particularly when it comes to Board membership. This is a finding not only confined to our research. Iecovich (2005) researched 161 not-for-profit (NFP) associations in Israel and found the following:

> *The findings show that women were underrepresented on Boards. In 38.7% of the organizations, women constituted 0–25% of Board members, as compared to 8% of the organizations where men constituted 0–25% of the Board members. Women were the majority (51% and over) on Boards in only 21% of the organizations, as compared to 71.2% of the organizations where men were in the majority* (p170).

Prouteau & Tabarie (2010) found that the world of voluntary leaders is neither representative of society at large, nor of the non-profit organizations' membership. In an examination of leadership within NFPs in France, they found that women were substantially under-represented in the positions of President and Treasurer though over-represented in the position of Secretary.

> *There's two females and 10 or so males (2)*

> *There are two women and four blokes on the Board, so six altogether. (3)*

> *Eight men and one female. (4)*

> *There are 0 females out of 12 on the Board. (5)*

A comment was 'do you really want a woman sitting as your vice president', and I personally found that offensive.

> *I think most of the members see it as being primarily about the fishermen. I guess I see it a little bit different to that because most of them, without their wives involved, would certainly be a lot poorer for what they're doing. There are a few women in the association and the revamp of the constitution allowed for full members of women; but that has not really panned out as well as some of us would have hoped. So realistically, probably less than 10 % are women. (8)*

> *As far as I know, the licences are in the male's name, but there are very strong affiliations with partners/wives who play a major part in the fishery either as processing or even on the boat. (8)*

I think that the majority of people unofficially don't see women as being really members. When I say member, I mean truly an equal voice with anybody else in the association, truly somebody who can sit in the chair and take it on. I mean, ***a comment made about [named woman] was 'do you really want a woman sitting as your vice president' and I personally found that offensive.*** *(8)*

I'd say it would be all male, because there are very few female participants in our fishery at all, apart from wives etc. But I would say we're basically 100% male. (9)

Predominantly male. I don't think I've met a female member of [association], although they may exist. (11)

It would be about 60% males, 40% females. We have what we call a family membership. Of course there are single males, and family members, which include the wives/partners. (12)

They're all men. (13)

The regional associations in Canada to a large degree are run by women executives, but the Board representatives from companies tend to be male. *So on our Board we have both, and it's a pretty good split. But if you looked at our 45 total members, that would probably skew heavily male. [Interviewer: It's interesting that the associations tend to be run by women.] Yes, they do in Canada. It's very interesting.* ***I think there's some skill there that attracts women, in terms of organisational management etc.*** *(14)*

The regional associations in Canada to a large degree are run by women executives, but the Board representatives from companies tend to be male.

We're not big on females in the British fishing industry. In a relative level it has got to be probably not far off one hundred per cent male. (16)

One female to four males on the Board. (18)

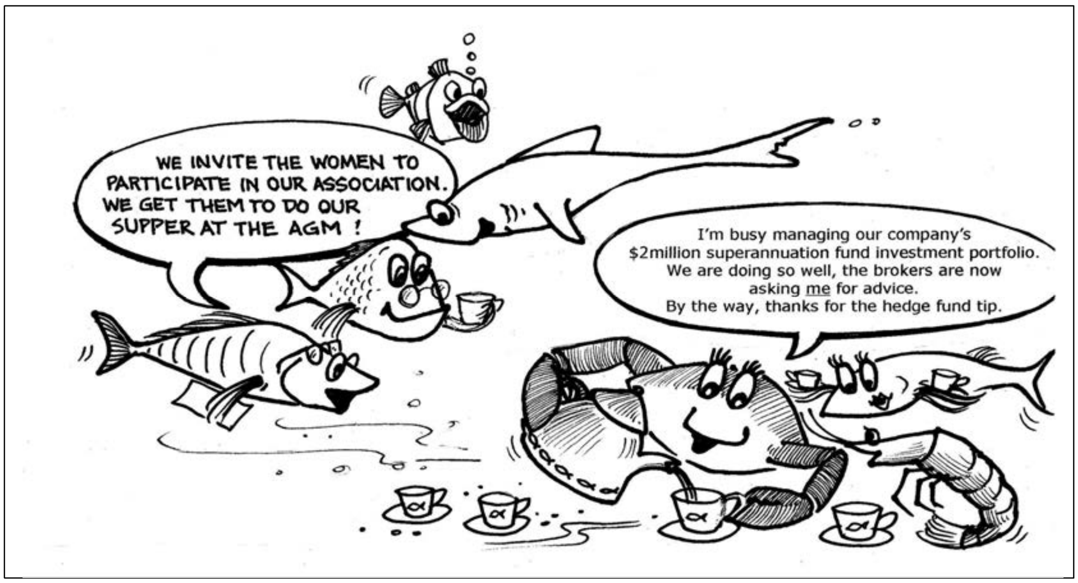
Predominantly male, probably wouldn't even be 80:20, it would probably be 90:10. (22)

Further, females are generally more consultative and conciliatory in style, a valuable attribute for association executives, leading to a greater sense of inclusion among the membership base.

We do actively encourage and pursue women as well, but this is a tough one, because ***a lot of women growers do work off farm, particularly the young women; they do have professional careers, they do have family responsibilities;*** *and the same applies to young men of course. (17)*

While the male members of a primary industry enterprise are more likely to be doing the physical work (not that women can't or don't), it is common for the female members to be keeping an eye on the books. Therefore increasing the number of women in an association's management can increase its business acumen.

There is evidence that associations driven by women have a different orientation to those driven by men. Burt (1998) outlines three different forms of networks. The first is an *entrepreneurial network* that provides access to information and control. The second type of network is known as a *clique* where its main benefit is the social security of its members. While cliques create social support, there are minimal information and control benefits. The final type of network is *hierarchical* and this provides sponsored access to information and control. *There is some evidence that women's organizations are more likely to be engaged in clique networks rather than entrepreneurial networks.* (Foster & Meinhard, 2005:147). They are more likely to be oriented towards 'bonding social capital' than they are to 'bridging social capital'.



Diversity can be a two edged sword. An association is based upon a shared purpose, something that is beneficial to all members. The greater the diversity, the more difficult it is to find that shared sense of purpose. Yet, as the concept of bridging social capital tells us, the greater the diversity, the more likely the association will find new ideas that aid its survival.

Society is enriched by diversity. Our research found that all of the fishery associations examined had substantial over-representation of males in the membership and on the Boards. Women - although they often don't hold the fishing licence - are likely to be active partners in the majority of small family fishing businesses. Engagement and enrolment of women is but one of the many avenues of diversity through which associations might be enriched. Gender equality not only makes civil sense; it also makes managerial sense. **In a study conducted by McKinsey and Company (2007), the authors observe a correlation ''between organizational excellence and women's participation in management bodies''**, although they acknowledge that correlation does not necessarily mean causality.

Most of the associations we examined for this research had some involvement by women, and this involvement was valued. We did come across one Board which was an 'old boys club' in the worst sense of the term and whose attitude towards and treatment of women members can only be described as appalling. We suspect that the members of this particular Board would be highly surprised that this is the way they are perceived by their women members, who are, in the main, the actual business managers of the family enterprise. The best insurance for any Board to ensure this paragraph is not talking about them is to proactively seek to have a minimum of two women on its Board. And if this paragraph is a surprise to any reader, then perhaps it is their Board to which this recommendation applies.

In partial summary: Society is enriched by diversity. Our research found that all of the fishery associations examined had substantial over-representation of males in the membership and on the Boards. Engagement and enrolment of women is but one of the many avenues of diversity with which associations might be enriched.

Most associations are accidental monocultures. They begin life as associations offering a collective voice to producers with a common interest. So they inevitably begin with shared background, commodity, and issues. As a result, membership of associations is relatively homogenous. This homogeneity, by definition, implies reduced diversity. Yet the richest conversations and the wisest decisions arise from diversity.

> [In response to a question from the interviewer as to how many [peak association] Board members would have experience as actual producers] *That's a good question. I will have to flick through people in my mind. I think in the composition of the current Board, most would be either Executive Officers or Managers. I think [named person] also has field experience, I will call it. That's a very good question. (1)*
>
> *Fishermen and aquaculture people on our Board; we're all 100 per cent either owners or involved in the industry. There's one woman who is a representative of the [named association]; she's not actually out there on a boat working, she works in the office, but she's got a biological background, she used to work with [peak body] before that. We don't have independent Board members. We're looking at going toward that, and we don't have anyone else apart from those that are elected by our members to become Board members. (4)*
>
> *Opening up the association to a wider context of people. At the moment [peak body] is made up of five organisations, so each person in theory won't come with their own agendas, but invariably you have to. I think it's just a role people take. (10)*
>
> *I think what we need to do is get greater participation of our associate members. Somehow bring our associate membership and find people that have time in that, to bring them in to the Board situation. (10)*
>
> *If you asked me if I could enhance the system, I would say possibly have a couple of independent directors. (17)*

Differences between sectors

On the issue of diversity of membership and board representation, there appears to be distinct differences between the three sectors of wild-catch, aquaculture, and recreational fishing. In the main, people in the wild-catch industry are second or third generation fishermen whose knowledge has been obtained in practical ways. For them, the resource that they seek already exists in the natural world. So associations in the wild-catch industry are largely populated by experienced fishermen, for whom high levels of formal education is generally not a priority. And the skills necessary to be a successful fisherman have little in common with the managerial skills necessary to run an association. And less obviously, though importantly, second and third generation primary industries are much more likely to be highly conservative and operate with what is known as 'external locus of control'. Competition and distrust between members of the one fishery is common. People with an external locus of control see their fate as being dependent upon an external third party, commonly government. Conversations within conservative, multi-generational industries are much more likely to take the form of: 'When are they going to …?' or 'Why don't they …?' (Plowman et al, 2004). All other things being equal, wild-catch associations are likely to contain the least diversity. The wild-catch case studies is the present research largely confirmed this to be the case.

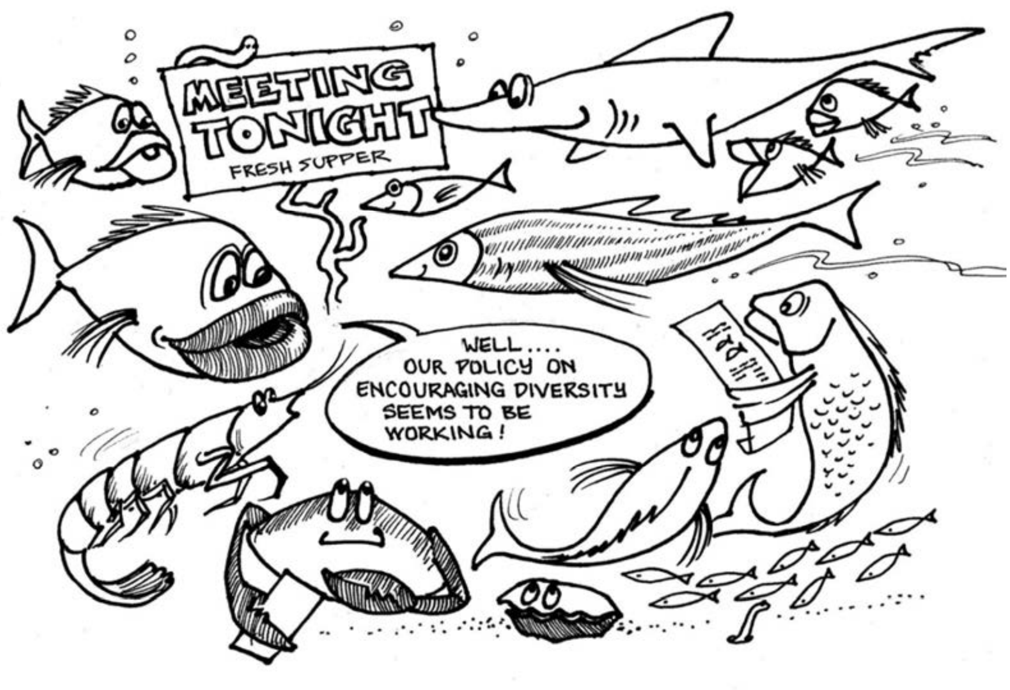
Aquaculture is about growing a resource, rather than catching a resource that exists in the wild. This 'farming' of a resource requires a greater concentration of scientific wisdom. As a result aquaculture associations tend to be more open-minded. Further, it is more common for aquaculture enterprises to be first generation. First generation enterprises are much more likely to be co-operative, freely sharing information between enterprises. And they are more likely to have an 'internal locus of control', illustrated by the 'language of: 'How can we ….? Because they are information seekers, aquaculture associations are, all other things being equal, likely to contain a healthy degree of diversity. Our case studies found this to be the case.

Recreational fishing is different from the two commercial sectors. Recreational fisherman can come from any vocational background. This means that, even without conscious effort, the boards and executive functions are highly unlikely to be homogeneous in their skills base. So for associations in this sector, diversity is the norm. Further, our case studies revealed that several recreational fishing associations specifically recruited the professional skills they needed. They would do this by (a) identifying the skills required, (b) identifying specific individuals who had those skills and were reasonable prospects of them becoming members, and (c) inviting the targeted individual on a recreational fishing trip before inviting them to become members and then join the board.

[Note that these sector differences have significant implications for potential capacity to innovate. On average, recreational and aquaculture associations have inherently greater capacity for innovation than do wild-catch associations.]

Recommendation 3:

(a) Recognise the natural tendencies within different industry sectors to be homogeneous or otherwise.
(b) Recognise the natural tendencies within different industry sectors to be conservative or otherwise.
(c) Women make up slightly over 50% of the Australian adult population. Assuming that the Australian aquaculture and fishing industries have a similar gender distribution – considering both licence-holders and partners, the 50% is an appropriate membership target for all associations to strive for. Targeting the partners of male members, through provision of activities and benefits that might appeal to women, makes this challenge quite realistic.
(d) Seek to have a minimum of two women members on the Board.
(e) Take steps to maximise diversity of age, skill, and experience within the association and on the Board.



Case Study 2: Queensland Aquaculture Industry Federation

Queensland Aquaculture Industry Federation (QAIF) is an association incorporated under Queensland legislation as a not-for-profit body. Formerly known as the Queensland Aquaculture Industry Advisory Committee, the association has been in its present guise for about 10 years.

QAIF is a peak body, representing the interests of the aquaculture in Queensland. It has twelve members, the majority of which are sector organisations. Several members are individual enterprises in sectors too small to have their own member associations.

QAIF is governed by a 12 member Council, which includes an Executive of President, Vice President, Treasurer and two Directors. The Executive Officer (who is paid for 18 hours per week) serves as Secretary and also sits on the Executive. The average age of the Councillors/Directors is mid-40s and ranges from mid-30s to mid-60s. There are two women Councillors/Directors. The President is independent, and presently is not employed by the aquaculture industry (though he has vast experience in this industry and is highly respected).

The work of the Federation falls mainly to the Executive Officer or the President. On an ad-hoc basis, other Councillors will take the running on specific issues for which they have the time and interest. Like most associations, QAIF is short on financial resources and voluntary member capacity.

The association has a Constitution which broadly defines its purpose. More specifically it provides a united voice, particularly to Government, for the aquaculture industry in Queensland. It receives the bulk of its funding, sufficient to cover the costs of the executive officer, plus Directors travelling expenses, in exchange for providing a consulting vehicle for Government. That remuneration of approximately $20,000 per annum is CPI indexed.

Funds are also provided by membership fees. These fees are flexible to reflect the various capacities to pay. The larger member associations such as Australian Prawn Farmers Association, the Australian Barramundi Farmers Association, and the Aquaculture Association of Queensland, each pay up to $4,000 per annum, whilst smaller members pay up to $1,000. In exchange for their larger size and contribution, the majors are entitled to two representatives on the Council (and hence two votes), though this privilege is not exercised. The issue of fees is not perceived as important as being able to represent all sectors of aquaculture, since this legitimates QAIF in the eyes of Government. At present QAIF does cover the whole industry, even though, at a member sector level, less than half of the aquaculture enterprises in Queensland would belong to those sector associations. It is recognised that the work of QAIF substantially benefits everyone in the industry, members or not.

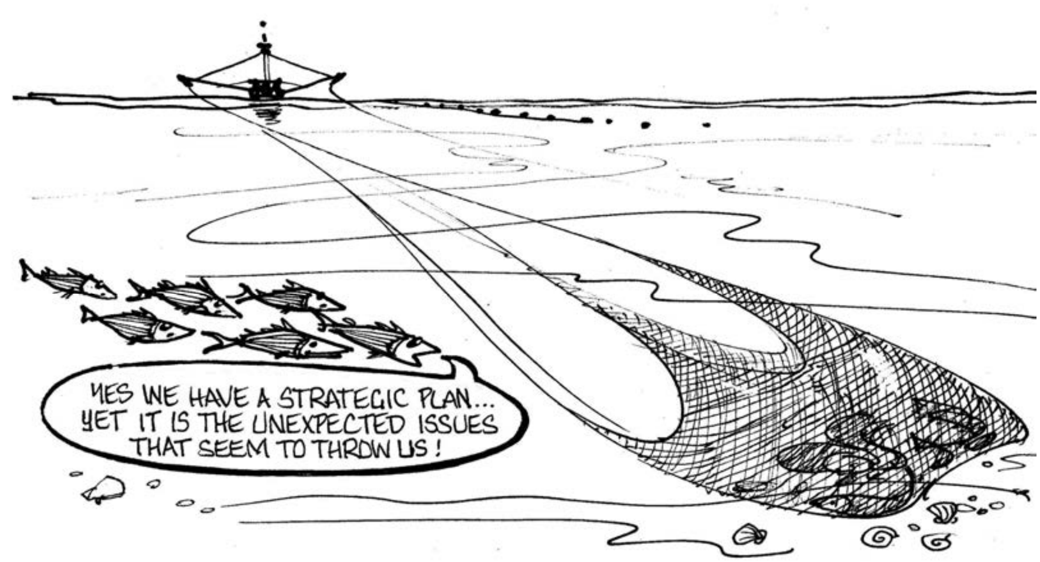
There are also associate members, generally service providers, who pay $250 to $300 per annum.

At its AGM, QAIF establishes its priorities for the coming year. Foremost among those is confronting the ‘green-tape’ regulatory environment that severely inhibits development of the industry in Queensland. Unlike Tasmania and South Australia, which have friendlier regulatory environment, Queensland has no Aquaculture Act, an omission that is forefront of QAIF’s agenda. The industry is in stagnation, with no new farms in the past decade. Other major issues for QAIF include (i) 'Country-of-origin' labelling for the food service sector, (ii) Licencing of minor-use permits for veterinary chemicals on behalf of members, (iii) providing educational events for members, and (iv) hosing down adverse public-relations issues. Interviewees expressed some frustration at the limited achievements of QAIF over the past couple of years, despite enormous effort from very dedicated and talented people.

The Council meets face-to-face two to three times per year. Its Executive, who have been in their respective roles for a number of years, are perceived to do an excellent job. Yet there are no obvious successors. There is no succession plan. Members receive travelling expenses but no sitting fees and the time burden away from their individual enterprises is heavy. Email and one-on-one telephone conversations are the way most QAIF business is conducted, and this is regarded as quite satisfactory.

There are a number of associations with which QAIF has a relationship. Some of these, such as member associations, are subsidiary. Others are State or Federal. There is a recognition that between these associations there is often inefficiencies and duplication of effort.

QAIF is vulnerable as an association on a couple of fronts. First, it is financially dependent for its ongoing operation on the funding provided by Government. With the recent change of Government in the State of Queensland, one that is giving out lots of messages of financial austerity, there is a major risk. Second, QAIF is politically vulnerable (as well as financially vulnerable) to loss of one or more of its major members. It recognises it would like to be closer to its largest member, the APFA. Third, QAIF is vulnerable to volunteer stagnation and burn-out. With an industry that has seen almost no growth in the past decade, and almost no new entrants, the volunteer gene pool is limited and aging.



Purpose, vision or charter of the association

Does your association have a published purpose statement, mission, or charter?

Big Rocks

The busier you are, the more important it is to stop and read this story.

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget.

As he stood in front of the group of high-powered overachievers, he said, "okay, time for a quiz." He then pulled out a gallon, 'wide-mouth' glass bucket and set it on the table in front of him.

Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one by one, into the bucket.

When the bucket was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside he asked, "Is this bucket full?" Everyone in the class said "Yes".

Then he said "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he gently poured some gravel over the big rocks and gently jiggled it, causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the space between the big rocks.

Then he asked the group once more. "Is this bucket full?" By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," one of them answered.

"Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a container of fine white sand. He started dumping the sand into the bucket and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel.

Once more he asked the question. "Is this bucket full?" "No!" the class shouted. Once again, he said, "Good!". Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim.

Then the expert in time-management looked at the class and asked: "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager Beaver raised his hand and said: "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it."

"No", the speaker replied, "That's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is this: Try rearranging the order in which you place the material in the bucket. If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them all in.

What are the big rocks in your life? Your children? Your spouse? Your family? Your friendships? Your education? Your dreams? A worthy cause? Teaching or mentoring others? Doing things that you love? Time for yourself? Your health?

Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first, or you'll never get them in at all. "If you allow yourself to be distracted by the little stuff (i.e. the gravel, the sand) then you'll fill your life with less important things and never have the real quality time you need to spend on the big, important stuff (the big rocks).

So, tonight, or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question: What are the "big rocks" in my life?

Then put those in your bucket first.

Acknowledgement: Stephen Covey: The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

Not only does the 'Big Rocks' story apply to your personal life, it applies to your association. Your association has a defined capacity – the 'bucket'. The issues that consume that capacity are big rocks, gravel, sand and water. Unless the association defines its 'big-rocks', in other words, its purpose and goals, it will often find itself distracted by less important 'sand' and 'gravel' issues – operational trivia that consumes time yet contributes little.

Mental Models

The only reason for any association's existence is that a collective of people or subsidiary organisations can achieve what one or two alone cannot. And people will join an association since it meets, for them, a particular need. What is not commonly realised is that what one individual is seeking from an association may not be what another member may be seeking.

From a psychological perspective, there are three different needs that potential members might be wanting their association to fulfil, and these three are not necessarily conscious (McClelland, 1987).

(i) Social needs. Each and every person needs to believe that they are OK. So we seek out like-minded people because they validate us. For some people, a collective provides them with company, people who have common interests, with whom they can share a beer, a yarn, and a laugh. Social clubs are an obvious example. Yet, industry associations will attract members for whom the social component of belonging is the most important. And we do not necessarily know who those members (or potential members) are. Therefore, an association that provides a deliberate social component is likely to be stronger. An example might be that a Board meeting is combined with a lunch or dinner. Or that an AGM is combined with a member BBQ.

I was sick the other day, and someone from my fishing club turned up at my house and just wanted to know if I was alright*. So from the most basic level of kindness to internal communication, I think it's pretty strong. (11)*

(ii) Achievement needs. For some people, perhaps many, an association provides a collective voice or a collective capacity to achieve more than any individual might achieve alone. And the association will be most effective when what it is trying to achieve is the same as what each individual member would hope to have it achieve. This means keeping abreast with the constantly changing needs of members and potential members and delivering on those needs. It also means recognising the likelihood of losing members once an association has achieved for its members a particular goal or lost a particular fight.

There's a suite of objectives that we attempt to make inroads on each season. So ***every time we have an executive meeting, we go through the objectives step by step, looking at ways that we can strategically put some things in place to try and achieve those objectives.*** *(3)*

(iii) Power needs. For some people, an association provides a vehicle whereby certain individuals can acquire status, influence, prestige, and an audience. These are the people who more naturally gravitate towards executive roles. A need for power has no connection with ability, yet good executives will have both power and ability. The danger for an association is that an executive with a need for power can have his/her needs met without meeting the social needs or the need for achievement that other members might have.

I'd have to say the majority of people who take on these roles are there for the betterment of the group, but if they're not at all, ***they can do so much damage. Unfortunately, some people get on these groups to do better for themselves, or maybe to push some of their own agendas****.* ***Sometimes the people with the most time aren't the right people.*** *(20)*

Associations serve as vehicles to meet each of those needs. Further, like congregate with like, so a larger association can end up with three different overlapping clusters of people, each cluster driven by a different, and unconscious, set of needs. This can have consequences for how an association chooses to organise itself, an issue to be discussed in more detail in the next Chapter.

Alice in Wonderland asked the White Rabbit as he scurried past: "Excuse me; am I on the right road?" "Where do you want to go?" responded the Rabbit, to which Alice replied: "I don't know". "Then any road will do!" retorted the Rabbit.

The message is this story is clear: without a clearly defined purpose and goals, the activity of an association can be aimless and reactive. Unless the purpose is made explicit, different members might have different expectations of the association, based on what each thinks the associations purpose is, or what their personal needs are. The unspecified expectations of members can lead to their disappointment, and maybe even disengagement, when those unexpressed expectations are not met.

Markham, Walters & Bonjean, (2001:104) suggest that Not-For-Profits (NFPs) currently fall into three broad types, defined by their primary purpose. These are:

> *(1) organisations that attempt to influence society or politics;* [power/political needs – see above]
> *(2) organisations that primarily benefit members – often by meeting social, spiritual, or recreational needs;* [social needs - see above] *and ……..*
> *(3) organisations that provide services to their members and community.* [achievement needs – see above].

Our research into member-based voluntary associations in Australia found clear examples of all three of these types. Most of the associations examined began as advocacy organisations. Many were still in that space, though others, having addressed, successfully or otherwise, their primary advocacy concerns, then shifted to become either benefit providers, service providers, or both. Associations that are primarily about advocacy often succumb to fatigue, finding that membership energy and funds cannot sustain 'David and Goliath' battles, particularly where there is limited success. In contrast, associations where the primary focus is in the provision of services to members, be they social, material or both, are much more enduring.

Bolman and Deal (1991a) suggest four distinct though unconscious 'mental models' that associations adopt in defining themselves and their purpose: *Structural*, *human resource*, *political*, and *symbolic*. An understanding of these mental models and their respective attributes can help Boards and EOs manage their organisations more effectively.

Heimovics *et al*, 1993 suggest that it is more effective to manage an association using multiple mental models rather than only one of the following.

(i) The Structural Frame

Clarity in goal-setting and role expectation provides order and continuity in organisations. Emphasis is on job-descriptions, clear procedures and policies and a view of the organisation as a rational and hierarchical system. Adherence to accepted standards, conformity to rules, and creation of administrative systems confer upon the organisation its form and logic. Procedures such as personnel systems and Board performance standards

> *define individual and organisational effectiveness. There is an emphasis on certainty of mission and clarity of direction* (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 421).

Under this mental model, associations will have a clear mission and vision to guide their endeavours; strategic plans will be functional and be followed; there will be established and documented policies; staff roles will be clear and documented, with appropriate KPIs, and monitoring and evaluation of performance at all levels, including the Board, will be standard operating procedure.

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association has, more than any of the associations we have examined so far, adopted this particular frame of reference. They are increasingly focused, logical and methodical.

(ii) The Human Resource Frame

> *People are the most valued resource in any organisation, according to this frame. The effective leader searches for a balance between the goals of the organisation and the hopes and aspirations of people, by attending to individual hopes, feelings and preferences, valuing relationships and feelings and through advocating effective delegation. NFP leaders who use this frame believe in sharing and helping. Delegation is important because it not only empowers others to take responsibility, but is also provides opportunities for personal growth and development. The frame defines problems and issues in interpersonal terms and encourages open communication, team building and collaboration* (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 421).

Under this mental model, associations will be primarily concerned about connecting with their members and staff, emphasising participation and engagement. Actions will be collaborative and decisions made by consensus. Relationship building will be central.

> *The people that hold the main office positions are really good mature people, and very welcoming. They drive the culture of the group. (11)*

One of the associations case studied seems to have adopted this frame of reference; though Traprock also comes close. Canegrowers Qld, which grew out of a statutory organisation and always saw itself as 'supporting the weakest link', probably operates internally with a healthy dose of this mental model coupled with the structural frame of established and sophisticated management systems. In its relationships with external stakeholders however, it is a master of the political frame.

(iii) The Political Frame.

> *The political frame assumes ongoing conflict or tension over the allocation of scarce resources, or the resolution of differences, most often triggered by the need to negotiate*

> *the acquisition or allocation of resources. Conflict resolution skills are necessary to build alliances and networks with prominent actors or stakeholders in order to influence decisions about the allocation of scarce resources. The informal realities of organisational life include the influences of coalitions and interest groups. Politically oriented leaders not only understand how interest groups and coalitions evolve, they can also influence the impact of those groups on the organisation. Those who use the political frame exercise their personal and organisational power, and are sensitive to external factors that may influence internal decisions and policies* (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 421).

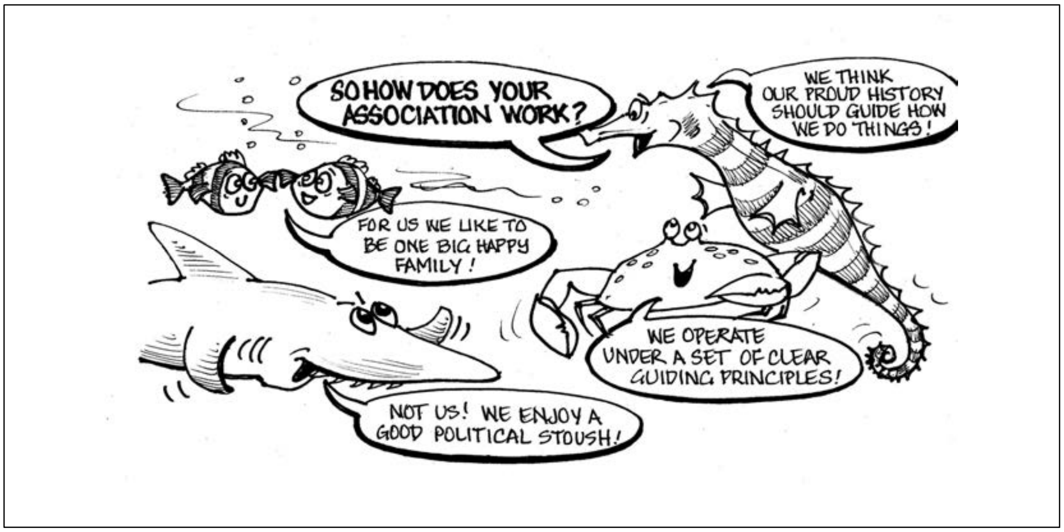
Under this mental model, associations will be primarily concerned about taking their collective members interest into a 'David and Goliath' battle against external interests. Governments, environmentalism, and the general public are often seen as less sympathetic to the association's members' interests than those members might wish. The more that an association is dependent upon the external environment, the more critical is a political orientation and the more important it is for Board members and EO to be masterful in their political skills.

Most of the associations we have examined have had their genesis in the political frame of reference. Canegrowers Qld, the peak body of a 3,000 strong membership base, has an 80 year history of annual negotiations over cane price between the sugar mills and Canegrower members. And it is because these negotiations are annual that the association has endured for so long. Many of the fishing industry associations we examined see themselves as having no other purpose than lobbying against major external forces for their members interests. This places those associations at risk of member disengagement when the heat goes out of the lobbying issue(s).

(iv) The Symbolic Frame.

> *According to this frame, realities of organisational life are socially construed. Organisations are cultural and historical systems of shared meaning where group membership determines individual interpretations of organisational phenomena. Organisation structure, politics and human relations are inventions of the cultural and historic system. Leaders invoke ceremonies, rituals and artifacts to create a unifying system of beliefs. This frame calls for charismatic leaders to arouse 'visions of a preferred organisational future' and evoke emotional responses to enhance an organisation's identity, transforming it to a higher plane of performance and value* (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 421).

Under this mental model, associations exhibit an orientation towards the traditional, the expected, the 'tried and true'. Of the associations we have examined so far, Traprock comes closest to operating from a symbolic frame. However, as it moves away from its original single-commodity focus and broadens its membership base, it is moving more towards a human resources frame, where its primary activities are based on building a sense of unity and social cohesion within a defined geographic catchment. ANSA Tasmania also fits squarely within the symbolic frame, positioning itself as a family-friendly social organisation that does admirable work in supporting sectors of the population that are less fortunate.



Clarity of purpose

Absence of clarity

A large number of interviewees either did not know what the specific purpose of their association was or acknowledged that the purpose was not clear. Absence of clarity of purpose and/or failure to clearly publish that purpose to all members creates a vacuum or ambiguity of expectation. Some members will expect the association to be moving on one set of issues while other members might harbour completely different expectations. As a result of this lack of clarity, member dissatisfaction is more than likely, and membership numbers will suffer.

> *If you want me to put [the association's purpose] into specific words, I couldn't and I don't think anyone could. They've got a general understanding, but not an intimate understanding. (1)*

> *Activities can be more random than perhaps they might be. Yeah, they need to be targeted a little bit. (1)*

> *Maybe sitting down and actually doing a strategic plan with a work plan so that we can tick off the big items.* ***I know we work on the big issues, but I think it's reactive rather than proactive****. But then that's hard to be proactive when you don't know which way the Government is going to jump sometimes. It's hard to also be proactive again with a Government that doesn't seem to support aquaculture. (1)*

> *They'd be aware of it in a general sense but how widely understood is it, I don't think it's very well understood. And also saying that though, in the last two years, it's all been changing so much. (4)*

> ***It's been running ad-hoc and reactive. We do not have a documented strategic plan. We don't know where we're going, really.***

> *I think we're really at a critical time, when* ***the purpose of that organisation was set some 30 years ago*** *or more. And I actually think it's very relevant that* ***we need to re-look at that****, at this time. I think we're in a really evolving time in our history. (4)*

> *I was talking about these evolving objectives, and I think we do need to revisit them and be clear about them, promote them, communicate them, and to me that could lessen some of this attachment people might have to thinking they need to vote up a certain person. (4)*

> *I don't know if you know fishermen, but they're very naïve sometimes, and what they expect and what is reality are often miles apart. (5)*

> ***You've got a knee-jerk reaction all the time, instead of setting up our own guiding principles and abiding by them.*** *(5)*

It's been running ad-hoc and reactive. We do not have a documented strategic plan. We don't know where we're going, really. Long-term, that is*. We know where we're heading in the next nine months. But to be fair, we've had some major changes which have taken up a lot of our resources. (5)*

There are no direct guidelines there. It's probably more day-to-day issues that we deal with. (6)

It's been inadequately resourced, perhaps undermined, and it's just has lost its way because of the lack of funds and people not wanting to put into it. (7)

If there were a crisis situation then the members pretty much would look to the organisation to start to understand what it's there for, its function and the roles of those involved. Without that, they seem to display rather a lot of apathy towards it. *(7)*

I'd say most don't understand or haven't read that charter. I've never seen it published, but it could be. (9)

Because of the lack of activity by the actual association previous to just recently, we are just trying to survive; so we really haven't been doing very much activity at all. I think that's changing now but ***over the past five years it's pretty much been in survival mode.*** *(7)*

Although we know the direction we're heading in, there is some confusion at times between whether we're a representative body as opposed to a peak body. *(10)*

I think that as a result of little change in the persons on the Board and their various roles, it has become inward looking rather than expansionary. (10)

It doesn't have a universal sign up [to its Charter] because typically the seafood industry always has an element who is always the lowest denominator who stands aside from performance issues. (13)

We need time to canvas members and to have that conversation on what we are really about and how we can do the job better.

I think too often we get side-tracked within our Council, and the statement of purpose and the objectives of the Council have been documented, but it would be a fallacy to say that they form a substantive part of the agenda of our Council meetings. We would be, in my view, a better Council if we paid more attention to it. *(13)*

We probably don't have a charter in a definitive sense but we do have a constitution which I suppose is the same. A set of rules that represents what the responsibilities are. (16)

We have a strategic plan but I don't know whether it's published or on our website or not. (18)

We don't really have anything written down that everyone lives by. Probably the Charter of the organisation is to develop new ideas and support the farmers from the district to do better in their own industry. That's not a published – it's just taken as given. (19)

The fact that I can't remember it probably means it's not clear. I can't remember it. (21)

There's an out-dated one [purpose] and we don't have a clear mission statement. (22)

We're very, very under resourced. And I'm trying to be all things to all people, and it just doesn't work. [Interviewer: But having more resources without having a clear purpose won't necessarily help you. In fact it can make it worse because you go running off in more directions. So what needs to be done about the clarity of purpose?] ***We need to get the committee to sit down; we need time to canvas members and to have that conversation of what we are really about and how we can do the job better.*** *(22)*

Operational clarity

When the purpose of the association is clearly specified and adhered to, it serves as a beacon to which all association efforts are directed. The most powerful purpose an association might have is one that the current members themselves jointly created. **Appendix 7** offers a process for doing that. That act of joint creation increases commitment. After all, continued support for the association is always voluntary, and people vote with their feet. Conversely, an association purpose, generated in the past, may be one that none of the present members have signed up for. So, for no other reason than the engagement and refocusing of members, there is a very good reason for an association to recreate its purpose consultatively, regularly, perhaps annually. This regular regeneration of the purpose ensures it remains relevant and front-of-mind.

Members want three things from a rep body (1) Public policy advocacy to create a clear development pathway; (2) networks and networking; and (3) professional development. *(1)*

People generally don't want representation, particularly in aquaculture, because once you've got a clear pathway for development, they're basically getting on with the business of doing business. *So I think there's a shift towards a more support economy. (1)*

What's the value proposition [that the association offers]? *It's unclear. Members want instant value. (1)*

Influencing policy before more green tape or red tape is put on our sectors (1)

> ***It's a must for any association to have a clear vision and mission. It's irresponsible if associations don't have that.***

We have a Constitution which defines our purpose*. I haven't actually ever read the Constitution. It has a purpose which is essentially to represent the association to Government and providing a united voice I guess for [the industry] in Queensland.* ***On an annual basis we pretty much set out a work plan and use that our basis for our activities.*** *(2)*

It is a new thing. ***We didn't have a clear mission and vision until last year. This has been the first financial year that the executive has worked to the strategic plan.*** *Previously, we were just putting out fires.* ***Now the directives of the industry are reflected in the agenda itself****. (3)*

We have a set part of our agenda at the AGM where the priorities for this year and the next years going ahead are listed, and members are asked to rate and prioritise them*. We get our top five items from there, which become standing orders on the agenda as well. But obviously, we're fighting fires along the way. So it's a combination of proactive and reactive. It's trying to be as proactive as you can be. (3)*

I think it's a must for any business and association that you need a clear vision and mission. I think it's irresponsible if associations don't have that*, because they have an obligation to their members to show what they've done to try to better their industry. (3)*

[From its Constitution] 'Representation of the fishing industry at State and Federal levels and act as an advisor or intermediary between the fishing industry, government, its agencies, and the community.' *That is very clearly stating what the [peak body] staff believe they do, with the emphasis there on [association as an] intermediary. (4)*

[State peak body] works on the very big generic problems that face the whole industry; like marine parks and everything else. And you know, ***without someone like [State peak body] coordinating and doing that, all the different fisheries that are touched by that marine park wouldn't get any help****. So the central coordination of tackling big generic issues that cover so many different fisheries, that's where [State peak body] is fantastic. (4)*

It's a political organisation. The requirement to get change requires the development of effective linkages between members and effective coalitions of interest. *(4)*

The issue for [the association] is that [the association] is very clearly, in its charter, a peak body, so it presumes that other industry associations exist at a lower level than [this association]. (4)

What I consider our purpose is to give our members, like fishermen, a voice to carry to the appropriate body. I think it's pretty obvious. (6)

There are a lot of owner operators in our association. I suppose you could say we're a big pile of life-stylers, so we have a pretty small voice in the scheme of things. So it's basically banding together to try and get our message across a little tiny bit more. (6)

My belief of that would be the ***"Fishery of the future" would be the flagship statement****. That statement needs to be* ***a short statement but there needs to be a larger volume of words to state what it means.*** *(8)*

Many years ago, probably 30 years ago, ***we decided that if we're not sustainable then we don't have a future; people would get rid of us, either local government, government, or the community. So we've gone all out to become sustainable****. (8)* [Note the recognition of the importance of 'social licence to operate', and the proactive decision to secure that licence.]

The objects and purpose of the association are: to unite and protect all participants of the commercial fishing industry in the southern zone for their common benefit, and to promote unity of effort for the solving of problems, and to secure for members all the advantages of unity of action. (9)

We formed for one basic reason and even though we ended up just about in the High Court, we didn't get very far with that. But the thing is to keep our rights going.

We've got to have it to know where we're heading and where the association is heading for the industry. Basically we can't present ourselves as an association and not have a direction or purpose. (10)

Survey the community and find out what it is that they expect to get from the peak body. Then putting that in as part of our strategic direction. (10)

When you join up, it's all put in front of you and it's clearly explained to you what the organisation is about. So I feel like it's about as good as it could be in terms of people explaining to you why the organisation is there, what it's for, and what we do together. (11)

It has to be a place that promotes recreational fishing in an enjoyable way for its members, so it gives them opportunities to catch up with each other and to go fishing and really enjoy it, and to become better at it. (11)

It has to lobby and be an active participant in the ongoing discussions about recreational fishing in Tasmania, whether it's access, or stocking, or licencing; it needs to be part of that discussion on behalf of its membership and recreational Fishers more generally. (11)

Our Charter is the same as the National Charter, so it just gets handed down. (12)

Having clear roles, mandate, purpose etc. Because we are the only national association for the advocacy of aquaculture, it helps. There's not a sharing of that, we don't bump into anybody else in that arena, which makes it really helpful, because government knows who to go to, and we know this is what we're supposed to do. (14)

Its purpose really is to be the voice of the fishing industry, to represent its members at Europe and Government level. (16)

Our purpose is to bring likeminded people together, networking, a source of information. (19)

*I think that **people want a social outlet and a time for likeminded people to come together and talk about the same sort of issues that everybody is facing in our area**, and I really believe that that's a major role for [our association]. (19)*

There's a range of views [as to the association's purpose]. Some people think it should be just policy, whereas others think it should be advisory. (22)

Thomson (2001) measures the extent to which group members feel that their participation has given them a voice in the process. He asks whether they perceived their organizations to have achieved legitimacy and access, not whether they got what they wanted. Given this measure, he finds that having a voice correlates directly with the strength of belonging. This is certainly the case with the members of a number of fishery associations supporting rock-lobster fishers in Western Australia. In their advocacy against pot-reductions, having an association that gave them a collective voice is what empowered them. Even though they lost their fight, they did not lose their sense of empowerment.

> *This association formed from fighting Government or the Fisheries Department at the time over pot reductions and management rules. That's how the whole thing came about. (6)*

> ***We formed for one basic reason and even though obviously we ended up just about in the High Court, we didn't get very far with that. But the thing is to keep our rights going****. It sounds like a little bit of a left wing bloody group, doesn't it? (6)*

Shift in focus

Some associations recognise that the purpose for which the association was formed may today be less relevant and other issues are now more relevant. Resilient associations conduct an annual review of their purpose, adjusting as necessary. They also retain a level of flexibility; while being primarily proactive, they retain the capacity to be reactive, as needed.

> *"[The association] is a peak body representing the aggregate interests of the industry in Australia". Now that's picked almost directly from the rules which haven't changed in a few years. I've added 'members' and that's something we're coming to grips with. The way it was worded with the best intentions in the past, "the interests of the industry", whereas now there are some people outside of [the association] directly. We still talk to them; we liaise with them. That's not a problem, that's a good thing. But* ***we now need to really focus on what our members themselves want****. So that's a fine but important distinction we're making there.* ***What the members themselves want is not static necessarily; it's dynamic.*** *(1)*

> ***What the members themselves want is not static necessarily; it's dynamic.***

> *We're deemed to be a representative agency [State peak body], but* ***I think we come from a background where the term 'representative' has meant, 'I'm a Fisherman that comes from the fishery, then I come on to the Board to represent that fishery.' And my view is that we need to change that perception.*** *We've evolved and become a sophisticated industry; so we need to be more strategic, and need to think about the industry as a whole. I think we need to constantly check that we're staying at the strategic level and not get involved in the small detail of the fishery and how it's managed. (4)*

> *So our association now is probably a bit more proactive, rather than what it was based on; it was a reactive beginning. The industry has gone to quota now and basically the fights been fought, and we're bucking over the scraps basically. So memberships over all the associations are really, really low now.* ***There's nothing controversial, the upturn and the upheaval in the***

***industry has happened now. We've probably changed a little tiny bit from a fighting organisation to an informative one now**. (6)*

I think that [association], like any association, could engage in an annual prioritising exercise. Instead of just dealing with anything that comes up, possibly, to more broadly define what their priorities are might lead to a better allocation of resources against those priorities. (9)

A lot of the competitiveness in our organisation here in South Australia has slowly waned over the years. And there are two clubs that are more of a social club rather than competitive, and this is where it hasn't kept pace with the changes. (12)

It's reviewed bi-annually – the Constitution and our Charter. It's updated because the times are changing with fishing all the time. So there's a lot of understanding because people have a great input into it. (12)

*They're too politically driven. They want to get involved with discussions with the government etc. instead of what [the association] was originally set up for – to have fun and **to go fishing and have fishing competitions. And the clubs don't seem to want to do that**. (12)*

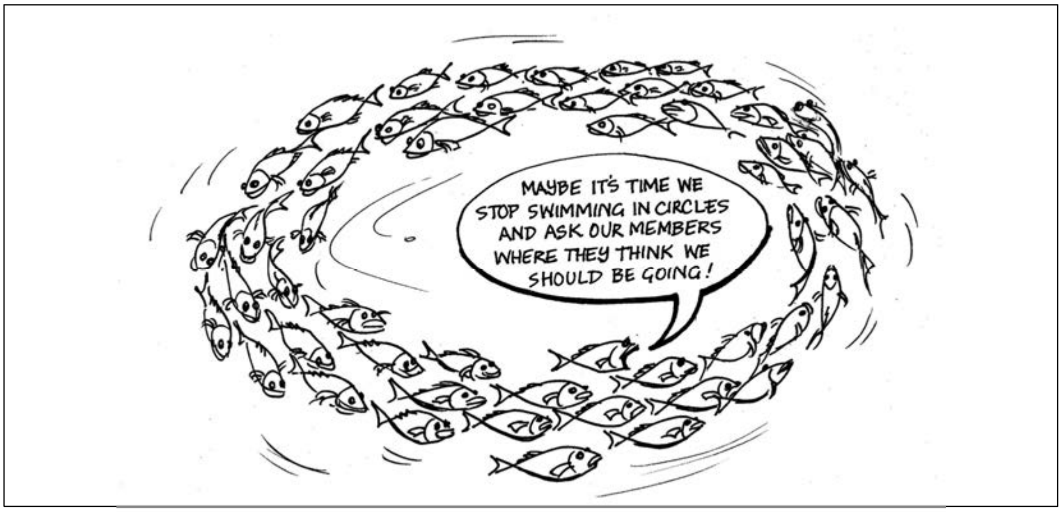
I think some of those things are evolving as certain sectors of our industry are maturing. So there's probably a different focus. [Interviewer: Is it time to do a review of your purpose?] It probably is; we haven't had one of these retreat type things for a few years now but it is probably time to do that again. (15)

The mission statement of the [association] is to facilitate the development of aquaculture in [named location]. And its direction changes, sometimes from week to week. But the main goal is to, in an orderly fashion, facilitate advancement of aquaculture. (15)

***We've always been there for the weakest link, representing the small grower**, but the number of growers is declining while the average tonnes per grower are increasing, so they're becoming more corporatized. (17)* [Thereby suggesting a need to change focus].

*I think possibly revisiting or actually coming up with a new charter, like, maybe **revising that annually or bi-annually**, because that also then would improve that understanding of it, and **make sure that new members who come along are then part of it and understand what the purpose of the association is.** (20)*

*The internet is an absolutely bottomless source of information and these days very, very few farmers operate without one. So the need for technical advice became less, and **the aim or the activities of the association has progressed slowly towards more lobbying and influencing the bureaucratic world** and the political world on the needs and issues of our industry. (21)* [A shift in purpose away from 'information provision' to 'lobbying']



Thomson (2001) makes a distinction between advocacy organizations and neighbourhood associations; the former have a single or more limited focus, while the latter take a much broader interest and generally serve a broader community. This, therefore, makes the advocacy groups less democratic, since they only give voice to a single interest group rather than encouraging a multitude of voices. Traprock, one of our 23 case studies and a geographically based association, is in transition between these two perspectives. Originally representing a group of fine-wool producers, and advocating in their interests, it has now broadened its membership base to include all primary producers in its region. These now include animal husbandry, cropping, viticulture and horticulture. Therefore finding activities that serve a common interest is proving challenging.

An association's purpose can be contextual. In times of political turbulence, the function of an association may be to ensure that the turbulence does not result in damage to the members. When individual enterprises or subsidiary associations are under threat, then having a collective united voice is both logical and necessary. Yet, when the heat goes out of the external environment; when there appears to be no great reason to have a collective voice, then the association's purpose can seem less clear, and membership is likely to wane.

> *Once we've gone through all the pain of going to quota and having our pot reductions and the industry turned on its head, it's all gone very quiet now. (6)*

Political turbulence is exactly what Association 5 has faced in the past five years. A peak body for a single commodity, with funding coming directly from Government in exchange for access fees, it has faced recent massive regulatory and financial turmoil, rendering any strategic planning problematic. Rather it is at the behest of Government.

> *[Interviewer: And do the members themselves decide what the new format will be, or do you get told by the Minister, in terms of the governance of the Association?] Oh, no, **we've been told; the Minister has actually made it public.** (5)*

> ***'You are a Board elected by your members. You are not the Minister's committee. You are an autonomous body and should be directing yourselves.'***

If the Minister or the Fisheries Department requests some consultation with industry, then the [Assoc] will go and do that. ***It's more of a knee-jerk reaction, rather than abiding by a clear strategic plan****. (5)*

I keep saying to our Board, ***'You are a Board elected by your members. You are not the Minister's committee. You are an autonomous body and should be directing yourselves.'*** *But the Chairman and the Executive Officer seem to take the view that when the Minister says, 'Jump!' we've got to jump. But I say, 'Hang on, we don't. You've got to go back and say no; it's not appropriate for us to do that today. Our meeting is not 'til this date, and we'll meet you then.' But they don't do that, so you get meetings jumping all over the place. (5)*

The issue of an association losing its independence and becoming a quasi-governmental agency is discussed more fully under 'Financial Considerations' later in this document.

The primary purpose of each of the associations examined in the present research falls into one or more of the following three categories:

1. Political. Commonly associations form to enable members to collectively address a threat to members' livelihoods. The threat focuses the energy and effort. Sometimes the threat is short-term or enduring. When the threat is overcome or accepted, membership in the association commonly wanes, unless it is replaced by other reasons for joint effort.
2. Benefits and services. Some associations form to establish a joint commercial benefit. Marketing co-operatives are a good example. Others, which form initially for political reasons, find they can sustain themselves over a much longer period if they include and then switch to benefits and services that may be out of reach of any individual member. Discounted collective purchasing of supplies such as fuel, nets, insurance are examples.
3. Social. Some associations (though fewer) either commence or mutate into primarily a social group. These are almost entirely with a defined geographic area or community. Association events, such as BBQs, dances, art-shows, etc. are designed to strengthen 'bonding social capital' for people whose lives are otherwise isolated.

The strongest and most enduring associations, even those that began with an emphasis on the political, are more likely to embrace all three purposes. Willingness to contribute to an association is measured by one very abstract criterion: 'Does it provide value?' The concept of 'value' means different things to different people at different times, and is often unconscious. Viable associations optimise 'value' for their members.

In partial summary: An association's purpose or charter is the mast-head around which members gather. It is the beacon towards which they collectively sail. It is the collective aspiration for which people are willing to put in dollars and time. And members will continue making those inputs provided the value that they gain is greater than their input costs. Since the external environment is in a constant state of flux, the purpose of an association also needs to be dynamic and under constant review to meet the changing circumstances and the changing needs of its members.

Recommendation 4:

a. Cater for the three social needs of members, namely social need, need for achievement, and need for power.
b. Publish the association's purpose or charter so that all members have a clear and shared understanding of what the association is there to achieve.
c. Revisit annually that purpose or charter. This should be done by the executive, in consultation with members, to ensure it continues to be appropriate or relevant.
d. Include the association's purpose as a header or footer on all association correspondence (including every meeting agenda, and all emails), thereby ensuring this stays front-of-mind.
e. Use the association's purpose or charter to tell the world what business the association is not in. Therefore the purpose or charter serves as a filter in determining what activities the association chooses to undertake or declines. Hence the association should only undertake activities that clearly fall within its charter or purpose. Further, the relative importance of potential association activities can be determined by assessing how well each contributes to the published charter.
f. Use the association's charter or purpose as the conscious beacon to which all the association's efforts are deliberately focused.

Case Study 3: Australian Prawn Farmers Association

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) is an association incorporated under Queensland legislation as a not-for-profit body. Formed in 1993, it represents the interests of aquaculture prawn producers in Australia, the majority of which are based in Queensland.

The association has 36 full members, representing 86% of the hectares under production, and a number of associate members. The average age of members would be low 40s, ranging from mid-30s to high 50s. The seven-member Executive Committee includes 2 women. Membership of that Executive, under the Constitution, can include up to three associate members.

The APFA has no formal leadership succession plan. Elections are held annually at the AGM, and from the seven chosen Executives, the general members then vote to elect the President, Vice-President and Secretary. Interestingly, at present, none of the Executive are owners of member enterprises. Rather, they are employees of farm enterprises or service providers. Non-owners are perceived as being able to take a broader industry view.

Board meetings are held quarterly, face-to-face, together with at least two further teleconferences a year. Meetings for general members are confined to the AGM (which is concurrent with the annual conference).

The APFA has a published vision, mission and strategic plan, the latter being relatively recent. At the last AGM, members were invited to identify and rank the most pressing strategic issues for the industry. The top five issues, which include R&D issues, industry skills, performance KPIs and public relations, become standing agenda items for each Executive meeting. The resulting strategic plan has been distributed to all members.

In addition to the Executive Committee, the APFA also has a subsidiary R&D committee where the membership is drawn from the broader member base. In the past, that subsidiary committee has been used quite deliberately as a vehicle for building the skills and confidence of younger industry members, a number of whom have now progressed onto the Executive. Both committees have documented role descriptions.

Full membership of the APFA is open to those licenced by government to operate a prawn farm. Membership is charged at $250/ha under production, capped at $16,000. Associate members can be anyone with an interest in the industry. They have no voting rights and pay an annual membership fee of $660.00. The membership based has been slowly declining. Weather, competition from overseas imports and government regulations have all been taking their toll. There have been no new entrants to the industry in over a decade. And so the financial base of the association is under pressure.

Decision-making by the Executive is transparent, replicable and in the interests of the industry at large. The Executive uses a structured template by which all decisions are made. The Executive aims to be very professional and accountable, even to the extent of having APFA shirts for executives to wear, thereby ‘leaving their other shirt at the door’.

In the past, the APFA successfully lobbied that all industry members pay an R&D levy, based on percentage of production, to the FRDC. These funds drive the industry's research needs as identified by industry members. Requests to tender are then put out to research bodies such as CSIRO, who conduct the research funded by the member levies.

Broad political lobbying takes up a smaller percentage of association effort than it has done in the past. One of the APFA's biggest political successes, in addition to the compulsory R&D levy, has been the 'country-of-origin' labelling of product. Australian prawns sold through major supermarket chains can now be differentiated by consumers from imported product.

The association employs a full-time executive officer. All other work of the association is voluntary. Funds are generated by membership fees, by an annual conference and through a management fee in overseeing research projects. With a declining membership base, association finances are under pressure. One way of relieving that pressure is for APFA to look very carefully at the membership fees it pays to related associations, looking at duplication of effort, and asking itself if it is getting sufficient value for money. Another way is to look at generating its own funds in order to take pressure off its members. To this end it is actively contemplating establishing its own prawn farm, which will, in addition to generating funds, provide a venue for industry training and R&D.

Another innovation that the APFA is presently exploring with the wild-catch industry is a national centralised marketing programme, funded through a voluntary industry levy.

A recent innovation in the industry, developed by its youngest Executive Committee member, is a benchmarking or enterprise evaluation tool. Members submit confidential figures on a number of KPI's which are then aggregated and sent back to members, thereby enabling any member to assess the performance of their particular farm.

The two-day annual conference is very well attended and attracts a wide diversity of national and international speakers who keep the industry abreast of emerging issues. The APFA also has a strong relationship with Queensland and Commonwealth scientific bodies. And the association conducts, as necessary, its own workshops.

Though it has no formal succession plan, the APFA actively encourages its younger members, and has been successful in attracting a number of newer younger members onto the R&D committee and the Executive committee. At the conference, awards and travelling scholarships are offered to younger members.

Internal communication is by email, newsletters and the web. The latter includes Facebook membership, and a members-only section which includes all of the proceedings of Executive meetings.

Future challenges include addressing the shrinking funding base, increasing costs, exploring present and potential partnerships, and reversing the declining membership through fostering a more enabling regulatory environment.

A means of organization, defined roles and responsibilities

Does your association specifically define the roles for each of its office-bearers?

Form follows function. Once an association has a clear purpose, charter or goal, it needs some organisational means of getting there. Commonly that is a system of governance driven by (i) roles and responsibilities, usually allocated to an individual or to a group, such as a sub-committee, and (ii) procedures that guide how those responsibilities are to be carried out in a consistent and objective manner.

Mental models

Voluntary associations are usually not for profit incorporated bodies, with a legal status that is separate from its members. Incorporated associations are subject to Australian State or Territory legislation. For each State or Territory, the appropriate Government authority offers a Constitution or a set of Model Rules. For more on the legislation and Model Rules, see **Appendix 2**. Within each of these generic documents, the roles and responsibilities of several office bearers are broadly defined. Each association is, of course, at liberty to alter these defined roles and responsibilities to suit its specific circumstances, provided it does so according to the regulatory requirement of the appropriate jurisdiction.

There are six potential role dangers for any association:

(i) That the sum of all documented roles does not equate to the association's purpose or charter. Sometimes, the roles lead to activity that is outside of the association's published charter; sometimes there is something in the association's purpose not allocated to anyone. Solution: Either alter the role, or alter the purpose to include it.

(ii) Role overlap. 'I thought that was my job!' This occurs when two or more parties believe that a certain responsibility is theirs. This more likely to occur when there is something attractive about that responsibility (or, more likely, the benefits that go with it.) Solution: Acknowledge and resolve the overlap.

(iii) Role underlap. 'I thought that was your job!' This occurs when two or more parties believe that a certain responsibility belongs to someone other than themselves. More common when the particular responsibility is unattractive. Solution: Acknowledge and resolve the underlap.

(iv) Role neglect. 'Whose job was that?' This occurs when nobody recognises a certain responsibility needs to be met, because we all overlooked it. Or the charter specifies a responsibility, though it is not allocated to anyone. Solution: Allocate the overlooked role.

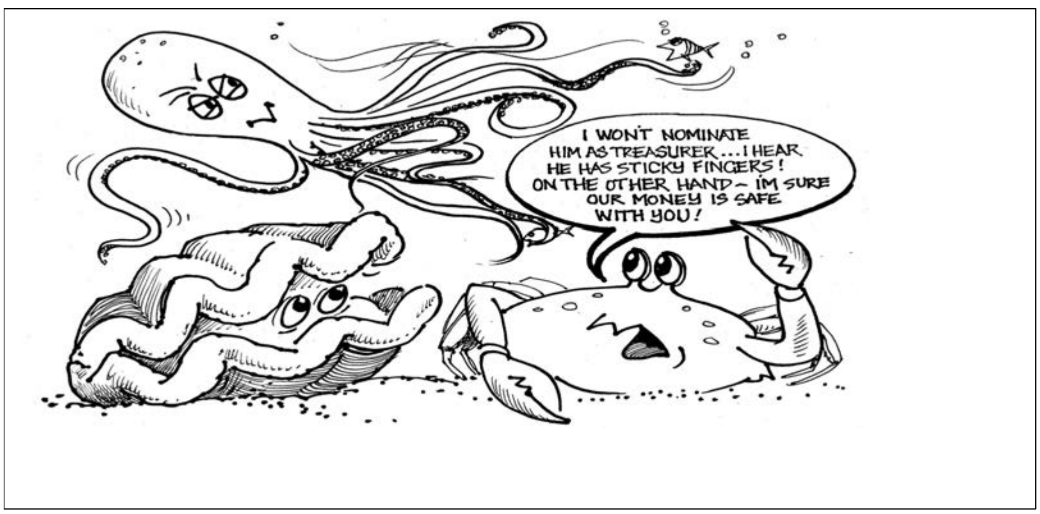
(v) Role concentration. This occurs when most responsibilities fall to one or a small number of key people, such as a chair, secretary or an executive officer.

This places those individuals under high risk of burn-out. It places the association under high risk of 'key-person' vulnerability. And perhaps, more importantly, it threatens the transparency, separation-of-powers, and probity of the association. This vulnerability can take the shape of (a) dependency by the many upon the few, (b) corporate knowledge too narrowly held, sometimes as a source of power, (c) self-interest ahead of association interest (even if unconscious). Solution: (i) spread all responsibilities broadly, (ii) have an understudy for all key roles, (iii) rotate key roles regularly to broaden the knowledge base and reduce dependency.

(vi) Role rigidity. This occurs where roles are too well defined and defended and silos are created, thereby hampering flexibility, a can do attitude or a service approach.

Associations commonly have the following roles:

1. A President – who also commonly acts as Chair. This person is the nominal figure head of the association, and often wields the highest level of authority. There is sometimes, in larger associations, a supportive role of Vice-President.
2. A Secretary. This person is the keeper of the non-financial records of the association.
3. A Treasurer – the financial manager of the association.
4. A Public Officer – a position required under some legislation.



The required functions under each of these roles are generally prescribed in the Model Rules under the appropriate State or Territory legislation. All of these positions tend to be elected and voluntary. In many associations, though certainly not all, sitting fees and out-of-pocket expenses are paid.

A role that is missing from all of the associations we examined, a role without which they are all the poorer, is that of Monitor, a person who observes the activities of the association and reports back on those observations. For more on this role, refer to the topic of 'Performance Measurement' later in this Report.

Associations often follow standard meeting procedures. These procedures had their origins in British Westminster Parliamentary procedures. Here are some commonly practiced meeting or committee procedures or rules.

1. The need for a quorum.
2. The meeting to be presided over by a chairperson.
3. Minutes of the meeting being recorded by the secretary.
4. Minutes from prior meeting being tabled or read out and then voted on for acceptance.
5. Treasurer's report being read out, then voted on for acceptance.
6. Correspondence inward and outwards tabled and often discussed.
7. Motions being put, then seconded, and then voted on by show of hands.
8. Election of office bearers.
9. Points of order, etc., etc.

Ask if the manner in which we conduct ourselves is a turn-off for younger or not-so-young potential members.

It will come as no surprise that many people, particularly young people, find these processes incredibly boring. Yet it may come as a surprise to know that the continuation of these procedures may not, in fact, be necessary. We follow these procedures because we believe, based on past experience, that this is the way things are done.

However, just because something has been done in the past is no reason whatsoever for it to be done in the present or the future. We no longer use manual typewriters or Gestetners duplicators for example. So if we wish our association to be modern, to be healthy and to attract and retain younger members, then one issue that needs serious assessment is how we conduct ourselves, and to ask if the manner in which we conduct ourselves is a turn-off for younger or not-so-young potential members.

Associations presently use whatever meeting procedures they use because that is all they know. There are alternative procedures; procedures that are much more contemporary, participative, and, best of all, faster and more fun. (See Appendix 5).

It is pointless adhering strictly to the letter of the law if doing so results, unnecessarily, in the decline of your association due to its inability to attract and retain potential members.

There are of course, legal reasons for certain meeting procedures. The executives of associations are generally bound by –in descending order - State laws, the constitution or model rules, the association's by-laws, and any resolutions of the Board. Those laws and guidelines are intended to be servants, not masters. **It is pointless adhering strictly to the letter of the law if doing so results, unnecessarily, in the decline of your association due to its inability to attract and retain potential members.**

Most associations are not-for-profit legal entities with Constitutional structures prescribed under State and Territory legislations. Those legislations, and the management practices that traditionally sit under them, are guided by Westminster principles over a century old. Further, the legislations are external to the associations and, even where they are not reflective of modern society or where they are not helpful to any particular association, they continue to inhibit.

Unfortunately, some of the association legislation and related association rules are themselves obsolete, even if still in force. For example, under some jurisdictions, notices to members for the AGM and for special general meetings need to be sent out by 'mail'. Email will not suffice. Changes to Constitutions require 75% of members present and voting, sometimes a logistical impossibility, particularly when current members are feeling disengaged or disenfranchised. People are, on average, conservative, and so getting the required 75% of members to agree to a change in the Constitution often proves too difficult. This conservatism is, of course, repeated on the national stage. Attempts to change Australia's constitution require a referendum, and very few ever succeed.

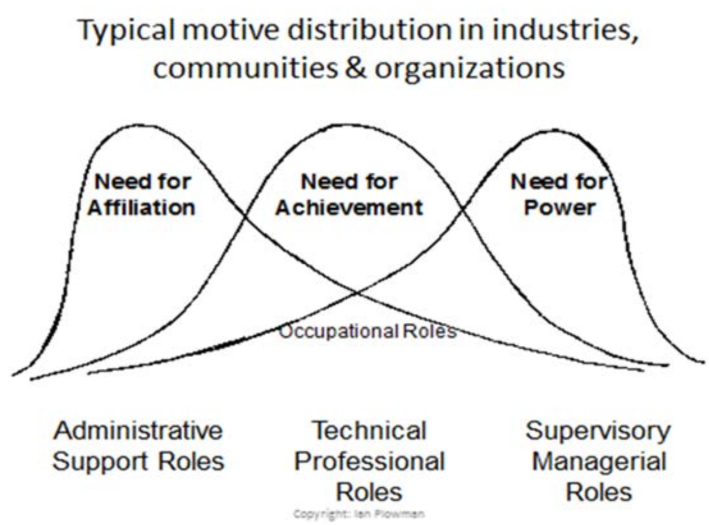
> *I think they did try to change it, but of course you need a 75% majority of the members to vote for it. So it didn't get through at the AGM.*

So, a very worthwhile conversation for any association executive team or Board is to examine the legal parameters under which they are operating, with a view to revising those parameters, through special resolution if necessary, to make them much more aligned with contemporary expectations.

In the previous Chapter, it was acknowledged that the three major, and unconscious, drivers of human behaviour are social need, achievement need, and power/political need. Further, we use the association as one of the numerous vehicles in our personal lives that will help us fulfil our needs. So some join associations as a vehicle to meet their social needs. Others see the association as a vehicle to help meet their achievement needs. Yet others see the association though which they can meet their need for power and political influence. Further, people are much more likely to enjoy the company of, and hence seek out, those who share their need. In consequence, associations might be thought of as three different overlapping clusters of people, each cluster not quite realising that members of the other two clusters are reading from a quite different 'hymn book'.

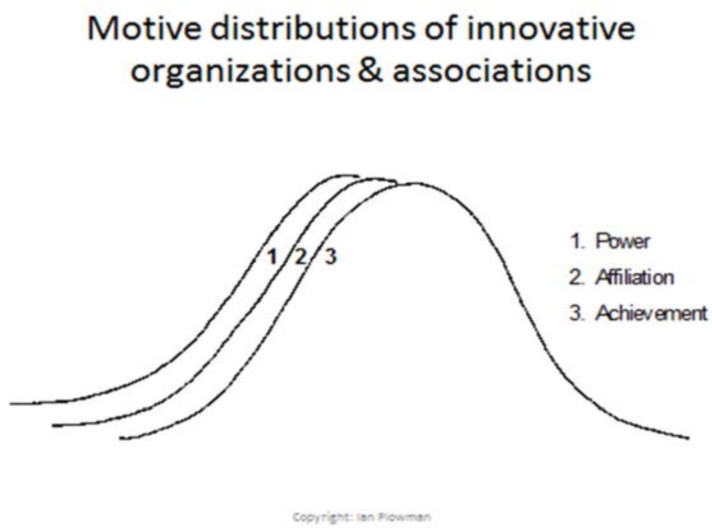
People who have a strong social need have an underpinning desire to be liked and included. They tend to seek out helping or supporting roles, rather than take the lead. People who have a strong need for achievement are more likely to be contributing in the belief their own individual efforts will make a difference and that we can do even better collectively. People who have a strong need for power are likely to gravitate to leadership roles so they can exercise a level of control.

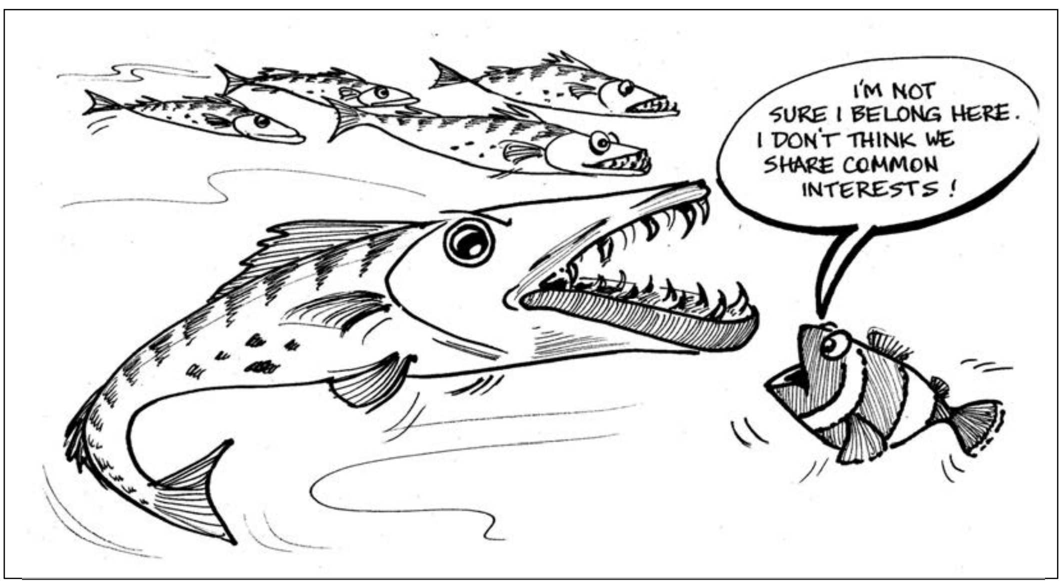
In consequence, it is possible for the profile of an organisation to look like the following diagram.



This is a very common motive distribution in social groups, including industry associations, and the human species has evolved this way because this form of distribution was once useful. The context in which it was useful was the context in which conservatism is valued. The downside of this distribution is that it is designed to block innovation and serve as a barrier to new ideas. More will be said on this later, under the topic of 'leadership'.

There is another form of motive distribution that is less common and which does serve to liberate new ideas and foster innovation. In this more innovative form, the social needs, the achievement needs and the power needs are all rolled together and are not found in separate parts of the association. [Note that the meeting processes outlined in **Appendix 5** result in this more desirable motive distribution.]





So how might you tell which of these two forms is found in your association? Well your Board will unknowingly tell you. In a Board that holds a concentration of 'need for power', the language expressed in the Board meetings and between the Board and the ordinary members will be largely statements. In a Board that is highly innovative, there will be a very high proportion of questions. After all, how else can an association grow, learn, and innovate, except through asking of questions?

Earlier in this Chapter, we suggest that associations and Board would benefit from appointing a member to act in the role of Monitor. One of the tasks of the Monitor could be to run a tally count of questions and statements. Where questions are few and statements are many, the Board now has a choice about behaving differently. Where it chooses not to, it can console itself that it is presiding over an association that is probably in decline and the Board is making a conscious choice not to do anything about it.

How else can an association grow, learn, and innovate, except through asking questions?

If there is one area where continuous improvement (covered later in this Report) has a massive potential pay-off, it is in the manner in which an association conducts its meetings. And a very productive starting point lies in the language of the Board.

Rules and regulations

Any matter that happens regularly could have a policy or procedure to guide it. And the Board passes authority down to others to deal with the 'ordinary'.

The issues that associations deal with are rarely random. Most commonly, associations deal with a relatively small number of issues, and these issues arise time after time. In order to deal with issues in an objective, consistent and impersonal way, healthy associations establish policies, procedures and regulations to guide the behaviour of Board members, Exec Officers and other employees. These codes of behaviour are intended to reduce the complexities of management and to remove any potential suspicion of bias, inconsistency or subjectivity. As a general rule, any matter that happens regularly could have a policy or procedure to guide it. This relieves the Board, Executive, and EO from having to make decisions on matters that are standard, conserving their precious attention and time to those issues that are out of the ordinary. And the Board passes authority down to others to deal with the 'ordinary' in ways that are prescribed by the Board's policies.

Often the effectiveness of an association (or otherwise) is a consequence of particular personalities. And most associations are blessed with at least one highly competent and dedicated person. Yet finding not only a willing person, but, more importantly, one with the desirable personal attributes is somewhat of a lottery. Highly effective associations recognise this and endeavour to insulate themselves from this randomness by building robust processes that are no longer dependent upon personalities. It is then the process, the procedures, the policies that lead to effectiveness, rather than dependence upon personalities.

> *We desperately need to review our rules because they're far too complex for what we are.* ***There are all sorts of rules that have been put together by a legal eagle, and they're actually restricting rather than helping our Association.*** *(1)*

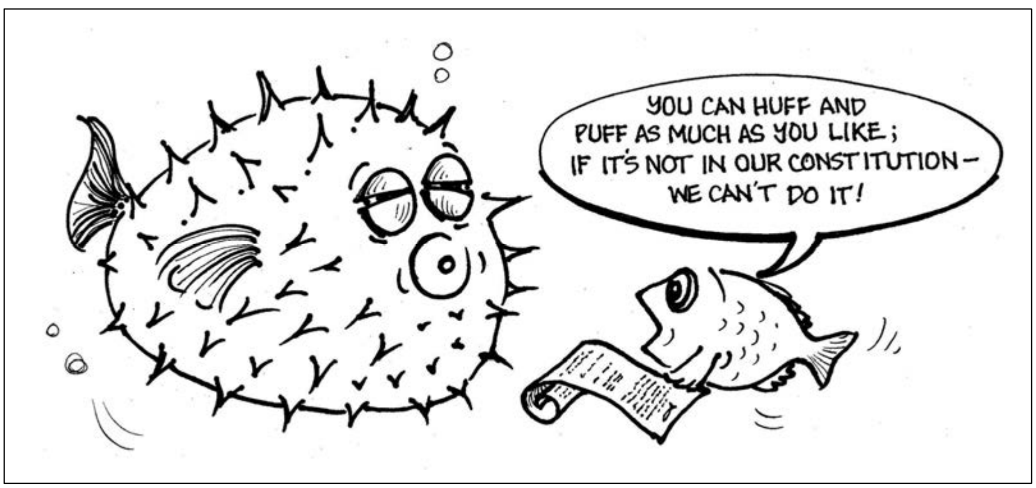
> *We try to be very, very professional about how we go about doing things. And accountable. 'This is what we're doing; this is why we're doing it. If someone questions, these are the three reasons why we've chosen this way to go.' (3)*

> ***We have a set of principles that governs certain decisions that we make, or particular criteria as to whether we as a Board need to address a particular matter and how****; such as 'Is it in the public interest?', what kind of implications it would have. So we have a set of guidelines, but I think they're possibly more informal in the sense that we know they're there. I'm not sure the extent to which they're actually documented as a procedure. (4)*

> *Another* ***thing we really need to do is, to put together a strategic plan, that we did have but it's just gone by the wayside. Like many reports, it sits on the top shelf and collects the dust. It needs to be the rule book, the plan by how we go about things*** *into the future. (8)*

> *They do [have a code of conduct]. There are different protocols in place for things like dealing with the media as well. Generally I think it works quite well. (9)*

> *We've put back in place some objective and independent decision-making structures within the fishery. (9)*



> *In terms of governance structures within the association,* ***the more objective and independent they can make those structures, the better it will serve the association and the function of the association.*** *And it removes, for example, the differences of position on issues.* ***It removes any***

issues of personality around the association as well. *And it's taking into account (in reference to the average age of members), there's a lot of history and knowledge that's retained within members, a lot of that's been carried for a long time, and it definitely influences people's point of view. So the more objective and independent you can make the governance structure and decision-making structure within the association, that will increase its capacity. (9)*

Our national body is in the process of changing their rules and regulations (12)

We have a State Constitution; then each club has its own Constitution. (12)

For example the banking, where it was all cheques with two signatories etc. - we are talking about trying to change that so that everything can be a lot smoother and run more efficiently. (12)

In addition to by-laws we have a communication strategy, a government relations strategy, so we have some more detailed documents that guide the specific activities. (14)

We do have, as a new Director, an induction package given to us, which sets out the rules of the association.

For the Board in Brisbane we've got a policy manual. So there are policies on everything that we're dealing with. *And if the situation changes, the Board will amend the policy to take account of the new situation. The role of the Board is to just check whether those policies are adequate and then change them as need be, and also to monitor them. (17)*

There's things expected of us by law and I don't think people really understand that we have to have an active committee; we have to abide by the Association laws and principles*. Some of them don't take the committee as seriously as they should or understand – as I say, they don't understand their roles, their obligations. I mean* ***lots of the committee people are on the committee just because of me lobbying them to be on the committee;*** *they're not very active at all. (22)*

Induction

When ordinary members step up into a formal role that gives them some functional and legal responsibility for their association, they are moving out of an arena in which they are an expert (as a fisher) into an area in which they may have no expertise and no prior experience (as a Board member). Not only is it logical, it is the responsibility of the other Board members that the new person is given some guidance as to what is expected of them and 'to be shown the ropes'. Some associations have an induction package given to new Board or committee members; other associations go further and actually provide in-house or outsourced professional training and induction. At the other end of the spectrum are associations where the new Directors receive no training or induction at all. Whilst we would regard it as sheer folly to give a person control of a $60,000 motor vehicle when they have never driven before, we sometimes allow novice 'drivers' to manage associations where the budgets can be of that dollar magnitude or greater.

Interviewer: So you think ***the induction kit*** *for [your association] and other associations could be more thorough, or handled differently?] I think so, and even that personalised, if they actually have a session with the new Directors, it could be useful. (4)*

We do have, as a new Director, an induction package given to us, which sets out the rules of the association. *And we get in it material relevant to [State peak body] such as the minutes of previous Board meetings, etc. It's not a code of conduct as such. [Interviewer: So when you say you're given it, are you physically handed a package of information, or is it a workshop?] That's right. It's just information. And some people will read it more thoroughly than others. And even in the rules of association, there are specific clauses that relate to the Board, but I don't think that the information is necessarily extensive. (4)*

There needs to be ***more education by and to the Board members on what their responsibilities are****. The various roles, the people in those positions – for example – do they understand their responsibilities? (5)*

I think that the executive needs more formal training of their roles*. (8)*

Some of the problem is that the Executive Officer does not understand the inner emotions of fishermen and how their minds work. Maybe there should be some training for Executive Officers. (8)

> ***More education by and to the Board members on what their responsibilities are.***

Also, we tend to pick the people that we want in the roles. You could call it grooming, but by the time they get to the job, they know very much what's involved, and they've usually been part of that with the person that was doing it before. [Interviewer - Succession planning?]. That's it. (11)

There are three year terms and so for all the elected members, from the Board right down. ***We actually have a meeting at the beginning of the term. So you get presentations on all these sort of issues so you can't say that no one has explained it to you. It's an induction. (17)***

It's part of our induction program which covers all 93 Directors. They're all aware, even though 21 are on the State Board, the induction is for all 93. Everyone understands the structure. (17)

Just the updating of the Constitution. I think everyone on management should have a copy, or even maybe small kits that can be passed down or handed over when you're elected. *(19)*

When I came into it, I started off doing two years as Treasurer, then did two years as Vice, then did two years as President, and I did not know the first thing about Chairing a meeting, and I never got taught either. My Mum gave me a little book on how to chair a meeting, and I ended up doing a checklist for myself, and getting a bit of advice from other people. But that's *probably something that could be certainly improved:* ***to give people some training on these things prior to being thrown into the hot seat.*** *(20)*

Role clarity

Under 'Mental models', earlier in this section, the six potential role dangers were outlined. The term 'role' refers to that suite of activities and responsibilities that falls to an individual or body. Ambiguity and managerial inefficiency are sure to arise where roles are not logical, are not specified or not published. The reverse also applies.

Lack of role clarity.

The roles of the leadership group should have some very clear guidelines drawn up, to give guidance as to what is expected and what the parameters of their roles might be.

It wouldn't hurt [for the roles] to be better defined because the executive chairman does look for support from some members of the Board. And he struggles to get it in achieving some aims. (1)

[Interviewer: So there are no specific roles and responsibilities allocated?] No, we have an Executive Chairman and there is a Secretariat. So I really think it is unclear at the moment how to do that. There's an important conversation to be had there. (1)

I would say that we still have a little bit of work [to do] in terms of the role the Board does as opposed to the Executive. (4)

If you clearly communicate that to your members that you're there to fulfil this job, not to be this representative, then if you promote that understanding, maybe the factionalism could fall away somewhat. I guess that's my own view about ***being very, very clear in your objectives of what the Board is there to do, and what it is not there to do.*** *Because there is sometimes tension between what the Board does at an overarching level, and [individual] fisheries don't want [State peak body] micro-managing their own fisheries. They want their own involvement in that. (4)*

I do believe though that ***the roles of the leadership group should have some very clear guidelines drawn up, to give guidance as to what is expected and what the parameters of their roles might be.*** *A clear operational manual. (5)*

What the clear delineation is between the role of a Director, the role of the EO, and the role of the Chairman; I think that should be discussed within a forum, rather than just put a document in front of them. (5)

If the membership doesn't understand the importance of the role and the input that the people that are undertaking those roles are putting in, then they don't see that they have any need to put something in. I think the association should see this as being very important. (8)

I think probably at the election of officers, maybe ***it could be made clearer exactly what each officer needs to do****. I think all you do is call for a Secretary, and you call for a Treasurer and a Chairman, etc. Maybe if their roles were pointed out right from the start, then we'd probably get a better applicant. (8)*

When the role is passed down its generally explained what's expected. I guess the problem being is that ***it's written in the Constitution, but there's such an old copy of it that it needs updating.*** *(19)*

Role clarity

Healthy associations need some allocation of specialist roles or responsibilities, such as treasurer, chair-person, and publicity officer. The variety of different roles or responsibilities combines to collectively achieve the purpose of the association. And, it is implicit that role holders can be trusted to carry out their roles diligently.

> *Associations typically establish roles that are validated as deserving trust whilst maintaining the impression that the association, as a whole, is trustworthy* (Fine & Holyfield, 1996:28).

It is helpful for the incumbent, other members of the executive, general members and any paid staff for the responsibilities of each of the roles to be clearly defined and documented, so that there is no ambiguity and that responsibility and accountability can be correctly apportioned. See **Appendix 1**: Responsibility Matrix.

Under the Associations Act, we have a certain range of obligations which must be fulfilled and we make sure that they are. The President, Vice President, Treasurer and Public Officer are elected. That carries through for the year. All of those people and, in fact, ***all of the other members on the Council, are very well aware of the duties and responsibilities of those people and so it's all done according to the book*** *(21)*

There is a list that we made up 12 months ago or more of who would be interested in what, who is the lead person on that topic. I end up as the lead person in many things but in some areas, such as maritime safety and training for instance, someone else is the primary, and I back them up if I can. (1)

One of the other things is the conscientious objector; that you actually give someone the black hat and that's their role to actually test it. Because you've got to avoid group think but if you assign that role… I think we need to do that because that actually creates a tension. (1)

We do have roles and responsibilities. The structure of it is that ***we have an executive which is the President, and the Executive Officer is also the Secretary; we have a Treasurer and then there's two Directors.*** *So that's* ***the executive committee and then there's the general Council****. (2)*

The Executive Committee is the overarching committee, and underneath that is the R&D Committee that looks after the research and development. ***The roles are documented. There are descriptions of each one.*** *(3)*

The staff members of the organisation ordinarily deal with queries, and if it is deemed business of the Board, then it will be provided to the Board. And it's up to them [the staff] discharging their roles and responsibilities in their job, as to whether something gets filtered through to the Board. (4)

Perhaps, at the beginning of each elected term, you could have a list saying, 'Okay, you're the Chairman, these are your roles. You're the Treasurer, this is your role. You're a general Committee member, this is your role'. (10)

We do have a document that gives an outline of what the roles and responsibilities are. We have job descriptions in each of the roles*. We have a Secretary, Treasurer, President, and Publicity Officer. And the meetings are done quite formally – there are quite experienced people running meetings. (11)*

When we take on a Secretary or a Treasurer, we make absolutely clear what they're getting in for. Don't just put your name up if you're not going to do the job. (11)

We need to re-write those roles and responsibilities and publish them in the current forums as opposed to hard copies and emails. (12)

The roles are documented. There are descriptions of each one.

At Board level, we've all got our own roles to play. So I'm the President and I make sure the others do their roles. We've got a Secretary, a Treasurer, a weigh master, and a Recorder. So we work on that and they do their roles. So the responsibilities are shared pretty well. (12)

It's a communications issue. I think that there are some roles within an organisation where the broader membership doesn't need to have a detailed knowledge of what their purpose and what their functions are. I think they should know who to go to if they've got a trade related problem. They should know who to go to if it's a policy matter. They should know who to go to if it's a question of legal interpretation or something to do with the law. So I guess from that perspective – just improved communications. (13)

We are constantly telling them what we do and what our role is. (18)

In aggregate, the roles should equate to the association's purpose. In other words, an association needs people to carry out its purpose and charter, and the sum of each person's role or responsibility should equal that purpose.

We found a number of associations where the structure of governance comprised a general Council or Board, within which sits an Executive Group and a CEO. In these situations, it is particularly important that roles are both clear and appropriate. This structure makes operational sense when the organisation is large and complex, and the Board is large. It seems to make less sense where the Board is relatively small.

> *We do have roles and responsibilities. The structure of it is that* ***we have an executive which is the President, and the Executive Officer is also the Secretary; we have a Treasurer and then there's two Directors.*** *So that's* ***the executive committee and then there's the general Council****. (2)*

> *We have an independent Chair, an independent Treasurer, and in theory an independent Secretary who, in our situation, is the CEO. And* ***effectively we have a situation whereby the Board's Executive aren't necessarily members****, because people that are taking up the roles aren't actually, in the Constitution, full members of the group. So* ***it's a governance issue*** *from my perspective. (10)*

> ***We very rarely have executive meetings as such. Generally speaking the executive is there to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution. The Council is what the makes the decisions*** *and then they leave it to mostly the President and the Treasurer to make sure that those decisions are carried out through the Executive Officer as well, which is the way it should go. (21)*

Because we're acting on the behalf of a whole stack of people who are trusting us to look after them, you are ethically obliged to make sure they know what you're doing.

> ***I'm actually very much opposed to Executive Councils acting on their own, because I think that's the path to trouble.*** *So that it really is only when dealing with staff recruitment and issues of that sort of vaguely confidential nature that I approve of having an executive meeting. Because* ***we're acting on the behalf of a whole stack of people who are trusting us to look after them, you are ethically obliged to make sure they know what you're doing.*** *(21)*

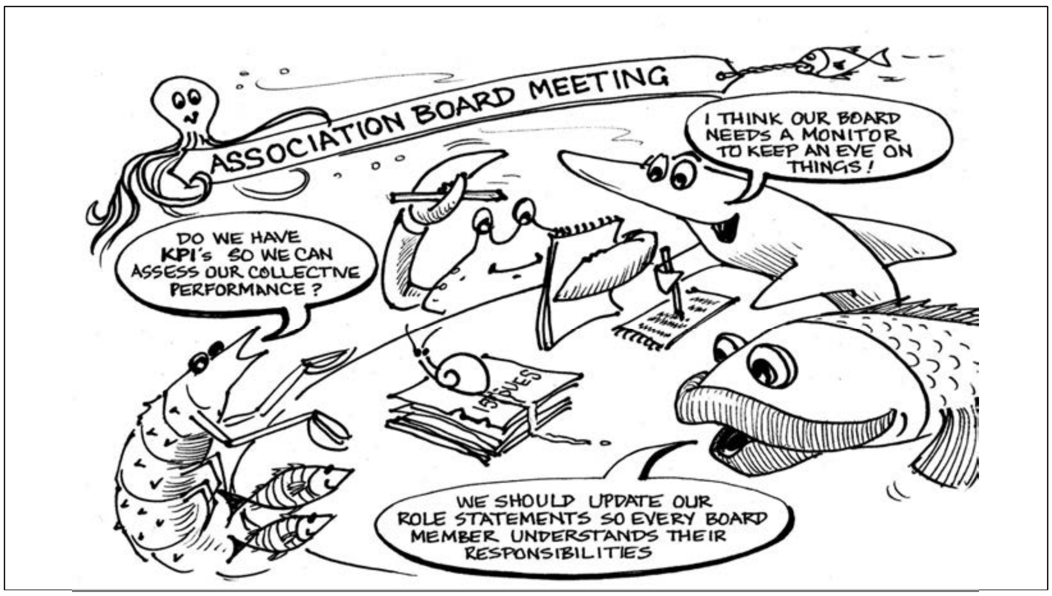
It is wise that policy decisions are only made by the full Board or Council, often in consultation with the broader membership base. It is the Executive Group that gives managerial guidance, and their wishes are carried out by the Exec Officer. Where the Exec Officer is also the Secretary, there is potential for the Exec Officer to have more power than is healthy.

One area of role clarity that can become problematic for an association is between the Board and the Exec Officer. In this research we have come across a number of occasions where the role relationships and responsibilities are ambiguous or inappropriate. For the benefit of all parties, the role boundaries and KPIs need to be made very clear. The Board employs the Exec Officer. The Exec Officer reports to the Board through the Chair. The reverse also applies. Only the Chair can give direction to the Exec Officer.

> *There is a danger too– I find my Board relies on me to do the [Board] recruitment and I don't think that's good.* ***The Board need to spend time [on finding new Board members]; it's their peer group.*** *I may be a part of it, but essentially I'm a paid employee. (1)*

*It's difficult because **the Acting Chair and the Treasurer are one and the same, and the Acting Secretary is the CEO. So again it comes back to that Constitution and governance issue**. So to have an executive meeting in the past where somebody can actually vote, the Acting Chair and the Treasurer, being one and the same person, was the only person who could vote. (10)*

We have five directors. [Interviewer: Sometimes, someone in your position [as EO] can get directed only from the Chair or the president and other times, any one of them can inadvertently say "[Name] do this; [Name] do you mind doing that".] I get that from five of them basically. (18)



Further comment on the relationship between Executive Officer and the Board is made under 'Performance Capacity', later in this document.

Associations depend, for their effective functioning, on a small number of dedicated people. That effective functioning often depends upon people having particular skills and personalities. Change the person, and the outcome can be quite different. In this sense, many associations are vulnerable. That vulnerability can be reduced by creating processes and policies that remove any dependence upon personalities. Decision-making is a good example; conflict resolution is another. Where personal factors come into play in either case, do not be surprised if there is underlying simmering resentment. Far better to establish, in advance, impersonal policies to be invoked in any situation that has the potential to become personal or partisan.

In partial summary: Once it understands its purpose, an association needs the means to move towards that purpose. That means that people need to do something, to carry out particular responsibilities in a co-ordinated and efficient way. It is more likely that the association will achieve its purpose when its machinery of governance and subsidiary roles are logical, impersonal, documented, co-ordinated and subject to regular monitoring and review.

Recommendation 5:

a. Establish an additional formal Board role – that of Monitor, a person whose primary role it is to keep an eye on and regularly report on the effectiveness of an association's governance and operations.
b. Document the roles of the Board, each executive member, executive officer and paid employee of the association. Create key performance indicators (KPIs) for each. These are essential, legally and philosophically, for the role of any paid employee. It is only against documented KPIs that a person's performance can be assessed. Likewise for the Board and each executive position.
c. Aggregate all of the roles to get an understanding of what those pooled responsibilities would deliver and then compare with the association's published purpose and charter. Adjust either roles or charter accordingly.
d. Establish in advance impersonal policies to be invoked in any situation that has the potential to become personal or partisan. Be guided by impersonal and transparent policies and procedures instead of personalities.
e. Ensure the broadest possible distribution of responsibility, including sharing of responsibilities across the membership, having a back-up for every key position and a succession plan in place. (See Recommendation 18 for more on this.)
f. Consider rotation of responsibilities, outside of the formal roles. For example, a different Board member might act as Chair for each meeting, thereby broadening the experience base of the Board.
g. Examine the role statements to ensure no areas of role overlap, role underlap, role neglect, or role concentration.
h. Adjust as determined by recommendations (a) and (b).
i. Examine the legislation under which your association is governed with a view to exploring how the requirement of the law can be adhered to whilst creatively altering your association's operating and meeting procedures to make them less formal and time consuming and hence of greater interest to younger potential members.
j. If the Constitution seems in any way to be inhibiting the effective conduct of the association, change it. Or have the Board create a bi-law to better serve the association.

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Case Study 4: Western Australian Fishing Industry Council

Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) is an association incorporated under West Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. It is the peak body for all of the State's commercial seafood industries. (RecFish West is the State peak body for recreational fishing). Established in the late 1960's, with the support of the seafood processing industry in WA, it employed its first professional officer in 1977. It has eight Board members, all but one of whom are men. The age range is from late 20's to 50.

Board members are elected on a three-year cycle, with a third being eligible for replacement annually. There is no limitation on tenure. Nor is there any leadership succession plan. Directors have all got 'skin in the game', being closely connected with the industry. There are no independent directors (though that notion is being considered). Board members are perceived to bring a rich diversity of skills to their task. There is a healthy turnover. And there has been a recent flush of young blood onto the Board. Potential Board members are nominated by their sectors, though, if successful, they do not represent those sectors. They represent the whole industry. The Chair is elected by the general members, while the deputy Chair is elected by the Board. New directors receive an induction package, though there is no formal induction process.

Like many associations, WAFIC finds attracting new Board members to be a challenge. There is a relatively small 'gene-pool' from which possible Board members might be selected. And there are heavy personal costs, both time and $'s, on those who exercise their civic duty and participate on the Board. There are few compensating perks of office.

WAFIC is funded directly by the Western Australian government in an arrangement that has only just been put on a more predictable footing. That operational funding is purely at the behest of the Minister. Licenced fishers in WA pay a licence fee a levy of 5.75% of their GVP. Of that 5% goes to the WA Department of Fisheries, 0.5% to WAFIC and 0.25% to the FRDC. So effectively all licence holders see WAFIC as their industry representative, and it is WAFIC's responsibility to service them.

Of the funding that WAFIC receives from government, it then acts as a broker to allocate a proportion of that out to major sector bodies, such as Western Rock Lobster Council and the Pearl Producers Association. These funding allocations have also just been subject to review.

WAFIC is just emerging from a very turbulent time. There has been the change in management structure for the rock lobster industry from input controls to output controls. There has been the replacement of a number of Ministerial Advisory Committees with WAFIC becoming the primary agency of consultation under a new Service Level Agreement being set up within it. There has been substantial loss of access due to increase in the imposition of marine protection zones. In this turbulent period, it has been more reactive than proactive.

WAFIC's purpose is to provide 'representation of the fishing industry at State and Federal levels and act as an advisor or intermediary between the fishing industry, government, its agencies, and the community.' It is the peak advisory and representative agency for commercial fishing in WA.

As a peak body, it acknowledges the existence of a diverse range of sector bodies, any of which might be the first port-of-call for a sector-specific issue. WAFIC attends to issues that are more generic across the whole industry. One interviewee suggested that the published purpose was due for revision, given the turbulence the industry and WAFIC have faced in recent years.

Although WAFIC represents all licenced fishers in Western Australia, it actually has a much smaller membership, some 43 in number. These come from harvesting, production, processing or marketing. Somewhat confusedly, and for historic reasons, members are a combination of individual fishers, corporations, PFAs and sector bodies. Each full member pays an annual fee of $220, which entitles them to vote. Under the constitution, this fee can only be raised if the association's financial state demands it and the association presently has a very sound financial base. The membership anomalies are acknowledged though constitutionally it requires a 75% majority to bring into being a change to allow only sector and regional associations as members. Obtaining this majority has so far proven too difficult.

There are also associate members, generally service providers, who pay a nominal $50 per annum and have no voting rights. There is potential for increasing the membership base through broadening the range of associate members. The downside to doing this is that it dilutes the focus.

WAFIC is hoping to move to a different membership structure, one in which only sectoral or regional associations will be members, and each of those associations will nominate a Director.

Services provided by WAFIC fall broadly into three. Sixty percent of the effort, funded by government, goes into representational services such as resource access, property rights, marine parks, etc. Second are issues identified as being of high priority for industry for which other sources of funds need to be found. R&D falls into this category, as does occupational health and safety. And finally there are issue that are not necessarily high priority for WAFIC, but are consistent with its direction, and for which it might play a supporting rather than primary role. Increasingly important, and under-funded is protecting the industry's 'social licence to operate'.

The work of WAFIC is carried out by the Board, a series of sub-committees and WAFIC Staff. The Board operates under a set of clear policy and decision guidelines and is a decision-making body. Subcommittees, each of which has clear operating procedures and lines of reporting , are comprised of two or three Board members and sometimes ordinary members. These committees include a public relations committee called 'Building Community Support', R&D, Audit, Resource Access, and Native Title. These subcommittees make recommendations to the Board. And then there are the WAFIC staff who also have clear operating guidelines. There is a CEO, and 12-14 staff (not all of whom are actually WAFIC employees) and an operation turning over $2 million. Increasingly it is becoming a sophisticated professional operation. It is acknowledged that some clarification of roles between Board and the staff would be appropriate.

The Western Australian Government has just devolved consultation services, between itself and industry, to WAFIC, providing an additional $400,000 plus $40,000 for overheads. Managed under a Service Level Agreement, this new arrangement will improve WAFIC's reach into the regions. While the government perceives WAFIC to be well-resourced, the opposite is true. There is little to no spare capacity.

Because WAFIC receives all of its funding from the Government, at the whim of the Minister, and because it has now taken on services such as consultation and seafood safety, there is a perception that WAFIC is an agency of government rather than being an independent member-based organisation. WAFIC perceives it presently has an effective working relationship with the Minister.

The whole seafood industry that WAFIC services is in slow decline. With buy-in costs being prohibitive, the industry is relatively closed. It is also aging. This makes it challenging to identify and attract new blood into the association's Board. WAFIC is proactive in identifying, encouraging and supporting younger members with leadership potential.

WAFIC experiences 'battles for turf' with other associations with whom it is affiliated. Western Rock Lobster Council, representing over 70% by value of the total Western Australian fishery, has just resolved with WAFIC a particularly tortuous relationship over funding and who has decision-making responsibility for the rock lobster industry in that State. In an attempt to build bridges with sector bodies, WAFIC has encouraged them all to co-locate administrative support and Exec Officers under one roof.

Communication between WAFIC and its constituency is healthy, open, and regular. Emails, a bi-monthly newsletter, telephone and face-to-face coastal tours are all effective communication mechanisms. Social media is a new addition. The AGM is also used as a strategic communication vehicle, combining the formal election component with presentations of interest to members and levy-payers. There is a formal communication policy pertaining to communication with members and non-members.

There are a number of major challenges WAFIC faces. In no particular order they include:

(i) The absence of any effective national voice for the seafood industry. This is particularly important given the enormous Federal push for marine parks.
(ii) The requirement to have 75% of members present and voting to change the Constitution and to put the membership on a clearer, more logical footing.
(iii) The constant threat of 'green tape' and the threat to the 'social-licence-to-operate'.
(iv) The instigation of an electronic unit register, thereby enabling the industry to identify who owns what, and to create an easier market system of resource exchange.
(v) The resource boom and its pressure on the human resource capacity of the seafood industry.
(vi) Creating an equitable voice for all industry sectors within the one peak association.

A means of defining membership

Does your association have a means of defining who is a member and who is not?

Associations need to have some form of recognition of membership. This form of recognition, commonly defined by (a) status as a producer, and (b) dues to be paid, or responsibilities required to be carried out, creates a boundary between association members, as insiders, and non-members, as outsiders. Commonly, though not always, membership confers benefits to insiders that cannot be accessed by outsiders.

Comments from interviewees suggest this topic of 'membership definition' has a number of sub-elements. These are (i) how a member is defined, (ii) classes of membership, (iii) the membership fee, (iv) voting rights, (v) benefit leakage and (vi) value-chain membership.

(i) How a member is defined

In the main, membership of an association is defined by (a) being an active fisher or producer – sometimes under licence, and (b) paying the necessary membership fee. Sometimes this definition is less clear than it might be.

> ***The difficulty is now in changing this [membership eligibility provisions] even though corporations law has moved on.***

There are about 23 aquaculture producers in Australia. The executive consists of about seven from those different farms. [From a later comment, it seems that those seven may not be the enterprise owners; rather the managers, or sector association executive officers.] *(1)*

It might be better if it [clarity of membership definition] was slightly better defined. (1)

Organisations that are eligible for membership [to the peak body] are associations connected with [the industry]. They're usually based on individual sectors. (2)

The eligibility criteria are basically to be a member of a Professional Fishermen's Association, or be a company whose principal object is the promotion and the welfare and development of the fishing industry, and companies incorporated under a law of the Commonwealth whose principal business is harvesting, processing etc. So ***the difficulty is now in changing this [membership eligibility provisions] even though corporations law has moved on.*** *We are stuck as a Board with those [loose] criteria. If your application is refused by the Board of Directors you can appeal to the Association in a general meeting. Basically, if we say 'No' as Directors, then you can appeal to the following general meeting. (4)*

We've got a horrible membership; because of the GVP, everyone is an automatic sort of member. What we do have, in reality, is a very confused membership base at [State peak body], which has associations with members and individual fisherman as members. And we're right in the process at the moment, at the Board level, of tearing that up, and starting from *scratch. At present no, it's a mixed membership – sorry, it's a jumbled membership. It's not a good membership. (4)*

***There are inequities in the sense that a whole association can be a member with 40 members, and a single person with a fishing licence can also be a member. Each pays the same membership fees.** (4)*

You need 75 % of members voting at a special general meeting to support the change to the Constitution.

*At the moment you have 43 members of [State peak body]; there are actually individual companies which are members – and that is what's wrong. Individual fishing family companies that will be a member of [State peak body] and then they'll [also] be a member through their association. They can be a member of the peak body as well and then with the Cray a couple of processors are members as well. So it's really confusing – and that's why it needs to be sorted out. But it's a really hard issue to get – **you need 75 % [of members voting at a special general meeting] to support the change [to the Constitution, on its definition of membership].** (4)*

The plan will be to have each fishery as a member. The minor fisheries – each fishery will have its own Director on [State peak body], whereas at the moment there's eight directors I think. (4)

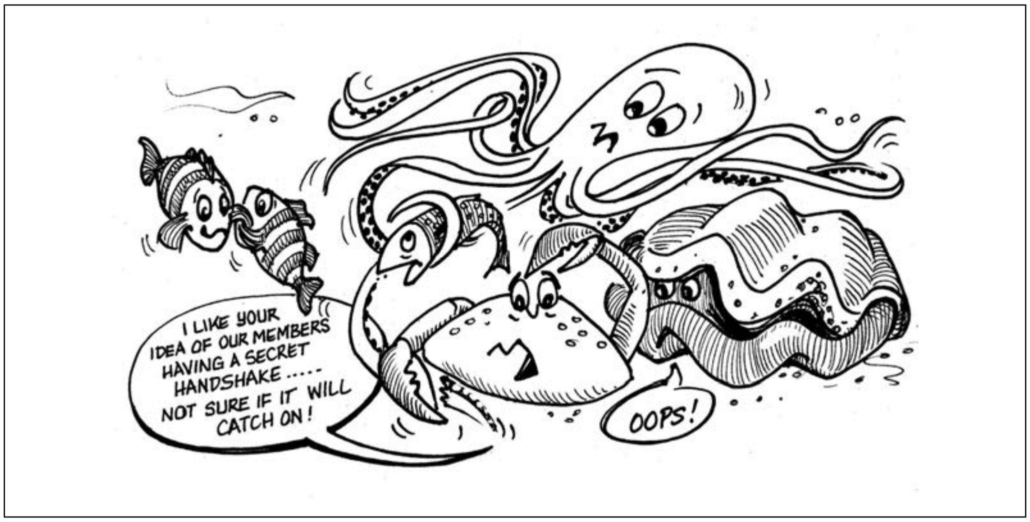
***In Geraldton there's probably half the people aren't members of the local association. And if you're not a member of that, you're not a member of [State peak body].** (4)*

Because the people that are there do care about it. So those that don't care have either chosen not to join or have moved on, so they're not actually intimately involved. (7)

I think [the association] is very clear on how its membership is defined. There are seven Ports in the southeast, and membership of [the association] is at the Port level, so essentially there could be up to seven members. At the moment we have six members, which couldn't be clearer. [Named Port] are not members of [our association]. Obviously we continue to liaise with them and have encouraged them to come back for a range of reasons. But at the moment the membership is quite clearly defined. How that flows onto individuals of the Port Associations is also quite clear. Once a Port is a member, then you're dealing with anyone from that Port. (9)

*The other side of the coin is that **because we don't charge a membership fee, people stay on the books for forever and a day.** So there's no taking a person off because they've died, we don't have any record. We don't maintain those sorts of records. **So once you fill out a membership form, which is basically to get a quarterly newsletter, you're there for life.** It comes down to the definition and expectation of what a membership should be. (10)*

We've certainly changed the way that that's done. It was at one stage, you simply get members of any number, any name. Get the name on the sheet and that's a member. We realised very early on that that was a mistake, and attracted a lot of the wrong sort of people. So we are now very definite about who we want as members. We want people that can mix well, have the fishery at heart, do the right thing, and behave by the code of conduct. And if they're not there *for all those things, we don't want them. We make sure they understand it right from the beginning. (11)*



You've got to be nominated and seconded, and you've got to pay your membership dues etc. You have to be asked to join. (11)

There's a formal application form which the association has the power of veto – of blackballing etc. [Interviewer: Does that happen?] No. I haven't seen it happen in my time, because the first year of membership is a provisional one. So even after your application has been lodged, the association has the ability to determine whether or not they consider you to be an appropriate member. Nobody has ever been kicked off in my time. [Interviewer: Is there a right of appeal?] Yes, there is. (11)

I think the particular group of people have a very clear set of standards of conduct as far as the way they conduct themselves, the way they go fishing. Everybody's responsible as far as the environment's concerned, as far as safety is concerned. There's no one going out drinking excessively while they're fishing. . They're not raping and pillaging the fish stocks; they're not littering the environment; they're not taking undersized fish. They're a very decent group of people, and ***the club has done a very good job at ensuring that only those sorts of people are in the club.*** *It makes it sound like a very closed membership; it isn't; but then again,* ***decent people are encouraged to apply****. (11)*

In terms of when they exactly become a member, when they pay their fee to a club or when the money gets to [the peak body]. (12)

The club's act as our agents, and as soon as they collect the fees, a person becomes a member. Some clubs sort of collapsing and people saying they were members of [State peak body] because they paid their fees but the fees didn't get through to [State peak body]. (12)

We don't deal with non-members, because they wouldn't be a part of our association. So everybody's a member. (12)

They have a problem with people who have been excluded from memberships in other States and then joining [State peak body] in [this] State. So then they can still enter competitions in their State. (12)

There is another problem still to be resolved and that is accepting single members in for [the association] and then allocating them into a club. So people can enrol in National [association] and then be allocated to a club in [State] in Australia, although the process has ceased at the moment. [i.e. the administrative system has broken down]. *(12)*

If you're talking about our members, you know every single quota owner contributes to the [association] by way of levy. So you could say that every fishermen, every person who owns even a tonne of quota, is a participant. (13)

People get more interested in organisations when they're proposing to change their structure because there's a certain amount of debate about it and controversy.

That's pretty easy for us because the organisation is funded by levy payers; the levy payers are the quota owners and that covers virtually 90-95 % of the fishing industry in New Zealand. Maybe not 95 % because there are a lot of fishers that don't own quota but we would also regard them as being part of our membership. (13)

The shareholders in the [peak body] are commercial stakeholder organisations and that's for particularly fisheries, particular species. So you've got about 27-28 of those. They will still remain, but we're trying to narrow that down to what we're calling sector representative entities, which will provide a voice for particular sectors. So you're going to have five organisations if the restructure goes through. They will then have the right to appoint a Director to the new organisation that we're creating called [New name for peak body] which will replace the old peak body. Now this is all in the process of gestation, but we're hopeful that the consultation process that we've had to go through and are still going through to make these changes will increase the interest of people getting involved. ***People get more interested in organisations when they're proposing to change their structure because there's a certain amount of debate about it and controversy*** *and that's when people start getting interested. (13)*

Regardless of the category of membership (e.g. supplier, association or producer) the Board has to approve all the new members. (14)

You're not going to join it if you're not a fisherman, full time commercial fisherman, it's not for recreation or anglers or divers, it's a fisherman's organisation. (16)

In the past, when [the association] had been a statutory body, you were just automatically a member whether you wanted to be or not. *Just over five years ago we've gone through an incorporation process where we've had to go through and redefine the membership. Before that,* ***up until 2000, we had compulsory levies and compulsory membership*** *and there was a period that we went through where we were treating it as voluntary membership but we only confirmed it in 2004. So since then we've actually spent a lot of time and effort with our* *members and sort of saying: 'If you want to belong, you can belong. But if you don't want to, you don't have to.' (17)*

There is one membership. So a grower must become a member at both local and at a State level. But if a local body says I don't want that person as a member; they're radical; then they don't even come to the attention of our State body. Now ***if they're granted membership at a local level that membership doesn't become official until they're also approved at a State level.*** *So they can't be admitted at a local level and not at a State and vice versa.* ***They must be admitted at both levels;*** *there are two separate decisions that get made. In order to do that they just grow [product] and supply a [processor]. They've got to be active growers. (17)*

You could say that every fishermen, every person who owns even a tonne of quota, is a participant.

The constitution covers that they also must be – we can resign a member if they're acting in a way which is against the organisation. I mean, if they went out there and slandered us, we can actually get rid of them as a member. (17)

Originally you had to be a producer [of a specific commodity]. We changed it in the last five years that it's just a primary producer from our region because a lot of people have diversified away from [that commodity]. *It was enterprise based but it's become sort of more district based. If you're a primary producer in this district you can't be an associate member, you can only be a member. So you can't join on the lower rate. If you're consultant or a professional serving the industry they're $30.00 as associate members or, if you're retired and you're no longer a primary producer, you can be the $30 associate member. (19)*

One of the main eligibility criteria for membership is to be a licence or quota holder. In the past, this characteristic was commonly allied to also being an active fisher or producer. Increasingly licence and quota holders are moving into retirement where the value of that quota or licence represents their superannuation. Or the licence/quota is obtained by an outside investor. Fishing/production rights are then leased out to younger people, active in the industry, who have no financial equity in their industry, though they are contributing all of the swat equity. And while many of those that hold voting rights have all of the say in their industry association, they are, in many senses, no longer in it. Conversely, those putting in the sweat equity, who are dealing with the current issues in the industry, for whom the industry is potentially their future, have substantially less say in its future.

(ii) Classes of membership

Many associations have several classes of membership. Most have at least two, being members (generally fishers/producers) and associate members or affiliates (commonly service providers). Where there are different classes of membership, there are generally different commensurate rights and benefits as well as different fees.

Well we have various categories of membership. Prawn farmers, Oyster Australia, salmon, abalone, and barramundi. Out of those, large sectors (defined by GVP) are prawn, oysters and salmon. The small sectors (defined by GVP) are abalone, barramundi, and mussels. The State Associations are South Australia and Tasmania, while the two feed manufacturers are corporate and Sydney Fish Market is corporate. And we have affiliates. They each have different annual membership fees. (1)

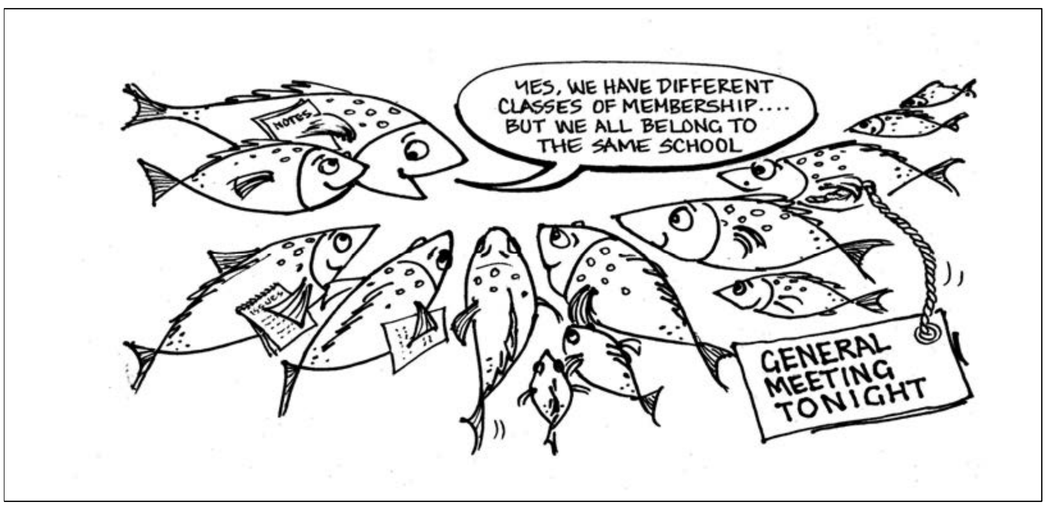
You have to be a primary producer in aquaculture and pay your money to become a member (2)

We have an outreach program, I guess you'd call it, to try and ensure that all appropriate associations are members. (2)

Full members, you need to be licensed for a prawn farm, licensed by Government. Hold a license - whether you're actively operating or not, that is irrelevant. (3)

We're very open on associate members. And that can be someone from a school, a laboratory, a service industry to the association. An interested party – it could be an importer who wants to keep an eye on what we're doing. We encourage people that are looking at it [entering the industry]. (3)

We also have some associate members, but the issue here is that we've always been Processors and integrated operators as well as Fishers. ***It's always been the fishing industry is what [State peak body] is about. You could be a firm whose only job is marketing of pearls in [State], and join [State peak body]. So it's harvesting, production, processing, or marketing****. [Interviewer: In other words, if I'm a boat builder, a lobster pot manufacturer, no.] Not a full value chain, no. We also have associate membership which is an industry ancillary to or servicing the fishing industry, so we do have provision for them. And we have quite an active group of associate members come to our AGM. They like to talk to the Fishermen, hear what's going on in the fishing industry etc., we've got about 10-12 of them. They pay nothing for it - $50 a year or something like that. They don't get a vote or anything. (4)*



Eligibility for membership is that you've got to be involved as a crewperson or Deckhand and/or MFL investor, skipper, owner-operator. Anyone that pertains to the rock lobster industry. We allow for everyone, we don't discriminate. *(6)*

We have two classes [of membership], full member and then a Skipper or Deckhand only pays half the sub, just to try to encourage a few new young blokes to come along. It's $100 for a full member. (6)

Obviously its membership is based out of six of the seven commercial rock lobster Ports in the southern zone, but in reading you the objectives and purposes of the association before, it's basically there to represent commercial fishing interests within the southern zone. We've had the conversation again within the last two years that ***whether it's an associate member or a full member etc. I think the structure is flexible enough that if there was another interest group that agreed with and wanted to be part of the association and agreed with the objectives and purposes, then that could be accommodated, so it is quite open.*** *(9)*

There are only five member associations, and the associate members aren't able under the Constitution to be elected to any positions, and as I say, they don't have any role to play in the actual group. (10)

So we want new people, but ***there are some people that we don't want. We don't want everybody****. We're not into the netters for instance. When you join up, people want to know that you're easy to get along with, and once you're in, you're really accepted by everybody. (11)*

There are three categories of membership in [our association]. Corporate members (which hold an aquaculture license and are engaged in the operation of a business), aquaculture association members, and associate members. Associate members are institutions, suppliers or supporter of the aquaculture industry. (14)

The definition of our membership has been broad enough to make sure it doesn't exclude people. Recently we've seen some problems arise from it not being clear enough.

[Interviewer: And for the associations, is it based on what they can afford?] There are two categories. For those that want to participate on the Board, the fee is $5,000. If an association is small and can't afford that or it's not important to them that they have a seat on the Board (you just want the information and some of the benefits), then it's $500. So there are only those two categories. (14)

The only thing causing confusion is the difference between an associate member and a full member. I personally am not sure what the difference is*, like what does a full member's benefit? I feel that we're not benefiting any different to an associate member and yet we pay a full amount and they pay only $30 odd. (19)*

The definition of our membership has been broad enough to make sure it doesn't exclude people, and I think that recently we've seen some problems arise from it not being clear enough. *It's difficult, because if you have it too defined, it potentially could exclude people, and* *too broad, then it allows for too much misinterpretation, and people get upset about that as well. (20)*

We have a classification in our membership for associate members which generally comprises people like tractor servicemen and fertiliser suppliers and all that sort of thing, ancillary industries but actually aren't farmers. And they are often very keen to become members on the basis that that gives them access to spreading information to our communication system about their services. They may have a position on Council but they're not allowed to vote. (21)

Associate members, apart from the voting right, are treated the same. I mean I try and serve them as equally to full members and to tell you the truth the fees are exactly the same. There is no discrepancy of fees. *(22)*

A potential source of members, embraced by some associations, though not others, is the brood stock of the industry, those young employees, deckies, skippers, etc who have no financial equity in their industry and yet who contribute most of its sweat equity. These are the people on whose shoulders rest the future of the industry. When people can see a clear path for their future, when they have a level of say in that future, they will invest in it. Creating a membership category, one that has a level of influence power, can be one of the smartest investments an association can make.

(iii) The membership fee

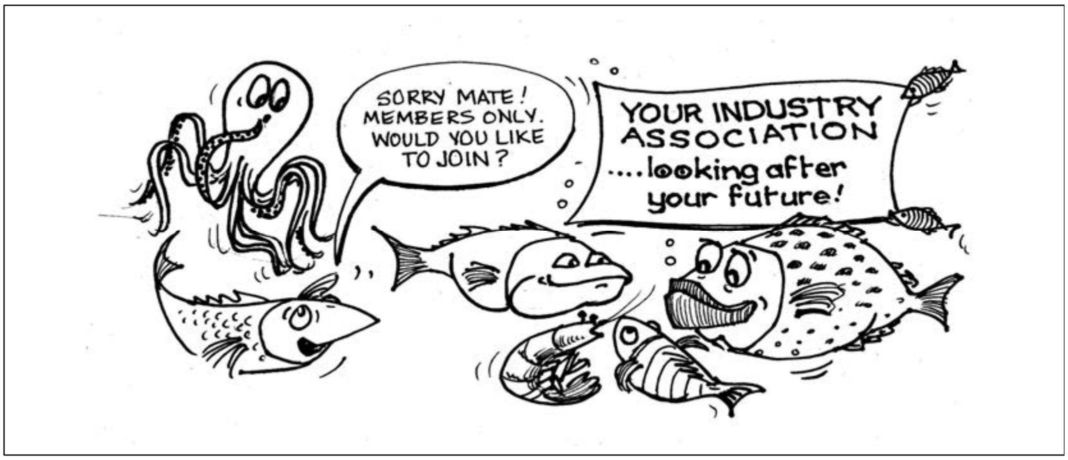
One of the means of defining membership is the dues to be paid. Different associations take different approaches to the issue of membership fees. Some have a flat fee, others have a category fee (i.e. large producers or small producers, or affiliate), while yet others base the fee on the volume or value of production. And some pay no fees at all, with all remuneration flowing from Government in exchange for a resource access fee paid to Government by members.

The financial cost is membership fees and they've got to pay for their own attendance at meetings, their own costs. (1)

The large sectors, they pay $9,000 each. The small sectors pay just $1,800 each. Corporates pay $6,000 each and I think affiliates – well we don't have any at the moment – about $600 or something, very small. Other than the affiliates, they all have the ability to be appointed to the Board within the rules. So that raises us about $60-70K a year. (1)

We have different membership fees and that's based on the size of those industries generally. The fee varies from sector to sector. ***The bigger the sector, the bigger the fee.*** *It's very flexible. The bigger associations are paying nearly $4,000 pa. That's not the most important thing, the membership fee. But* ***the overarching need is to have as much aquaculture representation in the body as possible to lend a certain amount of authority.*** *(2)*

***I think the [larger sector associations] are allowed to have two delegates at the [peak body] meeting**, whereas a smaller association can only have one. So I guess they do get a bit more say or representation at that table should it be required. [Interviewer: So do those two big guys pay substantially double the membership fee?] Yeah they do. (2)*



***It's a sliding scale depending on the size of production, in hectares. At present ours is based on the number of hectares under production.** So if you're a 10 hectare farm, you're charged at $250/ha. Once you get passed $16,000, that's the maximum fee. Associate membership is $660. (3)*

$250 over and above your GVP. It gives you the entitlement to vote. (4)

The exact words are: 'The Association to take into account, in its absolute discretion, the amount it considers necessary to provide sufficient funds for the purpose of conducting the Association's affairs.' *Even though it says '*absolute discretion*,' clearly, we've got more than $800,000 in the bank and a relatively reasonable income stream.* ***The Constitution also provides we can only raise fees effectively if there's a need to do so. And [the association] is generally in a reasonable financial position – so accordingly we can't just raise fees.*** *(4)*

I think it's quite a significant in-kind contribution that's expected from office bearers within the association in terms of the President, Vice-President, and Secretaries generally.

Everyone pays 0.5% of GVP that goes towards representation. Now that's collected by Government on behalf of industry and re-distributed but it comes through [State peak body]. And so there lies one of our problems, in that ***we have to go cap in hand to [State peak body] to get some funds for representation for [our commodity] which are rightfully ours anyway****. (5)*

I think our membership is still $100 for an owner-operator etc., and Deckhands [associate members] are only $50. (6)

The funds are paid by members, whether its collected through their licence fee or whether they actually voluntarily put it through their own associations*; and the in-kind, mainly that's the people that stick their hand up to sit on the Council. There's not really much else expected of members except to put their hand in their pocket basically and pay their membership. (7)*

We have a $200 subscription fee that's decided by the AGM. It's certainly not enough to pay for sitting fees or anything else. And some members don't pay. So I think it's really important that we go to other means of collecting fees through licence fees or other ways. (8)

We have our port association fee, and they pay the [second tier association] fee, a port membership, and also our Primary Industries Funding Scheme (PIFS) levy contributes to [second tier association] as well. We did take up a fighting fund collection for the Marine Parks thing, but that was for a one-off special purpose. It wasn't actually an association thing. So members generally aren't expected to make other contributions other than money through their membership. They partially are taking it out of our licence fee with PIFS, but some people reclaim their PIFS, so they really don't contribute. (9)

Possibly the PIFS levy has changed the understanding, because people understand how, if they pay their PIFS, they're considered members [of the Association], and if they don't, they're not. (9)

From the Executive, I think it's quite a significant in-kind contribution that's expected from office bearers within the association in terms of the President, Vice-President, and Secretaries generally have a quite active role within the association. They are primary points of contact for me as the Executive Officer, so their in-kind contribution is quite significant. In terms of financial from members, there is a port-based membership fee each year, but then [our association] has a range of other ways of generating income throughout the financial year as well. And as much as possible, the burden financially on members, they try to make that as little as possible. [Interviewer: Are you able to tell us what the Ports pay [our association] for the financial component of the membership?] It varies each year – to give you an idea, ***it has ranged from something like only $500 per port to maybe up to $1,500 per port in the last few years, which is set annually****. [Interviewer: And that doesn't vary depending on the size of the port and the number of licences?] No. (9)*

The cost of the members is $250 a year, to supply a member to the Board. ***The other big cost is the time commitment. Getting people to participate and be actively involved is a big commitment, and difficult to do.*** *(10)*

> ***Getting people to participate and be actively involved is a big commitment, and difficult to do.***

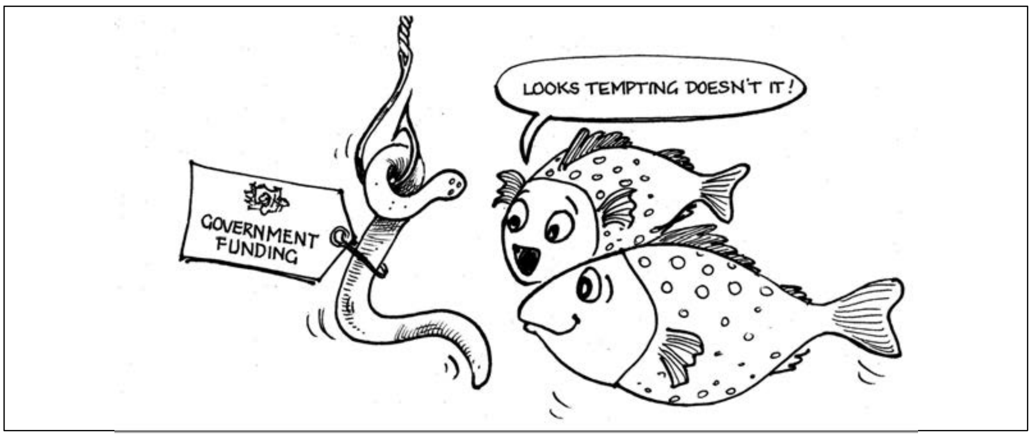
Actually establish a database and charge a membership fee. I think people when they pay have a lot more interest etc. about where their money's going to, rather than just signing up. (10)

Annual membership for a family is $80. Then out of that we pay [national peak body] and insurances etc. (11)

There's no expectation above our fees – our fees are set at $14 a single membership ($30 a family), which keeps our State association going. Then there's an ongoing fee that goes to national, which is part of the $14. We keep the fees as low as we can. Basically [State peak body] only keeps $5, and the rest goes to national [peak body]. (12)

And we've actually reduced their fees on a national basis, which reflects back to the State and then to the club fees. (12)

Every single quota owner contributes to the [peak body] by way of levy. So you could say that every fishermen, every person who owns even a tonne of quota is a participant. A lot of those people don't take an active interest in the industry association. (13)



Our levy is based on the amount of quota that you own and the value of that quota. *So for example a person who owns say 10 tonnes of [commodity A] quota would pay more than someone who owns 10 tonnes of [commodity B] quota and the bigger companies pay a very large percentage of our total income. (13)*

The membership dues vary depending on level of sales. On the fin fish side, mostly salmon farming companies, they would pay between $15,000 and $25,000 per member. On the shellfish side, where the sales are typically less, they would pay between $3,500 and $5,000. And within those categories there are different levels that, depending on your production level, have different fee structures. (14)

[Interviewer: And for the associations, is it based on what they can afford?] There are two categories. For those that want to participate on the Board, the fee is $5,000. If an association is small and can't afford that or it's not important to them that they have a seat on the Board (you just want the information and some of the benefits), then it's $500. So there's only those two categories. (14)

You don't know if the government is going to give you everything that you're owed! We have a system like that here [in Canada] for many of the agriculture sectors – a levy system. And for some commodities it's legislated, but the money goes directly to the association. It's just that there's an audit function the government has, to see whether or not that money gets passed on.

The government has an interest in the producers being aggregated in an association so that they can give their advice as a communal group. So that's why in Canada they've legislated as a levy. (14)

In Norway for example, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Association has a levy system too, where they pay 1-1.5%. Part of that is a marketing levy, part is for research and development, but the money goes directly to the association, and they pass that on to government. *For example, the research one will double up with the federal government money to do the research and development that's needed. But in that case, the industry has a say in how the research gets done. (14)*

> ***The levy from members is probably less than half the income now. The other income is from commercial activities.***

It's a flat fee of $500 for commercial, and the associate members are about $750 (they pay more). All the associate members are actually suppliers who supply huge volumes of sales to our members. And they have the indoor track to – like I would not go and buy from a supplier who is not a member of [our association], as it's not in our interests. We need their contribution. (15)

It's $500 for a regular membership and $300 for an associate member. I am looking at the invoice for 2012/2012. (15)

We have an annual subscription fee which is based on usually the size of vessel; a ten metre vessel won't pay as much as a thirty metre vessel. That's a regular annual subscription. (16)

With our levy base, we're not just purely reliant on the levy of members. We've got rental from building and interest and things like that. Actually the levy from members is probably less than half the income now. The other income is from commercial activities. *That way we can keep our levies down too, and that's one thing that makes people happy. If you can say well, your levy to Brisbane hasn't increased over the last three years, but you're getting all these services. So they're quite content with that. (17)*

There's a fee for membership at State level which is consistent across the State and at local level because they're autonomous companies, they are also not for profit, they set their own fee to do whatever they want to at a local level. There are two separate fees but marketed as one. One membership fee, but two components. It is on all tonnes supplied to a [processor]. We have a minimum membership fee which is 1250 tonnes. The average fee across the State would be about 30 cents a tonne but that does vary from 16 cents to 60 cents. The State fee is 10.25 (cents per tonne of commodity); for each local company, it's a fee that can differ. They differ from 6 cents to 50 odd cents depending on the size of the area. ***Generally across the State the membership fee covers only about 30% of revenue, 70% of revenue across the State comes from external sources.*** *(17)*

[On the question of discounts for long-term members …] everyone gets treated the same regardless of length of service. That's something that does crop up. Some people say I should get something back, because I've been a member for 30 years. And you say, well, you still had all the benefits over the last 30 years so it has been returned to you. If you pay $100 a year in membership, you may be receiving $120 in benefits both directly and indirectly. (17)

Twelve hundred and fifty tonne is the minimum tonnage, if they don't harvest that, they then have to pay the equivalent of the, well our membership levy is 23.75c per tonne and [peak body] are 10.2c per tonne for this year so if they didn't harvest the minimum of 1250 tonne, they are charged for the difference between what they harvested and the twelve hundred and fifty. So it's something like 34 cents per tonne. (18)

There's a membership fee. Basically, because we don't need a lot of money, it's about $100 per enterprise per year. *If you're not a member when you come to the meetings you've got to pay a meeting fee. The striking of the meeting fees is based on making it attractive for them to join as a member. So I think an associate member might be like $30-$40 .00. The meeting fee is $20 so you might as well pay $30 and become an associate member. (19)*

Some people were interpreting the fee differently. Some would pay on acres and some would round up and down, and you wouldn't get the same fees twice from some people, and they thought, 'I'm not growing [commodity A) this year, so I'm not actually going to pay.' But they might have been growing [commodity B], and we're a [commodity A] and irrigators association. So during the period where our dam was a bit low and we weren't getting full allocations, people who weren't growing as much [commodity A] decided, to pay on the area they were growing [commodity A], so if that was reduced, they would reduce their membership fee. (20)

Of issue with most associations is declining membership. In order to gain economies of scale, member corporations and enterprises often buy out the weaker or smaller participants in their industry. These expansions at the enterprise level can lead inevitably to contractions at the association level, reducing the number of people available to participate in association activities and to serve on its executive Board. Further, most association fee structures are pitched at the enterprise level. So an expansion or consolidation at the enterprise level can also lead to financial contraction at the association level.

***The industry is shrinking in the amount of people actually working in the industry**, but the MFLs [managed fishing licences] are still the same existing ones. (5)* [Same number of licences held by fewer people.]

The number of growers is declining while the average tonnes per grower is increasing, so they're becoming more corporatized.

So on the shell fish side, we probably have 13/14 active big commercial operators. We used to have a lot of small operators, but they're mostly all gone now, because the industry has matured so that you can't operate on the Ma and Pa part-time operation. Last year we had about three small companies, and there's only one of them left now. All the big guys are buying them out and taking over the leases. (15)

Consolidation. It's going to happen anyway, like these Ma and Pa operations, and you're starting to get some big mussel companies here that are actively buying everything up and are trying to control. And that's coming down to three people in [named Province]. (15)

*The traditional base has been the family farm and we've got a number of corporates moving in and a number of large family farms developing and you know, we've always been there for the weakest link, representing the small grower but **the number of growers is declining while the average tonnes per grower is increasing, so they're becoming more corporatized.** (17)*

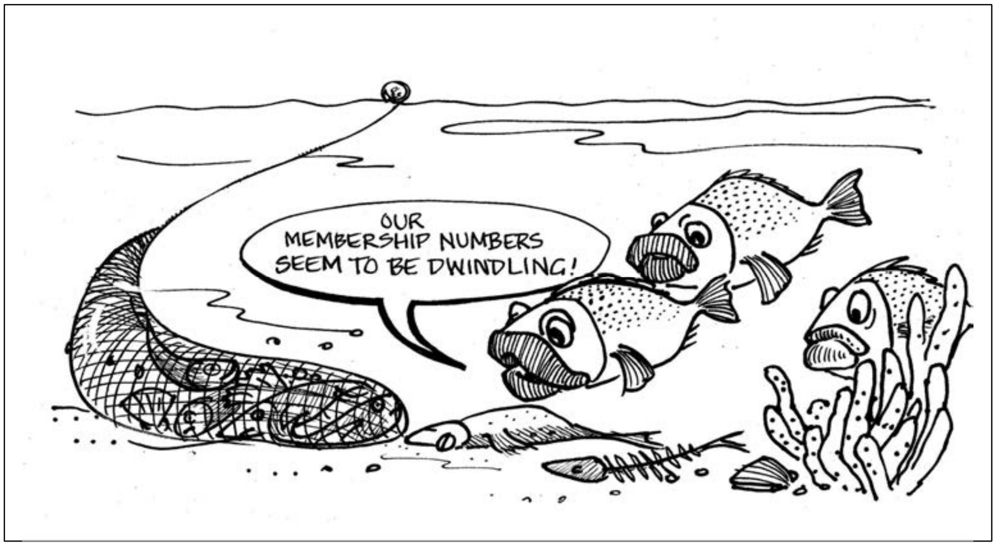
***There's been a reduction in membership as irrigation farms have generally become larger, conglomerations of one family upsizing to the farm next door. So the same acreage or more acreage is represented by fewer people.** (20)*

*Our area used to be basically established on 500 acre farms and it was all pretty even when it was established. And then over time, neighbours have bought neighbours, so **we still have the same amount of farms out there, but we've got about two thirds the numbers of growers that we used to have.** (20)*

*Generally speaking the number of actual farmers has decreased. The size of enterprises has increased and smaller ones have dropped out and certain areas have become less viable. **In my industry, for instance, we've gone from about 30-35 growers of varying sizes down to probably 12.** (21)*

Further, as producers engage in economies of scale, they may feel less in need of an association to operate on their behalf. In fact, our research came across several industries that had contracted to only one of two enterprises, defeating the need for an association to represent them.

***So generally some of the bigger growers can say, well I'm big enough, I don't need [the association] to fight the battles for me.** (17)*



On the flip side, governments prefer to be seen to be acting for industry as a whole; not for individual enterprises. And this can work in an association's favour where the government perceives that association to be the appropriate reference point for consultation.

> *[Interviewer: Do you see that occurring where some of the really big players say, 'I'm big enough to fight my own battles; I really don't need the association?'] It is a big risk for them if they want to go that route. Some of them do, but they always come back to [our association], because it's not acceptable for government to entertain a big player and not entertain the medium or small players as well. It's just not acceptable to us as industry, and we just won't tolerate it. And the government knows it. And as bad as the government can be, they always are advocates of [our association]. 'We will deal with this issue through [our association] as a uniform industry body, not as an individual.' We hear that over and over. (15)*

When there is a fixed enterprise-based membership fee, contraction in industry numbers can lead to a reduced financial base for the association. One way of dealing with this is to set a membership fee based on gross value of production (GVP) or gross volume above a set minimum base. This results in an equitable sliding fee based on capacity to pay.

> *[The fee] it is on all tonnes supplied to a [processor]. We have a minimum membership fee which is 1250 tonnes. (17)*

Whilst associations define membership in terms of the fee to be paid, too few define an in-kind expectation.

In some settings, where there are multiple levels of associations, such as local, regional and national, members pay multiple fees or levies. Whereas the local fee might be a flat rate, the levy for a national body is production-based and serves to fund such things as national R, D & E programs, such as FRDC.

Some associations, too few in our opinion, make it very clear to new members that they are expected to contribute in kind. Whilst (almost) all associations define membership in terms of the fee to be paid, too few define an in-kind expectation. Membership is a social contract between the joining member and the association. The association, in effect, contracts with the member to provide benefits to the member in exchange for a membership fee. Those benefits commonly add value to or protect the existing value of the member enterprise. **Yet rarely is that fee alone the sole factor that provides the benefits.** In almost all cases, the association needs some organisational competence in addition to the financial contribution. **Yet, at the time that it is most able, the association fails to contract with the joining member what their contribution to that organisational competence will be.** Instead of contracting for a small amount of in-kind support at the time of joining, associations endeavour to contract a very substantial level of in-kind support at the point of election of officer bearers. For most members, this contractual jump is a 'step-too-far', and so associations struggle, and often fail, to secure the necessary organisational competence.

> *The in-kind, mainly that's the people that stick their hand up to sit on the Council. There's not really much else expected of members except to put their hand in their pocket basically and pay their membership. (7)*

> ***Almost none of the associations have a sales pitch that spells out, in dollar or non-financial terms, the value proposition that members gain by belonging.***

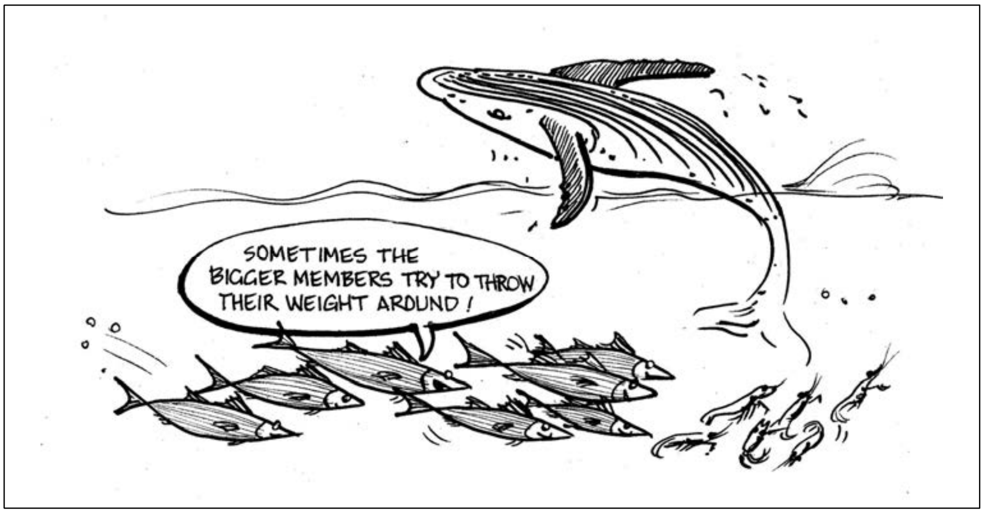
> *There is an annual membership, and it's expected that they will put in. That doesn't mean they have to be on the Executive, but it does mean that if we've got a barbeque on or for instance that they will help, we have an event where we take some autistic adults and children fishing, then they're (members) expected to come on at least one of the three trips a year where we take those groups away, and do their bit. If they don't, they're not kicked out of the club, but there are expectations that the members will all chip in. (11)*

> *The in-kind is if you volunteer your time for assistance, or you might donate prizes. I think it's left up to each member to decide how much they can contribute, either time-wise or financially. (11)*

An omission from every association case studied for this Report, bar one, was how the fee was pitched. Numerous interviewees told us that what members were looking for was 'value for money'. Yet almost **none of the associations have a sales pitch that spells out, in dollar or non-financial terms, the value proposition that members gain by belonging**. It is merely implied. This is an omission that is easily rectified. For example, those associations that had negotiated, on behalf of their members, attractive purchasing discounts on insurance, fuel, nets, motors, etc., would have no trouble quantifying the value proposition: 'You pay us $x; in exchange, you have the opportunity to obtain $y benefit'.

(iv) Voting rights

One of the benefits of membership is the right to vote on issues that affect the association and its industry. There are a variety of different approaches to the question of voting rights. In the main, members have voting rights, while associate members do not. And some associations give greater voting rights to larger members.



You have large industry association members and small industry association members from memory and the large industry association members have more votes. (1)

Everybody has the same voting strength except the affiliates. Members have an entitlement to nominate directors on the Board, with numbers subject to quotas. (1)

[Interviewer: And voting rights; is it one vote per member?] One per body. So [larger associations] have two bodies; so they get two votes. (2)

[Interviewer: Do associate members have voting rights?] I don't believe so, no. (3)

Once an associate is on the Board, they have full voting rights. [Note: this association allows associates to be elected by full members onto the Board] *(3)*

One vote, one member, regardless of size. (4)

[Interviewer: Do the Deckhands get to vote at your AGMs?] Yeah, they get equal voting rights. They're just as important to our industry as anyone. (6)

We have licence holders who can be full members and with voting rights, and employees can be non-members (associate members), but they don't have voting rights. (8)

Based on associate membership, no, they have no interest / input whatsoever. (10)

*There are only eight Directors and, because we have some very large companies in the [national] seafood industry, **the voting strength is pretty much controlled by three or four companies**. So if you are a small fisherman and wanted to become a Director of the Council it would be quite difficult to do. I'm personally not comfortable with it, but the changes we're making now – there should be hopefully more interest in people becoming involved in the sector groups and I think that will benefit the industry. (13)*

Everyone gets one vote at the AGM, or if they're not able to attend the AGM, they can give that vote to someone else. But it's one vote per membership. Everybody that's a member at the AGM gets one vote. (14)

[Interviewer: Do bigger Board members get more votes on the Board?] No, they don't. (14)

In order to run for office and have a vote, you have to be an active commercial operator. (15)

There are [two] associate [Board] members also; we have many different suppliers who get amongst themselves to run two people on the Board. One at large, and one is very specific. They sit on our Board and have input. It's only commercial operators that have a vote at the AGM. The rest of us commercial operators do not vote for associate members. It's their own group within a group. (15)

Each producing company then would have one representative that would be able to vote and those as far as I know, had the only voting membership privileges. So only producers can elect at the AGM, only producers can vote at an AGM, associate members can't and academic members can't. (15)

It used to be an acre-based membership with a limit, but then the bigger blokes who were paying more money, when they voted on an issue, they still only had one vote. So they said if they were going to pay more money, they wanted to have more votes. Then the little fellows, only paying a little bit, were getting their one vote as well, but a lot of them were the ones contributing to the executive. So it was really difficult to know how to go. (20)

*What we've done is to take all of that [ambiguity of membership] out of the equation and just make it a flat fee of $400. What we did then with the voting rights **was anyone who has in excess of 1000 hectares of irrigation are entitled to purchase another membership, and therefore get two votes.** So they pay $800, but they have two votes on issues as well. Most small blokes did agree that the big fellows probably did need additional votes for their size, but they didn't want to get over-run by a couple of big corporates all of a sudden then being able to dictate the result of a vote. And also they recognised that **it was a lot of the smaller growers that are actually on the executive**. (20)*

***Only one level to a 1,000 acres, and if you have in excess of 1,000 acres, you can pay again and hold two memberships, so it gives you two votes.** (20)*

(v) Benefit leakage

When association boundaries are permeable; when non-members find a way to access the benefits members enjoy, without contributing any of the costs, then the association's attractiveness to members is substantially weakened. Or, worse, if membership of an association confers no special benefits, then members might rightfully question why they belong. An example of a free-ride by non-members is when an association lobbies Government successfully on a particular issue and the benefits flow to everyone, not just the association members who contributed to the lobbying effort. Some associations endeavour to firewall benefits to their members, avoiding leakage to free-loaders where possible. Other associations are more generous, taking the view that their members are strengthened by having all players in their industry remaining informed and supported. Which of these two positions, or some intermediary position, is taken is an important conversation for the Board of any association.

> *The aim has been to exclusively serve members needs but it's impossible to avoid collateral benefit to non-members and other industry. (1)*
>
> *There's always this business of why should we tolerate free loaders and yes it can become problematical. But on the other hand, there's a countering argument that says, hang on, there's not much that we're doing directly for them or just for them, their benefit reflects on us as well. (1)*
>
> *You've got to accept there's always going to be freeloaders, free riders. (1)*
>
> ***Anyone who is not a member of a sector association benefits from what we do**. So in other words we lobby the Government to change some rule because we don't work with it, and the Government subsequently says yeah, you're right. So the regulation is modified so somebody else who is not a member of an industry association, therefore not contributing financially to the costs of representation which is travel and accommodation etcetera, gets the benefit and that's a major issue. You can't force people to be a member of an association. It's a financial issue. It means that **a few have to carry the weight of many financially**. So it is a serious issue and all that we can really do is lobby non-members to join by saying to them if nobody joins we can't pay for this and you can't do that and hopefully shame them into it. Sometimes it works. (2)*
>
> ***We're in it for the health of the whole industry; we don't care [if there is some benefit to non-members**]. (2)*
>
> *[Interviewer: What proportion of potential members sit under (peak body)?] Probably less than half. It's only because the work that we do that it's fine and rosy. (2)*
>
> *[Peak body] is a little bit different because it's a State peak body. So every sector is represented but when you come down to say the [named member associations], particular because they've got a lot of foreign investment there, so Chinese or Japanese own [commodity enterprises] but*

they won't join the Australian Association, but they have to operate under the same rules. ***They get the benefits but they don't have to be members. This is why the State Government has to fund us****. (2)*

By default every single business that prawn farms, there is a compulsory (by law) R&D levy that is paid, that's been passed. So if you're not part of the association, we still, as an association, have an R&D Committee that is there to put the best interests of the industry at heart, whether or not they're part of the association, to drive R&D. By that I mean that ***you don't have to be part of the association to get benefits from R&D.*** *There are a lot of benefits that people that aren't part of the association would get, because we work hard to represent the whole industry. (3)*

No, we are very careful on what we pass on to those outside the association, because we know how valuable it can be. *(3)*

One problem we do have would be that there's no penalty to not being a member. There are several free riders out there.

One problem we do have would be that there's no penalty to not being a member*, because if we were in there fighting for generic prawn farming or aquaculture per se within Australia, anybody that's involved in that operation is still getting the benefit of what we and the EO are doing. And* ***there are several free riders out there.*** *People that genuinely can't afford it and are genuinely struggling, we accept that. There are only a couple in there, to be fair, that are freeloaders. (3)*

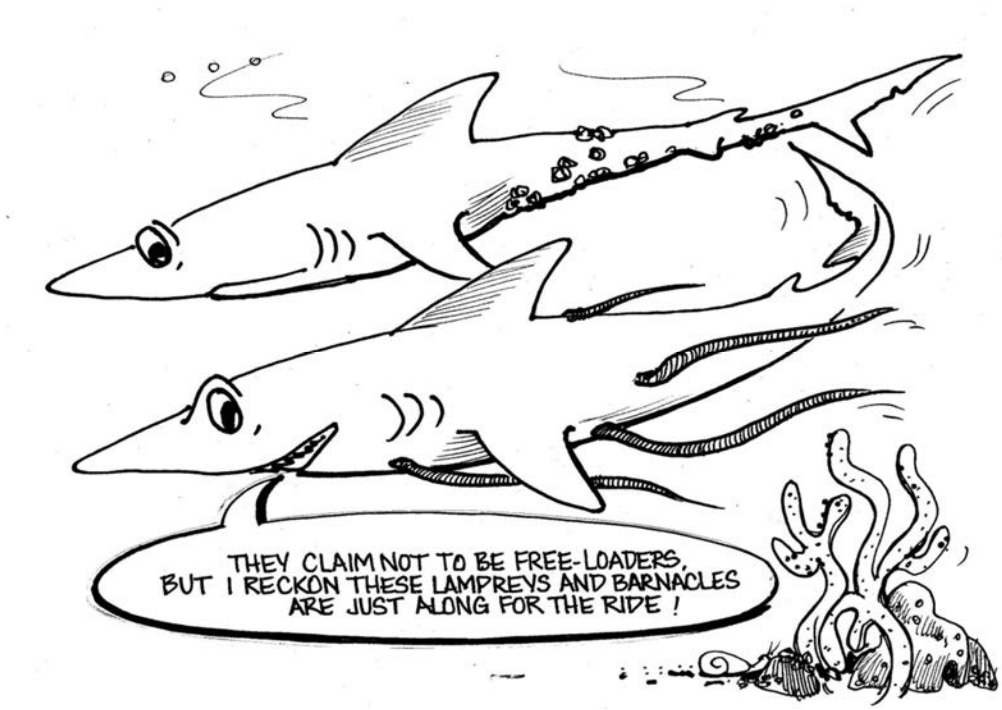
When there are specific items of R&D that the association has been able to win funding for, and when an extra cash contribution from, be it the CRC or the FRDC, some of that work will need to be done on farms, where the farm itself will get an early benefit. We'll only go to farms that are members, obviously. (3)

No, ***there's not a very strong divide there between benefits for members and non-members, because non-members obviously benefit from those things as well.*** *[Interviewer: So you can't quarantine the benefits?] No, the only one is the yearly conference, really, which non-members can still pay to go to, I think, at a higher rate. (3)*

There's nothing specific for members that non-members don't benefit from as well. They may have to look at areas where the members can benefit and non-members are excluded.

Members and non-members [are beneficiaries], because we're a peak body for the fishing industry, which is members and non-members. But also, there are very few people in [the State] who aren't either a member directly or indirectly. I'd say 95% of Fishers are either members or have a connection to a member. (4)

[Interviewer: the question arises, if I'm paying a considerable amount of money to the government through my GVP and then I have to pay $220 as a member, I might say…] I don't need to be a member! It is a really valid question. (4)



Non-members also benefit. *I suppose it's just most efficient. People would want what went through. It's sort of out of our control if the Fisheries make a decision; it goes through to the whole fishery, not what we've put up or another association has put up. (6)*

The thing is non-members get the advantage of that as well, and that's really the big thing. ***There's nothing specific for members that they get that non-members don't benefit from as well.*** *So I think that's probably an area that [the peak body], if it wants to show members value for money,* ***they may have to look at areas where the members can benefit and non-members are excluded.*** *(7)*

It's a bit like being in a union isn't it. I mean unless you've got a specific issue that you need help with, really you're just getting the same benefits that everyone else is getting and non-members are getting as well. (7)

What happens if I'm a member? I get the same benefit as if I'm not a member. So why am I going to spend money? I'm an idiot if I spend money on it.

If there was training or something, or maybe a website that had a special section just for members, I would utilise that; that would be my preferred method to go on a website and see what the latest news is for your membership number. And that may be something that's fairly effective as a service because only members would be able to have that access. So not the website generally, but to the special member's section. That would at least be a fairly basic way of having a benefit to members and non-members don't get that. (7)

For too long, it's just been a case of 'it should be right, they'll do something'. 'Somebody will go to a meeting; I don't need to go along'. Even when you've put somebody on the spot trying to get them to attend meetings to put their hand in their pocket, whatever it is and they go 'no, no, somebody else will do it'. It's so wrong and the reason is there's no accountability. ***What happens if I'm a member? I get the same benefit as if I'm not a member. So why am I going to spend money? I'm an idiot if I spend money on it. Don't think there's any difference at all really.*** *(8)*

They need to find value with their membership and we still have not addressed that issue. (8)

'It's okay to say this comes from a MSC (Marine Stewardship Council environmentally certified) fishery' and I think we should be saying 'no, you have to be a member to say this stuff' [since it was the Association that fought to obtain this accreditation]. I think it's an important issue, one of the few things that we have that as an Association to hold as value to people. (8)

People are well aware there is no boundary and are saying 'well I'm not going to be a member because it's not worth my while. I think people understand there isn't a boundary. (8)

Obviously [named Port] is not a member. [Our association] will, on occasion, generate advice on management issues within the fishery. With the abolishment of FMCs and the removal of the extension service from the licence fee, they established the Primary Industries Funding Scheme (PIFS) levy, which is a voluntary levy to essentially provide a funding base to establish the extension service again across the fishery. There are licence holders from [named Port] (the non-member port) who pay the PIFS levy, so ***[our association] will actively make an effort to include those licence holders from [that named Port] who have paid the levy, in any issues related to management of the fishery.*** *(9)*

The non-members definitely get a free ride out of it. They gain just as much through not being members, yeah. *(9)*

As soon as the big issues disappear, they just let everybody else carry the can. So you probably won't get money out of them anyway. They'll always find an excuse why they shouldn't pay.

Benefits always accrue to non-members*. It's an interesting question. Even under the regulations for rock lobster established for the Primary Industries Funding Schemes (PIFS) Act, one of the requirements is that those who don't contribute via the levy or actively seek a refund are essentially excluded from receiving benefits from the service. That's very difficult to do* ***when you're working towards delivering benefits across essentially an industry, and a broad cross-section of the industry. When you do that, there are flow-on benefits to those who don't necessarily contribute. It's been an ongoing issue in the industry from forever.*** *(9)*

The ones that don't pay just do not like to put their money out of their pocket. They want the results, but as we get to Marine Parks, anything like that, the big issue that will crop up – but as *soon as the big issues disappear, they just let everybody else carry the can. So you probably won't get money out of them anyway. They'll always find an excuse why they shouldn't pay. (9)*

They [benefits] are exclusive to members, but there is a grandfather clause if you like. So someone that wants to come along and is thinking about joining and has a friend that's a member, is allowed to come on a first introductory trip. But after that, there's the clear expectation that they're either going to join or not come again. (11)

[Benefits are] only to members. [Interviewer: So if you want to bring along your brother-in-law who happened to be visiting from Canada?] He needs to join. The reason for that is that we have public liability insurance, which tells us they need to be members. That was one of the debates last year which became a bit heated. It resolved itself in the fact that two people from the mainland had to join the club before they could come away on one of the trips that they wanted to come away on. The $80 is neither here nor there. [Interviewer: But the reason for the inflexibility is the insurance?] That's right. (11)

Our organisation also runs a state and national tagging program, and to participate in this program, you have to be an [association] member. (12)

We also do daily media monitoring to keep our members up to date with what's going on. That's only available to members. Our AGM, our national forum, where we have really interesting keynote speakers, is also members only. (14)

There's no leakage with the marketing money; you have to be a member to access it, and the government accepts that because we represent 92% of production. In terms of the lobbying, the association lobbies on behalf of everyone – the entire industry and the country. We can't really be an advocate for aquaculture for half the country! (14)

If you're not a member you're not in the loop; you didn't find out what's going on.

I think that there are always going to be free riders. Any time you're doing national lobbying for aquaculture development, if there's a company that's not a member, they're benefiting from the association's efforts too. For example, we're not asking that the industry grow just for members, we're asking that the industry grows overall. (14)

[Interviewer: But you can quarantine the more tangible stuff.] And that's where if they can get some support on government programs like our export marketing; it's an enticement. It's one more good thing that they definitely can't get if they're not members. (14)

Some things we have been able to [quarantine to members only]. I remember one time in the mussel industry we needed some short term financial help in order to get efficient floats in. That was made available to the paid up members only, so if they weren't paid up they couldn't avail on this specific program that NAIA was able to avail of. There's education and training more of which we were doing, actually that's the third big role, advocacy, lobbying and training and that has changed the past three or four years as well within ANIA. And the training *assistance with that and the liaison with academic institutions or whatever for putting out this training course, then they were made available to members only. Of course, advocacy and public relations are for the entire industry. (15)*

If you're a member you get informed on what's going on. You get to know what's happening at Brussels before anybody else. If you're not a member you're not in the loop; you didn't find out what's going on. (16)

Being a member you'll get the benefits of your representation; if you're not don't come knocking on the door saying you have lost something. I think it's very clear cut, you're either a member or you're not; it's very clear cut. (16)

Well I would say non-members get a benefit cause discussions and deals secured through the NFFO attending meetings with governments, so somebody who does not pay does get the benefit of some of the deals that's been secured so they get the benefits. The only thing they don't get is they don't get their voice, like to put to the public, and they don't get like sort of the packages what we're getting, the flares, the lifejackets, the radios and that so the big benefit to our representation is meetings. (16)

You know there are some people who do sit on the sideline, knowing that they'll get most of the benefits of membership and not pay.

Of course those things that we negotiate we can't quarantine to only our members. I mean they do go out there to non-members as well, because as far as Government is concerned, it is for the industry. *So that's where the benefits back to members can be difficult sometimes and our current membership is around 75 % [of eligible producers].* ***You know there are some people who do sit on the sideline, knowing that they'll get most of the benefits of membership and not pay.*** *(17)*

I think it's all about us having to concentrate on the services we provide and the representative activities and we've brought in a number of consultants to look at and talk to growers about whether or not we're actually delivering what they're after. The other one is quarantining benefits to members where possible. It's not always possible. (17)

Well [in our region], we've got all growers bar one that are members. So everybody who grows [commodity] is a member of [our association] and trust me, the one that isn't, everybody knows about, because they free load off the others. (18)

We have over the years, managed to put in place that everything that we do regardless of whether information or productivity is only directly related to Canegrower members. But if we are negotiating a deal with the mill, for instance, Bundaberg Sugar, when they owned the mill, they decided that they would take over a million dollars away from the growers to compensate for the losses in the marketing. And they claimed it in such a way, and we went and batted for those growers. We negotiated an outcome, but the only way we could negotiate it is if it went to all growers, including non-members. So that's where the non-members do get some benefit – not that they appreciate it, I might add. (18)

We do have those couple of non-members that get some of the things that we're fighting hard for and the other growers are paying for. *(18)*

Benefits are just to members, but non-members have to pay. It is open to non-members but they have to pay to come. Members pay a membership fee. (19)

We do non-members that get some of the things that we're fighting hard for and the other growers are paying for.

We don't have a lot to give back directly as a product, so we need to make sure that that's really clear, and that anyone who's not contributing, remove them [from the member data-base]. I'm sure they could get access to it [information] via other means, but ***I think that we need to create value.*** *And we haven't done that, we haven't valued that exclusiveness. I think we do need to create something special, so that they feel like they're getting something more than their neighbour who just contributes when he chooses to. (20)*

We think, well if there are a few freeloaders, eventually they might get around to joining and we are there to benefit the whole of the industry rather than just our members. *(21)*

Non-members most likely could benefit; because we have field days and you don't have to be a member to be at a field day so we're into sharing the information, basically because ***it's all about survival of the industry****. [Interviewer: So you don't mind if there is a bit of a leakage to non-members?] Not really. Field-days are open to people (non-members) but sometimes that is used as a tool of building the membership. We've had people turn up, get benefit and I will make contact with them and chat with them to see if they're interested in becoming members of the association. I don't do the hard sell, but they've been treated well by members I guess, so lots of them feel obligated to join eventually. (22)*

(vi) Value chain membership

Associations exist to benefit their members. Most of the associations studied for this Report began as producer associations. Yet producers are but one part of a value chain. If the association and the industry it represents are successful, so too are other people and enterprises along the value-chain. Fuel suppliers, processors, transporters, and marketers are just some of the critical interdependent links. The success of the association and its members leads to the success of others in the value-chain. Conversely, a failure of any critical link in the value chain can be damaging to the association and its members. That failure of any one link in the value-chain may have been preventable if that link was inside the association rather than outside it.

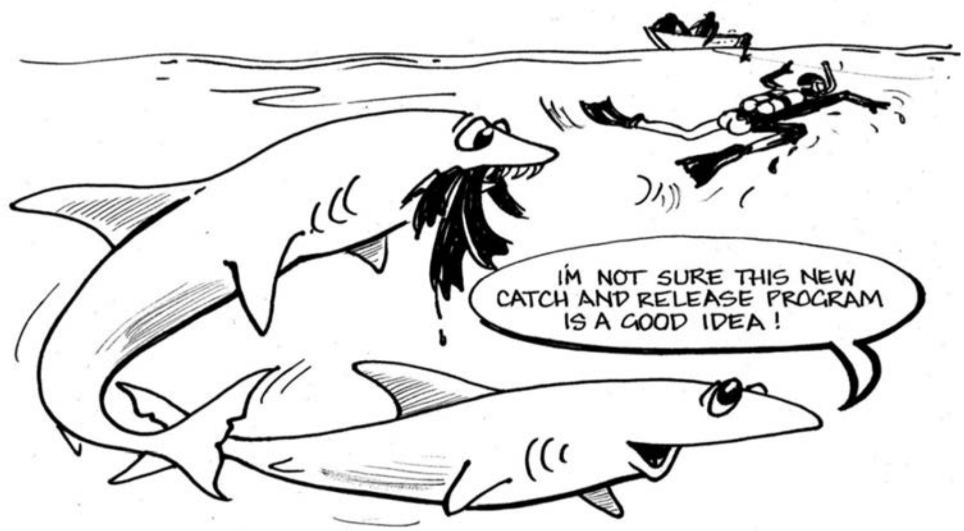
What level of direct membership would you allow? And it may be that the [association] has to go back and revisit that question. That is, if the representative bodies are going to struggle to be members of it, at what point should it actually open itself up and allow broader membership? When the [association] had some resources, a communications officer and it had *an Executive Officer, I actual suggested that they establish within the structure a [sector] suppliers' network. And that the [association] actually supported that network; they charged $400-500 for a supplier to be part of that network - providing a level of executive support for that network which was based on a suppliers' portal. Now that's been done by a number of organisations anyway. Value chain membership. (1)*

We should be having industry associations and include others in the supply chain.

The other suggestion might be to broaden the level [of membership] and promote the level of direct associate membership of the National Aquaculture Council but then identify the benefits that would have to be delivered for that. So you might charge $100-200 associate membership which may not give them voting rights but it is actually full of information; once again providing a similar level of support for the broader industry. (1)

[Interviewer: Do you have associate members?] No we don't. We're looking to change the structure of our Board and to have some involvement but more from the processing sector where our [commodity] end up as opposed to any service type industry. At present we aren't [vertically integrated] but would like to become so. (5)

One constitutional issue that is emerging is how we deal with associate members, and associated industries, because they're all important parts of the industry. How do we deal with other people in the supply chain? (21)



Some people see growers associations quite rightly just as representing growers, but my own personal view is that we should be having industry associations and include others in the supply chain. We're all linked in the same supply chain; we're all linked to each other. It's

> ***like a business; it's got a production factory, plus a marketing arm. We're a supply chain; we're not just producers. We are completely interdependent****. (21)*

An association that represents all of the links of a value-chain is obviously more complex than one comprised solely of producers. Determining the financial contribution of different value-chain elements is but one of the challenges. The diversity of membership both increases the association's strength (through providing both more and different inputs) and potentially weakens it (through reducing the homogeneity and commonality of interest).

> *We need some unified causes. So, a couple of years ago, we did a lot of men's health* stuff *and that got a lot of people involved. And 'sheep worms' is always a good topic for wool growers, but it's probably not much good for a grass grower. So we've just got to find more unified causes. I think it's only just going to be a matter of keeping doing things that are of interest to our members, which is more difficult than it was in the past. Because now we've really got wool, beef, stone fruit, – some people have got a couple of each [of these commodities]. So it's difficult to find common topics. (19)*

In partial summary: Associations are systems with an invisible non-physical boundary. That boundary is defined by who is 'in', and who is 'not in'. How membership is defined can be crucial to the strength of an association, including the contribution expected in exchange for membership. **Too many associations define membership by the payment of dues, while too few specify expectations of in-kind support at the time of joining**. Some associations have different classes of membership and different levels of voting over its affairs. Too few allow those contributing sweat equity to the industry to join or have some say in the associations. Protecting member benefits from non-members is an issue for some associations, though not others. How the industry or community itself is defined has implications for value-chain membership, and, in turn, for the clarity of its focus.

Recommendation 6:

g. Specify the value proposition to current and potential members gained in exchange for their membership fee.
h. Consider, at the time of a new member's joining, the in-kind expectations that the association has for its members in order to share the load commensurate with the benefits.
i. Examine their boundary strength with a view to ensuring benefits flowing to members cannot be accessed by non-members. There may, of course, be some associations that exist for the benefit of their industry as a whole. If that is their purpose, then this recommendation does not apply.
j. Consider the pros and cons of broadening the membership base to embrace the whole value-chain.
k. Consider having different classes of membership with different financial arrangements and different voting rights. Where this occurs, it is essential that

the definition of each category is clear and logical, and that the commensurate fee and voting rights are widely regarded by all categories of members as appropriate.

l. Recognise that the more the association diversifies the membership base, the more difficult it is to find commonality of purpose.

Too many associations define membership by the payment of dues, while too few specify expectations of in-kind support at the time of joining.

Case Study 5: Western Rock Lobster Council

The Western Rock Lobster Council (WRLC) is an association incorporated under Western Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. It was created in 2001 to represent the interests of the rock lobster fishery, a $300 million dollar a year industry that generates over 70% of all fishery income in Western Australia. Rock lobster is a highly regulated industry with a cap of 70,000 pots held by just over 600 licence holders. In terms of numbers of active participants, the industry is in gradual decline. There are presently 256 active operators, and very few new entrants, since the cost of entry is prohibitive. Half of the WRLC are investors, commonly licence holders who have retired from the industry and who lease out their pots to the remainder.

The fishery is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, the first fishery in the world to receive this international certification of sustainability.

The twelve Board members, all of whom are males, are elected from the three fishery zones, with six from C zone, and three from each of A and B zones Nominations are put forward by PFAs. The average age of the twelve Council members is in the 50's, and all are male. Elections are for two-year terms, split half, with annual elections for 50% of the Board members. When there are insufficient nominees for Board positions, they can be filled by invitation. This is the case with 25% of present Board membership. The Chair of the Board is elected annually by Board members, and the Secretarial and Treasury functions carried out by the Executive Officer who is a former Board member. There is a finance sub-committee. Other than that, most Directors have no specific subsidiary responsibilities.

All licence holders are automatically members of the WRLC. There is no separate membership fee. WRLC is funded from an access levy, based on GVP, paid to the WA Government who then distributes a small proportion of that fee back through Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) to the WRLC. The quantum of that funding and the manner in which it is distributed have been the cause of much angst. A recent agreement between WRLC, WAFIC and Government have now placed that funding on a more secure and reasonable footing. From the 1st July, WRLC will receive a guaranteed $220,000 per annum by which to conduct its operations. The Executive Officer is the only employee.

There is presently no other source of income for the WRLC. In the past it has managed to generate $40,000 in voluntary contributions to fight a marine park. With the recent changes in government policy, and following the abolition of Ministerial Advisory Councils, WRLC will receive a small amount of income, through WAFIC, to conduct ad hoc consultation with industry for Government. The Board is very conscious of its unhealthy dependency of its funding coming through Government and WAFIC and is presently contemplating a $2 per pot industry levy to give it some financial independence. With 70,000 licenced pots, that would provide WRLC with an extra $140,000 per annum.

WRLC have experienced a strained relationship with WAFIC which is the State peak commercial seafood body representing 40 separate fisheries of which rock lobster is by far the biggest. Yet presently WRLC has no direct representation on the WAFIC Board, though there are rock lobster fishermen on the WAFIC Board. From the 1st July, under new Government arrangement, and following representation from WRLC, the WRLC will have (a) official recognition as the spokesperson for the rock lobster industry, (b) a guaranteed level of funding, and (c) two members on the nine member WAFIC Board.

The Board meets six to eight times a year. Only recently has the Board approved sitting fees and travel costs for Directors. Prior to that, Directors were totally self-funded. There is still no reimbursement for accommodation, which in WA , due to the resources boom, is prohibitively expensive. There are no general meetings for members, other than the AGM, though there are periodic zonal meetings that are ad hoc and situation specific, often in reaction to various government proposals. Communication with members is via a relatively new interactive website. Engagement with this form of communication is not necessarily high, with many members not being sophisticated digital users. This is both a function of age and lack of adequate digital access. There are no hard-copy newsletters, with urgent ad hoc communiques being by email or SMS.

The fishery has, in the last three years, undergone enormous upheaval. Faced with the prospect of fishery collapse, regulation has switched from input controls (ie regulating season times) to output controls (ie regulating the quantum of catch per pot). Volumes of catch have shifted from a former maximum of 14,000 tonnes per annum to a fixed 5,500 tonnes per annum. With catches now based on price per kilogram, depending upon quality and demand, the industry now fishes to market price (advised by processors the day before catch) resulting in considerable efficiencies of operation and much higher quality product. Nevertheless, this shift has caused great challenges for the Board of WRLC and members to adjust to.

Guided by regulation and by funding, both of which are at the behest of Government, the WRLC Board struggles to perceive itself as an independent body. It is perceived by some to be solely responding to the whims of Government. Rather than operate in the long-term strategic interests of its members, it has, understandably, in the past five years been principally reactive.

There is a shared perception by interviewees that the Board needs to lift its level of professionalism. Due to competing time pressures and confidence in their skills, a number of the Board are less active and participative than others might wish.

Some are perceived to be serial committee people, often retired fishermen who wish to remain engaged with their industry. There is a perception that the Board lacks diversity. There are no independent directors, though attempts have been made in the past, and are planned again, to change the Constitution to enable this. Two recent appointees to the Board are younger fishermen, perceived by all to be a most welcome move. A mentoring scheme for potential directors is perceived to be a good idea.

The roles of Chair, Directors and Executive Officer are not defined. The EO has no KPI's to guide his actions. There is ambiguity between what the Board, the Chair and the Directors are responsible for, and what the EO is responsible for, leading to muddiness of responsibility. A recent Institute of Company Directors course may go some way to address this.

Board members are drawn from their respective zones. There is a struggle between the perception (by both ordinary WRLC members and elected Directors) that the Directors are there to 'represent' their zones as opposed to the perception that they are there to 'represent' the whole undifferentiated fishery. There is no code of conduct or other documentation to guide Directors in this and other sensitive areas. Nor is there any formal induction for incoming Directors.

Lobbying and political influence are the main activities of WRLC. Issues such as resource access, marine parks, licence fees, oil and gas industry right-of-passage, harbour and anchorage issue are the main demands, coupled with staying abreast of the science.

The WRLC is essentially closed to new members. Only MFL holders are presently members and they are aging. As they move to retirement, rather than sell their licences, they lease their pots out to other MFL holders or to non-licenced fishermen. Capping the units per licence may be one way of preventing further industry shrinkage and therefore protecting small fishing communities from social decline. There are no associate members of WRLC (though there could be). Four of the five processors are members since they are also MFL holders. In the past, there have been processors represented on the Board. Vertical integration has been considered as perhaps one way of bringing in fresh blood and to prevent the industry from slowly dying.

The WRLC has no succession planning. It has recently created, on the Board, a position of Vice President. There is no expectation that the incumbent in that role will be the next incoming President or Chair. One suggestion for leadership renewal is that responsibility for appropriately skilled representation lies with the PFAs who need to be thinking about nurturing successors to their presently elected representatives. Another suggestion is for WAFIC to develop a mentoring scheme for potential industry leaders.

The Board is not strategic in its approach, due in part to the immense challenges the industry has faced in the past three years and the limited experience and skills of Board members. Nor is the Board reflective of its own practice, and being effectively monocultural, it lacks opportunity to gain insight. Adoption of performance measurement, KPI's, and a continuous improvement philosophy can only be beneficial.

Major challenges ahead for WRLC include funding stability and independence, maintaining a viable, interested and proactive membership base, and professionalism of the Board.

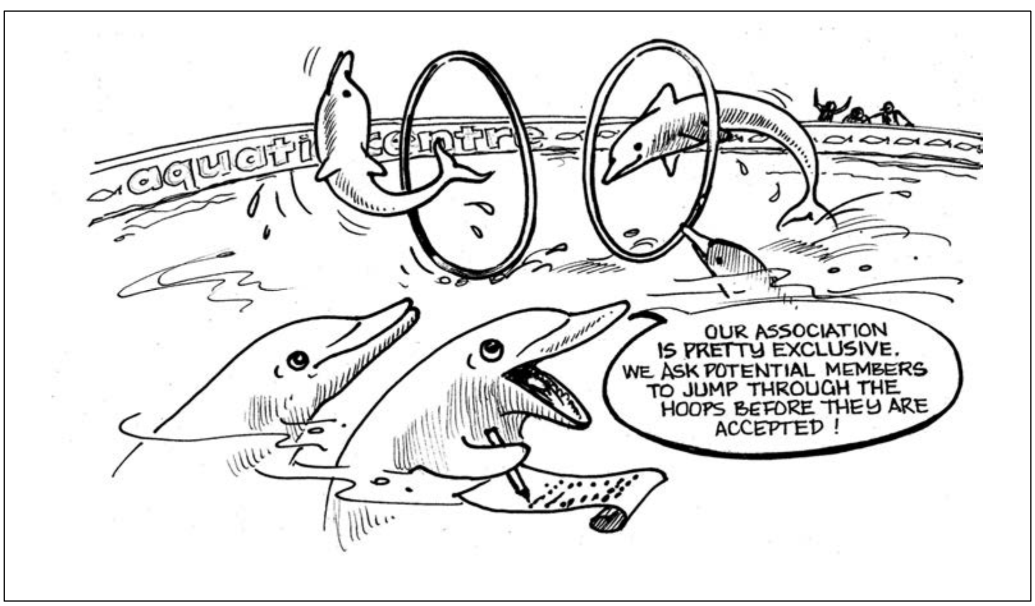
Capacity to absorb and lose association members

Is your association heavily dependent upon any particular person(s)? Can new members be absorbed without distraction?

Healthy associations are not 'closed'. That is, new members can join and old members leave without damaging the viability of the association. Therefore a healthy association is not dependent upon the contribution of any particular member, particularly its founder or leader. Similarly healthy peak bodies are not vulnerable to the loss of any particular member association, particularly one that represents a major slice of the industry.

A small number of associations in this study required that potential members apply to the Board for approval to join. One of those associations issued provisional membership only for the first twelve months. The literature on group membership suggests that a member's sense of belonging is greater when the group is more difficult to join and when there are substantial benefits that accrue to 'insiders', but not 'outsiders'. This has merit. An ideal position for a healthy association is that potential members seek to join, rather than be begged to join. The imposition of a joining hurdle, such as contributing on a sub-committee for the first 12 months, is likely to embed the new member's loyalty and commitment.

> ***I think it's probably in a very sticky situation to be honest.*** *(1)* [Comment on this association's dependency on a key person and on a very small fragile membership base.]
>
> *I think we're very vulnerable to membership loss and gain. Because it's not a huge association, any changes in the membership – increase or decrease – can have a resulting positive or negative influence. (2)*



***If we lost one of our major members it would impact quite a fair bit**. If we lost [commodity] which is by far the largest association in our industry, I'm sure it would certainly hurt [peak body's] ability to perform its function**. It would be devastating because you've got a major sector that we can no longer say that we represent.** Which is why the State Government funds the executive officer to make sure it's an effective [peak] organisation so that all sectors want to be at the table. (2)*

*In reality there is the [commodity A] farmers, the [commodity B] farmers; **basically the rest of the industry wouldn't come up to half of that.** (2)* [This comment pertains to an association where two members are larger than all remaining members combined]

*I'm not aware of significant amounts of people leaving. We do attract new members at a low rate, because **we have a fixed number of people in the industry**. So with the actual base, you generally have most people picked up in that membership structure. So it's a matter of redefining or attracting new associate members to spread your scope. (4)*

***The industry is shrinking in the amount of people actually working in the industry**, but the MFLs [managed fishing licences] are still the same existing ones. (5)* [Same number of licences held by fewer people.]

> ***There are some key members that we couldn't cope with losing and who the club really needs to keep it ticking along.***

I just know it's been a difficult two years to try and get everyone on board but that doesn't mean to say we're not tolerant of them choosing not to be on board. We're just trying to find ways of making them happy and having them in the club. (7)

The ability to hold your members and increase it? I reckon (i) have a big membership base for a start, and then (ii) progress with the goods and services that they provide for us. (9)

From my point of view as the Executive Officer, I'm not comfortable with members leaving. Obviously they leave for a reason, and I prefer to see that not happen. And as we covered, they are quite comfortable with any potential new membership that may arise. [Our association] will continue being proactive in trying to gain that seventh port back within its membership, but also within its existing membership, the tolerance to keep making those approaches wanes over time. (9)

***There are some key members that we couldn't cope with losing**. We're certainly able to cope with gaining more members, in terms of the friendliness of the structure and the capacity of people to introduce other people. So while it's capable of doing that, **there are critical people that we can't afford to lose, and who the club really needs to keep it ticking along**. (11)*

If for some reason one of the two major salmon growers, and there's only two of them, were to leave, that would have a major impact. People would question, 'what happened" and similarly in the mussel sector there are only a few of those as well and I would think that if one or more of those left the industry association would definitely have more questions directed at it. (15)

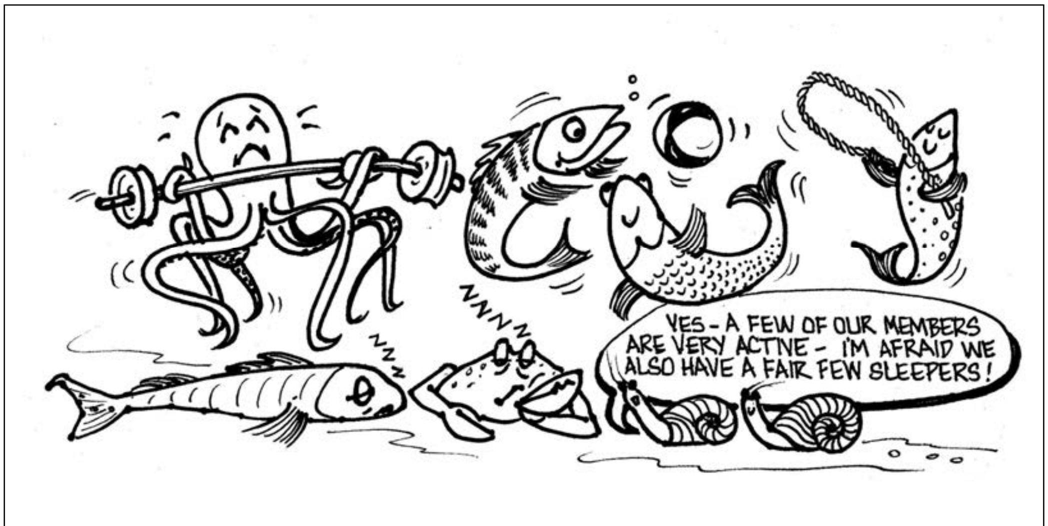
I would say that our doors are always open to new members. Most people that have commercial licences automatically say, 'You have to be a member of [our association].' Because you need your voice as a unified body when you go to Federal / Provincial government. And new associate members will join all the time. It's sort of a prerequisite here, if you want to do business in aquaculture, you become a member of [our association]. It's nothing written that you have to be, but we, as producers support people who are members of [the association]. (15)

It's not a large organisation. It's the main organisation for UK and Wales, but it has got a reduced membership through decommissioning and fisherman going out the industry, but it has absorbed that. It has a small amount of new ones come in. I would say it's not very comfortable about losing too many members; it doesn't want to be losing too many. (16)

Well, that's exactly the problem. ***There are probably 20 of us, but there were 40; that's the problem****. A couple of years ago, say 5 or 8 years ago, there were sort of 40-50 active members and say 20 sleepers. Now we have sort of 20 of those original members, 10 new members and 10 sleepers or something. (19)*

Well I wouldn't like us to lose any more members. I think we're starting to struggle. So I would say that that's a problem. Every time you take an enterprise member out, you take two people out plus their kids as well. *(19)*

It is not uncommon for an association to have a champion, a highly dedicated person, either voluntary or paid, who wields substantial influence, or who holds substantial knowledge. No matter how dedicated this person is, or how highly they are regarded, the strength of their contribution is also a weakness, due to the association's dependency upon this person. Healthy associations work to reduce or remove this dependency through rotation of responsibilities and through mentoring programs. Both need to be supported by systems that ensure communication, capture corporate knowledge and with well documented policies and procedures.



In peak bodies, their individual member associations are commonly represented by an executive officer, who builds up knowledge and establishes relationships. This creates a double vulnerability. To address it, each sector represented on the peak body could have a back-up who shadows them, and who is being groomed as their successor. This concept is related to the thought of compulsory turnover of Board members, fixed and limited terms, split-half elections, and a person in waiting for every position, as well as an immediate past elected person who acts as mentor and emergency back-up.]

The boundary strength mentioned in the previous section can have unintended negative consequences. Sometimes associations can become so 'clubby' that members hold this sense of belonging quite tightly; so much so that potential members are discouraged from joining. Or that there is a clique, an inner circle, which ensures any challenge to its power is kept at arm's length.

Our research involving twenty two industry associations, in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, found only one that was increasing its membership base. That association was in a recovery phase after almost total collapse. Some were stable. Most were in decline. The barriers to entry are (a) economic – too expensive, (b) social – there are alternate more attractive opportunities, and (c) perceptual – where potential members did not have sufficient faith in the association's capacity to add value to their enterprise. Whilst associations can do little to address barriers that are external to the association, they need to be alert to removing any barriers internal to the association.

In partial summary: Two potential risks for an association are (a) that it is damaged by the loss of a key person, and (b) that it is unsettled by the arrival of new people, who might bring in challenging ideas. Healthy associations acknowledge both and have processes in place to minimise both risks.

Recommendation 7:

a. Examine the contributions made, and the knowledge held, by particular members to ensure that the association does not have an avoidably high dependency upon any particular individual or individuals.
b. Where there is high dependency upon any one individual, then put in place a process whereby key responsibilities can be shared in order to grow knowledge in others. Some form of mentoring process might be required.
c. Examine the association's boundary strength to ensure that potential new members are aware of the association's existence, understand what is required of them for membership to be granted, and who feel welcomed and included when they meet the entry requirements.
d. Position the association as worth belonging to, with more benefits accruing through belonging than not belonging. Further, consider that applications for

membership require Board approval and that approval be conditional upon the potential member being willing to make an in-kind contribution within the first 12 months, in addition to their membership fee.

e. For potential members, the decision to join is tentative. Paying attention to the feelings and needs of potential members is an area where a little investment can reap large rewards.
f. Pay attention to the needs and feelings of current members. For present members, their level of engagement and commitment is variable. Less investment is needed to retain a current member than to recruit a new one. Yet paying attention to the feelings and needs of current members is often poorly done, and can generally be done better at very little cost.

Case Study 6: United Mid-West Fishers Association

United Mid West Fishers Association (UMWFA) is an association incorporated under Western Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. It commenced in 1992/93 as CAPR (Campaign Against Pot Reductions) and changed to its current name a few years later. The UMWFA has about 40 to 50 members and serves the interests of about 20 boats. Members range in age from 20's to 60's, with the average age being 45-50. The Executive Committee or Board comprises 10 elected members, with President, Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer being the three specific executive positions. Two Board members are women, and the average length of service of Board members is about 5 years, with a number having been there eight to ten years. The bulk of the association's work is carried out by the Secretary/Treasurer, the wife of a second generation fisherman.

The purpose of the association is basically to represent the interests of the members through Western Rock Lobster Council (WRLC) and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) – UMWFA is a member of both - to the Minister and the Fisheries Department. UMWFA also serves as a two way communication conduit between those two peak bodies and the UMWFA members. Activities of the UMWFA tend to be reactive rather than strategic.

Membership into the UMWFA is quite open. Anyone with an interest in the fishery is welcome to join. Full members, the majority of whom are owner-operators, pay $100 per annum whilst associate members, commonly deckies, pay $50. Both have equal voting rights.

There has been a steady decline in association membership. This decline has a number of causes: (i) a cap on the number of pots permitted in the industry, (ii) fewer boats servicing the industry, as a result of economies of scale and financial pressures, (iii) aging fisherman disengaging from their associations as they lease out their pots to the next generation of fishermen, who are forced therefore to operate on much smaller margins (and many fail), (iv) prohibitive entry costs, (v) a legislative shift in fishery management, resulting in a 50% reduction in the total catch, (vi) the shift from input management to output management has removed most of the contention from the industry, so people feel less need to be active members of associations, and (vii) alternative and more lucrative employment prospects in the resources industries. Due to all of the above factors, there are fewer and fewer younger people in the industry.

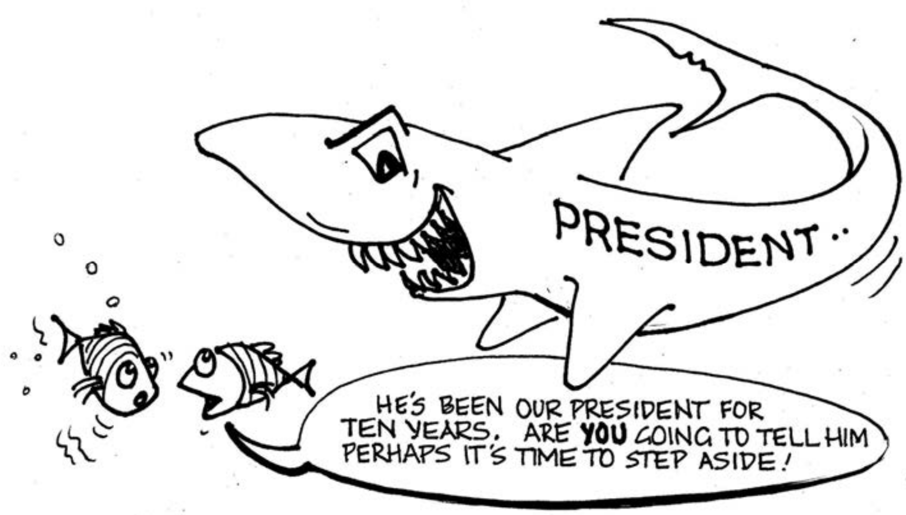
The UMWFA includes fishermen from several different zones. In the past, these zonal differences were the source of occasional tensions. These have now substantially disappeared with the introduction of catch quotas. That shift has also resulted in fishermen now fishing to a price, resulting, for some, in a better lifestyle, healthy financial returns, and substantially less time at sea. Nevertheless, the shift in fisheries management has paid a heavy toll. To help its members adjust, the UMWFA consulted with the New Zealand rock lobster fishery since they already had a very effective quota system and were able to pass on their experiences to UMWFA fishers.

All of the work of the UMWFA is carried out by volunteers. Therefore it has next to no costs, as well as having a healthy reserve of funds, the bulk of which are the residual of fighting funds established early in the life of the association. There are three or four Board meetings a year. They are not scheduled regularly; rather they are driven by emergent needs. There would be two or three general meetings a year, including the AGM and attendance is low unless the issue in contentious.

The UMWFA has no formal leadership succession planning, though it has had three changes of President in recent years, a move that is regarded as healthy. The current President is also one of the younger members. Past presidents stay engaged with the Board and continue to provide support. Apart from meetings, association business is largely conducted by email and phone, with the Secretary/Treasurer regarded as 'the best Secretary in the world'. It is an observation of this researcher that the vitality of the association is substantially due to the dedication of this person. The flip-side of this observation is that the association is also highly vulnerable, should they lose the services of this person. Some gradual sharing of the load might be a beneficial strategy for a variety of reasons.

With less political contention now in the industry, the primary task of the UMWFA is now shifting from political activism and lobbying – its founding cause – to greater levels of information provision and education. In considering the possibilities of fostering member-services, one possible area of interest would be for members to consider benchmarking their operational costs, with a view to increasing their bottom-line. Since it is in a very comfortable financial position, the association could consider how to actively use those funds for the greatest future benefit of members and their local industry.

Amalgamations are another option for strengthening the association. Like the UMWFA, other PFAs in the region are also struggling to hold membership. A united voice is a stronger voice, and many other benefits might be gained.



Freedom from cliques or sub-groups

Does your association have any cliques or sub-groups?

Cliques and sub-groups divide the energy of an association and can lead to distrust, unhappiness, and association disintegration. In fact the word *disintegration* means 'not integrated', so the existence of sub-groups, such as within an executive team, or Board, is potentially creating the seeds of disintegration. A sign of ill-health in an association is when any member of the association has a negative or non-constructive conversation about the association or its members to any other member, where certain other members are not privy to that conversation. Another sign is when a subgroup of association members is privy to information or benefits that are deliberately quarantined from other members. Or cliques can unconsciously arise when there in knowledge inequality between members.

One of the problems lies in language. Associations are sometimes referred to as 'representative bodies', with elected Board members seeing themselves as a 'representative' of the industry sector or geography that represented them. This mindset can result in internal tensions and disagreements in those associations that have a more overarching focus.

It's more like the people who are delegates for their respective zones jealously guarding their patch on behalf of those who elected them.

The [commodity] happens to be the one that we've got a major problem with. Instead of having one State association, they have regional associations and it's made that sector very ineffective when it comes to representing over-all issues, and it has been the case forever. Well they don't all agree. The group from [region A] won't agree with the group from [region B] and so when – they can't bring an issue to the table with one voice. (2)

The [Board] tries to operate from the perspective that we are trying to run as if we owned the whole fishery as one fishery, and that we encourage all our Board members to think along those lines, and to take off their zone hats when they're looking at the good of the industry. (5)

*[**Do the Board members see themselves as representing the whole of the industry or do they tend to see themselves representing the zone that elected them?] The zone that elected them.** That's where the governance comes in. (5)*

*So **it's more like the people who are delegates for their respective zones jealously guarding their patch on behalf of those who elected them**. From my perspective it comes back to a lack of experience by the people around the table in dealing with a broader range of issues, which can only be gained by being involved, as they are now, and learning from others. (5)*

I've just been ridiculed by the zone that I represent by not being hard lined enough on behalf of them. (5)

Within the industry, there's politics between the Ports, and also individuals. It's an issue, it's always been an issue, and it always will be an issue. But that doesn't stop the [the association] committee functioning, but they have to deal with those issues. ***I think the only thing you can do is be open and transparent in any processes that you run, and ensure that the association takes an objective point of view on issues and listens to and accommodates the feedback from its members.*** *As soon as you stop doing that, then I think you will find that you will have an issue. (9)*

We do have cliques and sub-groups, and we have people who fish together quite often outside the association. But it's not a serious clique like a political clique. (11)

I think people that come onto the [State peak body] Board or committee have to put away their club loyalties and put more to the association ahead. (12)

Salmon does cover something like 82% of the production value in Canada, so it's outnumbered the shell-fish guys and it's the big voice. But they get equal say around the table with the shellfish guys. (14)

I'm really conscious of that as a potential problem. Sometimes I find that that's one of my biggest time sinks, making sure that I do a lot of communication and outreach with members and Board members outside of Board meetings. But it is worth it. Because to have an effective Board meeting – and we do a lot of them on conference call – you can't do a lot of background discussion and checking to see how people are really feeling and how they are reacting to things. (14)

I also track my time – not down to the hour, but I can then provide the Board at the end of the year with: 'Here's the kind of things that we dealt with that impacted all of aquaculture. Here were the salmon issues. Here were the shellfish issues.' That helps when there are those kinds of questions. But it is a challenge for us, given the range of geography and species we have in Canada. (14)

The leadership of that committee, plus its members, needs to fully respect the views of everybody on that committee, rather than someone over-ride and control and dominate it.

[Interviewer: The impression I am drawing from the comments you're making is that your association membership is very cohesive? What do you attribute that to?] Probably because of the schools we have often are a school of hard knocks and we have to stick together sometimes in order to get action and then in order to overcome adversity. (15)

We're reasonably free from that. I mean, it's a scenario in most fishermen's organisation; there will always be little cliques and clubs. We consider ourselves fairly well balanced that any group never has the majority swing if you like, there's always a counter balance. (16)

Between you and me it does happen from time to time. It used to be stronger when it was a statutory organisation with all the rules and regulations. And the districts which could expand did so. And the ones that couldn't had the view that they were subsidising the ones who could.

So that's not as strong as it used to be, because generally any little subgroups are not based on regional differences, as they once were; its more on sort of personal issues. (17)

I think that you know, if you're in a committee situation, there needs to be that understanding that everyone doesn't always have the same opinion as you have. And I think ***the leadership of that committee, plus its members, needs to fully respect the views of everybody on that committee, rather than someone override and control and dominate it.*** *(18)*

The strategy to keep it less cliquey is to make sure we have good membership activity so that members remain engaged. (21)

In the present research we came across several associations that had a governing Board or Council and also had an inner Executive Committee, within which the CEO was permitted, under the association's rules, to carry the role of Secretary. In one of these associations, there is a Council, half of whose members are in the Executive, along with the CEO. The Executive meets more frequently than the Council and the minutes from the former are kept secret from the latter.

Later in this document, under the heading of 'Freshness of management and leadership', we describe a leadership style that is known as 'oligarchic'. The term refers to an association that is controlled by a leadership clique, restricting access to influence or scrutiny.

In partial summary: Political subgroups that are closed to others in the association and which share information and privileges within this select group and which is quarantined from other association members or which pursue agendas separate from the overall interests of the members are damaging to the health of an association.

Recommendation 8: Conduct an honest and frank self-assessment to ensure that there are no cliques in the executive or general membership, and, where there are, actively confront and discourage them.

Case Study 7: Wildcatch Fisheries South Australia

Wildcatch Fisheries SA (WFSA) is an association incorporated under South Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. WFSA was created in 2007 as the peak body for the State's wildcatch fishing sectors. It replaced two previously competing industry bodies that had divided the industry over a period of more than 10 years. While the merger brought most groups together, one significant industry sector, Rock Lobster, remains outside of WFSA. Member sectors include Abalone, Blue Crab, Charter, Inland Waters, Marine Scalefish, Prawn – Gulf St Vincent, Spencer Gulf & West Coast, Sardine, and SA WIN (Women's Industry Network) (generally comprised of the wives/partners of licence holders).

Of the 800 or so fishery licence holders in South Australia, the majority (over 500) are now members of WFSA. The age of the members reflects the profile of many primary industry groups with a large number of older participants. The average age is estimated to be in the order of 50 – 60 years, with individual fishers ages ranging from their 30's to 70's. The membership is predominately male.

Until recently, WFSA has suffered from limited funding. That lack of funding has substantially curtailed the association's capacity to employ a dedicated executive officer, leaving the work substantially to volunteers. This has led to WFSA being forced to reduce its service capacity. The Government of South Australia has recently moved to put industry associations on a more secure financial footing under a system known as the Primary Industries Funding Scheme (PIFS) or a similar agreed arrangement with the Department of Primary Industries and Resources – South Australia (PIRSA). In each case, the sector based arrangement provides for funds to be collected concurrently with or as part of the annual licence fee process. Receipt of funding is dependent upon each sector having a strategic plan which includes clear objectives and outputs. Payment of PIFS by individual licence holders is presently voluntary, though this may change if it becomes a sector based member fee as is proposed.

Any individual licence holder is automatically a member of WFSA if they are also a financial member of their sector association. Or where there is no relevant member sector, a licence holder can be a direct funder and member of WFSA. Since WFSA is a peak body, its funding otherwise comes from the member sector associations.

WFSA is presently governed by a Council of up to 13 members drawn from industry sectors and a Board comprised of three Councillors and up to three independent persons. This governance structure is presently being revised to allow for the inclusion of independent expertise as required. The new governance will be supported by an advisory group of executive officers drawn from member sector associations.

The fishing industry is under threat from State and Federal imposition of marine parks. These parks will lead to removal of fishing access rights. The industry's response to this threat has been the formation of the Marine Park Alliance, of which WFSA is a member. The battle to protect access rights has consumed a significant portion of the industry's energy and funds over the past 3-4 years.

While there have been benefits from this collective endeavour, it has also substantially detracted the WFSA from provision of some of its roles and services.

The limited capacity of WFSA has meant that it has not maintained effective communication with its members. Activities such as periodic regional / port visits, a regular newsletter and email networks have not been maintained in the past few years. These shortcomings need to be addressed to improve member support and recognition of WFSA. Outside of the activities associated with the marine park process, WFSA has been actively involved in marketing the industry and its role in society, and in lobbying and political representation. While those services are supported by the various sector member organisations, they are less visible and therefore not appreciated by many ordinary members.

There is considerable ambiguity about the respective roles of WFSA and the sector associations. This ambiguity has been of concern to several groups particularly the non member bodies. WFSA’s role in the National Seafood Industry Alliance (the national representative body) has gone largely unrecognised.

One of the challenges that a peak body such as WFSA faces is that government-supported programs and services flow equally to non-members as well as members. WFSA recognises that two of its challenges are (a) establishing a more secure funding base, and (b) communicating more effectively with its members. In order to raise its profile and deliver the services that its members expect, and to better represent the industry, WFSA needs increased capacity. Its status and recognition by Government as the industry peak body is conditional upon its having the confidence of its members.

The Executive have met irregularly in recent times, leading to uncertainty by some on the Council and Board as to the organisation’s activities and operations. There is no process whereby ordinary members can engage directly with management or Council members on issues of importance to them. While member associations can bring up issues for WFSA to address, there is seen to be a disconnect with the grassroots members / fishers. The WFSA AGM is the only opportunity for ordinary members to understand the activities of WFSA and that is poorly attended.

Since its creation, WFSA has successfully attracted new blood into the organisation and especially into its leadership group. This has brought much needed change to the association and the industry. There is a strong view that current resources within the leadership group are not being used effectively. Clearly defined roles for Council members would lead to greater sharing of responsibility.

While the rate of change of licences holders is relatively low, there is a growing group of second generation fishers who are coming through their family’s businesses that will provide a base for generational change. Therefore an important role for WFSA is to foster leadership succession for itself and its member associations. Another important task is to develop and promote a code of conduct for ordinary members going about their fishing business and for industry office bearers and leaders. Self-reflection and performance monitoring, neglected in the recent past, are other areas that will strengthen WFSA.

Code of conduct

Does your association have a code of conduct that guides people's behaviour?

How people are expected to behave

'Bad behaviour' is what occurs when someone else acts in a manner we disapprove off. That means that, sometimes, something that I do naturally can be irritating to others. Very rarely is 'bad behaviour' intended to annoy or offend others. Yet, we sometimes do not make explicit the behaviour that we collectively expect. A good example of a code of conduct is traffic regulations. Before being granted a driver's licence, a person has to demonstrate they understand the rules of behaviour required in exchange for the privilege of using the road.

An association often has similar guidelines as to what behaviours are expected of a member, in exchange for the benefits that membership confers. These behaviours commonly include (i) putting the interests of the association ahead of the interests of individual members, (ii) not doing anything that will be detrimental to the association or other members, and (iii) contribute to the ongoing viability of the association. Where such a code of behaviour is not present, or not widely publicised, tensions can arise.

> *No we don't have a code of conduct, though the rules of the association go well beyond a code of conduct. Yes, mediation is covered in the association rules. (1)*

> *I don't know if we have one, but it's certainly something we need to think about. (2)*

We have [association] shirts for each of the Board members, so we literally leave our [enterprise] shirts at the door.

> ***We make it entirely clear that if you are part of the Executive team or the R&D team that you leave the shirt of your business at the door prior to walking in.*** *So much so that we've even gone to the extent now of having a uniform.* ***We have [association] shirts for each of the Board members, so we literally leave our [enterprise] shirts at the door.*** *(3)*

> *There is a code of conduct, that was written back in the late 90's I think it was, commissioned and written mid to late 90's and that gave a whole direction of what we expected from the industry to be adhering to as far as operation of a farm etcetera. (3)*

> *Just because a member does something, doesn't mean that we won't go public and say, 'We don't agree with our member.' So it goes both ways: they can't expect backup if they undertake such activities. We've also had bad experiences with some of our Members having codes of conduct which have been the cause of friction in that sector. Industry does not have to be unanimous to be effective. (4)*

> *We've got specific policies about specific flash points such as communications, how we treat members and non-members, how we deal with the government. So some very specific issues*

that are flash points, which are mainly for the [association's] professional staff, though, so they can, because we've got professional staff here, handle those sorts of problems. Who do you contact next, what do you do, who do you send the papers to, etc.? It's a lot faster as well if the professional officers know what they should be doing and just start doing it. (4)

With our incoming Chairman or our last elected Chairman, he did produce a document for us to sign that we would obviously put aside all our independent views and act for the betterment for fishery as a whole. (5)

The Board can only function if it works as one, and you need to put your bias aside (your zonal stuff) especially if you've put your name in the hat to be on the Board. *(5)*

Put in place a clear code of conduct along with clear briefing as to how members should adhere to the code. *(5)*

There are no criteria to guide the discussion. *Yes, I do [think we should have a code of conduct]. If we can come up with one that's a standard one across industry that we could use as guidance – a one-page type thing, that'd be fine.* ***What I find in [this association], which is the organisation I'm a Director of now, is the lack of knowledge of the people around the table when it comes to discuss these issues. They don't know how to discuss them.*** *(5)*

When I joined the Board, I was sent an electronic version of the code of conduct.

Let's put it this way, when I joined the Board there was nothing put forward in front of me to say this is your code of behaviour. I suppose I should have gone and looked for something to see if something was there. My feeling was the place wasn't running that well. (7)

I think ***when someone joins they should as part of your membership package or to create a membership package.*** *You need to communicate. There is a severe lack of communication in the organisation. I remember the old days of the old organisation. You had your codes of conducts and you had all these things presented to you as a member or they were available at the organisation for you to find out about and I don't recall anything like that happening at [new peak body] at all. (7)*

We need an induction kit, specifically, particularly for new entrants*. In the past in this Fishery, a lot of the fishers are people that actually worked for other fishermen. I worked for my Grandfather previously. I did two years basic apprenticeship working for him, so* ***I understood my responsibility and role as a fisher.*** *But what's happening now is because of licences becoming so expensive and people becoming more business-orientated, it's a different kind of person that's now getting involved in the fishing industry. And so they're coming in what I would consider to be almost cold, so* ***you need some sort of a document that covers all aspects of fishing*** *from A to Z, whether it's membership, whether it's the role of the [association], whether it's marketing, whether it's ethics, best practice, all those sorts of things, the list is almost endless. That's where I think, we need our induction. (8)*

Have some sort of document as an introductory kit or whatever for new entrants that come into the fishery so that there are no excuses and no ignorance for doing things that they shouldn't. *Therefore, when they do get caught, they can't say they didn't know. It is better handled from within our association. Tell fishermen what is expected of them. (8)*

It's not just people; I don't think that the executives police enough*. I understand why, it's very difficult;* ***there are people in the fishery that do the wrong thing quite often****. It's very difficult to go 'you're doing the wrong thing' because how do you set yourself up to be judge, jury and executioner? (8)*

If we could have something like a code of practice for our delegates or members. Something written that they could actually understand. If you make it too rigorous about what they can't say and do, you're not going to get an open view from anybody. (9)

When I joined [the Board], I was sent an electronic version of the code of conduct. *(10)*

You've got a code of conduct in two ways I suppose about behaviour within the fishing club, and then behaviour as a recreational Fisherman. So following the rules that govern recreational fishing, so behaving legally and lawfully. Then within the club, for example, when juniors are along, making sure that people behave sensibly and act as role models etc. I think that's pretty well understood. (11)

According to our code of conduct, this is what all members agree that you should abide by.

A code of conduct is what you'd expect from a decent group of human beings in whatever you do, whether it's fishing or socially or whether it is business dealings with other people. It's integrity. You treat each other with respect; you treat the environment with respect, obey the laws of the land and just do what you should do. (11)

In all the time I've been in [association], we've only had one member breach that code of conduct. (12)

Only once one person got a letter about their behaviour at a meeting and there's a code that they followed. That's it. (12)

Ten years ago we established a charter, an industry charter and we invited people and companies to join the charter by the way of signing a charter document. *It's very adequate in defining how we should behave as an industry. I would have to say though, it's a document that has been observed in the – what's the word –* ***you sign it and then put it in the bottom drawer. So while we have got the correct documentation, we don't necessarily get people thinking about it all the time. In fact, we don't.*** *(13)*

We should; like most associations, not-for-profit groups, or any Board should have one. We've managed quite well, but that doesn't mean to say we shouldn't have something in writing that everyone accepts in advance of an issue. I think that's probably a weakness for us. (14)

It's hard for some companies, for example, to sit around the table as Board members (even though there may be 20 people around the table), they may be very large producers and so when they sit around the table, they want to wield a bit more power. Fortunately we have had good Board Chairmen and Board members sitting around the table to remind them and prevent this - You're there to represent the whole industry when you're on the Board. . (14)
And my advocacy, I had 16 straight years from its conception, and what's good for [me] is good for everybody else. I'm there to represent everybody, and have never changed. (15)

We have if you like, an established code of conduct, how we bring an issue forward and who decides what gets taken to the next level. (16)

***The code of conduct in itself is not something we just give them to sign; it is after the induction process. It is also after professional development and a pretty heavy session on corporate governance.** (17)*

You can feel very inadequate or in a position where you don't want to be telling people what to do. So if you've got something to refer back to and put yourself at arm's length from and say, 'According to our code of conduct, this is what all members agree you should abide by,' it's kind of like an excuse.

*When you get elected, you get a booklet with all that sort of information in it, with the Code of Conduct and things like that. **It's all very clear what's expected of you on corporate governance** and that sort of thing. (17)*

The code of conduct does talk about its good to disagree, good to sort of have different points of view. It also means that you've got to make a decision and stick with that decision once they all go home. (17)

*These are all your peers, and often (in my case) a lot of them were older than me and had had quite a lot of experience. So you can feel very inadequate or in a position where you don't want to be telling people what to do. So if you've got something to refer back to and put yourself at arm's length from and say, **'According to our code of conduct, this is what all members agree that you should abide by,'** it's kind of like an excuse. It helps, because these are your peers; it's difficult. So to try to make sure that you're not jeopardising any of those other working relationships or friendships, **if you have documents to refer back to, I think that would give the executive far more confidence to outline some of these things. It's no longer personal. You need to take that personal stuff out of it and just be as transparent as possible.** (20)*

*I do believe when we're merging with the horticultural association or when we turn into NT Farmers Association, there will be a code of conduct. There's got to be, to keep everything, how would you say, settled. **You got to have some rules; otherwise people just get carried away sometimes**. And, you know, it's a passionate thing, we're talking about everyone's livelihoods and that's where our passions do get high. (22)*

Another point of view is that behaviours can be over-codified, limiting people's capacity to respond creatively to whatever emerges.

Just because you have a code of conduct doesn't always mean it is always going to be followed, and who's going to police it and who's going to say 'okay you are going to get a slap on the wrist, you're not supposed to do this'. It still boils down to the individuals, even though something may be documented that this is our policy, I think in a voluntary member organisation that if you don't like it, you'll leave. But I think a lot of it boils down to the individuals. (15)

I am personally against too much compliance documentation, because it takes away people's capacity to think and to innovate. People rely on the plan that's says you have to do this, but what's written in the plan can't cover all situations. (21)

Codes of conduct are most effective when generated by the members. Here is one way this might be done. At one of the general meetings, or by questionnaire, ask what sort of behaviours would damage your industry, damage your association, or create difficulties within the operation of the Board? Have people generate a list of them, individually, and then send them all into the executive. These ideas are then pooled into a single document, looking for the ones that come up most often. Take the top ten adverse behaviours, those that could damage the industry, the association, or the Board. Then, for each one, build a rule that is the opposite of the undesired behaviour. Then publish it widely, and use it as a check-list for desired behaviours. (Refer also to 'Dealing with difficult people' – **Appendix 10**)

This is a small coastal fishery, and there are a lot of people always watching. You're never very far from another boat, or from a road, or from shacks or from tourists.

The whole intent of the Code of Conduct or the rules of behaviours is to de-personalise any function so that's it not dependent on the skill or personality or the charisma of anybody. It just becomes functional. It's no different to a drivers licence. You know when you drive on the road you don't care about the personalities of the other drivers; you just hope that they're operating under the same rules that you are.

Appendix 2 includes a Code of Conduct used by one of the larger associations that participated in this research. In that association, the Code of Conduct is fully explained as part of the induction process for each new Director, who, as part of that induction, personally signs off on this Code of Conduct.

Incentives not to misbehave

While it is desirable to specify the behaviours that associations expect of their Directors, their members and their staff, it is also desirable that there are incentives for people to comply and disincentives when they don't.

***We've got to increase the value of being a member, that way you then do have something that you can take away from them**. (8)*

Everyone has been in the fishery for more than ten years, and they have a reasonable comprehension of what is expected of them. Plus the fact that ***this is a small coastal fishery, and there are a lot of people always watching. You're never very far from another boat, or from a road, or from shacks or from tourists.*** *(8)*

There should be accountability and if somebody doesn't play the game they should be pulled over the coals for it and, if need be, get rid of them. (8)

They do [have a code of conduct]. There are different protocols in place for things like dealing with the media as well. Generally I think it works quite well. There is increased scrutiny on the fishery. With increased scrutiny comes increased media attention, etc. (9)

Although there's a code of conduct that we have that people work within, it really is a toothless tiger. I'd like to see a disciplinary clause *come in so that perhaps you could suggest to your member bodies that it may be time to change the representative if something came up. (10)*

We've had an issue with cliques in the group which we had to deal with. We did that by restructuring the category of membership. We did have to deal with some people that weren't necessarily abiding by the code of practice. None of these things are fun, which is why you need people on the Exec that will deal with them. So with all the fun comes the heartache. (11)

We have expelled members in the past due to dishonesty. Our organisation works on honesty. (12)

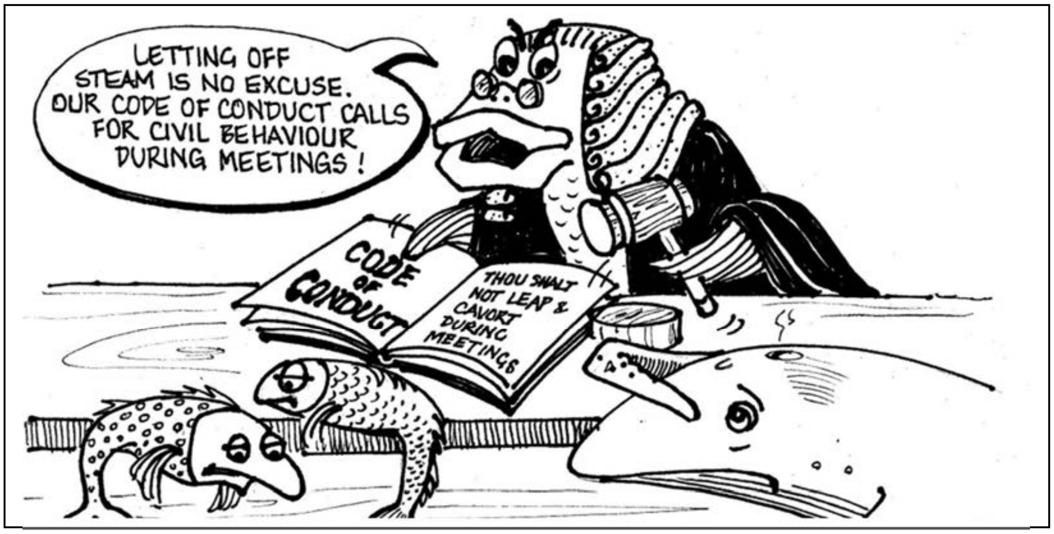
Adherence to our code of conduct may have actually increased little due to pressures on those who are non-compliant. We talked about name and shame, that's happened*. We've certainly got a more aggressive Ministry of Fisheries that is taking every opportunity of putting those miscreants' names out in front of everybody.* (13)

A rule is a rule is a rule, regardless of the person. A violation by the chair of an association should be treated no differently to that of any other member.

Disincentives should obviously be used very sparingly. Better to have a graded system such as (i) drawing the breach to a person's attention, (ii) drawing the second breach to a person's attention with a warning as to what the association could do if there is a third breach, (iii) act on the third breach. See 'Graded Interventions' in **Appendix 10** for details.

How an association might choose to act in relation to a breach should be stated in the code of conduct, an internally public document, so that all members are aware of expectations and consequences. If at all possible, never create a sanction for one specific individual at the time of a breach, since this unavoidably gives the impression of subjectivity and victimisation. It is far better to anticipate what breaches are possible and create sanctions for those in an objective fashion. A rule is a rule is a rule, regardless of the person. A violation by the chair of an association should be treated no differently to that of any other member.

Where ever there are sanctions, natural justice requires that there must also be an impartial process and avenue of appeal.



In partial summary: An association is like a group of musicians. Unguided, it just makes a lot of noise. Aided by a shared musical score and guided by a conductor, that noise become beautiful music. All that is required is to spell out what is expected of people so that their joint efforts are in harmony. And the music is even more enjoyable if the code of conduct is designed by the members themselves. Because then they understand and own it. Codes of conduct can be strengthened by having incentives to comply and disincentives not to. And natural justice requires that there must also be a process and avenue of appeal.

Recommendation 9:

a. Generate and publish widely a code of conduct expected of members. Consider developing a subsidiary code of conduct for the Councillors or Directors.
b. Manage behaviours against that code. See 'Graded Interventions' in **Appendix 10** for details.
c. Review the Code of Conduct annually, tweaking it if necessary. This not only ensures it continues to be relevant; it also means that it remains fresh in people's minds.

Case Study 8: Southern Fishermen's Association

Southern Fishermen's Association (SFA) is an association incorporated under South Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. It services the 30 fishermen who work the Coorong and the Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, an environmentally significant region at the mouth of Australia's largest river system, the Murray/Darling. The Association has been in existence since at least 1943 and possibly as early as the late 1930's. It has an elected executive group that meets at least quarterly to address issues associated with the Industry and Fishery. The Association meets with its members on an ad-hoc basis driven by need or issues at the time.

The Industry and Association is comprised of a range of ages from the 30's to the 70's, with the average being between their 40's and 50's. Given the small number of licences in the Fishery (36), and the low rate of transfers, there is considered to be limited capacity to have a steady turnover of active members, especially on the committee. The potential number of members has recently been affected by a decision of Government to re-allocate resource shares within the Fishery, this led to a quarter of licence holders (9) moving away and starting their own group.

There are in the order of 20+ of the potential members (27 licence holders) who are paid members of the Association. The constitution now provides for wives of licence holders to be full members to increase its capacity but this initiative has had limited success to date. Fishers actively involved in the Industry and Association have been members for over a decade and up to 40 years.

Recent changes in government policy have seen greater responsibility for a fishery handed back to the industry. This has created an upsurge of interest in the Association since it now potentially has greater influence on the financial interests of any fisher. The Government recognises the SFA as the representative body for the Fishery. As the recognised body, the SFA uses the annual licence fee process to obtain funding of over $55,000 from all licence holders to fund activities associated with management of the Fishery. The Association's costs in supporting that activity on behalf of all licence holders and funding for the peak body (Wildcatch Fisheries SA) are also funded through this mechanism. There is now some confusion over the status of fishers as members of the Association, even though a separate membership fee of $200 per annum is set and collected by the Association.

Almost all of the association's work is voluntary. Until the recent appointment of a part-time Executive Officer, it had no paid employees. The Executive Officer is funded as part of the Association's costs in supporting the management process, and small group of members have contributed a significant amount of time and product to promote and sustain their industry.

Communication within the Association is by email or a periodic newsletter, or the periodic but unscheduled meetings. The need for more frequent communication was raised several times. Limited computer literacy among members restricts the frequency and immediacy of communication.

Though it is a small association supporting a small fishery, it has had a strong lobbying and political influence. The Fishery also has built a high profile in the community. . SFA has been innovative and progressive. It developed the first environmental management plan in the Australian seafood industry. And it is only the second fishery in Australia to be accredited by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

The Association's constitution has clearly defined roles for its key positions. It also provides a mechanism for managing the behaviour of its members through a mediated process, although it has not been used. The need for formal training of industry leaders to improve management of issues of conflict was proposed.

While the Association has focussed on securing the Industry's position there is a view it should also focus on services that add value to an individual member's business.

Recent funding changes have provided for some increased capacity to deliver a range of benefits to licence holders and members. This has eased some of the burden on the small group of actively involved members. Some further funding to support marketing was considered to be of benefit to members.

The Association is actively involved in external communication through a long standing practice of ensuring their interests are being represented in a range of activities that directly and indirectly impact on the Industry. The need to create a greater interest in forums such as Seafood Directions was considered important in broadening the Association's engagement and capacity.

While the Association has had a strategic plan since 2003, which has been reviewed on several occasions, it is not used as a guiding document to assess performance and delivery of outcomes for the Association and its members.

Most of the challenges faced by the Industry have related to issues of resource sustainability, water management and access to resources. The constant focus on securing the present and future has seen some major initiatives such as MSC accreditation implemented, but little attention has been placed on supporting issues such as business performance and adopting technologies by the members.

The future is expected to bring increased demands to engage in representing the Industry to the community and governments at all levels to limit impacts on member's capacity to fish.

Capacity to deal with discontent and resolve conflict between members

Does your association have a conflict resolution protocol; is it known to members; and is it applied if necessary?

Storming, and its associated conflict, is likely to occur whenever there is a change in governance, such as new Board members or CEO.

Healthy associations experience conflict as does any other association. Healthy associations have processes for dealing with conflict in constructive ways that are open and respectful of all parties. Conflicts and disagreements that are acknowledged and addressed early are far less likely to cause substantial political damage to the association and its members.

Under the earlier section, 'Age of the Association', Tuckman's (1965) stages of a group's life were explained. The second of these, 'storming', occurs commonly early in an association's life, when people juggle for influence. This is a normal and necessary stage that should not be suppressed, even though it might seem threatening to the likely success of the group. Not to allow the 'storming' to occur out in the open only serves to drive it underground. Storming, and its associated conflict, is also likely to occur whenever there is a change in governance, such as new Board members or CEO. 'Storming' is what occurs as people try to establish a new 'pecking order' after the injection of one new person to a group, particularly a dominant or influential person.

Every decision that we make will be made to benefit the entire industry.

Where an association encourages conflict to remain on the surface, and has a transparent and equitable process that manages it, members are then free to fully engage in the issues of the association, issues that members are, and should be, passionate about.

One form of conflict that surfaced a number of times during this research is 'conflict of interest'. Potential for conflict of interest arises in an association when a licenced fisher or producer becomes an Exec Officer for the association. In the latter role, they are supposed to serve the interests of all members equally. Sometimes there is a perception that the Exec Officer puts personal interests (where he is in direct competition with fellow association members) ahead of the paid responsibility to care for the collective interests of all members. And in the absence of an effective code of conduct and an appropriate conflict resolution protocol, dissatisfied members will vote with their feet and disengage.

> *We do have a process for dealing with conflict. To tell you the truth, the conflict that we have is usually sorted out fairly quickly because the mantra of the association Board is that* ***every***

decision that we make will be made to benefit the entire industry. *So* ***if we make a decision that doesn't go to the favour of someone who gets upset, we make it quite clear that that's the decision that we'd make regardless of who it was.*** *(3)* [Note the value of making decisions on impersonal principles.]

At a Board level, we need to declare conflict of interest*, so we do have a procedure that we have to apply in terms of announcing what is a conflict of interest, and we wouldn't be present in the Boardroom if in fact it was seen that there was a conflict of interest. (4)*

I suppose under the current system you're there representing the whole fishery, so, if there is a conflict of interest, ***you probably push your own interests a bit.*** *(4)*

If there's not a degree of conflict, something's wrong! No conflict, no passion means we're doing something which no one really cares about.

If we have two different members coming to [State peak body] with a different position, the general policy that is followed is that both positions will be conveyed. *We don't take a decision in respect of any one view.* ***So as [State peak body] is the formal consultation body in respect of issues, from the Government's perspective, if two different licence holders / members have a view, then we are obliged to put both views forward****. (4)*

If there's not a degree of conflict, something's wrong! No conflict, no passion means we're doing something which no one really cares about. *(4)*

But the good thing is, fishermen being fishermen, they'll say their piece, they'll get hot under the collar and five minutes later, the guy that they were arguing with, they'll have a beer with and forget about it*. (6)*

Because we still live in a democratic society, if a certain member has an axe to grind, you say, 'Righto, move a motion, ***get a show of hands and have a vote on it****.' And if it doesn't get the votes, it gets put on the backburner. That's how we resolve most issues. (6)*

Perhaps people not knowing where to go for conflict resolution may be something that is a problem. ***They need to know that there's a process for dealing with dispute resolution so that they can utilise it rather than just going 'I don't like what's happening' or leaving*** *or whatever. (7)*

Well I think ***everyone has sort of been tip toeing around it a little bit and therefore there hasn't been massive amounts of conflict*** *and those that haven't been happy has just moved on so they've made their statement in a different way. So it's still this transition from the old to the new and meeting people's needs I suppose. (7)*

[Researcher's note: The previous quote illustrates behaviour that is normal early in the life of a group, the 'forming' stage, characterised by politeness and avoidance of difficult issues. Refer back to 'Age of the association' and Tuckman (1965).]

There is a format for deciding on how issues should be looked at and that should settle most of the disputes. (7)

***Maybe employ a mediator or an outside person in times when these things happen**. (9)*

All I know is that if we have disagreements or arguments or opposite opinions, you just work your way through it. ***And everybody's got to have a view. That's why you live in Australia. You've got to be willing to listen to the opposite people's views****. And at the moment they're not. They've just sort of got a fixed view. When it's time for the young ones to take over, it will change. (9)*

It's a recent thing. I think now with the establishment of the Management Advisory Committee in terms of resolving – and I don't think it's disputes, I think it's resolving differences of opinion or position, e.g. between ports – it's places [our association] again in a much more objective position on those sometimes contentious issues like TAC (and different ports do have different positions). It almost puts [our association] in the position where they're able to provide feedback across the coast to the MAC on issues like that. ***They don't necessarily have to seek a consensus industry point of view if there isn't one. (9)***

If you've got a problem, don't let it boil up or fester underneath and become a boil; just talk about it.

But in terms of a person who cheats, you know like at a [fishing] convention [a competition], it becomes then very, very tricky. A person that has weighed in a frozen fish are found by the Fisheries Department to be a frozen fish and they said they caught it ten minutes before, and they hold six Australian records and then their lawyer threaten them [the association] if they lost the record and things like that. So they're a little bit frightened of threats. (12)

The dispute resolution process has improved because we've realised how to behave in future. (13)

Change is always a little bit unsettling and change could and should actually promote discussion and some of that discussion normally is negative. *I think that we need to complete the re-structuring process as quickly as possible so that there's finality to it because* ***once there is finality you're going to get the opportunity for everyone to settle down and get back to business.*** *(13)* [Illustrating a desire to move from the more turbulent 'forming' stage to the more settled 'performing' stage, as described earlier under 'Age of the Association'.]

*When we have conflicts in our association, they tend to be very big ones. It could be, for example, the aquaculture industry in conflict with the rock lobster industry or the inshore industry over space. They're very big conflicts and we've had difficulty with that exact conflict over the last four or five years. I think we're getting it better resolved now but certainly there has been a decline. So it's not just a fight between a couple of members; it's of considerable magnitude involving a whole lot of people****. I think the only way to improve it is to have a clear passage to go down, so if you do have a dispute of some magnitude, it allows for mediation and some kind of resolution of it. We haven't got that.*** *(13)*

They've actually put together some legislation around an arbitration process. (13)

So when there is conflict between Board members, for example, [our CEO] has been very good at diffusing those. [Interviewer: So the resolution is based on the skill of an individual rather than a policy that's depersonalised?] Yeah, and these are all great suggestions. (14)

I would say that a code of conduct and conflict resolution should also be in writing, and we don't have it. (14)

[Interviewer: I was thinking of the number of associations versus corporates in the membership, compared to the composition of the Board. I imagine there's potential there for friction or discomfort. Some of the bigger corporates that have much greater singularity of focus might out-muscle some of some of the smaller member associations in terms of their influence.] Right, and so much depends on personalities. Sometimes we've had problems with the odd company wanting to have greater control, but now that we have more members, one company has less ability to do that. (14)

All of our directors have done negotiation skills training and other director courses.

Yes, we do have a conflict resolution protocol. Everyone within [the association] knows it. It should be on the website. It's always been there, and if we have a conflict then the Board – like, if I have a big issue with one of my mussel reps and is voiced, and we dismiss ourselves from a vote, it's discussed, then they come back and their decision is final. So there's a fairly good working relationship with everybody there, and everyone knows you can't cross the line. (15)

If there is a conflict between myself being a representative of the mussels and this other person, then it's totally reviewed. Any propriety information is not disclosed to me – I don't want it. It's none of my business. But if it's a general shift forward in the mussel industry, then the Board will vote on it. We will set up a meeting of all mussel growers if it's relevant and required so that everyone's aware of the issue, then it goes back to NAIA and we try to resolve it amongst itself. If it can't be resolved, the Board of Directors will have a vote on it and then approach government and say 'We're not happy with the direction this one person has taken, and that it's not going to foster the industry. Here's what other members of the industry feel it should be.' It seems like we always come in the middle somewhere. It's fair and transparent. The mussel industry in [named location] is very small compared to the membership. And everybody knows that there are no secrets. (15)

Well we describe ourselves as a very healthy association; so the number of conflicts reflects a healthy association. We try with the process of arbitration between different groups and where we have issues with a group or individual. Things get resolved a lot quicker now. (16)

Because there have been more disputes, we have put more effort into it. At the same time there is the realisation among different groups of fishermen there has to be give and take; it can't be all their way. They are having to be more realistic. (16)

I think the biggest problem is cohesion; trying to keep the club together as a group. One big issue is the fact that different classes may have had the same issue but it affects different groups of fisherman differently. So it is difficult to form a policy that relates to all the groups. Some groups may be disadvantaged by that policy so there's a lot of conflict between larger vessels and smaller vessels at the moment, which there always is in every port. It would be difficult to find areas [to the advantage] of the smaller vessels against the larger vessels. Sometimes some fishermen don't like it and won't accept it. You have to have a thousand solutions to one problem; you only have to pick a solution and go for it. (16)

With respect to improved dispute resolution, again ***all of our directors have done negotiation skills training and other director courses and we have specific training and updates at each of the quarterly Board meetings in the professional development area.*** *(17)*

We do have some healthy disagreement from time to time on significant issues. We probably don't have a formal mechanism but an informal mechanism that you can air your grievances and people will listen to it and ***once the majority have made a decision then you've got to get on and accept that****. If you can't accept the majority view, you just keep your mouth shut and get on with things. (17)*

The people on my committee are all big growers – we produce 40 % of the cane supply. So we're commercial growers, as well as members, and ***I think the professionalism tends to be our conflict resolution. We're professional on the committee and respectful.*** *(18)*

Openness. I wrote 'openness' which must have been the first thing that came to mind. ***If you've got a problem, don't let it boil up or fester underneath and become a boil on top; just talk about it****. I think that might be the same with everything in life. (19)*

Whispering behind doors is always bad news. Chinese whispers end up with total misunderstandings and serious, serious problems. ***If you've got a problem bring it out into the open; otherwise it will never get dealt with.*** *(21)*

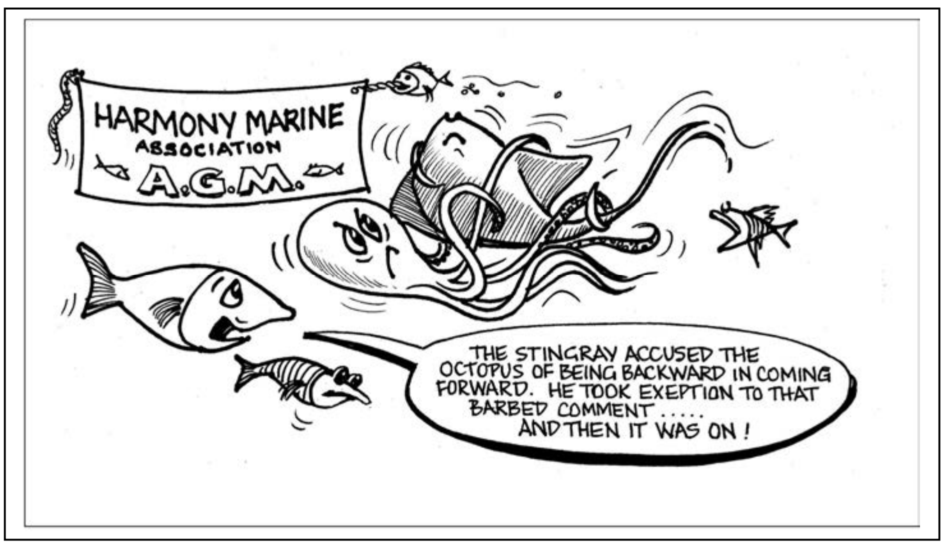
Conflict has come up before my time and it was quite ugly and from memory no one knew how to handle it. *[Interviewer: Would it be useful to have a process if it came up again?] It would certainly be useful and now that you've flagged it, it's another thing to maybe think about. (22)*

One issue that came to the researchers' attention towards the end of the research is the absence of appropriate mechanisms for dealing with a grievance. Grievances can occur between members, between a member and their association, or even between associations. Whilst the present chapter has focussed largely on conflicts between members, and for these, a conflict resolution may be appropriate, there appears to be an absence of mechanisms for dealing with a grievance between an ordinary member and the Executive, or even between associations. There is a total absence, if you like, of a Court of Higher appeal. In this absence, disgruntled members disengage, and associations waste valuable emotional resources in disagreement. Later in this document is a case study on the Seafood National Peak Body, a fictitious organisation, yet one that is sorely needed. Primarily concerned with industry unity and collective health, the SNPB could provide the essential dispassionate and professional avenue through which conflicts and grievances could be objectively handled.

In partial summary: Conflict in associations is healthy. It is only through conflict, no matter how robust or how mild, that members of a social group establish a 'pecking order'. It is also commonly the way that people express their passions. So it should not be suppressed. Yet, unless managed under an impersonal and equitable process, it can be destructive.

Recommendation 10:

a. Recognise that conflict is normal and that it should not be discouraged.
b. Develop a graded conflict resolution protocol and make its existence known to members.
c. Encourage the use of this protocol early, as soon as a dispute or conflict becomes apparent. See 'Conflict Resolution Protocol' in **Appendix 3** for details.
d. Create a third-party grievance mechanism and 'court of appeal' aimed at constructively resolving disputes and reducing the inevitable disunity that occurs in its absence.



Case Study 9: South East Professional Fishermen's Association

The South East Professional Fishermen's Association (SEPFA) is an association incorporated under South Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. The Association serves the interests of the licence holders in the South Australian Southern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery. The Fishery has 180 licence holders principally operated as small family businesses.

Interviewees have been involved in their industry for between 7 – 35 years and having been involved with SEPFA for between 4 and 23 years. The average age of association members is 40 - 50, ranging from 25 to their 70's. Members are almost entirely male.

The Association currently represents six (6) of the seven (7) fishing port associations in the Fishery. It serves the collective interests of all licence holders in the Fishery in areas of resource management. SEPFA has been in existence for approximately 40 years. Members meet regularly over the fishing season to deal with a range of fishery and other issues affecting the rights and interests of the industry.

SEPFA represents about 80% or about 140 of the total number of licence holders. Of those, about 30 licence holders are presently active in supporting the Association principally though their port associations. The association would like to draw back to it the one non- member port group to strengthen the Industry. Most members have little involvement beyond attending port meetings throughout the season.

SEPFA it is funded by an annual fee from each subsidiary association. The fee has been up to $1500 per port association, and is renegotiated annually. It also receives a portion from an industry levy administered under the Primary Industries Funding Scheme (PIFS). The PIFS levy is voluntary and supports management, research and development activities for the industry. This levy is based on the catch entitlements of each individual fisher and supports activities more broadly directed at fishery management rather than those related to the association. On occasions SEPFA has sought from members voluntary contributions to respond to specific issues and challenges beyond those normally faced. There is a view that a compulsory funding mechanism would be more appropriate.

The SEPFA charter, whilst appropriate, is not widely understood by the members. Most members understand the roles of key office holders.

Membership of SEPFA is clearly defined and understood. Non-members presently benefit from some SEPFA activities. SEPFA activities directed at lobbying, representation and management input directly benefit all licence holders regardless of membership. The major service provided by SEPFA on behalf of its members is 'representation'. It had developed its own system whereby members can insure their boats, giving them substantial savings. It is also an active support of charities and events in its region, bringing substantial kudos to the industry and its members.

Membership strength is limited due to the presence of a sub-group within the industry which led to one port group breaking away. This has had only a limited impact on SEPFA's capacity. The association's membership has varied over time. In recent years the management group have brought about changes, including improved resourcing, that have refreshed the organisation.

There is a perception that a code of conduct for the association and its members would be beneficial. This would provide a mechanism for effectively dealing with internal conflict.

SEPFA is perceived as a very effective association that actively serves the interests of its members and the industry. The energy and efforts of its Board and its Executive Officer (its sole employee) are widely appreciated. Its lobbying and political influence was rated highly given the changes that have occurred in recent years. The capacity to improve its performance was linked to funding and the ability to obtain extra resources as needed. There is a desire to expand the range of goods and services SEPFA provides, particularly those that can be quarantined for members only.

Decision making within SEPFA is very open, given its port membership structure. SEPFA's executive comprising representation from each member port meets regularly throughout the fishing season and seven to ten times a year. These meetings are often run in conjunction with meetings of the subsidiary port groups. Members have ample opportunity to directly contribute to debate and policy development within the Industry.

Within the annual election cycle, there is sufficient capacity to drive change should the members wish. Greater engagement by new or younger members would be desirable. The demands of the association fall too heavily on the present leadership.

The rock lobster fishery is structured into a hierarchy of local, regional, state and national groups with clear boundaries. Beyond that, within the broader seafood industry, the boundaries and responsibilities of the various groups are ambiguous and not understood by ordinary members. Some rationalisation and education could be beneficial.

SEPFA is considered to be an effective body given the level of resourcing. SEPFA has very effective engagement with a range of external groups and the media. Its internal communication systems including port meetings and email network are well regarded. It does not presently use the web for communication purposes. Nor does it monitor or measure its performance particularly well, and would benefit from systems of continuous improvement.

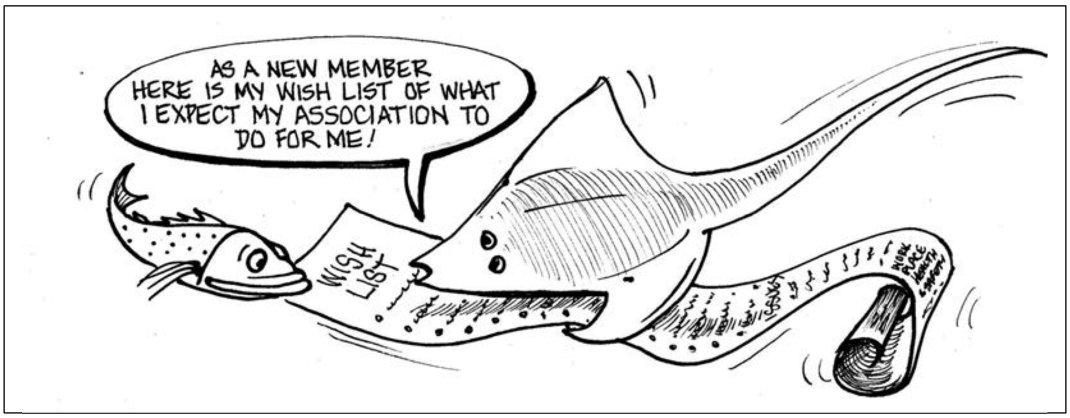
There is little recognition of the Association's role in supporting new skills and technologies for its members. The Industry has initiated improved catch reporting systems and is now trialling new "I-pad" based technology for data collection and management.

The Association has been challenged by issues of maintaining access and rights over recent years and it is through the member base and the efforts of the executive group that these have been responded to effectively. Funding is a current and future challenge. So too are industry unity, internal communication, industry representation, association capacity, resource security, services and benefits and "new blood".

Goods, services, and benefits back to members

Does the association provide its members with the goods and services that they expect?

People form an association because it gives them a collective benefit or a level of influence beyond that which they might have as individuals. The collective benefit might be solely social. More likely, the collective influence might be in regard to regulation, to markets, to political influence, or to goods and services. Further, since circumstances are seldom static, the goods, services or benefits that members expect are themselves dynamic, in a constant state of flux. Further they may not be realistic. So associations have an educative function, informing their members what can and cannot be done. Healthy associations are constantly asking their members for guidance on the benefits they most need their association to deliver for them. They also ask potential members what benefits the association might provide that would entice them to join. And, by maintaining close communication between the association and its members, the expectations remain grounded and realistic.



General member expectations

Member satisfaction and continued engagement with and support of the association depend upon the association delivering on the members' expectations. Sometimes those expectations are diverse, sometimes they are unrealistic, sometimes they are misplaced, and sometimes they are just unknown. Not knowing what your members' expectations are is akin to driving a motor vehicle blindfold. It is very likely to have some undesired consequences. What members care most about is whether the association is providing back to the member a level of value greater than the member's contribution.

> *What the members expect, and unfortunately of course – just the whole irony – if you're going great, the industry is just ticking along, you don't do as much, and everyone's happy. It really is interesting. Then when things are going bad, they say, 'What are you doing for me, and why isn't it going good?' (3)*

I don't know if you know Fishermen, but they're very naïve sometimes; and what they expect and what is reality are often miles apart. (5)

If there were a crisis, then the members would look to the organisation.

If there were a crisis situation when the members pretty much would then look to the organisation to start to understand what it's there for, its function and the roles of those involved. Without that, they seem to display rather a lot of apathy towards it. *(7)* [The apathy represents the vacuum in services and benefits back to members when there is not an external crisis.]

[To improve member services] I think it's a question across a range of associations as well. It's around ***identifying the level of investment and resources that they want to dedicate and fund to deal with issues, increase delivery****. Then an increased delivery of benefits; is it going to be proportionate to the increased investment in resources? Do they establish an office in the southeast? Do they take on an admin person? Do they continue to build the capacity of the association, and will that deliver a proportionate increase in benefits to members? I think those discussions have been had over time, and will continue to be had, or do they continue to manage it with the level of resources that they've invested currently, and are they happy to then try and build over time (to a smaller degree) the level of benefit coming back to members. (9)*

I don't believe that members know what to expect. And I don't think that we know what they really want. *(10)*

I think it was much easier 20 years ago where you'd say, 'You join up, you pay this money, you get your insurance with your membership, you get your trips, you also get discounts at shops,' all the different things that everybody's tried, but the way things are and the economy these days, nobody's got any time. You just can't do all those things. (11)

I think it's more than adequate now, because it's just aimed at being families, and people who want to go and fish together and enjoy each other's company, rather than have a structured political / strategic direction. (11)

There are no goods and services that I class as supplied. We're a fishing club association, we don't supply them with anything, I don't think. (12)

They're not worried about the cost of membership; they're worried about the value that they get from their membership.

I think people have got to see a benefit in the association before they're prepared to put more money in it. So I ***think it's very important that any association in the seafood industry is able to demonstrate that they are enhancing the interests of the members that form the association. It's about demonstrating benefit, isn't it? If you can demonstrate benefit, you will increase your membership.*** *(13)*

I think there's quite a list of things that members say they get value from. And I think that outside, the non-members have seen that, which I think has helped to increase our numbers. (14)

Natural disaster brings other challenges to our members, such as their revenue stream and therefore they tend to looks at us a bit more critically, as to ***whether they're getting value for money****. So it's a constant battle and I think* ***what actually happens is we actually lift the hurdle level ourselves and therefore there's a higher expectation from members****. (17)*

Keep talking to your members, find out what your members value because our recent survey of members it came back a resounding – ***they're not worried about the cost of membership; they're worried about the value that they get from their membership.*** *(17)*

[Interviewer: one of the things that has amazed me and you're association may be the only exception, where you actually say to members this is the value proposition you are getting for your money because most associations just say 'give us your money and we will try and do something for you' without spelling out precisely, there's no contractual relationship between the members and the association whereas you at least moved into the direction to say 'well this is what you get for your money'.] (15)

I think ***the committee and the management need to be approachable by the members; they need to be available when members need them****, whether it's in office hours or out of, and I think there needs to be total transparency as to what's going on. (18)*

We need to have feedback from the members on what they would like. Otherwise, the executive is charged with the job of just doing things better, which isn't clear enough.

We have a lot of one on one contact with the growers *as we've got the ability to be able to do that.* ***We're in the media all the time****, being seemed to be at the forefront of things and that's the main two ways that we're showing value for their money I guess. (18)*

Unifying causes. ***We need some unifying causes****. So, a couple of years ago, we did a lot of men's health stuff and that got a lot of people involved. And 'sheep worms' is always a good topic for wool growers, but it's probably not much good for a grass grower. So* ***we've just got to find more unifying causes.*** *I think it's only just going to be a matter of keeping doing things that are of interest to our members, which is more difficult than it was in the past. Because now we've really got wool, beef, stone fruit, – some people have got a couple of each [of these commodities]. So it's difficult to find common topics. When the president organised men's health, we had 60-80 people turned up. Whereas we would have a futures trader there or something like that and might only get 10 people. I think its partially agricultural woes.* (19) [Note that by broadening the membership base, you reduce the likelihood of finding issues of common interest]

I suppose we've shaped ourselves over the years by people coming in and doing different things, but really, it needs to be redefined. ***We need to have feedback from the members on what they would like. Otherwise, the executive is charged with the job of just doing things better, which isn't clear enough.*** *(20)*

Representation

The most common expectation of members is that their association will 'represent' them. To 'represent' means to act on behalf of' individual or collective members. Members seek this service from the association when they believe they do not have sufficient clout alone. In this sense the association is very much a 'union' for its members. An association's legitimacy to act as a spokesperson for its members is enhanced, the larger the percentage of the eligible potential member base the association claims to have.

> ***The major service is representing individual member's concerns**. So, for example, if one farmer had problems with the [government agency] concerning discharge. This is one member in a particular fishery or a particular industry; [peak body] would go into bat for them effectively and try to help sort it out with the relevant Government Department to try and find – to basically represent their interests and try to solve the problem. That would be the principle one. We also quite often will fight bad publicity. **If sometimes you see articles in papers or issues of bad publicity then we'll go into bat to try and to sort those sorts of things out.** We meet with the politicians regularly to try and project and inform of them of our industry, so public awareness because there's a lot of misinformation. (2)*

An association's legitimacy to act as a spokesperson for its members is enhanced, the larger the percentage of the eligible potential member base the association claims to have.

> *We're quite restricted. The services, obviously representation. That's our business. And I think **we provide high-quality representational services, but once again, at a peak body level.** So there may be times where individual members would prefer we were more aggressive with their sectoral interests that we may not find are appropriate for a peak body interests. (4)*

> *[State peak body] a number of years ago classified its activities into three sets of issues. So at the core are the **services which are funded from the money government gives us, which are basically peak body and representational in nature.** Then outside that **core are things that we believe are high priority for industry, but we're not being funded, so we either have to fund it from industry or other sources**. And the final area are **those activities which are not necessarily high priority** for [State peak body], but are consistent with our direction, **and other people are prepared to fund them**. Research goes into the second category. If we can't get money for the category two issues, then some of them just won't be done, or we'll do them at a very low level, because we're not going to divert the money that people give us compulsorily for representation to chase research projects. You've got to find another way of doing so. (4)*

> ***Well, 60% [of what we do] is still resource access / resource allocation, property rights, marine parks**. There's a lot of ongoing stuff – Fishers needing help with relations and dealing with the Department. That's general representational stuff, you know, licences cancelled for the wrong reasons or having problems with communications between Environment and Fisheries departments. (4)*

Probably just trying to get our point across. The ***only real service I suppose is having a major voice going through to the next level.*** *(6)*

Currently at the moment it's more of ***a coordination role****. Almost like* ***a "go to" point for information in the clearinghouse.*** *I think as approaching Government and other departments as a single entity, single voice. Not only at the State level but then at the National level as well; which is another thing not well understood. (7)*

I think political influence and that ability to have your voice heard at a higher level would be what people would value. Whether they're getting it is another thing. (7)

There's this constant bloody need to be at this meeting or that meeting or some other bloody meeting and most recently with the marine park thing. What an outcome that is; and ***how much time and effort has been put in on behalf of fishermen and they'd have no idea of it. They don't see any value in that. Without doing this stuff, we don't even exist. But the members don't see the value in relation to a membership fee.*** *Do you know what I mean? (8)*

The expectation of people, fishermen, is that the association goes and talks to the Government. (8)

That's virtually what I want them to do, to be able to negotiate with government departments which are above my head*. Excellent representation and value for money because they don't pay a lot of money and I think that the service and the representation that we get representing us fisherman is excellent. There are numerous things where they seem to be all involved with different forms of government departments which we couldn't get to on our own. (9)*

As an organisation we have the ear of government and the department to express concern or gratitude for different things

[Interviewer: Do you have an arrangement whereby you get for example, as a member, discounts on fuel or insurance etc.?] Not that I know of. [Interviewer: So really it's mainly the representation?] Yes. (9)

Primarily it's services to members, and primarily it's representation of the interests of its membership across a whole range of fishery-related issues, whether it is fishery management, infrastructure, dealing with other service providers who service the industry on behalf of industry, insurances. It also facilitates service provision. It manages service providers as well, in terms of managing projects on behalf of the industry. But primarily it's that representative service. (9)

Representation. It's where most of the energy is invested, as well. ***Primarily it's there to ensure that the industry has a voice.*** *(9)*

We provide them an outlet to government. As an organisation we have the ear of government and the department to express concern or gratitude for different things. We also provide a newsletter to explain some issues. (10)

And in theory/practice, an association for somebody to bring issues to. But if you look back over the last three years, there have been a limited number of times people have actually brought an issue to the association, from a public perspective. In theory, the service offers a focal point for recreational Fishers to talk through. But because they don't have the ability to actually contribute per se and question etc., I don't believe that that's an adequate service that we provide. (10)

The organisation organises trips, and some of us play around in the political field – hence [peak body] – and sit on other organisational committees, but apart from that, we don't provide anything else. (11)

The main thing is the representation and the lobbying and those sorts of things, and that's what the members perceive of most value.

We also provide a process to lobby the government over fishing issues. We sit on the Board of [State peak body]; we have a class one membership there with representatives on that committee. So there's a direct line to government over fishing matters. (12)

The main one is advocacy on behalf of the entire industry – promoting for regulatory reform etc. And they do an excellent job of that. (14)

It's quite a large basket of things that we provide. Our subscriptions aren't particularly high but we will provide representation at a National and an International level. (16)

It depends on whether the members involved, some would put high priority on the work they get from the federation. Others would put a very high value on the political representation. So far I would say the political representation, the most important factor for me. (16)

The biggest single one is ***our contract negotiations with [processor] for the supply and payment of [commodity]; that is by far the biggest thing we do, because that comes back to how much the growers are paid****. If you're not a member, you have the opportunity to go and negotiate individually.* ***We have a collective bargaining system and that's the biggest single thing that we do****. Everything else is complimentary. (17)*

The main thing is the representation and the lobbying and those sorts of things, and that's what the members perceive of most value*. It's nice to have discounts and things like that but this is what they really concentrate on. (17)*

I'd say the negotiations with the [processor], because that's where your income is. ***And as long as the members think that you're providing value for them and improving their income, you'll get their support.*** *But if they perceive that you're not – because we are a union I suppose in many ways, it's like a union; if the members perceive you're not doing the job they'll kick you out and get someone who can do the job. Some days you're not going to be as successful as you'd like to be, and if you tell them well, we've worked at this and it hasn't worked out, general they'll accept that. (17)*

We do all the negotiations with the [processor]; we do all of their Government issues, to deal with their government commissions, government issues, have one-on-one contact with them, hold meetings with them. (18)

What they expect is just good representation, from a local level to our more State and national lobby groups. (20)

There is a caution that is warranted here. Implicit in the notion of 'representation' is that the association speaks with a single voice. There is sometimes an assumption that all members hold a single position on an issue, an assumption that may not hold true. So the question for the association in 'representing' its members is whether or not it puts up one view or multiple views. If the former, then a consequence may be that minority voices will disengage and be lost to the association.

We came across several cases in the wild-catch sector (which is commonly internally competitive), where the spokesperson for the association was perceived to be pushing a personal perspective, rather than representing the views of the broader membership.

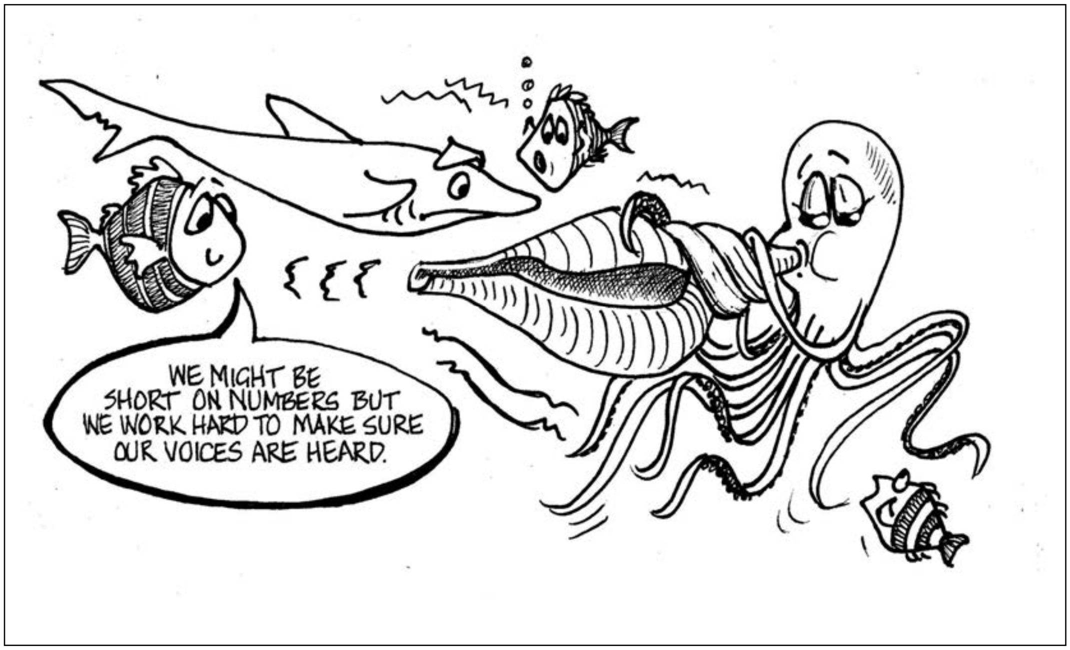
Other services

Apart from representation, there is a range of other membership services offered by associations. These include acting as a central agent, being an originator and source of services and events, acting as an information conduit, providing professional expertise including research and development, being a broker of various professional services, conducting training activities, arranging discounts on goods and services from suppliers, acting as a central benchmarking co-ordinator and arranging member social activities.

***[Our association] also has just recently taken on the responsibility for holding minor use permits for chemicals**. There was no other body capable of taking up the license so [our association] took it up because some of our members needed it, so we took it up for their behalf. We just got our first chemical registered and there are half a dozen other chemicals that we're looking at and at least three or four of those will definitely be held by [our association]. **A peak body representing multiple sectors holding the permits ensures that, when the permit is up for renewal, it gets renewed** as opposed to a sector holding that permit and not being able to afford to renew it. (2)*

***I've created a valuation model that I know some farms really got a lot out of. That basically is a model that tracks their own KPIs and P&Ls each year, and shows them where their gains are.** It's fairly simple but it works quite well. That was a direct thing back to the members. (3)*

*We're looking to report our evaluation model, **it's almost like a benchmarking thing** that helps the farms – spread-sheets etc. to help farms identify their trends and priorities. Each farm putting in their information, then that gave us a broad brush picture of what is going on in the industry. Each individual farm, they weren't identified, but each individual farm could look at* *the average and go "I'm over performing or under-performing and what do I need to do about it?" (3)* **[Researchers note: This particular association is the only one of the 23 in this study that offered benchmarking as a service to its members. Yet it is a member service concept that could be considered by almost all of the associations in this study.]**



Some time ago the association got hold of some funding, which obviously an individual farmer couldn't have done. And we got HACCP – ***we got every single member farm in Australia HACCP accredited.*** *It stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point. It's actually for your processing. So basically you do a HACCP program in your processing which runs, and it just checks everything of your system. And unless you've got HACCP accreditation, there are very, very few places you can sell your [commodity] to. The primary function is quality assurance, yes. Without it, you can't have it. So* ***every farm in Australia that was a member, through being a member was able to get accredited at a cost that was next to nothing, basically the cost of the lunch of the person that turned up, rather than thousands and thousands of dollars.*** *Non-members weren't involved, they can please themselves. If they did care, they were to do their own arrangements, and it's expensive. (3)*

We also provide a research and industry development program *body which [named person] manages. It is a research umbrella for research projects that quite a number of industry participants take advantage of. It is largely self-funded. (4)*

So ***our association now is probably a bit more of a proactive thing than what it was based on, it was a reactive beginning. The industry has gone to quota now and basically the fights been fought, and we're bucking over the scraps basically. So memberships over all the associations are really, really low now. There's nothing controversial, the upturn and the upheaval in the industry has happened now. We've probably changed a little tiny bit from a fighting organisation to an informative one now.*** *(6)* ***[This point talks to the possible service***

continuum for association. It is often an external threat that brings people together; it is internal goods and services that keep them together.]

*There is **a lot of discussion about value for money and whether groups should try and seek discounts at certain levels** and whether there simply has to be some service – something obtained from belonging to a group and providing critical mass. (7)*

Memberships over all the associations are really, really low now. There's nothing controversial, the upturn and the upheaval in the industry has happened now.

*I got a specific benefit being a member of a union, because they were able to advise me on a particular thing. And I think that's where some of the line gets blurred between an association and a peak body. I think [peak body] tries to stay out of specific individual issues and refer them back to the member association. **I think they have to be more clear – find out what the members want perhaps and see what is still in the realm of their association and what is in the capacity of [peak body] to offer.** Unfortunately you can't do away with the local associations and that's probably a bit of disconnect there between local associations and [peak body] because [peak body] is really a big oversight group doing some big picture stuff and unfortunately that just benefits everybody. So I think we need to work out what we can offer members [exclusively] as a peak body. If that means **having a lawyer on standby** or something. (7)*

*I think then it comes back to goods and services, that you're able to give benefits to members. **They've got to see the benefits of being involved with the organisation so that they will stay there and fund you.** (7)*

The fishermen are recognising that they need more information. So the more we give them, the more likely they feel that they need to be part of the association.

*Some of the things we've achieved are **the world's first environmental management plan for a whole of fishery.** This is a plan that's ongoing, it affects the stock, it affects the environment, it affects pollution; it covers all aspects of looking after our area, even to the point of putting restrictions on ourselves to make sure we're sustainable. Even to the point of banning a whole heap of nets that were targeting undersized Mulloway. And of course, the last and probably most important, **we received Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation which took at least ten years to achieve**, but through some very hard work by a few people, Lakes and Coorong have now achieved Marine Stewardship Council accreditation. (8)*

We don't supply any goods, but I would get 2-5 enquiries a week from fishermen about anything in the fishery: from transport to garages to computer websites to cost recovery to policies, anything**. It never used to be, but as time goes on, I ask them whether they are members of [the Association] and if they're not, I suggest to them that they should be members, and they'll probably get a lot more information. My approach to non-members has been, 'Just join up, it'll only cost you a couple of hundred bucks a year, and you'll have access to all this information, and I'll gladly help you.' And so a lot of the fishers like that approach. **The

fishermen are recognising that they need more information. So the more we give them, the more likely they feel that they need to be part of the association. *(8)*

They [the other members] really don't see the association having anything to sell; they don't see them able to contribute anything else along the way. I'm fairly different to that in that ***there's a hell of a range of things that the association could do. I heard about deals for waders and nets and those sorts of things****. Maybe you could even look into boats and motors and other things. Straight away you're getting offers with a 10 per cent discount without saying anything. If I can see that in my own business and there's 30 odd bloody fishermen in the association, I'd be thinking there's got to be some way of doing it. I personally went looking at the possibility of getting outboard motors for members immediately they said 'yeah sure, 10 per cent', 'no surely you can do better than that' and they ending up talking 15 per cent and I had done nothing except for saying 'surely you can do better than that'. Now, that indicated to me that* ***there's some fairly serious sort of savings that can be had. It's reasonable to think we could get a 10 cent fuel discounted if buying in bulk. Yep, we've got to work out how we're going to organise all of that. There's a huge amount of potential there.*** *(8)*

We've talked a bit about other ways that the association can ease the financial burden on members as well. So whether it's through things like insurances – e.g. and ***in the past [our association] was involved in establishing the [association] discretionary trust, which is essentially an industry self-managed insurance fund which is now broader than the southern zone for insurance of vessels, which at the time generated significant financial benefit to members.*** *So it does have the capacity to provide goods and services that they expect, and will provide financial benefit as well. (9)*

I also think that [our association] is pretty proactive from a community point of view on behalf of its members in terms of each year supporting various charities as well, on behalf of the fishery*. They're quite happy and active, and it's not just one all the time,* ***spreading benefits across a range of community charities and other relevant events in the southeast and limestone coast.*** *That from a whole-of-fishery point of view and whole-of-membership point of view delivers benefits as well. (9)*

> ***Our association is pretty proactive from a community point of view on behalf of its members in terms of each year supporting various charities***

I think it's remained relatively stable because (from being involved in a number of different industry associations) ***it's sometimes difficult from just dealing with the day-to-day issues that arise operationally for the association to then look at really building and adding value for members through additional opportunities and initiatives, and managing those on top of the core business*** *of the association, representing the interests of members. But I think it's an area that the association can improve in. (9)*

It also facilitates service provision. It manages service providers as well, in terms of managing projects on behalf of the industry. (9)

We do offer discounts at some of the stores. We have around 12 trips away each year that are heavily subsidised. We have a fully fitted-out camping trailer with everything for two or three families, it's also nearly free ($5 or something) for a family to take it. We provide insurances, visits. If they need something found for them, we can track it down, we make a point of that. (11)

Different clubs have a different bias – like one club is targeting tagging, it's a tagging club. They don't have regular meetings as such; it's all done over the internet. Other clubs have regular meetings and social gatherings once a month. Other clubs have their meetings on a regular basis, and club outings. So across the different clubs, there's quite a mixture of events. (12) [Note these clubs all fall under the State peak body]

***They provide all the new members with a lovely new pack of a little booklet on tagging and gear and [association] policies, then policies for fishing, you know when they go fishing; they provide a nice little pack, including the handbook**. (12)*

Younger members weren't interested in line class, as they were fishing for length only. So we've changed the record base now, to suit our younger members. (12)

They supply the [Association] handbook which includes all the fishing rules, which includes how to do your point scoring for your fish. They also supply records and badges that we can put on cars. They also send out notices about the whole of Australia, what do you call them, life buoys, they call them rings to save people, things like that they work on, they help fishermen generally and they also argue in parliament for the fishermen, recreational fishermen. (12)

I think they also have to just go ahead a little bit more with [the association], like fishing tournaments or conventions in [the State]. So all the services are quite adequate but they could add some more fishing conventions. So they could include their AGM with a convention or their committee meeting with a fishing outing. (12)

There is always going to be a need in any seafood related organisations to have good policy and science advice.

You need to promote the organisation's tournaments, and also to review who's actually eligible to participate. There would probably be greater interest if there were two divisions – members and non-members – so the non-members can see the benefits of membership. (12)

In years gone by, if you claim a national record, there was a fee associated with it. We have removed all fees relating to national claims. So we've given them more. They're getting more for their money now than they did ten years ago. (12)

We tried to organise some [State peak body discounts on purchasing] stuff, but we couldn't get it cheaper at State level, because national body was selling it. (12)

***The goods and services are policy, science, trade and communications**. (13)*

I think probably policy science and trade, [are most important] looking back. Looking forward, perhaps communications will be more important. (13)

One of the reasons why our membership has grown is that members and those outside of the association have been able to see the benefits of getting involved.

Policy advice, legal advice but not legal advice in terms of – just knowledge of the law as it relates to fishing. Communications, training, science, marketing – not marketing as in being marketers as ourselves, but certainly making people aware of trade related issues. [The most valued?] Policy and science. There is always going to be a need in any seafood related organisations to have good policy and science advice and they go hand in hand. (13)

I think that's one of the reasons why our membership has grown, is that members and those outside of the association have been able to see the benefits of getting involved. Some of them are tangible, for example, we provide our members with the opportunity of participating in a government-funded support program for export marketing. If they're involved in generic activities, they can get support. (14)

The other service that we provide is access to marketing monies. It's federal money matched with industry money to generic export marketing promotion. The program is currently under review, but for the past 5 years, overall funding for farmed seafood export market development has averaged 1M/year. (14)

We also do daily media monitoring to keep our members up to date with what's going on. That's only available to members. Our AGM is also members only. (14)

We also do daily media monitoring to keep our members up to date with what's going on.

If we had the resources, I think the association could look at group buying options, for example, purchasing packaging for the processing plants, or group insurance. Those types of member benefits that larger groups tend to be able to get. Those aren't our real priorities. A lot of the regional associations tend to have those programs in effect for their producers anyway. (14)

They do a lot of conflict resolution with government. They provide us with a lot of science staff, marine biology people mostly. And if there's something else that the government requires of us as operators, they do a lot of training for us and for our membership. (15)

We're still in a development stage and our regulatory agency is developing along with us as the industry has changed and grown. So I think there is still an important role that NAIA plays in lobbying for research and for regulations that are streamlined and are effective and yet focused. (15)

NFFO services provides a lot of actual work for vessels in the other industries like the cable industry, very tangible benefits and a lot of the members derive financial benefit from those services. On top of that, we help with the distribution every year in financial terms or it might *be in fishing gear or safety gear. So we will try to ensure that every member from the smallest to the largest gets a return on their investment if you like in a National organisation. (16)*

It doesn't matter how small a fishery is, the NFFO will look after it; they'll look even after one single fisherman who has got one niche market; if there's something affecting them, they will look after it. (16)

Well the services, the NFFO services are help and managing and tendering for guard ship work, and also get involved with helping for the fishing gear trials, and also are involved in the last two to three year, they've had monies available to supply all the fisherman with different packages each year, either an inshore kit consisting of flares and fire extinguisher, previous to that waterproof hand held radios and also personal life jackets for every member, every member of the organisation so there's been some good packages handed out which we weren't expecting. (16)

I was talking to our legal person this morning about a chemical drift issue where ***we provide free legal assistance to our members****. It can be things like that which is very reactive but* ***our other activity is training****, making sure of skills development, skill sets and competencies for our growers – use of chemicals, use of nutrients, minimisation or avoidance of environmental issues. So* ***we're developing best practice management for the growers****. (17)*

There's a sense that the members expectations leap frog our capacity and you keep on lifting capacity and therefore they keep on expecting more.

We very much concentrated on strategic issues, things that are going to have strategic value, biggest bang for your buck and whilst we do a lot of other things which are value add for the grower, we tend to look at what are the issues that are going to impact on most of our growers as far as their business going forward. So ***we try and deliver value for money and we try and match our services to member's needs.*** *(17)*

And that's another thing from the ordinary members' point of view; they perceive if they've got a problem or an issue or something like that, that [the association] can do something about it. [Interviewer: ***So there's a sense that the members expectations leap frog your capacity and you keep on lifting your capacity and therefore they keep on expecting more?] They do have high expectations, yeah.*** *I suppose you're probably chasing your tail to some degree in doing that, but that's probably no bad thing either. (17)*

Any professional resources that members require, the organisation can organise or lead them in the right direction.

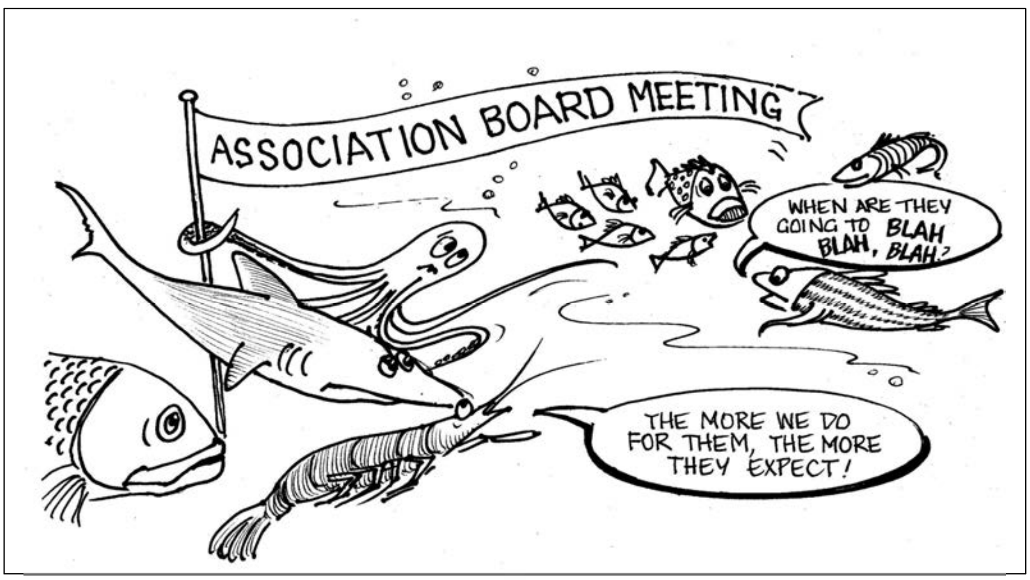
It's all about us having to concentrate on the services we provide and the representative activities and ***we've brought in a number of consultants to look at and talk to growers about whether or not we're actually delivering what they're after****. (17)*

We've got the union shopper, and there are benefits - like ***you can get discounts on cars*** *and things like that. (17)*

Well, we have a manager that's fulltime and she provides growers with anything to do with their [commodity] production areas, information. We assist them to find sources of whether it is ***legal advice – any professional resources that they require; the organisation can organise or lead them in the right direction.*** *We offer them incentives to increase productivity. We offer them communications. We* ***SMS our growers with information that they need to know****, whether it be about meetings or how much irrigation they should be putting on their paddocks. Yeah, it just goes on and on.* ***We basically fight for everything that gives the grower the ability to prosper.*** *I think it is that one-on-one service and the fact that we're there trying to get the best outcomes for them with all negotiations, whether it's Government negotiations or [processor] negotiations. (18)*

Well I don't know about the goods, we don't actually supply any goods. ***The services that we provide are mostly educational in the form of spreading information. - The social side of having a beer is also really important.*** *(19)*

The benefits are socialising, a form of socialising and networking. ***The services that are most valued by the members are definitely social and educational.*** *Even at our general meetings, there's always a barbeque lunch and there's always a few beers afterwards and then we have a Christmas meeting, where it's a big social event. (19)*



People get a pretty good service for what they pay for; ***they pay bugger all and they can get advice that might save them tens of thousands of dollars, in one phone call****. Not everyone uses that, of course, but the people that do use it get very good service. (22)*

So ***they get technical advice, they also get access to a network of information****. There's things* ***we act as a conduit for, information****, so if there's things happening through the Department or they also get field days organised for them. We actually replace a lot of the services that the Department used to provided, extension, advisory. (22)*

> *They pay bugger all and they can get advice that might save them tens of thousands of dollars, in one phone call.*

There's a real issue in Government taking resources out of agriculture and primary industry and then expecting us to do more and more but not understanding, not really understanding how serious their erosion of services and things are. And then what pressure that puts on a small association*. We are doing more and more; and, in fact, people ring me for information and I will say: 'Have you contacted the Department?' And they say: 'Oh, they've told me to ring you guys'. That's a real issue for us up here. (22)*

We want to provide a clear delineation in terms of benefits, in that when you're a member we want to link with agri business and maybe have a business card that ***when you shop at these places you get a members discount.*** *(22)*

Sometimes, even often, the association does not achieve what its members expect, even the executive members. The resultant frustration can lead people to question their continuing involvement.

We're just bumping our heads up against regulation and red tape and going nowhere and these sorts of – that's why I'm so active in these things. I want to contribute to try and resolve some of the issues and we just don't seem to be getting anywhere and it's very frustrating. Especially the last couple of times you come away thinking: 'Well what did we achieve from me being here for two days and being away from my business and flying down and everything?' We want some change to happen. ***You have to add value for the members*** *and we can sit around the table and talk until the cows come home, but if we don't change anything and show some positive results and generate that value well then you have to start questioning the value. Why am I contributing to this association or paying this membership if they're not doing anything for you and it's not from lack of trying, don't get me wrong. If we don't kick some goals in the next 12 months I don't know what it's going to do to the unity of the industry****. I know I will be frustrated with the process and really have to question my input into it****.* ***We can't' just keep talking the talk and not walking the walk.*** *(2)*

A lot of the time I've noticed in the last few years you try and organise things and get things happening, and everybody is excited. And then once you get it there and it's happening, then they don't participate. ***It's hard to get them to participate in things****. Everyone is time poor. This is just members. Actually it's probably in the last two years that this has been going on, and then,* ***when that happens, then you kind of lose interest and enthusiasm yourself.*** *(19)*

In partial summary: Members make a financial and sometimes in-kind contribution in order to receive perceived value. What members seem to value includes taking a collective voice to government, seeing their association in the media on their behalf, negotiations with processors and service providers in order to provide members with greater financial value, acting as a broker for goods and services, benchmarking between members, and being a direct provider of relevant information. Central to voluntary members continued involvement is their perception that value received is greater than input cost.

Recommendation 11:

a. 'Sell' to members the concept that the association is a natural extension of their business, seeking to provide benefits for each member that they cannot obtain alone.
b. When be providing 'representation', be sensitive to the likelihood of multiple opinions from members, and how best to honour all of those voices.
c. Survey, as part of an annual audit, all members to determine their priorities with respect to goods and services required, whether presently provided or not and their level of satisfaction with their association.
d. Survey, as part of an annual audit, potential members to determine (a) what goods or member services would need to be provided in order to entice them to join, and (b) what they would be prepared to contribute to the association, financially and in-kind, in order to obtain those benefits.

Case Study 10: Tasmanian Assoc. for Recreational Fishing

The Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc. (TARFish) is an association incorporated under Tasmanian legislation as a not-for-profit body.

What follows is an overview of TARFish as deduced from the comments of the interviewees and a review of the TARFish website. Those views are not necessarily consistent, and opinions differ.

The association was established in 2004 to be the 'fully independent peak body representing the interests of recreational marine fishers in Tasmania'. According to its website, its objectives are:

- Provide a forum for recreational fishers to raise relevant issues;
- Represent the interests of recreational marine fishers in communication with stakeholders;
- Communicate information to recreational marine fishers;
- Educate the community on environmental and recreational marine fishing issues;
- Promote the wise use and conservation of fish stocks and habitat, and
- Promote research into recreational marine fishing issues.

TARFish's major activities are: (a) the generation of a quarterly newsletter, the Bulletin, either emailed or posted to people on the 'associate member' data base, posted on the web, or distributed free through fishing-related organisations and retail outlets, (b) being present at and sometimes sponsoring fishing-related events, (c) lobbying government in the interests of its five member associations, each of which are recreational fishing associations, and (d) participating in a host of advisory Management Committees, committees of enquiry, expert panels, etc, all in support of the sustainability of safe recreational fishing. Its five founding and present members are Sea Charter Boat Operators of Tasmania (SCBOOT), Australian National Sportsfishing Association – Tasmania (ANSA), Tasmanian Game Fishing Association (TGFA), Australian Underwater Federation (AUF), and the Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA).

The Management Committee is comprised of 8 persons, all male. The composition of the Management Committee is an independent Chair (who holds a casting vote only), a member nominated by each of the five member associations, invited independent experts in marine matters, and representatives from Regional Representational Groups. The latter are twelve-month appointments. Other associate members can attend Management and Executive meetings by invitation, though this rarely happens. AGMs and Management Committee meetings are closed. Management Committee members reside in the Hobart region and attempts to broaden geographic representation have so far not been successful.

The TARFish Executive Committee is drawn from the Management Committee and comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. According to the association's rules, the CEO, who is the association's only employee, is also the Secretary. The Executive comprises four people, only two of whom are eligible to vote. Also according to the association's rules, the Executive Committee, which meets every six weeks, has power of veto over all association matters. The full Management Committee meets bi-monthly. It is not clear why there is an executive committee of four who are a subset of a management committee of eight. Decision-making in TARFish is seen as more centralised than desirable, falling short of the aspirations of the 'committee composition policy', as published on the TARFish website. There is a perception that the management of the association is 'comfortable' and could do with some invigoration and fresh ideas. There is a perception that the association would benefit from a clearer definition of roles of each of the Executive and Management Committee members, so people better understood their responsibilities. And there is a perception that a review of the association's system of governance and an independent evaluation would be appropriate.

The association did have a policy of limiting tenure to Management Committee positions to two years. However, the difficulty in finding fresh nominees, one that is shared by many voluntary associations, caused this policy to lapse. Because of the very small membership pool, and the time demands placed upon the willing few, there is little new blood in the association. Rotation of responsibilities and roles within the Management Committee has occurred. There is no leadership succession planning, and so leadership of the association is both stable and vulnerable. It is perceived that this absence of new blood can only be addressed by amending the Constitution to permit opening up of the decision processes to associate members, and also to people who represent different age groups, as a way of getting some younger ideas.

Under its Constitution, TARFish has only five members, each of which is an association and each represented on the Management Committee. Other associations may join if they meet certain eligibility criteria, pertaining to membership numbers. The membership fee is $250 per annum. Of the total membership of those five associations, their level of influence is not perceived to be equal. With only five members at present, the association is perceived to be very vulnerable to membership loss.

TARFish also has 'associate members', recreational fishers with no necessary particular associational affiliation. 'Associate membership' is free to the general public; any person is eligible to be on the associate membership list and receive the digital or posted newsletter. There is no annual membership renewal. Once entered, people remain on the data base. There is conjecture whether these people are actual 'members', given that they pay no membership fee and have no voting rights; nor are they perceived to have any substantial say in the conduct of the association. There are 2,250 'associate members' on the data base, representing the 125,000 recreational fishers in Tasmania. In recent years there has been a substantial effort to increase the number of 'associate members'.

Several interviewees suggested charging associate members a membership fee as a means of moving towards a degree of financial independence.

Management Committee members acknowledge lack of clarity as to whether TARFish is a peak body or a representative body, and what its actual role should be in either case. It purports to be a peak body for five member associations, and it also purports to be the representative body for all of its associate 'members' and for all marine recreational fishers in Tasmania. Yet, it also acknowledges that its existence and role is not yet widely known among recreational fishers.

TARFish is perceived to be very professionally run. People are able to express themselves freely and there is no negativity or distrust. Its CEO is highly respected and is perceived to work hard to promote the association. His role in the association is pivotal. The April edition of the TARFish Bulletin calls for expression of interests for associate member representatives to be on its committee of management, extending a now twelve month opening up of the association to the formal voice of its associate members.

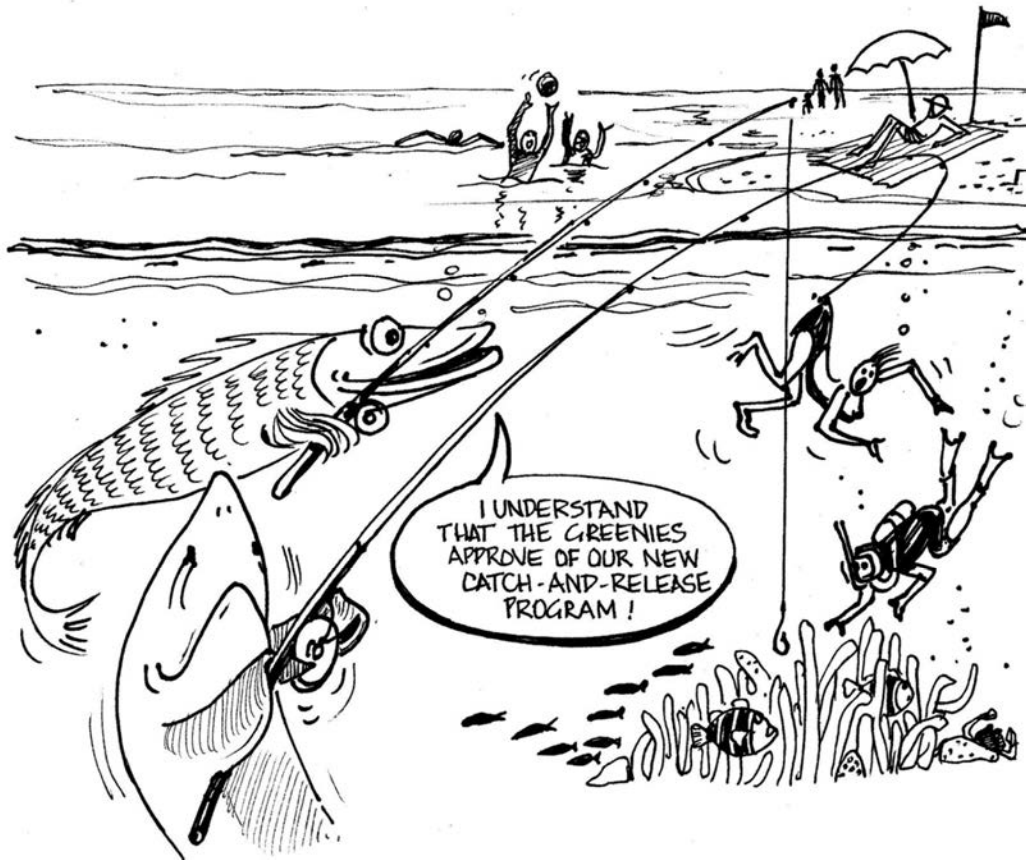
The behaviour of Management Committee members is guided by a code of conduct, a copy of which each new Management Committee member receives. That code of conduct is also published on the association's website, in the first edition of the Bulletin. There is a perception that it could be strengthened by providing capacity to sanction breaches by a member through disciplinary action. TARFish has also published a code of practice for recreational fishers.

TARFish sends to all associate members a posted or digital copy of the Bulletin. The Bulletin is also distributed through fishing shops. The association serves as an avenue through which associate members can raise an issue, either through their Management Committee representative, through writing to the association or by conversation with TARFish representatives at the many public events they attend. TARFish sees its role in providing information (through the newsletter and web-site), representing the interests of members and associate members to government and advocating on their behalf.

There is a view that TARFish could better serve its 'associate members' and the recreational fishing public by establishing mechanisms to assess their interests, issues and needs and incorporating those into its strategic direction.

Apart from the small membership fee from each of the five member associations, TARFish is totally funded by the State Government. Its website states that those funds come from the licence fees paid by recreational marine fishers in Tasmania. The association receives an annual grant of $130,000 per annum (recently increased substantially) plus management fees for various projects it outsources. Its financial position enables it to bank a healthy proportion of its income. Yet this income is a two-edged sword. Interviewees acknowledge that TARFish is highly sensitive to its government patron, thereby inhibiting its published desire to be an independent voice and potentially muting any public policy pronouncements. Interviewees also recognise TARFish's vulnerability to the potential of Government funding cuts and are keen to see independent sources of funding established.

TARFish has successfully positioned itself as the representative body that the Minister and government talks to. Yet interviewees do not regard it as being particularly successful in its attempts to influence government and they would like to see it more willing to take a policy position up to the government, as opposed to its present passivity. TARFish participates in the Recreational Fishers Advisory Council, a Ministerial advisory group. In terms of marketing, TARFish works hard to market itself to the recreational fishing sector, both the general public and the known recreational fishing groups. While TARFish is known to those groups, it is less known to the broader recreational fishing public. Greater media exposure is seen as desirable.



Communication from TARFish to its five member associations and Management Committee members is commonly face-to-face, phone or email. Communication with 'associate members' is via the Bulletin and through chatting with recreational fishers at the various events that the CEO attends. The association also has a comprehensive web-site. It has recently added Facebook and Skype to its communications. Suggestions to improve communication with 'associate members' and the general public include blogs, Twitter and greater use of the internet.

Under its funding arrangements with government, TARFish is obliged to report against a number of key performance indicators or KPIs. There is a perception that the accountability of the association would be strengthened if its evaluation was conducted externally and independently. There is also a perception that the Constitution of TARFish should also be reviewed to remove factors that may be limiting its diversity and growth.

Challenges facing TARFish include leadership succession, broadening its Constitution, clarification of its role in serving its various constituents, installing a more transparent system of governance, and broadening its funding base.

Performance capacity

Does your association have sufficient performance capacity to carry out the functions that members expect?

In order to provide outputs, such as good and services, an association needs inputs such as people, skills, networks, equipment, premises and funds. Used effectively in combination, these inputs equate to performance capacity, the ability to drive service delivery.

Some associations have only fishers/producers/growers as members and executives. Any work is done by these people in a voluntary capacity. Other associations have Councils or Boards, elected from fishers/producers/growers, who determine policy, while employing an Exec Officer and ancillary staff to look after operational matters. In other words, it is the operational staff who do the work. Yet some other associations, normally peak bodies that have commodity or sector associations as their members, have Boards that are comprised solely of paid employees (Exec Officers or managers from those commodity or sector associations) as well as having an Exec Officer for that peak body. An observation is that, when compared with fishers/producers/growers, paid employees carry a different financial risk for the consequences of decisions they may make. Certainly, paid employees do, in the main, seek guidance from their fisher/producer/grower employers before taking decisions.

Funds

The most obvious and frequently mentioned factor limiting the capacity of an association is having sufficient funds.

It's just the funds, we don't have the funds or the resources to do the kind of things we want to do.

Associations are finding difficult to balance the books as there isn't so much soft money around anymore. In WA, ***we don't have a big enough membership pool; we don't have enough industry growth at the moment to make it attractive for sponsorship, so membership is becoming too expensive.*** *(1)*

At its peak, we had a mixture of Government and industry resourcing, mostly Government resourcing. When it was very well resourced, it was going very well. But of course the government resourcing pulled out and then they got basically a part-time Executive Chairman and very little financial support; and because of that it has struggled. ***It struggles to do what it used to do, and it's in direct relationship to the amount of money that it has.*** *(1)*

We have a full-time Executive Officer*. Apart from that, it's all voluntary. The group of people on that Committee at present is probably as good a group as has ever been assembled in the history of prawn farming in Australia. So it's not from performance incapacity from the people.*

I think the skill level and the people are fantastic; it's just the funds, we don't have the funds or the resources to do the kind of things we want to do. *(3)*

Firstly, we must have a good funding base that's guaranteed so that we can employ an experienced Executive Officer or CEO and support staff. (5)

It's paramount to the efficient operation of any Industry body to have an assured line of funding as a base from which to structure your organisation*, so the staff can move forward with confidence in carrying out the tasks the Board sets before them. We spend too much time talking about where we're going to get our next buck from. (5)*

[To find extra funds] We can find another avenue through sponsorships, a research project type arrangement with the FRDC, a levy on fish imported into this country, a levy on dieseline used, or product produced. Some of the farming sectors operate on compulsory levies to fund their respective organisations. (5)

Having money to employ good lobbyists, i.e. public relations people like media and political, stock research etc. if needed and when required is also important. (5)

There is ***not much capacity at all due to such low membership fee*** *and there's not, the organisation hasn't really got any other sources of income. (7)*

It hasn't had the opportunity to set up a foundation, to be able to really get other sources of income to be able to build up capacity. (7)

If every fisher pays their share of dollars, executive officers could provide much more. (8)

To increase the performance capacity, you're going to need more dollars. And to access more dollars in the fishery, it's either got to be external funding or the fishers have to start getting more money for their product*. (8)*

Every now and then if we have a big issue, we're asked for a contribution to prop it up.

Relying on the individual Fishermen to become members, it's 75% and you still get 25% that won't voluntarily pay. So unless it's a form of funding out of your licence fee which they can't not pay, then you won't get it. If it's compulsory (I don't know whether that's legal anymore, it used to be) then you get more members. (9)

They've increased the level of resourcing available to deliver benefits to members. They've actively made a decision to invest in resources, to actively promote the objectives and goals of the association, for members. (9)

I guess you would never have enough money to do the work they're doing. ***Every now and then if we have a big issue, we're asked for a contribution to prop it up.*** *And I guess they probably haven't got enough money to do everything they'd like to. (9)*

We're self-funded. We don't get funded at all, so if we had more money, we'd probably be able to provide more services. Because of the funding, we keep our meetings to a minimum. (12)

Let's say the core budget is around $300,000 just for key staff, notwithstanding the lobbying and the projects, we were down to about $200,000, and we had to increase that to $300,000, which we are just achieving this year. So we've had to increase about 50%. (14)

I would prefer to have our activities funded solely through membership, so that you're not vulnerable to government cuts / changes, and your budget is basically your member fees. *We're not quite there. [Interviewer: What proportion of your funds comes from other than members?] I would say about 30%. We've managed to maintain that, but I would rather 100% of our core activities were funded through membership. [Interviewer: So that 30% is basically project management fees for administering government projects?] Right. (14)*

Just six months ago we've taken on a very new project. We're calling it 'A National Strategy for Responsible Aquaculture Development in Canada'. It's really about getting political will and support to advance the industry. We've done some major fundraising. (14)

I would prefer to have our activities funded solely through membership, so that you're not vulnerable to government cuts / changes.

We've got a major advocacy campaign going on, which has been a real challenge in the last six months, acquiring the funding for that. How we've done that is a little different from some associations. Some associations will put a levy on production. We put a levy on every member. Basically, we have asked them to double their annual membership fee for the time period of the project. We made it voluntary – some people weren't willing to pay it. But the issue was so important that I think we have about 95% compliance. (14)

Performance capacity, having enough resources. It's fine to have all these nice policies in place, but if you don't have the resources to get the benefits, do the work, to make things happen, then everybody's going to be disappointed in the end. I know all associations struggle with that. (14)

We've been more financially successful so we are able to hire a higher level representation at a more professional level of representation. We have more money than we had 5 years ago. (16)

Because we've had a decrease in membership numbers but the NFFO Services money, like that from escorting brought in, has managed to allow the NFFO to stay operating. (16)

You know, the economy's not very good and everybody's struggling, so unfortunately in previous years you would probably see membership fees go up. I don't really think you can just up it, if you put the membership fees up too much you're going to get some people that will just step back and drop out. So I think they've just got to keep things as they are at the moment. It's all down to membership. They're limited in the work they can do with the funds available. They do a brilliant job for the position that we're in. (16)

If our members are doing it tough, we tend to tighten our belt as well. (17)

People

The next most important factor in an association's capacity to deliver is having sufficient people.

[State peak body] has a CEO, an executive of three (one is part-time). Then you have two Research staff, a Bookkeeper, a Receptionist. (4)

Fishermen and aquaculture people on our Board [a State peak body]; we're all 100 % either owners or involved in the industry. We don't have independent Board members. We're looking at going toward that, and we don't have anyone else apart from those that are elected by our members to become board members. (4)

What we've got is staff members who, whether they like it or not, have to do the job and then you've got Board members who come in voluntarily and have their time seriously tapped. You go outside that, what have you got? (4)

What we do is, once you're on the Board, you're then expected to do more. (4)

***No, not enough personnel. Definitely not.** They are always stretched. They are always time poor. They always seem to have more issues than what they can deal with. **The State Government believes we're well funded and we're well staffed.** I've had that comment said to me directly by the Minister for Fisheries. (4)*

If you're an organisation with just a couple of people in an office somewhere, you just can't do everything that your members might want.

There's a whole lot more we could do. Even with the activities we are involved with, they don't get given the time and effort that they should. We haven't got the man power to spend the time on them. It's as if nobody is home in the organisation. (7)

[To increase performance capacity of the peak body]. Probably having the ability to employ someone, albeit on a part-time basis to provide communication so that people understand what's happening. (7)

I think we need at least a part-time General Manager who can take charge of this and start getting things happening. (7)

It's very difficult in volunteer groups to get somebody motivated, get them working, doing everything that needs to be done, keep them motivated. (11)

The people that we can get to do the work have less and less time. I know a lot of fishing clubs are looking at amalgamating for the same reason. There's always a core of people that will do *the work, and they've got less and less time. So if one Treasurer can do the work of two Treasurers, it should be looked at. (11)*

We're understaffed at the moment and we're still functioning. ***It's hard to get people to step up to take on leadership roles.*** *(12)*

I would say in the last year and a half to two years, since we hired a Communications Manager, a focussed Accountant, and our Executive Director who can focus on the advocacy part. When we don't have the resources internally, we buy them / hire consultants. [Interviewer: So there's been a recent upswing in capacity because you've invested in some key skill areas?] Yes. (14)

We've recently made a new short term staff position, anywhere from six months. That hopefully will alleviate some as more pressures come on in terms of public relations. This is something that our Executive Director has had to spend an awful amount of time at and therefore some of the other roles get pushed aside, because you end up in reactive mode and not being able to spend more time on being proactive. But, at the same time, we've an awful lot more involvement of our sub-committees of the Board and I think that has alleviated some of the pressures. (15)

You can only do what your representative is physically capable of doing; he can't be in two places at once. (16)

We've been more financially successful so we are able to hire a higher level representation at a more professional level of representation. We have more money than we had 5 years ago. (16)

It's a pity the way the industry is; it's a pity they couldn't have one or two more people like [our Chief Executive Officer] to offset the workload that he has, as the main one; say another one or two members, staff like right up there, for the workload that he has to carry. You have retired fisherman ashore that go to meetings, but to have a totally paid up executive who was there and travels all week and meets people…. But he is here, there and everywhere. Another one or two members could help them, I would say. (16)

It has sufficient capacity, because our manager and our committee members probably put at least 10 hours a day. And most of it is voluntary.

Well, we're looking at increasing the staff at National levels. Like most organisations we were very stretched with the amount of work we had to do. Sometimes member's smaller issues can be attended to. We're looking at increasing staff at the National levels and take on medium and small level problems. (16)

All of our directors are growers in their own right. (17)

That's the thing, once you get to be a bigger organisation you've got the capacity to do it, whereas ***if you're an organisation with just a couple of people in an office somewhere, you just can't do everything that your members might want.*** *You've sort of got to get someone else to do it for you. So you get economies of scale and specialisation too. (17)*

Because, on say environmental matters, years ago we never had the capacity to do it. But I suppose too the capacity works both ways. ***If you're seen as an organisation that's doing things, you're more likely to get people who want to work for you, and then you'll therefore get better people as well.*** *Whereas, if you're sort of like the bottom of the food chain, you'll just have to do your best. (17)*

It has sufficient capacity, because our manager and our committee members probably put at least 10 hours a day. And most of it is voluntary*. Our manager is paid fully, but we are not paid for anything that we do outside a meeting. (18)*

We haven't increased the levy but our costs have gone up. We do more as committee members voluntarily. My message to any association is: ***if your Directors or your committee members want to make an association work, they have to be prepared to put in the hard yards at no personal return.*** *(18)*

We are completely self-managed [by volunteer members] (19).

I think we should be head hunting people that have the ability to do particular things; again, not necessarily fishermen.

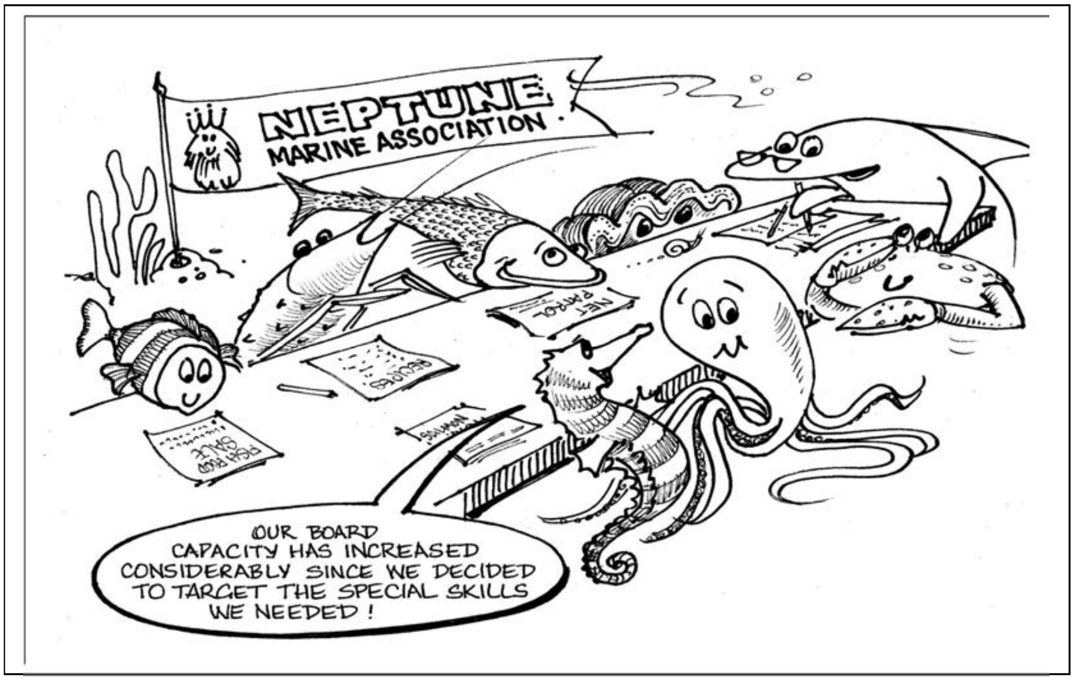
You know, associations like ours depend enormously on somebody, and I mean, in this instance, probably one or maybe two people driving it. A lot of people might say, oh yeah, that should be done, but I haven't got time. So ***you've got to have someone who has got the time or the dedication or whatever you want to call it to actually make sure it is done****. (21)*

Our best initiative and our strongest feature is to have an employed CEO, rather than just relying on a voluntary organisation. The role of the volunteers is to do what they should be doing, which is setting direction and strategies. (21)

We're very, very under resourced. And I'm trying to be all things to all people, and it just doesn't work*. [Interviewer: But having more resources without having a clear purpose won't necessarily help you. In fact it can make it worse because you go running off in more directions. So what needs to be done about the clarity of purpose?] We need to get the committee to sit down; we need time to canvas members and to have that conversation of what we are really about and how we can do the job better. (22)*

Contribution to an association is often inverse to the size of the member. Since associations are bodies created to give voice to individual enterprises, larger enterprises or industry sectors feel more able to stand on their own feet. Further, with larger, more complex operations, the larger members are often more time-poor than smaller enterprises or sectors. So the most active association members, the most dedicated, are often also the smallest.

And also they recognised that it was a lot of the smaller growers that are actually on the executive. They're the ones that contribute going to functions or field days or whatever, helping set up. They're the ones that were putting in the contribution physically as well. So you didn't *want to upset them by diminishing their value in the whole thing, giving them bugger-all of a vote. (20)*



Each association is different. There is no right or wrong answer to the question of 'who does the work?' Rather there is a continuum. At one end is the association comprised only of unpaid volunteer members; at the other end is a peak body comprised solely of paid employees of member organisations. And any particular format of voluntary/employed representation has its own strengths and weaknesses. So a productive conversation might be had around the questions of 'What are the strengths of our present model, and how can we enhance them?' 'What are the weaknesses of our present model, and how can we reduce them?' And the answer to both questions lies, in part, in the concept of diversity.

Skills

One of the emerging themes of this research is the extent to which the focus and behaviour within an association reflects the skills and interests of one or several key people, be that a CEO, a Chair or an Exec Officer. This focus becomes immediately apparent when that key person moves on, to be replaced by someone whose orientation and strengths might be quite different. With associations often highly dependent upon the skills and interests of one or two key people, it is highly unlikely that all of the attributes an association might wish to have can be found it that person or persons. Building the personal and professional capacity of all key people, be they executive members or paid staff, is an investment that can reap considerable dividends in the capacity of the whole association.

With that lower education level [in the wild-catch sector] there's more need for representation. They don't know how to effectively engage with the sophisticated machinery of Government. (1)

We've got a paid executive officer who is extremely skilled, has spent most of his working life lobbying Government. He used to be the executive officer for [named peak body] so they don't come any more qualified than that. Any better qualified than that and he'd be in Parliament. (2)

We get exceptional value from [Exec Officer], who is only part-time. I think he delivers terrific value from the effort he puts in, for what we pay for him, but a bit more remuneration and a bit more of his time I think would only benefit the cause. (2)

***[Named person] is worth a million bucks but we don't quite tell him that amount**, but more what we can afford. (3)*

> ***With that lower education level in the wild-catch sector there's more need for representation. They don't know how to effectively engage with the sophisticated machinery of Government.***

*I think on the peak body representational role, we're adequately resourced. We're stretched with the diversity of additional issues that are now demanded of the industry, especially in relation to eco-labelling, community standing. In other words, **we're introducing people over here to 'public licence to operate' type issues beyond our past roles and we're under-resourced for that.** If we lose our social licence to operate, there's no point trying to represent people on marine parks. So people accept the connection between issues, but **the pressure is on at the moment to spend a lot more time on marketing the industry to the community**. (4)*

I've got guys that can't read the newspaper, so because I've got a university degree, an Honours degree and Bachelor of Science, I do all the negotiations for them with the Department of Fisheries, with the Government, with the recreational sector. All they have to do is worry about getting up in the morning and go fishing. They don't have to worry about loss of access and everything else. I'm a Board member of [Assoc] so I lose a lot of fishing time, I lose a lot of family time to help look after the rest of the industry but while I'm looking after that I'm also looking after my own licence. (4)

> ***We need an increase in the professionalism of the Board. Yes, definitely.***

*There are actually more people in [State peak body] now than there were three years ago, and we have more money. **So I think that just being a Director now, with a turnover getting up to $2 million, we have 12-14 staff in [State peak body]. So offices, industry associations, we're renting to and from, I think internal management has got more difficult.** We're looking for a new CEO, and we're hopeful that that person will be more capable in the management area than our past CEOs have been. (4)*

But you also need to have the decision makers and strategic focused meetings etc. so the Board can be more functional, and formulating the right policies for the EO to work to. [Interviewer: In other words, ***we need an increase in the professionalism of the Board****.] Yes, definitely. (5)*

[Named person] is very dedicated and if she wants an answer on something she will ring people day and night until she gets an answer out of them. I'm amazed at what she does. *(6)*

I think we should be head hunting people that have the ability to do particular things; again, not necessarily fishermen.

If we didn't have the best Secretary in the world and she's a fisherman's wife but she knows the procedure, she's the person that takes the notes no matter what, it would fall apart. You need some dedicated people in there. (6)

There must be an identification of skills needed to successfully run an organisation from industry and Government and the resources to do this must be determined, a collection mechanism also established and it funded compulsory by everybody. (7)

I think we should be head hunting people that have the ability to do particular things; again, not necessarily fishermen. *And this is really important, one of the reasons the constitution got changed so that women's partners were full members was because there was the capacity in these people to actually take a lot of load off. (8)*

We've been struggling with replacement of resources, particularly in the science area, we've got a lot of old scientists who are contracted in and it's, ***where are the new fisheries scientists going to come from.*** *(13)*

We are very much limited just by the sheer volume of issues. Even if we trebled our capacity to handle it we still wouldn't be able to handle everything that is coming in. It's just the way of the world at the moment. (16)

For years we've had that much legislation and technical measures going at once and we've been expected to understand and implement them ourselves. And some things are just too complicated for us to comprehend, and or as organised meetings with the marine management organisation DEFRA – Department of Environment, Food and Regional Affairs and SeaFRAC which is the scientific side of government and SeaFish which is the technology side and the NFFO has been quick from the members request in organising meetings to sort out technical issues and concerns and bring people together to sort it out as quick as possible. (16)

If you're seen as an organisation that's doing things, you're more likely to get people who want to work for you, and then you'll therefore get better people as well. (17)

The person you need as an Executive Officer doesn't need to know how to grow tomatoes. They need to know how to run meetings, get information, communicate, - all of those sorts of things. (21)

Our first priority has got to be the members and that's partly related to the skills of the various people involved. So at the moment our EO has very good skills in the policy area, but less good skills in the membership area. She acknowledges that. So it goes up and down with the skills of the individuals involved. (21)

Having someone that can influence the media is probably quite different from the one who is a lobbying political person. So at the moment, the lady that we've got in the role is definitely the lobbying, political person and unfortunately I'm a management person. Between the two of us, we don't actually like doing anything much in the line of media although we both do. But, as I was saying, we've got a relatively small number of people available and we can't have someone who can do everything. (21)

***We do as much as we possibly can with the money we've got and the staff we have available**. Sometimes that changes if we get new staff, if one person moves on and the next one comes along, their skills are perhaps a little bit different from before, so they do other things. (21)*

Collective support

A critical, though sometimes invisible, element of an association's capacity to deliver is knowing that it has the support of current and potential members.

Well it is woefully under resourced in terms of support and it's the trend of people to ask the question: 'What am I getting?' without understanding that critical mass is actually something in itself. (7)

***To increase our performance capacity [of the peak body] the single most important thing is to bring everyone in under the one umbrella.** (7)*

*The only suggestion that I would have is **developing strategies to increase the capacity of the Port-level associations**; it's maybe an approach that they could look at. (9)*

The price of commitment

Board members of associations often pay a heavy price, in both time and funds, for their commitment to their industry.

When you're passionate it's easy to fall into that burn-out, to spread yourself too thinly.

Literally my Board member [named person] has been there since 1988. He literally said: 'I'm tired; I've got nothing more to give'. I just thought: How telling is that? (1)

*And you may burn people out. So subsidy is not only just a pecuniary – so you can – **when you're passionate it's easy to fall into that [burn-out], to spread yourself too thinly.** (1)*

[Interviewer: Are members of the Board paid sitting fees?] No, I'm paid for by [member association] who wants me to be there. The President who usually attends all the meetings as well, he does not – none of the Presidents get any money for being there. (2)

[Interviewer: What is your view of associations where the Board only has executive officers on them?] Well it's hard. They're the only ones with time to go and do this. I'm on the Board of [national peak body] as well because I'm the President of [sector association], but I never go to [national peak body] meetings. I've only done a couple of conference calls. I'm a farmer. Running any business is the same; it's just everyone is head down, tail up in their own business running it. It's hard. I must say ***I really struggle with finding the time and energy to take on industry stuff as well, because we are so busy in our own business.*** *There's not that many [producers] around and they're all very busy. So* ***they have to delegate these things to executive officers to go along, sit through the meeting and then come away with a five minute brief possibly for their executive or their membership*** *etcetera later on. I don't see a solution or anything to that really. I think it's a bit less than ideal. It's not like [a land based primary industry] where there's 7,000 farmers and a few people put their hand up and they sort of make a career at being at all of these meetings and helping run the industry. I don't think that opportunity exists in [our] industry to get that many people with time because it is such a high input and high demand industry or business to run. (2)*

I work seven days a week, literally from the time I get up to the time I switch off my lights. To take days away from the farm hurts. (2)

You can get renumerated for your Board meetings and your committee meetings as long as they go over a certain amount of time. So if it's a short one and it doesn't cover the time limit but you've still got to take the time to get there, sit down, lose your day fishing to do it, but if it's only an hour meeting, well then you lose out. Now ***there's also other meetings that we have to go to, and briefings and things like that, which aren't specific Board meetings and they aren't specific committee meetings, but you're expected to be there to go and have a briefing with the Minister or something like that that; you're not paid for that.*** *They say 'You're a Board member'; they ring you up and say can you please go and act on behalf of [State peak body] and sit in on this meeting for us and you don't get paid for that. (4)*

So without fishermen who give their time to the Board, or to a sub-committee of the Board, this type of work wouldn't get done.

I'm a Board member of [Assoc] so I lose a lot of fishing time; I lose a lot of family time to help look after the rest of the industry but while I'm looking after that I'm also looking after my own licence. (4)

[Remuneration from the association?] It doesn't cover all of that because you'll have reading at home to do, there's preparation for meetings that you've got to do that you don't get covered for. But let's say a Board meeting you get $310. So an all-day Board meeting which is what they always are, you get $310 plus your travel, 75 cents per kilometre and then you get your subcommittee meetings which were happening quite frequently for me, because we had a new program running and we were trying to get it up and going, they were $180, but the meeting

had to go for 2 hours and sometimes they don't: sometimes they go well over 2 hours plus again 75 cents for your travel. (4)

***So without fishermen who have given their time to the Board, who give their time to be on a sub-committee of the Board, this type of work would never get done**. (4)*

I used to charge [my previous association] $100 a night for my meals and accommodation which no one disagreed with. When I chaired the [present association] for 12 months it was the same. But suddenly they turned around and said, 'No accommodation,' because of lack of funds, it's just ridiculous. ***Some people don't understand the expenses involved in carrying out these roles adequately.*** *(5)*

In my case where most of our meeting activities take place in Freemantle and I live 440 kilometres north of there and plus it means interruption. I'm still an active fisherman, so it means interruption. (5)

The week before last, I went to Perth on the Wednesday for a finance meeting at 4:00pm, and I stayed over until Friday, then I got a message that the Fisheries Department wanted to talk to us on the following Tuesday 24th. So I chose to stay in Perth over the weekend rather than drive four hours home and then back again on the Tuesday. But I didn't know until 11:00am on the Tuesday24th that the meeting had been cancelled at 5:00pm the night before and postponed until 1 May. I said, 'Hang on; I've been in Perth for a week for this. Who's covering my costs?' I've got a unit down there, sure, but someone's still got to pay bills. Fortunately I was not staying at a hotel. (5)

The executive were spending hundreds of hours away from their fishing industry whilst other fishermen were going out to work.

It comes back again to funding, being able to employ an experienced Executive Officer and staff, and remunerating Directors adequately. In other words, ***the Directors of the Board should receive not only a sitting fee but travel expenses and accommodation should be covered as well. After all, Directors are elected to represent the members, so they should not be doing it at their own personal cost.*** *(5)*

We usually just leave it to the executive – the President, Secretary-Treasurer which is probably why I see a few people come to burnout. *You just get to the stage where you get sick of it, especially if something controversial comes up, your phone just doesn't stop. I remember one $1,000 mobile bill (and my wife hit the roof as you can understand). So it's very inadequate at the moment because it's just left to two people. (6)*

I just told them at one AGM that it was my last year, simply because it was time for a fresh face. And the financial cost to you starts getting quite large, especially if you're driving up and down to Perth all the time. I spent six years on the Rock Lobster Council driving 1000km round trip going to meetings all the time. (6)

There just hasn't been anyone else prepared to put their hand up. And most of it is because of cost. It is a huge financial burden.

When the Executive had to do all the work themselves, it just wasn't fair. They were spending hundreds of hours away from their fishing industry whilst other fishermen were going out to work. *(8)*

And the person who normally organises the meeting, it's honorary, so when they've done their 80 hours a week fishing and then spent 30 hours with their family, if there's any time left at the end of the week, they organise things for the association. (8)

I've been President for 12 years, and was Secretary for 14 prior to that. So while it's far too long, there just hasn't been anyone else prepared to put their hand up. And most of it is because of cost. It is a huge financial burden. *(8)*

I was up at 2 o'clock yesterday morning writing letters in relation to the marketing of sugar for the industry. I don't get paid for that and I don't expect to be. ***So the amount of time that the committee members put in, if they were to be paid for that, they would probably need to be on at least $100,000, and there is no way that there is finances available for that.*** *[Interviewer: Now you said there were five of you on the Board. So you've got five people doing that enormous amount of work, largely voluntary and you don't have any expectations of your other members other than they pay the fee?] That's exactly right because you can't. Because your members elect you to represent them. (18)*

Executive officer

An executive officer has very specific conflicts of interest because of the nature of their employment.

An important vehicle for an association's performance capacity is their executive officer. Often the sole employee, carrying out the tasks allocated by a multi-member Board, they sometimes experience having to report to multiple masters. Further, the expectations that Board members have of their EO are sometimes misplaced and inappropriate.

There is a danger too– I find my Board relies on me to do the recruitment [of new Directors to the Board] and I don't think that's good. The Board need to spend time, it's their peer group. I may be a part of it but essentially I'm a paid employee. (1)

Executive Officers generally end up finding out they're not in the room [when their sector issues come up]. Our Constitution provides for a fairly flexible approach [on conflicts] to fishers, because they have an interest in the industry, whereas ***an Executive Officer has very specific conflicts of interest because of the nature of their employment.*** *(4)*

We only have one person who is employed by the [Association] and he has to do everything from paying the bills to consulting, going up and down the coast talking to the Fishermen, trying to engage their thoughts, and then service the Board as well. *(5)*

Nevertheless, one of the reasons for employing an executive officer is that he/she brings to the role a range of professional skills that volunteer Board members may not have.

> *Because the political and funding challenges facing NFPs can be so complex, they are often beyond the scope of voluntary Boards, and hence must be the principal concern of chief executives. Drucker (1990:13) maintains: 'What works is to assign responsibility of effective governance of the association to the chief executive officer.' Critical leadership actions are initiated by the chief executive officer* (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 420).

> *To have some consistency in leadership, especially of EOs etc., is paramount to the organisation being successful.* (5)

> ***I really do see the EO as being the front man and in a lot of ways providing stronger focus for the industry than the Chairman**. (5)*

> *We must have a very competent Executive Officer, who has strong administration, communication and report writing skills, willing to gain a high level of understanding of the industry and is prepared to go out there and sit on the edge of the wharf (so to speak) and talk to members. Someone who's prepared to take on the role of EO for a period of at least five years to assist in bringing about the leadership and stability our Industry deserves. (5)*

I really do see the EO as being the front man and in a lot of ways providing stronger focus for the industry than the Chairman.

> *The Executive Officer has to be given adequate time to be able to negotiate and consult at the grass roots level with ample and timely information to assist members to again feel that they are being listened too and their views actually mean something when represented to Government. (5)*

> ***The sooner the fishery has the capacity to start paying for sitting fees or lost time from fishing, or it is becoming less and less likely that you'll actually have a true industry person or a real Fisherman on any of the Boards or at any of the meetings**. In future, it will mostly be an Executive Officer who is paid. (8)*

> *I think it's lack of direction from the Board. The Board needs to run the agenda and provide proper direction on tasks and issues such as forward planning and set some KPI's. (10)*

> ***At the moment the Executive Officer is most likely wearing the brunt of it, due to his own stubbornness of not sharing some of it about. But I look at it from both points of view there; we definitely don't want to leave it all to him; we've just had to force him to take holidays.** [Interviewer: Really?] Yes. You know 'You've got to take these holidays', but 'we've got this coming up and that coming up' and I said 'don't worry about that, we'll stumble through'. **At the committee meeting, we just had one, we had to actually move a motion to make [our EO] to take holidays. That will give you insight into what sort of a man he is.** (22)*

The chief executive is often at the centre of the organisation's information flows and can have an informational advantage over the Board.

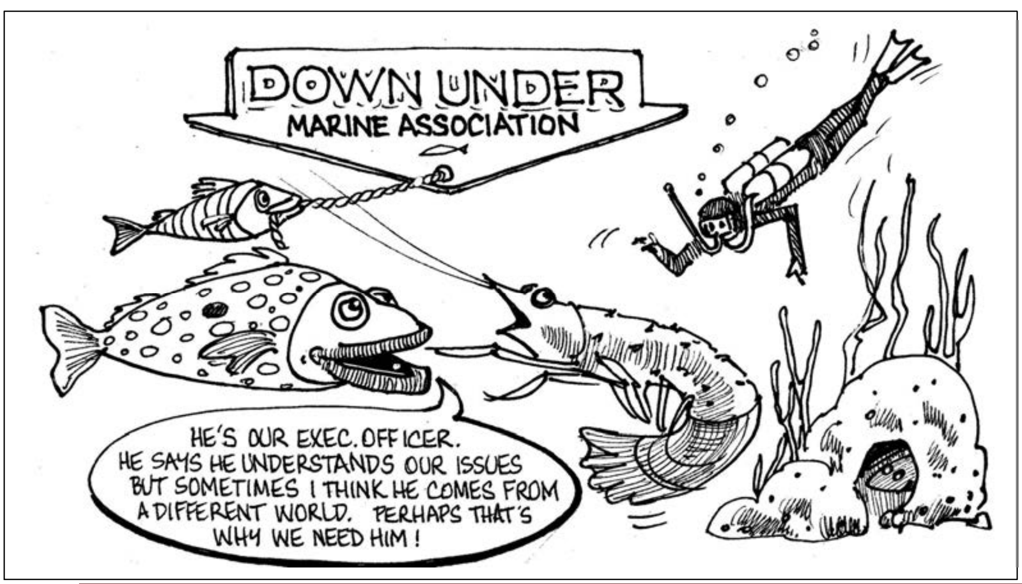
It's stretched due to lack of funding, which we have an Executive Officer who is chasing his tail most of the time, chasing money. But he's also the field officer. So he's out there doing control stuff and writing reports too. And in his spare time, he's lobbying for us. He's stretched pretty tight. (22)

> *Our EO is a nice enough person, but he's been at the helm for a few years now. He's been pretty adaptable and a great person to work with, but that starts to be a long time for one person to be in that position. So you have to make sure that they're not too comfortable in that position, and that they're also given the support they need to make those decisions.* [Comment by a Board member. This association, understandably anonymous, has some Board members who have been there over a decade.]

Since the Executive Officer, as an employee, has greater singularity of focus than do the volunteer Board members, it follows that s/he is commonly the instigator and recipient of most communication, serving as a broker of that information inwards and outwards.

> *This psychological centrality comes into being because the chief executive is often at the centre of the organisation's information flows and can have an informational advantage over the Board. Professional expertise and experience that comes with special organisational knowledge may give the chief executive the potential to influence the organisation. Most effort in an association is directed towards information processing. Hence the central role of the chief executive is strengthened in times of information uncertainty and resource dependency* (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 420).

> *We have an Executive Officer, so basically everything, most of the stuff is directed to him and then he directs it on where it needs to go. (22)*



This psychological and functional centrality can place an executive officer in a difficult position that requires skilful negotiation. While the EO might be central to the effectiveness of the association, those EOs that are most highly regarded are those who manage, at all times, to convey the impression that the Board is in charge. Whilst the Board might appear to lead from the front, the reality is that it is often the EO who is leading from behind.

There's a tendency for the paid executive to become the driving force of the association, rather than the association itself. It's about self-interest.

We found effective chief executives respond to this leadership expectation by carrying out their roles with and through their Boards, more often than those executives not regarded as effective. We found a major effectiveness criterion as the 'Board-centred leadership' behaviours of the chief executive. The locus of attention of the effective chief executive is largely Board-directed. (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 420)

At the other end of the spectrum are executive officers who act in their own interests. The present research encountered several cases of this occurring. It requires a level of skill and control by the Board to ensure this does not happen.

> *I think the problem you end up with when you have paid executives is that* ***there's a tendency for the paid executive to become the driving force of the association, rather than the association itself. It's about self-interest.***

In partial summary: Associations need internal capacity to carry out their objectives. That capacity is multifaceted. Most frequently mentioned is having access to sufficient funds. In many associations there are less funds than deemed necessary to do the work the association desires. Equally scarce is manpower, the willing bodies with the time and energy to contribute. Those few who do step up to the task are rarely sufficiently reimbursed for their time and burn-out is a professional risk. Having a Board with sufficient managerial expertise is just as important, though less recognised. Having dedicated staff can ease the burden on volunteers, though Boards need to take care not to expect everything from the staff. The EO is commonly in the centre of information flows, so sometimes the EO can try to do too much, risking burn-out themselves. In other cases, the EO can become the dominant figure in the association, with the Board being a subsidiary to the achievement of the EO's wishes.

Recommendation 12:

a. Assess, as part of an annual audit, delivery capacity (human, financial, technological, etc.) with a view to ascertaining the sufficiency of that capacity to deliver on the purpose of the association and the goods or services the members expect. The monitoring and evaluation framework offered in **Appendix 4** will be beneficial here.

b. Put in place strategies to build capacity, financial, human, and technological, and to review those strategies annually.

Case Study 11: Australian National Sportsfishing Assoc – Tasmania

Australian National Sportsfishing Association – Tasmania (ANSA – Tas) is an association incorporated under Tasmanian legislation as a not-for-profit body. Formed about 30 years ago. Its membership is based on families, not individuals, so it caters for a very broad age range. Seventy % of its active members are men. There are no women in executive roles.

ANSA Tas has two broad purposes. The first is to provide a diversity of recreational fishing opportunities for its members. The second is to engage politically as necessary to ensure the recreational fishing rights of its members and society generally are not eroded.

The association is governed by a team of four people, all males, being a President, a Secretary/Treasurer, a Vice President and an Ordinary Member. The roles and responsibilities of these people are documented and clearly understood. There is an annual AGM, with people being elected into Executive positions for a two-year term. There is no restriction on the number of terms that can be served, and the present Executive team are seen to be long-term. There is a semi-formal process of thinking ahead with a view to grooming successors. All management is voluntary. Interviewees acknowledge that increasing the pool of potential executive members requires increasing the number of members.

Membership of the association is by invitation. New members apply to join, are nominated and seconded, their application is put before the Executive who have the opportunity to 'black-ball' the application, (though this rarely happens) and membership is provisional for the first year. This approach to membership was invoked several years ago as a means of addressing a dysfunctional element. So ANSA Tas is more like a family-oriented 'club' than a more open association. Not that ANSA Tas is closed; far from it, though it is careful to recruit family-oriented members, people with integrity. There is an annual family membership fee of $80, out of which there is a contribution to the national ANSA body, as well as towards association insurances. There are additional participation fees for club events and members are expected to contribute to the organisation of club events. For insurance reasons, participation in those events is open to members only.

Like many associations, ANSA Tas depends heavily upon the knowledge and dedication of a few key people and the loss of those people would be keenly felt. On the other hand it is very open to gaining more members, though it does not put emphasis on increasing its membership base. For strategic reasons the association does not disclose its membership numbers, though interviewees acknowledge that, like most recreational fishing associations, it would be a very small proportion of the recreational fishers in the State. Its size and culture, and its financial position might all be described as 'comfortable'. The association's 'code of conduct', whether or not it is formalised, is understood by all members. There is a code they abide by as recreational fishers and a code they abide by as association members. Conflicts, where they rarely occur, are dealt with in an open and civilised manner.

As a recreational fishing association, ANSA Tasmania's primary activity and benefit to its members is the organisation of monthly recreational fishing events. Members also benefit from discounts at some stores; there is a fully fitted-out camping trailer for two or three families available to members and there is indemnity insurance to participate in club events. As members of the State body, recreational fishers are automatically members of the Federal body and can participate in ANSA events held in any other State.

The association's financial status is healthy. It costs about $2,500 per annum to run the affairs of the associations and the associations financial reserves are more than sufficient to cover eventualities. Its volunteer dedicated executive office bearers are perceived as highly capable and professional. The Executive meets formally on a monthly basis and often weekly informally. The association is perceived to have sufficient capacity to do what it needs to do, though its Executive, like most dedicated volunteers, are time poor. The main decision-makers in the association are its executive, and its web-master. Yet the decision processes are very open and any member can raise any issue within the association.

ANSA Tas is blessed with having, among its members, people who are well placed to looking after the association's interests in a public relations and political sense. Members of the media, public servants, Directors of State Fisheries organisations, and owners of tackle shops combine to give the association a degree of leverage other associations would envy. Its immediate past President has a weekly radio program on recreational fishing. Overall the association is well-connected politically and very successful in its lobbying efforts on behalf of the State's recreational fishers.

Association members are very generous with their knowledge, helping newer members acquire the skills in the myriad aspects of recreational fishing. The association will also financially support the cost to any member of acquiring their boat licence. One area where interviewees suggest all voluntary associations might benefit, including ANSA Tas, is from some publicly provided low-cost training in the governance of associations.

Responsibility in the association is widely shared. Members of the Executive are effective delegators and new members join with an understanding and expectation they will contribute their time and resources for collective benefit, including helping in one of the three trips per year where the club hosts a fishing event for autistic adults and children. Also members are expected to participate in organising at least one club event per year.

On the political side of its activities, the necessary resources and skills are fewer and more stretched. Yet the association does not shirk from ensuring the interests of recreational fishers are protected. In this endeavour, it is not necessarily in alignment with TARFish, the State peak body ANSA Tas helped to create. Where TARFish is perceived to be not pulling its weight, ANSA Tas does not hesitate to act independently if necessary.

The association has excellent external communication networks, with member connections into radio, government and commerce. Internally, its communications are both informal and effective, with email, phone and face-to-face being the primary media. Much of the association's business is conducted at its fishing events, at the conclusion of the fishing and before settling down to a relaxing beer. There are no formal performance measurement processes, though the association does have a strategic plan and keeps a tight monitor on action items meeting to meeting.

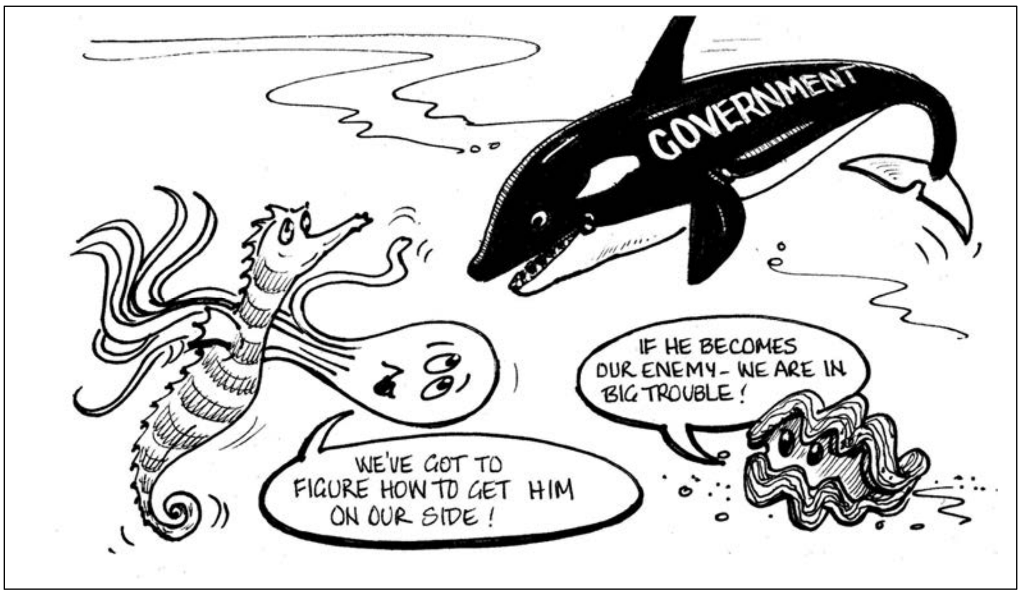
Major external challenges for the association include protecting the rights of recreational fishers in relation to competition from commercial fishers, loss of access, bag limits, legal sizes, licence fees, boat fees, launching ramps. It is difficult for voluntary associations to fight these issues often against the bureaucratic strength of government, the passion and strength of the environmental movement or the commercial strength of professional fishers. Another external challenge for the association is its relationship with TARFish. Internally, the challenge is to maintain sufficient membership numbers to provide for future leadership development.

Marketing/public relations/lobbying/political influence

Does your association engaged in the level of marketing/public relations/lobbying/political influence that members expect?

Associations attempt to influence the outside world on issues that matter to members. This may include co-operative marketing of product, lobbying for improved conditions for members and attempting to influence politics, local, State and Federal. This topic is subsidiary to the 'goods, services, and benefits' topic.

Lobbying and political influence



For most associations in this study, the issue of greatest importance to their members was having the ear of government, particularly with respect to resource access. The increasing powerful and sophisticated environmental lobby has led to a substantial increase in the declaration of marine parks and reserves, consuming substantial time, energy and dollars of associations as they seek to influence government regulations in their favour.

Associations often begin life as an attempt to bring a combined voice into conversation with government and other regulatory authorities. Changing circumstances, including success on this lobbying front, can lead to associations shifting focus to other joint member needs.

Ironically, successfully influencing government policies and practices can have significant consequences for the mission and viability of voluntary advocacy associations. When advocacy NFPs are successful in lobbying for change, this success can reduce the original need for being. Their efforts then shift to increasing the level of services and benefits back to their members.

Sometimes these services are delivered under a partnership agreement between the NFP and the Government against whom they were previously advocating. Such a partnership weakens the NFPs apparent independence. It also weakens its potential for future advocacy, since it is now reluctant to 'bite the hand that feeds it'. This life-course transition, from a focus on advocacy to a focus on service provision, whether sponsored or not, is common among voluntary associations. This drift can then lead the NFP to become less capable of reverting to an advocacy role, should it later be required. A drift to maturity is a drift away from radicalism. And it is also a drift away from the capacity to be responsive to opportunities for innovation (though this shift may not be absolute) (Salem, Foster-Fishman & Goodkind, 2002)

I don't think the lobbying is the core of our association anymore.

We've been pushing hard to have the Country of Origin labelling of seafood applied to the food service industry. *So people in restaurants and café etcetera will be able to differentiate Australian product from imported stuff. It's a lobbying political issue. I mean food labelling laws come from legislation. (2)*

In the past it was very much about lobbying, which was essentially the goods and services supplied back to the members. ***We still do lobbying, but I think we've extended those goods and services out to those different models. We just move with the times, basically****. (3)*

It used to be very much about lobbying. Essentially in the past the Executive Officers were lobbyists. We have a fairly turbulent political space as well, but our lobbying hasn't really increased, I don't think. We are still lobbying but we're a big enough association that we're attacking issues mostly ourselves. But ***I don't think the lobbying is the core of our association anymore****. (3)*

Everyone was against aquaculture at the start, the environmentalists and the fishing community. But things have changed a bit with regard to that. I guess the lobbying was quite good back then. So that sort of lobbying has probably eased off a little bit. It's a little bit more focussed now on more niche-style lobbying over specific issues rather than general public relations. (3)

The biggest issue for us is that we lack representation in Canberra as an Australian industry.

We need to be more professional in how we go about doing it. I think we need to be identifying the people that can help us. I'm not one for going to Ministers, for argument's sake. I shy off from using them as my first point of contact because in two years or 18 months, they're not going to be there. But the people behind the Minister will still be there. (3)

Best thing we've done in the last five years, by a country mile. I think that the whole issue of country-of-origin labelling, and that's 'buy Australian,' tremendous. *Absolutely first class work. That sort of thing was fantastic, where we got a real benefit for everybody, where we had a target, and we set out to get more and more people understanding that if you want Australian product, it's there to be bought, but you've got to be able to know where it is, and then it's got to be marked correctly for you. There are people out there (and still do it, mind* *you) that will use a label to say something is Australian, when it's not. And because of the whole structure now, because the Health Department have got on to it, there are fines now. There are people that will check on these guys that are doing it wrong. So that whole thing helped. (3)*

Governments can't have every association, when there's six of them knocking on the door, when one knock would have covered all six. We accept that. (3)

And all sorts of things change, not just your licencing. There are changes in different authorities that now have a power over you. There will be changes in workplace health and safety. There will be changes in award structures. Now, all of those things, unless you're on the ball and up with it, you will not know what's going on. ***Having one group responsible for going to Canberra, or wherever it needs to be, to represent the industry as a whole – that's the primary function, to save all the members doing that independently.*** *(3)*

So now Canberra are realising there is a group of people out there and a group of funds, and there is a way forward for all these Farmers trying to do different things, be it environmental, all sorts of different things. ***Without the [association], that could never have happened. So it's an industry representative, it's a presence****. (3)*

> ***Most members don't realise the amount of time and work and public relations and lobbying that is actually done by some of the executive.***

The working relationship depends on the Minister of the day because at the end of the day the Fisheries in WA, all of the decisions are made by the Minister. *[The State peak body] as an enterprise has never gone into the meeting very hard on anything criticising the Minister because that just does not work. He knows what rules he wants. (4)*

At the moment we've got a good Minister, open door policy, and I would say the effectiveness on the political lobbying side is 8 out of 10. (ii) Then if you went to marketing, I would say [State peak body]'s effective role in marketing both at a State and National level, I'd give them 1 out of 10. (4)

The biggest issue for us is that we lack representation in Canberra as an Australian industry. *So we have our respective State-based organisations, but* ***we don't have a formal Australian association represented in Canberra.*** *There's not really a formally-recognised national cohesive voice. I do think there's a significant gap there. (4)*

Probably public relations and lobbying in relation to Marine parks, licence fees, quota consultation with Fisheries Department, marine and harbours, oil and gas industry right-of-passage, China access problems for our product, and with lobster research, I'd say. (5)
I think the Minister definitely listens more to what the fishermen want. He tries to and he's always said that. He says, you guys tell me what you want and I will do it. I've heard him at meetings say that but the problem is everyone wants different things. (6)

Fishermen are the last of the hunter-gatherers. They're not into public relations, lobbying and political influence.

The Marine Park issue - I think that's taken a lot of resources from both association wise and membership wise and representative wise. *It's really been distracting from the actual job of [the association] at the moment and hopefully when that's resolved we might be able to get on with concentrating on just having [the association] as a stronger and more communicative body. (7)*

There was a time when a member and the [previous association] used to meet with the Director of Fisheries on a regular basis and that would have to have been valuable. That sort of thing doesn't occur any more. (7)

You could spend more time in the halls of Parliament. *It's building those relationships and working on those and to do what you've got to when you have the time. (7)*

Most government agencies and people talk about the triple bottom line being social, economic, and environmental, well actually there's a quadruple bottom line, and the fourth one is politics. (8)

I'm actually unsure that most members realise the amount of time and work and public relations and lobbying that is actually done by some of the [Association] executive. I think some of the fishers don't entirely understand the importance of lobbying and public relations. *(8)*

One reason fishermen are fishermen is that they're very basic in their instincts. They're the last of the hunter-gatherers. They're not into public relations, lobbying and political influence. *(8)*

[We need] more money in the slush fund to pay EO's, political activists, to work on our behalf. (9)

In the absence of an FMC and a management plan and harvest strategy (as one example within the fishery), trying to provide clear advice on a TAC from an industry point of view without those other frameworks in place was always quite challenging and often resulted in a situation of literally lobbying the Minister each year and trying to put forward a consensus industry position. (9)

In terms of lobbying, it depends on what you're comparing it to. If you were comparing it to other sectors in [this State], [our association] has been quite active in lobbying and investing resources e.g. with the Marine Parks issue, not necessarily just for the benefit of and focussing on southern zone issues, but broadly across the industry. So I think to some degree they have had some level of political influence. (9)

It's difficult when you talk about that sector-by-sector, fishery-by-fishery. Even in terms of value, with the southern zone being the most valuable fishery within [this State], it's still only *the southern zone rock lobster fishery, and not everyone in [State capital] necessarily cares about that. So to the degree that it can, I think it has good access in terms of decision makers within government and at that high level. (9)*

We have to be seen as strong enough on the political side that we are there representing our members in the political arena.

With the structure set up for rock lobster in [this State] as well, there's the capacity to – their lobbying and political influence side of things as well, not just to talk about it from a southern zone perspective, but to elevate that across the State level. (9)

*[To strengthen the influence.] Sustained contact and communication with influencers and decision makers at the highest levels within government, and building relations. That's always hard, because **you always have changes within government, and at higher levels also within the relevant departments**. I think they can always invest more time and resources into ensuring that those relationships are better than they have been. (9)*

*Well we have to be seen as strong enough on the political side that we are there representing our members in the political arena. **We have to be talking to the Minister of Fisheries and other areas each year, and then relaying that message back to our members.** (10)*

***We meet with the Minister, but we don't necessarily obtain results. Because we are 100% funded through government. Effectively, we're not willing to push the barrow and see what the boundaries are likely to come out at**. (10)*

It does have a major active role in the Fishery of [the State]. It is the main body that most of the Ministers talk to. (10)

We meet with the Minister, but we don't necessarily obtain results. Because we are 100% funded through government.

*That is something also that is covered exceptionally well in the club. **We have really good access to the Parliamentarians.** The club actually helped write one of the party's fishing policies. **We have a person who's an ABC Presenter as a member of the club. We have two of the members who are on ABC radio with the shows giving feedback to listeners.** Politically, it's a very savvy association. (11)*

*The attributes that enable it to deal with them are the people in the association. [Named person] is a senior member of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. [Another named person] is on the Fisheries Board and several other things. So it's just the fact that the membership are so well politically connected, and are also very good lobbyists and are very successful in what they do. I would say that **our club has a disproportionate influence for its size on policies in [this State],** which is fantastic. (11)*

Because it's such a small State, it's very, very easy to influence politicians. It has an undue amount of influence in the political process in this State. It's a bit like Queensland in the days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, but in a more positive way! (11)

That's what we do. We tend to go out and say, 'We need a public relations expert,' or, 'We need a politician in this political group; let's join one up,' and we'll go out and join them up. (11)

We're a conduit for the government to our members. (12)

***A lot of the information we get from government has embargoes on it, so we're not allowed to give it to our members.** (12)*

We've had to become a lot more active on political lobbying because of the Marine Parks and over-fishing by the commercial sector, and size and bag limits etc. (12)

Lobbying and political influence were the most valued. (13)

We're very vulnerable to changes, EPAs that kind of thing, and you do need to have a voice in Parliament. I think lobbying is very important. (13)

***We regarding having good relations with the Minister and the Ministry as very important** and we just keep that up all the time. (13)*

There are a lot of things to do with Government regulation and industry-wide issues that the individual can't deal with. So it's our role to represent them.

We have a Government which has come up looking for opportunities. It has kind of created an environment where we can get better outcomes from our dollar of lobbying or political influence. (13)

You look at Norway and Chile and other countries where there's very strong support for fishing, so they're zooming ahead of everybody. We figure we need more lobbying, so it's not quite adequate yet. (14)

Just six months ago we've taken on a very new project. We're calling it 'A National Strategy for Responsible Aquaculture Development in Canada'. We've done some major fundraising. We've managed to fundraise about $1.3 million over two years. It's really about getting political will and support to advance the industry. It's to have a new working relationship with the federal government in much more coherent coordinated way. We are looking for a new legislative and policy approach to aquaculture. It's really getting the federal government to see us as a priority for jobs and growth. Our fisheries legislation is 158 years old, and doesn't even reference aquaculture. And that's the main federal piece of legislation that manages aquaculture in this country, which is kind of silly. But within that, there are a number of technical issues that are interpreted by bureaucrats and regulators as e.g. fish health related issues. So we need technical expertise in dealing with the government on those issues. (14)

Any change in regulation is really a controlling regulation, or it has negative impact on production, or the way that we operate, and it's going to cost us money, which we don't like.

Sometimes it's a good change that everyone accepts as positive change. But if it's controlling or cost us more money, we're very active in that. (15)

We're just getting better at what we're doing and we've learnt to involve ourselves more effectively in the political process. Again with our finances, we have more financial stamina so we can go to more meetings and do it better. (16)

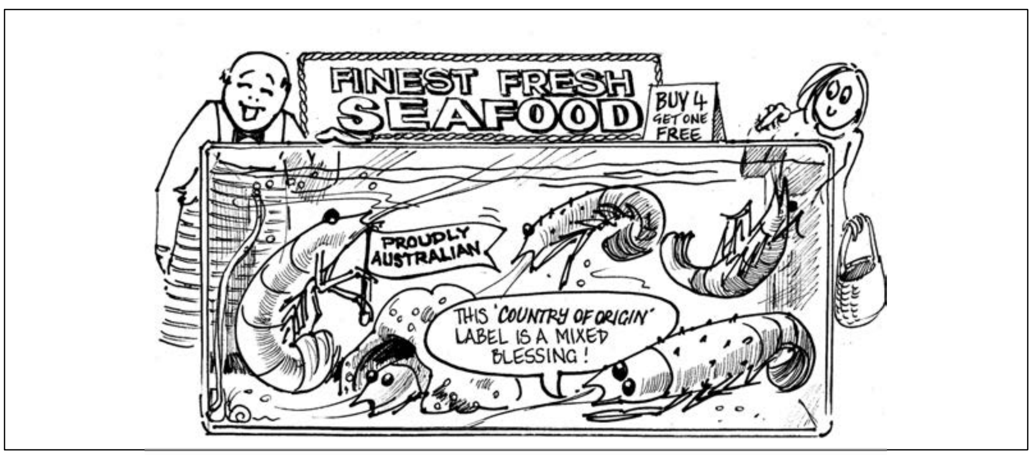
It's just the sheer amount of legal activity that is going on, fishermen are starting to appreciate; they can see the role we doing; we may not be winning but at least we are trying. (16)

Maybe as a representative it tends to be fishermen like ourselves as we are getting a little too old for going to sea; you spend more time sort of on the political side. The younger fishermen say they haven't got the time to get involved. I was the same when I was younger, I didn't want to. (16)

We can knock the edges off policies and slow policies down. We see our role is to see the policies as workable for the fishermen. It's probably environmental groups that usually tend to come up with workable policies. If we can find workable policies that still deliver the goods for fishermen. (16)

The NFFO is willing to fight for even one fisherman, for one fisherman, so fishing is what he does, so it's important that they represent the individual so you don't get lost in the organisation. I mean one of the biggest issues for this region is we're down to 13 driftnet licence holders but the association is putting it's whole weight behind this campaign to save the driftnet fishery, all directed at government minister level. It pursuing the talk, it doesn't matter if you're just one fisherman with one tiny fishing boat, they'll still represent you. (16)

This quote talks to an issue that associations sometimes overlook. It is not always necessary for an association to talk with one voice, or to talk for the majority. If it wishes to remain cohesive, to retain the engagement of all members, then it needs to honestly represent all voices, even the minority ones



Our new CEO wanted to advertise on TV in the State government election campaign and most of it was a membership drive to sort of show both members and non-members that we are very active** and we've come up with six things we asked of Government.* ***We are politically

***neutral but the campaign was challenging people [candidates] to address these issues for the [commodity] industry**. (17)*

***Well you would have seen the TV advertisements that [our CEO] did for the [State Government] election?** [The ad said] 'These are the things that we're looking for'. And **what we did for the members was draw up a comparison between what we'd asked for and what the various [political] parties [offered], what their policies on those issues were. A scorecard with a tick or a cross.** (17)*

[Lobbying in Canberra] Our Chairman and CEO will go down. Generally they do it separately. So the Chairman could be there one fortnight and our CEO the next, spread it around a bit. But we do actively also use the National Farmers Federation in respect to agricultural issues generally. So if there's trade issues, not only are we involved, but National Farmers Federation are involved and our Chair is on the Board of the National Farmers Federation, so it's not a passive membership thing; we are one of the big members of NFF. (17)

***Our public relations and lobbying is what the members like**. They often say, well go to the government or even the local council and argue for this. And that's the debates we have on the Board about what we should be doing all the time really. You know it's all about communication and active lobbying and having a media strategy. (17)*

*We've always recognised that [the value of lobbying], that's one of the main things in Brisbane that needs to be done and **that's why the State office will continue to be there, close to Parliament**. (17)*

We've got more political clout as a group than as an individual. (19)

At one point there, we had a heap of really nationally active members in different fields. (19)

Lobbying and political influence are generally invisible to members, often slow to bring any tangible result, and extremely time consuming.

***There are a lot of things to do with Government regulation and industry-wide issues that the individual can't deal with. So it's our role to represent them** on various committees, approach politicians or Cabinet or whoever, City Council, Town Councils, Shire Councils, those sorts of things. (21)*

Associations tend to provide services directly back to members, such as technical advice, field days, information newsletters, or services on behalf of members, such a lobbying or political influence. Whilst the former is visible, experienced by the members and therefore appreciated, the latter is invisible, does not necessarily show any immediate benefits and hence can go unreported and/or unappreciated by ordinary association members. Yet, it is this less visible work that can potentially have the greatest impact upon the members and the success of their industry. So associations need to be particularly conscious of conveying to members the 'invisible work' that is being done on their behalf.

That's one of the weaknesses of many national bodies such as this. ***There'd be an enormous amount of work going on but it was difficult to communicate that to people what that was.*** *You're doing it and then people would say: 'What are you doing?' Well we're doing this and this. I think that one of the great weaknesses that the association has is the communication of their existence and what it does and what it could do. (1)*

'What's the association doing for me?' Well, if they'd been paying attention, they would have known. And

Very often we're heading off problems before they become a problem*. So you know, a Government Department might say we're going to implement such and such – an activity and quite often [peak body] will actually head it off before it becomes a problem.* ***So most often the [member] industry associations aren't even aware that some of these things happen****. So, if we weren't there, it would have been more problems, but they don't see that. (2)*

Some Farmers have a real 'out of sight, out of mind' mentality, so they've skipped all these things and then say, 'What's the [association] doing for me?' Well, if they'd been paying attention, they would have known. ***And the irony is that they're not paying attention because the [association] has done this job on their behalf, and they haven't needed to pay attention because the things have been done for them.*** *It's quite an ironic circle that the people that are benefited often and the most are the ones that don't realise it, and then criticise it saying, 'What have you done for me?' (3)*

And the fishermen always complain that they don't think [the peak body] is doing enough, because they don't get to see and talk to the [the peak body] people on the ground, face to face enough. (4)

Members to make an appointment with their local politician and have a chat about their industry.

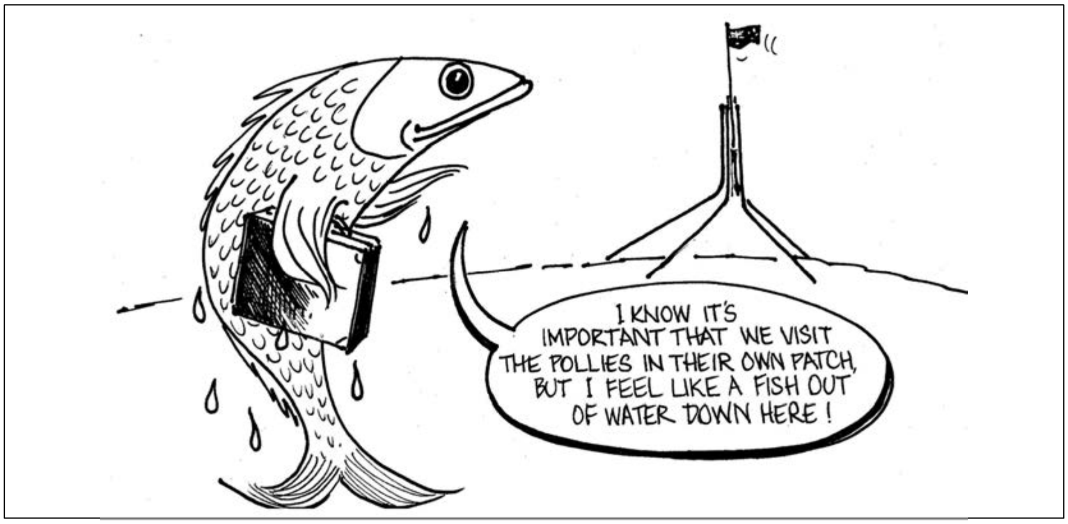
There are a lot of subcommittees. There's a research one, R&D and then there's building community support subcommittee. That's a new one. There's resource access subcommittee. So whether the wider industry know about these…? Probably a lot of people don't. The work is going on but they don't realise what's involved in it all. (4)

The members probably don't see much that they would expect has a direct benefit to them. I don't think they see the internal workings that happen underneath. (7)

Well not much has been happening in the Native Title area. I suppose input into the Marine Parks process has probably been the big ticket issue over the last couple of years. This Maritime Safety thing, I think – I'm not sure how many people are impacted by that, but I know it's been a big issue in some sectors. And the Award stuff, there was some input into the industrial awards. ***I don't know if the members are actually that aware of that. I think as long as their fishery is still open I think they're happy at that, they're still trading.*** *(7)*

How much time and effort has been put in on behalf of fishermen and they'd have no idea of it? They don't see any value in that. Without doing this stuff, we don't even exist. But the members don't see the value in relation to a membership fee. (8)

There's this constant bloody need to be at this meeting or that meeting or some other bloody meeting and most recently with the marine park thing. What an outcome that is; and ***how much time and effort has been put in on behalf of fishermen and they'd have no idea of it. They don't see any value in that. Without doing this stuff, we don't even exist. But the members don't see the value in relation to a membership fee.*** *Do you know what I mean? (8)*



Sometimes it's difficult. Like negotiating with Government in respect to say some environmental negotiations where members may perceive the organisation to be weak with these recent environment regulations that have come in, but they would've been much more severe had we not. But convincing 100 per cent of our members that that is the case is sometimes difficult. (17)

Some people use their membership as a bit of blackmail, saying, 'You guys aren't doing nothing for me, why do I bother?' When in fact you might be doing things on a state or national level, *and they can't see it because they may not attend meetings often enough, or they may not read the information sent out. (20)*

The current philosophy is we're primarily about policy, discussing policy with Government. And I have a divergent view. My view is that our first priority should always be member benefits. You can't be a functional organisation without members. It's just like running a business, and that the policy negotiation stuff should always come second to members. Because without members, we can't be a policy lobbyist anyway. (21)

Very often we're heading off problems before they become a problem.

But a lot of the policy work is hidden from people. You present a paper to Government and you go and speak with the Minister. Like, a lot of the members don't realise that that might be happening. (22)

Similarly the work of the executive can often be 'invisible' to ordinary members, and therefore not appreciated.

> *Often, until you've been in that executive position to look out on what everyone's doing – member to member a lot of people don't see that, and they don't know that that stuff is going on. And sometimes they'll be quite critical of what's not going on. (20)*

A regular member information process such as a weekly member brief or update can be used to make the invisible work more visible and valued. The New Zealand Seafood Industry Council has a procedure for a weekly policy brief to members through a "Friday update from the Chief Executive". This is only a one to two page electronic communication containing highlights and brief descriptions of recent, particularly policy related, activity.

Whereas goods and services back to members are visible, immediate and appreciated by members, public relations, lobbying, and political influence are generally invisible to members, often slow to bring any tangible result, and extremely time consuming. Unless an association is very careful, this invisible work can be unappreciated by the membership. Yet, it can often have a larger pay-off than the more visible and immediate goods and services. Further, if an association is thinking and operating strategically, it can anticipate and head off issues before they even become salient to members.

> *The current philosophy is we're primarily about policy, discussing policy with Government. And I have a divergent view.* ***My view is that our first priority should always be member benefits. You can't be a functional organisation without members. It's just like running a business, and that the policy negotiation stuff should always come second to members. Because without members, we can't be a policy lobbyist anyway.*** *(21)*

An association that participated in one of the workshops that sought to share these research findings talked of endeavouring to engage ordinary members in the political lobbying process. **They invited each of their members to allocate one hour in their year to make an appointment with their local elected member and have a chat with that politician about their industry**. This is a great idea that, unfortunately for that particular association, failed to get any traction.

One of the realities of governments is that they do not have any mechanisms for talking with ordinary fishermen. Rather 'the big end of town', namely government, would rather, and feels much more comfortable, talking to the 'big end of town', namely peak bodies. In fact governments are often instrumental in bringing these peak bodies into existence. A downside of this relationship is that it can become 'cosy', with peak body personal being unwilling to risk their 'cosy' relationship and the sense of self-importance that goes with it. In our research, we came across several associations that exhibited this cosy relationship whilst the members they were supposed to represent disengaged in droves. Over time, the 'peak body' became a hollow shell, representing very few fishers indeed; fishers who despaired at no longer having a voice with a government that refused to recognise any association other than the 'peak'.

Implicit in most of the commentary about representation and lobbying is the idea that the association would speak for its members as a single voice. It assumes the somewhat curious notion that (a) all members would have the same opinion on an issue, (b) only the majority opinion would be put forward, or (c) the President or the Board already know what the opinion of their members was (without asking them). During our research we came across one case-studied association that acknowledged (plus another that came to our attention later) that members held diverse opinions on an issue and the breadth of those opinions was what was faithfully put forward to Government. The value in putting forward multiple views is that all members continue to have faith in their association as their honest voice-piece. When (a), (b), or (c) above apply, is it any wonder members disengage?

Social licence and public relations

Of increasing relevance to many associations is what is sometimes known as 'social license to operate'. This 'social licence' is granted by the 'court of public opinion' and pertains to the perceptions that the general public have of the industry. If the general public feels that the industry is acting in ways that are detrimental to the public or the environment, then political pressure, legal sanctions, increases in regulation and loss of access can follow. Therefore it is increasingly important to industry associations to maintain a watching brief on public perceptions, particularly as portrayed in the media, and to be proactive in shaping those perceptions.

Several associations in this research have obtained Marine Stewardship Council certification, international recognition that their fisheries are sustainable and are being managed under best practice guidelines.

> *Educating them [Canberra] that we're not bad people; we're not polluters; we're quite environmentally friendly. I think they're still stuck, and saying no, no, bad people, bad polluters. (1)*

> *To give you an example, in the public relations space and how effective environmental groups are, I mean they've got incredibly sophisticated. They have cascaded phone call trees and they orchestrate "buzz". We're weak in this area. .* ***We should be using some of the tools that are used against us.*** *….* ***For us a meeting, a good letter and that's about it. We don't go in and run things using Parliamentary Committee process, briefing and using back benchers, using the party room, using the media.*** *(1)*

> *I think at one stage the lobbying was quite good. I think it struggles a bit now. Public relations, it's very bad at. It struggles to have a national profile. It doesn't have a public voice. Marketing, it can't do, to be honest. Public relations, it's very bad at. Lobbying it's not too bad at and political influence it's probably not too bad. (1)*

We, as an industry, have done a good job in producing a good product and promoting it. We haven't done a good job in promoting our own industry.

We, as an industry, have done a good job in producing a good product etc., and promoting the product. We haven't done a good job in promoting our own industry. *That's a big issue and something that will take quite a lot of time and effort. (1)*

A social license to operate is a big one*, public relations, political influence – so all of them. (1)*

We do have to continually work at promoting what the association is there for and what it does. That's pretty much every year we're finding better ways to do that and over the year that has certainly improved. (3)

We do have a 'building community support' campaign*, which I think is appreciated by our members, but I think they appreciate those instances where you can most assist them in the 'now', in terms of losing their access to resources. (4)*

I believe that what is really needed - especially with the changing attitudes of the public and the NGOs coming in from overseas and putting so much pressures on Australian fisheries, saying we're not sustainable, we're raping and pillaging, that there is not enough work done at an industry level, there's not enough work being done at a [State peak body] level. There's no work done at a Department level saying: 'No, every fishery these days is managed eco sustainably'. We haven't had a fishery collapse yet, so back off on the propaganda. I actually chair a committee, a subcommittee of [State peak body] called 'Building Community Support' and I've just spent the last 12 months doing exactly that. We don't have staff in there to do that. ***The public relations committee is only a new committee that's been around two years****, and I would say that committee has been hamstrung by its level of funding. We've already burnt our funding. We've had to stop the committee. So we had a $100,000 budget; that's gone. We burnt that in 12 months. With what funding it had, it did a very good job, and it was well received politically. (4)*

In [this State], we're going for this third party accreditation now. I don't know if you've read about that. Government has allocated a heap of money which is good; it's all to do with marine parks. And we're going to be certified by the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council); have you ever heard of that at all? It's a third party, it's a bit like the World Wildlife Fund, and they say this fishery is sustainable. Rock lobster is the first one to get it in the world. There's about 150 fisheries in the world that have been – are sustainably fished and caught. You don't damage the environment beyond acceptable levels and all this sort of – there's a whole raft of things, it's quite hard to get. At the moment they're looking at doing all the fisheries of [the State]. [Interviewer: So basically it's an international accreditation on sustainability?] ***In Europe now and Coles and Woolworths are going down that path, they won't stock anything unless it's certified. What the third party will do, someone else totally independent looks at it all and says that you're doing everything to the world's best practice and everything is good. I think that we're maybe better spending our money doing that. You're never going to win over the Greenies and the environmentalists.*** *(4)*

Coles and Woolworths won't stock anything unless it's certified. I think we're better spending our money doing that. You're never going to win over the greenies and the environmentalists.

The public perception or our industry is very bad. *For instance, one of my daughters is doing environmental studies at university, and when she first started, 90 per cent of the students thought we caught rock lobster with nets. (6)*

We still haven't quite got a general public perception of the industry going properly. It's been talked about but no one's willing, and the government's not willing to put money into it. *It's a badly underfunded idea. It would take several million dollars to do it. (6)*

You've got the respect of the State government, and that's done by us having MSC accreditation. And ***anything that has an impact on our fishery, we want to be part of it.*** *So [our President] is on half a dozen different associations, and other members are on others. I'm on a whole heap of water plans.* ***And I think we've gained the respect of most people. But that's the answer: you've got to be part of the scene.*** *(8)*

I really don't know if the members really care frankly. I mean obviously – lobbying and political influence is probably the one that they care about in terms of getting decisions made that are in their favour. But I think they underestimate the value of marketing and public relations and I think that if you get good marketing and public relations that can have as much political influence as anything else. (7)

Because an increasing number of these people are urbanites, they are increasingly becoming distant from rural and regional Australia. Everyone needs to know that we provide enormous volumes of fish for the public.

I think there is a bit of realisation that getting out into the public arena and influencing the people is important. I think we've got a couple of young people in the industry who probably can see the benefits of that, so they're probably, because of young blood, very much into the more marketing and PR and social media type of thing. So I think having a couple of people that have a bit more 'get-up-and-go' to get something happening. (7)

[Reason for our political involvement] Survival; simple as that. We've had a Victorian inland waters commercial fishery, we've had a NSW commercial fishery, and a South Australian inland waters commercial fishery; they've all closed in the last 20 years. And this fishery is the last one in the line. So ***it has been obvious that if you don't do some lobbying and public relations, and a bit of innovative stuff, then you will be a victim just like the other three commercial fisheries.*** *(8)*

It would be in every association's best interest to do as much marketing, public relations and lobbying, and political influence, and whether it's both sides of Parliament it doesn't matter, they need to continue it and increase their effort. ***Because an increasing number of these people are urbanites who have never been outside a metropolitan area, and they are***

increasingly becoming distant from rural and regional Australia. Everyone needs to know that we provide enormous volumes of fish for the public. And if we don't supply it, then we import more*, which creates more problems. Less people employed, there's just a whole spin-off. (8)*

Probably because the guys involved in [the association] can see that they have to keep on nibbling away at the politicians to get them on-side with our industry, so that we're not classed as raping and pillaging the ocean. (9)

I think that has kept a lot of the members there, the way that [our association] has dealt with Marine Parks. Despite it being a very contentious issue from the 'outside', from within it's been a positive point for the industry. (9)

I also think that [our association] is pretty proactive from a community point of view on behalf of its members in terms of each year supporting various charities as well, on behalf of the fishery*. They're quite happy and active, and it's not just one all the time,* ***spreading benefits across a range of community charities and other relevant events in the southeast and limestone coast.*** *That* ***from a whole-of-fishery point of view and whole-of-membership point of view delivers benefits as well.*** *(9)*

In terms of public relations, we're actively working with charities each year, and also profiling the benefits of the industry in local media etc. to the region*, I think [our association] is quite efficient in doing that.* ***We have established good relationships both with local media*** *in the southeast now and also metropolitan media to some degree. (9)*

We have established good relationships with local and metropolitan media.

[Most valued by members] *Definitely local profiling. Members like to see and hear things about their industry in local media and local forums. I think they value that. It's harder to do that in metropolitan media – they always like to see something positive about the industry in the metropolitan media as well, whether that be in print or on the radio / TV. (9)*

It's very well connected in that sense. There are people in the organisation that have prominent media roles, that have prominent roles in politics and in business, and that are very well connected in the wider community. So when it comes to getting things organised and talking about things, it has a good conduit into both politics and the media. (11)

I think the advocacy roles, public relations. And that has far-reaching consequences in terms of social license to operate, which is very important in this industry. And even in a Province where we generally have very good support, the thing is that we want to foster more support at the ground level. (15)

It's no longer what else is happening in your own backyard, it's what's happening around the rest of the world. Because everybody has one of these computers at their fingertips. No matter where they live now so they know what's going on everywhere. So it may be a public relations role that happens as a response to some sort of environmental event or pollution event or *something or other elsewhere in the world and, you know, our industry has to be able to react to that appropriately. (15)*

The fact that we are growing and becoming more visible. I think it may force us to make sure that we get very good at external communication and that's probably pushed us to develop a little bit more PR in the past three years anyway. (15)

We're having to go out there more into the public domain and fight and we're getting a lot of pressure and it's all coming from TV, newspapers, media coverage. So you've got to go into that domain and put your point across. So that is why the association has been more active and also it's asking its members to get involved at a local level more and keep the contact up with local radio stations and TV. So you get in to them personally, so if anything comes into the media, the association can pick their phone up and say [to a local member] would you be willing to be the contact, to comment on this issue? You've got to go; if somebody's attacking you in the media, you've got to go into that arena and put your case. So that's where we've been more active. (16)

They expect you, now and then, that if you make your mouth go they're willing to back it up and do some PR work or get you involved on the TV or radio interviews. I've just done couple of radio interviews Friday and today for national – for local radio station, so yeah it's alright. (16)

I think the NFFO is engaged a PR firm to sort of help them, handle media situation in newspapers. (16)

***The marketing of the industry to the general public is a major gap that we haven't managed to fulfil.** As you're probably aware, **the farming industry in general is not regarded very highly by the general public which is largely based in urban areas, and we have public relations on the table as one of the things that we must try to do,** to make the general public who consumes most of our product aware of what we do and how we do it. I'm afraid we haven't quite managed it yet. Very few people in Australia are farmers these days, whereas 50 years ago that wasn't true and people are accustomed to food just turning up in the supermarket neatly cut up and wrapped in plastic. They really don't have any concept of what's behind that fact you know. (21)*

I think we most likely need a little bit more lobbying in the public eye and public relations exercise's and try and help people to understand a little bit better about the implications on what could happen with the lack of this industry up here. (22)

Whereas the 'goods, services, and benefits' are directly applicable to members, the marketing of our association to the outside world, the deliberate practice of public relations, the lobbying and political influence are all about retaining our 'social licence' to operate. The court of public opinion can be harsh when it is uninformed.

So getting one's message into the media is a strategy used by more successful associations whose principle goal is advocacy. Yet getting the media's attention is very hard to do. Jacobs & Glass (2002) conducted research into the success of NFPs obtaining media publicity.

Organizations that want to get media publicity must be able to successfully construct information that can "pass" as news. The gatekeepers in this process are the journalists, editors, and other professionals in the news room, whose decisions about what is newsworthy have a powerful agenda setting effect on public discussion (Jacobs & Glass, 2002:238).

These researchers found that the media are generally uninterested in ordinary people and events. Accessing the media often requires the use of public relations professionals, a well-developed information infrastructure, and money. The larger an organisation's membership base the more likely media attention might be gained. This is partially because increased membership size means greater legitimacy of message, and partially because a greater membership base can mean more letters to politicians, to news editors, etc. (Jacobs & Glass, 2002)

I think maybe we need to put more in the media that how we're being treated is not right. (1)

You may be aware that both fishing and aquaculture are getting a lot of bad press for what we consider unreasonable reasons*; because there's a 'doom, gloom and guilt' industry out there whose job it is to scare people. (1)*

I think ***one of the things that some of the leadership training doesn't deal with is some pretty handy media training****, not only to get the interest of the media but to deal with the media and how to talk to the media. (1)*

We had a very good girl who used to be a media person with Channel 7 who used to do a lot of the work for us, writing media releases and organising functions at wineries and elsewhere etc. to bring the media along, to experience local seafood and encourage them to write good news stories for the local press. So the media would go away and write lovely stories about the fishing industry. That was really good publicity for our Industry, quite frankly, and I'm disappointed that today we don't do more of it. (4)

One bad press can damage you big time*. (6)*

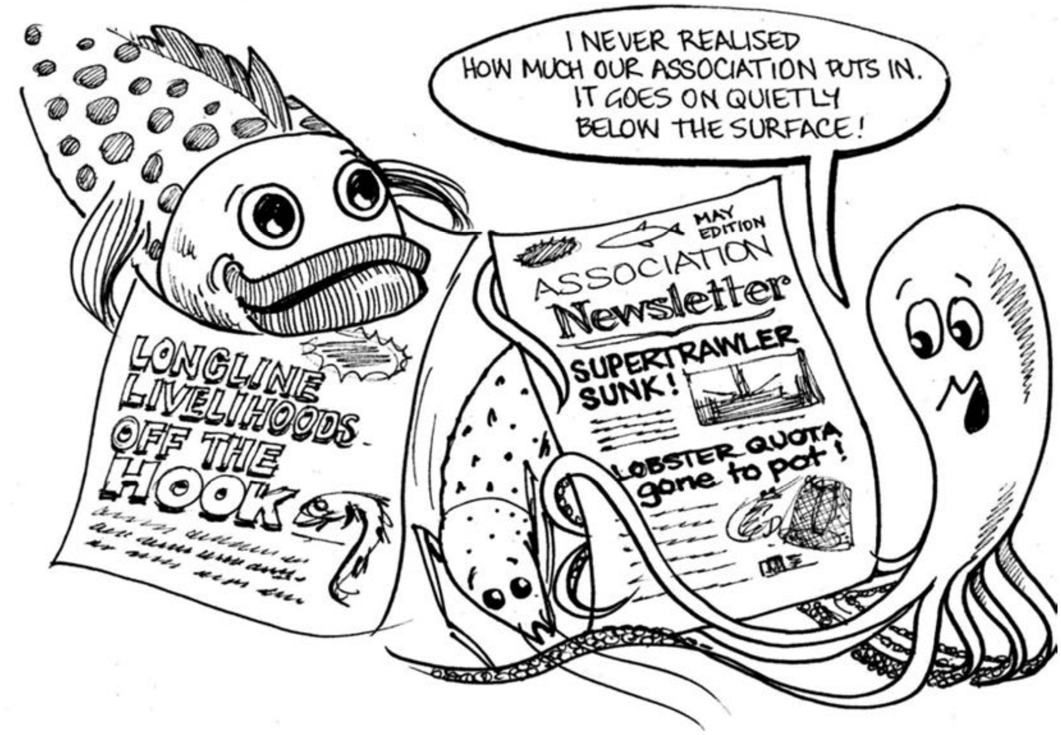
> *The seafood industry is confronted with so many environmental and emotive claims by people unaware of the real scientific facts*

I think the other reason for the trend on public perception is social media and it being used against the fishing industry. I think social media has had a big effect on perception and our inability to respond to it and compete. The old days of laying low so that we weren't a target may not be appropriate any longer. *(7)*

I think if we had a bit more of a presence within the media, we'd probably be able to get some more funding from the public*. (10)*

The seafood industry is confronted with so many environmental issues now and so many emotive claims by people who are unaware of the real scientific facts that we're in a position where we have to continually rebut claims that look good on television but don't have any

__scientific basis__ whatsoever. And, if you haven't got the tools to be able to do that, you're in trouble as an industry organisation. (13)



We've acknowledge that we need to do the media, like the public media position better, press, TV stuff. The key reason is that __we need to maintain a positive image about our sector, particularly in the minds of people within Government, but not in primary industry. So people in Treasury or in Environment, – so that this community feels proud about what this sector does, so that they align to it positively.__ (21)

I honestly believe it's just our lack of numbers up here that the Federal Government don't care about us too much. I mean that's one of the areas that lots of our members want; they want that to be ramped up, and it's quite inadequate at present because of resources. Very much public perceptions of agriculture. __We have put a little sticker out: 'If you eat, you should be interested in agriculture'. Public relations is about having the general community understand just what it means if you take a food bowl away__, basically. Members certainly want to see us more predominantly in the media and they want to see our public relation role increased. (22)

One of the largest associations that we examined for this current research is Canegrowers Queensland. With an eighty year history, a 3,000 membership base and a sophisticated and well-resourced management structure, Canegrowers have honed their media skills. In early 2012, just prior to the State election, they conducted a television media campaign setting out the key issues that the Canegrowers members would like the successful political candidates to attend to. This campaign had a dual purpose. The first was to extract some political promises. The second was to illustrate to their own members that their association had media muscle and was going in to bat for them in a very public way.

> *We're very active in the lobbying area, and with the media. We're very accessible,* ***both our past CEO and our present CEO are what would you say 'media tarts', they love the media.*** *They know how important it is. And also I don't know whether you've seen our TV advertising campaign for the State Government elections. That's something new that our CEO has introduced. (17)*

Marketing

> ***Regards to marketing, we actually are very, very close to looking at a centralised marketing levy which will help lobby and engage more in the marketing side of things.*** *We have put a lot of R&D money into, or a decent amount of R&D money into a national marketing approach for Australian prawns, from both wild and farmed. We've already canvased the farms for this National marketing approach, under the [association] banner. Therefore we have got membership support behind that, because it will involve a marketing levy. (3)*

> *We're right up there with political lobbying, but with marketing, we don't market ourselves that well other than our website because it costs money to market, and we don't have the money. (12)*

Your public relations strategy can work not only to the outside world but to your members as well. So it's actively trying to promote your own Association within your own Association.

> *Our policy is not to do marketing. If anything comes in, say someone wants mussels, it's sent out to every member saying that they've been contacted by this company who is looking for x number of metric tonnes of frozen mussels, everyone can contact this person. That's the only marketing that [association]. It markets itself as being the representative of all industry, but that's different. (15)*

> ***Your public relations strategy can work not only to the outside world but to your members as well. So it's actively trying to promote your own Association within your own Association****. (22)*

In partial summary: Associations are systems that depend upon the external environment for their ongoing survival. That external environment contains a number of threats and a number of opportunities. Healthy associations are conscious of those external threats and opportunities and use a number of means to try to influence them beneficially. The most obvious and common means is lobbying, getting into the ear of government with a view to having government act in the interests of the association and its members. Another is public relations; using the media in ways that are designed (a) to show members that their association has clout, and (b) to maintain the 'social licence to operate' is the eyes of the general public. Marketing can occur in the narrow sense, encouraging direct purchase of product, or in the broader sense of public relations.

Recommendation 13:

a. Invest in the development of expertise and the cultivation of relationships with those authorities, commonly government, best placed to ward off those threats. The higher the level of external threat, the more important it is for this investment.
b. Recognise that your members have varied opinions on a topic and therefore represent all of those views faithfully and proportionately.
c. Because lobbying and political influence are externally directed, and therefore potentially invisible to members, it is vital to keep members informed of these efforts on their behalf.
d. Because the court of public opinion can be a harsh and ill-informed judge, healthy associations keep an ‘ear-to-the-ground’ with respect to public perception threats, and have a media relationship ready to swing into action if needed.
e. Associations, through their collective member capacity, have a greater capacity to ensure supply than any individual. Therefore collective marketing can be commercially beneficial. It is recommended that associations give consideration to this option.
f. Build relationships with other associations and third parties where there is an alignment of interests and join forces for mutual benefit.

Case Study 12: Australian National Sportsfishing Assoc. – South Australia

The Australian National Sportfishing Association – South Australia (ANSA SA) is an association incorporated under South Australian legislation as a not-for-profit body. Over 30 years old, ANSA SA has been an association in decline. Its basic ethos is based on competitive fishing, a concept that recreational fishers are now less interested in. Though membership numbers are still weak, new leadership is hoping for some renewal and re-invigoration. Membership is family-based and has a wide range of ages from children up to 90 years of age. The average age of members is approximately 50 years. The majority of members are male.

ANSA has a national charter that each State based organisation and individual member is bound to, by virtue of their membership and constitution. The charter is subject to periodic review-to ensure that the purpose is aligned to the needs of its members. The association's "Code of Conduct" provides strict guidelines for claiming records. A small number of breaches have led to some significant action at a State or National level to enforce the Code.

While the roles of the key office holders are prescribed within the constitution, they are not widely understood. The broader membership and future leaders would benefit from a better understanding of what is required and of whom.

Membership of ANSA SA is commonly through subsidiary local clubs, which are autonomous and operate under a variety of structures. A member of those clubs can choose to also become a member of ANSA SA. The cost is $14 per person or $30 per family, with all but $5 of that being forwarded to the national ANSA body. A person can also join ANSA nationally, after which they are supposed to be allocated to a local club. However the related administrative processes have broken down.

Because of the conditions of the association's insurance policy, only members can participate in association events and/or submit details of their catch in the competition records. Hence it is only members who benefit from the activities of the association

There is some uncertainty in relation to membership numbers. The ambiguity pertains to being a member of a subsidiary club and also being a member of ANSA, at the State or national level. In some cases club members have paid their additional ANSA membership, though this has not been forwarded on, and those people are therefore not recognised as ANSA members. Or people have joined ANSA nationally or in another State without being on ANSA records.

ANSA SA is vulnerable to membership loss as it is based upon only four member clubs. While it has been successful in attracting a new club recently, there has been an overall fall in memberships of the various member clubs. There is a perception that membership numbers are the responsibility of the member clubs, not of ANSA itself. The association has found itself unable to attract many younger members, whilst older members are less and less interested in competitive fishing. Membership numbers are an issue that continues to challenge the organisation and its ability to attract future leaders. This vulnerability is underlined by the changing nature of the competitive recreational fishing. There is a trend to "open competitions" promoted by regional development and local government bodies. These offer substantial prizes beyond what ANSA SA can offer.

ANSA SA offer a range of services to its members. The benefits most valued are the political / lobbying roles, managing catch records and the provision of the member / competition handbook and associated information. ANSA SA has attempted to run State fishing competitions, though these have not generated any interest. Other services are provided through the national body.

ANSA SA has been relatively inactive for some time. It is a voluntary organisation with no paid officers. Its funding comes solely from membership fees coupled with a participation fee for each event. Its ability to meet member expectations is limited by financial resources. The organisation has been successful in establishing a bequest that specifically supports an ongoing tagging program. However, there is a need for other external funds to support growth and enhanced services

As well as being a member of ANSA nationally, ANSA is also affiliated with the peak body, South Australian Recreational Fishing Advisory Council (SARFAC). These three bodies have actively resource sustainability and recreational access rights. Yet ANSA SA's role in supporting recreational fishing has received limited recognition.

Individual recreational fishers are members of their local clubs. Through those clubs, individuals may also become members of ANSA, though this is not compulsory. This creates ambiguity about the number of individuals actually supported by ANSA SA, which could be between 60 to 200. This is a small number compared with the 210,000 recreational fishers reported by the SA Government.

The governance processes of ANSA SA have not yet adopted modern methods of administration or communication. The organisation is largely managed by nine people. Member clubs are spread across South Australia from the West Coast to the South East. This limits the capacity of the executive group to meet regularly, since each meeting requires a commitment of several days, and association funds are limited. The new Board meets three times per year. The association recognises it needs to make greater use of digital technology to conduct its business.

Membership is largely focussed at the local club level rather than on ANSA SA which supports and administers their sporting activity. This limits the ability to attract new members to the ANSA SA executive group. As most activity is club based, there is little engagement between the State body and individual club members. Ability to encourage fresh blood and new leaders is limited by many of the same issues as limit the capacity of the current executive. There is an acknowledged need for some freshness of leadership.

With local clubs, a State association and a national body, the roles and responsibilities of each are currently ambiguous. ANSA SA provides a very active email and information distribution service to its member clubs. It has no control over the level of information that is then distributed through those clubs to their members. ANSA SA has a relatively low profile with the broader community, limiting any external assistance or support. The major challenges to ANSA SA are similar to those of other seafood industry associations, whether recreational or commercial, which are run by volunteers. They include (i) increasing membership numbers, (ii) improving services to its members, (iii) ensuring resource sustainability and access, and (iv) strengthening funding.

Membership strength

Does your association have as members most of those bodies/enterprises/individuals who could potentially be members?

Mental models

The more that members feel they belong, the more they have invested in time, financially and emotionally, the less likely they are to leave.

The proportion of local industry members that actually belong to the association is a measure of its strength and of its legitimacy. In some industries, all eligible local producers are members of the association. In other industries, far fewer producers are members. The greater the absolute numbers of members, the stronger the association. Also the greater the proportion of members, relative to non-members, the greater the credibility of an association as a voice for that industry sector. One of the associations participating in the present research keeps its membership numbers confidential. It does that for external strategic reasons, believing that it can 'punch above its weight' in political circles if no one else knows how big or small it actually is.

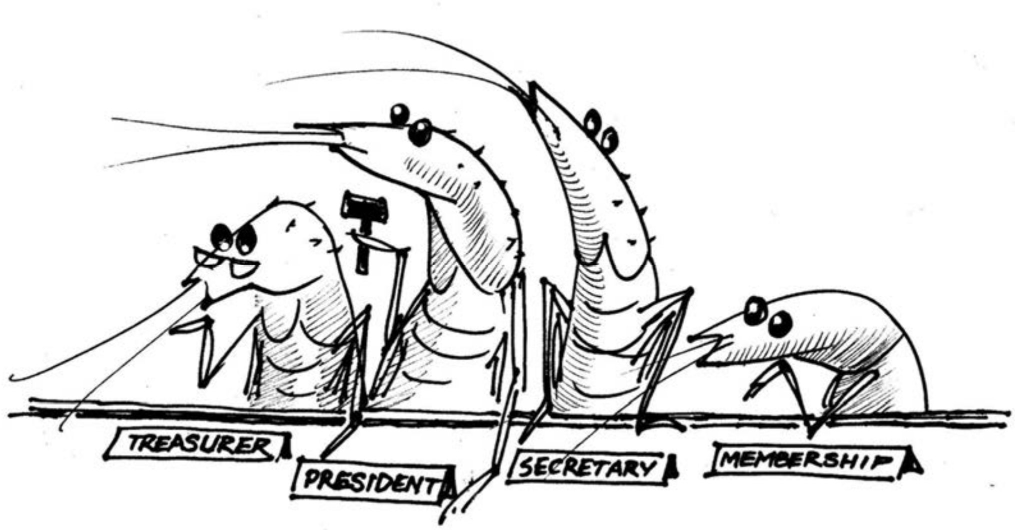
Not only do associations seek to attract members, they also seek to retain them. And yet, across the Western world, the membership bases of NFPs are in decline.

> *There is a transformation of the voluntary sector, in which contemporary non-profit organizations face declining total membership, threats of reduced government funding, and demands for greater accountability* (Hall, 1987; Leat, 1990; Putnam, 1995).(Jacobs & Glass, 2002:235)

The stability of an association is a function of the extent to which it provides member satisfaction. Members will continue to participate if the benefits to them outweigh the costs. And it is often not the activities themselves that provide the satisfaction; it is the act of participating in those activities in the company of others. The higher the sense of identity that members feel for the organisation, the greater the participation, and the higher the exit costs. In other words, the more that members feel they belong, the more they have invested in time, financially and emotionally, the less likely they are to leave (Fine & Holyfield, 1996). So, in addition to growing a sense of responsibility, increasing member loyalty is another reason why new members should be invited to share in the tasks of the association from Day 1.

This is precisely the experience of the Australian Prawn Farmers Association. No member, who has been active on one of the committees, has ever left. Further, the only members they have lost are those who have not served on one of the committees.

The value of an association to a current or potential member is enhanced the higher the level of risk or danger, be that physical, social/political or financial, to which members may be exposed through the common activity that gave rise to the association. So when there are obvious and imminent external risks, such as marine parks being gazetted or other threats to resource access, potential members will flock to the association, because (a) gathering together is a normal human response to threat, and (b) a collective voice has more clout.



Paradoxically, if the association, through strong collective membership, is able to see off the threat, or the threat is realised and accepted, no matter how reluctantly, then the catalyst no longer exists, and membership can fall away.

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This loss of membership will inevitably happen, unless the immediacy of the threat and hence the reason for belonging, is replaced by some more enduring reason for belonging. The provision of goods or services through the association, benefits that cannot be otherwise obtained, will increase the likelihood that the association will be sustainable.

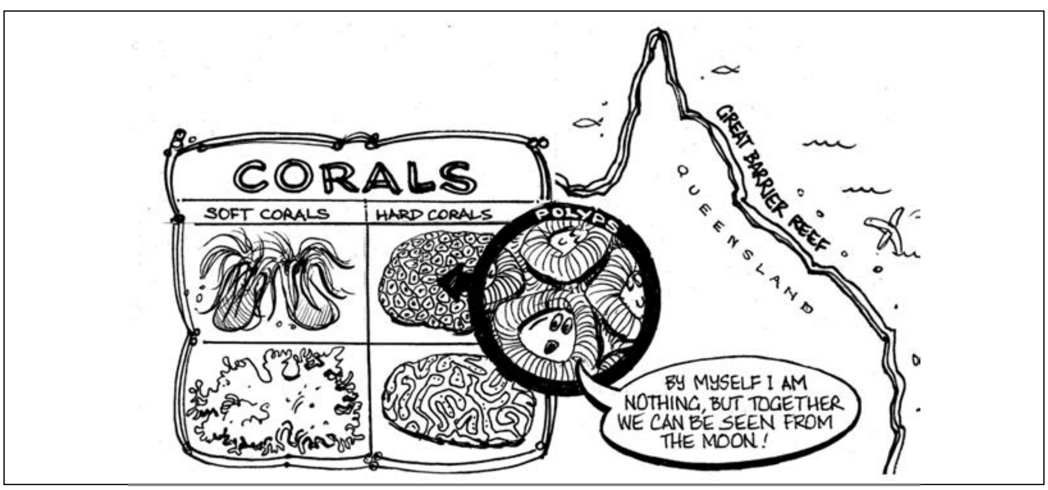
> *Generating cohesion in a social system that relies on individual participation demands recognition of the interplay between forces that bind (and hence require suspension of individual needs) and forces that fragment (and hence require expression of individual needs). Trust and secrecy are the two forces needed to build community. They are the forces that define those that belong and those that don't. Trust and secrecy operate by regulating information and building meaningful extended relationships. An organisation provides the environment within which relationships can flourish and*

experiences and knowledge shared. This is particularly important in risky situations involving external dangers. (Fine & Holyfield, 1996:24)

Groups within which danger is recognised establish mechanisms for generating trust. Group cohesion depends upon making the existence of the group matter to individuals. Trust is a fundamental anchoring dimension of that cohesion. Strong pressures are exerted on a new member of an organisation to demonstrate regard for others by following their advice – thereby demonstrating that both parties are trustworthy. 'I trust you to provide me with accurate information and guidance; therefore you are more likely to find me trustworthy'. *The establishment by a new member of trust in others is an essential element in belonging. So the organisation must establish processes, both formal and informal, within which trust can be created and trustworthiness established. And trust changes over time. Initially based on information, trust gradually becomes embedded within relationships.* (Fine & Holyfield, 1996:24)

Trust or confidence is one of the most important forces in group life. Confidence/trust is social: it occurs between people. Therefore trust is built through the interaction of people, and occurs more rapidly when those interactions are face-to-face. As trust in information becomes trust of persons, ties to the organisation are strengthened and lead to potential for cooperation. (Fine & Holyfield, 1996).

So the forces that bind seem to be (a) an external threat that gives rise to the need for a collective voice, (b) provision of benefits (beyond that collective voice), and (c) social forces – the desire to rub shoulders with like-minded people. In contrast, forces that fragment are often demographic and external.



Legitimacy of voice / strength in numbers

There's possibly two questions there in one. So I would say the majority of industries are represented on [peak body], the vast majority. However, each industry association may not necessarily have a big percentage of the farmers as members of theirs. When you come down to the membership of sector associations, probably less than half. ***Generally how we look at it, not in membership numbers but how much of the production is represented, the more legitimate we are in the eyes of the Government.*** *(2)*

Certainly, as an association, we punch way above our weight and probably because of the percentage of membership we have, support we have from membership overall and therefore the respect we do get from Government has made that fairly important. (3)

86% of the hectares being farmed in Australia for [commodity] are members of the association. (3)

The industry has gone to quota now and basically the fights been fought, and we're bucking over the scraps. So memberships over all the associations are really, really low now.

I think we largely pick up most of the Producers indirectly, or directly, in the membership structure. I know we came from this position where the local [named] Association was a member of [State peak body], and then all the Fishermen on the south coast were members of that. And I think over time, people have fallen in and fallen out of their own local associations, or they've had varying levels of participation which might have fallen away. So I think it's pretty good, but not all. I'd maybe put it at 85%. (4)

Well it's got 43 members; that's associations. [Interviewer: So that's 43 separate fishery associations, but there can be individual members as well, family members and enterprise members?] Yep. (4)

The industry has gone to quota now and basically the fights been fought, and we're bucking over the scraps basically. So memberships over all the associations are really, really low now. *There's nothing controversial, the upturn and the upheaval in the industry has happened now. (6)* [Note that once the threat of the new management regime has been realised, members no longer need the association, and so they leave. There is no reason for them to stay, unless the association can generate other benefits for its members.]

As more and more people exit the industry and then just become an investor, and they lose touch with the industry*, - even though they've still got a vested interest, but they're not a grassroots, going-to-work fisherman; everybody's numbers have dropped down. (6)* [Note that here the 'investors' now have a much more certain income through leasing their rock-lobster pots to active fishermen. Their income uncertainty and risk is diminished; so therefore their need to belong to an association is also now reduced.]

It's probably mainly investors that choose to sit on the fence, because they don't want to get caught up in the politics of it all, even though it influences them quite dramatically. But there's *a huge amount – **I think five years ago it was estimated then that 30 per cent of the pots were held by investors, and I think that's increased even more and more now.** (6)*

***I think the main one that's facing all associations at the moment is lack of membership. I think amalgamation of some associations would be beneficial, because it would strengthen their base**. (6)*

The main issue facing all associations is lack of membership. I think amalgamation of some associations would be beneficial, because it would strengthen their base.

I suppose we always have a dedicated group; you have another proportion of people, probably another third that will turn up if there's something contentious, and probably the other third that don't really care, can't be bothered no matter what happens. Unfortunately the apathy level is rising in that and the other associations. So probably about a third I reckon we have. (6)

I think it has just been time and probably because you put it down as a good common enemy, common interest and sort of been the whole Marine Park process that may have pulled a few people together. (7)

We've been trying to make sure that as many people are members as possible and that's why we're introducing the industry funding arrangements (e.g. PIFS). However people do have the ability to say they don't want to be a member. I suppose it is harder for them to opt out. The membership at an association level have the ability to say 'yes' or 'nay' whether they want the association to have the strategic plan and as part of the strategic plan to contribute to [the peak body], so I suppose, at an association level, they have the power to do that. (7)

*[Interviewer: Does it really have the capacity to be able to lose membership without it affecting its performance?] Absolutely it will affect its performance especially if a large number of people opt out; it would definitely affect its performance. We've got no other way of funding it. **At the moment it's totally reliant on membership to be able to fund. We have got no other way of funding the organisation.** (7)*

It's been a struggle to encourage everyone to be on board and that's where the focus has been obviously, trying to find ways to make sure we've got as much industry membership as possible. (7)

As more and more people exit the industry and then just become an investor, they lose touch with the industry.

***No one has wanted to rock the boat too much while we've been trying to get as many people on board as possible. Mainly everyone has been tip toeing around to keep them from running a mile too far and with a view of encouraging them to join**. So it's still this transition from the old to the new and meeting people's needs I suppose. (7)*

There's been no real care factor about either. I don't think people have had a real care factor. People have actually moved away. It was at a point where it couldn't function virtually.

Everyone has tolerated that; no one has done anything about it. There's no real want to actually fix it. (7)

*A much stronger organisation will allow for a better flow of people in and out because you won't be decimating it if people do leave and **hopefully they would be less inclined to leave if they were happy with what's there**. (7)*

***PIRSA (*Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia*) has for a long time said you don't really represent all the fishermen. So there's always been this fear of we have to have members** and personally I think we should be drawing a line in the sand and saying "you're either a member or you're not". (8)*

***Continually I am asked by government people, bureaucracy, anyone that's anti commercial, 'How many members have you got?'** (8)*

I've learned over the years from the peak industry and from local associations that you've got to be unified and speak as one. Otherwise the people who oppose you break you down into groups and eventually get on top of you. (8)

So long as there was a crisis on the horizon, we always had very strong membership. You've only got to get somebody who wants to take something away from them, and you'd get 100% membership.

*I think **what people have to remember is that the fishing industry is one of the last bastions of independence**. They're not like sheep or cattle or most other animals where you can herd them and one leads and the rest follow. **And while the fishers are starting to gel, they're coming kicking and screaming.** It's the cost of doing business that's made them try to become more of a group. (8)*

*Our next step is to delegate some fishers that are members of the association that are close – whether they have a drink or play golf or socialise with them etc. – **members to try and talk to the non-members about becoming a member.** (8)*

*Our perception is that 'we've got to have members; we've got to have members; we've got to have members'. **I think the reality there is that under the current system, people only become members if they have a perceived need. Sometimes we've had members when there's been a serious threat**, the most recent one was with pipis. There was quite a few extra people came on board with membership then because they had a perception that the member of the association will be doing something for me, I need to be a member because of this. But then we'll just back out of it again. That's actually quite a normal thing. (8)*

*In the past – 20 years ago – whenever there was a crisis in the fishery, whenever the fishery was being challenged by government or by non-government organisations, we always had very high membership. **So as long as there was a crisis on the horizon, we always had very strong membership**. You've only got to get somebody who wants to take something away from them, and you'd get 100% membership. (8)*

You've really still only got the eight or ten that are on there as delegates. (9)

In terms of licences, 141; so almost 80%. (9)

The ones that don't pay just do not like to put their money out of their pocket. ***They want the results on the big issue that will crop up – but as soon as the big issues disappear, they just let everybody else carry the can. So you probably won't get money out of them anyway.*** *They'll always find an excuse why they shouldn't pay. (9)*

They want the results on the big issue that will crop up – but as soon as the big issues disappear, they just let everybody else carry the can.

Relying on the individual Fishermen to become members, it's 75% and you still get 25% that won't voluntarily pay. So unless it's a form of funding out of your licence fee, which they can't not pay, then you won't get it. If it's compulsory (I don't know whether that's legal anymore, it used to be) then you get more members. Make it mandatory, stop the voluntary part. (9)

It always is that low, 0.5 – 2% for fishing clubs around the world, and it's no different here. (11)

There's a number of things you could do if you wanted to, but I don't really know if you want to increase the membership. My personal perspective is that it's very comfortable. Everybody is welcomed into the club, but I don't think they go chasing members that hard. (11)

If they wanted to increase the membership, they could do a lot more marketing and generally get each person to sponsor someone to come along. It's just whether people really see the need to. (11)

We don't give out our membership numbers*. [Interviewer: And is there a philosophical reason why your membership numbers are confidential?] Because it's similar to anybody else. If we said we had ten members, nobody would take any notice of us. If we said we had 20,000, they would take notice. At this point in time, we want to be able to say, 'This is what our position is,' without having to say, 'because we have 10,000 people behind us / 10 people behind us.'* ***It gives us strength when it comes down to lobbying.*** *[Interviewer: A strategic reason, okay.] (11)* [Note that the strategy of not disclosing membership numbers removes the need to grow membership numbers to demonstrate legitimacy. This association just claims legitimacy of voice and has sufficient political and media connections that it is powerful regardless of the size of the membership base.]

We're [the State peak body] encouraging new members all the time. But we really don't get involved in that; it's down at the club level. It hurts the association when they leave. That's where the clubs have to play their part, not the [State peak] association. (12)

[Interviewer - In [this State], they talk about something like 250,000+ people participate in recreational fishing every year]. ***We would be lucky if we had 60 at the moment****. And I think that would be over the top. We have 1-2% [of potential members]. It's very low. We're probably a bit of an elitist fishing group in respect to the way we fish. (12)*

[Membership strength]. So it's going to be probably less than one hundred at this stage. So it's a very small proportion. [Interviewer: So out of the 100, you've got 9 people that are actively supporting [the association], and the rest is done at a club level?] That's right. (12)

So now we deal with only national issues that are of interest to both categories – shellfish and fin fish. And I think the membership has increased a lot. (14)

It requires more work when there are new members. If you're not doing a really good job of communication and outreach, it's a very, very quick thing where people think, 'Oh, it's just an old boys' club.'

We've gained members. I'd say we've increased by 75% in the last three years. I think people have just come to realise that there are stumbling blocks to investment, to growing. A lot of them are regulatory in nature, and people have come united under a single cause, realising that we need to work together, rather than fight against each other. (14)

90-95%. It is strong, which I think really helps us in our lobbying activities. Because we can say that we represent the whole Canadian aquaculture industry. We farm in every province, including the Yukon. (14)

Corporate / Producer members: 19, Associations: 14, Suppliers: 21. Current Membership Total – 54. (14)

It requires more work on my part and my staff's part when there are new members, because you're starting from square one. But it's so key; and they quickly know whether things are a closed shop. If you're not doing a really good job of communication and outreach, it's a very, very quick thing where people think, 'Oh, it's just an old boys' club.' (14)

Fourteen producer members and about 70 associate members. We're only talking fourteen; so maybe ten of them are very active. The others just have their heads down, just trying to stay in the industry. [Interviewer: So in terms of the production volume in aquaculture, you probably got ninety-five to ninety-eight per cent?] At least. (15)

Well the membership's definitely decreased, cause the fishing industry is getter smaller. And decommissioning the vessels and people leaving the industry. (16)

We've actually gone from 100 % in 2000, immediately when we lost compulsory membership, we went to 95 %. We had a couple of areas break away from us in the Burdekin and that dropped it down to about 90 %, and since then ***we've actually drifted down to currently 75 %.*** *And there are a number of reasons for that.* ***One is perception of value for money, and also corporate farms coming in****. (17)*

We've got 70 members. Probably 60% of those are producers or part-time producers. (22)

To tell you the truth, in the last four years while I've been trying to build the association, build the quality, it's been about survival. It's basically doing everything to ensure that the *association survives. It's a struggle.* ***Membership numbers have increased, but I still feel with some hiccup 10 members could pull out over the next couple of months, if we're not seen to be heading in the right direction. It just feels precarious.*** *(22)*

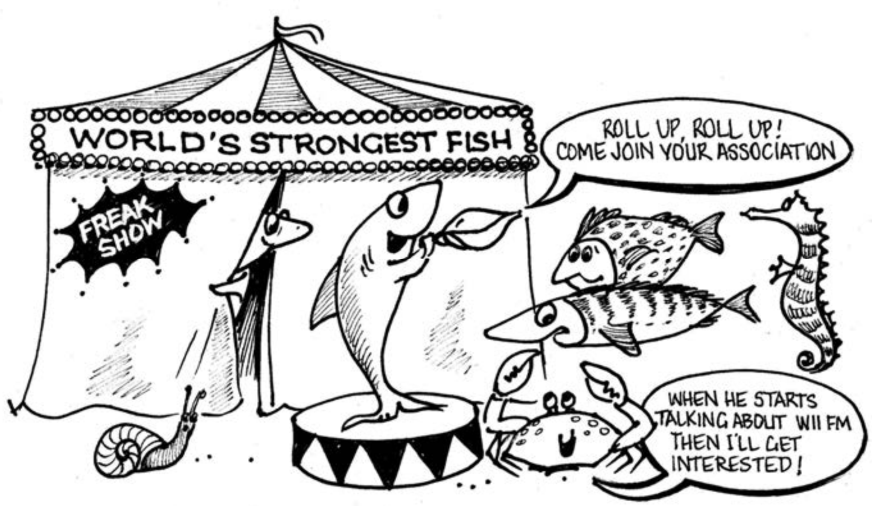
Perception of benefits

Maybe some of the energy they've been using to try and get people on board; perhaps they've got to cut their losses and get on with what they do have and look after the members that they do have. *I think there's been a lot of energy spent trying to chase non-members and if this last strategy doesn't work then I think we've just got to get on with the job. Because the people that do keep paying the membership are not being served as well as they could be because they're trying hard to get more members. So then the existing membership base starts to get disgruntled because they're not being serviced adequately and then you've got to chase them. (7)*

People need to see the worth of an organisation. And they're not going to contribute funds if there's nothing in it for them.

Most fishermen at various times have been unhappy with the association, most fishermen have dealt with that by not being members. So they've been anywhere between 'not a member for a little while' right the way through to 'I'm never gunna be a member again'. *(8)*

[Level of engagement] It depends on the issue. If it's something that's going to affect everyone, you have a lot greater participation. I think people generally do keep a close eye on what's going on, the information that's being distributed and what the issues are. And ***when it's a critical issue, I think the participation is quite adequate.*** *If it's not such a significant issue, I think it's just adequate, so it varies. (9)*



People have lost interest in the way we fish, the sport side of it. We'd run a competition and no one would come to it. We try to get them all to come and have what we call the State competition. But we couldn't get them all to come. They all had their own agendas. That's where it became awkward. (12)

It's demonstrating benefit, isn't it? If you can demonstrate benefit, you will increase your membership. (13)

If we're not successful in expanding, growing, and strengthening the industry – extending licences, increasing investment, growing the industry – then we won't have achieved what we wanted to. So my thinking is that if we can grow the industry, our association will also be able to grow in terms of members and in due (fee) structure. (14)

Given the size of our organisation, almost all groups are in. Even though some may spit the dummy, others join because there's an advantage. So it's something we've learned to live with since our association started. We weren't resilient enough. (16)

While you need to tap people on the shoulder, people want to participate more in an organisation that's highly active and it's seen to be highly active.

People need to see the worth of an organisation. And they're not going to contribute funds if there's nothing in it for them. *And I think the organisation needs to be focussed to actually provide the outcomes that their members or prospective members expect. If they can achieve that, then membership will increase. (18)*

My view is that while you need to tap people on the shoulder, people want to participate more in an organisation that's highly active and it's seen to be highly active. The whole idea of a very active and strongly member-centred organisation is the key to getting more people participating*. (21)*

We haven't touched their lives if you like. They've never been actively involved because of time. There's a few reasons for them not becoming members.

At one point we had 12 financial members*. I can't really pin it down, somewhere in between 12-17, and* ***now we've got over 70****. So, you know; we have to be doing something right for that to happen. There's been a little bit of marketing and there's also been a few runs on the board. So the trend has been good. (22)*

Some people balk because of the membership fee even though it's only very small. Oh yeah you know, I'm not paying $220 or whatever that is. Some people, just from an historical perspective, saw the association as a basket-case a couple of years ago. With other people, it's a lack of knowledge of what we're doing. ***We haven't touched their lives*** *if you like. They've never been actively involved because of time. So there are a few reasons for them not becoming members. (22)*

I know this might sound Territorian, but whether it's for a beer or barbeque or whatever, ***the more you bring the people together the more they'll understand and hopefully the more interest and involvement they will want.*** *That is a very important thing and that is just for the committee. For the association to survive this year and next is to get them to understand just how important what we do is. (22)*

Demographic and other external factors

There are no young fishermen. I'm probably classed as a young fisherman now, whereas it used to get passed on from father to son, father to son. *It is getting harder, there's a lot more restrictions on us now.* ***There's obviously a booming oil and gas industry where, if you've got a skippers certificate and every fishermen has, they can go up north and make themselves a thousand dollars a day sitting on a tug boat*** *and not have millions of dollars laid out.* ***So if I wasn't married with three children, I would probably be up there too and work for five weeks on and five weeks off and make myself $300,000 a year.*** *(6)*

They come when they're a bit younger, and when they're older they leave. So I don't think there's any pressure on that side of it. (9)

I think that's just normal with our industry. People come and go, and that's just the way it is. (9)

> ***A lot of them are getting on in years and tending to sell or lease their farms. And they're being bought by someone who is already a member.***

[Why people leave]. A bit of bad press from some non-members, there's been a lot of being undermined from the outside. *(9)* [If the bonding social capital is stronger with the outsiders than it is with the insiders, then luke-warm insiders become outsiders.]

Membership is declining. We've failed as an organisation to encourage young people along, and when we have, they're there for a short time and disappear elsewhere. (12)

There is a trend in the declining numbers, which is due to the ageing population of the membership. (12)

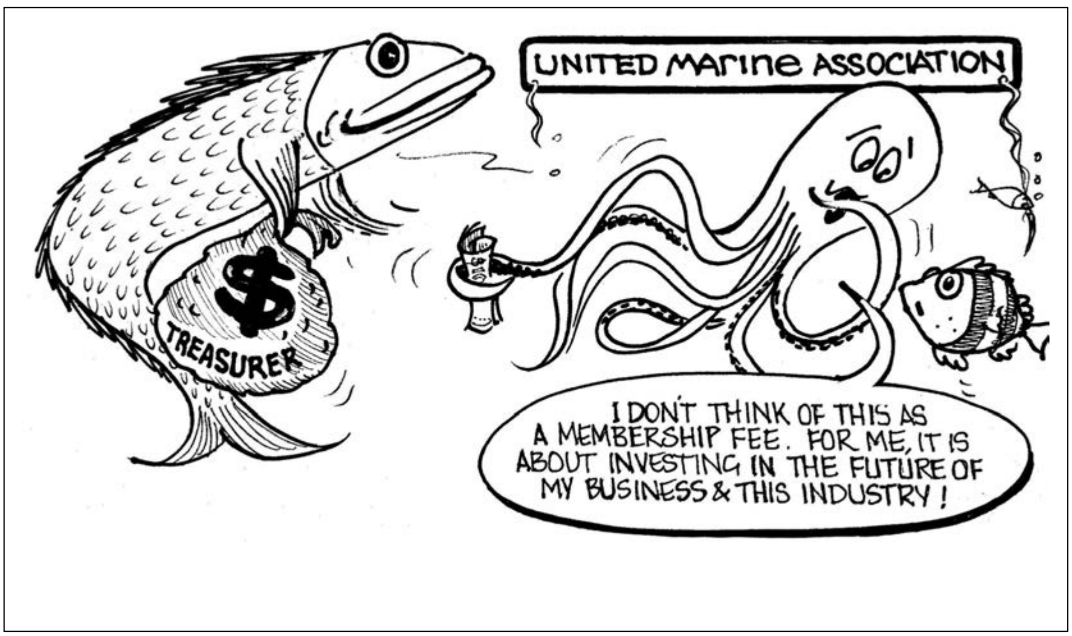
We're seeing the industry grow here but we're not seeing the number of companies grow here in terms of operating at this point, in terms of producers. (15)

Off the top of my head, the number of grower's State wide is falling every year; so it'd be probably about 4,000 or so. [Interviewer: You said the numbers are falling, what's the reason for that?] ***Well of overall membership, a lot of them are getting on in years and they're generally tending to sell or lease their farms. And they're always being bought by someone who is an existing grower and, more often than not, already a member. So the actual amount of sugar produced has fallen a bit but the number of members has probably fallen a little bit faster.*** *So the membership of the organisation as tonnage is still reasonably consistent but there's less members. You're still getting the income from it, but what you find, say around [named district], there's a lot of say smaller older growers. In the [another district], for*

> *example, the biggest area, there's a smaller number of younger growers with bigger farms. Further north is generally smaller farms and older growers as well.* ***So generally some of the bigger growers can say, well I'm big enough, I don't need Canegrowers to fight the battles for me.*** *(17)*

In partial summary: Members need associations, though that need can fluctuate. In contrast Associations need members, and that need is stable, particularly where the association has fixed expenses, such as an employee. The higher the percentage of potential members an association has, the more legitimate it can claim to be, in the eyes of external stakeholders, such as government. Further, the more members an association has, the stronger is its financial base. All but one of the associations in this research had a stable or declining membership. Members disengage when they do not see personal benefit. Numbers of members drop as enterprises engage in economies of scale, or active licence holders become investors. And membership numbers can rise or fall with the perception or otherwise of external threats, while member levels of optimism/pessimism about the future for their industry follows a similar pattern.

> **Recommendation 14:** Assess, as part of an annual audit, (a) the number of potential members, (b) the number of actual members, (c) the trends in the number of potential members over the past five years, (d) the trends in proportion of actual to potential members over the past five years, and the reasons underpinning each of those numbers.



Case Study 13: New Zealand Seafood Industry Council

New Zealand Seafood Industry Council (NZSIC) is the peak body for the New Zealand seafood industry. The Council is a member based organisation that provides a broad range of services to support the seafood industry in New Zealand. Those services range from representation and lobbying, research, community educations and awareness, support for industry sectors, industry development programs and training programs.

The NZSIC is supported by a compulsory industry-based levy collected by government from licence holders and rights holders. That levy is based on the quota of product the licence-holder is authorised to catch. The resulting NZ$3m or NZ$4m per annum has provided significant capacity for service delivery.

Currently the NZSIC is undertaking a review of its governance arrangements, including a shift to a voluntary levy, in order to better meet the needs and expectations of members, and in response to a shift in Government policy. The resulting restructure will result in a reduction of the number of Directors from eight to five, with each being nominated by the five key industry sector groupings of paua, rock lobster, deep water, inshore trawl fisheries and aquaculture. The restructure is also expected to bring greater clarity over the roles of the NZSIC and its member bodies. A number of responsibilities will be devolved from NZSIC to sector organisations.

The Board of the NZSIC develops policies and oversees their delivery. It is elected over a three year cycle with a third of its members replaced each year. There are no limits to the number of terms as a Director that a member may serve. The restructure of NZSIC will place a greater emphasis on the role of the member groups in identifying and developing future leaders for those groups and future Directors of the new Board.

The NZSIC has a code of conduct that seeks to ensure sustainability, environmental best practice and the industry's social licence to operate. Compliance with the code varies across the industry. The industry is increasing its efforts to ensure compliance.

The NZSIC has been very well resourced to ensure it has sufficient performance capacity to service member needs. The restructure will refocus the level and range of services it needs to provide support to its member groups. The organisation has effective processes for seeking member input particularly in key policy areas. It also has a number of effective communication mechanisms for keeping its members informed. As it is for many organisations, keeping members engaged will be a continuing challenging. Demographic challenges include an aging workforce, attracting young people into the industry and fostering future leaders.

The move from a compulsory quota-based levy to voluntary funding takes the Council into unknown territory. And there is a public relations challenge, in the face of pressure from Environmental NGOs, to present the industry as responsible, sustainable and beneficial. In this endeavour, ongoing Government support will be vital.

Learning new skills and adopting new technologies

In your association, do the members keep up with emerging technologies and master the necessary skills to do so?

We live in a rapidly changing world, politically, technologically, economically and socially. Individuals, enterprises, industries and their associations need to adapt to the external changes if they are to survive. This involves acquiring new information, learning new technologies and mastering new skills. Associations can play an important role in bringing relevant information, technologies, and skills to their members.

Material for this Chapter is divided into five areas: (a) the need for new skills and technologies, (b) the nature of the skills and technologies, (c) the source of the new skills and technologies, (d) the willingness to take up the new skills and technologies, and (e) the opportunity to apply new knowledge and skills.

The need for skills and technologies

It's important that the Board and [peak association] do keep up with what new technologies are there and they can disseminate that to members. Say if there was new technology that saved energy then that's a huge benefit to sector members, so that would be enormous. Being able to fast track chemicals through the [regulatory authority] and knowing how to do that, that'd be a bonus. (1)

One of the greatest assets for fishers would be to have computer literacy skills.

I see our industry as bi-modal. We've got two populations. We've got the grassroots who need a little bit more facilitation and whereas the other population are corporate, mature and they've got their ability to make pathways and they need different services. *(1)*

We find ourselves on a Board, but not necessarily with all the training in effective ways to be on that Board.

I think that might be a common experience for the fishing industry, that we do come from our boat, and we might have been active in our local association and very good at it. Then we get put up for election and find ourselves on a Board, but not necessarily with all the training in terms of the appropriate and effective way to be on that Board. I think it's a common experience. *(4)*

There is a need to work with science. That will never be easy because in most cases we know more about fish than they do and they do not like to admit to it. However it is important to work with them. (8)

One of the greatest assets for the Fishers would be to have computer literacy skills*. (8)*

I'm sure if a lot of the Fishers were actually shown how to use a computer that they wouldn't be so fearful of it. A lot of it is confidence. It just amazes me, particularly things like ***fish prices in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, they're blipped out daily.*** *If you've got fish in Sydney, you want to know what you've got for it. Well, before you send the next shipment of fish to Sydney, you can tack into the prices in Adelaide or Melbourne. So* ***I fail to understand why these guys are not maximising the value of their product.*** *(8)*

That's ***something that's sadly lacking in recreational fishing, a management course****. There's heaps done by the Department and the Feds, but there's bugger-all done by clubs and associations, because it's expensive. (11)*

I think if the national body perhaps, provided some training opportunities for people who might potentially be Secretary but don't feel that they have the meeting management skills. I think a lot of people don't want to be Secretary because you have to run the meeting. So I think ***if there were a one-day governance course that people could go on, it would make them more likely to step into those positions.*** *(11)*

De-regulation within the industry has brought about quite a few policy and structural changes. *It's all about relationships and so forth and it has caused renewed focus on communications, but also accessing experts in order assist us in some of these changes like the forward pricing and risk management. It's something we are engaging experts to advise our members on. (17)*

The nature of the skills and technologies

I don't think we're very sophisticated with our extension. I don't think that people understand extension in seafood is a technology transfer model. (1)

Next month we're doing a Board Governance course. The whole Board has to do it.

There's a lot of social science that we don't do *and if you look at the way that they do their extension and even with this RD&E plan, they don't map it out very well. I mean I'm doing a Caring for Country project and their program logic and the disciplines they put you under are much better than what you see in the Fisheries space. (1)*

An acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge, with industry being the "indigenous"; it has its own expertise. (1)

Once a year we have a workshop and it's in a different part of Queensland *and they organise tours of [industry] facilities which may be facilities that have got totally different culture methods because of the species but* ***you learn, oh gee, is that how you do that; I can see how that would work for me. It's been brilliant. That, incidentally, is free****. So there's a workshop and farm visits, all organised food, the venue, everything, buses, whatever is needed and it's all free. (2)*

They've also just recently undertake a large training program where they've secured funding to engage a consultant to do training in the seafood industry in Queensland. (2)

I know next month we're doing a Board Governance course, a one day course which has been put up. The whole Board has to do that. *(4)*

And we've got some big things happening in terms of our paper-based reporting system transitioning to an electronic system. It's a year or two away, but members will be able to trade in their catch quota electronically etc. So it's recognised that there needs to be a very big program to support people transitioning to that. (4)

The association is quite open to new technologies and new skills at the association level. A good example is the new technology and some of the work that [the association] has undertaken there, ***like in the past with the scales, and at the moment looking at i-pad applications*** *etc. The association is quite active in pursuing those sorts of initiatives. So* ***if the skills aren't existing within the association, they're quite happy to go and outsource them and cover the costs to have them available****. (9)*

If one of our members wants to go along and get their boat licence, we'll cover the cost of that. (11)

I've had really good fly-fishermen help me learn how to fly-fish. I've had people who are really skilled at fishing spending time making me better at it. (11)

On a national level, even within our membership structure we have technical working groups that deal with various technical issues – e.g. feed inclusion, sustainability issues, fish health. So we have access to technical experts on those working groups. So they're members and / or non-members, but everybody pitches in. So we do have access to technical experts at the national as well as the provincial level. (14)

Every three years we have a triennial election which means that our members vote for their new elected representatives, and every time we do that we bring them all together for a big induction as well as professional development. (17)

We've run QuickBooks training for the one who's doing the books.

We do a lot of is professional development with our Directors. They are all aware of good corporate governance and they do have a code of conduct*. (17)*

Yes, for example ***we've run QuickBooks training and things like that for the one who's doing the books*** *and all that type of things. So if it is brought to our attention that something is needed, on an as-needed basis we can provide those trainings. (18)*

I think technology hasn't improved in the bush in the past five years. I looked into trying to get internet at the woolshed and we can't get the telephone service. The suggestion was, we could host webinars. Save people trying to come to the meetings, they could be at home and do something. (19)

There's guest speakers, definitely workshops, forums, those sorts of things and, to be quite honest, I wouldn't know half of the stuff that I know now without [our association]. *(19)*

The source of skills and technologies

The biggest spin-off of the lot was back when we agreed unanimously to have a compulsory legislated research and development levy. *And that levy was the first of its kind, and still is the only seafood from a prime group that's actually –* ***it's a legislated levy that's paid by every single Farmer in Australia – members or otherwise – all goes through the FRDC.*** *It's collected by the collector of public monies or whatever, but it goes to FRDC and then it can be channelled through them and through Seafood CRC and gets ramped up for funding. (3)*

Yeah, we do have adequate access to experts. ***There's often workshops and talks at the conferences****, but it's not restricted to that. We have quite a good relationship of course with the research agencies, DEEDI and the CSIRO. And the association is quite well-known that we can facilitate workshops whenever required. (3)*

We get a lot of international speakers [to our conference] *who come and tell us what's going on overseas as well. What are they doing in the way of viral control? What are they doing in the way of just normal management? What are they doing to keep ahead on environmental issues? (3)*

That's what I'm saying about the associate members – we draw upon industry experts, [named member] or on the environmental stuff, [other named members]. So when we need them we'll generally draw upon the experts from our membership base. (4)

> ***There are a number of technical issues that are interpreted by bureaucrats, e.g. fish health issues. So we need technical expertise in dealing with the government on those issues.***

Particularly ***on the management and Government regulation, we do endeavour to get some outside influences in from other jurisdictions to help show how we might better manage ourselves****, but typically its relaying changes in Government regulation. (5)*

The fishing market all over Australia is under stress, so the suppliers are going out of their way more to sell their product. So we get a lot more information and a lot more gear to try out. And technology is advancing all the time. (12)

We own a company that's involved in the IT and data collection. Its main contract is with the Ministry of Fisheries, so this company has got great expertise in new technology. They're not there to coach industry members; they're there to encourage industry members to use electronic developments. (13)

The reason for the [declining] trend [in access to technical experts] really relates to this young available scientist in particular. (13)

Our fisheries legislation is 158 years old, and doesn't even reference aquaculture. And that's the main federal piece of legislation that manages aquaculture in this country, which is kind of silly. But within that, there are a number of technical issues that are interpreted by bureaucrats and regulators as e.g. fish health related issues. So we need technical expertise in dealing with the government on those issues. (14)

In the course of this research we came across two organisations that specialise in providing education and support to voluntary bodies such as industry associations.

Whilst the Institute of Company Directors provides admirable professional training, its origins are in the corporate world. By comparison, The Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance, provides services for NFPs. See http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/training.

Australasian Society of Association Executives (AuSAE) provides support, networking services and up to date industry information to association managers in the business, professional, technical, trade, sporting, welfare, religious, educational and finance sectors. It publishes the free digital Third Sector Magazine – see http://thirdsectormagazine.com.au/ - which offers a myriad of ideas for NFPs.

The willingness to take up skills and technologies

Unless the industry embraces new technologies, the actual fishermen won't, so you need the executive to do it, and then get us to follow along.

***A lot of the people in our industry are ageing and are less likely to take up new technologies**. They often do in their business but not necessarily their personal life. Like they'll have the latest GPS or whatever it is on their boat but when you ask about if they can run a computer and sit in on a Skype conference or something they wouldn't know what you're talking about. (7)*

***I think industry has got a very poor take up of technological stuff anyway**. We should have had teleconferences and Skype meetings and stuff. **We've got a wide geographic spread but we really haven't done much in making sure we shorten the distance for people, given some of the technologies that are available now. You could have chat groups or you could even have e-learning.** I mean I'm doing e-learning now at [another organisation]; it's just a matter of clocking onto a website and sitting there at your own pace going through modules and stuff. So this is all available but we as an industry haven't really taken it up. I think we do have a severe lack of access to technical experts. (7)*

*Just new technologies that come to the forefront in other industries that they decide are probably of some use to our industry as well. Like at the moment, they were doing that i-pad trial on the boats collecting data, so we don't have to do it all at the end of the month. It was all going to be done as you go. So that's all new. That wouldn't have been around five years ago. **Unless the industry embraces the new technologies, the actual fishermen won't, so you need the executive to progress it and do it, and then get us to follow along.** (9)*

They run courses for club administration etc. It's a matter of getting that information out to the people, which has been done in the past. But no one's actually taking it up. So opportunities present themselves, but we're not good at picking them up. (12)

It seems to be in an aging population. If we're running courses, it's normally the younger ones that are there.

We've also got our own training organisation. In the training area we've had a reduction in the demand for training. It could just be a reflection of the economic situation because training tends to be something people do in good economic times but not quite so much in poor economic times. (13)

The NFFO is actively involved with the training school for young fisherman, and so there is an avenue there if anybody wants to get a good start. It really is, covers what it can do. (16)

I think that organisations themselves, their directors need to keep up the skills in those areas, so that they can promote that type of area to their members. There will always be members that will never take up new technology. It seems to be in an aging population in farming that you get that. If we're running courses, it's normally the younger ones that are there. *(18)*

One of the ladies here is a TAFE teacher and she's doing an Excel workshop for people to improve their skills. Everyone was really excited and interested, and then, when it came to putting your name in to do it, everybody dragged the chain about it. It's just hard to get people motivated. *(19)*

[Our association] has got a lot of dedicated people and they're organising particular things for the community at large but they're being underappreciated. (19)

The take-up of these events by our members is not flash. *There's just so much on, it's really difficult to find a time that suits everyone. In a way, I know myself I get tired of going to things; you always have so many things to do on the farm. With shortages of staff, people are probably doing more than they should be. Then they struggle to make it to some of these field days or even meetings. We have a wide range of challenges up here. (20)*

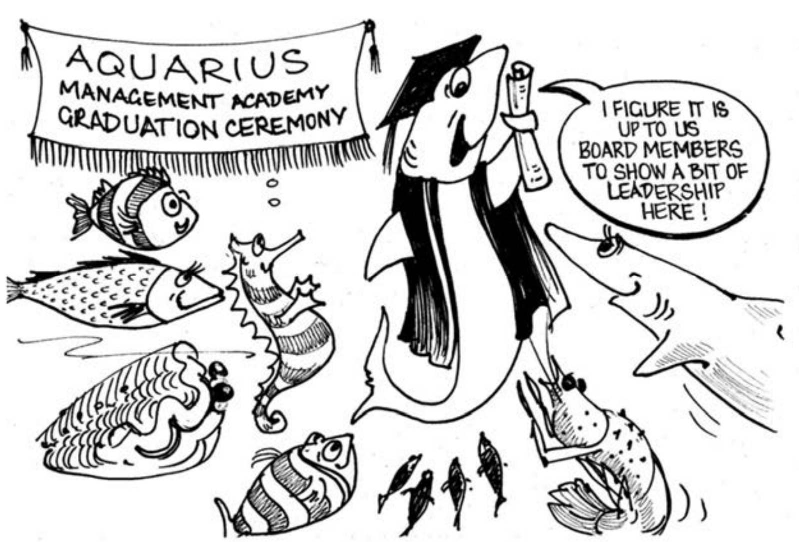
Opportunity to apply new skills

The Australian seafood industry invests heavily in leadership training. Talented, competent young people are given the tools to become tomorrow's leaders. Yet, in many cases, the associations that nominated these people for leadership training fail to give these same people the opportunity to apply these skills. If, as recommended elsewhere in this document, associations had an exit strategy for every current leadership position and created a vacancy into which these talented people could move, the association, and the industry would make significant gains.

In partial summary: Individuals and enterprises need to keep abreast of new information and new technologies that can enhance their business. The fishing and primary industry sectors have a limited propensity to take up new ideas and skills, though aquaculture is a clear exception. Older people are similarly reluctant. It is a responsibility of Board members to role model, to their members, their willingness to stay up to date with information, technologies and skills. It is also their responsibility to provide opportunities for future leaders coming through.

Recommendation 15:

- **a.** The Board to initiate an annual assessment of emerging and relevant skill-sets, information and technologies with a view to bringing these to the attention of their members and making them easily accessible.
- **b.** The Board to be alert to ad-hoc opportunities for information or skill development sessions that may present themselves in your State or region with a view to bringing these to the attention of their members and making them easily accessible. Note that some of these opportunities may be from sources outside of your industry, yet have relevance to it.
- **c.** Consider making it mandatory for all nominee or recent appointee Board members to undertake professional training, such as offered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Other comparable courses or self-help resources are also available.
- **d.** Be alert to the opportunities for coaching/growing younger and/or newer members and then providing them with appropriate responsibilities. Being included builds people's confidence and skills and hence their willingness to engage more actively in the business of the association.
- **e.** Continue to invest in the personal and professional development of any paid staff.



Case Study 14: Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance.

The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance (CAIA) is an association incorporated under Canadian legislation as a not-for-profit body. It represent a $2 billion dollar industry - aquaculture operators, feed companies and suppliers, as well as provincial finfish and shellfish aquaculture associations - that has seen little growth in the past decade, due to a non-supportive legislative environment.

The published Mission of the Alliance is to 'ensure the international competitiveness of the Canadian Aquaculture industry through:

- Effective representation of industry issues;
- Building a positive image of the Canadian Aquaculture industry;
- Promoting the consumption of Canadian Aquaculture products; and,
- Providing services to meet the needs of our members.

The principal objectives of CAIA are:

- To provide a strong, independent and united voice for Canada 's aquaculture industry on the national and international scenes;
- To be an effective and proactive advocate for Canadian aquaculture interests in relation to national public policy;
- To lead the development of a national aquaculture strategy, and to foster cooperation among aquaculture interests;
- To facilitate a public environment in which the Canadian aquaculture industry can achieve its full potential;
- To provide real and measurable benefits to members.

The association became CAIA in 1995, a rejuvenation of an earlier body (i.e., the Canadian Aquaculture Producers Council). The business of the association is organised around a 25-member Board, a seven-member Executive Committee (President, past-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two members at large, and the executive director), and four staff members. The two full-time staff members are an Executive Director and a Communications Officer; the two part-timers are a Marketing Officer and an Accountant/Office Manager. There are also a series of sub-committees including Communication Committee, Government Relations Committee, and Technical Committee. Average age of individuals on the Board is late 40s/early 50s, with gender mix about 40% female.

There are three categories of members: corporate producers, suppliers, and associations. Corporate producers and associations fall into two broad sector categories: finfish (with salmon being the major sub-category) and shellfish. Over 85% of the value of the industry in Canada is in salmon representing approximately 70% of the total volume. Membership fees are based on turnover and can be up to $25,000 per annum. The lowest fee is $500. The biggest members by production volume in their sector category get a seat on the Board. Associate members, who include suppliers, have a Board seat elected by them. Since 2005, the CAIA has had resurgence in membership; its members representing 92% of the industry. Those 51 comprise Corporate / Producer members: 19, Associations: 13, Suppliers: 19. These are drawn from every province, including the Yukon. Applications for membership require Board approval.

The Alliance keeps a healthy watch on the potential for cliques, given the diversity of species represented and the vast geographic separation between members. There is no formal code of conduct or conflict resolution protocol for members or for Board members. Having both available would lower the dependence on the personal attributes of key people who presently deal effectively with issues as they arise, based on personal skill.

Lobbying government of behalf of industry is the main service the Alliance provides. It also provides industry and marketing promotion. And it manages a government-funded support program for export marketing, distribution, on roughly a dollar-for-member dollar basis, up to $1m in Federal funds, giving exporters a potential 40% return on their money. Unlike the more general lobbying which aims to benefit the whole of industry, this export marketing incentive is only available to Alliance members.

Performance capacity of the Alliance is perceived to be adequate. A recent surge in membership has seen a 50% improvement in the budget, enabling increases in staffing capacity. The Alliance has just committed its financial reserves, supported by a voluntary one-off doubling of the membership fee, to 'A National Strategy for Responsible Aquaculture Development in Canada'. This project, aims to redress a non-supportive legislative and regulatory environment for Canadian aquaculture.

Elections for Board positions are held annually at the AGM. The Board then elects members of the Executive Committee. Board terms are yearly, renewable annually. Executive Committee terms are yearly, renewable annually... The Board meets quarterly (often electronically); the Executive Committee meets, again electronically, on an as-needs basis and generally bi-monthly, and the executive director is in constant consultation with Board and Executive by phone and email. At the AGM, every member has a vote, regardless of size, or membership category. On the Board, every Board member has an equal vote, regardless of the size of the producer, associate member or association that put them there.

The Alliance has no formal succession plan. There is a healthy turnover of Executive Committee members. . Like most associations, criteria for Board membership include willingness and having the time. Finding new blood is a challenge in an industry that has seen no growth in the past decade. However a recent surge in membership numbers has provided an infusion of new talent.

Responsibilities fall to the few. There are probably 15 active members from the Board. New members are expected to support the Alliance and their industry by lobbying their politicians as part of Alliance campaigns. Other than that and a fee, there is no expressed expectation they will support the association. Boundary ambiguities with respect to roles of CAIA and subsidiary associations are always a potential issue that are guided by clear principles and diplomacy.

Internal communications have recently been strengthened with the employment of a full-time communications officer. Phone and email are the most frequently used communication media; there is a quarterly e-newsletter, an excellent CAIA website, and most innovatively, the use of webinar technologies for on-line meetings of the National Strategy initiative, enabling documents to be shared and commented on in real time. External communication links are good, though could be strengthened by networking with non-aquaculture agricultural associations and peak bodies.

No formal performance measurement or continuous improvement processes, though managed informally. There is a strategic planning process every couple of years that the Board uses to guide the Alliance.

Major challenge for the Alliance is the realisation that there are legislative and regulatory barriers that have inhibited industry growth for the last decade, coupled with a resolve to find a major campaign to bring about an enabling legislative climate.

Decentralisation of decision-making

In your association, are the decisions that are made, made by one or two key people, a small proportion of people, or by association members more broadly?

The concentration of decision-making authority in the hands of a few tends to prevent innovative solutions, while the greater involvement of members and the accompanying diversity of wisdom are necessary for innovation. Participatory environments facilitate innovation by increasing association members' awareness, commitment, and involvement. In unhealthy associations, decisions are made by a few, often without broad consultation. In healthy associations, a much broader participation and responsibility is encouraged.

Mental models

In any debate and decision there is, of course, more than one stakeholder. Here is a generic list of eight stakeholders that could be involved in any debate and subsequent decision.

1. Those who are going to be affected in some way by the decisions that are made. This effect might be emotional, material, social, economic, cultural, spiritual or environmental. This group comprises the clients, beneficiaries, victims or recipients.

2. Those whose responsibility it will be to resource, implement and manage the decisions that will be made. Sometimes this group will include members of the previous group; sometimes not

3. Those who are regarded as having professional expertise in the area of interest. Caution: Since 'experts' often have a depth of expertise that is mirrored by a lack of breadth, and since they are often politically appointed, and hence may carry a particular bias, there is value in the experts being impartial or at least representing multiple points of view or disciplines.

4. Those who bring local indigenous knowledge. It is not the nation's earliest inhabitants that are being referred to here. It is the 'locals'; people whose ordinary lives can bring extraordinary wisdom to bear on the issue.

5. Those whose responsibility it is to fund, legislate or in other ways support or give patronage to the decisions that are made. These people have power of veto. Again, this group might include, wholly or partially, members of previous groups.

6. Those who are outside of the issue of concern, who bring a more holistic view, who can look at the issue in its broader context, who can act as 'critical friend' or 'devil's advocate' and whose views are respected by the other parties.

7. Elders, forbears, or ancestors – those whose stewardship in the past delivered us our present legacy and whose wisdom should not be forgotten.

8. Though not always relevant, a future or intergenerational perspective can often be beneficial. Imagine if our grandchildren's grandchildren were part of this conversation. What perspective would they offer?

When decisions are made in the absence of any of these eight perspectives, those decisions may be short-sighted or difficult to implement or maintain. In other words, they may not be sustainable.

Now, it is unlikely that any decision group has the luxury of having all of these voices in the room. Yet, not to have them raises the possibility of insufficient wisdom. So, what to do? It is quite possible for those who are present to act as proxies for those that are not. Imagine allocating one or more of these stakeholder identities to each of the people that are present. People are requested to offer comment and to make decisions, not only from their own perspective but also from the perspective of those absent stakeholders for whom they are acting as proxy.

The concentration of decision-making authority in the hands of a few tends to prevent innovative solutions

Most associations are accidental monocultures. They begin life as associations offering a collective voice to producers with a common interest. So they inevitably begin with shared background, commodity, and issues. As a result, membership of associations is relatively homogenous. This homogeneity, by definition, implies reduced diversity. Yet the richest conversations and the wisest decisions arise from diversity.

In 2004, James Surowiecki published the widely acclaimed book *The Wisdom of Crowds – Why the Many are Smarter than the Few.* He suggests that under the right circumstances, groups of people can demonstrate a level of intelligence above that of their brightest member. And what are those circumstances that lead to such collective wisdom? According to Surowiecki (2004:10).....

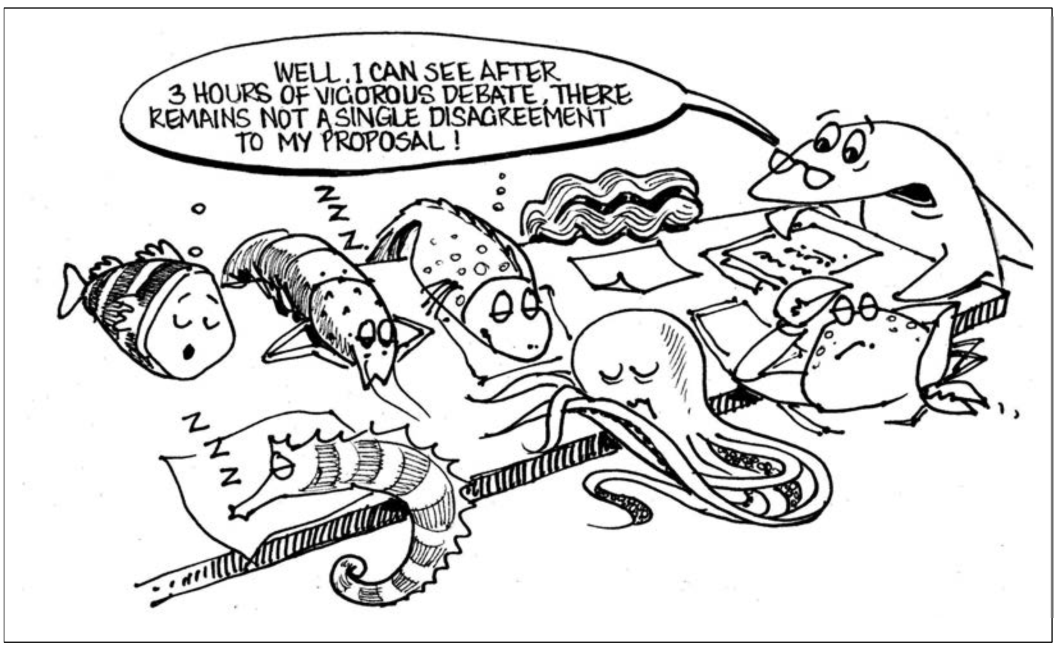
> *There are four conditions that characterize wise crowds:* ***diversity of opinion*** *(each person should have some private information, even if it is just an eccentric interpretation of the known facts),* ***independence*** *(people's opinions are not determined by the opinions of those around them),* ***decentralization*** *(people are able to specialize and draw on local knowledge), and* ***aggregation*** *(some mechanism for turning private judgments into a collective decision). If a group satisfies these conditions, its judgment is likely to be accurate.*

In its July 2007 edition (pp126-147), the *National Geographic Magazine* published an article entitled 'Swarm Theory'. The article describes collectives in the animal and insect world and notes the conditions that seem to underpin their success. Bees, ants, flocks of birds and schools of fish are examples.

In the animal and insect worlds, the intelligence is in the collective, rather than in the individual. And this collective intelligence is the result of each creature following a set of simple rules. As a result of those rules, no centralised leadership is required, since the 'leadership' occurs through the aggregated behaviour. Each creature acts on its own localised information.

The richest conversations and the wisest decisions arise from diversity.

So what are those simple rules that result in this collective intelligence? They are: — (i) diversity of participation, (ii) independence of contributions, (iii) comparison of ideas (peer review), (iv) time for all ideas to be considered, (v) a means of reducing options, and (vi) total transparency. The overlap between Surowiecki's observations and behaviour in the natural world is uncanny.



At present, in the Western world, the decision tools used by most organisations and associations include one or several of the following:

(a) Decisions by exhaustion: 'We've talked about this for the last four months. Can't we just make up our mind, so we can move on?

(b) Decisions by irritation: 'This issue might be the least important topic on our plate, yet it keeps on coming up and is driving us crazy. Can't we just make a decision on it and get rid of it?

(c) Decisions by expertise: 'Since this is outside our area of expertise, why don't we get a professional opinion? (All professional opinions have depth at the cost of breadth).

(d) Decisions by social dominance: 'It doesn't matter what the rest of us thinks if it differs from what the Board/Chair/CEO wants'.

(e) Decisions by show of hands from the floor: Calling for 'those for/those against' can create winners and losers, and does not strengthen commitment from all members.

(f) Decisions by consensus: Talking about the issue until a logical solution emerges that seems to be owned by all. The shortcomings of this approach are explained below.

Consider the following pairs, and ask yourself: 'Which one of the pair is more likely to be influential in a meeting, social gathering, or collective decision, most of the time?'

- Male/Female
- Younger/Older
- Tall/Short
- Unknown/Popular
- Extrovert/Introvert
- Plain/Attractive
- Deep-voiced/High-pitched voice
- Junior/Senior
- Dominant/Submissive

A moment's thought will reveal that there is no necessary relationship between any one of each pair and wisdom. Yet, our life experiences tell us that often one or more of these characteristics influences an outcome in an unwarranted fashion.

Instead, the wisdom arises when....

- People are independent,
- Have diversity of opinion,
- Are decentralised,
- Are anonymous,
- Where ideas can be subject to peer review,
- Where ideas can be pooled,
- Where selection is made individually and privately from that pool of ideas,

- Where results are aggregated,
- Where the process is completely transparent.

(Surowiecki, 2004)

So associations need (a) different decision tools from those presently in use. **Appendix 5** offers a number of these tools. They also need greater diversity in the conversations that lead to those decisions. This greater diversity can be obtained from (i) considering the eight stakeholder groups mentioned earlier, (ii) considering broadening association membership to encourage all elements in the value chain, and (iii) inviting informed and interested visitors to contribute.

Current decision-making processes

Perceived as poor

My observation universally across the seafood industry; we're not good at defining the processes we use in decision making. (1)

Perceived as neutral

***Most of the decisions are made on consensus; there tends to be very few things that go to votes**. (1)*

***There's nothing stopping people putting forward ideas and comments. It tends not to happen very much, perhaps because most of the relevant sectors are included on the Board.** (1)*

> ***If people don't know what decisions are being made, and the executive becomes a little over-zealous, then somebody can get unhappy with a decision and say, 'Well no one ever told me.***

*The structure is that there is a [peak body] committee but the committee is put there by their industry associations. So **an ordinary member can participate as long as their association allows them to participate in that decision making**. It's quite adequate from [peak body]'s point of view but it depends on the member's association. (7)*

*It's usually only when the shit hits the fan that they really get a bit disgruntled and then start going; 'Oh well'. **They want their say, but if everything seems to be ticking along okay and they're happy with their representation by their own association, then they don't really feel they need to bother getting involved themselves. (**7)*

They have a management committee but they haven't had elections yet because they're just newly formed. (12)

The opportunity is there for them; they know it's there, and really it's just a question of either they're prepared to pick up the phone or get to their computer or write a note. (13)

It's difficult to get together and that usually just happens once a year, you know at our annual meeting and the conference and trade show, usually February. (15)

The process exists, there's not many members that actively use the process but there is a process there. People who want to be involved or wish to be an observer at any meetings or in the decision making process [are able to do so]. (16)

NFFO wanting the members to get more involved. They repeatedly ask at meetings, if you got something to say bring it to us and we'll discuss it, actively pursuing members to get more involved. It's up to the individuals involved. There's as much involvement in the process as any individual wants; just depends on how actively they want to be involved themselves. (16)

*So, if you can, **try to separate the bigger decisions that maybe need to come from a full floor, versus smaller decisions that can be made within the executive.** And that's what the association has tried to do. We've had discussion about meetings, and it's been endorsed at a meeting that it's accepted, it's okay for the executive to make. **The danger in it is that if people don't know what decisions are being made, and the executive becomes a little over-zealous in what they have the power to do, then at some point, somebody can get unhappy with a decision and say, 'Well no one ever told me.** (20)*

Perceived as satisfactory

> ***We have a very structured decision template that we stick to. Every single proposal will get structured through this template.***

Every time we meet we'll put an update on what's going on, anything that requires more input, the rest of the industry or those involved in certain areas would be plugged in to those as well to make sure everyone's had a chance. (3)

*[Decision-making] **We have a very structured template (and that's only come across in the last couple of years as well) that we stick to**. **Every single proposal will get structured through this template.** So it's a repeatable process that is transparent. **Everyone knows that this is how they come up with the decision.** And it's purely and simply based on – there's a number of factors involved in it. The big thing is: how will it affect the entire industry? **We try to be very, very professional about how we go about doing things. And accountable**, 'This is what we're doing; this is why we're doing it. If someone questions, these are the three reasons why we've chosen this way to go.' (3)*

There is a forum and it's a relatively easy forum for someone to sit on that [peak body] Council I believe. I don't think there are any barriers for people to perhaps be a Council member at this point because it's not defined as being a President of an Association; it's an interested person. (7)

***I'm put up by the [named sector] industry, but I'm not there to represent it. I represent the whole [State fishing] industry.** (4)*

We've put back in place some objective and independent decision-making structures within the fishery. *(9)*

They don't have closed sessions, unless it's perhaps a sub-committee with the compliance of fisheries, which is fair enough. But it's all open anyway. We're allowed to go as observers. We can't vote, but we can discuss things. We can't vote, but we can definitely go there and put a position. (9)

I think [association] makes good use of the existing structure within the industry at the Port level. So on some issues, [association] will run its own process to gather feedback and form a position on an issue, whereas other times that responsibility goes back to the Ports, and it's up to the Ports to be organised enough to generate feedback to inform decision-making process at the [association] table. So ***it does have that deliberate policy; the structure is there to share responsibility*** *(9)*

We just call it the Executive, and it's predominantly four people. I'm the Treasurer/Secretary – a job I picked up last year because the Treasurer decided to stand down. [Named person] is the Vice President, having been the former President for a number of years. And we have [another named person] who is our President. We have [another named person] as the Webmaster. And we have an ordinary committee person, [fourth named person]. (11)

Small day-to-day decisions are made by a small group of people, but anything major goes out to the membership in general. So the opportunity is there for everyone to comment.

It appears to me to be very democratic, and everybody has their input into it. There are decisions that the senior management don't agree with on occasions, but if the majority of the members want to do it, everybody goes along with it quite happily. (11)

Small day-to-day decisions are made by a small group of people, but anything major goes out to the club and the membership in general. So the opportunity is there for everyone to comment, and all those comments are taken on board. (12)

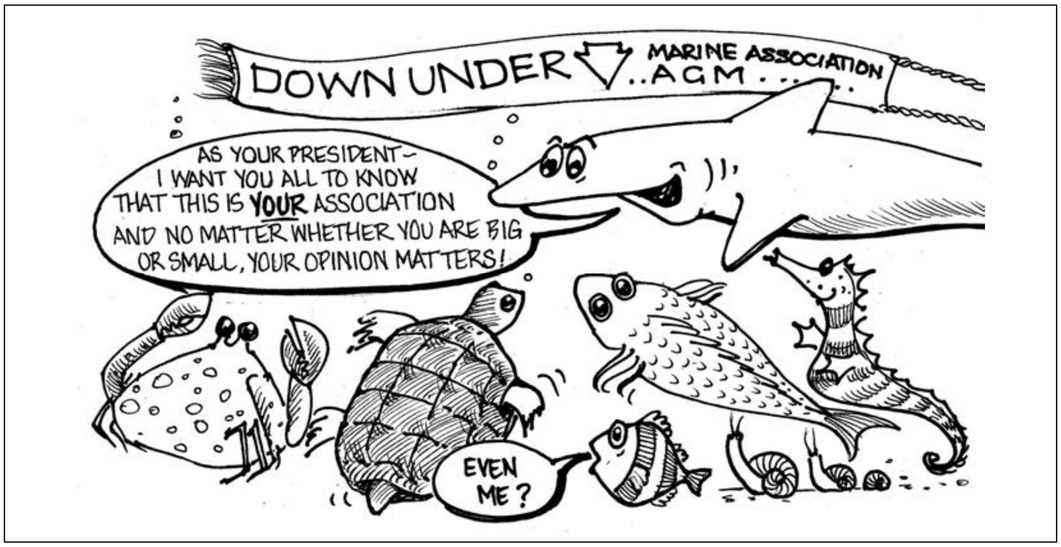
Four times a year, we have what's called a policy council and that's open to any person in the industry who wants to come along and raise any particular issue.

Yes, our Board is elected and if there are major policy decisions we consult widely with all members. I wouldn't say the final decision is made by members broadly. ***I mean someone has got to write the policy document, but the important thing is to make sure that members have the opportunity to comment on the draft. And I think we've been very good at allowing that participation****. If we're making an industry response to a government initiative or something that calls for an industry response and time is available, we consult widely. (13)*

Four times a year, we have what's called a policy council and that's open to any person in the industry who wants to come along and raise any particular issue. *(13)*

We have Board meetings about four times a year. One to two are face-to-face, and then the other two or three are by conference call. We don't have set dates, it is kind of just quarterly and on an as need basis. (14)

Every two or three years we have a policy forum where we decide on general policy going forward. Every year that's sort of like a strategic plan. That's reviewed by the members annually at the AGM. The Board's mandate then is to make sure that that policy is put into effect, and the Executive manage that. Then on a day-to-day basis for any decisions and between Board meetings (which are roughly quarterly) the management / Executive Committee would make most of the decisions. As long as it's in keeping with the Board's direction. (14)



Members then have the right to elect every three years their representatives at a local level and then those 13 companies then elect the State Board. The voting is voluntary although we do get 75 % of all members actually participating in those triennial elections. (17)

We have de-centralised decision making at a State level because of the very strong regional groups we've got. So there are no surprises when they come to Brisbane. (17)

The Board [of 21 elected Directors] is a policy decision making Board; as well as it has an inner executive of three, Chairman and two Vice Chairman, plus the CEO that meet – ***the Board meets four times a year. In between that the executive committee meets, but it doesn't make policy.*** *(17)*

You've got to remember, of the 21 that sit around our Board table, all but two of those are Chairman in their own areas, their own regions. So we've got those very, very, direct linkages from the decision making at a local and regional level right through to the State level. (17)

Up until 2000, with compulsory membership, our leadership could go out there and make a decision and our members had to wear it. Decisions have always been made for good reason but ***now we're a voluntary membership organisation, we've got to sort of make a different***

***sort of a decision because some of the members might resign their membership and leave**. Since we've gone into voluntary membership, we are even better in our reporting to our members, particularly through the social media, web, directly through branch meetings and annual reporting to ensure that they are fully aware of the structure of the organisation and the decision making processes and what issues are dealt with at that State level. (17)*

***We have a decision making process, decisions by consensus and very rarely does anything go to a vote.** I mean it's one of the things to try and achieve things by consensus to make sure we tick all the boxes. **Things do go to a vote as a last resort, and sometimes the Board meetings can go on for a long time before we get the right sort of decision.** And sometimes a decision may be postponed in order to get more information or to assist in that. (17)*

There's not just one or two people who make all the decisions. The Chairman may have a view, as he often does. But he can – people can try and influence the others, but it still gets back to the majority too. If the majority don't want something to happen, it usually won't. (17)

Well, we will try and engage members more fully and keep them more informed of the reasons for what is happening and we will try and sort of press gang them in to coming to meetings. So they actually understand the process and become involved. (16)

Whatever decisions we make are going to affect us personally. So we're not going to go and make decisions that are detrimental to any of the growers.

If we've got an issue that we feel very strongly about, and we can't resolve to the benefit of the growers, we'll call a growers meeting. And very, very rarely, almost never, do we get in a situation where our growers go against what our desires are, on how we manage it. We're really lucky; we have a great team of people here. (18)

But generally we tend to reach agreement on everything that we do, so we like to try and make it a consensus thing rather than a casting member thing. (18)

*Given the fact that we're all really big growers [the Board members], **whatever decisions we make are going to affect us personally. So we're not going to go and make decisions that are detrimental to any of the growers, because it will be detrimental to our business.** So it's a good position to be in. Some people are always concerned about the conflict of interest, but at the end of the day, in the sugar industry, it's a little bit different because we're not really competing against the other growers, it really us and the mills. So whatever we can achieve for our growers, whether it be in a monetary way or in a training way or in a funding way or whatever, everybody shares that benefit, not just a few. (18)*

Sometimes in the past, we've had Presidents who have been more willing to make decisions on behalf of the group.

*How it works is your three main, Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and then your sub-committee chair people and they form the management, and then they sit five or six times a year. It's mainly to discuss the next general meeting for members, but **the executive make the decisions**. (19)*

We've got a great President who is very careful to make sure that everyone gets a fair go. Sometimes in the past, we've had Presidents who have been more willing to make decisions on behalf of the group. *(19)*

We very rarely have executive meetings as such. Generally speaking the executive is there to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution. The Council is what the makes the decisions *and then they leave it to mostly the President and the Treasurer to make sure that those decisions are carried out through the Executive Officer as well, which is the way it should go. (21)*

Desired decision-making processes

We used to have it that many of the decisions of the Board are meant to be taken back to its growers for an opinion, and come back to the Executive. (1)

Your decisions that you make in research and development, which is innovation, I don't think there's a decision tool framework in there. ***You're not using net present values and decision support tools to drive your inquiry,*** *the disciplines around making investments and profound uncertainties of future investments and how they come back to the bottom-line.* ***Innovation is a slow hunch process; there's no such thing as a fast hunch. So we need processes that facilitate this process****. (1)*

One of the other things is the conscientious objector, that you actually give someone the black hat and that's their role to actually test it. Because you've got to avoid group think but if you assign that role… I think we need to do that because that actually creates a tension. (1)

I personally think more meetings, as much as it's hard to get people involved, sometimes even myself. ***I've felt really aggrieved about something, and you go and hear why the decision has been made. Even though you mightn't agree with them, you feel happy about them and you can understand why it happened to be made that way.*** *(4)*

If the general members are not included; if they're not able to make any contribution, then they don't have any ownership in it.

You need to have fully-informed decision making. That's what the Board's about, but you need to also have the confidence in the members who voted you on; they believe that you have the capacity to do that. (5)

The problem is ***if the general members are not included in it, then they don't have any ownership in it. If they're not able to make any contribution, then they're not going to feel included****, and they're not going to feel that they've got anything to contribute. (8)*

I think the association should look to increase the objectivity of its governance structures.

[To improve participation] Identify young people who are switched on so to speak and nurture those people and get them up to speed. (9)

The ***transparency of process*** *has increased as well. Increasing that,* ***I think the association should look to increase the objectivity of its governance structures****, and whether that's* *through things like **having a local independent Chair** – or there's a whole range of options to increase the decentralisation of decision making, and that's one thing that I think the association is looking at seriously at the moment. (9)*

I think they can open up and I know it's only a new committee; they could open up their meetings and just advise anybody that they can listen in or join in. It doesn't mean they've got to vote but you know, just open it. (12)

They could open up their meetings and just advise anybody that they can listen in or join in.

I think that you need to be in constant communication with the committee members, and, if an issue arises, I think you need to give everybody on that committee the opportunity to have a say. There shouldn't be one person that makes a decision prior to everybody else having the opportunity to make a decision. (18)

*I think that **when there are major issues that have to be decided upon, I think you need to bring members with you. You need to let them know what's going on. You need to let them know what issues the committee is facing, and they need to get an idea of what their members are thinking, and sometimes that can guide them to a decision**. (18)*

Because we're acting on the behalf of a whole stack of people who are trusting us to look after them, we are ethically obliged to make sure they know what we're doing.

*If every time you had to make a decision you had to call a general meeting, the growers would soon get quite frustrated, if they were basic things. **So I suppose the skill of the executive is to work out if something is really important that they need direct feedback from growers, then they should call a meeting**. (20)*

***I'm actually very much opposed to Executive Councils acting on their own, because I think that's the path to trouble.** So that it really is only when dealing with staff recruitment and issues of that sort of vaguely confidential nature that I approve of having an executive meeting. Because **we're acting on the behalf of a whole stack of people who are trusting us to look after them, you are ethically obliged to make sure they know what you're doing.** (21)*

Why people don't participate in association decision-making

The quotes above suggest that most, if not all, associations regard themselves as open to input from members in the decision-making process. Yet many members are still not active in that participation. Associations need to consider whether the reasons why some members might be less active in participating in decision-making.

Plowman et al (2004) examined six voluntary associations servicing primary industries. That research found:

A major challenge for all associations is maintaining and increasing member involvement in the issues their industry faces. Too few are involved in the decision-making of most associations.

Joining an association and participating actively involves stepping out of one's comfort zone into an unfamiliar environment. Two major reasons why people will not take that step into active participation is knowledge and confidence. People seek to avoid personal embarrassment and discomfort. What is immediately obvious in joining any association is inequality of confidence. And the foundation of that inequality is inequality of knowledge.

There's nothing stopping anyone being actively involved. I think everyone encourages it. ***I think there are issues about confidence initially.*** *So people don't know how to bring ideas forward and I think there's a weakness in the national seafood industry leadership programme, in that it only takes 12 people a year.* ***I think everyone's got willingness, capacity to serve, but this needs to be cultivated.*** *We had a young guy on the Board who had lost confidence. The Chairman provided feedback that he had amazing insight, added so much value. He adds so much more to discussions now. (1)*

> ***The moment anybody tried to have any real influence, they were not just shunned; they were intimidated and bullied.***

I've seen it in our association where decisions were only made by three people. The moment anybody tried to have any real influence, they were not just shunned; they were intimidated and bullied. *We had a really bad run of that in our association a few years back. (1)*

[Why people won't participate] ***A lot of perception from other people – the tall poppy syndrome if you like. I think that holds a lot of people back.*** *(2)*

Every member has a right to write to the management committee and have some input there too. ***It doesn't stop them from being able to communicate directly if that's what they need. It comes back to whether they know they can do that or not. (7)***

[What stops people from participating?] They're busy and I think they're quite happy to have someone else do the work for them. (7)

[Reason they don't?] ***Lack of confidence. Easily intimidated by particularly government, bureaucracy.*** *Also family and financial constraints. (8)*

More than half the fishery is not confident, family and financial reasons. They wouldn't take up the role. (8)

> ***People probably think they're not up to speed or good enough to do those jobs.***

[What stops people from participating?] ***Time and the travel****. They hold meetings in the afternoons, and when you're up at 3:00am, if you're going until 9/10:00pm – time is the main thing. Between fishing and other things that you do, your time is scarce. (9)*

*Nothing stops them. I suppose **maybe they think that they're not up to speed with issues and the history of what's gone on maybe**? (9)*

*I think as issues get harder and also the executive of [the Association] and their representation has become better, **people probably think they're not up to speed or good enough to do those jobs. There's only five, eight people or ten people in the industry that really are up to speed with most issues and also prepared to do it,** to do those jobs, so that's the reason. (9)*

*It's not money; it's about **the legal liability and the commitment of time**. (12)*

I think it's the age, because they've been involved for many years. They've been there and done that, so they're taking a more relaxed attitude towards it. (12)

Apathy. It's an Australian trait. (12)

It is very difficult to get the fishermen from the ports to become directly involved because they are busy. We are looking at different angles to try to get them involved. (16)

At the end of the day I'm a fisherman and my priority is to go to sea, and when I come ashore, I've got to try and fit meetings in and I can't keep up to speed with everything. (16)

I'm a fisherman and my priority is to go to sea, and when I come ashore, I've got to try and fit meetings in and I can't keep up to speed with everything

Fearful of commitment and some don't want to be involved in this sort of democratic process. They are fearful of their view maybe being submerged by a bigger view. So they don't offer at all and then complain when they don't get heard. (16)

They can't be bothered. It's as simple as that. They can't be bothered to get off their backside, they're quite willing to stand and talk on the quay or in the shed, but getting them to a meeting and speaking at a meeting, they're not interested. (16)

Professional decision-makers

The organisation has grown dependent upon the Executive Officer. It's a pretty dangerous place to be actually; it's not healthy.

An emerging phenomenon in associations is the professionalization of management. This can begin to occur when an association appoints an executive officer, a person whose administrative skills sometimes (even often) do not include first-hand experience as a producer. In peak bodies this can be an even greater issue, where most of the members may be drawn from the professional management ranks of their subsidiaries, leading to the possibility that some peak bodies may have no producers in their decision-making processes.

> ***I'd say in my own organisation, the organisation has grown dependent upon the Executive Officer. So you've got to find a way of negotiating that, and it's a pretty dangerous place to be actually; it's not healthy.*** *(1)*

> ***I'm constantly mindful of how much the exec officers have a lot more power and information that could create a power imbalance***. *(1)*

> *We have an Executive Officer, so basically everything, most of the stuff is directed to him and then he directs it on where it needs to go. (22)*

No matter how dedicated and knowledgeable these professional officers might be, the absence of the primary stakeholders from the debate and from policy settings creates a risk that may not be healthy for the association or the industry it represents. Where decisions are made by people who have 'no skin in the game', so to speak, those decisions run the risk of being suboptimal.

By the time it gets to the top [the peak body] the message is diminished. People don't have a personal livelihood stake in the decision. Not passionate enough.

In response to a question from the interviewer as to how many peak association Board members would have experience as actual producers] *That's a good question. I will have to flick through people in my mind.* ***I think in the composition of the current Board, most would be either Executive Officers or Managers.*** *I think (named person) also has field experience. That's a very good question. (1)*

> *That's maybe why we're struggling, we're not getting anywhere. You might have just hit the nail on the head.* ***By the time it gets to the top [the peak body] the message is diminished. People don't have a personal livelihood stake in the decision. Not passionate enough***. *(1)*

> *Getting new blood onto committees is a massive problem.* ***The reality is, in the peak association, it's quite easy to throw your executive officer at it and so your executive officer is always going to be the one there [on the peak association Board]. He's only one man.*** *So I think it's difficult. (1)*

> *[Interviewer: Peak bodies run the risk of consisting only of executive officers. Now the danger there is that nobody has got any skin in the game.] That's right; no one has actually got their ass on the line. (1)*

In partial summary: Most associations perceive themselves as being open to participation by ordinary members in their decision-making. Yet there are barriers to that participation, some of which may not be obvious. Decision tools may be less sophisticated than is desirable, and there may be lack of diversity in the decision-making team, reducing the quality of those decisions. Better decision-making tools are available. **See Appendix 5**.

Recommendation 16:

a. Ascertain, as part of an annual audit, the level of consultation with ordinary members prior to major decisions being taken and the level of satisfaction by members with the association's decision-making processes.
b. Look at, as part of its annual audit, the reasons some members are less active in their participation in decision-making with a view to removing those barriers.
c. Inequality of knowledge is one of the biggest barriers to participation. An association to put in place active processes to share critical knowledge as broadly as possible.
d. Consider how the association's decision processes could be broadened to allow for greater input from the eight potential stakeholder groups, including producers themselves. (See the body of the Report for explanation of these eight stakeholders.)
e. Consider the value of increasing diversity through value-chain membership.
f. Consider the adoption of participative decision processes, such as those outlined in **Appendix 5**.

Case Study 15: Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association

The Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) is a not-for profit association representing the interests of aquaculture producers within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador(NL) , on the east coast of Canada.

Formed in 1986, the association's purpose is to advance the aquaculture industry within the NL Province. It is a highly professional and respected association.

The industry is reasonably mature with most producers having been involved for 20 to 30 years. The number of aquaculture producers in NL is quite small and the industry is divided into a number of sectors. Fin-fish (mainly salmon) is the largest with two major producers, followed by shellfish (mainly mussels), and then a number of smaller commodity sectors. The Board draws two members from the fin-fish sector, two from the shell-fish sector, one from the remaining sectors, and two from associated members, a total of seven. Associate members of the Association are not eligible to vote during the AGM, only regular membership have voting privileges which means they (regular members) are the only ones who can elect members to sit on the Board. However, once elected, all members of the Board have equal voting rights, regardless of which sector they represent. The Executive is comprised of the President, Vice President, immediate past President, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Whilst the Board meets quarterly, Executive meetings are held on an as-needs basis. The work of the association is supported by a number of standing subcommittees including a Regulatory Committee, Operational Committee, Finance Committee, Science Committees. These standing subcommittees include Board members, though they also draw from the general membership and academic institutions.

Office staff include the Executive Director, Office Manager, R&D Coordinator and Regional Coordinator. All four staff are full-time, and additional part-time or contract staff are hired as required.

There are two classes of association members: producer members and associate members (both suppliers and researchers). Each licenced aquaculture production company is entitled to one membership. The NAIA represents over 95% of all producers in NL. There are only fourteen producers in the Province, each paying a flat $500 per annum membership fee. Any supplier to the industry is a member of NAIA at an annual fee of $300. There are about 70 associated members. Through industry rationalisation the producer membership base is shrinking, even though production volumes are increasing. As well as having a financial implication, the shrinking membership base has implications for the available human talent to support the association.

The NAIA's membership is highly cohesive, having formed close bonds through collective adversity. Where necessary it operates a clear and effective dispute resolution protocol, aided by the skills of its Executive Director.

In exchange for their membership fee, the NAIA engages in lobbying or advocacy, in public relations – increasingly important, in R&D programmes and in training and development. It has a very comprehensive web-site which lists all of the benefits that the association provides its members, and most unusually (when compared with the other associations case studied for this research) expresses the benefits as a value proposition in exchange for the fees. And members do indeed receive benefits well in advance of the fees paid.

With an annual operating budget in excess of Ca $400,000, less than 10% of income is fee based. The association also benefits from R&D project funding, trade missions, grants, events, wage subsidisation, and management fees, much of which comes from directly or indirectly from the government, which is very supportive of the industry. The association has adequate financial reserves, Government support and sufficient institutional capacity to deal with any emerging issues.

Board members can be either owners or delegate employees. They are elected annually, whilst the President has a two-year term. There are no restrictions on the number of terms a Board member can serve, and, whilst there has recently been some new blood, a number have been there for some time. Finding people willing to step up is a perpetual challenge, given the small membership base. There is no structured succession planning. While the fin-fish sector is comprised of people who are relatively young and professionally educated, suggesting a pool of future leaders, holding young people in the industry is a challenge, with the resource industry offering tempting alternate employment. The shell-fish sector is largely comprised of an older demographic.

The NAIA has an excellent relationship with the national peak body, the Canadian Aquaculture Industries Association, and enjoys reciprocal Board representation. Any redundancy of effort that does occur is likely to be in the areas of PR and regulatory reform, a redundancy that is perceived to strengthen the respective efforts. The NAIA is a very active participant in the international industry tours conducted by CAIA; it also hosts and manages a number of international trade delegation. Through these and similar networks, it maintains a very healthy watch on external issues. It is also very effective in the PR arena, ensuring it protects its members' 'social licence to operate'.

Its internal communication networks are regarded as excellent. Phone, email and face-to-face are the main methods that Board members and the Executive stay in touch. Its website is first-class, and includes a members-only section.

The Board conducts an annual strategic plan, reporting back on that at the annual general assembly. Performance assessment is conducted by the Board on employees, though the Board does not consciously review its own performance.

Major current challenges include constant battles with a constraining regulatory regime, continuity of staff, and maintaining the freshness and vitality of the Board. Future challenges include a shrinking membership base, through consolidation, and maintaining the 'social licence'.

Of all of the topics discussed, the two interviews regarded the quality of the external communication, financial sustainability of members, skills development, and membership numbers to be the most critical for NAIA.

Openness to new ideas

How open to new ideas from ordinary members or outsiders is your association?

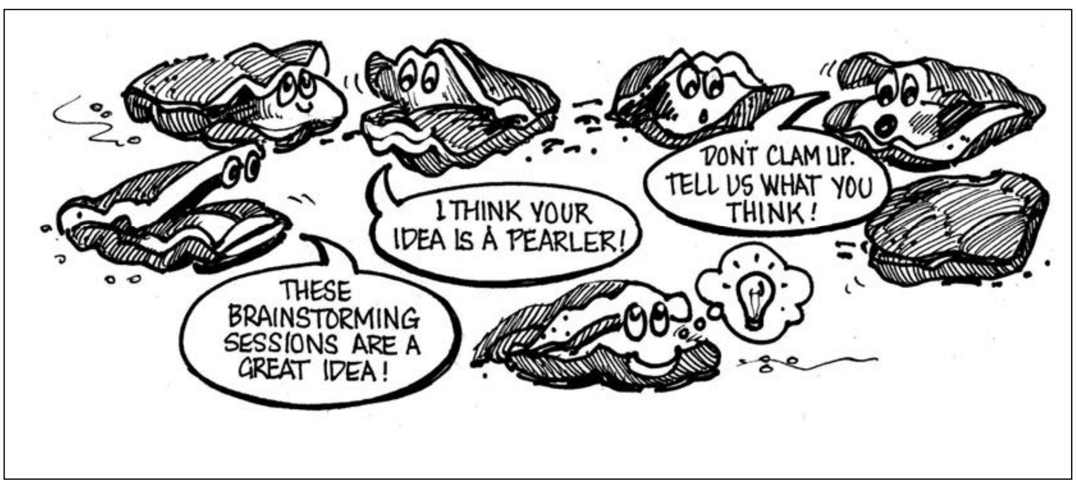
[Note: We asked this specific question to only a few interviewees. This question was deleted from the suite of interview questions, part way through the research, in recognition of the need to reduce interview time. We nevertheless believe this is a very important topic, one that will enrich any association.]

New ideas can come from any source, either internal to the association or from completely outside. Healthy industry associations are keen to hear, pilot and adopt new ideas in order to stay 'ahead of the game'. These new ideas are often adaptations of ideas found in other industries, or in similar industries operating in different geographic locations.

Mental models

> *There is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new order of things.....Whenever his enemies have the ability to attack the innovator, they do so with the passion of partisans, while the other defends him sluggishly, so that the innovator and his party alike are vulnerable.*

Niccolo Machiavelli (1490), *The Prince*



The human species has survived for 100,000 years <u>because</u> it is far more conservative than it is innovative. Leaders are the natural protectors of conservatism and the resistors of innovation. Resistance to change is healthy and normal, whilst innovation is dysfunctional when the operating environment is stable. Yet innovation is valuable when the operating environment is turbulent. Most innovations are initiated by mavericks, people for whom bonding social capital is low. In other words, people who don't particularly care what others think. Yet leaders resist those innovations, largely because they are much more likely to care what others think. After all, since, by definition, a 'leader' is someone who has 'followers', and, because the 'followers' can choose to follow or not, leaders are much more sensitive to bonding social capital. They would rather be well regarded by their peers than rejected. Further, the language of leaders often has an important characteristic. Plowman (2005) found that leaders have a marked propensity to make statements, and a comparable tendency to rarely ask questions. Since questions are one of the fundamental avenues to new information, statements serve as a vehicle for blocking new information or ideas and protecting the status quo.

As Machiavelli recognized 522 years ago, new ideas are commonly resisted. And they are more likely to be resisted in those industries that have a multigenerational history. The reason is that when there is multigenerational history, the source of wisdom and guidance is the older generation. The older generation is commonly also the source of governance and power. To suggest a new idea is to imply criticism of past practice. So associations are commonly naturally resistant to new ideas.

In brand new industries, of which aquaculture is more likely to be an example, there may be no historical wisdom in an earlier generation, no industry wise owls to whom to turn. So any new industry is much more likely to turn to the science rather than tradition for its answers.

I have been speculating last night what makes a man a discoverer of undiscovered things; and a most perplexing problem it is. Many men who are very clever - much cleverer than the discoverers - never originate anything.

Charles Darwin, 1871 letter to his son Horace
(E. Darwin, 1915, 2:207)

Rogers (1995) identified five characteristics that increase the likelihood of a new idea being adopted. Those characteristics are: (a) relative advantage, (b) compatibility, (c) observability, (d) trialability, and (e) complexity. Each of these will now be considered in greater detail.

(a) Relative advantage: The extent to which an idea is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes. The greater the perceived relative advantage of an innovation, the more rapid the rate of adoption will be.
(b) Compatibility: The degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing motives, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters. An idea that is incompatible will not be adopted as rapidly as an innovation that is compatible.
(c) Observability: The degree to which the results of the innovation are visible to others. The easier it is for individuals to see the results of an innovation, the more likely they are to adopt it.

(d) Trialability: The degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis. An innovation that is trialable represents less uncertainty to the individual who is considering it for adoption, as it is possible to learn by doing.
(e) Complexity: The degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use. New ideas that are simpler to understand are adopted more rapidly than innovations that require the adopter to develop new skills and understanding.

Plowman et al (2004B) examined six voluntary associations servicing primary industries. That research's findings included:

- *Biographical characteristics that lead to higher levels of innovation include youth, education, overseas travel, time spent in the industry (less is better), diversity of prior experience, and diversity of income streams.*
- *Younger respondents, across all industries have higher levels of education than respondents who are older. Education correlates positively with innovation.*
- *Respondents who had worked in a different area in primary industries prior to their present one score more highly on 'openness' than respondents who previously worked in a primary industry like their present one. 'Openness' is strongly correlated with creativity and innovation. Coming from outside provides a greater pool of ideas.*

Jaskyte (2011) identified two types of innovation that can occur within NFPs. Administrative innovations pertain to structures, systems and human resources that link to how the NFP is run. Administrative innovations are most commonly introduced 'top-down'. Technical innovations more commonly pertain to a product or service provided by the NFP to its clients. Technological innovations are more commonly driven 'bottom-up'.

> *While structural, process, and human factors were significant predictors of administrative innovations, only one human factor- transformational leadership – predicted technological innovations. (*p84)

> ***Innovation is least likely to flourish when the leadership is of long tenure. In contrast, freshness of management and leadership enhances the likelihood of innovation.***

Transformational leadership is future-oriented, open-minded, willing to experiment and empowers creativity in others. It is accepting of individual differences and is not bound by tradition or successful past practice. Transformational leaders expect others to think for themselves and challenge them to become high performers.

Jaskyte (2011) reports that innovation in NFPs is least likely to flourish when the leadership is of long tenure. In contrast, freshness of management and leadership enhances the likelihood of innovations in NFPs, since new leadership correlates with increased openness and less fixation on past practices.

> *A negative relationship between innovation and leadership tenure suggests that it is particularly important, where there is long-term leadership, to reassess internal policies, rules, structures and processes. If left unquestioned, assumptions and practices can become out-dated and impede progress* (Jaskyte, 2011:84).

In order to foster the possibility of innovations emerging in NFPs, Jaskyte (2011) recommends: (i) Challenging familiar organisational processes, (ii) Inspiring a shared vision among employees and members, (iii) Enabling employees and members to act in accordance with the vision, (iv) Role modelling the way the leader expects others to behave, and (v) Recognising the success of others and giving celebration to their efforts.

Salem, Foster-Fishman & Goodkind (2002) hold a similar view. They observed that strategies that supported being open to innovation include (a) a change orientation, (b) a conscious philosophy or vision, (c) a proactive strategy for achieving association goals and overcoming barriers, (d) the creation of a supportive organisational network, and (e) a ruthless avoidance of resource dependencies that required them to engage in activities that were inconsistent with the innovation. An essential precursor to these strategies is the clear strategic vision held by the leaders.

These researchers suggest that successful change efforts in NFPs require internal and external environments that are conducive to the change (or at least not consciously or unconsciously opposed to it). In order to achieve the desired change, successful NFPs were even willing to lose those internal members and external connections whose views were not in alignment with the desired change. (Salem *et al*, 2002)

What the interviewees say

> *Maybe we need to get somebody in to give us a talk on a key issue just to broaden the horizons. (1)*
>
> ***Each Board meeting having a guest come in and talk to us about some aspect of the industry that's relevant.*** *(1)*
>
> *The bi-annual major Australasian Aquaculture Conference. The conference is far bigger than NAC members. The last one was in Hobart I think in 2010 and I think they had 700-800 delegates. The next one is in Melbourne in May this year. To that we're expecting maybe 900 delegates. So it becomes much, much bigger than just Australian aquaculture but* ***it does give everybody an opportunity to rub shoulders and it's seen as quite a useful thing****. This is where a lot of interchange takes place between sectors, between organisations etc., etc. Plus this conference is also attended by regulators and they have a slot to put their positions forward. (1)*

[Note that one of the benefits of this conference is that it builds 'bridging social capital', creating 'the strength of weak ties'. By rubbing shoulders with people from outside of our normal circle, we increase the likelihood of idea exchange.]

***I'd say we don't play with ideas. We can't play with ideas because we've using other business's money**. It's a bit of a risky game that one. (1)*

I'd say not a lot of creative thinking. (1)

*We do not have the capacity. **I think people have even got to the stage where they've stopped having new ideas because it just didn't appear that we were going to be able to do anything with them**. (7)*

***Something we haven't done for a long time in this fishery is we had a brainstorming session**. And we looked around the fishery we looked at all the positives, all the negatives, all the threats, all the gains. It took about half a day, and unfortunately there was only two attending, which was [named person] and me. But what that did, it identified that we needed to go down the environmental path. We needed to formalise an environmental management plan, and that allowed us to move on to getting the fishery MSC-accredited. So I think it's high time that we need to go down that path again, but **I would like to see the [association] executive – there's five or six in that group – locked in a room, and have it out about where this fishery needs to go, where they think the fishery needs to go in the next 10/15/20 years' time.** (8)*

*Because the leaders of the association and the fishery are getting old, repetitive, and the same old, same old. I can't see us getting any new blood in the fishery, because there's no new entrants, but **we need some fresh ideas, and we need to start encapsulating where we need to be in the future.** (8)*

Everybody is open to hearing new ideas. I was only 23 when I came into the association and I've never once felt like I'm an outsider.

Innovation and capacity to adapt comes from within the membership, and the capacity of the association and the committee. So building that capacity over time and encouraging youth, fresh ideas, all of those things. (9)

*If you're looking at say research, we own a company that is solely there to provide finance, which is partly Government funded for research, as much as FRDC does. So **if you're talking about new ideas from that perspective yes, people have got that opportunity of getting into research**. Government funding is under threat at the moment, so whether we're able to continue or not is a matter of conjecture. (13)*

Sometimes we make a mess of it and sometimes a success of it; but we are prepared to have a go at it, and sometimes we fail. (16)

> ***Everybody is open to hearing new ideas. Like I was only 23 when I came into the association and I've never once felt like that I'm an outsider. They've always made me feel extremely welcome.*** *(19)*

> *There's a lot of people a lot smarter than me in the association and there's a lot of people that think outside the box. We've actually got a fair amount of input that comes back into the association about what we should do; what can we do about this? Can we get that? Can we find out about this; can we find out about that? We actually get quite a large feedback on that. (22)*

One of the non-fishing industry associations case-studied for this Report takes its members on an 'annual holiday'. Travelling together, on a chartered bus, they visit members of exemplar associations in completely different industries to see what they can learn. The distances travelled on the bus allows for considerable incubation time and conversation time between members, thereby helping new ideas to be assimilated, as well as building social bonds among members.

Each three year term one of our Directors travels overseas so that they can observe.

Another idea is for your association to subscribe to e-news from various member-based associations completely outside of the Australian fishing industry.

A third idea is to use every person-to-person gathering in your association, be that committee meetings, Board meetings, field days or whatever, as an opportunity to invite visitors and/or potential members to the event. Make a deliberate point of seeking out and listening to the opinions of these outsiders.

> *I actually think when you look at other organisations, we're lucky we're well-resourced so we tend to do things a little bit differently.* ***Now one of the things we do is we have a program of ensuring each three year term each one of our Directors travels overseas so that they can observe****. They don't all go together. We send them in groups of two or three so they can talk about what they see.* ***Four years ago I took four directors over to Brazil and we met with all the decision makers over there. We went for two weeks. That is an investment by us in their development purely to see what goes on elsewhere****. (17)*

In partial summary: Associations vary in the extent to which they perceive themselves open to new ideas. Traditional wild-catch fisheries tend to be more conservative than aquaculture fisheries. There is a correlation between level of education and propensity to innovate. There is also a correlation between youth and propensity to innovate. And there is a correlation between looking outside the square and propensity to innovate.

Recommendation 17:

a. Conduct an annual brainstorm amongst current or potential members for new ideas presently in use elsewhere that might have application to their association. Any signal from the association that 'new ideas are welcome here' can only be beneficial with respect to member participation and association resilience.
b. Recognise the correlations between, on the one hand, levels of education, youth, diversity of networks, and travel and, on the other hand, propensity to innovate, seeking every opportunity to enhance those factors.
c. Recognise that new members, not yet absorbed into the culture of the association, are able to observe things about the association that established members cannot see. Yet, as new members, they are generally hesitant about revealing what they observe, unless invited. These fresh eyes make every new member a potential source of new ideas.
d. Consider inviting outsiders to any association meeting, event or conversation with a view to tapping into the wisdom of those outsiders.

Case Study 16: National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations – North East Branch (UK)

National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations – North East Branch (NFFO-NE) is a subsidiary of NFFO, the UK's peak industry association. It services wild-catch fishermen from the Humber Estuary to the Scottish Border. It supports a wide variety of fisheries from drift netting for salmon, trawling for white fish, prawns, shell fish, scallops and a whole mixture of fisheries over the North East coast of England.

It was created in 1977, resulting from the amalgamation of a number of smaller port-based associations. The average of members is over 45, with those in representative positions being closer to 60. Gender distribution among membership is 99% male. There are presently about 60 members in the NFFO-NE and about 160 in the NFFO overall. Like most associations, these number have seen a steady decline over the years as fishermen retire and boats are decommissioned.

Interviewees are aware that NFFO-NE has a constitution though they are unaware if it has a formal vision or purpose statement. Its functional purpose is to be the voice of the industry and to support each and every member, no matter how small, in order to protect and strengthen financial viability and operating conditions. The association does not have a strategic plan; rather it seeks out and responds to issues as they arise. These issues are many and of increasing complexity, necessitating a deeper level of professional capacity within the association.

As a result, the association's operating capacity is stretched. Treasury services, administration, and the executive officer functions all reside within the NFFO parent organisation.

Membership is open to full-time commercial fishermen. The annual membership fee is based on the engine size of the licenced vessel, the more kilowatts, the greater the fee. In addition to their fee, representative members are expected to attend meetings, front the media in a PR role, be a champion for the cause.

The association is relatively free of cliques and operates in a transparent manner with an effective arbitration policy to settle any internal conflicts and disputes. It sees itself as a very healthy association.

Despite a slowly declining membership base, NFFO is in a sound financial position, largely due to the creation of a subsidiary, NFFO Services, which has taken advantage of the resources boom, to contract fishing vessels and their skippers for guard ship and escorting work. Funds generated from NFFO Services have enabled the provision of free benefits, such as flares and fire extinguisher, waterproof hand-held radios and personal life jackets to each and every member. The financial benefits from this source have more than off-set the diminishing pool of membership fees into the association. One particular benefit is the association's capacity to recruit a higher level of professional support. And it is presently looking to take on more administrative support to boost its very stretched capacity.

Benefits of membership include representation at national and international levels, supporting research that benefits the industry and political lobbying. It prides itself on going in to bat for the smallest member. The association is also very effective in the public relations arena, being able to go toe-to-toe with the increasingly powerful environmental lobby. It is in regular contact with relevant Ministers and bureaucrats, and its perceived to be largely responsible for saving the UK fishing industry from oblivion. The NFFO is an active supporter of a training school for young fishermen. While some benefits leak to non-members, since they are industry-general, many benefits are quarantined for members only. These members represent about 65% of the industry, and although not all members are active participants in supporting the association, it has sufficient support.

The decision-making of the association is left to a few. Though the association is open to participation by all members, and actively seeks their involvement, there is a reluctance by many to get involved. The association has a managing committee headed by a chairman and deputy chairman. There are annual elections to this committee, though, like most committees, there is less new blood coming in than the association might wish.

There is also less new blood coming into the fishing industry generally. The resources industry, and in particular, the off-shore wind energy industry offers younger potential fishers, far more attractive pay and conditions.

External communication is one of the strengths of the NFFO. The increasing complexity of the environment within which the industry operates has necessitated its engaging with all of those bodies and issues that might impact upon the industry. They see this as a political necessity.

Internal communication is also very strong. NFFO uses a host of different forms of communication, from newsletters to interactive web-site to Twitter to regular meetings. The administrative arm of the association, including its Chief Executive Officer, is highly accessible to each and every member. Sector member meetings are held as needed on an issues basis, there are annual regional meetings, while the managing committee meets monthly. These committee meetings are open to any member, each of whom is advised when these meetings are being held.

One of the challenges for the association is that its members come from such a variety of fisheries, so the association faces a very broad range of issues, most of which are not shared across all members. So the challenge is maintaining cohesion within the membership. One example is developing a common fisheries policy. Environmental challenges are an ever increasing pressure, having to prove that fisheries are sustainable. The NFFO proactively collaborates with the scientists to prove fisheries sustainability. Fighting for access and increased quotas are other continuing issues.

Freshness of management and leadership

Is your present association leadership fresh or long-term?

The longevity of managers in their jobs provides legitimacy and knowledge of how to accomplish tasks, manage political processes, and obtain desired outcomes. It also provides stability. In contrast, new management and leadership can usher in new ideas. Healthy associations seek a balance of both.

As reported in Plowman et al (2004):

> *Leadership is a two-edged sword. It is an act of civic responsibility. It is also an act of denying someone else civic experience. The more widely that civic experience can be shared, the healthier the association.*

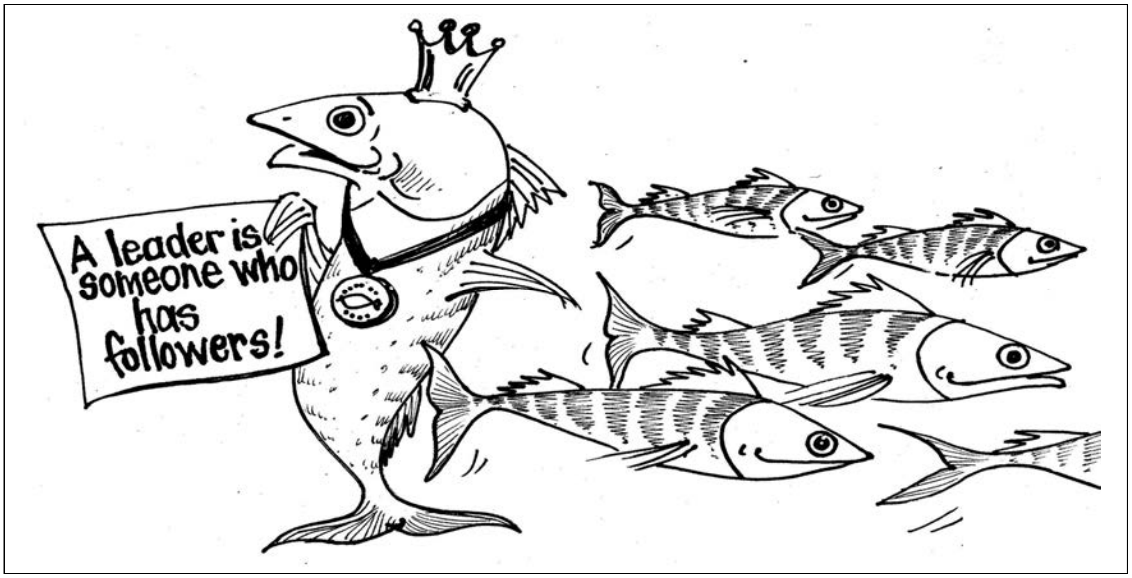
Across the Western world, the take-up of civic responsibility is in decline. In the past, when the pace of life was a little slower, when single income breadwinners had a spouse who carried the domestic responsibilities, this freed up the bread-winner to engage in civic duties, often for their entire adult life. The following quote comes from an interviewee whose dedication to his industry is unlikely to be repeated.

> *When I started out in 1960, I had that gut feeling that I wanted to have a say in the running of the industry in which my money was invested, to achieve better outcomes for the industry and the community as a whole. My first association involvement was when I was asked to be treasurer of the local PFA in '62, and then the Secretary of the Association,, which I did for 15 years. In that period I was then elected onto the State [peak body] in '73, and Chairman in '75, which I did for 26 years. I finished on the board of [peak body] in 2009 after 36 years of service. (5)*

Models of leadership

> ***Leadership is an act of civic responsibility. It is also an act of denying someone else civic experience.***

The need for a leader or leaders is hard-wired within human beings. We are born dependent upon parents, we grow up dependent upon parents, teachers and other authority figures, and we enter adulthood guided by legislation and governments. So there is no stage in our life where we are fully responsible for our circumstances, no matter how independent we'd like to be. And that dependency takes two forms: (i) needs dependency – where we expect others to satisfy needs we are unable to satisfy ourselves, and (ii) information dependency – where we seek information from others that is of interest or benefit to us.



It is also a human condition that we internalise our successes and externalise our threats and shortcomings. So we believe that if we are successful it is because we worked hard; not because we were born in a particular location at a particular time under a particular set of favourable circumstances. Conversely, if we are unsuccessful or threatened, it must be someone else's fault and therefore we appeal to some authority to fix it for us.

Thirdly, it is a normal human condition that people who are threatened are more inclined to gather together than when they are not threatened (Schachter, 1959).

Although we are still unconsciously hard-wired to the need for leaders, survival in the modern world is substantially enhanced by a steady renewal of leadership, allowing for a constant flow of new ideas and new behaviours.

Put these three basic human conditions together and what do we get? We get an association that has a leadership structure; one that we are prepared to support and defer to, as long as the threat remains. And one to which we hand over responsibility.

For 90,000 years, of which over 80,000 was spent as hunter-gatherers, humans have lived in social groups, led by the wisdom of tribal elders. That wisdom was nurtured, passed on and revered. Paying attention to the wisdom of elders raised the likelihood of survival. To ignore the wisdom of the elders was to risk death from starvation and the elements. Further, tribally, any disrespect shown to elders was severely punished. Any behaviour outside of the norm was socially frowned upon. In such an environment of bonded social capital, innovation rarely occurred, since it violated established practices. So we have become hard-wired to defer to the 'wisdom of the elders' and to be conservative as a species (Plowman, 2009).

Yet that wisdom of the elders is only relevant when the environment within which the wisdom was acquired remains unchanged. And in today's world, unlike the world of our ancestors, change is constant. Although we are still unconsciously hard-wired to the need for leaders, survival in the modern world is substantially enhanced by a steady renewal of leadership, allowing for a constant flow of new ideas and new behaviours.

Markham *et al* (2001) suggest there are four models of leadership in voluntary associations. They are (i) the democratic leadership model, (ii) the oligarchic leadership model, (iii) the leadership by default model, and (iv) the leadership for self-development model. Each is described below.

(i) The democratic leadership model.

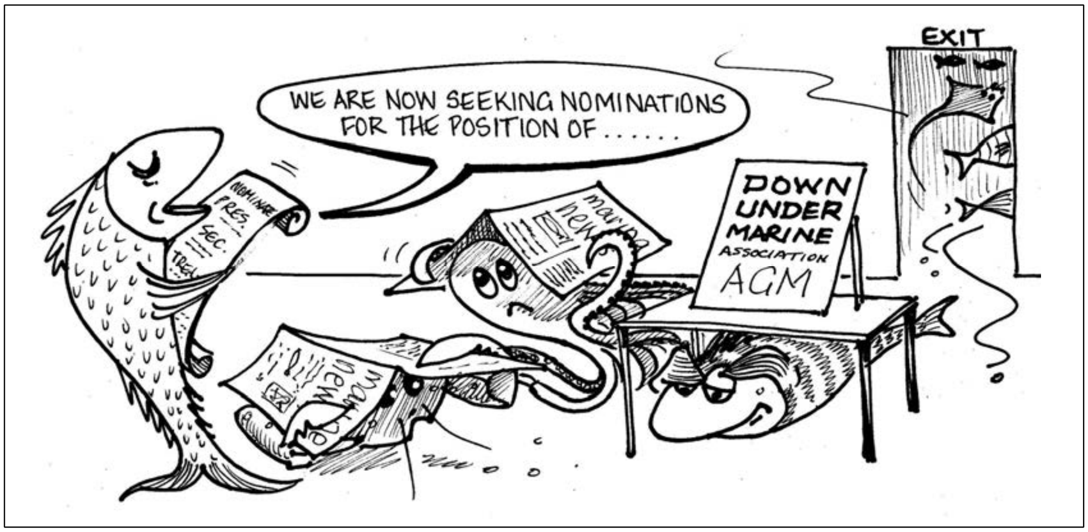
In the democratic model, leaders see themselves as there primarily to serve the interests of the association and its members. They are democratically elected by the membership as being the most worthy candidate for the position(s). Leadership renewal occurs regularly, as leaders understand the value of freshness of perspective. The membership contains many who see it as their responsibility to take up the leadership role, and willingly accept the sacrifices this entails. The members themselves take an active interest in the affairs of the association, so there is not a substantial knowledge discrepancy between the leadership and ordinary members. Decision-making is highly participatory. The broad sharing of responsibilities mean that there is a steady stream of people growing their confidence in their capacity to participate in the leadership of the association. There is a high level of satisfaction among both leadership and members and membership turnover is low. Conditions that favour democratic leadership in voluntary associations include being small in size, not requiring sophisticated systems of governance and low external dependency.

Associations in this study which seem to embody the democratic leadership model include the United Mid-West Fishers Association, the Traprock Group, and the Emerald Cotton Growers and Irrigators Association.

(ii) The oligarchic leadership model

The oligarchic leadership model is what sometimes evolves from more democratic beginnings, often as a very understandable consequence of the conditions the association faces. Evidence for this model is an entrenched clique, which holds prestige, power and knowledge, thereby substantially differentiating them from their membership. There are often privileges of office. Because leadership is time consuming and carries considerable responsibilities, incumbents acquire experience, knowledge and networks that often render them indispensable, an attribute they can use to their advantage. Ordinary members, acknowledging these attributes of their leaders are therefore willing to abdicate their participation in democratic and participative governance and pass decision making to their oligarchic leadership.

In an earlier Chapter on 'Means of Organisation', the three basic human needs – social need, need for achievement, and need for power were described. The oligarchic leadership model occurs when those with a need for power are concentrated in the Board and associated senior roles. And where that occurs there is a propensity for the Board to make statements as opposed to asking questions, thereby inhibiting any prospect of innovation.



Probably the most fundamental definition of a leader is 'someone who has followers'. So people who are well-known, popular and charming are particularly likely to gravitate to positions of leadership. For some, the position of leadership can unconsciously feed ego needs, rendering them reluctant to surrender the position. They often see themselves as having better judgement than others as to how the association should be run, and what policies it should pursue. Attention to the interests of members is paid in order to hold their position rather than as an act of service. To keep their position, they become political masters of impression management and control.

> *Those who aspire to leadership may be mainly interested in using the organization as a tool to advance a personal agenda or as a path to material rewards, prestige, and power. Many voluntary associations are consequently dominated by an active minority of leaders. Leaders play an important role in building member interest and commitment; however, member apathy or leaders' efforts to maintain their positions can create self-perpetuating leadership cliques, resulting in diminished influence and leadership opportunities for others and blocked communication between members and leaders. The result can be decreased member commitment and increased attrition, threatening organizational viability and effectiveness* (Markham et al, 2001:104).

Ordinary members cannot envisage themselves acting in a leadership role, nor would most of them want to. Member satisfaction, in contrast to leader satisfaction, is generally low.

Oligarchic leaders, sometimes termed 'alphas' (as in 'alpha male') use every mechanism to control the selection of those in the leadership circle, ensuring that deputies are compliant rather than challenging. These lieutenants (known as 'betas' or subservients) rarely are granted the opportunity to succeed or replace the leader, or they become 'puppets' to the real leader who remains in the shadows pulling the strings.

Challenges to oligarchic leadership are rare, and when they do occur they are often brutal. And sadly, the successor often brings the same oligarchic qualities. The world political stage, current and past is littered with examples. Ordinary members cannot envisage themselves acting in a leadership role, nor would most of them want to. Membership satisfaction, in contrast to leader satisfaction, is generally low. Members are commonly passive with substantial learned helplessness. Rebellion can surface when underlying satisfaction becomes too great. Or members just leave, psychologically, physically and/or financially.

> *The Cardwell Sport Fishing Club is one of the major sports fishing clubs in Queensland, but it has the same half a dozen people looking after it.* ***The Secretary was there when I came to Cardwell 26 years ago. No one else will do his job. Members might complain, but they won't try to do anything about it themselves.*** *(3)*

> *What happened, for a very long time on the Board; it was stagnant. No one in the [State] fishing industry gave a stuff. No one wanted to be a part of it. It wasn't until industry reaches crisis that people starting going, 'I've actually got to get involved in my own industry here and try and do something from within'. (4)*

> *The people that are there now would actively encourage it [new blood] and I don't know why they didn't in the past? People are now encouraging it and saying well yeah, we need people to step up, whereas in the past I didn't get that feeling that they wanted them. The previous executive, seven, eight, nine, ten years ago really had to be pushed away, [before new people could be encouraged]. (9)*

> *It's the lack of willingness from the past leaders [that stopped people getting involved]. (9)*

> *Obtain new blood and encourage turnover – [There has been an] increase in burnout and tiredness. I think our Constitution encourages that type of thought being 'I'm in that comfortable zone, I don't need to do much,' or, 'I've hit my head so many times against a brick wall, I'll just roll over and die and let people walk over the top of it, because it doesn't matter what happens, nothing's going to change.' (10)*

I think that as a result of little change in the persons on the Board and their various roles it has become inward looking rather than expansionary. (10)

Leaders encourage member participation as an opportunity to share the load. And they are more than happy to hand over to a successor, if only one can be found.

Our present research found several associations for which the oligarchic model would apply. Long established leadership, compliant and deferent deputies and perks of office are signals that this form of leadership might be at play. Further, a substantial knowledge and power gap between the leadership and ordinary members who are relatively passive is another sign.

A bi-product of oligarchic leadership is 'gatekeeping'. Information flows are politically controlled in ways that favour the power clique and disempower others. Information is blocked, filtered, fabricated and distributed in a manner that serves the interests of a privileged few and at a cost to the many. Rarely does oligarchic leadership operate with the long-term interests of their industry in mind. To the contrary, and our research found a number of examples, where oligarchic leadership presides over an industry brought into decline by the very actions of that leadership.

(iii) The leadership-by-default model

One of the most challenging aspects of NFPs is finding anyone to lead, particularly when the role is voluntary, comes with burden of responsibility and the expectations of members, and with little to no compensating benefits. Where membership is also voluntary and there is not a highly compelling unifying cause, leadership can be a thankless task. Those who step into the leadership role as an act of civic responsibility can find themselves with a vision for their association that is not necessarily broadly shared. So their leadership efforts can be frustratingly unsupported, and they can find themselves undertaking much of the work themselves.

Those who step up are primarily driven by a desire to serve. With a tendency to do too much, such leaders are at risk of burn-out.

Most members of associations have more than enough demands on their time, and have no interest in taking on the responsibilities and time inputs that leadership demands. So leadership falls to that small percentage of members who (a) have a sense of responsibility to their industry and community, (b) have the available time. So under the leadership-by-default model, leaders encourage membership participation as an opportunity to share the load. And they are more than happy to hand over to a successor, if only one can be found.

Probably re-define the roles of the Executive and put restrictions across the time and capacities etc. of those particular roles. And this is a bit of a Damocles'' Sword, because at each AGM the positions become vacant, but most associations such as mine, I won't bother putting my hand up because ***people like me who go to these sorts of committees are probably sitting on half a dozen other committees****, and they don't have the time etc. to be putting all their efforts into one basket.* ***So somebody who's been doing it for a number of years will stay on and stay on. So there's no succession planning, and the Constitution doesn't force that.*** *(10)*

The leadership-by-default model occurs in associations where there are no aspiring leaders hammering at the door. Those who step up are primarily driven by a desire to serve, and they believe they can find the time necessary. Being citizens with a propensity to volunteer and with a tendency to do too much, such leaders are at risk of burn-out. They do not derive much pleasure from the responsibility and they are more than willing to devolve power and responsibility to others.

We found a number of associations that might be best described by this model. They tend to be grass-roots associations, rather than peak bodies; they tend to represent people from a limited geographic area, and the associations are primarily or solely run by volunteers. They have limited dependency upon external sources and resources.

All the people in their current positions have been there for at least a couple of years now but then the other side of the coin is there are not really any other options. I can't see anybody else on the Board that could do the job better. So I wouldn't say that they're stale; just because it hasn't changed for a while. And I don't believe there's anyone else that I could see that could do the job better than the three that are doing it, and ***I'm very afraid, if any of them had to leave for any particular reason, who would be the people that would step in?*** *(2)*

I think that might be a common experience for the fishing industry, that we do come from our boat, and we might have been active in our local association and very good at it. Then ***we get put up for election and find ourselves on a Board, but not necessarily with all the training in terms of the appropriate and effective way to be on that Board. I think it's a common experience.*** *(4)*

We've changed President three times now, in the last few years so everybody has a bit of a crack at it which is good. The guys who are ex-Presidents are always there. Some aren't even on the committee, but they'll turn up to a meeting and basically give a bit of a guiding hand. (6)

A few of them would like to get off [the Board] but they know there's not really a lot coming behind to replace them.

We haven't had a General Manager; we've had an ad-hoc system of leadership at the moment. I mean the Chair has been doing the best job he can under the circumstances but there's been a bit of a juggling act. (7)

I've been President for 12 years, and was Secretary for 14 prior to that. So while it's far too long, there just hasn't been anyone else prepared to put their hand up. And most of it is because of cost. It is a huge financial burden. *(8)*

About five years ago there was a lapse for about three years where nobody would take it on, and I stepped up to the plate and got a team together, which has been running pretty effectively for about five years. But before that we didn't have a leadership for a few years. (12)

A few of them would like to get off [the Board] but they know there's not really a lot coming behind to replace them. (18)

(iii) The leadership-for-self-development model

In leadership- for-self-development, those who step up do so, not primarily as an act of service, or as an opportunity for self-aggrandisement; rather they do so as an experience for personal growth. Like oligarchy, leadership for self-development leads to knowledge and political networks being concentrated among a few. Unlike oligarchy, leadership for self-development may be more inclined to take personal risks and to stretch themselves and the organisation. Therefore such leaders will be more committed to the association than ordinary members might be. Because these leaders are so committed, it is more difficult for the association or its members to criticize them. Nor are such leaders likely to be critical of others.

Leadership-for-self-development is not without its short-comings.

Some aspects of leadership for self-development, like democracy, oligarchy and leadership by default, can hinder effectiveness. A great deal of time goes into administration, committees and meetings multiply, and procedures become increasingly labyrinthine. While this may meet some members' needs for leadership activity, others are apt to complain that time and resources are diverted from other goals, and both members and leaders are frustrated by the low flexibility and efficiency that result. Typical complaints are that meetings are too long, procedures are too complex, and attainment of stated goals is hindered by too much administrative activity (Markham et al, 2001:126/7)

Some leaders show excellent leadership. Some show very little.

Without safe-guards (such as fixed terms) in place, leadership-for-self-development could easily become oligarchical leadership. After all, how much personal development is enough? This never ending journey of self-discovery might be undertaken with the association merely being a vehicle for that personal indulgence.

Our research did not surface any cases where leadership-for-self-development was clearly a primary driver. We certainly found many associations where an unexpected side benefit to association Board members was a growth in personal levels of confidence and skill. And in a number of cases, office bearers in an association at grass-roots level had gone on to represent their industry at a peak body level. And many acknowledged that it was the confidence and skill gained at grass-roots level that enabled the step up.

(v) Some thoughts on leaders, followers, leadership and followership.

The terms 'leader' and 'leadership' are sometimes used interchangeably. Yet consider the following:

(i) It is quite possible for a group to have leadership provided by a competent leader.
(ii) It is quite possible for a group to experience leadership from many people, with no specific leader.
(iii) It is quite possible for a group to have a leader with limited leadership ability.
(iv) It is quite possible for a group to be without leadership or a leader.

A definition of a leader that makes obvious sense is 'someone who has followers'. Hence it is the 'followers' who sanction and legitimise the 'leader'. So a 'leader' is someone who meets the expectations of the 'followers'. There are three sets of expectations that followers place on a leader. [Note: The notion of the three facets of a leader was conveyed to me by my personal mentor and respected elder, Dr Bob Dick, one of Australia's leading social psychologists. I have sought a reference as to the origins of the idea, but it is lost in antiquity.]

First: A person who can represent us to ourselves, someone we look up to and admire; or someone who can represent us to the outside world. This is the '*legitimate leader'*, the President or Chair. They occupy a position of power, and are expected to be powerful in lobbying for our interests.

Second: Someone who has the necessary expertise or knowledge in a particular context. This is the '*effective leader'* and is context specific. Change the context and we may need a different 'effective leader'. For example, who knows how to fix the fax machine? So followers expect the 'effective leader' to 'achieve' on their behalf.

Third: Someone who will show empathy and support in times of grief; who will share our joys in times of happiness. This is the '*empathic leader'* whom we expect to feed our social needs.

Note that these three expectations that followers have of their leader are a third-party representation of 'need for power', 'need for achievement', and 'social need'.

So followers have, unconsciously, these three and constantly changing, expectations of a leader. It is rare that any one 'leader' will be able to meet the followers' expectations in all three. So our leaders can often disappoint us. This is another reason for sharing the leadership of an association. The more broadly it is shared, the more likely that all three sets of follower expectations can and will be met.

In their 2004 research into healthy rural communities, Plowman *et al* interview 65 people from eight separate rural communities. Some of those communities were found to be substantially more innovative and resilient than others. And the difference was captured in the language of the interviews. The interviewees from the communities that were in decline were more likely to ask: 'When are they going to ….. ?' where the 'they' referred to the local Council, the State government, or any person/body external to the interviewee. In those communities that were thriving, however, the language was quite different. There, interviewees asked: 'How can we …. ?', recognising that responsibility in their future lay in their hands, not with some external 'other'.

So when 'followers' externalise their expectations of their leaders, they are falling into the 'When is s/he going to …..' camp. This depowers the followers, because they now expect someone else to look after it, and empowers the 'leaders', regardless of their actual competence. It also sets up a gulf between the 'leaders' and the 'led'. And for some 'leaders' who enjoy a level of kudos from their role, it is a gulf they are happy to see remain.

In associations where the prevailing view is 'How can we ….?', there is likely to be a much greater sharing of responsibility and much less need by any individual to hang on to the trappings of power. Leadership is much more likely to be on rotation, based on the context and skills required. So it is willingly shared. Followers, who have had their own experiences in the leadership role, are empathic to the challenges and burdens of leadership, and so adopt a supportive and helpful followership role. Until it is their turn to step up again. We found a number of associations, covered in the case studies, where leadership by rotation is the norm.

(v) An evolutionary perspective on leadership.

We're trying to rotate responsibilities, but we also don't want to discourage those longstanding members who are always willing and very helpful.

Some readers might find the comments in the previous section challenging to their notion of a 'leader'. After all, we seem to be saying that an incumbent leader might not be most beneficial to an association. And people's resistance to that notion might be very strong indeed, and it is very deep seated. So deep seated in fact that the concept of a strong leader is encrypted into the DNA of almost every human being on the planet. And yet we, the authors of this Report, are saying the value of that encryption may no longer apply.

For 90,000 years the human species has been guided by the wisdom of the elders. In childhood we looked 'up' (literally) to the wisdom of our parents; at work we respected the wisdom of the boss; in our associations we acknowledge our leaders have greater depth of knowledge than we do. So most human beings regard it as perfectly natural for there to be leaders and followers.

The notion of leaders and followers leads to more complex social structures. And no matter which culture we consider, social stratification is always present. The concept of social stratification is reinforced by males who seek to be further up the hierarchy. And the reason for that is that a woman, whose primary evolutionary objective is to ensure that her genes are successful in the next generation, is much more likely to choose as a reproductive mate somebody who will bestow her offspring with dominant genes. Of course there are exceptions, though there are not sufficient exceptions to change this common scripting of our genes.

New ideas are most likely to come from younger people, people with a different perspective (eg women), and outsiders; those who have not been socialised by the present culture.

Recognition of the wisdom of the elders became entrenched in the human psyche because the external environment changed very, very slowly, such that what an elder shared with their followers was likely to be helpful. And when the environment is stable and the wisdom of the elders is lore and law, innovation of any type was discouraged and punished, since it would challenge the wisdom of the elders. The social expectation was that elders would 'tell' and 'followers' would ask; never 'tell' or 'suggest'.

When the social, economic, political, or technological environment is no longer stable, the wisdom of the elders may no longer be helpful, even though the elders are hard-wired to feel the need to 'tell' and the followers to 'ask'. What is needed in a turbulent environment is a suite of ideas and practices that may differ from those espoused by the elders. And these are most likely to come from younger people, people with a different perspective (e.g. women), and people who have not been socialised by the association to be compliant and obey. The best ideas commonly come from outsiders. Unlike the ancient world for which we are hard-wired, survival in the modern world demands a complete reversal of old practices. Now we need leaders who 'ask' (and listen) rather than 'tell', and followers who 'suggest', rather than 'ask'.

Finding leaders

One of the most frequent comments from interviewees concerned the difficulty in finding people willing to step into leadership roles within associations. Reasons for the difficulty include lack of confidence, perceived lack of knowledge both about the industry and the role, reluctance to be seen as a 'tall poppy', the financial burden, and the time lost from business and family.

There is a danger too– I find my Board relies on me [the EO] to do the [Board] recruitment and I don't think that's good. ***The Board need to spend time [on finding new Board members]; it's their peer group.*** *I may be a part of it, but essentially I'm a paid employee. (1)*

We're not getting the people coming forward that really want to make a difference (5)

When it comes to an AGM and they call for nominations from the floor, well by then half the people are hiding underneath the table.

And ***quite a few of us have been on the committee for probably eight to ten years. People tend to shy away from AGMs in case they get a job.*** *It's usually only if you have something controversial come up in a management proposal, you've got to virtually lock the doors to keep them out. Any other time you're battling to get enough to have a quorum. (6)*

When it comes to an AGM and they call all positions vacant and for nominations off the floor, well by then half the people are hiding underneath the table. *(6)*

I think it's important – we've talked about freshness and new points of view which are pretty basic reasons why ***it's important to keep changes happening at the committee level****. (9)*

Within the last five years, I think we've had three changes of leadership. (9)

It would be nice to have new people coming in, but ***there are just too few people out there that put their hand up****. I very much doubt whether anybody else would bother putting their hand up to attend meetings etc. because there's no real interest, and I don't think they believe they get that much benefit back from it. (10)*

Possibly just an expansion of the number of members. And it really requires the membership themselves to step up and perhaps take a little more responsibility. The problem is of course, *that the people who have been doing it for a long time feel the pressure to continue, or they worry what will happen if they don't. So it's the challenge that's known to pretty much every organisation at the moment. (11)*

***Last year it was nearly dead, the committee basically didn't exist**. (12)*

We're trying all the time. I send out emails every month asking for people. It just doesn't work. (12)

*We're understaffed at the moment and we're still functioning. **It's hard to get people to step up to take on leadership roles. There's no one to take their place, so they all stay there.** We've been the same for the last five years, and we can't get people in there. (12)*

We're trying all the time to get more members to step up to the Board, but it's hard to get people to come up because it's extra work. We've got a core sitting on our Board, and are trying to get more all the time. (12)

We keep asking people to nominate for the Board, but we don't get any response. We'd like to be running with about 15 members. It's the same with most organisations. (12)

[Suggestions for increasing leadership freshness?] A change in the constitution I suppose, but I'm not sure that would be the answer. At management level if you're talking about paid employees, the only way you can do that is hire and fire, isn't it? (13)

[Interviewer: So does each of your subsidiary associations have a responsibility or a mandate to produce the next generation of executive for your association? You're a peak body, so the only place that your new blood is going to come from is from people coming up through the ranks, isn't it?] It's funny, but most of our members of the Executive, the Officers, are producers, with a few exceptions. So the company or the association appoints who they want to represent them on the Board. (14)

Getting some of these people that are so dedicated – bypassing them and saying, 'No, we really want to go outside.' We've managed it okay, but the same five people would volunteer for everything.

We're wanting those that can contribute a lot of time and energy rather than the ones that can't. At the same time, we know that we need turnover. There still seems to be the core group today that was actively involved five years ago. And you don't want to discourage that, because they're willing to put in the time and they have some of that corporate history, but you also need to encourage new people to get involved. (14)

[Interviewer: You might float amongst your members the consideration that they think about rotating the representative of their association / corporate as a rotational responsibility to provide freshness from their perspective.] That's a really good suggestion. We're trying to rotate responsibilities, but we also don't want to discourage those longstanding members who are always willing and very helpful. (14)

The freshness is coming in through committees and new members, but our core Board has been fairly stable. (14)

There's been at least 25-50% renewal. Plus we've had new Board members as we've acquired new members in the last three to four years. There's been constant change – new blood, new opinions, and new expertise. So it's all been good. (14)

It's hard when people put themselves up for re-election once a year; it is not the same intensity if the same people get elected again. (16)

We'd like to see fresh faces around the table that puts in; it invigorates discussion. (16)

In some local areas, they do have some problems, but bigger areas, especially in Brisbane; you have no trouble finding someone who is willing to take on those positions. Everyone to some degree is ambitious by being there; they think that, by being there, they can have an influence on what happens. (17)

Everybody else was sort of getting burned out. They said 'Okay you're young person in my company; you go for it now'.

Over the past couple of years we have managed to get a better turnover in the Board and actually get a couple of younger members. That may be a reflection of the fact that everybody else was sort of getting burned out. Or they said 'Okay you're young person in my company; you go for it now'. (15)

While we do not have the same people over and over again, we certainly do have some people that have been there a long time. (15)

I am an employee. [Interviewer: Okay and you can be on the Board and be the President.] I have been in the past, yes I have been designated by my employer. [Interviewer: What you're telling me is that for any member, which is typically a corporation, the Board member, the representative can be the owner, can be the employee; it could be anybody representing that particular business.] But it has to be a written designation by the president of the company, to say that this person is my representative or is the company representative and has voting authority for the specific company. Now you're not a representative of the company on the Board, you're a salmon representative or a mussel representative. You're an industry representative and you can take direction from all the members. (15)

Generally, after each election, we do have new people coming onto the Board too as others retire or choose not to come back to Brisbane and maybe still remain on their local committees. It used to be only maybe two or three [new Board members] once, but now you probably get say 15-20 %. But I know some areas do find it difficult to attract someone who is willing to go to Brisbane too, because you've virtually lost say a month or so [per year] by going down there. You've got a meeting that is generally at least three days and you've got four of those a year, and then, once you think about travelling and everything, it's quite easy to lose a month. When I first started, it used to be a five day show. You think even BHP doesn't have anything that long. (17)

> *We struggle and never have an election up here, we've never in my seven years we've never had an election. We struggle to get people. It's a lot of work for not much return for them. [Interviewer: To get them to nominate for the Board you mean?] Yeah. [Interviewer: You haven't had a contest for people to get on?] Unfortunately they're not fighting to get on [the Board] and a few of ours would like to get off [the Board] but they know there's not really a lot coming behind to replace them. (18)*

> *They've got to stand for election every year. One of the issues again is just finding people who are prepared to stand and so you want to encourage a competitive process. Again, the more we engage with members, the more people want to participate.* ***It is a bit of a struggle to get people to participate in the Boards as office bearers, and so the more we interact with members and provide benefits to members, the more people want to be members of the Board.*** *(21)*

> *If they've done a stint on it for two years or three years, they don't want to necessarily go back on [to the Board]. And so we sort of run out of people eventually. (22)*

The problem of finding leaders is exacerbated when there are multiple levels of associations. For any higher level of association, such as a peak body, the only source of its leadership is from the member associations. Yet we found no member associations that had a deliberate policy of growing leaders to represent them at a higher level. This is an omission that we recommend all associations address.

Where there are multiple-levels of associations, it is the responsibility of the executive at any level to ensure that it is nurturing and encouraging people who can serve as representatives at the level above. It is also the responsibility of the executive, where appropriate, that they support and nurture the growing of future representatives from the associations at the level below.

Growing leaders

None of the twenty two associations participating in the present research had a formal succession plan, though one interviewee was a member of another aquaculture association that did. Several made contradictory comments saying both that had had a succession process, though no succession planning. All interviewees thought the concept of growing future leaders and setting up a mentoring process to do so was a good idea. Peak bodies recognised that responsibility for growing future leaders in the peak body fell as much to the subsidiary association members.

> ***I don't think succession is active in [our association] in terms of thinking about [leadership renewal]*** *(1)*

> ***Essentially it takes someone 6-12 months to actually get functioning at a Board level and our job is actually shortening that. So I think it's useful [to have an induction kit].*** *(1)*

My suggestion is to have a trainee Board member program or some sort of mentoring program. That would be fantastic.

I think there's a weakness in the national seafood industry leadership programme, in that it only takes 12 people a year. (1)

[Interviewer: Do each of the delegates, including you, have a stand-in, a backup, a protégé, an apprentice?] I could only talk for our industry. I don't know about the others; 'No'. (2)

[Interviewer: Does the [association] have a conscious succession plan for leadership?] No. [Would it be useful, mentoring potential industry leaders; a sort of development plan?] I think it would be useful. (3)

*I think **we need some younger people on there**. [Interviewer: **Does the Council have a mentoring program to grow up-and-coming young people?**] They don't, no. We'd like to, but we just don't have the resources. [Interviewer: Does each of the zones have a sub-committee?] Each of the zones probably has their own Professional Fishermen's Association associated with them. Because we're so diversified in terms of our location, they tend to be just dealing with the issues in their own areas. Then they feed back into that zonal thing, which feeds back into the whole Council. [Interviewer: So **the responsibility for growing prospective Board members should lie with those fisheries' associations?] That's right.** We've talked about it before. Again, they suffer from a funding problem as well. You've got to really spend some time and effort to try to develop that sort of thing. Unfortunately, most of them are heavily involved in running their own business, and having the time to be able to do that, if they had a designated person who could be a mentor, then it's okay to say it's a retired person; **the retired people tend to go on the Board, unfortunately**. (5)*

*Participation is a big thing we all struggle with. **We should be mentoring people**. Maybe a mentoring scheme with the fishing associations. (5)*

Young kids, give them a run at it. It's their fishery. I'll be long dead when they're putting up with it.

***My suggestion for that is to have a trainee Board member program or some sort of mentoring program in place. That would be fantastic**. (5)*

***The last President put in his Presidential Report we've got our young people coming through; I think it's about time we all step aside and give them a go.** (6)*

*There's still several people on the [peak body] Council that have been around the traps for a really long time and so I think they are looking for it [new blood] but **it comes back to having that second tier of industry associations sending the people up.** So really it's something that perhaps has to be communicated to the associations that it's not a bad idea to put someone different in every now and again to bring some fresh ideas into the show. (7)*

If we want to get the younger leaders to take over the roles, they're smarter than us old volunteers were. They need to be paid some sort of sitting fee or travelling fee. (8)

Identify young people who are switched on so to speak and nurture those people and get them up to speed. (9)

*It's hard. [Our association] has been trying to do it [freshness of leadership], but I guess **not getting caught in that cycle of having past committee members having a bit of time off and then coming back** and sitting on the committee, but encouraging new, younger Fishers to at least have a role on the committee. And encouraging them to become more active over time with a view to taking on those leadership roles. [Our association] has actively been trying to do that. **They encourage and fund younger members of the industry to attend industry events / functions / forums, to encourage them to be involved.** And some of those individuals have remained involved with the association, and some haven't. I think it's something that [our association] needs to continue to do. (9)*

*We've made a point in the last couple of years of getting a lot of younger blokes in and grooming them, but **you can't put old heads on young shoulders**. So we're just waiting to get through the next election, and our plan is that a lot of these young blokes will come on to the committee to take over a lot of these roles. But I guess we do a lot of political work to get to what we want at an election. We've got some long-term cards that we've been playing that we need to get over the line in the next election. (11)*

*We do plan for it, and I'm the first one to say new ideas, new people. **Young kids, give them a run at it. It's their fishery.** I'll be long dead when they're putting up with it. (11)*

If you want to be President, you have to serve as Vice President for 12 months beforehand to get familiar with the role, rather than step into it cold.

*You have to pick the right people. It's all very fine to say, 'Look, I'm not going to do that [executive role] anymore' but **you have to phase in new people over time.** Just a cold change can be dangerous as in two or three years, the wrong person can do a lot of damage. (11)*

*I suppose you could do things like rather than just having a President and a Secretary, **you could have a President and a Vice President, and spread the load around,** and do what they do in a lot of other associations, where **if you want to be President, you have to serve as Vice President for 12 months beforehand to get familiar with the role** before you step into the position, rather than step into it cold. (11)*

[Interviewer: For the new people that come in, do you have an induction process?] We have a membership manual in terms of what we provide them. We don't have any training per se. That's something that I think would be useful at some point in time to have a Board organisational workshop. (14)

[Interviewer: One of the risks for an association such as yours where your membership is based on a flat fee is that as the industry, even though the total production volume might be on the increase, the number of member corporations might in fact, through consolidation, be in decline.] We already know that. [Right, and yet the individual corporation as members may be growing. So if they are growing, they are likely to have newer and younger employees coming

into the association, who are the potential future leaders of the industry and therefore the association. So to what extent is there a conscious program with your association of growing those young people?] I don't know that there is a conscious effort on that of growing future leaders for the association. I know we certainly support students and aquaculture students. But how to do that within companies so that they would want to participate on behalf of the companies? I don't know how the industry association actually does that. That's almost like a within-company thing. I think that's probably how that would come about. And I have to think about doing that myself. But I tell you what, it's like nobody wants to do it because it's a friggin' lot of time and effort. (15)

*We are about succession planning. I think succession planning within the actual growing sector is inadequate, but as far as our organisation goes I think it's very adequate. Some growers are quite selfish; they want to concentrate on their own business. Because Directors are very successful people, they don't do it for the money. ……**We do have a concentrated effort on succession plan to make sure we do anticipate; we don't just come up to a [Director] nomination period like we are for the next 2013 election, we don't actually come up and say: 'Let's hope we get a lot of nominations'; we're actually working on it now.** (17)*

***I think probably having a succession plan is not a bad thing.** So you've got to have reasonably long length, but then you've also got to have the ability within the organisation that, say if someone goes under a bus, there's someone there that can step in without too much trouble. **There's no sort of formal succession plan in place at all.** (17)*

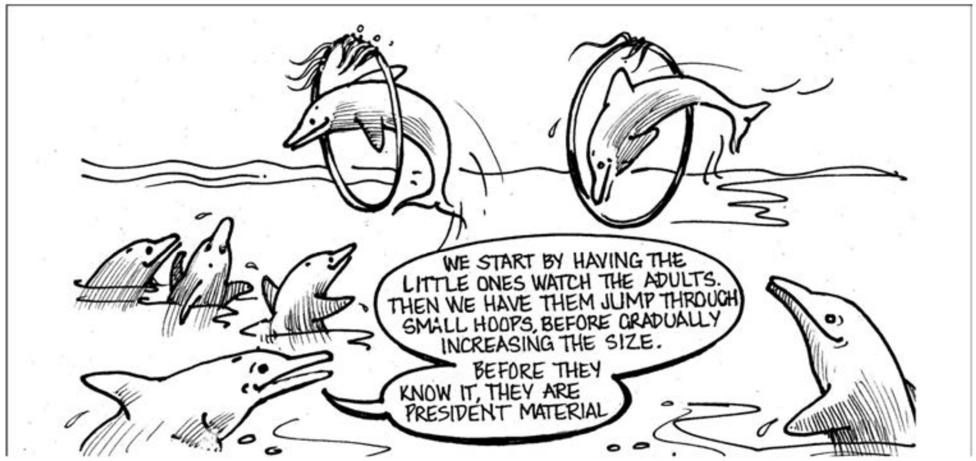
There is quite substantial succession planning in the membership, and also in the Directorship. (18)

> ***Get them to come in and sit through a few meetings to see what they think about it and give them an idea of the time***

***We're not very good at doing any of that succession; we always sit here and think now 'Who could take over?' But nothing really ever gets done**. Every now and then they get invited into a meeting when it's coming up to election time, just to give them a bit of a look and then they …. That's about all that's done. Not very adequate, I don't think. (18)*

*It's hard, it's hard. It would be good to get them to come in and if you think there's some, which is what we try to do before the last election, **get them to come in and sit through a few meetings to see what they think about it and give them an idea of the time commitment**, as it is a time commitment thing. There's some younger growers that need to be targeted. (18)*

Although we are more likely to think that the objective of growing leaders is to ensure that we have new leaders coming through for our association, it is just as important to think about producing leaders for our peak bodies and beyond. Hence part of the leadership development strategy for any association is to have an exit strategy whereby our competent leaders can be released to serve our industry at a higher level of representation and advocacy.



Electing leaders

The Minister has asked for more diversity on our Board, but I was thinking, 'What more could he want! And how are we going to find more who also have interest in the fishing industry?'

Iecovich (2005) examined 161 non-profit organizations in Israel to understand the composition of Boards, the methods employed to recruit new Board members, and the selection criteria of Board members. The results of that study, which may or may not apply to the fishing and aquaculture industries in Australia, suggest that most organisations use mainly informal means to recruit new Board members. The most important selection criteria were those related to interpersonal relationships, willingness to contribute time, and expressing an interest in working for the organization.

There are two major theoretical perspectives on how board members are selected. The first is stewardship theory (Donaldson and Davis, 1991) which suggests that the main function of the Board is to improve an association's performance by selecting Board members on their expertise, experience, and their networks. The second is the democratic model, which maintains that the major role of governing Boards is to represent the interests of the membership base. These two different perspectives imply different methods of Board member selection and different profiles of Board composition. Under the first perspective candidates for Board membership are either selected or appointed; under the second, they are democratically elected (Iecovich 2005).

> *We've got three MBAs; a Lawyer Professor of Management; we've got a public company Director, a local aquaculture entrepreneur; we've got a guy who won the national fishing industry entrepreneur award in 2010; we've got a Board member with an anthropology*

> *background and who is now a manger in the [named] group. Anthropology is a completely different professional background than most of us. The Minister has asked for more diversity on our Board, but I was thinking: 'What more could he want? And how are we going to find more who also have interest in the fishing industry? (4)*

Each of these perspectives has its particular advantages and disadvantages. Boards that mirror their membership base are more homogeneous, and therefore have a greater sensitivity to the needs of their members. Further they are perceived by their members as being 'legitimate' because of the similarity in backgrounds. In other words they have a greater level of 'bonding social capital'. One the other hand, since managing of an organisation can require financial skills, administrative skills, and political skills (to name a few) homogeneous Boards, elected by their members, can lack the diversity necessary for the management of an organisation.

Boards that are selected/appointed to provide diversity of skills, knowledge and networks are generally more sophisticated in their management. They have a higher level of 'bridging social capital', yet they may seem a little remote or out of touch in the eyes of ordinary members.

> *Several methods of board member recruitment are generally used: (1) elections—all organization members (general assembly) vote for the proposed nominees; (2) selections—only the board is authorized to nominate new board members; (3) appointments—new members are appointed by stakeholders or other external organizations or political agencies. Organizations may differ in the way they choose to recruit their board members* (Iecovich 2005: 164).

I think that might be a common experience for the fishing industry, that we do come from our boat, and we might have been active in our local association and very good at it. Then we get put up for election and find ourselves on a Board, but not necessarily with all the training in terms of the appropriate and effective way to be on that Board.

Our research found the first and the third of these methods used in the associations we examined. The majority used elections at an AGM by the general assembly. Yet, since there is almost never a case of competition for scarce Board places or an over-supply of willing nominees – rather the reverse – nominees are rarely a surprise and almost always cajoled by existing Board members. So perhaps, number 2 above does apply. We found only one where the Board appointments appeared to be politically mediated; this being for a peak body whose total funding was allocated by government, having been collected from levies imposed on fishers. However we also came across additional variations. For example, in some associations the inner executive positions of President, Secretary, and Treasurer are selected from the general assembly. In other associations, those positions are voted on by only the elected

Board members themselves, outside of the general assembly. And we came across one case where the Chairman was selected by the general assembly and the Deputy Chairman, for internal political reasons, was selected by the Board.

> *The Deputy Chairman is elected by the Board and the Chairman is elected by the members every year. The Chairman used to be elected by the Board but it's sort of changed. Over the years they wanted to get rid of someone who was entrenched, and they couldn't get rid of him so that's why they made it direct elected and it's gone on. It's an unusual situation when you think about it. (4)*

In the unlikely event that an association might be blessed with choice in relation to potential Board members, on what basis might it choose? Iecovich (2005) suggests three major categories of selection criteria.

> *First, personal resources that include achieved status—education, professional skills that are essential to the Board's activity, and experience, such as in financial management, accountancy, the law, and other specific areas of expertise relevant to the organization's domain of activity. Second, personal characteristics that include ascribed status—age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and race—and representatives of various constituencies within the community and society representing different perspectives, identities, and interests, including clients of the organization's services. Third, people who possess social capital in terms of the right social connections with the kinds of resources necessary and useful for the organization. This is of particular importance because non-profits operate in an environment where social skills and networks are crucial to negotiate with the surroundings.* (p165)
>
> *In fact, the research found that the most important selection criteria for Board members were those associated with being an enthusiastic and committed supporter of the organization and having special skills or knowledge relevant to it* (Iecovich 2005: 164).
>
> *It may be that they feel there are barriers. I've seen a few people put their names up a few times and haven't gotten on the Board. [Interviewer: Is there a sense in which there are some internal politics at play that determine who gets on the Board and who doesn't?] Possibly; that's where this whole ability to vote in blocs by nature, the composition of the membership structure that might result in the fact that some people with a lesser support base – I use the term 'support base' loosely in that they might come from a minor fishery with less exposure to the other fisheries – or their name might not be as well known, and they get less of an opportunity to be successful. (4)*

Our interviews revealed that there are often two more fundamental selection criteria to association Boards; namely: (i) who has the time? And (ii) who has the confidence? Both of these immediately narrow the field. And, as mentioned earlier in this document, confidence is often based on knowledge. One of the greatest barriers to participation is knowledge inequality.

There's only five, eight people or ten people in the industry that really are up to speed with most issues and also prepared to do those jobs.

It's a pretty small pool that you're picking people from, and [the challenge is] trying to get them to give up their time to go on it [the Board]. If you want to kick someone off and get someone new to just fill in the spot, that can happen. I don't know how you get freshness. (4)

I think as issues get harder and also the executive of [the Association] and their representation, unlike before, is very good, so that's become better, ***people probably think they're not up to speed or good enough to do those jobs.*** *There are only five, eight people or ten people in the industry that really are up to speed with most issues and also prepared to do those jobs. (9)*

> *Another set of reasons relate to those who have attained higher education and professional qualifications (achieved status) and tend to become board members because they are people who are successful and economically secure and have the time and inclination to devote themselves to their communities. Awareness of the importance of civic participation and public mindedness, actualized through board membership, may result when people are at a stage of life at which such participation is realistic—essentially, the mundane issues of life have been settled. Potential board members may also be frightened off by the complexities of board responsibilities—such as fiduciary duties and the personal responsibilities imposed on board members by law—to put forth their best efforts to warrant the organization's success. Lack of appropriate qualifications in terms of education, professional background, and experience, or the lack of free time to become involved in such activities may also serve as deterrents* (Iecovich 2005: 175).

Iecovich (2005) concludes that society would benefit substantially if one of the major barriers to civic participation was removed.

> *Since one of the barriers to more democratic participation is that people lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of governance, it is very important to tackle these knowledge deficiencies. Specific courses and training programs should be developed for those populations that are underrepresented on Boards. The major purpose of such training programs should be to increase awareness of the importance of civic participation through Board membership, and to provide people with the knowledge and skills that will qualify them to become Board members. This can encourage younger individuals, women, and those from deprived groups in the population, to*

become more involved in voluntary organizations and to exert influence on the decisions that may affect and improve their lives. (P178)

We don't have any training per se. That's something that would be useful - to have a Board organisational workshop.

I think that might be a common experience for the fishing industry, that we do come from our boat, and we might have been active in our local association and very good at it. Then we get put up for election and find ourselves on a Board, but not necessarily with all the training in terms of the appropriate and effective way to be on that Board. I think it's a common experience. (4)

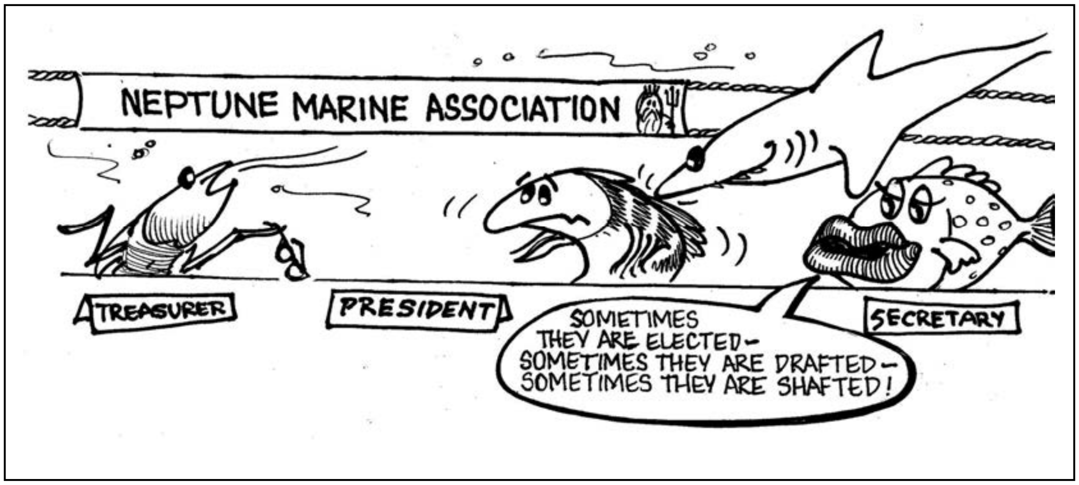
Whether you actually impose something which makes the structure forcibly regenerate [i.e. compulsory turnover], could be useful to look at. My own view is that it's also important to have ongoing training. An ongoing focus on the required role. I don't think that's ever a bad thing. I think it's important to do it as a group as well, so everyone's on the same page. (4)

[Interviewer: Do you think that that exercise that you undertook [Institute of Company Directors Course – conducted with fellow Board members and with the Board members from a subsidiary association] could be a useful annual event, in terms of just reminding people?] Very much so. Some people might feel that they've already done it before and don't get a lot of benefit, but for myself, I think it would be very useful. You might evolve it a bit – about the things you look at. [Researcher's note: This raises the idea of inviting as observers, to every Board meeting, where they are not presently directly represented, members of the Board of other organisations with which [the association] has a current or potential relationship] *(4)*

[Interviewer: For the new people that come in, do you have an induction process?] We have a membership manual in terms of what we provide them. We don't have any training per se. That's something that I think would be useful at some point in time to have a Board organisational workshop. (14)

In the majority of the case studies, Board or Council members are elected. Commonly these elections are annually, though in one case they are every three years. If a few cases, elections are split-half, with only half of the governing group being eligible in any election cycle. This is a very satisfactory model, creating a balance of fresh ideas with experience and stability. We found one case where Directors could be appointed, should there be insufficient nominees. Rarely, if ever, were there so many nominees that a formal vote by members was necessary. Almost always are nominations uncontested. We also found one case where all Directors, bar one, on a 25 seat Board, had their seat purchased as part of their member entitlement. The one that did not was elected by a particular sub-category of the members. We found another case where the producer members elect five Board members, whilst the associate members (commonly suppliers) elected another Board member.

We came across one case where the Board members were elected at the AGM by the general members. Immediately after the election of Board positions, the general members then elected, from that pool of Board members, the executive positions of President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Yet we found other cases where, once general Board members were elected, it was those Board members, not the general members, who determined who the executive would be. In a practical sense, we suspect there is very little difference between these two approaches, though in certain contentious cases, there might well be.



In the corporate section of the membership, you automatically get a Board seat if you pay the top fee.

It is annual. Election is by the broader membership. So basically what happens is that we have in our Constitution seven on the Committee. A minimum of four of those must be full members. So you can't have seven associate members, but you can have associate members on the committee, anything up to three. Those people are nominated from the floor, and then they're voted for. Then once the seven people have been nominated, it's up to the second round of nominations for the President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. But they're not settled by the Committee, they're settled by the broader membership. (3)

[State peak body] has eight Board members. We have one year terms and three year terms on a rolling rational basis. So I got voted on, on a three year term. I'm two years into my three year term. When that runs out at the next AGM, I have the opportunity to say I am re-standing for another three years or I am vacating my seat. And ***what I do is if I'm going to vacate my seat or I'm going to stand again, you let [State peak body] know beforehand, and they may send out emails to members saying, [named person] is standing again****, he would like your vote or [named person] is not standing again; can we have nominations for his spot, and then on the day there's nominations from the floor. (4)*

The Directors of the Board is two years, the Chairman is elected each year from within the Board. (5)

Our constitution allows an appointment process. So we've got ***25 % of our Board are actually appointees at the moment and not elected representatives.*** *Appointees have to meet the* *same criteria as an elected representative but they don't go through the election process. They're approached and asked would they stand in until the election process. (5)*

When the new term starts, all the positions are vacant again. You don't automatically go back into your role. You've got to be re-elected locally.

I think it's two years. Say for instance, the President and Treasurer will be on for two years, the following year, the Secretary etc. are elected. That way it's not a complete walk-out of people. So there are always people there, the four major ones. [Interviewer - A staged process. Is there a limit on the number of times you can serve?] No. (12)

Every member has a right to elect Board members, that's right. Not everybody gets to appoint one. The reason for that is, for example, in the corporate section of the membership, in order to be a Board member, you automatically get a Board seat if you pay the top fee. So a salmon company that pays $25,000 will get a Board seat. One that pays $15,000 doesn't. On the shellfish side, if you pay $5,000 you get a Board seat, but if you pay $3,500 you don't, etc. etc. (14)

You could be the Chairman for 100 years if the members were happy with you.

The difference with the associate is that we only have one associate member on the Board, so they collectively within themselves have to elect who is going to be the associate representative on the Board. (14)

The members will elect the Board, and then the Board meets to elect the various positions that would then become the Executive Committee. (14)

It would be two salmon reps and two mussel reps [on the Board]. And then an alternate species rep and then two at-large members or something or other. They're elected by all the voting members, all the producer members are the regular members at the AGM. Any regular member can nominate somebody else to run for the Board and then there is a vote at the AGM. The general membership votes for two Board members in each of those sectors. The associate members, they get two Board positions as well. (15)

When the new term starts, all the positions are vacant again. You don't automatically go back into your role. You've got to be re-elected locally, and also in Brisbane too. So the Chairman's got to get enough support and the Deputy Chairman to get back into their position. If the Board members think you're doing a good job, you'll get back. But if you they've got issues, then someone else may get up. You can't take anything for granted. I suppose it's a bit like a political party in that respect. Once you're the Premier or something like that, there's not really a succession plan in that sort of respect either. (17)

You could be the Chairman for 100 years if the members were happy with you. But if you're not doing a good job, you won't last very long either. *(17)*

I think it's good to have it [elections] every year. It just gives people a good chance to review what they're doing. It starts that process of thinking, 'If I do this next year, who can we start looking at that might take this position the year after?' (20)

Composition of the Board or Council

Board composition varies. In most of the twenty two case studies, Board members were actual fishers/producers, and this was more likely at the lowest level of association. However, in one association, in aquaculture, none of the Board members were enterprise owners; all were professional employees. At the peak body level of associations, Board membership was more likely to be made up of professional administrators, with executive officers the most likely incumbents. A few associations had independent directors, and even more saw the value in doing so. Most Boards were homogenous in their composition, having limited diversity. One recently revamped peak body, one that had no paid employees, augmented its capacity with an advisory group of executive officers drawn from its member associations.

We don't have independent Board members. We're looking at going toward that, and we don't have anyone else apart from those that are elected by our members to become Board members.

[Interviewer: How many farm owners are on the Board?] None. There was, two years ago, three years ago, four years ago, there was, but it wasn't actually a good idea. Effectively they weren't coming with an [association] hat. They still wore their farm hat. I'm talking about the hats they invisibly wear. The management from that same farm wore an [association] hat. Does that make sense? (3)

Fishermen and aquaculture people on our Board; we're all 100% either owners or involved in the industry. We don't have independent Board members. We're looking at going toward that, and we don't have anyone else apart from those that are elected by our members to become Board members. (4)

*We have six Board members up for rotation at any given AGM. [Interviewer: Excellent, you're the only association so far that I've come across that does that. I applaud you. Fabulous.] But there is no restriction on re-nominations. So **what we are seeing are the serial members** sort of thing. What we do have is that most people within the association are active fishermen and it is quite difficult for them to manage the time [to participate in the association]. **Our [choice of] Chairman at the moment virtually came down to a situation where we had two retired fishermen, and they are serial committee people, and they were realistically the two choices we had, because they had the time to allocate to the job.** (5)*

*They are the – as I indicated before, the serial committee people. [Interviewer: Because the thesis of my question was about diversity within your Board, because **many Boards have an invisible weakness; they're a monoculture.] Yep, that's exactly what ours is.** (5)*

Two AGMs ago we suggested to our members that we should carve off a 33 % of the Board members and bring in some outside expertise and they rejected that. (5)

Our [choice of] Chairman came down to a situation where we had two retired fishermen, and they are serial committee people, and they were the two choices we had, because they had the time to allocate to the job.

Somehow we have to have a set of criteria which applicants for positions of Director must meet before applying to make sure the Council attracts the best possible people available from amongst the membership. (5)

Hopefully the redefining of the way the organisation is run in terms of the Council and the CAC, so the CAC being the Council Advisory Committee comprised of executive officers will give a lot more legitimacy with their presence and I think that will help in them being more comfortable about actually standing up and supporting the group. I think personally the ability for the executive officers [from the subsidiary associations] to be legitimately involved with the organisation [peak body] will actually have a real ripple effect which probably hasn't completely been understood. (7)

[Suggestion] Probably put on age groupings. As in ***at the moment, the average age being 55 plus, actually create positions that require you to be 15-22, that sort of thing****. Basically just break it up into a different sort of demographic. (10)*

Somehow we have to have a set of criteria which applicants for positions of Director must meet before applying, to make sure the Council attracts the best possible people

There's only eight Directors and because we have some very large companies in the seafood industry, ***the voting strength is pretty much controlled by three or four companies****. So* ***if you are a small fisherman and wanted to become a Director of the [peak body] it would be quite difficult to do****. I'm personally not comfortable with it, but the changes we're making now – there should be hopefully more interest in people becoming involved in the sector groups and I think that will benefit the industry. (13)*

I think ***there's a need to have freshness coming in all the time****. We have large companies who want to be involved, want to have a director on the Council. Those Directors do tend to change, the ones that are nominated by these companies; because the company's executive has changed, that does introduce freshness into it. (13)*

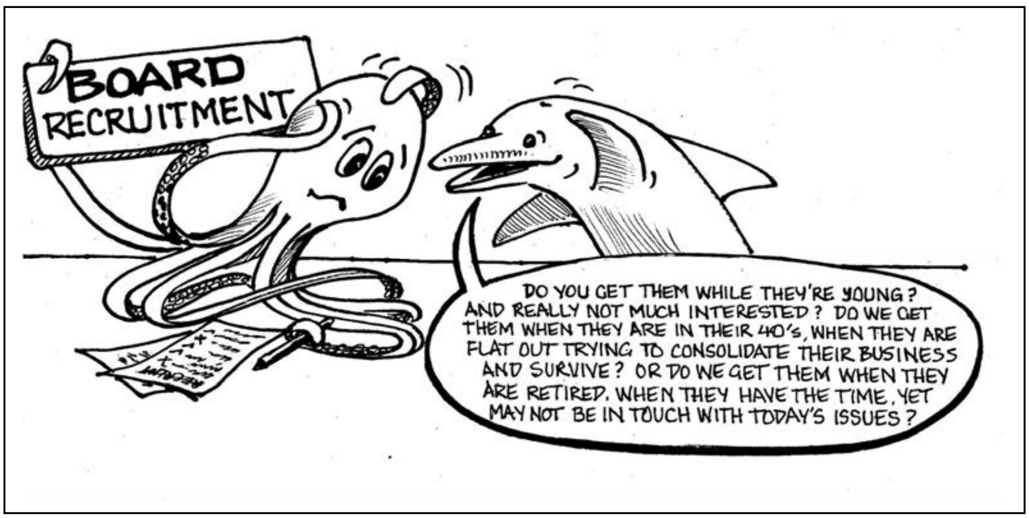
We try to get one or two of the younger fishermen to start to realise that they have to start getting involved, because it starts to hit them in the pocket which is good; it makes them pay attention. (16)

I already sit on a Board that has independents on it. It gives you diversity.

Our constitution actually says that if you achieve the age of 70 you've got to renominate each year, it's got to be approved by members. So we generally don't have too many people over 70. (17)

Some associations bring freshness of thinking into their Board by including several independents. Others have considered this option and rejected it.

There is provision within the Constitution to have independent directors, so if they were put up, they certainly can get on the Board. But I haven't seen it happen. That's another issue for the Board that they are looking at. [Interviewer: Do you think that would be useful?] Yeah, absolutely. I think in my experience at [State peak body], I've seen only very few people who are independent of the industry put up for it. And I don't think that's got any traction by virtue of people just haven't been familiar with them. And again it comes back to that I think our members think they need to have people from industry with that background to understand the issues. So again, I think that's an education thing for us as [State peak body] to our members to talk about having a really vibrant, decisive, and strategic board – that would in fact assist. Again, that's all part of the evolution of the organisation, and we need to take the members with us in that respect. (4)



***I don't know whether we need a Barrister, but we do need independents. I already sit on a Board that has independents on it. It gives you diversity.** (5)*

And the issue also with our industry that's rationalising, is it gets very difficult to find leaders or people suitable, or who have the drive or the time to do it as well. Or are at the right stage of their life to want to have some input into decision making. So sometimes it's better to keep what you have. The other avenue is having a couple of independents, which will add balance to the Board and give that extra unbiased input. If they've got the skillset that the Board is looking for, no problem at all. I'm a very strong supporter of having two independents on the Board. (5)

I personally don't believe that we even need to have only fishermen involved in this. The reason they're called fishermen is that they're quite good at fishing; they're not called bankers because that's not their job. We don't need to have fishermen doing specific parts but we do need to *have them overseeing what happens. So as long as they operate within specific guidelines we can get anybody along. [An argument for broadening the skills base in the association] (8)*

It gets very difficult to find leaders or people who have the drive or the time to do it. Or who are at the stage of their life to want to have some input into decision making.

I guess we hire in expertise if we need it. Like when we're doing cane supply contract negotiations and issues like that if we need to get a solicitor or a lawyer in, we just hire them in as needed. Rather than having them all the time and then not having to have much input for most of the time. So I guess we hire that expertise when we need it rather than trying to have them sitting at the table with us all the time. (18)

The term of leadership

Within the election cycle of the association, there is a term for which the Board or Council nominee or candidate is elected. For most, there is a one year election cycle which occurs in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting. Some have a two-year election cycle, and two in our case studies had a three year cycle.

In most associations, the incumbent can renominate for the next election cycle. And it is more common than not that people, perhaps out of a sense of duty, do renominate. The result can be that Boards become tired and bereft of new ideas. Some associations, though not many, have fixed and non-renewable terms for the Chair or President. Others see the benefits of applying the same logic to all Board positions, particularly when combined with a split cycle, since this gives a nice blend of stability and corporate knowledge with freshness of thinking.

Literally my Board member [named person] has been there since 1988. He literally said: 'I'm tired; I've got nothing more to give'. I just thought: How telling is that? (1)

*Four years I've been there and I don't think many faces have changed. Our exec officer might be the only one, another replacement was there. I suppose **the upside is it gives us stability**. So you know what direction the association is going on key issues; you know the key players, so you can talk to them if you've got a burning issue. **The downside is you might get a bit stale; you might be a bit complacent.** And we're all creatures of habit so we take the path of least resistance so we may not participate as well as we should. (1)*

In the time that I've been there for four years, it's been the same President, Treasurer and Executive Officer. (2)

*Its three years rolling. I went on because the Chairman, the new Chairman this year, he had one year left to serve on his term, so I did the one year term. They're all three year terms unless someone resigns, gets off and then you get elected for the remaining. So the Chairman is elected; he is before the Board. The Board always turns over pretty regularly anyway. At the moment, the longest serving person is probably six or seven years. **Our turnover is staggered in terms of those service periods. I think at this last one there were three new members elected,***

and they're staggered terms. *So then next election, different Board members would come up. But I don't believe there's anything that precludes you from re-nominating. (4)*

It is more common than not that people, perhaps out of a sense of duty, do renominate. The result can be that Boards become tired and bereft of new ideas.

As a Board member, and from my experience, three years is a more beneficial length of time as it gives members time gain the experience and knowledge of the issues that come before them. Members can always resign if they feel three years is too long for them and the Board can appoint someone else to replace them until the next election. A staggered system of replacement is ideal. (5)

I think maybe a two-year term would be more appropriate, maybe. And maybe three for the executive. (6)

For sure, you can't have the same person at the helm for too long because it gets a bit stale. (6)

Yes. ***Like the chairman [is limited to] a couple of years. As far as the representatives I think that should be a couple of years as well.*** *I'll have to check the Constitution. [Interviewer - So there are limitations, in particularly for key people like the chairperson?] Yes. [And the office bearers?] Yes. (7)*

I've seen the same faces on the Council for many years. It's whoever is put up by their association. I know for a start that [my association] doesn't have any restriction on the length of service of office bearers, and I don't think [the peak body] has got a restriction on the terms of office bearers. (7)

I think they're up for re-election, but I don't think there's anything that says they're only allowed to do one or two terms. We have one year terms but there's no, there's certainly no barrier to keep putting your name up. (9)

With a lack of new people putting their hand up, we had to go back to inviting the same people back or letting them come back.

Each year the Constitution requires that office bearers are elected to all positions every year. Provided they're elected on that annual basis, they can hold it for consecutive years without any limitation. (9)

Yes, we do have a period of two years, but we've just recently changed that where the same person can re-apply, and has to be re-nominated. It's an important point, because ***we started off just having rotating two-year periods. But with a lack of people putting their hand up, we almost had to go back to inviting the same people back or letting them come back.*** *(10)*

Each association puts up a member for two years. So [named association's] representative therefore has the right to be there for initially two years. The association then has to re-nominate its nominee. But it's a flow-on effect, and basically it's just a paper scenario saying, 'No, ***if you're happy to sit here, then you'll be there for the rest of your life.'*** *(10)*

A lot of the guys have been on the Committee for the last five years. So I think it's not a bad idea to move positions around within the Committee. That's fine, so everyone has a chance of being Chairman or Treasurer etc. But I don't necessarily think that if you've served two years, you should just be kicked off. (10)

Once you're inside the association and on the Board, then it can become fairly incestuous. There needs to be an ability or driver or opportunity to get fresh leadership. *Unless an association turns around and says, 'Oh, Fred you're off, then Harry, you're on.' And generally associations aren't going to do that because they don't have people who will say, 'Okay, I'll go along and attend.' They have people like me who said, 'I'll go along for a couple of months to fill in,' and then all of a sudden I'm there.* ***So despite the fact that [peak body] doesn't have a succession plan, neither do a lot of the sub-groups.*** *(10)*

We do try to roll them round. I was President for a long time, and I've stood down this time around and given it to another guy, and I've taken up Vice-President. But in effect, there's no limit. (11)

I'd consider them to be long-term. We've got a new President, but I think a lot of the other Office Bearers have been doing it for a long time. (11)

It's not very fresh; they're all pretty old, as old as me! I think the people that are in there do it because they do it exceptionally well, but also some of the younger guys coming through, the more experienced people really do encourage the younger ones. ***They know they can do it really well, but they don't want to do it forever, so they're encouraging and mentoring the younger members*** *coming through. So it is a very supportive group of people. (11)*

We have eight directors and three come up in each cycle to retire by rotation *and anyone can nominate anyone to aspire to directorship and there's a formal voting process around it. (13)*

The term is one year renewable. (14)

There is no cap on the period that they serve. I think a cap would be healthy.

The term for officers is one year renewable annually. Often a president will have three years at the helm and sometimes you will have a President that will last longer than that. For example, I've been Treasurer for three years, so I probably won't be Treasurer next year. We've changed Secretaries recently, we've changed Presidents, and we've changed Vice-Presidents. So we do rotate those positions. (14)

What we have changed, we initially said our Presidency would only be a one-year position and then we decided, for continuity purposes, we should have it two years. (15)

In the last five years, we've gone through a situation where our Chairman has been constant but our CEO of long standing, he retired and we've had a new CEO. In effect ***the Chairman's position comes up every three years, and our current Chairman has been there I think going on nine years****. So there's been some consistency there, but we have had a change at the CEO level. (17)*

***They're three year terms; there is no cap on the period that they serve**. A lot of them re-nominate after three years. People like our Chairman and our Vice Chairmen [have served] for between 15 years and 25 years at the State level. So there is no cap. **I think a cap would be healthy, but it's certainly not the currently policy.** (17)*

I was off for a term and then I was on for another term and now I'm back again for a third time. (17)

You need new people with ideas. Also you need a solid core, a working core who knows the ropes too.

They have a three year term but you are able to extend for election. There's not like five years and you're out, and you must turn over. You can renominate and there's no maximum term when you then have to stand down and give someone else a turn. (18)

Well it's the same as any democratic system, but they can renominate. Some of the guys in some areas have been there for 30 years. (18)

***I think just continue changing the management every two years which brings new ideas.** I think – and this is due to lack of members – you get recycled a little bit, and I think it needs fresh people there all the time. (19)*

To be honest we don't revolve members that much. Like I was Treasure for sort of 4 or 6 years and the one before me was probably the same. So you don't get that much change, you don't have a wholesale change anyway. Our Constitution only manages the position of Chair. (19)

*Certainly **the President and Secretary have been on board for the last 15 years**, not necessarily in those same roles, but as part of the executive. But we've got a constant flow of people through the Council and generally speaking the executive doesn't do anything without the Council approving. So the freshness can appear in the Council, it doesn't have to be in the leadership. (21)*

You don't want people in there for ten years just running through the same stuff. You want to bring new people in.

You don't want people in there for ten years just running through the same stuff. You want to bring new people in. Look, if we could turn people over every couple of years in the immediate positions, that would be unreal. That's ideas and that's what you need. And also you need a solid core, a working core who knows the ropes too. [Interviewer: So it's a blend of stability and freshness, is it?] It is. (22)

Healthy industry associations constantly seek out fresh and new leadership. Some do this by constitutionally requiring fixed terms for all elected officers or executive positions. International service organisations such as Rotary, Lions, and Toastmasters operate on this basis. Even the US Presidency is restricted to a maximum of two terms.

Here is a useful model to consider:

- Imagine all executive positions to be held for a two year non-renewable term,
- Imagine half of those positions to be changed annually, thereby combining freshness with stability,
- Imagine, for every position, having a position elect (such as a Deputy), a position incumbent, and an immediate past position, enabling the position elect to shadow the position incumbent whilst being mentored by the immediate past position.

What this model does is to separate personality from leadership. Leadership becomes civic duty. A person steps into the role for their two-year term of duty. They are supported in their role by an 'apprentice' and an 'elder'. At the end of their two-year term, they step aside, not because they were voted out, not because they were unpopular, not because they had run out of steam. It is <u>not</u> personal.

> ***I'd prefer to see it hardwired constitutionally so people get rested.*** *We haven't run into a problem yet. I like to avoid service fatigue syndrome. I think there's evidence to justify it and* ***I like the fact that it focuses the Board's attention on recruitment and empowerment and development*** *and so I think it's much, much better****. I think then people can actually put their shoulders to the wheel if it's for a limited period.*** *(1)*
>
> *[Let's say you had two year terms and let's say you had for any one person such as you personally, you had a maximum of two terms which means every two years half of the people on the Board would change. You'd still have the same associations represented as peaks but you'd have a new person speaking for them. Is that possible?] That is a possibility. Then if you did that, I would like to see that person be an actual farmer, someone on the ground, rather than an association person [an employee]. There would probably be a good way to do that, to actually have a farmer [on the Board] and then they've got to have the time. You'd have to put on the meetings outside peak production time because they have the main focus of their farm and it always is at production time but* ***that would be one way of getting freshness in, having an actual farm member.*** *(1)*
>
> *I think that's a really good point [compulsory turnover]. It actually goes back to ensuring that there's freshness in its member body. It's just probably not a bad idea to have something like that where you've got a fixed term.* ***I think a fixed term as a Vice President; then you will automatically become the President and you will automatically be the Immediate Past President.*** *(1)*
>
> *In our association, we now do a lot of [leadership] recruitment. We review what skillsets we need at the table. That means you shift from being, "oh, I've got to serve and this term may last forever" to a* ***maximum of two terms****. Because* ***in 2004, we had the committee members that had been there since the organisation had formed in 1988. So they were knackered, absolutely knackered; something had to change. What happened now is that we're now cycling people through****. So we've actually got to induct and support; it's about recruitment and when that mind-shift occurs, you go, 'training and support systems' and codifying actually how you deal with problems and how you work. Because essentially it takes 6-12 months to actually*

get a person functioning at Board level. And the Board's and EO's job is to actually shortening that. So I think it's useful. (1)

It's a bit of a struggle [to get nominations for executive positions]. If you were to do that [compulsory leadership turnover] you mightn't have the situation you've got at the moment. It's not a bad idea; I don't mind the idea to be honest. *(1)*

> ***We had the committee members that had been there since the organisation had formed in 1988. So they were knackered, absolutely knackered; something had to change.***

The trouble is, we don't have the large variety of people to choose from, like the farmers. If you find someone like that who's willing and does the job properly, why shouldn't you leave him there? But on the other hand if you've got a section of industry that's dominant, you're probably better off having fixed terms at four or five years. (5)

[On the issue of fixed terms.] ***I'm president of the [named community group], and that's what we do there, you have two- and one-year terms so everyone can't get off at once. [Interviewer: So you have split half elections?] Yeah, that's the ideal situation****, but we don't do it at the association level. It would be probably more idyllic to do that. [Interviewer: So you reckon it could work?] I reckon it would work. (6)*

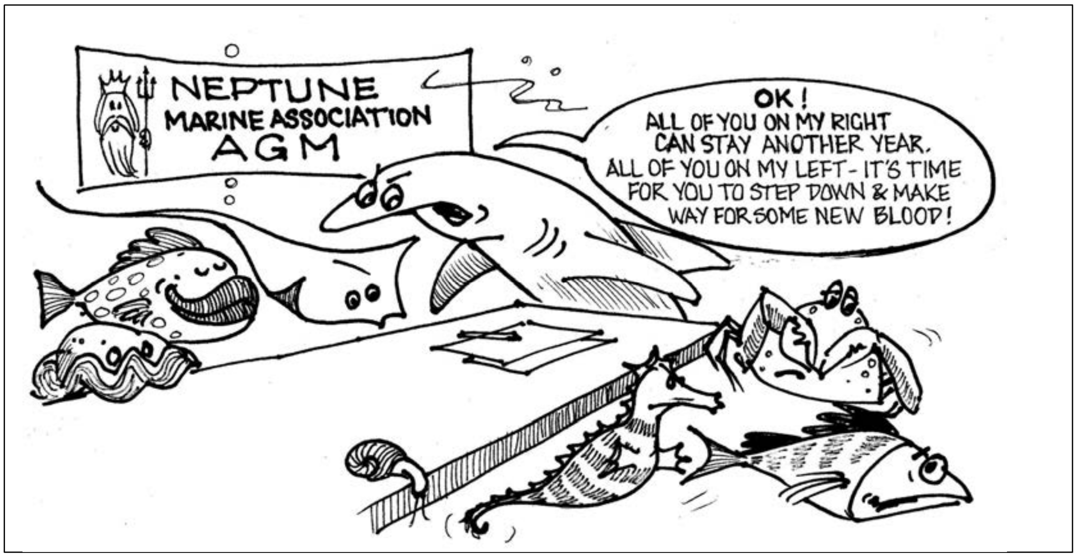
Most organisations benefit from an injection of new people, new ideas, and new ways of doing things. Obviously you don't want everyone changing all at once. On the other hand it's good to have people on there who have been there for a while and who know – who've got experience. If you don't have a fixed term then you can end up with the same people fronting up year after year after year and I think that can make an organisation go stale. I think there should be some sort of turnover of people. *(7)*

I'd like to see some freshness of management and leadership. So I would see a rotation of term because ***if you have fixed terms and a rotation in place then they have to do more about training new people and finding new blood.*** *(7)*

> ***If you have fixed terms and a rotation in place then you have to do more about training new people and finding new blood.***

Very tempting to say that you'll lose the people that have the experience out of a job, but I also feel that it probably will force other people into the job then. So I think it will be beneficial. I think it's probably all that you could use to increase participation. (8)

If you get someone who is an absolutely outstanding performer in the role and they're limited in the number of terms they can serve, it has the potential to be detrimental. Then again, if that person says for a protracted period of time, it stops other younger people coming through *who are developing and growing into those sorts of roles from participating. It's an upside-downside thing. (11)*



No it doesn't have a constitutional restriction [on length of elected service]. Each Director role comes up for re-election every three years. So your term is three years, and then you need to be re-elected if you wish to continue. I can see some benefits in restricting terms because it avoids people I guess like myself who have been around for a long time. But I think, on the other hand, you could argue, and I guess people would argue, that you do get the opportunity to get rid of people every three years. So if they're not performing or there's a feeling that they're not performing, presumably the industry would let them know. There's no easy answer, there's merits in both directions. (13)

Well that's in the Constitution that they're to change Chairperson mainly every year, and that does happen. But the other little sub-committees, they don't. [Interviewer: Do you think it would be a good idea if they did?] Yes, I do. (19)

Two one-year terms, and then they have to step out of it and give someone else a go. I think that's spot-on. Other positions are long-term. It's necessary for them to change over, I feel, every two years no-matter-what, because you need fresh ideas. Not just for the Chair, for all positions. *(19)*

I reckon two years for the Chair is fantastic. The Chair and probably Secretary do the most work. It's just getting harder to find the new people and there are a few people that could probably do it, but we haven't been able to get them. *(19)*

At least the President changes every two years. It's a two-year elected term, and then you remain on as immediate past President*. (19)*

We never get anyone randomly nominate on the AGM; it's all pre-organised. It's not that we struggle, it's not too often we have unfilled roles. ***And some of the people you'd think would least be interested, once you approach them and talk to them about it; that seems to be the most successful way of getting people on board. And making it their choice, rather than***

> ***trying to push.*** *The other thing is in the past it's seemed like when people get in there, they get stuck; so having fixed terms wouldn't be a bad idea. We don't have fixed terms. (20)*
>
> *We need to keep a constant stream of people and not have blocks of people that are there for five years, then suddenly nobody. (20)*

It is common at an annual general meeting for the ordinary members to 'run a mile'. Why? Because they do not wish to be stuck in a position they do not understand and for an unknown amount of time. Adoption of the ideas above changes all that. It is much easier for people to take up executive roles if (a) they know it is of direct benefit to their own enterprise, (b) they have been coached for it, (b) they have acted in the position briefly, and know that it is not too onerous, (c) they know it is for a fixed term only, and (d) the load is widely shared.

> *Obviously when it comes to an AGM and they call for all positions vacant and nominations off the floor, well by then half the people are hiding underneath the table. (6)*
>
> *Because it's an honorary position, and because the fishing business has become so expensive in the last 10 years. The cost of doing it just frightens the hell out of most of them. (8)*

It's necessary for them to change over, I feel, every two years no-matter-what, because you need fresh ideas. Not just for the Chair, for all positions.

As far as who is going to be President, that is more often who is going to be lumbered with doing it, as opposed to fighting off volunteers. *It usually works itself out though. If somebody is a terrible President well then usually somebody will say 'Hey mate, it's about time somebody else did that'. (21)*

If members join an association in the understanding that it is an extension of their own enterprise, that its purpose is to add value to that enterprise, then it is logical that every member can and should make a contribution to its management. With a policy of fixed non-renewable terms for executive members, the common difficulty of attracting people into executive roles is reduced.

> *Here in [State]* ***the associations have been put in a position now where they're controlling the destiny of their fishery,*** *which means it's controlling the destiny of the Fisher's investment in his future. So a lot more Fishers are becoming – dragging and screaming – but are becoming more interested in what's going on, only because they're interested in their investment. I think part of the reason it has happened is that they're finally waking up (along with a few others, and particularly the younger ones),* ***that if you're going to have an investment in a business, you want to know what the future is, you want some certainty. The only way you're going to do that and find out about that is to start having an interest in what's going on at an association level.*** *(8)*

There is a counter point of view that is reluctant to retire someone from an executive role when they have just established appropriate knowledge and relationships.

> *It doesn't work. New South Wales Silver Perch Growers Association had that [compulsory turnover of executives] and what it meant was that you get someone who is representing you, the President, who has built up skills over two years and then he's not allowed to be re-elected and they actually had to change it because it just didn't work. So you'd get someone who becomes skilled at representing industry and dealing with policy officers and so on, he learns not to scream and shout and thump the desk, he learns that you've got to sit down and negotiate, and then he can't represent you anymore. (2)*

If you're going to have an investment in a business, you want some certainty. The only way to do that is to start having an interest in your association.

> *[On fixed terms] It does work sometimes, and it doesn't other times. Like the local Agricultural Society here is struggling. They only have a two-year maximum term for a President (they can re-nominate after two years), and they can't get a President. The Ag Society has been going for about 100 years. (6)*

> ***Freshness of management and leadership? I wish! The reason we haven't got it is because we wouldn't have any leaders if we had fixed terms, because more than half the fishery is not confident, family and financial reasons. They wouldn't take up the role. There would be no one at the top to lead them.*** *So while it would be nice to have a fixed term and relieve those long-term office bearers of their positions, they just wouldn't be filled. It's not a pragmatic way to go, particularly for this fishery anyway. (8)*

If the association is not of sufficient value to its members; if it cannot attract members to act for a fixed period in executive roles, then closing it down might be the only alternative.

> *How would you increase that [freshness of leadership] without bringing new people in that don't know anything about what's been happening for the last three or four years? (9)*

> *At the moment, I would say fixed terms would be detrimental to the organisation. It's to do with the age, and we don't have that spread of people that are prepared to put their hand up to participate in some of these things. (12)*

> *No, you need to have a lengthy period of time. Because when you're negotiating contracts they're normally for a period of time. And what happens, for instance in the Tablelands we have a rolling contract. So if that rolling contract was negotiated in 2008 for instance, by 2014 you've still got the same contract from 2008. So if you don't have at least one person in there that assisted in negotiating that contract, you can very easily be overcome by the person that you've got the contract with, due to the loss of knowledge. It's important that succession planning is done in a way that you don't lose that link. (18)*

Some interviewees have offered the view that they've tried fixed terms for the executive, and they have still struggled to attract people willing to take on the roles. In that case, the question needs to be asked: 'Why not close the association down?' If the association is not of sufficient value to its members; if it cannot attract members to act for a fixed period in executive roles, then closing it down might be the only alternative. Raising that possibility at an AGM may be sufficient to flush out some interest. If it does not, then the membership has declared, through its collective silence, that it no longer values the association.

The burden of leadership

People who put their hand up for leadership positions are often very dedicated people, driven by a sense of responsibility for the industry they love. And they can pay a very heavy price. In fact it might be argued that the reason many people will not step forward is that they do not want the open-ended responsibility that carried such a heavy burden in time and money.

Further comment on this topic appeared earlier under 'Performance Capacity'.

> *And you may burn people out. So subsidy is not only just a pecuniary – so you can –* ***when you're passionate it's easy to fall into that [burn-out], to spread yourself too thinly.*** *(1)*

> *It's just the practicalities I think is killing us a little bit is our industries tend to be quite small. We even struggle to find people within our associations to take on leading roles, and also because they are farmers, and this is a problem I have as well. I work seven days a week, literally from the time I get up to the time I switch off my lights. To take days away from the farm hurts. (2)*

> ***It's a tough job [being President]; this is people's livelihoods we're mucking around with. It's close to the bone.*** *(6)*

When you're passionate it's easy to fall into that burn-out, to spread yourself too thinly

> ***Once you get into the President's job, it's very hard to get out of it.*** *[Interviewer: Because you can't get out until you find somebody to take over?] That's virtually what happened with me. I just told them at one AGM that it was my last year, simply because it was time for a fresh face. And the financial cost to you starts getting quite large, especially if you're driving up and down to Perth all the time. I spent six years on the Rock Lobster Council driving 1000km round trip going to meetings all the time. (6)*

> ***I've been President for 12 years, and was Secretary for 14 prior to that. So while it's far too long, there just hasn't been anyone else prepared to put their hand up. And most of it is because of cost. It is a huge financial burden.*** *(8)*

> *When other people go on the Board of Directors, they see the level of participation that's required and the extra activity nights and emails, conference calls etc., and they're just not committed to it. It's not what they thought it was.*

There just hasn't been anyone else prepared to put their hand up. And most of it is because of cost. It is a huge financial burden.

And the other thing is the onerous nature of the positions. I think for people that take things on one year at a time, we're flat out finding people to do that. If you turned it into two- or three-year blocks, I think you'd scare people off. Even though once they're in, they well and truly usually stay in there for two or three years, and usually longer on the executive in some positions. (20)

Other burdens, mentioned earlier in this document when discussing people's reluctance to participate, include the following:

(i) The *knowledge burden* – taking a position on the Board or Council of an association requires a host of new knowledge and skills.
(ii) The *confidence burden* – Board membership is initially a step into the unknown. Without support, this step is too daunting for some.
(iii) The *'tall poppy' burden* – a product of 'bonding social capital', someone who like to regard him/herself as one of the boys/girls may be sensitive to the perceptions of his/her mates that they are now someone of higher status.
(iv) The *financial burden* – non-reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs.
(v) The *time burden* – opportunity costs away from family and business.

So it is the responsibility of associations to seek ways of reducing the burden of leadership. Mentoring, directorship training, rotation of responsibilities, and fixed leadership terms are all ways of addressing that burden. So too is appropriate financial recompense.

In partial summary: Humans have a psychological need for hierarchical structures within which they can associate and which they expect to address their needs. The need to be a follower automatically creates a demand for leaders which carries responsibility and privilege. Leaders need to be found, (a difficult task); they need to be mentored and nurtured (a neglected task). Election cycles are generally annually, though in some cases every two or three years. Few have fixed terms, and there is rarely a contest over Board nominations. Board composition is generally monocultural. It is acknowledged that the heavy burden of leadership renders the role unattractive.

Recommendation 18:

a. Invest in a deliberate strategy of nurturing and mentoring members to share the leadership burden and then easing them into positions of responsibility.
b. Consider changing its constitution to mandate fixed and non-renewable terms for all executive positions.
c. Consider two-year elected terms, with split-half annual elections.

d. Consider that, for any elected position, there is (i) an apprentice in waiting – e.g. a secretary-elect, (ii) an incumbent, and (ii) an immediate past incumbent – who can act as mentor and back up to the previous two.
e. Consider changing the entry rules so that fixed-term participation in executive roles is part of the membership obligation.
f. Change the model rules to permit and encourage rotation of responsibilities, such as chairing meetings, or recording minutes.
g. Change the association's cultural norms to allow and encourage leadership to emerge from any quarter.
h. Consider increasing the diversity of the Board through the inclusion of independent directors.
i. Any association that is a member of a higher level association, peak body or similar, to adopt a deliberate policy of growing future leaders to represent them in these forums.
j. Adopt an exit strategy for all current leaders and Board members, thereby freeing them up for higher level representation.
k. Recognise that any association at a regional or peak level has a strategic responsibility to nurture and grow future representation in the associations below them.

Case Study 17: Canegrowers Queensland

Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Ltd, otherwise known as CaneGrowers Qld, is a growers' representative association. Created in May, 1926 as a statutory body, in 2000 it became voluntary for its members to belong. It presently has 3,500 members, representing about 80% of cane growers in Queensland. Its members pay a levy, based on tonnage of cane sent to the mill. The State body is in the fortunate position of having accumulated income producing assets, such that 75% of its income is from those sources, rather than from grower levies.

Each member is also a member of a local CaneGrowers body, of which there are eighteen. The association has 93 Directors spread over those eighteen branches and Brisbane. Each local CaneGrowers body elects, from its membership, a Board member to represent them on the State body. Those eighteen, along with an internally elected Chair and two Deputies make up the 21 member Board. That Board is divided equally into three sub-committees, as follows: (a) Organisational Affairs Committee which deals with the corporate governance and the strength of the organisation, membership, constitution, financial, legal, audit, all those sort of things; (b) Industry Management which looks at industry policy; and (c) Crop Protection and Environment which covers environmental and regulatory issues. The Board meets four times a year for three days. The Executive, comprising the Chair, two Deputies, and the CEO meets every six weeks.

The organisation is based in Brisbane and employs a number of professional staff. It is a thoroughly professional organisation, with excellent induction processes for new Board members, well documented policies, and established systems of monitoring and review.

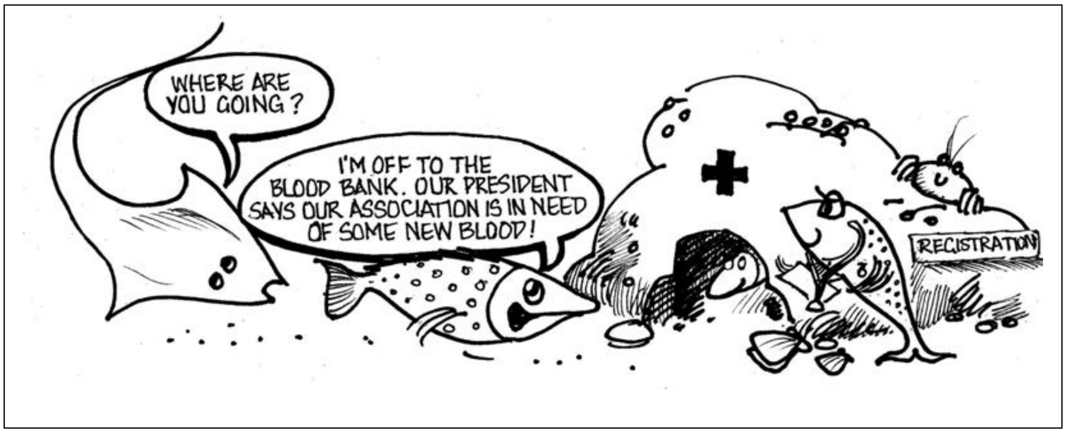
Its major service back to its members is to negotiate the cane price paid to each of its members by the mill. This has always been its historic role. It is also very active in lobbying and agripolitics, being a member of the National Farmers Federation and a steady visitor to the halls of political influence in Canberra and Queensland.

CaneGrowers Queensland does not have a formal succession plan. It has a three-year election cycle and presently experiences about 20% turnover of Directors in that cycle. Its Chair and two Deputies have each held their roles for a number of electoral terms. Directors are 'grown' in their local Branches before being elevated to greater responsibility. The State organisation has considerable depth of talent regionally.

New blood

Is your association attracting a healthy proportion of new blood into its membership?

It is stating the obvious that people get older. If the average age of association members is increasing, then the association automatically becomes more conservative and risk averse. So all associations need 'new blood' in order to bring in fresh energy and ideas. 'New blood' can be the next generation of younger people coming through. It can also be completely new entrants to this industry. Or it can be as a result of expanding the membership base to include new categories of members. Getting 'new blood' into the association is unlikely to happen without a deliberate effort to seek out and welcome new members.



As older members withdraw or retire, associations need an equivalent number of new entrants, just to maintain the status quo. However, maintaining the status quo may no longer be enough. As industry issues become more and more complex, there is need for greater levels of expertise and representation at higher levels. Any industry might be thought of as a pyramid. At its base are ordinary members; at the pinnacle are the senior representatives who guide and protect the industry's future. With greater demands necessitating more 'horse-power' at the top, this is impossible to bring about without growing the base. Put another way, if we want a taller pyramid, it needs a broader base. Therefore a critical task for any association, arguably the most important task, is the BUILD THE BASE.

Why people join, or don't

Associations exist because of the perceived benefit to their members. This perceived benefit, relative to cost of membership, is seldom static. The perceived benefit is often driven by (a) issues internal to the member, and (b) contextual issues external to the member.

Issues internal to the member can include:

(i) Its internal capacity to deal with emergent issues alone. When association members reach a certain size they are more able to deal with emergent issues alone, and less in need of collective support. Sometimes a member enterprise or association finds itself with more resources and capacity than the association upon which it previously depended.

Each of the other larger companies tries to isolate themselves from other people. (15)

So generally some of the bigger growers can say, well I'm big enough, I don't need [the association] to fight the battles for me. (17)

(ii) Its financial capacity to continue to remain a member.
(iii) Its belief that it can obtain a 'free-ride' from the efforts of others.
(iv) Its position in its own lifecycle. Younger enterprises and/or individuals are in a learning phase and are keen to seek ideas and support from others. The mental focus is 'opportunities and threats ahead'. As enterprises and individuals mature, the mental focus shifts to 'time left – have I done enough, got enough to see me out?'

Issues external to the member can include:

(i) Whether the issue is in flux, and is therefore open to influence, or is settled. In the case of the former, members will rally to the cause, hoping to influence the issue in their favour. Once the issue is settled, members resign themselves to the result, and hence their need for the association drops away. An example in Western Australia was the battle over pot reductions.
(ii) The state of the industry. Industries too have lifecycles. In the entropy or growth phase, when the operational rules and processes are being established, there is need for collective effort. Once the rules and processes are established, and the industry enters its mature phase, the members settle into a more comfortable routine of doing the business.

People generally don't want representation, particularly in aquaculture, because once you've got a clear pathway for development, they're basically getting on with the business of doing business. (1)

In 2008, the FRDC commissioned research into the reluctance of fishers to engage with their associations (van der Geest & MacDonald, 2008). Key reasons for not joining associations include:

(i) It costs too much,(ii) fishers don't see any benefits,(ii) too many associations and (iv) they don't do anything for me. (p36)

Why we need new members

The changing demography of primary production is widely acknowledged. Interviewees all acknowledge that without new entrants to their industries, those industries face a grim future.

> *First **we need younger farmers at the beginning**. So the problem and again, it's right through the whole agriculture industry and we're not seeing that. I know with my industry in [commodity], I am by far the youngest. **Most of the big producers are all getting towards 70**. They're not going to be going for an awful lot longer. I don't know what's going to happen, to be honest. I fear for our industry; we're dying. (2)*

> *The gene pool is reducing if we lose farms. (3)*

Getting 'new blood' into the association is unlikely to happen without a deliberate effort.

> ***I think [State peak body] has new blood, but part of the problem is some of our industry associations, I don't think they do**. So we are getting new people on [State peak body], but as you said, I think it's more a problem to do with the shrinking industry. **People are leaving the industry at a faster rate than joining it. (4)***

> *It's very difficult, because it's a closed industry. There is no new blood coming in because there's just not enough money in it at the moment. The average age ten years ago would have been ten years less. **I don't think anyone new has come in the industry in the last four years. About 30 have gone out in the last six years, young guys who just couldn't make it.** (5)*

> *We've got ourselves down to 256 operating fishers now [from 700] and **typically when we lose a fisher now he's not replaced by someone, his effort is absorbed by those remaining**. Unless it's a succession through family **there's very, very few younger operators that can afford to buy into the industry.** [Interviewer: So is this an inevitable drift to death for the industry?] Yeah I guess so. **We tried in vain to have our units per licence capped so that we would maintain a set number of vessels within the industry because the flow on effect through small coastal communities has been horrific.** (5)*

> *It's just very hard at the moment because **there's no people left in the industry anymore**. We're trying very hard to get the young people in to the association at committee level. (6)*

I don't think anyone new has come in the industry in the last four years. About 30 have gone out in the last six years.

> *Look, we could always want to have new blood in there but it's pretty well a closed shop now. As I said, there's a lot of people in there that have lost interest and, **as the fleet shrinks, there's no new young owner operators who have got the fire in their belly and they want to come out and make a difference. There's an older demographic in there now. A lot of them are quite comfortable with what they're doing and they're just happy to plod along and don't really care about the bigger picture.** (6)*

Just like every other association around the country, unless there's something controversial, I don't see as many bums on seats. (6)

When there's certainty, maybe you will get some new blood, you will get some new entrants in the fishery. But at the moment it's fairly high risk. (8) [Aging/declining industry]
***Unfortunately there's not a lot of young people coming into the industry; that's the other problem. It's not an attractive industry to a lot of young people. Unless you've got a strong family connection, not many young people get into the industry.** (7)*

We need to encourage younger anglers to join the association. (12)

We're pretty stale because we can't attract new members. (12)

*I think **there's a huge problem with the aging workforce we have in the catching sector in particular, and it's becoming very difficult to attract young people into working as fishers** and I think we need a real effort in that area to get people into the industry. Our industry leaders are also aging. (13)*

On the fin fish side it's excellent, because there are a lot of young, vibrant, well-educated people. On the mussel side, we're about 60/40 older people (55 and up), which is going to be an issue in the next four or five years. (15)

We've only really got two sons who have come home out of 70 members, the 70 that were around when we started.

It's imperative that organisations to stay healthy have to bring new blood in. You get five people sitting down and they'll all look at something slightly different to the other and you know, you can rack your brain about something and someone will just come up out of the blue and make a comment. Without the new blood you tend to get used to each other, and so you need to look beyond the square, and new blood will do that. (18)

***Sadly, there are not really any members who are encouraging their children to come home, including me, and we've only really got two sons who have come home out of sort of 70 members, the 70 that were around when we started. Only two sons come back.** One of them is a civil engineer who has come back to be a grape farmer and the other is a builder who has come back home. So, when we have our meeting the other day, we talked about the fact that we need to get those two guys involved now. (19)*

***There's no one my age; like I'm 31 and I'm the youngest member**, I'm pretty sure. **And there's no one my age in the area that owns a property.** The majority of the age groups of people in the area have children at school or at university, and then there's me and my husband and there's probably two other couples around my age and the rest are the parents. The ones [offspring] that are a bit older have gone and haven't come back. (19)*

***We need to get more young producers coming into the association or into the district, but I don't know how you do that.** (19)*

With our political pressure as far as rising fees and costs everywhere, everybody wants to be involved and or have an ear to the ground at least via the association to see what is happening. (8)

Barriers to entry

Whilst acknowledging the imperative to encourage new members, the reality is that there are a number of factors that will determine whether or not an association is able to attract new blood. A number of these reasons have already been explored under the earlier heading of 'Age of Association Members'. Other reasons cited by interviewees include competing employment choices, needing to be sufficiently mature to be interested, lack of encouragement from current association members, the prohibitive industry entry costs, Constitutional barriers, and lack of confidence. So these barriers might be within the industry itself or within the association.

In the Western Australian rock lobster industry, there is a growing trend for older fishers to disengage from active fishing and to lease out their licenced pots to younger fishers. So the licence holders become investors with a fixed income, while the younger fishers take on the risk of variable income without the security of the licence. Yet the peak body of that industry, the Western Rock Lobster Council, is open only to individuals who are Managed Fishing Licence holders. So the number of active fishers who are also MFL holders is in decline, and the WRLC's Constitution unintentionally inhibits the new blood it can attract. Further, consciously or otherwise, there is a risk that the WRLC Board will make policy decisions that benefit members, who are increasingly investors, as opposed to benefitting cray fishers, who are increasingly lessees.

Many people don't want to have a go. They just don't have the confidence or the understanding, and it's very frightening. *(1)*

The people that are there now would actively encourage it [new blood] and I don't know why they didn't in the past? ***People are now encouraging it and saying well yeah, we need people to step up, whereas in the past I didn't get that feeling that they wanted them.*** *The previous executive, seven, eight, nine, ten years ago really had to be pushed away, [before new people could be encouraged]. (9)* [A strong indication that an earlier Board may have operated as an oligarchy, unconsciously putting its own interests ahead of the broader industry.]

Probably for the last ten years it's been hard to get new ones into the industry because it has become overpriced.

Unless you can get a heap of new ones buying in to the industry, you're not going to get new ones. I think it will just happen. As the young ones that are involved get a bit older, they seem to get more involved. When they're young, they just let it run. (9)

It's invested significant levels of resourcing in doing that [attracting new blood]. It's just that the results don't necessarily reflect the level of investment. [Interviewer: So its capacity to do that is quite adequate, because you've got a pool of second generation people coming into the industry, the question is how you attract them into that role.] Absolutely. It's adequate because the people are there; the resources are there to support them. But it's actually retaining them. (9)

***Probably for the last ten years it's been hard to get new ones into the industry because it has just priced itself out of everybody's way of getting in to the industry. It's become overpriced**. (9)*

It might be nice that we get some younger guys in here, but the other side of it is, you want mature younger people; not the young people that don't really care. (10)

*For instance, **our club is so happy with what they're doing; they decided they wouldn't advertise anymore for anybody.** (12)*

Some of them certainly have very good skills, but they lack the confidence in having a go. That's what I believe stops a lot of people.

It needs to go back to the publicity, and the active fishing component as compared with the social fishing component. That's I think, where the key is. Having said that, there's a lot of competition from things like the Whyalla Snapper fishing competition, or the Onka-Stomper in November, the fishing competition down the southeast where there are some pretty significant prizes being offered. And to compete with that is an uphill battle for our organisation, because we don't have access to those large prizes. (12)

***In years gone by, for anglers to learn about fishing techniques / styles etc. they joined a fishing club, because that's where the knowledge base was. But nowadays, it's all on the internet, so they don't have to join**. (12)*

***It's easier to start [work] and stay at McDonald's than it is to go out on a boat and learn that it's great out there.** And that's where it starts; its people going out there and trying it and finding they've got the capability to do something that others can't. (13)*

Whereas you're into a younger generation that doesn't like physical work. They like set hours and big money in the oil industry – oil and gas, which is starting to play big roles here. (15)

You've really got to be brought up in the industry. You've got a generation where they just want to sit on the settee and play their Xboxes; they're not really keen to get up at three o'clock in the morning. It has got to be bred into you and you've got to want it. (16)

It's hard to attract the people into this industry where you're not actually sure if you're going to end up with a pay at the end of the week. We've got a big industry taking over now which is really sucking the life blood out of the fishing industry. It used to be the oil industry but this wind farm industry is just really hammering the fishing industry now - guaranteed pay two weeks on and a week and half off then back on again. (16)

> *I just think that the priorities are different. When you're a young fisherman and just starting up a business, you tend to be entirely focused on your own business rather than the wider problems. It's only when the problems start directly affecting you that you become involved in it. So it's a total sheer necessity that younger fishermen have to become involved. (16)*

> [Why people may not get involved.] ***For whatever reason, they might think that nobody wants to hear what they have to say, or thinks that they might have something to contribute.*** *(20)*

> ***I think a lot of rural people don't have confidence in things like public speaking, leadership roles. Some of them certainly have very good skills in this, but they lack the confidence in having a go. That's what I believe stops a lot of people.*** *It stopped me from getting involved, except that [named person] just twisted my arm just that little bit far. (20)*

> ***You've got to communicate and encourage the younger members that they can do this stuff. It's people thinking that they're not capable or they haven't got the skill. That's a pretty common theme.*** *(20)*

Membership of industry associations is voluntary. In order to encourage new members, it is important to understand why people might or might not volunteer their time, energy and hard-earned dollars.

> *It has been observed that there is a positive relationship between an individual's willingness to participate and her or his expected benefits from participation. The expected benefits may be for the betterment of the broader community, which might include social justice, provision of a municipal service, and building local institutions to provide economic opportunity. Personal individual benefits may include skills and leadership development, and the opportunity to meet and spend time with other people. [However, there is] a negative relationship between an individual's willingness to participate and the associated personal costs, which include time commitments—such as paid work and childcare—and energy levels. Observed obstacles to participation include a lack of confidence to being able to contribute to a project on the part of the potential participant, the defeatist attitude among community residents based on the belief that nothing will ever be accomplished, and lack of interest on the part of those who hope to move out of the community* (Lamb, 2011:78).

Understanding the benefits and disincentives of potential members to joining the association enables an association to better target its recruiting efforts. Strategies might include:

- Identify all those who are potential members,
- Talk up the benefits of participation and belonging,
- Acknowledge all of the disincentives, and take steps to reduce them,

- Specifically target those for whom the benefits are likely to be most relevant and the disincentives are least.

One of the authors of this Report is a member of a long-established NFP that has an acknowledged aging and declining membership base. That association examined the census data to understand the profile of volunteers. It also did a demographic analysis of its current membership base, to better understand its present membership profile. Here it is just as important to understand the profile of those who presently do not join and why, as it is to understand who do. These two sets of data provided the association with key ideas for a membership drive.

From the perspective of a potential association member, rational choice theory would suggest that people will act according to the following:

- *If the benefits exceed the costs, participate,*
- *If the costs exceed the benefits, do not participate.* (Lamb, 2011:80)

A new generation

Despite the barriers that inhibit new blood from joining their association, many do. For some associations, there is a level of optimism that there is sufficient new blood waiting in the wings.

> *There are some second generations out there.* ***Over the last three or four years, sons have taken over from fathers, but I don't think any of them are represented on the committee****. The people on the committee are all the principals of their business. (2)*

There's an older generation that's just on the brink of retiring and handing over to younger blood and that younger blood has been represented on the Board.

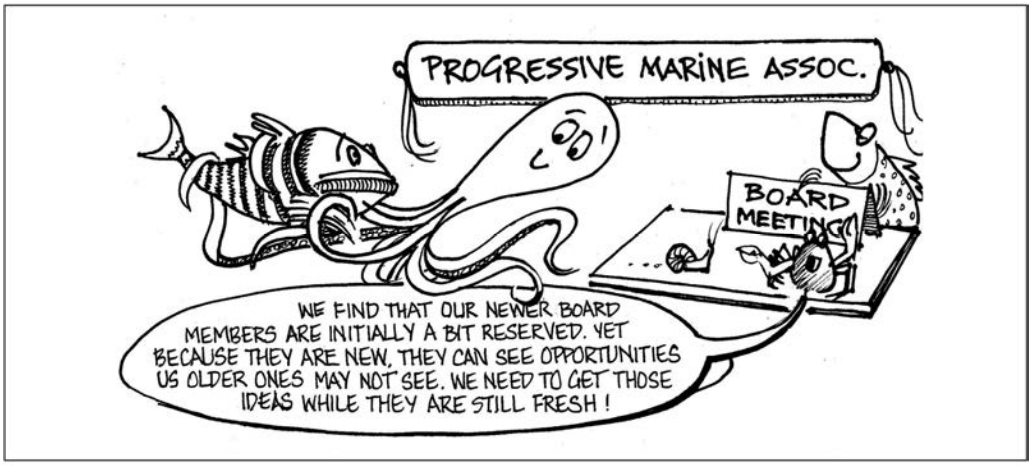
> *It's a bit of a seismic change.* ***There seems to be a lot of younger members (when I say younger, members like myself in their 30s) coming through, starting to get a voice, getting into managerial positions.*** *I think the industry is changing when a lot of Uni grads have been hired and have been in the industry now for about ten years, and are starting to get on to some of the R&D and Executive Committees. So they have been quite a big change in the last couple of years, getting new faces. (3)*

> *The average Director age has dropped because we lost a lot of the older members about three years ago, and we went through a bit of renewal. (4)*

> *Average age of the [State] fishing industry I would say would be plus 50 and its only starting to turn around in the last 5 five years that you've got new entrants coming in. You've got sons coming through or people biting the bullet like I did and investing in. The investing in side of things is* probably a bit lower than family coming through, but ***there's an older generation***

that's just on the brink of retiring and handing over to younger blood and that younger blood has been represented on the Board of [State peak body]. *(4)*

We have managed to convince the younger guys that it's their time to take over. My son said, 'When am I going to get to take over the boat?' I said, 'Righto, you can take over, you're responsible for everything, I'm going to off to do something else. And ***hopefully we can talk him or someone else to taking on the President's role in a couple of years to relieve the guy that's doing it now****. (6)*



The next generation coming through have a different mindset to the current/outgoing generation. Younger people have young families they want to spend time with.

The next generation of guys coming through have a different mindset to the current / outgoing generation *in terms of the current generation is really focussed on fishing. In the offseason, the focus was still on fishing / maintenance etc. I think a lot of the focus is shifting – it's not necessarily a bad thing – but* ***younger people have younger families that they want to spend time with****, or they have other priorities and business interests in their life as well, and the focus is not necessarily on fishing. And particularly in a quota-managed fishery where there is generally a pretty well-defined period of time where people are fishing, I think people have made choices about how they're going to spend the remaining portion of that year investing their time. (9)*

It needs to attract those younger, under 30s, 40s, or even under 50s, I suppose. (12)

I think over the past couple of years we've had two, three members that are new blood and the rest of us old fogies then take a fresh look at things. (15)

I would say the majority of the members would be above 40, would definitely be above 45. You have got some younger entrants coming in, but in all fisheries now to get established is really *hard. You have to be coming in on the back of like a family business or it's really hard to get started. But there isn't that many like 20, 25 year olds, I would say there's vast majority of membership is 40, 45 plus. (16)*

My father said I should go along to the branch meeting and get involved, so I went along and became the Secretary.

*In our last election in 2010 – we're due for another one in 2013 – we had a fairly major change with out with the old and in with the new. There were a number of long serving directors who retired, did not seek re-election and **we had a big injection of young blood and enthusiasm**. (17)*

***Unless you can get a heap of new ones buying in to the industry, you're not going to get new ones [in the association].** I think it will just happen. As the young ones get a bit older, they seem to get more involved. (9)*

***My father said I should go along to the branch meeting and get involved**, so I went along to the branch meeting and became the Secretary and that was reasonably early in the year and then we had the election not long after that I got on the [named] Committee (17)*

Nurturing new members

Whilst there may be new blood waiting in the wings, interviewees recognised that these people needed to be carefully nurtured if they were to deepen their commitment to their association. If the association expects some of these people to be its future leaders, the association itself needs to show faith in new members by investing in them. The decision by any individual as to whether or not they invest in the association is often a function of how they are treated on first contact. There is an old adage that says:

I may not remember what you said to me. Yet I'll always remember how you made me feel.

So does the association's first contact with a potential member engender them with positive feelings? Imagine a visitor to one of your association's meetings. What would they see or hear? Would they regard this as a positive experience?

Attracting them is difficult; retaining them once they're members, they generally stay. (19)

One of the most simple and most effective techniques for engaging any person in a positive fashion is to ask for that person's opinion or ideas. And treat the response with dignity and respect. Visitors, particularly potential members, are likely to be tentative. They may be reluctant to offer an opinion, wanting to weigh-up whether or not they will engage. Their decision to engage is partly a matter of their confidence; it is substantially a matter of whether or not they feel encouraged and welcome. [For more on what a potential member might think about in relation to joining an association, see **Appendix 6**].

Several associations with which we are familiar have a 'visitor and new member' committee. The responsibilities of the members of this committee are three-fold. The first is to make the visitor feel welcome; introduce them to other members and to seek out their opinions and ideas that may be of value to the association. The second task is to give the new person a job; not an onerous job, just a small one. And that job is to be done in partnership with existing members. The sooner that people feel they are part of a team, the easier and quicker it is for them to engage. At the outset, visitors feel like outsiders. The secret: Make it easy for them to feel they are part of the team. Engage them and involve them early. The third task is to induct the new members into the cultural and behavioural norms of the association.

> *When joining an organisation, new members experience both interest and ignorance. As a result, the first goal of membership is information, which is provided by group members. For a novice, organisational legitimacy is central to trust. The group has awarded status to some members (by role or by reputation); the new member trusts these individuals, though perhaps not totally and not without some anxiety. Without trust, the urge to exit is strong. Over time, trust becomes based in shared experience. As the new members become more proficient, they develop standards of judgement by which to evaluate competence and award trust. The organisation is transformed from an object of trust to an arena of trusting interactions.* (Fine & Holyfield, 1996:28).

Does the association's first contact with a potential member engender them with positive feelings?

So a healthy association might be regarded as an organic system whose primary task is growing people. That 'growing' process has a number of phases.

(i) Awareness: People not yet in the industry are attracted to it, or not. This occurs in the face of many possible choices. For example, a young person, who has some exposure to your industry by virtue of family members or living in a region where your industry is active, is faced with a host of possible career options, many of those being very attractive. Therefore, if your association represents your industry, then it has a responsibility to make entry into your industry as attractive as possible.

(ii) Interest: If your industry offers a degree of attraction, then it is the responsibility of your association to help potential members to make that choice. One of the easiest ways to do this is to invite them to an industry or association function and to make them feel welcome. Here your association is engaging in a deliberate policy of 'grooming', meeting people's social needs.

(iii) Engagement: People will engage with an industry or an association if they feel their opinion matters. Therefore wise associations will, in relation to potential new members, spend more effort in listening than in telling. As the old adage says: 'If I want people to listen to me, first I have to listen to them'. The task is not just to give the appearance of listening, but to actually take the views of the potential member into account. After all, the association probably needs members more than the individual needs an association. Apart from fearing not being listened to, other barriers include confidence, and having an understanding of how the industry and the association work. So part on an association's engagement strategy is to remove those barriers.

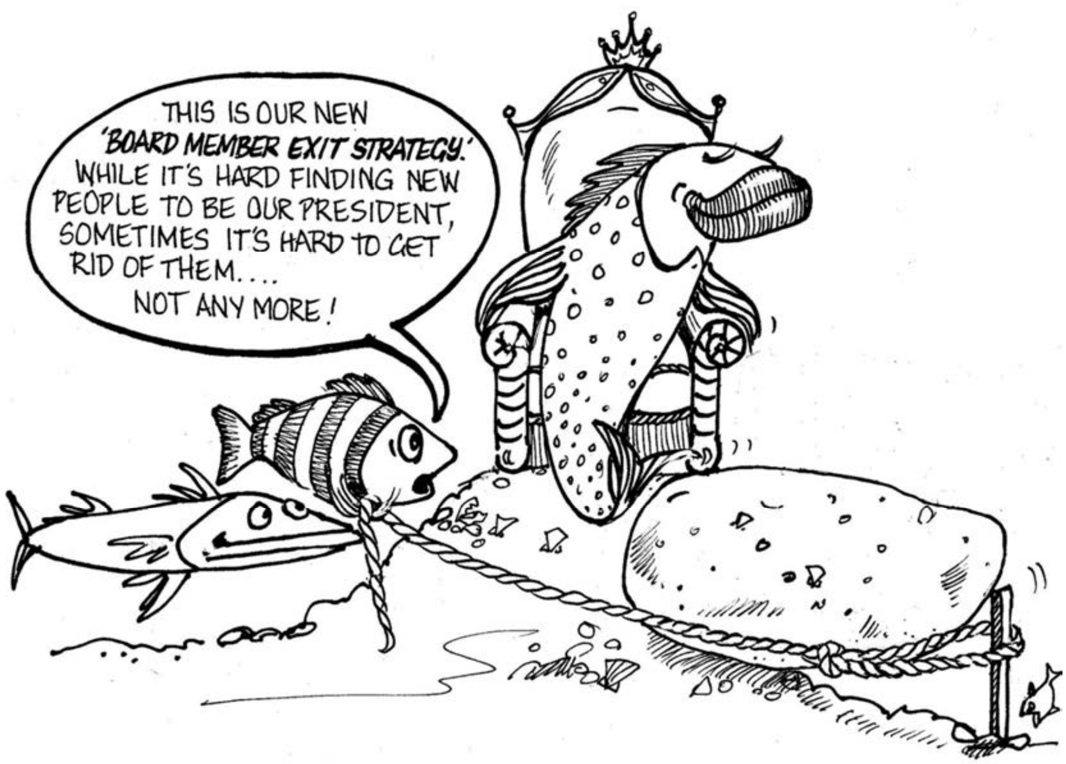
(iv) Belonging: If potential members show an interest in engaging, invite them to an association event. When they are there, give them a small job – even something as simple as helping to put out the chairs, telling them that the strength of the association is that everyone pitches in. This invitation to help might seem trivial; yet it is psychologically powerful. People will only join an association if they can imagine themselves as a worthwhile member, if they can begin to imagine themselves belonging.

(v) Valuing: As established members engage with the new or potential member, that engagement is a mutual dance around two questions: 1. '*What can the association do for you that you cannot do alone?*' And 2. *'What can you do for the association that will make us more effective?'* Both of these questions need to be asked equally often of all members. Healthy associations value the contributions of all members and are, in turn, valued by them.

(vi) Taking responsibility: If the association is meeting the three needs of its members (social, achievement, power), they will engage further. This engagement can be deepened by increasing the responsibility that members are invited to undertake. In other words, it is the responsibility of a healthy association to 'grow' all of its members. This growth is gradual and deliberate, from helping out in some small way at an event, to being listened to seriously during a discussion, to taking short-term responsibility during an event, to gradually moving towards more formal roles. Here mentoring, coaching and formal leadership training play a very important part.

(vii) Transferring: Healthy associations recognise that their longevity and vitality depends, in part, on succession. So every member who carries out a particular role, no matter how major or how minor, needs to train someone else to do it. Conversely, no member of an association should regard any role as 'theirs'. Key roles might be represented by a role elect (learning the role), an incumbent (doing the role) and an immediate past (mentoring the role). By conscious transferring of responsibility, executives free themselves up to take responsibility elsewhere, perhaps at a higher level. In other words, they promote themselves from below.

(viii) Moving on: Executives acquire knowledge and wisdom. That knowledge and wisdom is often of great value at a higher level. And the confidence gained by an executive in an earlier role equips them well for higher levels of responsibility and service. So part of the responsibility of any association is to grow 'elders' who can take on greater responsibilities elsewhere, and carry the association's interests into a forum of greater influence. This means that incumbent Board members, and their associations, need to have an exit strategy, a deliberate policy of vacating their role without leaving a vacuum. One way of giving effect to this exit strategy is for each Board or Executive member, at the time of their election, and as part of the ceremony of that occasion within an AGM, for them to publicly sign a letter of resignation, effective at a maximum of two elected terms after date of appointment.



These eight stages of 'growing' people are a numbers game. Of 100 people who could potentially join your industry, maybe 20will. Of the 20 that join the industry, maybe 18 will join the association. Of the 18 that join the association, maybe 12 will, at some stage, hold an executive position. Of the 12 that hold an executive position, may 2 will move on to represent the industry at a higher level. So unless we are constantly finding new people to join our industry, unless we are consciously exposing them to ever increasing awareness and responsibility, we will be faced with a constantly shrinking pool at the other end. It is pointless engaging in leadership succession planning without also planning for new member attraction and induction.

I think the answer to it is promotion, and the reason I say that is that you go out and promote and you get 50, you might end up with 5 really good ones. So plain numbers, that's the way to do it. Get the 5 really good ones and discard the 45. Whereas in the normal course of events, the way we do it, we might attract 1 out of 5. So we only have one new 1 on the committee instead of 5. (11)

I mean I look at the Rural Agriculture Association in WA and how much those groups actually nurture their young people. We've got this National Seafood Leadership Course etc. but it's the same people coming up with the same approaches. (1)

***It's our role [as Board members] to map out who we need to recruit, who we need to enrol and what the pathway is, etc. Don't rely on the executive officer to do it**. It's laziness in my view. (1)*

It is pointless engaging in leadership succession planning without also planning for new member attraction and induction.

***There should be a national school of excellence**. Because **we're not getting the bums on seats in aquaculture education programmes**, a lot of the schools are dropping aquaculture from their studies. So if there was a way of capturing that – so more and more people who are working in aquaculture, aquaculture farmers and they've got degrees and diplomas and whatever, that skill base is diminishing because there's no new blood coming through to do that. **The only way you're getting new blood is coming from overseas because the overseas companies invest in Australia**. So this lack of development and lack in getting ideas through to the top [peak bodies], its having an impact all the way through the chain. (1)*

[Suggestions for increasing new blood]. Leadership training, getting people interested, encouraging that and then having a constitution that says you can have a go. (1)

The more people who are new to the industry are encouraged to give their opinions, that can only stimulate freshness of thought and ideas.

It's a bit like being a Year 10 student running into a Year 12 maths class and looking at the scribbles on the board, thinking how on earth can anyone understand all of that. But when you become a Year 12 student yourself, you follow it. So it's a bit like that. I think that's one of the most important things, not only resourcing from a financial perspective, but also human resourcing that's directly from industry. (1)

Anytime I see leadership training being put up, I'm a massive advocate of those things. Because I think it's great to get people interested. (1)

***[An association established an R&D sub-committee] We did that because it was an involvement.** It was getting people involved. **It was getting younger groups within the association, younger members, and younger workers of members to be on the Committee, to feel part of it and belong. And to learn**. And [named person] who's on the Exec Committee* *now, was on the R&D. [Another named person] who is on the Committee, was on the R&D, [a third named person] was. So that strategy worked in developing people. (3)*

That [encouraging new talent through the R&D committee] was deliberate, it was never an accident. ***We discussed that at Board level on numerous occasions about getting younger guys, less experienced from a corporate level, to be involved****. And* ***that will be a stepping stone into understanding what we do****, what the industry does, give them a feeling of belonging and worth. And we've done that for a lot of years. (3)*

Those guys that get on the R&D Committee are usually your up-and-coming prospects *etc. going through the ranks, and they're usually the ones that put up their hand to be on the Exec Committee. (3)*

At the conference, we have awards for juniors. We spend a lot of time getting scholarships and travelling scholarships for these people. (3)

I certainly think trying to encourage – I don't want to use the term 'younger' members, but perhaps people new to the industry – ***just encourage them to have a voice****. So either younger as far as time in the industry (of course you need experience to be respected) but* ***the more people who are new to the industry are encouraged to give their opinions, that can only stimulate freshness of thought and ideas*** *and approach and stimulate a lot of thinking that hasn't been thought of before. (3)*

We really do need to encourage younger guys to get in there and take my place, etcetera, so they can start to take more ownership of the industry *and the direction of it as well as again that's one of the good things about [named younger person], he's still quite young, the youngest I think in there as well and extremely progressive. (3)*

The other big thing that I'd urge other associations to do is ***give the new guys support, because you could easily feel out of place. It's very daunting when – I'm a fairly outgoing person, but I know if you're apprehensive about anything and you're not very confident, it's very, very daunting getting on those committees.*** *Because essentially, these guys that have been on there for a while are legends. So to get on a committee with them, and you're sitting there, and you like the industry and they're the ones who have written all the books, and you sit there and try to tell them what you think is new and how you think you should do it; it's very daunting. You've got to have a very good crew of older guys there, who have done the job, to be open to that sort of stuff, and not just dismiss it. (3)*

How do you do that? You just try to be inclusive, and target. ***We've been pretty good at targeting, offering bursaries and emerging leaders. Those kinds of programs / initiatives are really important to give people confidence to go back.*** *I participated in a leadership bursary with eight people of all different ages, and in the 12 months since we did it, we had a fantastic take-up of people extending or nominating for positions. So I've seen that first-hand, and have also seen it with other people with bursaries etc. so I do think those things are quite important. There was a bursary available for a young person to attend the Directors' course that just happened. (4)*

It's a pretty small pool that you're picking people from, and [the challenge is] trying to get them to give up their time to go on it [the Board]. *If you want to kick someone off and get someone new to just fill in the spot; that can happen. I don't know how you get freshness. (4)*

I think we need to go out and encourage people to take a more active role in the management of the fishery itself. (5)

And while I fully encourage the younger ones coming on, they've got to want to stay for a few years. It takes them two years just to learn the ropes. (5)

It's a pretty small pool that you're picking people from, and the challenge is trying to get them to give up their time to go on the Board.

We just convinced them to come along to a meeting, and said to them, ***'You guys are the future of the industry; you've got to step up and take an interest.'*** *I suppose my son's been so used to me going away to meetings for years and years. (6)*

[Interviewer: you wouldn't step into that job unless you'd observed other people doing it. Would I be right?] Yes you can't just step into it, you definitely have to – ***beforehand I used to go to a few meetings here and there. And I didn't understand how we've got to vote; what's the purpose of what we can do.*** *And it's not until you get into it that you understand that WAFIC is under the Minister and the Council is under the Minister. I was on the committee for about four to five years. And going to Fisheries meetings and learning the ropes and see how they get all their information from the Fisheries and what goes on and all this sort of stuff. [Interviewer: In other words, can you imagine your association deliberately targeting some young people and saying look, these are the steps we want you to go through, could that happen?] Definitely. If there's a young kid that wants to come on, we'd be saying come with us to a WAFIC meeting and a Council meeting and see what goes on and just slowly sort of bring them into it. We don't want to put too much pressure on because, if they get too much pressure, they won't do it. (6)*

I think there needs to be training of those that are currently holding the positions. There almost has to be exit strategies as well.

So ***I was a young lad and my father used to drag me along to it [to association meetings]*** *(6)*

I think because we've had some associations who have made a conscious decision to put young people up and encourage new people. They also recognise that they're all getting older as well. (7)

Almost a generation change is needed, almost like an AFL club, ***the long term successful clubs always recruiting and nurturing new talent, there is a sense of belonging to the club and that foster's success*** *and, due to that, they're well resourced. (7)*

There are the training and the programs available but it's even afterwards doing that as well, there needs to be more of a transition program in place. It's almost like if you've done the program then that leads to actually progression over a number of years into the committees

and into more leadership roles. So you can't just stop with completing a course*; there needs to be more to it. [Interviewer - So you're suggesting that not only use the training and development opportunities but then provide some path or some mechanism for succession, is that what you're saying?] Yes, and* ***I think there almost needs to be training of those that are currently holding the positions too of how they can approach the situation. There almost has to be exit strategies as well.*** *(7)*

I think having a strong effective association, that would help. Training, maybe send someone out to the sector meetings and espouse the benefits of becoming involved in management. ***Maybe have some financial compensation for attending meetings. It's hard to make the dollar now so everything you have to spend, you've got to justify. So if you can get the petrol money or a couple of hours' time or your airfare paid for or whatever it is you need or utilising technology and get booked onto a Skype meeting*** *rather than having to travel all the way from the West Coast over to here to a management meeting, they may participate a bit more. (7)*

Barriers to entry have become too great to allow new entrants with appropriate skills. ***Training of the next generation with arrangements for them to fulfil roles in the industry must be implemented****.* ***Agreement is needed from the current guard to start really devolving authority and start mentoring****. (7)*

The thing about new blood is you get somebody new into the fishery and they usually very keen. So with very little work, you can get them to come along and be a member. They get a little jaded after a while and become wise to what's going on, and that's when they sort of fall off the wagon. (8)

Agreement is needed from the current guard to start really devolving authority and start mentoring.

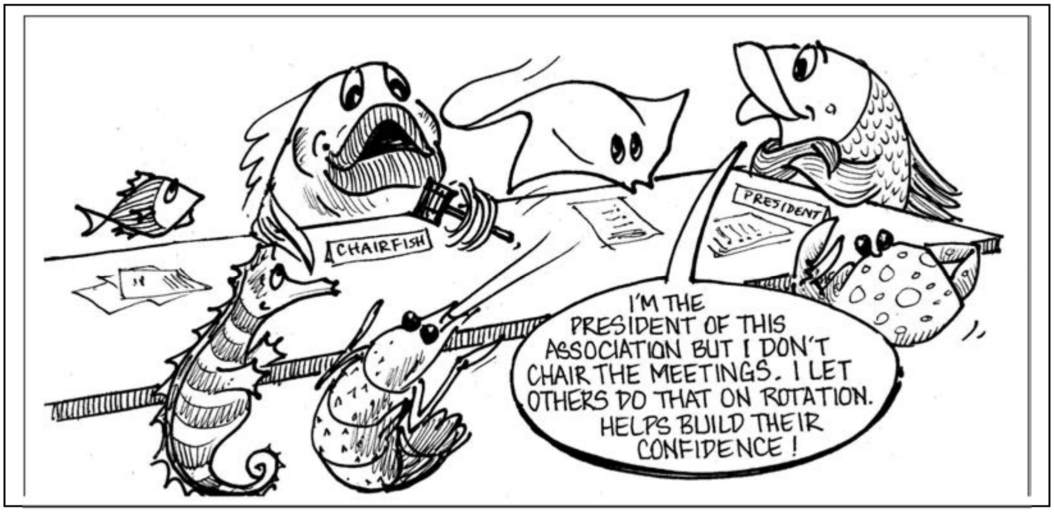
Each year we ask for nominations for each of the various roles within the Committee. So I guess it's been encouraged. I'm the Deputy Chair now, so I guess I've been encouraged to sit through a couple of years of just being a member, and encouraged now to become an Executive member. (10)

They could invite people to join or set up more [association] groups once again, including young people. (12)

Every so often we do have a fairly major transition from old to new, but we actively have to recruit new blood. ***We actively tap people on the shoulder*** *because a lot of young growers in particular –* ***back in the old days there used to be young farmers groups and so forth, they're not around anymore, so a lot of people did their initial training on leadership through those groups.*** *There is a lot of activity as you're aware through SRDC [Sugar Research and Development Corporation], but they're not groups that meet monthly or whatever like young farmers used to. There are all sorts of other rural leadership courses and so forth, but we actively do tap people on the shoulder. It doesn't necessarily mean they get elected but we tap on them shoulder to nominate at least, to express interest and there's been quite a few successes through that approach. (17)*

Generally the growers would prefer to see you sort of earn your keep for a few years and you get yourself a bit of background before you end up down there [on the State Board]. (17)

Generally, say if I can't get to the Board meeting, I will get one of the [local] elected representatives to go here in my place, which I've done before. So it gives some of these younger guys a bit of exposure to it. (17)



When you do have elections, you've got to go out and knock on people's doors, to get someone interested in standing. And I think ***some of the younger people are not as committed probably to doing this sort of work****; given the time spent away from home or their own business, or anything like that.* ***What we try to do is give them a bit of responsibility to start with, and see how they handle that, grow them locally before they go on.*** *(17)*

You've actually got to actively get out there and identify people. ***We actually do have a few programs where we do give preferential treatment to young growers that show a bit of leadership initiative****. We sort of pick them out to fast track them if you like, give them encouragement and they're easily identified by turning up to grower meetings and so forth. So we're actively out there trying to identify them. (17)*

They try to get everybody to have a go at being a chairperson because it's part of their education, that everybody stands outside their comfort zone a bit.

[Interviewer: If you take a thirty five year old who's been in the industry for fifteen years and they've seen people [on the committee] who have been there [in the industry] for forty years, they're hardly likely to step into a committee job; it's a bit daunting. So I think it's actually about growing people to do just a tiny job rather than a big job.] Rather than throwing you in the deep end. (18)

The Chairperson gets up and gets everybody enthused. I think it comes to down to personality too, some chair people, they're just not that type of person. ***They try to get everybody to have a go at being a chairperson because it's part of the education too, that everybody stands***

***outside their comfort zone a bit**. **I knew nothing and I went in as the Secretary. I think I did that for five years and in that time you're picking up so much stuff and even just public speaking. God, I would have never have done that. Now I can stand up in front of them and talk to them all day.** (19)*

***Possibly trying to identify new people that could potentially take over these roles, and bring them on board in an informal way, inviting them to executive meetings. Allow them as a bystander to sit there and see how the executive works**, possibly. **I know for me, prior to being involved, it all seemed very daunting and very formal, and I used to be quite nervous when I started to get involved. But after a while you realise that it's not all that bad**, and it's quite casual. (20)*

*At the moment while this generation is actively starting its own commitments in the industry, when that runs thin, we're going to get a lag there before my children become part of it. It's something we often talk about around our AGM, and I suppose we don't really have a solution for it. All we keep coming up with is that **we've got to try to involve young people to come along to general and executive meetings and keep that really open.** (20)*

***It's important to keep in the front of your mind, whether you're an executive member or just a normal association member, that it's important to remain open and welcoming to new people, to try to encourage people to go to meetings and try to encourage people to have a voice in the association.** It's a tough thing because generally people are more reserved when it comes to expressing their views in a meeting situation. (20)*

> ***It's important to remain open and welcoming to new people, to try to encourage people to go to meetings and to have a voice in the association.***

> ***You've got to grow their confidence. It's just so important to encourage people that they can do this stuff, that they <u>do</u> have something to contribute.***

***People need encouragement, and strategies to show people the process in the executive, prior to them even looking like getting involved**, just to break down the stigma that it's official. It can be quite a lot of fun, it's quite challenging, and I suppose I really enjoyed it in the end. (20)*

***You've got to grow their confidence**. I know that two or three of the members of our executive have been through young leaders' programs, and it was that type of leadership program that helped to grow their confidence to become involved. So **it's just so important to encourage people that they can do this stuff, that they do have something to contribute**. (20)*

The only reason that I got in there [on the executive committee] is that I like finances, so being Treasurer suits me fine. And that's all I really wanted to do. Then after a couple of years, they convinced me to go to Vice President. But I think we would get a lot more uptake if you said to someone (that's how I've attracted most people), 'If you want to be the Treasurer, that's fine. Just do however long you want to do, and then pull the pin if you want.' But you find that once they've been there, their confidence grows, they find that it's not as bad as they thought. And *by not having that pressure there of having to continue, they consider doing another year or moving into another position. So to make sure that if people choose not to continue, they feel that they've got an out. That's really important.* ***And when you've got people there because they want to, you attract other positive people as well.*** *They see it and go, 'That looks like a great group to be part of.' (20)*

> ***The association needs new members and new blood more than the individuals need the association. Therefore the association cannot expect potential new members to come to the association. Rather the association must go to them.***

I would love to say free beer and barbeques but I don't suppose that would look good on the Report. [Interviewer: I mean let's face it, we need to find a little bit of enjoyment in life and, if having a beer and a chin wag's the way to do it, why not?] It can actually lead to a lot more. ***When you make it a calm, comfortable, relaxed environment, it is easier to get people involved in stuff****. Because they are calm and relaxed and they're not stand offish, they're not worried about anything so, sometimes yeah, it can be as simple as that.* ***Getting people together, getting people to know people; so interaction of members would have to be one of the better ways I would say of getting people to move up*** *and what would be a good way of get them to want and move up and get involved in the higher levels of it and the decision making and that. (22)*

From an association's perspective, the association needs new members and new blood more than the individuals need the association. Therefore the association cannot expect potential new members to come to the association. Rather the association must go to them, seeking them out wherever they may be. As indicated above, the process of 'growing people' is a series of steps. So the first steps might be where association members chat regularly and informally with potential members at a point where they congregate. This could be on the wharf, at the pub, at the football, for example. Once a relationship has been established, the association member could ask the potential member about some of the industry issues that concern him/her. The association member might then (a) inform the potential member what the association is doing about that issue, or (b) if that issue is not yet on the association's radar, promise to take up the issue with the association and then report back to the individual. It is not necessary, at this point, to raise the issue of membership. The point is to have the potential member start to become aware of the potential benefits. Let them raise the issue of joining.

Expanding the membership base

Much of the commentary pertaining to 'new blood' has been about attracting younger members. There is another dimension of 'New Blood' that might also be considered. New entrants to the industry, regardless of age, bring with them experiences and ideas from completely different fields, thereby enriching the possibilities for the association. The more heterogeneous the membership, the more diverse – be it age, gender, ethnicity, experience, income sources – the greater the chance the association will find the knowledge, skills or ideas to address whatever challenges the association faces. Though desirable, this can be a particularly difficult challenge. People from different backgrounds from the mainstream of membership can feel like outsiders, a perception that members may consciously or unconsciously reinforce. We relate most to people like us, to people of similar backgrounds, since they validate us. We can feel uncomfortable in the presence of people who are in any way different.

Associations are often formed by producers to give them a united voice. Yet the success of the industry, in which members are but a part, can often be heavily influenced by other members of the value chain. All members of a value chain are interdependent. Therefore an association can find 'new blood' by broadening its membership to others in the value chain.

In considering the value chain, do not overlook deck-hands, skippers, and fishers who are not licence holders. Each of those, in their own fashion, have 'skin in the game', and each of those has a vested interest in the industry's long term viability. As front-line workers, they also have a valuable perspective on the industry. And, most importantly, there is just as much chance of a brilliant idea emerging from this group of people as there is from anyone else in the industry.

All members of a value chain are interdependent. Therefore an association can find 'new blood' by broadening its membership to others in the value chain.

I think the disincentive for broadening the membership base is that you would then have other membership needs that you would then need to fulfil.

Under the earlier topic of 'Decentralisation of decision-making', it was recommended that any association consider the perspectives of each of the eight generic stakeholders. This list of eight might also serve as a prompt as to who else might be invited to participate in association meetings or events.

The association has no deliberate policy [for attracting new blood] but maybe we need to have an actual farmer come in; rather than the association [EO], have an actual farmer [on the Board]. *Someone on the ground, on the grass root level. Having some way of engaging the farmers and getting them on the Board; I'm sure they would be amenable to it if it's outside peak production period. So that way the farmer feels as if he's having input, he's getting his input across. (1)*

Well, ***there's this issue about extending its membership base to associate members****. So you'd have to become more of a seafood organisation. But* ***I think the disincentive for doing that is that you would then have other membership needs that you would then need to fulfil****. And I query whether they're in a position to do that. It is a catch-22 in my view, because you do really move away from the central component of a Producer and a Fisherman and their issues, and* *suddenly find yourself dealing with a large amount of other issues that it might not be placed to deal with. (4)*

Certainly its inadequate in the fact as you said, we are losing human resources. So maybe we should be looking at associate membership to try and pick up. (5) [This association presently has no associate members.]

The vertical integration is one way; it's the only one that I've come up with [to increase membership] (5).

My sentiments are amalgamation. That's the number one thing, the only way out. *If they amalgamate, increase your membership again and then they can go to the Minister and say, 'Right, we're representing 32 members,' or something like that. That's what gets clout. As soon as the Minister sees a large figure on a bit of paper, he'll sit up and listen. If he doesn't, it goes to the media and he ends up looking like a goose. If you say, 'We're representing 10 members,' he's not going to give you much of his time.' (6)*

My sentiments are amalgamation. That's the number one thing, the only way out.

Really, it's only once you get somebody that takes over a licence that wants to be involved; you're not going to get crews or Skippers that are just doing it for a job. Unless they're really dedicated, they're not going to get involved in Association. (9)

Road shows out there with license holders and crews could potentially 'identify' future members. (9)

I think the answer to it is promotion, and the reason I say that is that you go out and promote and you get 50, you might end up with 5 really good ones. So plain numbers, that's the way to do it. Get the 5 really good ones and discard the 45. Whereas in the normal course of events, the way we do it, we might attract 1 out of 5. So we only have one new 1 on the committee instead of 5. (11)

To increase membership they got to sell it; they can have stalls at the caravan show; they can have stalls at the fish show; they could advertise at the fishing stores, you know the main stores in and out of [State capital]. They could do things like that. They could invite people at the boat ramps to join. There's a lot of things they can do if they wanted to increase their memberships. (12)

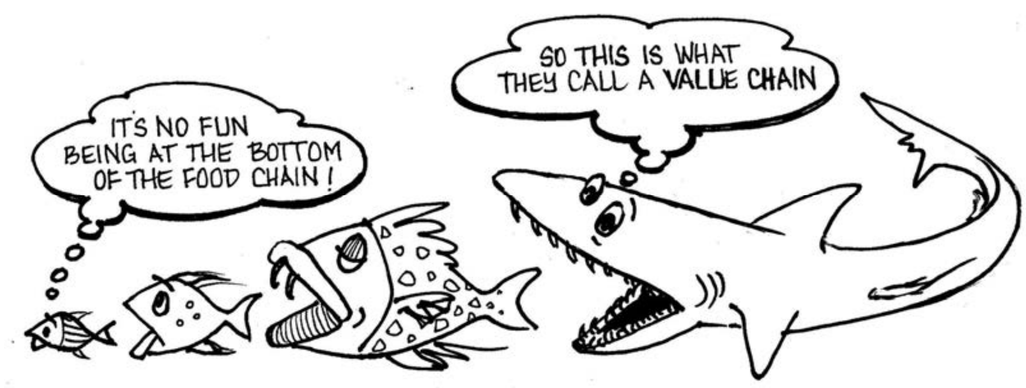
We noticed an organisation functioning well on one of the forums, and a couple of us made contact with them and told them the opportunities in [our peak body] and they actually formed the club, which was quite interesting. So we increased our membership by one club. (12).

Advertising, trying to get fishing shops to hand out our brochures. And get the [member] clubs more pushing – getting together and having the fishing competitions instead of keeping to themselves. People might then start enjoying it. (12)

I think the executive probably could visit the clubs and talk to them about ANSA meetings and now of course it could probably have [association] meetings over Skype, you know two people in [capital city], two people in [regional city], and one in [another regional location] whatever. They could make it easier for people to be a member of the State [peak body] Committee. (12).

What they need is a growth policy that helps them gain membership of the younger fishing fraternity, like the forty year olds, the thirty or forty year olds. They've got the energy and drive and will take it into the future. Besides those young adults, they could set up young membership programs with children or teenagers or youth and they could develop that and that would help their organisation grow into the future. (12)

They have tried by bringing in what they call non-[association]. So some of the clubs, some people might not want to join [the association], but they might want to fish in the comp. So we've made a non-[association] section. (12)



If I could enhance the system, I would say possibly have a couple of independent directors.

*[Suggestion] Promotion, promotion of the industry as a career choice. It's hard to overcome the cost of entry thing. Quotas are hugely expensive for a young guy to buy if he wants to. So that's a big problem but **if the fishing companies are going to continue they are going to have to have people catching their fish and I think that they've got to look at innovative ways of trying to bring those young people into the industry as catchers.** (13)*

***All of our directors are growers in their own right. You know, if you asked me if I could enhance the system, I would say possibly have a couple of independent directors.** But that's something we've chosen not to do. (17)*

With the larger farms, particularly farms that are owned by corporate entities, it's pretty much a requirement for their managers to be a member of the association, and, if the person in the role is actually interested, to become member of Council. (21)

One of the things that we've found to be more useful is to track down the people who aren't members and ask them why aren't they members. And point out to them why they should be and that's the beginning. *You have their contact details, you have what they're doing, and where, and how they're doing it, so you can maintain contact if you choose. You can send them notices of workshops and things that they might find interesting – so you're gradually drawing them into seeing why they should be a member. (21)*

In partial summary: Our industries are struggling to attract new blood into their associations. Yet, there are potential members coming through the industry, often the offspring of current industry members. Whilst acknowledging there are a number of barriers to entry to our industries and our associations, there are many suggestions as to how engagement and participation of new and potential members might be nurtured. New blood might also be found if associations broaden their membership base, particularly within a value chain. And for associations whose numbers have declined below critical mass, amalgamation with other associations might prove an effective survival strategy.

Recommendation 19:

a. Undertake a demographic profile of (a) all potential members, and (b) all current members, and (c) recent departing members, to better understand who joins and why, who leaves and why, who else might be attracted to the association.
b. Build the base.
c. Do all in the association's power to seek out diversity in its membership base, to extend a welcoming hand to any potential members who are 'different'. It is this diversity that is the best predictor of innovation.
d. Consider broadening the membership to include (a) the eight stakeholder groups, and (b) all dimensions of the value chain.
e. Codify the association's policy towards the attraction, engagement, induction and retaining of new members, and the growth of established members into positions of civic responsibility. In other words, there could be a specific policy pertaining to each of the eight stages of 'growing' people.

Case Study 18: Tablelands Canegrowers

Tablelands CaneGrowers is an association incorporated under Queensland legislation as a not-for-profit body. It is one on a number of regional CaneGrower associations, all of which are affiliated under the umbrella organisation of CaneGrowers Australia. CaneGrowers is a voluntary member-based organisation that represents the interests of the majority of cane producers.

Tablelands CaneGrowers was formed in 1996, when the Atherton Tablelands, in North Queensland, were opened up to cane-production, aided by the establishment of an independently-owned local mill. Tablelands CaneGrowers has between eighty and ninety members, representing all but two cane-producing enterprises, one of which is mill-owned. The average age of growers would be 50, ranging from early 30s to late 70s.

The five member Board (one female) is elected on a three-year cycle. There are no restrictions on length of service and three Board members have been there for some years. The Board meets monthly, face-to-face. There is a full-time Executive Officer employed, and all the work of the association is carried out by the EO and the Board members, all of whom are major producers, growing between then 40% of the tonnage of the region. So the interests of the individual Board members and their enterprises are inseparable from the interests of all growers. Board members are volunteers and willingly put in very long hours in the interests of their members.

Members pay an annual membership fee, based on tonnage of production, which has two components. The first of these, at approx. 10c per tonne, supports the national organisation while the second, at 28.75c per tonne, supports the local organisation.

The association provides a very broad suite of services to its members. These range from negotiations with the mill over cane price and supply, agronomic advice, dealing with regulatory issues, in fact any issue underpinning grower prosperity. The strength of the association is that the membership is highly cohesive and that the Board and the EO are always accessible. Communication with members is face-to-face, emails, faxes, phone, and, most recently, SMS.

There is no leadership succession-planning in place. The burden of the associations falls to the willing few, and there is limited interest from others to pick up responsibility. The likely opening up of new production areas will usher in some new growers who are likely to become new members, raising the prospect of new blood into the association. Fresh thinking is regarded as desirable.

The association has witnessed considerable turbulence in the industry and this is not likely to diminish. Future challenges include maintaining financial viability in the face of rising costs, sugar marketing, and government regulation.

Sharing responsibilities

Does your association have a deliberate policy of sharing responsibilities proportionately?

Robert Putnam (1993) observed that the quality of a democracy depends on its citizens. This applies equally to associations. The governance of an association depends on its social capital and civic community with some people being more civic-minded than others (Putnam, 1995a). People belong to an association because it provides them with certain benefits. Many regard those benefits as 'rights'. What is less recognised is that '*rights*' go hand-in-hand with '*responsibilities*'.

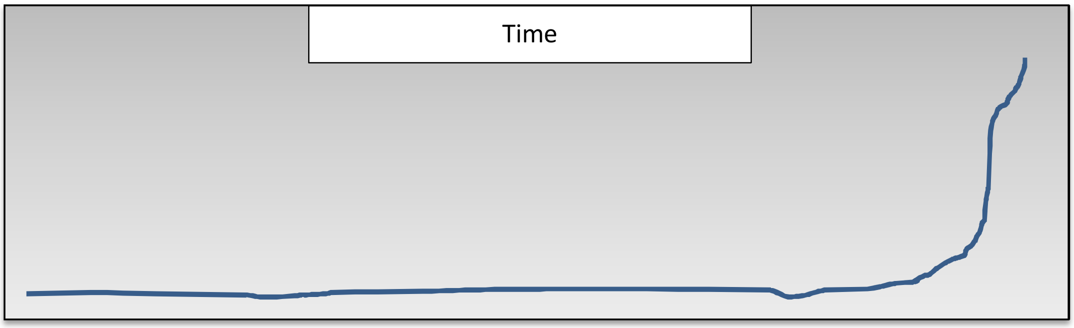
I was brought up to believe that one of the most important things you can do is to participate in civic-type arrangements.

Civil society is essentially democratic and composed of people who enjoy rights of full social citizenship. The right of participation in the market place or in public and voluntary organizations is a fundamental right of citizenship in terms of influence on decision-making and control. Thus, active citizenship forms the cornerstone of civil society and leads to citizen empowerment (Iecovich, 2005: 161)

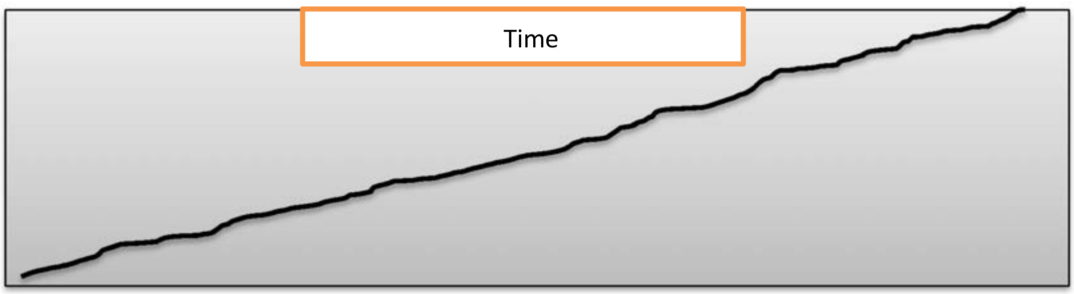
> *[Interviewer: One of the observations that I make is that there's a decline generally across Australia in terms of civic experience, civic responsibility, and civic role models.] It's one of the most important things you can do in your life.* ***I was brought up to believe that one of the most important things you can do is to participate in civic-type arrangements****. (4)*

In their 2004 research into healthy rural communities, Plowman *et al* interview 65 people from eight separate rural communities. Some of those communities were found to be substantially more innovative and resilient than others. And the difference was captured in the language of the interviews. The interviewees from the communities that were in decline were more likely to ask: 'When are they going to ….. ?' where the 'they' referred to the local Council, to the State government, or to any person/body external to the interviewee. In those communities that were thriving, however, the language was quite different. There, interviewees asked: 'How can we …. ?', recognising that responsibility in their future lay in their hands, not with some external 'other'.

Most of the associations examined in this research had a participation profile that looked like this.



Most associations: No expectation of any contribution until the AGM.



Some associations: Membership is a privilege with responsibilities expected from Day 1.

Barriers to engagement

There is a tendency within associations for much of the work to fall to the few. This is a slow, creeping and insidious trend. Once an association is formed and creates an elected Board, Council, or Management Committee, it creates a group of 'insiders' (the management group) and 'outsiders' (the general members). The insiders become privy to more information, and knowledge, building up an unconscious knowledge, experience, confidence and expertise barrier against the participation of outsiders. Whilst it is not difficult for 'insiders' to leave at any time, it is more difficult for 'outsiders' to step up to replace them.

> *But the problem is the pressure on industry is going up. And there are less and less fishers around.* ***Our problem is, small industry, big geographical distances****. And with Perth being the only town. But a lot of people in the regions – even when we pay for the travel costs etc., it's just too hard for them. (4)*

> ***Once an association creates an elected Board, Council, or Management Committee, it creates a group of 'insiders' (the management group) and 'outsiders' (the general members).***

People understand the need to have the [peak body] Council particularly, but no one is prepared to put in the time. (7)

A lot of people have seen it like ***'I don't think I'll be any good at doing it, I'm not as good as [the President] at doing stuff'. Anytime you say something you get shouted down anyway.*** *(8)*

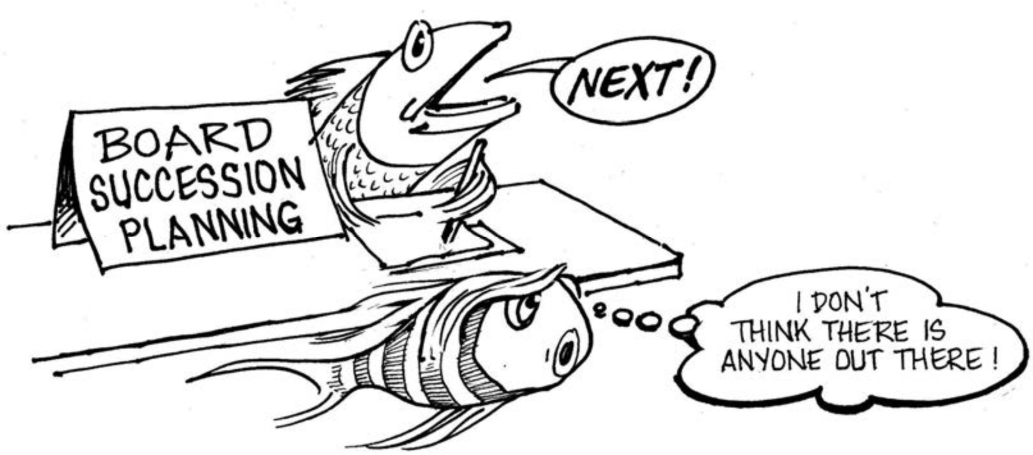
I'm not involved in the association as a worker. I'll support it 100%, but you've got to have a lot of spare time and dedication to be able to be involved. There's a lot of work involved. We're flat-out as it is. *(9)*

People like it and they don't want to give it up. I wouldn't say it's an old boys' club, but there are just some longstanding folks that have wanted to hang on to it.

I don't think there's heaps of capable people out there to try and share those responsibilities. (9)

I think, just change the whole attitude of the industry, which would be bloody hard. That would be about the only way to fix it, I reckon. (9)

Time commitment. Also ***a feeling of, 'Am I good enough to do this?'*** *So worrying that they'll be bad at it or let the club down. That sense of responsibility. Perhaps* ***not wanting to be left to do it on their own.*** *(11)*



Primary industries have a fairly apathetic approach to membership of these things and I wish that was better. (13)

Sometimes when members have been around for a long time, they want to maintain their role in the association and they don't want to share. It's quite an identity. They take real ownership. So we often try to encourage shifting – you mentioned earlier about every other year having a new person sitting on the Board. But people like it and they don't want to give it up. I wouldn't say it's an old boys' club, but there are just some longstanding folks that have wanted to hang on to it. It's not something that we've focussed on or done a really good job of. Again, I think it is important to stress that there needs to be a balance between new members, change in the Board makeup and also consistency to allow longstanding, valuable members to continue to serve. I think we have been able to achieve that. (14)

I think because everybody seems to be busy; I think we all appreciate the fact that everybody else is also busy. But I don't know that there's any conscious or written documented thing of trying to share. (15)

Where industry members feel they can achieve their needs without their association, they are more likely to disengage (or less likely even to join in the first place). One example is enterprises that are sufficiently large that they do not feel the need to associate, or they become the sole player in the industry. Another is those licence holders who lease out their quota to other fishers. Their income is now shielded from the daily vagaries of the industry. Membership apathy can also occur when an industry has been through turmoil and/or when members feel that their association has very little power to achieve anymore on their behalf.

Those who are more financially vulnerable, or who have less experience in the industry, are more likely to seek the support of the association and stay engaged.

The apathy is caused by the lack of clear and timely communication from both the Fisheries Department and the Ministers office to Industry with adequate information, then leaving insufficient time to allow fishers intelligent and meaningful discussions at a local level. (5)

The industry has gone to quota now and basically the fights been fought, and we're bucking over the scraps basically. So memberships over all the associations are really, really low now. *There's nothing controversial, the upturn and the upheaval in the industry has happened now. (6)*

They couldn't be bothered, don't want the reasonability, aren't prepared to put the time in. (18)

On the other hand, those who are more financially vulnerable, or who have less experience in the industry, are more likely to seek the support of the association and stay engaged because it gives them information, collective bargaining power, and the sense that they are not in this alone.

Falling to the few

Because it is easier for 'insiders' to gain experience, and more difficult for 'outsiders' to gain entry to the management group, the work increasingly falls to a smaller pool of people. Some associations revolve around a single competent individual, be that a President, a Secretary, or an EO. And whenever this occurs, the association is vulnerable. It is vulnerable to critical information being held (and sometimes guarded) in the head of one individual; it is vulnerable to that individual suddenly being unable to continue in his/her duties.

Think of a wagon wheel, where all information has to flow through the hub. Now consider a wagon wheel where all information flowed through the rim. Healthy associations try to avoid the former by sharing responsibilities broadly, having an understudy for each formal position and by fostering a culture of compulsory turnover.

A lot of fishers don't want to be involved. Fishers say: 'Well, that's what we're paying for.'

[Interviewer: How many of your members do you feel you hear from often, if they're actively keen to hear what the R&D Committee is turning out?] Apart from the Exec and the current members of the R&D Committee (and some of them double-up on membership), I would say not a lot. (3)

For the Board, I think it's quite shared. As far as R&D Committee members go, no, it's not. It's quite lop-sided. There's only a couple of us who actively participate in email threads or phone conversations. (3)

A lot of fishers don't want to be involved. I struggle to get members for the Resource Access Committee. Fishers say well 'That's what we're paying for. Why would I pay my 0.5% [of GVP], and I have to go to all these meetings at the same time?' (4)

I think it's devolving responsibilities down and getting people engaged. I think decentralisation of decision-making is the critical issue. The burden is actually heavier now, but we have tried to disperse them better. (4)

Out of the twelve members of the Board, there's probably four that are really active; the other eight participate by email infrequently, but most attend Board meetings about every six weeks. (5)

Some just don't have the same will to be involved as others. Work commitments are sometimes used as an excuse but with emails these days life is so much easier to keep up to date and be involved. But the will has to be there. ***This season has also had an effect on participation of Directors. Some probably won't catch their quota this season. So from a financial point of view, it's more important to them to concentrate on running their business than running an association.*** *A few have probably had second thoughts about whether they should have accepted or even stood for election to the available seats on the Board. (5)*

I think the Board should be taking more responsibilities on certain issues, yes. Unfortunately, there's only one or two people on the Board who actually involve themselves in any of the work. (5)

Out of the twelve members of the Board, there's probably four that are really active.

It's usually just the President and Secretary who get all the inward correspondence, and if there's something that needs to be discussed, the President calls the Secretary who will do a ring-around and organise the meeting date, and we go forward from there. ***The only two positions of any responsibility are the President and the Treasurer-Secretary.*** *(6)*

We have a marvellous secretary; she does all sorts of stuff. (6)

You end up in a catch twenty two when the few that are involved get lobbed on everything *and they're that busy doing that, it seems to be that there's not that foundation to even allow for the delegation. (7)*

There's a lack of people putting their hand up. It seems to be the same people doing the work. (7)

There's been a lot of people there for a long time. You've got the same people attending meetings and the same people will sit there and let the same people take on the responsibly. It's only at a Board level when things were being shared around. ***Council tends to sit there and let the Chair take on most of the responsibility.*** *That may change in the future with the new structure but in the last five years it hasn't changed very much. (7)*

They feel they can't commit the time, because there's no recompense for it. You're doing it in your own time and on your own dollar.

I don't think they're that engaged. They're more interested in their little issues as opposed to the bigger issues. Most people are very passive and just let the usual suspects get on the committee and they don't know what's going on. (7)

I know when we get a fisherman in, we try and see if they will participate in committees and things. But there's just ***a bit of a lack of getting people to have the confidence and the experience to feel that they can participate at a high level; and also that they feel they can't commit the time, because there's no recompense for it. I mean you're doing it in your own time and on your own dollar*** *and so that's also a bit of a problem. (7)*

While we've still got the same old buggers still doing the same old thing, it is extremely difficult to try and get new blood, and new ideas.

[What stops people from participating?] ***They're busy and I think they're quite happy to have someone else do the work for them.*** *It's usually only when the shit hits the fan that they really get a bit disgruntled and then start going; 'Oh well'. They want their say, but if everything seems to be ticking along okay and they're happy with their representation by their own association, then they don't really feel they need to bother getting involved themselves. (7)*

I would say only three or four [members are active]. Certainly the President is extremely active, and the Vice-President is very active. That's about it. (8)

While we've still got the same old buggers still doing the same old thing, it is extremely difficult to try and get new blood, new ideas, and to try and share some of the responsibilities of the association amongst only a handful of people. *(8)*

Unfortunately a lot of Fishermen, providing everything is going alright, they're quite happy to just go fishing, and it's left to a few people to run the ship. *They accept that some people are doing all the work and they're getting the benefit out of it. (8)*

Just the lack of interest. Everyone's relying on someone else to do it. (9)

Each year there is potentially one or two new people that may become involved, which hasn't changed. I'm guessing one reason for that is that ***there is a level of complacency within the industry****. Until something is directly going to affect someone,* ***someone else will look after it****. I think that as well, [association] have funded resources to deal with issues on behalf of the industry as well, so* ***the association (Exec Officer, President etc.) can deal with those issues.*** *(9)*

The same dedicated ones do the work. (9)

I've been at it for a lot of years. And because I've been doing it for so long, I know what I've got to do to get it done. ***I'm more than happy for someone else to do it, but the truth of the matter is that I can just do it better****. (11)*

I would say 80% of the workload is done by a small minority. (12)

I'm more than happy for someone else to do it, but the truth of the matter is that I can just do it better.

It's the age group again, where some of the people that have retired are looking for something to do, there are others that have retired and are looking to shed responsibility. So there's a mixture. So the younger people are the key. (12)

It's basically fallen on about three people to actively seek new members. (14)

There are probably 15 active members from the Board and the membership, which hasn't changed a whole lot. (14)

The easy part is being the financial member. The more onerous part is being actively involved.

Because there's less of those old members and more new members, and they don't have the old [civic] ethos, it's getting a bit more difficult. The burden is falling on fewer people*, and there are fewer people proportionately as well. (19)*

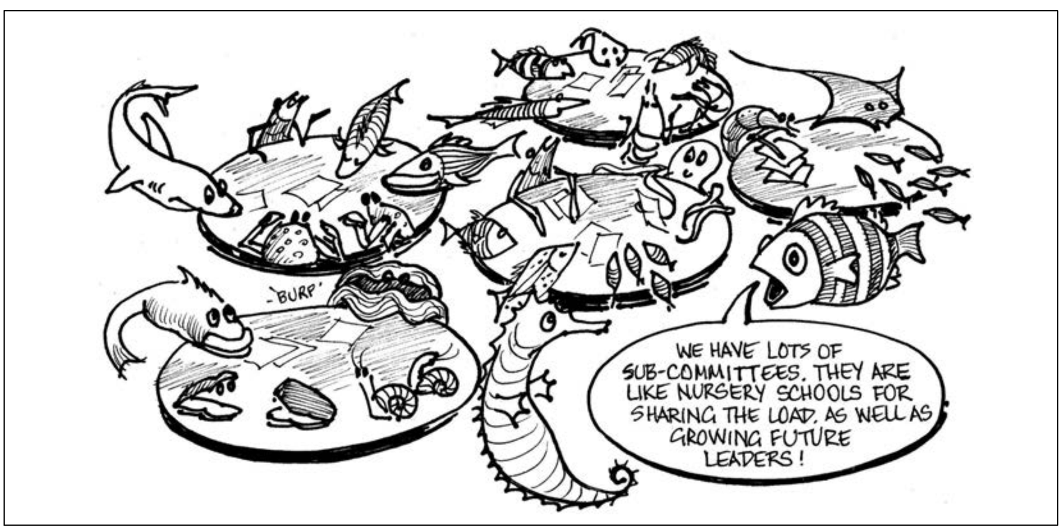
Just trying to get everybody on board, not only to be a financial member, that's the easy part, to belong to something and say, 'Well, I've paid my $400, I'm a member, and that's where it stops.' ***The easy part is being the financial member. The more onerous part is being actively involved and trying to do something to affect the common good of the whole organisation.*** *It'd be nice, I guess, to maybe see more involvement than there is. (20)*

There's an invisible danger in associations; that competent people put their hands up and less competent or less enthusiastic people don't. And so the long term consequence is burn out for competent people and the absence of skilling for the others and letting them get away with carrying a lighter load.

When someone is responsible for a job, have someone else with potential on board [as an understudy]. It's sometimes easy to do a job – like I'm responsible for the database, which I do *myself. And the Secretary says, 'I need you to show me this one day, but can you just change this for the time being?' and I think, 'No worries,' but* ***that's my flaw. I still haven't passed it on, but I really need to sit down with the Secretary or the Treasurer and set up a process [to teach them what I'm doing].*** *My fault was that I just took it on and didn't really take the time. I should have explained it to the Treasurer. You can always be there to back them up. But* ***my fault is that I think that we're all time-poor, and I'll just quickly do it myself. But now I'm still stuck with the job.*** *(20)*

The more someone does, the more they have to get done. [Named person] was a classic one for that – he gets loaded up with everything. He's reliable and mature; he has the experience and has great ideas. People feel confident in that he can do a job, but he gets asked every time. I suppose that's why he's had to step out; he's just been so burdened, *rather than just having it sustainable. (20)*

Keeping an association functioning requires certain costs, often the time and energy of a dedicated few. These few sometimes succumb to burn-out, or resentment. When this occurs for those individuals, the personal cost is clearly greater than the benefit. Ideally, as a general principle, the benefits that each member receives from an association need to be matched by the responsibility that each member has of contributing to its health and vitality. Healthy associations ensure that responsibilities are widely shared, and rotated. To keep your association healthy, is the association finding ways to distribute the costs proportional to the benefits? Does every member know what their responsibilities are? Participation in sub-committees as a compulsory condition of membership is one appropriate strategy. Compulsory turnover of executive and committee positions is another.



We usually just leave it to the executive – the President, Secretary-Treasurer which is probably why I see a few people come to burnout*. You just get to the stage where you get sick of it, especially if something controversial comes up, your phone just doesn't stop. I remember* *one $1,000 mobile bill (and my wife hit the roof as you can understand). So it's very inadequate at the moment because it's just left to two people. You just rely on the rest to turn up and take some interest. Because **a lot of people will come along and voice their opinion, but will not take an executive role.** You find that goes across all walks of community life in regional communities. You struggle to find people to take over. (6)*

The Executive Officer is most likely wearing the brunt of it, due to his own stubbornness of not sharing some of it about.

*The workload's not huge until something controversial comes up; then you've got to run around and get support. Especially I found **I got to burnout level because I was doing two roles - President of the association plus I was a Director on another association.** (6)*

One of the associations examined for this report had one particular member enterprise that was larger by far than any of the other member enterprises. Its owner, an extremely successful entrepreneur, appeared to be completely disinterested in engaging with the association. The explanation was that though his enterprise was by far the largest in the association, that enterprise was one of the smallest in the owner's portfolio of diverse businesses. So his mind was on other matters.

I got to burnout level because I was doing two roles - President of the association plus I was a Director on another association.

It is common for associations to have a small elected executive and sometimes a paid exec officer. Most of the membership is passive and not actively engaged in association business. Yet that passive membership is often very vocal with respect to what they expect the association to do for them. This can be very dispiriting for the small dedicated executive doing their best with limited time and resources.

*I suppose our Exec Officer takes responsibility for the minutes, the papers, the agendas, and all that sort of stuff. But as far as input into issues, **I think the whole Board has input into the issues, but then I suppose our Exec Officer is the one that has to carry it.** (1)*

We used to share it back in the old days but nowadays it's getting harder and harder. [Named EO] will handle it if he possibly can. (1)

At the moment the Executive Officer is most likely wearing the brunt of it, due to his own stubbornness of not sharing some of it about.** But I look at it from both points of view there; we definitely don't want to leave it all to him; **we've just had to force him to take holidays**. [Interviewer: Really?] Yes. You know 'You've got to take these holidays', but 'we've got this coming up and that coming up' and I said 'don't worry about that, we'll stumble through'. At the last committee meeting we had to actually move a motion to make [named person] to take holidays. That will give you insight into what sort of a man he is. [Interviewer: **Highly dedicated. And I mean, that's a wonderful thing but it's also a risk of weakening the

association.] Absolutely, because people don't get to do much. I'm all for throwing responsibility out to as many people that you can. If that keeps them all coming back, it keeps them interested and that keeps the brain ticking over. *(22)*

Beneficiaries

In system terms, the benefits to members are the outputs of the system. In contrast, the contributions of the members, financial and otherwise, are the inputs. Where members see the association as being a logical extension of their business, an inseparable part of their business, they are more willing to invest the necessary inputs, including responsibility-sharing, to achieve the desired outputs.

If your b#lls are on the line you get up more, but if you're cruising along, you sort of don't really care.

Probably because there's been renewal [in membership], it [the question of portfolio responsibilities] needs to be revisited. Again it comes down to the project management thing. It's got to align. If my industry is going to do it, it's got to align with their interests. So then we worry about cross subsidisation. (1) [Note the reluctance, signalling that members of peak bodies are putting sectoral interests ahead of those of the peak.]

Some people have got more stake in the industry I suppose*. I mean some of the little blokes don't really care and if you've got more debt and you've got to pay the banks and the Government is trying to do this to you, you feel like you want to get out there and do more stuff, as opposed to a guy who sort of owns his own pots and goes with whatever.* ***If your b#lls are on the line you get up more, but if you're cruising along, you sort of don't really care.*** *It depends on the issue as to what will get people involved. (6)*

Here in [State] ***the associations have been put in a position now where they're controlling the destiny of their fishery,*** *which means it's controlling the destiny of the Fisher's investment in his future. So a lot more Fishers are becoming – dragging and screaming – but are becoming more interested in what's going on, only because they're interested in their investment. I think part of the reason it has happened is that they're finally waking up (along with a few others, and particularly the younger ones),* ***that if you're going to have an investment in a business, you want to know what the future is, you want some certainty. The only way you're going to do that and find out about that is to start having an interest in what's going on at an association level.*** *(8)*

Our fishery could have been put out of existence many years ago. It's only through strong representation of the Executive that's kept it there. So I believe all fishermen should be members, because each and every one of them is getting the benefit of it. *(8)*

People get more interested in organisations when they're proposing to change their structure because there's a certain amount of debate about it and controversy and that's when people start getting interested. *(13)*

Our fishery could have been put out of existence many years ago. It's only through strong representation of the Executive that's kept it there.

I'm a great believer in the need to communicate regularly with all of the members and keep them informed and when they have that information coming to them on a regular basis they make their own choices as to whether they wish to be involved at say the committee level. (13)

> *We should all be involved, but there are only so many hours in a day. But **really we should all be involved as there's a lot of money at stake. But I suppose you leave it to the guys that know what they're doing. It's probably a slack attitude.** I suppose they've got 24 hours a day now, but I don't know how they fit it all in. (9)*
>
> *So I would like to see our group really driven – put the responsibility and the onus of the existence of the group back on to the members. Because ultimately, we don't profit out of it (it's a not-for-profit) so at the end of the day, it's not going to matter to the executive if the whole thing shut down. The real damage would be done to the growers. So ultimately the drive needs to come from them. I think, **when you give people plenty of opportunity to direct things from the core membership, you put the responsibility back on them.** (20)*
>
> ***When it's critical to someone's business – and don't get me wrong, all the other things we talk about are critical to people's businesses, they just don't see it. And you don't see it, until you get involved, and not everyone's been involved.** I used to be like that prior to getting involved. So I think we've got a responsibility to try to communicate the importance of some of these things back to the membership base. That's where the flaw is, I believe. (20)*

When you ask people to make a financial contribution, you are inviting them to engage. People who engage financially and socially are more likely to commit. A financial contribution also fosters an expectation that there will be some form of benefit in return (Brettell, 2005). Note this is therefore an argument for (a) voluntary contributions, as opposed to compulsory contributions (which can generate resentment against, or lack on engagement with, the association), and (b) avoiding full-funding from investments or government.

In our research, one of the things we did not find was any association communicating with its members about (a) the value of the benefits that the average member was getting, relative to their financial contribution, (b) the price that the members of the management group were paying (in both time and personal costs) and (c) the risk to individual members if the association was to fold.

It seems that this is an omission that can be easily rectified.

Sharing the load

A different model is to structure the association and its business so that the load is shared by as many as possible. Instead of being 'passive rock-throwers', members are now actively engaged. This involvement deepens people's understanding of the complexities of running an association and reduces the level of criticism. One approach is 'portfolio responsibility', where, rather than people being ordinary Board members, each and every one is given a portfolio responsibility. It could be for finance, such as the treasurer. It could be for leadership renewal. It could be for continuous improvement. Or it could be as simple as taking responsibility for organising the BBQ for the next AGM.

Previous research into healthy primary industry associations (Plowman et al, 2004) found that associations could be divided roughly into two groups. That division was defined by people's language in the interviews. In the unhealthy associations, members often asked: 'When are they going to …..?', generally referring to their executive, their peak body, or the government. In the healthy associations, people asked: 'How can we …..?', taking personal and collective responsibility for their own future.

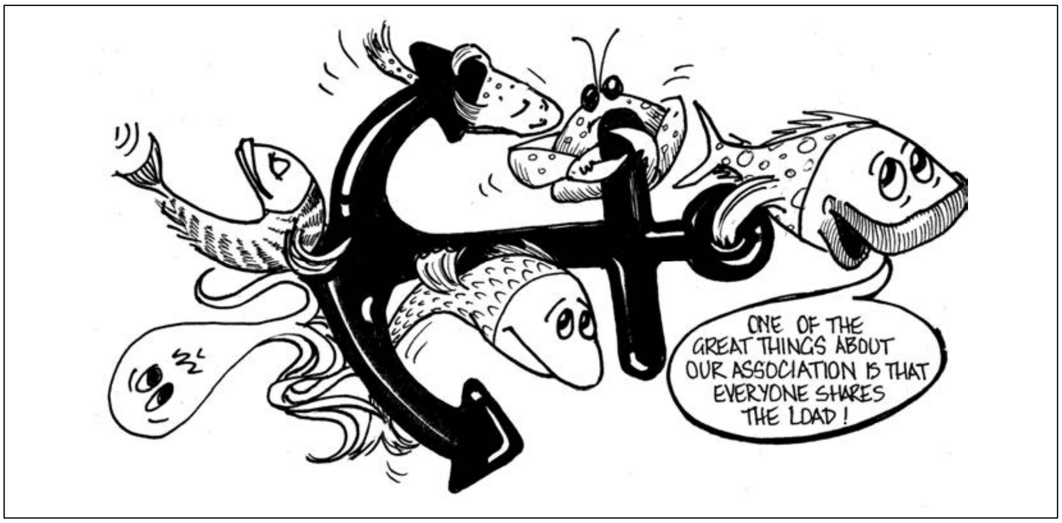
The 'when are they going to …?' camp often makes progress through a dedicated executive officer, sometimes funded, in part, by government money. This dependency upon an executive officer and upon government funding, though very common, renders an association weaker than it otherwise might be. Why? Because people are naturally human. No matter how dedicated an executive officer might be, their source of income differs from the income source of members. So their priorities and interests are not in perfect alignment. Unlike producers and other enterprises in the value-chain, executive officers often have less 'skin in the game'.

This is not an argument against executive officers. Far from it. They are often essential members of the team. The caution being offered here is that executive officers are employees. It is the association Board's responsibility to ensure that the Board remains in charge of policy direction and avoids too great a dependency upon one person, any person.

The focus of any association can be divided into three: (i) setting and overseeing policy, (ii) management of policy decisions, and (iii) operational matters. Whilst Boards might delegate the last two to their Executive Officer (and staff, if any), they should never, ever delegate the creation or overseeing of policy. That always remains the sole responsibility of the Board.

When there are multiple layers of associations, the local producer level of association tends to have the highest percentage of individual producers in the membership. At the sector level, there is likely to be an increased proportion of paid executive officers and fewer producers. At the State or National peak body level, there is likely to be more and more 'professional managers' and fewer, if any, producers. Yet, it is the fishers/producers who have 'skin in the game', where the decisions that are taken are likely to have immediate financial impact. So the downside of peak bodies is that the decision-makers may be immune from and less sensitive to the immediate and longer-term financial and operational consequences of their decisions, when they are on fixed salaries.

Yet, in this research we found one very effective and progressive producer-level association where the Board is comprised solely of managers of the enterprises. There is not a single owner/producer directly represented on the Board. The explanation for it working so well without any owners is that past experience of the Board showed owners to be too passionate about their own enterprise and had great difficulty shifting their focus to the interests of the industry as a whole. For that association, employed professionals were more able to be dispassionate and impartial. And their association is vibrant and thriving.



One of the associations case-studied for this research has 75 enterprises in its association. It is one of the conditions of membership that each and every member will be on one of the several sub-committees that run that association's business. Not only is there a five-member executive, there is a committees dedicated to produce quality, another committed to membership services, yet another dedicated to looking after new members and bringing them up to speed in relation to the association's business. In effect, the association is an extension of the business of all 75 enterprises. So looking after the association is part of looking after one's own business. At any one time, up to 45 member enterprises are actively engaged on one of several of the association's sub-committees.

> ***As new issues come up, we assign them to an individual member to take driving control of it and report back to the organisation at the next meeting.*** *So apart from obviously Secretary, Treasurer, President, Executive, they're very well defined of course, and then after that, if new issues arise, then a member may be given the responsibility for taking the lead on it. (2)*
>
> *We nominate people from the Council for particular tasks. So food safety, when there was a lot of food safety stuff happening we nominated a particular person to attend the meetings and report back to the Council on it. [Interviewer: So is that sort of like portfolio responsibility?] Yeah and they're ad hoc although having said that some of them have gone on for a number of years. (3)*

I want to contribute to try and resolve some of the issues; that's why I'm so active in these things. (2)

It's very rare that the Board ever knocks back a recommendation from a sub-committee.

Everyone has always shared the load depending on what it was. Very good balance of the load. It's very, very good. There was a time when one or two people did everything, but it doesn't happen now. (3)

[Reason for seeking involvement of members]. To keep members' confidence in the association itself. No farm that sat on the Committee is not a member. In other words, ***every farm that has ever had a Committee member is still a member of the association. The only farms that have dropped off are farms that have never had a member on the Committee.*** *I think* ***the lesson there is that you should try to get them on there to start with, to get them to appreciate it****, or again, there's two things here. One is that they know how good the association is because they're on it, and they can see, and their eyes will open. So you can do that by putting them on, or conversely,* ***you've got to be able to show these people that aren't on the Committee better as to what you do.*** *But that's appears to be harder; we haven't succeeded in doing that. (3)*

We have a clear set of structures of sub-committees which relate to some of those functions. And each of those sub-committees has very specific terms of reference which outline both what the sub-committee can do and what needs to go back to [peak body]. And they're reviewed every two years. *(4)*

There are a lot of subcommittees. There's a research one, R&D and then there's building community support subcommittee. That's a new one. There's resource access subcommittee. (4)

If you've got a big enough membership you can perhaps have some of these management things passed off into smaller groups. (11)

Often new members are more willing to share the load.

It's hard to get people into the roles and easy for them to exit once they do get into it. I would much prefer to have people actively involved in seeking memberships of the various committees that the Council has. (13)

New membership, because that inserts new blood, and often new members are more willing to share the load. (14)

[Interviewer: Is there any expectation on your members when they join, that they'll be sharing the responsibilities in a non-financial way?] I'm not sure that we put any specific expectations on them, but we certainly encourage them to participate in Board members and association events. And now that we've got more committees going, that's helpful to find a place for people. But I'm not sure we say, 'The expectations of your membership are here.' And I think maybe a reluctance to overwhelm people with too many rules coming in. It's an interesting idea, thinking about what clear roles you could give to new members, but we haven't done that, maybe with the fear of scaring them away. (14)

The Board is a decision-making body. However, there are committees of the Board to assist it in fulfilling its business. ***So it has a Resource Access Committee, an Audit Committee, a Native Title Committee, a Research and Development Committee, the idea being that those committees will each have one to two board members on it (some of them may have three). They'd also have executive staff and potentially other independent people involved on those committees. They are in the business of making recommendations to the Board*** *unless the policies are such that the committee has a remit to make decisions.* ***There are a clear set of policy guidelines for each committee as to what its general business is. Then the Chairperson of that committee in administering those policies will determine if it needs to become a decision for the Board, or recommendation, or whether that committee carries on the business.*** *[Interviewer: So do the sub-committees have people on them who are members of the association, but not on the Board?] Yes, it can occur. There an expectation that every board member will be on at least one of those sub-committees. (4)*

If the members were more aware of the role and function of the organisation, they may then have a little bit more interest, especially on issues that are closest to them.

So to put it another way, ***there are institutional mechanisms that allow for a great deal of decentralisation, in particular the membership of the [State peak bodies] sub-committees.*** *And far from us being a closed shop in that regard, we're more the other way round. We're very keen on people being part of them. They're very formal in the sense of their terms of reference, and it's very rare that the Board ever knocks back a recommendation from a sub-committee. They might defer it / fiddle with it (that's the Board's job).* ***That's our key mechanism. I just wish we had a bit more participation from our membership base.*** *(4)*

We could actively encourage participation in those sub-committees more*. Certainly there's a representation on there, but we could encourage those. So the only way I could see things integrated formally into that decision-making structure would be to encourage more participation at the sub-committee level. (4)*

A Director of [the association] was the Chairman of each sub-committee, but it gave us the opportunity to include a whole range of other people from different but interested organisations. *So the Executive Officer of [the association] or another staff member would take the minutes of the sub-committee meetings and report to the Board's monthly meeting in written form and also, where necessary, answer questions raised by the Board on the day. Subcommittees worked in [that association], because some days we were having 12-hour Board meetings, which was ridiculous. So we had to do something. (5)*

Every organisation should have roles and responsibilities for everyone.

I think if they were more aware of the role and function of the organisation, they may then have a little bit more interest and especially on issues that are closest to them. They might be more willing to take on those. (7)

I always believe that ***every organisation should have roles and responsibilities for everyone****, especially those on the committee. There should be a sharing of roles and responsibilities. A bit like a Ministerial type appointment, you've got your Prime Minister and then they have their Ministry of people who are responsible for certain things. (7)*

Most if not all conflict comes about from people thinking they've got a better way of doing it. And, 'Okay, if you've got a better way of doing it, show everybody what it is and put your hand up and do it.' Unfortunately, that never happens. So it's left to the people that want to do the work. And ***my management style is that the ones that want to do the work are the ones that are allowed to do it their way.*** *(11)*

People willingly participate. It's like a lot of other clubs. There are the senior members, the Secretary and President, and if they need help with anything, they just say so, and everybody jumps in to help. (11)

Unlike a lot of other clubs I've been involved in where the load goes back on to a few people, the club has people who are very effective delegators, and everybody's quite happy to participate. (11)

Everybody that's a member is expected to participate in organising at least one club-wide trip each year*. And you can join in with two or three others to do it, but there's an expectation that everybody will be involved. Coming along on trips, helping underprivileged people, and they might be selling raffle tickets, but* ***there's an expectation that people will chip in****. And very quickly you learn who's going to do that. (11)*

Everybody that's a member is expected to participate in organising at least one club-wide trip each year. There's an expectation that people will chip in.

It does have a policy of sharing responsibility across the members*. Maybe not so much in the political / lobbying side of it, which is left to a group of senior people who have a lot of expertise in that area, but in the day-to-day functions and organising the trips etc. they take it in turns to do it.* ***It's a rotational type of system so everybody knows what's going on and what's expected of them****. (11)*

Because like attracts like. And that's very much the plan that we had when we changed the way we did things. [A shift to family memberships, rather than individual memberships] ***You attract the right person; they're friends with the right type of people, so they'll attract the right sort of people****. (11)*

People need to get motivated to feel as if they've become part of the bigger picture*. For example, to accept roles on [State peak body] and to participate in, like, Marine Parks, community-type projects. That's where they need to go. Once they have engagement in those community-type issues / areas, I think there'll be more interest generated in the organisation. (12)*

[Interviewer: Is the membership of the sub-committees confined to your Directors?] We draw from outside as well. For example, our Technical Committee is made up of those that aren't often on Boards, because they are the ones that know the regulatory system, and we have Veterinarians who know fish health, and that's the kind of expertise we're looking for. So in some cases, ***we definitely go outside the Board for sub-committee membership****. Our main (ongoing) ones: Communication Committee, Government Relations Committee, and Technical Committee. (14)*

[Interviewer: Is there any other in-kind expectation of members?] Yes, especially for the advocacy part, for our major push for regulatory reform. We do expect – and members are aware of this, that we're going to call upon them to become advocates and to lobby their local members of parliament, or even the Ministers when required. So we give them that direction, when and how to do it, and the training. So there is an expectation of some time commitment on their behalf. (14)

We definitely go outside the Board for sub-committee membership.

It is important that members of Parliament don't just see me, but they actually see and interact with members. So I think it's starting to be a real time commitment, to be active in [the association]. (14)

[Interviewer: In Argentina, there's a system called AACREA http://www.aacrea.org.ar/ –they have no government agencies looking after agriculture – but they have a Farmer-owned very, very large cooperative where they form local groups of producers / companies in groups of 12, and they meet on each other's premises every month on rotation. The 11 are hosted by the owner. Whilst the owner absents themselves, the 11 go through the owner's books, they do a tour of the owner's enterprise, and they call the owner back in late in the afternoon and say, 'Here's your report card. Here's what you have to fix.'] Like an internal audit. [Interviewer: They're all equals doing it for each other.] It's very interesting. Our folks are probably a bit too competitive for that, but it's a really interesting idea. (14)

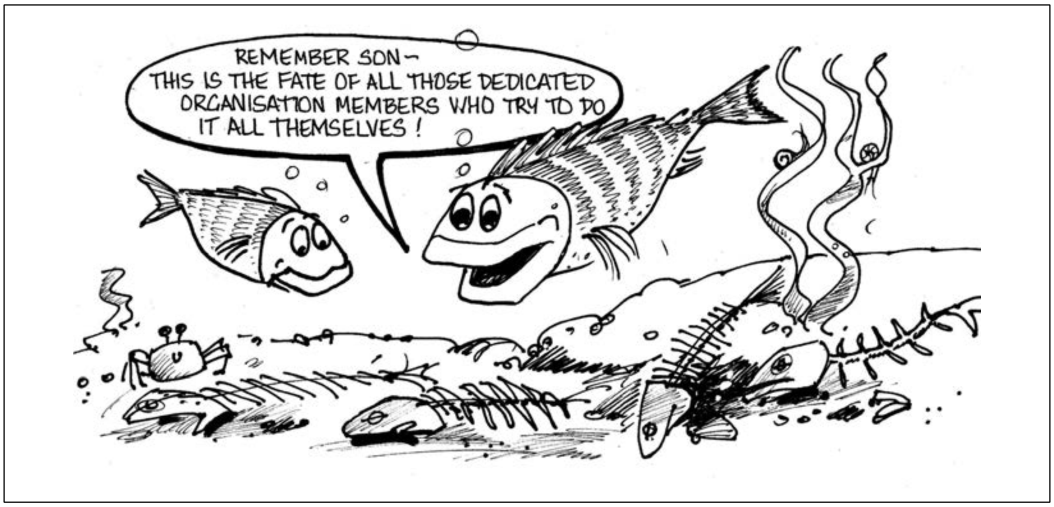
If you engage them in participation from the word 'go', you increase the likelihood that they'll grow into those senior positions without even knowing they're doing it.

[Interviewer: Do you have a range of sub-committees as vehicles for sharing the load?] Yes. [Interviewer: Do they have formal guidelines and protocols?] They do. There's the Regulatory Committee, Operational Committee, Finance Committee, Science Committees. They're standing committees. [Interviewer: Do you deliberately go outside the board to staff the sub-committees?] Inside experts and outside experts as required. ***We have a lot of academic people within our organisation. We work very well with universities.*** *From the Memorial and the Marine Institute, and Olsen Science Centre, you couldn't ask for any better activities, members. Any issue, pick up the phone and call someone that you know within that university. And sending Fisheries on the federal side. A very good group. (15)*

[Interviewer: Do you use those sub-committees to grow the skills and confidence of newer members to groom them to be potential board members?] It's not a deliberate strategy. The

sub-committees are in place based on their expertise. [Interviewer: So each of those committees is open to members, not necessarily just Board members.] Yes that is correct and, if we need to, we haul in other people with expertise from whatever, you know. (15)

I like what we talked about earlier about involving regular members so it wasn't such a huge leap for regular members to all of a sudden jump in to being on the Executive. *(15)*



[Interviewer: When people join, is there a set of expectations as to how they will behave or things that they will do? Most associations don't; they just say 'give us your money' and we'll go about the following range of businesses. Other associations say 'Okay, we will take your membership on as a provisional only and for the first twelve months. If you wish to be a confirmed member at the end of the twelve months, here are the duties we expect of you. Here's one of our many sub-committees, what particular expertise or interest do you have? Which one do you want to be on?] That normally doesn't happen with general membership but it certainly might happen with the elective Board. [Interviewer: The reason why I am mentioning this is that many associations struggle to get people in the elected positions because we asked them to go from almost no involvement other than the fee, to a higher level of involvement and for many people that is a step too far. It's not only a step too far in terms of time; ***it's a step too far in terms of their knowledge and competence. Whereas if you engage them in participation from the word 'go', you increase the likelihood that they'll grow into those senior positions without even knowing they're doing it****.] Agreed. Yes and definitely it is very difficult to get anybody for even running for a Board at times. (15)*

I don't go to meetings and just sit there like a Muppet, and sometimes you got to back it up; you got to be willing to put the time in and attend meetings. (16)

It is only of necessity. People realise that its crunch time and they have to do something and be actively involved or go out of business basically. (16)

We have a policy of trying to involve different groups on a-need-to-know basis rather than everybody getting involved in everything. If there is a problem, we will go to the guys who are specialists. (16)

The Board is so big; everyone has got to be given something to do. *You can't have a small group doing the work and the others just looking out the window or something like that.* ***Apart from being a Director, I've also got a job on a sub-committee****. We've got a number of committees; they meet in front of the Board, not on the same day, various days before it and then the committee Chairman reports at our wider Board meeting about whatever his activities on that committee have been. (17)*

When we have the Board meeting, that's all in the papers, so each staff member, responsible for that [particular] role, has to address the Board and their own committee initially about what's happening in that area. ***We have three Board subcommittees****. One is called the Organisational Affairs Committee which deals with the corporate governance and the strength of the organisation, membership, constitution, financial, legal, audit, all those sort of things. The second one is Industry Management which looks at industry policy. The third one is Crop Protection and Environment which covers off on a lot of the environmental regulatory things. So that when we have the Board meeting, the first morning the committees meet and they hammer out their issues. They have a meeting and brief the Chairman so he's aware of what's come up and then it goes to the wider Board meeting. So what may go through a committee may not necessarily get up when it comes to the wider Board either. (17)*

The sub-committees help share responsibility around, that's for sure. There's usually a healthier flow of new people into the sub-committees because it's often the more social things.

They try to get everybody to have a go at being a chairperson because it's part of the education too, that everybody stands outside their comfort zone a bit. *I knew nothing and I went in as the Secretary. I think I did that for five years and in that time you're picking up so much stuff and even just public speaking. God, I would have never have done that. Now I can stand up in front of them and talk to them all day. (19)*

We go through the list of members and we haven't had practically any non-contributors. *You know, some people are less outgoing and would rather just be on the committee or whatever. Generally most people have a go at something. (19)*

At functions most people pitch in, yeah. We host this Art in the Woolshed every two years and nearly every member comes and helps set up and then helps pack up and works at the function for the two or three days that it happens. It brings the members together. (19)

The sub-committees help share it [responsibility] around, that's for sure. There's usually a healthier flow of new people into the sub-committees because it's often the more social things. *So our associate members will often get involved in those positions, with organising dinner or field days or things like that. (20)*

We've seen in the past where there might be one dedicated person who tends to take everything on themselves. And they can't.

*By making roles very clear, I imagine you would get more people on board. Good delegating of duties is really important. Often **we've seen in the past where there might be one dedicated person who tends to take everything on themselves. And they can't, it's about having all your executive working together prepared to share the load.** And utilise people's skills. (20)*

Growing people

The previous chapter gave recognition of the need to 'grow' people in terms of civic experience and responsibility. One way of doing this is through the creation of sub-committees and working groups, whereby younger/newer members are invited to 'cut their teeth' on issues that are of value to the broader membership. This exposure has a double benefit, reducing the burden on the dedicated few, whilst creating in less experienced members a sense of confidence and possibility. Through this civic experience, people are then able to step up into roles of greater responsibility.

> ***More nurturing and bringing the younger crew through, rather than the older people positioning themselves and not vacating the positions**. Then there is a pact to encouraging the younger ones too. I mean **there's a lot to be said for the older generation talking about new ones stepping in, but then they [older members] have to be willing to step out as well**. (7)*
>
> *How do you get confidence unless you've had exposure? I haven't been involved in this type of thing much before as well, so it takes a while. (2)*

The older generation talk about new ones stepping in, but then the older members have to be willing to step out as well.

*Like I had the day off and went to WAFIC meeting - about 250 kms to go to a Council meeting and go to Perth and go to the WAFIC meeting to put forward some of our association views. And I was a little bit of a duck out of water there for a while getting up in front of all these people and I didn't know what to expect. **It was a bit of an eye opener but I'm glad I did it and I know what to do next time. It's all a great experience.** (6)*

> *Obviously trying to identify leaders of the future in the industry associations, the sector associations and then perhaps targeting them and perhaps giving them some training. **A lot of people don't put their hand up because they don't feel confident. So maybe if there was some training given to people that can actually motivate people to put their hand up and be a bit more willing to participate.** (7)*
>
> *Increase the strength of the leaders at the leadership level so that people understand what's happening, why it's happening and they're able to understand that they can put a view forward that's listened to and hopefully some resources come from more people being members. (7)*

> ***I think the ability is there***; *I think the reason for people actually taking it [responsibility] on has declined;* ***the interest of people at this point is probably low***. *(7)*

> ***We've had several opportunities to sit down and do thinking-type processes. The one thing that has come out of it is that anybody that has been involved in it, at least for a short period of time, feels like they've been involved***. *(8)*

The more that responsibilities are shared among members, the greater their feeling of belonging.

> *You should have contented people, you've got less fires to put out, you've got more possibilities for being members, you've got more people more willing to put their hand up and say 'I'll do something, I'll take on that roll, I'll take on that job'. (8)*

> ***I'm sure that there's certainly a need to do something to get the young ones to take responsibilities***. *Maybe more members could be included at various meetings that the executive attend so they can gain experience. (8)*

The role of the Chair is to ensure the association is competently and professionally run. That does not mean the Chair should act as chairperson for each meeting.

> *Potentially, the association being more targeted in its approach, and* ***maybe creating and defining specific roles and responsibilities for younger people,*** *and not just being general, like in terms of having younger people just sitting on the committee as another [association] delegate from another Port, but* ***maybe having some more defined roles and responsibilities for younger / new people to contribute to the process.*** *(9)*

> *I think it's a matter of finding the right people who are willing to do a bit of that development themselves before it's brought back to the [association Board] table. I think it's identifying who and* ***building the capacity in the association to do that amongst its membership and its committee structure. The majority rely on a few, generally***. *(9)*

Here is another way that freshness can be brought to the leadership of an association. The role of the Chair is to ensure the association is competently and professionally run. That does not mean the Chair should act as chairperson for each meeting. That responsibility can be rotated across all members of the Board or Executive, thereby broadening civic experience and deepening civic knowledge. It is merely the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that meetings are chaired adequately; not that the Chair personally needs to do it.

> ***I get the boys in the committee to rotate as Chair. It increases their skills***. *(1)*

Similarly, it is generally the Secretary who acts as minute-taker. Yet there is no reason why the role of minute-taker, like the role of chair, cannot be rotated, with a fresh person doing it each meeting. The Secretary, who may be the keeper of the minutes, does not need to be the person who records them. The more that responsibilities are shared among members, the greater their feeling of belonging. Similarly, the more that a member can contribute according to his/her strengths or passions, the greater their feeling of belonging.

More generally, we can ‘grow’ people in both confidence and skill by delegating a task to them. Not all people are equally confident; nor are people equally skilled. Hence delegation is a task that needs to be customised for each individual. **Appendix 12** offers a simple delegation tool that can be varied as required.

In partial summary: Associations are voluntary organisations that are more resilient when the load is widely shared. When the responsibility is carried by the few, an unconscious barrier of skill, confidence and experience is established between those few and ordinary members. Yet the benefits of association membership need to be emphasised so that people see the association as a natural extension of their business. Through sharing the load and growing the confidence and capacity of their members, an association can strengthen its own capacity to deal with external opportunities and threats.

Recommendation 20:

a. Review the present governance structure with a view to assessing how widely responsibility is being shared.
b. Establish a deliberate governance policy of responsibility sharing and rotation, so that all key positions have at least two Board members experienced in them.
c. Establish a deliberate policy of responsibility sharing, with a target of engaging every member, not just financially, but also in terms of their ideas and efforts. Division of responsibilities into a series of sub-committees provides a structure whereby a large percentage of members can each be part of one of these sub-committees.
d. An association, in courting new members, to outline not just the benefits of belonging, but also the responsibilities expected of each member in exchange for those benefits.
e. An association, as a matter of policy, will allocate to a new member, at the very outset, a small task, the undertaking of which helps a new member feel they are contributing.
f. Endeavour, as a matter of policy, to grow each and every member through gradually increasing their responsibilities.
g. Establish a communication policy that clearly conveys to every member the personal and enterprise benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, that membership brings. The objective is to position the association as being a natural extension of, and inseparable from, the member’s own enterprise.
h. An association that employs an executive officer to ensure that their EO is working strategically, under the guidance of the Board, and not making themselves a martyr to the cause or the sole repository of critical information and networks.

Case Study 19: The Traprock Group

The Traprock Group was formed in 1991.

> *We had a dramatic improvement in the first five years, or maybe even in the first six or seven years. I detect the last five years we probably have stagnated a little and it's probably because we're looking for places to go.*

This comment was made in 2004 (when Traprock was one of several associations examined by Plowman *et al* researching innovative primary industry associations). It then had 75 enterprises as members, all wool producers. In lifecycle terms, Traprock could then be defined as mature.

In 2012, Traprock would still be regarded, in the wool industry, as one of the most progressive and successful enterprise member groups in the country. Yet, due to the increasing problem of wild dogs, a 70% decline in the wool industry, and the strong Australian dollar, Traprock now has about 40 active enterprise members, and, in order to survive, it has diversified its membership base. It is no longer primarily a single commodity based group (fine wool); it is now a regional group, accepting membership from beef producers, fat lamb producers, fruit-growers and vineyards. This diversity makes it harder to find activities that serve the interests of the majority of members. From the 75 enterprises that formed the core of the original membership twenty years ago, in only two of those enterprises have sons returned to the farm. And neither of those two has yet become active members of Traprock.

In life-cycle terms, Traprock is probably now in decline. The average age of its members, the financial pressures that most members are under, time poverty, and a declining membership pool all contribute to its atrophy. This is not to say that Traprock will die as a group. It is financially sound, has an excellent reputation locally and nationally, has a highly dedicated and intelligent executive with vast accumulated knowledge in maintaining group vitality. Its reinvigoration will depend upon the energy that the group's leadership have to invest in it, and the value of those investments back to its members.

The Traprock Group membership is open to producers who pay $110 per annum membership. Associate members pay $30 per annum, though there are no differences in the benefits received. The association has been carefully financially managed over its history and has a healthy bank balance. Every two years it runs a large regional cultural event, Art in the Woolshed, with 50% going to charity and 50% going to the association. It is a very sound financial position. Traprock has no employees, with all of the association's work being carried out by members, often working within a number of subcommittees.

The Traprock Group has a partial formalised process for succession. It also has an informal process. The formal process is that the Constitution permits the President to occupy that role for a non-renewable two years only. The informal process is that Traprock has a number of functional sub-committees, each of which serves to grow people's civic experience and confidence.

Overall, based on the perceptions of the two interviewees, Traprock is a healthy association. Areas where more attention might be paid include clarity of purpose, clarity of organisational roles, clarity of membership definition, capacity to absorb and lose members, member benefits, performance capacity, membership vitality, take-up of technologies, leadership freshness, capacity to attract new blood, spare capacity for creative endeavours, external communication, internal communication, performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

Perceived major challenges include falling membership numbers, recycling of the willing, and the economic health of the members.

Availability of spare capacity/slack resources

Does your association create the opportunity whereby members, officers and executive can 'play' with ideas?

Slack resources allow an association to afford to purchase innovations, absorb failure, bear the cost of instituting innovations, and explore new ideas in advance of actual need. Innovation and adaptability can only come about through trial and error. Hence ideas can blossom when people and the system have spare capacity within which they can experiment, trial, and 'play'. Surplus time, resources, dollars, or available people are necessary for creative ideas to be explored. When our resources are stretched, we do not have the capacity to explore new ideas.

One association, which prefers not to be named, is presently planning to have the members collectively invest in an independent enterprise. That enterprise, related to their businesses, would serve as (a) an income generator, thereby reducing the financial burden on members, (b) a research site, and (c) a training venue for new entrants and employees in the industry.

It is well known that demands expand to fill the time available. These demands can be operational; they can be strategic. It is only by paying attention to the strategic demands, which frequently involve doing something different, hence innovating, that an association can position itself to be ready for the future. So a simple strategy to follow is this: Allocate 90% of resources (time, dollars) to operational matters. Partition 10% of resources for strategic and emergent opportunities. These can even be accumulated (particularly dollars) until there is a nice little reserve that can be invested in some exploratory way.

> *[Interviewer: What about if an association set aside some time or funds to explore a new idea?] It's a great idea for a corporation that's trying to achieve something where – even in our case we could do that with our executive. It would be brilliant if we could find the time to do that with our executive officer because she is quite an innovative person but her background is marketing and* ***if I gave her five hours a week to go and play in that area she would be overwhelmed with delight.*** *But it might also depend upon the nature of the person. (1)*

> ***The good thing about being a little bit stretched is it really makes you consider what's relevant and what's not.***

> *We certainly don't have a lot of play money. Time and money are always quite restricted because as I said before, we have one Executive Officer for the association, and I know her time is stretched. And certainly* ***from a financial point of view, we certainly don't have any room to move as far as freedom to go and chase opportunities when they present themselves****. (3)*

> *On a score of 1-10, I'd say [association] is on about an 8-9 stress level. On availability of spare staff I'd say 0 for surplus capacity.* ***They don't have any spare time; they don't have any spare staff****. (4)*

Given that we've taken a few steps in the right direction, I think as I mentioned earlier, a [commodity] levy or lobbying our members for an extra couple of dollars each would – ***if we could have even another $100,000 a year, we could allocate some money to look at innovation.*** *You need to look at opportunities, which you can't do unless you've got the resources and the funding to do it. (5)*

Over the five years we've managed to come in under budget every year specifically so that we could build up this pool of funding.

The opportunity is there to do it [play with ideas] at the association level. ***They're quite open to exploring and developing new ideas****. But it depends on how you look at it. If there's a new idea (e.g. e-data) which is developed and explored and identified as a priority, then the association will pursue it, and resources are invested into that. But if there are other ideas / concepts, initiatives that may add value to the association but aren't necessarily a priority, I don't think the spare capacity is there to pursue those. (9)*

In the last six months, we've taken on this fairly major government relations strategy, which is requiring significant resources. We've got that funded through members, but, in addition, our organisation itself, particularly year one, is funding the lion's share of it. So we've been able to do that utilising members' equity over a number of years. So basically, ***over the five years that I've been here, we've managed to come in under budget every year specifically so that we could build up this pool of funding.*** *And it seemed appropriate now to use it. (14)*

[Interviewer: Many associations are stretched just doing the operational stuff, and almost have to abandon the standard things to address the emergencies.] No, we have enough staff on hand that if something came up – a while ago a big issue on salmon came up on industry safety – the staff is on hand, and federal and provincial governments have Veterinarians on staff. It's just picked up, same thing if we had a toxin problem here in particular bays, it's addressed immediately, and there are protocols in place to follow. Industry itself steps up when and if there is an emergency. Because we see the value of [our association's] participation on things. (15)

We're prepared for that sort of thing. Something is bound to crop up and probably something you don't expect either, and, at the last Board meeting, we had the NFF CEO speak. And that was one of the points he made about ***there's all these things that may crop up, that you've never even thought of, and the effect on your industry, if it does happen****. I think we've got it pretty right at the moment. If things do happen, we've got the ability and if we don't have anyone of our own to deal with it, you can soon grab someone who knows about the issue. (17)*

We just work longer hours. We're very limited on the ground. We can't afford to be paying two or three people, so the committee takes up the slack. (18)

We could certainly do a lot more if we had more capacity. But ***the good thing about being a little bit stretched is it really makes you consider what's relevant and what's not. When you see groups that are quite financial and have a lot of capacity, sometimes they tend to lose their way.*** *They get in a bit of everything and they maybe forget their charter a little bit.*

Whereas when you have less capacity, you really do have to justify everything you do, and there are some things that might be achievable in a good year, but it makes you revisit what you're there for. (20)

The volunteers' primarily role is to set the direction and say what we want done, and then there are arms and legs to do it (the Exec Officer). I think it's very important. The association is very good because it's got a set of arms and legs to do things, and in that sense it's got an excellent capacity. ***Yes, that's what I'd say to other associations. Having a paid worker that is run by a Board of volunteers is the way to go.*** *(21)*

When you're up to your armpits in alligators, it's hard to remember that your initial objective was to drain the swamp.

Prioritising is often the name of the game. *We may think we should do both of those, but we can only do one; so which one? We'll confer and decide okay, if somebody else wants that done, then they're going to have to do it themselves.* (21)

There is an old adage that says: 'When you are up to your armpits in alligators, you don't have time to think about draining the swamp'. Yet, paradoxically, unless we 'drain the swamp', we remain in the dangerous predicament.

The capacity in the people that have the time is used up. So those that are willing to put in are working as hard as they can. So again it's about attracting new people with spare time. (11)

They're trying to run it as a voluntary group and it always fails. So we're fortunate that we have an employed person to do the work. *We might say: 'This is our policy position', but someone has got to put all those words in paper to Government. (1)*

They're trying to run it as a voluntary group and it always fails. We're fortunate that we have an employed person to do the work.

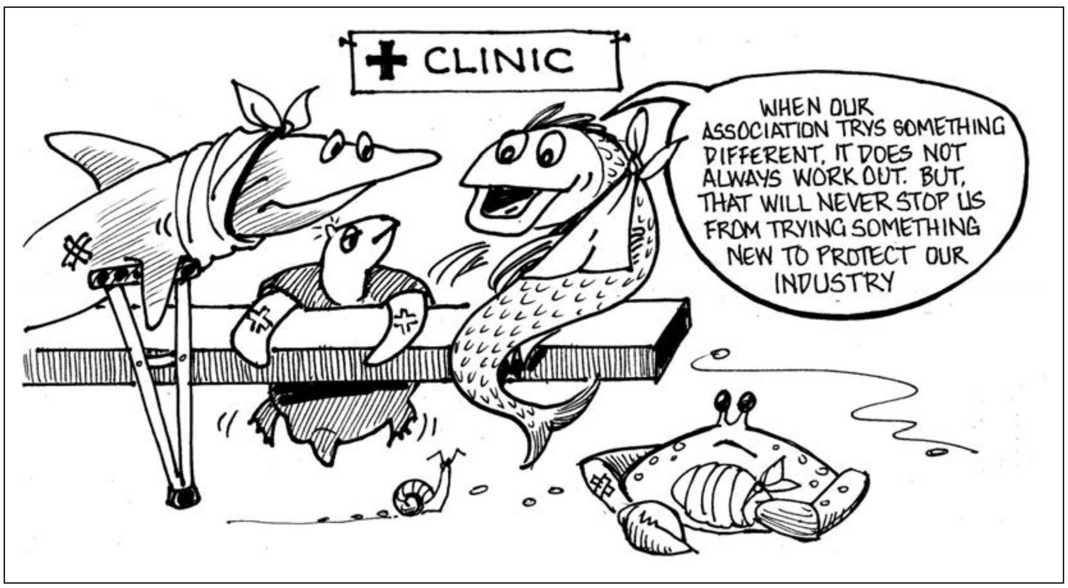
It basically gives someone that industry identifies as an up and coming leader, saying: 'Here mate, go and take a week off work; we'll put a $1,000 bucks towards your wages for that week that you can pay to somebody else to cover your time'. So we're actually going to pay you to do this. Or we're going to pay your cost and accommodation for three or four days to go here and we're going to give you a $2,000 budget to try and pull something off, but you have to write it up and how it directly relates to the association and it becomes a project in its own right. (1)

So where does an association find spare resources? Since it is in the member's interests for their association to survive and thrive and thereby continue to bestow benefits, the first source of spare resources needs to be its members. These spare resources might be time, ideas, equipment or funds.

Suddenly if something blows up, we can find the dollars and the people. We always have done. We're Australians*. (3)*

When members see a benefit – it's just like any business – members are prepared to pay money and increased membership fees in exchange for the benefit. I don't see it as a chicken and egg thing; you have to demonstrate a benefit for people to be prepared to fork out money. (21)

Recommendation 21: Consider quarantining a percentage of funds/time/other resources, say 5%, from operational use, to establish a pool that is to be invested, under guidance from the Board, in speculative strategic opportunities. This pool could be held separate from the resources required for routine operational matters. Rather, this pool is deliberately allocated to endeavours that have an unknown likelihood of success and might well 'fail'. Like an infant invariably falling over as it learns to walk, 'failure' is an essential component of innovation and progress.



Sometimes we make a mess of it and sometimes a success of it, but we are prepared to have a go at it and sometimes we fail. (16)

Case Study 20: Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Association

Central Highlands Cotton Growers and Irrigators Association Incorporated (CHCG&IAI) is an association incorporated under Queensland legislation as a not-for-profit body. The association under its present Constitution was established in 1991, though it existed in an earlier form since the cotton industry commenced in the 1970s.

Its members are growers, with each enterprise paying $400 per year, entitling them to one vote. Larger growers are permitted two memberships, at $800 per year, entitling them to two votes. Associate members, generally suppliers and consultants to the industry, pay $100 per year, and have no voting entitlements, though they do get access to association correspondence distributed to members. The association has very low costs and is in a healthy financial position. It has, in the past, received funding support from the national peak body, Cotton Australia, though it no longer does so, following a national down-turn and belt-tightening in the industry. Individual growers pay a levy to Cotton Australia of $2.50 per bale plus GST.

The association holds member meetings every two months, though these are not tightly scheduled. The elected executive meets roughly monthly, often on an as-needs basis. The five-person executive comprises Chair, Vice-Chair, immediate past Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. All of these positions are honorary and voluntary with the Secretary receiving a small remuneration to cover expenses. The average age of people in the executive roles is early to mid-thirties.

About 95% of the eligible members belong to the association, with about 50% of those being active supporters. The major function of the association is to act as a voice for local growers and to be a two-way information conduit for the industry.

There is no formal leadership succession process in place, though there has been a healthy turnover of people in executive roles, with an average tenure of three years. There is a cultural expectation that people will pass on the baton.

Boundary clarity

In your association, at present, is there sufficient clarity of roles and responsibilities between associations representing different levels?

This question may not apply to all associations. Industry associations can be peak bodies, sector bodies and local industry associations. Together these form a pyramid structure, and each association has its own specific roles and responsibilities. At the boundaries, sometimes there is confusion and conflict over who is responsible for what.

Form follows function. In other words, the responsibilities of various associations should be allocated in such a way that they have the greatest overall effect. In general terms, responsibilities should be placed as close as possible to those who are going to be materially affected by their decisions and policies. In other words, the issue should be pushed down as close as possible to the level that covers those most materially affected. Does it affect the members of only one grass-roots-level association? Then deal with it there. If the issue affects members from more than one grass-roots association, then deal with it at the next level.

Interviewees' comments largely fell into three categories: (a) those that valued the effective relationship they have with other associations, (b) those that recognised the relationships and the clarity of respective responsibilities would benefit from renegotiation and clarification, and (c) those that question the need for the relationship and the value it provides.

The value of an effective relationship

An effective relationship between associations with potential overlap, underlap or dispute in relation to responsibilities and the boundary of those can be strengthened and protected by having a written document that (a) acknowledges and declares the responsibilities that fall to each, and (b) a process for resolution should ambiguities and disputes arise.

> *I suppose we are both a peak body for aquaculture but we're also a sector body within the seafood industry. (1)*

> ***Governments can't have every association, when there's six of them, knocking on the door, when one knock would have covered all six. We accept that.***

> *[Having a Code of Conduct that includes defining the roles and responsibilities of the various associations, both peak and member.] You pick it up in the Code of Conduct for the Board. And that Code of Conduct can be published for the members to actually recommend that. It's a two- way street because not only do the growers and the members have to realise they won't be threatened by the national body, but the members also have to understand there's areas that the national body should not tread, so it works both ways. (1)*

Governments can't have every association, when there's six of them knocking on the door, when one knock would have covered all six. We accept that. (3)

There's a peak body for [each commodity, such as] cray and pearling and abalone and stuff like that, and they are sort of in charge of the industry specific issues such as a rule change within industry. Whereas [the State peak body] is more generic over the top, you know, occupational health and safety over all fishing boats in [the State], marine parks*. State marine parks have been a big one over the last couple of years for [the State peak body] and that affects everyone. The generic stuff overriding all fisheries. For all those industry specific ones, [the State peak body] sends it back to the sector bodies; any rule changes has to come back through [the State peak body], but it's really just a rubber stamp. (4)*

It's so important that we have one voice as a peak industry body.

So there is a structure in place which basically says that [State peak body] is the peak advisory and representative agency for commercial fishing in WA, but there is an internal structure at [State peak body] whereby fishery specific matters are delegated to that fishery to deal with. (4).

I would think the biggest factor in our industry is that we have a very, very big fishery, being the rock lobster fishery with a significant number of members and political sway, and then we have a number of minor fisheries, say a one- or two-man operation. (4)

Of the funding that [State peak body] receives, so much of their money then goes on to sector bodies, so the Western Rock Lobster Association, the Pearl Producers' Association – so the major fisheries. It's an additional amount funnelled directly to them. [Interviewer: So [State peak body] is the broker of the Government's funds, and has a formula that it uses to dole it out to the various subsidiary associations?] Yes. (4)

I think there is probably a reasonably good boundary between them. When [peak body] first started it was made very clear as to what [peak body] was going to be able to do and what the associations were going to be responsible for. *(7)*

It's so important that we have one voice as a peak industry body. I tried for many years, but I failed, and I think they're failing now. We've just got to make everybody aware of the benefits we can gain from having one peak industry body. (8)

Within rock lobster I think it's generally quite clear. Over the last five years, every year, we've made a point of saying: this is the structure that's in place for rock lobster. As in, starting from the Port level in each zone, building up to the zone level in each zone, [our association] in the southeast and the northern zone association. You then have [State peak body for rock lobster] at the State level. You then have a national body for rock lobster. And how that works, ***what its roles and responsibilities are and also flowing back down, what the role at the State level is, what the role at the zone level is as well, are quite different to what the Ports are discussing down at that other level. So I think the roles are quite clear.*** *(9)*

Some of the clubs have social members that aren't members of [State peak body]. Each club can run its own business I guess. (12)

One thing that is worthwhile saying is that although we have a top organisation, we have a lot of other sound organisations which concentrate on both fish species and geographic trends. (13)

Our association is active – our Executive Director serves as a Board member of [national peak body]. We have some members in [regional association] that are members of [national peak body]. [Regional association] is a Provincial organisation, and we work within the confines of [named region]. You certainly get overlap through [national peak body] which is a national body. They lobby as a representative of all Provinces in Canada. You might get some conflicts there, but it's usually nipped in the bud. [National peak body] is very active and good. Very strong. [The national peak body CEO] is a good advocate for everyone. She's there to build an active working regime that aquaculture can move forward in and excel. Lots of times she deals with a federal issue that the provincial [regional association] will not get the same standing, because [national peak body] is well known by federal government. And they do help all associations across Canada. I'm quite happy with them. (15)

The subordinate association recognises the peak body association only when it suits them, and goes its own way when it doesn't.

I think it's all pretty clear. I mean there are some things where there's overlap and redundancy, but I think it's redundancy that needs to be there. If you think about advocacy or if you think about lobbying Federal Government for example, for other regulatory issues or support or funding or research or whatever, I think the redundancies there are necessary ones. (15)

There are commonality of problems to all sectors and then there are special problems to sectors which are well defined in that sense. But each group has specific problems and they will be represented separately from the overall games of the organisation. (16)

I think we just become a more mature organisation and more experienced at these sort of things. Different groups sometimes have taken priority over other groups' interests. It is give or take really because it's more of a sign of a mature organisation than possibly a younger association possibly would not have acted that way, but with maturity, experience and aging. (16)

That's pretty clear. We just deal with local issues; and if it's a State-wide thing, Brisbane can deal with it. Something might happen locally which may have some sort of application to Brisbane; you can just give them a ring and say these sorts of things are happening; what do you think? And vice versa too. And that's why the elected members and the staff all know each other. You let the regional offices pretty much do their own thing as far as local issues go; if it's a State or national issue, it gets done by Brisbane. (17) We're a foundation body of the National Farmers Federation and also the Queensland Farmers Federation and internationally we're also we're very active in both the global [commodity] alliance and also the World Association of Beet and Sugar Growers. (17)

We still export 80 % of our product into the international market. We are very, very active and conscious that we need a level playing field there so we are very, very active there. Our Chairman and CEO attend just about anything that's happening internationally and our Chairman was World President of the Beet and Sugar Growers for 3 years up until about 18 months ago and now he's currently serving a term as Vice President following his tenure of President, so very, very active. Both our CEO and Chairman have a fairly regular presence in Canberra and of course we're well known in both Ann and George Street [Brisbane] here. (17)

***When there are issues that are generic to other areas, it's a State issue. When they're just generic to our own area, our peak body will assist us on an individual basis, and if it relates to issues that may occur in other districts, well then the State body will also be asked to be involved**, if we think it's appropriate. But you've got to remember that we have a very good relationship with the other CaneGrower regional bodies. And so if it's an issue that's a mill area issue, we do tend to unite as members of say the three Boards and we'll put forward a united voice on different issues. (18)*

Associations grow civic experience, confidence and skill among their members, who subsequently go on to represent their industry at an even higher level.

Another way we influence things a bit is that, over our history, a few of our members have been politically active in one way or another or have been important members of industry bodies. Like [named person] who you know, with Australian Wool Innovations , and, at the moment, [another named person] is the Chairman of Agforce and he's a member of [our association]. So we do probably get a little bit of influence through that sort of thing. At one point there, we had a heap of really active members in different national fields. (19)

Note that this last quotation talks to the role of associations in growing civic experience, confidence and skill among their members, who subsequently go on to represent their industry at an even higher level

The need for rationalisation of the relationship

Every association is part of a layer of interest. At the most basic level, the unit of interest might be a producer. To give themselves a collective voice, a group of individuals or enterprises will form an association, perhaps at the commodity or local geographic level. An example might be the North Queensland Barramundi Aquaculture Association. It might have five members. Above this is another level, perhaps at a State level, that represents broader aquacultural interests, including prawn and scallop. Yet above that there might be a national body representing all aquaculture interests. And further above that might be the national seafood council. Intersecting all of those might be marketing associations, food safety associations, etc., etc. In the majority of cases, an individual from one level might sit at the table of the level above. So only one person from the lower level has any detailed understanding of what occurs at the level above.

What is less likely to happen, and here it is being proposed, is that every Board member at one level, receive a full induction at the level above, thereby giving them an appreciation of that higher sphere of responsibility and what that higher sphere can deal with on their behalf. This practice occurs in CaneGrowers Queensland, where all of the Chairs of the subsidiary local organisations receive an induction into the parent body, even though they may never be involved in the management of that higher body. Further, the Chairman of CaneGrowers Queensland, who is himself a grower, is on the Board of the National Farmers Federation and the international World Association of Beet and Sugar Growers. So, in one person, there is this span of connection and involvement, from grass-roots to international.

All of the comments in Chapter 6 (e) with respect to role issues also apply here. Role overlap, role underlap, role neglect, etc. can occur between associations as well as within associations.

Seafood is a small sector shrinking: why do we have four governing bodies doing different bits?

I've already asked Patrick Hone (FRDC) and he's agreed in principle to fund a bit of a workshop with key people from these organisations to address these things. I'm not suggesting that any organisation should be chopped out, but I am suggesting that we need to be realistic and ask: ***'What's the point of having an organisation which is not properly funded?'*** *(1)*

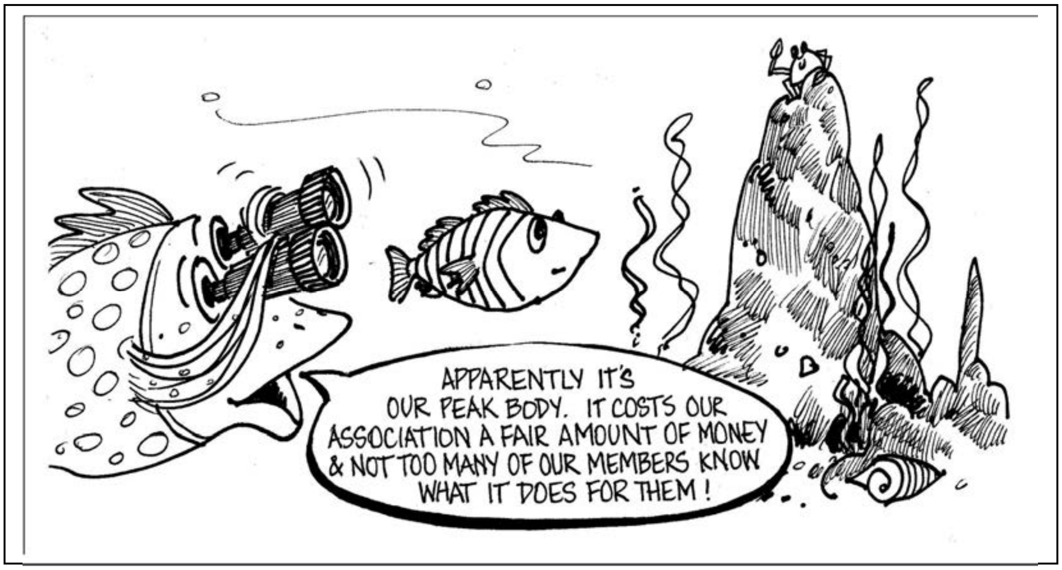
Seafood is a declining industry. I think there are 178 bodies that represent the seafood industry nationally and none of them are adequately funded. So something has to move. *(1)*

Clarification of roles. If we could sort out – it's not just within, we need to look outside of the association and see who is doing what. There are so many things that ***I could rattle off, several topics which we're doing this but they're [other associations] doing it as well. Well, why are we doing it? So we influence what they do. There's a real blur there as to who is doing what.*** *(1)*

For an entity like this that has associations as members, it's a massive issue; we have to be very, very careful [about not straying into the area of responsibility of a member association. *(1)*

That's one thing the seafood industry does very poorly [establishing clear boundaries of responsibility between associations]. *You've got different layers there of which the [commodity] farmers are a member of them all; like [named association A] and [named association B] and then our own association.* ***I see it as a major problem really. It creates a lot of inefficiencies, wasting resources and it's probably something we could do a lot better than we do.*** *(2)*

So do we call ourselves the Queensland [commodity] Association and then the poor guys that are left outside the State don't get represented, or do we call ourselves the Australian [commodity] Association, now what do we attack? Are we part of the National [peak body], or *are we part of Queensland [peak body]? Or should we be part of New South Wales [peak body] and Northern Territory? So it's very difficult to find this boundary. (3)*



Its peak body status sometimes gives members some difficulty because obviously what's needed for one or the majority of sectors isn't always right for any particular sector. (4)

***I don't think there's an ambiguity. There's a battle for turf, which is a different issue**. So I think the roles and responsibilities are quite clear, and the Minister has re-clarified that in recent policy Statements, but **the turf battles are never-ending. The question is trying to stop them becoming dysfunctional.** Part of the way we do that is requiring most of the Executive Officers to have their offices at [State peak body]. (4)*

*We've been asked to employ another staffer who will be the liaison between the Department and the fishermen, and that's where the breakdown in [State peak body] is. We don't have a really good relationship and liaison between all the different fishermen in [the State] and the Department. And **the fishermen always complain that they don't think [State peak body] is doing enough, because they don't get to see and talk to the [State peak body] people on the ground, face to face** enough. (4)*

I felt that those MAC [Ministerial Advisory Committee] structures were extremely important and effective. The government now wants to ask [State peak body] to do everything and come up with all these things, and both industry and government don't have that structure they used to have, in terms of technical experience / well-informed advice. [Interviewer: It seems sort of crazy to abolish the MACs, and then set up a process within [State peak body] to go and do consultation. You end up in the same place but perhaps less effectively.] That's exactly right. (4)

*It comes back to communication between EO's and CEO of [another association] and staff to arrive at a compromise with the assistance of respective Boards. **They've got to have it clear in***

their minds exactly what each organisation should do, and put it on paper and get on with it. Unfortunately we don't seem to always achieve that. *(5)*

> ***There are very few fishers who know that peak body still exists. There's no feedback, and no no promotion coming out, not even an annual newsletter.***

Document it clearly and have it in a picture form and not only for [State peak body] but I think it needs to go further than that to the whole Seafood industry in Australia. I was recently trying to understand the roles of the likes of the National Seafood Industry Alliance (NSIA) and Seafood Experience Australia (SEA) and Seafood Services Australia (SSA). *(7)*

For many years I've held the firm belief that you've got to have a peak industry body that's uniform over the whole different varieties of industries within the fishing industry in South Australia. But you've got to have a strong local group. (8)

Outside the actual nucleus of the association (the executive), there's very few fishers who even know that [peak body] still exists. There's no feedback, and there's no promotion coming out, not even an annual newsletter. There's nothing there saying 'We're still here, we're still doing this. *(8).*

From other fishers point of view I think they seem to be more confused about the boundaries and layers so I'd say that the confusion has increased. (9)

Try and limit it to so many. ***There's just too many – so many different associations****. (9)*

Communication, through either port meetings or face to face meetings. Specifically on that issue, ***what [State peak body 1] do, what the others do, what does [State peak body 2] do? Who do they represent****? etc., etc. (9)*

> ***The decision almost comes down to saying, 'Well, I've got all these invoices; which one is going to deliver me the most benefit? And I'll pay that one.'***

Once it gets broader than that [the rock lobster industry], it's not 100% clear. Then you've got organisations like Wild Catch Fisheries, the Australian Seafood Industry Council in the past – now the National Seafood Industry Alliance. All of those other bodies – and I think they're very important and have a role to play. ***I think that as you become further and further removed from the immediate impact on 'me' the rock lobster Fishermen in this case, the level of interest to understand what they do and why, and how they're funded etc. drops off.*** *(9)*

I think understanding resourcing underneath that structure is something that's possibly not clear. Like, ***after four years of explaining the PIFS program to people, some guys still don't get it****. They don't understand how it works, where the money goes and what it funds. And I think* ***what [commodity peak body] is investigating now is the possibility of hopefully simplifying the funding and resourcing structure underneath the whole different associations and what their roles and responsibilities are,*** *because I think that adds to the confusion. I think that when they get an invoice for – at the moment the PIFS levy, they get an invoice for [commodity* *peak body] there's the port stuff going on at [regional association]; they get an invoice from [State peak body] each year as well.* ***The decision almost comes down to saying, 'Well, I've got all these invoices, which one is going to deliver me the most benefit? And I'll pay that one.'*** *I know a lot of guys look at it that way, so I think if we can streamline and simplify that funding and resourcing structure, that's one. But in order to do that and make that clear within the industry,* ***you have to be able to clearly define in a way that's supported what the roles and responsibilities are of an organisation like [State peak body].*** *And I know that rock lobster is – not from the grassroots level, more of the State association level has proposed some changes within [State peak body] as well to increase efficiency and ensure relevance. And, at that basic level, involving the Executive Officers who have the contact back with grassroots, that they're involved in the State level. And that, just by default, increases awareness back within the industry of what those organisations are doing. I think that's a way of going about it. (9)*

I think that as you become further removed from the immediate impact on 'me' the Fisherman, the level of interest to understand what they do and why, and how they're funded drops off.

From [our association]'s point of view, we went to a lot of trouble, spent a lot of time and effort and money to get that peak body up and going, so that a lot of that stuff we wouldn't have to do. (11)

If you're asking [our association] if we understand the boundary between where we finish and where [peak body] for instance takes over, that's a different thing to asking us where the boundary should be, or asking [peak body] where it thinks the boundary is. [Our association] has a particular way of doing things. We get out there and fight for the recreational fishery if it's needed. Therefore, ***we will do what we think needs to be done, especially in the political field, to protect the recreational fishery. That may be an area that others [the peak body] think they should be allowed to do on their own.*** *(11)*

We've told [peak body] that [our association] will not be corralled by what the [peak body] Board suggests or directions that the Board goes in. *If [our] membership says that it wants to go in a different direction, [our association] will take that position. [Interviewer:* ***So you're not beholden to [peak body] even though you're a member of it, it doesn't dictate policy to you?] That's right****. (11)*

There is a lot of overlap, and it's driven by an individual rather than the organisation. (12)

I think what's happening is the sector organisations, which are effectively the shareholders in the [peak body], ***the sector organisations are becoming stronger and I think that means that while they increase in strength, of necessity, the peak body is likely to diminish in strength.*** *And we're just adjusting to that now.* ***We're in the process of narrowing down what is done by the peak body****. And that will improve the understanding of what the body does.* ***So some of the services or some of the work that we've done in the past will be transferred and become the responsibility of the sector organisations, because they're directly related to their particular interests****, but the peak body will become more focussed and that should enable it to be far better appreciated. (13)*

There's some changes taking place right now which will reflect that and acknowledge the growing strength of the sector organisations. The problem is that ***there's a real need, in any country, to have a single voice for the fishing industry or the seafood industry on some matters, and there needs to be the capacity to give a quick response to particularly media things which come up very quickly and you need to be very proactive in responding to them. If there's a difficulty in identifying who or what is the voice of the [National] fishing industry, we would regard that as a huge problem****. There isn't at the moment, because there is clearly a peak body and it's the body that people go to but if you didn't have a peak body it would be very difficult. (13)*

It's a big problem for us. ***One of the reasons why we're going through this restructuring is to address those very issues and to make those boundaries a lot clearer.*** *We've spent a couple of years trying to define those boundaries a lot more clearly and the whole objective of the restructuring we're going through is to make sure that every industry organisation in the seafood industry clearly understands what their particular role is. So there shouldn't be any clash between – well there will be clashes, but at least the clashes will be within clearly understood boundaries. (13)*

It's a big problem for us. One of the reasons why we're going through this restructuring is to address those very issues and to make those boundaries a lot clearer.

The growing aquaculture industry has got themselves unified in a single organisation and because of that it's probably unclarified the roles [between then and the peak body]. And the inshore fishery which has been more disorganised, small profitability, smaller operators, so it has some conflict and perhaps a need to define the roles and responsibilities [relative to the peak body]. (13)

It has been challenging, and continues to be something I'm really sensitive about. Our responsibilities are federal in nature and regional associations are responsible for regional issues. So any federal legislation, regulation, issue, we would naturally be involved. But sometimes there is overlap. So sometimes it's a regional issue, but they would like some federal support. What I'm really careful to do is not dive in to a regional issue without ensuring that we are actually wanted. (14)

I think it's been helpful for us to have it written: these are the roles and responsibilities of [peak body]; here's what the regional associations do; this is where we can provide support. [Interviewer: Do you have a standardised decision template / tree for yourselves and the regional associations?] No we don't, but it is a good idea. [Interviewer: If you had it, and gave it to all the other associations, then you have mutuality of decision processes.] It's a good idea. (14)

This topic of 'boundary clarity' is different from the earlier topic of 'boundary strength'. In fact it is more like the earlier topic, 'A means of organisation' and the related topic of 'roles'. Not only does there need to be role clarity in relation to the responsibilities of various executive members, there also needs to be role clarity between the responsibilities of associations that are linked in a hierarchy – for example a peak body association and a subsidiary commodity specific association.

The concept of a 'peak body' can be problematic when the Board is not elected by those subsidiary groups (or their members) for whom the peak body claims to speak. This is because the prerequisite of 'trust' has not been established and there is an absence of 'social capital' between the two. The tension that existed in the recent past between WAFIC and the rock lobster industry illustrates this point.

Though much of the focus above has been on boundary clarity in a vertical sense, associations also have relationships between bodies at a similar level. Sometimes these are associations sharing adjacent geographies, such as zonal PFAs. At other times, they are associations dealing with similar commodities. As associations examine ways to maintain viability, amalgamations are an option.

> ***Because we are two [commodity] operations that are absolutely joined with everything – all their problems are our problems, and vice-versa.*** *Be they from governments, regulators, imports, marketing, health and safety, workplace stuff, awards, even the biology and water discharge. We're both farming the land, draining water off, adding feed. Even the feed companies we buy from are the same.* ***There's just so much synergy between the two****. (3)*

Because we are two [commodity] operations that are absolutely joined with everything – all their problems are our problems, and vice-versa.

> *I think the main one that's facing all associations at the moment is lack of membership. Of course the [neighbouring named] Professional Fisherman's Association are the same as everyone else. They're struggling for membership, struggling to get Presidents; they've had a paid secretary for quite a few years. As I said earlier,* ***I think amalgamation is the only way out to strengthen the core base so you have more people to take on these leadership roles.*** *(6)*

Questioning the value of the relationship

An important conversation for any associations with potential overlapping or intersecting interests, and hence this needs to be a partnership conversation, is to consider who is best placed to deal with particular topics or have carriage of particular responsibilities.

This research revealed a tendency for associations, or even enterprises, with a particular set of interests that intersect with an association with an overlapping though broader set of interests, as they become stronger, to withdraw from the higher level body. An example is in aquaculture, where a State peak body is strengthened at the cost of the national peak body. Or where a national peak body restructures, reducing its responsibilities which are handed back to increasingly strong sector bodies. It is, of course, just as possible that the reverse might happen. So it is likely, over time, that responsibility for particular issues will trade back and forth between associations representing broader or narrower interests.

> *I think what's happening is the sector organisations, which are effectively the shareholders in the [peak body], the sector organisations are becoming stronger and I think that means that while they increase in strength, of necessity, the peak body is likely to diminish in strength. And we're just adjusting to that now. We're in the process of narrowing down what is done by the peak body. (13)*

When there is a hierarchy or related associations, such as from local PFA up to national peak body, each of those associations needs to have a non-overlapping, yet logical span of responsibility. Our research found examples where relationships between adjacent levels became strained for the following reasons:

1. The association at a higher level had less resource capacity to meet its obligations than did its member association. This left the subordinate association needing, for its own sake, to pick up, at a local level, a responsibility that was clearly and logically national.
2. The association at a higher level received funding, not from its subordinate member associations, but from a completely different source, thereby immediately shifting the focus away from serving the interests of the subordinate associations to serving the interests of the peak body itself and its funding patron.
3. The association at the higher level serving the interests of diverse (as opposed to similar) subsidiary associations, and hence was not perceived to be giving sufficient attention to the interests of any particular subsidiary association.
4. The subordinate association recognised the peak body association only when it suited them, and went their own way when it didn't.

Every industry association is at strategic risk from loss of membership and support from the subordinate level. This might happen in multiple ways, as follows:

1. An association at a higher level fails to pay sufficient attention to the enterprise or association at the level below, then suddenly finding that (a) the subordinate level has reached a level of maturity where it no longer needs the parent, or (b) where the subordinate level is less financially able to support the level above.
2. An association at a lower level fails to implement a deliberate policy of growing certain individuals in its membership able to represent it, when necessary, at the higher level.

> *I suppose the National Seafood Industry Association, the National Aquaculture Council is a member, but then, when on the NSIA website, aquaculture doesn't rate much of a mention, so you think it's not doing much for us. (1)*

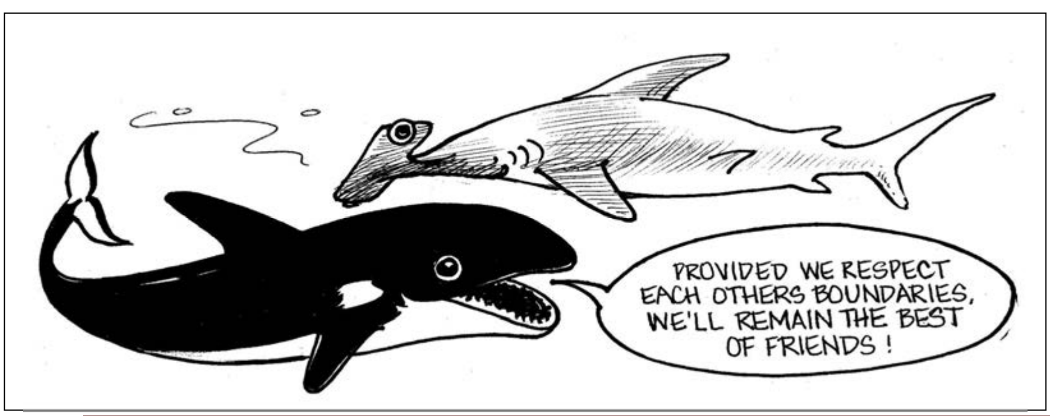
Our association is trying to take some leadership on restructuring to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the various bodies that provide services to the seafood industry - Seafood Services Australia, Ocean Watch, FRDC. Seafood is a small sector shrinking: ***why do we have four governing bodies doing different bits?*** *So there's a really important conversation to have there,* ***there's some cross jurisdictional issues here.*** *Is it inefficient? Is it effective?* ***We've got different competencies in those bodies; why aren't we making one strong one organisation?*** *Is it still relevant? Massive conversation to be had there. Industry needs to make up its mind about what it actually wants. (1)*

It costs a lot of money to be part of these peak bodies. And you've got to be getting value for money.

I struggle with lots of these little bodies around the place trying to do stuff. We've got a [partner named] Association and they employ an executive officer. Really our goals are all very similar. The boundary is not necessarily that clear in my opinion. ***There's probably more duplication going on than there has to be which is frustrating*** *and I don't know how necessary it is to address that. (2)*

[Interviewer: Ways of increasing your funding base?] This has only happened recently, because we've lost some membership, so we've had to start thinking about it. We've also had to start thinking about our contributions to others as well, because we've got money coming in, but also going out. ***So we've been looking at where our money is going, and are we getting value for that money. That would be things like: do we need to be a full member of the [association A] for $10,000 a year? Do we need to be a full member of the [association B], or of [association C] themselves?*** *So there was probably $30-40,000 and more actually per year to be saved from rationalisation of our own memberships of different associations. (3)*

It's more duplication rather than toe stepping. It's really more duplication and therefore then, that's why we have to review it. *And [national peak body] even, for instance, they're not full-time. So we've got a full-time Executive Officer. So yeah, at the moment we're reviewing this whole peak body structure.* ***We're basically looking at realigning ourselves to see where we fit, because it's not a bottomless bucket of money that [this association] has as well. And it costs a lot of money to be part of these peak bodies. And you've got to be getting your value for money****. If you looked at [peak body] lobbying power, without [our association] in there, the lobbying power won't be as big as the [lobbying power of our association] will be by themselves. (3)*



***[Association A] guys really don't acknowledge us too much, other than take the money. And [peak association B] guys, it's arguable whether or not they're big enough to do something with us**. It's just something again that we need to work on. **Why are we members of this and the other at the same time when we are doing the same things that we're asking them to do for us on our behalf?** Is it purely a political reason that we've stayed as a member? And that can happen, where we can't afford to leave that one just yet. (3)*

Wearing two hats

Some associations, say at commodity level, have Board members who now wear two hats. They are both a grower/fisher and a Board member. This is a special issue in wild-catch where members of an association are in direct access competition with each other. Similarly, an Exec Officer of a commodity association might be a rep on the Board of a peak body. The question must be asked: 'When a person wears 'two hats', where does the loyalty lie? As one interview correctly observed: *What's in a member's interest is not necessarily in the association's interest. Yet what is in the association's interest is generally in the member's interests*. Therefore it is important that all members of an association put the interests of the association ahead of their individual member interests. Similarly, any person appointed from an association at one level to sit on the Board of an association at the next level needs to recognise that their responsibilities have now shifted, and that they no longer 'represent' the level from which they came.

I know I'm coming there as sector rep but as soon as I cross that Board threshold there's case law that says you've actually got to represent the peak body.

The other thing is because they're executive officers they also have significant commitments for their own roles and so that means that they would have to go back to their Boards and say look, I'm going to do this, something is going to have to give, back in my day job. Many associations wouldn't agree to do that. (1)

***I know I'm coming there as [sector rep] but as soon as I cross that Board threshold there's case law that says you've actually got to represent [the peak body].** (1)*

*Members all have their own organisations or associations to run. The expectation is that the peak association Chair and Secretariat will provide most of the essential functions of the aggregate interest of benefit to members. In other words they very much have to get on with their own business, running their own associations, but there are some things that are beneficial to bring to an aggregate table like the peak association. Which means that despite some people on the peak association Board being nominated to be involved in some topics, they've not always managed to step up and do as much as I thought. **Their member organisation takes priority.** I mean that would be a common feature for all Directors of most of these associations. If you're a member of the peak association, if you're on the Board you have a fiduciary duty to that company or the organisation, but you also have a responsibility to the members you represent. (1)*

[Interviewer: How many farm owners are on the Board?] None. There was last, two years ago, three years ago, four years ago, there was, but it wasn't actually a good idea. Effectively they weren't coming with an [association] hat. They still wore their farm hat. I'm talking about the hats they invisibly wear. The management from that same farm wore an [association] hat. Does that make sense? (3)

There's always politics that everyone deals with, but we make it entirely clear that if you are part of the Executive team or the R&D team that you leave the shirt of your business at the door prior to walking in. *So much so that we've even gone to the extent now of having a uniform. We have [association] shirts for each of the Board members, so we literally leave our [enterprise] shirts at the door. (3)*

We used to have Directors [enterprise owners] on the Executive, but for some reason they'd dropped out. I guess it's because the General Managers were there. I guess it's the people making the decisions all the time that probably seem to do a better job, I guess, of running the thing. [Interviewer: That's interesting.] Yeah, it is to me as well, because one thing I tried pushing for is for Directors [owners] to be on there. They're a funny bunch, though, those Directors, the guys that are putting in the actual money. They seem to be fairly focussed on one thing. Like I said, we used to, but I guess there was a fair bit of in-fighting a bit more as well. They take things quite personally. [Interviewer: Right, so the fact that you guys sitting on the Board are not necessarily the owners enables you to be a bit more impartial?] Exactly right. Like I said, we take that company shirt off when we go in there, and we're very much impartial to everyone else. (3)

People sometimes think they're elected to represent their fishery, but I think that's just because of the way we've been for 40 years as this representative type of structure. *But my experience of the Board, I feel that people are keeping themselves up at the broader level in terms of addressing and reminding themselves that they're there. (4)*

We make it entirely clear that if you are part of the Executive team that you leave the shirt of your business at the door prior to walking in.

Whereas the rock lobster structure that I was looking at, they're voted into that Board by their zones, and they were saying ***they have a big problem with the fact that they think they're there to represent their zone and they just continually end up in discussions that is really about people representing their own zone****. So from that instance I could look at that structure and, say potentially, if you made clearer the objectives of the Board and potentially changed the voting structure underneath, you might get some changes. (4)*

I think, at the moment, if people vote in blocs, and I think the largest number of votes actually sits with the rock lobster industry. So it all links back to this membership restructure that we're looking at, as to how you vote people on the Board [of the State peak body]. (4)

At the moment [peak body] is made up of five organisations, so each person in theory won't come with their own agendas, but invariably you have to. I think it's just a role people take. (10)

I think people that come onto the [State peak body] Board or committee have to put away their club loyalties and put more to the association ahead. *(12)*

Think about the association and not themselves and their [subsidiary] club. (12)

In fact, that's one of the criteria that we often look for amongst the Council members. How can you expect this particular person to have the interests of the whole industry in mind as opposed to his own personal business? And this is actually sometimes quite a difficult distinction for some people to make. I always say, ***what benefits the industry benefits you but what benefits you doesn't necessarily benefit the industry.*** *(21)*

Recommendation 22:

a. Recommendation 4 applies here, this time at the scale of the association. Watch out for role overlap, role underlap and role neglect when comparing the responsibilities of associations operating at different levels.
b. Push responsibilities to the lowest level at which they can appropriately be dealt with.
c. Have a written document that (a) acknowledges and declares the responsibilities that fall to each, and (b) a process for resolution should ambiguities and disputes arise.
d. Each grass-roots association is responsible, as part of its exit strategy for all incumbent Board members, for providing appropriate representatives for the next level of the association.
e. Any Board or Executive sitting in a peak body role to recognise where their new responsibilities now lie.
f. As part of its annual strategic plan, each association is to review the value it gets from any partner associations, and to assess the extent to which they are providing adequate support for those partners, their strategic allies.

Case Study 21: Northern Territory Horticultural Association

The Northern Territory Horticultural Association (NTHA) is an association incorporated under Northern Territory legislation as a not-for-profit body. Created in the early 80's, it represents the interests of a number of commodity producers, ranging from cut flowers to melons to Asian vegetables to rambutan, mangoes and citrus. The NTHA is not a peak body; it's an umbrella organisation, with some members also belonging to commodity associations. Its 180 members represent roughly 30% of the growers from those various sectors in the Territory, while they represent probably 80% of the larger producers. Governed by an elected 18-member Council, NTHA has a small executive, elected from within that Council. Yet it is the Council, not the Executive that is the decision-making and policy-setting body. NTHA employs a full-time executive officer and two part-time clerical staff. Because of the work it does on behalf of the Northern Territory government, 80% of their funding comes from that source. It charges a membership fee of $150 per annum for members. Project specific funds can come from Horticulture Australia Limited, to whom NTHA members also pay a levy, and from voluntary contributions by members for specific projects. It also has associated members, who represent other elements of the value chain. Associate members do not have voting rights.

The NTHA has no formal process for succession. It is blessed with a long-term dedicated leadership, though it acknowledges it is easier to find people to sit on the eighteen member Council than on the Executive.

In order to achieve personnel efficiencies, the NTHA is about to merge with the Northern Territory Agricultural Association (NTAg) which has about 70 members who produce grain and legume crops. The new organisation, to be known as the Northern Territory Farmers Association, will then represent the majority of the plant growing farmers in the Territory.

External communication

Does your association actively seek out networks and information exchange with individuals and groups right outside of the association?

Mental models

Environmental scanning and extra-associational activities of members can bring innovative ideas. Innovative associations exchange information with their external environments. Through talking to people completely outside of the industry association, ideas can be exchanged with a resultant benefit to adaptability, sustainability and innovation.

Granovetter (1973) coined the concept of 'the strength of weak ties', pointing out that there are greater potential future benefits from new and unexplored relationships ('bridging social capital') than there are in the established ones where most of the benefits have already been discovered. Strong ties ('bonding social capital) are likely to be cohesive, and this cohesion can include a more rigid set of norms and render people more impervious to new information.

According to Foster & Meinhard, 2005, the benefits of fostering strong bridging social capital may be directly related to the size of the association.

> *Smaller organizations are generally seen as more organic in nature, and thus more responsive to environmental fluctuations (Daft, 1999). They are also more likely to cater to specialized niches where resources, including funding resources, are more liable to be stable (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Large, generalist organizations are also less affected by environmental turbulence, but for different reasons. As a result of their size, they have gained control of their environments and have slack resources to tide them over rough periods (Hannan and Freeman, 1977; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Greening and Gray (1994) suggest that large organizations are more likely to have formal internal structures to manage and respond to external threats; and, as a result, are in a better position to handle these challenges effectively. Slack resources also provide organizations with the flexibility to experiment with new strategies and lower the risk of such experimentation (Kaluzny et al., 1993). On the other hand, external challenges are more likely to have a negative impact on mid-sized organizations that are too big to cater to niches, but not large enough to have sufficient resources to withstand significant changes in the external environment. Given this differentiation in resources and focus by size of organization, we would expect mid-sized organizations to be more eager than smaller or larger organizations to seek diverse collaboration partners*. (Foster & Meinhard, 2005: 154)

It is not only the size of the association that drives an increased orientation towards the external world. The level of organisational maturity and strategic sophistication also is a driver of bridging social capital. The desire for collaboration with an organisation quite unlike one's own relates to the perception that the potential partner could be a long-term strategic ally.

> [Due to financial pressures], …. *voluntary organizations have had to become more business-like in their attitudes and behaviour. There is more emphasis on recruiting board members who are more business-oriented and entrepreneurial rather than selecting those more socially focused (Adams and Perlmutter, 1991). This is accompanied by an increased focus on adopting new governance and management structures and practices (Froelich, 1999; Peterson, 1986). Our findings suggest that the more an organization has become internally efficient in its use and deployment of staff resources, the more likely it is to be strategic with its collaborations and seek relationships with diverse organizations.* (Foster & Meinhard, 2005: 155)

What the interviewees say

Fostering relationships with outsiders brings multiple benefits. We can learn from others. We can influence others in ways that may be beneficial to our association and our members. We can form mutually beneficial partnerships. And most importantly, by having networks spread way beyond our immediate membership, we can be alerted to opportunities and/or threats, enabling us to take early and timely action.

Cross-pollination can be increased by linking web-sites, through having guest speakers, hosting or participating in conferences, by pursuing relationships, by subscribing to newsletters, and by travel, to name but a few of the ideas that associations participating in this research are using.

We'll get international experts over to give an update of where the international guys are sitting and how it's impacting on us.

I think every time I go on [to the NAC website] all I can see is the Australia/Asia Aquaculture meetings, rather than actually information about each individual sector and Australia's aquaculture. It seems to focus on one annual event. So ***I'd like to see sectoral information or links to sector websites****. [Interviewer: Do you have direct links on that [peak-body] website to all your other member sectors?] Good question. I haven't really looked. (1)*

> *[Cross-association communication support.] You need to basically request to the [other partner] associations that when you send out a newsletter, can we (our association) have an article in it?* ***Can we have a broad based article ready to go every two months*** *or something like that, so it just updates.* ***Can we put something on your website?*** *If I send you this update, would you be good enough to forward it on to your grassroots members and continuously remind them? Can you please do this? (1)*
>
> ***We run a conference each year*** *as well, which the [association] coordinates. It's a two-day conference, so the first day will be geared up towards business. So we'll get the likes of*

Woolworths and Coles there for global updates. ***We'll get banks there on financial advice or updates on what's happening financially in the world. We'll get international experts over to give an update of where the international guys are sitting and how it's impacting on us.*** *Then the second day is very much geared towards R&D. It's a very well-attended conference; we get a lot of delegates coming. Last year we had 180 participants. It's regarded as a very good conference to attend. (3)*

We get a lot of international speakers [to our conference] come and tell us what's going on overseas *as well. What are they doing in the way of viral control? What are they doing in the way of just normal management? What are they doing to keep ahead on environmental issues? (3)*

Anything that makes a decision that affects our fishery, we wanted to be part of and take part in, which is exactly what we achieved. And now we have really good feelings with local government. They come to us for advice.

We've been asked to employ another staffer who will be the liaison between the Department and the fishermen, and that's where the breakdown in [State peak body] is. We don't have a really good relationship and liaison between all the different fishermen in [the State] and the Department. And the fishermen always complain that they don't think [State peak body] is doing enough, because they don't get to see and talk to the [State peak body] people on the ground, face to face enough. (4)

I think it's increased a little because ***the research guys and the management people in the Department are coming to us more often now,*** *rather than us going to them all the time. They're seeking our ideas because some of the things they've done in the past have been pretty impractical, so they come to us before they do things now. (5)*

I think we should be looking to increase our contact with other jurisdictions and there's always something to learn. (5)

When it was all we could catch, we didn't really care to be honest. But now it's a whole new field, we seem to communicate. ***Our Association has brought people over from Tasmania and New Zealand to actually explain to fishermen what it's like under quota to get a good view on it.*** *It is good to hear the testimony of another fisherman who has gone under quota and gone through it. (6)*

Maybe getting guest speakers or thinkers-in-residence or whatever it is coming to meetings. Actively seek out where your area of expertise falls down and where you'd like to have more expertise and bring people on board. *The trouble is, normally that costs money and if you haven't got the money to spend you're going to do the things that don't cost a lot of money. You might have to find friendly people who don't expect a financial return at this stage. (7)*

In our environmental management plan, we decided we needed to be part of everything. *Any committee,* ***anything that makes a decision that affects our fishery, we wanted to be part of***

and take part in, which is exactly what we achieved. And now we have really good feelings with local government. They come to us for advice. *(8)*

I think our association does it better than any other association in [this State]. We decided many years ago that we had to be part of everything, and particularly local government. ***We're represented by two local governments in our association, and both of those treat us with respect and come to us with problems. The reason for the trend is [this association] has been on the front foot i.e. Environment Management Strategy and Marine Stewardship Council****. (8)*

I'm sure if a lot of the Fishers were actually shown how to use a computer that they wouldn't be so fearful of it. A lot of it is confidence. It just amazes me, particularly things like ***fish prices in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, they're blipped out daily.*** *If you've got fish in Sydney, you want to know what you've got for it. Well, before you send the next shipment of fish to Sydney, you can tack into the prices in Adelaide or Melbourne. So* ***I fail to understand why these guys are not maximising the value of their product.*** *(8)*

And that's how we got to the MSC [Marine Stewardship Council] road, that's how we got to the environmental management plan for the fishery. I think someone outside the fishery [brought it to our attention]. (8)

They are quite keen to seek out who the right department / agency / organisation is to talk to, and gather the right information to then engage in whatever the decision-making process is.

Things like Seafood Direction, where you've got a whole different mix of people in the seafood industry. Not necessarily Fishermen, but researchers, marketers, NGOs, just a whole range of people. Fishermen need to start seeing first-hand what these other time bombs are that are ticking outside the fishery. (8)

I guess it's the guys running the show. They've made an effort to get involved, and that's probably come about because they've started discussing things like Marine Parks. Then they get to know the people they talk to, then they progress it to other situations as well. (9)

Just become active within other groups outside of your own area / field*. (9)*

In all honesty, though, I think that they have got more professional in their approach, and have taken a broader look at issues, and not such a necessarily isolated look at just the southern zone. They're taking into account other factors which regulators and other agencies may also be looking at in dealing with issues as well. And that's across things like Department of Transport, not just primary industries, Department for Environment with the Marine Parks issue and dealing with that. I think that [our association] has been incredibly effective in dealing with that issue down in the southeast. So I think it's just an increase in professionalism of their approach across all issues. (9)

It's okay for the industry to have a position, but it has to be a credible and well-supported position. So on a whole range of issues, e.g. ***when October was closed to fishing in the southern zone, [the association] was quite happy to then go and outsource independent***

***expertise to compile reports and the necessary facts and documentation to support the arguments that they were putting forward** in a credible manner, and I think there were benefits to doing that. (9)*

*If there's an external issue, e.g. potential loss of access due to a wave energy project or a shipping issue, **they are quite keen to seek out who the right department / agency / organisation is to talk to, and gather the right information to then engage in whatever the decision-making process is**. (9)*

*Whether it's been done over the life of the association, it's something that's been inclusive and had the whole membership on board, one way or another **[our association] has been pretty good at saying, 'Alright, what is going to impact on the industry?' and involving itself in those processes.** (9)*

I would like to do a better job of liaising with other non-aquaculture associations. I think there are probably some good best practices in other resource-based industry associations that we could benefit from.

*[Named person] who is the former President has **a weekly radio show on my radio program** – I'm the mornings presenter on the ABC in [named State]. **So [named person] has a weekly segment with me where he talks about the benefits of recreational fishing and where the fish are biting.** That's pretty impressive for our organisation. Another member of [our association] has another segment on radio. So in terms of that communication, it gives both the capacity to communicate about recreational fishing and what we do, but it also gives them the capacity to have influence and be part of the political debate. (11)*

I think it needs something like a newspaper Editor to write small items for the paper and the media, including the fishing forums. Someone who has a gift for that sort of work. (12)

*With government and so on, I would say it's quite adequate. It should be more outgoing with like-minded associations, such as the National Federation of Agriculture. **I would like to do a better job of liaising with other non-aquaculture associations. I do some of that with agriculture, but not a lot, because it's just how busy you are. But I think there are probably some good best practices in other resource-based industry associations that we could benefit from.** (14)*

There's a number of researchers on our Board that also have really good linkages with other countries. It's their responsibility to keep that alive and report back. (14)

They do a lot of exchange visits to all the different countries – Chile, Norway, Spain, Japan. [Interviewer: Your association does that?] Our association does it through [national peak body], and through some federal programs industry people like ourselves can travel. We'd like to see one in Australia! (15)

That's always been important to (our association), as we were trying to learn from other areas so that we didn't make the same mistakes that they made in other regions. So external communications were always important to us. (15)

We just become more experienced in what we are doing with the realisation we do have to engage with the wider groups; with different interests. It's become a political necessity. When you are doing business with these people then they're involved in policy so it just makes sense to do it. (16)

It's just a rule that we have adopted out of necessity again; we realise that there are so many new games in town, try to get into them or, if you miss, you do so at your cost. (16)

The other thing is we have an active presence within the National Farmers Federation, we're a foundation body of the National Farmers Federation and also the Queensland Farmers Federation and internationally we're also we're very active in both the global sugar alliance and also the World Association of Beet and Sugar Growers. (17)

I think again, our association through World Association of Beet and Sugar Growers and National Farmers Federation at national and international levels and Queensland Farmers Federation, our affiliations at international, national and state levels are very, very strong and we're actively involved in those groups. We consider ourselves extremely good at external communications. We've got a good website; ***we've got a fortnightly magazine which is subscribed by just about every politician that is interested in agriculture****. (17)*

With the outside world, we're members of QFF and NFF, so we know sort of what's going on in the agricultural scene. So ***we've got a couple of staff in Brisbane that deal with this sort of thing. So we don't have too much I suppose that comes up and takes us unawares. I suppose it's a capacity thing again, the ability and time to look around at that sort of thing.*** *(17)*

Most of us grow other crops. We're not just sugar growers. The ideas flow through from other areas. And say there's something that the Burdekin is doing that could relate to the Tableland, then we'll investigate that. (18)

To avoid being insular in their outlook, associations need to adopt a deliberate policy of looking beyond their immediate sphere of responsibility and interest, with a view to picking up ideas, opportunities, and markets that may not be immediately obvious. There are many ways this might be done. Subscribing to e-magazines outside of your immediate industry is one. Travel is a second. Inviting outsiders as guests to your executive meetings and then inviting their observations is a third.

One of the more progressive associations that participated in this research has a deliberate policy of inviting every association member to act as its ambassador. This association markets its produce to clients based in a large city. Whenever a member of the association visits that city, they make a point of calling in on that client and asking the client in what way might the association improve the products and service that association provides. Note, that although this particular association provides a commodity, they see themselves as providing a service. That service is a particular commodity, of a particular standard, delivered in particular quantities or batch sizes at a particular price. Quality is assumed. It is the other attributes that make it a service.

Several innovative associations take their members on tours or visits to different enterprises, different regions, and even different countries, to see what can be leant. The time spent travelling together enables many rich conversations, thereby increasing the likelihood that good ideas will gain broad acceptance. These exchanges of ideas also energise the directors considerably as well as raising their strategic sensitivity.

Four years ago I took four directors over to Brazil and we met with all the decision makers over there.

Once a year we have a workshop and it's in a different part of Queensland *and they organise tours of [industry] facilities which may be facilities that have got totally different culture methods because of the species but* ***you learn, oh gee, is that how you do that; I can see how that would work for me. It's been brilliant. That, incidentally, is free****. So there's a workshop and farm visits, all organised food, the venue, everything, buses, whatever is needed and it's all free. (2)*

Now one of the things we do is we have a program of ensuring each three year term ***each one of our Directors travels overseas so that they can observe.*** *They don't all go together. We send them in groups of two or three so they can talk about what they see.* ***Four years ago I took four directors over to Brazil and we met with all the decision makers over there.*** *We went for two weeks. So everyone is given the opportunity.* ***That is an investment by us in their development purely to see what goes on elsewhere.*** *(17)*

> ***Each Christmas we used to have a bus trip*. *So we went to Warwick, and we went to a feedlot, to a plastic tank making place, BigW distribution centre etc., etc. and then we went to Stanthorpe and then we went and saw Net-Pro who cover all the orchards, the Symphony Hill Winery, went to a place called Pure Heaven that supplies organic soaps and all that sort of stuff on the internet. Then we did Inglewood – we did organic chook farm, an olive grove, dingo research station***. *(19)*

> *I think [the bus trip] it's to show what other people are doing, other enterprises and also it's a form of socialising and spending time together, and that's the fun part. (19)*

Another association encourages visitors to its community and to its member enterprises. And because of its reputation, this association and its small community has many visitors. What is unusual is that the visitors are not accommodated at the local hotel, motel, or guest house. Instead, they are invited to be house guests at the home of one of the association members. This forges bonds of friendship that blossom into a network of productive relationships. It is a perfect example of fostering bridging social capital.

> **Recommendation 23:** Adopt a deliberate policy of engagement with the outside world with a view to establishing relationships with suppliers, fostering markets and sourcing new ideas.

Case Study 22: Northern Territory Agricultural Association

Northern Territory Agricultural Association (NTAg) is an association incorporated under Northern Territory legislation as a not-for-profit body. Formed 18 years ago, it has about 70 members, a substantial increase since its low ebb of merely a 'handful' five years ago. The upsurge in membership, 90% male and ranging in ages from 20 to 70, (average 40 yrs) coincided with the employment of a full-time Exec Officer, an agronomist of 25 yrs experience who is well-known and respected in the Territory. About 60% of members are active producers and about 25% of the members are active supporters of the association.

Unofficially, its primary purpose is to aid the survival of agriculture in the Northern Territory. It does not have a clear mission and its statement of purpose was drafted many years ago and needs updating. At the moment there are differing views as to whether the primary purpose of NTAg should be about influencing government policy or providing agronomic advice. NTAg is about to amalgamate with the Northern Territory Horticultural Association (NTHA) to create a new association to be known as Northern Territory Farmers Association. That amalgamation will create the opportunity to start afresh with respect to purpose and systems of administration.

NTAg is administered by a Board of six, including a President, Secretary and Treasurer. Most of the work is directed to the Executive Officer who tries to be all things to all people, placing him at risk of burn-out. There is a perception that a number of these Directors are there because they were invited and probably do not have an appreciation of their responsibilities under law. The average duration of service on the Board is two to three years. There is no formal succession planning and no limit to the time that Directors can serve. The Association recognises it is drawing from a relatively small gene pool and could run out of potential Directors.

Membership of NTAg is only loosely defined. There are members, who by definition are supposed to be producers, and who can vote, and there are associate members, who can be anybody, including producers, and who can't vote. Yet both pay the same annual membership fee of $270 per annum. The voting strength of members is independent of size; one membership, one vote. In terms of the benefits received, both classes of members are treated identically. And there is no policy of restricting benefits to members only. Non-members attend field days and other NTAg events at no charge. The association sees itself there as a benefit to all agriculture. Committee members are expected to give the association in-kind support; there is no similar expectation of ordinary members.

There are no cliques within NTAg. It is recognised that the amalgamation of the two associations will bring together two different histories and cultures that will take some time to meld. The glue that binds them is the recognition of strength in numbers as an aid to collective survival. A formal code of conduct for the new association will help direct the energies of passionate people. This needs to be supported with a conflict resolution protocol. The absence of such protocol rendered a past NTAG conflict more difficult.

In terms of goods and services, the bulk of NTAg's work is in agronomic advice. It conducts trial plots, field days, demonstration events – between three and six per year. It is an information conduit. Advice is also given one-on-one. With the Government reducing its agronomic services, there are increasing levels of demand upon NTAg. The association is also an active lobbyist, endeavouring to influence government policy. Much of this work is invisible to members. It also seeks every opportunity to get media coverage for the good work of its members. Members would like to see more effort put into lobbying and public relations, giving recognition to the importance of agriculture in the public eye. Public relations work also has an internal benefit; it makes visible the work of the association to potential and current members.

Apart from membership fees, NTAg gets some financial support from Federal grants, such as ‘Caring for Country’. The NT Government also provides some financial and in-kind support. The new association with occupy a Government-provided office. The new association would like to develop partnerships with agronomic suppliers and negotiate purchasing discounts for members, thereby creating a tangible benefit from membership.

The performance capacity of NTAg is stretched. In the absence of defined strategic direction, the highly dedicated Exec Officer tries to be all things to all people: agronomist, lobbyist, publicity officer, membership officer, financial officer, fund raiser. Delegation of some duties to Directors and ordinary members would grow their capacity and reduce the burden on the Exec Officer. This can only be beneficial. The new association will have two employees, permitting a rethink of responsibilities and administrative systems.

Given the vast distances in the Territory, most Board meetings are by teleconference. And there are four face-to-face meetings per year. Decision-making is by the Board, though inputs from others are encouraged. Big issues are canvassed with the broader membership. The Board has a healthy mix of established and new members, providing an infusion of new ideas. Yet most of the work falls to the Executive Officer.

NTAg has very healthy relationships with other bodies. It shares information freely with the horticultural sector and with the NT Cattlemen’s Association. Interdependence is recognised. NTAg manages to attract visiting experts who provide workshops and information sessions, keeping members abreast of the latest relevant information.

Internal communication is also healthy. There is a weekly email update to members. Phone is the other most frequent medium. SMS is out of the question, due to the absence in the Territory of appropriate telecommunications infrastructure. The new association is proposing a regular newsletter.

NTAg has no formal performance measurement or continuous improvement mechanisms, other than the requirements to account for expenditure against government grants. The new association will consider implementing both mechanisms.

The major challenge that NTAg has faced in its recent past is ‘survival’. Members are being overwhelmed by new government regulations pertaining to native vegetation, water, rivers, climate change, carbon tax, etc. Agri-forestry and managed investment schemes are competing with agriculture for scarce productive land. Agriculture is feeling besieged by a government it perceives is unsympathetic to issues of food security and economic and social viability.

Funding and resourcing is the most important internal issue for NTAg. Being besieged by regulation and an apparently unsympathetic government is the greatest external threat.

Internal communication

Does your association actively encourage and provide opportunities for communication between members of the association, and between the association and its members?

Internal communication is the glue that holds an association together. It also creates an internal environment favourable to the generation and promotion of new ideas. The greater the level of internal communication between association members and/or the association executive, the higher the level of sustainability, adaptability and innovation. So effective internal communication is one of the key ingredients of survival. Internal communication might be face-to-face, emails, teleconferences, newsletters, websites, etc. Communication might be from the association itself out to its members. It might be from the members back to the association. Or it could be between association members. Further, internal communication can be formal or informal.

Effective communication has several parts. There is a sender. There is a message. There is the means by which the message is sent. There is competing ‘noise’ - other messages or issues that can distort or distract. And there is a receiver of the message, who needs to decode it and understand it.

Given this chain of necessary elements, it is understandable why attempts at communicating sometimes fail. One of the most common reasons for failure is the belief that ‘sending a message’ equals ‘communication’. That is rarely enough.

Members kind of know what’s going on, but are a little bit lacking in communication, so they’re not really up-to-date with what’s happening.

Issues to consider with respect to internal communication are: (i) methods of communication, (ii) the content of the messages, (ii) the targets of the message, (iv) the frequency of the message, (v) the timeliness of the message, (vi) the relevance of the message to the receiver, (vii) the degree of competing ‘noise’, (viii) communication blockages.

Another way of breaking up the topic of communication (in fact, any topic), is to do so under seven questions:

1. Why do we communicate?
2. What is communicated?
3. How do we communicate?
4. How often/when do we communicate?
5. Who communicates and to whom?
6. Where do we communicate?
7. What are the blockages to effective communication?

Each of these will be addressed in turn.

Why communicate?

Communication is the exchange of meaningful information. It is the two-way exchange that serves as a form of 'glue', binding a number of individuals into a collective sense of 'we'. Each association would benefit by having a conversation with its current and respective members as to 'why' they think communication is important. Understand the 'why' must precede and give guidance to the 'what', 'how', 'when', 'where', and 'who'.

> *I came up with the suggestion about the FRDC providing an industry leader to go and play. That might be one of the key areas [communication] that we get somebody to go and play. It's actually one of the most critical components of the industry. (1)*

> ***Information is power, and that the more information the fishers get, the more confident they'll be.***

> *But as far as general members go, **I've had discussions with members who kind of know what's going on, but a little bit lacking in communication, so they're not really up-to-date with what's happening.** For the whole association, I would say quite inadequate. Because I'm on the email list for the association as well, and there's not a lot of information that comes through. And **just from my own personal conversations with members who aren't on any committees, they're often out of the loop with what the industry is doing.** (3)*

> *We haven't sent a newsletter out for a while; we must be due for one. Just small things like that across the fishery, just letting them know what's happening, what to expect, those sorts of things, and particularly under cost recovery. So what I'm saying is that the **information is***

power, and that the more information the fishers get, the more confident they'll be, particularly about their business investment, and certainly for the future. *(8)*

*I suppose it's adequate, because **we're not actually driving anything**. Unless we start to drive it and take more positive action as an association, then we can't really blame anybody else for any lack of communication. (10)*

What is communicated?

What is presently communicated between an association and its members sometimes differs from what should be communicated. The interviewee quotes canvas both.

In my association they [Board minutes] are all there in one spot [on the website] so you can always go back and check them. *You just put out the papers in one meeting and if you lose your emails you just go there. The whole history is there so if anyone new comes in they can look at anything that they want to look at. (1)*

*The AGM, yeah. We have taken it quite seriously in the past, doing things like commissioning special pieces of research on the long-term trends in our sector / the industry. **So it's not just an AGM. We usually have a particular communication objective. Last year the issue of the AGM was the cost of running industry associations.*** *(4)*

We can provide a bit more savvy, a bit more timely information to our members, what [State peak body]'s up to and be part of our social licence to operate etc. (4)

> ***Board minutes are all there in one spot on the website so you can always go back and check them.***

Instead of getting letters and that through the mail, everyone gets an email straight away detailing all the things that are happening in our industry and all that sort of stuff and we can decide to have a meeting and decide which way we can go with it. (6)

Every week we publish a policy status report that outlines policy changes which are mainly government implemented, but might be of interest to people in the industry. *(13)*

We send out the rule book every year and it has the constitution in. Also general information on contacts for various fishermen's organisations and a lot of fisheries rules, safety related information. There's lots of stuff in there; it's nearly as thick as a telephone directory. (16)

What should be communicated?

You've got to spruik at the good job you're doing. So I think it's taking advantage of probably more Fishing News to be honest, the FRDC funded newsletter. Putting very specific dot points and some photographs and stuff in that magazine. (1)

I'd like to probably see a members'-only section [on our web-site] *and all of the Board papers and agendas, minutes go in there. (1)*

When [our EO] had a part-time Assistant, there used to be an industry newsletter which came out each quarter or every two months. And that was quite good. It was a 2-3 page PDF saying what the R&D Committee Exec and certain members are up to. I think the industry liked that, and it's since stopped. (3)

We use electronic as much as we can, but you can't replace face to face occasionally.

We don't have any personal grass-roots communication except for when we need to consult with industry on something that the government wants to change. So always ***these meetings are pushed on, they're not actually just information sessions where you can get to know people and build those relationships with the industry, which is what you need.*** *So you need to have that networking happening. (5)*

We're having to have more meetings because we're having to cope with that much more now, technical measures, legal limitations, quota issues, there's that much ongoing we've got to be informed more, we've got to be having more meetings. (16)

One area that I think we used to do a lot of, and there is still debate going on about, is we used to actually run a regular member meeting program monthly, with some activity. (21)

More communication, more direct contact with members, not on a daily basis but showing members what we're doing, what we're striving for and listening to what they want. So just better communication and showing them the runs on the board and trying to involve them. (22)

How do we communicate?

Mechanisms used by associations to communicate range from face-to-face, to phone calls, including teleconferences, to Skype, to emails, to faxes, to SMS, to e-newsletters, to interactive web-sites, to hard-copy newsletters, to webinars. Factors determining the most suitable communication tools include the geographic spread of members, their levels of e-literacy, capacity to receive electronic communication, confidentiality, and the urgency of the issues to be communicated.

Email, teleconference, periodic meetings. ***Like everybody else we use electronic as much as we can, but you can't replace face to face occasionally.*** *(1)*

Fax believe it or not*. Well the first one is obviously electronic email or something like that but the second one, believe it or not, is fax.* ***In our industry we send out emails all the time. Not everybody in our industry is either on an email or is electronically connected, or, if they are, they don't monitor the bloody thing. But if you send a fax to them they seem to pick it up.*** *Ironically it's expensive. Actually group texting is quite good but your message has got to be very brief – i.e. 'an email sent out this week'. I think pummelling people with emails is good, not a bad idea, but you've still got to get the addresses.* ***If you want to get some messages out, if you've got the database, I still think you actually need to use the fax. The fax is something that the growers actually pick up. I can't stress that enough.*** *I know in our industry we've got* *some of the most grassroots growers in Australia; if you fax through they will look at it. Somebody picks the fax up and they pass it onto somebody else and generally it gets looked at. (1)*

SMS is also very effective to let them know that there's something that they need to look at. *(1)*

Internal communication is the first thing that drops off when you're busy*, and you tend to be very issue-driven. I think some sort of digest at some regular interval is useful. Something that allows people to get what you're doing in 45 seconds. (1)*

Not everybody in our industry is either on an email or is electronically connected, or, if they are, they don't monitor the bloody thing. But if you send a fax to them they seem to pick it up.

Because we're only dealing with 10-12 people, decisions are all made by everybody and generally it's done by email. In such a large space like Queensland, so getting people together for meetings every few weeks or every month or every two months it doesn't happen. So what we have is an effective means of communication, an email list and a regular newsletter and then, of course, we meet once or twice a year. (2)

We put out newsletters all the time. *There's obviously the conference which is a fantastic way to do that. There are emails that go out to the members all the time. Again, there are models etc. that go out for some feedback (decision models etc.). So I actually think it's really good, for the capacity that we've got.* ***There's also a members' section on the [association] website. So once you become a member, you get a password and you can access all the communication from all the meetings (including board minutes) there as well.*** *(3)*

The CEO put out a brochure every couple of weeks with an orange top which stood out amongst your paperwork. You could put it on the table in the wheel house and the crew and everyone would read it.

I've reached agreement with the committee recently for the Executive Officer to make up a Facebook page which has not been kept up to date. But certainly I think encouraging younger members – well, not just younger members – ***social networking I think is an avenue that cannot be brushed aside when wanting to communicate with industry.*** *Certainly I think social networking should be actively promoted more in an association. As to very effective, obviously the newsletter for people who don't social network, but* ***social networking is very quick, very easy, and very rapid.*** *I think those things are very powerful. (3)*

We've been varying our communication; like, we have ***a more regular email from the CEO*** *and* ***more e-magazines****. We've got our new Admin Officer, sent her off for Facebook / Twitter training etc. to see if we can find better ways of communicating to our members. Sending out the glossy magazines is out. The Fishery Department has largely discontinued that as well. (4)*

There being no doubt from [State peak body]'s perspective when you ask what communication our members most value, it is the face-to-face. So I'm not under any illusions that a newsletter is going to replace face-to-face, but could more effectively supplement it. (4)

The most effective was a few years ago; the then CEO was putting out a brochure every couple of weeks with an orange top which stood out amongst your paperwork. You could take it out and put it on the table in the wheel house and the crew and everyone would read it. *To me that was the ideal way of doing things because people would pick it up and read it. Whereas some of the Fishermen, you can't get them to turn on their computer more than once a week. (5)*

Telephone and text to alert people to what's going on, tell them there's a meeting on or whatever, then email to give them the detail.

We have communications, obviously email and phone is probably the most important. We also have a website which enables us to access all our members. ***We can do bulk emails and SMS through our website which has been quite useful in getting information out.*** *Also, voting on issues can occur on the website. So it's instantaneous feedback from our members when we require it. That's been very, very good. (5)*

Email, telephone and text to alert people to what's going on, tell them there's a meeting on or whatever, then email to give them the detail. *And anything that comes down from the top which goes through, we get it emailed out anyway to us as well. So it's pretty good communication lines. (6)*

We're not a mob of texting people over here. We're all sort of aged-challenged a little bit and we enjoy a good face to face. *(6)*

We're not a mob of texting people over here. We're all sort of aged-challenged a little bit and we enjoy a good face to face.

Given the current technical expertise and perhaps even the [lack of] access that some people have to things like broadband and things like that, probably the old paper based newsletter that goes out to every member, it's probably still the best and most effective*. You don't have to send out one every week or every month but at least once a quarter or something just to let people know what's going on. (7)*

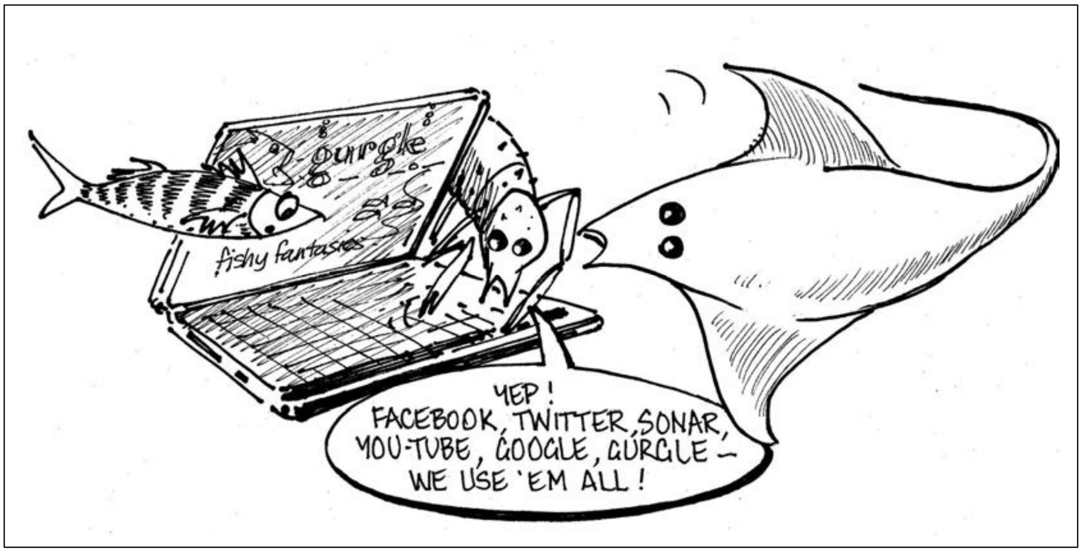
Unfortunately post or print method is probably the most effective, because they all still receive their bills and everything by mail. But it's just the way they are. *But they do read it. (8)*

[This association] has been more active in itself, and also ***has been a lot more active in consulting with and communicating with grassroots industry, like via the Ports at that level as well – face to face****. (9)*

So communication is good. There's the emails, as you've seen, my phone has rung a lot since we've been here – people are constantly ringing me to find out what's going on. We don't have a website, but there's newsletters that go out to members as well. (9)

And I have to be honest, I think still within the industry, a lot of them wouldn't be able to use the web and go onto the website and find things out, but to get the letter in the post at least quarterly if you're a member, that's a good way of communicating what's going on to people. (9)

At an individual level, phone. Email is very good and is always improving, like getting more contacts through individuals with email. And that's a very efficient way of communicating. They're the two. There's also less regular written (at least) quarterly updates that go out. (9)



***Have people if they need to say something, give them a five-minute timeframe to do it, like a presentation**, I guess. Rather than a case of a structured debate or argument. (10)*

***I think our association needs to adopt things like Facebook, Twitter, and greater use of the internet.** (10)*

***Again, maybe running a blog or a forum where people could write – and maybe have a Q&A section on our website.** That sort of thing. Maybe be involved in a few different things, like there's different organisations such as Red Map which encourage people to list where they catch unusual species' of fish. We could be a sponsor / major sponsor of that. And **maybe do some advertising within the local fishing magazines and shops etc. Hold a bit more presence.** (10)*

*I think the people involved will probably have to get together a bit more. **Maybe they got to talk on Skype** or something like that and gradually, you know, sort it all out and let everybody know what's going on at [the association]. (12)*

[Interviewer: Do you have scheduled regular meetings that members attend?] No, just the three executive meetings a year, which they can attend if they wish. (12)

I think that we're trying very hard to communicate better with all levy payers. ***There's a thing that goes out every week called a Friday update which covers an incident that occurred during the week of interest in the fishing industry and that's available on line to anyone who wishes to subscribe to it.*** *(13)*

[Most valued form of internal communication} The internet. (13)

SMS is probably the most uncomplicated way of doing things. If something is on, you can make sure that members know about it.

It's improved a lot since we've hired a Communications Manager, and we have a specific internal communications plan. We raised our level of internal communications through newsletters. We're doing webinars; she's keeping the website up to date. We have an electronic bulletin every couple of months, but I think phone calls and emails are the best ways. (14)

We have not been doing the video-conferencing, but ***we've been doing the webinars where you actually take members through a document and work on a document during a meeting.*** *So people get to see a slide deck of information on the computer. (14)*

The entire Board do meet quarterly besides a fair bit of email correspondence and several members of the Board are members of various sub committees or working groups that we have. So there is an awful lot of communication. (15)

Our website has been recently updated and the Facebook and the Twitter and all the stuff we weren't really into before is there now. (15)

Email and telephone. Basically getting together, the main [association] office is six hundred kilometres from me. (15)

The thing that gets people in most is a personal phone call. They have to make a personal commitment to come.

Emails, everybody can get emails instantly. They can reply to them, and when need be, not only do we have quarterly meetings for the Board of Directors, as need be, meetings are called also. If we've got an issue here in central (where 95% of the mussel industry is), (the association) will set up a meeting (face-to-face) almost immediately. (15)

I still prefer to talk to somebody. I still think it's better to tell them, to be able to telephone, to speak to somebody. I still prefer to talk to somebody. I'm not that good with email; I don't Twitter; I'm not that keen on texting. It's nice to be able to talk to somebody. (16)

Where it used to be like a quarterly meeting, and you used to have wait all year to get one meeting per year for your region. Now it's just so easy. When you do phone up, I mean I phoned up on Friday and I got straight through to the top one there, [named Exec Officer]; he *just answered the phone. [Named person] discussed what I was having to do, and the access is there, it is so easy to talk to people and get the information now. (16)*

Well, we have meetings as necessary. Certainly four to five times a year. Most members will meet or interact on a regular basis. It depends on what's hot at the moment. If there's an issue say with a prawn fisherman, we may need three or four meetings in a couple of months. So just as necessary. (16)

You have one meeting at least once a year in your region and they also get notified of the monthly meetings we have, which are either based at the head office at York or where they are going to be, I know there's one going to be one next week at Whitby. If I wanted to go but that's not my region, that's like Yorkshire, but I know where the meetings is going to be and I get mailed with the minutes of the previous meeting and what's going to be discussed at that meeting. So I know where the meetings are going to be if I want to go to them and also get involved if I want to go to York at the AGM one, so we know what's going on if you want to go. (16)

There are more meetings at a local level, there's more information available from your local representative. I would say it's a lot better in the last five years. There's more ways of getting your information, through what's actually happening that day and the internet, this Twitter or whatever it is; so it's very good now. (16)

It has been an area of concern for our organisation. The steps were taken to try to make more direct contact with members, sort of direct emails. We sent a new website out and made the website more interactive to try and involve members and bring them more up to date with what is going on and become more involved in policies. (16)

***Every member gets a copy of our annual report. We use it as a membership marketing tool**. (17)*

*We've got that magazine that comes out each fortnight and you've got the website. We probably get a couple of texts during the week about things that are going on. **SMS is probably the most uncomplicated way of doing things. If something is on, you can make sure that members know about it**, as well as locally we've got a newsletter that comes out every couple of weeks. They do like that magazine and the newsletters and the texting and so if there's anything sort of significant we always write to them too. So they've got two or three ways of finding out what's going on. (17)*

*We're right into the social media, both in LinkedIn and Facebook and Twitter. We've got a great internal communications team. We do have an intranet service linking all our offices on an internal email. And we have regular meetings, we get all the managers, those regional managers into Brisbane at least four times a year; we have a monthly teleconference with them all but our managers here are expected to travel. We get out into the districts on a very regular basis as well and vice versa, there's a couple of regional people here today for various meetings. So there's a two way street. **We use grower information meetings and shed meetings on a very regular basis.** And then **we have a 1800 number for our members to phone**. (17)*

You're probably getting more digital stuff with Facebook and Twitter and things like that; not just the written word anymore. [Interviewer: And do you find your members are right up on that stuff?] Not too much; no. No, probably most members aren't that interested in Facebook and anything like that; they're probably a little bit old. They stick to more traditional methods I suppose. ***We've done things on YouTube and things like that, but I don't know if the members have got too excited about that. I think they still prefer a face to face situation more than anything.*** *(17)*

We've done things on YouTube and things like that, but I don't know if the members have got too excited about that. I think they still prefer face to face more than anything.

Email, text and still phone calls, fax too. I'd say only about thirty per cent of our growers are on email so I'm still doing a lot of faxing as well, believe it or not. [Interviewer: that's effective?] It has to be, we get straight to them I guess, doesn't it? Worst comes to worst, I ring them. Or we SMS them. It's unbelievable how good that service works, because they've all got their mobile phones on them, and these days they're all pretty well smart phones. (18)

……….the associate membership group [others in the supply chain who are service providers, rather than producers]. They have access to communication with our members through our newsletter which we just swapped back to having a hardcopy mailed out in the post as opposed to an electronic one. ***The associate members then can, for a small fee, put in flyers in that magazine as an insert.*** *So that's a way of communicating with members and it's an important service that we provide. In fact,* ***that's one of the reasons why we've gone back to the hardcopy as opposed to the electronic one.*** *(21)*

We've just gone back to hard-copy newsletters. It also means you absolutely hugely increase your readership. *Electronic communications are read by the person who mans the computer whereas something that's sitting on the coffee table is read by at least all members of the family. Whereas, if you go through your emails and you're really busy and somebody sends you a newsletter about something you might look at the headline and then flick it away and it never gets looked at again. (21)*

If there's a good function on it's actually done by ring around, not just by email*. So they'll ring people up and get people to attend. So I think the communication internally is not bad. (21)*

If we're going to have an activity, you do need to have flyers in shops and stuff like that and have email contact. ***The thing that I think gets people in most is a personal phone call. They have to make a personal commitment to come****. Whereas the other ways, it's I will come if I feel like it. If you ring people up, and its hard work; if you ring people up and say: 'This is on; can you come?', you're likely to get a personal commitment to come. (21)*

We send out member wide emails weekly. We try to keep them updated with what's happening. (22)

How often/when do we communicate?

The timing of an association's communication can be just as important as the content of the message or the manner in which it is sent. Timing has several aspects: (i) how often does the communication occur? More often is better than less often. (ii) How regular or irregular is the communication? Communication that occurs on a known date is more effective than communication that is ad-hoc or irregular. This predictability is particularly important for meetings, which can be scheduled ahead into the member's diary. (iii) What time of day and for what duration is the meeting scheduled? Be considerate of the working rhythms of the association members and choose a time that suits the majority. Set a finishing time as well as a starting time, and stick to it, remembering that people have other pressures on their time. When an association invites members to an event such as a meeting, it is setting up a social contract as to how much of their time will be required. Honour that time contract if you wish your members (and their families) to continue to be supporters of the association.

> ***Our Board tries to meet face to face twice a year. (1)***
>
> *Board meetings are held quarterly, face-to-face four times a year as a minimum. But we'll have at least two phone linkups with everyone. Some years it may just be the six times a year. The only general meeting on a routine is the AGM. We have had a few exceptional meetings we've called when it's been voting on levies and marketing etc. (3)*
>
> ***When documentation goes out to industry, the time frame for consultation is too short.*** *Then our Executive Officer is trying to get views out of the industry when they haven't adequately been supplied with the necessary information on which to base their thoughts or comments. (5)*
>
> ***We have six to eight meetings a year at Board level.*** *(5)*
>
> *A few meetings ago we scheduled to meet every six weeks, but that's already been disrupted. Prior to that it was as and when required, and I'm trying to get them out of that, saying, 'You blokes are elected by your industry. You're your own body. It's not the Minister's body. You tell them when your meetings are scheduled, and they should be able to fall in line with that. Unless there's something special and the Minister wants to talk to you, sure. The Chairman should be free to do that.' , 'Stop it; it's your organisation. You set your dates. Make them known to the Minister and the fisheries Department, then they communicate with us.' That's how we should do things. You've got to have terms clearly laid out as to how we do business. (5)*
>
> *Not as regular as I'd like. We used to have them [Board meetings] every month, but now it's every three or four months, depending on what's happening.* ***If there are no dramas going on, we don't have them.*** *(6)*
>
> ***If you've got a big issue where somebody's pocket is going to be hurt, they'll have big meetings and the communication is good.*** *But then you'll have 12 months where you'll only have the one port meeting or one general meeting. (9)*

It's increased because it's been an active decision by the executive to say we want to communicate back to our ports and our members more than what had been done previously. (9)

In terms of frequency of association meetings, I think it's very good, and has improved significantly over the last five years. (9)

When documentation goes out to industry, the time frame for consultation is too short.

It would be at least – in the summer time when we're fishing you'd have a meeting pretty regularly once every two months. Then in the winter time when things cut back a bit, you'd probably have one every three months. So up to five / six meetings a year. (9)

I would say that [the association] would meet almost once a month over the course of a year. At a committee level you would easily get up to around 12 meetings per year. Across the course of a year you would have maybe three to four rounds of Port meetings each year across various issues as well. And obviously the email communication flows daily. Phone calls are daily. At least quarterly written updates. (9)

They have to communicate with the clubs and the members more. (12)

The Exec Committee meetings are called as needed, but it would probably average at once a month. The Board is four to five times a year. There's one AGM a year, in the fall. (14)

One of the big things that people get out of the meetings was when you had that time after the meeting where growers could sit back and have a beer with their peers.

We meet once a month. We have a director's meeting. General meetings are just the AGM. And we have a pre-season meeting and an end of season meeting. If there's any issues that we need have meetings with, like we had a couple of extra meetings this year just issues based, if we need to get information to growers. (18)

We try and organise three to four meetings a year for the general members. I mean they're not scheduled at any particular time, but they try and do three to four a year. The management - I would say that's about five or six and usually it's to work out your general meetings and any issues. (19)

One of the big things that we saw people getting out of the meetings was when you had that time after the meeting where growers could sit back and have a beer with their peers. *They were discussing, say, planting and giving tips etc., and what we were finding was that people were getting just as much if not more value out of that social side after the meeting. So we wanted to make sure that that opportunity was there every time. And not after 11:00pm, but somewhere between 8:30pm and 9:00pm, because most people can't sit and listen for much longer than two hours and pay full attention. And when people know that meetings are limited, quick, and thorough, they don't mind coming along. Then those that want to stay behind and have a beer can do that. Some of the older fellows don't get out very much, so it ends up being* *good for them, so they'll come back. Whereas if they walk out half asleep without the chance to talk to anyone, they won't want to waste their time coming back again. (20)*

Who communicates, and with whom?

If an association is a natural extension of the business of each association member, then every member should (a) be privy to all of the association's affairs, and (b) be able to communicate with the association as and when they choose. Through the election of office bearers and sometimes an executive officer, ordinary members delegate, to those people, responsibility for more mundane operational matters. However that delegation should never remove an ordinary member's right to know about, and have a say in, the affairs of their association.

You get emailed when there's an issue; a newsletter goes to everyone. ***The newsletter goes to all commercial fishermen.*** *The newsletter is published by [State peak body]. They used to have a bi-monthly magazine which was too expensive. Now they're down to a – I think it's every 2 months a pamphlet is mailed out, it's a hard copy A4 which goes to all the commercial fishermen. (4)*

With the fisherman, get on the phone and talk to them or face to face. That's what fisherman really respect. The younger fishermen get social media; older fishermen do not.

We don't use SMS purely because I don't think there's a database. There's only 40 members that the emails go to. Like I'm the President of the Dongara association which is a member of [regional association], so the email might come out on marine parks. It will come to me, just to me and then it's up to me to then forward that on, and that where it can break down. The problem is does it get out? If the person sits on it they mightn't forward it out; that's the problem. (4)

With the fisherman I'm always saying get on the phone and talk to them or face to face. That's what fisherman really respect and like. The younger fishermen get it [social media], older fishermen do not. So you have to break that down into two categories of age and technology savvy fishermen but the face to face coastal tours; the fishermen get together in the room, sit down, have things explained to them. I think it's by far the best model to use for fishermen. (4)

I think even old people appreciate new media, in my experience. Smart phones and i-pads are getting to 60/70% of the population. (4)

There's still one thing that is not developed, for the whole of the State fishing industry, a thing called a unit register. Now a unit register identifies all the owners and holders of fishing concessions in the State. No one actually knows who owns everything. So when you want to consult, you're consulting with FBL holders or MFL holders but you may not be consulting with a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant or whoever who actually owns the licence because then they lease it out. (4)

Stuff gets distributed [from the peak body] to the sectors and then it's up to the sectors to distribute it further and whether the members actually read it is up to them. (7)

A lot of fishermen are just that; they get out and fish and don't understand a lot of the big words and politics behind it. And ***if you've got somebody good in the right positions that can explain them and break them down into English for some people, which I think we have now. It's made it a lot better.*** *(8)*

There's an email chain set up between the EO and the port members *of [peak body] who represent each port but going further as I said, I'd send them up to the president and they can throw them out to their members so to touch everyone. (9)*

I'm finding that as our membership increases, it's more challenging. I sometimes think, 'Oh, I haven't talked to x for a while, I'd better pick up the phone!'

Yes. [Our association] has very regular meetings committee members attend. Other individuals from the Ports – the members – are encouraged to attend as observers if they would like to. The details of those are made widely available. There's often Port meetings that [our association] runs. They won't necessarily run six or seven individual Port meetings, they might run two or three where you've got groups of Fishers from different Ports coming together as well to put their views across on different issues, so I think the opportunities are provided.) (9)

[Interviewer: Do you have scheduled or regular meetings where the associate members can attend regularly to talk about issues?] ***Associate members can't attend unless they're invited to. How do they know the meeting is on?*** *[Interviewer: Do you hold public meetings?} Very rarely. (10)*

The suggestion is that we talk to our members and find out what they want, which does happen. (12)

I would love to see the members [of the peak body] talking personally to the members of the [subsidiary member] club at meetings and fishing outings and social events and things. (12)

[Interviewer: The proceedings of the various meetings, either your Executive or Board meetings, are they available on your web for members only?] We have been thinking about a web page just for members, and haven't come to a decision around that. (14)

I'm finding that as our membership increases, it's more challenging to keep the liaison going between everyone. Because as we get more members, I sometimes think, 'Oh, I haven't talked to x for a while; I'd better pick up the phone!' (14)

We need to find out what members think, and the best way to do that is to have a beer together or sit around and have dinner or whatever.

[Interviewer: Do you have a members-only section on your website?] Yes. Some of it is password protected. [Interviewer: And are Board minutes put up there for members to see?] Yes, they're on the website. ***The financial statements are issued to all members at our Board of Directors meeting and are totally reviewed at the AGA. Everything is open and transparent. There is nothing withheld from any member****. (15)*

We decided with an active policy that we would try to communicate better with a whole range of members. (16)

I think that your organisation Board members and management need to be very active amongst the members, and they need to be available to members when issues come to hand. (18)

I think the fact that there is a manager available whenever they need it, and the SMS with the ongoing information on their mobiles has been very, very well received. (18)

When commenting on their association's internal communication, most interviewees for this research tell us about the avenues of communication from the association to its members. Very few talk about the avenues of communication from members to the association. Yet, effective communication is bi-directional. As much effort needs to be put into listening to the members as is put into conveying information to them.

We need to find out what members think, you know, and the best way to do that is to have a beer together *or sit around and have dinner or whatever and engaging with members. (21)*

This engagement between members helps to establish and strengthen the 'social capital' of the group. Members informally exchange information, thereby assisting each other and enhancing the value of belonging. These exchanges are one to one, one to many, many to many and many to one. They are as unscripted as they are vital to the establishment of trust and the feeling of belonging.

To ensure that members can be trusted, some form of socialisation is essential. Only through expertise can one attain the rewards that come from belonging. A set of social and normative pressures encourages voluntary instruction. In practice, expert members teach novices because of the belief that one should repay one's own *socialisation with the socialisation of others, the satisfaction of generating shared interest, the status rewards of contact with less knowledgeable people, and the claim that one's own community will be extended by creating other experts. The challenge for the novice is that, to become an expert, one must spend time in the company of others that you acknowledge to be expert. Thus affiliation develops through collective events sponsored by the association where such expertise can be shared.* (Fine & Holyfield, 1996:28).

Where do we communicate?

If an association wants to reach non-members, potential members, or luke-warm members, one needs to go to them. We cannot expect them to come to the association. Further, people are much more willing to engage when they are in their comfort zone rather than out of it. Therefore associations wishing to communicate will find their efforts more productive if they give thought to the best location.

If you really want to talk to some of these Fishermen, you're better off sitting on the edge of the wharf. *(5)*

You've got to remember that people sit on the back of the ute and gather information amongst themselves *and something that has been said at the meeting that nobody's comfortable with saying "I don't understand what the hell you just said"; at the back of the ute is where they start talking about those things. And if you could get the people - there's probably 5 or 6 in the fisheries - that are sort of the spokespeople on the back of the ute that talk, and if you can target those people, you'll start getting some of that information out there. Communication is an important thing in all of this and we don't have any. (8)*

If you really want to talk to some of these fishermen, you're better off sitting on the edge of the wharf.

Between the trips and official meetings, we probably have at least 12 full-on meetings a year. Then we'd have maybe another 12 with smaller groups. But remember, some of these meetings are over three or four days, so you get a lot of stuff knocked out over three or four days. We've found the most work, the most productive work, gets done on fishing trips after everyone's finished fishing, in the first hour and a half before we let them have a beer. (11)

Our staff in Brisbane are very, very mobile. We engage with growers on the farm, at shed meetings, at information meetings, on a very regular basis. (17)

What are the blockages to effective communication?

It is quite common, when an association wants to get its message across, to 'turn up the volume', by making the message stronger, or louder, or more frequent. Greater gains in improved communication can occur if we understand, remove, or circumvent blockages.

Blockages can include cost, time, capacity, literacy (including e-literacy), and competing demands.

> ***The last meeting the only reason I got to go was because someone else paid for my airfare to go to another meeting.*** *I think it's predicated on resources. I mean one guy paid for it out of his own pocket. I managed to piggy back on something else. (1)*

> *I get some of my Board members coming to me [the Exec Officer] saying, "I'm really pissed off. It's obvious that these guys [other Board members] haven't read the Board papers [in advance of the meeting] and I've invested my personal time". And I've got guys flicking through papers in here and they're asking for points of clarification. And I say well, you've got to raise it with your peers, go to the Chairman. So there is some barrier about communication there, because they aren't raising it. We've got to coach them a little bit. (1)*

The executive committee all have access to computers and are quite literate in that area. But once you move outside the executive, it falls away fairly quickly.

> ***Having web portals sounds great; but nobody use them. Unless there's a specific reason, unless you've got something that's being continuously updated and there's a reason to go there, industry struggles to continually go to an industry based website.*** *I can't remember the last time I was on our [named] one. It hardly ever gets changed. (1)*

> *I think we've got to drag our members into the website more often. It's unfortunate that we had some issue with it on start up and people became disillusioned. They'd have one try at getting in and if that didn't work they'd say it was useless and give up. It's fairly indicative of our membership. They're not particularly IT savvy. (5)*

> *If you just rely on the Council members or just relying on sector associations, there appears that* ***there might be some gatekeepers in these organisations*** *and so things would get down to a certain level and* ***then it doesn't seem to get more widely distributed*** *and that's been an ongoing problem for lots of years. (7)*

> *While we like to think that everyone has got access to a computer and they should all just jump on the website and see what the latest news is, the reality is that* ***the age group of people that we're sort of aiming at****, a lot of them probably get the weather report [from their computers] and that's about it. (7)*

> *I just wish more of them had better communications, having more access to a computer or the internet so that as information becomes readily available. In the past there's only been one or two people that's actually managed and run the association; where now we've got five or six people that are more involved. But I would like to see another ten or a dozen, and* ***the only way you could get them involved is on a regular communication basis, and the only way to do that is to have electronic access to these people. And I don't think they've got it, or the majority don't have it****. Half the Fishery is not electronically switched on. Information is power.* ***The [Association] executive committee all have access to computers and are quite literate in that***

> ***area. But once you move outside the executive, it falls away fairly quickly.*** *My ultimate dream would be to have every Fisher connected to a computer, and just general discussions on issues and topics. And you could have regular feedback from just about anyone in the fishery about anything. (8)*

The information that's put out has increased considerably. It's gone a lot more electronic. How some of the members receive that probably hasn't changed, because they don't have access to it.

> ***Some of our membership doesn't have email or computers, and some do. So no matter which way we go, we're going to miss out on some of the contact with the members. The members that do have internet are reluctant to receive stuff direct, because they'd rather have it sent through their mail. And some have a fear of providing their details within the organisation.*** *So there is a mixture, and again, it's largely to do with the demographics of the membership. (12)*

> ***It's gone a lot more electronic. The information that's put out has increased considerably. How some of the members receive that probably hasn't changed, because they don't have access to it. (12)***

> *Now I think about it we've sort of fallen into the trap that okay, we'll just send the email out to the email broadcast list for the executive members and it doesn't go out to all members. (21)*

The psychological literature on relationships includes a model by Will Schutz called 'FIRO-B', standing for *Fundamental Interpersonal Relationships – Behaviour*. What this model makes perfectly clear is that there is a sequential relationship that occurs between any two individuals or between an individual member and their association. That sequential relationship says that *commitment* must be preceded by the opportunity to *influence* and *be influenced*. That *influence,* in turn*,* must be preceded by *inclusion*. Unless a member is made to feel included, and is seen by others as being included, any attempt at influence will fail, and commitment to the organisation cannot occur. (For more on this model, FIRO-B: see **Appendix 6**).

> *It comes down to communicating. On occasion years ago, I or other executive members made a concerted effort to go and communicate with these people. To drink a beer with them and talk to them; that's all they're looking for. Some of those people will be on the executive in a year or two. (20)*

And the key to *inclusion* is to be accepted and to be listened to. And face-to-face communication is where inclusion starts. And this needs to occur at the outset of the relationship. Why? Because at the very beginning of a relationship, say the first time a potential member thinks about joining the association, that very first experience will strongly influence the decision of that potential member. There is an old adage that says: **'I may not**

remember what you said to me; I'll always remember how you made me feel!' So how is your association making each and every member feel at their first moment of contact?

> *Sociable organisations enable voluntary communities of rapport to become established. Groups that engage in serious leisure are more likely to become close-knit organisations. These are groups that we join because we choose to do so. Sociable organisations allow us to choose our level of engagement. Participation is a sociable organisation must be rewarding over time. Without such reward, people disengage. It is the organisation that provides the reward, rather than the activity itself. Otherwise, people are likely to engage in the activity outside of the organisation. Whilst it might appear that the organisation is incidental and the activity is essential, in highly cohesive organisations, it is the organisation and the relationships it embodies that are essential, and the activity is incidental* (Fine & Holyfield, 1996:32).

To drink a beer with them and talk to them; that's all they're looking for. Some of those people will be on the executive in a year or two.

One of the associations case-studied for this research was established 21 years ago. Upon its formation, its first act was to gather all of its members together for a five day workshop, the major emphasis of which was learning how to communicate with each other, how to analyse problems and how to make decisions. Unstated, though essential in this initial gathering, was the act of mutual respect and inclusion.

One of the authors of this current Report was contracted, a decade ago, to Meat and Livestock Australia to support the setting up of fifteen beef producer groups across northern Australia. Called 'BeefPlan', the project grouped together between five and twelve beef producing enterprises from a region to act as self-driven action research groups. Each of these groups began its life in a face-to-face workshop learning a suite of skills on internal communication and decision making. The first application of these skills was then to define the group's purpose and develop a strategic plan to give effect to that purpose. Says the co-ordinator of one of these groups:

> *A large part of what makes [our group] work is the way we are set up for success. The initial meetings involve a workshop on meeting and decision skills. The results of the first 1-2 workshops are respect for all group members' knowledge and experience, as well as an understanding of how to conduct democratic meetings where everyone contributes. The process works – it is unique and to my knowledge none of us had seen anything like it and we are nearly all people who are involved in a lot of groups. The result seems to be firstly that we have come to know each other better and respect each other so that we enjoy coming together, and also that when we come together our*

meetings are to the point, don't waffle, are meaningful and we feel not only satisfied but that we have achieved something.

*[For more on these meeting and decision tools, see **Appendix 5**]

In general terms, to ensure that any sent message is effective, the general rules is:
'Multiple methods, to multiple people, multiple times'.

A less obvious blockage to communication is the absence of common or shared language: It is stating the obvious that effective communication is aided by shared language. Yet, an important and subtle component of shared language is shared meaning. Shared meaning, in turn, is often the result of shared experiences. And these shared experiences become shared history, increasing our sense of belonging. The older an association becomes, provided it continues to recruit younger members, and the more diverse its membership base becomes, the less likely that all members will share the same experiences or history within the association or outside it. Yet that sense of shared history can be strengthened by exchange of stories between older members and newer ones. Through exposure to oral histories, yesterday's stories become today's shared language.

There's less clarity because some new members haven't been through the system like the old members had. (19)

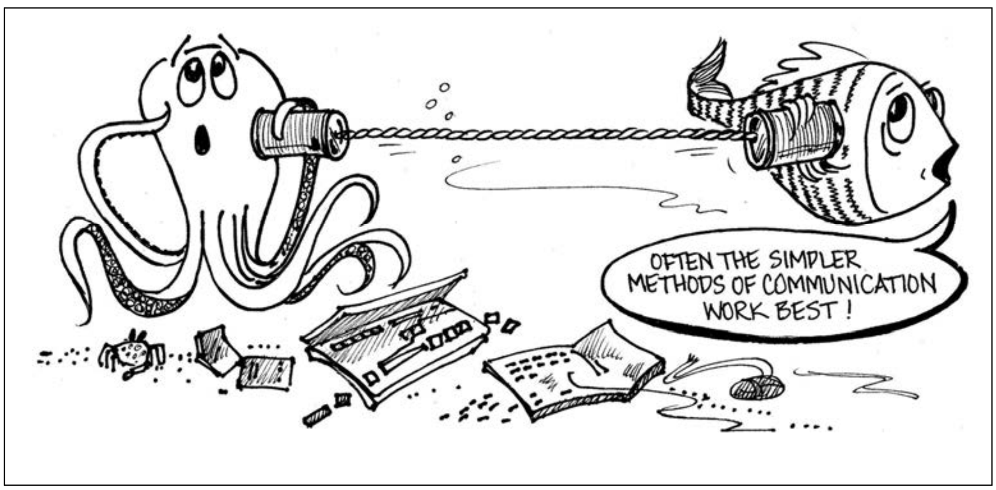
Now half of the members are new and they haven't been through all that [early information sharing]. They haven't done the black hat psychological training; they haven't done the Myers Briggs psychological assessment. Half the members have, and that causes some problems in that you go to reintroduce an old idea for the new members and the new members will lap it up, but the old members aren't interested. (19)

Communication is a bit like line fishing. We put bait (the message) on a hook and toss it overboard. Unlike line fishing, however, the sender of the message does not know if the intended target has taken the 'bait'. In fact the sender of the message does not know if they are fishing in the right spot, using the right bait, or, in fact, if there are any fish there at all. Continuing the 'fishing/bait' analogy, the sender of the message has a much greater chance of the bait being taken if they 'burley' the water first. For example, an SMS or phone message to give a 'heads-up' about a more detailed message to follow. Readers will think of many more 'burleying' techniques.

Recommendation 24:

a. It is desirable for any group to begin its life with members in a face-to-face workshop, establishing a sense of inclusion as well as protocols for internal communication.

b. Once interpersonal relationships have been established (though not before) other forms of internal communication, including a range of digital tools, can be brought into play. To ensure the messages are received, aimed for multiple methods, multiple times. Those communication tools will have greater value if we 'burley the water' first.
c. As much effort needs to be put into mechanisms whereby members can communicate with their association as is put into the association's communication with its members.
d. Shared language can be developed through the sharing of stories. By having older members share their oral histories, newer members developed an increased appreciation of the work of the association that preceded them.
e. Include, as part of an annual audit, an internal survey of member's satisfaction with the frequency, content and media of internal communication, seeking suggestions for improvement.



Case Study 23: Perfect Ports Association

Perfect Ports Association (PPA) does not exist. It represents the best of what has been learned in an FRDC-sponsored research project into healthy industry associations and leadership succession, and is, in part, a composite of a number of associations. So what follows is fiction. The intent of this fiction is to provide readers with a portrait of an ideal association. Or at least to stimulate thinking.

PPA is a producer level association, comprised of 27 family-owned enterprises. Located in a small rural community, it has been in existence for over 45 years, founded largely by the previous generation of the present members. There are only three licence holders who are not presently members of PPA. The average age of its members is 55, with an aged spread from 22 years to 78 years. Membership is open to all of those with a direct interest in PPA and who directly drawn income from its fishery. It has on its book, 80 individual members, both full and associate. Forty percent of those individuals are female, often the wives, partners or daughters of licence holders. There are two women on the six-member Board. Twenty five percent of the members are aged below 40, making PPA somewhat unique among industry associations. (Reasons for this will be explained shortly). One Board member is aged 25.

Each year, at its AGM, PPA revisits its vision, checking with its members that it is still fresh and appropriate. Its current published vision is as follows:

'Perfect Ports Association exists to advance the economic and social benefits to its members whilst pursuing the sustainability of the fishery so that future generations can enjoy the same benefits.'

This vision appears on PPA's official letterhead and on all correspondence, both hard-copy and digital. It serves as a beacon to which all association effort is directed. It also serves to anchor the associations rolling five year strategic plan.

The business of the association is conducted through a Board, a part-time Exec Officer, and a number of sub-committees. Each functional unit has clearly documented roles, supported by KPIs. People take these roles seriously. The Board consists of a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Monitor, plus two other non-defined Board positions. The role of Monitor has only recently been introduced with the responsibility of keeping a watchful eye on process of Board meetings, membership engagement and other intangibles. The Board also has an ex-officio seventh member, changed annually – somebody outside of the seafood industry yet who brings valued expertise to Board considerations. This year, the ex-officio Board member is a media specialist. Last year it was a solicitor.

Roles are reviewed annually to ensure that collectively all roles are adequate to maintain pursuit of the vision, and that there are no role overlaps or omissions.

PPA has six sub-committees. Their areas of responsibility respectively are: (i) Product marketing, (ii) Co-operative purchasing, (iii) Financial sustainability, (iv) Fishery sustainability, (v) Lobbying and public relations, (vi) Member engagement and satisfaction. Of the 80 individual members, 42 are, at any one time, on one of these sub-committees. Each Board member sits on one of these sub-committees, though in no cases are they chair of those sub-committees, a deliberate policy that will be elaborated on shortly.

Guiding the overall governance of the association is its Constitution. Based on the model rules mandated in the State legislation, the association ensures that the Constitution is a working and practical document, aiding, not constraining the governance of the association. Where changing circumstances find the Constitution inadequate, it is changed at the AGM. This has happened at least seven times in the history of PPA.

PPA has two classes of membership; full members and associate members. Membership is open to individuals, not corporations. Full members are required to be people presently actively fishing and who are licence holders. Associate members are people whose income is derived from involvement in the industry. Associate members can include investor licence holders (more on this shortly), skippers and crew without a licence, and any person in the value-chain whose associate membership is approved by the Board. PPA presently counts, among its associate members, researchers, ships chandler, and a fisheries consultant. At the AGM, full-members get two votes, whilst associate members get one vote. One of the six Board members must be drawn from the associate membership. That person then gets full voting rights as a Board member. Of the 80 individual members, there are 25 licence holders (the other two are investor licence holders), and 55 associate members.

Applications for membership need to be approved by the Board. Membership is provisional (without voting rights) for two years. Membership fees are not fixed. The philosophy of PPA is that it is a natural extension of the business of every member, and therefore both full and associate members benefit socially and economically. Each year the Board strikes a budget for the forthcoming year's activities. This budget takes into account current economic conditions and hence members capacity to pay. PPA Board policy is that 50% of its budget will come from member contributions. So the fees are then set accordingly. (The source of the remaining 50% will be covered shortly). Of the total contributed by members, 60% is contributed by the 25 licence-holder full members (on a scale tied to GVP) and 40% is contributed pro-rata by the 55 associate members.

PPAs fishery is fixed in terms of the permitted number of licence-holders. The Board is very conscious of the trend to aging in the industry and the difficulty of attracting new and younger licence holders. With a fixed pool of licence-holders, retiring licence holders are encouraged to sell their licences as opposed to being land-based investors. The strong social ethos and very supportive local community has led to PPAs policy being very successful in this regard. To support this policy, PPA is in the fortunate financial position of being able to buy out any retiring licences and then making these available, through a ballot system to younger active fishers, at rates that are better than otherwise commercially available. PPA's philosophy, underpinned by its vision, is to ensure its community is socially sustainable, not just economically sustainable. Young families and fishery sustainability are inextricably linked.

The 'member engagement and satisfaction' committee's responsibility is to pay attention to the social health of PPA. Recognising that governance knowledge can accumulate in the heads of one or two people, it maintains a policy of mentoring and rotation to reduce this vulnerability. (More on this shortly). It pays close attention to the satisfaction of each and every member, recognising that it is much easier to retain a member than recruit a new one. It is also very conscious of each potential new member to PPA, and does its best to keep the 'welcome mat' out, inviting potential members to PPA social functions and as guests to its AGM. This committee also pays close attention to its provisional members, nurturing their engagement and provisional membership towards granted membership. The attraction of progressing towards granted membership is coupled with the responsibilities that each provisional member and member has in being an active contributor towards the collective good. This committee also has in its charter the following responsibilities: (i) ensuring no cliques or subgroups form in detriment to the majority, (ii) ensuring that the PPA's Code of Conduct is understood and adhered to by members, and (iii) that the PPA's conflict resolution protocol is published, known and used objectively and fairly should any disputes arise.

In return for their membership fee and in-kind contribution, PPA members get a range of benefits. Initially formed to lobby the government for regulation and protection of the fishery and the industry, its benefits have since broadened. Functioning as a co-operative, it operates a single-desk marketing service on behalf of its members; it purchased goods and services at attractive bulk rates – consultancy services, insurance, training, ships chandlery, fuel, etc. As one of the major employer sectors in its community, it has the political and financial strength to lobby for and obtain a range of social services (improved child-care facilities, health services, aged care) for its community. Of major importance to its members and its community, the PPA sees itself as the proactive protector, not only of its fishery, but also of the social fabric. The PPA annual charity ball, seafood festival and art show, now in its fifteenth year, attracts over 1000 visitors and boosts the community's and the association's coffers considerably. Celebrity chefs vie for the honour of being proclaimed 'Seafood Challenge Champion'. Of this event, the PPA is justifiably proud.

Discount benefits (which are very attractive) are available to members only. All other benefits generated by the PPA are available to all. The sustainability of the community is recognised as prerequisite to the sustainability of the association. PPA conducts an annual survey of its community to see what new benefits or services PPA might be able to broker or provide.

Provision of these benefits to members and community requires considerable effort. And that is provided willingly and voluntarily by members of PPA and the community. In fact, the Southern Seafood Ball, though initiated by PPA, is managed by a dedicated community committee of which only 25% comes from within the PPA. Financial strength of the PPA comes from four sources. Fifty per cent of its annual budget comes from membership. Of that contribution 10% is quarantined into a financial reserve. Many years ago, PPA Board made the prudent decision to gradually build up a reserve so that there was at least 12 months of operating to fall back on. Prudent financial management has seen this reserve grow into a now substantial sum, thereby permitting PPA to purchase the licences of retiring fishers and then make them available, at less than commercial finance rates, to younger fishers. The interest from those loans serves to gradually build that reserve, since they are above those available commercially in the market, yet the loans are made available at lower than commercial rates (since the association takes no administration fee in managing these loans – they are managed by a dedicated community member who is a retired accountant with a son in the fishing industry). The annual charity ball and sea-food festival, in addition to supporting local charities and services (such as aged care, thereby enabling retired fishers to remain in the community), provides a healthy contribution to PPA's annual operating costs.

The fourth source of PPA income is a bi-product of the resource boom. Alert to the experience of other fisheries, where those with a Masters ticket would be poached by the emerging off-shore oil and gas boom, PPA took the bold step of tackling this threat head-on. Keen not to lose skippers to the resources industry, yet acknowledging its attraction, PPA acts as a recruiting broker to that industry, providing skippers on short-term contracts in the fishing-off-season, and taking a management fee for doing so. Years of knowledge and experience re weather, tides, currents, ocean floor topography, location of marine cables, etc become a cashable resource that PPA and its members are able to tap into, whilst ensuring its retains its skilled people.

PPA keeps a very close watch on anything that might positively or negatively impact upon its social and economic sustainability. It makes a point of ensuring its members are involved in local Government, and maintain healthy personal relationships with senior government figures (both elected and bureaucrats) whose jurisdictions are relevant. It works hard to ensure it is a good community citizen at both local and State levels, volunteering to have representation on any committees of enquiry. It protects its 'social licence to operate' by being one of the first associations in Australia to obtain sustainability certification from the Marine Stewardship Council. Where appropriate it forms relationships with other bodies where there is benefit in collective strength and shared knowledge.

PPA's Board is conscious that it operates in an ever-changing environment within which today's technology, knowledge and skills may not be sufficient for tomorrow. It also recognises that the increasing complexity of its operating environment requires an increasing level of professionalism in its governance. The Board invests in each Board member through appropriate professional training, including Institute of Company Directors training. Training is also extended, as appropriate to the Exec Officer. As part of its annual audit of its capacity, the Board remains alert to emerging training needs and technology acquisitions.

One of the strengths of the PPA is the extent to which its governance and decision-making is decentralised. Probationary members as well as affirmed members understand that they are expected to give their time and expertise in addition to their membership fees. As stated earlier, PPA positions itself to be a natural extension of everyone's business. Hence members willingly contribute time and energy, since they are investing in the sustainability of their community, their association, and their industry. Those members who are not presently on one of the six sub-committees know that next time round they probably will be. Passive membership is not part of PPA's fabric or philosophy. The Board long ago abandoned the very formal standardised meeting processes which are based on the old Westminster system. Instead it uses modern participative processes, designed to encourage the hesitant and foster confidence. Decisions of the Board are only made after wide consultation, so that there are no surprises. Rather than using the more familiar formal processes of committee decision-making, the Board and sub-committees use more contemporary and participative decision tools, (such as those found in 'Co-operative Conversations', thereby reducing the risk of split-votes.

PPA is very open to new ideas. One of the roles of the Monitor is to ensure, that at each Board meeting, the number of questions asked is not exceeded by the number of statements made, thereby keeping the Board curious and constantly open to new information. At each Board meeting, it invites as a guest, an outsider. At the end of the Board meeting the outsider is invited to give the Board feedback and offer any ideas that might seem suitable. Outsiders, when they visit PPA in this small community as invited guests, do not stay at the local motel or hotel. Rather PPAs philosophy is that its guest be billeted in the home of one of the Board members as a family guest, thereby creating friendships that give PPA a broad network of contacts and friendships in the broader outside world. Further, when any PPA member travels, they are encouraged to visit a fishery or a co-op with a view to searching for new ideas. Of particular value to the PPA are any newer or younger members. Generally better educated and with greater awareness and comfort with digital technologies, they are encouraged from the very beginning to share their ideas. And the PPA is willing to try new things, acknowledging that sometimes they fail. However, that is no reason not to try.

A problem for many associations in the seafood industry is leadership. Too few people are willing to take on the roles and they are then stuck there for too long. PPA foresaw this problem early and took policy steps to avoid it. One of the biggest deterrents for potential leaders is the confidence, knowledge and time involved, particularly when compared with that asked of an ordinary member. Second is the number of years some leaders are in the role. PPA's strategy for the former was to grow the skills, confidence and responsibilities of every member so that no member is passive. This is aided by PPA having a strong social ethos and operating out of a small community where people are known to each other. So PPA shares the load and grows its future leaders without them necessarily being aware that is happening. Further PPA's constitution stipulates that no-one can hold any elected position for more than two consecutive terms. That means that leaders can retire graciously and impersonally. By holding split-half elections, where only half of the executive are up for renewal at any one time, governance of the association is a combination of freshness and experience. Within the Board and the respective committees, the roles of chair, monitor, and secretary are rotated, so the burden is further shared that way. For any elected position there is a position elect (who will take up the position in the next cycle, and whose present role is to shadow the incumbent), the current office holder, and the immediate past office holder (who can mentor the incumbent and his/her successor).

PPA also realises it is part of a larger system of regional, State and National fishery associations and willingly shoulders its responsibility to ensure it grows leaders who can serve as representatives on those bodies. And of course, PPA past executives, those who have completed their two terms, are now available for higher levels of representation. This aids the influence that PPA is able to exert in its interests as well as positioning itself favourably in the information flows.

In relation to these higher level bodies and in relation to neighbouring local level associations, PPA understands the importance of boundary clarity. It is careful to understand the scope of interests and responsibilities of these other bodies and to ensure that boundaries, roles, and responsibilities are clearly delineated.

The 'glue' that binds an association's members is their shared interests and the internal communication. PPA uses multiple means of communication. It issues a monthly newsletter (hard-copy or digital depending on member-preference), it maintains a bulletin board on the jetty as well as in the ship's chandlery, and it issues emails to all on its data base as required. At the local club, every Friday evening, President's hour allows any current member, potential member, or community citizen to chat informally with the President and raise any issues they choose. This informal channel of communication is widely and successfully used. And the PPA maintains a web-site with a Facebook page, the latter being favoured by the younger members. And as part of its annual audit, PPA assesses member satisfaction with its communication methods.

PPA is not static. In a dynamic, complex and demanding world, it continually reinvents itself. Using the Snyder Model of Planning and Evaluation, it closely monitors and assesses, against key

Performance indicators, every facet of its performance. From that the Board itself is not excluded. The pursuit of continuous improvement is relentless.

By any measure PPA is a very successful association. This is no accident. It has been forward thinking, visionary, brave, inclusive and disciplined. The key to its success lies in the manner in which it has consciously endeared itself to its community, provided people with positive experiences and become an integral part of its social fabric.

Performance measurement

Does your association actively monitor and evaluate its performance against agreed goals?

As mentioned in an earlier topic, healthy industry associations have a purpose and a series of goals that direct all activity. Further, healthy industry associations monitor and evaluate association performance against that purpose and goals. No responsible skipper would put his boat on autopilot towards a bearing without occasionally checking. The more frequently this is done as normal practice, either by the skipper for his boat, or the committee for the association, the smaller the adjustments that will need to be made.

The topic of 'Performance Measurement' is closely allied to the topic of 'Continuous Improvement'. The former pertains to 'how are we travelling?'; the latter pertains to 'what will we do about it?'

> ***The association has to adopt an open policy, an open promise to its members about how it's going to operate. And ask the members to remind it at annual general meetings: 'Is it still doing this, and how is it going about it?***

Performance measurement might also be called monitoring and evaluation. The Snyder Model, found in **Appendix 4** is an excellent tool for monitoring on the run and for evaluation end-of-project. Monitoring-on-the-run is recommended for every association activity. It is helpful to have, in addition to the standard association roles of Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, etc., the role of Monitor. The Monitor is an observer of process, watching for what is working well, what is not working so well, what can be improved, and what can be learned.

One of the dimensions of a meeting that the Monitor might observe is the nature of the spoken dialogue. In particular, it can be helpful to keep a tally sheet table on which is recorded the name of every participant. Beside each name, keep a running tally of the number of statements made and the number of questions asked. At the end of the meeting, the Monitor can report back on their observations of how well the meeting went, including the tally scores.

What this process does is to bring into awareness who talks and how often, and who does not. Further, when the number of statements exceeds the number of questions, this signals an association that is missing out on the opportunities to learn, grow, and adapt.

What could be done

> ***It's almost like the association has to adopt an open policy, almost an open promise to its members about how it's going to operate. And ask the members to remind it, particular at annual general meetings: 'Is it still doing this, and how is it going about it?'*** *Almost a Code of*

*Conduct for the Board. And **within that Code of Conduct, have that flow chart there about that decision making process, and also report against it.** (1)*

It's a desirable ideal situation but it has not been considered a high priority compared to delivering the service to members. In other words we should do that but there's limited time, limited resources, let's get on with the job rather than – it's a luxury. That would apply to the next question (on continuous improvement) as well. (1)

From an EO perspective, we also need to have KPIs in there, which we don't.

If we said at the beginning of the year okay, the major goals for this year are bang, bang, and bang and then, half way through the year, one of our agenda items we just checked on how we were progressing with A, B and C and at the end of the year you check as to whether you'd ticked them off or not. And probably could be measured against a number of players in the industry for example, number of viable members by each sector. You could also measure it by the kilogram output and then you've got a snapshot of the industry each year for the whole sector. Number of employees is a very good one. We always struggle to find that out. (1)

***It wouldn't hurt to develop a process where members can actually identify the performance**. (1)*

[Interviewer: Because if we review the performance of our staff etc., it makes just as much sense to review the performance of the Board.] Absolutely, and this was something that was raised in our Directors' course. And I hope it's something that we implement. (4)

*I've never seen a report card. I've only just got on the Board, but I've never seen one. **From a Board perspective, once a year is all that's needed, I think. And the Chairman can do that. But from an EO perspective, we also need to have KPIs in there, which we don't.** Those KPIs need to be performance-based and tangible. So it gives him something to work towards. (5)*

The Board has to occasionally take a few minutes on self assessment of their performance. I don't think that would do any harm.

We were supposed to have a strategic plan in place last year, and it still hasn't been done. Because of going over to a new [fishery] management plan, all our energy and resources have been put into getting that up and running, because that's on a very tight time schedule, and to do these other things as well – and we're trying to do our Constitutional change as well – the strategic part has been almost impossible to do. I would say by the end of this year when the management plan is in place, then we can move our energies into doing the things that we're supposed to be doing. (5)

*I think, firstly the Board should, under an independent facilitator to lead discussions, update our strategic plan. A facilitator to lead members through an assessment over a couple hours, that's all. Then **the Board has to be able to occasionally take a few minutes to make a self assessment of their performance. I don't think that would do any harm.** (5)*

I would say the CEO as part of his role would have to be to do an internal review, and if he's not doing it, then we're remiss at a Board level of not having that done. (4)

You can't monitor something you don't have; so you've got to start with having an association that's working. (7)

We probably should evaluate it, I suppose. But it's hard to work out what you would measure it against, isn't it?

We'll have a communication plan. I mean they have to have a strategic plan and they have to be able to tick off against that. And then every now and then again just throw out to the membership and look for feedback from them as to whether they think you're doing a good job or not. So you've got to have a communication strategy and you've got to have a feedback strategy. (7)

***We probably should evaluate it, I suppose. But it's hard to work out what you would measure it against, isn't it?** (9)*

Maybe we get someone from the outside, not members I mean, like someone neutral, and get them to assess where we're at every twelve months or so. (9)

*The association will review my performance as an Executive Officer regularly, but **I don't think that they necessarily review the performance of the association overall in terms of the issues that it's been dealing with**. It's a relatively informal process of: what issues did we deal with, and did we deliver an effective result? **It's not necessarily asking: have we taken a broad strategic approach, and are we achieving against a broader strategy? I think they're lacking that.** The reason for that trend I think is that [the association] is still a pretty grassroots association, and they don't necessarily take that strategic, overarching approach. They're dealing with grassroots issues, whether it be around vessel survey etc. And they want to deal with problems that Fishermen are ringing up about. (9)*

***They could take a broader approach to planning, too**. (9)*

It would be nice to ask the members if they're reading the magazine. (10)

External evaluation. At the moment the evaluation is done basically by the Board. I think in the future it would be nice to have people come in and monitor our performance externally. (10)

[Interviewer: And do you have KPIs for your Executive Officer?] We don't, and unfortunately we don't even have – I'm involved in two or three other associations where we have an annual performance review of the Executive Director, which we don't do with this organisation. But we should. (14)

I think we should have a survey system, even if it's just twice a year, and there's a program called Survey Monkey that I use for something else. I just think that would be perfect for this, but then it would be getting people to do it. But you know, I think it would be worthwhile doing that. (19)

That's a deficiency that I'm particularly concerned about, that the organisation should have a regularly reviewed strategic plan.

We definitely need to survey our members, I think. I noticed on this page about surveying after each function or meeting, I think that's a really good idea. I just don't know how serious people would take it. I'm finding that because members are getting tired, they're becoming more informal. I've noticed that in the last five years. It's hard for them to take it seriously. ***I've just noticed even with our management meetings, they're not as serious as they used to be. It used to be like a Board meeting almost. We are less professional, less disciplined****. (19)*

That's a deficiency that I'm particularly concerned about, that the organisation should have a regularly reviewed strategic plan. *The CEO and the people in the office need to ensure that each of the commodity groups has a strategic plan that's developed by members, not just by the Board. And I think that's a deficiency. (21)*

What is presently done

[Do we review] the actual performance of the organisation? Probably 'no' and, to be honest, it wouldn't have been a bad idea to actually get that from the members themselves. *(1)*

We're just in a maintain capacity mode. I think the Board is yet to do its targets and how it's going to manage issues temporally. ***I'm just not experienced enough and again, I'm a little bit naive because my induction is not so good so I don't know where the running issues are and maybe that's a good conversation for me to have after this. (1)*** **[From a Board member of four years].**

At our AGM, we look at what we did for the year and we decide what we would like to do for the coming year whilst still remaining flexible to respond to any unexpected red tape or green tape. (2)

The R&D Committee decides on what projects we think would best benefit the industry. So essentially ***what happens is that the R&D Committee does a review of how the trends of the KPIs are tracking. Then each year they get a priority list back on which one would give the most bang for its buck****. DPI and CSIRO are the ones that usually pick up the majority of our work. So we would generate a list of priorities and then we'll put it out for tender, if you like, to the research world, saying, 'We've got these problems, can someone come and help us?' (3)*

*It's very proactive now and very adequate at the moment. We talk about our objectives towards strategic planning every time we have a meeting, and what things we're going to do to be able to achieve those objectives****. A rolling strategic plan is a logical thing for any association.*** *I think the focus has been in the past on putting out spot fires more than anything. Now, at each meeting we insist on talking about each of these objectives that we've identified in the strategic planning. (3)*

Strategic planning is done and that gets a review each year. And if there are avenues that we haven't done much on, then actually they get reviewed at the meeting prior to the conference each year. (3)

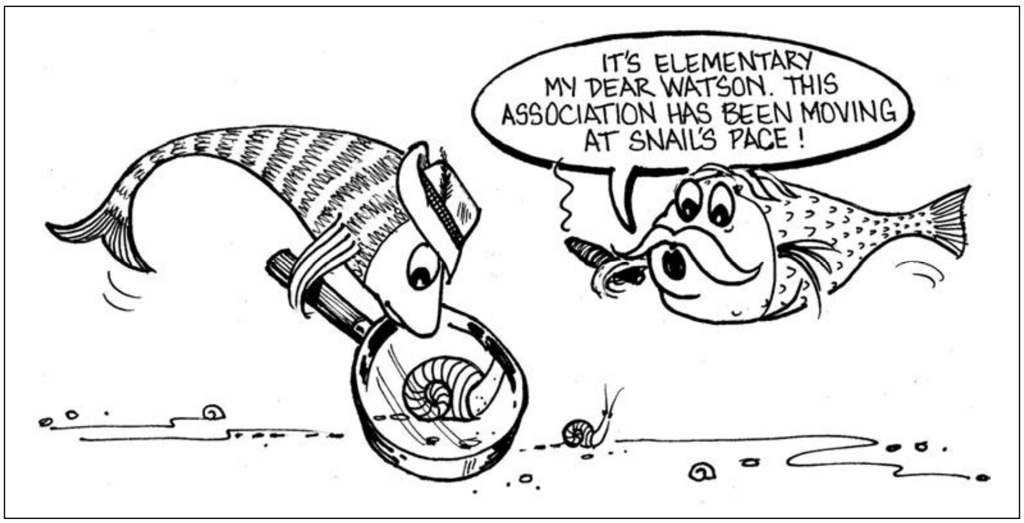
It looks at monitoring any bad press out there, so all public relations. (3)

The R&D Committee does a review of how the trends of the KPIs are tracking. Then each year they get a priority list back on which one would give the most bang for its buck.

***You get an annual report every year for an AGM which gives you a wrap up of what's been done, and what's not been done, and the quarterly newsletter definitely tells you where [the association] is in the world with certain issues**. So there is that method of keeping tabs on [the association]. (4)*

The only way they measure themselves is how many members have come on board. Everything else didn't seem to matter in the last few years. (7)

***Our only performance indicator for this fishery and this association is that the fishery is still here. Survival. And that's what we have to get away from, away from that survival mentality and start expanding and broadening our horizons.** Getting on the front foot. (8)*



I don't think we've ever evaluated. (8)

We have an agreement – a deed – with the government which is fairly open to interpretation, on which we're able to meet all the KPIs. And we have to give a letter indicating those KPIs every year and how we've achieved them. (10)

***It's probably not our role [to conduct an evaluation], depending on how you look at it, because all our KPIs are aimed at us getting funding.** [Interviewer: So even the core roles and* *objectives of the organisation?] They're easily accounted for, for instance if you turn around and say, 'Has your membership increased etc.?' the answer is, 'Yes, associate members.' 'Are you actively marketing,' 'Yes, we've attended government forums, we've done this, we've done that.' So it's fairly easy to answer, 'yes,' but then unless you're getting anything out of it at the other end, it's not accountable. (10)*

*And we do **have an action plan at each meeting to see what's been done and what needs to be done**. So we do keep a fairly tight rein on it, but it could be a bit more formal. (11)*

We have a business plan every year and the Board certainly pays great attention to whether we're achieving the objectives in that business plan.

*We do have action lists for all meetings, which are circulated pretty regularly. **The expectation is that by the next meeting you're supposed to have the action list dealt with, and if you haven't, someone will put their hand up to give you a hand with it.** But we tend not to give too big a task to people that don't have too much time. (11)*

I presume they haven't got any performance agenda and if they have, they haven't communicated it to the members. (12)

***My role as President is to make sure that the Board is operating properly, and I'll tell them if they're not.** Like tonight I've just sent a reminder to our Secretary that it's time to send out the email for the subs that are due. So I do a lot of that. (12)*

***Well we have a business plan every year that the Board approves and the Board certainly pays great attention to whether we're achieving the objectives in that business plan.** I think that while our measurement of our Chief Executive has been consistent in terms of the business plan, I think we've also reviewed and externally reviewed the performance of the Council as a whole and that's the reason why we're doing the restructuring. (13)*

Yes, we do give ourselves a scorecard at the AGM, but it's not something that the Board asks for; it's just something that gets done every year. We do try to have strategic planning sessions every two to three years with the Board, which involves that kind of in depth analysis. (14)

If the Executive Director doesn't come up with a half-decent report at the AGM, there will be lots of questions. So I think the performance monitoring indirectly has improved a lot in the last five years. (14)

*[Interviewer: Do you do an annual strategic plan?] Yes, generally. You know **the first meeting after the newly elected Board is in place generally the focus of the next meeting then is to have a strategic planning session.** [Interviewer: And do you report back annually on the strategic plan?] To the general AGM, yes. (15)*

We do annual reviews to say: this has been done, this has been addressed, this has been deferred etc. But mostly all the checklist and categories that we have are addressed in an orderly fashion, and if we go back [to the CEO] and say, 'This was supposed to be done in July, *how come it's not done, what's the progress, and when's it going to be finished?' The members know that. They get copies of our AGA and see the categories we'd like to see addressed each year. And we all report back at the next AGA, and, if it's something major, most everyone wants to be kept up to date. (15)*

In a changing world, I mean especially with a job like fishing, how do you set performance targets? (16)

Every three years we employ [named external consultant] to do a 10 % sample of our membership about their attitudes, how they perceive communications from us, and our performance. *We've been doing that since 1995, and also we monitor the trends across that period of course as well. (17)*

The first meeting after the newly elected Board is in place is to have a strategic planning session.

We've engaged a firm of consultants, we're getting them to run the whole show; we are not going to be present at the meetings with the regional companies. We've decided that they should talk to some of our big corporate growers, who are both members and non-members, about our performance and they're expectations of [our association] and what can entice them to become members. (17)

Those 21 Directors tend to review the performance of the elected officers and it's their role, also through the CEO, to make sure the staff are also performing. (17)

In the past few years, we've learnt we have to promote ourselves back to our members, e.g. our membership has grown, and we've achieved these sorts of things. In the past, annual reports etc. were probably done more on production based and how the year went in general with the crop, whereas our Secretary helped me change that direction a little bit and start focussing on the annual report being what the association achieved for the year, which makes a lot of sense. (20)

People are reluctant to promote what they've done for the year. But in a way you don't realise, you think you've done bugger all for the year. All you seem to do is try to put out fires. But then when you start going back through your minutes, all the things you've dealt with etc., they add up quite a bit. We need to try to reflect on that so the growers will go, 'Oh, that's right, they got that done, we had that to deal with as well.' (20)

Well one of the tools that we've found to be particularly important is this issue of doing a survey every now and then. ***Every couple of years you need to go back to your members and say hey, over the last whatever period we've done this, this and this. Are you happy with that? Are there other things that you want us to do?*** *So by doing it that way you have documented attitudes that you can then take to the Council. (21)*

We have to report back to Government, as to what we've done and how we've spent their money, what project we embarked on and what we've achieved. So there is [performance *monitoring] for Government; there isn't through the association, except my self-imposed method. (22)*

Recommendation 25:

a. Establish annually your association's 'big rocks' – the strategic goals to be achieved.
b. Decide upon what will be measured. The ideal is multiple measures, using multiple methods, taken multiple times.
c. Create the role of Monitor whose role it is to report, for both short-term events (such as each meeting) and long-term events (such as each year's program) on 'what worked?', 'what didn't?', 'suggestions for improvement' and 'what can be learned from these observations'.
d. Ensure the necessary **resources** are in place, **activities** planned and undertaken, desired **effects** identified, **goals** nominated and **end-state** or **vision** described and agreed.
e. Adjust as required.

Note: The Snyder Model, offered in **Appendix 4**, enables process evaluation (on the run) and outcome evaluation (on completion).

Case Study 24: Australian Seafood National Peak Body

The Australian Seafood National Peak Body (SNPB) does not exist. This case study describes the possible characteristics of such a body, based on what has been learned from 22 case studies.

The SNPB exists to fill a service vacuum that is beyond the capacities of national sector peak bodies. It is more than a national industry peak body; it is the nerve-centre for a national multi-sectoral system of governance and representation. It is also the nerve-centre for industry communication. Prior to its establishment, representation and support for the Australian seafood industry was provided by a motley ad-hoc collection of associations. Now, under the guidance of the SNPB, all associations combine into one integrated whole. And this whole is a flexible system driven by grass-roots industry members.

As the head of this complex system of fishing industry associations, the SNPB also manages the relationships and responsibilities of all subsidiary associations. Through negotiation with them, it carefully maps out the roles and responsibilities of all associations, ensuring that (i) there are no overlaps in responsibilities or unallocated responsibility gaps, and (ii) that all responsibilities are pushed to the lowest level capable of dealing with them.

SNPB's membership base consists of full members and associate members. Unlike its predecessor, the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC), the SNPB is not funded via a chain of sector and/or State/National peak bodies. Full members are individual licence holders for wild-catch, for aquaculture, for post-harvest and for importers. Associate members are anyone else whose livelihoods or interests are wholly or partially dependent upon the seafood industry. So associate members are drawn from employees and crew, from research providers, and from suppliers to the industry. Employees and crew pay a flat annual fee of $50. Researchers pay a flat annual fee of $250. Full members pay a levy based on 0.00025% gross-value of production (or, in the case of suppliers, on the percentage of their gross turnover that comes, directly or indirectly from the seafood sector). [GVP of fisheries production $2.23BN (source ABARES 2010-11)- includes all commercial wild-catch plus aquaculture. Of this $948M is aquaculture. (ABS 2003). GVP of post-production or imports are unknown]

SNPB is the primary collector of funds for all industry associations and bodies in the chain (including the FRDC). Depending upon the industry or sector, the SNPB strikes a voluntary GVP levy for every licence holder. The SNPB retains the fixed and agreed minimum of 0.00025% of GVP and distributes the balance down to the next level(s) of association. This level of downward distribution is as specified by the individual fisher. So normal market mechanisms apply. If the member is unhappy with the level of service from their local level or intermediate level association they can direct their funds elsewhere.

This method of funding gives several advantages; because it is constitutionally enshrined, it is the members individually (not the association) that determine how much of their total levy cascades down from the SNPB. This decision is made annually and it occurs in conjunction with payment of licence fees. All licence holders in the nation are billed through the SNPB, whether a member or not. This single bill includes a stated member-ship fee component. To get their licence renewal, even non-members are obliged to pay it, though they can then 'opt-out', reclaiming the membership fee. This scheme is similar to South Australia's PIFS. It has the added advantage of giving the SNPB a larger pool of money to exploit on the currency markets before refunding it a month later. So the first advantage is licence holders making a single contribution that is psychologically inseparable from the licence fee. One's right to fish is inseparable from one's right to representation at the highest level. When members feel that their subsidiary association is doing a good job, they can increase the level of contribution; where they feel their subsidiary association is not doing a good job, they can restrict the flow of funds to it. So each subsidiary association is directly accountable to its members for the perceived value it delivers (as is the SNPB). Each subsidiary association, in turn, offers its members a designated packet of services in exchange for a requested sum. Further, as smaller associations become less viable and fold, the interests of their members get catered for at the associational level above; this association absorbing the responsibilities (and funding) of its subsidiary predecessor. In fact, small specialist fisheries may find that their sole representative voice is the SNPB. So, in effect, the SNPB serves as 'representative of last resort'.

Because the SNPB represents the interests of the wild-catch, aquaculture, post-harvest and import sectors, one of its biggest challenges is to maintain unity of purpose given the diversity of its representation base. Its mission statement is:

'The Seafood National Peak Body exists to support its members' pursuit of economic and social benefits whilst protecting the sustainability of their respective endeavours so that future generations can enjoy the same benefits.'

Based in Canberra, the SNPB has two broad functions. The first is to present, promote and protect the member industries in the eyes of external stakeholders. The second is to monitor, foster and nurture the health of its member associations, and, through them, the seafood industry as a whole..

In its external focus, the SNPB is primarily charged with pursuing lobbying, political representation, and public relations campaigns on behalf of its sector industries. In addition to its CEO, an experienced Canberra lobbyist formerly working with land-based primary industries, it has a full-time staff of 7. These include two lobbyists and an experienced journalist/media specialist.

In its internal focus, the SNPB sees itself in the role of 'nurturing parent', monitoring patterns of communication and the issues they represent while providing information, tools, and a philosophy of encouragement and development. In partnership with the FRDC, which shares a similar philosophy, it provides development opportunities for association Board members and for Executive Officers. Its annual EO five-day retreat, conducted in partnership with the Australian Graduate School of Management, has developed a reputation for lifting the professionalism of management through its post-graduate Certificates and Diplomas of Seafood Industry Management. Similarly, its three-day Certificate of Seafood Industry Governance has played a pivotal role in advancing the professionalism of industry association Boards.

One of the advantages of having grass-roots fishermen as direct members of SNPB, one that did not exist prior to its establishment, is that they now have an avenue for grievances and dispute resolution. Previously, any association member with a gripe against their association had nowhere to turn other than to resign. This led to considerable fragmentation across the whole seafood industry. With the objective of maintaining industry unity, the SNPB offers a grievance and dispute resolution service, using skilled and neutral mediators. One of the benefits of this service is that the

SNPB is able to quickly pick up any dysfunctionality in a subsidiary association, dysfunctionality that had previously remained invisible. The SNPB is then able to apply targeted governance training, resulting in a more professional and unified industry.

Supporting its twin focus of both outwards and inwards, the SNPB is sophisticated in its media use of all contemporary technologies. It has developed admirable mastery in the social media space, with an active FaceBook presence and a considerable Twitter following in excess of 100,000. It puts out a weekly bulletin and two quarterly publications, both hard-copy and through all digital formats.

The weekly bulletin is a single A4 length overview of key issues arising anywhere in the Australian seafood industry, including industry responses to those issues. Each topic is dot-point only. The intent of the document is to keep every licenced holder 'in the loop' with respect to SNPB and subsidiary State and sector peaks. It goes out digitally, coupled with an SMS alert, to every licence holder. It also goes to every State and Federal Minister with an interest in fisheries.

The SNPB quarterly review is a compilation of national and international articles aimed at keeping its members informed of trends, threats, and good news stories, all designed to position member industries early and optimally within their operating spheres. This publication is revenue positive through sale of advertising space on products specific to the industry. Its income is sufficient to cover the full on-costs of one dedicated librarian/journalist who is responsible for the weekly bulletin and both quarterly publications.

The second quarterly publication, supported by as-needed media briefs for more urgent issues, is designed to position member industries in a positive light in the minds of external policy and decision-makers, the general media and the public. 'Healthy Seas, Healthy Food'.

More important, SNPB has initiated a partnership with a commercial TV station for the production and distribution of a program, 'Aussie Seafood Safari'. Triggered by the success of food and cooking shows, each weekly edition of the program features one seafood commodity, the industry that supports it, and the characters within that industry. Anchored by Matthew Hayden, well known former cricketer, amateur fisherman and accomplished chef, the program show-cases the industries environmental credentials, interesting personalities, scenic environments and delicious healthy food. This program, which costs the industry nothing, dovetails with the annual 'Aussie Seafood Festival', held in a different coastal location each year, a three-day extravaganza of events during which Australia's leading chefs vie for the honour of producing the highest quality sea-food dish. Commercial spin-offs from this event flow back to SNPB, sufficient to fund the PR-skilled co-ordinator.

Yet the most important communication function of the SNPB is as a collector and distributor of information from grass-roots fishermen and industry personnel. Communication from the deck, from the wheel-house, from the aquaculture farm, from the market floor, all flows, either directly or as copies, to the SNPB. So too does information from associations back to members. When the communication to the SNPB is direct, the SNPB then distributes the communication to where it is best dealt with. The advantage of the SNPB being the primary recipient of all communication is that it is able to determine patterns that otherwise might remain invisible. All communication, prior to redistribution, goes into a single mega data-base. Here it is automatically interrogated by data mining/discourse analysis software known as Leximancer [https://www.leximancer.com/ and http://textisbeautiful.net/], designed to glean patterns from large data sets. [This process is not unlike the research project that spawned this case study, where 68 interviews across 22 associations, involving many hundreds of pages of transcript, were carefully examined for emerging patterns.] SNPB also operates a media-monitoring function. Each week, the SNPB's website updates its published data-cloud, conveying to all members what topics are emerging and where. Before the establishment of this communication system, the industry had no knowledge management system. Now key issues can be detected, identified early and dealt with, often before they become significantly detrimental. Their social media capacity has been their number one tool in this regard, protecting the industry's social licence to operate.

SNPB maintains a very close and supportive relationship with universities and research bodies. It understands that scientifically supported facts from credible research bodies are the strongest weapons in its armoury. The sustainability focus of the SNPB leads it to have a very close and amicable relationship with peak environmental bodies such as WWF. Though this relationship was initially treated with great suspicion be member bodies, it has proven to be a strength. With an increasingly informed general public, the 'social licence to operate' has great potential to harm any industry that neglects its social and environmental obligations. With the aid of science and the environmentalists, SNPB has obtained, for its member organisations, a competitive edge over many of its international competitors through being a 'leader of the pack' when it comes to high quality seafood produced under world's best practice.

The SNPB has a current annual budget of $5.4 million. It obtains its funds from three sources. First, member contributions make up 10% of its operating budget ($540k).

The second source of SNPB income, 50% of its total, is mercantile. Each year, the SNPB commissions confidential research into the expenditure of operators in its three sectors. It asks three basic questions: (i) what has been purchased (human, capital and operational) for the past twelve months, (ii) what are the costs for each purchase, and (iii) who was the supplier. The resultant data enables SNPB to offer several services. First, it enables the calculation of industry sector benchmarks, provided back to the member sectors. Second, it helps the SNPB determine the best suppliers and the size of their levy as associate members. It also enables the SNPB to approach suppliers to do bulk deals on a range of purchases, resulting in financial benefits to members plus a healthy commission back to the SNPB. This service funds two designated full-time employees (one to gather and process the data, the other to negotiate bulk purchase deals), in addition to returning a handsome financial benefit to the peak body.

The third source of SNPB funding, 30% of the total, comes from brokerage. Australia's resource boom includes a significant off-shore component. Even the on-shore industry commonly ships its commodities in bulk carriers out of Australian waters. The rise of this off-shore industry was initially at the expense of the wild-catch industry, as experienced ticketed skippers were poached. Recognising that the operational life of any resource operations are often substantially less than the career of an experienced skipper, the Australian seafood industries, through the lobbying efforts of the SNPB, has sought to protect its industries whilst converting a threat into an opportunity. SNPB Services is a subsidiary operation expressly set up to capitalise on this opportunity. It trains and provides pilots for all bulk carriers operating in restricted waters. It provides experienced skippers with appropriate local knowledge as support to geo-survey, cable-laying, drilling and similar ventures, whilst ensuring these essential skilled personnel are not permanently lost to their seafood industries. . This service has been particularly welcomed by the younger generation of fishers, otherwise torn between staying in an industry that is in their blood and the booming resources sector that offers opportunities too good to turn down. Thanks to the entrepreneurial efforts of SNPB, now they can do both.

SNPB's financial strength increases annually, due to the gradual accumulation of reserves. Its goal is to acquire one year's full operating costs as an emergency reserve, after which it will gradually wind back the percentage levy it seeks from members. However, it recognises that some degree of 'hip-pocket' engagement with members is always essential. People value what they pay for.

The Association has a Board of six. One of these is an independent chair; two are elected by full members, one by tertiary and research institutions, one by supplier associate members, and one by employee associate members. Elections are held bi-annually for 50% of the Board, (split half elections), resulting in each Board member having a fixed and non-renewable term of four years. This gives a balance of renewal coupled with experience. Further, it is not the incumbent who is elected; it is their successor. Rather, it is a person who will shadow the incumbent and formally take over in 12 months. For any of the key positions, there is a position elect, an incumbent, and an immediate past Board member who can serve in an ex-officio mentoring and advisory role. The Board meets bi monthly, supported by the Executive Officer and one administrative officer.

SNPB understands that there is an increasing trend for licence holders to be no longer actively involved in their industry. They are often retired fishermen or passive investors. The SNPB also is acutely aware that the future of the industry lies not in these investors but in younger people entering the industry, an endeavour that is increasingly financially difficult. The financial cost of buying in is influenced, in part, by licences often representing the superannuation of retirees, people less and less actively engaged in industry. So the SNPB has a very active education campaign, underpinned by a financial strategy, that encourages licence holders to sell their licences back to the SNPB. The SNPB in turn, as the primary body responsible for the long-term viability and health of the industry overall, offers the licences to associate members for purchase at a financial rate half a per cent below best bank rates. They are able to do this, since they do nat have the rapacious profit motive of the financial sector; rather that have a social interest in ensuring recruitment of younger members and hence future leaders. And licence holders who are not also active fishermen are classified as associate members, rather than full members.

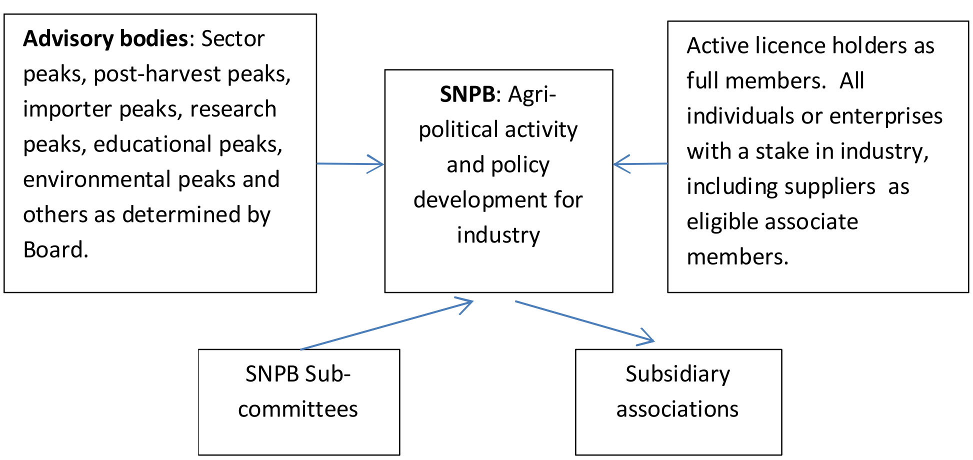
Subcommittees, operating digitally, do the lion's share of the SNPB's policy work. Membership of these subcommittees is by election, drawn from both members and associates. It is made clear to all members, at time of joining, that service on subcommittees is expected. Service on sub-committees is recognised as a professional contribution to industry and is remunerated accordingly. The remuneration, set and reviewed annually by the remuneration sub-committee, is sufficient to compensate members for time that might otherwise be spent back in their enterprise. Yet, appropriately, since they are consuming industry funds, the subcommittee members are accountable, just like an employee. There are a wide range of subcommittees and they all have a deliberate dual function. First is their obvious designated responsibility. Second, and arguably more importantly, they serve as 'training grounds' in industry governance. It is the 'graduates' of these subcommittees who commonly become Board members, first of their own subsidiary associations, and secondly, of the SNPB.

Beneath the SNPB are a number of subsidiary associations, ranging from Federal sector peaks down to port or fishery level associations, though none of these are 'members of the SNPB. The SNPB philosophy is not unlike that of a parent of teenagers. It never does for them what they should do themselves for their members; it coaches and skills subsidiary associations to ensure they are sufficiently competent and that they are growing future SNPB Board members; and that it remains ever ready to step into a service breach should a subsidiary-level association fail.

Subsidiary associations are able to avail themselves of SNPB guidance and support. The SNPB national governance system has the following attributes:

1. Each year, each association, at any level, specifies the responsibilities and services for which it will be accountable.
2. Each association positions itself as the logical extension of the member's enterprise, adding value in ways the individual member cannot.
3. The SNPB oversight ensures responsibilities are kept at the most appropriate level and that overlaps and gaps with neighbouring or higher/lower level associations are avoided.
4. A budget is set against the delivery of those responsibilities and services and a levy struck accordingly, prorated against the GVP of the member (or a flat fee for an associate). Any member is free to contribute over or under this specified amount. [Note this is a deliberate variation on the absolute pay/no pay system of the past. It puts the market mechanism of reward for service (or otherwise) directly in the hand of the licence holder.]
5. The SNPB collects all levies and licence fees, distributing them according to the specified wishes of the licence-holder. They are not cascaded down the line through sector peaks, etc; they are paid direct.
6. Each year, every association reports back to its members on the delivery of promised responsibilities and services.

The SNPB operations are highly professional. High quality staff are employed on contracts for a fixed term of five years, with one year extendable options. Staff turnover is expected, and even encouraged. Whilst attractive employment conditions ensure loyalty and willingness to stay, no employees are retained for more than seven years. Freshness of ideas and skills keep the SNPB regarded internally and externally as a highly regarded organisation.



The SNPB operates in a space also occupied by a number of other national organisations. These include Seafood Services Australia (SSA), Seafood Experience Australia (SEA), Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), and Seafood Cooperative Research Centre (SCRC). The SNPB has a close working relationship with each of these. It does not encroach on the services or responsibilities provided by each of these four bodies, through it does keep a close eye on its members' satisfaction with the services provided by these bodies. Since the SNPB sees itself as the primary guardian of the industry overall, it is prepared, if necessary, to ensure that the important services provided by each of these four bodies continue to be provided, should one of those four bodies fail.

The environment within which the SNPB operates is increasingly complex. Challenges in the seafood operating environment include:

- an industry with a declining share of production from the wild caught sector and an increasing share for aquaculture
- an export focus for the wild caught sector
- increases in domestic demand being met from lower cost imports (over 70% of total Australian consumption).
- an array of representative bodies at local levels focused on local issues
- an increasing development of national representative bodies for industry sectors with sector specific agendas but with many common national issues
- funding constraints for subordinate representative bodies, which might form a funding base
- no prospect for a compulsory levy structure
- limited scope for seeding funds from government
- increasing threats to access from other interests in the Australian community
- increasing demands to respond to environmental concerns
- more demanding market access and trade issues
- a complex array of other bodies representing national interests in industry development, policy, research and government interactions with the potential for competition and duplication with the functions of a national representative body

Benefits and services presently provided by SNPB include strategic planning, communication and those cross cutting issues in the agri-political arena where a unified industry view is essential. Issues which cannot be addressed by any subsidiary level association include:

- voting rights
- industrial relations basics
- policy support
- FishCard – A membership benefit card giving discounts from selected suppliers.
- membership privileges
- discounts on training courses
- legal advice email services
- tax advice email services
- full website access
- broad market access issues
- fuel rebate
- marine protected areas and marine parks
- EPBC Act issues
- native title
- regulatory functions and co-management
- food safety and emergency response mechanisms
- national workforce issues
- responses to national enquiries
- eco-labeling
- climate change
- national water policies
- advice to service providers and research institutions

Each year, an annual member satisfaction survey is conducted, with the results published widely. In addition, the SNPB conducts an annual rolling strategic planning exercise looking out to the next ten years. These two mechanisms minimize surprises whilst maximizing member satisfaction with its services.

[Note1 : Ideas for this case study are drawn from B. MacDonald, 2008, M Exel, 2013, and J. Ruscoe (personal correspondence). Any errors are mine.]

[Note 2: This case study is written to stimulate conversation and thinking. It is deliberately aspirational, and to some, even fanciful. To dismiss it too readily would be to miss the opportunity for a more informed reader to add value by improving upon these ideas.

Ian Plowman

October 2013

Continuous improvement

Does your association adopt a deliberate conscious practice of continuous improvement?

Good, better, best,
Never let it rest,
Until your good is better,
And your better best.

Slogan on Furphy Water Tanks,
Australian trenches, WW1.

Healthy associations are constantly reflecting on their own performance and looking for ways to improve. The interviews for this research indicate that almost all of the conversation that occurs in associations pertains to the business of the association, namely issues to do with access, production, legislation, etc. Very little conversation pertains to how the association is conducting itself, and how the individuals within the association are conducting themselves in relation to their association. Topics of conversation that could be productive for any association Board or Executive team could include:

1. What are the barriers to increasing the number of people involved in our association and how can we lower those barriers?
2. What do we need to do to increase the level of engagement with our members and have them regard the association as a logical extension of their business?
3. How can we increase the level of exposure to members of the workings of the association and how do we grow people's interest and confidence to become involved?
4. What is the logical pathway from 'new member' to 'experienced industry representative' and how can we grow people's interest, willingness and confidence to progress along that pathway?
5. What level of knowledge and skill is required of a Director or Board member and how do we help prospective Directors and Board members to acquire that knowledge and skill?
6. What standard of professionalism is required of a Board and how can we reach or exceed it?
7. How effective was our last Board meeting and what ideas do people have to improve it?

Here are two ways that a 'continuous improvement conversation' can be conducted. Both are recommended.

(i) At the end of every association function or meeting, every participant is requested to respond in writing to the following three questions: (a) what worked? (b) what didn't?, and (c) suggestions for next time? These anonymous written responses are collected at the end of the meeting and passed to the person who will chair or co-ordinate our next meeting. [Remember the recommendation of having a rotating chair]. That person types up all responses on a single file and emails out to all members within two or three days of the completion of the meeting. These suggestions are then incorporated into the conduct of the next meeting.

Three questions to conclude every meeting:
(i) What worked?
(ii) What didn't?
(iii) Suggestions for next time?

A subsidiary idea is to invite to your Executive meetings, Board meetings, or Annual General Meetings an office bearer of another association or corporation, concluding the meeting by inviting them to give a report, either oral or written, on what they have witnessed and what suggestions for improvement they might offer.

[By the way, should your Board seem reluctant to take up these suggestions of self- or third-party assessment, the source of that reluctance is probably 'need for power', a characteristic that will inhibit improvement, since there is a perception of criticism.]

(ii) Not only should we aim to improve the effectiveness of each meeting, we should aim to improve the effectiveness of the association overall. Therefore, every six months, it is recommended that you have a standing agenda item that is a health check on the association as a whole. This could be undertaken as a survey that is sent out two weeks in advance of the meeting with a request for all answers to be back in a week. These are collated and sent out, in summary form, as part of the agenda, enabling our most critical health issues to be openly addressed at our forthcoming meeting.

In a courageous piece of action research, Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), a producer-funded R&D body, under a programme known as BeefPlan (mentioned earlier), provided small locally-based and self-selected groups of producers with the sum of $10,000 over three years. This was basically returning to them some of the funds they had already contributed as a research levy. The conditions under which this money was allocated were (i) that the group was to undertake research of a social, economic or environmental nature that would be of benefit to members of the group and to their neighbours; (ii) that they begin the life of the group by undertaking a workshop on meetings and decision skills, (as already mentioned) and continuous improvement; (iii) that they shared the results of their research with their neighbours, and (iv) they reported back to the MLA on how the money was spent. Fifteen such groups were formed. Each year they held an annual forum where producer representatives shared ideas on their research projects and on what they were learning about themselves as a group.

What could be done

[Why doesn't the seafood industry have a conference that's only about association health and work through it?]. Yeah, it'd be good dialogue. I don't think we do [have enough of these conversations]. I don't think we do. We talk more about the issues, rather than open communication about process and association problems. I'd imagine that there's enough social glue now – as there's been enough intergenerational change, there's been enough investment in national leadership courses, there's a common language now. So a lot of people that in these positions have actually got a common base, they're in similar stages of their careers, so the opportunity is there. (1)

> **To more broadly define what their priorities are might lead to a better allocation of resources against those priorities.**

It would be good if we could all have some sort of Association summit so we could all get together in one room, see what our common issues were. *So if you can come together on bigger issues on a regular basis, understand that you're not fighting these things in isolation, not operating in silos. It's probably affecting each of us around the State – OHS, harm minimisation laws, the fair workers trade laws - they've all been imposed on us. Each little association is trying to fight them and implement them. So collectively if we can come together, or somehow do some sort of summit. (1)*

We don't do that. ***It's a good idea to identify major issues, six month period review and at the end of year can we tick off them or are they still ongoing and if so why.*** *(1)*

We actually did something very similar to this once [sought member's feedback] on an issue, a really important issue for our industry and we got about 12 faxes back and somebody didn't like this, everyone else was comfortable but the thing is we actually asked them that question. So *it's not a bad idea, at the AGM, to send out with the membership forms, bring it back to the AGM or post it back with your membership, if you want your opinion to be heard. I think it's a great idea. They might not express it, but you've given them the opportunity to have an opinion on how the association is going and what can we do better. (1)*

We've had some embezzlement from a sub-committee. That highlighted that we needed to do some corporate governance and firming up of the processes.

[Interviewer refers to the suggestion, in the printed question, of having an evaluation at the conclusion of every Board meeting.] I think it's brilliant, because you're right. ***People's time is valuable when they come to these meetings. You want to make sure that at an association level / Board level that you're using time appropriately, being as effective as you can, communicating effectively with people, that they understand.*** *Particularly [peak body] AGMS etc., we need to get the most out of members in terms of what we're asking them to do. So at every level, for my own [association] and for the Board in [peak body], I can see that kind of thing being useful. (4)*

There are guidelines that were drawn up in 2009, but unfortunately, people don't seem to want to take notice of them. The guidelines should be reviewed at least every two years by the parties involved to see if they need updating. (5)

[Continuous improvement] This should be part of the self-assessment process with discussion around the topic of how can we be more professional in our operations and also in servicing our members. (5)

[On the interviewer's suggestion of evaluating every Council meeting as the last agenda item] I think that's an ideal suggestion. That should be in every agenda. ***The other thing we have a problem with is making sure that the minutes are written as a record of what was discussed at the meeting.*** *(5)*

I think that [association], like any association, could engage in at least an annual process to go through more of a prioritising-type exercise, in terms of just dealing with anything that comes up at any time, possibly, ***to more broadly define what their priorities are might lead to a better allocation of resources against those priorities.*** *(9)*

We have a problem with making sure that the minutes are written as a record of what was discussed at the meeting.

They could put a process in place. Again, it's the available level of resources given that it is a relatively grassroots industry association. It's the level of resources that are there, and whether it's a priority to take time out to invest in a process and spend money doing that. Or do they keep dealing with the issues that are being brought up by members and focussing on. (9)

I think we need to obtain feedback from the general public. From a survey, find out whether or not people know who we are, what it is that we're trying to achieve, and then they do the assessment, rather than we do it internally. (10)

I think having a Critique Officer would be the way to go. I've seen that work quite well in other organisations. And maybe half-yearly the Critique Officer reports, the second one being at the AGM, with some KPIs maybe to give him something to work with. *(11)*

You need to have the right people there to be able to engage in that sort of stuff, and we currently don't have them. There's probably people out there, but they're not coming forward. (12)

We should have opportunities where we can discuss future direction *or these different opportunities. But* ***we tend to just deal with the current issue****. When in fact if we're to try and better ourselves, we better extend that more and even have a committee that can look ahead. Like have a five-year strategic plan for the group. (20)*

If your meeting is going past three hours you've got problems. You're either micro managing or your Chairman has lost control of the Board.

We've had some embezzlement of some money from a sub-committee. For that particular incident, some of the things that we highlighted that we needed to do better was some corporate governance and some firming up of the processes. *There was a process in place, but we were relaxed on it because you trust everyone. Anyone that takes on a voluntary role, you automatically think that the last thing they'd do is steal. But you can't allow that personal thing to come into it. You have to have the process there and then make sure it's carried out. (20)*

What is presently done

[Describing the processes in a different Board] we've structured our agendas a little bit differently now. We've taken the Australian Standards. So early in the day I now table issues which I know are emerging but I need the Board's views on, like a discussion paper and when they've got the most energy I put those up front and I even got an innovation one in there. So how innovative you are, where is it in on the agenda? Is it the last thing or the first thing you talk about? So we do round-the- table, I need your input here in terms of where this is heading so then I can give you a more detailed paper. So we'll use that process and then there's decision papers, things that have to be ratified, decisions on and then there's information items. I try and structure it in that way. (1)

If your meeting is going past three hours you've got problems. You're either micro managing or your Chairman has lost control of the Board. *(1)*

We had a strategy day last year where we sat down on a full day and tried to nut out where [the association] should go and how it could become better and that was definitely something that took all day at a Board level with the key staff members in the room. *Then the RD&E committee put forward 20 projections for where we want the industry to be at an RD&E committee level. (4)*

There is a continuous improvement through the goals but the review around it is probably not as good as you have in business. I think we've gone through a bit of a baptism of fire in the last few years through reviewing the organisation and what it's going to look like in the future. (13)

We set ourselves ten goals a year, and we measure them every year. For Boards, that's critical. You should know where you're going and how you're doing.

I'm on another Board that's more of a regional Board, where that's what we do. We also have a regular performance evaluation of the Director, KPIs as well. ***We set ourselves ten (or whatever) goals a year, and we measure them every year. For Boards, that's critical. You should know where you're going and how you're doing.*** *Maybe we're not operating as effectively as we could as a Board. (14)*

We do have a policy of conscious improvement. We are all fairly active in the process of following up on what we are doing. (16)

Not deliberate. It's just sort of something we've always done because I think all your Directors say in Brisbane are down also at the grassroots too. You often get growers giving you their points of view about things and ways you should be doing things, so it doesn't operate in isolation by any means. So you're aware of what the issues are that are concerning the members. (17)

We have another committee, outside of [our association], called [named organisation]. And three of the [association] members sit on that; it's our productivity side of it. We are always striving on how we can do things better to increase productivity and ultimately put more money in people's pockets. (18)

Commonly 99% of Board attention is given to the business of fishing and its associated issues and one per cent or less is given to how the association is conducting itself. And yet, whilst acknowledging there are many other variables that influence the health of an association, what can weaken or kill an association is how it is conducting itself.

Recommendation 26: Adopt a process of continuous improvement. The Experiential Learning Cycle, offered in **Appendix 8**, provides a conceptual framework for continuous improvement. It is exactly the same model that an association can use for Action Research (discussed elsewhere in this Report).

Financial considerations

Does your association have sufficient funds to meet its operational and strategic needs?

[Note: this topic was not asked of all interviewees. Rather, to try to reduce the length of the questionnaire, this topic and its questions were blended with the earlier topic on *Performance Capacity.*

An **i**ndustry association needs funds in order to carry out its business. Those funds, which may come direct from members, or from other sources, are sometimes adequate for the association to conduct all of its desired activities. Sometimes the funds are inadequate.

Cost pressures and financial vulnerability

Some associations are financially prudent and have built up healthy reserves. This is more likely to be the case with local producer associations where the operational manpower is largely or totally voluntary. Associations with fixed overheads for staff and premises are more vulnerable, particularly in the face of a shrinking membership base, or where there is a very small membership base and key memberships are financially critical, or where funding is tied to a fixed formula that is difficult to adjust to meet changing circumstances.

> *At the moment we spend about $24,000 on our Exec Officer, which is not much but we're also spending about $12,000 to $16,000 on Secretariat services. (1)*

> *You know the cost of power going up and up.* ***Our price per kilo –that hasn't changed over the last five years. So we can't get prices increased but everything else is on top of us.*** *(1)*

> *I think they had $150,000 to seed their CEO so that went for four or five years so that's gone. It will probably never return again, who knows. (1)*

Our price per kilo –that hasn't changed over the last five years. So we can't get prices increased but everything else is on top of us.

> ***For the [membership] fees that we pay all these other associations, we could almost get a full-time lobbyist working for us.*** *So we've just got to look at whether or not we're at that stage, if we're a big enough organisation to get some real clout in the political avenues. (3)*

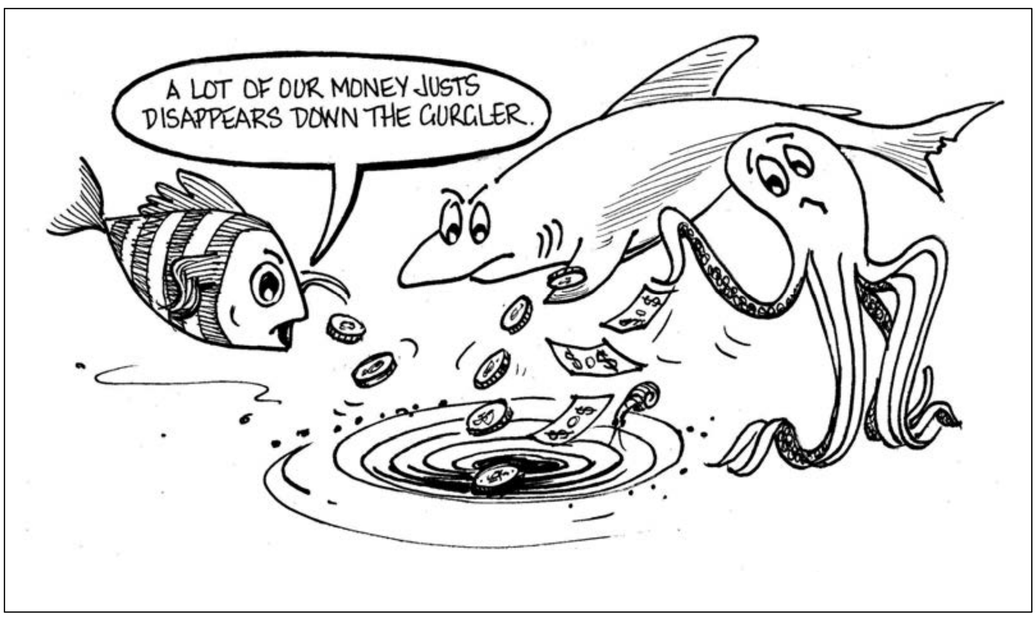
> *The main issue in [State peak body] is that the bulk of the fees indirectly come from the Rock Lobster sector, and there's always a possibility they could say, 'Get stuffed, we're off on our own.' So most members know that if we lost all our Rock Lobster members [State peak body] would be in trouble. And as a voting bloc, they're by far and away the largest voting bloc on [State peak body]. [Researcher note: this comment infers there is a perception that individual [State peak body] Board members are partisan, perceived to be acting in their sectoral interests.] (4)*

Most of the official positions, like President, that's a voluntary job, so it's at no cost to the association whatsoever. The only cost to the association is supplementing the Secretary-Treasurer's cost of phone and stationery. We just give the Secretary-Treasurer a small allowance. They're actually entitled a wage of up to $30/hr. But [named person] very rarely draws on that; she does so much voluntary work, it's unbelievable. (6)

I guess you would never have enough money to do the work they're doing. Because every now and then, if we have a big issue, we're asked for a contribution to prop it up. And I guess they probably haven't got enough money to do everything they'd like to. (9)

The issue is that we find that it's disgusting that not-for-profit sporting clubs and public interest type groups like ourselves just end up becoming part of a machine to milk the money from their members, and not actually achieve what they want to do. ***So you end up paying out – we pay GST, we have to insure, then we have to pay an Accountant, and we have to get audits done, and all the various other things that do absolutely nothing for our interest or our sport.*** *(11)*

We probably have around $5-7,000 in the bank, which is more than enough. It costs us about $2,500 a year to run the club, so we've got a buffer. (11)



For every trip that we organise there's automatically a $30 levy in there as a buffer. Invariably we'll eat into that $30, but the theory is that before you establish a cost for the trip, it starts at $30. So probably our most expensive weekend is $220 which covers accommodation and meals. (11)

[Interviewer: and what sort of annual budget would you run at, what sort of quantum of turnover of money for your total association budget?] Four hundred, four hundred thousand. (15)

You can get someone to target all the Government funds, because there's plenty available. Try and build up a kitty and then try to maintain it. So don't try and get greedy, *get an amount of money that's okay. At the moment we've got about $100,000 which is plenty. (19)*

It's no good having a heap of money in the bank when we don't' have the skills or the human capacity to operate.

We don't need any funds now, but I think we need a consultant to help out. I don't know whether employed or what – for applying for funds. There's a lot of money out there really if you have the right skills. (19)

The cost of operation is next to nothing. We've built up reserves over the years. ***I think there's a point there where I think we've got to start potentially investing in things, as it's no good having a heap of money in the bank when we don't' have the skills or the human capacity to operate.*** *So I think we're getting way too heavy in the finances, and light on in the people.* ***So possibly some investment into training on basic corporate governance. Basic things like that would go a long way to making it a sustainable group.*** *(20)*

Some associations lamented their financial strength. As one interviewee from a formerly wealthy association explained, when they had lots of money, it was consumed by service providers charging exorbitant fees. Or it was spent on the employment of an executive officer to whom members handed over responsibility. This resulted in significant knowledge inequality and hence association vulnerability. Only after the association had blown its healthy reserves were members forced to reengage and take a more hands-on approach to running their association.

Government funding

A number of associations in the present research received funds from government, often on a fee for service basis. The transfer of service delivery and other government responsibilities to the NFP sector has been a growing trend in the Western world over the past two decades. And although associations are frequently grateful for this assured source of funds, O'Connell (1996) points out that there are considerable risks attached.

The first risk is that the co-ordination and accountability for service delivery is now substantially more problematic. Second, the associations themselves are weakened since their partial or complete dependence on government funding substantially weakens the perception of the association's independence. Third, the funds themselves are at risk. Whenever a Government is faced with austerity measures, cuts to external partnerships are generally greater than they are internally.

> *Long-term government support for an association creates a quasi-governmental entity with decreasing value as an independent force. If a government is a very substantial funder of an association, the association's ability to be regarded as an independent force is called into question.* (O'Connell, 1996:224)

Changing government policies have led to many services now being delivered, on a fee-for-service basis by the NFP sector (CAIA, NAIA, NTAg, NTHA, TARfish, WAFIC, WRLC, QAIF). Yet, there is increasing uncertainty with respect to this funding base. (Heimovics *et al*, 1993: 420)

Whilst governments might outsource service delivery to NFPs, they cannot outsource their ultimate responsibility for the delivery and funding of such services, regardless of who does the delivery.

> *Government may decide to keep moving in the direction of greater reliance on voluntary institutions to fulfil essential services and programs, but it cannot do so on the assumption that it can reduce support to its service partners whilst expecting the service to be maintained or even increased.* (O'Connell, 1996: 223).

> ***There's a real issue in Government taking resources out of agriculture and primary industry and then expecting us to do more and more but not understanding, not really understanding how serious their erosion of services and things are. And then what pressure that puts on a small association****. We are doing more and more; and, in fact, people ring me for information and I will say: 'Have you contacted the Department?' And they say: 'Oh, they've told me to ring you guys'. That's a real issue for us up here. (22)*

> *We get a grant from the Government. So part of the function of this is to provide a single point of reference for Government consultation. When they're seeking consultation they seek it through us. It's just a flat fee of $20,000 per annum and we fund the whole association out of it now, including travel. (2)*

> *We've had support from the Government for over a decade and that's made it possible for us to be an effective organisation. Without that support the industry wouldn't be able to contribute enough money to have an executive officer and without an executive officer it's very difficult to be an effective organisation. When I say effective, I mean from the point of view of representing industry. (2)*

> ***Information sessions [previously] run by the Department; they're putting them back to [the peak body] to do.*** *(4)*

> *I think that with the change in environment of engagement of commercial fisheries, particularly with primary industries, removal of FMCs, the onus and responsibility has fallen back onto the industry association, so it's been up to them to make sure that they're organised and can engage in whatever the process might be, whether it's a TAC discussion or some other form of discussion or issue. (9)*

O'Connell (1996) points out that the role of voluntary associations is not primarily to serve as an alternative to Government; rather it is to help keep governments honest and responsible.

> *Voluntary associations provide wonderful elements of spirit, participation, service, influence and freedom to do one's own thing. But if the government overloads them*

> *with the basis responsibility for public services, yet undercuts their income and limits their role for advocacy and criticism, they will fail society.* ***The greatest contribution that voluntary associations contribute to society is their independence****, which permits innovation, advocacy, criticism, and, where necessary, reform*. (O'Connell, 1996:225)

Government resides at the 'big end of town'. It is much more comfortable dealing with other entities of significant scale, than with individual fishermen/producers/enterprises. So Government goes looking for a 'big-end-of-town' entity, a representative body with whom it can correspond. And if one does not exist, Government can create it. In responding to Government, associations need to avoid seduction. It is all too easy for association personnel to be made to feel important, and hence dance to the Government 'piper', rather than keeping member interests front of mind. This is particularly the case when Government is also a significant direct funder.

Here are the comments from one disgruntled and perceptive association member:

The Minister rightly points out that the industry is divided between individual fishers, and various sectors on almost all issues. Popular decisions are hard to come by.

Consequently however, over time, management has allowed, even encouraged, the evolution of a culture within advisory institutions that serves policy alone. There is no consultative spirit, or intent. [The association's] existence enables the government to be seen to fulfil its obligation to consult - period.

[The association operates] as a funnel for departmental policy, under the principle of "the ends justifies the means". The [association is seen to] be run as an "old boys club", where a nod and a wink pass for due process. Decisions will be by consensus as perceived by management. Originality is not required, and individuality is to be discouraged.

Go with the flow, or go home. The history of our advisory bodies abounds with examples of this, and very few members of significant character have chosen to endure the process. From the point of view of the average fisher, consultation has demonstrably become little more than a sham.

Most individual fishers do not trust management, and rightly or wrongly, that extends to members of the Board. Everyone is seen as pursuing their own personal interests.

Fishers bristle at any hint of favouritism, and are quick to pick a fight amongst themselves. In turn, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Department has come to rely on fisher disunity to facilitate the imposition of policy. Bureaucrats thrive on this. Due process is the least of their concerns.

A number of associations in this research are funded by Government out of a pool contributed by members as resource access fees. That relationship challenges the independence of the Board and gives the Government a potentially coercive whip hand.

> *More and more there's layer upon layer of regulations and hindrances to our industry which we don't seem to be able to break through and achieve results. So more and more we're focussing on the process because that's what they're throwing at us. (1)*

If all of a sudden the Government decided this [association] wasn't worth funding – because it's presently a good vector for them to communicate with the industry. You know they have representatives there and they get a lot of feedback. If the budgets are tight and they think well we can save ourselves [nominated dollar figure] a year and they do it, [the association] would probably – it would be doing even less than it is now, if not cease entirely. So yeah, that's always a challenge absolutely, the funding stream. (2)

You've got the Minister's minder saying, 'If you don't do such-and-such we'll cut your funding off.' Well you can't operate an organisation like that.

The Minister came through and scrapped [previous licence fee arrangements] and put GVP in. Gross Value of Product. It's an access fee. So what the Government has said, even though you've bought a licence, you now have to pay for the right to access a community resource. *Even though it's a renewable resource, it's a community resource. So we're going to charge you 5.75 % per annum of your GVP as an access fee. So my licence fee per year that I pay is now based on a GVP. And 0.25 % goes to FRDC. 0.5 % goes to [State peak body]. So 5 % goes back into the Government to run the Fisheries Department and manage our fisheries; 0.5 % goes to fund [State peak body], 0.25 % goes to RD&E for FRDC. (4)*

[Researchers note: It seems that working in the [the State peak body] office are a number of people, at least one of whom is not employed by [the State peak body], and another who will be employed under an SLA funded directly by Government. And all the others are directly funded by Government at the whim of the Minister. It is easy to understand the perception that [the State peak body] is an agency of government.] (4)

[Interviewer: I struggle with this notion of how [State peak body] sees itself: is it as an agency of Government or as an agency of its members?] Again, this is this critical junction that we're now at. It would have definitely seen itself as an agency of its members, but by virtue of this new Government structure, in effect, the government holds the purse strings to [State peak body]. (4)

And it's not until you get into it that you understand that [the association] ***is under the Minister and the Council is under the Minister.*** [From a [commodity] fisherman who believes that both [State peak body and sector peak body] are government agencies, since they are both funded by government out of access taxes paid by fishermen to government.]

[Interviewer: It seems that conceptually, the boundary between government and [State peak body] is not arm's length, both by virtue of funding, and by virtue of it now being almost a subsidiary of government in a consultation sense.] Yeah. I think in the consultation sense, it has been well-defined in the sense of the functions that it does. And it's very clear that it's not that representative side of things specific business unit. There are specific people that carry that out. Which does in a sense leave [State peak body] clear in terms of its representative capacity. (4)

The fact that ***the Minister is the person that determines what funding will come to [State peak body],*** *that is something that I think – and I wasn't on the Board at the time – despite the best efforts of [State peak body], was imposed on it. (4)*

The working relationship depends on the Minister of the day because at the end of the day the Fisheries in [named State], all of the decisions are made by the Minister. *[State peak body] as an enterprise has never gone into the meeting very hard on anything criticising the Minister because that just does not work. He knows what rules he wants. (4)*

[State peak body]'s role been enhanced by the loss of expertise in the Fisheries Department, which has left proportionally more expertise in [State peak body] on policy issues. *(4)*

There's nothing requiring Government to hand over any particular percentage. That's a discretionary decision of the Minister.

At the end of the day the Minister makes the decision, and we're there to facilitate and probably have a negotiated outcome on some things and a position. ***And the Minister will sign off on them sometimes, or he'll make his own recommendation, which will be totally different to what the Board wants. That's happened before, a lot of times.*** *(4)*

The Government basically collects the fees [levies based on gross value of production] and then decides to hand a lump sum to [State peak body]. It doesn't stream the fees directly to [State peak body]. ***So there's nothing requiring Government to hand over any particular percentage. That's a discretionary decision of the Minister****. (4)*

[Interviewer: It seems to me it's in the interests of the Government to keep this financial noose around [State peak body]'s neck, and it's in [State peak body]'s interest not to have it round its neck.] That's absolutely the case! And I'm not sure whether and to what extent there is room to change that in terms of with a change of government, or with a significant restructure in terms of how [State peak body]'s seeks its funding. Fishermen generally are of the view that they pay out enough money. I don't think at this point in time that they would welcome any new structure whereby significant fees were requested from them to belong to [State peak body]'s. So yes, it is an issue. (4)

They have established ***a Service Level Agreement between government and [State peak body] in terms of consultation functions*** *that a specific business of [State peak body] will carry out on behalf of the government. So the government has devolved all its consultation to this particular unit. (4)*

We've entered into an SLA with the [State] government for $400,000 a year that should come to one senior staff member and one assistant to them. And the contribution is $30-50,000 towards the office, and somebody on the road all the time benefits [State peak body]'s indirectly - all those sort of things are an advantage. But no-one's funding us directly to do marketing or community or social-licence-to-operate activities. We've spent some of our reserves doing some of those activities. (4)

We've entered into Service Level Agreements with the government, where we actually do more government services. So we're undertaking additional activities for the government on a range of factors such as certification of seafood, consultation – the government finds it very difficult to efficiently undertake consultation activities these days. (4)

The greatest contribution that voluntary associations contribute to society is their independence.

Of the funding that [State peak body] receives, so much of their money then goes on to sector bodies, *named] – so the major fisheries. It's an additional amount funnelled directly to them. [Interviewer: So* ***[State peak body] is the broker of the Government's funds, and has a formula that it uses to dole it out to the various subsidiary associations?****] Yes. (4)*

[Interviewer: And ***do the members themselves decide what the new format will be, or do you get told by the Minister, in terms of the governance of the association?] Oh, no, we've been told; the Minister has actually made it public.*** *(5)*

If the Minister or the Fisheries Department requests some consultation with industry, then the Council will go and do that. It's more of a knee-jerk reaction, rather than abiding by a clear strategic plan. (5)

We need to break that financial nexus with Government and get independent funding.

In the past, we'd have to approach them to have a handout, and that's including to [peak body] and to Department and the Minister's office. And of course if you were causing trouble, it was harder to get your money. [Interviewer: So any three of those levels can turn off the funding tap?] Yes, they could. Or they can threaten to. ***You've got the Minister's minder all the time saying, 'If you don't do such-and-such we'll cut your funding off.' Well you can't operate an organisation like that.*** *(5)*

Before this Minister came along, we used to be paid directly from the Fisheries Department, direct to [our association] and direct to the other sector bodies as well. Whereas now it goes through [peak body]; then the [peak body] board oversees our association's budget, which creates problems. (5)

I keep saying to our Board, 'You are a Board elected by your members. You are not the Minister's committee. You are an autonomous body and should be directing yourselves.' But the Chairman and the Executive Officer seem to take the view that when the Minister says, 'Jump!' we've got to jump. But I say, 'Hang on, we don't. You've got to go back and say no; it's not appropriate for us to do that today. Our meeting is not 'til this date, and we'll meet you then.' But they don't do that, so you get meetings jumping all over the place. (5)

We really need to break that financial nexus with Government and get to independent funding. (5)

[Direct Government funding] It creates a lot of instability. The funds should come direct to the [Association] on a guaranteed basis so the [Association] can carry out its operations unhindered. (5)

We really need to break that financial nexus with Government and get to independent funding. *(5)*

Under the Primary Industries Funding Scheme (PIFS), really all Fishers are members now, whether they like it or not, because they're making some sort of financial contribution to the running of the association. (8)

State peak body is the broker of the Government's funds, and has a formula it uses to dole it out to the various subsidiary associations

[Interviewer: It might not be so clear for your group, because as I understand it, you pay your Port Association and the Port Association then passes the funds to SEPFA, so I guess a lot of people don't even see any direct financial contribution in that context there.] Yes, yep. That's what I reckon. It's a good setup, but it's just a little bit cloudy on what's happening on that [financial] side of things. (9)

We receive substantial government grants. Sufficient to say that we're able to bank a fair percentage of them. *(10)*

In the last three years we've gone from funding of $80,000 to $130,000 per annum from the government. Plus we obtain funding for projects that we initiate. (10)

Start charging a membership, and seek independent funding sources. At the moment we're solely reliant on government. (10)

Like any association that is funded by the government / donations, they're limited in what they can do. (10)

Obtain independent funding. [Interviewer: On the basis that would then help you take a stronger position with respect to lobbying and political influence?] That's right. At the moment if there's a dispute, invariably the discussion comes up in regard to funding, and basically would the association still be there if it didn't have political support. ***Government has established all these peak bodies as a way of developing policy at arm's length. Now they want to control the policy-makers.*** *(10)*

We market to get more members, but that's purely a numbers game, when you're going back to government. It's a numbers game. You go to the government and say, 'We're applying for this grant / funding etc. and we have 5,000 members,' it's a lot easier to push your barrow than to turn up and say, 'We've got five association members, and the rest of them don't count.' So it's purely a numbers game. (10)

We position ourselves and make policy decisions and align ourselves, even though we don't do it publicly. We'll write the Minister a letter saying, 'We support this particular policy or this particular piece of legislation,' but we don't do that in the public domain as such. I think we need to take an informed stand on some issues, and actually come out, rather than just roll over and play the quiet role behind the scenes. Sometimes you've just got to stand up and be counted. I think it shows in our policies as well, and things like anti-netting etc. from a recreational point of view. There are always two sides to the story I know. (10)

We meet with the Minister, but we don't necessarily obtain results. Because we are 100% funded through government. Effectively, we're not willing to push the barrow and see what the boundaries are likely to come out at. *(10)*

We have an agreement – a deed – with the government which is fairly open to interpretation, on which we're able to meet all the KPIs. And we have to give a letter indicating those KPIs every year and how we've achieved them. (10)

The problem in a lot of organisations is that they get seduced into just Government policy stuff. So everything revolves around what the Government wants to do.

It's probably not our role [to conduct an evaluation] , depending on how you look at it, because ***all our KPIs are aimed at us getting funding.*** *[Interviewer: So even the core roles and objectives of the organisation?]* ***They're easily accounted for,*** *for instance if you turn around and say, 'Has your membership increased etc.?' the answer is, 'Yes, associate members.' 'Are you actively marketing,' 'Yes, we've attended government forums, we've done this, we've done that.' So it's fairly easy to answer, 'yes,' but then unless you're getting anything out of it at the other end, it's not accountable. (10)*

Three years ago the association looked like it was going to go belly up and then the government came to the party with an additional $50/60,000. So funding was a major issue. I think it still is, because we're now dependent on government funds. *(10)*

Government has established all these peak bodies as a way of developing policy at arm's length. Now they want to control the policy-makers.

Governments these days don't do business nicely. They've never done business nicely. The worst part is they're doing business nastily now, which is a lot worse. *So there needs to be a very visible understanding by government of what they're dealing with. The people in government haven't been put there and paid by us to put up barricades and treat those people with disdain, which is what they do more often than not these days, sadly. (11)*

So now we have the funding in this project, it's going to be very difficult to go back to not having it, because we're seeing the results of being able to provide members with an enhanced level of support. And government is responding to us differently because we are more able to respond in a much more professional way. *So it will be interesting at the end of the two-year project whether we can then maintain some level of that, because it would be very, very difficult to go back. (14)*

The problem that I see in a lot of organisations is that they get seduced into just Government policy stuff. So everything revolves around what the Government wants to do. *It's very easy to get sucked into their round of meetings. That's what I see as a big risk. The first focus has to be on members and the second focus has to be policy. But if the policy thing is the first focus,* *then the organisation ends up getting sucked into the Government whirlwind and Government isn't our member. (21)*

One thing that strikes me is that government does not value industry associations. They tolerate them because industry members insist on having them, so they'll have someone who can speak to Government on their behalf. But it pisses the Government off no end because they're a unified voice and they're often putting forward an opinion that doesn't jibe with the politicians assumptions. (21)

Other funding sources

A number of associations receive funding from outside sources. Often this takes the form of project money, a mixed blessing, since associations can find themselves distracted from their core business as they chase project money. And in the majority of cases, project money or management fees are paid directly or indirectly by government. Some associations generate funds through semi-commercial ventures such as conferences, events, or real-estate. These are more robust sources, since the association has a high level of control over their generation.

NAC runs this big conference which sort of offsets or creates the subsidy for its activities. (1)

We found that we could find funds if we needed to when we took the Minister to task. People were rocking up donating $1,000 or $5,000 and $10,000.

There's three main ways of getting funding. There used to be four, but the three main ones are: membership, then there is the money that comes in from the conference (obviously there is sponsored money in there as well), then there are management fees from the R&D, where we can manage certain projects, and we claim a ranging figure, between 5-8%. So it might pull in $5-10,000 a year depending on what it is in the association's funds. [Interviewer: So, a service level agreement back to the researchers?] Yes. And ironically years ago, interest. The Conference earns us money. Very much so; always. It averages certainly more than $30,000 a year. (3)

***Funding can be increased by running research projects on behalf of industry, for which the [Association] receives an administration fee.** This is not an ideal way of doing business but I am afraid, if it brings in much needed dollars, it's a help. The only other alternative is to go to the fishermen and ask for a direct contribution over and above that already paid to government, which may not be acceptable to members. But you can't go out and employ someone and tell them, 'Look, we don't know whether we've got funding next year.' Nobody would want to take a job like that, especially with so much competition from the Mining Industry. (5)*

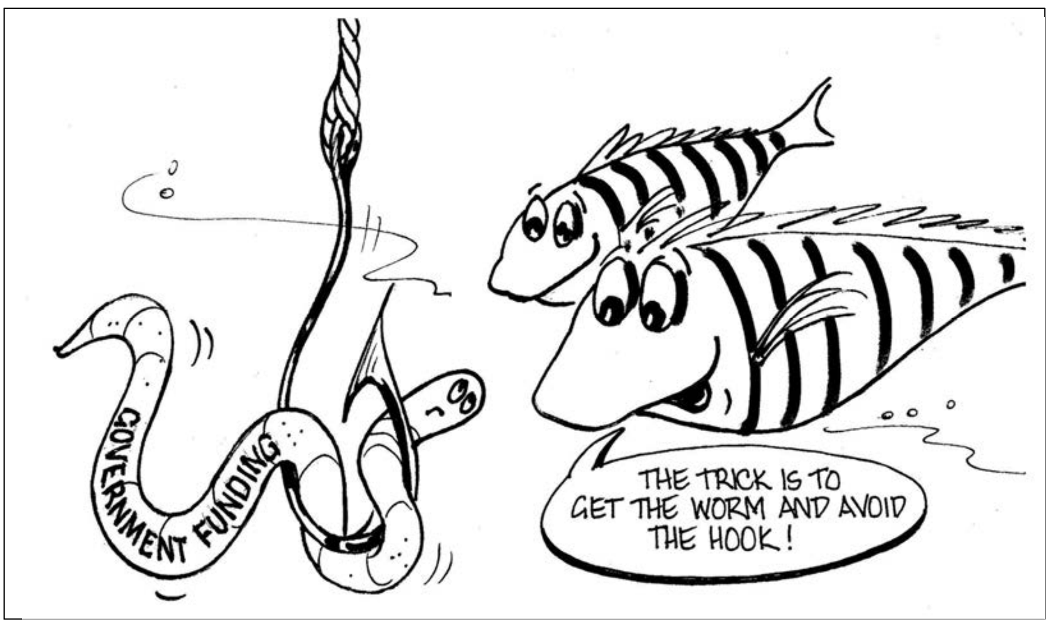
We had a big drive [for funds] when the first lot of pot reductions came in and we were lucky to raise a substantial amount of money and the association pretty well just runs off the interest on it. (6)

They're going to have to get some funds from somewhere and they may need to get some from sponsorship and they may need to get some from advertising or they may need to get some from members.

We've been lucky that we've always had money there from obviously a long time ago so we hadn't had to go down the way of probably fundraising forever. ***There was a lot of money put up a long time ago which ended up being a bulk of money in a bank account*** *and the threat of the Fisheries Department – this is probably going back '94 – so if you don't pull your head in a bit we're going to drag you to court. And that probably saved us all a lot of money, so the money has basically sat there as a bit of a deterrent since then. (6)*

We found that [we could find funds if we needed to] a couple of years ago when we took the Minister to task. People were rocking up donating $1,000 or $5,000 and $10,000. *They were very passionate about what we were trying to achieve. And we find that if you do get something that's to everyone's cause, it's not very hard to raise money. (6)*

Only by some smart moves from the Executive were we able to receive some grants and money from other areas. (8)



The only thing we could do is if we were to get a major sponsor, or lift membership fees, which would drive people away. (12)

So ***they're going to have to get some funds from somewhere and they may need to get some from sponsorship and they may need to get some from advertising or they may need to get members.*** *They already have a bequest for funds for tagging in [State] so people don't have to pay for tags and tagging certificates after the initial supply and that bequest may last ten or twenty years. (12)*

I have applied to the Natural Heritage Trust for funding for tagging, which was successful. We did that program which went quite well. Through the Office of Recreation and Sport, I have tried unsuccessfully for several years to get any funds through them. And only recently I've found out that fishing is not on the Federal Government's list of eligible sports. (12)

We've got some Government funding and some development groups within Federal and Provincial Government. ***Less that 10% of our funding comes from members****. [Interviewer: So ninety per cent has to come from other sources?] And that may be Government funding but not just a handout here or a core funding type thing, it has been project based and that's changed over the past five to seven years, more and more projects, so we are, the industry association either managers or liaises or carries on the research or project activities or other agencies that are involved in you know, the development source or whatever research institution. For which we get a management fee, yes, and that ranges depending on the type of project. (15)*

One of the other things is trade missions - it's another type of project - conducted for Federal Government, a trade mission to Norway or to Chile or to China or somewhere like that and, our industry association and staff has co-ordinated those activities; [we receive] an administration fee. (15)

The association itself does a lot of training programs / science research projects that they get overheads for. It might be $3,000 for this project, but we need to do many projects through National Research Council and all the different bodies. *Of course it would come from mostly government and other suppliers etc. [Interviewer: So you get money direct from the government?] We do. There is a limit, it's not a big budget, but we use that money as bridge financing and go after all the money and programs and services that we charge overhead for. [Interviewer: So* ***there are three sources of money: membership fees, brokerage for running education programs and other services, and then government monies.*** *(15)*

We have an annual subscription fee which is based on usually the size of vessel; a ten metre vessel won't pay as much as a thirty metre vessel. That's a regular annual subscription. If we have a crisis, the constitution allows for a cash call from all individuals for their share of that loss. But I have got to say that we make a profit and members get their dividends of one sort or another, so it does work both ways. (16)

It formed a part of the association called NFFO Services, in which it got involved in managing fishing vessels for guard ship work, pipelines getting laid and undersea cables where the oil companies or the cable companies, pipeline companies would hire fishing vessels to do guard ship work, which is a lot cheaper than bringing in their ships to do it, but the fishing industry benefited and the NFFO benefited through managing it. (16)

Well the services, the NFFO services are help and managing and tendering for guard ship work, and also get involved with helping for the fishing gear trials, and also are involved in the last two to three year, they've had monies available to supply all the fisherman with different packages each year, either an inshore kit consisting of flares and fire extinguisher, previous to that waterproof hand held radios and also personal life jackets for every member, every *member of the organisation so there's been some good packages handed out which we weren't expecting. (16)*

I think they've had a little bit more money to play with. The NFFO Services side of that have compensated for lack of funds through actual membership. We've just been more financially successful and sort of matured as an organisation or built up reserves and experience in how to operate in the fields we are operating in. (16)

In Brisbane they've taken a view that we've done well out of property over the years, so that's our main income apart from the levies. (17)

With our levy base, we're not just purely reliant on the levy of members. We've got rental from building and interest and things like that. Actually the levy from members is probably less than half the income now. The other income is from commercial activities. *That way we can keep our levies down too, and that's one thing that makes people happy. (17)*

There are three sources of money: membership fees, brokerage for running education programs and other services, and then government monies.

We'd love to be able to bring some other income in, but then you lose your not for profit status because you don't want to be going to the Government paying tax; it's a big juggling act I think. Trying to find other income without losing your not for profit thing. (18) [Researcher's comment: I suspect this concern about tax is misplaced. Many associations earn independent income to off-set expenses. Our understanding of the restriction is that income cannot be paid back to members as a dividend.]

Now Art in the Woolshed would succeed anytime. A lot of exhibitors, high quality exhibition, lots of visitors to see it and a good time had by all.

Art in the Woolshed was a success but the running of it is difficult. Now Art in the Woolshed would succeed anytime. A lot of exhibitors, high quality exhibition, a lot of visitors to see it and a good time had by all. It's a community service we're trying to give because the money gets donated. Oh well, there is a benefit. We get to keep half the money and half the money is donated. We make a couple of thousand bucks, but I think the biggest benefit is it's a good community event. (19)

At the moment we're doing a campaign to try and get rid of the wild dogs. [Named government agency] has provided the funds to do it and that's maintained our bank account, so to speak. Yes, we've got plenty of funds but not everyone wants to spend it. Everyone is really tight. (19)

Some money does come through grants at the moments, some Federal and Territory grants. Can be through the 'Caring for Country' Program. There are different avenues for chasing funding; just meeting the criteria and acquitting them off properly tends to be very labour intensive on paper work, especially if it's financially Federal money. (22)

Membership fees

The most common way that associations are financed is through membership fees. When these fees are set at a flat rate per member, and the number of members is in decline, an association's financial state can become precarious.

There are membership fees of course, and they vary just depending on the viability of each of the industries each year. So ***I suppose you've got no certainty that you're going to get your money in each year*** *because you just don't know whether one of the sectors will say, we're not going so well this year; there's a global financial crisis or whatever, we just can't afford to pay our fees. (1)*

Probably 70% [of the association's income] would come from membership, 20% from the conference, and 10% from others. But membership fees are certainly the big one. (3)

Farms are getting bigger but there are fewer farms. So essentially over time the financial basis is shrinking.

Something that needs to be changed is the review of the fee structure because it's not reflecting the current – we have a cap [on the fees]. And ***that's the problem now, consolidation in the industry. Farms are getting bigger but there are fewer farms. So essentially over time the financial basis is shrinking.*** *That's why we're looking outside the square to try and build that capacity back in. (3)*

The funds, because there have been prawn farms closing. [Interviewer: Therefore your inward cash flow diminishes?] Yes, exactly. And there's one of the largest prawn farms has gone through a restructuring, so they're producing less, so there's less member fees there as well. And as well, the Executive Officer had a part-time Assistant who used to put out more communication, there were industry newsletters, and that's stopped as well, which is another reason for the decrease in performance. (3)

But there needs to be a more stable [financial] front. You just can't apply for grants all the time; you need all fishermen paying some fee. *(8)*

If they got more funds, they could do more. But I don't know how to get more funds out of people that won't join now, unless they think about including it in a licence fee. But then I guess, if they took it out of our licence fees, they partially are taking it out of our licence fee with PIFS, but some people reclaim their PIFS, so they really don't contribute. (9)

I think people have got to see a benefit in the association before they're prepared to put more money in it. So I think it's very important that any association in the seafood industry is able to demonstrate that they are enhancing the interests of the members that form the association*. (13)*

The main thing is that ***we are going to change the funding base from compulsory levy to voluntary, probably and I don't know if it might cause problems with free riders.*** *But in so saying, quite a few of the [subsidiary] organisations have a very high uptake voluntary levy* *anyway. Those of us who are used to that aren't concerned but some others feel it might be a challenge. (13)*

We are going to change the funding base from compulsory levy to voluntary; I don't know if it might cause problems with free riders.

We're only a new industry; we don't have a massive cash reserve like a lot of the other cane grower districts do up and down the coast. So we need to try and do everything we can to maintain our memberships, financially especially. (18)

Recommendation 27:

a. Conduct an annual audit of the association's financial affairs with a view to assess its capacity to fund the forthcoming year's program of work.
b. Where the funds are insufficient, the association has three possible choices: (i) raise more funds to meet its work aspirations, (ii) reduce its work aspirations to meet the available funding, or (iii) where the expenditure is regarded as necessary, urgent, and one-off, perhaps to go into debt for an agreed period, supported by a plan to get back to surplus. Any of these three courses of action would be of considerable gravity and not undertaken without the blessing of the full membership.
c. Avoid dependence upon government funding.
d. Aim for direct allocation of funds from members to association.
e. Pitch the funding at a level that (a) members can presently afford, and (b) that is sufficient for the association's present goals.
f. Avoid flat-fee funding. Consider pitching membership fees on a percentage of turnover.
g. Avoid a direct relationship between fees paid and level of association influence.
h. Aim for some separate sources of income, provided they don't distract. For example, what skills or resources do members hold that might be contracted out through the association, to benefit both association and member.
i. Set an annual set of objectives, an accompanying budget and seek funds accordingly.
j. Aim for a minimum of 12months reserve.

Major challenges

Strategic planning often includes what is commonly called a SWOT analysis, where SWOT is an acronym for Strengths and Weaknesses (both internal to the association), Opportunities and Threats (often external to the association). Weaknesses and Threats might be collectively regarded as challenges facing the association. Major challenges exist for most associations. And if left unattended to, these challenges can weaken or destroy an association.

Perceptions of major challenges varied considerably. Interviewees were more inclined to talk of challenges facing the industry, more so than the associations. Some themes emerged frequently. Among them are industry stagnation or decline, financial fragility, difficulties in attracting new blood, particularly into leadership roles, green tape, marine parks, and resource access.

> *Seafood as a whole - fisheries as a natural resource management issue, has historically been command control (govt) management style. It's shifting more now because* ***the Government's cost has got too high relative to the return coming out. So there's a driver now to reduce governance costs. So industry is moving towards self-regulation****, so co-governance. So they actually have to take greater responsibility and make the choices whereas it used to be thrust upon them. (1)*

The Government's cost has got too high relative to the return coming out. So there's a driver now to reduce governance costs. So industry is moving towards self-regulation.

The current situation in the overall seafood industry flows onto the associations that represent them. Pretty well the seafood industry overall but the aquaculture industry have had a horror year and a lot of that has been to do with the financial crisis, the imports, competition from overseas and stuff like that. So ***I think the challenges facing the association and the NAC is one of relevance and its biggest crisis is funding and also credibility.*** *Also* communication *is one of its greatest challenges as well, because people are forgetting that it even exists. (1)*

> *Well funding is a critical one. I think communications. The health of the membership association and membership industry is also important and also I think new blood, I think that's a real issue.* ***I think that's a massive issue, having new blood coming into the industry at the membership level and also at the leadership level.*** *They're some of the biggest issues for the association and also the changing workplace environments and those challenges are really difficult for the members. And that puts a lot of pressure on the bodies because unfortunately* ***the vast majority of these memberships are voluntary and so convincing the grassroots members to stay on as members is critical to even keep the money for the higher level.*** *(1)*

> *The major battles come down to finances and resources, that's a constant one. The other major one is that we really need our industry to grow for our industry to be able to exert itself. (2)*

I think that's a massive issue, having new blood coming into the industry at the membership level and also at the leadership level.

If all of a sudden the Government decided this [association] wasn't worth funding – because it's presently a good vector for them to communicate with the industry. You know they have representatives there and they get a lot of feedback. If the budgets are tight and they think well we can save ourselves [nominated dollar figure] a year and they do it, [the association] would probably – it would be doing even less than it is now, if not cease entirely. So yeah, that's always a challenge absolutely, the funding stream. (2)

I don't want to be melodramatic and say survival, but it would be one of the top five. ***Because I am concerned that unless it does grow and there are more people understanding what we do, we will just shrink. We are not putting any more ponds in, and haven't done for 13 years.*** *We should be growing.* ***Because we're not growing, we've not got new farms, we haven't got new players.*** *(3)*

The carbon tax is certainly a major concern, absolute major concern because our power could increase 30 per cent. (3)

I still think disease is a big issue. Australia has been quite fortunate, we haven't had the major diseases like white-spot, and I certainly think it's not if, but when, those diseases hit our shore. (3)

The lack of a strong national industry body is definitely a huge negative for us. Many decisions are really decided at a national level now. *(4)*

Marine parks. The biggest challenge is the growing influence of the Federal government in fisheries management. (4)

We've got an increasingly restrictive environment operating for our Fishermen in terms of access to the resource. Environmental pressures, political influences. ***Definitely the rise of the environmental NGOs in terms of very well-funded organisations with very well-funded campaigns.*** *And on the flipside, the fishing industry has not been best placed in terms of being able to react or rebut to those very well-organised campaigns. We need to be better about this funding of the scientific basis of some of those assertions. And I don't believe we are doing that. (4)*

Our biggest problem has been the ability to get a coalition of 75% plus one vote for constitutional change. Not the biggest problem, one of our problems. (4)

Things like the new OH&S rules, ethical treatment of animals; marine mammals and whale and seal interaction. There's quite a lot of issues. The EPBC Act and the environment is the biggest one, but it's not the only one. (4)

Our biggest challenge is to remain viable. I think the biggest thing is going to have to be amalgamation. It's just silly now because you simply don't have the memberships. For a lot of associations to even remain viable, the Leeman one is the classic example, they'd be better off joining the Central West Coast Association. They've just got no membership left at all. (6)

Marine parks are going to play a massive role in the next three to five years in all commercial fishing.

Number one is the young people, involving them because they're the future of the industry*, (ii) I think amalgamation of a smaller association with another one, (iii) I think taking the responsibility of the conduit of the fishery away from WAFIC and giving it back to the Rock Lobster Council. (6)*

I guess the increasing grab of dollars from the government. The cost of doing business. ***MPAs (Marine Protected Areas), they are an enormous worry to all commercial fisheries.*** *For us the challenge in the next ten years will be justifying to the public that we are an integral part of the community, not only economically, but socially, because there are so many Fishers that are not just Fishermen, they are in their working life and social life, Country Fire Service, Ambulance Drivers, coaches of footy teams. They participate in a whole range of fundraising community activities. (8)*

The two major challengers are going to be fee rises and marine parks. ***Marine parks are going to play a massive role in the next three to five years in all commercial fishing.*** *(8)*

The management of the fishery, obviously, is an ongoing challenge, and the factions within our industry are an ongoing challenge for us as well. (9)

Marine Parks is a major challenge. The cost recovery every year is a major challenge. Marine Parks are definitely going to be a big killer in the future. (9)

One is the increased level of responsibility that has fallen with industry associations to represent its membership on management issues. That was compounded (and you can say this for rock lobster generally) by declining fishery performance in recent years. ***So you found yourselves in the situation where you didn't have a structured approach or process to decision making around fishery management. And you also found yourself in a pretty tenuous position from the industry's point of view with people under financial pressure due to the fact that quotas were continually being reduced.*** *(9)*

I think to some degree, [our association] initially dealt with that quite well. They maintained that throughout the period. They had a professional approach. They ran comprehensive and good consultation processes as well, but I think the key challenge that came out of that was that ***they were always in a position of having to represent – and that's the key word – the views of members, not necessarily remove themselves from that space and have an objective***

discussion about decisions that were necessarily best for the fishery. *That's been a really key challenge for them in terms of management of the fishery. (9)*

Obviously, ***Marine Parks*** *has been another key one in the southern zone. And again some of the things we've talked about:* ***professionalism of approach****,* ***willingness to engage external expertise*** *to assist them in overcoming that and dealing with the issues. I think that's been a strength. And* ***having the resources available within the industry to do that as well, it's a luxury that some industry sectors don't have – the capacity to raise those resources****. The southern zone rock lobster fishery does have that, and it places them in a stronger position. I think they're a couple of the key of the key ones. (9)*

It's the declining membership. The older people that were involved have slowly gone away. You can't get the young ones to get involved.

Marine Parks. ***Resource access is going to continue to be a challenge into the future. There's always competing interests for resource access.*** *Market security is a key one at the moment which will continue to be a problem. Ensuring that there is coordinated investment of industry resources into research initiatives that are best going to support the industry, and that it's done in a coordinated way and that there's buy-in from industry. I think that's a challenge facing the industry as well. (9)*

You've got a group of commercial Fishermen who are well-resourced, very motivated for the abovementioned reasons, and have a very professional body behind most of them with a lot of money, and a government that is keen for economic activity, up against a recreational group who are seen pretty much just to be there causing trouble a lot of the time. (11)

We get bigger issues like recreational fishing areas, recreational fishing species, etc. These are big dollar items. And it's a lot harder for a recreational to find the people that are motivated enough to chase those goals. That's going to be one of the big challenges. (11)

Dealing with the conflicting priorities of the professional Fishermen versus amateur Fishermen and ***trying to make sure that the amateur Fishermen aren't disadvantaged by the strength of the lobby groups in the professional fishing associations*** *etc. And* ***the influence of the environmental groups****, and to ensure that the information that some of the environmental groups are basing their actions and policies on is accurate. So communication is absolutely vital. (11)*

It's the declining membership. The older people that were involved have slowly gone away. You can't get the young ones to get involved*. We seem to hear of a lot of people doing fishing competitions, but they're the ones that you win money on. We can't get them to come to what I used to call amateur fishing where you would fish for a trophy, or a fishing rod, or a reel. (12)*

Somehow, we've got to get the membership up and get more people involved. Other than that, it's just going to die. I think that's the only thing, as an association, we should be looking to do. *We could say that the committees going well and all this, but the committee's* *only there until it [the association] dies.* ***Without the members, it dies****. That's why I think that's all they should be concentrating on; getting more members somehow. (12)*

Probably the biggest challenge that [the association] – along with all other recreational fishers – is that ***Department of Fisheries is not looking at the science, but the political pressure from either recreational or commercial fishers****. (12)*

I think the major challenge for the industry is the continual focus on environmental issues that we have to pay attention to and the continual erosion of fishing space. (13)

The restructure of the [peak] organisation that they were going through the last couple of years and probably aspects of industry profitability have been major challenges. (13)

We've got to get the membership up and get more people involved. Other than that, it's just going to die. I think that's the only thing, as an association, we should be looking to do.

I sort of had three which are bracketed together, which is all about a strategic leadership position for the Seafood Industry. The first one is about our reputation for Quality & Safety. Second one is all about seafood health and seafood protein as a source of protein in the upcoming future and the third one really was all about science for innovation and growth. The other two that I had, most critical issues was the, about the environmental NGO's and the damage that they choose to do to the seafood industry. I think the other critical issue is about Government which is about a whole of Government support for our industry. (13)

But most of regulatory is on controlling its members and controlling how you operate, and more level of requirement, more flotation, more navigation. 'You can't do this, you can't do that, you've got to do that,' and there's no reason to do it. They're not friendly operators. You've got to have patience and nerves of steel. ***They try to control you, 'If you don't do this for us, you're not getting your licence for next year.' You can't get your licence for next year, you can't operate or sell your product, or process.*** *I call it a controlling side. (15)*

Consolidation within the industry has meant over the past few years that there was a decrease, a little bit in the number of producing members. How much will that continue, I don't know. There's potential for more for sure and I think that will present some challenges. (15)

I think the biggest problem is cohesion; trying to keep the club together as a group. One big issue is the fact that different classes may have had the same issue but it affects different groups of fisherman differently. So it is difficult to form a policy that relates to all the groups. Some groups may be disadvantaged by that policy so there's a lot of conflict between larger vessels and smaller vessels at the moment, which there always is in every port. It would be difficult to find areas [to the advantage] of the smaller vessels against the larger vessels. Sometimes some fishermen don't like it and won't accept it. You have to have a thousand solutions to one problem; you only have to pick a solution and go for it. (16)

The major problems for us are the environmental challenges. There are new environmental standards which are a problem for fishermen everywhere. You have to basically change the way we have fished for hundreds of years. It's a big problem. How do you keep a fisherman in business, but meet the demands that have been put upon you? (16)

The major challenges that the association has been faced with lately is the common fisheries policy, the cod recovery program and negotiating a better deal for the fisherman to the stocks. Rebuilding, that was a big challenge and I think they benefited from that now. We're getting increased quotas, through lobbying and putting our point across. One of the biggest challenges the NFFO and the UK fishing industry is facing now is the constant, constant – the greens, like your marine conservation societies, the WWF, and marine conservation lodge the constant pressure on. Of course we want sustainability you know, and it – a reporter asked me the other day have things changed since I started fishing 30 year ago and I turned around, there's actually more fish now than when I started 30 year ago. It is getting better; there's a lot less boats now and the larger mesh sizes and technical measures are starting to pay off. (16)

We do have an aging membership. We do have quite a bit more environmental regulation. The challenges in the last five years was the aging membership, the resources boom which has been the last five years and the future as far as a drain on our human resources (17)

*Getting the right people as elected members and staff, and making sure your members know what you stand for, which is probably the most important thing. **If the members can see you're standing up for them and they're getting value for money for their membership then they'll support you.** And if you never take a stand or never do anything for them, they're going to say well, why on earth should I bother be a member? I think that would probably be the main thing; that the members know what you stand for. They may not always agree with what you do but if they respect that, that's a big thing I think. (17)*

> ***If you never take a stand for them, they're going to say well, why on earth should I bother be a member?***

***In the next five years, we're going to have some new growers coming on and I guess they're the challenges with getting them used to the association. Hopefully they may bring something to it as well.** We're facing a period of new members and new challenges going forward I guess for the new members coming on board. (18)*

The major challenges for our association are all basically I think general industry based issues. (19)

Just surviving. The major challenge is dealing adequately with the policies of Government, because there's a raft of new Acts and legislation on the horizon. There's the Native Vegetation Act, there's the Water Act, there's the probably Living Rivers Policy that's going to come out, there's climate change, there's the carbon tax, all this sort of stuff and putting the industry – dealing with these whole raft of issues– yeah that's a major challenge. The industry is changing dramatically. Agri Forestry has come into the Territory and is buying up good agricultural land. Other forestry companies like the sandalwood companies and they're not management investments, but we've had a raft of Managed Investment Schemes. So there's the changing *face of agriculture. If we're trying to push and lobby on the basis of food security and all our land is being sold to Forestry, it seems a little contradictory. Our public perception is another challenge. Agriculture is seen as the bad industry. I mean the cattle industry recently with the cruelty to animals and all that stuff. So major challenges are our image, public relations, all that. (22)*

One of the major challenges is convincing the Territory Government that what we're doing is a worthwhile thing and it needs to be done. (22)

Recommendation 28

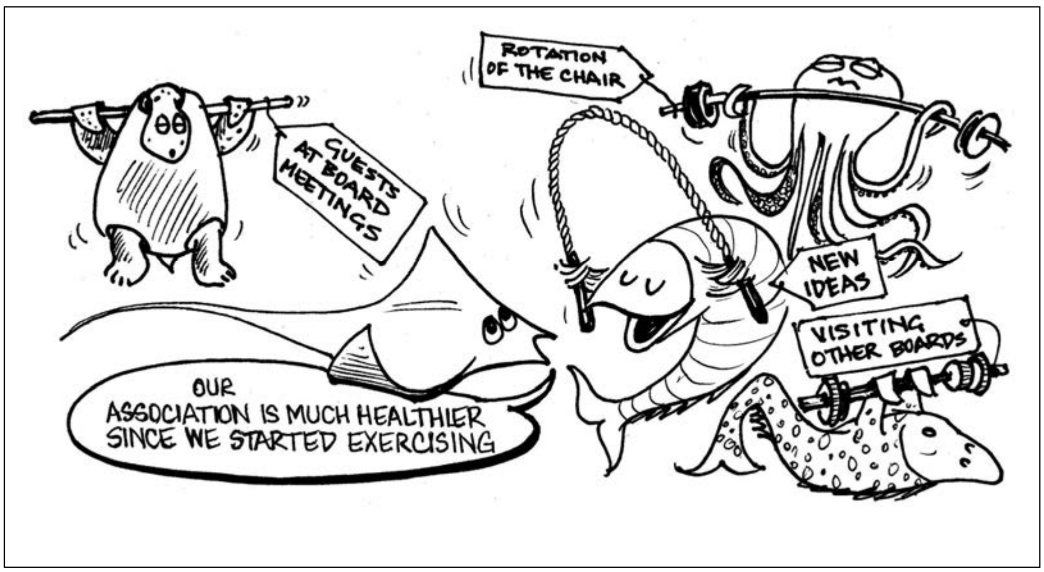
a. As part of its annual strategic plan, identify the four areas of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
b. In response to each of these four, (a) change the association to maximise its exploitation of any or all of these four, or (b) try to influence any of these four to maximise the benefit to the association or to minimise the cost.

Suggestions that will lead to a healthier association.

Interviewees varied considerably in their suggestions for fostering a healthy industry association. Some common themes include the need for new blood in the governance structures, healthy informed participating membership, fresh and progressive leadership, valued goods and services delivered to members, financial stability and professional systems of governance.

> *Something that we all instinctively know is to have a vigorous membership and the fresh blood. I think that's something that's really important that we're not seeing in most of our industries, we're getting older. (2)*

> *You've still got to be able to be a strong association, as strong as possible, which means that you need money. The more money you have, the stronger you are. So I think you need to not rely on members to be able to do that. (3)*



> ***Tap into that next generation that put their hand up to say that they'd like to help.*** *Because* ***there are plenty of very intelligent people that are smarter than me coming through the ranks, and they just need to be given a fair go.*** *Give them some encouragement. (3)*

> ***We need to grow, number one. If we don't we will implode****. To do that we need to convince the regulators that* ***we are who we say we are, and we're not black. We are very, very green. Greener than almost any other industry you can imagine.*** *So we need to grow. Then as you grow, you employ more people. As you do that, you encourage more graduates and more people into the industry that are clever. (3)*

> *(i) Having a good strategic plan; clarity of purpose is definitely a big thing. You need to have that otherwise your members are going to be confused. (ii) Transparency of results and good*

communication is also super important. (iii) And a diversity of members on the association is good. Diversity. (iv) Goods and services back to your members. You need to both be able to deliver something back to the members (otherwise what's the point of being there), but sometimes you also need to clarify what is going back to the members. It's very important that when you give something back to them, let them know, so they appreciate it. (v) Freshness of management and leadership. I don't necessarily mean changing over, but certainly well-documented elections, and encouragement of people to nominate, I think is quite important so they don't get stale. (3)

We're not black. We are very, very green. Greener than almost any other industry you can imagine.

I think a healthy association has a broad representation of its members, complete cross section of its members, has a very good network system to keep members in touch and up to date with what the peak body is doing and has a line of communication that is constantly open and free flowing and informative and works. I think ***they need to have a realisation that just sending out emails doesn't work; that you need to have more face to face time with members.*** *(4)*

Governance. It needs to have a refreshed structure. So whether, in our instance, we need to be looking at membership. Board reform – thinking about refreshing that constantly. It's really important to have some independents. Highly effective communication. Encouraging participation. And continual learning, improvement, and upgrading of skills is important. (4)

Better selection processes [for Council Board nominees]. I think we need to revamp how we do those selections. Whilst we can put up names, I don't think people really give a full brief. We don't put out a CV for instance to members. (5)

I want to see the Board stand on their own two feet as a proper Board should and run themselves as a Board without being influenced so much by the Department or the Minister's office. And make sure we can get funding that's consistent; not having to look over our shoulder all the time because somebody in the Minister's office want's to pull funding or something like that. (5)

More leadership training and to try and encourage younger participants*, because there are some of them out there. We have, in the past, run leadership programmes with Federal initiatives and things and there's been a fairly poor uptake unfortunately. (5)*

My sentiments are amalgamation. That's the number one thing, the only way out. If they amalgamate, increase your membership again and then they can go to the Minister and say, 'Right, we're representing 32 members,' or something like that. That's what gets clout. ***As soon as the Minister sees a large figure on a bit of paper, he'll sit up and listen.*** *If he doesn't, it goes to the media and he ends up looking like a goose. If you say, 'We're representing 10 members,' he's not going to give you much of his time.' (6)*

I've suggested that maybe now with MSC and the likelihood of a ten-year management plan for the fishery, trying to get a few of the bun fights and crises and issues that have been *threatening the fishery in the past to then shift our focus more on things like increasing the activities of the association, being more proactive, trying to increase our networks, increase our marketing. Do lots of more innovative things for the fishery, and try to get it onto more of a front foot instead of always defending your right to have access to the resources. I think that's the challenge for the next five years for the fishery. (8)*

We've got to stay open at an executive level down and communicate with our members and keep on encouraging them and all our potential members. ***New people that enter into the fishery, we've got to get them straight onto our association and make them actively involved because they're the new blood, they're the future.*** *(8)*

Just don't be scared to seek help from outside when it's needed. Like, employ the right people to do the jobs in the future, rather than trying to do everything yourself. (9)

(a) Clear purpose / means of organisation: it has to be a well-structured organisation.
(b) Deliver benefits back to members. That's related to performance, but it has to deliver the benefits back to members. It's not supported if you don't.
(c) Organisation structure, which depends on membership. You're not effective and you don't represent anyone unless you have membership, which is critical.
(d) Relationship building at the political / high-level decision making level. They have to keep building that capacity.
(e) Internal communication with members. I think that again, is around structure.
(f) Decentralisation of decision making.
(g) Capacity building amongst the membership base and within the association is key to having strong association going forward. (9)

If people don't feel good about the organisation and don't feel they are making a contribution and that their opinion matters, then they won't stay very long.

It's not just the performance of the meeting but there needs to be something there, you know, like a barbeques, regular outings, presentations, fostering local meetings, just the whole thing you know, social involvement, like discussing things, meeting at the Sea Rescue, having cuttlefish presentations, basically social interactions. (12)

Above everything else, I think that any association has got to look to enhance value for its members. *(13)*

If it's a regulatory barrier, or if it's a resource barrier, or it's a financial barrier, then those are the sorts of things that this association has to pay attention to. (14)

I think for the association to remain viable, basically, to make sure that the executive is on their toes, that the Board is engaged (which is not always the case), and then the third thing would be to make sure that the industry itself for which it serves is growing. (14)

The core of it comes down to having an association that – whatever it is – your members see value in and want to participate, want to pay their membership dues, want to support an association that they take pride in. *That's really the core, because if they don't have that, then membership will start to erode, you don't get support. (14)*

The challenge is to get the older members to let go a little bit, and look outside the square a little bit; maybe try new things.

At every level, if people feel like they're being included, valued, and that their opinions matter, all of that is absolutely key to making them feel that they like being involved in the association. *It sounds pretty simplistic, but it's at the core of effective associations. It's all good to have a lot of other things in place, but* ***if people don't feel good about the organisation and don't feel they are making a contribution and that their opinion matters, then they won't stay in it very long.*** *(14)*

Engagement with members is critical. Engagement with non-members is also critical to find out why they're not members and engagement with our corporate farmers because they're becoming a bigger sector. And, of course, engagement with the Government, particularly in respect to environmental and growth strategies. (17)

Well I think probably their corporate governance to start with so that people know what their responsibilities are and their carrying them out well and to probably have a bit of initiative too; not just to say sit there and let the world pass them by. (17)

Agriculture is an optimists business and as an organisation you've got to be optimistic too. When things go wrong, not to let it get you down so much because if the organisation itself starts to get too pessimistic and gloomy it's probably in a bit of a downward spiral to a degree if it's not big enough to have people saying, pull yourself together and get on with it. That does happen too. ***If the Board loses confidence and the members lose confidence and leave, you won't get that back easily.*** *(17)*

A good dirty joke before the meeting. Actually we're good mates; it's all about being good mates and respecting each other. (18)

My message to any association is: ***if your Directors or your committee members want to make an association work, they have to be prepared to put in the hard yards at no personal return. (18)***

If the members lose confidence in the Board and leave, you won't get that back easily.

If you have got all your members fighting together for the one cause, you can achieve the world. But we don't have that in agriculture, and that's why farming is in the position that it's in. Of all the organisations I've been involved in, [this association] is probably the one that I can say that has some ability to achieve what we want to achieve. But it doesn't come easy. But it is made easier, because our growers are united. (18)

I guess it's knowing their member base, the needs of their member base and trying to address those. Having communication lines with them, keeping them abreast of what you're doing for them for the time, just being there for them. Quite often they just come in here and they come to get the mail and they need someone to talk to as much as anything else. You become a bit of a counsellor as well in that respect sometimes, but it's mainly the communication lines between the two so they know what you're doing for them, getting information out to them. (18)

Get one of your really good executive members from 8-10 years ago to look at you over a beer and say well, this is what we did, what are you doing now, and is that better or worse? (19)

You just need to make sure that social side stays. - -- We do stupid things. ***Like last year we had barefoot bowls for our Christmas thing in Warwick. But we made sure that all the kids could come, because a lot are 10-16, so we had all the kids and so on.*** *You've got to have all those sorts of things and we get a bus so that you can have a drink. (19)*

Membership. And it's the young ones that are here. ***The challenge is to get the older members to let go a little bit, and look outside the square a little bit; maybe try new things****. (19)*

You probably might want to ask how do people look at you from outside? In other words, in our case, ***how do the non-members who live in our community look at us and how would you encourage them to look at us more favourably?*** *(19)*

Recommendation 29

a. Identify, for your association, members of the eight stakeholder groups or people who might speak for them.
b. Independently invite members of the eight stakeholder groups to provide ideas on improving your association.
c. Pool and publish those ideas.
d. Act on those that have the greatest strategic value.

External contextual factors

In addition to the internal contextual factors listed and discussed above, there are a number of external factors that impinge upon society generally and therefore impact directly or indirectly on an association's capacity to build long term viability.

These external contextual factors include:

- An increase in educational levels for younger people, and an increase in their mobility, coupled with an ever shrinking globe, thereby increasing the career options available. The result is a drift to the cities from the bush and a decline in the appeal of all forms of primary industry as a career.
- A decline in the percentage of people willing or able to take up civic responsibility, thereby reducing the number of role models for the following generations.
- An increase in governments claiming responsibility for more and more facets of human existence (coupled with a declining capacity), leading to a state of dependency and learned helplessness by the population at large.
- Every increasing complexity, including an ever-increasing regulatory burden.
- A decrease in the proportion of the populous who have family, relatives or acquaintances working in primary production, thereby reducing the political leverage of the food production sector.
- An parallel increase in the power of the 'green lobby', which coupled with the previous point, puts ever increasing pressure on the primary producers' 'social licence' to operate.
- Ever increasing input costs, not offset by commensurate income increases, and foreign imports leading to constantly increasing competition.
- A resources boom that sucks competent staff away from primary industries, thereby weakening both the social and economic fabric of rural and fishing communities.

Some of these external issues, those that arose most frequently during the course of our interviews, will now be explored. They are offered in no particular order.

- **Declining numbers of participants in an industry –** due to legislative pressures, aging populations, financial pressures, imports, amalgamation of smaller enterprises into larger ones, corporatisation and industry restructures.

  The number of farms being able to make a decent amount of money is dropping off. The Farmers are probably making more money, but the industry in itself is somewhat stagnated. And a lot of that is just due to the restrictions that the government is putting on us, which is some of the stuff that we're obviously trying to look at changing – all the red tape. There are a hell of a lot of environmental restrictions being put on industries, and it's fairly difficult to run a *competitive business with unrealistic expectations, and there are a hell of a lot of them out there at the moment. (3)*

***This fishery in itself used to have 180-200 fishermen; there's now 11**. (4)*

The trawling industry is under the pump and is suffering badly and barely making ends meet. Instead of wanting new entrants, they've got people wanting to get out hand over fist. They want to be bought out; they want to be shut down; they want to be finished up. So the trawling industry is stuffed. (4)

Like the rock lobster has gone from the mid 80s, 800 boats down to 250. So a lot of associations have just folded up. (4)

***We've gone from a fleet of nearly 500 boats down to I think 268-269 working this year. That's the total fishery for WA. Massive, massive reduction. That's in the last six years.** We've gone through major upheavals. I will give you an example. There used to be 100-105 A Zone MFLs allowed to fish in the area. I think there's 41 of us fishing this year. Still the same number of units or pots in the industry now. **Our island used to have 13 boats working from it, we're down to four.** (6)*

I left Leeman in 1994 when there were 19 boats there. Now I think there's five or six. (6)

We've got less growers, from a height of 6,500 growers down to 3,500 members. So there's less people to draw on. (17)

*Generally speaking the number of actual farmers has decreased. The size of enterprises has increased and smaller ones have dropped out and certain areas have become less viable. **In my industry, for instance, we've gone from about 30-35 growers of varying sizes down to probably 12.** (21)*

- **Enterprise succession planning –** industry members are more likely to become active participants in their association when they have a financial stake in the industry's future. Some younger people (and some 50 years of age) do not know if, or when, they will get a financial stake in an industry within which they may have spent their whole lives. Until succession planning is sorted out at the family and enterprise level, willingness by younger industry members to invest in their association can be limited.

The fishing industry is a family thing and the father does pass it onto the son. I'm in that boat; I can name five other members who are sons of fishermen. (6)

My son said, 'When am I going to get to take over the boat?' I said, 'Righto, you can take over, you're responsible for everything, I'm going to off to do something else. And hopefully we can talk him or someone else to taking on the President's role in a couple of years to relieve the guy that's doing it now. (6)

One of the things that I've witnessed over a number of years (and it was largely the same with myself) that ***as long as Dad's going to the meetings, and he's doing the stuff, then the kids don't really become active.*** *When the responsibility of enterprise ownership changes within the family – and I don't just mean the kids are working for Dad,* ***when that responsibility has been passed over, they're actually becoming responsible. When they've got their name on some overdraft, then they become interested in the association. And at that point you'll see these new faces coming along.*** *And you know they've been out there for a number of years, and they've been well capable. What drives them to become interested is when they become responsible for stuff. At that point, these decisions start to affect them. So suddenly they're interested in what's going on. When there's that change in succession, then you see the people come on and be interested. I see it as a driver in interest in belonging to the association. (20)*

When they've got their name on some overdraft, then they become interested in the association. And at that point you'll see these new faces coming along.

[Succession planning]. I know a few where it's gone well; I know a whole bunch where it is not at all good. It's a difficult thing. It's probably one of the most difficult challenges that any family on the land has to face. And it's a tough thing to talk about, act upon, and do anything with. Some families seem to do it alright, and some – ***I've got friends that are 50 years old, and they still don't know what's going to happen when something happens to Dad, or who gets what or anything. I think it's terrible.*** *The decision can't be made, and it keeps some of these younger people kind of floating in the ether. (20)*

Even though I've basically worked for my parents on the farm since I left school, I haven't had a financial stake in a [commodity] growing business until two years ago, and that's where I felt most confident in contributing. *(20)*

- **Declining industry fortunes.** Industries are not static. They experience the same ebb and flow of fortunes as do individuals. When an industry's fortunes are on the rise, participants are more willing and have greater capacity to invest in their associations. When industry fortunes wane, belt-tightening at the enterprise level is necessary. People exit the industry. Industry associations can lose vitality and energy. Further, associations may have to make structural adjustments to their resources, including personnel, meaning they may no longer be able to deliver services that members may still expect.

What incentives are there to attract 'young people' into the fishing industry *apart from those carrying on an already established family business which does not involve them in borrowing vast sums of money to participate? The proposed marine parks would deter anyone, young or old to invest in the fishing industry as it currently stands.* ***One of the few remaining young skippers we know in the shark industry quit today and has taken a job in the mining industry.*** *Far less stressful and a much better guaranteed income.* (Yvette Mansted – Esperance)

At its peak, we had a mixture of Government and industry resourcing, mostly Government resourcing. When it was very well resourced, it was going very well. But of course the *government resourcing pulled out and then they got basically a part-time Executive Chairman and very little financial support other than that, and because of that its struggled. It struggles to do what it used to do, and it's a direct relationship to the amount of money that it has. (1)*

One of the few remaining young skippers we know in the shark industry quit today and has taken a job in the mining industry.

So in this environment the Board made the decision to divest themselves of a dedicated executive officer. So NAC had some capacity loss. They've had a cut back and so again, I think you'll find this as a theme probably in other organisations that there's a pressure for change, some rationalisation. (1)

When there was fat, the industry was worth billions and billions of dollars then you have all this capacity. Now the fats got to be trimmed. We've got to be lean, mean, and rational. (1)

***The reality of aquaculture in Queensland, there hasn't been a new fish farm or prawn farm approved for 10 years.** There are just no new farms coming along. The industry is probably growing but that would be from increases in production and that's not by increasing the area, its increasing the yield per hectare per year. There has been growth from that, but **there's been virtually no new earthworks going on in the industry and some farms have actually left dry. There are a number of empty farms out there.** So new people aren't coming along and picking up them and running with them. That's because it's too scary, too hard to do in Queensland. [Interviewer: Is Queensland different from other States?] Yes. The salmon industry has been going ahead in leaps and bounds and there's other barramundi farms in other parts of Australia that have expanded and progressed, but in Queensland, 'No'; too much red tape. (2)*

The reality of aquaculture in Queensland, there hasn't been a new fish farm or prawn farm approved for 10 years.

That's the travesty of the whole industry that we haven't grown significantly in the last ten years – the last 20 if the truth be known. Volume of production. Just the volume of the physical entity in Australia. We're going to produce around 4,000 tonnes again this year. Well, I remember us doing that 15 years ago. (3)

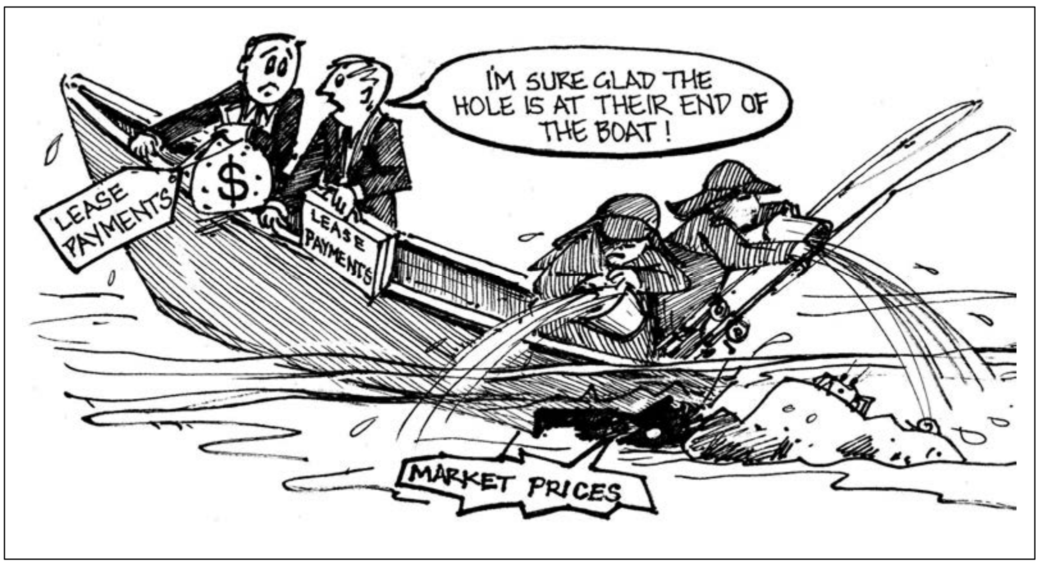
*The industry got given a bit of an unfair rap over how it's perceived with the public towards the environment. **In the past we've been perceived as being the same as a sewerage treatment plant, which is just not true. I think public perception is changing, though, towards aquaculture** as well. It's becoming a reliable source of quality seafood, and I think the public are starting to realise that. (3)*

[Named enterprise] a major player, up until recently, it was the largest single [commodity] producer in Australia. They have sold one of their three farms and have ceased major production in [named location], so they've gone from producing 1,500 tonnes or more a year to probably only 2/300, and from operating 150 hectares to only about 20/30. So their involvement and financial contribution is dramatically cut. And largely from the cyclone, Yasi, has had a dramatic effect up and down the coast in all sorts of things. Not just our membership, but also individual farms have struggled. (3)

Once it goes to quota - it happens to all fisheries; the investors make the money out of it.

*But **the industry as a whole has suffered in the last five years or more because of the imports, really. Prices have just been very poor** – they haven't really increased, but the cost of production has gone up. Then you've had the flood events and cyclones coming so close to each other, and it's changed farms. Some farms have just gone over to barramundi because they can grow barramundi – no offense to them, I grow barramundi too – it's an absolute breeze compared to prawns. (3)*

***Once it goes to quota - it happens to all fisheries; the investors make the money out of it** because the pot price went from $13,000 to $20,000 within three months. So the investors win. The lease price – you lease them all back – before no one could lease them because it was getting low and it was around $700-800 a unit before quota, and now, this year [with quota] it's up to $2,000 a unit. Because when quota comes in, it's all about turnover. Before then, it wasn't – input control governs how much you could work efficiently. That's where conflicts come up. (4)* [This quote illustrates how the economics of an industry can lead to its demise. Investors on fixed incomes; fishers on variable incomes and locked into fixed lease payments. Perhaps the lease contract conditions need to be variable too. Perhaps a % of the current market price]



*In the last five years there's been significant pressures politically in terms of the lack of access to resources. You have Marine Parks being the predominant one, population growth – we've seen a loss of Fishermen in local centres just through population growth, environmental sectors, recreational fishing. So the sustainability issue is a huge one. Securing access for fisherman because of that is a major problem. **What we're seeing is huge chunks of the ocean being locked up as marine parks and Governments bending to the will of green groups**. (4)*

*I don't think I've ever met a happy fisherman. They're like farmers, they always like to whinge. They're never going to happy. They're never happy making enough money. **They'll never make***

enough money and there's always someone pissing them off whether it's another fisherman or it's Government. You can never find a happy fisherman. *(4)*

The buy in is too expensive. To be a rock lobster fisherman you've got a $2 million debt to start you off. *. So the capital buy in into this industry from total new entrants, unless you're a lotto winner, is going to be minimal. Cost; that's the main inhibiting factor for people, new blood, that aren't family coming into this game. (4)*

The whole industry in general is just not happening; there a decline in not just lobsters, but all fisheries are declining dramatically. It is purely financial. It's nothing to do with fish stock. The price of all fish generally hasn't gone up. Like prawns used to be 23 trawlers, I think we're down to seven now. They just work bigger nets and virtually instead of catching them all in 2 months they catch them over 4 now. So certain blokes catch three times as much, but they need to catch three times as much because the costs have gone up. So the price hasn't changed. And that's what's happening across all fisheries; economies of scale is just what it has to be. (4)

> ***It's all about the price of the crays now. I find it's a better lifestyle. I'm getting more days off to do other things and we're making more money.***

But there are quite a few changes, particularly in WA ***I would say that mining has had a significant impact on the local fabric, as people find it hard to get staff.*** *My own company is quite a big organisation, and we've had to utilise 457 visas. That sort of thing does have a major impact on people in terms of losing staff to other industries and not really being able to compete in terms of the conditions and pay. So added to the diminishing access, it's certainly been a critical time for the industry. (4)*

Once we've gone through all the pain of going to quota and having our pot reductions and the industry turned on its head, it's all gone very quiet now. (6)

> ***All fisheries are declining dramatically. It is purely financial. It's nothing to do with fish stock.***

Basically we could catch as much as we wanted in seven and a half months. Usually every single day, no matter what. No matter what the price. *Now it's a completely different ballpark [after the legislated changes for the fishery]. I used to do engine-hour running time in a season 1,200-1,800 hours in a year. We're down to about 300 now. I've worked 35 days for the season so far. (6)*

Everyone just fishes to the price. We don't fish to the weather anymore. We don't fish to the season sort of thing, if you know when the crays are running. ***It's all about the price of the crays now. I find it's a better lifestyle. I'm getting more days off to do other things and all that sort of stuff and we're making more money.*** *So major, major mind change. We handle our product infinitely better than what we did a while ago (6)*

And what you're finding now is that some young guys are just leasing all their quota and still trying to make a go of it. But they're struggling like hell. I think things aren't looking too well in *our industry this year, because* ***a lot of fishermen find that the average beach price will not cover their lease payments.*** *(6)*

A lot of fishermen find that the average beach price will not cover their lease payments.

I come from a farming background; my brother's a farmer, and you can see just ***in this town where I'm living – [named town], where I was born and bred, just no young people left. Our average age in our town is 50 – 60 years of age.*** *They're all doing what I'm doing. My son's running the boat, and I'm fly-in, fly-out offshore, because I've had to go and work****. I was hoping to be semi-retired by now, but I've had to keep working because we've had the rug pulled out from under us and we're struggling to repay debt.*** *(6)*

There are no young fishermen. I'm probably classed as a young fisherman now, whereas it used to get passed on from father to son, father to son. It is getting harder, there's a lot more restrictions on us now. There's obviously a booming oil and gas industry where, if you've got a skippers certificate and every fishermen has, they can go up north and make themselves a thousand dollars a day sitting on a tug boat and not have millions of dollars laid out. So ***if I wasn't married with three children, I would probably be up there too and work for five weeks on and five weeks off and make myself $300,000 a year. A lot of fishermen have exited the industry for oil and gas.*** *A lot of fishermen who are fishing now do two things. There's an ever-growing proportion of fishermen who will go and do their five weeks up north and in the five weeks off they'll actually run their lobster boat. (6)*

In this town where I'm living, where I was born and bred, there's just no young people left. Our average age in our town is 50 – 60 years of age.

We're not getting as many younger people coming through. *We definitely want a lot more to come in.* ***But it's getting harder and harder because you've got the mines dangling a big carrot in front of them, so it's hard to get new blokes to come on board.*** *The whole industry is a bit stale in that respect. [Interviewer: So the mining industry has knocked your industry around a fair bit?] I'd say a little bit. It's been good for us because the guys that have dropped out have found a job to go to. It's been good in that respect.* ***I wouldn't blame the mining industry, but there just doesn't seem to be the willingness of young blokes to go fishing anymore.*** *(6)*

It is simply because Fishermen have disappeared. Like, ***back in the '80s and '90s when there were 700-odd boats, you could fill a hall with people. And now you couldn't fill a lounge room. That's just how it's changed.*** *(6)*

Probably for the last ten years it's been hard to get new ones into the industry because it has just priced itself out of everybody's way of getting in to the industry. It's become overpriced. (9)

Aquaculture's change from a multiplicity of organisations into one was helpful and we're getting inshore fishing similarly restructured from a multiplicity of organisations into fewer more significant solid bodies. (13)

We've been struggling with replacement of resources, particularly in the science area, ***we've got a lot of old scientists who are contracted in and it's, where are the new fisheries scientists going to come from.*** *(13)*

If I wasn't married with three children, I would probably be up there too and work for five weeks on and five weeks off and make myself $300,000 a year. A lot of fishermen have exited the industry for oil and gas.

[Interviewer: Is Canada besieged by the same situation that Australia is – suddenly being flooded with Marine Reserves that are not accessible to fishermen] No, that's particularly an Australian phenomenon, I think. We have lots of interest in developing Marine Reserves – they want to do Marine Parks, but they haven't succeeded in doing that, it's politically too hot. Because the commercial Fishers would basically burn down people's houses if they tried that. (14)

Whereas you're into a younger generation that doesn't like physical work. They like set hours and big money in the oil industry – oil and gas, which is starting to play big roles here. *(15)*

Probably there's been some incredibly major changes in this industry. My core business is grass seeds and legumes, and I am just amazed at what we've had to go through in sugar, compared to other industries that I've been involved in. There's been de-regulation. There's been the break up of our sugar terminal ownership. There's been the breakup of Queensland Sugar Limited. There's been the constant of millers taking control of every single facet of this industry, at the grower's detriment. There have been water issues, where you have Labour Government putting in supposedly independent bodies like Queensland Competition Authority to put up water prices, when they can't even get the data from companies like Sun Water. It's just been – it's been an absolute nightmare. I have never worked so hard in my life for the industry like I have with the sugar industry. Even today there is letters going out to millers. They want to change our marketing. They want to market all our sugar and we have to accept that. It's a bit like giving Dracula the keys to the blood bank. And then you've got the mills, now we've been pushed into this extension. They want full control over the Extension Officer. It's just an absolute nightmare. (18)

Do you remember, going back 20 years ago, we had Statutory Boards. We didn't have these sorts of problems in agriculture when we had those Statutory Boards. You didn't see farmers put up by Woolworths and Coles and told that well, if you're lucky, you might get paid, but we want it for this price today. And if you don't want it, someone else will supply it. We've never had that, and now it is very, very bad out there, very bad. (18)

The production of [commodity] in Queensland has deteriorated. It's not 50 % of what it was 15 years ago; it's probably 20 % or 30 %. I don't know the number but it's declined a lot. (19)

Most people around here are not very financially strong and I think everybody is just wearing out; you see that everywhere. *(19)*

Then there was the drought and the downturn of the industry and [our peak body] shrunk to a minimal organisation that was quickly running out of funds. Then it rained a few years ago and it all started to turn around. (20)

- **Ever-increasing complexity.** The world is increasingly complex, particularly the regulatory world. This places higher demands upon associations, particularly in time, skills, professionalism, and money. Member-based associations are required to become increasingly sophisticated just to survive, and more and more are they dependent upon sophisticated professional support.

Issues have become so complicated. It is very difficult for all the fishermen to get their head around the entire thing.

I think there's that many different parts of the fishing industry that really – it [the association] has to focus on everything, if you know what I mean. So it could be talking about two or three different issues in the C and D [zones?] and I'm meeting ministers and things like that so, as far as a charter, it's ongoing, what other issues crop up to deal with. (16)

Issues have become so complicated. It is very difficult for all the fishermen to get their head around the entire thing. (16)

We are very much limited just by the sheer volume of issues. Even if we trebled our capacity to handle it we still wouldn't be able to handle everything that is coming in. It's just the way of the world at the moment. (16)

Some bodies were just overwhelmed by the sheer number of issues we're dealing with. We're far from perfect but we do our best. (16)

You kind of just adapt to conditions as they arrive. Most fishermen will meet the challenges as they come. It is very difficult to make a policy at the moment because the goal posts are moving so quickly. Just try to be as adaptive as we can. (16)

These and other external trends are often beyond an association's capacity to influence.

Recommendation 30: Identify and acknowledge these threatening external factors and find ways to either (a) minimise or neutralise their negative effect upon the association, or (b) creatively turn these trends to the association's advantage. **Recommendation 28** also applies here.

20. Conclusion

Associations are first and foremost social systems, driven solely by the voluntary commitment of their members. How that commitment is harnessed and nurtured is a vital ingredient in healthy associations and the willingness of people to step into leadership roles. The recommendations in the body or this Report are largely about suggested changes to individual and collective behaviour. Almost all can be achieved at no cost. The greatest challenge in adopting these recommended behaviours is letting go of habitual and often unconscious practices and behaviours that are otherwise self-defeating.

The authors of this report welcome feedback and comments.

Ian Plowman – email: ian@plowman.com.au

Neil MacDonald – email: neil@nmac.com.au

28th November 2012

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Intellectual Property

With the exception of material in the Appendices, all of the material in this research is the intellectual property of the FRDC. Material in the Appendices has been provided by the principal investigator, the copyright for which is jointly held by FRDC and Ian Plowman Pty Ltd.

Appendix 2: Staff engaged in the project.

Principal investigator: Ian Plowman

Co-investigator: Neil MacDonald

Illustrator: Pam Walpole

Appendix 3: Raw data

Raw data for this project consists of interview quotes. The most salient quotes drawn from the 68 interviews populate the body of this Report. The number in brackets after each quote indicates the source (by case study – not by interviewee).

Appendix 4: Responsibility Matrix

A responsibility matrix is a tool for clearly defining task responsibilities. If nobody knows who is responsible for what, it is quite likely that nothing will get done.

A responsibility matrix is commonly created after a list of tasks has been generated. The matrix purpose is to define who is going to do what by when. It can take a variety of forms at a variety of levels of sophistication. The basic form is as follows:

Task	**Who carries primary responsibility**	**By when is it to be completed**

The responsibility matrix is an aid to accountability. It can be established as a 'standing order', setting out the duties of each and every committee member, executive officer, and employee. These duties can be revised, as necessary, at each AGM.

The responsibility matrix can also be used as part of the minutes of every meeting, documenting each of the action items. The accountability matrix can then be reviewed at each appropriate subsequent committee meeting as a means of checking on progress.

By publishing the accountability matrices among members, responsibilities are publicly known and therefore more likely to be carried out.

One of the benefits of generating such a matrix is that it starts to sheet responsibility home. It is common for people to generate ideas which they expect others to implement. Through the generation of a responsibility matrix, this issue is confronted.

Research shows that moribund communities, organizations and associations are commonly heard to say: "Why don't they ….?" Dynamic healthy communities, organizations and associations are commonly heard to say: "How can we ….?" It is the latter that are more inclined to take responsibility for their own health and future.

Appendix 5: Incorporated Associations

Incorporated associations are a legal entity, separate from their members and executives. The governance of incorporated associations falls within the jurisdiction of each State and Territory legislation. In each case a generic set of model rules is on offer, and the necessary information can be found on the web-sites, listed in **Appendix 2 (a)** overleaf.

Further, the South Australian Government offers a check-list by which members can audit their association's compliance to the model rules. See **Appendix 2 (b)** overleaf. This helpful check-list can be easily adapted to fit all jurisdictions.

Since the Model Rules offered by the various jurisdictions are generic, each association might choose to modify the Model Rules to suit their specific circumstances. Whenever an association chooses to make these modifications, it needs to do so within the appropriate jurisdictional requirements, usually through a special general meeting.

One of the interviewees for this research project is a Professor of Management with a background in law. He also has a long and distinguished association with the seafood industry. He made the following comments with respect to associations:

> *Courts generally give quite a bit of leeway to Associations. My experience with the courts is that they say, 'It's an association; it's volunteers; get a life' to people who go to court over these issues. Unless it's like there's an ethical issue within an association, for example a recent instance where a building was sold at a low value and it was alleged that the company was linked to do with one of the Directors and an ex-CEO. Other than in those sorts of issues, my experience is that the courts are very reluctant to get involved (4)*
>
> *The only follow-up question I would ask in your survey:* ***"Is there someone in your organisation who has specific responsibility for filing the necessary Directors' forms and annual returns with your local [State or Territory] body regarding incorporated associations".*** *I think that's a good litmus test for whether they're meeting the formal requirements under their Acts. If they're not, then – and it [may be] different in each State, it is my understanding that the general rule is you lose the shield of incorporation.* ***The Directors could have unlimited personal liability****. (4)*
>
> *You might get a new Board, and they may not realise that someone's got to fill in the form and send it off to the Commissioner. Also,* ***when you change a Constitution you've also got to send the change off to the Commissioner.*** *All the Commissioner generally checks in a change to the Constitution in WA is the rules about changing a Constitution. In other words, you've got to have some special resolution. They don't want to be – as I said cliques taking over and doing strange stuff. And similarly there is concern over the rules relating to the diversion of assets to members. My experience has been that these factors are all they generally all they really look at. They say, '****Are you meeting the requirements relating to elections broadly, and more specifically changes to your Constitution and your General meetings. And secondly, is your***

> ***Constitution very clear that you can't pay out the assets to the members.'*** *If they're clear on those two things, they interpret it generously and let pretty well anything you like go through. (4)*

Suggested additions to model rules

The various State and Territory Model Rules tend to codify the legal and administrative requirements that keep an association healthy. The recommendations that follow suggest codification of social and psychological aspects that will keep an association healthy. However, be aware that the legislation is very prescriptive as to how any off-the-shelf Constitution might be changed.

> *We're in the middle of trying to re-jig the Constitution, because there are some inadequacies in it. Especially one specific point is that we tried to change something last year, and we just found out that you've actually got to mail everything out. Email is insufficient. Because in the Constitution, it said 'mail.' We assumed that email would be sufficient, but it wasn't. So we've got to redo the process. (5)*

Based upon this FRDC-funded research into healthy associations, here are some modifications that could be considered:

1. Vision/Goals/Activities

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely what the association's purpose is. Revisit that purpose annually, revising as necessary.

Subsidiary to any vision are a series of goals that will collectively give effect to that vision. Goals are to be specific, with stated KPI's, time specified, and allocated to particular members/executives/Board members who carry responsibility for them.

Subsidiary to each goal is an activity or range of activities that will give effect to that goal. Each activity to specify the resources required to execute it and well as identifying who carries responsibility for its execution.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely what are the responsibilities of each office bearer, each paid employee, and each general member. Build into the Constitution and Model Rules, for every position (a) a succession plan, (b) an elected appointee to all key roles – a person-in-waiting, (c) an incumbent in all key roles, (d) an immediate past office holder – to mentor and back up those following, and (e) an exit strategy.

3. Membership

(a) Deliberately target increasing membership and participation from (a) the eight stakeholder groups, (b) younger members, (c) women, (d) any/all elements of the value-chain, and (e) people from outside the industry who have an interest in it.
(b) Define the conditions under which a person or entity may become a member, the obligations that go with that membership, the benefits of being a member, and the barriers that separate members from non-members.

4. Code of Conduct

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely what are the appropriate behaviours expected of members; what avenues are available to the association to encourage the desired behaviours, and what system of redress might be invoked should those desired behaviours be violated, to the detriment of the association or its members. Include within the Code, an avenue of appeal, allowing natural justice for any member against whom it takes action. Consider the value of having all office holders, Board members, and employees sign off on this Code of Conduct.

5. Conflict Resolution Protocol

Whilst Model Rules commonly specify the processes under which mediation might be pursued, the Constitution or Model Rules might also specify the conflict resolution processes that might be invoked long before mediation might be necessary.

6. Goods, Services and Benefits to Members

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely what goods, services, or benefits the association will undertake to deliver on behalf of its members in exchange for the obligations (financial and in-kind) that members bestow on the association.

7. Decentralisation of Decision-Making.

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely (a) how decisions are to be made and (b) who will have input into making them. **Appendix (5)** refers to a range of participative decision tools, while Chapter 23 refers to the generic list of eight potential stakeholders, plus others the executive might suggest.

8. Openness to New Ideas

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely how the association will keep itself open to new ideas. The annual audit of the association might ask current and potential members for suggestions on how this might best be done.

9. Freshness of Management & Leadership

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules precisely how leadership succession and renewal will be prescribed. One suggestion is (a) to have non-renewable two-year elected terms for committees of management, with (b) annual split-half elections, thereby establishing a blend of freshness with stability. Further for each prescribed association role (chair, secretary, etc.), consider having a person elect (an apprentice in waiting), an incumbent, and an immediate past incumbent (a mentor or back-up). Consider rotation of responsibilities among executive members for roles such as chair, minute-taker, and process facilitator. Have an exit strategy for every position.

10. New Blood.

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules the policy for attracting, inducting, and retaining new members. Also specify an upper age limit, beyond which executives need special member approval to renominate.

11. Sharing responsibilities

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules the responsibilities of each member, not just the executive members, in contributing to the ongoing vitality of the association. Consider having new members publicly sign off on their responsibilities as a member.

12. Spare capacity/slack resources

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules the percentage of time/funds/other resources that will be quarantined from operation use and held specifically for speculative exploration of opportunities. Five to ten per cent is an appropriate figure.

13. Boundary clarity

Where an association has a set of responsibilities that abut or potentially overlap with the responsibilities of another association (as might occur with a peak body and a commodity body), the Constitution or Model Rules could not only define its own responsibilities; it could also define where those responsibilities stop (a responsibility boundary) and those of another association are therefore free to start. This boundary should of course be established in joint conversation with other interested associations.

14. External communication

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules the sort of external scanning and idea exchange that will (a) keep the association on watch for emerging opportunities and threats, and (b) build a positive image between the association and its external world. A healthy association seeks to build partnerships with outside bodies. It also seeks information from sources outside of its normal sphere.

15. Internal communication

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules the avenues of internal communication necessary between: (i) members and executive, (ii) executive and members, (iii) members and members.

16. Performance measurement

Specify in the Constitution or Model Rules what will be monitored and how often. All of the topics in this current document are worthy of regular monitoring and evaluation.

17. Continuous improvement

Codify, in the Constitution or Model Rules, the philosophy and practice of continuous improvement as a cultural norm.

Incorporated Association Websites

Appendix 2 B

State or Territory	**Web-sites**
General	https://wiki.qut.edu.au/display/CPNS/State+and+territory+legislation+for+Incorporated+Associations
WA	http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumerprotection/content/business/associations/index.htm, http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumerprotection/content/business/associations/model_rules-Incorporation.html http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/associationsguide/Content/18_Sporting_and_Recreational_Clubs/18.2_Rules_of_association_and_.htm http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumerprotection/content/business/associations/Changing_Rules.html
Vic	http://www.fobg.org.au/aa_nonhtmlfiles/Association_Model_Rules.pdf
Qld	http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/incorporated-associations.htm http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/AssociationsAndNonprofits/Incorporated_associations_smart_business_guide.pdf http://friendsofopendocument.com/docs/assoc-guide.pdf http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/legisltn/current/a/associncorpa81.pdf http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/incorporated-association-rules.htm
Tas	http://www.consumer.tas.gov.au/business_affairs/incorporated_associations http://www.consumer.tas.gov.au/business_affairs/incorporated_associations/constitution__rules#model
South Aust	http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au/Associations/index.html http://www.lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/ch06s03.php
NSW	http://www.vmda.com.au/ModelRulesA5Booklet.pdf http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/aia2009307/
NT	http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/licenreg/baal/club_assoc.shtml
ACT	http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1991-46/current/pdf/1991-46.pdf http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/1991-31/current/pdf/1991-31.pdf

Appendix 2 C

The Company Secretary
[Big Association Ltd]
[Postal Address]

Dear Sir

Code of Conduct for Directors

1. This is to acknowledge my receipt of a copy of the “Code of Conduct for Directors” as approved for adoption by the Board of Directors of the [Big Association Ltd] on [specified date].

2. In accordance with a decision of the Board on [specified date], I wish to advise the Board of my acceptance of the approved “Code of Conduct for Directors”.

Yours faithfully

………………………….. ……………………………
(Signature) (Date)

…………………………..
(Name in Blocks)

[Note: The above is the format used by one of the participating associations whereby any new Director/Board Member signs off on the Code of Conduct used by that association.]

CODE OF CONDUCT

This document outlines the role and duties of Directors of the Big Association Ltd (BAL), and provides guidelines for appropriate behaviour by directors of BAL in the performance of their duties. It is to be read in conjunction with relevant legislation and corporation policies.

Introduction

The Board's code of conduct is to assist directors understand their role and to discharge their duties more effectively. All directors are elected to represent the interests of producer members throughout Australia. Management is appointed by the Board to carry out the day-to-day management functions within the framework of policies and strategic guidelines established by the board of directors. Ownership and control are clearly separated.

The successful operation of the Board and the Nation-wide BIG ASSOCIATION LTD organisation is a function of the Board of Directors. It is vital that this code of conduct be adopted by the Board to ensure that a strong, united industry-wide BIG ASSOCIATION LTD organisation is not only maintained, but enhanced by good corporate governance.

Meetings and Board Decisions

The Board of Directors is required to meet quarterly or at such other times as required to fulfil their obligations to the Association and its producer members. Any decision made by the Board results in ownership by each and every Director. All Directors are to support these decisions even though such decision may be conflict with their own views or the views of their local association.

Executive

The Board of Directors has appointed an Executive to guide management in the conduct of policy actions between the quarterly meetings of the Board. The Executive comprises the Chairman, Senior Vice-Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the General Manager. If the Executive considers it necessary to depart from established policy, it must refer the matter to the Board by way of meeting in person or teleconference.

Confidentiality

Confidential information received by a Director in the course of the exercise of Directorial duties remains the property of BIG ASSOCIATION LTD, and it is improper for a Director to disclose it, or allow it to be disclosed unless that disclosure has been authorised by BIG ASSOCIATION LTD or is required by law.

To maintain the integrity of the Board it is essential that matters discussed In-Committee remain confidential within the Board. All other matters considered and decided by the Board are in the public domain of the organisation and its membership unless otherwise determined by the Board.

Agreement

All Directors will be asked to agree and sign this code of conduct. Any breach of the code of conduct and, in particular, that of confidentiality will require the relevant Director to voluntary resign forthwith.

Code of Conduct

1. A Director must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the association as a whole.

2. A Director has a duty to use due care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of office and exercising the powers attached to that office.

3. A Director must use the powers of office for proper purpose, in the best interests of the company as a whole.

4. A Director must recognise that the primary responsibility is to the company's members as a whole but should, where appropriate, have regard for the interests of all stakeholders of the company.

5. A Director must not make improper use of information acquired as a Director.

6. A Director must not take improper advantage of the position of Director.

7. A Director must not allow personal interests, or the interests of any associated person, to conflict with the interests of the association.

8. A Director has an obligation to be independent in judgement and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied as to the soundness of all decisions taken by the Board of Directors.

9. Confidential information received by a Director in the course of the exercise of Directorial duties remains the property of the association from which it was obtained and it is improper to disclose it, or allow it to be disclosed, unless that disclosure has been authorised by that association, or the person from whom the information is provided, or is required by law.

10. A Director should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon the association.

11. A Director has an obligation, at all times, to comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law and with the principles of this Code.

Guidelines for the interpretation of the principles of the Code of Conduct

The following guidelines are intended to assist Directors in complying with the core principles of the *Code of Conduct.* They are not meant to be exhaustive and may be added to over time to address issues of importance as they arise.

1 Duties to the Association

1.1 Each Director should endeavour to ensure that the functions of the Board have been specified clearly, are properly understood and are competently discharged in the interests of the associations.

1.2 A Director should endeavour to ensure that the management of the association is competent and is devoting its best endeavours in the interests of the association.

1.3 In evaluating the interests of the association, a Director should take into account the interests of the members as a whole, but where appropriate or required by law should take into account the interests of creditors and others.

2 Duties to Members

2.1 Each Director should endeavour to ensure that the association is financially viable, properly managed and constantly improved so as to protect and enhance the interests of the members.

2.2 A Director should seek to ensure that all members or classes of members are treated fairly according to their rights as between each other.

2.3 A Director should consider whether any benefit to be received by the Director or an Associated Person is of sufficient magnitude that the approval of the association should be sought, even though not required by law.

2.4 Fiduciary duty requires the Director to make a contribution in the interests of the association and the members as a whole and not only in the interest of those who primarily elected such Director. Where obligations to other people or bodies preclude an independent position on an issue, the Director should disclose the position and seriously consider whether to be absent or refrain from participating in the Board's consideration of the issue (see also Guideline 6.2). Before taking the decision to be absent, a Director should consider whether that absence would deprive the Board of essential background or experience. The matter should be disclosed to and resolved by the rest of the Board.

3 Duties to Creditors

3.1 Whilst the obligations of a Director are primarily owed to the association (that is to the members as a whole), there are situations in which it is necessary to evaluate the interests of the creditors. This is particularly so where the association's financial position is uncertain or where insolvency may be pending. In cases of doubt, a Director should, with some urgency, seek professional advice.

4 Duties to other Stakeholders

4.1 All associations and their Directors must comply with the legal framework governing their operations and must be conscious of the impact of their business on society. Without limiting in any way the nature of the issues with which the Director must be concerned in the running of the business, particular attention should be paid to the environment, questions of occupational health and safety, industrial relations, equal opportunity for employees, the impact of competition and consumer protection rules, and other legislative initiatives that may arise from time to time. Although the Director owes primary duty to the members of the association as a whole, the responsibilities imposed on associations and the Director under various Acts of Parliament clearly demand that the Director evaluate actions in a broader social context.

5 Due Diligence

5.1 A Director should attend all Board meetings but where attendance at meetings is not possible appropriate steps should be taken to appoint a deputy.

5.2 A Director must acquire knowledge about the business of the association, the statutory and regulatory requirements affecting Directors in the discharge of their duties to the company, and be aware of the physical, political and social environment in which it operates.

5.3 In order to be fully effective, a Director should insist upon access to all relevant information to be considered by the Board. This information should be made available in sufficient time to allow proper consideration of all relevant issues. In the extreme circumstances where information is not provided, the Director should make an appropriate protest about the failure on the part of the association to provide the information and if necessary abstain from voting on the particular matter on the basis that there has not been the time necessary to consider the matter properly. Any abstention, and the reasons for it, should be included in the minutes. It may also be appropriate to vote against the motion or move for deferment until proper information is available.

5.4 A Director should endeavour to ensure that systems are established within the association to provide the Board, on a regular and timely basis, with necessary data to enable them to make a reasoned judgment and so discharge their duties of care and diligence. An internal audit of systems supporting the Board should be conducted regularly.

5.5 A Director should endeavour to ensure that relations between the Board and the auditors are open, unimpeded and constructive. Similarly, the auditors should have direct and unimpeded access to the Director. A Director should be satisfied that the scope of the audit is adequate and that it is carried out thoroughly and with the full co-operation for management and the internal auditors.

5.6 A Director should endeavour to ensure that any association on whose Board the Director sits complies with the law and strives for the highest standards of business and ethical conduct.

6 Conflicts of Interest

6.1 A Director must not take improper advantage of the position as Director to gain, directly or indirectly, a personal advantage or an advantage for any Associated Person, which might cause detriment to the association.

6.2 The personal interests of a Director, and those of the Director's family, must not be allowed to prevail over those of the association's members generally. A Director should seek to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible. Full disclosure of any conflict, or potential conflict, must be made to the Board. In considering these issues, account should be taken of the significance of the potential conflict for the association and the possible consequences if it is not handled properly. Where a conflict does arise, a Director must consider whether to refrain from participating in the debate and/or voting on the matter, whether to be absent from discussion of the matter, whether to arrange that the relevant Board papers are not sent, or, in an extreme case, whether to resign from the Board. Where a Director chooses to be absent from the meeting, consideration should be given as to whether expertise that would be contributed by the director is otherwise available. In the case of a continuing material conflict of interest, a Director should give careful consideration to resigning from the Board and consider the provisions of Guideline 7.3.

6.3 An executive Director must always be alert to the potential for conflict of interest between management interests and the Director's fiduciary duties as a Director.

6.4 The payment of "success fees" in situations of potential conflict of interest is unacceptable.

7 Use of Information

7.1 A Director must not make improper use of information acquired by virtue of the Director's position as a Director. This prohibition applies irrespective of whether the Director would gain directly or indirectly a personal advantage or an advantage for any Associated Person or might cause detriment to the association.

7.2 Matters such as trade secrets, processes, methods, advertising and promotional programs, sales and statistics affecting financial results are particularly sensitive and must not be disclosed.

7.3 A Director who takes the serious step of resignation on a point of principle should disclose the reasons for resignation to the Board. In deciding whether or not to make public the reasons for resigning and composing any resignation statement, a director should have regard to the following:

(a) the duty not to disclose confidential information so as to damage the association; and

(b) the duty to act bona fide in the interests of the association.

7.4 A Director who has been nominated to a Board by outside parties should recognise the particular sensitivity of the position and should be especially careful not to disclose to the nominators matters that are confidential unless the prior agreement of the Board has been obtained.

8. Professional Integrity

8.1 Any Director should recognise that the position occupied is particularly sensitive one. As a Director one must be prepared, if necessary, to express disagreement with colleagues.

However, in the absence of a need to express disagreement, one should be prepared to implement the decisions of the Board as a loyal member of the Board.

8.2 If there is any doubt whether a proposed course of action is inconsistent with a Director's fiduciary duties then the course of action should not be supported. Independent advice should be sought as soon as possible to clarify the issue.

8.3 When a Director feels so strongly as to be unable to acquiesce in a decision of the Board, some or all of the following steps should be considered:

(a) making the extent of the dissent and its possible consequences clear to the Board as a means of seeking to influence the decision;

(b) asking for additional legal, accounting or other professional advice;

(c) asking that the decision be postponed to the next meeting to allow time for further consideration and informal discussion;

(d) tabling a statement of dissent and asking that it be minuted;

(e) writing to the Chairman, or all members of the Board, and asking that the letter be filed with the minutes;

(f) if necessary, resign, and consider advising the appropriate regulator.

8.4 'Opinion shopping' and the search for loopholes in the law is unacceptable.

(Adapted from the By-Laws of the Australian Institute of Company Directors)

Definitions of terms

Associated Person in relation to a Director includes any spouse (including a de facto spouse), parent, child, brother or sister of the Director or any company, corporation, partnership, trust or other entity owned or controlled by the Director or in which the Director has a material personal interest within the meaning of the Corporations Law.

Company is used to include government business enterprises and not-for-profit organisations.

Directors includes all directors who are non-executive directors.

Appendix 2D: From South Australia

Checklist: Good Governance for Healthy Associations

Checklist: http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au/assets/files/GoodGovernanceChecklist.pdf

Introduction

This set of questions is designed to be asked of the governing committee of an Incorporated Association as a guide to healthy governance. It is intended to generate discussion about what changes may be needed, how these can be made and who can help. It does not include every aspect of governance but provides a broad cover of the more important aspects of governance.

This checklist is currently being trialled with several community Associations in the Anangu Pitjanjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands and so may change as feedback is incorporated. Comments are welcome. Please email the webmaster at ocba.webmaster@agd.sa.gov.au

	Question	No	Yes	Comment	Note
General	Is a copy of the Constitution (also known as the Rules of the Association) available to the Committee?				If you don't have a copy, you may be able to download one from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs website www.ocba.sa.gov.au. Or you can order one from the same website.
	Do the Objects of the Association (as written in the Constitution) match up with the current purpose and direction of the Association?				You may need to update these by holding a Special General Meeting and taking a vote to make sure most members agree with the changes.
	Are the rules you are using to manage the Association different from those in the Constitution?				Your rules are there to make sure the Committee is acting fairly. If the rules need changing, you will need to hold a Special General Meeting to change the rules formally. Then you

					must notify the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs so they have a current copy of your Rules.
	Who is a member of your Association?				You may have a list of names of members or your constitution may determine who is a member by a set of conditions such as age and location of where they live. Both the Governing Committee and the members themselves should know they are members and have certain rights.
Governing Committee	What are the names of the Association Office Bearers? Chair? …………………………………… Treasurer? ……………………………… Secretary? ……………………………… Public Officer? ………………………				Each office bearer has a separate role with different responsibilities. If you want to know more about these, refer to the information on Office Bearers on this website.
	Were all the Office Bearers appointed in the way your constitution says?				Your constitution may say that they need to be voted in either at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General

					Meeting (They should not be chosen at a normal committee meeting or by just one or two people).
	If your Public Officer has changed - have you notified the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs?				It is important that the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs knows who your Public Officer is, as they are the chief contact person between them and your Association.
Meetings	Are meetings held at a place and time that is convenient for the Committee?				If members are finding it difficult to attend meetings regularly, try and find out why. A different time or place may encourage people to attend. It is important that each role is carried out e.g. there must be someone taking the minutes each meeting.
	Are all members notified of each meeting date well in advance (at least two weeks)?				If you don't have set dates for the year, make sure you set a date for the next meeting at the end of the last one. A reminder that the next meeting is due is always helpful.
	Are they held regularly? (for example once every two months)				Try setting dates for all the meetings for the year so everyone knows well ahead.
	Do you know the minimum number (quorum) of people for the meeting to be legal?				Check your Constitution. It will tell you how many people are needed to hold a meeting.

	Are decisions should be made by a vote in the way your constitution says?				All decisions should be made in accordance with the rules of the constitution.
	Is a financial statement presented at each meeting?				The finance officer should present a financial report to each meeting to keep the Committee up to date on money going in and out and how much you have in the bank.
Minutes	Are minutes recorded for each meeting?				It is essential that there is a record of each meeting, when it was held, who attended and what was discussed and decided.
	Are the previous meeting minutes confirmed as correct at the commencement of each meeting?				Members who were there at the previous meeting must be able to agree or make changes so that they are a true record
	After each meeting, are the minutes printed and copies sent to all the Committee members?				Members should have a chance to read the minutes - particularly if they couldn't attend so they know what happened.
	Is a signed copy of the minutes kept in a safe place at the place the meetings are usually held?				Once agreed they are a true record, the Chair should sign the minutes. They should be kept in a secure place so they can be referred to if requested.
	Are the minutes of meetings made available for any committee member to read?				Any community member should be able to get a copy of and read the minutes - even if they are old ones.

Finances	Are all moneys banked as soon as possible (preferably within a day) of being received?				If you can't get to bank then you may need to consider purchasing a small safe. The money that you deal with may not be cash and should be able to be transferred by Internet banking.
	Are all funds that come into the Association used in ways that are consistent with the Objects (purpose) of the Association?				All the members have responsibility to make sure the money is used only for the purpose the Association was set up for. When voting on something that will cost money ask 'How will this achieve our goals?'
	Does the Treasurer keep accounts that show where and when money comes into the Association and how it is spent?				It is essential that the Treasurer keeps up to date and accurate records of money coming in and going out of the Association so that all members can see that the money is being used to achieve the goals (objects) of the Association.
	Are all payments authorised by at least two members of the Committee?				All money being paid out should be approved in writing by at least two Committee members. It is preferable that they aren't both from the same family.
	Is the total of the money coming into the Association more than $500,000 a year?				If yes, then you need to let the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs know as soon as possible. They will tell

					you what you may need to do differently.
	If you get more than $500,000 a year - Has the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs been told? Is a financial report prepared and audited each year? Has a financial report been sent to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs for all the previous financial years?				You should be a 'Prescribed Association'. This means you need to have a financial report prepared by an auditor. A copy of this report needs to be sent to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs.
Property	Does the committee have a list of the assets owned by the Association?				It is important that there is a current list of what valuable items (assets) the Association owns. This includes such things as cars, buildings, furniture and computers. This is needed so it is clear to the community what the Association owns. It is also needed when preparing financial reports
	Does the list show the current value of each of the assets?				Many assets will go down in value the older they are. For example, a new car that is only a few months old will be worth a lot less two years later.
	Does the list show where the property is located?				This list should also list where these items are. No single person can 'own' the property of the Association. It belongs to all its members. However there may be a person or persons

					responsible for taking care of it. It is their job to make sure it is only used for the purpose of the Association.

Where to from here?

A copy of the responses to this checklist should be kept by the Committee and copies made available to each of the members.

At the following committee meeting the following could happen:

The Secretary make an Action list of things to do that came out of the discussion from the checklist.

The Committee work out who is going to do what task and put names to each.

The Secretary gives each person a list of what they need to do with a date set for follow-up.

If the check shows your Association is very healthy, the Secretary should keep a copy of the completed checklist and the Committee agree on a date to review this in say, 12 months time.

Appendix 6: Conflict Resolution Protocol

Conflict is healthy and normal in any group. It can occur whenever there is a difference of opinion or a clash of personalities. Whenever these differences escalate, then conflict can become detrimental. Therefore it is useful to have some strategies to avoid or reduce the likelihood of that detriment.

The first strategy is avoidance, one that is much simpler than its sounds. This strategy has two parts: (i) never disagree, and (ii) acknowledge dissent.

It is conventional in our society for people to express disagreement with an idea that differs from theirs. What is less well understood is that disagreement rarely achieves any benefit; rather it leads to considerable wasted time, energy and potential harm.

Consider this thought-provoking proposition. **If you want people to *stop* listening to you, disagree or argue with them!** Why is this? In most people, a disagreement or argument triggers a person's need to resist, to protect his/her own ego. Conversely, people who feel valued and respected are much more open to receiving new information than people who feel threatened. In fact, people are more likely to alter a point of view when (a) that point of view has not become entrenched, (b) they don't have to, and (c) their self-esteem is not under threat.

Consider the use of the word, '**but**', particularly when it follows immediately after the utterance of another. The word 'but' can signal to the preceding speaker that their point of view is about to be devalued and opposed. It immediately, therefore, invites the deposed person to stop listening! The use of the alternate conjunction, '**and**', permits another viewpoint without negating the first. Since 'and' is affirming, the other party is now more inclined to listen.

Many people are not conscious of how often they use the word 'but'. It is suggested that the frequency with which a person uses the word 'but' is a measure of how adversarial they are. An adversarial person probably knows they do not get their way as often as they might wish. An adversarial person who wishes to become a more considerate and co-operative person can be coached to replace the word 'but' with the word 'and'. How? During the meeting, whenever any person utters the word 'but', any other person can immediately and assertively holler 'and'. People are then drawn to realise how unconsciously adversarial they are, even when they are consciously trying to be co-operative.

So, if a person offers a point of view that you do not share, do *not* say that you *disagree*. Rather, say that you hold an opinion that is 'different'. 'Different' is a more neutral term that does not signal 'right' or 'wrong'. It may even arouse curiosity. The subtle difference in language reduces the possibility of argument and increases the possibility of mutual listening.

Further, indicate to the other person that you are willing to change your mind in the light of appropriate evidence. This disarming signal increases the probability of the other person being less rigid in their views.

A metaphor may be useful here. When two boxers are in the middle of a boxing ring, they can dance, having many choices as to which way to move. However, when one of them is forced into a corner, for him/her, those choices now vanish. The only option is to defend furiously. So it is preferably not to put another person into a corner. Remember, a person is more likely to change their mind when they are curious rather than when they are threatened.

A concept related to 'pushing' one's idea occurs when one person feels the need to convince another of the merits of their idea. There may be no disagreement evident, yet there is a clear attempt to convince or persuade. This action often has the same psychological effect as 'but' and is to be discouraged. Every person's opinion is valid for them at that moment. Every person has the right to hold an opinion or to change it, only when it suits them.

Readers (and workshop/meeting participants) often, and understandably, feel a little frustrated at the logic of 'never disagreeing'. They may even feel frustrated at 'just listening' when the point that has just been made by another speaker is one they cannot agree with. Further people may feel the need to register that they do not agree and/or that they hold a position that is different. So, what to do?

Contrary to what the previous point – 'never disagree' – may seem to be inferring, it is recommended that **whenever dissent is felt, it should be expressed.** This warrants explanation.

First, dissent is different from disagreement. Disagreement is interpersonal; it challenges the views of another person, causing the likelihood of resistance and reduced cooperation. Dissent, on the other hand, is personal. It is a clear statement of one's own position without denigrating or opposing that of another.

'I disagree with what you are saying' is likely to trigger a different response from: 'My views on that are different'. The latter is less destructive to the relationship between the speakers.

Second, expressing dissent, when it is honestly felt, is to reveal the genuine and the authentic. And **for a conversation to be productive, we would wish that all parties be genuine and authentic**.

Third, paraphrasing Peter Block (2007): *'For my 'Yes' to mean something, you need to know what my 'No' is'*. The encouragement of dissent, though not disagreement, leads to a conversation that is genuine and transparent.

Fourth, expressing dissent provides an opportunity to open up genuine dialogue and exploration of differences in a desire to find mutual understanding and perhaps common ground. For example: 'My understanding of this issue is different. The way I see it is ....", followed by a genuine 'I'm keen to understand what brings you to your view.'

Despite our efforts at prevention, by the deliberate adoption of a non-adversarial culture, conflict can still arise. When it does we need a strategy for managing it. Common rules of association often refer to a structured process of mediation. This becomes necessary when the conflict is entrenched. What follows is a set of protocols that might prevent this entrenchment and need for mediation.

The conflict resolution protocol involves a structure conversation between the parties involved. It can be supported by an external mediator (who does not have to be a trained professional), or with sufficient goodwill and maturity, it may only involve the conflicted parties themselves. The structured conversation involves the exchange of information between the parties, and the information to be exchanged relates to specific behaviour, the consequences of that behaviour, and the intended behaviour in response.

Behaviour -> Consequences -> Behaviour

In some instances the consequences will be material. On many occasions, those consequences will also include beliefs and feelings.

Behaviour -> Consequences -> Beliefs -> Feelings -> Behaviour

And the most important beliefs will be assumptions about each other's motives.

The reason that conflict escalates is that Party A observes Party B's behaviour; this behaviour has consequences for Party A. Party A forms assumptions about Party B's motives; these assumptions trigger emotions in Party A, leading to certain actions by Party A, often towards Party B.

In turn Party B observes Party A's behaviour; this behaviour has consequences for Party B. Party B forms assumptions about Party A's motives; these assumptions trigger emotions in Party B, leading to certain actions by Party B, often towards Party A.

While both parties can observe the actions of the other, they have no knowledge of the assumptions being made that trigger certain emotions that lead to actions. So each party is largely blind to what is going on inside the head of the other.

The conflict resolution protocol that follows gets that information out in the open where it can be shared. There are four ground-rules that underpin the protocol.

1. Only begin if both parties want a solution.

2. When decisions are made, anyone affected by the decision is to be involved in the decision-making.

3. Resolution to any issue is sought only after all the relevant information has been exchanged and understood.

4. Problems are expressed as common goals, without blame, criticism or demand.

At the start of the conflict resolution session, each party prepares three lists of items she is prepared to talk about.

1. Things I'd like the other person to continue doing, just as she does them now.

2. Things I'd like the other person to do more of or less of.

3. My guess as to what is on the other person's list.

The conversation begins with the two parties coming together. Party A non-defensively describes one item on her first list. Party B listens, trying to understand what it is like for A. B may then ask questions for clarification only. The B restates A's first point in their own words. A then confirms that they have been understood correctly, or, if not, adds what has been missed.

The two parties swap roles, repeating the sequence above.

When each party describes an item, they are invited to use the following sequence:

Behaviour: exactly what was said or done. This is descriptive only.

Consequences: the impact of that behaviour on the other person.

Beliefs: what the impacted person assumes the first person was trying to achieve by the action.

Feelings: the emotional response of the second party to their assumptions about the intention of the first party in acting that way.

Actions: how the second party feels like responding in response to those feelings.

The conversation proceeds, with each party taking turns to work through the items on their first list. Then the conversation moves to the more difficult second list, one item at a time. The sequences of the exchanges are exactly as before. On completion, both parties can then move to the third list, though this is optional, and often unnecessary. The purpose of compiling this third list prior to exchanging information is to begin to establish empathy, the capacity to put one's self in the other party's shoes.

The conversation can now move to problem-solving mode. Initially the problem-solving is tentative and exploratory. It can take the following form:

If you were willing to (suggested action), then I might be prepared to (suggested corresponding action)?

This expression is an invitation to the other party to respond, to indicate whether this offer is moving towards an agreement.

The objective of conflict resolution is to depersonalise the conflict and to bring both parties together in a joint effort to solve a shared problem. When the issue has been fully understood from both sides, and the beliefs, assumptions and emotions acknowledged, the solutions often become obvious. And good-will between the parties as well as mutual respect is established and maintained.

Formal mediation now only becomes necessary if the processes outlined above do not resolve the conflict.

Acknowledgement: This conflict resolution model was taught to me by Bob Dick, one of Australia's foremost social psychologists.

Appendix 7: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The Governments are very keen on amassing statistics – they collect them, add them, raise them to the nth power, take the cube root and prepare wonderful diagrams.

But what you must never forget is that every one of those figures comes from the village watchman, who just puts down what he damn well pleases.

British Economist, Josiah Stamp, 1929

Evaluation is about asking questions. Those questions might be considered to focus, in the simplest systems terms, on three things: inputs, processes, outputs. Each of those three things might be considered from four different time perspectives: the past, the present, right at this instant, and the future.

The result is a four x three matrix, as follows:

	Inputs/Resources	**Processes/Activities**	**Outputs/Effects**
Future (Planning)	What resources will we need to undertake those activities?	What activities will we need to undertake to achieve those effects?	What outcomes or effects would we like to achieve?
Current (Formative Evaluation)	What resources do we presently have and what resources do we presently need?	What activities are we presently undertaking and what activities should we be undertaking?	What effects do we want to have happen and what effects are actually happening?
Short cycle or process evaluation	Do we have what we need right at this moment?	Are we doing what we intend right at this moment?	Are we getting the effects we want, right at this moment?
Past (Summative Evaluation or Outcome Evaluation)	What resources did we have? Is that what we actually needed to do the job?	What activities and processes were undertaken? Were they the correct activities to achieve the desired outcome?	What outcomes did we effect? Were they the outcomes we wanted?

First is planning. Let us assume we would wish to drive from Brisbane to Cairns. For inputs, we would need to ensure we had a suitable vehicle, a competent driver, sufficient funds for fuel, food, accommodation, adequate time available and a suitable map. For processes and activities, we would need to plan our route, our time schedule, and our accommodation. And for outcomes/effects, we would need to consider each of the travel stages between Brisbane and Cairns, ensuring that our plans will have us comfortably arriving at our intended destination at the intended time.

Second is outcome evaluation (sometimes called “summative evaluation). Here the question is “Have we arrived yet?” Outcome evaluation is “after the event”, seeking to determine if the project met its objectives, on time and on budget. Using our motor vehicle analogy, if our project was to drive from Brisbane to Cairns, the outcome evaluation asks “Are we in Cairns yet?”

Third is long cycle process (or “formative”) evaluation. Here the question is “Can we improve what we are doing?” Process evaluation might be “after the event” or during the event. It looks at ways of improving what we do. Using the motor vehicle analogy, the process evaluation might ask “Have we passed Maryborough yet? Do we have enough money for fuel to get us to Cairns?”

Fourth is “short-cycle” or “on the run” process evaluation. It occurs continuously as the project is underway. It constantly monitors and adjusts the project. In relation to a motor vehicle, it would be constantly monitoring speed, driver alertness, fuel in the tank, road conditions, and other traffic.

Each of these matrices can be adapted by any stakeholder in relation to his/her immediate context.

In addition, each matrix can be considered at any level of scale, from the micro, through the meso (intermediate level) to the macro. The contents of the cells will change, though not the logic.

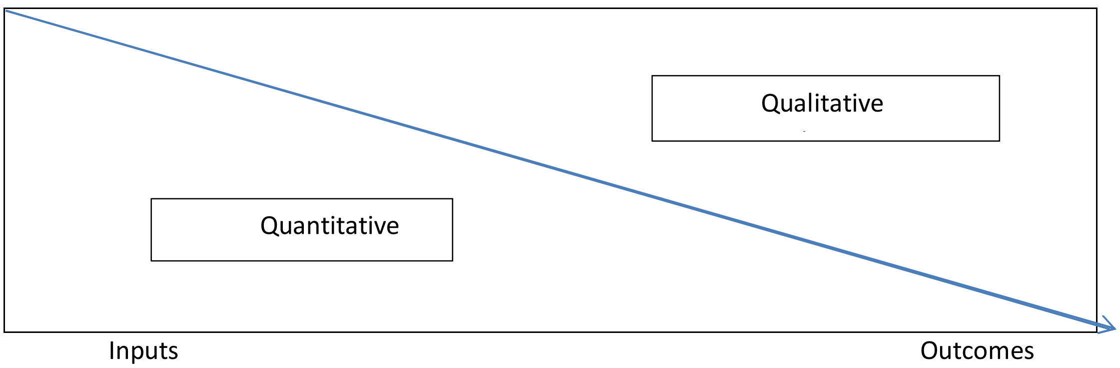
It can also be used as a learning tool (hence the pronoun ‘we’); it can also be used by an external monitor (change to the pronoun ‘they’).

Two important comments about data. The first pertains to the sort of data that might be collected. The second pertains to the accuracy of data collected.

In conducting an evaluation, we gather evidence, also known as data. Data can be quantitative (expressed as numbers) or qualitative (expressed as words). Some regard numbers as more accurate and hence more desirable. Yet, a moment’s thought will reveal that not everything can be expressed in numbers. For example, ‘member satisfaction’ can more easily be expressed in words than in numbers. ‘Beauty” or ‘Grief” are far more difficult, if not impossible, to express as numbers. Yet other things, like ‘hours worked’ or ‘litres of fuel’ can quite easily be captured quantitatively.

When it comes to capturing data for evidence of inputs, activities, effects, outputs and outcomes, a very curious thing will be observed. The closer we are to the inputs end of the continuum, the easier it is to measure quantitatively; the closer we are to the outcomes end, the more difficult to measure quantitatively. Often it is impossible. Yet the reverse is true for qualitative measures. In other words, we can easily measure the inputs end quantitatively; we can reasonably easily measure the outcomes end qualitatively.

This distinction becomes important when authorities seek 'hard evidence' on the progress of any project. 'Hard evidence' is often code for numbers – quantitative measures. So it is really easy to show how much money was spent on a project. It is much more difficult to provide 'hard evidence' of the outcome.



The second comment about data or evidence pertains to its accuracy. In monitoring or evaluation, we seek to obtain evidence that we are on track or that we have achieved our objective. For example, the speedo on our car is evidence of the speed the car is travelling. Yet, a moment's thought will tell us that the speedo might be wrong. So it is possible that the evidence does not match the facts. Or consider global warming. The level of carbon dioxide in the air is increasing. The average temperature of the earth is increasing. Therefore it must be carbon-dioxide that is causing the earth's temperature to rise. This is an example of a potential correlation error, illustrated by the following ridiculous example. My grandfather died at age 85. My grandfather drank water all his life. This 'proves' that drinking water will 'cause' a person to die.

The key point here is that often no single measure can be taken as 'proof'. What monitoring and evaluation seeks to do is to gather sufficient evidence that we can have confidence in it. And confidence can be increased when we use multiple methods to gather that evidence, from multiple sources, multiple times, considered at multiple levels.

These four 'multiples' are suggested as a means of being able to make a warranted assertion about any arena that is being evaluated. In other words, it is desirable that the findings of an evaluation will withstand the closest scrutiny.

(i) *multiple sources*: gather evaluation data from as many different and diverse sources as is logical to do so. Stratified random sampling is suggested.

(ii) *multiple methods*: using a variety of different methods to capture the data eliminates the possibility of any patterns being a product of the method rather than of the data.

(iii) *multiple times*: capturing data across different time periods increases the confidence that any findings are robust over time, rather than being a momentary aberration.

(iv) *multiple levels*: data can be examined through four lenses or layers. First is the descriptive layer (what actually happened?). Second is the policy layer (what policy, technology or logic gave rise to that happening?). Third is the worldview layer (what was the mindset that gave rise to that policy, technology, or logic?). Fourth is the mythology (what unconscious beliefs, stories, or history gave rise to that world view?).

These multiple measures can be both quantitative and qualitative, where possible.

A slightly more sophisticated evaluation framework for any association is the Snyder Model. It is a log-frame (logical framework) methodology that lends itself to planning, as well as to formative (baseline), process (during) and summative (end point or outcome) monitoring and/or evaluation.

The Snyder model is logical, robust, and holistic. It lends itself to the broader evaluation principles of 'multiple sources, multiple methods, multiple times, and multiple levels'.

The Snyder Model itself is a logic chain.

Resources are consumed in *activities* that have *effects*, both intended and unintended, on the way to achieving *milestones* or targets in order to achieve an outcome or *vision*.

Or ….

Resources
are consumed by
Activities
which produce
Immediate Effects
(both intended and unintended)
while achieving
Targets, Objectives, or Goals
and pursuing a
Vision

The Snyder model produces categories within which data (for example, interview transcripts) and other evidence might be sorted.

Resources	Activities	Effects	Milestones/Goals	Vision

Once the data has been sorted into these categories, we can start to ask questions of the data. For example (and not exhaustively):

Vision: (i) Is there a clear vision for the quality, quantity and type of services that members expect?

(ii) Is that vision shared and agreed between all stakeholder categories?

(iii) Is that agreed vision for level of service actually being provided?

Milestones: (i) Do the service providers have service delivery milestones or goals?

(ii) Are those milestones/goals actually being delivered?

(iii) Will these milestones/goals inevitably lead to the desired vision?

(iv) Are there parts of the vision for which there are no milestones, goals or targets?

(v) Are there milestones, goals or targets which are unrelated to the vision?

Effects: (i) Do we know what effects we are looking for from what we do?

(ii) Are we achieving the effects we hope to?

(iii) Are there effects we did not intend? Are they beneficial, negative, or neutral?

(iii) Will the effects we are creating inevitably lead to the milestones, targets or goals we seek?

Activities: (i) Are we aware of the activities we will need to conduct?

(ii) Are we conducting them?

(iii) Are (or will) those activities inevitably give rise to the effects we are seeking?

(iv) Are we seeking effects, yet are not conducting the activities that will give rise to them?

Resources: (i) Are we aware of the resources we are consuming?

(ii) Do we have the necessary and sufficient resources to conduct our intended activities?

(iii) Do we have resources at our disposal that are superfluous to those activities?

It is pointed out that these questions pertain to (a) awareness and appropriateness of each of the categories, and (b) comparison between any adjacent pair of categories, to ensure the desired alignment.

Note that the Snyder model lends itself to any level of scale. For example the Snyder logic can be used to evaluate the performance of a field officer, a sector-level association, a peak body, or the industry as a whole. In a 'normative' (or ideal) sense (as opposed to 'descriptive' or current practice), it makes sense to go from the macro or industry level evaluation to a micro or field officer level evaluation.

Ideally, the valuation framework needs to be kept in mind throughout any project so that we are alert to the need for data that populates all of the evaluation categories. The evaluation then looks at the adequacy within, and the comparison between categories, working backwards from 'vision'.

Acknowledgement: The Snyder Evaluation framework was created by Dr Wesley Snyder of the University of Queensland and modified by Dr Bob Dick, also from University of Queensland.

Appendix 8: Meeting Skills and Participative Decision Processes

Introduction

A fisher's decision to engage with his/her association or to participate more fully is often made during a formal or informal meeting of association members. The basis for that decision is frequently how other people treat the fisher and how they make him/her feel.

Closer attention to how conversations and meetings are conducted can increase the willingness of people to engage. Here are some simple rules that will help.

Some ideas to make meetings more engaging

(i) Have fun. Life is already serious enough. Make your meetings fun and people will want to come back.

(ii) Nametags. Give everybody a nametag, first name only, that can be read from three metres.

(iii) Make people feel welcome. A visitor can feel like a 'fish out of water'. Introducing them to others and making them feel welcome increases the likelihood of them wanting to return.

(iv) Small groups. It is not uncommon for a meeting to held around a large table or set up theatre style with a head table. It is much more productive for people to work in small table groups with a maximum of six, where people are much more likely to participate. Each of the small groups can have a conversation about a topic for the meeting, then each of the table groups can then report back to the big group.

(v) Give everyone a say. The small table groups enable this to happen. It is particularly important to encourage any visitor, prospective member, or even quieter member to have their say.

(vi) Listen actively. There is no greater compliment than to know that you have been listened to. So we can strengthen the membership bonds merely by concentrating on acknowledging the comments that others make.

(vii) Never disagree. This might seem like a strange suggestion, and one that differs from what might happen in your meetings. When we disagree with someone we risk putting them on the defensive. Further disagreeing with someone almost guarantees that they will not listen to you.

(viii) Express dissent. When a person has an opinion that differs from that another has just expressed, It is important to let them and the other members know that you do not agree.

That does not mean you should disagree. Instead, you should express your dissent. Let me explain. Imagine how you might feel if someone else responds to you by saying: ‘No, that is wrong. I disagree with you entirely!’. Now imagine if somebody else responds to you by saying: ‘My experience is different to that. The way I see it is …’. The first case is likely to make you feel defensive; the second case is likely to make you feel curious.

(ix) Write ideas and main points down. People cannot remember most of what is said during meetings. So many good ideas are lost. If each idea, when it is offered, is captured on a white-board or flip chart, then people are more likely to make higher quality decisions, because all of the ideas contributed are now available visually. Further when a person’s idea is written down just as they expressed it, they are likely to feel valued.

(x) Decision-making. The decision processes in most meetings fall into one of the following categories:

(a) Decision by exhaustion. ‘We’ve been talking about this for the last three meetings. Why don’t we just make a decision and move on?’

(b) Decisions by dominance, where whoever thumps the table hardest, yells the loudest or has the most senior position sways the decision.

(c) Decisions by show of hands. This is a very common decision tool and can split the group into those for and those against. People who lose a vote can become disgruntled.

So each of these three methods is unsatisfactory. We use those decision tools because we are not aware of more suitable tools. Here are two which are helpful in building commitment, and are respectful of every person regardless of age, gender, experience or popularity.

The first tool, ‘multiple voting’ reduces a large list of ideas to the best three or four, where each can be examined more closely. Once we have a detailed understanding of each of these three or four options, we can then use the second decision tool, ‘spend $10’ to pick the best.

Each is now described in detail.

Multiple Voting

Imagine your committee has been working on a project. Together you have all just brainstormed a whole list of potential solutions to a problem you’ve all been discussing. You now want to reduce this large list to the “best” few, and then implement them with full commitment from all of those who will need to be involved.

Normal practice would be to argue the pros and cons of each idea, a process that could chew up a lot of time. Yet experience will tell you that in a bunch of ideas there are some real gems and lots of rubbish.

A technique for reducing a large list to a smaller one whilst increasing commitment is now offered.

1. Number the items on the large list. Say there are "N" items.
2. Decide upon the criteria for making the choice. E.g. "ease of implementation", "lowest cost", "highest level of constituent support", or whatever.
3. Divide "N" by 3
4. Invite participants to select the "best" 1/3N items from the list, noting their item numbers on a piece of paper. However, they cannot include any in their selection that they actually contributed.
5. Invite participant to choose a further "next best" 1/3N items (no double counting from the first set of choices). This time, people can include items they had suggested. Again note the item numbers.
6. Items on the first list get two votes, signalled by two fingers or two hands. Items on the second list get one vote.
7. Proceed through the whole list, item by item, one at a time, asking people to indicate the votes it received by show of hands. Count the total votes by show of hands.
8. The most popular items will be revealed by the number of votes they received.

Multiple voting commonly separates out those three or four ideas most favoured by most people, thereby separating the 'wheat from the chaff'. Each of the most valued critical few can now be closely examined. One way of conducting this closer examination is to invite people, with respect to each one of the selected few options, to offer (i) what they like about it, and (ii) what they don't like about it.

Once members of the meetings have a thorough understanding of the 'critical few', we now need a decision tool to select the most favoured idea.

Spend $10

This decision tool, like the last one, involves each person present making their own decision privately.

Imagine there are four options we have to choose from. Label them Options 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Each person has an imaginary $10 to spend across all four options, in the following way:

- Give a minimum of $1 to each of the four items,

- Give a maximum of $7 to your most favoured item.

- Allocate the $10 according to how well you favour each of the four items. (So, 3,3, 4 is possible. So is 1,4,1,4.

When each person has privately decided, the votes are then tallied across all participants for each of the four items.

The one that receives most votes from most people is the clear winner.

Appendix 9: On Joining an Association

Psychologist William Schutz suggest there is a simple pattern that people follow in the process of joining and participating in an association. The three steps in that pattern are *inclusion*, *influence* and *affection*.

Inclusion:

When a person considers joining an association (or withdrawing from it) they generally have a fair idea of what the association does. So the stated purpose of the association might be what attracts a potential new member. However, that is not what will lead a potential new member to *commit* or a current member to *continue to commit*. There is an old adage that says:

I may not remember what you said to me; I'll always remember how you made me feel.

So the question is: how do we make our current or potential members feel? And the answer to that question is largely shaped by the answers to the following *inclusion* questions that a potential member is asking herself:

(i) Does the leader of the association include me?
(ii) Do other members of the association include me?
(iii) How likeable and like me are other members of the association?
(iv) Based on the purpose of the association and my experience of the members, do I wish to include myself and have others include me?

Developing a sense of belonging is central to the issue of inclusion.

Influence:

Once the initial question of inclusion has been addressed and answered positively, the next step in the pattern towards commitment is *influence*. Influence is the capacity to shape the efforts and behaviour of others, say by having my suggestions taken up. It is also the willingness to have others shape my behaviour, by my bowing to their suggestions.

The influence questions that a potential member may ask are:

(i) Do I want to influence the group?
(ii) Am I willing to try to influence the group?
(iii) Am I able to have my needs met in this group?
(iv) Do group members and the leadership support my attempts to influence?
(v) Will I still be included if my attempts at influence are either accepted or rejected?
(vi) Am I willing to let the group influence my behaviour?

Attempts at *influencing* others and/or being *influenced* by others can only occur if the *inclusion* issue has been attended to. People who do not feel that they belong to an association are unlikely to attempt to influence it. Further, attempts at *influence* will be rejected by the other members unless and until they feel they have *included* the new member.

Warmth:

In deciding whether or not to commit to an association, the third issue a potential member will address is *warmth* or *affection*. Are there spontaneous expressions of love and affection being demonstrated? These may be by spoken word, supportive touching, or acts of generosity.

The warmth questions that a potential member may ask include:

(i) Do I have a sense of affection for others in the group?
(ii) Am I willing to express that affection in appropriate ways?
(iii) Am I comfortable and gratified when others express affection towards me?
(iv) Does the leader of the group like me?
(v) Do I have genuine friends in this group?

Putting this all together:

Each of these three, inclusion, influence and warmth will be considered, even if unconsciously, by each and every member of the group, and in that order. So people will individually include themselves (or choose not to). Only then can there be attempts at influencing or being influenced by others. And the development of affection can only occur after the influence issue is settled.

So people's commitment to any group is psychologically staged. Being in a group involves recognition that any of our three needs for warmth, for influence, and for inclusion are always tentative. They can be withdrawn in staged fashion, just as they are granted in staged fashion.

Further, each of these phases is reciprocal. If I wish people to be inclusive of me; I need to be inclusive of them. If I wish to influence others, I need to demonstrate that I'm willing to accept their influence. If I wish to receive expressions of affection from others, then I need to be affectionate towards others.

Our needs for individuality require us to take risks, and we are more likely to take risks in a group when we are confident that the group's granting to us of inclusion, influence, and warmth will not be withdrawn when we take that risk.

Conversely, acceptance by the group of our individuality, shown by their continuing to grant us warmth, influence, and inclusion, deepens our commitment to the group.

Groups in which people are not taking risks, and are not cycling through the inclusion, influence and warmth, are likely to be mediocre in terms of emotional involvement and commitment of their members.

Acknowledgement: Mulligan, J (1988). The Personal Management Handbook. Sphere books, London.

Appendix 10: Developing a Vision, Mission, or Purpose Statement

Organizations, groups or communities often find it useful to develop for themselves a mission or purpose statement. This statement then becomes a “shared beacon on the hill”, a joint goal towards which everyone strives.

There are a number of processes for creating one. What follows is but one of them, a process that is both effective and efficient. It is suitable for use with up to 20 people.

Materials used are pencil and paper, butchers paper and felt or whiteboard pens.

The process is based on the concept of the action learning spiral – see **Appendix 9**- with instructions as follows:

1. Each person is invited to draft, on behalf of all their colleagues, a statement that, in their belief, captures the essential purpose of the organization or community. This draft is triggered by the following request. *‘Imagine it is now [5 years from today]. Our [group, organization, community] has been remarkably successful, far more successful than any of us might have imagined. You bump into an old friend who has heard some good things about what has been going on. They ask you …’How come?’. Your reply is ….’*

At this stage the quality of the wordsmithing is not important: what is important is that the statement contains the essential elements. When the person has finished their draft, they write it legibly in large font onto a sheet of butchers’ paper. Step 1 should take between 10 and 15 minutes.

2. One at a time, each participant presents their statement to all other participants, providing brief explanation if necessary. They then stand in front of the group, their statement on butchers paper held against their chest for all to see.

3. In response, <u>every</u> other participant, one at a time, looks to the speaker and, clearly using their preferred name, expresses what they <u>like</u> about the statement that has just been offered. No negative comment at all is permitted. [For groups larger than 10, feedback to each person is given by a randomly selected five people, one at a time.]

4. After every participant has presented their vision statement and received positive comments, people are invited to form pairs with those whose statement was different from theirs. (For larger numbers, or when time is tight, groups of three will work). The task of the pair (or trio) is to draft a new statement, using the best of the positive feedback and ideas that have just been expressed. Step 4 should take about 10 to 15 minutes.

5. Pairs (or trios) present their statement as before. This time no feedback is sought.

6. By this stage, convergence of ideas will be becoming evident. At most there will now be about six statements. All earlier work-in-progress is removed from view and the statements displayed.

7. Participants are invited to use the two-vote, one-vote process – explained in **Appendix 5** - to select the best.

8. In plenary, the best becomes the base to which key ideas from the other offerings might be added. Wordsmithing results in a statement that captures the essence of the group and which is owned by all, since it was developed through their joint efforts.

Appendix 11: Strategic Planning

Strategic planning asks three questions:

1. Where would we like to be, as an association, in x years?
2. Where are we now?
3. If there is a difference between 1 and 2, how do we bridge the gap? Or …If there is no difference between 1 and 2, how do we ensure that position is maintained.

Each will now be considered in turn.

Where would we like to be?

It is useful to pitch this question into the future, commonly five years. Five years is far enough away to generate what is called an aspirational vision; that is we can allow ourselves to dream a little, and come up with a vision for our collective future. It is also useful, even important, for an association to ask this question of itself annually.

So even though we are imagining an ideal state of affairs five years out, we do this annually, resulting in a rolling five-year strategic plan.

It is also important to put this question to all of the members of your association, not just the Board or Executive. Members are much more likely to 'sign on' to a collective association vision if they have had a hand in its creation. In fact, it is recommended that, for all elements of the strategic planning process, the association should enrol the participation of the eight stakeholder groups mentioned in Chapter 23.

Appendix 7 offers a process whereby a vision-statement can be created.

A vision can often be broken down into a number of goals. These might include number of members, sources of income, financial balance held in reserve, leadership turnover, etc.

These goals or targets should collectively result in the desired vision. In order to be owned, they too should be generated and committed to by the ordinary members.

The Snyder model of planning, monitoring, and evaluation, explained in Appendix 4, will be useful for any association planning to move towards its vision.

Where are we now?

If an association is to move successfully towards its desired future, it needs to have a thorough understanding of where it is right now. And this needs to be very thorough.

There are several mental models that will prove useful here.

First is a SWOT analysis. SWOT is an acronym standing for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Strengths and weaknesses tend to lie within an association, while opportunities and threats are more likely, though not necessarily, found in the association's external environment.

Second is a STEEPLES analysis. STEEPLES is an acronym that stands for Social, Technological, Economic/Financial, Environmental, Political, Legal, Ethical, and Spiritual. (Not all of these will necessarily apply to each and every association. Use your own judgement to decide which of these aspects is most important for your association.) Combining the two analyses, as association might ask itself questions, such as 'What are the strengths of this association with respect to its financial status? What are our weaknesses?' or …'What are the opportunities for this association from the external political environment?' 'What are the political threats?'

So eights of STEEPLES questions are possible for each of the SWOT elements.

Third is a Five Frames analysis. These are five different ways of looking at the world. First, what Facts do we have on this dimension? What are the Feelings of each of the eight stakeholder groups in relation to the dimension under examination? What Assumptions might we be making here? What are the Risks association with this issue? What do we Like about this issue?

The STEEPLES analysis can be combined with the Five Frames analysis to produce a matrix of questions.

	Facts	Feelings	Assumptions	Risks/Negatives	Positives
Social					
Technological					
Economic/financial					
Environmental					
Political					
Ethical					
Spiritual					

One of these matrices can be completed for each of the four SWOT elements. The result will be Five Frames (5) X STEEPLES (8) X SWOT (4) = 160 possible questions.

The beauty of this multi-analysis is that it prompts members of an association to think of questions we may not otherwise have thought of. Of course, an association might decide that it should concentrate members' minds on some elements more than on others.

The quality of the information revealed by this analysis will be much greater if the analysis is completed privately by each participating member, say as a mail-out survey. Answers are then pooled into a large spread-sheet. Topics that pop up most often by most members are those the planning team needs to pay most attention to.

How do we bridge the gap?

Now that we have (a) a clear understanding of where the association would like to be in five years time, and (b) a clear understanding of where we are now, we can begin to consider how to close the gap, if any, between the two positions.

This is best done, in a planning sense goal by goal – where each goal is an important element of our vision. We tackle this with four questions (all drawn from Appendix 5).

1. How will we achieve X (where X represents the goal we are presently considering)?
2. What critical aspects of our SWOT/STEEPLES/FIVE FRAMES presently apply to X? This gives the background or context against which we are working.
3. Given that background, what ideas do people have in relation to Q1? Here the objective is to generate as many ideas as possible. It does not necessarily matter at this point whether the ideas are workable or not. This is a brainstorming exercise only.
4. Which of these many ideas/strategies do we like the most? Which ones will we begin to trial.

Note that steps 2, 3 & 4 are best carried out individually and privately. Email is ideal for this. Members begin by addressing question 2. All answers are emailed to a central person, identities are deleted, and ideas pooled into a single document that is then emailed out.

Step 3 is conducted the same way. Individual and private idea generation, pooling of ideas, and distribution of a big list.

Step 4 is also conducted the same way. To move from Step 3 to Step 4 requires selecting the best ideas from a big list. The Multiple Voting technique, explained in Appendix 5, is an ideal tool for this purpose.

The planning team can then select the strategies for achieving each of the association's goals. The responsibility matrix (see Appendix 1) is an ideal tool for distributing responsibilities.

And the Snyder model of planning, monitoring, and evaluation, (see Appendix 4) is an ideal tool for ensuring our strategic plans stay on track.

-ooOoo-

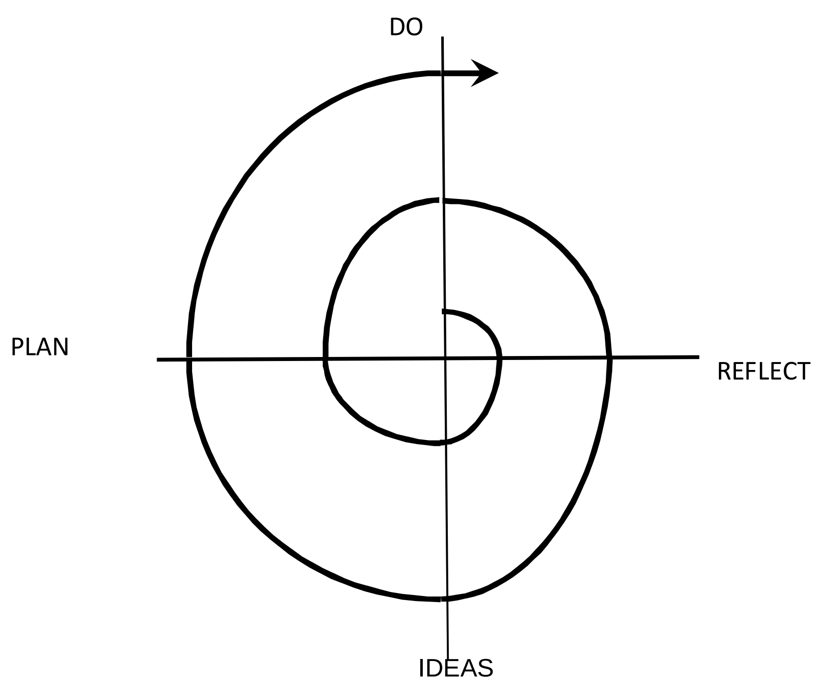
Appendix 12: Continuous improvement and action research

Introduction:

The Action Research Spiral (also known as the Continuous Improvement Cycle) provides a basic architecture for the design and delivery of any research an association might choose to undertake. This model is robust, and can be used at any scale (global down to individual) and for any cycle time (annually down to the minute).

The Action Research Spiral and its Stages:

The spiral can be represented a number of ways. Here is just one way.



The Action Research Spiral consists of four components:- 1. Action or doing; 2. Reflection, observation, evaluation or review; 3. ideas, generalization or development of theories; and finally, 4. planning or active experimentation.

The spiral is divided vertically into "passive" on the right and "active" on the left. It is divided horizontally into "concrete" in the upper half and "abstract" in the lower half.

Kurt Lewin, who first developed this model of research and learning, believed that understanding involves a balance between the concrete and the abstract, between the passive and the active. This balance generates tension which drives the spiral. Postponement of immediate action is essential for observation, reflection or review, whilst action is necessary to achieve purpose. The integration of these opposing but symbiotically related processes results in deeper understanding.

Kurt Lewin's work has been further developed by Professor David Kolb, whose book "Experiential Learning", (Prentice Hall, 1984) has had a major impact on our understanding, particularly in relation to how adults acquire knowledge. "Experiential Learning" explains the theory behind the Action Research Spiral. The spiraling continuity of experience means that every experience both builds on something that has gone before and modifies in some way whatever comes after.

Some key points about the Action Research Spiral:-

- It does not matter where you start
- Effective learning requires at least one round of the spiral to be completed
- The stages of the spiral are Action, Reflection, Ideas, and Planning.
- People tend to prefer one stage of the spiral, tolerate two others, and neglect the fourth.
- There are individual differences in these preferences.
- Skipping any stage results in ineffective learning.
- Learning can be strengthened by inputs at any stage.
- Learning can be strengthened by publishing at any stage.

Sometimes called the Action Research Cycle (and sometimes drawn as a *circle* – which it is not), the four stages are linked in spiralling fashion.

Learning or research involves spiralling outward to greater and greater understanding.

Lack of use of the learning results in vortexing back towards the middle. Static knowledge is never an option.

The rate of learning is a function of motivation and intelligence. There are within - and between-person differences.

Moving too rapidly around the spiral limits the absorption of understanding.

Moving too slowly kills learning from lack of stimulation.

Wherever we are on the spiral represents the sum total of our understanding. Everything inward from that point is what we know; everything outward is what we don't.

(i) The Action Phase

The *action* or *doing* phase is when some activity is actually occurring. Learning in this phase can be gained either from the *doing* or from *watching* the doing. The *doing* can be full-blown activity, a film, demonstration or a pilot project, or a small simulation or experiment. When the *action* is unplanned, then this is the first phase of the spiral; otherwise this phase can be anywhere in the spiral sequence. This phase occurs in the concrete world and separates the active and the passive.

(ii) The Reflection or Review Phase

The *reflection*, *review* or *evaluation* phase generally involves disengagement from the *doing*. This is, at least partially, an in-the-head activity, where people contemplate what it was they had just experienced, what seemed to be effective and should be retained and what might be modified. This phase occurs in the passive world , bridging the concrete and the abstract. Reflection can be conducted in two phases. The first is to invite people to write down the major impacts the experience had on them. Do this without any discussion whatsoever. The second stage is to invite people to discuss and share their reflections.

(iii) The Ideas Phase

The *ideas* phase, also known as *generalizing*, can be either a starting point for the Action Research Spiral or just another phase on the spiral. It is a starting point when the *ideas* are an act of creative or original thought, or when they are obtained from another party or information source, such as a book, a professional or a colleague. Otherwise, this phase generates its ideas from prior reflection, assimilating thoughts, and occurs in the abstract world, bridging the passive to the active. Like the *reflection* phase, the *ideas* phase too is divided into individual writing and then paired or small group discussion.

(iv) The Planning Phase

The *planning* phase, also sometimes referred to as *active experimentation*, is where the ideas from the previous phase are organized and massaged before being used. This active phase bridges the abstract world of ideas with the concrete world of action.

Cycle Times:

The Action Research Spiral is dynamic. Standing still is not an option. Yet the dynamic nature of the spiral might be conceived in a number of different time frames.

For example, we could imagine using it in short cycles of several minutes. Imagine being confronted with a row of lit candles, never having seen a candle before. Fascinated, you reach out to touch the first flame (*action*), where you experience intense pain and a reflex action to withdraw; you associate the pain with the flame (*reflection)*, from which you generalize that flames can cause pain (*idea*). That general idea converts itself into a *plan* not to touch the remaining candle flames just to see if the experience is any different. You then move away (*action*) from the remaining candles.

From no prior knowledge, you have now "researched" that candle flames cause pain, based on one experience only and you have resolved to be careful of them in future. The whole learning experience probably took less than a couple of seconds.

One could also envisage an hourly cycle time, where 15 minutes was allocated to some action experience, 15 minutes to reflection, 15 minutes to the generation of ideas, and a further 15 minutes to planning. It is not being suggested that each phase necessarily occupy one quarter of the available time, though that may not be a bad idea.

Another cycle time is daily. Both the end of the day and the beginning of the day are suitable times for reflection, ideas and planning.

Weekly is also a common cycle time – it's no accident that most societies have a day of rest (*reflection??)* – as is annually – annual holidays and festivals.

Not only might the spiral be thought of in different time frames, cycles can be embedded with cycles. For example, a number of learning topics might be addressed in one day. Each of those could be designed around the spiral architecture, whilst the whole day itself could conclude with a one hour reflection, ideas and planning session.

For example, imagine a novice fisherman, going out on a trawler for the first time. Whether s/he knows it or not, s/he's about to undertake some action research. Imagine, in response to everything s/he observes, the novice asks 'Why?' And the novice's more experienced colleagues explain. So the novice observes the actions of the more experienced colleagues, reflects upon what is being observed and seeks an explanation. The explanation provides the theory that underpins the action, allowing the novice to plan what s/he would do when necessary. These action research cycles could be occurring every few minutes as the novice works hard to build up the necessary knowledge and skill. Action research could also be occurring at the same time and at a different scale. For example, as they are returning to port, the skipper might ask the novice what he or she had learned from their three days at sea.

Another example of applied action research might be an experienced fishing crew seeking to improve the fuel and catch efficiencies of a trawl. Their action research could begin with a vague idea that their trawl efficiency could be improved. The skipper shares his thoughts with the crew and they all kick around a few ideas. Choosing a couple of ideas that seem to have merit, they plan to modify their trawl pattern. The plan is then put into action, and the results assessed. If those results were beneficial, the crew talk about tweaking the plan a little more to see if the results can be improved further. That plan is put into action, and the results assessed again. This is how action research is done. It may look no different to our normal activities, yet it is. What is different is the deliberate thinking or reflection that follows every action, the sharing of ideas, and then the deliberate planning to do something just a little different next time.

Yet another example might involve your fishery association. The chair of the association is conscious that there has been a drop off in membership, that it is hard to get people to turn up for meetings and the younger people seem reluctant to join. This is a perfect scenario for a piece of action research, as follows: (i) reflection that the association's energy seems to be waning, (ii) seek out some ideas from current members and potential members, (iii) build those ideas into a plan, (iv) execute the plan, observing what happens, (v) reflect upon the differences, if any, (vi) share further ideas with a view to slightly altering the last plan, (vii) execute the modified plan, (vii) reflect upon those outcomes, etc., etc.

Continuous improvement is just a slightly varied form of action research. Unlike the previous example where the crew might hit upon a trawl pattern they are very happy with and therefore continue unchanged, under continuous improvement the spiral never stops. The crew is never satisfied they have it right, and so they adopt a deliberate policy of subjecting everything they do to the four phases of the spiral.

The more that the four phases of the spiral are deliberately tackled and published the better. The more frequent the phases of the spiral, the smaller the adjustments that are necessary, the less stress there is upon the whole system, and the deeper our understanding becomes.

The table below offers a structured approach to problem-solving using the action research spiral.

Step	Focusing Questions	Generate lots of ideas	Choose the Best Ideas	What's Needed to move on?
1. Identify the broad issue we want to work on	What do we want to change	Seek out lots of issues we could consider.	Decide on one issue and develop a desired state, a vision or goal for that issue.	Identify the gap between where we are and where we'd like to be.
2. Analyse the issue at present.	What is preventing us from reaching the desired state	Lots of potential causes identified.	Decide on the most important causes and confirm them.	Key causes documented and ranked.
3. Generate potential solutions	How can we make the change?	Lots of possible solutions identified.	The best potential solutions chosen.	Create a solutions list.
4. Select and plan the solution	What is the best way to do it?	Lots of criteria for evaluating successful solutions.	Best criteria decided. Implementation and evaluation plans agreed upon.	Measurement criteria to evaluate solution effectiveness.
5. Implement the solution	Are we following the plan?	If things go wrong, what contingency plans can we put into place.	Adjust the plan as necessary, initiating contingencies if required.	Solution in place.
6. Evaluate the solution	How well did it work?	Evaluation models considered.	Effectiveness of solution agreed upon.	Confirm problem solved, or ….agreement to continue

Appendix 13: Dealing With Difficult People/ Graded Interventions.

We sometimes believe that other people can be difficult. *A difficult person is someone whose behaviour is different from that we would expect or wish.* Hence, in all probability, other people sometimes experience us as 'difficult' as well. It is not people who are difficult, it is their behaviours.

Here are five simple steps that may help.

(i) Prevention is better than cure.

(ii) Have group identify all of those behaviours it would rather not have to experience.

(iii) Have group then identify the opposite of those behaviours.

(iv) Publish the desired behaviours as the group's own set of groundrules.

(v) Manage any emergent behaviour against those groundrules.

The last step requires some expansion. If we have a set of groundrules that are believed to be fair and equitable, we can manage against them, as follows. This process, known as 'graded interventions' should be **entered at a level prior to the one you believe is necessary**.

So here is how you, as the facilitator, chair or participant, intervene. Choose the level of intervention that is one level earlier than you think necessary. If the inappropriate behaviour reoccurs, go to the next level. If the inappropriate behaviour reoccurs again, go to the next level, etc. Continue until the inappropriate behaviour stops (or you leave).

1. Observe but do nothing.

2. Draw attention to the groundrules for workshop or meeting. 'Folks, can I just remind everybody about the groundrules we agreed to work to.'

3. Observe aloud, drawing attention to the specific groundrule. 'Folks, can I just remind everyone about Groundrule No 3.

4. Observe aloud in specific terms, and being more specific about the violation: 'Folks, I notice this is the fourth time that Groundrule No 3 has been ignored by this half of the room.'

5. Observe aloud and specifically; point out the consequences for the group, and suggest more strongly what you'd prefer to happen. 'Folks, this is the fifth time that we have

ignored Groundrule No 3. The reason that we agreed on this Groundrule is ...... The consequences of our not adhering to it is ....'

6. Observe aloud, specifically, point out consequences, express your own feeling in the light of the behaviour and consequences, and suggest more strongly under what conditions you are willing to stay in the room. (Thereby implying that you will leave if it occurs again).

7. Observe aloud, specifically point out consequences for the group. Stand and walk out, saying why you are leaving, and on what conditions you are willing to return.

Acknowledgement: I was taught this process by Bob Dick, one of Australia's most skilled facilitators and process designers.

Appendix 14: Towards clarity

This appendix might be regarded as a sub-set of 'continuous improvement'. It offers a series of logical decision points, expressed in step-wise fashion, each step leading to greater understanding of an issue or situation.

1. That's one; that's not one. Can we distinguish between an issue of interest and anything else?

2. That's a good one; that's not a good one. Can we distinguish a good one from a not-so-good one?

3. These are the characteristics that make it a good one. Do we understand the characteristics that lead to us describing it as 'good'?

4. These are the more important of those characteristics. Are some of those 'good' characteristics more important than others?

5. These are the internal or external factors that shape or constrain those important characteristics. Do we understand how those more important 'good' characteristics are influenced?

6. Here is how we can favourably influence those factors. Can we influence them?

Appendix 15: Delegation

The purpose of delegation is to pass authority to another in order (a) to grow their competence, and (b) to free you up to attend to more strategic issues.

The level to which you delegate is a function of your confidence in that person in relation to the particular task being delegated. Your job is to grow their competence and your confidence in them. Hence there is a gradation in the communication you might have with the person to whom you are delegating the task, as follows:

1. Look into this issue and come back to me by [time/date] with a range of options.
2. Look into this issue and come back to me by [time/date] with a range of options, together with your recommendation as to which option is best.
3. Look into this issue and give me your recommendation as to what we should do.
4. Look into this issue, decide what needs to be done, organize it, and let me know how it went.
5. Look after this issue. Don't bother to tell me how it went unless it comes unstuck.

Each executive, supervisor or manager will develop their own version of this. The point of the progression is that you can pick any point on the continuum, depending on your level of confidence in the delegate's capacity. Then, over multiple similar tasks, you can grow this person's capacity to pass over greater and greater responsibility. The clarity of the instruction leaves the delegate in no doubt as to how much freedom of decision they are being given.

Ian Plowman

Appendix 16: Workshop Reports

On completion of the interviews, data analysis and case studies, research results were shared with industry via day-long workshops conducted in each of the States and the Northern Territory. These workshops were advertised and through the peak industry body in each location.

As part of the deliverables for the project, FRDC requested a report on the first two workshops. This follows, after which the feedback from each workshop is then included.

Workshop Report

FRDC Project 2011/410 – Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession

Introduction:

The project centred on building up an understanding of healthy industry associations and otherwise through 23 case studies of separate industry associations and 70 person to person interviews. The project plan involved conveying the findings of the research back to industry through a series of one-day workshops, one to be held in each State and Territory. The first of the workshops was conducted in Adelaide SA on Monday 13th August 2012, the second in Perth WA on Wednesday 15th August 2012.

The workshop design

Our original proposal recommended that each workshop would learn from the feedback gather from the prior workshop. We structured each workshop, commencing at 9.00am and concluding at 5.00pm, giving up 7 hours of working time, after allowing for breaks.

Each workshop was arranged in table-groups of five or six people, with people moving to a new table and different mix of people at each of the breaks. Before sharing with participants the research findings, the workshop began with a series of small insights and skills intended to enhance participation and engagement. Participants then practiced those skills in a series of short exercises. They then continued to use those principles and skills through-out the balance of the workshop.

Each research topic was dealt with the same way, as follows:

- Topic was introduced
- Participants were given a series of questions on that topic as it pertained to their association.
- Those questions were then discussed within the table groups.

- We then shared what the academic literature says on the topic.
- We then shared what the interviewees said in relation to that topic.
- Recommendations were then offered.
- Participants then talked in their table groups about the application of those recommendations to their associations.

Each topic took between 30 minutes and an hour, depending upon its complexity and importance to participants.

Each participant received, at the beginning of the workshop, a handout containing all of the recommendations from each of the research topics, regardless of whether or not they were the top priorities identified by the participants of the particular workshop.

The Adelaide workshop:

Invitations were commenced a month prior to the workshop. The invitation is attached. Using data bases obtained from peak industry bodies, contact was made by phone when we had phone contact and by email. In the weeks leading up to the workshop follow-up emails and phone calls resulted in 25 acceptances. We then had two late withdrawals.

The venue for the workshop was the Rockford Hotel in Adelaide CBD.

The participants and their associations were:

- Jonas Woolford & Anthony Mezic – Wildcatch Fisheries SA
- Simon Clark - Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fishery
- Kerry McGorman - Gulf St Vincent Prawn Boat Owners Association
- Samara Miller & Thomas McNab - Abalone Industry Association of SA (WZ)
- Karen Holder - SA Blue Crab Pot Fishers Association
- Tom Di Vittorio / Allen Matheson - Charter Boat Owners Association
- Nathan Bicknell - Marine Fishers Association
- Justin Phillips - South East Professional Fishermen's Association
- Roger Rowe - Northern Zone Rock Lobster Association
- Martin Hernen - SA Aquaculture Council
- Knut Gasmannis – ANSA SA
- Tony Bainbridge, Mark ?, Steve Incledon – SA Freshwater Association
- Aaron Nichols, Roger Jeffrey, Ian Janzow – Metropolitan Fishers Alliance
- Mehdi Doroudi - Executive Director Fisheries & Aquaculture

The interview research involved 29 topics, far more than the workshop time permitted us to cover. So we presented the workshop participants with the list of topics, inviting them to choose the topics of greatest value to them. They chose, in descending order of popularity:

- Freshness of management and leadership 11 votes
- Sharing responsibilities 10 votes
- Lobbying/marketing/public relations 8 votes
- External communication 8 votes
- Continuous improvement 8 votes

Each topic involved the participants working hard mentally. This is fatiguing, leading to quite a decline in energy in the afternoon. A number of participants also expressed the view that, because they came from the three sectors of wild-catch, aquaculture, and recreational fishing, many did not know each other, and they wanted to spend time on issues beyond the research that we were there to convey.

We responded to the clients' expressed wishes and flagging energy levels, by getting them to identify what would be the best use of their time for the final hour, given the people that we had in the room. This shift lifted people's energy considerably, though it threw a couple of people who wanted to continue working through the research topics.

The four topics that small groups chose to work on in the last hour were:

- Understanding the profile of each of the associations represented.
- Improving cross-sector communication between stakeholders (see report following)
- (still chasing the participants for reports on the last two topics).

At the conclusion of their allocated time, each of the small groups gave a summary presentation back to the other workshop participants. Those other participants had the opportunity to respond to the presentation with a comment, under the heading of: 'Had you thought about ….?'. Rather than give a response, that point was captured by the presenting group as part of their small working group outputs.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants provided individual and anonymous feedback. This was aggregated and emailed back to the participants, along with handouts on the research topics chosen by the participants and covered in the workshop.

The Perth Workshop:

Initial contact was made to WAFIC and RecFishWest as the two peak bodies in the State. Each provided a contact list and emails and phone calls were made to every person/association on the list. The first invitation was sent a month prior to the workshop. A copy is attached. Three subsequent follow-up invitations were issued leading up the workshop, including the offer of financial support to any associations for which funds might have been an issue. We got no takers to that offer.

- Nineteen people accepted our invitation.
- In the two days prior to the workshop we had four withdrawals and apologies.
- Of those who indicated they would attend, six did not show.
- Three people who had not responded to our invitation turned up.
- Twelve people commenced the workshop.
- Of those, a number had to leave, three at lunch, and two at afternoon tea, leaving seven participants at the end of the workshop.

The venue for the workshop was the Hillarys Research Centre, WA Department of Fisheries.

The participants and their associations were:

- Heather Brayford, Department of Fisheries
- Fiona (???), Department of Fisheries
- Mark Tucek, WAFIC
- Kym Coffey, WAFIC and Pearl Producers Association
- David Carter, Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd
- Linda Williams, Latitude 31 PFA
- Brett McCallum, Pearl Producers Association
- Abby Fraser, WRLC
- Andrew Rowland, RecFishWest
- Joe Petrovich, Australian Underwater Federation
- Bretton Stitfold, Western Aust Trout and Freshwater Angling Assoc
- Dan Machin, NAC and Aquaculture Council WA

The interview research involved 29 topics, far more than the workshop time permitted us to cover. . So we presented the workshop participants with the list of topics, inviting them to choose the topics of greatest value to them. They chose, in descending order of popularity:

- Purpose 9 votes
- Lobbying/marketing/public relations 8 votes
- External communication 7 votes
- Decentralisation of decision-making 7 votes
- New blood 5 votes
- Internal communication 5 votes

Our two learnings from the Adelaide workshop were (a) that participants wanted to share ideas with each across small table groups, not just within them, and (b) we needed to do better at managing energy.

In relation to the first learning, we concluded the small group conversations on any topic with a plenary session, whereby anybody could share with the other tables anything they thought useful to share. This extra activity seemed to quell the need that also occurred in Adelaide. The second issue of topic fatigue seemed less than in Adelaide, in part because the group was smaller, and with people leaving, we were reduced to two, then one table.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants provided individual and anonymous feedback. This was aggregated and emailed back to the participants, along with handouts on the research topics chosen by the participants and covered in the workshop.

Key learning for both workshops

Apart from the need to find variety to manage the naturally-occurring afternoon energy loss, and the need the participants from various associations and sectors have to just meet each other, in most cases for the first time, and have a chin-wag, the fundamental communication skills and tools seem to be what people valued most. Although the research findings about healthy associations were of interest, participants, once exposed to the micro-skills and tools of effective communication and meeting design, recognised that these skills and tools were of equal importance to the research findings. Because we don't know what we don't know, the value of these new skills only becomes apparent once people become aware of them. Further, they recognised that these are skills that association Presidents and Chairs, very few of whom actually attended, need to use if they are to attract and retain potential new members.

A second equally important learning from the two workshops is that participants now recognise that building a membership base is as important, if not more important, than building leadership capacity. The return on investment in investing in the membership base is likely to be far, far higher than funds invested in leadership development. This is not to suggest that leadership development is not important; it certainly is. However, building a broader membership base, coupled with a philosophy of shared responsibility through sub-committees, a deliberate understudy process for all formal positions, and a planned exit strategy for all formal positions will lead to the leadership issue largely taking care of itself.

Here is a relevant quote from a Canadian fishing industry interviewee:

> *At every level, if people feel like they're being included, valued, and that their opinions matter, all of that is absolutely key to making them feel that they like being involved in the association. It sounds pretty simplistic, but it's at the core of effective associations. It's all good to have a lot of other things in place, but if people don't feel good about the organisation and don't feel they are making a contribution and that their opinion matters, then they won't stay in it very long.*

It is our opinion that helping people feel valued and included is probably one of the best investments an association can make. And it costs absolutely nothing to do it.

Healthy Industry Associations and Succession
Final Report

Ian Plowman and Neil MacDonald

20th August 2012

.

Adelaide 13th August 2012

FRDC Project 2011/410 Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession Workshop

Participating associations: Wildcatch Fisheries SA, Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fishery, Gulf St Vincent Prawn Boat Owners Association, Abalone Industry Association of South Australia (WZ), Central Zone Abalone, SA Blue Crab Pot Fishers Association, Charter Boat Owners Association, Marine Fishers Association, Net Fishers Association, South East Professional Fishermen's Association, Northern Zone Rock Lobster Association, SA Aquaculture Council, ANSA, SA Freshwater Assoc., Metropolitan Fishers Alliance, PIRSA – Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Workshop Feedback

What worked	What didn't	Suggestions for improvement
EVERYTHING ! AWESOME PSYCHOLOGY !	The single best convention I've attended!	Maybe target individuals further down the ladder in future.
Moving seats regularly. Capturing ideas on butcher's paper.	The silent working for three minutes. [Some people still talked.]	More variation through the main body of the chosen top 8 topics.
The morning was valuable	I struggled with the afternoon session. I came to learn about successful strategies that I could think about adopting in our association & the best timing of the strategies. Whilst I learned and picked up some recommendations, I felt that this fell short of my expectations.	Introducing everyone at the start, so we know who is in the room. If someone is not happy with the workshop, suggest to explore this in more detail before changing the format of the workshop. When I pressed the person as to what he wanted, he did not know.
Identifying right at the start how to get everybody to have an equal hearing, not only for this workshop but for our future meetings.	That the workshop got changed to satisfy the whim/wishes of just one participant.	Don't try to present too much information.
The opportunity to step back and reflect on our	Conveying some of the key elements in an	Missed the introductions. God to know who

association. Forced thinking time.	association in summary form.	we are in the room with.
Group participation. Addressing wide-ranging issues. Cross-sector involvement.	Too long on management/organisation of associations.	Attendee introductions. Define seminar rules to prevent inter-sector conflict (potential). Allow whole group discussions (not table-based).
Communication tools. Breaking down the process of management, Outlining needs for change.	Overlap with breaking down points which seem to be all near done.	More tools relating to communication skills.
Engagement through table-swapping & tasking. Initial tutoring on rules of engagement. Follow-up tasks to retain learning.	Dunno !!. Can't think of any stand-out item. Time is always an issue.	Dunno!!
Interaction with different stakeholders. Follow-up of outcomes. Some good stuff floating around.	Not sufficient time for consolidated outcome.	More time to follow up on suggested presentations. Where to from here?
The morning session on how to do/look at things. The second part of the afternoon session where there was more interaction amongst us.	The initial afternoon session seemed to be the same thing but in a different format/wording.	Morning session OK, but then need a less formal afternoon as we did this time.
Individual involvement/engagement. Covering topics most people interested in/relate to. Getting a broader aspect of other associations & problem areas.	Specific to associations as we all have different issues, strengths.	Taking info away which helped thinking.
The structure to organisations and their	Time and space.	2-Day event.

development. Making us analyse our own organisation to look at what is good governance. Analysing what are the negatives and positives in my organisation.	More time to network with other individuals from other sectors.	
Changing tables; thinking time; tools; talking ball & question mark. Information was relevant.	Got a bit lost on energy & concentration levels leading up to & in 3rd session. Better when we moved into session 4.	Maybe an activity after lunch to help people focus. No idea what though.
Group interaction. Sticking to time and topic. Being flexible to respond to group networking.	Not much on the basic problems; e.g. how to access funds, how to resolve multi-layers of associations. Bit vague on results of survey and what happens next.	None on why the workshop was established & what FRDC expect (& government). How to ensure that Government listens to the seafood industry. Identify (or help to identify) quantifiable value and produce benchmark?
I enjoyed the research and principles of functional associations and members.	The top questions may be refined to 2 to illustrate the process of effective communication.	Compress the hours. Some more informal conversations.
All of what was covered today was very valuable. Key points to each and every organisation.		I believe it was all well-presented and managed for each associate member as they will have more of a broader view.

Tuesday, 14 August 2012

FRDC Working Group Results

Overview

An all-day seminar was held at the Rockford Hotel Adelaide on Monday 13th August 2012 and was hosted by the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC) which is co-funded by the Australian Government and the Fishing Industry. The purpose of the seminar was to provide training and education in the conduct and management of fishing industry associations.

After the lunch break, it was suggested that the seminar's purpose might be extended to take advantage of the presence of key representatives, and to use this opportunity to examine wider aspects of the fishing industry as a whole. This suggestion was put to the vote and subsequently adopted by the FRDC hosts.

This paper is the product of one FRDC working group comprising:-

Tony Bainbridge (SAFWAA)

tonybainbridge46@hotmail.com

Nathan Bicknell (EO Marine Fishers Association)

mfa.nathan@yahoo.com.au

Mehdi Doroudi (Director PIRSA)

mehdi.doroudi@gov.sa.au

Kerry McGorman (Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery and Sustainable Shark Fishery)

kerry@jimmyeliasandson.com.au

Steve Incledon (SAFWAA)

steve.incledon@hotmailcom

Roger Jeffery (Metropolitan Fishers Alliance)

rjeffery@adam.com.au

Our ideas for continued conduct of the seminar

- Industry sector leaders stand up and tell us about your industry
- Participants to give an introduction of who they are
- Continue with the format and move to the next item
- Establish informal communication paths between all attendees.
- Discussion on principals that you would need for industry associations to interact with licence holders (members) and interactions with stakeholders.

These ideas were prioritised and voted, and the agreed topic was then translated into a clear and concise question for further consideration by the group.

The question:

Can we improve cross-sector communications between stakeholders?

Suggested solutions

- Using a broad-based face to face forum approach
- Improved networking between sectors
- Establish cohesive approach both within and external to each sector
- Implement improved training and awareness so that we're all on the same page.

Background reasons for the question

1. Commercial sector has invested heavily and have an enormous amount of information available e.g.:-
    - Sustainability
    - Environment
2. Frustrated because this information is not made available to other stakeholders and the public, and two-way communication is missing.
3. Need improved access to training and easily understood information
4. Too many associations in every sector.
5. Restricted access to information is hurting us all.

6. We need clearly defined authority for representation of each sector.

   Have you thought of?

   These questions were raised by the combined meeting attendees following a short presentation of our group's thoughts and suggestions.

- How do we co-ordinate it all?
- What is the target audience?
- Will there be immediate resolvable conflict?
- How are you going to fund it?
- How will you determine the clarity of purpose?

Perth 15th August 2012

FRDC Project 2011/410 Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession Workshop

Participating organisations: Department of Fisheries, WAFIC, Austral Fisheries Pty Ltd, Pearl Producers Association Ltd, WRLC, RecFish West, Australian Underwater Federation, Aquaculture Council WA.

Workshop Feedback

What worked	**What didn't**	**Suggestions for improvement**
Well constructed agenda with adequate time for each agenda item. Excellent explanation of terms and background to issues. Professional approach.	Not enough time for plenary sessions on each agenda item. A little too much focus on Boards/Exec committees, rather than how 'Grass Roots' can be more engaged or serviced.	Few more case studies. Perhaps a role play of a Board meeting with various personality types allocated to players.
Use of talking ball, timer to give person speaking the permission to speak and not be interrupted, but then a time limit so that they don't dominate all conversation, Use of 'And', rather than 'But'. Use of learning spiral and use & practice reviews of activities. Consider always the three needs of members: (1) Social, (2) Achievement, (3) Political. Clear purpose and policy designed for associations/organisation. Many things to consider and decide to	Thought there might be more focus on a single idea like succession planning: the who, what, where, how, etc. but time wouldn't allow for that.	Get Chairmen, Presidents to these workshops, so that they can use these techniques, especially 'talking ball' and 'egg timer'.

implement (like a tool box).		
The small groups; changing tables; the talking ball, timing and listening props. Three minutes of thinking time. Hearing about other people's experiences.	Not being able to discuss my topics due to lack of votes.	Perhaps explaining each of the topics. (I know it would take time.)
Valuable theory/practical points for better communication, relationship building and effective associations. Thought-provoking and solid tools for individual's improved effectiveness in meetings.	It is hard to see how I can translate outcomes to changed group behaviours. Hard to see how some of the tools (e.g. egg-timer) will work in practice.	Long repetitive process became tiring after a point, and hence less productive. Maybe a shorter workshop? OR break up the routine to allow refreshment of dynamics.
Use of reflection & writing. The plenary exchange. Process to assist enquiry – the '?' device. Having two facilitators.	Discipline around timer and talking ball. Reading of screen aloud. Need to capture the plenary exchanges.	Hold people to account. Note taking to assist with recall of the plenary sessions.
The small groups. Good networking opportunities. Good information provided.	Lagged in the afternoon. Not enough discussion & too many comments on the slides.	Don't read out comments. Talk to slides; don't read them out.
Giving us fundamentals. Allowing an environment that is interactive. Conversations/sharing viewpoints with other participants.	Slightly too long. Maybe focus on 4 – 5 issues instead, more tailored to the group present/local issues.	Being able to talk through specific issues/scenarios more fully, both in respect of advice and experiences from people who have been involved in such scenarios.
The use of props in the workshop setting clearly showed how these simple measures can be used in association meetings & events effectively. Hearing examples of the way other associations operate provided useful ideas that can be taken	The w/shop may have provided more value to my association if some of those involved in the decision making process were present.	It might have been useful to have heard more from those involved in relatively *healthy associations,* about the journey their groups had taken to get to where they are.

back to our own council. Networking opportunities- it was useful to be in the same room as others working towards similar goals in the same industry.		

Suggestions from participants in open round-table conversation at conclusion of day.

To generate higher level of attendance:

- Provide more information in the invitation email about the concepts/content we will explore.
- Use the association networks to aid in the recruitment of participants.
- Hold the workshop on a weekend (for recreational fishers).
- Tues/Wed best for aquaculture sector.
- Consider holding a workshop in Albany & Geraldton, as well as Perth. Perhaps 6 – 9.00 PM.
- Aim to get Chairs and Vice-Chairs
    - Tools for more effective meetings,
    - Shorter meetings,
    - Higher levels of engagement,
    - Helps all Directors to have a voice, particularly the quieter ones,
    - These are tools that will help you be better Directors
- Brett McCallum suggests we tell FRDC that there needs to be a separate follow-up project focussing specifically on the tools of engagement. For roughly $6,000 could train 50 people (if we could get the interest of potential invitees). It is Association Chairs who would most benefit from the skills.
- Use the past participants from Adelaide & Perth to promote, through their inter-State networks, the future workshops.

FRDC Project 2011/410 - Healthy Industry Associations and Succession

Hobart Workshop – 9th April 2013

Participating organisations: TARFish, Tasmanian Abalone Council**.**

As part of the extension of this project, a workshop was offered to the Tasmanian seafood industry community. Working through TSIC, getting traction for an agreed date proved challenging. It was finally agreed to 'piggy-back' the workshop with the TSIC AGM, holding the workshop the day following, namely on 9th April 2013. To aid in getting traction, we also requested a short presentation as part of the AGM on the 8th April.

We arrived at the AGM venue to find the event had been cancelled due to the inability to attract a quorum. We subsequently had a meeting with Neil Stump. He was not confident we would have a strong turnout for our workshop.

The evening before the workshop we had **six confirmations** of attendance.

Below are the steps taken to try to attract participation.

22 March 2013 – confirmation from TSIC on event date to follow TSIC AGM, date options discussed with TARFish that same afternoon.

24 March 2013 – follow up email with TARFish, offer for Sunday workshop sent to TARFish members by M Nikolai 26 March. One response indicating Tuesday would be acceptable. Further reminder sent 27 March. One further response indicating the weekend was preferred.

27 March 2013 – TSIC arrange for contact list to be supplied. List received 28 March. Due to incomplete contact details – 8 phone contacts made for email / fax details (6 responses received). One acceptance received.

2 April 2013- Invitations & background materials distributed.

3 April 2013 – Further invitation sent to those that were interviewed as part of the Project. TSIC requested to make time at AGM for introduction to project. Acceptance from one industry sector rep.

4 April 2013 – One acceptance.

5 April 2013 – Press release issued to 16 outlets – radio, TV and print.

8 April 2013 – One acceptance. Met with TSIC General Manager.

The workshop attracted two participants – Mark Nikolai from TARFish, and Jillian Freeman from the Tasmanian Abalone Council. A productive, interactive and informal workshop was conducted. As with the previous workshops in SA and WA, because the research covered so many topics pertaining to industry associations, we addressed those topics in which participants had the highest level of interest. Workshop feedback was captured.

What worked	**What didn't**	**Suggestions for improvement**
One-on-one interaction Use of non-technical terminology Structured Focus of research on seafood industry Interaction with commercial sector	Value of input from a diverse group of participants	
The information was clear and concise. Presented in an informal way and easy to understand. Relevant and interesting.	Full day is too long, and easy to lose focus.	Less topics to analyse. Choose items that are specific to the audience present.

Darwin - 1st May 2013

Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession Workshop

Participating organisations: Northern Territory Seafood Council, Northern Territory Farmers Association, Humpty Doo Barramundi, Amateur Fishermen's Association of Northern Territory.

Workshop Feedback

What worked	What didn't	Suggestions
Early frustration on the 'but' and time restraint on talking – ~~but~~ and, in the end, I found it very rewarding …..and challenging as well as an interesting learning.	Great opportunity to benchmark; was restricted by time constraints. Value in speaking constraint may be useful though.	I'm a big fan of interaction. While Ian and Neil are great facilitators – and topics very interesting, I'm driven by hearing people's ideas – and probably more driven to share, which is more about how I might improve ☺ Great work! 10/10.
I really enjoyed the 'Meeting without Discussion' info. I also found it very useful to apply the project findings to my association.	Nothing really. It was all very useful and interesting.	Print out of slides so I could write notes against them. Thank you both.
All	Access to experiences however open to range of options to topics raised.	Attend regional centres.
Rotating chair and tables. Selecting key issues and drilling down to each one. What can I do? Outside groups NT Farmers involvement.	It was a bit slow at the start.	It would be good to do similar for rec fishing clubs separately.
Small tables. One-minute timer to make more aware. Presentation of ideas through stories.	Opportunity to see/learn about 'good news' organisations (examples). Attendance – some missing from start & loss of	Use participants to promote the value to the jurisdictions yet to hold workshop. I would have extended the attendance further to my

	people during the day. People valuing the day by staying the whole day. Promotion of the workshop.	colleagues in other areas if I had known the value better. (I feel bad for restricting it when capacity to include them was there.
The ball and allowing each person to talk. 'Have you thought of …?' Moving around allowed you to experience others perceptions/thoughts.	'The minute' – was hard to keep to that time-frame. I thought it had too many sections that were targeted. Information overload in some parts.	
Provided an objective analysis of effective v's struggling organisations from a range of perspectives. Some excellent issues were delivered and absorbed.	Can't think of any point I regard as a waste of my time.	None
Tools for more effective meetings were great. Key findings of studies and recommendations were valuable. Review tool of how I can implement recommendations was great.	My energy levels got low in places.	Workshop was great. Maybe some kind of following up/mentoring after the workshop: i.e. pick up the phone and ask 'How are you going?' in a week or two to prompt further action.
The meeting management tools provided were, in themselves, worth the time. Selecting by consensus key issues relevant to the group.	Not that it didn't work but I would have liked to expand on not using 'but'- other options and avoiding excessive ownership of ideas. How to avoid argument.	Follow up meetings!

Brisbane: **13th June 2013**

Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession Workshop

Participating organisations: Queensland Seafood Industry Association**,** Gulf of Carpentaria Fishermen's Assoc., Mackay Recreational Fishing Association, East Coast Crab Fishers, Freshwater Fishing & Stocking Ass of Qld, Qld Prawns.

Workshop Feedback

What worked?	**What didn't?**	**Suggestions?**
Wake-up call to associations not to be complacent and to review the way we work towards our goals and review outcomes.	Obviously initial contact needs work to get more people involved in workshop. Otherwise, workshop itself achieved aims.	More information prior to workshop to generate interest.
Everything! Talking ball, Timer, Question marks Most civilised and effective meeting format I've ever attended.	Nothing.	Maybe some of the individual topics could be shortened up. Précis points on the board; not read in entirety.
The involvement and engagement of a smaller group. The informal way in which the workshop was conducted.	The agenda was too full to allow sufficient discussion on some topics.	There is certainly a need for further workshops.
It was very well presented and explained. There were new ideas which I can take back with little expense. Well done!		Just keep on doing what you are doing.
Organisation of day & timing spent across all	Towards the end of the day, I think	Would have loved to see more information on how

efforts/issues. Covered a lot of information very effectively.	people were starting to get tired with less suggestions coming forward.	other associations have implemented things and how they overcome barriers and resistance.
Made me look at myself and my organisation and will make definite changes to how our younger committee members get involved & participate on issues. Great ideas for conducting meetings.	We didn't solve the funding problems all organisations face at the present.	I suggest management from Fisheries Qld attend one of these meetings.
Good idea that the group were given the option of selecting six of the subjects which were most important to their personal operations instead of glossing over the entire agenda in the time allotted. I though the measure 0-10 assessment idea half way through the session was a great measure stick, noting that most were between seven and eight plus rotating seating after each session was a great idea.	Everything was fine, the subjects and exchange of ideas exceeded my expectations.	More five minute breaks, to accommodate the call of nature or stretch your legs. It's O.K if you are walking the floor as the presenter, I am not used to sitting on my backside all day. We were really cramped for time and it would have been great to intermingle with other sectors of the fishery for longer and exchange information about government and fisheries management failures as currently exist within Fisheries Queensland.

Sydney: 18th June 2013

Healthy Industry Associations and Leadership Succession Workshop

Participating organisations: Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Professional Fishermen's Association, OceanWatch, South Coast Fishermen United, Sydney Fish Market, Hawkesbury River Commercial Fishing Association, Women Industry Network Seafood Community, Ballina Fishermen's Co-operative, Clarence River Fishermen's Co-operative.

Workshop Feedback

What worked	What didn't	Suggestions for improvement
Interaction, inclusiveness, punctual, clear, concise. Straight to the point. Easy to follow.		
I felt the program worked well; refreshing with some new approaches. Helpful, well-informed. I feel more confident after attending.	Maybe going over some things unnecessarily, as they were already known.	Broader subjects.
The introduction. The meeting rules	Slides were sometimes difficult to read – packed with words and people's comments that kind of blurred.	Good to have some of the key small group discussions fed back to the overall group. There were some good ideas that didn't get communicated.
Group reflection on topics	Too much text on the slides.	Reduce PPt slides to dot points or representative images. Supply info on slides as further reading after workshop.
Good research and results	All worked well.	None. (Slightly warmer swordfish).
Changing speakers all the time made it easier to stay focussed. Groups of five always changing created better discussions.	Coffee was crap. That's all	I couldn't improve it.

The morning format; well-presented with time to read, then engage in discussion.	The afternoon session appeared rushed. Reading material was long. Or the backward-forward was hard to take in.	Less sessions with more time allowed for discussions.
Input from all attendees during sessions provided real feedback and day-to-day sharing of challenges.	Too many words, sentences on PPt. Was difficult to absorb information. Some points very pertinent but missed the mark due to too much information.	Slides need to be decreased or have handouts relating to topics with the feedback noted. Provides take-home information and opportunity to review the statements.
Collective participation. Information advocating diversity. Brief attendance of DPI delegates.	NSW Fisheries Management has not been conducive to providing wild harvest fisheries with a positive and encouraging working environment. This impacts the industry morale and has been long term. The interaction does not provide a solution to consecutive government behaviour.	Understanding and evaluation of how to develop an association in the first place and take this to the successful organisation.
The program opened up ideas for constructive groundwork to engage and be more productive within our organisation and the communities we represent.	Not shown how to stop governments having full power and make them accountable for their actions taken on the small communities and the effect their decisions have on the people who are affected from these flow-on decisions.	Enjoyed the workshop. Thank you.
Understanding associations more in depth. Suggestions for improvements.	Not linking back to restructure of the fishing industry.	Not all questions were answered that need to be.

Melbourne: 11th July 2013

FRDC Project 2011/410 "Healthy Industry associations and leadership succession" workshop

Participating organisations: Seafood Industry Victoria, DEPI – Fisheries, VRFish, Melbourne Seafood Centre, Native Fish Australia.

Workshop Feedback

What worked	What didn't	Suggestions for improvement
Almost everything – very informative and empowering.	Need a bit more variety somehow. Different techniques to present issues.	Encourage more people and organisations to attend.
Structure of the workshop and alternating presentations, with 'doing' and engaging. Question wands – set the ground-rules for providing questions/feedback so there was no interruptions. Information provided was easily digestible. Great tips and recommendations to take back and implement!! Thanks.	I found the workshop a little long – energy started to drop, perhaps limit to a 3.00pm finish. Other than that, no other negatives!!	Length of time (workshop). Some slides were lengthy.
Structure of each topic, i.e.: Discussion on topic, Studies, Application and discussion. This meant you were already on the way to figuring out how the material was relevant. Small groups were less threatening. The group's rating the topics created ownership and	Long day, energy levels, and ability to take it all in.	Shorten the day 10 – 3 plus options for short 10 – 12 sessions the next day after reflection to pick up other topics. Reference list. Copy of the slides after. Quite wordy slides. Sometimes they moved before you had a chance to read them. Examples of associations/places that do each

interest.		well.
Research. Table discussion on individual points. Broad range of discussion points. Relativity of discussion points. Ball and timer. Group mixing.	Ball and timer	More literature.
Guidelines for successful meetings. Healthy debate in groups and around the room. Great relevance to fishing industry. Moving tables around. Nametags.	Details on membership issues. A bit too much of the detailed content of the research interviews.	More on governance and responsibility. Less detail, i.e. Feedback (as above).
Group discussion was advantageous. Sharing everyone's knowledge and experiences gave the teachings more background and applicability.	Some slides were covered too quickly, not allowing for sufficient time to absorb or consider the findings.	A hand-out of the slideshow or class notes would help to follow the content or cross-check the information at a later time.
Accessible presentation of project outcomes. Requirement to work all elements helped reinforce learnings.	Long day/big time commitment – more participation if half day??	Would find useful having overheads in advance to take notes on/build on.