

# Establishment of the National Fishing Industry Education Network and the Production of Relevant Curriculum

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F I S H E R I E S  
R E S E A R C H &  
D E V E L O P M E N T  
C O R P O R A T I O N

Project 93/241

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1 Background</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2 Need</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 Objectives</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4 Methodology</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5 Detailed Results</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6 Further Development</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7 Project Staff</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8 Financial Report</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>9 Distribution List</b>	<b>16</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the later part of 1993 the FRDC, through active participation with TAFE and industry, recognised that national provision of vocational education and training for the fishing industry would constructively assist the industry to maintain sustainable production, employment and profitability.

Agreement was reached on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 1994 between the Fisheries Research Development Corporation and the New South Wales TAFE Commission for the funding of a project titled "Establishment of the National Fishing Industry Vocational Training Network and production of relevant curriculum" (NFIEN).

Analysis of the broad provision of training for the fishing industry, at that time, gave rise to the following needs being identified:

- Training for the industry should be industry driven
- Information and training delivery should be flexible and assessable regardless of geographic location
- Duplication of effort in regard to technology transfer and training should be contained and cost savings used to increase the penetration of these activities.

Therefore, the chief objective of the NFIEN was to develop a nationally focused vocational education and training network, providing technology transfer to all sectors of the Australian fishing industry (fishing - aquaculture - post harvest - secondary education). Specific objectives were as follows:

- Centres of excellence were to be developed to coordinate national vocational training for the fishing industry
- The establishment of joint national curriculum accreditation pathways, involving the F&SITC network and other peak industry bodies, facilitating the provision of nationally recognised fishing industry training to each State and Territory of Australia.
- Efficient development of vocational training programs, in association with the National and State Fishing Industry Training Councils.
- Continuing involvement with fisheries research organisations, and the FRDC, for the purpose of directing the findings of current fisheries research into useful curriculum for dissemination to industry.

A Small steering group was established for the project consisting of:

- Principal Investigator of NFIEN project
- Chairman and Executive Officer of the SA Fishing & Seafood Industry Training Council
- Manager SA Fishing and Seafood Industry Skills Centre
- Manager NSW National Fishing Industry Education Centre

Three other groups were formed as part of the planning and management strategies for the project.

- The NFIEN Curriculum Committee consisting of representatives of all the State and Territory TAFE systems.
- A National Planning Group with representatives of industry, education and training organisations and Government agencies.
- The National Fishing Industry Training Council (NFITC) Reference Group

Milestones reports regarding progress of the National Fishing Industry Education Network Project were provided to the FRDC Board periodically throughout the term of the project. The following is a summation of the results that were achieved within the project.

A NFIEN Curriculum Committee for both pre and post-harvest was established and a number of outcomes were achieved including:

- A short list of urgent curriculum projects.
- Project Proposal and Project Management Guidelines.
- Curriculum Document Template.
- A list of high priority training needs for the fishing industry.
- An initial pilot project to identify the existing curriculum and learning materials for Fresh Water Aquaculture.

Initial attempts by the NFIEN Curriculum Committee to obtain funding from the Australian Committee for Training and Curriculum (ACTRAC) for curriculum development were rebuffed and as a result members of the NFIEN had no alternative but to pursue sources of funding independently.

As a result four new curricula were developed and other existing curriculum adopted for use in several states.

The development of learning materials for high priority training areas was limited to two curricula with open learning packages developed for delivery of Coxswain and Master 5/Skipper 3 courses adopted for use in several States.

A working group, consisting of the Principal Investigator, managers of existing specialist centres and Chairperson of the NFIEN Curriculum Committee met on numerous occasions and considered a range of issues and strategies regarding the delivery of training throughout the network and particularly across State boundaries.

As a result of the activities of this group a number of outcomes were achieved:

- A specialist centre (node) in fresh water aquaculture was established at Grafton NSW in October 1993 with an investment of over a million dollars from the NSW TAFE Commission and a commitment to recurrent expenditure of \$350,000 per annum.
- Funding of \$187,000 was obtained from ANTA in June 1995 and these funds, together with an investment of \$150,000 from the State Government, have enabled the Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre at Port Adelaide SA to establish an export standard processing training facility.
- A trial of the flexible delivery strategies and policies was initiated at the National Fishing Education Centre of TAFE, Grafton NSW in January 1995 with the delivery of the Advanced Certificate in Aquaculture (Fresh Water) to approximately 200 students in 4 different States or Territories.

Accessing the funding required, in addition to that provided by FRDC, in order to meet the milestones of the project was a major undertaking for those engaged within the project and the timelines for gaining that funding were much greater than anticipated.

However, a number of strategies and outcomes were achieved as follows:

- Lease agreement for provision of premises to Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre (ASISC valued at \$150,000 was approved by SA DETAFE on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1994.
- Funding for ASISC fit out to the value of \$187,000 was approved by ANTA and SA Training Authority in June 1995.

- A “States Co-operative Project” proposal for funding to assist in establishing additional specialist centres was successful subsequent to the winding up of the NFIEN Project.

The NFITC Reference Group for the NFIEN met on October 26<sup>th</sup> 1995 and determined that many of the original objectives of the project were still valid and the outcomes to date were valuable but that the project needed stronger direction and involvement of industry representatives.

A revised proposal titled Australian Seafood Industry Education Network (ASIEN) : Delivering R&D Outcomes through Training was presented to the FRDC Board. Subsequently, the Board approved the revised proposal and the utilisation of the remaining \$260,000 of the NFIEN project to enable the further development of results achieved by that project.

# 1 BACKGROUND

During 1993 the South Australian Fishing and Seafood Industry Training Council and TAFE NSW were developing specialist education training centres to service the vocational needs of the fishing industry;

- a) The National Fishing Industry Education Centre (NFIEC) in Grafton NSW focused towards the production sectors.
- b) The South Australian Fishing and Seafood Industry Skills Centre (SAF&SISC) in Port Adelaide focused towards the post harvest sectors.

It was widely recognised that national provision of vocational education and training for the fishing industries would constructively assist the fishing industry to maintain sustainable production, employment and profitability.

The FRDC, through active participation with TAFE and industry involved in the development of the above specialist training centres, were confident that they would remain industry driven and relevant. Industry based management committees on both training centre boards were developed to direct these activities. Fiscal constraints were inhibiting the realisation of the potential benefits of the Centres. These constraints were impeding the transfer of scientific knowledge and other information, and structured vocational training to the fishing industry. Hence, a funding application for the establishment of a national network to address these issues was developed.

Agreement was reached on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 1994 between the Fisheries Research Development Corporation and the New South Wales TAFE Commission for the funding of a project titled "Establishment of the National Fishing Industry Vocational Training Network and production of relevant curriculum" (NFIEN).

## 2 NEED

A need existed for the development of an efficient, effective and coordinated method for the national dissemination of all fishing information including research, with the objective of providing benefits for all sectors of the Australian fishing industry. The term technology transfer was adopted for the proposed information dissemination to industry, based on FRDC's definition as follows:

“TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER involves those activities which deliver the results of fisheries research to those within the fishing industry, fisheries managers and other researchers. It extends beyond publishing of research results, and also includes activities that are undertaken to ensure that commercialisation of appropriate projects is accomplished efficiently.” (FRDC Research and Development Plan 1993-94 to 1997-98, pviii)

“Australia has a history of concentrating on research to the exclusion of adequate technology transfer and/or commercialisation of that research.” (FRDC Research and Development Plan 1993-94 to 1997-98, p14)

An objective of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation at the time was “making more effective use of resources and skills available in the community in general...”. A key function of FRDC was understood to be, “to facilitate the dissemination, adoption and commercialisation of the results of fisheries R&D.” (FRDC 1991-92 Annual Report, p8, FRDC Research and Development Plan 1993-94 to 1997-98, p6).

Research and Development Strategies of FRDC included a strong focus on the “transfer of R&D information to industry”. (FRDC 1991-92 Annual Report p16).

FRDC recognised that, “...supporting education and training programs in collaboration with the National Fishing and Seafood Industry Training Council and other training bodies...”, would assist in the transfer of technology to the fishing industry which would have a positive effect on the sustainability of the fishing industry, provide employment opportunities and improve the economic future of the industry. (FRDC Research and Development Plan 1993-94 to 1997-98, p17).

Analysis of the broad provision of information and training in the fishing industry, at that time, gave rise to the following needs being identified:

- Training for the industry should be industry driven
- Information and training delivery should be flexible and accessible regardless of geographic location
- Duplication of effort in regard to technology transfer and training should be contained and cost savings used to increase the penetration of these activities.

### **3 OBJECTIVES**

The chief objective of the NFIEN was the development of a nationally focused vocational education and training network, providing technology transfer to all sectors of the Australian fishing industry (fishing - aquaculture - post harvest - secondary education). Specific objectives were as follows.

- 3.1** Centres of excellence were to be developed to coordinate national vocational training for the fishing industry. The production centre was to be located near Grafton, New South Wales and the post-harvest centre to be located at Port Adelaide in South Australia. The first objective of the project was to coordinate the above centres jointly to ensure that efficient and effective provision of vocational education and training for the fishing industry.
- 3.2** A second objective was the establishment of joint national curriculum accreditation pathways facilitating the provision of nationally recognised fishing industry training to each State and Territory of Australia. These pathways were to enable the inclusion of recent research findings into 'living curriculum documents'.
- 3.3** The third objective was the efficient development of vocational training programs, in association with the National and State Fishing Industry Training Councils, for the various sectors of the fishing industry.
- 3.4** The fourth objective was to develop a continuing involvement with fisheries research organisations, and the FRDC, for the purpose of directing the findings of fisheries research into useful curriculum for dissemination to industry.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

A Small steering group was established for the project consisting of:

- Principal Investigator for the NFIEN project
- Chairman and Executive Officer of the SA Fishing & Seafood Industry Training Council
- Manager SA Fishing and Seafood Industry Skills Centre
- Manager NSW National Fishing Industry Education Centre

Support for the project was sought from the National Fishing Industry Training Council (NFITC) and although an acceptance of the development of the NFIEN was eventually gained, many members of the NFITC still held concerns about aspects of the project. Some members of the NFITC saw the proposed network as a direct threat to their power and control of the national training agenda for the fishing industry and attempted to use their influence to ensure additional funds from ANTA were not made available to the network to supplement those funds provided by FRDC.

Two groups were formed as part of the planning and management strategies for the project.

The NFIEN Curriculum Committee consisting of representatives of all the State and Territory TAFE systems held its first meeting on 21 June 1994 and through a series of subsequent meetings established a list of priorities and guidelines for curriculum development for the network.

A National Planning Group was called together for a two day meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1994. Representatives of industry, education and training organisations and Government agencies attended the meeting which in the end proved to be too large and diverse with the result that many of those attending felt that there were no concrete outcomes. However, a decision was taken during the meeting that the project should receive strong direction from the industry and that a Reference Group of the NFITC should be established to provide that direction.

The NFITC Reference Group for NFIEN met on several occasions during the second half of 1995 and prepared a framework for a revised proposal for the completion of the NFIEN project. This framework was included in a November 1995 progress report to the FRDC Board together with a series of recommendations regarding the project.

As a result of the above report the FRDC Board decided to wind up the project and call for a revised project proposal from the NFITC Reference Group for NFIEN.

## 5 DETAILED RESULTS

Milestones reports regarding progress of the National Fishing Industry Education Network Project were provided to the FRDC Board periodically throughout the term of the project. The following is a summation of the results that were achieved within the project.

### 5.1 Curriculum Development

An overall objective of this aspect of the project was to co-ordinate curriculum development on a national basis as a means of avoiding duplication of effort and making more productive use of existing resources. The following strategies were implemented and outcomes achieved.

#### 5.1.1 Establish National Curriculum Committee (target date Aug 1994)

A NFIEN Curriculum Committee for both pre and post-harvest was established and held its first meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1994. As a result of this and subsequent meetings a number of outcomes were achieved.

- A short list of urgent curriculum project was established
- Project Proposal and Project Management Guidelines were developed
- Agreement was reached on a Curriculum Document Template
- A NFIEN Nodes role statement was prepared for discussion at National Planning Group Meeting
- A proposal for funding curriculum development was presented to the Australian Committee for Training and Curriculum
- Alternative funding sources for limited high priority curriculum and learning materials development were identified.

**Note:** The full benefit of establishing a National Curriculum Committee was not gained by this project due to the failure to include State Fishing Industry Training Councils in the membership of the committee.

#### 5.1.2 Prioritised Training Needs (target date Jan 1995)

A list of high priority training needs for the fishing industry was developed by September 1994 through consultations with members of the NFIEN Curriculum Committee, State ITC Executive Officers and participants in a National Post Harvest Training Priorities Workshop.

These areas of high priority were as follows:

- Aquaculture (including fresh water and mariculture)
- Open learning systems for training based on USL Code
- Seafood handling, processing and OH&S
- Workplace English for recent immigrants
- Seafood retailing

#### 5.1.3 Identify Existing Relevant Curriculum (target date Jan 1995)

An initial pilot project to identify the existing curriculum and learning materials for Fresh Water Aquaculture was undertaken by OTEN from the NSW TAFE Commission on behalf of the NFIEN Curriculum during July/Aug 1994.

#### **5.1.4 Produce CBT Curriculum (ongoing)**

Initial attempts by the NFIEN Curriculum Committee to obtain funding from ACTRAC for curriculum development were rebuffed and as a result members of the Network had no alternative but to pursue sources of funding independently. The following curriculum was developed or identified and adapted for use by current network members:

- Advanced Certificate in Aquaculture (NSW TAFE)
- Mariculture Farm Hand Traineeship (SAF&SITC)
- Certificate in Customer Service (Seafood) - awaiting accreditation
- Customer Service - Seafood (SAF&SITC) - awaiting accreditation

In addition to the above, curriculum development undertaken in each State has been monitored and co-operation across State boundaries has been facilitated where possible. These activities specifically resulted in the adoption in several States of the following curriculum, avoiding duplication of development effort:

- SA DETAFE Coxswain and Master 5/Skipper 3 curriculum
- TAS FITAB Seafood Handling and Processing Traineeship

**Note:** These developments were substantial and met the action and time frame requirements of the project but they have largely occurred due to the informal communications and exchange of information facilitated by the existence of the NFIEN Curriculum Committee.

#### **5.1.5 Produce Relevant Learning Materials (ongoing)**

The development of learning materials for high priority training areas within the fishing industry was perceived by the NFIEN Curriculum Committee as being secondary to the development of curriculum where required. As a result developments undertaken by network members in this area to date have been limited to the following:

- Advanced Certificate in Aquaculture (Fresh Water) open learning package
- Seafood Retail open learning package (in development)

In addition to the above developments, open learning packages developed by SA DETAFE for delivery of Coxswain and Master 5/Skipper 3 courses were identified and adopted for use in several States.

### **5.2 Training Delivery**

Training delivery to the widely spaced and isolated communities that characterise the fishing industry has always been problematic. This aspect of the NFIEN project has largely focused on establishing specialist centres (nodes) within the network and trialling open or flexible approaches to training delivery on a national basis.

The following strategies were implemented and outcomes achieved:

#### **5.2.1 National Training Delivery Working Group (target Aug 1994)**

A working group, consisting of the project Principal Investigator, Managers of existing specialist centres and Chairperson of the NFIEN Curriculum Committee met on numerous occasions and considered a

range of issues and strategies regarding the delivery of training throughout the network and particularly across State boundaries.

As a result of the activities of this group a number of outcomes were achieved:

- A specialist centre (node) in fresh water aquaculture was established at Grafton NSW in October 1993 with an investment of over a million dollars from the NSW TAFE Commission and a commitment to recurrent expenditure of \$350,000 per annum.
- Establishment of a second specialist centre (node) in post harvest processing and retailing at Port Adelaide SA was delayed considerably due to difficulties experienced in gaining support from the NFITC for the funding proposal presented to ANTA.

However, funding of \$187,000 for this centre (node) was eventually obtained from ANTA in June 1995 and these funds, together with an investment of \$150,000 from the State Government, have enabled the Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre at Port Adelaide SA to establish an export standard processing training facility.

- A model for delivery of training programs at a distance and across State boundaries was developed and tentative policies in regard to a range of issues including, recording of student credit hours, payment of student fees, differential in fee structures and the role of a Training Broker within the network.
- The NFITC established a steering group in June 1994 to provide future direction and guidance in the development of the NFIE. Of major concern to members of this group was the notion of network nodes, or specialist centres and the process by which decisions regarding the location of these centres were made.
- Plans for establishing nodes in Queensland and Western Australia were initiated but placed on hold due to the concerns raised by the NFITC Steering Group.

**Note:** The target of establishing specialist centres (nodes) in four States by November 1995 was not achieved largely due to the need to address the issues regarding the allocation of these centres raised by the NFITC Steering Group.

### 5.2.2 Implement Trial of Delivery Strategy (target due Aug 1994)

- The trial of the flexible delivery strategies and policies developed by the National Training Delivery Working Group was initiated at the National Fishing Education Centre of TAFE, Grafton NSW in January 1995 with the delivery of the Advanced Certificate in Aquaculture (Fresh Water) to approximately 200 students in 4 different States or Territories (see appendix 4).
- A further trial of flexible strategies was planned to be implemented by the Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre, Pt Adelaide SA, in 1996 with delivery of the Certificate in Seafood Retail.

**Note:** The trial of delivery strategies through delivery of the Advanced Certificate in Aquaculture have been somewhat limited in their scope due

to a lack of ownership by State Industry Training Councils and the resultant lack of promotion within industry circles in a number of States.

### 5.3 Management

The strategies outlined within the milestones section of the NFIEN Project proposal relating to Management (Group Structures) have been achieved as follows:

- The NFIEN Curriculum Committee was established on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1994
- A Management Advisory Group for the National Fishing Industry Education Centre at Grafton was established on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1993
- Board of Management for the Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre was established in September 1994
- A National Planning Group for the network was established and held a two day meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1994 where the mission statement and overall objectives of the NFIEN were agreed and support in principle was obtained from the majority of TAFE systems in each State or Territory.

**Note:** The complex nature of the large number of groups established as part of the management strategy for this project was, in part, been responsible for difficulty being experienced in gaining clear directions and uniform national support for development strategies.

This problem was also been exacerbated by the fact that several members of the NFITC and a number of State Fishing Industry Training Councils felt that industry was not in control of the project. As a result of this concern a NFITC Steering Group for the NFIEN project was formed as outlined in section 2.2.1.

#### 5.3.1 Funding

Accessing the funding required, in addition to that provided by FRDC, in order to meet the milestones of the project was a major undertaking for those engaged within the project and the timelines for gaining that funding were much greater than anticipated.

However, a number of strategies and outcomes were achieved as follows:

- Lease agreement for provision of premises to Australian Seafood Industry Skills Centre (ASISC valued at \$150,000 was approved by SA DETAFE on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1994.
- Funding for ASISC fit out to the value of \$187,000 was approved by ANTA and SA Training Authority in June 1995.
- A "States Co-operative Project" proposal for funding to assist in establishing additional specialist centres (nodes) in Queensland and Western Australia and fund the delivery of training programs within the NFIEN was submitted to ANTA by the NSW TAFE Commission in March 1995. Unfortunately this submission was not successful due to a lack of support from the NFITC.

A second submission made by the NSW TAFE Commission was successful subsequent to the winding up of the NFIEN Project.

## 6 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The NFITC Reference Group for the NFIEN met on October 26<sup>th</sup> 1995 and determined that many of the original objectives of the project were still valid and the outcomes to date were valuable but that the project needed stronger direction and involvement of industry representatives. It was also clear at this time that the proposed amalgamation of the NFITC with the Rural and Forestry National Training Councils to form the Primary Industry Training Council of Australia would mean that this new body could not provide the sole industry leadership for the project as it's coverage did not include the post harvest sector. (it was a lack of apparent emphasis given to post harvest training in the industry that prompted the FRDC's involvement with NSW TAFE).

Members of the NFITC Reference Group therefore decided that the Australian Seafood Industry Council was the only appropriate body to provide industry leadership and overall management of a revised and redirected NFIEN in the future.

The Executive Officer of The SA Fishing & Seafood Industry Training Council was requested to complete a comprehensive report regarding the status of the NFIEN project and a framework for a future revised proposal for the network in accordance with the agreement reached by members of the NFITC Reference Group for the NFIEN. This report was submitted to the FRDC Board for it's consideration and as a result the Board decided to :

- Wind up the current NFIEN project in March 1996
- Request a revised proposal for consideration

A revised proposal titled Australian Seafood Industry Education Network (ASIEN) : Delivering R&D Outcomes through Training was presented to the FRDC Board. Subsequently, the Board approved the revised proposal and the utilisation of the remaining \$260,000 of the NFIEN project to enable the further development of results achieved by that project.

## 7 PROJECT STAFF

Principal Investigator: Alan Fridley  
Position: Industry Specialist  
Fisheries, Intensive Animal Management  
Rural and Mining Industry Training Div.  
TAFE Commissioner of NSW

Alan's role was to oversee the management of the project including financial management, achievement of milestones, liaison with Government and industry bodies and project documentation. His role also included organising the Planning Group and acting as Executive Officer of the group.

Chairperson of Curriculum Committee: Bob Miller  
Position: Executive Officer  
SA Fishing & Seafood Industry  
Training Council Inc.

Bob's principal role was to organise and Chair the network Curriculum Committee with the aim of establishing agreed national training priorities and a co-ordinated curriculum/learning materials development program. In addition, this role included liaison with ACTRAC to establish a formal relationship with regard to approval and funding of national projects related to the fishing industry.

Co-Project Manager: Wally Morrison  
Position: Manager  
National Fishing Industry Education Centre  
of TAFE (NSW)

Co-Project Manager: Lara Damiani  
Position: Manager  
SA Fishing & Seafood Industry Skills Centre Inc.

Lara and Wally's roles were to manage the development and operation of their respective centres and to undertake a range of projects allocated to each centre under the auspices of both the Planning Group and the Curriculum Committee. Their roles also included liaison with industry in their respective states and membership of the NFIEN Curriculum Committee.

## 8 FINANCIAL REPORT

### PROJECT RECONCILIATION RURAL MINING LTD

<b>RECONCILIATION OF PROJECT FISHERIES RESEARCH &amp; DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR Nanager MR BARRY PORTER INDUSTRY SPECIALIST FISHERIES INTENSIVE</b>					
<b>INCOME</b>					<b>\$448,590.00</b>
<b>FUNDING FROM</b>					
	FRDC - Recpt G171153 - 16 February 1994				\$65,332.50
	FRDC - Recpt G91404 - 4 May 1994				\$65,332.50
	FRDC - Recpt G91482 - 28 July 1994				\$65,322.00
	FRDC - Recpt G91493 - 26 September 1994				\$65,322.00
	FRDC - Recpt G91527 - 6 February 1995				\$62,582.00
	FRDC - Recpt G91565 - 1 May 1995				\$62,561.00
	FRDC - Recpt H25941 - 2 February 1996				\$35,665.00
	FRDC - Recpt H64441 - 17 April 1996				\$26,473.00
<b>LESS EXPENSES</b>					
		<b>Expenditure 1994/95</b>	<b>Expenditure 1995/96</b>	<b>Expenditure 1996/97</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
5211	Salaries	\$15,142.36	\$47,765.16	\$70,936.13	\$133,843.65
6311	Travel	\$19,792.25	\$25,048.29	\$14,371.05	\$59,211.59
6161	Operating	\$99,820.74	\$108,370.95	\$73,816.07	\$282,007.76
2661	Capital	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
		\$134,755.35	\$181,184.40	\$159,123.25	<u>\$475,063.00</u>
					\$475,063.00
					<u>(\$26,473.00)</u>
<b>BALANCE AVAILABLE AS AT 2 May 1996</b>					
<b>(No Funds Available - FRDC to Forward Outstanding Half of Final Payment as per Agreed Budget)</b>					

## 9 DISTRIBUTION LIST

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