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ASSOCIATION

25th March 2015.

AUSSIE PRAWN FARMERS SEEK TO EMULATE TASMANIA'S SALMON FARMING INDUSTRY GROWTH AND WANT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO COMMIT TO AN EXPANSIONARY ACTION PLAN.

The Australian prawn farming industry is a world leader in innovative prawn production and management - underpinned by years of game changing scientific research into sustainable practices eg developing super feed stocks no longer dependent on ocean sourced fish.

APFA, President, Matt West said it is one of our core strengths that we have developed our industry with minimal environmental impact.

"Environmental sustainability is a stand out feature of our industry - envied by our overseas counterparts - setting our prawns apart from imported and wild caught product."

"46 independent CSIRO studies have stated unequivocally that prawn aquaculture discharge in estuarine systems is assimilated rapidly - unlike the pesticides and herbicides that we do not use."

"However no new farms have been approved by regulators in the last 12 years. The APFA field numerous enquiries regarding investment in prawn farming in Australia, but because of the uncertainty of unachievable and unreasonable licence restrictions, investors have shied away from any commitment," Mr West added.

APFA has now asked the Federal Government for support and to commit to a proposed comprehensive, Stewardship Action Plan to be adopted by the entire industry - one that would be professionally developed and engage all stakeholders.

"This plan would enable us to pursue our vision for where we see the industry in the future and most importantly map out a co-operative but enforceable, bench marked strategy for how we get there," West explained.

"APFA considers the timing is now right for action with both the Federal and Queensland Governments initiating studies for improving the quality of terrestrial water runoff into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

"We do not use herbicides or pesticides".

Australian Prawn Farmers Association

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"However if these new studies result in the imposition of an operational policy that imposes standards that are not currently achievable - there will be no new development and expansion of our industry in the optimum suited aquaculture regions of North and Far North Queensland - where the majority of APFA members operate."

Such a plan was successfully done for the Qld Coral Fishery and Marine Aquarium Fishery in 2013.

APFA members sell all they can produce and production per hectare is now at peak levels. We need to expand to meet continued Australian demand for our premium product. If we can break from the current regulatory impasse, APFA contends growth from \$70ml to \$412 ml annually is realistic and achievable, within just a few short years.

Australia's prawn industry is currently worth almost a billion dollars a year - only 6% is supplied by Australian aquaculture.

"Our industry aspires to emulate the exponential growth enjoyed by Tasmanian salmon farmers. That booming industry in 1986-87 produced only 56 tonnes of fish. It now harvests 43,000 tonnes with a GVP of approximately \$550,000,000.

"With commitment, and the regulatory will the Australian Prawn Farming Industry can become an even more valuable contributor to the overall economy while boosting employment and allied services in North and Far North Queensland's regional centres.

"Our prawns will always be a sought after, nutritious and sustainable product." West said.

Matt West
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