



Culture Change

**How to Implement Sustainable
Change and Drive Higher
Performance**



Cultural Change in Fisheries

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Cultural change in fisheries

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Fisheries has a long history

- Commercial fishing was one of the first industries in the State
- Fisheries oversight has been around a long time
- Leadership of the Department has been very stable
- Longevity has strengths but change can be a weaknesses



Western Rock Lobster

- The Fishery has existed for decades
- Oversight has occurred for decades, with innovation to predict future catches and protection for TEPS
- Healthy stocks in the 'best managed fishery in the world' - first to achieve MSC certification
- Could sustain large fleets and volumes
- Grew to become the largest fishery in Australia with exports around \$300m





A close relationship

- Competition and independence was prized (but within narrow terms)
- Input controls meant a race to fish within a total allowable catch
- Independent thought and representation was widespread
- Paternalistic management shared the wealth and protected lifestyles. Examples include:
 - Restrictions on pot numbers which limited structural change;
 - Restrictions on pot design which controlled catch efforts (at the cost of efficiency);
 - Restrictions on access to the Abrolhos Islands;
 - Restrictions that saw fishers back for lunch;
 - 'Spoon feeding' on late licence renewals;
 - Maintenance of important traditions like the Blessing of the Fleet.
- Government control constrained by consultation and funding models that reinforced the status quo



The case for change

- Studies (circa 2000) identified the need for change:
 - Over-capacity (in fishers, boat numbers and size)
 - Volume prized over value
 - Diversity of industry representation impeded consensus and leadership
 - Export market concentration heightened risk
- But change was slow and the imperative weak ...



The change imperative

- The change imperative appeared in Oct 2008
- Puerulus settlement collapsed, threatening future catches
- A new Minister and Director General had just been appointed
- Industry failed to articulate a coherent response:
 - Some supported urgent action;
 - Others rejected the science;
 - Some funded legal challenges and public demonstrations; and
 - Others changed their views between meetings.



Dealing with the immediate crisis

- The new Minister backed an evidence based approach and the best available research called for urgent action
- The catch was reduced with warnings of further action next year if the problem persisted (which it did)
- Consultation commenced on more permanent changes to management settings



Preparing for change

- Consultation reforms streamlined processes and built industry representation capacity:
 - The ministerial advisory body abolished;
 - All advice from Industry to Government directed through the Peak Body (WAFIC);
 - All Government consultation with Industry directed through WAFIC (or the WRLC as its delegate)
 - The sector body (WRLC) recognised in the regulations for consultation
- Funding reforms increased flexibility for the Department and both funding and security for WAFIC.



Don't waste a crisis!

- The DoF position was agreed internally to ensure consistency in research and policy
- The Minister was convinced of the need to use the crisis to drive further change (quota)
- Industry change champions were identified
- Backbenchers and opposition MPs briefed
- Industry consultation targeted the imperative for change



Ensuring legitimacy for change

- New consultation mechanisms used to build industry support
- Action taken as soon as 51% majority secured
- Senior management involved in consultation and response to opposition (eg demonstrations and in the Courts)
- Staff briefed regularly to keep on message
- Key journalists targeted and science briefings included as part of media conferences
- Changes enacted via legislative amendment



Immediate impacts

- Catches reduced to record levels for 3 years
- Some regulation retained at request of industry (need for compromise)
- Industry acceptance of quota aided by Chinese market closure
- Additional research commissioned to understand cause (environmental factors)

Outcomes

- Peurulus settlement at record levels
- Breeding stock at record levels
- Race to fish replaced with focus on maximising margins rather than volumes
- Asset values tripled
- Beach prices doubled
- Tax structures need review!
- New relationship between fishers and DoF



It doesn't end ...

- Research is on-going
- Management changes have sparked other challenges (eg whale entanglement)
- Some service delivery reforms have been slow (eg FishEye)
- Industry promotion and market diversification now need attention
- Change doesn't end but success should still be celebrated (eg award nominations)





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