



FINAL REPORT

WRL Communication, Education and Engagement Program

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Abbreviations

- *WRL* – Western Rock Lobster Council
- *BoB* – Back of Boat Lobster
- *Back of Boat* – Back of Boat Lobster
- *DPIRD* – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- *WA* – Western Australia
- *MSC* - Marine Stewardship Council
- *AHA* - Australian Hotels Association
- *WAGFG* - WA Good Food Guide

Executive Summary

What the report is about

This report encapsulates the achievements and outcomes of the [*Western Rock Lobster Council's \(WRL\) Communication, Education, and Engagement Program \(Project 2022-063\)*](#), which aimed to enhance community understanding, trust, and acceptance of the Western Rock Lobster industry. Through innovative strategies and initiatives, the Program sought to foster enduring relationships between the industry and the community, ensuring the industry's social license to operate is supported by government, community, and industry stakeholders.

Background

The Western Rock Lobster Council (WRL) is the peak body representing Australia's most valuable single-species wild capture fishery. Its role is to co-manage the resource with the government and provide leadership on critical issues such as resource access security, social license, market resilience, member advocacy, and research and development for the benefit of the lobster industry and the broader seafood sector.

This Program represents the second in a series of communications initiatives undertaken by WRL. Following the completion of the **first Communications Program**—[*Increasing Community Understanding, Trust, and Acceptance for the Western Rock Lobster Industry Program \(Project number: 2020-058\)*](#) in August 2022—WRL recognised the need to further refine and expand its communication efforts. The learnings, successes, and areas for improvement from the first program served as the foundation for the development and implementation of this second program, which has been running from November 2022 to November 2024. It is recommended that readers begin with the foundational Communications Program (Project number: 2020-058) to fully understand the progression and refinement of communication strategies employed by WRL. You can access the final report of that program [here](#).

WRL's Strategic Plan outlines a vision for the organisation to have, by 2027, the full confidence of government, the community, and its members as a well-resourced, self-funded peak body engaged in advocacy and co-management for improved resource security. The current Communications Program builds on these objectives, focusing on further improving communications within and outside the industry.

Aims/Objectives

The Communication, Education and Engagement Program aimed to strengthen industry engagement by enhancing participation of internal stakeholders in Council activities, fostering a more cohesive representation of the industry's interests to government and other stakeholders. This approach aimed to create a unified voice for the industry, ensuring that its needs and priorities were effectively communicated and understood by key decision-makers.

Furthermore, the Program sought to broaden and deepen relationships with external stakeholders, including government bodies, other industries, and the broader community. By establishing robust relationships, the Program aimed to bolster resilience within both the Council and the broader industry landscape. These efforts were designed to create a more sustainable and supportive environment for the Western Rock Lobster industry, ensuring its long-term viability and success.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this Program was informed by the insights gained from WRL's previous Communications Program, the development of WRL's Communications and Engagement Strategy, and

the findings of the 2020 and 2023 Community and Stakeholder Surveys. Through these, WRL identified two key methods that have proven most effective in forging strong connections with the community.

Firstly, connecting through stories has been a cornerstone of the Program. By sharing the industry's journey on sustainability, economic and cultural contributions, and stories of industry pioneers, WRL has successfully engaged the community and highlighted the industry's positive impact.

Secondly, connecting through produce has been another effective approach. Providing information on correct handling and preparation, recipes, cooking guides, demonstrations, and tastings has not only increased awareness of Western Rock Lobster but has also encouraged consumer engagement and supported market growth.

These methods, emphasising integration and collaboration, have involved members, fishers, and both internal and external stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to communication and engagement.

Results/Key Findings

The key findings of the WRL's Communication, Education and Engagement Program highlight significant achievements and insights gained over the course of the initiative. Through a multifaceted approach that included community surveys, website development, and engagement initiatives like the Back of Boat Lobster initiative, WRL has successfully deepened its connections with stakeholders and the broader community. These findings underscore the Program's impact in enhancing industry perceptions, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering greater community engagement with the Western Rock Lobster industry.

- *Community and Stakeholders Perceptions Survey:* The Community and Stakeholders Perceptions Survey provided valuable insights into how the industry is perceived by the local community and stakeholders. The survey highlighted areas where communication and engagement efforts could be improved, guiding the development of targeted strategies to enhance community understanding and support for the industry.
- *Western Rock Lobster Website:* The Western Rock Lobster Website served as a central hub for industry information, including sustainable practices, recipes, and news. A refreshed website developed under this Program improved user experience, enhancing access to critical updates, resources, and event details. This restructuring aimed to boost member engagement and clarity for stakeholders.
- *Back of Boat Lobster Initiative:* This initiative has not only promoted consumer engagement but also enhanced industry-community relationships and demonstrated transparent, sustainable fishing practices.
- *Community Events:* Through active participation in community events, the industry increased its visibility and engagement with the local community. These events provided opportunities to educate the public about the industry and its practices, fostering positive relationships and promoting a deeper understanding of the industry's importance.
- *Community Engagement Competitions:* The Community Engagement Competitions encouraged community involvement and creativity in promoting the industry. By inviting participants to share their stories and experiences with Western Rock Lobster, these competitions helped to humanise the industry and build stronger connections with the audience.
- *Partnerships & Collaborations:* Collaborating with other industries and organisations allowed the industry to reach a broader audience and enhance its visibility. These partnerships facilitated the sharing of resources and expertise, leading to innovative communication strategies and a more coordinated approach to industry promotion.

Implications for Relevant Stakeholders

The Program's success has significant implications for various stakeholders, including industry members, coastal communities, and government. Improved communication has strengthened industry-community relations and highlighted the industry's socio-economic contributions.

Recommendations

Despite the Program's achievements, there is still room for improvement. WRL acknowledges the need for continued efforts to enhance communication strategies, including the development of a new Communications Program for 2025-2026. Recommendations include ongoing community engagement, strategic partnerships, and innovative storytelling campaigns.

In conclusion, WRL's Communication, Education and Engagement Program has been instrumental in enhancing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, as well as the broader community. By building on the Program's successes and addressing its recommendations, the industry can further improve its outreach efforts and secure long-term sustainability.

Introduction

The Western Rock Lobster Council (WRL) is the peak body representing Australia's most valuable single-species wild capture fishery. Its role is to co-manage the resource with the government and provide leadership on critical issues such as resource access security, social licence, market resilience, member advocacy, and research and development for the benefit of the lobster industry and the broader seafood sector.

WRL's Strategic Plan defines the organisation's purpose as providing the community with the economic and social benefits of a sustainable Western Rock Lobster industry, supplying its iconic product to both local and overseas markets. The Plan outlines a vision for WRLC to have, by 2027, the full confidence of government, the community, and its members as a well-resourced, self-funded peak body engaged in advocacy and co-management for improved resource security.

A critical element of the Strategic Plan is the fourth key objective, 'Ensure the social licence to operate is supported by government, community, and industry.' Achieving this objective involves several key actions. These actions include measuring the performance of the industry and professional advocacy representation through surveys of members, stakeholders, and the community; developing and implementing a revised communication strategy for members, stakeholders, and the community; maintaining close contact and good relations with other industries and associations; developing and implementing a strategy to increase awareness of the WRLC industry's social licence to operate; and increasing connection with the community through industry promotion and Back of Boat activities.

Having successfully completed initiatives under the previous Communications Program - *Increasing Community Understanding, Trust, and Acceptance for the Western Rock Lobster Industry Program* (Project number: 2020-058) - WRL recognised the need to continue improving communications both within and outside the industry.

The purpose of this Program has been to develop rich and enduring relationships between the community and industry based on mutual respect and understanding. While informed by WRL's Strategic Plan and Communications Strategy, this program was not a direct implementation of these strategic documents. It included only new and complex initiatives that are non-core business for WRL.

The Program was designed and implemented to benefit the Western Rock Lobster fishery and other wild-caught fishing industries in WA and across Australia. It also offered advantages to other organisations and sectors with similar objectives, such as other seafood industries, hospitality, and tourism. Additionally, the WA community benefited from increased awareness and accessibility of Western Rock Lobster produce, fostering a stronger connection to the industry.

This Program delivered on the commitment to form and cement genuine relationships within the community, strengthening the fishery's social licence to operate and benefiting other fishing industries through shared learnings from community engagement activities.

Objectives

1. Strengthen industry members engagement: Increase the full participation by internal stakeholders in Council activities, to best enable the Council to represent the industry to government and other stakeholders.
2. Broaden and deepen relationships with external stakeholders from government and other industries to make the Council and the industry more resilient.
3. Build awareness of the significant contribution the industry continues to make to coastal communities, and the state.
4. Increase community awareness of the availability and accessibility of western rock lobster.
5. Ensure the industry is getting maximum social license benefits from its Marine Stewardship Council certification as a sustainable fishery.

Methods

Through the implementation and subsequent analysis of initiatives under WRL's previous Communications Program, alongside the development of WRL's Communications and Engagement Strategy and the insights gained from the 2020 and 2023 Community and Stakeholder Surveys, WRL identified two key methods that have proven most effective in forging strong connections with the community:

- **Connecting through Stories:** Sharing the industry's journey on sustainability, economic and cultural contributions, and stories of industry pioneers.
- **Connecting through Produce:** Providing information on correct handling and preparation, recipes, cooking guides, demonstrations, and tastings.

These methods have demonstrated their efficacy in engaging the local community. The current Program emphasizes integration and collaboration, involving members, fishers, and both internal and external stakeholders.

Specific Methods and Tactics

1. Stakeholder and Community Consultation:

The Community and Stakeholder study introduced in 2020 determined community awareness, association, trust in the industry's custodianship, and respect for the Western Rock Lobster industry. Under this Program, a revised version of the community perceptions survey and stakeholder research was developed to achieve two primary objectives: to include communications initiatives that were not part of the original survey and to compare the new results with the 2020 benchmark to measure the success of WRL's communications efforts. This new survey tracks awareness and support for the industry, measures the industry's social licence to operate, and assesses the impact of recent communication activities, including the 12-month public education campaign with Seven West Media and the Back of Boat Lobsters mechanism.

2. Back of Boat Lobsters:

Introduced in 2020, the Back of Boat program has become WRL's flagship initiative for community connection and building social licence. It facilitates direct interaction between fishers and the public, ensuring community access to premium, wild-caught lobster. The program's success is evidenced by increased community engagement and online presence. WRL developed a public-facing Back of Boat website to connect the community with fishers, provide preparation and recipe information, and deliver strategic messaging on sustainability, industry history, and operation. Under this program, WRL created written and visual content to support the Back of Boat initiative, including lifestyle videos, how-to guides, inspiring recipes, and lifestyle photography. Additional collateral such as the WRL's Lobster Tales Magazine and factsheets were distributed through multiple touchpoints, including Back of Boat activations, community events, and seafood retailers, to educate the public about the fishery and its produce.

3. Collaborative Partnerships:

WRLC identified opportunities to establish strategic partnerships with tourism, hospitality, and other premium producers to reach a broader audience. Collaborations with sector peak bodies like the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) and organisations with shared goals like Buy West Eat Best and WA Good Food Guide were established. WRLC engaged in community events and activities to raise

community understanding and respect for the industry, hosting events like Perth Royal Show, Shore Leave Festival, Fremantle Seafood Festival, and WA Cray Day activations.

4. Establishing the Western Rock Lobster as a WA Icon:

WRLC aimed to strengthen the connection between the industry and the WA community by renewing the status of Western Rock Lobster as a WA icon. The Program supported and grew the Back of Boat program, formed partnerships with sectors like tourism and hospitality, and focused on telling the stories of the people and families behind the industry. The 'WA Cray Day' campaign was reviewed and relaunched to inspire the community to celebrate the WA Day long weekend with Western Rock Lobster, including the WA's Best Lobster Restaurant competition and multiple Back of Boat activations and cooking demonstrations. Short pieces telling the stories of fishers and their families were developed for the Back of Boat website and repurposed for distribution via social media and newsletters.

By implementing these methods, WRLC aimed to create genuine relationships with the community, strengthen their connection to the fishery, and build a sense of identity and pride in the Western Rock Lobster industry.

Results, discussion, and conclusion

Stakeholder and Community Consultation

Redevelopment and Execution of a Community Perception Survey and Stakeholder Research

Since its initial Community and Stakeholder study in 2020, WRL has evolved its Communications Strategy and undertaken significant community-focused initiatives like the Back of Boat system and a 12-month education and awareness campaign with Seven West Media. These developments, not foreseen in the first investigation, necessitated a review, redesign, and redevelopment of survey and consultation processes to accurately gauge their impact and extract maximum insights.

In November 2022, WRL partnered with senior research consultants Research Solutions, who had previously developed WRL's original survey, to update the 2020 questionnaire and approach. Their task was to conduct a fresh community and stakeholder perceptions survey, enabling measurement of the impact and effectiveness of WRL's communication campaigns since then.

The new survey was developed to:

1. Track awareness, knowledge, and support for the Western Rock Lobster industry in Western Australia compared to the 2020 benchmark.
2. Reassess the industry's social license to operate, including perceptions of sustainable fishery management.
3. Measure the awareness, engagement, and impact of communication activities over the past two years, particularly the 12-month public education campaign with Seven West Media and the introduction of the Back of Boat Lobsters mechanism.

WRL's updated Community and Stakeholders Survey was completed in April 2023.

Key Findings:

- **Community Support:** The Western Australian community continues to strongly support the Western Rock Lobster industry, with 77.2% of respondents expressing overall support and 53.6% stating they are very supportive. Additionally, 80.7% of respondents reported trust in the industry. These results are consistent with, and slightly better than, the findings from the 2020 survey, driven by factors such as industry pride, perceptions of sustainability, and resource stewardship.
- **Industry Acceptability:** There has been a notable increase in industry acceptability, with 71% of the community perceiving the industry as more concerned about and considerate of West Australians' views, up from 62% in 2020.
- **Economic Contribution:** The industry continues to be viewed favourably for its economic contribution to the state (85.6%), status as an export industry (86.4%), and role as a significant employment source (84.4%).
- **Affordability and Consumption:** Perceptions of Western Rock Lobster being available at a reasonable price have significantly improved compared to 2020, with over 70% of respondents believing this in 2022. Approximately 40% of the community consumes Western

Rock Lobster at least once a year, with most regarding it as a special occasion food. As frequency of consumption increases, respondents are more likely to view it as an affordable luxury. The ease of sourcing Western Rock Lobster strongly influences consumption patterns.

- **Back of Boat:** The Back of Boat sales initiative enjoys strong community support, with one in four respondents aware of it having purchased Western Rock Lobster this way. Notably, 25.1% of the community were aware of the Back of Boat initiative even before the launch of the backofboat.com website in September 2022.
- **Other Industry Promotion Initiatives:** Awareness levels for various industry promotion initiatives include 16.2% for cooking shows on how to prepare lobster, 9.0% for festivals and market days at ports, 9.7% for information on the industry's history, and 7.0% for the WRL stand at the Perth Royal Show. There was overwhelming support for all these initiatives across the board.

In conclusion, the 2022-23 Community Perceptions Survey indicates a positive reputation and outlook for the Western Rock Lobster industry in Western Australia, with continued community support, trust, and favourable perceptions. The industry's initiatives, such as Back of Boat sales, have garnered staunch support, setting the stage for further engagement and growth in the future.

The full report and results summary are attached in the annex for detailed review.

Western Rock Lobster Website

In July 2023, WRL launched its refreshed westernrocklobster.org website, representing a significant enhancement in user experience and navigation for members and stakeholders. The updated design offered a contemporary appearance and improved functionality, making it easier for members and industry stakeholders to find the information they required.

As part of the comprehensive Communications Program and the Digital Transformation of the WRL Industry Program, WRL recognised the need to refine its online presence to better serve a diverse audience. Previously, the WRL website housed information relevant to both industry professionals and the public, leading to a cluttered and confusing user experience.

In response, WRL undertook the task of splitting the website into two distinct platforms. Westernrocklobster.org now serves as the industry-specific website, tailored to the needs of members and stakeholders, providing targeted and relevant information. This restructuring aimed to increase member engagement by providing easy access to critical industry updates and resources, helping members stay updated on industry news, and offering details on industry events they could participate in. By doing so, the new website supports Objective 1: *Strengthen Industry Members Engagement*, by enhancing participation by internal stakeholders in Council activities, fostering a more cohesive representation of the industry's interests to government and other stakeholders.

Simultaneously, WRL introduced the backofboat.com website, dedicated to delivering information pertinent to the community and public. This platform offers an array of resources, including recipes, cooking instructions, purchasing options, and general information about the industry's operations and sustainability efforts, alongside details of upcoming community events.

To ensure seamless adoption and understanding of the new website structure, WRL proactively communicated these changes to its members through multiple channels. This included announcements in the WRL monthly newsletter, updates on social media platforms, and detailed explanations provided at industry-specific consultative meetings held in person.

Through this strategic restructuring and proactive communication approach, WRL aimed to streamline access to information, ensuring clarity and relevance for both industry partners and the wider community. This effort not only enhanced the user experience but also strengthened industry member engagement and participation in Council activities.

Since its launch, the refreshed website has been well-received by industry members, with positive feedback frequently shared during WRL Executive team consultations and industry meetings. Members have embraced the enhanced functionality, with noticeable uptake of the digital forms available on the platform. These forms have streamlined various administrative processes, such as registering for industry meetings and events, updating contact information, applying for associate memberships, and subscribing to the industry's monthly newsletter. By digitalising these tasks, the new website has reduced email exchanges, minimised data entry errors, and improved overall efficiency for both WRL and its members.

Back of Boat Lobsters

The Back of Boat Lobsters (BoB) initiative is a collaborative effort by Western Rock Lobster (WRL) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), supported by WRL's Industry Partnership Agreement with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) through this Program.

Since its launch in September 2020, the Back of Boat initiative has transformed the way Western Australians access their local lobster. This pioneering program enables consumers to acquire live lobsters directly from fishing boats along the Western Australian coast. The initiative has garnered overwhelming community support, with feedback from the public, received both directly and via social media, emphasising the delight in purchasing the freshest, best-value lobsters directly from fishers. The Western Australian community has wholeheartedly embraced the Back of Boat initiative, achieving a significant milestone with the sale of over 150 tons of live lobster directly to the public to date. Since its launch, 107 different vessels have landed over 250,000 lobsters at 21 ports stretching from Kalbarri to Fremantle along the WA coast.

BoB has undergone significant evolution to meet local demand. Initially, daily limits were set at 100 lobsters per landing per day and 200 on any December day. However, in response to increasing demand, these limits were raised to 200 lobsters per day and 400 for December days. In 2023, recognising the sustained demand, the daily limit was further increased to 999 lobsters, reflecting the initiative's continued adaptability and success.

BoB has given the industry an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with the community, highlighting its values and practices. WRL considers it crucial for fostering authentic relationships, improving understanding of the fishery, and instilling pride in their world-class premium seafood product.

Back of Boat Lobsters strategically tackles two vital priorities crucial for the sustainability and growth of the industry: ensuring the social license to operate is supported by government and community and securing resource access and rights. This initiative pioneers a model not only beneficial to the Western Rock Lobster fishery but also applicable to other Western Australian fisheries, exemplifying its broader industry impact. The commitment to building and enhancing the industry's social license aligns with priorities, emphasizing the significance of a strengthened connection between the Western Rock Lobster industry and the local community that improves resource access security.

The success of the Back of Boat Lobster initiative has been further validated by WRL winning the Industry Promotion Award at the 2024 WA Seafood Industry Awards. This prestigious recognition highlights WRL's exceptional efforts in reconnecting the seafood industry with the local community and underscores the initiative's impact on promoting sustainable practices and local seafood consumption. This award serves as a testament to the initiative's effectiveness in achieving its goals, emphasising the industry's commitment to transparency, sustainability, and community engagement. The recognition underscores the significant strides made by WRL in fostering a stronger bond between fishers and consumers, ensuring the continued success and positive perception of the Western Rock Lobster fishery.

At its core, Back of Boat Lobsters transcends the transactional to enhance positive industry perception and foster trust through transparency and sustainability. It is a proactive effort to meet community desires for increased live lobster availability, with a direct connection between fishers and consumers through back-of-boat sales. The program not only meets local demand at the best value but also supports tourism objectives, highlighting the industry's profile and positive economic impact.

The initiative serves as a dynamic communication vehicle, allowing the industry to directly engage with the community, effectively demonstrating values and practices. By incorporating storytelling and transparency, it provides a platform for educating the public on the industry's world-leading co-management, operations, and regulations.

In summary, Back of Boat Lobsters stands out as a strategic and innovative solution, effectively addressing high-priority areas in the fishing industry. It not only contributes to a sustainable and transparent framework but also reinforces positive relationships, setting a compelling benchmark for responsible practices in the broader seafood industry of Western Australia.

Back of Boat Lobsters activations

WRL has hosted, participated, and promoted multiple Back of Boat sales events, including those during Easter, WA Day, and Christmas at various ports. These events received an enthusiastic response from the locals who arrived early with their Eskys to buy the freshest lobsters available directly from one of their local fishers. Back of Boat activations offer a unique opportunity for fishers and their customers to engage in shared experiences, exchanging stories, recipes, and forging genuine connections and bonds with one another.

The Back of Boat lobster activations have proven to be highly successful, as demonstrated by both the enthusiastic public response and the significant sales figures. During the festive season of 2023, WRL organised activations across five key ports, resulting in the sale of over 8,000 lobsters in a single day. In response to growing demand, WRL also implemented an online ordering and payment system, which facilitated nearly 9,000 lobster sales in December through this platform. In 2022, nearly 30,000 lobsters were sold during the festive period, with participation from 35 boats across various key ports, including Fremantle, Two Rocks, Geraldton, and Lancelin. The introduction of these activations, coupled with digital innovations, has not only streamlined the purchasing process but has also enhanced community engagement, providing a platform for customers and fishers to connect in meaningful ways.

For more detailed insights, the press releases for the festive season Back of Boat activations can be viewed at the following links:

- [Festive Season 2023](#)
- [Festive Season 2022](#)

Backofboat.com - Community Connection Website

WRL dedicated significant efforts to promoting and enhancing the new backofboat.com website. This platform was meticulously crafted to educate the public, including consumers and chefs, about the Western Rock Lobster industry and the Back of Boat (BoB) program. This strategic initiative signifies a shift from the primary promotion of BoB through platforms like the Back of Boat Facebook page, which continues to complement the website. The website also hosts the online ordering and payment system for added convenience.

While the initial development of the Back of Boat website fell outside the scope of this Program (part of the ongoing [Digital Transformation of the WRL industry project 2021-030](#)), ongoing efforts were directed towards creating new and updated content to enrich the website's educational offerings.

Since its launch in September 2022, and under the umbrella of this Program, the website underwent regular updates and refreshes. WRL meticulously curated a diverse range of written and visual content to bolster support for the BoB initiative, raise awareness, and educate the community.

Notable additions included the 'Western Rock Lobster Industry Journey' page, offering insights into the rich history of Western Rock Lobster fishing through a concise yet comprehensive timeline of industry milestones.

Consistent efforts were dedicated to updating the [Cooking section](#) of the website with new recipes, how-to guides and basic cooking methods, providing users with a continual source of inspiration. Additionally, these recipes and guides were shared weekly on Instagram to further engage and inspire the audience.

Furthermore, a new '[Events](#)' page was introduced to keep the community informed about upcoming events, complete with detailed information. Additionally, occasional pop-ups with special announcements, such as Back of Boat sales for Christmas and the WA's Best Restaurant community competition, served to enhance user engagement. Efforts were made to introduce a blog section titled "[Catch & Cook](#)," where regular posts containing relevant and useful information were published.

To enhance user experience and engagement, a new '[Where to find Western Rock Lobster](#)' distribution page was added. This page provides information about Back of Boat fishers, restaurants offering lobster on the menu, and wholesalers, making it easier for people to find and enjoy Western Rock Lobster.

All newly developed content was diligently shared and promoted across multiple channels, including newsletters and social media platforms, to ensure maximum reach and impact within the community.

Lobster Tales Magazine

WRL launched its "Lobster Tales" magazine as part of this Communications Program, with the first edition published in September 2023. The inaugural issue was strategically launched at the Perth Royal Show, where it was distributed to hundreds of visitors. This summer edition featured a variety of seasonal lobster recipes for home cooks, alongside articles providing insights into the Western Australian lobster industry. Content included profiles of local fishers, discussions on sustainability practices, a comprehensive Lobster Buying Guide, and a restaurant guide highlighting places in WA where lobster dishes can be enjoyed.

Following the success of the initial publication, a Winter edition was produced and launched in June 2024, coinciding with the WA Day long weekend. This timing was integral to the WA Cray Day campaign, an annual industry initiative aimed at extending local consumption of Western Rock Lobster past Easter and culminating in the celebration of WA Day. The Winter edition continued to offer original recipes, feature articles, and profiles of industry pioneers and local chefs.

Both editions of the magazine were developed in collaboration with local recipe developer and food stylist Kate Flower, who has become an ambassador for the industry, helping to promote content and advocate for the industry's interests. This partnership exemplifies one of the methods of this Program, which involves collaborating with high-profile ambassadors from other sectors to positively enhance the industry's profile. By leveraging the ambassador's positive reputation, this approach not only generates media attention but also accesses new networks and audiences through their social media following.

The magazines serve as free resources for the public, providing comprehensive information about the lobster fishery and its operations. They are designed to educate readers in an attractive and engaging manner, addressing frequent questions, and promoting the industry.

To maximise reach, the magazines are available both in print and online. During the Perth Royal Show, 600 copies of the summer edition were distributed, while the Autumn/Winter edition was launched at a launch event at Old Bridge Cellars, a well-known boutique wine and liquor store in Fremantle, where over 100 copies were handed out. The strategic distribution of the magazine through various channels, including online platforms such as backofboat.com, social media and newsletters, as well as physically at community events, Back of Boat sales, farmers markets, and seafood retailers, has helped to raise awareness and educate the community about the Western Rock Lobster industry.

The overwhelming response to both editions is a testament to their success. WRL initially printed 1,000 copies of the first edition (summer), which were quickly distributed at the Perth Royal Show and during Back of Boat sales. Due to high demand, an additional 200 copies were printed for distribution at the Shore Leave Festival in April 2024. For the Autumn/Winter 2024 edition, WRL printed 2,000 copies, which have been delivered to fishers, seafood retailers, and handed out at events. The magazine has been incredibly popular, with WRL expecting to be out of stock by the end of September 2024. Industry members and the public alike have provided positive feedback, frequently requesting copies at the WRL office or emailing to ask how they can obtain one.

In particular, customers at Back of Boat sales have expressed their enthusiasm. Josephine McGhee, who purchased lobsters at the Mandurah Back of Boat activation in December 2023, shared her experience in a Back of Boat newsletter response:

"Thank you for the newsy email. Congratulations on your successful program. I bought 6 beautiful lobsters from Mandurah BOB. I always look forward to the season. The recipes are a bonus. I even was given a coloured recipe cookbook which I am enjoying."

This enthusiastic reception has underscored the magazine's value as a tool for connecting the community to the Western Rock Lobster industry.

Digital copies of both editions can be found in the annex. [Link here to view online.](#)

WRL Social Media Initiatives

Under this Communications Program, WRL has allocated significant resources to optimise its social media platforms. After studying the specifics of various platforms, WRL concluded that Instagram should be the primary focus to enhance its social media presence and impact. This decision has been driven by the platform's effectiveness in reaching and engaging a broad audience.

The current use of Instagram has proven successful, with regular, almost daily postings and strong engagement from followers. The previous content plan targeted both the lobster industry and the general community. Under this Program, the social media strategy has been redeveloped to feature Back of Boat content more prominently, as part of the strategy to build community awareness and understanding of the industry. The current content plan includes a mix of fishers and pioneers' profiles, recipes, industry facts, quick how-to guides, engaging reels, community event announcements, and competition announcements.

One notable social media initiative undertaken under this Program is the "Saltwater Portraits Instagram Campaign." Launched in January 2024, this campaign highlights the stories of fishers and their families, highlighting their valuable contributions to their communities and the Western Australian fishing industry.

Through "Saltwater Portraits," the lives of fishers are explored in-depth, capturing their stories through captivating narratives and stunning visuals. Each month, a different fisher is featured,

sharing their journey, passion for the ocean, and the meaningful impact they have on their communities. This campaign not only celebrates the resilience and dedication of fishers but also fosters a deeper connection between the industry and the wider community. By sharing these stories, the campaign aims to increase awareness and appreciation for the vital role that fishers play in sustaining coastal communities and preserving marine ecosystems.

The success of the "Saltwater Portraits" campaign is evident in its high levels of engagement. These posts consistently receive the most likes, comments, and re-shares, particularly from fishers and industry members. This strong response underscores the campaign's effectiveness in resonating with its target audience and enhancing the connection between WRL and the broader community.

In summary, WRL's innovative approach to social media, particularly through Instagram, has significantly enhanced its engagement with the community and the industry. By leveraging platforms effectively and generating added content opportunities, WRL has successfully built a robust online presence that supports its communication, education, and engagement goals.

[Link here to view WRL's official Instagram account.](#)

Print Materials for the Back of Boat Initiative

In addition to digital initiatives, Western Rock Lobster (WRL) has developed a range of printed collateral to support the Back of Boat initiative and enhance community awareness. This includes branded Back of Boat cards featuring the website URL, social media handles, and key information about the program. Additionally, Back of Boat stickers and T-shirts have been created to build brand awareness and promote the initiative.

Complementing these materials, Back of Boat flyers have been produced to provide clear instructions on transporting, handling, dispatching, and cooking lobsters. These flyers serve as valuable educational resources for consumers, ensuring they have the necessary information to make the most of their Back of Boat purchases.

Furthermore, a pull-up banner has been designed for events, highlighting the Back of Boat initiative and its benefits to attendees. This banner plays a crucial role in amplifying awareness and engagement at various industry-specific events and community gatherings.

Designs for all these assets can be found in the annex.

Community Events

Western Rock Lobster (WRL) actively participated in major community events, strategically engaging with diverse audiences to raise awareness and foster appreciation for the Western Australian lobster industry.

At events such as the Perth Royal Show and Shore Leave Festival, WRL highlighted its identity and message, capitalising on these gatherings to reach large audiences with manageable resourcing commitments. Through booth exhibitions, back-of-boat activations, fishers Q&A sessions, cooking demonstrations, and lobster tastings, WRL not only built brand awareness but also engaged with the community and other industries, creating valuable connections.

As part of the Program, WRL supported and participated in a variety of community events, leveraging these platforms to enhance trust and value within the community while promoting the Western Rock Lobster industry.

Perth Royal Show 2022/2023: WRL made its debut at the prestigious Perth Royal Show, strategically positioning its booth in the Farm 2 Food pavilion. This allowed the industry to highlight its high-quality credentials and engage directly with the public. The event also marked the official launch of WRL's new visual identity and community-oriented website, BackofBoat.com. Chef Don Hancey conducted daily cooking demonstrations, focusing on sustainability and the Back of Boat initiative.

Fremantle Seafood Festival 2023: WRL's involvement as a major partner in the Fremantle Seafood Festival, held from March 10-12, 2023, was a resounding success. Spanning three days at Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour and Esplanade Park, the festival offered a comprehensive seafood experience, including on-water boat displays, trailer boats, and fishing gear. WRL's sponsorship featured two daily lobster cooking demonstrations and tastings led by WA Food Ambassador Don Hancey, and a daily lobster BBQ masterclass with celebrity chef Bart Beek and local rock lobster fishers, showcasing the art of cooking lobsters on the coals. Additionally, WRL facilitated a Back of Boat sales activation where visitors could purchase freshly caught lobsters directly from local fishermen. The Seafood Alley, with a menu designed by Don Hancey, further enhanced the festival's appeal. Attracting nearly 6,000 attendees over the weekend, the festival garnered positive feedback and successfully celebrated and promoted the premium Western Rock Lobster, solidifying WRL's role in enhancing local seafood culture and sustainability.

Coogee Live Festival 2023: WRL participated in the Coogee Live community festival by highlighting the Back of Boat program. Activities included a Back of Boat activation, cooking demonstrations, and tastings led by Chef Caroline Taylor and local lobster fishers, targeting an audience of approximately 25,000 visitors.

Shore Leave Festival 2023/2024: WRL's continued support for the Shore Leave Festival in Geraldton showcased its dedication to promoting Western Australian seafood and fostering community connections. The festival was a notable success in both 2023 and 2024. In 2023, the Abrolhos Long Table Lunch attracted 240 attendees, with 65% from outside the Midwest, and the event's web page saw 7,304 views. The Beach Price Markets engaged 5,000 attendees, receiving positive feedback for WRL's Back of Boat sales and free BBQ activities. The 2024 festival built on this success, with over 250 guests enjoying the Abrolhos Long Table Lunch and a record 230 cooked lobsters sold at the festival's hub. The Back of Boat sales, led by fisherman Matt Kalazich, resulted in over 170 lobsters sold, primarily for immediate cooking. The festival's impact was further demonstrated by significant engagement with Western Rock Lobster content, which achieved a cumulative reach of 100.3K and 1.5K engagements. The addition of the Dongara Sessions and enhanced cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs, including Matt Stone, further elevated the event's appeal. Overall, the Shore Leave Festival highlighted WRL's successful community engagement and promotional efforts, effectively showcasing Western Rock Lobster and supporting local culture and economy.

Full Shore Leave 2023/2024 Post Event Reports are available in the annex for detailed review.

These community events have provided WRL with a platform to educate a wider audience about the sustainability and quality of the Western Rock Lobster industry, while highlighting the significance of the Back of Boat initiative. These efforts have strengthened the industry's relationship with the community and underscored its commitment to sustainability.

Community engagement competition

Western Rock Lobster has established two annual community engagement competitions as part of its Communications Program, aimed at fostering connections with the local community and promoting Western Australian lobster consumption.

WA's Best Lobster Restaurant Competition

The WA's Best Lobster Restaurant Competition, initially launched as part of the WA Cray Day campaign in 2021, has evolved into an annual tradition. It aims to promote local lobster consumption, extending beyond Easter and culminating in the celebration of WA's State Day in June. The June WA Cray Day represents a recent WRL marketing initiative designed to extend the lobster buying period and elevate the industry's profile within the community.

The competition, open to any cafe, pub, bar, or restaurant with lobster on its menu, encourages community members to vote for their favourite lobster-serving establishment. In average, 800 community members participated in voting for their favourite restaurant each year, with five random voters receiving a prize pack including a restaurant voucher and a voucher for online Back of Boat lobster purchases.

The overarching goal of this campaign is to establish Western Rock Lobster as a WA icon, fostering a stronger connection between the industry and the WA community. It aims to instil a sense of identity and pride in Western Rock Lobster, establishing it as an integral component of the culture. Simultaneously, WRL aims to cultivate relationships with restaurants serving lobster, advocating for their inclusion on local menus and encouraging exposure within the community.

The competition was extensively promoted through various channels, with WRL designing an array of assets for both digital and print platforms. Collaborating with Seven West Media facilitated access to a broad audience, with the competition hosted on The West Australian website until 2024. Additionally, partnering with the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) and WA Good Food Guide (WAGFG) enabled targeted promotion among their members, leveraging their network to engage local restaurants and cafés in the competition.

Based on the submissions received during the competition, WRL compiled a curated list of cafes and restaurants serving sustainably sourced WA rock lobsters across the state, which has been added as a new page on the backofboat.com website. This dedicated page aims to highlight community-favourite eateries serving our renowned seafood, strengthening Western Rock Lobster's culinary reputation. This curated list is accessible at backofboat.com/restaurant, complementing the website's existing resources.

While initially hosted on the West Australian competition site as part of an annual partnership, in 2024 WRL made the strategic decision to host the competition on its own backofboat.com site to increase traffic and awareness of the website and available resources. [\[Link here to view the competition page\]](#).

WRL Photo Competition and Calendar

The WRL Photo Competition and Calendar, launched in 2020, has evolved into a flagship engagement initiative that inspires fishers and the local community to creatively express their connection to the industry. Over the years, the competition has grown significantly, reflecting increased interest and enthusiasm for this unique program.

In 2022, the calendar underwent a major redesign, introducing a practical and collectable format: a wooden stand paired with postcard-sized monthly cards. This innovative design allowed recipients to reuse the stand and store their favourite photos each year, fostering a deeper connection to the competition and the industry. The redesigned calendar proved to be a hit with stakeholders, with 200 copies distributed to competition winners, fishers, and members of the community during the festive season, as well as at Back of Boat events.

By 2023, the competition saw over 70 entries, highlighting the growing appeal and success of the initiative. The selected photos captured stunning moments in the Western Rock Lobster industry, from the beauty of the ocean to action shots of fishers at work. These images were featured in the 2024 calendar, which continued the refined design from 2022. The calendar was again widely distributed to stakeholders, including members of Parliament, and available for purchase from the WRL office.

In October 2024, the WRL Photo Competition received another 70 remarkable entries. The 12 winning photos, chosen by the Board, beautifully captured the artistry and dedication of the lobster fishing community. The 2025 calendar, featuring these standout images, retained the popular wooden stand and postcard card format while incorporating a fresh design for added appeal. 200 copies were produced and distributed to winners, key stakeholders, and members of Parliament. The calendar is also available for purchase throughout December, making it an excellent Christmas gift. Copies can be picked up from the WRL office in Fremantle or ordered via email.

The WRL Photo Competition and Calendar have become integral to WRL's engagement efforts, bringing fishers, stakeholders, and the broader community together while celebrating the vibrancy and resilience of the Western Rock Lobster industry.

Calendars designs for 2022, 2023 and 2024 are available in the Annex.

Partnerships & Collaborations

WRL has identified opportunities for the industry to establish strategic partnerships, pooling resources to reach broader audiences through new methods and networks. These collaborative partnerships have provided high-quality and informative content related to the fishery and the industry, engaging partners with a broader community reach. Such partnerships have been developed with selected organisations and personalities with shared target audiences and aligned values and objectives, promoting the fishery and the industry more effectively.

Australian Hotels Association (AHA WA)

WRL strategically partnered with the Australian Hotels Association (AHA WA) to enhance industry outreach and foster engagement within the hospitality sector from January to December 2023. This collaboration significantly increased WRL's presence and recognition in the hospitality industry.

Key Initiatives and Outcomes:

- Event Sponsorship and Promotion:
 - 2023 AHA Accommodation Awards: At the Devil's Lair Gala Ball held at Crown Perth, WRL showcased premium Western Rock Lobster to an audience of 500, honouring WA's leading hotels and exceptional staff. The lobster dish received outstanding feedback from attendees. Quotes from the post-event survey implemented by AHA highlighted the dish's impact: "Opening speeches were short (and special enough) and the special Lobster entree was spectacular!" and "This year's menu was amazing, especially with the Lobster dish." Another guest remarked, "To enjoy top-quality Lobster at an event of such size was very impressive." Additionally, Paul Brockschlager, Australian Hotels Association Deputy CEO, received several phone calls affirming that the inclusion of the lobster elevated the gala, reinforcing its status as the premier event for the accommodation sector.
 - 2023 AHA Hospitality Expo: WRL participated in the annual Hospitality Expo at Crown Perth, which drew over 2,000 industry professionals. WRL presented premium lobster dishes, including steamed and sashimi lobster, prepared by renowned chef Don Hancey. This engagement received an overwhelmingly positive response, with many visitors experiencing lobster sashimi for the first time.
 - 2023 AHA Hospitality Awards: WRL representatives were involved in this prestigious event celebrating excellence in WA's hospitality industry, attended by 1,100 guests.
- Initiative Support:

AHA supported WRL's initiatives by promoting the Best WA's Lobster Restaurant Competition and the WA Cray Day campaign in their EDM and Hospitality WA Magazine. This outreach effort reached approximately 1,150 member contacts statewide, enhancing engagement and participation.

- Stakeholder Survey Distribution:

AHA facilitated the distribution of WRL's stakeholder survey to its members. AHA's endorsement encouraged participation and provided valuable feedback from the hospitality sector.

The partnership with AHA not only facilitated valuable networking opportunities but also helped WRL initiate and build relationships within the hospitality sector, laying a solid foundation for future collaborations.

West Australian Good Food Guide (WAGFG)

WRL's partnership with the WA Good Food Guide (WAGFG) aimed to elevate the presence of Western Australian rock lobster in the hospitality industry and among consumers seeking exceptional dining experiences. This collaboration included WRL as the exclusive presenter of WAGFG's inaugural Best Pubs List, which highlighted the top pubs and breweries in WA, with the top 20 and Pub of the Year award revealed at a major awards night on November 18, 2024.

Key Initiatives and Outcomes:

- **Event Collaborations:**

WRL produce was featured in various WAGFG events, such as the Chardonnay & Seafood Lunch at Leeuwin Estate. This event celebrated the release of the 2021 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Chardonnay. Chef Dan Gedge crafted a menu that highlighted WA's finest seafood, including rock lobster, paired with Leeuwin Estate wines. This collaboration underscored WRL's commitment to working with chefs who share a passion for exceptional dining experiences.

- **Content Creation and Promotion:**

WAGFG created and published content reels and image carousels capturing the journey from catch to plate. These were shared on both WAGFG (37.2K followers) and WRL social channels, enhancing visibility and engagement.

- [WA Cray Day campaign – Back of Boat fisher reel](#)
- [WA Cray Day campaign – Chefs reel](#)

As part of WRL's ongoing efforts to promote Western Rock Lobster and increase community engagement, two special editorial pieces were produced in collaboration with the WA Good Food Guide (WAGFG).

- [Celebrating WA Day with Western Rock Lobster editorial](#)

A special editorial piece was written by a top WAGFG writer, featuring interviews with fishers and an in-depth look at the complexities of the business. This article was prominently displayed on the WAGFG website and shared on their social media accounts, significantly increasing awareness and appreciation for the Western Rock Lobster industry among a wide audience.

- [Lobster Lovers: Must-Try Restaurants in Perth](#)

A special editorial piece showcasing Perth's top venues to enjoy Western Rock Lobster, celebrating its versatility and role in Western Australia's culinary scene. Featured on the WAGFG website and social media channels, the article highlighted a range of dining experiences, from casual waterfront venues to fine dining, inspiring readers to explore and enjoy this prized local delicacy.

- **Support for Campaigns:**

WAGFG supported WRL by featuring the Best WA's Lobster Restaurant Competition and the WA Cray Day campaign in their May News EDM (10,850 subscribers), encouraging their audience to participate and engage with these initiatives.

- Ambassadorship:

The Editor-in-Chief of WAGFG, Georgia Moore, actively promoted WRL, acting as an ambassador and furthering the reach of WRL's initiatives.

- WAGFG Hospitality Awards:

WRL also is also collaborating with WAGFG as sponsors of the WAGFG Hospitality Awards 2025, where WRL has received presenting rights to the WAGFG 'Pubs List' Award. This partnership includes numerous benefits such as branding opportunities, promotional mentions in WAGFG communications, and collaboration on menu items featuring WRL produce.

The partnership with the WA Good Food Guide has proven highly successful, significantly enhancing the visibility and appreciation of Western Australian rock lobster within their audience. The Chardonnay & Seafood Lunch at Leeuwin Estate drew 80 attendees, showcasing our product to a discerning crowd. WAGFG's EDM campaigns reached 10,850 subscribers, with notable engagement: 117 clicks to the Best WA's Lobster Restaurant Competition page and 312 clicks to the editorial piece. The WA Cray Day campaign achieved impressive reach with 5,248 views on the Back of Boat fisher reel and 5,691 views on the chefs' reel. These metrics underscore the effective promotion and engagement generated through our collaboration, reinforcing WRL's presence and impact within the hospitality industry.

Collaborations with AHA and WAGFG exemplify WRL's strategic approach to enhancing the presence of Western Australian rock lobster and the fishery, leveraging the culinary scene's support to broaden audience reach and visibility. These partnerships not only reaffirm WRL's dedication to the rock lobster industry but also strengthen connections within the hospitality sector.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Aligned with Objective 5, *ensuring the industry gains maximum social license benefits from its MSC certification as a sustainable fishery*, WRL developed a community awareness campaign. This campaign raised awareness of the MSC certification by participating in MSC's key annual campaigns such as Sustainable Seafood Week, World Ocean Day, National Science Week, and the Australian Christmas campaign.

Key Initiatives and Outcomes:

In December 2022, WRL contributed to MSC's national Christmas Prawn and Lobster campaign, encouraging people to purchase MSC-certified seafood for Christmas. The campaign featured chefs with sustainable prawn and lobster recipes and included digital advertising, chef influencer recipes, paid media, earned media coverage, social media engagement, and competitions. A full post-campaign report can be found in the annex for detailed review.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, WRL actively participated in the national Super Seafood campaign. This annual initiative, organised by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and the MSC, aimed to raise awareness of MSC and ASC labels while fostering support for sustainable fishing practices. The campaigns involved digital advertising, chef influencer recipes, paid media placements, earned media coverage, social media engagement, and events. In 2023, the campaign reached 100 million people, with significant coverage in top-tier publications. Celebrity chefs such as Manu Feildel, Annaliese Gregory, Larissa Dominello, Mark Olive, Guy Turland, Courtney Roulston, and Alice Zaslavsky served as ambassadors, promoting sustainable seafood consumption. Full post-campaign reports can be found in the annex for detailed review.

On World Ocean Day, celebrated on 8 June, WRL participated in MSC's educational project for schools. Students across Australia learned about sustainable fishing through the MSC's Saltwater Schools program and wrote letters to fishers working at MSC-certified fisheries in Australia (including 3 Western Rock Lobster fishers), featured in a short film launched on World Ocean Day 2024. This video was shared on social media on both MSC and Western Rock Lobster platforms. [It can be watched here](#).

WRL's longstanding commitment to MSC was highlighted in a feature story on the Australia & New Zealand MSC website and pitched to global media outlets such as the BBC and The Guardian.

Buy West Eat Best

WRL has become member of Buy West Eat Best, a food labelling program dedicated to supporting the local food industry in Western Australia. Managed by the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia, this program aims to identify Western Australian food products clearly and easily, ensuring they meet stringent criteria for local content and quality. The program's goals align with WRL's commitment to encouraging community support for locally sourced produce.

Key Initiatives and Outcomes:

- Buy West Eat Best Meet the Buyer Exhibition 2022:

WRL participated in this event for the first time, aimed at promoting locally sourced produce. Held at Crown Perth, the exhibition attracted buyers, chefs, sommeliers, media, and educators interested in supporting Western Australian products. WRL's involvement included tastings and discussions on fishery sustainability and the Back of Boat program, highlighting WRL's premium rock lobster to a diverse and influential audience.

- Plating Up WA Initiative:

Plating Up WA is an annual initiative by Buy West Eat Best that celebrates Western Australia's diverse and plentiful produce. Throughout June, select venues across the state create and serve dishes inspired by local ingredients.

- 2023 Campaign:

40 venues participated, with two featuring lobster dishes on their menus.

WRL's participation included a dedicated feature lift-out in The West Australian, which supported the annual WA's Best Lobster competition, perfectly timed to coincide with WA Day at the start of June. [Click here to read](#).

- 2024 Campaign:

45 venues participated, with three featuring lobster as a special dish.

The West Australian published a dedicated feature lift-out for this year's campaign, significantly enhancing the visibility of the Plating Up WA initiative and WRL's involvement. [Click here to read](#).

The campaign received statewide promotion on Channel 7's Sunrise by Minister Jarvis, further elevating its profile. [Click here to view](#).

These initiatives highlight WRL's strategic efforts to connect with broader audiences through shared values and objectives. By aligning with organisations that support and highlight locally sourced

produce, WRL effectively highlights the quality and sustainability of Western Australian rock lobster, enhancing industry visibility and fostering new business relationships.

Seven West Media (SWM)

Building upon the success and learnings from WRL's previous annual campaign with Seven West Media, WRL partnered with them again in 2023-2024 to develop and implement a series of innovative and targeted campaigns. These initiatives aimed to increase community engagement with the industry, raise community acceptance, and enhance awareness of the availability and accessibility of Western Rock Lobster. Leveraging insights from past campaigns, the new partnership focused on delivering creative strategies, including social media videos, informative features, and guest chef recipes.

Key Initiatives and Outcomes:

- Social Media Videos:

- **WA Icons**

As part of WRL's WA Cray Day campaign, this social media video aimed to build a sense of pride and excitement for Western Rock Lobster, positioning it as a key element of Western Australian culture. Presented in a concise listicle format, the video displayed various iconic aspects of Western Australia, giving special emphasis to the Western Rock Lobster as a celebrated local produce. The objective was to solidify the lobster's status among the pantheon of WA icons and must-have items for the WA Day holiday. [[Link to view video here](#)]

- **Perth's Fave Ways to Enjoy Lobster**

Featuring chefs, fishers, and everyday West Australians, this video posed the question, "What's your go-to way to cook lobster? Why do you enjoy cooking with lobster?" By capturing diverse responses from different individuals, including chefs, fishers, home cooks, and food enthusiasts, the video highlighted the versatility and popularity of lobster consumption. [[Link to view video here](#)]

- **Beginners Guide to Back of Boat**

This short social media video provided an engaging exploration of the process of purchasing lobsters directly from the Back of Boat. Presented in a user-generated vlog style, the video followed a person as they navigated the entire experience, from ordering online to purchasing the lobsters and interacting with fishers. Viewers gained insights into the significance of Back of Boat sales in Western Australia through conversations with the fishers themselves. [[Link to view video here](#)]

- **Family's Back of Boat Experience**

This video sent a family to Fremantle Harbour to explore the Back of Boat experience, emphasising the importance of food sustainability and mileage. The video followed the family as they learned about buying directly from fishers and enjoyed fresh lobster, highlighting the benefits of this practice, and encouraging families to consider lobster for Easter. [[Link to view video here](#)]

- **We End the 'Lobster or Crayfish' Debate**

The video addressed the 'Lobster or Crayfish' debate by educating WA locals on the differences between lobsters and crayfish. Presented in a playful and engaging manner, it featured a local lobster enthusiast and expert insights from WRL to clearly explain the distinctions. This humorous and

informative approach aimed to foster friendly interaction and educate the community about these differences. [\[Link to view the video here\]](#)

This upcoming video aims to educate WA locals about the difference between lobsters and crayfish. By enlisting a local lobster fan and backing up with expert knowledge from WRL, the video will explain in clear detail how they are different and positively position WRL as the experts in the field. This playful, yet informative video will create friendly engagement and help educate locals on the significant differences. It is scheduled for delivery in July 2024.

Insights, metrics, and highlights for each individual video can be found in the Seven West Media campaign reports in the annex.

- **Blessing of the Fleet Mini-Documentary**

This mini-documentary covered the annual Blessing of the Fleet festivals, filmed on October 27 in Fremantle and November 3 in Geraldton. The video featured interviews with key participants, explored the event's history, and highlighted Western Rock Lobster's role in this significant tradition. Published in November 2024, the documentary was prominently displayed on [Perth Now](#) website as well [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages, resonating with audiences and strengthening the connection between WRL and Western Australian culture.

Across Facebook and Instagram, the campaign garnered 39,272 video views within the first three days, achieving 65% of the 60,000 video view goal—a strong start. The campaign reached a total of 67,726 impressions and 65,271 users, generating 1,134 reactions, comments, and shares for an engagement rate of 1.67%.

• Guest Chef Features

As part of WRL's partnership with The West Australian, a series of guest chef features were launched in the Sunday Times Magazine, the most-read lifestyle magazine among Western Australians with almost 300,000 readers weekly. This initiative aimed to inspire and empower the community to create Western Rock Lobster meals at home.

In 2023, four renowned local chefs from well-known Western Australian restaurants were engaged to create unique lobster recipes:

- [Matthew Payne, Head Chef at Dandelion: Western Rock Lobster with Mandarin butter](#)
- [Steve Finch, Head Chef at Cooee: Lobster with yuzu hollandaise and hot chips](#)
- [Ben Keal, Executive Chef at Three Pound Group: Lobster Thermidor with oyster mushrooms](#)
- [Adam Robson, Head Chef at Cape Lodge: Rock lobster with burnt butter and finger lime](#)

These recipes were published in the Sunday Times Magazine throughout the year to maintain a consistent presence. Initially featured in print, the recipes were also made available online and added to the recipes section under Backofboat.com.

The goal was to make cooking Western Rock Lobster accessible and enjoyable. This content is now available for use on the website, social media, email, and other communication activities.

• Informative features:

Building on the success of the previous campaign on the Pioneer Series (Program 2020-058), WRL published four new informative features under the current Program, covering engaging content designed to raise community understanding of the industry's role in WA. These features aimed to

highlight the industry's values and sustainable practices and to educate the community to remove misconceptions about local availability.

- [Feature #1: Science & Sustainability](#)

This piece explained the biological and ecological aspects of the Western Rock Lobster lifecycle, highlighting its journey from larvae to adult, and detailed the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification and its significance in promoting sustainable fishing practices.

- [Feature #2: The Fisher and The Chef Q&A, Buying Guide, Economic Impact](#)

In this feature, a Q&A session between a fisher and a renowned chef provided insights into the industry's practices. Additionally, it offered a buying guide with examples of where readers can purchase Western Rock Lobster and included infographics highlighting the economic impact of the industry on local communities.

- [Feature #3: Back of Boat Initiative Overview, Online Ordering, Health Benefits](#)

This feature provided an overview of the Back of Boat initiative, detailing its inception in 2020 and its current status. It also explained the Back of Boat online ordering platform and highlighted the health benefits of consuming Western Rock Lobster.

- [Feature #4: Top Chefs' Passion for Lobster](#)

Featuring interviews with three of Western Australia's top chefs, this piece delved into their passion for working with lobster, their approach to planning lobster dishes, and their creative process in crafting dishes that appeal to their customers.

These features were published between 2023 and 2024 in the Sunday Times as double-spread features. They are also available online, providing insights into the Western Rock Lobster industry's practices and values to a broader audience.

Insights, metrics, and highlights for each individual article can be found in the Seven West Media campaign reports in the annex.

- Special feature Sustainable WA

Under the partnership with The West Australian, WRL participated in the "Sustainable WA" feature in 2023 and 2024. Sustainable WA is an annual special feature published by Seven West Media, distributed state-wide in The West Australian as a 32-page gloss magazine lift-out. This initiative offered a targeted platform to communicate that the WRL Fishery is respected and recognised as an iconic global leader in sustainable fisheries management. The features are also available online, providing insights into the Western Rock Lobster industry's practices and values to a broader audience.

The 2023 article, "[Custodians of the Resource](#)," emphasised the industry's sustainability leadership and collaborative efforts in managing lobster stocks, environmental oversight, and ongoing scientific research. The 2024 article, "[United in Stewardship Aims](#)," highlighted the fishery's certification by the Marine Stewardship Council, its sustainability pillars, and the successful co-management approach between industry and DPIRD. Both articles underscored the industry's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

- Special feature The Ultimate Christmas Feast

The West Australian's Ultimate Christmas Feast, a special lift-out in the newspaper and available online, offered readers a collection of festive recipes for the holiday table. WRL was prominently featured in this special feature, highlighting the versatility and luxury of this iconic local delicacy. Collaborating with WRL as an ambassador, chef Scott Bridget created a special Christmas recipe that highlighted the rich flavour and festive appeal of Western Rock Lobster. Alongside the recipe, a story emphasised the tradition and indulgence associated with including lobster in the Christmas spread. The feature highlighted various ways to incorporate lobster into the festive menu, from starters like lobster and pineapple spring rolls to main dishes such as steamed lobster with ponzu and lime or roast lobster with miso butter. The story also provided insights into sourcing fresh lobster, including visiting farmers' markets, Back of Boat sales, seafood retailers, and specialty grocers. It emphasised the importance of engaging with fishmongers to select the best lobster and offered tips for identifying a high-quality, lively lobster. This feature not only celebrated the culinary delight of Western Rock Lobster but also highlighted its availability and accessibility, encouraging readers to incorporate this local treasure into their festive celebrations. [\[Link to view the special feature here\]](#)

The partnership with Seven West Media has proven to be highly effective, reinforcing WRL's presence and impact across multiple platforms. Building on the insights and successes from their initial Communications Program, this collaboration in 2023-2024 allowed for a refinement of strategies and notable achievements. **Key learnings** from this partnership include the effectiveness of integrating diverse media channels, such as social media and print, to amplify reach and engagement. The use of innovative content and strategic video placements, combined with effective audience targeting and cross-channel promotion, has driven significant success. These activities not only elevated community awareness and acceptance of Western Rock Lobster but also underscored the importance of a multifaceted approach. Moving forward, it is recommended to continue leveraging print media for brand visibility, explore targeted social media strategies, and incorporate creative elements to engage a diverse audience effectively. These insights will guide future campaigns to further enhance impact and community connection.

Full Seven West Media post-campaign reports 2023/24 are available in the annex for detailed review.

Other Collaborations

WRL also teamed up with recipe developer Kate Flower to create 'A Local Table 2022 Cookbook,' featuring over 60 recipes highlighting Western Australia's produce, including the iconic Western Rock Lobster.

Television also played a role in promoting WRL's content. The 4WD Adventure TV Show featured an episode with Mark LeCras, a former West Coast Eagles star, fishing with a local Western Rock Lobster fisher in Fremantle, celebrating WA's seafood heritage.

WRL also engaged with the Caravan & Camping WA TV series, sharing insights into Back of Boat lobster experiences and lobster cooking on camping BBQs, reaching audiences through Channel 7 Perth and online streaming.

Print media collaborations included Menu Magazine, where an informative article titled 'Custodians of the Sea' covered the industry's history, sustainability practices, and the Back of Boat initiative. [\[Link here to view the article\]](#). RAC's Horizon Magazine featured Back of Boat as a must-try experience when traveling in the Coral Coast, reaching over 700,000 households. [\[Link here to view the article\]](#).

In summary, WRL's strategic collaborative partnerships have enabled it to reach a broader audience and promote the Western Rock Lobster industry more effectively. These alliances have been instrumental in sharing valuable information and cultivating greater industry acceptability and trust.

Implications

Assessment of the impact of the outcomes of the Program on WRL stakeholders.

Activity outcome	Program Objectives	Benefits to		
		WRL members/ fishers	Community	Government
Community and Stakeholders Perceptions Survey	1-2-3-4-5	X	X	X
Western Rock Lobster Website	1-2	X		X
Back of Boat Lobster Initiative	1-2-3-4-5	X	X	X
Community Events	1-2-3-4-5	X	X	
Community Engagement Competitions	1-2-4-5	X	X	
Partnerships & Collaborations	1-2-3-4-5	X	X	x

Recommendations

Based on the extensive work and achievements under the current Program, here are some recommendations to further enhance industry's communication and engagement efforts:

Community Perception Surveys: Conduct regular surveys to gauge how the industry is perceived by the local community. This will help in understanding community priorities, assessing the effectiveness of current communication strategies, and identifying areas for improvement.

Strategic Partnerships: Identify and leverage strategic partnerships to reach a broader audience and enhance industry visibility. Collaborating with organisations that share similar values and objectives can amplify the impact of communication efforts.

Council Representation: Increase internal stakeholder participation in council activities to better represent the industry to government and other stakeholders. This will help in building stronger relationships and increasing industry resilience.

Awareness Building: Build awareness of the industry's contribution to coastal communities and the state. Highlighting the positive impact of the industry can help in garnering support and appreciation from the broader community.

Storytelling Campaigns: Launch a series of storytelling campaigns on social media and other digital platforms, highlighting the personal stories and experiences of people involved in the industry, such as fishers, chefs, and community members. This humanizes the industry and fosters stronger connections with the audience.

Community Event Participation: Actively participate in community events to increase visibility and engage with the community. This provides an opportunity to educate the public about the industry and build positive relationships with stakeholders.

Collaborative Cooking Events: Partner with local chefs and restaurants to host collaborative cooking events where participants can learn to cook lobster dishes using sustainable practices. These events can be live streamed to reach a larger audience.

Community-Centric Content: Develop a series of community-centric content, such as blogs, videos, or podcasts, that highlight the positive impact of the industry on local communities. This can include stories of community initiatives supported by the industry or profiles of individuals benefiting from industry programs.

Cross-Industry Collaborations: Explore collaborations with other industries, such as tourism or hospitality, to promote the Western Australian lobster industry. This can include joint marketing campaigns, package deals that combine lobster experiences with other local attractions, or co-hosted events.

Continuous Improvement: Acknowledge the need for continuous improvement in communication strategies. Building on past successes and lessons learned, develop a forward-looking plan that sets achievable yet ambitious objectives for the future.

Further development

While the current Program has achieved significant milestones in enhancing industry communication and engagement, there are areas where further development is needed to address ongoing challenges and opportunities. These include:

Stakeholder Engagement: While the Program has made strides in engaging with internal and external stakeholders, there is a need for deeper and more sustained engagement to ensure that all voices within the industry are heard. This may involve implementing regular feedback mechanisms and forums for open dialogue.

Community Perception: While efforts have been made to improve community perception, ongoing initiatives are needed to ensure that the industry is viewed positively by the broader community. This could involve targeted campaigns to highlight the industry's contributions to the local economy and environment.

In light of these challenges and opportunities, WRL is committed to continuing its efforts to enhance industry communication and engagement. Following the successful completion of this Program, the Council will submit a new Program Proposal for 2025-2026, outlining a strategic roadmap for future initiatives. This new proposal will build upon the foundations set by the current Program and will seek to address the evolving needs of the industry and community. While specific projects and initiatives for the new Program are yet to be determined, the Council is confident that it will continue to make significant strides in enhancing industry communication and engagement.

Extension and Adoption

In order to communicate the progress, outcomes, and learning of the initiatives under this Program, WRL currently utilises the following channels and will continue to do so in the future:

Board Reports: WRL provides regular updates to the Board of Directors on the progress of the Communications Program. Informed Directors then communicate this information to members so that updates flow into the membership.

Annual Reports: WRL includes a section in the organisation's annual report dedicated to the Communications Program. This provides a comprehensive overview of the program's activities, outcomes, and future plans for stakeholders and the broader community.

Members & Stakeholder Surveys: WRL conducts annual surveys to gather feedback from stakeholders on the Program's effectiveness and areas for improvement. The results of these surveys can inform future Program strategies and activities.

Infographics and Visual Content: WRL creates infographics and visual content to present key data and information in a visually appealing format. These are shared on social media, websites, and in presentations to enhance understanding and engagement.

Industry Meetings: WRL presents and provides updates on the progress and key findings of the current Communications Program at Coastal Tour meetings, AMMs, and PFA (Professional Fishers Association) Meetings.

Monthly Newsletter: WRL includes updates on key elements of the Program in its monthly newsletter, which is sent not only to members and stakeholders but also to members of the community who subscribe via the website.

Milestone Emails: Additional ad hoc updates on specific elements of the Program are provided to members and stakeholders via email blasts. These are shared with relevant members on an as-needed basis to keep them informed.

Press Releases: WRL issues press releases to announce major milestones, achievements, or new initiatives. Press releases can help generate media interest and reach a wider audience beyond the program's immediate stakeholders.

Social media and Websites: WRL utilises its social media channels as well as its websites as platforms to communicate and distribute content produced under the Program such as videos, fact sheets, and articles.

Collaboration with Industry Publications: WRL partners with industry publications to publish articles or features about the program's initiatives and outcomes. This helps reach a targeted audience within the industry and highlights the program's impact.

Presentations at Conferences and Events: WRL presents findings from the program at relevant industry conferences and events to reach a broader audience and share insights with industry peers and experts.

Project materials developed

See the Annexure of this Report – a set of files supplied with the report.

Appendices

See the Annexure of this Report – a set of files supplied with the report.

