



**Seafood Industry Partners' Project
(SIPP) 2010 Retreat: Connecting Early
Career Researchers with the Australian
Seafood Industry Through Meaningful
Coaching Partnerships – Year 2**

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Project No. 2010/751





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Front Cover Image – Seafood CRC students and industry mentors assigned “maintenance” in the CRC job lotto undertake maintenance “work experience” at Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture Photo: Mark Oliver

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Non-Technical Summary

2010/751 - Seafood Industry Partners' Project (SIPP) 2010 Retreat: Connecting Early Career Researchers with the Australian Seafood Industry Through Meaningful Coaching Partnerships – Year 2

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OBJECTIVES:

- Develop, implement and continuously improve a CRC mentoring program.
- Develop training for mentors and early career scientists.
- Provide industry connection and create new industry experiences for early career scientists.
- Provide additional opportunities for connection between all industry mentors, early careers scientists and CRC staff.

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

- 23 PhD students, 1 Masters by Research and 4 Post Doctoral Research Scientists participated in SIPP 2010.
- 10 industry mentors actively participated in SIPP 2010.
- Two training courses conducted with hand-out materials and pocket cards
- Field trip to a commercial prawn farm with four training elements conducted.

KEYWORDS: SIPP, mentoring, coaching, training

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- Craig Foster – Clean Seas Tuna
- Rod Missen - EcoFish
- Tony Charles – Australian Prawn Farms
- Richard Smullen – Ridley AquaFeed
- Warren Lewis – Aqua-Marine Barramundi
- Helen Jenkins – Australian Prawn Farmers' Association
- Ben Smith – SA Abalone
- Jenny Cobcroft – Clean Seas Tuna
- Richard Stevens – Western Australia Fishing Industry Council
- Wil Conn – Prawn, Trout and Barramundi industries

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CRC Program Manager Emily Mantilla presents a thank you gift to all staff at Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture on behalf of the Seafood CRC and SIPP 2010 participants. Photo: Mark Oliver

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the SIPP?

The Seafood CRC's Education and Training Program has a strong end-user focus and needs to ensure "industry ready" graduates enter the Australian seafood industry at the completion of their candidature. The desire to develop the capabilities of both young researchers and industry participants is a strong and major driving force in the Seafood CRC.

As such, research students and post doctoral research scientists (termed early career scientists in this report) will be part of a program that enhances their pathway into further seafood research or industry careers. This program is called the Seafood Industry Partners Project (or SIPP) and usually takes the form of a yearly training "retreat".

As part of the early career scientist's involvement with SIPP, higher-degree students and early career scientists are co-supervised and mentored (or managed in the case of the post doctoral research scientist's) by industry members called "project partners" (industry mentors). From experience with SIPP 2009, it was discovered that commitment from industry personnel to undergo formal mentoring arrangements with early career scientists is difficult and so the CRC now adopts a "roving" industry mentor program to each retreat.

SIPP also ensures early career scientists gain industry and market place experience as well as CRC industry participants benefiting from CRC research and training. This will strengthen mechanisms for the broader CRC community to adopt CRC innovations and to develop a skill-based culture within industry.

The CRC's SIPP program also allows strong linkages, with all aspects of industry, and presents opportunities for researchers to gain practical knowledge of the seafood industry first hand and to develop new skills, including business and marketing that will improve their prospects of subsequent employment. SIPP also aims to build stronger networks across all sectors. Incentives, training and practical support will encourage candidates to complete their qualifications on time and be in a better position to take up employment in the industry.

The participation of industry members as mentors will address opportunities for improving skills of industry people with a view to contributing to the growth of industry participant organisations. It will also create a culture of collaborative research.

The Seafood CRC SIPP program was developed by extensive consultation through the CRC bid process with industry partners. This was detailed at the final interview for the "bid" process and was considered to be an excellent initiative. Final endorsement of the initiative was achieved from DIISR in 2007.

1.2 Need

Disconnection between research and industry is a common issue of concern and it is considered that this lack of disconnect leads to lack of communication about

research needs from industry and poor adoption of CRC research outcomes. Consultation with industry has also resulted in the need for more industry-ready graduates. Industry wants graduates who have a deeper understanding and connection with the Australian seafood industry and understand more thoroughly the nature and the challenges industry face in all facets of their business.

In addition, there is a need to improve communication and cooperation between industry and research providers and vice versa. The need to develop this is highlighted by the necessity for industry to become more innovative and to understand the importance of research and development to maintain a leading and competitive edge.

The CRC SIPP program assists in improving that process by enabling opportunities for industry and researchers to understand each other's views, challenges and promote better communication on ideas and projects.

1.3 Objectives

- Develop, implement and continuously improve on a CRC mentoring program.
- Develop training for mentors and early career scientists.
- Provide industry connection and create new industry experiences for early career scientists.
- Provide additional opportunities for connection between all industry mentors, early careers scientists and CRC staff.



Industry mentor Craig Foster from Clean Seas Tuna gets to meet special guest, “Friday” the fur lion seal at the SIPP 2010 Welcome Dinner. Photo: Mark Oliver

2. Methods

The process of connecting early career scientists with mentors was assisted by the fact that many students already had mentors appointed as identified during the student project application process. Many of these students had had a meaningful, professional relationship in the past 12 months with their mentors but many had not, or were yet to identify, a suitable mentor. Based on the poor response of mentors from SIPP 2009, it was decided to create a group mentoring situation where “roving” mentors would take part in the retreat. It was ensured that these mentors were represented from the entire production and supply chain ensuring participants were able to learn about the Australian seafood industry in its entire context.

For the program to be successful, as well as maximising personal development opportunities, it was considered essential that the selected industry mentors as well as the early career scientists were able to take part in training activities that appealed and benefited both groups. In 2010, the two day SIPP retreat for early career scientists and industry mentors was conducted as at the Sea World Nara Resort on the Gold Coast due to close proximity to Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture. This two day retreat consisted of:

- **A Welcome Dinner** – An opportunity for the SIPP participants to meet with each other and CRC staff. The atmosphere was kept informal to ensure maximum networking took place and Job Lotto activities at Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture were assigned and revealed. CRC staff, early career scientists and industry mentors were strategically grouped together with set seating at the function.
- **A Tour of Shark Bay** – An opportunity to have a personal guided tour of the impressive aquarium facilities at Sea World by marine biologists.
- **An Effective Communication Workshop**– An opportunity for SIPP participants to break down the traditional ‘*us and them*’ stereotype between researchers and industry. The art of extension is important to get CRC research out to industry and to give early career scientists the communicative tools to be able to engage with industry effectively and understand what industry actually wants (on a one on one basis or from a sector perspective). The course was designed to show how a researcher can form a connection with industry at all steps of the industry/researcher relationship. The take home messages for the workshop were around assumptions, behaviours, attitudes, intuition and influence.
- **Job Lotto Work Experience Placements at Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture and Social BBQ** - Participants were strategically assigned “work experience” jobs in four areas on a commercial prawn farm – management, maintenance, feeding/growout and water quality. Participants were put in to groups that were least associated with their research topics or least associated with what mentors do daily in their place of employment as a means of enriching their experiences with industry. Work experience placements were lead by Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture staff members for two hours and involved interactive activities as well as question and answer sessions. At the conclusion of the work experience placements, participants

were taken on a full farm tour, followed by a BBQ with Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture staff for further networking and discussions about the prawn aquaculture industry.

- **An Innovative and Entrepreneurial Thinking Workshop** - The purpose of the 3.5 hour workshop was to empower the SIPP participants in a way that makes them think more entrepreneurial about their work/research/business and also about themselves as an individual.

At the end of the retreat, early career scientists and mentors were surveyed to ensure there is a continuous improvement for the SIPP retreats each year.



A full house of SIPP participants taking part in the effective communications workshop run by Aubrey Warren

3. Results

3.1 Feedback Statistics

This chapter of the final report describes the outcomes of the feedback survey where participants were able to select from strongly agree, agree, neither or not applicable, disagree and strongly disagree to a number of questions related to the retreat. There was a 79% return rate on feedback surveys.

3.1.1 Statistics on Networking and Making Connections with Other Participants

- 71% of SIPP participants strongly agreed that SIPP 2010 was a valuable experience for them to feel part of the Seafood CRC. 28 % said they agreed and 1% said neither or not applicable.
- 19% strongly agreed, 19% agreed and 62% said not applicable that SIPP was a valuable experience for them to be able to connect with their industry mentor or mentee.
- 52% strongly agreed, 42% agreed and 6% said not applicable that SIPP was a valuable experience for them to be able to connect with Seafood CRC staff and Program Managers.
- 65% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that SIPP 2010 provided a valuable experience to meet other early career scientists and industry.
- 68% strongly agreed, 29% agreed and 3% said neither/not applicable that the Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture field trip and BBQ was fun, interactive and a great addition to the retreat.
- 71% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that the social events were a great addition to the retreat which helped break down barriers and get everyone talking and interacting.

3.1.2 Statistics Related to Connections with Industry

- 26% strongly agreed, 61% agreed and 13% said neither/not applicable that SIPP 2010 provided a good opportunity to expand their knowledge about the Australian seafood industry.
- 29% strongly agreed, 57% agreed, 7% said neither/not applicable and 7% disagreed that the job lotto experience was useful for them to try something new and learn more about different facets of the Australian seafood industry.

3.1.3 Statistics Related to Training Workshops at SIPP 2010

- 58% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 10% said neither/nor and 3% disagreed that the effective communications workshop with Aubrey Warren was useful and will assist them in their career/business operations.
- 6% strongly agreed, 58% agreed, 3% said neither/not applicable and 3% disagreed that the innovation and entrepreneurship workshop with Evan Douglas was useful and will assist them in their career/business operations.
- 39% strongly agreed, 55% agreed, 3% said neither/not applicable and 3% disagreed that the training facilitator Aubrey Warren was professional, entertaining and knowledgeable.
- 29% strongly agreed, 58% agreed, 3% said neither/not applicable and 10% disagreed that the training facilitator Evan Douglas was professional, entertaining and knowledgeable.

3.1.4 Statistics Related to Satisfaction with SIPP 2010 Activities

- 6% strongly agreed, 23% agreed and 71% said neither/not applicable that if the survey respondent attended SIPP 2009, that the activities and experiences offered in 2010 were of more relevance/benefit.
- 65% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that overall they were satisfied with SIPP 2010.
- 65% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that SIPP 2010 was extremely well organised and ran like clock-work.
- 78% strongly agreed, 19% agreed and 3% said neither/not applicable that they want to attend SIPP 2011.

3.2 Feedback Comments – Favourite Part of SIPP 2010

When prompted to respond to what was their favourite part of SIPP 2010, the comments received were:

1. The effective communication workshop ran by Aubrey Warren. This workshop really opened my eyes to things which I do with no intention.
2. Aubrey's workshop was fantastic! Very valuable.
3. The communication workshop was very relevant to the working environment and it had excellent engagement activities for the audience. It was great to catch up with CRC students and other industry reps.
4. Shark Bay tour and the prawn farm tour.

5. The retreat offered a great opportunity to mix with other students etc. This time and the connection with other students and mentors are invaluable.
6. Staying at SeaWorld and visiting the Shark Bay aquarium. The prawn farm tour and eating prawns at the BBQ. The pre-dinner drinks and meet and greet.
7. The drinks and dinner on the first night broke the ice and set the scene for the rest of the retreat. We could unwind a little!
8. The chance to network and develop potential new research/business partnerships.
9. The field trip.
10. The innovation and entrepreneurship workshop and the job lotto experience.
11. Interactions with members of the Seafood CRC.
12. The Shark Bay aquarium tour – particularly seeing all the shark species up close and the tour of the Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture facility.
13. The effective communication workshop and the trip to the prawn farm (the job lotto was cool)! The Shark Bay trip. You did a good job.
14. Shark Bay tour at SeaWorld and the prawn farm tour. Nick (Moore) was really funny and passionate.
15. The effective communication workshop and the tour to the prawn farm.
16. Gold Coast prawn tour.
17. Tour of prawn farm.
18. The kiss with the sea lion and the interaction with Seafood CRC participants (other students, industry, Seafood CRC team).
19. Really enjoyed being able to go to an aquaculture farm. Industry experience is always so valuable and being able to explore different industries from the one you are studying is very important.
20. Meeting people from different areas, the location and a structured and organised program.
21. The tour of Shark Bay - I could have sat and watched the fish all day. The dinner was enjoyable and valuable. Great location and getting to know other students.
22. Interesting activities that enabled networking as well as informative workshops and presenters.
23. The opening dinner.

24. The first dinner and entertainment.
25. Gold Coast Marine prawn farm tour. It was a great insight into the prawn industry.
26. Networking during evening events.
27. BBQ at Marine Aquaculture and the farm tour.
28. Meeting CRC staff and Program Managers. Also seeing the “future” of our industry research people.
29. The communications workshop.
30. Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture and the first night's dinner.

3.3 Feedback Comments - Strengths of SIPP 2010

Specific comments received when asked what where the strengths of SIPP 2010 retreat were:

1. The field trip to industry, the tour of SeaWorld aquarium, the food, the accommodation and the attendance of Seafood CRC staff. I was very happy with the whole 2010 SIPP retreat experience.
2. The workshop and the farm visits and enough social time to talk to all the attendees. Thanks Emily and Mark for a wonderful retreat.
3. Getting out and seeing how different industries run compared to the industry I'm involved in.
4. It was relaxed and had a good mix of relevant workshop sessions and other social activities. It had a great location and good food. It was an outstanding opportunity to visit Gold Coast Marine – thank you!
5. Great workshops and the opportunity to mix with other students, CRC leaders and mentors as well as the relaxed environment and the link with industry.
6. Communication workshop with Aubrey was very valuable. Getting out of the home town and the casual atmosphere. Thanks Emily and Mark – thoroughly enjoyed SIPP 2010.
7. The casual atmosphere made it easier to talk to people. I found it very welcoming and it was easy to be able to talk to industry socially. I am sure SIPP 2011 will be fantastic!
8. Relaxed atmosphere and was well organised. Had relevant workshops and activities.
9. Practical activities.
10. The job lotto experience.

11. Assembly of a range of members.
12. Well organised, interactive and fun.
13. Well organised. Industry relations were okay.
14. Well organised with a good amount of time allocated to talk with other students and industry people. Everyone was willing to socialise with people they didn't know too which was awesome.
15. The organisation, the place where the retreat was held and the activities. It was great!
16. Connection with people and learning about seafood business rather than only science projects.
17. Emphasis on social interactions/networking.
18. The communication skills workshop was a very good idea and very useful to us (researchers) dealing with other fields (industry). Lots of time dedicated to networking and very friendly organisation/environment.
19. The relaxed atmosphere was very nice and I think it made the seminars even more enjoyable!
20. Structured and organised program and friendly people linked with the Seafood CRC.
21. Really good opportunity to meet with a variety of people with all different backgrounds. Provides a good understanding of current research in aquaculture. Fantastic networking opportunity and informal and fun.
22. The location, the farm visit and members of industry participating.
23. The number of different people.
24. Interaction with other scientists and new people.
25. Well organised and the time frame was adequate (Wednesday evening to Friday lunch).
26. Mix of people's backgrounds and ease of networking with different places and visiting a working farm.
27. Industry and academic interaction.
28. The CRC staff present for the duration and they were so open in discussion.
29. The relaxed program and the lunches! Assistance to attend – wouldn't have been able to come without this (thanks!)

3.4 Feedback Comments –Least Favourite Part of SIPP 2010

The specific comments received when promoted to consider their least favourite part of SIPP 2010 were:

1. The innovation and entrepreneurship workshop only because I felt it was not applicable to me. I am being very critical because I learnt a lot from this workshop.
2. Getting up early but it is necessary to fit everything in!
3. None except for the fire alarms going off in the presentation on Friday morning.
4. Nothing though Thursday was a very long day.
5. It was a long day on Thursday.
6. It was a long day on Thursday – though I am not complaining! I felt I may not have given 100% towards the end of the day.
7. The innovation and entrepreneurship workshop was not really relevant for me but interesting information though.
8. Seeing those delicious deserts go to waste on the first night at SeaWorld and the mosquitoes at the prawn farm after dark.
9. The last three hours of the innovation and entrepreneurship workshop was harder to understand and the topic was heavier than the effective communications workshop. We didn't get the chance to enjoy SeaWorld because there was no time.
10. The entrepreneurship workshop was a bit too much sit and listen and would have been better if there was a bit more interaction.
11. The innovation and entrepreneurship workshop.
12. Lack of group connection with Program Managers and introduction of future opportunities with the Seafood CRC.
13. Over catered dinner was wasteful. Entrepreneurship workshop should have been more interactive.
14. Having the social dinner on the first night. The fact that name places were on the tables was a very good idea.
15. Nothing!
16. The seminars were a little long. It would have been nice to see four, 1-2 hour seminars rather than two really long ones. I think a number of students, myself included, found the entrepreneurship workshop not very relevant to our current situation (maybe better if shorter).

17. The resort.
18. Friday morning (the innovation and entrepreneurship workshop).
19. The location (but I'm sure most people thought that was fantastic)!
20. Getting up early.
21. Would have liked more formal mentor/student opportunities and workshopping.
22. It was a very early start on Thursday.

3.5 Feedback Comments – Ideas to Improve the SIPP Retreat Experience

When asked for ways the CRC could improve the SIPP retreat experience the following feedback was given:

1. Maybe do speed dating on the first night as there were some “exclusive” groups which were a little harder to get in on the first night.
2. I really enjoyed in 2009 hearing from the students and their research. I think this is really valuable.
3. Some introduction of aims/interaction to build linkages and relationships between PhDs and industry reps. Help both groups identify the “need” (e.g. industry awareness, career pathways, industry research needs, skilled work force etc.) and the “solution” (e.g. communication, industry visits) in these relationships. It gives purpose for everyone’s engagement.
4. I enjoyed both the 2009 and 2010 retreats. If you plan 2011 retreat as you have for the retreats 2009 and 2010 it will be great.
5. Workshop on how to get your research out into the aquaculture industry. What to do after your PhD – a sort of “what next” talk. Informal mentor meetings/sessions one on one with your mentor.
6. Perhaps more mentor/mentee activities and interaction with other mentor/mentees.
7. Should have a talk on the Seafood CRC, its activities and its future and how we can develop our careers in association with the CRC.
8. Organise a dive/snorkel with the marine fish species at the aquarium! Writing/publication skills workshop and a fishing trip.
9. It was really good but Thursday was a bit long (but it wasn’t too intense so that made it manageable).

10. Group connection with Program 1 and 2 with students and managers. Also introduce current Australian seafood industry problems (both technical and market) and future direction.
11. Better to have the first dinner on the second night as many people were tired on Thursday.
12. Short presentations from participants (include prizes). Include some team activities with some kind of competition (e.g. fishing competition) and shorter, more interactive seminars.
13. I hate to say it but I found doing a student presentation last year allowed students to become familiar with one another and their projects (it was easy to miss people. I don't think I managed to meet everyone so having talks is good for that).
14. More interactive exercises.
15. More hands on activities. I think this trip provided a great opportunity to get out of the office and away from our computers and seminars so more interactive and hands on activities would have improved this experience. I understand that the large group size limited this.
16. Ask students to do small overviews of each of their projects.
17. Give the PhD's a task on day one to report (collectively) on day three – a sort of tournament of minds.
18. Get more industry to attend.
19. Run an exercise during the day that results in people filling in a form to see if they can place names with descriptions of research/industry work.
20. More industry representation.
21. Begin with a group bonding activity (e.g. Amazing Race).

3.6 Feedback Comments – Ideas for SIPP 2011

When questioned if any of the participants had some ideas the CRC could implement for SIPP 2011, the following were suggested:

1. Get the students to present their research.
2. Keep visiting different industries and areas involved with the whole supply chain.
3. The need and solution suggestion from before and it would be good to have more experience of the fishing industry as well as aquaculture.
4. Visit to the fish markets and another aquaculture facility would be great.

5. Visit industry again.
6. Visit more seafood farms and industry.
7. Give a talk on the CRC.
8. Shark dive/snorkel at Sydney Aquarium or Mooloolaba Underwater World. Visit the Sydney Fish Market and the Sustainable Seafood Café at Annadale, Sydney. Trawler tour in Sydney Harbour or a prawn trawler tour.
9. Suggest Darwin as a venue.
10. Darwin. Maybe extend the Job Lotto idea and have a bit of a role play for our own fish farm.
11. More field trips to aquaculture farms. Darwin could be a good venue.
12. It would be good to schedule some 'exercise' time in the program. Like a vigorous walk together to somewhere interesting and/or a gym circuit. I quite liked the dancing myself.
13. Good connection with all Seafood CRC staff and students. Create a way to make everyone keep in contact (e.g. make a contact list or create a Seafood CRC FaceBook page then add everyone in as a friend).
14. Have two industry tours.
15. Change the venue to Tasmania and have an oyster field trip on a production day. A workshop about milestone reporting (structure, content, tips). Add some of our project/PhD/job details on our name badges. Give a list of participant contact details to all those who attended.
16. Sydney as a venue and if possible, another industry experience.
17. Make it longer and less tight. Perhaps presentations (on a voluntary basis) from the members/participants.
18. Somewhere warm with a shorter and wider variety of seminars. More hands on. Keep the informal atmosphere as it made it a very relaxed and enjoyable experience.
19. Interactive workshops – not one way communication workshops.
20. More farm tours of alternative production techniques.
21. Visit another aquaculture farm like tuna, salmon and Barramundi.
22. A specific stand up and introduce segment at the start.
23. Cooking and preparing seafood and eating!
24. I do think that setting the students an unannounced task on the first day – to report back on the last day – outside of their experience/comfort zone would be illuminating. They would have to do it between times, too. You could ask them to make a case for establishing a business and presenting a

'prospectus' to a group of investors (the industry mentors). They could make the case for investing in a prawn farm, a trawler, a private laboratory, a retail seafood business, an export business etc. Be inventive! Best case wins!!

4. Discussion

It was pleasing to discover that SIPP has gained more traction as a greater number of early career scientists took part in 2010 (28 compared with 23 attending in 2009) and a greater number of industry personnel taking part (10 versus 5 in 2009).

It came through very strongly in the feedback survey that the retreat plays a crucial part in ensuring early-careers scientists feel part of the CRC and it was valuable for all participants to be able to connect and get to know the CRC Program Managers. This is especially important when you consider that CRC early career scientists are scattered throughout Australia and often have little help financially to attend other CRC events such as the twice yearly planning and reporting forms and other functions. This reiterates that it is important to continue to provide the \$1000 mentoring costs per year for students to ensure traction with future SIPP events and their mentors.

For those early career scientists that had their own personal industry mentors present, the feedback also strongly demonstrates that the retreat provides a good opportunity for the mentoring relationship to flourish and professionally develop further. Without these types of formal gatherings it is likely that the mentoring relationship would dwindle or would not be so successful. As per SIPP 2009, it was still very difficult to get industry to attend the 2010 retreat but the offer of the bursary to attend did help significantly in obtaining presence by industry. Many students' assigned mentors were unable to take part in the retreat due to time and work commitments so inviting a cohort of industry people to take part worked extremely well. The notion of having a "roving" industry mentor system added significant value to the project through giving the participants exposure to a greater range of industry types, positions and people.

According to the survey, the informal and relaxed nature of the retreat also enhanced communication between the early career scientists and the industry personnel and helped break down barriers and get attendees networking and sharing their experiences and ideas. This format needs to be continued for the retreats in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

There was a very strong, positive reaction to the value of the job lotto experience and the visit to Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture's facilities. The majority of the participants agreed that this was an integral part of the retreat for both early career scientists and the industry mentors to discover a different facet of the seafood industry they may not have had exposure to in the past. The BBQ with the Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture staff was also another activity in which SIPP participants could connect with industry personnel and network.

The training workshops were also highly regarded and survey results show they were useful and in most cases relevant to the individual. More participants got value from the effective communications workshop than the innovation and entrepreneurship workshop. This may be due to a number of reasons. The communications workshop

was extremely interactive and the facilitator was obviously very skilled in training large groups of people from diverse backgrounds. The material discussed was also kept at a simple level with only a few key points people needed to take home with them. On the other hand, the entrepreneurship workshop was too detailed and was not pitched for the right audience. While the marketing and business based early career scientists understood the content and the messages delivered, the majority of other participants were “lost” in the material and were not able to identify the key messages or the relevance to their work or situation. Whilst the training provider was briefed about the audience, the material was still not pitched at the right level and was also not interactive enough to keep participants interested and alert. More emphasis needs to be placed on briefing busy training professional to ensure they are able to deliver training workshops that will benefit participants. However, despite this feedback, most participants valued both course facilitators with the majority of them scoring them as highly professional, entertaining and knowledgeable.

It was pleasing to discover that those who had been to SIPP 2009 and were able to compare the quality and relevance of SIPP 2010 activities with those of 2009, all agreed that the activities and experiences offered in 2010 were of more relevance/benefit. It was also pleasing to see that the majority of people attending SIPP 2010 would like to attend SIPP 2011 (industry included) and that participants considered it to be well organised and planned.

The top 10 learnings and suggestions that came from the feedback survey that can be integrated in to the planning and activities of SIPP 2011 were:

1. Ensuring each day does not go for too long. A few participants commented that 8am – 8pm was too long a day for maximum attention and alertness to activities.
2. Continue to ensure all training workshops are as interactive as possible and do not include any one-way communication type activities.
3. Consider more training activities at SIPP 2011 but structure them in small, bite sized chunks (e.g. 90 minute activities rather than 3 hour+ activities).
4. Provide an opportunity at the beginning for participants to tell others about their research or job roles (**NB – This activity was planned for the opening night dinner in the form of a very informal interview by a “mock” journalist. However SeaWorld did not provide a roving microphone but rather, one with a short cord that would not reach around the room requiring each person to stand up, walk to the podium and then sit down stretching out the formal activities of the night to well over an hour. It was decided by the retreat coordinators to abort this activity – especially as the networking and socialising was at its peak by the middle of the evening*).
5. Create more formal training activities which require mentors to pair up with early – careers scientists making them “work” together on specific tasks.
6. A workshop on “where to next for a student” and how industry can help them get there.
7. Provide some information about the Seafood CRC.
8. Include an activity that small groups need to work on over the duration of the retreat in which they must report back on the last day.
9. Ensure other field trip opportunities are provided besides aquaculture.

10. Include a small amount of detail about the job role/research project on the name badges for everyone to enhance networking.

Other ideas that came from the feedback survey that should be implemented immediately to ensure the group continues to communicate together includes inviting participants to become “friends” on the Seafood CRC FaceBook page and also to send out a contacts list for all participants to re-connect after the retreat. A NING network page was established for the 2009 retreat (to get around FaceBook being blocked at places of employment and universities) but with continuing the popularity and usage of FaceBook, the NING account will be deleted and replaced.



Seafood CRC marketing PhD student Jasha Bowe during the “Feeding” Job Lotto activity at Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture. Jasha checks for any uneaten food not utilised by the growing prawns . Photo: Mark Oliver

5. Benefits and Adoption

A number of benefits have arisen as part of SIPP 2010:

Short term benefits: Early career scientist and industry cohort, specific training courses and training resources developed.

Medium term benefits: Increased leadership and general skills of students, post doctoral research scientists, emerging career scientists and industry personnel.

Long term benefits: More graduates and early career scientists having a connection with the seafood industry and understanding how their research contributes to industry benefits and the food industry. The Australian seafood industry has a greater understanding of the benefits of CRC research and hence, the benefit is an improved adoption rate of technology and new information.

6. Further Development

Plans for SIPP 2011 can be further developed in line with feedback received from participants as outlined on page 20. Key developments to continue for 2011 and beyond include the provision of a bursary for industry to take part (airfares and accommodation), ensuring field trips to visit industry remain as an integral part of the SIPP program and ensuring more interactive activities take place. The challenge will be to get more industry personnel taking part. A strategy may be conducting a formal request for ideas four months before the retreat to get industry committed.

7. Planned Outcomes

Public Benefit Outcomes

- Early career scientists with global knowledge of the seafood industry and specific sectors
- Link graduating students with positions in the seafood industry or universities.
- Retention of graduated students remaining in the seafood industry.

Private Benefit Outcomes

- Ability for early career scientists to effectively communicate with industry about R&D enabling industry to value benefit.
- Confidence and communication skills promoting industry ready graduates.
- Industry mentors and mentees gain new skills.
- Training courses delivered.

Linkages with CRC Milestone Outcomes

This project fits within strategy 1 of the A,B, Sea theme business plan and is specific to the following milestones:

- Initial students recruited, inducted and paired with appropriate industry mentors (Milestones 3.1.2 and 3.6.1)
- Students gain PhDs and selected students embark on career pathways in seafood (Milestones 3.1.3 and 3.6.2)

These outcomes relate to developing and coordinating a comprehensive PhD, Masters and Honours program with a strong industry context across all CRC themes.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, SIPP 2010 was a successful initiative for early career scientist and industry training and encouraging a young scientist cohort with links to industry. It also achieved important connections with the Seafood CRC organisation and CRC staff. The challenge still remains in getting industry involvement at future retreats as the CRC competes with industry's work, time and financial commitments. The Seafood CRC will look at new strategies to address these issues and implement them for SIPP 2011.



SIPP participants talk with Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture staff member over the prawn feeding processes and procedures. Photo: Mark Oliver