

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99

A GUIDE

For the development,
planning and implementation of
a national conference
for the Australian Seafood Industry

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FORWARD

The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) and the Seafood Council (SA) had great pleasure in hosting delegates and speakers to Adelaide, South Australia for SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 – the inaugural Australian Seafood Industry National Conference.

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 provided a significant opportunity for the industry, at a national level, to determine directions for a more sustainable future.

The seafood industry in Australia is currently worth \$2 billion annually (gross value of production) plus an estimated \$7 billion annually in terms of employment and investment. To ensure the industry maintains and enhances this economic position it is imperative that the Australian seafood industry looked beyond its own shores to the latest overseas trends as well as sharing information across all fisheries.

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 was a major step in the growth of this significant industry. Speakers delivered messages to delegates on the current key issues of Access Security, the Environment, Industry Profile and Quality.

This manual has been developed to capitalise on the information and experience gathered by the organisers of SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 in order to assist those who will be involved in the organisation of future Seafood Directions or similar conferences.

This manual has been prepared by Michele Manno, Project Management Team, SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 would not have been a reality without the drive, passion and commitment of a dedicated team with the support of the industry as a whole.

The support was generated from all facets of industry from grass roots fishers to the South Australian Government as well as federal support from the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation and a series of other sponsors.

In amongst this myriad of people there were particular individuals who stand out from the crowd who sacrificed their time and endless amounts of energy to make it all happen. Industry leaders in South Australia such as Jim Raptis, Terry Moran, Steve Hinge, Roger Edwards, Martin Smallridge and Bernie Lange believed in the concept of the project and individually and collectively were responsible for making it work.

Leaders on a national level such as Nigel Scullion and Peter Dundas-Smith contributed endless amounts of support and effort to the event.

For anyone who was involved in this project they were all a part of a history-making process that has set the benchmark for the future.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) recognised the need to hold a conference and showcase the advances of the industry in recent years, in terms of quality, training, environmental performance and the institutional framework for efficient fisheries management.

As well as this there is and was the need to promote the domestic consumption of Australian seafood by highlighting the health benefits of the product.

Tasting Australia, a major food promotion occurred during October 1999 and offered significant marketing opportunities from overseas and interstate buyers to the industry, as well as an international media contingency, plus approximately 40,000 consumers who attended the event.

The natural synergy between holding the conference followed by a significant presence at Tasting Australia allowed the Seafood Industry to achieve its strategic objectives.

During the week prior to the conference Adelaide hosted the 3rd International Lobster Congress. The timing of all these events offered a wide range of industry members the opportunity to participate.

The opportunity to provide national recognition for Australia's seafood industry to highlight the true value of its members and their operations was facilitated through the events and the presence of critical industry mass.

1.1 History

In 1998 the South Australian Seafood Industry Development Board expressed interest in holding the inaugural National Seafood Conference in South Australia in 1999. The South Australian Government, through the Seafood Industry Development Board, pledged \$50,000 to support the conference. This commitment was made on the condition that the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) would match this money.

The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) awarded the right to hold the conference to the newly established peak South Australian industry body, Seafood Council (SA).

In recognition of the advantages gained from hosting a national industry conference, ASIC and the Seafood Council (SA) formed a partnership to progress the first national biennial industry conference in Adelaide, October 1999.

South Australia was able to create an environment conducive to hosting the inaugural event, coupled with support from industry and sponsorship through the hard work and determination of all involved.

And the rest as they say is history...

1.2 Why a Seafood Industry National Conference?

Most seafood industries around the world hold national and international conferences as a means of identifying issues, learning from the experiences of others and highlighting the current issues of concern. The seafood industry in Australia was yet to hold a national industry conference.

The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) identified the need to hold a biennial national seafood industry conference where industry could gather in an appropriate forum to discuss and learn about issues of a critical nature that affect the industry. It was also envisaged that the forum would be used as a means of providing the basis for future planning and directions.

There was a range of industry needs identified as critical and it was felt that a national industry conference could begin to address these issues at a national level.

A seafood industry national conference has the ability to meet the following needs of the industry:

- The need for the seafood industry of Australia to promote itself and its image
- The need for industry to address the public's perception of seafood and associated issues such as quality, health benefits and product promotion
- The need for the Australian seafood industry to develop a conference culture at a national level to assist and ensure the effective transfer of information
- The need for issues such as training and education, marketing and industry development to have an international perspective addressed through attracting international speakers and delegates
- The need for more extensive communication and interaction within the industry at a national level

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives for SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 were a combination of ASIC's overall aims as well as specific objectives relevant to the progress of the industry which were identified as part of the development of the FRDC proposal.

1.3.1 ASIC

ASIC's aims and objectives are to:

- Promote the range of quality Australian seafood, locally, nationally and internationally
- Generate business for the Australian seafood industry
- Enhance the image of the Australian seafood industry amongst the community

1.3.2 FRDC

Aims as outlined in the proposal:

- To conduct a national seafood industry conference in Adelaide, October 1999
- To utilise the conference as a means of transferring information regarding critical issues to the seafood industry using local and overseas experts
- To enhance the image of the Australian seafood industry amongst the national and international community
- To obtain information from overseas seafood, trade, production, marketing and development figures and to utilise this information in the decision making process for the Australian seafood industry
- To take advantage of the international Tasting Australia media contingent in Adelaide for promotional opportunities on an international scale for the Australian seafood industry
- To document the process for planning for future biennial national seafood industry conferences
- To obtain clear resolutions from the conference and to use these resolutions to develop national industry policy for the future
- To use the Tasting Australia exhibition being held in Adelaide in October 1999 as a national and international seafood trade display/exhibition as part of SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 and to use this forum for trailing future trade displays for the seafood industry
- To use the seafood exhibition as a means of promoting Australian seafood products and the seafood industry to the general public

1.3.2 FRDC

- To use the seafood exhibition as a means of increasing or opening up possible new trade opportunities with invited overseas buyers

The biennial event has been established to set the standard and implement the process to ensure the future success and continuation of the event.

1.4 Direct Benefits

A seafood industry national conference will have a plethora of benefits for not only industry but the general wider community as well.

Industry will benefit from:

- The associated promotion of the range of seafood available in Australia
- The presence of international experts in Australia to assist with advice on matters of national importance
- The generation of business by promoting Australia's industry and associated businesses
- Having a better understanding of what is required to obtain public support for the industry
- Having a forum for educating and informing its members on critical issues and using this forum to obtain resolutions for policy development

The public will benefit from:

- Having a better, more informed understanding of the industry and by having an industry more in tune with operating within community expectations
- Having an opportunity to directly interface with industry

2 PLANNING

Planning is an integral part of any event management process.

It needs to be noted that if you fail to plan, then subsequently you plan to fail. The development and coordination of the inaugural seafood industry national conference can be described as a continuous planning process.

Each element of the event requires some form of planning, a strategy or list of desired end results. It is the outcome that is of greatest importance and if there is no preparation or well thought out plan then inevitably fine details may be overlooked and the benefit of the project reduced.

The formation of the Steering Committee as well as wide industry consultation was a key component of the planning process. The Steering Committee initially assisted with the appointment of a Project Management Team and the development of concepts and themes.

2.1 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee is an interlocking component of the planning process. It needs to be viewed as an active and vital link between industry and the Project Management Team.

The Steering Committee has distinct roles and responsibilities and needs to be selected by the state host in conjunction with the national peak body.

2.1.1 Selecting a Committee

The selection of the Steering Committee is the responsibility of the hosts of the event. In conjunction with the national peak body (ASIC) the host state needs to liaise with this national counterpart to elect industry representatives who will fulfill all of the criteria and roles of the committee, collectively and as individuals.

The hosts of the event, in this case the Seafood Council (SA), elected industry representatives as well as Project Management Team members to form a Steering Committee.

This was an informal process with the Seafood Council (SA) liaising extensively with ASIC.

The Steering Committee was formed and included representatives from the following groups. The majority of members should come from the host state to keep traveling costs to a minimum.

2.1.1 Selecting a Committee

- Australian Seafood Industry Council
One industry representative – Event Host (National)
- Seafood Council (SA)
Two industry representatives – Event Hosts (State)
- Primary Industries & Resources SA
One representative – State Government plus Major Sponsor
- Australian Fisheries Academy
One industry representative – Industry Training
- South Australian Fishing Industry Council
One industry representative – ASIC Representative (Host State)
- Project Management Team
Three representatives – Project Managers

2.1.2 The Role of Steering Committee Members

The role of Steering Committee members can be defined as follows:

- To advise and support the Project Management Team
- Liaise continuously with industry at all levels
- To take ownership of the event by playing an active role in all facets of the planning process and implementation
- To act as champions for the event to industry peers, government representatives, key stakeholders, potential sponsors etc.
- To be committed to the project for its entire duration
- To communicate effectively and continually with ASIC in relation to the project
- To be responsible and accountable for specific tasks and actions

2.1.2.1 Steering Committee Meetings

Steering Committee meetings need to be held on a regular basis throughout the project.

The inaugural event held Steering Committee Meetings in:

- November 1998
- January 1999
- February 1999
- March 1999
- May 1999

2.1.2.1 Steering Committee Meetings

After this five month maiden planning period it was decided by the Steering Committee that many of the major conception issues were resolved and the committee was more than happy to be kept up to date via phone, facsimile and email.

Ideally the Steering Committee should meet on a monthly basis including after the event, primarily to ensure all follow up action is completed accurately and within the appropriate timeframes.

It may be necessary for the Steering Committee to meet more often than monthly in the immediate lead up to the event.

2.1.2.1.1 Agendas and Minutes

Comprehensive agendas and minutes including all resultant actions were accurately documented.

Agendas and minutes are included in Appendix 14.1 and 14.2.

2.1.3 Industry Support

Industry support was vital to the success of the inaugural event and also for the ongoing success of the event in the future.

The inaugural event was well supported by industry overall but there were significant contributions that were greater from some states than others, as well as specific individuals committing significant time and resources to the overall project.

Individual efforts were noted, as significant contributions to the event as without this form of support the Project Management Team could not have achieved all of the desired outcomes and objectives.

The seafood industry national conference is an event that needs to be maintained by industry in order to ensure its survival well into the third millennium.

2.2 Project Management Team

A Project Management Team is an essential requirement to ensure the overall development, planning and implementation of the event.

The project team needs to comprise a broad skill base.

2.2 Project Management Team

A highly skilled project management team was put together to undertake the co-ordination and management of the inaugural conference, as well as to ensure that all objectives were met and milestones reached. The host of the event in this case the Seafood Council (SA) appointed the Project Management Team on the basis that the individuals had the abilities to complete the tasks required.

The Project Management Team for the event had the following responsibilities:

- Development of a detailed plan to achieve objectives
- Coordination of initial and ongoing liaison with the industry nationally
- Development and management of marketing and media plans to maximise the promotional opportunity, according to key objectives and messages
- Involvement in the attraction of funding from a variety of sources, including sponsor management
- Overall management of the Conference including: venue liaison, speaker liaison, program development including the social program, the production of printed materials
- Overall management of the Seafood Pavilion including coordination of public display and tasting area, liaison with Tasting Australia to ensure maximum benefit to the Seafood Industry and professional coordination of the area.
- Attendance at Steering Committee meetings

The appointment of the Project Management Team is at the discretion and agreement of the host groups allowing that team members meet the criteria in terms of skills and experience.

The use of a professional conference organiser ensured that there was a source of experience to guide the Steering Committee in the preparation and execution of the event.

2.3 The Concept

The concept behind the inaugural biennial national seafood industry conference was formulated after an initial proposal had been developed and ASIC had agreed to support such an initiative.

The original philosophy behind the need for, and decision to host an industry national conference was the obvious lack of previous forums for industry to gather at a national level. The need to discuss issues critical to the survival of industry whilst listening to the knowledge held by others from around the globe was the initial foundation for the event.

2.3 The Concept

The concept of industry being able to decide and be a part of their own destiny by determining directions for the future was the underlying factor making this event different from any others that had been held in the past.

Seafood Directions '99 adhered to the concept from start to finish and it is assumed that this will be the foundation to be built on for future conferences.

2.3.1 Developing a Logo, Name & Themes

The development of a logo, name and overall themes involved a wide spread consultation process by the Steering Committee and Project Management Team with industry, to ensure that the event conveyed the correct messages.

All aspects needed to be integrated

The logo developed for the inaugural event symbolised and represented the aims, objectives and concept of the entire project. The Project Management Team liaised intensely with a graphic designer to ensure the right message was portrayed. The end result was the current logo that has been adopted by ASIC as the perpetual logo for the event, now and in the future.

The name, similarly to the logo, needed to represent the ethos of the event. The Project Management Team generated a list of potential names and after liaising extensively with industry Seafood Directions '99 evolved. The concepts surrounding the name of the event originated in SA but the final solution was found offshore in New Zealand.

Seafood Directions '99 focussed on several themes and issues critical to the industry. After widespread industry consultation the issues to be addressed at the event were decided upon:

- Access Security
- The Environment
- Industry Profile
- Quality

2.3.1.1 Consultation in Relation to Themes & Issues

There was wide consultation with respect to the project with all Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) members.

Members of the Project Management Team attended an ASIC meeting in Canberra, presenting information in relation to the commitment and planning required to ensure success.

2.3.1.1 Consultation in Relation to Themes & Issues

As well as meeting with ASIC members formally at a scheduled meeting, Project Management Team members met with several ASIC members out of session to discuss all elements of the conference.

Active communication with ASIC was important to maintain the commitment and energy required to ensure all of the required objectives were met.

On a regular, often almost daily basis members of the Seafood Council (SA), Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) and the conference Steering Committee were consulted in relation to themes and issues. This level of communication and interaction is critical to ensure that the messages being conveyed by industry are the issues and actions being put in place by the Steering Committee and Project Management Team.

The Project Management Team found the most effective means of communication to be contacting industry members via phone for an instant response, with email also quite successful. Facsimiles were also used. Whilst responses and feedback were received it was felt that this form of communication often added to everyone's paper trail and tended to provide too much information at times.

2.3.2 Printed Materials

Printed materials are an integral part of any event. All of the printed material produced for Seafood Directions '99 followed a consistent theme.

Seafood Directions '99 produced the following materials:

- Stationery – letterhead and with compliments slips (3 000 copies)

All correspondence involved with the event was printed and sent out on this material. (Appendix 14.3)

- Stickers (25 000 stickers)

Stickers were used on every available piece of correspondence sent by the Project Management Team. The stickers were also used to seal the 18 000, hand folded, preliminary notification flyer. (Appendix 14.4)

- Preliminary notification flyer (18 000 flyers)

The preliminary notification flyer was an initial medium to promote the event by providing readers with basic information about the event as well as a slip to be returned registering their interest. (Appendix 14.5)

2.3.2 Printed Materials

- Sponsorship Prospectus (5 000 copies)

This document was circulated to a list of potential sponsors that had been generated. (Appendix 14.6)

- Registration Booklet (2 500 copies)

The Registration Booklet was extensively distributed nationally as well as being sent to all people who had registered a preliminary interest in attending the event. (Appendix 14.7)

- Conference Program (400 copies)

The Conference Program was produced for use by delegates during the event as well as a promotional tool to be distributed with media packages. (Appendix 14.7)

- Conference Proceedings (275 copies)

Conference Proceedings were compiled and produced. The document was sent to delegates, speakers and sponsors.

- Delegate Name Tags (300 name tags)

Nametags for conference delegates were on chords to be hung around the neck and colour coded to distinguish sectors and organisations.

- Delegate Satchels (275 satchels)

Satchels were selected according to the colour theme of the event, incorporating blue with the traditional black satchel. The satchels were printed with the appropriate logos and filled with inserts provided by sponsors.

- Seafood Directions '99 Caps (85 caps)

Seafood Directions '99 caps were produced to ensure that the Steering Committee and Project Management Team could wear them at all times ensuring they were highly visible to all delegates and speakers.

The caps were also produced as part of the speaker gift presentation as a memento of the inaugural event. A limited number of caps were also available for sale to delegates.

2.3.3 Web Site

A basic web site was developed for the national seafood industry conference primarily to provide initial information.

Budget limitations resulted in the site comprising of a home page with several links including to the web site of the state host. Using an already registered and operational domain name capitalised on the opportunity to have an electronic presence whilst working within budgetary guidelines.

The web site address was publicised extensively through all printed material in relation to the event.

The website provided brief information about the event and the major themes and issues. Comprehensive contact details for the Project Management Team were also available.

A comprehensive interactive site would have been preferable and basic site could be expanded upon in the future allowing for budgetary consideration.

2.4 Timeline and Gantt Chart

Timelines need to be developed as part of any project and in particular any event that involves so much time, effort and planning.

The Project Management Team developed a Gantt chart from the end of November 1999 through until mid October 1999 to prioritize tasks and monitor timeframes. (Appendix 14.8)

The Project Management Team referred to the original gantt chart and made modifications as needed when monitoring progress.

3 HOSTS

The hosts of an event such as a national conference are of extreme importance and vital to the success or failure of the event.

The inaugural, national seafood industry conference was a direct response by a request made by the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC). It was agreed by ASIC (for numerous reasons) that the Seafood Council (SA) would host this first event.

As hosts the Seafood Council (SA) were responsible for ensuring that the proposed conference met all of the specified aims and objectives as well as the industry's desired outcomes.

This included accountability for all facets involved with the development, planning and implementation of such an event.

It is understood the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation will host Seafood Directions 2001 and Western Australian Fishing Industry Council will host the event in 2003.

The designation of hosts for subsequent conferences is important to ensure adequate planning, continuity and the maximisation of benefits accrued from successive conferences.

3.1 The Role of the Hosts

The role of the hosts of a national seafood industry conference is:

- To provide guidance to the Steering Committee
- To provide guidance and instruction to the Project Management Team
- To take ownership of the event and all of the processes involved
- To be responsible for decisions made in relation to the event
- To support the project for the duration from start to finish

3.2 Australian Seafood Industry Council

The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) is the peak body representing the commercial sector of the Australian seafood industry.

ASIC identified the need to hold a national seafood industry conference on an ongoing basis. ASIC will host the biennial event in conjunction with state peak industry bodies.

3.2 Australian Seafood Industry Council

ASIC's mission statement is:

'Through industry leadership and representation, provide a single united voice for all sectors of the Australian seafood industry on national issues of importance to the industry.'

It is for this reason ASIC is located in Canberra – to be close to the seat of federal Government and the decision makers. However, it remains responsive to the interests of State, Territory and Commonwealth waters fishing operators and aquaculturalists.

The seafood industry is a dynamic industry, employing tens of thousands of people, supporting many local communities and making a significant contribution to the national economy.

3.3 Seafood Council (SA)

The Seafood Council (SA) Ltd is a voluntary funded seafood industry company, which represents all sectors of the commercial fishing and seafood industry in South Australia.

The Council's overriding aim is industry development and was established in August 1998 to meet the growing demand for development and industry promotion.

The Seafood Council (SA) has been established to provide development services to South Australian harvesters, sellers and producers of fish and seafood, and to work closely with other industry related organisations including training and government agencies for the benefit of the seafood industry and for South Australia.

The Seafood Council (SA) is located at Fishing Industry House in Port Adelaide.

The Council's main objectives are:

- To obtain secure access arrangements for the South Australian seafood industry
- To increase profitability of all members of the seafood industry by improving consumption of fish and seafood
- To support effective fisheries management in South Australia

The Council responds to development opportunities and advice from the SA Seafood Industry Development Board and other bodies that carry an industry development charter.

4 FUNDING

Funding is an extremely critical factor essential to the survival of the project, as without the necessary funding base the event would be destined to be nothing more than an ideal and no where near the presence of Seafood Directions '99.

Events such as a national conference are costly to execute, as there are many components involved.

A certain level of funding should be secured prior to significant allocation of resources and commitments being undertaken in relation to the project.

4.1 Sources of Funding

Sources of funding for an event such as an industry's national conference can be obtained from the public and private sectors.

It is possible to obtain funding through grants and applications at both state and federal levels within the public sector as well as specific industry institutions and service providers.

The private sector is a primary target for sponsorship.

4.1.1 Funding Applications

Funding applications need to be completed when applying for state and federal government funding. This also applies to any funding being sought from research and development providers, such as the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

The funding application submission process can take significant time and therefore needs a commitment early in the planning stage. It is advisable to apply for appropriate funding and grants as soon as possible due to the time it takes for the process and various rounds of funding to be finalised before either a positive or negative decision has been made.

Funding sources such as the FRDC may have rigid funding cycles with lead times up to one year. It is therefore important to identify funding sources as soon as possible and to find out about the prospective funding process.

4.1.1.1 Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

An extensive application was developed to apply for funding through FRDC. (Appendix 14.10)

The process of applying for funding through this organisation is a two tiered process with applications needing to be approved at state level prior to advancing to the Federal evaluation level in Canberra.

The preparation of the FRDC Application was very time consuming with continual liaison between ASIC, the Seafood Council (SA) and FRDC taking place.

The application was developed and edited for an extensive period of time to ensure that all sections of the application were adhered to and all information contained in the document was supportive of the overall aims and objectives.

4.1.1.2 Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA)

An official formal funding application to the South Australian Government's Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) was not submitted in relation to the Seafood Directions '99 project as funding had already been committed verbally to the event, on the condition that FRDC agreed to match the PIRSA contribution.

The significant contribution provided by FRDC was matched dollar for dollar by PIRSA. These funding commitments provided the seed funding for the inaugural event in South Australia.

The host state needs to enlist the support of their state fisheries department to build significant base support for the event.

4.1.2 Sponsorship

This is a funding source that requires unfaltering persistence and the ability to 'sell' the event to the corporate world as an investment with significant benefits to their organisation.

Acquiring sponsorship needs to be undertaken in a structured manner with a professional proposal being prepared with appropriate benefits.

Sponsorship for Seafood Directions 99 was most successful with organisations related to the seafood industry. Leads provided by industry members provided the greatest return on investment of time.

5 BUDGET

It is critical to the financial success of the project that budgets are continually monitored with reference to predictions and forecasts as well as cash flow. The budget needs to be reviewed on a fortnightly basis, and more frequently as the event draws closer.

5.1 Projected Income and Expenditure

In the initial stages of planning a budget must be prepared indicating the projected income and expenditure for the duration of the project.

Budget forecasting for the initial conference was quite difficult, as there was no precedent. The budget for the inaugural event will provide a reasonable starting point for future conference budgets.

The most effective way to begin this process is to list all potential income sources as well as all areas of expenditure. To ensure the initial budget is as accurate as possible it is imperative that quotes are obtained for as many lines of expenditure as possible so that the levels of income required to meet projected expenditure can be gauged.

A contingency line in the budget is essential to allow for unexpected expenses and the potential lack of income.

5.2 Actual Income and Expenditure

Actual income and expenditure indicates the true representation of the financial status of the project.

In comparison to the projected figures, the actual amounts can be tracked against the project cash flows to indicate areas of financial concern. This is a task that needs to be completed at regular intervals to maintain control of the financial situation of the project.

See Appendix 14.11 for of the actual and projected budget.

6 SPEAKERS

Speakers are a core component of an event particularly an industry national conference where the focal point is on the messages being conveyed by the invited speakers.

It is crucial that conference speakers are relevant to the issues and themes the event is focusing on so that delegates receive maximum value for money through the presentation of relevant information.

The themes and key messages need to be determined before any speakers are invited.

Speakers for Seafood Directions '99 were chosen on the basis that they were experts in the areas of key issues identified for the conference and that many of them were leaders in their field from overseas and around Australia.

It is crucial that at the outset of the project, criteria and guidelines are established in relation to the level of expenditure (such as travel and accommodation) that the project will incur for each invited speaker. It is recommended that where possible all speakers' costs be kept to a minimum.

6.1 Speaker Program

Wide spread industry consultation was undertaken when developing the speaker program. (Appendix 14.12)

The speaker program for Seafood Directions '99 was developed collaborately with ASIC, FRDC and the Seafood Council (SA). It is vital that speakers are individuals that industry members want to hear and that they find the information beneficial and applicable to their own specific situations.

It is essential that the speaker program offer a variety of speakers from around Australia as well as internationally recognised overseas presenters. It is preferable that keynote speakers have international experience to add to the appeal to potential delegates.

FRDC, due to the nature of its core business and being a major funding provider, may request that its relevant projects are presented as part of the speaker program.

6.2 Speaker Selection and Approach

The speaker selection and approach process is an integrated coordinated effort between industry members, representative bodies and the Project Management Team.

Speakers were generally approached through already established relationships, particularly with the speakers from around Australia. Overseas speakers were contacted via email, the internet and phone after initial research had been completed.

As soon as initial contact had been made in terms of an informal approach, speakers were formally contacted through a written invitation to participate.

6.3 Speaker Communication

The Seafood Directions '99 Project Management Team was responsible for all speaker communication and interaction prior to, and during the event.

Throughout the entire duration of the project, speakers were kept informed of the progress of the event.

The process involved:

- Letter inviting speakers to participate in the event
- Letter acknowledging and thanking the speaker for agreeing to participate
- Speaker Information Form
- Industry information packages including the Registration Brochure
- Welcome Letters upon arrival
- Letters of thanks after the event

Informal communication between speakers and the Project Management Team was by phone and email. Through this personal contact, aspects such as travel and accommodation, program changes and event procedure were discussed.

It is important that the contact with conference speakers is on going and thorough.

6.3.1 Speaker Travel & Accommodation

An official travel agency was appointed to coordinate all speaker travel and accommodation. Bunnik Travel liaised with the Project Management Team and handled all booking arrangements.

This service did not incur any expense for the conference or delegates and is strongly recommended as it allows the Project Management Team's time to be utilised effectively.

6.3.2 Speaker Gifts

All speakers were presented with gifts as a token of appreciation. The gift packs consisted of a red and white wine pack, which was donated by Woodstock Winery and a Seafood Directions 99 cap.

7 SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors and the resources they commit are a vital component of any major event.

There are two types of sponsorship: cash and in kind. Cash sponsorship is the most critical with the value of in-kind sponsorship always being less than the cash equivalent.

Seafood Directions '99's financial success was dependent upon the significant acquisition of cash sponsorship.

The Project Management Team had the responsibility of this task.

The sponsorship target was set at \$50,000 with the majority of sponsors being industry related organisations and companies.

7.1 Sponsorship Targets

Sponsorship is an integral part of an event, in terms of funding and is part of the overall financial success of the event. A significant level of sponsorship by recognised companies also provides credibility for an event.

During the early planning and implementation stages of the sponsorship process, specific cash and in kind targets need to be developed.

This target level was agreed upon between the Project Management Team and the Steering Committee during the initial process. Setting this level enabled the budget to be developed.

Ample lead time needs to be allowed to achieve sponsorship targets.

The longer the lead times for sponsorship acquisition the better.

7.2 Sponsorship Proposal

The Project Management Team and the Steering Committee developed a comprehensive sponsorship prospectus for circulation.

5000 copies of the prospectus were printed with 4867 being distributed nationally to potential sponsors in both the public and private sectors.

Four specific sponsorship categories were developed with specific benefits for each level in line with the level of monetary contribution.

7.2 Sponsorship Proposal

The levels of sponsorship were as follows:

Foundation Sponsor
\$ 10 000

Major Corporate Sponsor
\$ 7 500

Corporate Sponsor
\$ 5 000

Business Sponsor
\$ 2 500

7.3 Sponsorship Approach

A broad coordinated approach to sponsorship was undertaken.

Lists of potential sponsors were developed and various Project Management Team members were allocated target groups.

The process was long and on going with the rejections and letters of decline significantly out weighing positive responses. A positive outlook to feedback from those sent sponsorship proposals is critical, no matter what the response.

7.4 Sponsorship Reports

Accountability to sponsors is crucial and great attention was given to ensuring all promised sponsor benefits were delivered.

The Project Management Team worked to provide sponsorship reports as a form of recognition of sponsors' support and to illustrate value for money received.

It also illustrates to the corporate sector that the seafood industry is mature enough to engage in mutually beneficial sponsorship arrangements.

There were 22 Sponsorship Reports issued, one to each participating sponsor (both cash and in kind) within four weeks of the event.

Each report was a comprehensive account documenting the delivery of all benefits as outlined in the prospectus, plus providing examples of the print media exposure for the event.

7.4 Sponsorship Reports

Every report had a colour cover, which was professionally designed to enhance the overall look of each document. The reports were sent with a covering letter thanking the sponsors once again for their support and introducing the next conference and host organisation.

See Appendix 14.3 for an example.

8 REGISTRATION

Delegate registrations were an integral part of the event.

Seafood Directions '99 needed delegate registrations as a core component of:

- Projected income planning
- Actual income
- Delegate target numbers
- Wide spread industry representation and support

8.1 Registration Booklet

A comprehensive full colour registration booklet was designed and produced for the Seafood Directions '99 event.

The booklet was sent to potential delegates, (those who had already registered interest through the preliminary flyer), industry mailing lists and associations and other related industry bodies such as government departments.

The booklet contained the following information:

- Information about the conference management and all relevant contact details
- Information about the conference venue
- A general overview of the event
- Conference Program
- Keynote Speakers
- Poster session
- Conference Proceedings
- A full list of Sponsors
- Social Program which included the Tasting Australia – Feast for the Senses, Food and Wine Festival and the Seafood Soiree
- Travel and Accommodation Options and a detailed outline of the services offered by the officially appointed travel agency
- Delegate Companion Program and Tours
- General Registration Information & Costs
- Registration Form

There were 2500 registration brochures printed with approximately 2250 circulated across the state, nationally and internationally.

8.2 Registration System

Seafood Directions '99 implemented a registrations system to compile information and monitor the payment process.

The system was extremely effective and worked to the following procedure:

- Delegates complete Registration Form as per the registration booklet
- Form is returned to the Project Management Team with payment
- Payment is processed
- Delegate receives confirmation of payment and registration
- Delegate data is entered into the Microsoft Access Database
- Delegate is then registered

The registration system was linked to name badge production and ticket allocation for social functions. There was one central source of relevant information that could be easily accessed by the Project Management Team. It is important that the Management Team is familiar with whatever data system is used.

There was considerable work involved in establishing the database for the conference as there was little consolidated data available at the start of the project.

8.3 Delegate Data

A delegate database was formulated as a result of the information received on all Seafood Directions '99 Registration Forms.

Microsoft Access Software was used to formulate a delegate database and store the information for future use.

This database was more than just an information source for personal details but a record of delegates and their payment details. It is advised that as soon as registrations are received that they are entered into the database in order to prevent a backlog of data entry.

The database can then be used as a permanent record and be built upon in the future. It has been discovered during the duration of this project that a comprehensive industry database in Australia does not truly exist and this template can be the beginning of this record of data.

8.3.1 Delegate Travel

Delegates were encouraged to use the services of Bunnik Travel as they were able to offer cheaper travel and accommodation rates.

9 VENUE

An appropriate venue is of extreme importance to the event. The physical location for the event adds to the overall appeal of the package being offered.

It is also important to compare several venues against specific criteria.

Criteria for selection of an appropriate venue include:

- State of the art five star facilities
- Audio visual facilities
- Accommodation availability
- Additional meeting room availability
- Professional and efficient service
- Flexibility and negotiation options
- Reputation of the facility for similar events and appeal with target groups
- Cost of hire of venue, accommodation etc

Any other requirements become a little more specific and are related to personal preference and aesthetic attributes, which ultimately are the choice of the host organisation.

9.1 Venue Selection

The selection of an appropriate venue for the event that fulfills all of the basic prerequisites is very important.

The selection is a process of elimination that can only take place after all of the potential venue options are visited and the facilities assessed.

The Seafood Directions '99 project listed four potential venue options and visited each one before deciding upon a final location.

9.2 Venue Liaison

Once the venue location has been decided upon and a booking confirmed the Project Management Team needs to meet with the appropriate venue personnel to discuss all of the event's requirements in detail.

It is extremely important to establish a good working relationship with the venue hosting your event which includes maintaining communication throughout the planning process with the venue's specific point of contact.

9.2 Venue Liaison

The venue should supply a detailed information package outlining all of the options on offer to the event as well as preliminary event order and menus. All arrangements need to be confirmed in writing.

The investment in the venue is significant considering the amount of money for the hire of the facility as well as the revenue from guests requiring accommodation. It is therefore imperative that value for money is received. All venues considered for Seafood Directions 99 offered free rooms for a certain number of accommodation bookings from delegates.

The Project Management Team spoke to their venue contact weekly up until the month prior to the event and then almost on a daily basis until the event itself. Visits on site at the venue occurred several times during the months leading up to the event, ensuring that all parties were clear on each other's expectations.

See Appendix 14.4 for Venue Brochure and Event Order.

10 THE EVENT

Seafood Directions '99 took many months of planning and was all over in a matter of a few days.

10.1 General Housekeeping

Each day of the event any 'general housekeeping' issues were addressed. An industry spokesperson was elected to handle this process by addressing the delegates at the beginning of each day.

10.1.1 Registration Desk

The registration desk is the central hub of activity and information at any conference.

Delegates register their attendance, satchels are received and outstanding questions are answered.

Seafood Directions '99 was an event with approximately 250 delegates. In order for the registration desk to be adequately manned by the Project Management Team there needed to be three experienced people greeting delegates and speakers during the peak registration periods.

The computer housing the Microsoft Access delegate database was set up at the conference venue to ensure information could be retrieved at any time, records up dated and additional materials printed.

The registration desk was busiest early in the morning and during all breaks. A Project Management Team member was stationed at the registration desk constantly throughout the duration of the event. It is very important to have this area attended at all times to answer questions or provide information to speakers or delegates.

10.2 Conference Program

The Seafood Directions '99 Conference Program was a detailed document provided to all delegates in their conference satchels.

Persistence and long lead times was required when following up requests for abstracts from speakers.

The Conference Program featured:

- General Information, including contact details for the Project Management Team
- Official Welcome
- Social Program Details
- Official Conference Program
- Photographs of all Speakers
- Abstracts from all Speakers in relation to their Presentations
- Acknowledgments
- Information about the Event Hosts
- Sponsorship Information (logo and text submitted by each sponsor)
- Venue map

400 copies of the document were produced with almost all programs were distributed throughout the conference.

The program book as well as being an information source for delegates was distributed as part of a media pack sent to media outlets nationally and internationally.

10.3 Social Program

A social program is an important aspect of the overall event.

Seafood Directions '99 developed a comprehensive social program to cater for the needs of all delegates. Each social function had particular relevance to the conference and gave delegates a variety of options to choose from.

The social functions offered were:

- Welcome Industry Cocktail Party
- Seafood Directions '99 Conference Dinner
- Seafood Soiree
- Tasting Australia – Feast for the Senses 'Seafood Pavilion'

10.3 Social Program

During the initial stages of planning for Seafood Directions '99 a National Industry Awards Dinner was discussed but due to lack of resources and overall industry support this concept has been postponed to perhaps Seafood Directions 2001.

11 MEDIA

The media is an important element if the conference is going to gain wide spread exposure.

Both print and broadcast media were targeted for potential coverage through issuing media releases and possible story leads.

Unless the budget allows for paid advertising there are never any guarantees that coverage will be gained.

A strategy needs to be implemented when dealing with the media for the duration of the project to ensure that the potential for maximum coverage is gained prior, during and after the event.

11.1 Media Releases

Media releases were formulated and distributed at three distinct periods in relation to the event.

- The Launch of the Event
- Prior to the Event
- After the Event

The media releases were circulated for approval before they were released.

A media launch was scheduled three months prior to the event to raise awareness amongst industry members and the wider community.

A total of 156 media releases were sent intrastate, nationally and internationally to all forms of media notifying them of the inaugural event. These included print, broadcast and industry publications.

A list of media outlets is included in Appendix 14.5.

Copies of the media releases are included in the Appendix 14.6.

11.2 Media Packs

Media Packs were developed and accompanied media releases at various times throughout the duration of the project.

A media pack is included in Appendix 14.7.

11.3 Media Coverage

Media coverage is vital to ensuring that not only the industry involved in the project is aware of the event but also the general wider community.

Seafood Directions '99 gained extensive media coverage. Budget restrictions did not allow for independent media monitoring, therefore the record of media achieved relied on internal monitoring.

A full copy of media coverage is included in the example sponsorship report Appendix 14.13.

12 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The Conference Proceedings document provides a record of the events, as well lists any actions that need to be addressed in the future.

The document is a reference and information source.

The final record can be used also as a promotional tool in the future illustrating the achievement of industry. The proceedings should be circulated as extensively as possible.

The Seafood Directions '99 Conference Proceedings were distributed to all delegates, speakers and sponsors.

12.1 Speaker Papers

It was requested that all participating speakers provide a written paper of their presentation at the event.

Delegates, speakers and sponsors alike can then constantly refer back to the information shared at the time.

On accepting an invitation to speak at the conference, speakers were asked to complete and return a speaker information form which, when signed meant that the speaker agreed to abide by specified conditions, including the provision of a written document of their presentation at the event.

12.2 Information Compilation and Design

All speakers were sent a letter after the conference thanking them for their participation once again as well as requesting the submission of their paper electronically.

A style sheet was included in this correspondence so that all submitted documents would be formatted to a standard template to save time and further design work when compiling the final draft.

The communication was followed up with emails and phone calls requesting paper submissions. To avoid (or minimise) this time consuming task it is recommended that the style sheet for paper formats is circulated before the event and speakers are asked to hand their paper in at the end of the conference.

If a paper was not supplied then the abstract previously submitted was included with speaker contact details in the conference proceedings.

12.2 Information Compilation and Design

All of the compiled information was forwarded to a graphic designer for final formatting and layout. The proceedings featured the speaker's papers, the speaker's take home messages, the future action list, as well as delegate and sponsors' names.

A draft was circulated to appropriate industry bodies, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation as a funding provider and the Seafood Council (SA) as a host for comments and feedback before being sent to print.

12.3 Final Document

The Conference Proceedings final document will be used as a point of reference for the information that was shared at the inaugural event.

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 provided a significant opportunity for the industry to determine directions at a national level, for a more sustainable future.

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 was a major step in the growth and development of this significant industry. Speakers delivered meaningful messages to delegates on the key issues of Access Security, the Environment, Industry Profile and Quality.

The speakers' papers contained in the proceedings will provide a wealth of information on these important industry matters.

From a review in the final session of SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 a charter for future actions was determined for a whole-of-industry approach at a national level. The 'take – home' messages from all speakers plus the list of future actions are included at the end of the speakers' papers in the conference proceedings.

A copy of the document is included in Appendix 14.19.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

Seafood Directions '99 was a learning experience and for an inaugural event has been described as a great success, establishing the foundation for the future.

The event would not have happened without the hard work of a dedicated team. The countless hours committed to making this event happen is too many to calculate.

The following recommendations have been made for the event in 2001. These recommendations have been developed so that the process that occurred at Seafood Directions '99 can be improved upon.

It is strongly recommended that a comprehensive checklist be developed for future project managers of the event as well as a policy and procedures manual.

Recommendations are as follows:

13.1 Introduction

- Following the successful establishment of the initial event it is recommended that national industry conferences continue and that the host state for the next two conferences are agreed upon on advance
- Aims and objectives need to be reviewed constantly and ratified by ASIC 18 months prior to each conference
- The direct benefits from holding national industry conferences need to be reviewed for relevance and modified if necessary
- The opportunity for public interface with industry needs to be expanded

13.2 Planning

- Timeframes need to be as long as possible. Planning should be greatly assisted by the use of the manual, including reference materials
- Steering Committee election/formation should occur 18 months prior to the event
- ASIC needs to develop Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee which includes roles, responsibilities and outcomes
- Minutes of Steering Committee meetings need to be circulated to ASIC Board members and other identified key stakeholders
- There needs to be local champions who will drive the industry support on a state level and a mechanism where industry at a national level has ownership and commitment. The national drivers may or may not be the ASIC Board
- The Project Management Team needs to be put in place as soon as the Steering Committee is formed
- The Project Management Team needs to be made up of professionals with specific expertise who possess a diverse and specific range of skills as well as:
 - Excellent interpersonal skills – the ability to liaise with industry
 - An understanding of the seafood industry
 - The ability to follow checklists and manage processes and procedures, within defined deadlines and budget constraints
 - The ability to work unsupervised
 - The ability to manage a cashflow budget
- It is highly recommended that the name and logo be used on an ongoing basis.

13.2 Planning

- Themes need to be developed for each conference according to the issues facing the industry at the time
- Wide spread consultation to ensure themes and issues are relevant to industry needs to occur
- A high professional standard needs to be maintained with all printed materials, where themes and logo are included
- A web site (if budget permits) could be further expanded to allow electronic registration as well as a more interactive platform for the event
- The web site offers the opportunity for the Conference Proceedings to be produced for electronic access via the web site

13.3 Hosts

- The role of the host should be formalised with a list of specific duties and expectations
- ASIC should develop proforma lists of duties and expectations for:
 - Host
 - Steering Committee
 - Project Management Team(There needs to be an allowance for some flexibility in relation to local situations and strategic opportunities)

13.4 Funding

- Funding needs to be applied for as soon as a host has been named and a Steering Committee formed
- Hosts need to strategically approach their state government for financial support

13.5 Budget

- A budget needs to be developed as soon as a Steering Committee is formed, based on previous conference budgets
- Budget reports need to be prepared monthly for budget projections, costs and cash flow

13.6 Speakers

- Potential speakers need to be identified as soon as the relevant issues have been identified by the Steering Committee following extensive consultation
- The Steering Committee needs to develop a policy on speaker payment and reimbursement before speakers are approached
- Speakers need to be clear of the commitment their acceptance to speak entails eg abstract and paper submissions and timeframes
- It is strongly recommended that speakers be asked well in advance to provide the electronic copy of their final paper following their presentation.

13.7 Sponsorship

- Sponsors from previous conferences are given first right of refusal on sponsorship
- Sponsorship is sought as soon as the Steering Committee has been formed
- Sponsorship targets need to be set in relation to budget projections
- Adequate and professional resources need to be allocated to sponsorship acquisition and servicing
- Industry contacts need to be approached to provide leads and opportunities

13.8 Registration

- It is strongly recommended that an experienced travel agency handle speaker travel and accommodation as well as delegate tour and travel arrangements

13.9 Venue

- Need to select a professional venue with suitable facilities
- There needs to be a comparison of costs across a series of suitable venues

13.10 The Event

- An appropriate person needs to be appointed Master of Ceremonies for the duration of the conference
- Briefing notes need to be prepared for all session chairs
- Running sheets need to be prepared for specific social events in the program
- An audio visual schedule needs to be prepared
- There needs to be close liaison with the audio visual supplier prior and during the event
- Speakers need to have the opportunity to check their AV before they speak
- Further consideration should be given to a National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner to be held in conjunction with the conference

13.11 Media

- It is recommended that additional resources be allocated to a dedicated media person
- Media coverage can have a negative impact on the conference or more likely on the industry over matters such as environmental sustainability. A contingency plan needs to be developed to cope with such situations.

13.12 Conference Proceedings

- At the time of preparation of this manual the Conference Proceedings had not been distributed and it is suggested that feedback is gathered on the Proceedings by the next Steering Committee/Project Management Team