

# **4<sup>th</sup> National Rocklobster Congress: Market Development Workshop**

**Mr Roger Edwards**



**Australian Government**

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**Fisheries Research and  
Development Corporation**

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## **1.0 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

2005/222 4<sup>th</sup> National Rocklobster Congress

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### **OBJECTIVES:**

**To expose industry members to key national and international market development issues and advances.**

**To develop a strategic approach to national rocklobster market development.**

**To update industry members on other key issues of strategic national importance.**

### **NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY:**

#### **Outcomes to Date**

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> National Rocklobster Congress achieved the stated objectives. Industry was exposed to high quality information about key national and international market development issues and advances, as well major developments in the post harvest and enhancement areas.
2. Twenty-one speakers presented and over 170 people participated with representation from all states and members of all levels of the supply chain. The meeting linked directly with a range of industry and Government meetings and the FRDC rocklobster subprograms.
3. The key action was that communication should be upgraded and formalised between the respective Australian State rocklobster industries (and New Zealand) with the purpose of implementing a national rocklobster industry communication strategy, developing national capacity and opportunities and market development.

Two years on from Congress 3 in Fremantle 2003, lobster prices are 30% lower, the SA Northern Zone has adopted quota, lobster propagation is developing and product quality is a given in markets. As well, lobster markets, marketing, market development, Marine Stewardship Certification, supply chain standards, national seafood promotions, country of origin labeling, European Seafood Expo and the National Food Industry Strategy, are all opportunities for national lobster industries.

The Congress posed the questions “Should the industry work together on these opportunities and if so which ones and how?”

The Congress was structured in two parts;

1. a series of briefings covering a range of industry, aquaculture, and post harvest topics and
2. presentations on market related topics with group sessions where the following questions were dealt with on a species basis:
  - What are the opportunities to work together?
  - What concerns do we have?
  - How do we overcome these concerns?
  - What is the one project that we would take on in the next 12 months?

The Congress was hosted by the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association in conjunction with Southern Rocklobster Limited, with support from industry in each lobster producing state. The location was Hobart and the Congress was held from 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2005.

The Congress was also important for the dissemination of information from the FRDC Rocklobster post harvest and Rocklobster enhancement and aquaculture subprograms and on key marketing issues. Presentations were made by 21 speakers, with over 170 people attending various parts of the program.

The key message from the Congress was that action is required that would involve the respective Australian State rocklobster industries, as well as the NZ industry, and communication should be upgraded and formalised through the engagement of the industry executive officers and members across Australasia.

The Executive Officers agreed to meet formally at least 6 monthly to progress:

1. projects identified from the Congress in the next 12 months
2. a national rocklobster industry communication strategy
3. national capacity opportunities and
4. market development.

## **2.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This Congress would not have been possible without the supporting contribution from sponsors. The major sponsor was FRDC with other sponsorship provided by: Western Rock Lobster Council, SARDI Aquatic Sciences, Tasmanian Fisheries & Aquaculture Institute, M G Kailis Group, Australian Insurance Brokers, Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council, South Australian Rock Lobster Advisory Council, Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association, JAS-ANZ, Australian Maritime College, Agri-Business Banking Southern Tasmania - Westpac Banking Corporation as well as support from the QLD Rocklobster Association, Victorian Rocklobster Association, NSW Rocklobster Association and Seafood Industry Victoria.

The contribution of the steering committee consisting of Rodney Treloggen, Steve Gill, Richard Stevens, Jim Fogarty, David Lucas and Scott Westley should also be acknowledged.

Special mention goes to Dr Patrick Hone of the FRDC who assisted with program content and Congress format. He also was a major contributor throughout the program.

In closing the Congress would not have been a success without the energy, resources and local guidance from the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association, in particular Rodney Treloggen.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

The rocklobster industry was the most valuable seafood industry in Australia valued in excess of \$550 million per annum in 2001-02. An estimated \$200 million per annum has been lost nationally in the last 3 years from the market value of Australian rocklobster, due solely to a decline in market price driven by the exchange rate and a downturn in international markets.

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Rocklobster Congress - Adelaide 1999, created a benchmark for the Australian seafood industry in information exchange. A key outcome of the inaugural Congress was to hold a national rocklobster meeting on a regular basis. Meetings and industry communication subsequent to the Congress confirmed support for a bi-annual national lobster meeting to deal with national lobster specific issues.

Subsequently the National Congress has been held in Geelong 2001 and Perth 2003, and this project is a continuation and further development of the national initiative which is supported by the industry in all states.

### **4.0 NEED**

Australia comprises over 4 different lobster fisheries operating in 6 states. The range of issues facing these industries continues to increase and includes:

- access security including resource sharing, marine protected areas and native title
- fishery management
- environmental interactions
- workplace safety
- information technology
- community perceptions and
- Market development.

While there have been some key developments of national significance since the Perth meeting, in particular in the areas of fishery management at the State level and environmental management systems, the most immediate and financially significant national strategic issue is the marketing challenge.

In the area of market development numerous projects/initiatives have commenced since the Perth Congress including:

1. National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS) export strategy
2. Seafood Enterprise Alliance (SEA)– strategic development of the national seafood industry
3. National Aquaculture Council (NAC) – market research and seafood branding strategy
4. Southern Rocklobster FRDC funded strategic plan 2003
5. Southern Rocklobster Limited – industry funded national development entity for Southern Rocklobster
6. Identification of Niche Market Opportunities for Southern Rocklobster – FRDC/NFIS funded global market research
7. South Australia Seafood Council – Seafood Marketing Plan

The major Australian rocklobster industries face a number of common national and international marketing issues. Specifically if informed market development investments are to be made at the sector level, the following need to be canvassed, understood and addressed:

1. the benefits and costs of market development based on regional, State, species, and national approaches,
2. the value of accreditation and options for establishing traceability,
3. cultured lobster – opportunity or threat,
4. the benefits and costs of syndicating market development activities with other seafood sectors,
5. the benefits and costs of linking with other food and beverage sectors,
6. linkages with SEA, NAC and NFIS in relation to market development, and;
7. industry market development structures, funding and management.

In addition to the market development area, project work has been ongoing through the FRDC rocklobster post harvest and aquaculture and enhancement sub programs.

In summary there is an immediate need for national rocklobster industries to deal with many important market related issues if it is to effectively engage in a range of local and national initiatives which will be finalised in 2005.

The 4<sup>th</sup> National Rocklobster Congress was the ideal vehicle to contribute to meeting these strategic challenges.

## **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress were:

1. To expose industry members to key national and international market development issues and advances.
2. To develop a strategic approach to national rocklobster market development.
3. To update industry members on other key issues of strategic national importance.

## **6.0 METHODS**

A steering group drawn from industry, including the catch and processing sectors in the respective states, oversaw all aspects of the Congress including program, speakers, topics, sponsorship and the social program. Direct linkages were established early with relevant groups such as the rocklobster subprograms and FRDC to ensure synergies could be captured.

The event was delivered by a project manager working with an experienced event coordinator who operated at the direction of the steering group on the Congress detail.

The project team:

- Developed an overall timeline incorporating all key tasks for the successful management of the Congress.
- Developed materials covering theme, registration, program structure, pricing, venue details, graphics etc



- Drafted the program and liaised with subprogram leaders
- Liaised with speakers arranging invitations, topics, travel & accommodation, and AV support needs
- Liaison with session chairs – as per speakers plus briefing and background materials.
- Liaison with venue – location, room, AV etc.
- Developed sponsorship proposals, established a prospective sponsor list and distributed invitations to sponsors.
- Managed the sponsor benefit program and communicated with sponsors post event.
- Management of audio-visual requirements – liaison with venue suppliers and coordination of liaison between speakers and technicians.
- Selected accommodation options.
- Provided ongoing budgetary information.
- Managed the Congress database, registration, banking, receipts, confirmation and registration desk.
- Collated the proceedings and prepared financial and project reports.

Email was the primary form of communication in preparing for the Congress. The program was finalised 2 months prior to the event and did not change except for the withdrawal of one speaker.

The social events maintained the national species “Taste Off” tradition and incorporated the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen’s Association.

## **7.0 RESULTS / DISCUSSION**

The 4<sup>th</sup> National Rocklobster Congress achieved the stated objectives. Industry was exposed to high quality information about key national and international market development issues and advances, as well major developments in the post harvest and enhancement areas. Full details of the Congress proceedings including workshop resolutions can be found on:

[http://www.seafoodsa.com/dynamic/documents/Title\\_page.pdf](http://www.seafoodsa.com/dynamic/documents/Title_page.pdf)

The event was primarily developed in Adelaide and was successfully held in Hobart drawing on administrative assistance from the local organisation. The team approach worked well and the national industry once again contributed to the overall success. The team details are provided in Appendix 1.

The Congress program (see Appendix 2) covered two days and three evenings, and was complemented with rocklobster post harvest and aquaculture Subprogram meetings held the day prior. Twenty-one speakers presented and over 170 people participated with representation from all states and members of all levels of the supply chain. A critical success factor can be attributed to the direct linkages made with the FRDC rocklobster subprograms.

The key resolution from the Congress was that action was required involving the respective Australian State rocklobster industries (and New Zealand) and communication should be upgraded and formalised through the engagement of the industry executive officers and members across Australasia.

The Executive Officers agreed to meet formally at least 6 monthly to progress:

1. projects identified from the Congress in the next 12 months
2. a national rocklobster industry communication strategy
3. national capacity opportunities and
4. market development

The Congress resolutions reflect the commitment of the national industry to work towards a coordinated approach to national lobster industry development in particular, market development.

## **8.0 BENEFITS**

The primary beneficiaries from the Congress include the wild harvest, culture and post harvest sectors across all lobster producing states. Benefits initially are non-market and include flow on effects in development from information exchange and capacity building aimed at effective national action.

The focus of future actions will be in the area of market development and this potentially will see market benefits accrue in the future. A substantial program of presentations aimed at deriving market benefits was developed.

The overriding benefit derived is in maintaining and building on links and relationships between industry, managers and researchers. The event will see closer partnerships emerge and additional investment in R&D going forward. A key development was in the area of propagation with the wild sector moving to engage and invest in the next stage of the program.

## **9.0 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

At the conclusion of the program an open discussion was held on further development of the Congress concept. The following were put forward as suggestions for Congress 5, to be hosted by Queensland:

1. Target young industry participants – concerns were expressed about the lack of succession and low number of the “next generation” of industry leaders. It was agreed this group should be targeted and in support, FRDC committed to match dollar for dollar their cost for attending the next Congress.
2. The program content mix was canvassed and the need to mix science and industry issues with more emphasis on industry issues such as access security and marine protected areas was identified.
3. Question time – it was suggested that a question time after each presentation be allocated.
4. Marketing – a longer lead time for notice of the Congress was requested than the 6 months.
5. Cost – the need to keep the price down was noted.

The next Congress is planned for Queensland in 2007 – 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> July.

## **10.0 PLANNED OUTCOMES**

It was anticipated that the Congress would lead to a more informed and coordinated approach to market development at the national level with the following benefits:

- More strategic investments in market development
- Avoidance of non-productive investments in market development
- Effective engagement in whole of seafood industry market development initiatives

The key action to emerge to achieve the planned outcomes, is that the executive officers have agreed to meet formally at least 6 monthly to progress the projects, industry communication and market development.

The first meeting is scheduled for November 2005.

## **11.0 CONCLUSION**

The Congress remains an important project for the national industry. This is evidenced by the level and quality of participation by the national industry. The clear direction and commitment achieved on key industry issues, such as market development, highlights the usefulness of the meeting.

The Congress can be assessed against the performance indicators as follows:

1. Meeting milestones – achieved.
2. Numbers attending the conference – in excess of 170.
3. Skilled facilitator appointed – Dr Susan Nelle NFIS.
4. Number of appropriate participants confirmed – in excess of 120 attended formal Congress sessions.
5. Level of successful sponsorship acquisition to meet budget – achieved \$37,500 (ex FRDC).
6. Breakeven financial result – achieved.

It can be concluded that the event was successful both financially and in terms of meeting the objectives.

## **12.0 REFERENCES**

Nil

## **Appendix 1 – Staff**

Roger Edwards – Project Manger  
Tria Goode – Event manager

## Appendix 2 – Program



# **4<sup>th</sup> National Lobster Congress** **October 11-13, 2005** **Hobart, Tasmania**

## Program

**Tuesday 11 October 6.30pm- 8pm Meet & Greet & Registration – Mercure Hotel Hobart**

### **Wednesday 12 October - Morning**

	<b>THEME</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>
8:00am	Registration	
9.00am	Welcome & Housekeeping	Mr Roger Cotton - Chair Southern Rocklobster Limited
9.10am	Official Opening	Hon Stephen Kons- Minister for Primary Industries and Water
9.20am	Major Sponsor (FRDC) address	Dr Patrick Hone Executive Director
	National Lobster Scene	<i>Chair: Roger Cotton</i>
9.30am	Tasmania	Rodney Treloggen
9.40am	Western Australia	Steve Gill
9.50am	South Australia	Roger Edwards
10.00am	Queensland	Jim Fogarty
10.10am	Victoria	David Lucas
10.20am	New South Wales	Scot Westley
10.30am		Break-coffee

	<b>Rocklobster Post Harvest / Rocklobster Enhancement and Aquaculture</b> <i>Sponsored by TAFI</i>	<i>Chair: Prof Bruce Phillips</i>
11.00am	Rocklobster Post Harvest Program overview	Prof Bruce Phillips
11.20am	Rocklobster Enhancement and Aquaculture in Australia	Dr Robert van Barneveld
11.40am	Advancing hatchery propagation of tropical rocklobsters ( <i>Panulirus ornatus</i> )	Clive Jones (DPI, Cairns) Mike Hall (AIMS)
12.30pm		Lunch

### Wednesday 12 October – Afternoon

	<b>Rocklobster Post Harvest / Rocklobster Enhancement and Aquaculture</b> <i>Sponsored by SARDI</i>	<i>Chair: Dr Robert van Barneveld</i>
1.30pm	Feasibility of translocating rocklobsters in Tasmania for increasing yield.	Caleb Gardner (TAFI)
1.50pm	Evaluation of polyphenoloxidase activity in Southern Rocklobster	Hannah Williams (Curtin)
2.10pm	Challenges for the rearing of tropical lobsters in sea cages in the Torres Strait	Matt Kenway (AIMS)
2.30pm	Determining flesh quality attributes of undervalued large Southern Rocklobsters	John Carragher (SARDI)
3.00pm	Propagation of Southern Rocklobster ( <i>Jasus edwardsii</i> ) in Tasmania	Arthur Ritar (TAFI)
3.30pm		Break – coffee
		<i>Chair: Prof Bruce Phillips</i>
4.00pm	Evaluation of alternative processing technologies applicable to crustaceans	Hannah Williams (Curtin)
4.20pm	Clean Green Program update & Improving live transportation techniques and technologies for Southern Rocklobster	Matt Muggleton (SRL)
4.40pm	Establishing post-pueruli growout data for Western Rocklobsters to assess economic viability	Roy Melville-Smith (WA Dept Fisheries)
5.00pm	Open Forum – all speakers	
5.30pm	Close Day 1	

**Thursday 13 October - Morning**

	<b>Market Development – setting the scene</b> <i>Sponsored by WRLC</i>	<i>Chair: John Sansom President TRLFA</i>
8.45am	Housekeeping	John Sansom (TRLFA)
8.55am	Keynote address – Market Developments in Europe	Western Australian Agent General Robert Fisher AM
9.30am	National programs - NFIS	Susan Nelle (Managing Director, National Food Industry Strategy)
9.50am	FRDC projects & direction	Dr Patrick Hone (FRDC)
10.10am		Break – coffee
10.30am	Market Development - setting the scene Sponsored by MG Kailis	Facilitated session
10.45am	Overview – Western Rock Lobster Programs	Peter Fraser (WRLC)
11.05am	Overview – Tropical Rock Lobster Programs	Greg Hart (MG Kailis)
11.25am	Overview – Southern Rock Lobster Programs	Roger Edwards (SRL)
11.45am	Global market database	Alice Hurlbatt (WRLDA)
12.00pm		Lunch

**Thursday 13 October – Afternoon**

	<b>Market Development Workshop – working collectively and action plan</b>	<i>Facilitated session</i>
1.00pm	Group Task briefing	
1.10pm	Group session	
	Group Presentations	
3.00pm		Break – coffee
3.30pm	Workshop Summary	
4.00pm	Congress Outcomes & handover	Dr Patrick Hone (FRDC)

**Thursday 13 October – Evening**

	<b>THEME</b>	<b>Master of Ceremonies</b>
6.30pm	National Species Taste-Off	Rodney Treloggen (TRLFA)
7.00pm	Congress Dinner including 20 <sup>th</sup> Year Celebration of Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association	