

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99

The Inaugural Bi-ennial National Seafood Industry Conference

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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**

FINAL REPORT

Project No. 99/340

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

99/340 SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 Australian Seafood Industry National Conference
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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

While the Australian Seafood Industry is valued in excess of \$2bn, there has never been a national seafood conference in Australia. During 1998, the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) recognised that a conference would provide opportunities for industry to showcase its advances in recent years, particularly in quality, training, environmental performance and the institutional framework for efficient fisheries management.

It was recognised that a national conference with an international profile would also be an opportunity to promote domestic consumption of Australian seafood by highlighting the quality and health benefits of the products.

During 1998 the South Australian Seafood Industry Development Board was also expressing interest in holding a seafood conference in South Australia in 1999. The two concepts were brought together and the South Australian Government, through the Seafood Industry Development Board, pledged \$50,000 to support a national seafood industry conference in Adelaide in 1999. This commitment was made on the condition that the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) match the pledge.

In late 1998, the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) awarded the right to hold the inaugural National Seafood Industry Conference to the newly established South Australian seafood industry body, the Seafood Council (SA) Ltd. In recognition of the advantages gained from hosting a national industry conference, ASIC and the Seafood Council (SA) formed a partnership to progress and manage the conference.

Timing of the event was organised to coincide with Tasting Australia, a major bi-ennial food promotion to be held during October 1999. The natural synergy between holding the conference followed by a significant presence at Tasting Australia offered significant marketing and profiling opportunities to overseas and interstate buyers, international media and approximately 40,000 consumers who were expected to attend the event.

Theme

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. The theme was then decided as "Directions '99", to reflect the required industry outcomes of setting directions for the future.

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.

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.

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.

The progress made towards acting on conference recommendations will be assessed at SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS 2001 to be held in Brisbane, hosted by the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation.

Background:

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. Such conferences offer an ideal environment for mixing between fisheries and for managers and researchers to mix with fishers.

In 1998, the seafood industry in Australia was yet to hold a national industry conference.

Need:

The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) identified the need to hold a 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.

The need for a national industry conference has been previously identified as a priority, in the FRDC Report on People Development in the Seafood Industry by Miriam O'Brien.

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.

Need:

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

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 identified at the start of the program.

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

Specific aims in holding the national conference were:

- 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

Objectives:

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

Methods:***Steering Committee***

To oversee the planning, development and management of the conference a steering committee was established comprising representatives of all key stakeholder groups. The steering committee membership was:

- Terry Moran
Australian Seafood Industry Council
- Jim Raptis
Seafood Council (SA)
- Steve Hinge
Seafood Council (SA)
- Will Zacharin
Primary Industries & Resources SA
- Hagen Stehr AO
Australian Fisheries Academy
- Bob Pennington
South Australian Fishing Industry Council
- Project Management Team

The role of Steering Committee was:

- 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

Project Management Team

The Project Management Team reported to the steering committee through the Professional Conference Organiser.

Printed Materials

In order to promote and publicise the conference, 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Sponsorship Prospectus (5 000 copies)
This document was circulated to a list of potential sponsors that had been generated.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.

Web Site

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

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

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.

Results:

Sponsors

The success of the conference was made possible through the support of key sponsors. The Fisheries Research & Development Corporation and Primary Industries & Resources South Australia were the major supporting sponsors providing the impetus for further sponsor support.

The following were all attracted as sponsors through distribution of a sponsorship proposal nationally and internationally.

Seafood Services Australia
Melbourne Wholesale Fish Markets
Jack Minklis Pty Ltd
R.F. McLaughlin & Consolidated Fishermen
Racovolis Pty Ltd

Malaysia Airlines
Spencer Gulf & West Coast Prawn Fishermen's Association
Department of Industry & Trade (SA)
SA Rock Lobster Industry

Abalone Industry Association of South Australia
Australian Fisheries Academy
Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry Australia
Australian Maritime College
Western Australian Fishing Industry Council
Austral Fisheries
Baird Publications
Environment Australia
Kendell Airlines

A. Raptis & Sons in conjunction with Jarmers Restaurant
Prawn Industry SA & SA Rock Lobster Industry in conjunction with Radisson Playford Hotel
Tastes of Tropical North Queensland
Trade Displays

Northern Territory Seafood Industry
Primary Industries & Resources SA
Prawn Industry SA
SA Rock Lobster Industry
Australian Tuna Boat Owners Association
Australian Fisheries Academy
Australian Prawn Promotion Association
Seafood Industry Victoria
Western Australian Fishing Industry Council
Queensland Commercial Fishermens Organisation
Seafood Services Australia
Eyre Peninsula Tourism Association
Northern Territory Seafood Industry Council

Public Relations

The event generated considerable media coverage, primarily within the print media.
Refer to Appendix 2.

Budget

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS '99 was originally designed as a breakeven event, and not a profit-making venture.

The areas where large variations from budget occurred were as follows:

- > Registration fees were down on budget
- > Sponsorship was up on budget
- > Speaker travel exceeded budgeted amount

Final financial statement is as follows.

Benefits:

The benefits provided by the conference include:

- Development of a report highlighting the key issues facing industry over the coming five years
- Obtaining commitment from key stakeholders to progress the issues during the coming five years
- Commitment to making the conference into a bi-ennial event
- Production of a conference manual to support future events
- 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

The public benefited from:

- Exposure to industry and seafood products
- Increased awareness through media coverage on a range of issues

Further Development:

Industry leaders met during the event to discuss future activities. It was agreed that a national conference should be held biennially to monitor outcomes of past events and plan for the future. It was recommended that this initiative be supported.

Conclusion:

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 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:

- 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