

Australian Prawn Farmers Association

(December 2014. Volume 3)



Ridley Aqua feed Australian Prawn & Barramundi Farmers Symposium 6-7th August 2014

Ridley Aqua feed Australian Prawn and Barramundi Farmers Symposium held at Sea World 6 – 7th August 2014.

The new look event was hailed a success from those who attended. APFA was pleased to report record attendance numbers at the General and Annual General Meetings. 44 people were recorded as attending the APFA meetings an excellent turn out – thanks to all who took the time to come and hear what your board and association have been doing for you over the last 12 months.

Your Board members for the 2014-2015 year

are: President – Matt West, Vice President – John Moloney, Treasurer – Sharon Pullen, Executive – Nick Moore, Alistair Dick, Warren Lewis, John Moloney, Richard Smullen, Rob Bell and joined by APFA's media/communications, marketing and external government relations - Spencer Jolly.

Feedback from the new style symposium was that the 2 days were preferred and the venue was most welcoming to those who had brought along their families.

Senator Barry O'Sullivan officially opened the Symposium and had mingled with guests the evening before at the Welcome Reception.

Symposium Sponsorship recognition and thanks

Thanks must go to Ridley Aqua feed for the naming rights sponsorship, Fresh by Design for sponsoring the Welcome Reception beverages, Lindsay Australia for sponsoring the BBQ dinner Beverages, FRDC for sponsoring the welcome reception food, Proaqua for sponsoring the chiller packs, CSIRO for sponsoring the awards and Agrifood Skills for a student sponsorship.

Thanks also to attendees for taking the time to attend and make the event a success.

The 2015 Symposium will return to Sea World – dates to be 30th to 31st July 2015.

Channel 9 did some coverage of the Symposium particularly Senator Barry O'Sullivan talking about Country of Origin Labelling for seafood. If you missed the coverage a link is on the APFA website under news.

Channel 9 also took shots of the lucky early morning shark swimmers. Despite some "bleary eyes" there were some really keen guests eager to dive into Sea World's Shark pool and flounder about. Fortunately the sharks and other fish were all well fed and seemed to mostly ignore their new visitors.



Senator Barry O'Sullivan officially opens the symposium



Part of the audience for the opening address.



APFA representatives at Label my Fish with Hon Bob Katter MP. Kangaroo Point November 25, 2014.
Present Nick Moore, Dr Matthew Briggs, Alistair Dick, Bob Katter, Spencer Jolly.

What's happened since August...

Following the SBS Series on "What's the Catch" Matthew Evans came to Kangaroo Point Brisbane November 24, 2014 to gather support for the campaign APFA was well represented with Nick Moore, Dr Matthew Briggs, Spencer Jolly and Alistair Dick. There were some short speeches and of key importance a chef at the event did not think it was too difficult or costly to change menus to suit the origin of the seafood they had on the menu.

Since the Symposium APFA have provided submissions to several inquiries - for State and Federal Senate committees on various topics and issues relevant to industry:

Imported Risk Assessment Biosecurity consultation, Seafood Labelling, Agriculture levies, Imported Food Inspection Scheme, QDAFF Review of Fisheries Management Approaches, Northern Australia task force, Australian fund establishment and Environmental Biosecurity.

ALL submissions are on the APFA website.

There seems to be a groundswell of support from all levels of government to support prawn farming and aquaculture development in general. If any member has any development issue they would like support for please contact APFA.

APFA takes "Tigers & Bananas" to Canberra.

Queensland LNP Senator, Barry O'Sullivan - a staunch supporter of our industry - has invited APFA to host a prawn luncheon in one of parliament's outdoor courtyards early next year. Senator O'Sullivan said - "It will be a great opportunity to showcase our farmed product and promote APFA issues to the relevant federal ministers and MP's as well as representatives of the Canberra media gallery." Mr O'Sullivan will consult with APFA over the guest list but we expect some heavy hitters from the Abbott Government and over non government mp's to relish the chance for a hearty lunch of our prawns, washed down with a XXXX or two or some Queensland wines. You can be assured, APFA members making the trip to the nation's capital for the lunch will make the most of the chance to "ear bash" key decision makers.

Other Snippets

On 15th October Helen attended a G20 forum where I met Victor Perton, Senior Advisor, G20 Presidency and supporting the Australian Treasurer Joe Hockey's leadership of the G20 Finance Track. He was very interested in Australia's prawn farming industry and in his opening speech talking about all that QLD had to offer to a global economy he mentioned it twice.

During lunch I had the pleasure of being seated next to the Bundaberg Mayor - Cr Mal Forman who also talked to me about the Bundaberg prawn farms.

QLD government showcased Queensland Globe one of the best interactive economic tools I have seen that can be used with google earth. If you would like to view it - <https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/mapping-data/queensland-globe/globe-for-g20>

The China Free Trade Agreement may be good news for those who are looking to export - The removal of tariffs on **seafood**, including of 15 and 14 per cent respectively on rock lobster and abalone, over four years <http://dfat.gov.au/fta/chafat/fact-sheets/key-outcomes.html>

Queensland Competition Authority Review of Queensland Aquaculture Regulation - <http://www.qca.org.au/Productivity/Productivity-Projects/Review-of-Queensland-Aquaculture-Regulation/In-Progress/Review-of-Queensland-Aquaculture-Regulation>

Queensland Competition Authority Aquaculture Report awaits Government action.

The QCA Report with its recommendations for sweeping changes and a bold, new approach to the regulation of the aquaculture industry in Queensland awaits Treasurer Tim Nichols ticking it off and referring it to his colleague Fisheries Minister John McVeigh for action. APFA expects the government's response will be released in the first quarter in 2015. The QCA's call for regulatory reform to boost investment in prawn aquaculture has long been advocated by APFA. Creating special 'development areas for marine aquaculture is well overdue. APFA has also urged the Newman Government to adopt the QCA recommendation for a dedicated aquaculture unit or an industry led task force to benchmark progress and ensure the QCA's review and recommendations are fully implemented. A key priority ensuring a "co-ordinated effort" at all levels of government to develop a regulatory code for each development areas - the aim of such a 'public code' is for better investor certainty and confidence from the outset of such a project.

The Queensland Fisheries Review is completed and APFA anticipates it will call for a new deal to boost prawn farming and backing support the major recommendations of the QCA review. The Fisheries Review is with Fisheries Minister John McVeigh for action. Once again it's public release is not expected till early next year. However the combined QCA and Fisheries Review recommendations and their calls for government action - offer our industry the greatest opportunity in over two decades for some game changing catalysts and an expansionary and positive future.

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Love Australian Prawns

A function at Gambaro Restaurant 27th October 2014 called to celebrate all there is to love about Australian prawns with the local producers was very well attended by members, Seafood CRC, FRDC, buyers and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Dr John McVeigh MP with his key staff.

An excellent presence of key Woolworth's buyers were in attendance and praised the campaign.

The Minister praised the wild catch and farmed prawn sectors for collaboration in this campaign and everyone enjoyed a fantastic selection of prawns.

Country of Origin Labelling report due 18th Dec 14

Country of Origin labeling - to be extended for all cooked seafood - Senate Committee Report and recommendations to be published 18th December. APFA provided an extensive submission to this Senate Inquiry and urged Senators to finally summon up **"the political will"** to and mandate the extension nationwide. APFA's submission generated considerable media interest as did the whole CoOL issue - highlighted as it was by a three part series on SBS titled "What's the Catch?" Although a House of Representatives Inquiry referred our call to extend the CoOL to a future meeting of the Prime Minister and Premiers - APFA expects some firm recommendations from the Senate Inquiry to help propel this issue forward. APFA has urged a simple one word edition either - "Australian" or "Imported" to seafood on offer in restaurant and takeaway outlets. Surely it is time to implement what former Queensland Nationals Senator Ron Boswell promised to deliver before that last federal election. Seafood customers deserve and are in fact increasingly demanding to know what they buying. Studies in the Northern Territory where CoOL has been mandated for all seafood have shown not only customers but fishers and restaurants and takeaways all benefit and product substitution rip offs are a thing of the past.

Have you checked out the APFA web site lately. It is being regularly updated and will be revamped shortly. If you need membership passwords for the member only section please contact Helen Jenkins.

From the President – Matt West.

Thanks to farms, owners, Executive and R & D committees for their continued support. It has been a great start to the season and the two committees met early in November to look at the strategic issues facing the industry which is currently being formed into a strategic R & D plan.

There are many positive signs for this industry with renewed State and Federal government support, investor interest and change of ownership of some farms, I know that all the focus between now and Easter will be on getting maximum crops and returns.

I am confident of a good couple of years ahead.

Plans are already underway for next year's symposium – returning to Sea World on 30-31st July 2015. Lock away these dates now and take the opportunity for a family break.

Good luck to everyone for a bumper crop and a safe Christmas.

WHITE PAPER into the Development of Northern Australia following Pivot North report - due 1st quarter 2015. APFA has made a detailed submission to the prime ministerial task force charged with preparing the White Paper. our call has been strongly supported by the Federal Member for Cairns, Warren Entsch. In a media release following the Pivot North Inquiry's findings APFA President Matt West said the report "was a berth of fresh air for APFA members and had shone a spotlight on what caused green site expansion of our industry to stall, to the detriment of regional economies - for the last two decades in Queensland."

The Inquiry found the major stumbling block preventing growth in the state above the Tropic of Capricorn was "regulation of prawn aquaculture." And this "despite massive investment in science by governments to prove the economic viability and environmental sustainability of prawn aquaculture and commensurate investment by the industry to comply with strict environmental guidelines."

The Inquiry agreed with APFA's concern that - "it is easier to import prawns from overseas countries that have benefitted from access to Australian research than it is to grown the prawns here" and went on to note - "a lot of money has been spent on the science of farming prawns especially regulating nutrient levels in the water, and that Australia has developed best management practice of farming tiger prawns. Australia's high level of expertise in this area, however, has largely been exploited for the benefit of foreign growers."

So with our hopes boosted by such criticism APFA has asked the Prime Ministerial task force to do the following:

1. An urgent independent scientific review – binding on both parties, of our discharges and ecological impacts into the estuarine receiving waters.
Part of the comprehensive 46 peer reviewed CSIRO water quality studies reported that the nutrients from a prawn farm were not detectable 2 kilometers downstream from estuaries. Justification should also be sought for why prawn farming is singled out for "zero net" discharge when other land based activities are not.
2. To review the need for any new aquaculture farm in an estuarine environment to trigger the EPBC Act and the use of the Precautionary Principle within its powers. Our farms have been operating in the GBR areas now for more than thirty years with no reported environmental impact from prawn farming.

<http://www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/measuring-success/report-cards.aspx>

Region	Suspended solids per annum/tonnes	Total nitrogen tonnes	Dissolved Nitrogen tonnes	Total Phosphorus tonnes	Dissolved Phosphorus load tonnes	PSII pesticides/kg
Cape York	2,000,000	14,000	5,500	1,500		
Wet Tropics	1,400,000	16,000	11,000	2,000	530	10,000
Burdekin	4,700,000	14,000	5,700	2,600	430	4,900
Mackay Whitsunday	1,500,000	8,100	3,300	2,200	370	10,000
Fitzroy	4,100,000	15,000	2,700	4,100	245	2,300
Burnett Mary	3,100,000	13,000	2,800	3,100	350	990
Totals	16,800,000	80,100	31,000	15,500	1,925	28,190

APFA data from a 2002 CRC study http://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/17607/sub045.pdf

Suspended solids (TSS) per annum/tonnes	Total nitrogen tonnes	Dissolved Nitrogen tonnes	Total Phosphorus tonnes	Dissolved Phosphorus load tonnes	PSII pesticides/kg	Suspended solids per annum/tonnes
1314	53		6.5			

- 2.a State Government's own Reef Quality Water Protection plan baseline data from 2009 revealed 16,800,000 of total suspended solids were released - our industry accounted for only 1,314 tonnes (0.008%) of that. See table above.
- 2.b To put that into perspective for your committee - if our 1,314 tonnes of TSS was five inches high, the 16,800,000 would represent the height of Queensland's highest mountain - Mount Bartle Frere.
3. To justify the need for "zero net" discharge mentality when clearly the above table shows prawn farming contributes very little to the loads currently impacting the reef. In fact this was confirmed in the Great Barrier Reef Strategic assessment and 25-year management plan – Page 159. <http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/managing-the-reef/reef-2050>
4. The removal of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Aquaculture) Regulations 2000 thereby removing GBRMPA's ability to turn this regulation on and off.

Love Australian Prawn Management Committee pictured below, from left to right:

Stephen Murphy, Annie Jarrett, Miles Toomey, Jayne Gallagher, Marshall Betzel, Graeme Stewart, Helen Jenkins, Warren Lewis, Dylan Skinnis, Arthur Raptis.

