

2001/305

**The Inaugural National Abalone Convention
Held at the Stamford Grand Hotel, Glenelg
South Australia 19 – 21 August 2001**

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OBJECTIVES:

1. To host a successful truly national Australian Abalone Convention
2. To maximise the transfer of information for the promotion and cost effective and efficient ways to deal with common issues.
3. To secure an economically viable event.
4. To formulate a national plan dealing with common issues facing Australian abalone fisheries management

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

The Convention proceedings were published and distributed to every delegate. Another major outcome was the achievement of a successful national Australian abalone convention and the desire by delegates to create a national forum in which to discuss and action issues of a national significance. Delegates at the convention witnessed presentations that showed the gains made in fisheries management, particularly where it imposed on abalone fisheries. The event was financially viable. A draft national plan was started with the audience participating in an open forum discussion that identified major areas or issues of concern that are of a national significance.

The event was such a success that the Seafood Industry Victoria undertook to convene the next National Abalone Convention to be held in 2003.

KEYWORDS: Successful, Australian Abalone Industry, National issues, fisheries management.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Inaugural National Abalone Convention would not have been such a success without the commitment of a dedicated team supported by the majority of the abalone industry.

Each State's Association, the South Australian Government, the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation and sponsors gave support, financially and in-kind.

The National Steering Committee comprising Bob Pennington (President - Abalone Industry Association of SA Inc.), Dean Lisson (President – Tasmanian Abalone Council), John Smythe (Executive – NSW Abalone Industry Association), Ian Taylor – (Executive Officer - WA Abalone Industry Association) and Len McCall (President – Seafood Industry Victoria). Advice from Don Buckmaster also assisted in developing the event.

Patrick Hone and Peter Dundas-Smith were equally supportive of the event.

Thanks to all those involved who helped make the event an unforgettable experience.

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1. Introduction

In 2000, every State Abalone Industry Association agreed to support the Inaugural National Abalone Convention with an amount of \$2,500 sponsorship and the Abalone Industry Association of SA Inc. pledged to donate \$10,000 as host.

South Australia created an environment conducive to hosting the inaugural event, coupled with immense support from industry, sponsorship, hard work and determination of everyone involved.

1.1 Background

The idea for this event was spawned by a number of industry members over many years, but culminated at the FishRights'99 Conference held in Fremantle in November 1999. There were two people from Western Australia, Terry Adams and Kerry Rowe, Tas Warn, Don Buckmaster and David Fitzpatrick from Victoria and Bob Pennington and myself from South Australia.

As we sat and listened to the presentations given, we couldn't help but think that if the abalone industry had a conference we would ensure it met our needs only. A Conference for industry, listening to and debating, only industry issues.

At the 3rd International Abalone Symposium in Cape Town, the idea was developed further with help and support from Rob Royle and Scott McKibben from Tasmania, John South, Brad Adams and Kim Friedman from Western Australia and again, myself and Bob Pennington from South Australia.

The opportunity to provide national recognition for Australia's abalone industry to highlight the true value of its members and their operations was facilitated through the event and the presence of a great audience, who's numbers far exceeded preliminary expectations.

1.2 Why a National Convention?

Australian abalone currently enjoys a relatively strong position in the market through steady demand for product. This will only continue as long as the resource is sustainable. It was agreed that industry would benefit through the application of leading edge or state of the art technology and world's best practices in management, research and resource protection.

At that stage, no mechanism existed for the effective exchange of ideas, or to consider leading edge technology, or to benefit from learning of the trials and tribulations other State's have experienced. The Convention was to present excellent opportunities for communications with contacts from all over the globe.

There was a need for all States to be involved in a national forum and for industry Australia wide to focus on management, marketing, R&D issues, resource protection and commence formulating national plans or strategies to focus on achieving the desired outcomes.

1.3 Objectives

- To host a successful truly national Australian Abalone Convention
- To maximise the transfer of information for the promotion and cost effective and efficient ways to deal with common issues.
- To secure an economically viable event.
- To formulate a national plan dealing with common issues facing Australian abalone fisheries management.

2. Planning

The formation of the Steering Committee was a key component of the planning process. The Steering Committee appointed an Event Management Team to develop concepts and themes.

2.1 The Role of the Steering Committee

The role of the Steering Committee was:

- To advise and support the Event Management Team
- To take ownership of the event by playing an active role in all facets of the planning process and implementation
- To be responsible and accountable for specific tasks and actions

2.2 Industry Support

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 project.

2.3 Event Management Team

The Event Management Team was an essential requirement to ensure the overall development, planning and implementation of the event.

The Event Management Team was responsible for the:

- 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

- Involvement in the attraction of funding from a variety of sources and sponsor management
- Overall management of the Conference including: venue liaison, speaker liaison, program development, a social program and the production of printed materials
- Attendance at Steering Committee meetings and telephone conferences

The logo developed for the inaugural event symbolised and represented the aims, objectives and concept of the project. The Event Management Team liaised with a graphic designer to ensure the right message was delivered. The result is the logo that has been adopted as the perpetual logo for the event and by the National Abalone Council.

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 Abalone Industry Association of SA Inc. was host for the event, with support from every other State abalone industry association.

This included accountability for all facets involved with the development, planning and implementation of such an event. It is understood Seafood Industry Victoria will host the next National Abalone Convention in August 2003.

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 idea.

The Major Sponsorship came from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Dover Fisheries, PIRSA and various trade displays.

5. Speakers

Speakers are a core component of an event particularly at an industry national convention where they are asked to convey a focal point of a particular issue.

It is crucial that convention 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 points were determined before the speakers were invited.

Speakers for The Inaugural National Abalone Convention were chosen on the basis that they were experts in the areas of key issues identified for the convention and that many of them were leaders in their field from overseas and around Australia.

Guidelines were established to the level of expenditure for travel and accommodation that the convention was to incur for each speaker. All speakers' costs were kept to a minimum. In fact some speakers paid their own way and accommodation costs, but were offered a seat at the dinner.

6. Venue

The Stamford Grand Hotel located in the seaside suburb of Glenelg, Adelaide was deemed to be an appropriate venue for the event. The physical location for the event added to the overall appeal of the Convention. The hotel offered all modern conveniences with many rooms to use and the latest technology for staging the presentations. All sessions were audio taped, particularly the first day's concurrent sessions for those unable to attend one or another.

The accommodation is first class with some discount offered to Convention attendees. Meals and refreshments were of a high standard and the catering for the Dinner and the Cocktail Warm-up function was exceptional, especially the "States' Selection" abalone dishes.

7. Convention Proceedings

The Convention Proceedings document provides a record of the events, as well the list of any actions that need to be addressed in the future by a national forum of some structure.

The Convention's Proceedings were distributed to all delegates, speakers and sponsors within three months after the Convention's conclusion. ISBN's were secured for both the printed material and the CD ROM that went with it.