ESTABLISHMENT OF SEAFOOD SERVICES AUSTRALIA
Stage One: Seafood quality management and seafood safety (SeaQual Australia)

Jayne Gallagher
Ted Loveday

FISHERIES
RESEARCH &
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

Catching Fish for Everyone!
QSIA
QUEENSLAND SEAFOOD
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION INC

AUSTRALIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY COUNCIL

FRDC Project No: 99/357

ESTABLISHMENT OF SEAFOOD SERVICES AUSTRALIA
Stage One: Seafood quality management and seafood safety (SeaQual Australia)
Final Report
May 2003

Contents

99/357	ESTABLISHMENT OF SEAFOOD SERVICES AUSTRALIA Stage One: Seafood quality management and seafood safety (SeaQual Australia)

Principal Investigator: Mr Ted Loveday
Address: Seafood Services Australia
15 Hercules St
HAMILTON   Qld   4007
Ph: (07) 3633 6777
Fax: (07) 3633 6776

OBJECTIVES

- Establish SeaQual Australia (SeaQual Stage 2) and State SeaQuals in each State and the Northern Territory
- Implement the "Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence" (SISPASE) with a high priority on Food Safety and Quality Management
- Establish Seafood Services Australia: delivery of cost effective, competitively priced, seafood post harvest services through the integration of new and existing services (including SeaQual Australia) under one centre.

1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

FRDC Project 99/357 established processes and mechanisms to ensure that standards can be developed throughout all sectors of the seafood industry. These functions are relevant, workable and industry driven, whilst also meeting the requirements of relevant government agencies and importantly customers. This in turn is recognised as critical to establishing a secure and certain future for the seafood industry and maximising the benefits available from the sustainable utilisation of Australia's fisheries resources.

One particular benefit for the seafood industry, achieved through this project, is the recognition that the industry is receiving from governments here and overseas for the leadership being shown in relation to addressing critical industry development issues. Such recognition provides improved access to investment and industry development opportunities, to both the overall seafood industry and individual enterprises.

The work of this project will continue through Seafood Services Australia Ltd. SSA Ltd has a clear mandate to act as a catalyst for seafood industry development and to assist the industry to achieve its vision of being internationally competitive, sustainable and resilient.

In 1998 the Queensland Commercial Fishermens Organisation (QCFO) responded, on behalf of the Australian Seafood Industry Council, to FRDC's *Request for R&D Funding Applications to Undertake the Development of a National Approach to Seafood Quality – SeaQual Australia: Stage 2*. The proposal identified SeaQual as the platform from which enhanced coordination and synergies were to be achieved in the post harvest and value adding sectors of the Australian seafood industry. QCFO's application was successful.

The vision was to have an organisation focused primarily on seafood industry development – a gap identified in the Meyers Report that resulted from a review (commissioned by FRDC) of the SeaQual project. The major output of the project was to create a single entity to manage three FRDC funded projects (known as SeaQual, National Seafood Centre and AUSEAS) as well as to coordinate other initiatives in relation to industry development.

The establishment of SSA was considered to be critical to the industry's capacity to manage the plethora of food safety and quality initiatives which were clearly embedded on the agendas of regulators such as ANZFA, State Health departments etc. An emerging issue at this time was the need to assist industry in meeting community and government requirements to demonstrate responsible environmental management.

In undertaking the project Queensland Seafood Industry Association (formerly QCFO), QSIA, ensured that all States were empowered to:
- develop complementary processes to manage industry development issues at the State level, and
- to provide input to the development of national industry standards promoting the adoption of world's best practice.
The major vehicle for this was the SSA Network, which continues to gain strong support as a forum for debate and resolution of issues.

The project achieved all of its objectives and more, by furthering the information and capacity building work undertaken by SeaQual Stage 1 and gradually incorporating a number of functions and responsibilities previously undertaken by FRDC Projects 2000/400 (National Seafood Centre) and 2000/240 (AUSEAS).

A large number of products and publications were released by both SeaQual Stage 1 and SSA over the three years. All publications are included as attachments to the report and can be purchased directly from Seafood Services Australia or one of their agents (see www.seafoodservices.com.au/bookshop).

In October 2001, a major milestone was achieved with the establishment of Seafood Services Australia Ltd. Initial membership comprised FRDC and ASIC. In December 2001, SSA Ltd assumed management responsibility (from QSIA) for completion of FRDC project 99/357. This was managed under the direction of a seven member board, as a company limited by guarantee.

SSA Ltd was established with a clear mandate to act as a catalyst for seafood industry development. SSA Ltd will continue the work undertaken through FRDC Project 99/357 and ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to industry and government needs.

Keywords: Industry development, quality management, food safety, environmental management systems

2.   Acknowledgements

Seafood Services Australia would like to acknowledge the following organisations which contributed (financially and in kind) to the successful completion of this project:

- Queensland Seafood Industry Association
- Australian Seafood Industry Council and member organisations
- Queensland Government (including the Queensland Fisheries Service, the Centre for Food Technology and the Department of Primary Industries)
- Seafood Training Australia and member organisations (in particular Seafood Training Queensland)
- Fisheries Western Australia (Seafood Quality Management Initiative)
- National Aquaculture Council
- Seafood Importers Association of Australia

3.   Background

SeaQual was established in late 1995 as a partnership between FRDC (formerly the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy) and the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) to assist the seafood industry address quality issues. By completion in October 1998, this project was successful in achieving all of its objectives and more. A copy of the final report for SeaQual Stage 1 can be obtained from Seafood Services Australia Ltd.

In June 1998 the FRDC Board approved interim funding which enabled SeaQual to continue work between November 1998 and March 1999. Subsequently, FRDC commissioned a review and commenced development of a business plan to evaluate and justify the possibility of continued investment in SeaQual. The Meyers Review (undertaken by the Meyers Strategy Group) was generally positive and identified a number of areas to justify FRDC's continued involvement. A business plan outlining the basis for continued investment in SeaQual was presented to the FRDC Board in October 1998. It was recommended that FRDC continue to fund (in partnership with industry and government) SeaQual as part of a larger "centre" which integrated other FRDC post harvest activities particularly the National Seafood Centre (NSC) and the Australian Seafood Extension and Advisory Service (AUSEAS).

Tenders were called from parties interested in establishing the "Centre". A consultative meeting was convened and sponsored by the Queensland Commercial Fishing Organisation (QCFO) to discuss a Queensland based proposal to establish the "Centre" by co-locating SeaQual with the NSC and AUSEAS at the Centre for Food Technology in Brisbane. This proposal was supported by ASIC and member organisations. The subsequent QCFO proposal submitted to FRDC was approved.

4.   Need

Industry and governments throughout Australia recognise the need to support the continued growth of an internationally competitive sustainable seafood industry. The operating environment is in a state of constant change as it moves to one of increased industry self regulation and responsibility. The development of industry standards (accepted nationally and internationally) incorporating food safety, quality and environmental management elements provide an opportunity for the industry to drive necessary change to meet the challenges of achieving sustainable industry development.

The Queensland workshop conducted during the development of the project proposal identified a critical need for SeaQual Stage 2 to provide immediate benefits to all States. This would be achieved by providing key linkages with agencies responsible for food regulation and by networking the State based "SeaQual" operations (Objective 1 meets this need).

SeaQual Stage 1 produced the Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence (SISPASE). The plan identified actions and responsibilities for government and industry stakeholders. In addition, it provided a strategic framework for the food safety and quality work to be undertaken by SeaQual Stage 2 operating as part of the "Australian Seafood Centre" (Objective 2 meets this need).

With many industry development initiatives at State and National level, it was identified that there were significant opportunities for achieving bigger and faster impact through better networking and integration. Capabilities proposed to be brought together under one "Centre" would provide the impetus and structure to develop and manage the adoption of nationally consistent industry standards. The "Centre" would also meet a need to provide coordinated products and services to all stakeholders, both government and industry (Objective 3 meets this need).

5. Project Objectives

5.1. Objective 1

Establish SeaQual Australia (SeaQual Stage 2) and State SeaQuals in each State and the Northern Territory

5.2. Objective 2

Implement the "Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence" (SISPASE) with a high priority on Food Safety and Quality Management

5.3. Objective 3

Establish Seafood Services Australia: delivery of cost effective competitively paced seafood post harvest services through the integration of new and existing services (including SeaQual Australia) under one centre

6. Methods

6.1. Establishing State Based Organisations

Establish SeaQual Australia (SeaQual Stage 2) and State SeaQuals in each State and the Northern Territory

A key function of the project was to empower and build capacity at the State level to deal with food safety and quality management issues. Funding was provided to assist States in developing an organisation suitable to particular circumstances and needs. Seminars were planned for each State to explain the objectives of the project and how people could get involved.

6.2. Implementing the Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence

Implement the "Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence" (SISPASE) with a high priority on Food Safety and Quality Management

SeaQual and other relevant SSA staff were to undertake and manage a number of activities designed to achieve the food safety and quality goals described in the SISPASE. The methods to achieve this objective are detailed in the SeaQual Operational Plan 1999/2000 (Attachment 1) and SSA Operational Plans 2000 and 2001 (Attachments 2 and 3 respectively).

6.3. Establishing Seafood Services Australia

Establish Seafood Services Australia: delivery of cost effective competitively paced seafood post harvest services through the integration of new and existing services (including SeaQual Australia) under one centre

The methodology to be used to achieve this objective was outlined in the proposal "Establishment of the Australian Seafood Centre". A summary of the proposed approach is provided (Attachment 4).

Achievement of this objective would be dependent on co-investigators of this project and PIs of other projects (NSC and AUSEAS) meeting their agreed commitments. The PI for this project was to ensure that those commitments were met and that the formation of the "Centre" was based on a sound understanding of the capabilities needed to deliver the services and products demanded by seafood industry stakeholders.

A promotions strategy would be implemented announcing the formation of the "Centre" and its capabilities. This strategy was to be furthered by developing and implementing a longer term communications strategy to disseminate information to stakeholders about the progress in establishing the "Centre" and to gain support and commitment.

It was recognised that ASIC was a key stakeholder and that mechanisms should be developed to ensure it could continue to contribute to the overall development of the "Centre" and also reporting on progress. The PI for the project was the QCFO President, Mr Ted Loveday. Management of the project by QCFO (later QSIA) ensured the continual involvement of and direction by the Australian Seafood Industry Council.

SeaQual Australia was to be relocated to Brisbane and housed in the same building as the National Seafood Centre and AUSEAS. SeaQual Manager, Ms Jayne Gallagher was to be retained to assist the transition from SeaQual Stage 1 to SeaQual Stage 2. A SeaQual Project Officer was to be employed to assist the SeaQual Manager undertake activities associated with implementing the SISPASE. FRDC was involved in the selection of SeaQual staff.

Initial funding for the project would be provided by FRDC, industry cash contributions, and in kind contributions from Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation and

the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. Opportunities for securing funding from other sources were to be investigated. An annual outcomes based budget was submitted to the FRDC Board with annual budget items justified and variations to the budget (as detailed in the project agreement) highlighted.

6.4. Changes to Original Methods

6.4.1. Strategic Guidance

An Advisory Board was to be established with membership to be based on a selection process involving ASIC and FRDC to ensure that the mix of skills and knowledge could provide strategic guidance to the PI in establishing the "Centre". This did not happen due to unresolved issues regarding accountability and responsibilities of the proposed members of the Board.

Meyers Strategy Group was to progressively identify options for increasing the capabilities of the "Centre" and was to provide advice to the Advisory Board through the PI. The contract with Meyers Strategy Group was terminated in late 1999 as it was evident that the pace at which the transition to the "Centre" was to occur would be slower than first thought and that the strategic advice required had changed as the project progressed. The project had established links and consultative mechanisms, in particular the SSA Network, to capture the sort of strategic advice needed to successfully establish the "centre".

In addition the PI, Co investigators and SSA Staff became more directly involved in achieving the commitment needed to support the "Centre" than was originally envisaged.

Funds allocated to the Advisory Board and the Meyers contracts were reallocated to supporting the SSA Network.

6.4.2. Project Contract Variations

There were a three contract variations during the project:

Quality Library

The Quality Library Project being undertaken by AUSEAS was terminated by FRDC. QDPI sub-contracted SSA (FRDC 99/357) to complete the project and publish the output by incorporating an annotated bibliography in the quality inventory. The resources purchased as part of the Quality Library project were to be transferred to SSA Ltd.

Product and Process Development

Under a project variation approved in September 2001, SSA assumed responsibility for delivery of services under the former project *2000/400 Seafood Services Australia: product and process development* that had been previously contracted to Queensland Department of Primary Industries until the end of August 2001. The new Seafood Industry Development Fund, launched at Seafood Directions 2001, became the principal mechanism through which these services and activities were to be delivered.

Project Applicant

The contract between FRDC and the QSIA in relation to project *99/357: Establishing Seafood Services Australia*, was transferred to SSA Ltd in December 2001, making SSA responsible for the final delivery of the project objectives.

7. Results/Discussion

7.1. Establishing State Based Organisations

Objective 1: Establish SeaQual Australia (SeaQual Stage 2) and State SeaQuals in each State and the Northern Territory

This objective was achieved.

A priority activity at the commencement of the project was the development of State based organisations to implement food safety and quality initiatives at the local level and to provide State based input to the further development of SSA. Work towards achieving this objective started while the existing project (SeaQual Stage 1) was finalised. The name "State SeaQuals" was dropped during the project as it became clear that the name of the State based organisation, as well as the terms of reference for it, was for each state to decide.

By April 2000, SSA was able to establish key contacts in each State and with national industry bodies to enable the achievement of Objective 1 and to assist with the achievements of other project objectives and milestones. Key outputs for this objective are:

7.1.1. SSA linkages with State and National industry Organisations

SSA established linkages with industry organisations in all States and Territories as well as with national industry organisations. These linkages are listed below.

Each State was asked to nominate one member from that State to attend SSA Network meetings. SSA outlined expectations in a letter and invited each State to advise of their particular aims and objectives in relation to SSA. This was a stimulus for achieving cross industry communication in each State and formed the basis for a State based network (State based SeaQual).

Groups which are sponsored to attend the SSA Network meetings are indicated in bold italics below.

Queensland

Queensland Seafood Industry Association
Queensland Seafood Marketers Association
Queensland Aquaculture Council

New South Wales

Master Fish Merchants of Australia

Ocean Watch Australia
NSW Seafood Industry Council
Sydney Fish Market

Victoria

Seafood Industry Victoria
Victorian Aquaculture Council
Seafood Services Victoria
Seafood Training Victoria

Tasmania

Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council
Tasmanian Aquaculture Council

South Australia

South Australian Fishing Industry Council
Seafood Council (SA)

Western Australia

Western Australian Fishing Industry Council
Aquaculture Council of Western Australia

Northern Territory

Seafood Council Northern Territory

National

Australian Seafood Industry Council
Seafood Training Australia
National Aquaculture Council
Seafood Importers of Australia
Australian Prawn Farmers Association
Australian Barramundi Farmers Association

7.1.2. Establishment of the SSA Network

A project advisory committee, comprised of members from each "State SeaQual" and national industry representative organisations, was envisaged in the original project proposal. During the first year of SSA's operation it was clear that an inclusive process was needed to provide an open and informed forum for debate and discussion. This forum became known as the SSA Network and support was provided for through the project to enable industry members (the original proposed membership for the advisory committee) to attend.

The SSA network has continued to gain momentum with meetings now being held up to three times per year. Approximately 30 to 40 people routinely attend the meetings (most at their own expense) which are held in different locations around Australia. Emphasis is now being placed on getting local industry members to attend the meetings when they are held in their state.

The agenda of these meetings is constantly being expanded such that more recently ad hoc working groups have been formed to address specific areas. SSA also funds industry attendance and participation in these working groups

Meetings of the SSA Network were held as follows:

April 2000	Brisbane
August 2000	Brisbane
December 2000	Sydney
March 2001	Melbourne
August 2001	Adelaide
November 2001	Brisbane
April 2002	Canberra
June 2002	Sydney

7.2. Implementing the Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence

Objective 2: Implement the "Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence" (SISPASE) with a high priority on Food Safety and Quality Management

This objective was achieved. The following section provides detailed achievements for each of the 5 elements of the SISPASE.

7.2.1. Food Safety

Food safety was a key focus for a number of activities undertaken by project staff over the past three years. Much of this work has been recognised nationally and internationally as providing leadership in relation to assisting seafood industry members to understand and comply with their food safety responsibilities.

The SISPASE objective in relation to food safety was:

To ensure continued viability of the industry and protection of consumers by introducing systems that minimise the food safety risks associated with producing, handling and selling seafood

The major outputs in relation to the food safety objective under the SISPASE are identified below.

Food Safety guidelines for Aquaculture, Harvesting, Retailing and Processing

The National Seafood Centre funded Seafood Industry Victoria to develop three Food Safety Guidelines (Seafood Harvesting, Retailing and Processing) to assist seafood industry members understand and comply with their food safety responsibilities. The first editions of these guidelines were finalised in April 1999 and published by SSA under the SeaQual brand. These publications were key additional components of the SeaQual Food Safety Information Pack. The publication of the Guidelines was an early achievement demonstrating the potential synergistic effect of combining three previously separate projects into one.

In response to industry demand the SeaQual Food Safety Guidelines for Aquaculture were developed and released in May 2000. All the guideline publications are sold to recover printing and distribution costs and include an electronic food safety plan template. Revenue from the sale of these publications was returned to the project and used to improve the publications, particularly the templates.

With separate funding from FRDC, the South Australian Fishing Industry Council piloted the SeaQual Food Safety Guidelines for Harvesting in a number of small fishing businesses in late 2000. The aim was to further develop the food safety plan templates provided to purchasers of the SeaQual Food Safety Guidelines. Recommendations from this project were incorporated into the templates.

Since publication, more than 1000 copies of the SeaQual Guidelines for Seafood Harvesting, Retailing, Processing and Aquaculture have been distributed.

When they were published the SeaQual Food Safety Guidelines were recognised by governments as leading the way and were promoted as models for other industries to follow. Copies of the publications are provided (Attachments 5, 6, 7 and 8).

SeaQual Information Packs

SeaQual Stage 1 produced a series of information packs relating to food safety and quality. There were four packs available on the topics of *Food Safety, Requirements of Specific Buyers, Export Certification* and *Whole of Business*. SSA assumed responsibility for distributing and improving the packs which were the major mechanism for providing information on food safety and quality to the Australian seafood industry.

The content of the packs were continually reviewed and updated and as new publications were produced they were incorporated in to the SeaQual Pack system. For example, purchasers of SeaQual packs were given the opportunity to request a free copy of *Focusing on Food Safety and Quality* (see below Quality inventory and Quality library project outputs) and a *Directory of Consultants for the Australian Seafood Industry*. SSA also provided a free update service (through the AUSEAS project) for one year from the date of purchase for all SeaQual packs.

In late 2000, the Centre for Food technology was contracted to evaluate the SeaQual Packs and to provide recommendations for improvements. A copy of the executive summary of this report is provided (Attachment 9).

Following the review SeaQual Pack 4 was discontinued. Promotion of the SeaQual Packs has stopped pending a complete revamp of the SeaQual Pack system.

"SeaQual's guide to HACCP and quality assurance"

The SeaQual Food Safety Guidelines provided advice that assisted seafood businesses develop and document Standard Operating Practices relating to good manufacturing practices (GMPs). They did not provide enough information to assist the more complex, higher risk businesses and did not address the issue of linking food safety with quality management.

The SeaQual project officer was tasked with developing a book which provided more detailed information about both developing HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) programs and using them in seafood businesses to manage both food safety and quality. The publication *"SeaQual's guide to HACCP and quality assurance"* was published in August 2000. This publication was also distributed through the SeaQual Packs and provided a much needed boost to Pack 2 in terms of content. Copies were also sold separately. A copy is provided (Attachment 10).

Keep Me Cool **consumer campaig.**

"Keep me Cool" promotion was designed for use by industry members to promote food safety responsibilities of everyone handling seafood, both industry members and consumers. The package, which completes the "water to waiter" focus of the SeaQual food safety information, is based on three cartoon fish characters each promoting key aspects of maintaining seafood safety:
Keep me cool – on ice
Keep me cool – under cover
Keep me cool – in the fridge

Consumer focused products (t-shirts, posters, information flyers, stickers and balloons) were produced and made available to ASIC members for use in seafood festivals and other consumer focused events.

The Keep me cool products are distributed through the SSA publications program. Copies of the three Keep Me Cool characters are provided (Attachment 11a, b, c and d)

Food Safety Risk Assessment (CD-ROM incorporating SeaQual's Guide to Risk Assessment and SeaQual's Guide to Hazards and Controls)

Any food safety plan/scheme developed must be based on a sound scientific risk assessment. SSA's original application recognised this and Stage 1 of the food safety risk analysis was completed in 1999. Stage 1 resulted in the development of a risk profile for all major commercial species sold in Australia. Stage 2 commenced in August 2000 and was finalised in June 2001. Stage 2 was managed by SSA with separate funding provided by FRDC.

SSA's work (Stages 1 and 2) has resulted in the following outputs:
- A guide to food safety hazards and their control in the seafood industry (based on the USFDA seafood guide) which details

hazards associated with each of the commercially available species produced in Australia
- Detailed risk assessments undertaken for 10 high-risk product/process pairs
- A guide to risk assessment for members of the seafood industry which includes a tool "risk ranger" to assist in determining priorities (for research and management)
- Risk assessment workshops were held in Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide to present the findings and work has commenced on priority issues for those states.

The FAO was asked to review the work undertaken on risk assessment. FAO assessed the risk assessment work as compliant with internationally recognised CODEX standards. In a recent letter Grimur Valdimarsson, Director of the Fisheries Industries Division at the FAO, states:

> "I have now read SeaQual's Guide to Food Safety Risks in Seafood, and I can tell you straight away that this is one of the best pieces of literature I have read in a long time conveying information to industry".

Articles detailing this work were also published in the Journal for Food Microbiology and Infofish International.

Work is now focused on ensuring the Australian Seafood Standard reflects the outcome of the risk assessment work and that processes are put in place to ensure that the risk assessment is continually improved and updated as new knowledge becomes available.

Copies of the material produced as part of the risk assessment work is provided (Attachment 12).

National Seafood Emergency Plan

The Seafood Emergency Plan (SEP) is industry's crisis plan to assist prior to, and throughout, a food safety crisis related to seafood. SSA provides the secretariat to the Seafood Emergency Committee (SEC). ASIC chairs the SEC.

The SEP was developed by SSA, through extensive participation and collaboration by members of the SSA Network. It operates at the industry level and complements the role of state and federal governments as well as enterprise based recall procedures.

The SEP has had a long gestation and will be under continual review to ensure that it is continually improved and updated. A trial of the Seafood Emergency Plan was conducted in Melbourne on 6 March 2001 using a simulated emergency. All members of the SEC (or a nominated proxy) attended the workshop. Members of the SSA network, Seafood Services Victoria, Seafood industry Victoria and the Women's Industry Network also attended.

Mock emergency workshops are being organised to operationalise the SEP at the State level (the level at which most food safety

emergencies are managed by the government and industry). These workshops are being organised by the relevant SSA Network members in conjunction with the SEC Chair (ASIC CEO).

Australian Seafood Standard (ASS)

The first consultative draft of the ASS was provided to the SSA Network for input at its meeting in Brisbane in August 2000. The initial draft was intentionally drafted in a prescriptive manner, on the basis that it is much easier to work with a draft to make it less prescriptive than the reverse. At the August meeting participants agreed on key underlying principles for the ASS:

- It should cover all product sold domestically and overseas
- It should apply to all sectors in the supply chain i.e. "water to waiter"
- It should meet the minimum regulatory requirements and
- It should be a voluntary industry driven standard

The meeting also considered that the format should focus on the outcome to be achieved with maximum flexibility for methods to demonstrate achievement of the required outcome.

The issue of consistency between definitions in the draft seafood Standard, the Food Standards Code (and associated documents), the Model Food Act and AQIS was raised as critical to the further development of the ASS. A definitions working group was established, chaired by Richard Stevens from WA, to determine areas of inconsistency and omissions in definitions and resolve these in relation to the ASS.

Further consultation drafts were produced. Draft Version 4 was circulated widely and was the subject of much debate at the SSA Network meeting held in Adelaide in August 2001. At this stage the Federal and State regulatory Ministers responsible for food safety had agreed to a new process for developing food safety – the Primary Products and Processing Standards. It was resolved that SSA should pursue the development of the ASS with regard to the new processes emerging in the domestic and international regulatory environment.

Draft Version 6 was the final version to be considered by the SSA Network under this project. A special meeting of the SSA Network was held in Sydney in June 2002 to consider Draft 6 released in May 2002. Draft 7 resulted from this meeting.

A number of different consultants were engaged during the various development stages of the ASS. As each successive draft was developed and circulated for comment more people became actively engaged in the process. At the beginning of the project there was little consensus about the ASS in terms of what it should cover and what it should contain and how it should be implemented and managed. Amongst others, these issues were debated and resolved through the processes established under this project to develop standards for the seafood industry. These same processes can be applied to any number of areas including environmental management and occupational health and safety.

Successive drafts of the ASS are provided (Attachment 13).

7.2.2. Quality Management

Although much of the focus was on food safety as the non negotiable component of quality management, the project also undertook a number of activities relating to the broader issue of quality management. Activities centred on providing information to improve SeaQual Pack 2 – "Meeting your customers' needs" and SeaQual Pack 4 – "A whole of business approach".

The SISPASE objective in relation to quality management was:

> *To maximise the benefits achieved by the adoption of appropriate quality management systems throughout the seafood production and distribution chain.*

The major outputs in relation to the quality management objective under the SISPASE are detailed below.

Benefits/cost study for SQMI (joint funding with Fisheries WA)

In partnership with the SQMI, funding was provided to gather information about the benefits and costs of implementing quality management systems in seafood businesses. The project provided some useful information which has been used in presentations to industry (including Seafood Directions 2001) and in providing advice to industry members enquiring about implementing quality management systems. Results were incorporated into SeaQual Pack 2.

A copy of the final report is provided (Attachment 14).

Quality Inventory and Quality Library (paper & CD) (sub contracted by QDPI)

The Centre for Food Technology was originally funded to develop a quality library to underpin the development of quality systems in the seafood industry i.e. to provide the technical resource to assist industry members in dealing with specific quality management issues. In September 2000, SSA assumed responsibility for completing the quality library and for publishing the Quality Inventory detailing the resources available to industry. This publication was produced in hard copy and CD Rom formats.

Titled *Focusing on Food Safety and Quality* it provided information and contact details for more than 100 initiatives and programs. Initial distribution was to people who had already purchased a SeaQual Pack (as part of the updating support program). Copies were also sold individually at a nominal (cost recovery) price.

SeaQual Pack purchasers were given the option of receiving a free copy of the printed version OR the CD Rom. The CD ROM had the added advantage of allowing searches of the database for key words, organisations and quality codes. The publication was extremely popular with the initial print run exhausted within 6 months.

Environmental Management

Based on the successful approach used to provide food safety related tools and assistance to the seafood industry, SSA linked with the Ocean Watch SeaNet project and received funding to develop a "Green Chooser" and associated information packs. The "Green Chooser" project was first promulgated at the ESD conference in Geelong in March 2000.

With funding from FRDC (FRDC 2000/146) a project officer was employed to develop a model and support materials (tools) to assist seafood businesses and fisheries. The project officer also provided overall coordination of the project, while SeaNet officers facilitated a number of case studies to trial the materials developed. A significant amount of the SeaQual Manager's time was also devoted to this project to ensure consistency with the overall standard of material published by SSA and to ensure complementarities between the "Green Chooser" material and the existing SeaQual information.

Work is continuing on this project. Copies of the material produced as part of the Green Chooser project will be made available through the SSA publications program.

In addition SSA worked with the Australian Prawn Farmers Association and CSIRO to hold an environmental management workshop to explore the opportunities for developing a world's first prawn farming environmental management standard. One prawn farm in Queensland is progressing towards achieving ISO 14000.

This and other related environmental management activities all provided input to the development of the "Green Chooser" material.

7.2.3. Communication

The SISPASE objective in relation to communication was:

> *To establish and maintain effective communication*
> *about seafood safety and quality issues between*
> *and within all sectors involved in the production and*
> *distribution of seafood products in Australia.*

SSA was established to assist seafood industry stakeholders (industry, government and others) and to undertake technology transfer activities, particularly relating to post harvest seafood research. To achieve this communications and technology transfer activities from each of the three previously separate projects were combined and delivered within a single framework.

Implementation of the communication and extension strategy commenced with the employment in January 2001 of a dedicated full time communications and marketing officer. Activities undertaken as part of the communication and extension strategy included:
- Establishment of a single contact number for Seafood Services Australia
- A high profile launch of SSA

- Identification and attendance at appropriate trade shows and events (including food service trade shows)
- Production of a regular broadsheet/newsletter
- A regular feature in each of the three major national magazines (Austasia Aquaculture, Professional Fisherman and Seafood Australia) and several State based magazines
- A website
- Publication sales and distribution
- Conference and seminar speakers
- Attendance and sponsorship of SSA at significant industry events

Summaries of these activities are provided below.

Establishment of a single contact number for Seafood Services Australia

At the start of the project significant effort was directed to communicating with each State about the way in which it would like to interact with Seafood Services Australia. The need for a single contact number was raised at these workshops. A national contact number 1 300 130 321 was established and promoted. The use of the number has increased steadily over the past three years. Peaks in usage were experienced following major promotional activities.

Launch of Seafood Services Australia

While still funded under separate agreements with different project management arrangements it was decided that SSA should commence marketing itself as a "one stop shop". This meant that the previous project names (i.e. the National Seafood Centre (NSC), the Australian Seafood Extension and Advisory Service (AUSEAS) and SeaQual Australia) were not used except in specific circumstances (for example, the SeaQual branded food safety publications). A distinctive logo and corporate style was developed. Service descriptors and promotional material was developed to enable SSA to "go public".

SSA was successfully launched in Adelaide on 7 October 1999 in conjunction with Seafood Directions 99 (the first national seafood industry conference). The services previously provided by SeaQual Australia, the NSC and AUSEAS were effectively combined under one "umbrella" name, in one location and with a single contact phone number.

Copies of the initial communications material is provided (Attachment 15)

Revamped publication sales and distribution system

At the December 2000 SSA network meeting in Sydney it was proposed that there be a central point for publications and promotion material for the industry. A taskforce was established and an initial teleconference was held later that year. A further meeting was held in Melbourne in conjunction with the SSA Network meeting. Members of the task force included: Chris Gindidis (Vic), Richard Stevens (WA), Stephen Gill (NSW), Bev Austin and Stephen Thrower (SSA), Michael Parolin and Kylie Paulsen (FRDC).

It was agreed that a combined catalogue should be produced however there were a number of unresolved issues relating to scope and responsibility for maintenance. An initial catalogue was produced for Seafood Directions 2001. A copy is provided (Attachment 16)

Figures 1, 2 and 3 below summarises information about trends in SSA publication sales (Source: SSA Business Plan).

Fig 1: Publication sales for category for FY 2001/2002.

Publication sales by category

Other (incl public), 17%
Industry Training, 1%
Industry Org, 3%
DPI Library, 2%
DPI Info Centre, 2%
Seafood Businesses, 46%
Government (other), 14%
Education, 11%
Consultants, 4%
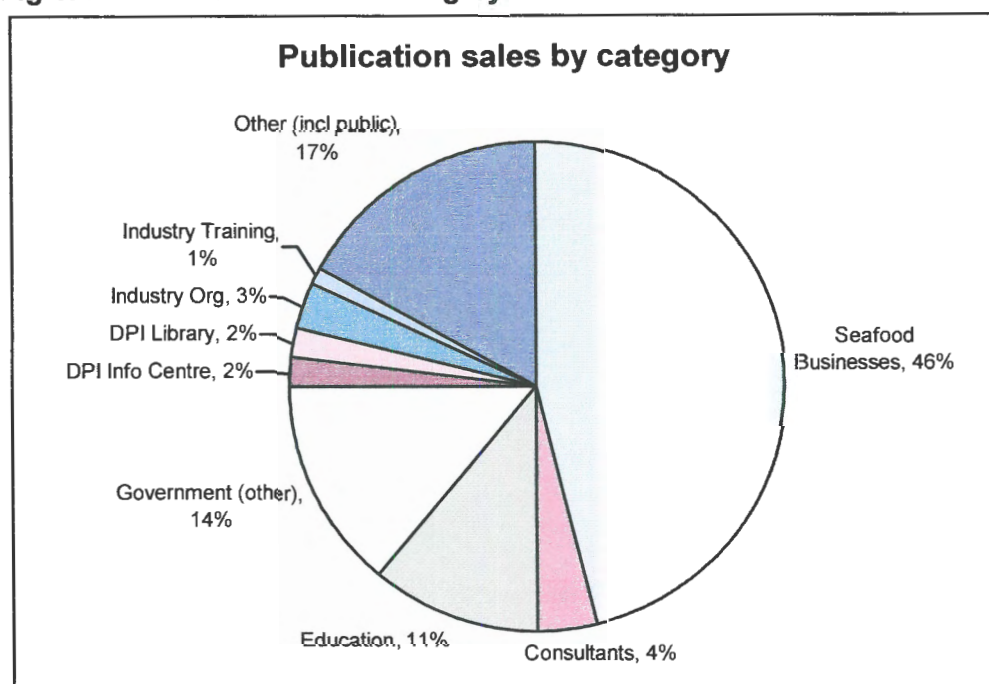
Fig 2: Sales of SSA Publications for each month from July 2001 to March 2002 showing increasing sales following promotional activity.
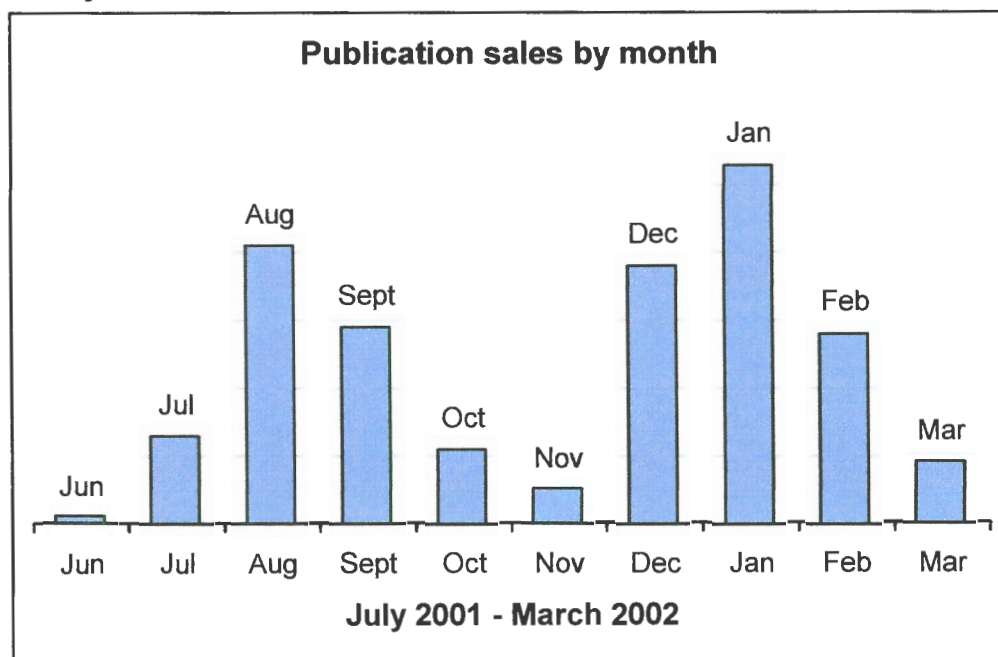
**Fig 3: Publication sales by state for FY 2001/2002**
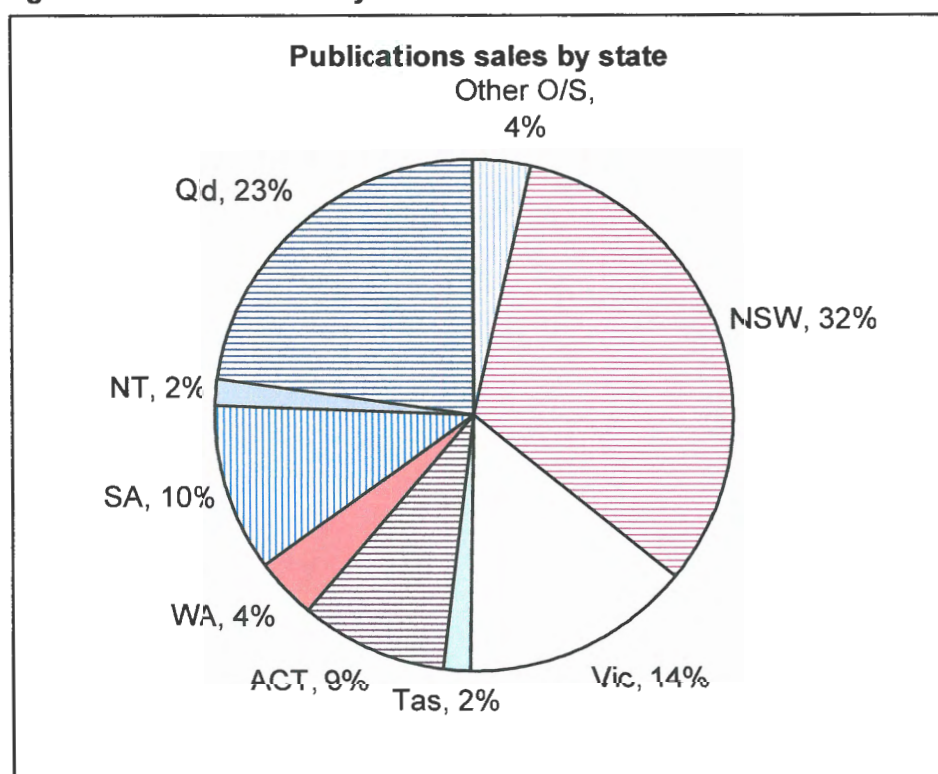
With the establishment of SSA Ltd new procedures were developed to enable more cost and time effective delivery of SSA's key seafood industry publications program and to ensure that there is better penetration into several target markets (eg training providers) and better spread throughout Australia. The new arrangements, to be implemented in late 2002, were to involve a number seafood related associations and organisations as retail outlets for SSA publications.

Letters inviting organisations to become an Approved Publication Outlet (APO) were forwarded to relevant seafood industry and related bodies throughout Australia. A copy of the letter is provided (Attachment 17).

SSA Newsletter

SeaQual Australia News was published in April 1999 soon after the commencement of the project. In late 2000, the newsletter was revived (as the Seafood services Australia newsletter) to profile activities of SSA and SSA network members. Published quarterly in conjunction with Seafood Australia magazine the newsletter was distributed widely throughout the SSA Network and to the seafood industry generally. A sample of the newsletters produced is provided (Attachment 18).

National and State based industry media

All three core service units of SSA contributed numerous articles and editorial to various industry and trade magazines. The articles covered all aspects of the work of SSA.

Trade Shows

During the three years of operation SSA participated in a number of food service trade shows. The major shows attended included the Fine Food Fair (1999, 2000 and 2001) and the Catering Trade Fair (1999, 2000 and 2001). SSA was instrumental in the establishment of Seafood World at the Fine Food Fairs and hosted an anchor stand surrounded by seafood exhibitors.

SSA has also exhibited (in conjunction with other FRDC funded projects) at major food trade shows. These provide exposure for SSA services and activities to major users of seafood –food service, hospitality and restaurant sectors. Several primary producers, processors and retailers participate in these shows and as a result of efforts by SSA staff the seafood industry now has a major presence.

SSA invited local industry associations to participate in these events. The Master Fish Merchants of Australia took advantage of the opportunity at the Fine Food Fair held in Sydney in 2001.

Publication sales and enquiries increased significantly in the two months following a major trade show.

Website

Early in the project Seafood Services Australia was represented on two websites: the projects being undertaken by Queensland Department of Primary Industries were on the QDPI site, while SeaQual projects were was on the Seafood Site operated by the Queensland Seafood Industry

Association. On 1 March 2002, SSA was removed from these sites and a single Seafood Services Australia website was launched at http://www.seafoodservices.com.au.

Industry Conferences and Events

A key mechanism for communicating and extending the work being undertaken by SSA was to attend and participate in industry conferences and events. There were numerous events including sector specific seminars and workshops. Other key events included:

Seafood Directions 1999

The SeaQual manager chaired one of the conference sessions and sponsored a number of speakers. The PI presented a paper outlining the proposed approach to developing a national seafood safety standard.

A workshop on developing the standard was conducted and sponsored by SSA prior to the Seafood Directions Conference.

Aquafest 2000

A number of presentations were made by SSA staff at Aquafest 2000 covering all aspects of work being undertaken by SSA. In addition an information stand was staffed for the whole of the conference.

Seafood Directions 2001

SSA sponsored the Seafood Soiree held in conjunction with Seafood Directions 2001. The SeaQual manager had input to the overall program development and general organisation of related events. In addition SSA organised and presented a full session on Seafood Safety and Quality. Presentations included seafood safety risk assessment, the Australian Seafood Standard and a cost/benefit analysis of food safety and quality systems, all of which were initiatives originating from the SSA Network.

Other conferences and events

SSA staff also participated in numerous events and conferences including:
- ABARE Outlook Conference 1999
- BRS Country Matters Conference 2000
- Australian Prawn Farmers Association Conferences
- Australian Barramundi Farmers Conferences
- Australian Institute of Export (Qld)
- Workshop on aquaculture of the Native oyster (*Ostrea angasi*) organised by NSW Fisheries in Bateman's Bay
- Workshop and AGM of the Qld Red Claw Farmers Association in Rockhampton.

The participation was in the form of presentations about SSA related activities, sponsorship of events, staffing an information booth/trade show, or providing information for delegates.

National Seafood Industry Awards

Several State based awards were sponsored as a continuation of the awards program commenced by SeaQual Stage 1. Sponsorship was

capped at $1,000 per award, per State, per year. Under these arrangements the following awards were sponsored
- Queensland SeaQual Gold Award 1999, 2001
- Western Australian Fishing industry Awards 2000
- South Australian Seafood Awards 1999, 2000

The first National Seafood Industry Awards were conducted in November 2001. SSA sponsored two awards:
- The Seafood Quality Award
- The Seafood Environment Award (in partnership with the MSC).

All awards represent an opportunity to provide recognition to seafood industry members who have demonstrated leadership and commitment to achieving the industry's goals for food safety, quality and environmental management.

Sponsorship

SSA was asked to sponsor a number of industry events. Given the limited funds available, it was only possible to sponsor those events which assisted the overall achievement of the project objectives. Sponsorship was therefore limited to national seafood industry events (Seafood Directions 1999 and 2001, Aquafest 2000) and seafood awards (Qld, SA, WA and National).

7.2.4. Training

The SISPASE objective in relation to training was:

> *To ensure the development of, and access to, training that meets the food safety and quality management objectives of the seafood industry.*

The SeaQual Manager represented SSA on the Seafood Training Australia management committee and provided input to the development of the strategic training plan for the seafood industry. Other SSA staff were also actively involved in the development and finalisation of the National Seafood Industry Training Package (NSITP) and more recently in the review being undertaken of the NSITP.

A number of outputs relating to implementing the training objective were produced as part of this project including:

Consultants Directory

Outside technical assistance is often required as businesses develop new processes and implement new plans. In response to industry demand SSA collated a *Directory of Consultants for the Australian Seafood Industry*. The directory provided information on how to select a consultant and how to achieve the greatest benefit from hiring a consultant. The directory was also indexed to allow selection of a consultant from among nine areas of expertise.

The consultants paid for a one page advertisement self-identifying their areas of expertise. The directory was distributed free to people ordering a SeaQual Pack. The initial print run was a sell out.

Training *CD-ROM* (co funded by Seafood Training Australia)

SSA sought funding from Seafood Training Australia (STA) to assist the development of an interactive CD Rom *"Managing Seafood Safety"*. STA provided $35,000 and provided guidance to the project to ensure that it was able to be used as a learning resource supporting the National Seafood Industry Training Package (NSITP).

The CD Rom incorporates all relevant SeaQual food safety publications and using real work situations explains the relevance of food safety concepts to seafood businesses. An upgraded version of the food safety plan template is included as well as advice on gaining recognition and qualifications in food safety.

Able to be used by individuals or groups, the CD Rom is an extremely flexible learning resource for seafood business managers, seafood workers and trainees, and registered training organisations. It provides food safety information relevant to aquaculture, wild harvest, processing, and sale and distribution of seafood.

The CD Rom has been noted by ANTA as an optional learning resource and is being distributed through ANTA channels as well as through the SSA Publications Program. Initial response has been very good with sales already reaching more than 300 (September 2002).

A copy of the CD Rom *"Managing Seafood Safety"* is provided (Attachment 19).

7.2.5. Policy, Program and Regulatory Environment

The SISPASE objective was:

> *To manage quality activities in the seafood industry*
> *in an effective, open and accountable manner.*

As with SeaQual Stage 1, a large amount of time and resources were devoted to ensuring that the policy, program and regulatory environment were appropriate for industry to achieve its potential. Some of the activities SSA staff were involved in include:

Establishment of Fish Names Committee

SSA assumed the role of managing the Fish Names Committee and with input from the SSA Network established a new process for considering and approving fish names for use in Australia. A summary of this process is provided (Attachment 20).

Establishment of Seafood Industry Development Fund (SIDF)

Following the variation to the project agreement in September 2001 new procedures were developed for funding FRDC applications for projects which relate to industry development (i.e. part of FRDC Program 2) and which require up to $30,000 funding.

To ensure maximum flexibility while maintaining accountability a two stage application process was developed. The initial stage (Stage 1) provides enough information to assess the attractiveness and feasibility

of the proposal. Applications for up to $5000 can be directly approved at this stage. Applications for over $5000 and up to $30,000 which are considered to meet the eligibility requirements for the SIDF and which have a good chance of being funded are invited to submit a Stage 2 application.

The new Seafood Industry Development Fund was launched at Seafood Directions 2001 with the publication of "*A new opportunity for developing our industry*". A new application form was developed (based on the FRDC Webapp) together with a guide for applicants. Copies of these are provided (Attachment 21).

The inaugural meeting of the SIDF Project Evaluation Panel (PEP) was held by teleconference on 21 January 2002. Members of the PEP are:

Professor Russell Reichelt - *Chair*   (SSA Chair)
Mr Peter Dundas-Smith   (FRDC Executive Director)
Mr Russ Neal   (ASIC nominee)
Mr Ted Loveday   (SSA Managing Director)

The PEP is supported with advice and logistical support by SSA Business Development Manager, and FRDC Programs Manager.

Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Excellence (Version 2)

In April 2000, a meeting was held to review and update the Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence. It was attended by industry and government participants from all States as well as representatives from key national industry organisations. At that meeting it was decided that the SISPASE needed to be updated and expanded to include a wider range of objectives. A draft document was circulated for input a number of times to the meeting participants, the SSA Network members and ASIC. A final draft was produced and submitted to ASIC for endorsement. It was agreed that publication of SISPASE 2 be postponed until after the establishment of SSA Ltd and the formation of the SSA Board.

Domestic Food Safety Standards and Regulation

Primary Product and Process Standards

New Inter-Governmental arrangements for development and implementation of nationally consistent Primary Product and Process Standards were foreshadowed by the Commonwealth Government in late 2001. Scheduled to commence in July 2002, the new arrangements were to be administered by a new body Food Standard Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) – previously known as Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA).

Seafood was identified as potentially the first industry sector to develop a standard progressed under the new Inter-Governmental process.

The PI, Ted Loveday participated in the high level Inter-Governmental Primary Products Working Group, to ensure processes developed were conducive to achieving the outcomes identified as part of the Australian

Seafood Standard development process already being undertaken by SSA. This Group was responsible for making recommendations to Ministers regarding the process for developing and recognizing National Primary Product and Process Standards under the Food Standards Code.

Working Group on Food Safety System Equivalence

The SeaQual Manager Jayne Gallagher, continued to participate and influence the work being undertaken by AFFA's working group on equivalence. The aim of the working group was to ensure consistency in standards and auditing processes between food safety systems operating in the food sector (there are over 800 systems).

The seafood industry voiced it concerns in a number of fora that there needed to be a system of equivalence to enable a single audit of a food safety system to meet various regulatory and market needs. The work of the Working Group was monitored to ensure that it was consistent with seafood industry needs. The Working Group was discontinued in August 2002 with the announcement of the National Food Industry Strategy and implementation of various associated initiatives.

Safefood NSW Risk Assessment

The SeaQual Manager was invited to participate on the Safefood Production NSW Risk Assessment reference panel as a representative of FRDC. The NSW Risk Assessment was consistent with the national food safety risk assessment in that it followed the same (CODEX) model and used the same experts. SSA involvement in the reference panel ensured that the risk assessments which resulted were consistent and cohesive.

Due to the expense involved in undertaking risk assessment work it was considered important by both SSA and Safefood NSW to ensure that there was no duplication and that the information and data collected added to the collective knowledge and understanding of food safety risks in Australia.

Risk Management Reviews

During 2001 and 2002 ANZFA (FSANZ post June 2002) undertook a risk management review of Listeria Monocytogenes in all foods, initially concentrating on dairy and seafood products.

SSA invested significant funds in providing input to this review by commissioning position papers, literature searches and by providing critiques of ANZFA's work. ASIC was provided with technical information about the issue.

The outcome of this work was the recommendation by the FSANZ Board to the Ministers that there was no risk based reason for establishing a limit for Listeria Monocytogenes in cooked crustacea and that a revised limit be introduced for smoked seafood.

FSANZ has yet to start work on a review of the microbiological standards for seafood generally. This is likely to be incorporated into

the Primary Products and Processing Standards development process currently being undertaken.

Working Group on Ciguatera

Following a number of concerns raised by members of the SSA Network, a Working Group on Ciguatera was formed. Initially to provide advice to AQIS on some immediate market access issues the Working Group achieved, for the first time, nationally agreed management protocols to minimise the risk of Ciguatera poisoning associated with commercially caught fish sold both domestically and internationally.

The Working Group was sponsored and led by Safefood Queensland and comprised industry and government representatives from Queensland, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia. Regular reports and updates were provided through the SSA Network to other States.

The Working Group will continue as a sub-committee of the Seafood Safety Committee established by Safefood Queensland to advise on the development of a food safety regulatory scheme for seafood in Queensland. Reports to the SSA Network will continue to be provided.

International Food Safety Standards and Regulation

Seafood Export Consultative Committee (SECC)

SSA, through the PI, Ted Loveday has continued participation in the SECC which considers seafood safety and other seafood export related matters. This linkage is becoming increasingly important to SSA's ability to deliver successful outcomes in relation to food safety related issues across all jurisdictions.

Input to CODEX and other international standards.

SSA has continued input into CODEX matters relevant to seafood through the Australian CODEX Stakeholders Forum, FASANZ, AQIS and State Food Regulators. Issues of vital importance to the seafood industry currently being considered by CODEX include:
- microbiological limits
- maximum levels for cadmium and lead in seafood
- risk assessment criteria
- Code of Practice for Fish and Fisheries Products (food safety)

Regular briefing was provided to ASIC in relation to issues being considered by various CODEX committees. Issues recently considered include, the consideration of maximum levels for lead and cadmium in seafood that are being pursued by the United States for adoption by the CODEX Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) meeting held in Rotterdam in March 2002. ASIC was advised that if adopted, the proposed levels would have a significant adverse impact on Australian seafood trade.

SSA maintained a watching brief throughout the three years of the project.

World Fish Inspection and Quality Control Congress

At the recent World Fish Inspection and Quality Control Congress, Ms Jayne Gallagher, SSA Business Development Manager (previously SeaQual Manager) was elected as the South Pacific representative to the Board of the International Association of Fish Inspectors. She has continued to liaise with other members of the Congress regarding the possibility of the 2003 World Fish Inspection Congress being held in Australia and hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

At the invitation and sponsorship by, FAO Dr John Sumner conducted a risk assessment workshop and presented a paper at the Congress. The paper was well received with requests for copies of the Risk Assessment work continuing to be made. The FAO has used this document to develop resources which are now used throughout the world.

7.3. Establishing Seafood Services Australia Ltd

Objective 3: Establish Seafood Services Australia: delivery of cost effective competitively paced seafood post harvest services through the integration of new and existing services (including SeaQual Australia) under one centre.

This objective was achieved.

The project commenced with the relocation of the existing SeaQual Manager from Canberra to Brisbane in April 1999. During the project three previously funded and managed FRDC seafood post harvest initiatives (NSC, AUSEAS and SeaQual) were progressively integrated. In October 2001, SSA Ltd was established as a company limited by guarantee. The inaugural membership of the company comprised the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and the Australian Seafood Industry Council.

7.3.1. Strategic Guidance

SSA Board

Applications for membership of an Advisory Board for SSA, prior to formal establishment as an entity, were sought in June 1999. The establishment of the Advisory Board did not proceed due to a number of procedural issues including reporting and accountability. In early 2000, Ron Edwards was invited and accepted appointment as Chair of SSA.

Following establishment of SSA Ltd the members elected Mr Russ Neal and Mr Peter Dundas Smith to the Board. Professor Russell Reichelt was invited and accepted the position as Chairman of the Board of SSA Ltd. The first meeting of the Board was held in November 2001. At that meeting the Board appointed Mr Ted Loveday as Managing Director and recommended that additional directors be appointed. In May 2002, Mr Terry Moran, Mr Richard Stevens and Mr Roy Palmer were appointed to the Board.

Consultancies

Meyers Strategy Group, the company which conducted the review of SeaQual Stage 1 and recommended the establishment of Seafood Services Australia, was engaged to continue to provide strategic advice during the initial development phase of the project. This arrangement was mutually terminated in August 1999.

7.3.2. Planning and Reporting

The initial work program for the project was guided by the Seafood Industry's Strategic Plan for Achieving Seafood Excellence (SISPASE) particularly focusing on the food safety and quality objectives – see Objective 2.

Annual Operating Plans

Priorities for the project after the first year were established through the Annual Operational Plan which was to be submitted to FRDC in December each year.

The AOPs were developed following broad consultation with industry bodies and SSA Network members. The plans reported on activities and achievements for the year and identified priorities for the next year. Reports against budgets were also provided. Copies of these plans are provided (Attachments 1, 2 and 3).

Reporting

Regular written and oral reports, detailing project achievements and outputs, were provided to industry and government stakeholders including to
- the Australian Seafood Industry Council. (An SSA staff member attended each meeting of ASIC)
- the FRDC Board(in addition to written report complementary copies of all project outputs were provided to Board members)
- the SSA Network
- State based network organisations
- Industry associations (as detailed in Section 6)
- Federal and State Ministers (on request)

7.3.3. Resources

Staffing

The project commenced in April 1999. The Principal Investigator, Ted Loveday, then CEO of the Queensland Commercial Fishermens Organisation, provided 20% of his time as in kind support to the project. A full time SeaQual Manager, Jayne Gallagher, was contracted to QCFO and moved to Brisbane. Offices and office support was provided by the Centre for Food Technology, Queensland Department of Primary Industry.

A project officer was recruited and commenced work in July 1999. The project officer resigned in December 2000 and was replaced by a communications officer in January 2001. Accounting and book keeping services were provided by QCFO initially then outsourced for approximately 2 to 3 days per month. Project staff details are provided in Appendix 2.

Funding

All funding from other sources predicted in the project application were received and applied to achieving project outcomes. This included:

Cash:
- $50,000 contribution from QFMA
- $15,000 contribution from QSIA
- $10,000 contribution from QSITC

In kind:
- Contribution from Queensland Department of Primary Industries (including office accommodation, equipment and support as well as the involvement of key personnel involved in marketing, quality and food safety)
- Other States and Territories (government and industry) provided in kind support particularly through the SSA Network activities (staff attendance, sponsorship of venue and catering).

Opportunities to obtain funding from other sources were continually sought and several co funded projects were undertaken to assist achievement of the project objectives e.g. Training CD Rom.

7.3.4. Project advice and assistance

SSA staff members provided advice and assistance to a number of projects over the three years. Involvement in these projects demonstrated the important contribution that SSA can provide, as well as helping to define the future role of SSA Ltd in assisting the overall development of the seafood industry.

Key projects, which did not involve any financial consideration for SSA, include:

Community Communication Guide for the Seafood Community

The Manager SeaQual was a member of a reference group assisting the development of the Community Communication Guide for the Seafood Community and the associated resource folder. This activity provided an opportunity to promote SSA activities to members of the Women's Industry Network.

Queensland Fisheries fore sighting program

Staff from SSA participated in a FRDC sponsored fore sighting program organised by the Queensland Fisheries Service to develop a 10 year vision for the Queensland fishing industry.

8.   Benefits

The longer term outcomes associated with this project will be of benesit to everyone involved in the seafood industry. Increased consumer confidence in the seafood industry is achieved by demonstrating good food safety, quality and environmental management practices at both the enterprise level and collectively. SSA has worked over the past three years to develop tools and resources (including pathways) to assist industry to understand and comply with community expectations.

SSA has deliberately taken a "water to waiter" approach to all of its activities. It is acknowledged that while some activities can potentially accrue more immediate benefits to particular sectors, long term benefits from improved practices and enhanced development opportunities in one sector will accrue to all sectors of the seafood supply/demand chain. The outputs related to each of the three project objectives and associated short and long term benefits to the seafood industry in Australia are summarised below (Fig 3).

Fig 3: Summary of benefits accruing to the Australian seafood industry as a result of FRDC investment in *Project 99/357 Establishment of Seafood Services Australia Stage 1: seafood quality management and seafood safety (SeaQual Australia)*

Item/Activity	Short term benefits	Long term benefits
Objective 1: Establishing State based organisations		
• Identification of relevant state industry organisation/s	More transparent mechanism for influencing the work program of SeaQual Australia and other SSA related projects	Better targeting of investment in industry development activities
• Establishment of SSA Network	Forum for debate and collaboration on issues related to the work program	Development of industry solutions to issues relating to food safety, quality and environmental management
• Continual operation and funding of SSA Network	Provides opportunities for stakeholders from all over Australia to meet and share ideas to address common issues	Continual improvement of industry practices "from water to waiter"
Objective 2: Implementing SISPASE		
• Food safety	Availability of resources and assistance for seafood businesses to understand and comply with their food safety responsibilities	Seafood businesses able to demonstrate compliance with food safety requirements thereby engendering improved consumer confidence in seafood
• Quality	Information about quality management systems appropriate to industry and individual business objectives	Seafood businesses able to maintain existing and capture new market opportunities due to meeting customer expectations for quality and consistency
• Communication	Access to timely and affordable information to assist industry sectors and individual businesses achieve their development goals	Improved international competitiveness through faster and wider adoption of improved practices throughout the seafood industry
• Training	Training package and learning resources aligned with requirements of seafood businesses in relation to food safety and quality management	Access to timely relevant training to assist seafood industry implement and achieve food safety and quality management goals
• Operating Environment	Government and industry collaboration to resolve industry wide food safety and quality	Supportive policy, program and regulatory environment to assist seafood sectors and individual

Item/Activity	Short term benefits	Long term benefits
	management issues	businesses achieve development goals
Objective 3: Establishing SSA Ltd • SSA Board • Planning & Reporting • Resources • Project advice & assistance	Provides a "one stop shop" for advice and assistance in relation to seafood industry development Australia wide Provides an accountable corporate structure/entity that can leverage funding for the seafood industry from sources that were previously unavailable or difficult for the seafood industry to access	Synergistic effect on industry in terms of sustainability and international competitiveness through the collaborative approach to information and problem solving Recognition by government and community of the real value of the seafood industry to Australia's economy and commensurate support for continued development

One particular benefit for the seafood industry, as a result of the work undertaken under FRDC Project 99/357 is recognition that the industry is now receiving from governments here and overseas for the leadership being shown in relation to addressing critical industry development issues. A sample of the letters detailing this recognition is provided (Attachment 22).

Such recognition provides additional opportunities for the seafood industry generally as well as for individual enterprises. For example, SSA's SeaQual Food Safety Guidelines have been used as the basis of successful funding applications to FarmBiz for seafood safety training in South Australia and Queensland.

9. Further Development

Work undertaken through this project has provided a sound basis for the establishment of Seafood Services Australia Ltd. This objective was achieved approximately 8 months ahead of time. This enabled the company to establish operating policies and procedures, as well as further develop a business plan used as the basis for further FRDC funding of SSA related activities. Operational funding for SSA Ltd was approved by FRDC and project 2001/ commenced on 1 July 2002.

A detailed business plan has been developed to guide the further development of activities undertaken by the project and by SSA Ltd generally. The business plan is confidential to the Board however a summary of the main features of the plan has been published in "SSA Means Business". A copy is provided (Attachment 23).

10. Conclusion

FRDC project 99/357 was successful. It achieved all objectives and more.

A firm foundation has been established for SSA Ltd to continue the work undertaken as part of this project and ensure that the seafood industry benefits through a nationally consistent food safety and quality management framework.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Intellectual Property

All intellectual property arising from this project has been transferred to SSA Ltd for continued use in achievement of the organisation's objectives. This intellectual property forms part of FRDC's contribution to SSA Ltd.

Appendix 2: Staff

The following staff were engaged on the project:

- Mr Ted Loveday (Principal investigator)

- Ms Jayne Gallagher (Manager SeaQual)

- Ms Fiona Anderson (Project Officer)

- Ms Anna Rosa (Communications Officer)

- Mrs Annick Kennedy (Book Keeper)

12. Attachments

Attachment 1:   **SeaQual Operational Plan 1999/2000**

Attachment 2:   **SSA Operational Plan 2000**

Attachment 3:   **SSA Operational Plan 2001**

Attachment 4:   **Establishment of the Australian Seafood Centre**

Attachment 5:   **SeaQual's Food Safety Guidelines for Harvesting Seafood**

Attachment 6:   **SeaQual'sFood Safety Guidelines for Processing Seafood**

Attachment 7:   **SeaQual's Food Safety Guidelines for Retailing Seafood**

Attachment 8:   **SeaQual's Food Safety Guidelines for Aquaculture**

Attachment 9:   **Review of SeaQual Information Packs**

Attachment 10:   **SeaQual's Guide to HACCP and Quality Assurance**

Attachment 11:   **Keep Me Cool Material**

Attachment 12:   **SeaQual's Guide to Seafood Safety Risks (Book and CD)**

Attachment 13:   **Australian Seafood Standard (versions 1 to 6)**

Attachment 14:   **SQMI Benefit/Cost Study**

Attachment 15:   **Initial communications material for SSA**

Attachment 16:   **SSA Catalogue (2001)**

Attachment 17:   **Authorised Service Provider agreement**

Attachment 18:   **SeaQual/SSA Newsletters**

Attachment 19:   **Managing Food Safety – Step by Step (Training CD Rom – joint funding by Seafood Training Australia)**

Attachment 20:   **Fish Names Committee**

Attachment 21:   **Seafood Industry Development Fund, Brochure, Application Form and Guide to Applicants**

Attachment 22:   **Recognition Letters**

Attachment 23:   **SSA Means Business**