

***Exploring Strategy and Strategic Planning  
within Australian Commercial  
Fisher Micro-Businesses***

by

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## ABSTRACT

The small business sector is a foundational element of national economic performance and the provision of employment to millions of workers globally. Micro-businesses, a sub-set of the small business sector, are a key contributor to that economic performance. This study examines the Australian micro-business sector. The growth and profitability of Australian micro-businesses can be impacted by a myriad of internal and external business factors which can be viewed through the prisms of strategy and strategic planning. Strategy is developed to achieve a vision, goal or what could be described as a better future for the business. Achieving the business goal is met through the process of strategic planning which may involve the use of methodologies, analytical tools and processes to achieve the goal.

There is considerable research literature regarding strategy and strategic planning in the context of large, small and micro businesses. However, there is a paucity of research relating to Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses. This study is focussed on exploring the use of strategy and strategic planning at the micro-business level within the Australian commercial fishing industry.

Consequently, this study will examine themes noted by industry and how these micro-businesses express their use or otherwise of strategy and strategic planning. The study begins by exploring the context in which commercial fishing micro-businesses operate. This scene setting is comprised of more than the value of the sector but also explores the broader contribution of the sector to the national economy. In setting the context in which commercial fishing micro-business operate, this study also examines current market structures, industry participants and commercial fishing demographics. The final element of exploring the context in which these micro-businesses operate includes employment, regulation and the family business structures.

The study then focusses on a detailed, multi-faceted literature review which examines strategy, strategic planning and strategic analysis tools. This process lays a foundation for examining strategic management theories to provide a deeper understanding of the context in which commercial fishing micro-businesses operate. For the purposes of this study, the

many competing and complimentary theories are grouped into four categories: (1) the Classical Framework (e.g. design, Planning and Positioning Schools); (2) the Environment / Contingency Framework (e.g. Power and Culture Schools); (3) the Neo-Classical / Competition Framework (e.g. Resource-based, Competition and Entrepreneurial Schools); and (4) Post-Classical / Contemporary Framework (e.g. Learning, Emergence and Cognitive Schools). The implications of these theoretical frameworks are discussed in the context of strategy and strategic planning. Taking into account the industry context and literature review a set of research questions and objectives were developed.

The study design and results were identified and reported from data obtained from participating commercial fishing micro-business operators. The primary data collection process was elicited through qualitative interviews. Within the interview process participants were asked to identify short, medium and long-term issues affecting their businesses. Finally, participants were taken through a process of applying a strategic analysis tool. Results suggest that the family business structure is the dominant business framework amongst participants. It was also found that regulation was a significant impediment to the operation of commercial fishing micro-businesses.

The study's final analysis and conclusions suggest that strategy amongst participants in this study exists and is manifested in an ad hoc manner and is reactive in nature. Government legislation is cited as creating obstacles to the use of strategy or strategic planning. Finally, there was a clear understanding from participants of the salient internal and external factors impacting their businesses. The ability to deal with those issues using strategy was limited.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COSBOA	Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia
DIISR	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (Queensland)
DIISRTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (Commonwealth)
FBA	Family Business Australia
FCSA	Fisheries Council of South Australia
FRDC	Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GVP	Gross Value of Production
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
NFF	National Farmers Federation
NSIA	National Seafood Industry Alliance
NTSC	Northern Territory Seafood Council
PESTEL Analysis	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal Analysis
QDAFF	Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
QDEHP	Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
QSIA	Queensland Seafood Industry Association
SEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (Commonwealth)
SIV	Seafood Industry Victoria
SMEs	Small to Medium Sized Enterprises
SWOT Analysis	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis
WAFIC	Western Australian Fishing Industry Council

## STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet the requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made.

Signature:



Date:

08 / 02 / 2014

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

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The small business sector is an important regional, national and international contributor to overall economic wellbeing (Anderson, Jin-Hai, Harrison, & Robson, 2003; Yesseleva, 2012). The Australian commercial fishing sector is a significant contributor to the national economy and is dominated by small businesses (Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research [DIISR], 2011). In the Australian context, the definition of small business is specifically divided between 'small' and 'micro' businesses where a small business is defined as having up to 19 employees and a micro-business is a business with up to 4 employees (Australian Bureau Statistics [ABS], 2001; Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education [DIISRTE], 2012). According to McPhee (2008) the majority of Australian fishing firms are family enterprises supporting regional commercial business activity. This study is qualitative and will focus on a sub-set of small businesses in Australia, the commercial fishing micro-business and exploring. There is a paucity of research that has addressed the use of strategy and strategic planning amongst this sub-set of small businesses. Consequently, this study will explore, using qualitative interviews, themes noted by commercial fishing micro-business operators regarding their use strategy and strategic planning.

This study has been organised to ensure that the structure, value and key policy issues facing commercial fishing micro-businesses provide the context in which they operate and their use of strategy and strategic planning. The following sections outline the research background (Section 1.1), the research context (Section 1.2), the purpose of the research (Section 1.3), the significance of the research (Section 1.4) and finally the overall thesis outline (Section 1.5). In doing so, key elements of strategy and strategic planning are identified and discussed in the context of the commercial fishing micro-business.

## **1.1. MICRO-BUSINESS, STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Commercial fishing micro-businesses play an integral role within the Australian fishing industry. A primary motivation of this research is to make a contribution to the Australian

commercial fishing industry and to the academic literature in the micro-business, strategy and strategic planning fields. It has been argued that micro-businesses have limited human and capital resources to deal with the business environments in which they operate (Lumpkin, McKelvie, Gras, & Nason, 2012; Sen, 2011) or capacity to influence the markets in which they operate (Oliver & Black, 2011; Samujh, 2011). Yet, there is relatively little understanding as to how (and if) strategy and strategic planning is used within these businesses (Leitner & Guldenberg, 2010; Wiesner & Millett, 2012). This is important because it has been argued that businesses should engage in some form of strategy or applying strategic planning to support their survival and growth (Hasegawa, 2003; Van Praag, 2003).

## **1.2. CONTEXT**

The primary research focus in this study is the use of interview data collected from Australian commercial fisher micro-business owners. This study is concerned with developing an understanding of how this group of micro-businesses use strategy and strategic planning in their firms in the context of the challenges impacting the business sector and fishing industry.

## **1.3. PURPOSE**

This study will explore the nature of strategy and strategic planning within commercial fishing micro-businesses. Four research questions were developed to guide the study including:

Research Question 1: What strategy factors do commercial micro-fishing businesses link to sustainability and growth in the sector?

Research Question 2: In what ways do commercial fisher micro-businesses apply strategy to support the sustainability and growth of their businesses in the sector?

Research Question 3: What factors impact how strategic planning is executed within the Australian commercial fishing micro-business sector?

Research Question 4: In what ways do commercial fisher micro-businesses apply strategic planning to support the survival and growth of their businesses?

The research questions are underpinned by multiple research objectives which are noted below:

Research Objective 1: To identify drivers that inhibits the use of strategy and strategic planning among members of the commercial fisher micro-businesses sector.

Research Objective 2: To identify the ways in which commercial fishing micro-businesses apply strategy and strategic planning as part of the overall survival and growth of their businesses.

#### **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE**

The value of the commercial fishing sector is significant and according to the Australia's commercial fishing industry contributes over \$2.3 billion per year to the national economy and is primarily supported by micro-business activity (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences [ABARES], 2013). This research is the first of its kind to specifically focus on the use of strategy and strategic planning within the micro-business context. The research little has not fully explored what the strategy and strategic planning are in the context of this industry setting. The context in which these micro-businesses operate, that is, the broader market and legislative environment are in some ways beyond their influence and a such the primary focus of commercial fishing micro-businesses is the their short-term survival.

#### **1.5. THESIS OUTLINE**

Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses face a volatile market environment, constantly changing regulatory arrangements at a state and national level and a range of business level limitations (e.g. capital and human resources) that may impact on their

capacity to remain viable (Fenton & Marshall, 2001; Minnegal & Dwyer, 2008; Van Putten, Hamon & Gardner, 2011). It is in this context that the study will explore the use of strategy and strategic planning by micro-businesses.

The study is divided into four key sections including a chapter devoted to setting the scene and the context in which commercial fishing micro-businesses operate. The use of strategy supports businesses in effectively and efficiently achieving their goals or business outcomes within a particular marketplace (Farjoun, 2002; Stefanovic & Milosevic, 2012). Whereas strategic planning involves the use of methodologies and processes to achieve a business vision or to address market conditions (Collis & Rukstad, 2008; Campbell, Renshaw, & Engstrom, 2010). In the organisational context it could be argued that strategic planning is the execution of strategy (Piran, 2013; Sterling & Rader, 2012). Strategy and strategic planning concepts, while linked, are separate constructs that are operationalized in different ways. The purpose of this study is not to assess strategy versus strategic planning but to explore how these concepts as manifested amongst commercial fishing micro-businesses and the implications for organisational practice and theory.

The literature reviews family business framework as it relates to strategy and strategic planning to explore the potential impact of on strategy and strategic planning. This has been deemed important as one key demographic element of the commercial fishing sector is the family nature of the businesses within industry (Le´de´e, Sutton, Tobin, & DeFreitas, 2011; McPhee, 2008; Schirmer & Pickworth, 2005). This is followed by an application of strategic analysis tools (e.g. benchmarking or analysis through the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis) to determine factors that are potentially impacting on micro-businesses in the Australian commercial fishing industry, internally and externally. In order to gain a better understanding of strategy and strategic planning the literature review also focussed on strategic management theories. The final component of the literature review involves a discussion of the implications of the literature review.

The third section of the study is the research design and results chapter. The study employed a three-tiered approach for collecting data from commercial fishing micro-businesses. The

primary data for the study was collected by conducting face-to-face interviews and focussed on short, medium and long-term issues facing their business operations that may have impacted the execution of strategy and the development of strategic plans. A strategic analysis tool (a SWOT analysis) was also used to gain knowledge regarding the issues impacting on the micro-businesses and how these relate specifically to strategy and strategic planning in commercial fishing micro-businesses.

The final chapter of this study provides a final analysis of conclusions based on an overall synthesis of the data collected from industry participants and make recommendations from multiple perspectives including industry, industry associations, government through fisheries management. This study will also examine industry feedback in terms of their effects from a theoretical, academic perspective. Study limitations and areas of further research are also provided.

This research is supported by an ongoing research partnership between the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre and the University of the Sunshine Coast supported and primarily an industry driven study. The Australian commercial fishing industry is broadly unaware of the importance of strategy and strategic management or the extent to which micro-businesses use strategy in their business planning processes.

The following chapter will provide a foundation to help clarify the commercial fishing context from an Australian perspective.



## **2. INDUSTRY OVERVIEW**

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The underlying driver of this study is exploring strategy and strategic planning amongst micro-business operating in the Australian commercial fishing industry. The approach adopted in this study reflects a grounded, qualitative approach to collecting and analysing data from individual micro-business operators. The following literature will help to contextualise the business environment in which commercial fishing micro-businesses operate. The issues addressed here are a precursor to detailed analysis of strategy and strategic planning literature and its theoretical underpinnings. Industry issues in this chapter are identified through the use of ABS data, industry statistics identifying the value of commercial fishing to the national economy from quasi-government agencies such as ABARES.

### **2.1. THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN SMALL BUSINESS ELEMENT OF THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY**

The Australian economy is comprised of over 2 million businesses with approximately 1.9 million of those businesses categorised as small businesses (DIISR, 2011). The micro-business sector comprises over 84 per cent of small businesses which is over 1,700,000 businesses (DIISR, 2011). Small businesses perform an essential role in the economy providing flexible, responsive service to consumers and suppliers, contributing to the supply chain as a customer of other small businesses and large firms, and providing employment opportunities across urban, rural and regional centres (ABS, 2010; Ergas & Orr, 2007). Based on ABS survival rates from June 2007 to June 2009, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector was on par with other sectors with over 80 per cent survival, compared to over 80 per cent survival in health care and social assistance and almost 79 per cent within the rental, hiring and real estate services (ABS, 2010). The ABS survival rate data indicates the ongoing importance of commercial fishing micro-businesses nationally significant small to medium sized business (SMEs).

The small business sector has a significant representation in rural and regional centres. Thirty-five per cent of small businesses are based outside of capital city centres in rural and regional Australia (Connolly, Norman, & West, 2012). In urban centres, the most prolific

industries are those providing business services; in regional centres agriculture and business services are the most common, accounting for approximately 25 per cent of business types (Connolly et al., 2012). With one quarter of businesses in regional centres being agriculture orientated the importance of a viable commercial fishing micro-business sector is critical.

## 2.2. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMERCIAL FISHING MICRO-BUSINESS

The Australian agricultural, fishing and forestry sector comprises approximately 200,000 small businesses growing, harvesting and supplying food for national and international markets (DIISR, 2011). The micro-business component of the seafood sector in Australia is an important part of the national food supply chain. The sector is a significant contributor to the national economy with the ABARES noting that in 2011-12 the total volume of Australian fisheries production was over 237,000 tonnes whereas the gross value of production (GVP) of Australian fisheries production increased by 3 per cent to \$2.3 billion (ABARES, 2013).

The \$2.3 billion figure combines both commercial fisher and aquaculture GVP, approximately \$1.3 billion and \$1 billion respectively. Seafood is also an important component of the Australian food production system and the sixth largest food-based primary industry (ABARES, 2013). Table 1 provides a jurisdictional view of the value of the commercial fisheries and their value to the Australian economy. Overall, the total volume of fisheries production fell in 2011-12 by almost 2,500 tonnes and GVP fell by over \$900 million (ABARES, 2013).

Table 1

*Wild Harvest and Aquaculture GVP (\$ millions)*

Species	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	Commonwealth
Wild Harvest	81.5	54.6	185.5	276.0	209.0	153.0	34.0	308.0
Aquaculture	54.5	16.4	82.5	109.0	237.0	537.0	17.0	-
Totals	136.0	71.0	268.0	385.0	446.0	690.0	51.0	308

Source: ABARES (2013, pp.13-18).

Rises and falls in the Australia dollar as detailed in Figure 1 indicate that commercial fishing micro-businesses are impacted by changes to the dollar. Consistent rises in the Australian dollar mean higher prices for exported Australian goods (Reserve Bank of Australia, 2013). Figure 1 provides an average Australian dollar which demonstrates its variability peaking at approximately \$1.07. In February 2012, the Australian dollar fell almost 15 per cent in August 2013 to approximately 91 cents. The drop in the Australian dollar starting mid-April 2013 was the beginning of a drop in the value of the Australian easing pressure on exports but in turn allowing cheap imported product into the Australian domestic market placing pressure on commercial fishers who do not export.

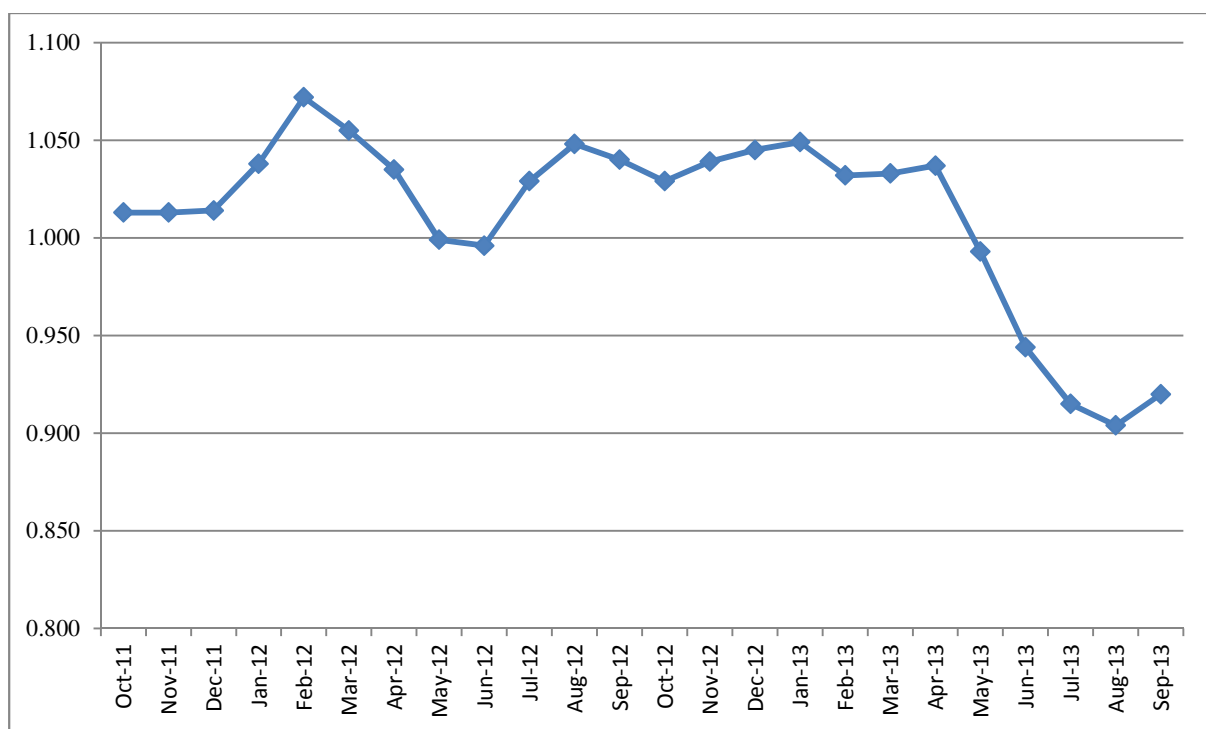


Figure 1. Monthly Average - AUD per 1.00 USD. Adapted from *Forex Tools, Historical Rates*, OzForex Pty Ltd 2013.

The importance of commercial fishing micro-businesses are not limited to economic benefits but also social benefits, especially for regional populations, through the creation of employment within the seafood industry in the post-harvest and seafood processing sectors and ancillary employment (Curtotti, Hormis, & McGill, 2012; Fisheries Council of South Australia [FCSA], 2009; Fisheries Research and Development Corporation [FRDC], 2010; FRDC & Ridge Partners, 2010). The existence of a commercial fishing fleet also creates

indirect employment in terms of the provision of industry specific services such as vessel refuelling, maintenance and insurance businesses (Delforce, Dickson, & Hogan, 2012; FCSA, 2009).

The importance of the Australian seafood industry to the Australian economy is further highlighted by a report developed by the NTSC which identifies that over \$1.4 billion has been invested in commercial licences, vessels with approximately 330 registered commercial vessels (NTSC, 2011). Investments in the industry can also be found in land based support structures, aquaculture businesses and equipment. The NTSC also notes that over 650 businesses are directly involved in the industry. More broadly, businesses such as electricians, refrigeration specialists, carpenters, welders, chandlers, mechanics, boat yards, and other service providers are dependent on the commercial seafood sector.

This section has outlined that the Australian commercial seafood industry is an important part of the National economy. Micro-businesses in the Australian seafood sector invest billions of dollars to operate in the industry. However, commercial fishing micro-businesses operate in the context of a multi-layered, multi-stakeholder business environment in a market that can provide seafood to consumers from a range of supply channels. The market structure in which Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses operate is examined in the next section of this chapter in order to better understand the market and potential impact on the development of strategy or strategic planning.

### **2.3. MARKET STRUCTURE**

A range of stakeholders occupy the Australian seafood market including domestic commercial fishers, domestic aquaculture farmers, seafood importers, processors, primary and secondary wholesalers, central seafood markets, commercial fisher cooperatives, food service, catering firms and retail outlets as detailed in Figure 2. The market environment is not a simple one and the provision of seafood to the end consumer can be sourced from a range of stakeholders in the seafood supply chain.

The market presents challenges and opportunities in terms of developing strategy and strategic planning for commercial fishing micro-business such as identifying who is the end consumer. Micro-businesses can pursue up to six stakeholder groups in the Australian seafood market including processors, primary wholesalers, central seafood markets, fishing cooperatives, food service, catering firms and retail outlets or directly sell to the public. This presents commercial fishing micro-businesses with the challenges ranging from the identification of the most profitable markets, maintaining quality control and transport costs for example.

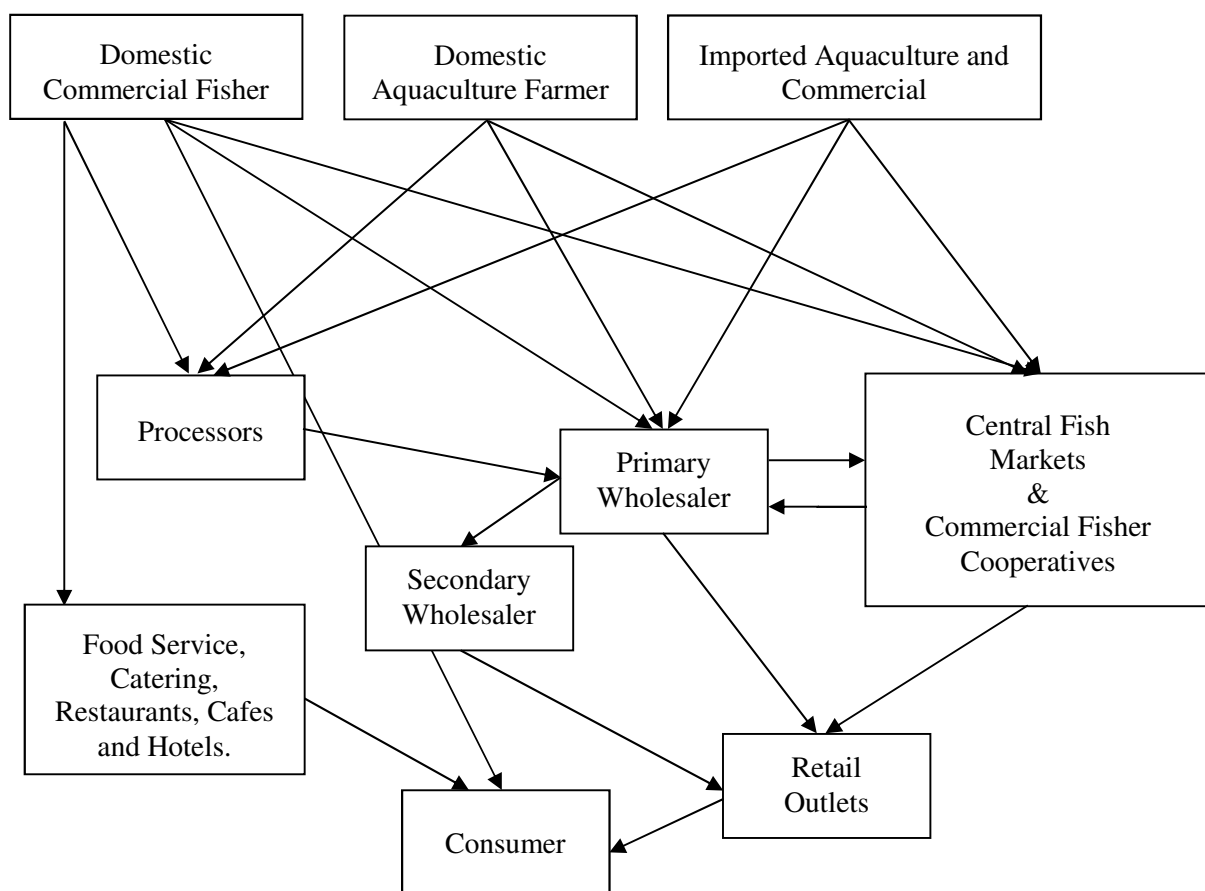


Figure 2. Adapted from “Australian Seafood Market Structure” market conceptualisations developed by Ruello, 2008 and Spencer and Kneebone 2007.

It is regularly found (Department of Fisheries, Western Australia), 2011; Ruello, 2008) that commercial fisher micro-businesses have limited choice in who they can supply to, that is, in some regions wholesalers operate in a near monopolistic market structure as small business lack the capacity to reach markets or do not have market arrangements that allow direct sales to retailers or consumers. It could be argued that while wholesalers play a role in the market Spencer and Kneebone (2007) they may not necessarily play a dominant role if micro-businesses can access the market through multiple means such as targeting (1) consumers; (2) processors; (3) primary wholesalers; (4) central fish markets; (5) food services, catering, restaurants, cafes and hotels; or (6) fishing cooperatives. The final supply pathway taken by commercial fishing micro-businesses could be developed through the strategic planning process.

It is also common strategy for commercial fisher micro-businesses, where possible, to attempt to diversify their access to markets by membership of fishing cooperatives. These cooperatives usually are defined as organisations that are owned, managed and used by their membership base for the benefit of members (ABS, 2012). The benefits of these are cooperative structure provides a central distribution point for the consistent supply of product (Clarence River Fisherman's Cooperative, 2012). The cooperative market structures also provide access to discounted goods such as fuel and mooring facilities for vessels (Clarence River Fisherman's Cooperative, 2012; Coffs Harbour Fisherman's Co-operative, 2012).

The significance of this in this study is that this may be a useful strategy for commercial fishing micro-businesses. However, it is also noted that these cooperatives have been less than successful as a result of limited business management skills, capital, number of members selling to the cooperative and understanding of governance processes (Hilborn, Orensanz, & Parma, 2005; Unal, 2006). On the other hand, others are known to successfully support the development and growth of the industry (Hilborn et al., 2005). Little is known about how commercial fishing micro-businesses interpret this in their strategic thinking or application in strategic planning within the business.

The export market provides another strategic option for the sale of seafood product that may be appropriate in some cases. However, there are significant costs and other strategic challenges that often make this a difficult option for commercial fishing micro-businesses. For example, the Australian government applies a cost recovery model in terms of exporting with rules and a guideline that is managed by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) to ensure food safety and to meet the importation standards set by importing nations (AQIS, 2012a). Commercial fisher micro-businesses must add approximately \$5,000 in fees to export and must comply with additional costs through an audit regime to ensure that the businesses paperwork and vessel remain compliant with AQIS standards and do not jeopardise export markets for other businesses (AQIS, 2012b). In summary, this is often not a viable strategic and cost effective alternative for many commercial fishing micro-businesses.

The commercial seafood industry structure is multi-layered and provides commercial fishing micro-businesses multiple channels to sell seafood. The industry structure provides an overview of most of the key stakeholders participating in the Australian seafood market. However, two key stakeholders have not been identified and exert influence over the commercial fishing industry which are explored in the next section in the context of strategy and strategic planning.

## **2.4. INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS**

It has been noted ABARES (2013) that the value of the Australian seafood industry is a significant contributor to the national economy. Figure 1 discussed previously, provides a detailed overview of the commercial fishing sector's market structure. Although, Figure 1 does not include two key industry participants; (1) industry bodies and (2) government (i.e. fisheries management). These stakeholders groups develop legislation and provide advice on fisheries respectively that may impact on the markets in which commercial fisher-micro-business operate.

The industry bodies noted in Table 2 have limited organisational resources and are critical stakeholders in how commercial fisheries are managed. This task puts significant pressure on industry groups in terms of finances and this limits the services that can be provided for all members. For example, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) is fully funded by a voluntary membership base which means not all commercial fishers will be members while Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) and Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV) have a sophisticated funding arrangements that increase their financial status but not to the extent that services could be offered on a business to business basis. That is, the provision of strategic planning training for example would require consultants or industry trained facilitators at enormous cost, particularly in states such as Queensland and Western Australia where the fishing fleets are not confined to one geographic location. This may also be reflected amongst fisheries management agencies.

Table 2

*Industry Services*

<b>Industry Body</b>	<b>Services</b>
QSIA (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation to government on fisheries legislation and management, licensing and access issues.</li> <li>• Communication of fisheries issues.</li> <li>• Promote the consumption of wild caught seafood.</li> <li>• Provision of low cost or subsidised training.</li> </ul>
WAFIC (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation to government.</li> <li>• Communication of fisheries issues.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with the Western Australian government for better fisheries management.</li> <li>• Provision of materials in the areas of (1) resource access, (2) safety and training and (3) research and development.</li> </ul>
SIV (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation to government on fisheries legislation and management, licensing and access issues.</li> <li>• Representation regarding Marine parks, native title, environmental issues, safety, education and training, research and development.</li> <li>• Media and public relations, marketing and promotion of seafood.</li> </ul>

Note: Service summary information derived from commercial seafood industry websites.



The management of fisheries is a State and Federal responsibility depending on the fishery which involves the ongoing management (including profitability) and scientific research on fish stocks to ensure their sustainability (Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry [QDAFF], 2013). Table 3 provides some examples of the role of fisheries management.

Table 3

*Fisheries Management Role*

<b>Government Department</b>	<b>Fisheries Management Role</b>
QDAFF (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and conserve fisheries resources while maintaining profitable commercial and enjoyable recreational fishing sectors.</li> </ul>
Department of Fisheries, Western Australia (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We take a holistic approach to managing the State's fisheries, where the combined effects of all fishing sectors are taken into account. This involves making decisions on the best use of the fishery resource within a total and sustainable catch for each fishery or fished stock. This may involve allocation or reallocation of fish resources to either the recreational or commercial fishing sectors.</li> </ul>
Department of Environment and Primary Industries (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our management of fisheries is focused on securing a high quality natural resource base for the long term, as well as generating economic and social benefits in our communities. We aim to secure, share and grow our fisheries resources in an ecologically sustainable way for now and the future.</li> </ul>

Note: Information sourced from the government department websites.

The most common theme across the departments noted in Table 3 is maintaining the viability of the commercial fishing industry. Business level assistance could not be found on the department's website. All of the department web sites note the idea of using fisheries resources to the benefit of the fishery. What is not clearly identified by government agencies are the competing interests across fisheries management including resource allocation/sharing issues between competing fisheries sub-sectors such as commercial, recreational, Indigenous and aquaculture groups. This suggests that departments must allocate funding to regulatory and industry development tasks. These tasks may change depending on the government of the day.

In summary, industry bodies and fisheries departments are key stakeholders in the Australian commercial seafood industry. Table 2 suggests that industry bodies provide similar services to commercial fishing businesses such as representation to government or industry wide needs such as training. Whereas Table 3 suggests that government's role in the industry context is one of regulation. The absence of assistance with respect to strategy or strategic planning for commercial fishing micro-businesses amongst industry bodies and government does not suggest that the issue is not critical for micro-business forms. It may be argued that industry bodies and government agencies may not have either the knowledge or financial capacity to assist commercial fishing micro-businesses. The following section examines commercial fishing demographics to help understand the micro-business through industry demographics.

## **2.5. COMMERCIAL FISHING DEMOGRAPHICS**

In this section, the demographic composition of commercial fishers is described. This is to highlight potential challenges that may be linked to strategy and strategic planning. Curtotti et al. (2012), Fenton and Marshall (2001), Gardner, Tonts and Elrick (2006) and McPhee (2008) have noted that in general terms the commercial fisher demographic profile includes:

- A predominance of males in the industry (McPhee, 2008).
- A mean age profile of 45-55 years (Curtotti et al., 2012).
- Limitations in terms of accessing training (McPhee, 2008); and changes in attracting and re-skilling (AgriFood Skills Australia, 2011).
- Almost no desire to retrain (Curtotti et al., 2012).
- Have a long-term history in the commercial fishing industry (Fenton & Marshall, 2001).
- A proportion are second and third generation fishers (McPhee, 2008).
- Strong link to place (Gardner, Tonts, & Elrick, 2006).
- Predominantly regional workforce (Gardner et al., 2006).
- Limited formal education (Fenton & Marshall, 2001).

Perhaps the demographic profile of the Australian commercial fisher has an impact on the capacity for an uptake of strategy or strategic planning within the business. Qi (2005) argues that demographics may be important in the way that strategy is or is not employed. Qi also notes that support from senior management for middle management is influenced by the demographic profile of the workforce's demographics. Qi (2005) provides some insights including a need for organisations to invest funds in training and up-skilling and training in better communication between different levels of management to implement strategy and attain a common level of understanding amongst employees. This may have limited applicability at the micro-business level may have no hierarchies amongst their employees. The following section moves beyond predominantly descriptive demographic information to examining employment in the context of the Australian seafood industry.

## **2.6. EMPLOYMENT**

Employment in the commercial fishing industry has regional value, providing employment opportunities at a regional level. However, the commercial fishing industry faces challenges with respect to maintaining employment levels. National small business peak bodies such as Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) have argued that the significance of small enterprises and micro-businesses are that they provide employment opportunities across the entire Australian economy (COSBOA, 2009). However, identifying a precise employment figure across the commercial fishing micro-business sector is complicated by ABS data collection methodologies and a lack of employment statistics collected by industry bodies and State and Territory governments (FRDC, 2005). In terms of commercial fishing direct and indirect employment figures provided by the FRDC an initial estimate of approximately 60,000 was proposed (FRDC, 2005).

Updated FRDC estimates suggest that there are approximately 30,000 directly employed persons in the Australian seafood industry, 20,000 in commercial fishing and 10,000 in the aquaculture sector (FRDC, 2010). The significance of employment across the Australian economy is approximately one-tenth of those employed across the agriculture sector which

the National Farmers Federation (NFF) estimated was approximately 307,000 persons (NFF, 2012). The commercial fishing sector is a significant national employer but the employment figures do not provide insights with respect to employment issues facing commercial fishing micro-businesses and potential implications for strategy or strategic planning.

Curtotti et al. (2012) note that the commercial fishing industry's labour needs are centred on vessel skill areas (e.g. deck hands, divers, skippers and process workers). However, there are ongoing challenges facing employment in the industry as noted by Curtotti et al. (2012) and QSIA (2013) including: (1) low wages, (2) limited career pathways, (3) high worker turnover (4) predominance of part-time and casual employment, (5) competition from other sectors and (6) lack of a corporate culture. These challenges can lead to employers reliant on employees on call and/or on a seasonal basis leading to available unemployed, skilled crew looking for employment in other sectors of the economy that either pay more money or are full-time positions (Curtotti et al., 2012; Ruello, 2008). This outcome would significantly impede the capacity to apply strategic planning when a significant business cost, employees, cannot be factored into the planning process. Abdulkadir, Isiaka and Adedoyin (2012) suggest that employee commitment is necessary for their participation in the business, essentially the more focus on employee development the greater commitment to organisational processes.

According to Connolly and Orsmond (2011) the rise of commodity prices and demand for resources has led to an investment shift to the mining industry. Overall, the 'resources boom' has led to a higher Australian dollar and in turn has led to an influx of cheaper imported products and an increase in the need for skilled and unskilled labour across the economy (Banks, 2011; Connolly & Orsmond, 2011). This may increase pressure on commercial fisher micro-businesses to reconsider how they compete in their market place or to reconsider how they might differentiate their product from cheaper competitors.

The mining boom also poses a strategic threat to commercial fisher micro-businesses by applying pressure to source employees that are prepared to create incentives that might include an increase in income or other non-income related employment benefits. Shifts in Australian government policy regarding the use of foreign skilled workers suggests that the

drain on skilled labour will continue to be an issue for the small business sector (Banks, 2011; Dziedzic, 2012). The Australian seafood sector is a significant employer, particularly in regional and coastal areas.

## **2.7. REGULATION**

There is another factor that should be considered in the context of commercial fishing and that is the role Government regulation. The introduction of regulation in fisheries is undertaken by government to ensure fish stocks are maintained and as consequence fishing effort is managed or in order to achieve other policy agendas such as environmental sustainability, this has been the case with respect to the introduction of marine protected areas ([MPAs]; Department of Environment, 2013; Northern Territory Seafood Council [NTSC], 2013). Regulation can have implications on the capacity to fish and thereby impacting the business planning of commercial fishing micro-businesses, examples include closures to commercial fishing in Fog Bay in the Northern Territory established by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) in 2001 and lifted 12 years later (AFMA, 2013).

The commercial fishing micro-business environment is heavily regulated. As noted opportunities to export and potentially made untenable due to cost implications. Other government regulation such as licenses to legally access commercial fisheries add to the challenges faced in this industry that are particularly relevant to commercial fishing micro-businesses. In Queensland for example, commercial fishing is governed by the *Fisheries Act 1994* (Qld) and *Fisheries Regulation 2008* (Qld) and includes (a) operating times, (b) area closures, (c) boat size restrictions, (d) gear restrictions and (e) catch limits (Fisheries Queensland, 2011; McPhee, 2008). The regulatory framework in which commercial fishers operate should be considered, along with other variables (e.g. industry participants), as impacting the manner in which small business can operate. The Australian commercial fishing industry contains a number of industry participants with different impacts on the capacity of fishing micro-businesses to interact within the domestic and export elements of the market.

The former Commonwealth government through the previous Minister for the Environment, Hon Tony Burke MP, initiated a national system of marine parks to ensure sustainability of Australia's marine resources (Duffy, 2013). The development of the legislation has not been supported by the commercial fishing industry on a number of grounds. Seafood industry bodies have argued that there will be ongoing social and economic impacts of MPAs. The National Seafood Industry Alliance (NSIA) for example have noted that proposed MPAs in Victoria and South Australia will create reserves covering 41 per cent of State waters; 35 per cent of State waters in Western Australia and the Northern Territory; and 19 per cent of waters in the north of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland (NSIA, 2012b). This will close fishing to on average, 30 per cent of commercial fishing areas if the MPA process is completed as designed by the former Commonwealth government.

The impact on commercial fishing micro-businesses is a loss of access to fishing grounds leading to increased fishing pressure amongst remaining micro-businesses and increased pressure on domestic and export seafood supply chains. The MPA process as articulated by the Australian government does not have a policy for the removal of fishing licences and it is possible that the same number of small businesses may target the same fishing grounds (NSIA, 2012b; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities [SEWPaC], 2012). Wholesalers and retailers will increase their purchases of imported seafood product leading to greater pressure on domestic wild caught product and longer-term decreasing profits for Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses once the MPAs are established. Commercial fishing micro-businesses will have less area to fish and will concentrate efforts in smaller fishing regions across Australia. The NSIA's (2012a; 2012b) and NTSC (2012) analysis of the MPA network has identified other business level impacts that will generate added pressure in the domestic Australian seafood market place and may lead to (1) unprofitable fishing businesses; (2) fishing businesses closures; and (3) negatively impact employment in the regions. In terms of overall strategy micro-businesses may face the challenge of staying viable in smaller fishing areas or take on losses until competitors exit the fishery thus creating more potential catch for the business.

Two conservation management agencies in Queensland directly limit where commercial fisher micro-businesses can operate through marine park management legislation; the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection ([QDEHP], government conservation agency). The GBRMPA and QDEHP enact zoning regulation that limits access to fishing grounds and in some cases excludes commercial fishing activity through the use of zoning plans; the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* (Qld), *Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006* and *Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2008* respectively.

In the Australian context, fisheries and conservation management has significantly focused on biological and ecological sustainability (Donohue et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2010). While extensive efforts have been made to ensure that Australia's fisheries are biologically sustainable, there is little understanding of strategic business activities amongst commercial fisher micro-businesses and few, if any, public resources are devoted to assisting this group of small businesses (Fillis, 2007; Fox, Grafton, Kompas, & Che, 2003; Parish & Freeman, 2011). The NSIA commissioned a report examining the complexity of impacts to the commercial fishing sector including but not limited to the removal of displaced fishing effort to ensure pressure on stocks is controlled; business restructure assistance and advice; employee assistance; assistance for communities highly dependent on fishing and social assistance for industry and the community to deal with the potential health impacts of large scale business closures (NSIA, 2010).

## **2.8. FAMILY BUSINESS STRUCTURE**

This study will also examine the family business framework that adds a layer of complexity in understanding how strategy and strategic planning is manifested amongst Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses as they are a dominant business structure as argued by McPhee (2008). Family Business Australia (FBA) has argued that there is no agreed definition of family business (FBA, 2013a). Multiple definitions have been posited and include but not limited to:

- ‘A family business is comprised of two or more members of the same family involved in the business with one or more related members having a controlling interest’ (FBA, 2013a, p.2).
- ‘Most small businesses are run by an individual or a couple who can easily be classed as ‘family’. Most small businesses will employ family members at various stages of their operations. This will depend upon the age of the family members, their closeness to the business and the business owners and their inclination to work in the business. Many families have been running businesses for generations and the culture of these families is one of jumping in and providing help when needed rather than one of definite hours and rosters’ (COSBOA, 2012, p.2).

The family business framework can be viewed in terms of involvement or aspiration (COSBOA, 2012; FBA, 2013a). The involvement perspective includes issues such as generational ownership, family versus non-family management or the percentage of ownership held by a family (FBA, 2013a; Sharma, Chrisman, & Gersick, 2012). The aspiration framework approach focuses on the degree of family involvement in the business (Bird & Wennberg, 2011; Sharma et al., 2012).

Family firms share a mutual identity, have a strong degree of trust, and offer a safe environment to discuss and share ideas (Bird & Wennberg, 2011; Nadim & Lussier, 2012). Collins and O’Regan (2011) that the definition of a family business has evolved around aspects of the family enterprise including control, power over decision-making, the firm as the primary source of income, ownership and the intergenerational nature of these types of business. Craig and Moores (2009) argue that 80 per cent of businesses on global scale are family owned firms. The family business paradigm is a dominant form of business organisation across cultural groups with approximately one third of these businesses surviving into a second generation (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003; Gupta & Levenburg, 2012; Lussier & Sonfield, 2010; Napoli, 2012).

Liu, Yang and Zhang (2010) argue that institutions such as government are key in developing the rules by which family businesses operate thus government are intricately involved in the markets which they regulate. The Council of Australian Government (COAG) a grouping of



State and Federal governments have acknowledged the negative impact of regulation on the small business sector (COAG, 2012). There has been recognition that small businesses are impacted by regulation which: (1) adds to business costs, (2) is developed without a detailed understanding of industry issues and (3) which are not consistent across jurisdictions (COAG, 2012).

The family business structure has been labelled a complex one with unique internal dynamics where the business is not solely focussed on profitability but also providing employment opportunities in regional areas and in under-developed economies (Castillo & Wakefield, 2007; Gupta & Levenburg, 2012; Sen, 2011). Castillo and Wakefield (2007) noted that the family business structure demands more effort and commitment from family members that may be focussed on achieving the vision of the founding member.

The FBA surveyed 570 family business leaders (FBA, 2013b). The survey indicated that the strengths of the family business framework include shared beliefs, a support network, shared vision and strategy, branding and a focus on customer service (FBA, 2013b). These benefits add to those identified by Lumpkin et al. (2012) and Rundh (2011) who noted micro-business advantages at the business-consumer interface versus the internal or operational side of the family enterprise articulated by the FBA. The strengths identified by the FBA survey noted strategy which was defined in the survey as a common drive within the family business and not strategy as business goal (Box, 2011; FBA, 2013b; Farjoun, 2002). The FBA (2013b) argues that the key challenges facing family businesses in Australia include balancing family issues, the continued maintenance of family control of the business and preparing and training a successor.

It has been argued that the family businesses founder (owner/manager) has a critical role in setting the tone in which capital is spent and goals are formulated within the business (Erdem & Erdem, 2011; Chu, 2009; Kelly, Athanassiou, & Crittenden 2000). That individual's influence can influence the firm in many contexts including succession management, employee recruitment, use of capital and ongoing and future management within the business (Erdem & Erdem, 2011; Lussier & Sonfield, 2009).

The family business also assumes that business owner is significantly involved in the success of the business and in a constant state of searching for a business advantage which is supported by research with Nadim and Lussier (2012) arguing that customer relationships have a positive effect of small business performance and sustainability in the marketplace. The family business structure also offers individuals the opportunity to ensure longevity and keep the business amongst family over time through the implementation of succession within the micro-business (Laakkonen & Kansikas, 2011).

The family business structure has been noted as a dominant global business structure (Craig & Moores, 2009) and is prevalent amongst commercial fishing micro-businesses (McPhee, 2008). The family business provides its owner direct operational control over the business, allows for quicker decision-making, control over recruitment and succession management (Collins & O'Regan, 2011; Erdem & Erdem, 2011; Lussier & Sonfield, 2009). However the family business model faces limitations including the balancing of family issues, the continued maintenance of family control of the business and preparing and training a successor (FBA, 2013b). The family business framework seems to focus on the internal operations of the business which could lead to little or no use of strategy or strategic planning when both these constructs demand an appreciation of the business environment outside the firm.

## **2.9. TOPIC SUMMARY: INDUSTRY OVERVIEW**

In summary, the Australian seafood industry is worth billions to the national economy and commercial fishing micro-businesses are an important part of generating that value. In terms of industry context this chapter examined the value of the commercial fishing industry to the national economy. The industry structure, its participants, commercial fisher demographics and employment issues were also examined. The intention of identifying these issues is to provide a recent set of issues facing the commercial seafood sector from a national perspective and is not a review of every possible issue facing Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses.

While some of these issues are constantly changing such as fluctuation in the Australian dollar or changes in human resources generated from the resources boom this chapter highlighted many of the challenges that are faced by the commercial fishing industry. Taken together this provides insight into the turbulent nature of the business environment. Commercial fishing micro-businesses have limited if any control over employment trends, impacts of other industry on the availability of skilled labour or industry structure which highlights the need and potential benefits to commercial fishing micro-businesses to approach the long-term sustainability through strategy or strategic planning.

The benefits are also significant given the value of the industry to the Australian economy. A greater emphasis on business growth through strategy and strategic planning may benefit regional fishing communities and industry and not just the individual micro-business. Exploring how commercial fishing micro-businesses apply strategy and strategic planning may be valuable to other commercial fishing micro-businesses, industry bodies and government. The following chapter focuses on strategy and strategic planning in the context of commercial fishing micro-businesses.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

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This chapter will explore strategy and strategic planning in the context of Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses. A critical part of the analysis is to distinguish differences between what research literature defines as ‘strategy’ and ‘strategic planning’. This section will explore strategy and strategic planning constructs and possible linkages between them. The literature suggests a degree of overlap which could be explained by using the frameworks of emergent versus deliberate strategy. It has been argued that emergent strategy (Farjoun, 2002; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2013) involves what firms actually do in terms of strategy and deliberate strategy (Hanna, 2011; Wiesner & Millett, 2012) involving planning to achieve goals and outcomes.

This section provides definitions of strategy and strategic planning which too some degree adhere to an emergent versus deliberate strategy perspective. The definitions also suggest that strategy can be viewed as the final destination for a business where strategic planning is the process for determining the most appropriate ‘steps’ to reach the destination (Degraevl, 2012). The distinction between strategy and strategic planning as a concern with attaining organisational outcomes and not whether they have been achieved or are the right outcomes for the business, this is a concern of strategy (Candy & Gordon, 2011; Drejer, 2004). This chapter also extends the examination of strategy and strategic planning to include an analysis of the micro-business, strategic analysis tools and a summary of these sections leading to a detailed review of strategic management theories.

Understanding strategic management theory is necessary to understand the context in which business develops strategy. The purpose of this study is not to test the theories but to use them to better understand the minor-business owner and his or her development of strategy or possible reasons for not developing strategy. For the purposes of this study, the groupings used in this chapter are based on theoretical groupings posited by French (2009) and Jelenc (2009).

### **3.1. DEFINING STRATEGY**

Strategy can be defined as focussing on internal business resources and its fit in the business environment goal setting and the application internal capabilities to respond to the market in which it operates (Farjoun, 2002; Pretorius & Maritz, 2011; Stefanovic & Milosevic, 2012). The use of strategy has been linked to improving business profitability (Bowman & Helfat, 2001; Kim & Mauborgne, 2009).

The focus of this research is to explore the use of strategy amongst a sub-set of Australian small business, the micro-firm. Strategy has been the focus of considerable research attention and has been conceptualised as planned or coordinated effort from an organisation to meet a goal or achieve a set of defined actions (Box, 2011; Farjoun, 2002; Stefanovic & Milosevic, 2012). It has been further argued by Farjoun (2002) and Stefanovic and Milosevic (2012) that strategy involves the development of the organisation internal capabilities to respond to the business environment.

Farjoun (2002) further contends that there are three underlying issues driving strategy and are identified as (1) objectives and activities, (2) planned and actual coordination activities and (3) co-alignment. Objectives or goals describe what is to be accomplished but not how that will be achieved whereas activities or actions are those things that help achieve goals such as how business resources will be deployed (Mazzarol et al., 2009; Porter, 1979; 2008). Planned or coordinated activities are central to the strategy process where planning can be conceptualised as either static or dynamic (Cook & Yamamoto, 2011; Phillips, 2011). The concept of co-alignment defined by Farjoun (2002) is the degree to which a business can adapt itself to its environment and adapt the environment to suit it.

Strategy can be used by organisations to achieve outcomes such as improving performance, sustaining or growing a business, or a combination of the two (Dahlmann & Brammer, 2011; Kraus, Harms, & Schwarz, 2006; Phillips, 2011). Organisations do not have unlimited resources and must adapt what they do have to compete against others (Ghemawat, 2002; Grattan, 2009). It is likely that commercial fisher micro-businesses are continually managing

limited resources to achieve any number of strategy outcomes including survival, maintenance of the business or growth.

Another component of understanding strategy is the competitive environment in which businesses operate. The seminal work of Porter (1979) argued that competition is often too narrowly defined by managers. The five competitive forces are a holistic way of looking at industries that provide a model to understand the structural underlying factors that limit profitability (Porter, 1979; 2008). The five forces include (a) threat of new entrants, (b) bargaining power of customers, (c) threat of substitute products, (d) bargaining power of suppliers, and (e) rivalry amongst industry operators (Porter, 1979; 2008).

To better understand strategy and its applicability within organisations it is helpful to identify its origins and the lessons businesses can apply from defining strategy outside the business context. The research literature examined in this section highlights the multi-faceted nature of strategy. In summary, strategy could be conceptualised as:

- A planned and coordinated process used to meet a goal or set of business aims (Box, 2011; Farjoun, 2002; Stefanovic & Milosevic, 2012).
- Involving the development of businesses internal capabilities to respond to the business environment in which operates (Farjoun, 2002; Stefanovic & Milosevic, 2012).
- Being underpinned by objectives (goals), is not only planned but involves coordinated activities and the degree to which a business can adapt itself to its business environment (Farjoun, 2002).
- A process used by organisations to achieve outcomes such as improving business performance, sustaining or growing the business (Dahlmann & Brammer, 2011; Kraus et al., 2006; Phillips, 2011).
- A process that involves the use of limited resources (Ghemawat, 2002; Grattan, 2009).
- A process taking place in a competitive business environment (Porter, 1979; 2008).
- More than creating a vision but creating a business environment to achieve increased business profits, growth or business longevity (Bhide, 1994; Keliher, & Reinl, 2009).

- The external business environment may have more of an impact strategy such as changing communications technology, trade globalisation and the increasing importance of the consumer in strategy development (Dedrick, Kraemer, & Linden, 2008; Teece, 2010).

Overall, strategy is the starting point used by some organisations to reach a goal of importance to the business; strategic planning is the process used within the organisation to achieve the overall strategy by using both business and human resources. The operational phase in which firms take strategy from the conceptual to the daily work of the firm involves strategic planning.

### **3.2. DEFINING STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Strategic planning is a process by which an organisation uses its resources (e.g. capital and human resources) to reach goals or business outcomes so in some respects the constructs are linked but are not the same. Research literature also suggests that organisations should develop written plans to ensure that profits and growth are realised to underpin business longevity (Bhide, 1994; Douglas, Douglas, & Davies, 2010). Strategic planning has also been linked to growth-oriented organisations (Mazzarol, Reboud, & Soutar, 2009; Smart & Conant, 2011).

Strategic planning has also been the focus of considerable research attention has been defined, in part, as a systematic process (Blatstein, 2012; Moore, 2009; O'Reagan & Ghobadian, 2007); involving the investment of organisational resources to meet a goal, an organisational vision or means to grow the organisation (Collis & Rukstad, 2008; Mazzarol et al., 2009; Rickard & Harding, 2000); is a way to help business deal with changing market conditions (Bhide, 1994; Campbell et al., 2010; Patnaik, 2012); has been argued to be an element of overall business success (Allred, Addams, & Chakraborty, 2007; Arnold, 2012; Brockmann & Lacho, 2010; Walsh, 2011); and measuring and evaluating the planning process (Hayward, 2011; Ryan, 2002; Stephan, 2010). For the purposes of this study, strategic planning is defined as a systematic process where people make decisions about intended or future outcomes, how these outcomes are to be accomplished, and how success is to be measured and evaluated.

Strategic planning literature notes that the use of strategic planning provides a means to grow organisations or assist in creating a pathway to longer-term growth (Allred et al., 2007; O'Reagan & Ghobadian, 2007). Moreover, strategic planning literature also suggests that planning can be envisioned as formal (i.e. documented, published and revised) or informal (i.e. unwritten or elements are written but not defined as strategic in nature) where the business is differentiated by superior service without that approach being a formal branch of the businesses strategic approach to engaging with costumers (Allred et al., 2007; Bhide, 1994; Douglas et al., 2010).

Gibson and Cassar (2002) provide some insights and through their examination of an ABS Business Growth and Performance Survey over a three years period (1995, 1996 and 1997). A number of industry categories were excluded from the analysis including commercial fishing business as they are grouped by the ABS under the category 'Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry'. The outcomes of the study provide some insights into the frequency of planning amongst small businesses with between 1 and 200 employees without further breaking down micro, small and medium enterprise categories, this was a limitation identified in the study (Gibson & Cassar, 2002). Planning intentions and other variables were examined including business size and volume as well as management training variables. Over 3,500 business responses were analysed yielding the following results:

- Approximately 20 per cent of businesses surveyed undertook strategic business planning over every year of the study.
- Over 30 per cent undertook planning at least once during the study time frame. This number is an amalgamation of (a) non-planners to planners at almost 15 per cent, (b) planner to non-planner at approximately 10 per cent, and (c) the planning status changed over all three years, which accounted for almost 10 per cent of businesses. Almost half of the sample group did not engage in any strategic planning.
- The larger the firm and larger the business volume the greater the positive associations to the possibility that planning would take place. This was explained in terms of larger firms having the resources (i.e. human resources and capital) and capacity to differentiate products which suggests that planning may, at some stage, take place within large organisations.



- Management training was positively related to intention to plan. Businesses that indicated they would change their operations were more likely to undertake a planning process.

O'Reagan and Ghobadian (2007) argue that strategic planning is an established management tool that benefits organisations of all sizes. O'Reagan and Ghobadian (2007) further outline strategic planning as a formal process that has at least seven components, including:

- An environmental scan;
- Understanding of current resource requirements and future resource needs;
- Is a written document;
- Cover organisational activity beyond one year;
- Identify alternative strategic options;
- Develop ongoing monitoring, evaluation and modification processes; and
- Develop shorter plans for functional areas (e.g. as noted by Allred et al. (2007) functional areas as including marketing, operations, management and finance.

Miles et al. (2007) have noted that small businesses play an important role in the development of rural and regional communities. Small businesses are differentiated from larger organisations in terms of access to capital, the number of employees, and revolve around families (Miles et al., 2007; Sharma, 2004). Miles et al. (2007) interviewed 11 small businesses with respect to strategic planning:

- Seven of the small businesses indicated they had business plans in place;
- Two of the seven had not yet updated their plans;
- The small businesses had not sought advice on business planning from external sources; and
- Two of the seven had sought assistance from government with respect to business planning.

Allred et al. (2007) argue that in dynamic and changing small business environment, formal plans quickly become redundant over time. Allred et al. (2007) further note that an initial strategic plan only serves to provide assurance to business investors that the organisation has strategic pathway to enable growth. Firm size was also discussed by Allred et al. (2007) to the extent that larger firms tend to use formal business plans and smaller firms through organisational management engage in daily informal business planning with an emphasis on functional areas of marketing, operations, management and finance. As argued by Mintzberg (1987) the organisations position or niche within a market is a strategic endeavour but would require more than informal planning if for example a business engaged in a joint venture.

Kraus et al. (2006) examined performance implications of strategic planning that contains the elements time, degree of formalisation, use of strategic instruments (practices) and degree of control; the empirical analysis in the study was conducted on a sample of almost 300 small enterprises in Austria across the services, trade and manufacturing sectors (Kraus et al., 2006). The results suggested that small businesses do use strategic planning and indicated a positive relationship to firm performance (Kraus et al., 2006).

Some key issues that may be identified by commercial fisher micro-businesses during interviews and focus group facilitation is the debate in the strategic planning and management research arena as to the implications for business of formal and informal planning (Burke, Fraser, & Greene, 2010; Gibson & Cassar, 2002; Gibbons & O'Connor, 2005) and financial performance (Biestman, 2011; Mazzarol et al., 2009; Pearce, Freeman, & Robinson, 1987).

Research examining micro-business strategic planning recommend the use of written plans to help organisations to achieve growth, maintain profitability and access finance (Edgcomb & Thetford, 2004; Hormozi, Sutton, McMinn, & Lucio, 2002). Hormozi et al. (2002) argue that plans that cannot be examined, altered to suit the conditions facing the businesses will provide a pathway to 'somewhere' but it is unlikely that the pathway will be one that increases profitability, helps to grow the business or assess existing opportunities or threats in the marketplace.

It has also been argued that micro-businesses need assistance in the form of training or tools to implement strategic plans as the importance of the primary industry sector is often overlooked as are the contributions of micro-businesses to national economy, the regions in which they operate and the local community in which they reside (Edgcomb & Thetford, 2004; McPhee, 2008). However, micro-businesses face internal resource constraints, limited power to influence the markets in which they operate, are heavily influenced by the owner and his or her family (Kelliher & Reinl, 2009). These circumstances are reflected in the Australian seafood industry with additional business characteristics including owners that are second or third generation operators; work for approximately 60 hours per week during fishing seasons; and have limited formal education (Fenton & Marshall, 2001; McPhee, 2008).

Considerable research attention has been applied to exploring strategic planning within organisations and in particular small businesses noting that they do not engage in strategic planning of any kind (Beaver, 2003; Wang, Walker, & Redmond, 2007). This is contrary to strategic planning literature, which strongly advocates for planning for the long-term to ensure organisational survival and avoidance of high failure rates and poor performance (Ennis, 1998; Jocusen, 2004). It has also been posited that strategic planning implies an attempt to change an organisation's strength to help generate an edge over competitors (Dutton & Duncan, 1987; O'Regan & Hobadian, 2002).

In summary, strategy is the positioning of a business to meet a future state or goal whereas strategic planning is the method by which the organisation's members reach a particular end state. The purpose of this research study is not to compare the constructs but to examine them in the context of commercial fishing micro-businesses. The next section examines the micro-business framework in the context of applying strategy and strategic planning.

### **3.3. THE MICRO-BUSINESS**

Commercial fishing micro-businesses are a sub-set of SMEs and, according to Lumpkin et al. (2012), Monahan, Shah and Mattare (2011) and Sen (2011) argued that micro-businesses face a number of impediments because of their size. Some of the impediments facing micro-

business are noted below and may impact the extent to which micro-businesses use strategy or strategic planning and include:

- Restricted financial business resources;
- Attracting and retaining skilled and unskilled employees;
- Ability for the micro-business to achieve economies of scale;
- Lack of recognition of the micro-business in a given market in relation to larger businesses;
- Lack of knowledge of business incentives, tax concessions and potential flexibility in business regulation;
- Lack of collateral to obtain loans for the business;
- Inability to prepare a business plan that is often required by financial institutions before business loans can be obtained; and
- The availability of financial and non-financial services.

Lumpkin et al. (2012) and Rundh (2011) have also acknowledged that while micro-businesses face challenges in the market place there are advantages to operating a micro-business including:

- Flexibility in relation to quick decision-making and the capacity to act rapidly relative to larger businesses;
- Capacity to undertake risks without the potential for large financial losses; and
- Capacity to move between domestic market activity and exporting goods and services.

To understand strategy at the micro-business level it is prudent to examine how strategy is manifested. Research literature examining small business has focussed on what could be considered a continuum where strategy is either an emergent phenomenon at one end of the spectrum (Farjoun, 2002; Mirabeau & Maguire, 2013) or deliberate at the other (Hanna, 2011; Wiesner & Millett, 2012).

The prevailing argument within strategy literature suggests that large organisations engage in strategy as a deliberate process (Ahenkora & Peasah, 2011; Barnes, 2002; Harris, Forbes, & Fletcher, 2000; Pless & Maal, 2011; Pretorius & Maritz, 2011). Wiesner and Millett (2012) surveyed 1,230 Australian small businesses to explore strategic practices amongst SMEs and the extent to which business size had an impact on strategy amongst small business. Wiesner and Millett (2012) also explored the extent to which strategy is either deliberate or emergent across small businesses and defined 'deliberate strategy' as having direction, is a controlled process achieving an outcome; while 'emergent strategy' is based on the notion of learning and adaptive behaviour. The Wiesner and Millett (2012) research suggested that small businesses take a deliberate approach to their use of strategy. This is consistent with research literature and arguments raised by Ahenkora and Peasah (2011) and Harris et al. (2000), who also argue that the development of strategy is a deliberate and planned process.

Research outlined by Wiesner and Millett (2012) is inconsistent with findings outlined by Farjoun (2002) and Mirabeau and Maguire (2013) who have argued that strategy is an emergent process. Farjoun (2002) specifically notes that a planned approach to strategy restricts the concept by not recognising that planned and emergent themes in strategy can coexist or perhaps overlap. Mirabeau and Maguire (2013) suggest that an emergent strategy framework is one that reflects what organisations actually do versus what they may plan to do and critically, what unique, organisational learning is integrated into the development of strategy.

Wiesner and Millett (2012) defined small businesses as having a minimum of 10 employees. The operational definition for micro-business in this study is based on an ABS (2001) definition including sole proprietorships and partnerships without employees or businesses employing less than 5 individuals. This difference in definition presents a challenge in terms of understanding strategy development at the micro-business level and may be responsible, in part, for the conflicting findings in the literature. An underlying assumption not fully addressed in the research literature is the size and organisational capacity of the businesses

examined under the deliberate and emergent strategy frameworks. Under the deliberate strategy framework Wiesner and Millett (2012) examined SMEs while Mirabeau and Maguire (2013) examined one large information technology firm. In both these research studies the concept of strategy is examined amongst businesses with greater resources than a micro-business.

A third position also exists that suggests that strategy can involve a mix of deliberate and emergent approaches (Ahenkora & Peasah, 2011). In this study, strategy within Proctor and Gamble (a multi-national corporation) and noted that large organisations can be driven to incorporate both a formal and emergent strategy orientation. Even though this research was conducted in a large organisation it suggests that strategy is a complex construct that may be difficult to confine to one framework (e.g. a deliberate versus an emergent creation) or another. This may mean large organisations rely on their corporate knowledge and skills across their management team and or develop strategy skills from within. Commercial fishing micro-businesses may not have the capacity to move between deliberate or emergent strategy through a lack of human resources, business skill or desire to develop strategy which may suggest strategic planning is secondary consideration to the operation of the business itself.

Ahenkora and Peasah (2011) note that larger organisation can engage in partnering with other organisations to develop strategy. This suggests that using the skills others will have no costs to the organisation (such as human resource costs of lost time through meeting or planning sessions) and accepting that developing strategy may evolve into a shared process rather than one that is kept within the organisation. However, it may be possible that micro-business also use hybrid approaches but little is known about this approach. The purpose of this study is to examine how, if used, is strategy developed across commercial fishing micro-businesses.

A driver for the operation of a small business is the pursuit of organisational growth and often growth, strategy and strategic planning are interlinked to the extent that a lack of focus on strategy may lead to limited growth or no growth within the small (Mbugua et al, 2013; Tell, 2010; Vettoretti, 2012). There are several stages of firm growth with some authors arguing

that it is a staged process (i.e. there is a defined beginning, middle and end) as argued by Labeledz and Berry (2011) and Gill and Biger (2012); while others argue that it is an organic process whereby growth may occur at varying intervals in the life of the firm as argued by Park, Shin and Kim (2010) and Irvin, Pedro and Gennaro (2003). White and White (2012) have argued that many factors lead to small business owners purposefully avoiding business growth. In order to identify these factors White and White (2012) surveyed 100 small and medium businesses and four key areas emerged from the survey data including (1) the avoidance of organisational risk, (2) the maintenance of a specific lifestyle; (3) evading interaction with government regulation; and (4) maintaining control over decision-making and a sense of control. This literature suggests that the reasons motivating an individual to operate a micro-business vary. This variation may impact on the development of strategy or strategic planning depending on whether growth or maintaining the business status quo (perhaps survival in the market) are driving the micro-business owner.

Claire (2012) examined how 187 emerging entrepreneurs measured future business success, finding that although economic achievement is important in the context of the business overall, it was not their primary measure of success. Claire (2012) notes that instead the participants indicated that relationships, integrity, and lifestyle were more critical in terms of measuring firm success with almost one-third of them did not identify profit in the top 10 of 20 measures of success. Lashley (2011) supports this using a case study perspective focussing on business ambitions of tourism operators with the following 'lifestyle' business ambitions: (1) aspiring for more control, (2) personal satisfaction and (3) wanting to live on site.

### **3.4. STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOLS**

The purpose of strategic analysis tools is to ensure a methodical, balanced and industry specific approach to understanding the market in which businesses operate. Analytical tools rely on a range of data sources to extrapolate future assumptions (Aldehayyat, Al Khattab, & Anchor, 2011; Al Ghamdi, 2005). There are number of strategic analysis frameworks available to firms of different sizes and resources to assist in strategic planning including but not limited to tools such as:

- SWOT analysis (Kingswood, 2010; Woods & Joyce, 2003).
- Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) analysis (Aldehayyat et al., 2011; Network Rail, 2013).
- Competitor analysis (Chen, 2009; Tsai, Su, & Chen, 2011).
- Benchmarking (Broderick, Garry, & Beasley, 2010; Jaques & Povey, 2007).

These tools have been developed to manage uncertainty in both the internal and external market environment in which organisations operate (Aldehayyat et al., 2011; Helms & Nixon, 2010). The following section provides an analysis that compares and contrasts some commonly used strategic analysis frameworks including SWOT, PESTEL, Competitor analysis and benchmarking approaches respectively which have been designed to assist small businesses understand their applicability to the business environment. There are numerous analysis tools and these are the most prevalent or 'well-known' tools used by organisations.

### **3.4.1. SWOT ANALYSIS**

The use of the strategic planning methodology known as a SWOT analysis has been used to evaluate the pursuit of specific business projects (Helms & Nixon, 2010; Kingswood, 2010; McKechnie, Grant, & Katsioloudes, 2008). Internal, business factors are captured in 'SW' and the external business environment is captured by 'OT'. The use and broad applicability of SWOT analysis has been the focus of strategic planning literature generally (Helms & Nixon, 2010); it has been conceptualised as an instrument for identifying the elements of strategy surrounding businesses of any size (Lumpkin et al., 2012); as a single tool for strategic decision-making (Agarwal, Grass, & Pahl, 2012); or as one component of internal strategic thinking coupled with a consideration of the overlay of controllable and uncontrollable factors and desirable and undesirable factors from a marketing perspective (Novicevic, Harvey, Autry, & Bond, 2004).

The SWOT analysis assumes that successful strategies are based on a fit between internal organisational resources and external market possibilities (Novicevic et al., 2004; Valentin, 2001). SWOT analysis can be highly useful for microenterprises wishing to take stock of their strategic situation and forming a strategy that matches the situation. Without additional



analysis, however, such assessments are of little use in developing and enacting a strategy. Instead, the SWOT framework can best be used as a starting. The SWOT analysis uses four critical components grouped in terms of a firm's organisational traits and environmental factors that create the basic framework (Novicevic et al., 2004). Novicevic et al. (2004) expanded the use of SWOT analysis by adding layers of complexity utilising a situation analysis (controllable and uncontrollable factors) and the judgement of management and its vision for the organisation (desirable and undesirable factors).

Helms and Nixon (2010) examined the use of SWOT analysis as a strategic management tool by interrogating over 140 academic peer-reviewed articles in the ABInform Global database by identifying SWOT as a search word or by examining indexes. Helms and Nixon (2010) noted that SWOT analysis as a methodology for strategic planning purposes and has also been used to strategically position organisations; and as a tool for education and training used by researchers, educators, trainers and consultants. There are many tools available to commercial fisher micro-businesses to provide some context in the strategic planning process and the PESTEL analysis provides an alternate approach.

### **3.4.2. PESTEL ANALYSIS**

The PESTEL analytic approach describes a structure of macro-environmental issues used in developing a strategy for the business (Aldehayyat et al., 2011; Network Rail, 2013). Understanding these macro-level issues can, at the firm level, link to clarifying opportunities and threats in the business environment; may identify potential risks in the business environment. The PESTEL approach could also help identify potential changes in the business environment and in the longer-term implications for firm growth (Aldehayyat & Twaissi, 2011). The PESTEL analytic approach is one way to manage potential risks in the business environment but it should also be considered that these (e.g. political and economic) factors are largely uncontrollable at the firm level.

Understanding the business environment has been explored through examining the knowledge and use of strategic planning approaches by owner-managers and managers within firms. Woods and Joyce (2003) investigated the knowledge of and use of varying

strategic planning approaches such as cost benefit analysis, benchmarking, SWOT and PESTEL analysis. Over 500 firms were randomly selected and managers/owners interviewed to assess their knowledge of and use of strategic planning tools with approximately one-quarter of the interviewees identified as, 'owner-managers', almost one third as, 'partner/director' and approximately one third as, 'manager/supervisor' (Woods & Joyce, 2003).

The results suggested that manager/supervisors and owner-managers were likely to use a strategic planning approach if known and it was also noted that growing firms were using more strategic planning tools than other firms (Woods & Joyce, 2003). A key finding was that of access, where owner-managers were less likely to have access to strategic planning tools and linked that access to professional training or experience in managerial roles (Woods & Joyce, 2003).

### **3.4.3. COMPETITOR ANALYSIS**

The SWOT and PESTEL analysis processes may assist businesses to gain a more detailed understanding of their business environment. Competitor analysis in the context of strategic management and planning involves an assessment of business competitors (Bloodgood & Bauerschmidt, 2002; Chen et al., 2011; Upson et al., 2012); and the analysis provides both an offensive and defensive strategic context to identify opportunities and threats (Bergen & Peteraf, 2002; Upson et al., 2012). Chen et al. (2011) have argued that whilst competitor analysis in strategy formation is important, understanding a rival's perceptions in strategy is also important if resources are to be directed toward competing in specific market.

### **3.4.4. BENCHMARKING**

Benchmarking has been defined as a process of comparing an organisations procedures and performance against best practice within an industry (Broderick et al., 2010; Jaques & Povey, 2007). The definition of benchmarking has also be noted ass being multi-layered with activities including (a) internal benchmarking; (b) competitive benchmarking; (c) functional benchmarking; and (d) generic benchmarking (Cassell, Nadin & Gray, 2001; Jaques & Povey, 2007).

Yasin (2002) notes that benchmarking has limitations in terms benchmarking data being collected at the business level with a greater need for integration with academic models or frameworks. Support for benchmarking in some organisational settings are more supported by some business units than others while understanding the costs and benefits of benchmarking are not always clear (Yasin, 2002). Cassell et al. (2001) suggest that benchmarking should be linked to critical business issues such as financial performance and customer satisfaction.

### **3.5. TOPIC SUMMARY: STRATEGY**

In summary, the purpose of this section was to understand the components of strategy and strategic planning as they relate to business and more specifically commercial fishing micro-firms. This sub-section has also examined strategy in the organisational context involving the planning and coordination of internal business resources to achieve an outcome or goal in a particular market setting. Strategy is a multi-dimensional and can be defined as:

- A planned and coordinated process used to meet a goal using limited resources.
- Developing internal capabilities to respond to a competitive business environment.
- Coordinated activities and the degree to which a business can adapt to its environment.
- Achieving outcomes such as improving performance, sustaining or growing the firm.
- Creating a business environment to achieve increase profits, growth and business longevity.
- Changing communications technology, trade globalisation and the consumer may impact on strategy.

Strategic analysis tools provide organisation with the means to understand the strategic issues facing them. As noted previously there are a number of tools developed for use by small businesses to assess the readiness of these firms to apply strategic planning which were reviewed in this sub-section included: (1) SWOT analysis, (2) PESTEL analysis, (3) Competitor Analysis and (4) Benchmarking. These analysis tools are an example of many

tools available to micro-businesses. For the purposes of this study the SWOT analysis approach has been adopted to understand the internal and external challenges and opportunities identified by commercial fishing micro-businesses and more specifically if the issues are linked into strategy within the businesses. The SWOT analysis approach offers a simple to use analysis tool that does not require detailed knowledge of a range of issues as required under the PESTEL approach, or detailed knowledge of their competitors as required under a Competitor Analysis. Benchmarking would also require significant research with respect to what constitutes best practice which is beyond the scope of this study.

Data collected from strategic analysis tools can be used to better understand the internal and external issues commercial fishing micro-businesses face. These issues could be used to help develop strategy for the business or understood in the context of strategic management theory.

### **3.6. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THEORIES**

Strategy has a range of theoretical underpinnings, each with a specific focus and underlying set of assumptions that will be examined in this section. The importance of understanding the theoretical background to strategy is critical because in the business context the formation of strategy is composed of assumptions regarding the firm, the behaviour and role of employees, the prevailing business environment, competition and the product or service provided by business (Candy & Gordon, 2011; Drejer, 2004; Jelenc, 2009; Priem & Harrison, 1994). These assumptions are prevalent across the strategic management theories and are explored in the context of implications for commercial fishing micro-businesses and their application of strategy. Strategic management theories have been the focus of considerable research that focus on how to utilise business resources (human and capital) in such a way as to create a business advantage, understanding the role of management, grow the organisation and differentiate products (Bull 1999a, 1999b; Drejer, 2004; Fellenz, 2008; Hitt, 2011; Pina e Cunha & Vieira da Cunha, 2006).

There are multiple schools of strategic management thought that have developed over time, each providing multi-layered perspectives with respect to strategy. The following groupings are based on the subjective approaches proposed by French (2009) and Jelenc (2009) grouping theories into a series of frameworks (i.e. Classical, Neo-Classical / Competition and Post-Classical / Contemporary) with groups of theories (for the purposes of this study denoted as ‘Schools’). French (2009) and Jelenc (2009) have argued that the differing strategy theories have some overlap but each essentially has a competing idea for their explanation of strategy in the work context. The frameworks and schools are outlined below:

- Classical framework including the Design, Planning and Positioning Schools;
- Environment / Contingency framework including the Power and Culture Schools;
- Neo-Classical / Competitive framework including the Resource-based, Competition and Entrepreneurial Schools; and
- Post-Classical / Contemporary framework including the Learning, Emergence, and Cognitive Schools.

The four frameworks used to group the varying strategic management schools have been developed over a 90 year period. According to Jelenc (2009) there may be a continuum of theoretical approaches with one end of the spectrum being the Classical and Environment frameworks (1950s to mid-1980s) and the other the end the Post-Classical / Contemporary framework (1947-2005). Jelenc also contends that the Neo-Classical / Competitive framework can trace its origins from the early 1920s to the late 1990s perhaps as the pre-contemporary forerunner to the Contemporary perspective. French (2009) provides similar groupings but does not identify the Environment framework and thus for the purposes of this study provides a useful guide to how these theories may inter-relate and more importantly how these frameworks provide a lens to how micro-businesses might engage in strategy.

### **3.7. CLASSICAL FRAMEWORK**

This school of strategic management is identified by an analysis of the business taking into consideration external and internal factors (Arbogast, 2011; Pryor, Humphrey, Oyler, Taneja, & Toombs, 2011; Jelenc, 2009). This theoretical perspective is still a dominant perspective

in the business environment given its capacity to simply capture key factors impacting on business (French, 2009; Vaduva, 2013). The external appraisal concentrates on the threats and opportunities from the environment in which firm operates and the internal appraisal focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the business (Helms & Nixon, 2010; Jelenc, 2009). The SWOT analysis tool focusses on the internal and external environment and this dual focus is present in current managerial reviews of organisational strategic planning and strategy overall (Zanotti, 2012). French (2009) identifies three sub-sets to the classical school of strategic management: design, planning, and positioning. The theory underpinning the ideas of the Classical Schools of strategic thinking in the business context are the product of classical and neo-classical economic thinking (Dixon, Dogan & Kouzmin, 2004; Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2007).

### **3.7.1. DESIGN SCHOOL**

Under this paradigm, strategy is a deliberate process designed by the head of the business or the chief executive officer (CEO), who is responsible for the policies of the business (e.g. setting the vision statement) and investigates the business environment, and determines the goals for other employees to accomplish (Hsu, 2011; Shaheen, Ali, & Shah, 2012). There is a conceptual plan, although it is not necessarily formalised, and the role of management is to control the plan (Liedtka, 2000; Mills et al., 2007).

According to French (2009) there is no theory of strategy creation embedded in the Design School per se. This suggests that from an organisational perspective that organisation head, be they a CEO or owner is the primary point of strategy creation. Meyer (2011) argues that the design school perspective involves a series of considerations some adaptive and some possibly destructive to the operation of the business; some considerations from the design perspective include:

- Understanding what is happening through the use of environmental scanning.
- Strategy should not be developed by using past performance as a basis for predicting and understanding the future of the organisation as the future is not always predictable.

- Strategy is concerned with defining what the business mission is, the business vision and the firm's values.
- Understanding the business environment which should inform the mission, vision and values identified by the organisation including the products and services provided to consumers. Understanding the environment is also concerned with client segmentation and the firm's position in a particular market.
- Implementation through the establishment of business goals and managing organisational performance.

Recent conceptualisations of the Design School (Shaheen et al., 2012) promote the identification of managers that work on two extremes of managerial thinking on a spectrum from reasoning to innovation or creativity in strategy design. Battistella, Biotto and De Toni (2012) and Bertola and Teixeira (2003) argued that the design framework is utilised by organisations to improve business performance and to identify innovation at the product and business levels. The approach outlined in the Design School led to a deliberate move away from what French (2009), Leidtka (2000) and Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998) describe as simplistic, theoretical, informal planning to deliberate, highly formalised plans leading to the Planning School approach.

Battistella et al. (2012) contends that strategy is design driven and underpinned by innovation within the firm. Strategy, according to Battistella et al. (2012) shapes the business model that guides the business. The development of highly sophisticated planning and execution of plans within the firm (Battistella et al., 2012; Leidtka, 2000). The Design School assumes that an organisational head, such as a CEO, is integral to the development of strategy and crucially planning is overlooked by management (Liedtka, 2000; Mills et al., 2007). Management or the firm's CEO under this theoretical paradigm are critical for the successful implementation of strategy. This has some transferability to the micro-business arena but the theory has some implicit assumptions including (1) the firm has a management cadre and (2) the firm has a CEO/owner with the time, knowledge, skills and ability to develop and implement strategy. Blackburn, Hart and Wainwright (2013) contend that the small business sector face constraints generated by the industry sector in which they operate, business age and size combined with pressures facing owner/managers will impact on growth and performance.

### 3.7.2. PLANNING SCHOOL

The message of this strategy paradigm is a focus on formal procedure (French, 2009; Miller & Liberatore, 2011; Mintzberg et al., 1998). Strategic planning as outlined in the previous section was developed in an era of business activity defined by an external business environment that was simple, predictable and importantly stable (French, 2009). Planning under this view of strategy is an important and critical part of an organisation's functioning (O'Reagan & Ghobadian, 2007; Paulson, 2009).

This theoretical school has been questioned insofar as strategic planning is a process according to Hamel (1996) and White, Krinke and Geller (2004) that attempts to simplify a complex organisational phenomenon (i.e. creating strategy) into manageable set of guidelines. Hamel (1996) highlights a problem with the planning school of strategy that focuses on control to achieve a goal, conversely strategy assumes a degree of risk and where individuals with the business create a vision or future state of being that the business can develop.

Dahlmann and Brammer (2011) tracked changes to environmental strategies amongst American firms over a ten-year period and noted that despite policies and plans regarding the environment most organisations had neither proactive or harmful policies with respect to the environment. Despite ongoing industry policy debates regarding the environment and issues such as biodiversity, climate change and sustainability it has been assumed that organisations have taken pro-environmental strategic behaviour which has not been the case (Dahlmann & Brammer, 2011). Under this framework organisations take a deliberate approach to strategy and act on plans in a systematic way.

Miller and Liberatore (2011) contend that strategy is a strictly planned endeavour in the context of supply chain management. According to Miller and Liberatore (2011) and Monczka, Blascovich, Parker and Slaughter (2011) the coordination of multiple elements of a business to ensure goods are moved along a supply chain are dependent on planning at different levels using a mission, objective, and strategy framework. The Positioning School takes the perspective that business can align itself by examining economic conditions and position the business to maximise business returns.



Brinckmann, Grichnik and Kapsa (2010) undertook a meta-analytic study examining 46 studies with over 11,000 start-up and existing small businesses and the relationship between planning and performance in the small business context. Brinckman et al. (2010) discussed their findings in terms of the product work on strategy such as meetings, the drafting of written plans, and the use strategic analysis tools may lead to improved business performance. The study's split between start-up and existing businesses yielding findings suggesting that newer firms will tend toward business planning and less so for existing businesses. Brinckman et al. (2010) contend that existing small businesses have greater resources than new firms yet these older businesses tend to do less planning. The overall contribution of the Planning School is the importance of planning to improving the performance of the business which is supported by Miller and Liberatore (2011) and White et al. (2004) and in particular the small business as argued by Brinckman et al. (2010).

### **3.7.3. POSITIONING SCHOOL**

At the core of the Positioning School is that strategies are positions which are based on competition and economics (Hamel, 1997; McKechnie et al., 2008; Porter, 1979). Strategy in this context moves from the reliance on planners to analysis influencing management within an organisation (Acur & Bititci, 2003; Tuan, 2012). The business strategy was impacted by Industrial Organisation (IO) economists (De Bondt & Vandekerckhove, 2004) with IO taking into consideration of business behaviour and the relationship between firms (French, 2009).

Teece (2010) offers another method of understanding strategy in the context of the Positioning School. Markets change over time and with the introduction of improving technology, concerns over the sustainability credentials of products or services and the globalisation of trade has shifted the balance of trade and to some extent taken influence away from suppliers to consumers (Dedrick et al., 2008). Teece (2010) uses the concept that technology plays a role in strategy and with the proliferation of mobile phones, computers and vessel based technologies are tools to help small organisations conduct business without the need for a fixed office or retail establishment.

The positioning framework involves product innovation and design and in broader terms the external business environment involving a detailed understanding customer needs and the role of technology in the market (Akpoymare, Adeosun, & Ganiyu, 2013; Ibrahim & Gill, 2005; Teece, 2010). Akpoymare et al. (2013) argue that positioning is a critical component of raising product and service offerings amongst consumers and serves as the external component of overall business strategy. Ibrahim and Gill (2005) discuss positioning strategy as a means to exploit niche elements of a service. In the following section, the Environment / Contingency framework specifically addresses the external issues beyond the control of business (Jal nec, 2009).

### **3.8. ENVIRONMENT / CONTINGENCY FRAMEWORK**

The Environment / Contingency framework was developed in response to the need of business and corporate planning to react to increasing levels of complexity and uncertainty in the business environment (Jel nec, 2009; Robinson & McDougall, 2001). Essentially, a contingency framework is one where performance is dependent on a number of factors and where strategy and structure must align to deal with the business environment (Meznar & Johnson, 2005). A series of studies measuring the relationship between the use of strategy and the performance of businesses were examined by Campbell-Hunt (2000). Using a meta analytic approach, Campbell-Hunt concluded that contingency theories offered better insights into competitive strategies by suggesting that a link exists between competitive strategy and firm performance.

Mintzberg and his colleagues have argued that strategic theory has yielded a single best pathway to business structure (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The outcome of this perspective, according to the classical theoretical school, suggests that business should seek a particular, optimal organisational structure. The Contingency School provided an alternate perspective on strategy with a central tenant that successful business structures are reliant on the market in which it conducts its trade (Campbell-Hunt, 2000; Meznar & Johnson, 2005).

### **3.8.1. POWER SCHOOL**

The Power School of strategic management argues that the process of forming and developing a strategy is by its use (perhaps manipulation) of power in the workplace (Haynes & Hillman, 2010; Jelnec, 2009; Rowley, 2003). This strategy prism relates to the power organisation can exercise externally in a specific market or power derived from management or business owners (Rowley, 2003). Haynes and Hillman (2010) discuss power that is derived from a Board, the CEO and finally strategy development arguing that the degree to which position-power influences strategy depends on the individual board member influence, industry background, length of time in the industry as well as the influence exerted by the CEO as a mediator concerning what a board views as strategic.

The Power School suggests that the use of politics and power occurs to satisfy different spheres of interest within the workplace (Elliott & Smith 2004; Jelnec 2009). A critical outcome of power and politics in the workplace under the Power School perspective of strategy suggests that individuals and groups may need to find compromises when developing strategy that satisfies the power issues within a given workplace (Elliott & Smith 2004; Drago & Clements, 1999). Beyond the issue of power in the workplace the cultural background of the workforce is a consideration when developing strategy (London, 2002).

### **3.8.2. CULTURE SCHOOL**

The cultural school relates to the integration of individuals into a working environment that may have differing cultural backgrounds (Gorgievski, Ascalon, & Stephan, 2011; Jelnec, 2009). Workplace culture permeates organisations and can help the formulation of strategy and strategic planning but can also hinder the process through poor communication between organisational levels or possibly resistance from business units to undertake new tasks without a clear understanding of why new goals have been set (London, 2002). Both Jelnec and London are detailing firm level culture without a link to culture beyond the organisation. The workplace culture identified by London (2002) implies a monoculture where employees share a common cultural identity.

Hoffman (2007) presents an additional layer of complexity when considering culture. The culture in which the business operates will have cultural norms and expectations that will differ from that of the business. Hoffman further notes that in developing strategy and strategic planning in particular cultural differences should to be considered when developing strategy that accounts for differences between cultural groups. It could be argued that the potential range of cultural experiences are limited for commercial fishing micro-businesses by the nature of their business structure. Micro-business structures have small workforces or are comprised of an individual or couple. The degree to which culture plays a role may be linked to the cultural norms established with the family for example.

Cakar and Erturk (2010) examined culture across 90 SMEs employing over 740 employees exploring culture in the context of innovation and performance finding that managers need to create the environment in which employees will develop innovative thinking. Cakar and Erturk (2010) acknowledged the focus of their study was directed at mid-level managers without the perspective of owners or CEOs. The culture issue may vary across firms and with the family business framework a dominant one the potential variety across business may be significant limiting the applicability of the study. The Classical and Environment / Contingency frameworks focus on understanding internal issues and an understanding of the business environment. The Neo-Classical / Competitive framework deal more directly with the external business environment.

### **3.9. NEO-CLASSICAL / COMPETITIVE FRAMEWORK**

Neo-classical School extend the ideas of the Classical Schools by arguing the unique nature of individual businesses and their capacity to deal with issues in the business environment in which they operate (Hamel & Prahalad, 1995; Tywoniak, 2007). The individual schools explored in this section focus on the external challenges facing the organisation.

#### **3.9.1. RESOURCE-BASED SCHOOL**

The resource-based school provides a way of examining a business and a way to approach strategy. Hamel and Prahalad (1995) argued that organisations are comprised of a collection

of resources and the way in which resources are combined differentiate businesses in the same market. Under the resourced-based view, businesses are not categorised as homogeneous and competition can occur despite market positioning (Hamel & Prahalad, 1995; Tywoniak, 2007). Porter's five forces model for example, does not address the concept of exploiting market opportunities and having the resources and skills to compete in a given market (Hamel & Prahalad, 1995; Porter, 1979; 2008).

The resource-based view of strategy has been extended as a theory of dynamic capabilities (Ambrosini, Bowman, & Collier, 2009; Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Hitt, 2011) to examine how advantage is gained and maintained over time. According to Helfat and Peteraf (2003) a dynamic resource-based view deals with the resources and capabilities of a business over time by understanding the evolution of its resources and capabilities. The capability life-cycle identifies three initial stages of a capability life-cycle: founding, development, and maturity (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003).

Under the resources framework Hitt (2011) argued that managers and their capacity to manage business resources to achieve strategic outcomes. Sirmon and Hitt (2009) support this finding by arguing that management is an important component of strategy implementation as their knowledge skills and abilities are critical. Both Hitt (2011) and Sirmon and Hitt (2009) investigate resource management from the perspective of the larger business enterprise. The small business perspective is lacking as noted by Hudson, Smart and Bourne (2001) noting that measuring firm performance as a measure of the success of strategy is limited because small business resources are limited. However, small businesses can use their internal capacities as argued by Aragon-Sanchez and Sanchez-Marin (2005) such as innovative capacities and flexibility. Aragon-Sanchez and Sanchez-Marin (2005) examined the strategic orientation of over 1,300 SMEs with a minimum of 50 employees broken down across the construction, manufacturing and service industries. This presents challenges in applying a resource based perspective from relatively large SMEs versus micro-businesses where the magnitude of resource differences may not be insignificant. The Competition School examines strategy through the prism of competitive market-based forces.

### **3.9.2. COMPETITION SCHOOL**

Another component of understanding strategy from the Positioning School perspective is the competitive environment in which businesses operate. Porter (1979) argued that competition is too narrowly articulated by management. The five forces framework developed by Porter includes (a) threat of new entrants, (b) bargaining power of customers, (c) threat of substitute products, (d) bargaining power of suppliers and (e) rivalry amongst industry operators (Porter, 1979). The five forces provides a model to help organisations shape their position amongst competitors and in conjunction with a business strategy can assist in maintaining profitability in the long-term (Porter, 1991; 2008; Zeleny, 2010).

Porter's framework provides a model for commercial fishing micro-businesses to develop an understanding of the competitive forces within industry. With commercial fishing micro-businesses predominantly structured s family business enterprises developing a map of the five forces could be achieved and used in conjunction with other strategic analysis tools (e.g. SWOT analysis) to develop strategy or a more detailed understanding of the forces impacting on the business. Beyond the issue of firm level competition strategy can also be viewed through the prism of entrepreneurial skills of individuals.

### **3.9.3. ENTREPRENEURIAL SCHOOL**

This school of strategic management places the entrepreneur as the source of strategy which is fully reliant on the knowledge and skill developed by an individual (Companys & McMullen, 2007; Ireland, Hitt, Camp, & Sexton, 2001). Beyond the entrepreneur as the single individual with a unique vision with some research suggesting developing entrepreneurial skill sets amongst employees such as (1) personal effectiveness, (2) creating idea, (3) acting on prospects, (4) ongoing individual learning and (5) recognising business and non-business opportunities (Ahmad, Ramayah, Wilson, & Kummerow, 2010; Tang, Crossan, & Rowe, 2011).

The Entrepreneurial School focuses on identifying organisational opportunities and where power is concentrated with the CEO (Hodgkinson, 2002; Jelenc, 2009). O'Shannassy (2010) has argued that a key argument facing the Entrepreneurial School is the potential tensions between organisational Boards, CEOs and senior management teams and where strategy should be developed. O'Shannassy (2010) does not provide a definitive response as to who has ultimate carriage for developing strategy but does argue that senior management, CEOs and Boards each bring a unique perspective to the development of strategy. This strategic management perspective could be applied to the micro-business environment as the owner could be identified as the entrepreneur but as Ahmad et al. (2010) and Tang et al. (2011) suggest the employee factor may be critical to the success of the entrepreneur. In many circumstances commercial fishing micro-businesses are operated by sole operators so the degree to which new ideas could be limited by human resources. The Neo-Classical / Competitive framework has developed beyond the internal and external business focus with respect to strategy and moved to frameworks of strategy that embrace a changing business environment.

### **3.10. POST-CLASSICAL / CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK**

The Post-Classical / Contemporary framework demonstrates the integration of concepts outside the traditional management research field by incorporating ideas generated from the fields such as the biological sciences and psychology for example (French, 2009; Jelenc, 2009; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009).

#### **3.10.1. LEARNING SCHOOL**

Hamel and Prahalad (1995) articulated what they argued as a failure of the Classical School to substitute established strategic processes with approaches that are able to cope with change. A key tenant of this strategy school is a focus on how managers think. Strategy development is a product of a learning process within the organisation (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009). It has also been argued that this paradigm recognises that formal planning is not static but an ongoing process that requires re-examination and if necessary adjustments (Kraus &

Kauranen, 2009; Miller & Ireland, 2005). This paradigm, in keeping with previous frameworks, assumes that businesses have the resources and employees and that they have the training or skills to deal with change in the business environment in which they operate.

### **3.10.2. EMERGENCE SCHOOL**

The emergence paradigm is characteristic of a complex system. Generators of emergent behaviour could be considered agents (or organisational staff), which, individually, have a limited capacity to effect change but as a unit can engage in creative or unique ways within the environment in which they operate (French, 2009; Stacey, 2001). The collective, emergent behaviour of the group is superior to any single individual (French, 2009). This school may have relevance in commercial fishing micro-businesses with a family structure in which members participate in the business and have a shared vision of the business and its goals.

### **3.10.3. COGNITIVE SCHOOL**

The Cognitive School of strategic management explores the thought processes in developing strategies (Jelenc, 2009; Tikkanen, Lamberg, Parvinen, & Kallunki, 2005). Understanding how managers process strategic thinking can be examined through workshops and individual self-analysis for use by the organisation (Tikkanen et al., 2005). The Cognitive school examines the ways in which organisational strategists think and in some circumstances the influence of their position within the organisation (senior managers versus junior staff) and potential impacts on strategic thinking (Gavetti, 2005). This perspective suggests a high degree of owner/operator introspection and time away from the micro-business which may not be feasible if the owner is the business is a sole source of income.

## **3.11. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the previous discussion, several important issues have been identified. At the core of the discussion is a lack of understanding of how strategy and strategic planning is implemented and executed among commercial fishing micro-businesses. Furthermore, the



strategy and strategic planning literature posits many potential benefits for this industry. Taken together, the lack understanding of the implementation and execution of strategy and strategic planning along with research support described previously, forms the platform for the significance of the research that follows.

Based on this discussion the four research questions are investigated in the subsequent analysis, research questions 1 and 2 relate to strategy with questions 3 and 4 relating to strategic planning and are listed as follows:

Research Question 1: What strategy factors do commercial micro-fishing businesses link to sustainability and growth in the sector?

Research Question 2: In what ways do commercial fisher micro-businesses apply strategy to support the sustainability and growth of their businesses in the sector?

Research Question 3: What factors impact how strategic planning is executed within the Australian commercial fishing micro-business sector?

Research Question 4: In what ways do commercial fisher micro-businesses apply strategic planning to support the survival and growth of their businesses?

### **3.12. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research questions are underpinned by multiple research objectives are noted below:

Research Objective 1: To identify drivers that inhibits the use of strategy and strategic planning among members of the commercial fisher micro-businesses sector.

Research Objective 2: To identify the ways in which commercial fishing micro-businesses apply strategy and strategic planning as part of the overall survival and growth of their businesses.

## **CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS**

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This chapter presents an analysis designed to better understand the factors that may influence the implementation and execution of strategy and strategic planning among commercial fishers operating in micro-business in Australia. The findings described throughout this chapter were obtained from 18 face-to-face interviews conducted with individuals currently operating as commercial fishers in Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland.

### **4.1. METHODOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION**

A qualitative framework using a face-to-face interview process has been selected as it provides a platform to explore and document the views and experiences of commercial fishing micro-businesses with respect to strategy and strategic planning. Inductive research does not begin with a theoretically-driven hypothesis but is a process of moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001; Minto, 2009; Zikmund, 2000). A thematic analysis will be applied to interrogating the qualitative data. This form of analysis involves the creation and application of codes to data to help understand themes within a set of data (Devers & Frankel, 2000; Howitt, 2010). The data can take multiple formats including an interview or focus group transcript, field notes, qualitative surveys, video footage or a combination of these approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010).

The key processes involved in thematic analysis revolve around the transcription of textual material, the analytic effort and the identification of themes and sub-themes (Howitt, 2010; Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Whilst a sequence of process is implied by Howitt and Cramer (2008) it is possible for the researcher to seek additional textual information through interviews or focus groups and it is likely that this could be identified during the analysis of themes.

The analytic endeavour is the process of familiarisation with and coding of the data collected (Howitt, 2010; Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Having a good understanding of the data is one part of the process but interrogating the data is an ongoing process as is developing and refining

the conceptualisations of the data (Howitt, 2010; Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the researcher must prepare the rationale for coding and themes well in advance of collecting data. Braun and Clarke (2006) further note that the research must apply criteria for choosing a theme or pattern and apply that logic consistently across the data set.

Research methodologies can take many forms and will be influenced to some extent by the paradigms and norms influencing the researcher. Frankel and Devers (2000a; 2000b) have noted that qualitative research consists of describing and understanding specific situations or the individual or collective experience of individuals prior to examining theories. This study has taken a qualitative approach to better understand strategy and strategic planning phenomenon amongst Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses.

## **4.2. PROCEDURE**

Eighteen qualitative face-to-face interviews were undertaken between August 2012 and October 2012. Each participant was provided with a research study information sheet and an informed consent form (see Appendices 1 and 2). It was explained to all participants that their comments were confidential and that no specific individuals would be identifiable. All participants were told that they could stop the interview at any stage and that they were under no obligation to be involved. The study was undertaken with University of the Sunshine Coast Ethics Approval, S12383.

Interviews were held in Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using a consistent set of question that were open ended. Interviews lasted between 17 and 47 minutes with an average of 26 minutes per interview. Participants were presented with set of questions (described below) and resulted in significant qualitative data for review. The process requires the interviewer to be an active listener and to have the ability to ask clarification questions in order to fully explore participant's responses (Chenail, 2011; Howitt, 2010). The interviewer is an active participant and must ensure that the session stays on topic without limiting the detailed response participants may give (Howitt, 2010).

Probing techniques were employed during the interviews in an attempt to uncover the validity of the points raised. The use of probing techniques is consistent with interviewing better practice (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). The final analysis involved using the interview transcripts to identify and describe patterns and themes about the enactment of strategy and strategic planning in the seafood industry. To improve the validity of the findings all attempts were made to systematically analyse the data to promote completeness and reduce bias in the analysis process.

#### **4.3. PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATION CRITERIA**

The study involved 14 males and four females. Participants were recruited through the NSIA a national grouping of commercial fishing industry bodies. The NSIA collectively represent thousands of small businesses and allowing for access to potential participants through the NSIA industry body network. As participants were sought for the study across Australia and as a result of promotion through the NSIA, a New South Wales fishing cooperative promoted the study amongst its members.

The criterion for inclusion in the study was based on an existing ABS definition. A micro-business is, (a) non-employing businesses; sole proprietorships or partnerships without employees; and (b) micro-businesses - businesses employing less than 5 people, including non-employing businesses' (ABS, 2001, p.1). Using the criteria above commercial fishing bodies within the NSIA and commercial fishing cooperative databases were contacted to source participants from amongst their membership bases. In total, 16 businesses (18 participants) volunteered to be involved in the research as each business met the criteria described above.

The average age of the participants was 45 (SD = 12.5) with a range of 23 years to 72 years. The average years employed in the fishing industry was 22 years (SD = 10.9) with a range of 1 to 38 years, see Appendix 3.

Three sub-groups of participants emerged: six participants could be classified as commercial fisher micro-businesses catching product for domestic sale, four interviewees working within the context of a domestic commercial fishing micro-businesses working in a cooperative and six participants were commercial fishing micro-businesses involved in catching product for export sale. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the 16 micro-businesses that participated in the research. For the purposes of the study, no in-between group themes were examined as the purpose of the study was exploring strategy and strategic planning across micro-businesses irrespective of the fishery (species fished) or market (domestic versus export).

Table 4  
*Business Type*

<b>Market</b>	<b>Business Size</b>	<b>Business Type</b>
Domestic	6 micro-businesses	1 Sole Proprietors and 5 Partnerships
Domestic/Cooperative Member	4 micro-businesses	4 Sole Proprietors
Export	6 micro-businesses	4 Sole Proprietors and 2 Partnerships

Source: Appendix 3.

The overall education mix incorporated not only fishing qualifications but a mix of high school and tertiary level studies. The qualification mix is outlined in Appendix 3 and summarised below:

- High school qualification (n = 2);
- High school and certificate level qualifications (n = 1);
- High school, a certificate level and university qualification (n = 1);
- Commercial fishing qualification (n = 1);
- Commercial fishing and a university qualification (n = 1);
- High school and commercial fishing qualification and (n = 8);
- High school, commercial fishing and trade qualification (n = 3); and
- Commercial fishing and trade qualification (n = 1).

No female participant held formal commercial fishing qualifications. In total, 14 of the 18 participant indicated that they held commercial fishing qualifications. All of the male commercial fishers held commercial fishing qualifications.

Table 5 provides an outline of the positions held by commercial seafood micro-business operators. The range of positions outlined in Table 5 suggests that commercial fishing micro-businesses are underpinned by secondary sources of income.

Table 5

*Positions held outside of the Australian Seafood Industry*

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Positions / Industry</b>
1	M	Health
2	M	Construction
3	M	Australian Army
4	M	Fitting and turning
5	M	Mechanic
6	F	Legal secretary
7	M	None
8	M	Agriculture
9	M	Contract Plumber
10	M	None
11	M	Agriculture
12	F	Secretarial work
13	F	Industry directorships and finance sector
14	F	Small business owner and nurse
15	M	None
16	M	Involved with Ministerial Advisory Committee
17	M	None
18	M	Furniture building

The 16 micro-businesses employed a variety of part and full-time staff as well as integrating volunteer staff (see Appendix 3). The breakdown of staff included:

- 4 commercial fisher micro-businesses did not employ staff.
- 1 commercial fisher micro-business employing 1 full-time staff.
- 1 commercial fisher micro-business employing 2 full-time staff.
- 2 commercial fisher micro-businesses each employing one full-time and one part-time staff member.

- 3 commercial fisher micro-businesses each employing 3 full-time staff.
- 3 commercial fisher micro-businesses each employing 1 part-time staff member. One commercial fisher micro-business also had a volunteer, a family member.
- 1 commercial fisher micro-business employing 4 part-time staff members.
- 1 commercial fisher micro-business with a single volunteer, a family member.

#### **4.4. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Creswell (2003) suggests that an interview protocol should be designed with one or two central questions in mind. All of the questioning conducted in the interviews focused on the use of strategy and strategic planning of micro-businesses in the seafood industry. The interview protocol developed for the study included 10 questions that focussed on the use of strategy and strategic planning was developed. The protocol also included an additional four questions that guided participants through a simple SWOT analysis. This was included to support the identification of strategic issues confronting the participants in the running of their businesses.

Developing a set of useful questions was a key driver of the research process to ensure the question elicited useful data but more importantly the participant understood each specific item. Boyce and Neale (2006) and Foddy (1993) have noted that whenever possible using non-emotive language and open ended questions may help to yield more detailed responses regarding an issue. Foddy (1993) in particular highlights that limiting hypothetical questions will lead to more factual response than a response that may have little basis in reality for the participant.

Subsequent modifications were made to the initial draft with the assistance of an expert panel to ensure the language was relevant and appropriate for participants. The expert panel comprised of eight commercial seafood industry stakeholders and included three commercial fishers; three industry body officers and two seafood industry researchers. To improve the validity of the questions the expert panel was used to ensure relevant and appropriate language was incorporated in the tool. Subsequent modifications were undertaken:

- Items 1 and 2 did not evoke commentary from the expert panel and were retained. Item 3 was commented on by panel members and was amended by referring to changes in the business from 2011. Items 4 and 5 were also nominated for change and the word ‘capabilities’. The item was retained and it was noted that capabilities referred to financial business capabilities. Item 5 was deleted as it seemed to repeat Item 4.
- Items 6, 7 and 8 were also commented on with respect to tense and purpose. The three items were retained for use in the interview process as they related to current customer networks versus changes in those networks.
- Item 9 did not seem to fit into the interview question set and was not used.
- Item 10 was expanded as three separate items to ensure issues generated in the short, medium and long-term were captured.
- It was also determined with input from the expert panel that Item 11 did not fit into the sequence of questions.

The draft questions are contained in Appendices 4 and 5 with the final set of questions outlined in Appendix 6. A qualitative research approach was undertaken and is outlined in the next section.

#### **4.5. DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH**

Qualitative research involves an inductive process that moves from specific observations (i.e., interview discussions) to broader generalizations and theories (Cavana et al., 2001; Minto, 2009; Zikmund, 2000). This process involves a thematic analysis that requires close interrogation of the qualitative data collected in the interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) detail a set of six phases to undertake thematic analysis which provide a framework or guideline for understanding data collected in the research process. The framework drafted by Braun and Clarke (2006) is a guideline and not a set of rigid rules for analysis including:

- Data familiarisation.
- Generating initial codes.
- Collating codes.
- Theme review.



- Naming and theme definition.
- Drafting the study.

The data analysis process employed is modelled on the framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The face-to-face interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed for the purposes of the data analysis. The process of transcription is an important step in familiarisation and supports the researcher to become familiar with the data. It required repeatedly examining responses and involved note taking on issues relating to strategy or strategic planning identified by each participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009).

Nvivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software tool, was also used to aid data analysis as part of the overall familiarisation process with the data set (Beekhuyzen, Nielson & Von Hellens, 2010; Beekhuyzen, 2008). The Nvivo software provides a means by which data can be organised based on the content of responses and to assist in categorisation or the development of themes within the data set and not a substitute for rigorous data analysis (Beekhuyzen et al., 2010a; Beekhuyzen, Von Hellens, & Neilson, 2010; Welsh, 2002).

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the second phase of is the generation codes from the data. Codes can assist in identifying characteristics in the data and can help make linkages between data collected and coding ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009). There are two key issues to consider as coding is developed with Braun and Clarke (2006) arguing that a choice must be made between a data-led coding approach or a theory-led approach. For the purposes of this study and given the lack of understanding of strategy and strategic planning amongst commercial fishing micro-businesses, a data-led approach was utilised.

Searching for themes should begin with the coded data and any initial themes that have been identified within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010). It is essential that broader identified and more broadly that themes are combined to develop overarching issues (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The critical issue with respect to developing codes into themes is that the researcher is undertaking an iterative process, codes and themes are identified may need to be reconsidered (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010).

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that in reviewing themes there are two levels of evaluation and filtering of the themes identified in the data. The first level involves reviewing at the level of the coded data to determine if they form a comprehensible form and if is this the case then a second level of analysis is undertaken (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second level involves a similar process over the whole set of data collected and in turn the researcher can consider the validity of individual themes in contract to the whole data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010).

In terms of defining and naming this phase of thematic analysis involves identifying the core of each theme individually and more broadly as themes overall (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010). The final phase involves the final analysis and drafting and it is critical that the analysis provides a succinct, logical and detailed account of the story extracted from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Evidence must be documented to help support the prevalence of the theme in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

During the analysis phase, the data was organised categorically and reviewed repeatedly. More than a hundred hours have been involved in the identification and description of patterns and themes from the perspective of the respondents. The process involved then explaining these patterns and themes as suggested by Agar (1988). To facilitate the process all of the interviews were transcribed.

Care was taken to apply a systematic analytical protocol in an attempt to promote completeness and lack of bias in the collection and analysis of the data (Lillis, 1999). Despite this, consistent with the view of Mertens (2004), like any research based on qualitative data this study acknowledges that the background of researchers is bound to introduce some biases in the way that themes in data collected are discerned and prioritised. Nonetheless, there was a high degree of consensus amongst the research team and industry experts concerning the emergent themes. Further, the comprehensive process engaged here also supports the validity of the findings.

#### **4.6. SAMPLE SIZE AND SATURATION**

This study is exploratory and as such qualitatively focussed suggesting a smaller sample set than those used in quantitative studies (Howitt, 2010; Small, 2009). It has been argued that at some point in the qualitative data collection process there is little additional material of use from increasing the sample size (Howitt, 2010). One of the key difference between the use of a qualitative approach to collecting data over quantitative is the use of frequencies (Mason, 2010). Taking a quantitative research approach and interviewing hundreds of participants may help to discover a set of research constructs or identify new constructs and this approach is literature and hypothesis driven (Cavana et al., 2001; Howitt, 2010). Using a qualitative research framework is no less rigorous but applies a different data collection paradigm in which the richness and depth of the data collected helps the researcher uncover themes and issues (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010).

It should be noted that there is an ongoing debate within the qualitative research community in support of determining a baseline for saturation and the way in which the determination is made. It has been argued that at a minimum, five to six cases (Creswell, 1998; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) are required. Given (2006) has argued that a minimum number of cases is 15 to 18. In terms of a maximum set of cases Thompson (2004) suggests this could range between 30 to 350 cases. For the purposes of this study it was determined that that by interview 18 saturation had been reached which is consistent with the minimum number of cases noted by Given (2006).

Saturation will determine the qualitative sample size in a qualitative study (Mason, 2010; Tuckett, 2004). In this study, the underlying issue was the depth and richness of the data that could be obtained from interviewing commercial fishing micro-business owners. In summary, sampling in this study was driven by the need to understand the multitude of potential issues that may impact on the capacity of micro-businesses to use strategy and strategic planning. The decision to cease interviewing in this study ceased at 18 cases as limited new data was being collected through the interview process which is consistent with qualitative research practice (Given, 2006; Tuckett, 2004).

## 4.7. DATA ANALYSIS AND THEMES

The interview data were transcribed after each interview, read and re-read to determine some initial codes which were then loaded into Nvivo 10. Eighty-two initial codes were identified from amongst the data. The questions used in the interviews were also used to explore themes, which were coded as nodes within Nvivo 10. The tool has been used not only as a computer based research collection instrument but growing as a data analysis device (Beekhuyzen, et al., 2010a; Welsh, 2002) and as a tool for team-based research (Beekhuyzen, et al., 2010b; Wiltshier, 2011).

Themes and codes were drawn from responses from the interview data set derived from question items 1 to 10. Four themes were derived from the interview data set, including: (1) '*Family Business*', (2) '*Strategy Orientation*', (3) '*Decision-Making Approaches*', and (4) '*Use of a Plan*' themes. An overview of the final themes are contained at Appendix 8. The qualitative interview data provided by participants is contained at Appendices 9 through 24 respectively. The paper now outlines

### 4.7.1. FAMILY BUSINESS THEME

The family business was cited as a reason for being in the industry. A key theme uncovered through the interview process was termed, '*Family Business*' and related sub-themes. The definition of a family business provided by COSBOA (2012, p.2) and Sharma et al. (2012) sets a broad based interpretation of what could constitute a family business where the business is comprised of the owners, family members. This definition is further segmented into sub-themes titled, '*Generations*', '*Personal Investment*', and '*Lifestyle*'. This segmentation is supported by Collins and O'Regan (2011) arguing that the definition has evolved around aspects of the family enterprise including elements of control, power in decision-making, the firm as the primary source of income, ownership and the intergenerational nature of these types of businesses.

When describing drivers that influenced participant's choice to be part of the industry, it was regularly indicated by participants that many had inherited the work from previous generations of fishers. It seemed from the interview data that most of the participants had some familial link to the business. Comments capturing this view included, *'Well I'm a second generation fisherman so yeah, it's probably chosen for me but I've always enjoyed it, I've always enjoyed going out with my father'*, and from another, *'I was born in a fishing family. I started off fishing with my father. I left, went and joined the army for 20 years, came back and I went back fishing'* and *'I know nothing better. That's [fishing] is the only thing I know'*. The issue of intergenerational fishing amongst families was not described in significant detail and it would in that context it is difficult to judge the degree of strategy or planning.

There was very little strategic reasoning for entering the industry. Participants also indicated many benefits of the family business model. There was a sense of control and power of decision-making (i.e., Collins and O'Regan, 2011). This was captured by the comments of one operator who noted *'Family business, opportunity came up that I could run my own boat so that was the main reason'*. This participant was suggesting that the family business gave him the opportunity to be free to make his own choices. There was evidence that many of the participants enjoyed the occupation because it gave them freedom and flexibility in their lives. The participants also appeared to enjoy having their family around, one interviewee noted, *'If you've got family of course around you like dad can run your crabs to the airport for nothing well for sure you're on top a little bit more then'*. This aspect of the family business model also provides financial efficiencies and flexibility. Gupta and Levenburg (2012) noted that the family business structure influences the members of that family in different ways that may benefit the business in the longer-term. In this study there was evidence of family volunteering their time and effort leading reductions in human resource costs with one participant noting, *'I've always had the support of my parents and my father is still an active fisherman'*. These responses provided suggest labour is not a critical issue with these participants which could be construed as an advantage over competitors paying crew.

A related theme of '*Second Generation*' indicated that many of the participants were in the industry in some form of multi-generational capacity. Laakkonen and Kansikas (2011) suggest that family link in micro-business helps to ensure its longevity. This appeared to be the case in this analysis. It was evident that this sense of responsibility was felt by many of the participants. For example, it was stated, *'I've got a family member working with me now so it's also looking after his health too because hopefully he's going to have a bit of a career in the fishing industry too. So by going to this bigger boat hopefully it'll set both of us up where I can sort of in the next probably 10 or 15 years I've got probably left in the industry I can sort of hopefully do it without knocking myself around anymore than I already have'*. The '*Second Generation*' theme in this context has an element of strategic planning where the micro-business owner is prepared to make an investment to increase the businesses long-term income for the benefit of the owner and his family member.

There were clearly significant personal costs labelled, '*Personal Investment*', associated with working amongst members of a family. It also appeared that this sense of family obligation may be driving the success of these businesses as there was a strong need to keep the business going and working hard. This view was captured in the comment that, *'I think you tend to work hard in a family business because it is your business'*, and *'I think it's a double edged sword. I think you tend to work hard in a family business because it is your business. It is your heart and soul. So I think you put in a lot more hours than you actually recognise you put in and you try your absolute damndest to make thing work and to make things profitable'*. This finding is consistent with literature that the family business structure demands more effort and commitment from family members than non-family members (i.e., Castillo & Wakefield, 2007). Further, the data indicated the need among family members to put in extra-effort (above and beyond) to ensure the longevity of the micro-business (viz., Gupta and Levenburg, 2012). From a strategic planning perspective, a potential weakness in the family business framework is also its greatest strength in terms of reliance on family to ensure the business remains viable.

Related to the family business theme was a '*Lifestyle*' theme. This was described by the respondents in a way that lines-up with Lashley's (2011) broad definition of lifestyle. That is, the profession is chosen because it includes a combination of (a) aspiring for more control

and/or (b) personal satisfaction. There were many comments that reinforced this theme. For example, it was noted, *'I chose it because of the lifestyle it gives you, in conjunction with work, you know'*, and *'I was seeking a lifestyle that read not so much dollar or economically driven just a lifestyle choice'*. It also seemed that it looked attractive because of liking the idea of being in the fishing industry. This was found in the comment by one participant who stated, *'Well, I've always been interested in the seafood industry and I like fishing, and I wanted to see how it would go with a commercial fishing business'*. This theme suggests a lack of strategy or planning as the participants noted an interest in the micro-business to support their lifestyle and maintain but not grow their enterprise. This is inconsistent with strategy (e.g. Dahlmann & Brammer, 2011), strategic management theory (e.g. Douglas et al., 2010) and strategic planning (e.g. Allred et al., 2007; O'Reagan & Ghobadian, 2007) where a consistent underlying assumption is growth.

This section of the study attempted to understand the drivers of members of the seafood industry and looked specifically at the micro-business element. It was found that the family business model explains membership in the industry for a variety of reasons that include benefits and obligations. It was also found that others in the industry for lifestyle reasons that the industry affords. These appeared to link to flexibility and also having an identity as a fisherman. The data provided by participants relating to family is significant across businesses and may represent an underlying set of constructs relating to business growth and profitability. It could also be argued that the family nature of commercial fishing micro-businesses may have implications for the application of strategy and strategic planning.

In summary, the data revealed a strong underlying theme of family business as a motivator of the participants in the study. The family business identity of the interviewees was considered one of the key reasons for being in the business. Further, the family business orientation of the industry appeared to impact the participants in multiple ways. It created a sense of responsibility and drive that may be underlying the survival of the industry. This does bring into question the long-term sustainability of the industry if there is a strong dependence on family involvement and effort to maintain profitability. Research literature suggests that there may be room for growth if these businesses were to focus on strategy (Box, 2011; Farjoun, 2002; Stefanovic & Milosevic, 2012).

#### 4.7.2. STRATEGY ORIENTATION THEME

Another important theme identified in the data set was titled, '*Strategy Orientation*'. The participants indicated two general approaches to the running of their business these were a '*Growth Orientation*', '*Survival Orientation*' and '*Minimising Business Costs*'. In addition, there was a sub-theme labelled '*Plan B*', these as explained in more detail below. Research literature suggests that while, in broad terms, the use of strategy and strategic planning assumes that businesses will choose growth over just sustaining profits or declining profitability as suggested by Dahlmann and Brammer (2011), Keliher and Reinl (2009) and Hormozi et al. (2002). It was common among the participants to describe a desire for growth. In terms of the '*Growth Orientation*' this was exemplified by the comment that, '*My aim was to be self-sufficient in the industry, as in owning my licence and owning my own boat and then to get a bigger boat*'. The opportunity for growth in the industry was articulated by another statement indicating '*I'm actually frightened of where I'm going, on how much potential that we've got in the next six to 12 months*' another suggested, '*I just bought a new boat. I just added another boat - well actually marketing new products*' and another, '*I guess in any business you're trying to grow your business and become more commercially viable or profitable*'.

On the other hand, it was also noted among participants to describe surviving as their main orientation. The '*Survival Orientation*' sub-theme was identified and related to statements such as, '*Well, at the moment, the way the markets are, I think it's more - the main goal is to survive and hang in there, because I feel that there will be less people next year*' and, '*At the moment our aim is to be here in 2013. Obviously the industry is going through some tough times and I'm just hoping to be able to see that through. Our aspirations for the year are no different to any other year*', and finally, '*In this boat that we've got now, the bigger boat that we went to this year, we could survive because we would just have to change the way we work*'. These responses suggest, at the micro-business firm survival in their chosen market is a key driver for maintaining the business. Hormozi et al. (2002) note that a business plan will help to increase the success of the business which, given the responses to follow may not take into account the variability of markets or the impact of government regulation.



When describing impacting their survival many issues were raised. This is also discussed in more detail below. However, the cyclical nature of the market, market development problems, was often linked to the impact of government regulations and decisions. Several interviewees mentioned the impact of government on the way in which their business is conducted. Their frustration was evident as it was noted the impact of government in terms of an underdeveloped export market, *'The government was supposed to negotiate a free trade arrangement over seven or eight years ago - that's a non-event'*, and, *'I think certainly the conservation side of things is always a threat, always has been, always will be'*, and another cited government fisheries closures as a key concern, suggesting, *'Mainly government things, external things that are going to come in, any restrictions we're going to get... closures'*.

It was also noted by one participant who indicated having a growth orientation that government presents many challenges for micro-business operators, he said, *'We have a meeting at the industry association but before we have the meeting the government come in and say this is what you're going to do. Either you do it or we do it. So we've always got the gun on our head all the time, and that's based on the alleged scientific evidence and it really pisses you off sometimes'*. Participants noted the possible impacts of government regulation and in the context of commercial fishing micro-businesses the theme of 'Survival' may have strong underpinnings of the impact of regulation on industry over other variables, this assertion would need to be tested by further research.

In response to this the strategy of many operators was focused on ensuring the use of a 'Plan B'. The theme named 'Plan B' related to identifying alternate income streams if things did not go to plan. Given the perceived uncertainty in the industry many participants described a 'Plan B'. For example, one said, *'Well Plan B is to - like I said earlier - to fall back on my trade skills'*. In this instance the alternate income plan involves the application of trade skills in another industry whereas other interviewees mentioned an alternate income stream but did not identify what that might involve, simply that they had an alternative ready, *'Whereas I'm more like roll the dice, go and do it, I just back myself that if that doesn't work I'll go and find Plan B or Plan C to cover myself'*. Linked to this was a willingness to downsize the business as a strategy to keep working in the industry if things did not go to plan.

The ‘*Plan B*’ sub-theme presented interesting findings with respect to alternate income streams if the micro-business were to fail. Four of the eighteen interviewees held no other positions (or paid roles) outside the commercial seafood sector. A ‘*Plan B*’ seems to be an essential given the implied volatile and constantly changing nature of the commercial fishing sector. Some of this volatility was demonstrated as follows, *‘we still have issues ahead of us you know, probably looking out three or more years, and things we have to deal with. I guess it's getting that culture of change, and being proactive and meeting things instead of being reactive, which is always the case with fishermen. You know, that's a learning thing that you try and get through’*. The ‘*Plan B*’ perspective could be seen as another form of survival strategy amongst this group of firms and suggests that a willingness to invest in and operate a commercial fishing micro business is a risk laden proposition in what could be described as a volatile industry environment. The ‘*Plan B*’ approach is consistent with strategy as outlined by O’Reagan and Ghobadian (2007) where strategy involves the development of alternative courses of action.

Other approaches included, *‘Minimising Business Costs’*. *‘The measure of a better year is actually, you know, taking a little bit off your principle of all your loans at the moment’, ‘There are some fishermen in this port that are very dictated by their costs. Like they'll be too can't afford to lose the money if they bomb out’*. Others were focused on maximising returns from their catch, *‘Yeah, well you've got to get as much value as you can of the product you catch and trying to cut costs where you can’*. While other described being prepared to downsize *I have two boats. One of them is currently on the market, but I'm not optimistic that we'd recover - that I'd get the price that I would deem a suitable price’*. These examples demonstrate the flexibility in the micro-businesses as argued by Lumpkin et al. (2012) and Rundh (2011). However it could also be argued that needing an alternate income source or having to downsize suggests a degree of volatility within commercial fishing industry.

#### **4.7.3. DECISION-MAKING APPROACHES THEME**

An important role of strategy is to help guide business, in this study business decisions were based on external factors suggesting a very informal approach to decision-making. The third

theme was labelled, *'Decision-Making Approaches'* undertaken by the individual micro-business owners, sub-themes varied and demonstrate that the micro-businesses have adopted a range of decision-making processes as part of their business strategy. When making decisions, strategic management literature recommends environmental scanning to be most effective. In this context little formal environmental scanning has taken place. When probed, a number of themes appear.

A combination approach where business decision-making was influenced by the knowledge and experience of other commercial fishers noting, *'Well, I think I'm a fairly knowledgeable fisherman and having said that, I've learnt a lot from the elderly people that have fished in this harbour all their lives. I've taken information off them, absorbed it and utilised it'*. Participants also indicated that, *'In relation to industry things we have chosen to become very involved in the industry. My husband is actually on an industry committee, so he wants to = keep informed of what's happening and what's impacting on industry. So he does gather information from there. He has a network of other fishermen that he actually gathers information from. Some of that other information is where you get net supplies from or where is a cheaper place to get cartons from or something like that'*. Utilising the knowledge of others was noted by participants and in particular, *'you pay attention to what other people have done in the past so it's where the experience comes in where you've been around other people that have done things or tried things or done things in the past but haven't done it for a while and you think well maybe that's worth looking at again or doing something like that'*. In terms of strategy, participants noted that their approach was flexible to the degree that they trusted the knowledge and skills of their counterparts and competitors.

Decision-making was also identified from the participants as purely a function of their experience, *'Gut instinct, there's a - you can look back through your records, see when the best times were'*. Making decisions on experience was also identified by a participant noting, *'No I'm going on my own information. I know what we did, you know, 25 years ago and - well 19 years ago I bought a boat specifically to fish in the deep water - specifically - and got stopped after two or three years and it's taken 16 years to get the licences back to be able to do it because there is a resource out there that's been absolutely wasted and it's a big one -*

*it's a big resource'*. These responses indicate a reliance on personal experience and suggest a total lack of strategy or planning.

Decision-making based on chance or a taking a calculated risk was also part of the responses provided by participants, *'But it's hard at the moment because of the issues getting the product into China, and that's where the top dollar is. Then, if you try and - I mean, the local market can take some, but when you're competing with other states, and other states with different products, you know, they try and screw you down too. So, it's a bit of a gamble more than anything, and you can only - it's about risk minimisation'*. Taking risks is part of the normal business process, *'It's normally, just, yeah, but weigh up of the pros and cons and through the 12 months just spend a lot of time - just take a risk and if - go with your best option, what we think is the best option, but yeah, just a general discussion'*. Similar to the gut instinct approach the responses denote a reliance on individual knowledge and historic returns on international markets for product.

Decision-making presented by participants in this study is consistent with a Leaning School strategic management perspective as outlined by Kraus and Kauranen (2009) and Miller and Ireland (2005). Networking was identified and it was noted that, *'When I make decisions I approach with caution and I generally do a trial. If a new customer wants to buy my product I will - I won't send him a heap of product in one go, I'll just do a trial. Like with this new guy I've been doing business with now I just say I'll send you just a little bit of product just to see how things - see how it goes'*. A family-based situational approach is outlined, *'No, we all talk together, the whole three of us. It's usually - well, it is always - my husband, myself and my son because we're the three that run the business. Because there'll be things that I'll understand that they won't understand, there'll be things that they can bring to the table that I don't, so any time we want to make a decision, it comes back to me to find the money and go to the bank and do the negotiating, but they have to be able to tell me what's reasonable and what's not reasonable'*. Decision-making derived from networking suggests that there is some planning but the degree to which they are strategic or strategically planned is questionable.

Participants indicated a range of decision-making approaches which suggest that commercial fishing micro-businesses have multiple pathways to ensure decisions are as informed as possible. In terms of developing strategy the key elements underlying strategy development pre-supposes a degree of planning as argued by Box (2011), Farjoun (2002) and Stefanovic & Milosevic (2012) who posit that strategy is a planned and coordinated process. The way in which participants in this study have indicated they take decisions suggests a highly informal, experienced based approach.

#### **4.7.4. USE OF A PLAN THEME**

The fourth and final theme was titled, *'Use of a Plan'*, and was an amalgamation of interviewee responses based on the sub-themes titled, *'Elements of a Plan'*, and *'Identification of a Formal Plan'*.

The *'Elements of a Plan'* sub-theme suggested the interviewee had elements of a plan but no formal or informal plan could be identified, *'My plan at this point is to continue to operate and operate more frequently'*, and it was also noted, *'I'm self-motivated and stuff like that, so like some of my mates can work with me fine, but on and off we'll go to the reef or whatever I want to do'*. Long-term succession was also cited, *'Yeah, hopefully it's just a continuation of the same thing where hopefully in maybe five years, 10 years' time I'm taking more time off or maybe who knows, I might even be operating a different boat. Maybe he'll [family member] be showing me enough signs where I can diversify and go and do something different and let him run the business'*; and in terms of new equipment, *'We do look into the future of new equipment that's coming out, work out when we might be able to afford it and try to purchase it if we can'*. In all of these instances participants demonstrate elements of a plan but it could be argued not enough to classify the elements as a formal or informal plan.

The *'Identification of a Formal Plan'* sub-theme was derived from participants, *'...my brother decided he wanted to go fishing, so we went through family succession planning and helped him get started in it. So, you've got to be aware of what lies ahead, or try and guess what lies ahead, so that becomes - you know, you use your resources to research, you know, online, or attend meetings'* and, *'We've worked towards that for several years. Our plan*

*consists of that for instance we need to earn \$2,500 a week, so it's \$10,000 a month that we need to look at the start of the month to say how are we going to earn that? In that there's obviously a maintenance component built into it of x a week'. In these examples it could be argued that a formal set of plans within the commercial fishing micro-businesses exist but is not the norm across firms. The next section examines some strategic considerations facing operators in the commercial fishing industry.*

#### **4.8. INDUSTRY ISSUES**

In order to secure qualitative data to help understand the business in environment in which commercial fishing micro-businesses operate. Using Question items 10, 11 and 12 participants were asked to consider issues over three time periods: (1) short-term or 1 to 6 months, (2) medium-term or twelve to 12-24 months and (3) long-term or beyond 24 months; a set of initial themes are noted in Appendix 25. Participants were asked to consider issues facing the industry at different points in time.

Two key themes were identified over the three time periods titled, '*Regulation*', and '*Industry development*'. The theme '*Regulation*' was defined as examples of government rules or processes that impact on the commercial fishing micro-business. The next theme, '*Industry development*' was defined as issues dealing with the business or the market in which it operates.

##### **4.8.1. SHORT-TERM ISSUES**

The commercial fishing micro-businesses provided a range of responses that were categorised under '*Regulation*'. Under this theme there were several instances to suggest that participants business operations were impacted by government regulation. The impact of regulation on the micro-business was identified by the following comments, '*Just the certainty of the fishery because we have got the trawl plan review happening and it should have started in 2009 and we have had a change of government and now we have had the budget cuts and people leaving fisheries, just the uncertainty is unnerving*'. It was also noted

by another participant that, *'Probably local issues such as, you know, they're going to cut the quota, or what are they going to do'*. In both these instances participants referred to changes in regulation and the impacts on the business.

Further examples of regulation impacting on participants were identified, *'Prawns are now \$14 and fuel's 100 cents or \$1 - you know, \$1.90 or something. See it's gone four times. Our insurance has gone from two per cent on \$200,000 boats to four per cent on \$500,000. So all these added costs and insurance, all the bullshit regulations and the paperwork, the [unclear] the workers' comp, all that, the paperwork, the safety and that'*. This example suggests market conditions and regulation are increasing operating pressure on participants. Another participant noted, *'The thing that's holding us back there is some of the rules and regulations about unloading your fish, who you can sell it to'*.

Additional examples of regulatory impacts were also noted by participants and it was termed, *'Where can I fish'* theme. It was noted, *'That's the primary concern. Once that can get put away I think then the fishery needs to start looking at itself and start helping itself but primarily we need to know that there is still going to be a fishery. That we still have access to fishing grounds and we can still fish an applicable number of nights to keep our businesses viable'*. Access to fishing grounds is a critical issue for participants, *'I don't think markets are a problem. Access is our biggest problem, access and common sense management'*.

Under the *'Regulation'* theme it was noted by a participant that regulation can have a negative impact on business operations, *'So for us personally at the moment, we're on the slip doing our - putting on the new nozzle and prop, which we wanted, so my thing is the boat has to get back to work and start making some money again, because we've had an extended period out in the middle of the year that we don't normally have. Fear of regulation was also noted amongst participants, 'I don't know, I think the biggest thing for me that I can see, and for other crabbers, is we are quite unique and fortunate where the mud crab fishery is a wild caught fishery. We don't have aquaculture competitors. As with prawns, as with fish there's huge aquaculture competition in those species and the only real main concern for me is if they develop some way of mass producing mud crabs'*.

Participants also identified a range of issues noted under the theme of the ‘*Industry development*’. It was noted that, *‘I guess for all Tasmania seafood in different degrees the market and the market prices and everything are driven by export and the availability of the producers to be able to export. At the moment they're in fair crisis sort of thing with their export trade and that does generally filter down into the domestic supply as well’*. It was also noted that potential market instability and implications for quota (i.e. investment in a quota managed fishery), *‘The market, the overseas market and the price of quota will be affecting this industry more than anything at the moment’*. This issue identifies the need for stability in foreign markets and potential impacts on micro-businesses that take the risk of exporting.

Other examples of industry based development issues included, *‘So you actually then need other boats to do the same value add on their boats to help fill that need. So we need to join together as that but we also need to start doing some of our own, whether we call it promotion in as much as we need to tell the public that we are doing things sustainably and we have got turtle excluders and all this sort of thing as well which goes hand in hand with getting things on menus in restaurants’*. This example highlights the multiple needs facing commercial fishing micro businesses in terms of (1) industry promotion based on industry working together and (2) need to be seen as stewards of the marine ecology.

In summary, regulation was identified as a short-term issue of concern for commercial fishing micro-businesses. With little to no planning undertaken by participants it is unknown how they would address the impact of regulation. The magnitude of impact with respect to regulation is broad ranging quota restrictions to potential limitations on accessing a specific fishery. Finally, participants also brought into question the competence of fishery management and a potential issue identified in the medium and long term issues identified by commercial fishing micro-businesses; the competence of fisheries management and the application of fisheries management regulation.

#### **4.8.2. MEDIUM-TERM ISSUES**

In terms of the ‘*Regulation*’ theme, participants continued to mention issues relating to regulation and its impact on their businesses noting, *‘Mainly government things, external*



*things that are going to come in'. This comment represents a constant fear of changes to how fisheries are managed with a participant noting, 'Well, access to quota. That will be the primary one, and fishing grounds'. Again, participants raised regulation as an issue of concern in terms of operating the firm and access to fishing grounds.*

In terms of the 'Industry development' theme it was indicated that, *'Until we have a trade agreement. But until our government can work out an agreement with their government that we can get the fish in legally. My company does have an agreement with another import company in Asia with - where we can shift lobsters through. It's the only agreement I think around in this state'*. Participants focus on the markets in which they operate but are aware that government intervention will influence their market. It was also noted that, *'I mean our fear is always other people coming into this area'*. It was also noted that understanding the market in which commercial fishing micro-businesses operate generates a degree of fear in potential competition.

#### **4.8.3. LONG-TERM ISSUES**

The long-term issues identified by participants under the 'Regulation' theme provided an insight into the impact of government in the management of fisheries and implications for micro-businesses, *'Like I said before you want to be able to walk out your door and you know what you're doing day in, day out and you're here to stay. But when is that ever going to happen? When is the government ever going to say oh righto - we know damn well we're sustainable and especially in the crab fishery and stuff like that'*. The participant again notes the impact of regulation is one that creates instability in the minds of commercial fishing micro-businesses.

Participants also demonstrated a concern with access to fisheries and the negative impact on their businesses viability by arguing that, *'That's the primary concern. Once that can get put away I think then the fishery needs to start looking at itself and start helping itself but primarily we need to know that there is still going to be a fishery. That we still have access to fishing grounds and we can still fish an applicable number of nights to keep our businesses viable'*.

Under the 'Industry development' theme participants indicated their consideration of changes in species caught or moving operations elsewhere, *'Yeah look, I think there may be some changes to Fisheries Management in that time, although I think that's probably unlikely given the speed at which they normally operate. So 24 months out I don't have any more specific plans at this point except to say that unless the business is profitable at that point in this area then we will have to consider moving elsewhere or altering the style of operation and perhaps the fish that we target... So there's a number of options there and it really is dependent on what happens over the next 12 months or so but thinking ahead, yeah, there are some potential options there. We might start looking at different species or think about moving to a different area'*. It was also noted that, *'We could survive but there'd be no - we'd have to find another market or go back to the domestic market. If we go back to the domestic market I reckon our prices would drop by 75 per cent. That will probably put a lot of people to the wall'*.

#### **4.9. MACRO INDUSTRY ISSUES**

Chapter 2 of this study presented a series of macro level issues potentially impacting on the capacity of commercial fishing micro-businesses to apply strategy and strategic planning at the firm level. These issues included: (1) MPAs, (2) fisheries management, (3) conservation and (4) employment.

##### **4.9.1. MPA**

The potential impact of MPAs was cited as a concern amongst participants. Some noted a fear of current government agencies in the creation of MPAs, *'I also have a permit to operate in the Commonwealth Fisheries which economically has potential but it's expensive to get in it and we've got some issues right there now with the marine park planning process and the possibility that AFMA may close one or two of the seamounts we access from here for shark protection. So that's uncertain at this point'*. Some participants indicated support for MPAs without closing a fishery to establish the marine park, *'I would like to see ore marine parks if they're like a little - a square mile one here or there. So they can compare the marine park with what's going on in the actual fishery. Whereas they just lock up these great big areas,*

*like that Tony Burke with that thing up off Torres Straits or whatever. Let's be the biggest marine park in the world for the sake of it, it's just crazy'. Some participants noted that MPAs may alter the industry in the long-term, 'The restructure of the industry and long term is the marine parks, because that is never going to stop'.*

#### **4.9.2. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

Participants indicated the impact of fisheries management on the operations of their micro business, *'We're also subject to a lot of other so-called stakeholders, I suppose, in terms of how it might impact on our operating costs. But the actual conduct of the business is very dependent on Fisheries Management'. This was supported by statements regarding pressure felt by micro-business owners in compliance to a range of stakeholders including fisheries management, 'There's a lot of government, from surveys to the fisheries to conservation groups, marine parks, associations, meetings, processes. Everyone seems to want to have a say within your industry now whether they're involved or not'. Participants also noted that fisheries managers have little understanding of the businesses operating within the commercial fisheries, 'Just bullshit management where we've got fisheries managers that have no idea of what we're doing and what's going on out there. Do you know what I mean? This is my big struggle, fisheries managers'.*

#### **4.9.3. CONSERVATION**

Conservation legislation was also mentioned by participants as a problem for business, *'I think certainly the conservation side of things is always a threat, always has been, always will be'. The issue of conservation was viewed as adding to the regulatory burden facing business titled 'green tape' and it was noted that, 'The threats of green tape, you know. There's red tape and there's green tape and its green tape. It's getting that hard now we're getting constricted so much with regulation, and it's suffocating our opportunity - our - suffocated by green tape and regulation basically because - and it's unrealistic, a lot of it'. An alternate view of conservation was proposed by a participant who noted, 'Well if we can work in with them everyone can win. The greenies can win, the politicians can win. Everyone can win if we do it right'.*

#### **4.9.4. EMPLOYMENT**

Employment was mentioned amongst participants particularly pay arrangements with one participant noting, *‘So we have actually got them as a share fishing arrangement which seems to be a unique thing and it might line up a little bit with share farming arrangements. So with share fishing they bring their skills and a little bit of tools to the thing which is just basically their personal protective equipment. So that's how we pay them. They need to cover their own accident insurance while they are on the vessel’*. It was also indicated that some commercial fishing micro-business owners will never take on an employee, *‘No, no I'll never employ anyone’*.

#### **4.10. STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOL**

The final element of the interview process involved asking participants to identify the business based strengths and weaknesses. Participants were also asked to identify business opportunities and threats. This process allowed each participant to articulate the internal and external issues facing each business.

##### **4.10.1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

A number of issues were identified using a basic SWOT analysis undertaken with each participant in the study. Participants were asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses within their businesses. Table 6 details the varied themes under the *'Strengths'* and *'Weaknesses'* categories. Participants noted that *'Business Skills'* as the most identified theme and the most cited weakness related to a *'Lack of Business Skills'*.

In terms of strengths participants noted a range of issues including their commitment to their fishery, *‘We haven't got a business if I'm not operating’*. Commitment from the family to the business was also noted as a business strength, *‘My wife mostly I suppose... I think we work well together and we sit down and discuss everything that we're doing’*. The link to family was also supported with one participant stating, *‘My wife mostly I suppose... I think we work well together and we sit down and discuss everything that we're doing’*.

Table 6

### SWOT Analysis - Internal Factors

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Most Identified Themes</b>
<b><i>Strengths</i></b> Business Infrastructure; Business Skills; Quality Product; Quota Ownership; Industry knowledge; Family commitment; Commitment; Skilled Crew; and Sustainable Environment	Business Skills
<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b> Ability to Change Fisheries Regulation; Availability of Crew; Need for Skilled Crew; Lack of Business Skills; Personal Health; Stock Levels; Time Poor; and Access to Quota	Lack of Business Skill

Source: Interviewee Feedback

With respect to weaknesses it was noted that, '*For me personally it'd probably be to see my crew develop a little bit more to a point where I can actually step back a little bit more*'. Personal health was mentioned as a serve weakness within the micro-business, '*I suppose the weaknesses are I'm heavily reliant on my own physique and body to - if I have an injury or if I hurt myself all work ceases*'.

From a strategy perspective the range of business strengths and weaknesses suggests that commercial fishing micro-businesses have an awareness of their internal business capacities. It should be noted that the '*Strengths*' and '*Weaknesses*' identified in Table 6 were identified across 16 commercial micro-fishing businesses. This may be an indicator that commercial fishing micro-businesses do not use strategy or apply strategic planning within their businesses.

#### **4.10.2. OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

Interviewees were also asked to consider the opportunities and threats within their businesses. Table 7 details the varied themes under the '*Opportunities*' and '*Threats*' categories respectively. Participants noted that '*Market Development*' as the most identified theme in terms of business opportunities and that the most cited weakness related to '*Fisheries Regulations*'.

Table 7

*SWOT Analysis - External Factors*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Most Identified Themes</b>
<p><b><i>Opportunities</i></b>                      Business Diversification; Market Development; and Online Business Development</p>	<p>Market Development</p>
<p><b><i>Threats</i></b>                      Market Volatility; Fisheries Regulation; Recreational Fishing Effort; Imports; Increased Fishing Effort; Lack of Stability; Marine Parks; Reactive to Fisheries Issues; Resources Sector; and Weather</p>	<p>Fisheries Regulation</p>

Source: Interviewee Feedback

Participants predominantly noted business related opportunities and in some circumstances demonstrated strategic thinking in terms of developing markets, *‘I think we need to go and start talking to our buyers and investigating other things that we could do to the product so our buyers can sell it maybe directly to restaurants or something, I don't know. So the processing is done on the boat as opposed to any processing that may happen in the buyer's premise.*

Participants were also asked to identify threats to their businesses and consistent with the previous section, regulation was the most frequently identified issue. With the exception of market volatility and weather all of the threats identified had a regulatory element involved.

## CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

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The focus of this study has been the use of strategy and strategic planning amongst a sub-set of small businesses, the Australian commercial fishing micro-business. This chapter represents the analysis and integration of themes and issues identified amongst commercial fishing micro-businesses facilitating or limiting the application of strategy and strategic planning literature and strategic management theory. This chapter will also identify together key learnings derived from micro-business owners. Finally, implications for strategic management theory, strategy and strategic planning and micro-businesses are provided as well as implications for industry associations and fisheries management.

### 5.1. THEME ANALYSIS

A total of four factors and a sub-factor were identified from participant interview data regarding strategy and links to sustainability and growth in the sector: (1) '*Family Business*' (sub-themes titled, '*Generations*', '*Personal Investment*', and '*Lifestyle*'), (2) '*Strategy Orientation*', (3) '*Decision-Making Approaches*', and (4) '*Use of a Plan*'. These factors provide insights into the business framework predominantly used by commercial fishing micro-businesses, their strategic orientation and decision-making approaches. Finally, elements of planning were uncovered and discussed in the broader strategy context.

#### 5.1.1. FAMILY BUSINESS THEME

A significant factor identified amongst participants was the familial structure of commercial fishing micro-businesses. The family business structure provides individuals with a sense of control, ownership, a shared vision amongst family members, business longevity (inter-generational ownership) and a sense of freedom to operate the business as he or she sees fit. This finding is consistent with research undertaken by Collins and O'Regan (2011), Sharma et al. (2012) and FBA (2013b). Participants also mentioned the inter-generational nature of operating a commercial fishing micro-business such as having family not only involved in the business but part of succession within the business and again this is consistent with family business literature (Nadim & Lussier, 2012; Samujh, 2011).

Demographic data in this study providing some evidence suggesting commercial fishers tend to stay in the industry over the long-term. Three of the 18 participants in the study had less than 10 years worked in the industry. Under the '*Generations*' sub-theme and by examining the age demographics, participants have multi-generational experience (10 or more years' experience) in the Australian commercial fishing industry with 15 participants having multi-generational experience in their respective fisheries.

The average years employed in the fishing industry of this group with 3 or more generations experience was 32 years (SD = 3.6) with a range of 46 to 66 years. In terms of inter-generational literature Lussier and Sonfield (2010) and Ibrahim, McGuire, Soufani and Poutziouris (2004) argued that successive generations may lead to greater levels of professional management and development of strategy within the family business. Successive findings in this study suggest that commercial fishing micro-businesses do not actively develop strategy or strategic planning but have been in operation for multiple generations. This seems to contradict current views on strategy as conceptualised by Lussier and Sonfield (2010) and Ibrahim et al. (2004). According to Hormozi et al. (2002) and Wang et al. (2007) small businesses are more likely to fail without strategic planning. The demographic data in this study suggests that opposite is the case. It could be argued that despite no strategy or strategic planning amongst micro-businesses in this study, the multi-generational nature of the businesses imply that their business practice are responsive to the markets in which they operate.

The sub-theme titled '*Personal Investment*' underpins the family business theme. This investment is characterised by participants in this study highlighting a need to keep the business viable and spend as much time in the business as possible. This is consistent with Castillo and Wakefield (2007) who additionally note that the family business structure demands constant effort above and beyond a non-family business structure. A primary focus on the businesses operations may provide a reason why strategy and strategic planning are not key processes used by commercial fishing micro-businesses.



The sub-theme titled '*Lifestyle*' is another element of the overall family business theme which some participants noted as providing a lifestyle that was not focussed on business growth. This view of the commercial fishing micro-business is inconsistent with strategy literature stating that at one level strategy is concerned with improving performance, growth or a combination of these factors (Dahlmann & Brammer, 2011; Kraus et al., 2006; Phillips, 2011). The lifestyle perspective is also inconsistent with strategic planning literature which focusses on setting goals and objectives (Collis & Rukstad, 2008) and planning evaluation (Stephan, 2010). The consequence of a lifestyle choice amongst commercial fishing industry micro-businesses may be another factor limiting the use of strategy or strategic planning. If a micro-business owner is solely focussed on sustaining their business to ensure a certain level of lifestyle is achieved strategy and strategic planning may be irrelevant for some micro-businesses operators.

### **5.1.2. STRATEGY ORIENTATION THEME**

The strategy orientation theme was identified and was comprised of four sub-themes, namely, '*Growth Orientation*', '*Survival Orientation*', '*Plan B*' and '*Minimising Business Costs*'. The first sub-theme titled, '*Growth Orientation*' was identified involving the acquisition of a larger vessel, potential for growth over a 12 month period and the purchase of additional vessels to target multiple fish species. Growth is an issue that is active amongst some of the participants in this study. This finding is consistent with strategy literature as argued by Keliher and Reinl (2009) that strategy and long-term growth are critical to the survival of small businesses particularly amongst micro-businesses.

Box (2011), Farjoun (2002), Stafanovic and Milosevic (2012) argue that growth, as part of a strategy, is achieved through a planned and coordinated process. Evidence of a pathway to growth is not evident in participant responses in this study. There was some evidence that participants possessed an understanding of their competitive environment by signalling need for growth but again as envisaged by Porter (1979; 2008) a detailed understanding of their external business environment could not be determined from the responses provided by participants.

Participants indicated that surviving from year to year was a critical issue and was labelled '*Survival Orientation*'. This theme was characterised by statements referring to staying in business for a period of time or at the very least staying in operations for a 12 month period and examining their business environment at that point. This perspective is not consistent with the application of strategy where the focus is on sustaining or growing the firm (Dahlmann & Brammer, 2011; Kraus et al., 2006; Phillips, 2011). Participants also indicated that surviving in their markets would be influenced by external issues beyond their control including the impact of regulation (i.e. fisheries and conservation legislation). This understanding of the external environment is consistent with Porter (1979; 2008) however there were no solutions or methodologies identified by participants to address the impact of regulation on their businesses.

An additional sub-theme identified in the study and was labelled '*Plan B*'. Given the volatility depicted in the responses provided by commercial fishing micro-businesses of the Australian seafood industry some participants noted they had a '*Plan B*' ranging from: (1) involving themselves in industry associations, (2) informally developing a three-year outlook on potential regulatory change, (3) returning to full time employment in another, trade based industry, and (4) developing a Plan B or C just in case. It could be argued that commercial fishing micro-businesses have informally and partially applied strategy within their small business environment albeit informally. This approach is consistent with strategy using limited resources to achieve a goal as conceptualised by Ghemawat (2002) and Grattan (2009). The counter argument that a '*Plan B*' approach does not constitute strategy is also applicable in this study.

The final sub-theme titled '*Minimising Business Costs*' or doing whatever is required to ensure that the business stays viable. According to participants, minimising costs involved processes such as ensuring debt is kept as low as possible, cutting businesses costs wherever possible or selling assets to ensure the longevity of the firm. These responses are not consistent with strategy literature as outlined by Farjoun (2002), Pretorius and Maritz (2011) and Stefanovic and Milosevic (2012) who argue that strategy at its core is the capacity to apply internal capabilities to respond to the market. The '*Minimising Business Costs*' sub-

theme may represent a significant departure from the use of strategy and again provides additional support to the finding that commercial fishing micro-businesses are not developing strategy or strategic plans.

### **5.1.3. DECISION-MAKING APPROACHES THEME**

Decision-making based on chance or taking a calculated risk were identified by participants and labelled, '*Decision-Making Approaches*'. Participants in this study noted multiple methods of decision-making by commercial fishing including: (1) learning from older commercial fishers, (2) using industry committees to share information, (3) closely monitoring competitors in the market, (4) use of their own intuition or 'gut instinct', (5) relying on risk taking to make decisions, and (6) using existing commercial networks. These approaches to decision-making are based on individual use of personal or informal commercial network knowledge to make decisions at the business level. Both strategy and strategic planning are underpinned by a systematic, coordinated and documented approach to achieving a mission or reaching an organisational goal (Box, 2011; Farjoun, 2002; Mazzarol et al., 2009) which is not aligned to making decisions on instinct or informal networks.

### **5.1.4. USE OF A PLAN THEME**

Participants noted sub-themes titled, '*Elements of a Plan*', and '*Identification of a Formal Plan*'. In relation to the, '*Elements of a Plan*' sub-theme participants noted a range of issues that could be labelled as parts of a plan including: (1) increasing work effort, (2) involve close friends to assist them diversify their income and help the business, (3) potential to transition the business to a family member and (4) upgrade equipment. There was insufficient data provided by participants to suggest that these elements form part of a formal or informal plan. Strategic planning literature (Gibson & Cassar, 2002; O'Reagan & Ghobadian, 2007) suggests a formal document that has clear goals, is time restricted and has support from members of the business constitutes planning. This was not demonstrated amongst the participants in this study suggesting strategic planning is not priority for these businesses.

The sub-theme named, '*Identification of a Formal Plan*' was derived from participants that suggested they were deliberately planning within their micro-businesses. Participants outlined a process of succession planning within a family business structure. Participants also detailed revenue plans with weekly and monthly income figures. There was insufficient data provided by participants to determine if strategic planning was taking place. This lack of planning is consistent with research undertaken by Jocusen (2004) and Wang et al. (2007) arguing that an absence of planning is common amongst small businesses.

## **5.2. SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM ISSUES**

Participants were asked to consider issues in their businesses over the short (1 to 6 months), medium (12-24 months) and long-term (beyond 24 months) that could impact on the capacity of firms to execute strategic planning. A consistent set of themes were identified across each time period, regulation and industry development.

Regulatory burdens identified by participants over all time frames can be summarised as follows and included: (1) delays in introducing management plans, (2) potential changes to quota levels, (3) regulatory burden or 'red tape' involved in complying with fisheries management rules, (4) security of access to the fishery, (5) unclear fisheries management rules, (6) regulatory burden 'green tape' compliance and (7) assurance from government that fisheries practice is best practice. Participants noted that government creates considerable barriers to the growth of their operations. Porter's (1979; 2008) five forces model provides a prism by which to examine the short, medium and long-term implications of regulatory burden on commercial fishing micro businesses.

Under the '*Threat of New Entrants*' force described by Porter (1979; 2008) restrictive government policy act to provide a degree of control over a market by establishing the processes by which businesses operate in a market. From the issues raised from participants in this study, the amount of regulatory pressure on commercial fishing micro-businesses may act a strong deterrent to the consideration of developing strategy and strategic planning. Under Porter's (2008) competitive forces paradigm this regulatory burden may add to

existing competitive pressures faced by commercial seafood micro-businesses in a market where competition is fierce and where, according to ABARES (2013), the value of seafood imports has risen to \$1.4 billion in 2011-12.

Industry development burdens were identified and included: (1) unpredictability of export markets, (2) ensuring high product standards, (3) difficulties in convincing competitors to work together to market product, (4) lack of will by government to assist industry develop export markets and (5) difficulties in changing from export to domestic market species. The industry development issues identified by participants could form part of strategy or be incorporated in a strategic plan as noted by O'Reagan and Ghobadian (2007). However, there was no evidence of an environmental or market scan; no evidence that plans were written, addressing organisational activity beyond 12 months, sub-plans such as marketing or alternative strategies.

### **5.3. MACRO-LEVEL ISSUES**

Participants in this research have indicated that there are a range of issues that may inhibit their use of strategy or strategic planning. At the macro-level issues that were identified by participants included: (1) MPAs, (2) Fisheries Management, (3) Conservation and (4) Employment.

The potential impact of MPAs was the most commonly cited concern amongst participants. The bases of the concerns were grouped around a loss of access to fisheries and the loss of prospectivity or their capacity to change fisheries in which they operate. Some participants were resigned to MPAs but they could not understand why they were being developed. This feedback would make long-term strategy and strategic planning extremely difficult to undertake when it might not be clear if a fishery will be in existence from one year to the next. The inability to develop strategic plans in a policy environment where an MPA could be announced to the detriment of a micro-business is supported by the NSIA (2012b) who estimate potential losses ranging from 19 to 41 per cent. Moreover, the remaining commercial fishing micro-businesses may be forced to compete in increasingly smaller fisheries as noted by NSIA (2012b) and SEWPaC (2012).

Fisheries management was consistently mentioned by participants as impacting on the operations of their businesses. As noted by Fisheries Queensland (2011) and McPhee (2008) outlined a range of processes that should be regulated to ensure the longevity of a specific fishery. Where participants in this study suggest there are issues relate to continual changes to those rules, loss of access or increasing already restrictive rules regarding gear use.

Conservation legislation was identified by participants as a problem for their businesses. It was noted by participants that conservation legislation creates ‘green tape’ burdens in addition to compliance with fisheries management regulation. It can be argued that commercial fishing micro-businesses will continue to face pressure from government impacting on their capacity to focus on strategy or strategic planning. In the Queensland context, the GBRMPA and DEHP potentially compound what could be termed ‘fear of changing legislation’ as these agencies could further restrict access to fish stocks through regulatory instruments such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003 and Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006 for example.

In terms of employment, the participant businesses in this study indicated that collectively they employed seven full-time employees, seven part-time employees and two volunteer staff members. This range of employment is consistent with COSBOA’s and the FRDC’s assessment of small businesses across the Australian economy (COSBOA, 2009; FRDC, 2010).

#### **5.4. SWOT ANALYSIS**

A series of strategy analysis tools were examined in Chapter 3 of this study and for the purposes of understanding strategy and strategic planning, a SWOT analysis was undertaken with participants. The SWOT analysis framework is applicable to small and large businesses for identifying elements of strategy as argued by Lumpkin et al, (2012) and can be used as a strategic planning tool (Agaral et al., 2012; Novicevic et al., 2004).

### 5.4.1. SWOT ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A range of internal business strengths and weaknesses were identified from participant feedback organised according to their potential strategic planning needs. Table 8 breaks down strategic planning needs in terms of internal business strengths and weaknesses.

Table 8

*SWOT Analysis - Internal Strategic Planning Categories*

<b><i>Strengths</i></b>	
Owner Focussed:	Commitment, quota ownership, and quality product.
Business Capital:	Business infrastructure.
Professional Development:	Skilled crew, industry knowledge and business skills.
Family:	Family commitment.
Other:	Sustainable environment.
<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b>	
Owner Focussed:	Lack of business skills.
Business Capital:	Access to quota and stock levels.
Professional Development:	Ability to change fisheries regulation, time poor and need for skilled crew.
Employment:	Availability of crew.
Other:	Personal health.

Source: Interviewee Feedback

Participants identified ‘*Professional Development*’ as strength in terms of employing and training skilled crew, possessing industry knowledge and general business skills to engage with their specific markets. This is consistent with the use of strategic planning as a way to manage change within the market (Bhide, 1994; Campbell et al., 2010; Patnaik, 2012). The ranges of strengths identified by participants while limited to this study suggests commercial fishing micro-businesses have the capacity to plan but are not doing so at this stage.

Table 8 also contains two elements relating to the family business framework namely owner and family commitment. The identification of owner commitment to the business by participants has been the focus of research literature relating to the role of the family business founder (Erdem & Erdem, 2011; Kelly et al., 2000); succession planning (Laakkonen & Kansikas, 2011); and overall management commitment (Lussier & Sonfield, 2009). The

overall family theme amongst participants is also consistent with Craig and Moores (2009) view that the family business structure is a significant not only regionally but nationally and internationally.

In terms of weaknesses participants identified a range of internal business issues where it was acknowledged that owners lacked business skills, as outlined in Table 8. Moreover, that participants were seeking professional development in relation to influencing changes to fisheries regulation and a need to up-skill crew. Identifying these deficits reflect the role of the micro-business owner as conceptualised by Kelly et al. (2000). The weaknesses identified by participants partially support the argument by Erdem and Erdem (2011) and FBA (2013b) that small business owners need to track their business needs and those of the family. Participants did not identify family as a weakness thereby suggesting that in this study sample family involvement in the micro-business is a positive outcome.

#### **5.4.2. SWOT ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

Participants identified three broad areas of potential market opportunities and threats. Table 9 presents these findings and suggest that commercial fishing micro-businesses do not foresee many business opportunities but can readily identify a range of market and regulatory threats.

In the context of this study, participants identified three broad areas of potential expansion requiring investment in their business to succeed which supports the findings of Nadim and Lussier (2012) that the customer and community link is critical to the ongoing viability of the small business. These findings also suggest that a reason why commercial fishing micro-businesses do not use strategy or strategic planning are limited by the multiple external threats.



Table 9

*SWOT Analysis - External Strategic Planning Categories*

<b><i>Opportunities</i></b>	
Business Opportunities:	Business diversification, market and online development.
<b><i>Threats</i></b>	
Market Conditions:	Market volatility and lack of stability.
Threats to Commercial Fishing (can be influenced directly and indirectly by legislation):	Increased fishing effort, imports and recreational fishing effort.
Regulation (red tape):	Reactive to fisheries issues and fisheries regulation.
Regulation (green tape):	Marine parks.
Other:	Resources sector and weather.

Source: Interviewee Feedback

The findings in Table 9 provide support for the argument that commercial fishing micro-businesses are focussed on addressing market and regulatory issues above other business matters including strategy and strategic planning. The trend in the data provided by participants suggests that micro-businesses in the Australian commercial fishing industry are facing challenges they may have no capacity to influence irrespective of any strategy or strategic planning they may undertake. This finding is consistent with arguments posed Monahan et al. (2011) and Sen (2011) that changing government policy is difficult.

## **5.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study was guided by a series of questions relating to strategy and strategic planning. A series of factors potentially influencing strategy derived from the responses provided by participants are detailed in Table 10.

Table 10

*Factors Influencing Strategy - Based on Participant Feedback*

<b>Research Questions (RQ)</b>	<b>Factors underpinning RQ.1.</b>
RQ.1. What strategy factors do commercial micro-fishing businesses link to sustainability and growth in the sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family business structure a way to secure longevity in the industry.</li> <li>• Inter-generational nature of micro-businesses possibly linked with sustainability.</li> </ul>
	<b>Factors not supporting RQ.1.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the family business to provide a lifestyle leaving no capacity to focus on strategy.</li> </ul>
RQ.2. In what ways do commercial fisher micro-businesses apply strategy to support the sustainability and growth of their businesses in the sector?	<b>Factors underpinning RQ.2.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of business or purchase of new vessels.</li> <li>• Identified external issues impacting their business, such as regulation and noted inability to influence those external factors.</li> <li>• Plan B identified in case the business fails.</li> </ul>
	<b>Factors not supporting RQ.2.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No pathway to growth identified by participants.</li> <li>• Surviving over a 12 month enough to satisfy business owner.</li> <li>• Minimising business costs to avoid losing the business.</li> <li>• Decision-making approaches identified in this study reliant on instinct or informal networks.</li> </ul>

In terms of RQ1 the primary factors supporting that may link sustainability or growth were sourced amongst the family business structure of commercial fishing micro-businesses and the inter-generational nature of firms in the seafood sector. Participants did not set strategy in the context of a goal or vision for the micro-business in either an emergent way Farjoun (2002) and Mirabeau and Maquire (2013) or in a deliberate way as argued by Hanna (2011) and Wiesner and Millett (2012). If the family business is used to secure a certain lifestyle this could be construed as a goal in broad terms but this could not be inferred from the data in this study.

In relation to RQ2 commercial fishing micro-businesses have cited business expansion, purchase of new capital, a capacity to understand macro-level issues impacting their businesses and an alternative income source should the business fail which is consistent with Stefanovic and Milosevic (2012) who argued that strategy is positioning the firm to deal with the business environment. These factors could be part of an overall strategy but this was not

articulated by participants. However, participants provided no strategic pathway but did note that survival was critical to them. Some participants indicated a strategy to minimise costs by selling assets which may limit business growth. Finally, participants outlined their decision-making approach as reliant on instinct and informal networks. This is contrary to strategy literature noted by Dahlmann and Brammer (2011), Kraus et al. (2006) and Phillips (2011) who argue that improving firm performance or sustaining or growing the business is reliant on improving performance.

A series of factors potentially influencing strategic planning derived from the responses provided by participants are noted in Table 11.

Table 11

*Factors Influencing Strategic Planning - Based on Participant Feedback*

<b>Research Questions (RQ)</b>	<b>Factors underpinning RQ.3.</b>
RQ.3. What factors impact how strategic planning is executed within the Australian commercial fishing micro-business sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased work effort.</li> <li>• Involving family or friends in the business.</li> <li>• Transitioning ownership.</li> <li>• Infrastructure upgrades.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Factors not supporting RQ.3.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of documentation regarding planning.</li> <li>• No evidence informal planning.</li> <li>• No evidence of family or employees involved in planning.</li> </ul>
RQ.4. In what ways do commercial fisher micro-businesses apply strategic planning to support the survival and growth of their businesses?	<p><b>Factors underpinning RQ.4.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some evidence of succession planning.</li> <li>• Revenue planning identified.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Factors not supporting RQ.4.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited data on whether participants were formally planning.</li> </ul>

In both strategy and strategic planning terms participants did not explicitly provide information on these processes. Tables 10 and 11 suggest that micro-businesses could develop strategy or strategic plans but the data to support this is not available.

## **5.6. RESRESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Research objectives were set as part of the research process in order to fully explore strategy and strategic planning at the commercial fishing micro-business level. The first research objective was - *To identify drivers that inhibit the use of strategy and strategic planning among members of the commercial fisher micro-businesses sector.* Utilising the SWOT analysis a series of factors that could inhibit strategy or strategic planning included: (1) lack of business skills, (2) ability to change fisheries regulation and (3) time poor.

Participants were asked to identify short, medium and long-term issues within their businesses with regulation being a common issue over the three time frames. A potential set of underlying regulatory issues included: (1) delays in introducing management plans, (2) potential changes to quota levels, (3) compliance with fisheries management rules, (4) security of access to the fishery, (5) unclear fisheries management rules, (6) conservation compliance and (7) assurance from government that fisheries practice is best practice.

The second research objective was - *To identify the ways in which commercial fishing micro-businesses apply strategy and strategic planning as part of the overall survival and growth of their businesses.* Using the SWOT analysis data to determine if commercial fishing micro-businesses (1) no evidence of documentation regarding planning, (2) no evidence informal planning, (3) no evidence of family or employees involved in planning and (4) limited data on whether participants were formally planning.

## **5.7. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY**

The use of strategy, 2009) \and in turn, strategic planning is linked to growth-oriented organisations (Mazzarol et al., 2009; Smart & Conant, 2011). Research literature also suggests that organisations should consider developing formal plans to ensure that profits and growth are realised to underpin the longevity of the business (Bhide, 1994; Douglas et al., 2010).

The purpose of this study was not to test the validity or generalisability of strategic management theories but to explore their capacity to help understand strategy and strategic planning constructs amongst commercial fishing micro-businesses.

### **5.7.1. CLASSICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Design School is differentiated from the Planning and Positioning Schools insofar as the CEO/owner develops the organisation's strategy (Hsu, 2011). The Planning (Gibson & Cassar, 2002) and Positioning (McKechnie et al., 2008) Schools are not dependant on the CEO/owner but take the perspective that planning and coordination and understanding of the external business environment. Feedback from participants under the sub-themes titled, '*Elements of a Plan*', and '*Identification of a Formal Plan*' it could not be determined if planning was taking place amongst micro-businesses in this study. This suggests the classical framework provides little insights into the operations of commercial fishing micro-businesses in the context of this study.

### **5.7.2. ENVIRONMENT / CONTINGENCY FRAMEWORK**

The Power and Culture frameworks represent the use of power and influence versus developing strategy in the context of the organisation's philosophy or cultural setting (Haynes & Hillman, 2010; Jelenc, 2009; Hoffman, 2007). The Power framework focusses on strategy developed through the influence and control of a Board or through its CEO (Haynes & Hillman, 2010). This theoretical perspective was not reflected amongst issues raised by participants in this study. However, the family nature of the commercial fishing micro-businesses in this study suggests that culture may play a critical role in how these businesses approach strategy. The extent to which culture may underpin strategy or strategic planning could not be determined as the internal views of family members is unknown. This is contrary to Hoffman's (2007) assessment that cultural difference may impact on strategy because there are differences within firms.

### **5.7.3. NEO-CLASSICAL / COMPETITIVE FRAMEWORK**

Resource-based framework is focused on how for resources are used to achieve strategic outcomes as the organisation matures (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003). In this study strategy and strategic planning is a not a key function of commercial fishing micro-businesses and the applicability of a resource based view has limited applicability in this instance. The Competition School has been linked to models such a Porter's five forces paradigm. Participants indicated that their informal decision-making processes based on advice from older commercial fisher or by participating in industry groups which is consistent with understanding Porter's 'rivalry amongst industry operators' (Porter, 1979). The Entrepreneurial School argues that individual entrepreneurs develop strategy resides with a single person and not developed through others (Companys & McMullen, 2007; Ireland et al., 2001). This could not be examined in this study as the strategy was not a key business driver for commercial fishers.

### **5.7.4. POST-CLASSICAL / CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORK**

The Learning School theory is based in the learning of individuals within the organisation and recognises (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009). The Emergence School extends the Learning School perspective by examining the capacity of groups within the organisation to effect change (French, 2009; Stacey, 2001). These strategy theories assume individuals have the knowledge, skills or abilities to help create strategy or engage in strategic planning. This is similarly true for the Cognitive School of strategic management where the focus of the theory is how managers process strategic thinking (Tikkanen et al., 2005). The focus of this study was to explore the use of strategy and strategic planning within commercial fishing micro-businesses.

The strategic management frameworks provide multiple perspectives on understanding strategy in the business context. For the purposes of this study the strategy frameworks proposed by French (2009) and Jelenc (2009) are one way to organise the various strategy paradigms or schools. Each school offers some insights into how micro-businesses can develop strategy but each has a set of limitations or assumptions regarding the capacity of

business to develop strategy. The applicability of these theories to the micro-business and how the business owner develops strategy was difficult to assess as the focus was not to test theory but explore the manifest use (or lack of use) of strategy or strategic planning.

## **5.8. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

The research process has provided considerable insights into the Australian commercial fishing industry and specifically the issues facing micro-businesses. The overall finding suggests that amongst the participant's strategy and strategic planning were not identified as priority issues. The range of issues identified by commercial fishing micro-businesses suggest a market environment that poses obstacles to growth through unnecessary regulatory compliance; green tape impacts that may close significant parts of domestic fisheries through MPAs; and the instability of export markets. These issues alone would be enough to divert the attention of commercial fishing micro-businesses away from strategy and strategic planning.

The study was exploratory and the most notable themes identified in the research process were the importance of the family unit, the impact of regulation on commercial fishing businesses, commercial fishing culture, developing a new strategic management theory for the micro-business sector, industry associations and fisheries management.

### **5.8.1. FAMILY BUSINESS STRUCTURE**

The family business framework is dominant amongst commercial fishing micro-businesses in this study. A number of issues could be interacting to limit the capacity of micro-business apply strategy and thereby achieving growth. Are there differences in the capacity of family structured commercial fishing micro-businesses to undertake strategy or strategic planning compared to non-family operated firms? Liu et al. (2010) provide a framework to address the issue of capacity with respect to why micro-businesses might not engage in strategy or strategic planning. The institutions that interact with the small business may be critical to the

growth or stagnation of firms (e.g. Liu et al., 2010; COAG, 2012) in a given market and government is a key institution in the Australian commercial fishing industry and in the context of this study may be a key reason for a lack of strategy and planning amongst these micro-businesses. If firms are fixated in responding to regulation the time and effort required to engage in developing goals and a vision for the business is possibly less likely to occur.

### **5.8.2. REGULATORY IMPACT**

The other key theme noted by participants was the impact of regulation, both green and red tape on their business operations. Participants identified regulation as a short, medium and long-term issue for their business. They also noted regulation a key threat facing business. This suggests that there may be challenges for government in how to draft regulation that does not impose constant challenges to the operations of small business. This may be a product of government being so far removed from the reality of business operations that the development of fisheries regulation has led to a constant business threat facing commercial fishing micro-businesses. There may also be an argument that government should not be concerned with the business skills amongst any sector they regulate as it is a risk taken by all businesses to operate in a given marketplace.

### **5.8.3. INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS**

Chapter 2 noted that Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses are represented by industry associations. These organisations do not specially focus on business management matters for their members (QSIA, 2013; SIV, 2013; WAFIC, 2013). Industry bodies focus on broader, industry level issues for example the promotion of wild caught seafood or the provision of subsidised training (QSIA, 2013). If a program were developed industry associations would need to find a training mechanism to deliver programs and would face issues including:

- Geographic Issues: States like Queensland and Western Australia pose considerable geographic costs in terms of training delivery, travel and trainer costs.



- Responsibility: Do industry peak bodies have a role in the development of member training and in turn, assume a degree of responsibility for the viability of their members businesses? Is training fully sponsored or do members pay to access the training?
- Measuring Success: How could the success of planning be tracked amongst participating micro-businesses and what are the metrics by which success are judged?

#### **5.8.4. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

Interviewees noted that legislation and regulation were key issues and impediments to the viability of their operations. It was suggested that legislation impeded business operations in terms of:

- Time taken to respond to government requests;
- Fear of new regulation;
- Fear of changes to existing regulation;
- An inability to properly develop foreign market access for seafood; and
- A constantly changing regulatory environment and the business insecurity that this creates.

While commercial fishing micro-businesses identified regulation as a key threat there was no pathway to deal with the impact of changing legislation. Few participants suggested that their industry associations had a role in mitigating the impact of regulation on industry. There may be a possibility that government needs to consider its engagement process with commercial fishing micro-businesses. This change in engagement could include developing a more detailed underrating of the drivers and challenges facing micro-businesses.

#### **5.9. LIMITATIONS**

As outlined in Chapter 1, this research study was focussed on Australian commercial fishing micro-businesses. The results are limited to the participating businesses and as a consequence care must be taken in generalising beyond this group of micro-businesses. On the other hand this study overcomes this by the use of industry experts and the application of

a qualitative research approach allowing participants to provide the study with their in-depth thinking regarding issues within their industry.

## **5.10. FURTHER RESEARCH**

In conclusion, strategy in the commercial fishing industry does exist but at a very informal level and is reactive in nature. There is an opportunity for industry to work more effectively and perhaps capitalise on the benefits of developing strategy. The participants for the most part were well aware of important strategic issues concerning their business and industry. This was clearly demonstrated in their knowledge of their opportunities and threats for example. But they appear to be ill equipped to respond to opportunities or threats in their markets and as a direct result of the impost created by fisheries and environmental legislation.

The predominant strategic approach identified in this study was informal or ad hoc. It could be recommended that formal approaches be applied more explicitly and appropriately funded industry bodies support these micro-businesses. The uncertainty that government regulation plays in the industry seems to affect the thinking and operations of commercial fishing micro-business and could be described as culpable. There are obvious needs for regulation and a more consistent and fair approach is needed to support this industry and the various relevant stakeholders.

Finally, the industry while mature and in many ways the last of the hunter gathers does need to apply more formal approaches to their strategic thinking. Leading, managing their people, structuring their businesses and above all applying strategy and strategic thinking to their activities is not an impossibility. Participants in this study clearly demonstrated an understanding of the internal and external business and legislative issues facing their firms. Part of the challenge facing commercial fishing micro-businesses is the hunter mentality, these firms understand their issues but how to address them using strategy is absent from this industry's thinking.

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## **APPENDIX 1 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Participant Information Interview**



**Research Project Title:** Exploring Strategy and Strategic Planning within Australian Commercial Fisher Micro-Businesses

#### **Invitation**

You are invited to participate in a study investigating how wild harvest fisher small businesses use strategic thinking and planning in their operations. The study is being conducted by Eric Perez from the Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) under the supervision of Dr John Whiteoak, Faculty of Business, University of the Sunshine Coast (USC). The study is supported by funding through the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre's (Australian Seafood CRC) Seafood CRC MSc Scholarship.

#### **1. What is the study about?**

The purpose of the study is to explore how wild harvest fisher small businesses use strategic thinking and planning.

#### **2. Why have I been invited to participate in this study? Do I have to take part?**

As a commercial fisher operating a small business, your input and ideas in this area are critical to better understand how wild harvest fisher businesses take on strategy and strategic planning.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. While I would be pleased to have you participate I respect your right to decline without penalty or need to explain your reasons. This also means that any data collected from you will not be included in the research process.

#### **3. What does this study involve?**

Your involvement will be required for a 1 hour face to face interview. The session will be recorded on an audio system to assist the researcher analyse your responses. Your individual responses will not be linked to you personally to ensure your anonymity. If you choose to take part in the interview the researcher will contact you by phone or email to arrange a suitable time and venue for the interview.

#### **4. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

All information about your participation will be kept confidential with paper data stored in a lockable cabinet and electronic material stored in a password protected file in the possession of the researcher and accessible by Dr John Whiteoak alone. You will not be identified in the final thesis or any subsequent publications.

## 5. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The research will be published in mid-2013. A copy of the paper will be provided to all interviewees via email or by hard copy if requested. The researcher will contact each participant once the study has been published to discuss its results and any additional research efforts that may stem from the study.

## 6. What if I require further information?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Eric Perez on phone: (07) 3262 6855, mobile: 0414 841 532 or email [eperez@qsia.com.au](mailto:eperez@qsia.com.au) or Dr John Whiteoak on (07) 54594809 or email: [Whiteoak@usc.edu.au](mailto:Whiteoak@usc.edu.au). We would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

## 7. What if I have a complaint or concerns?

This study has been endorsed by the Australian Seafood CRC and the University of the Sunshine Coast, Faculty of Business. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study please contact Mr Greg Kiorgaard, Research Ethics Officer on phone: (07) 5459 4574 or email: [humanethics@usc.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@usc.edu.au) within the USC's Office of Research.

## 8. Researchers

Principal Researcher: Eric Perez *BCom, BBSc*  
Organisation: Queensland Seafood Industry Association  
Contact Numbers: (07) 3262 6855  
0414 841 532  
Email: [eperez@qsia.com.au](mailto:eperez@qsia.com.au)

Research Supervisor: Dr John Whiteoak  
Organisation: University of the Sunshine Coast  
Contact Numbers: (07) 54594809  
Email: [Whiteoak@usc.edu.au](mailto:Whiteoak@usc.edu.au)

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form. This information sheet is for you to keep.

On behalf of the University of the Sunshine Coast and the research team thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

**APPENDIX 2  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Consent for Participation  
Interview**



**Research Project Title:** Exploring Strategy and Strategic Planning within Australian Commercial Fisher Micro-Businesses

1. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
2. I have been given a copy of the participant information sheet.

Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

For further information, please contact: Eric Perez on phone: (07) 3262 6855, mobile: 0414 841 532 or email [eperez@qsia.com.au](mailto:eperez@qsia.com.au)

**APPENDIX 3  
DEMOGRAPHICS**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Businesses</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years worked in the industry</b>	<b>Fisher Category</b>
1	1	M	72	6	Domestic, Sole Proprietor
2	2	M	46	30	Exporter, Sole Proprietor
3	3	M	66	30	Exporter, Sole Proprietor
4	4	M	44	16	Exporter, Partnership
5*	5	M	23	1	Exporter, Partnership
6*		F	23	1	Exporter, Partnership
7	6	M	43	20	Exporter, Sole Proprietor
8	7	M	47	30	Exporter, Sole Proprietor
9	8	M	40	25	Domestic Partnership
10	9	M	39	27	Domestic Partnership
11**	10	M	53	38	Domestic Partnership
12**		F	50	30	Domestic Partnership
13	11	F	45	17	Domestic Partnership
14	12	F	54	30	Domestic Partnership
15	13	M	27	14	Domestic, Sole Proprietor Cooperative Member
16	14	M	40	23	Domestic, Sole Proprietor Cooperative Member
17	15	M	45	20	Domestic, Sole Proprietor Cooperative Member
18	16	M	53	38	Domestic, Sole Proprietor Cooperative Member

Notes: 5\*, 6\*, 11\*\* and 12\*\* are Interviewees 5a, 5b, 10a and 10b respectively.

**APPENDIX 3  
DEMOGRAPHICS – CONTINUED**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
1	Medical degree, Coxswains, Marine Certificate and MED 3	1 part-time (2-3 days per week)
2	High school certificate, Marine Certificate and MED 2	4 part-time (2-3 days per week)
3	High School certificate, Marine Certificate and MED 4	3 full-time
4	High School certificate, Certificate in Fitting and Turning and MED 2	No employees
5*	High School certificate and Coxswains	No employees
6*	High School certificate, Certificate 3 in Business Administration and Tertiary studies	No employees
7	High School certificate and Coxswains	1 part-time (2-3 days per week)
8	High School certificate, MED 2 and Master 5	3 full-time employees (2 deckies and 1 bookkeeper)
9	High school certificate, Coxswain and Certificate in Plumbing	Volunteer
10	Minimal fishing qualifications, on the job learning from family members	No employees
11**	High School and Master 5	1 part-time (Daughter) and Volunteer, Parent
12**	High School	1 part-time (Daughter) and Volunteer, Parent
13	High School certificate and Certificate 4 Training and Development	1 full-time
14	High School	2 full-time

**APPENDIX 3  
DEMOGRAPHICS – CONTINUED**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
15	High School, Skipper 2, MED 2 and Master 5	1 full-time, 1 part-time
16	High School and Master 5	1 full-time, 1 part-time
17	High school, Master 5 and Skippers ticket and electrician apprenticeship	No employees
18	Class V and MED and safe food handling	3 full-time

Notes: 5\*, 6\*, 11\*\* and 12\*\* are Interviewees 5a, 5b, 10a and 10b respectively.

**APPENDIX 3  
DEMOGRAPHICS – CONTINUED**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Primary fishery</b>	<b>Secondary fishery</b>
1	Line	-
2	Rock Lobster	Scaelfish and Giant Crab
3	Rock Lobster	Garfish
4	Rock Lobster	-
5	Sea Urchin	Periwinkle
6	Sea Urchin	Periwinkle
7	Sea Urchin	Periwinkle and Commonwealth license
8	Crayfish	Shark and dropline
9	Crab	Reef Fish
10	Crab	Spanish Mackerel or Coral Reef Finfish
11	Crab	Spanish Mackerel
12	Crab	Spanish Mackerel
13	Prawn, Bugs and Scallops	-
14	Prawn, Bugs and Scallops	-
15	Longline	Lobster
16	Lobster and Fish	-
17	Kingfish, Trag, Jewfish, Snapper and Cod.	-
18	Prawn	Fish

Notes: 5\*, 6\*, 11\*\* and 12\*\* are Interviewees 5a, 5b, 10a and 10b respectively.

## APPENDIX 4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: COMMERCIAL FISHER

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



**Research Project Title:** Exploring Strategic Thinking and Planning within Australian Wild Capture Fisheries

Welcome...

1. Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate a small business?
2. What are your broad aspirations for the business for 2013? What will you measure to track your progress?
3. Can you/will you do anything differently?
4. What capabilities are necessary to build and maintain to your business?
5. What systems do think are necessary to operate to build and maintain your businesses key capabilities?
6. Who is your primary customer?
7. Who were your best customers? Can you find more of them?
8. Who do you feel are the key stakeholders influencing your business?
9. Who are your most valuable suppliers? Are there some you stop doing business with?
10. What are the problems facing your business in the short term (1-6 months), medium term (12 to 24 months) and long term (beyond 24 months)?
11. In terms of the business, what were your biggest frustrations in 2011/12 financial year and what did you do about them?

End of Questions...Interviewee thanked.

Activity... A SWOT - an acronym for Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats analysis is a tool designed to assist businesses. The S Strengths and WeaknessesW are internal factors that businesses have some control over. The O Opportunities and ThreatsT is the external business environment (your market) and where businesses have little to no control over.

12. I would like you to identify 3-5 business strengths?
13. I would also like you to identify 3-5 business weaknesses?
14. Could you please identify 3-5 business opportunities?
15. Could you identify 3-5 threats to the business?

**Comment [KC1]:** Differently from what? Last /previous years? Past operational methods?

**Comment [KC2]:** You might need to define what capabilities means

**Comment [KC3]:** Were you menaing Q6 to be current tense and Q7 to be past tense?

**Comment [KC4]:** For Q12-15 do you want the TOP 3-5 or any SWOT?



## APPENDIX 5 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: SEAFOOD INDUSTRY RESEARCHER

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



Research Project Title: Exploring Strategic Thinking and Planning within Australian Wild Capture Fisheries

Welcome...

1. Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate a small business?
2. What are your broad aspirations for the business for 2013? What will you measure to track your progress?
3. Can you/will you do anything differently?
4. What capabilities are necessary to build and maintain to your business?
5. What systems do think are necessary to operate to build and maintain your businesses key capabilities?
6. Who is your primary customer?
7. Who were your best customers? Can you find more of them?
8. Who do you feel are the key stakeholders influencing your business?

9. Who are your most valuable suppliers? Are there some you stopped doing business with?

10. What are the problems facing your business in the short term (1-6 months), medium term (12 to 24 months) and long term (beyond 24 months)?

11. In terms of the business, what were your biggest frustrations in 2011/12 financial year and what did you do about them?

End of Questions... Interviewee thanked.

Activity... A SWOT - an acronym for Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats analysis is a tool designed to assist businesses. The SW are internal factors that businesses have some control over. The OT is the external business environment (your market) and where businesses have little to no control over.

12. I would like you to identify 3-5 business strengths?
13. I would also like you to identify 3-5 business weaknesses?
14. Could you please identify 3-5 business opportunities?
15. Could you identify 3-5 threats to the business?

- Comment [mar722 1]:** Nice one. I don't have a list of your objectives and goals. I assume you can attribute each question below to an objective.
- Comment [mar722 2]:** Really nice, but your ethics clearance will probably ask that you provide a little background information, discuss how the results will be used, and then give your details in case people panic and want to contact you... let me know if you need an example..
- Comment [mar722 3]:** Might need to be a bit more specific here ; differently as a result of q2??
- Comment [mar722 4]:** Some fishers will have no idea what to answer here. You may need to give them some ideas.
- Comment [mar722 5]:** ditto
- Comment [mar722 6]:** see q9 comment. Same here I think. To what level do you want the response? Actual names? The main thing is to know EXACTLY what you are going to do with the responses so that you know exactly what sort of data format you need. You wont be able to go back and ask them. I suspect you want to know the TYPE of customer??
- Comment [mar722 7]:** when? Past tense only?
- Comment [mar722 8]:** What will you do if the answer is yes - will you want them to expand - or do you really want to know why they are not finding them perhaps? Or there are not enough there or .... i.e. do you have an objective that can be better addressed?
- Comment [mar722 9]:** I cant tell whether you really want names addresses and telephone numbers here, or just something vague. Easier for a reviewer (me) to have the objectives nearby to tell whether this is a useful question or not. I cant imagine what you would do with detailed information, which makes me think that you need categorical responses?
- Comment [mar722 10]:** You may want to know why?
- Comment [mar722 11]:** Some people can forget the question if it has three parts to it. You might be best to separate this out into 3 new questions if you really need them to answer each bit.
- Comment [mar722 12]:** These are short and sweet and likely to give you heaps of data. The main thing is that you can analyse them well. I am sure yo... [1]
- Comment [mar722 13]:** Why aren't these part of the survey?
- Comment [mar722 14]:** They may need more guidance than this. Eg are you looking at personal strengths as part of the business? What other sorts of strengths?

## APPENDIX 6 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Interview Questions



**Research Project Title:** Exploring Strategy and Strategic Planning within Australian Commercial Fisher Micro-Businesses

Welcome...



1. Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate a small business?
2. What are your broad aspirations for the business for 2013? What will you measure to track your progress?
3. Can you/will you do anything differently from last year?
4. What are necessary elements to build and maintain the business?
5. Who is your primary customer?
6. Who are your best customers? Can you find more of them?
7. What process or approach do you take when making decisions within the business?
8. In terms of decision-making where do you draw information to make your decisions?
9. Who do you feel are the key stakeholders influencing your business?
10. What are the issues facing your business in the short term (1-6 months)?
11. What are the issues facing your business in the medium term (12 to 24 months)?
12. What are the issues facing your business in the long term (beyond 24 months)?

Activity... A SWOT - an acronym for Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats analysis is a tool designed to assist businesses. The Strengths and Weaknesses are internal factors that businesses have some control over. The Opportunities and Threats is the external business environment (your market) and where businesses have little to no control over. Could you please identify?


























13. Business strengths.
14. Business weaknesses.
15. Business opportunities.
16. Business threats.

End of Questions...Interviewee thanked.




























**APPENDIX 7  
INITIAL CODES**

	Use of a Plan		
			Identification of a Formal Plan
			Elements of a Plan
	SWOT		
			Weaknesses
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

**APPENDIX 7  
INITIAL CODES – CONTINUED**

	Strategy Orientation		
			Survival Orientation
			Status Quo
			Growth Orientation
	Stakeholders		
			Internal
			
			
			
			Family
			Employee
			Business Partner
			External
			
			
			
			Industry Associations
			Fisheries Management
			Buyer
	Reason for being a commercial fisher		
			Lifestyle Choice
			Family Business
	Issues 3 (Long-Term)		
			Stable Market
			Over Regulation
			Crew availability
			Climate Change
			Changing Fishery
			Changes to Regulation
			Business Stability
			Access to fishery

**APPENDIX 7  
INITIAL CODES – CONTINUED**

	Issues 2 (Medium-Term)		
			Regulation Review
			Poor Market Development
			Over Regulation
			Effort Shift
			Crew Training
			Climate Change
			Business Stability
			Business Growth
			Access to fishery
	Issues 1 (Short-Term)		
			Vessel costs
			Regulatory Review
			Poor Market Development
			Over Regulation
			Effort Shift
			Access to fishery
	Decision Making Approach		
			Situational Context
			Risk Taking
			Market Data
			Joint Approach
			Gut Instinct
			Combination
	Business Management		
			Plan B
			Minimising Business Costs
			Growth of the Business

## APPENDIX 8 THEMES

Themes	Sub-Theme / Codes	Most Identified Themes
Family Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family</li> </ul>
Business Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth of the Business</li> <li>• Minimising Business Costs</li> <li>• Plan B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth of the business</li> </ul>
Strategy Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth Orientation</li> <li>• Status Quo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth orientation</li> </ul>
Use of a Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of a Plan</li> <li>• Identification of a Formal Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of a plan</li> </ul>
Decision-Making Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combination (all approaches)</li> <li>• Gut Instinct</li> <li>• Joint Approach (business partner)</li> <li>• Market Data</li> <li>• Risk Taking</li> <li>• Situational Context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gut instinct</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 9**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 1**  
**THURSDAY 8 AUGUST, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Initially I'd like to ask you why did you choose the seafood industry to operate a small business.
Interviewee 1:	Well, I've always been interested in the seafood industry and I like fishing, and I wanted to see how it would go with a commercial fishing business.
Eric Perez:	Okay, thank you. Question two, what are your broad aspirations for your business into 2013 and, as a corollary to that question what will you measure to track your progress against that?
Interviewee 1:	Well, I'd like the business to be profitable into 2013 and in terms of tracking that, well, it's essentially looking at what your operating costs are, what your wages are and the cost of maintenance, gear replacements etc, all the essential operating costs of the boat, as opposed to the money that is made by selling the fish that's caught.
Eric Perez:	In terms of comparing 2012 to last year, to 2011, have you done anything differently from that year to this year, in terms of the business?
Interviewee 1:	I think 2012 there's been more focus on fishing. The business has been interrupted because of my involvement with the seafood industry association and also still practicing medicine up until the middle of 2011 but in a part-time capacity. So the ability of the - or the efficiency of the business to operate effectively has been compromised up until this last 12 months when there's been a distinct effort to improve the output and work the boat more efficiently, with a view to increasing income and trying to have a positive outcome in terms of the earnings from the business.
Eric Perez:	Alright, thank you. A two part question here. What do you believe are the necessary elements to build the business and what do you feel are the necessary elements to maintain your business? So start off with the building of the business, firstly.
Interviewee 1:	Well, I think building of the business means that one has to be working as often as possible. You've got to remember that in this particular line fishery that I'm in, I operate out of a particular location and it's all open water. So we're very much dictated to by the weather in terms of when we can operate.  There are other variables as well, because we work in the East Australian Current. So it's important for me to be very cognisant of weather windows and get an appreciation of what the current might be like to allow me to effectively operate in that environment.
Eric Perez:	Okay, thank you for that. The next question is who is your primary customer?
Interviewee 1:	Primary customers are a central fish market, because the product that I catch attracts a much better price interstate as a general rule than what it does locally.

Interviewee 1:	However, we do catch a variety of other product, other fish, some of which is sold locally here, and some - particularly the high end product - I sell directly to a high-end restaurant.
Eric Perez:	I guess the next question is how would you describe your best customers and how can you find more of them?
Interviewee 1:	Product and you get the best price for it by a direct sale. The issue there is that they'll only take small amounts. So one has to be realistic. With large catches the potential then is that you have to spend a lot of time going to multiple, different locations to sell your product. That situation's essentially impractical, so one has to I suppose select where the product will go dependent on volume, dependent on what prices you can get, either locally or by sending it interstate, and determine how you're going to ship your product in that respect.
Eric Perez:	Who do you feel the key stakeholders are influencing your business at this point in time?
Interviewee 1:	Well, I think obviously Fisheries Management would be the major stakeholder impacting on the business because we operate under fishery regulations, I suppose. We're also subject to a lot of other so-called stakeholders, I suppose, in terms of how it might impact on our operating costs. But the actual conduct of the business is very dependent on Fisheries Management.
Eric Perez:	In terms of potential issues or problems facing your business, can you outlined any that you see in what we might call the short-term between now and the next six months?
Interviewee 1:	Well, one I alluded to before and that was the decision by Australian Fisheries Management Authority as to whether they will close one or two of the seamounts that we've been accessing in the Commonwealth Fisheries. That potentially could have a very substantial impact on our ability to catch blue-eye trevalla out on the seamounts. If they're closed down we've virtually got nowhere else to go.  So that would have potentially a significant impact on the business. It would restrict our operations to the area closer and the areas that we work now and the success of the business will be dependent on the amount of product that's available there.  There's quite a lot of competition from other operators in this particular area. So the biggest issue we face there is actually being able to catch sufficient product. That's the biggest issue that this business faces, is the ability to catch sufficient product.
Eric Perez:	Okay, thank you. So I'll ask you the same question again but in the medium-term, so about 12 to 24 months out from now?
Interviewee 1:	Prediction?
Eric Perez:	Yes, please.
Interviewee 1:	Look, I think that's uncertain. My plan at this point is to continue to operate and operate more frequently. There's been a number of



Interviewee 1:	<p>interruptions, which have impacted on the business, but I think the issues I face are that we have to operate whenever the weather allows and that each time you plan a trip you have to plan it around the weather window, potential estimation for current, determine the number of days that you think you could stay out and start wanting to set a target about what you consider as being a sufficient catch to enable you to have a profitable trip, taking into account the number of days at sea, the distance you travel and the fuel you might use and any crew payments that you might have to make.</p> <p>Our bait and ice which is essentially something which is a fairly consistent cost isn't a major consideration in judging the economics of the trip. It's mainly the number of days at sea and the amount of product that you can catch.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay, and here's one in terms of, like you said, predictions. Long-term, beyond 24 months? Again, taking it from your fisheries perspective.
Interviewee 1:	<p>I think there may be some changes to Fisheries Management in that time, although I think that's probably unlikely given the speed at which they normally operate. So 24 months out I don't have any more specific plans at this point except to say that unless the business is profitable at that point in this area then we will have to consider moving elsewhere or altering the style of operation and perhaps the fish that we target.</p> <p>So there are a number of options there and it really is dependent on what happens over the next 12 months or so but thinking ahead, yeah, there are some potential options there. We might start looking at different species or think about moving to a different area.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay look, that's the conclusion to the formal question elements of what I've got here but what I'd like to try with you is an activity and to stretch your grey matter a little bit more - and, again, thank you for your time - is to look at a SWOT. Are you familiar with that acronym?
Interviewee 1:	Look at a?
Eric Perez:	SWOT.
Interviewee 1:	No.
Eric Perez:	Okay, it's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and it's an analysis tool that's designed to assist businesses. So when you're looking at strengths and weaknesses, they're the internal factors that a business has some control over, and I can give you some examples of those.
Interviewee 1:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Your opportunities and threats being those external issues in your market that you have very little control over. So for example, a strength might be your business's capabilities. You might have a lot of capital there ready to go or the internal weakness might be your financials, as an example.

Eric Perez:	So could you give me a couple of strengths that you see in your business?
Interviewee 1:	<p>Okay. Well, the infrastructure of the business is very good. It's a new boat and there's no money owing on it. So our infrastructure to establish is good. The other strength of the business is that the product that we target is a high-end product that's in very significant demand in the community. So we've got an excellent quality product. I can't see that changing. In fact, if anything it's going to be an increasing demand for this product. I think in terms of the pricing structure for the product, we're probably seeing it at its most difficult now because something like about 70 per cent or more seafood products consumed in Australia are imported, and with our high dollar then it's making it much easier for importers to be able to sell their product in Australia, making it more difficult for local primary producers to compete.</p> <p>So we're probably seeing a most difficult situation at the moment. I think if the dollar was to drop we would see an even increase in demand for our product as imported products became less competitive - oh sorry, more competitive. So good product, good infrastructure. I think they would probably be the major strengths that we've got there.</p>
Eric Perez:	You've identified some strengths there and you identified a particular threat with the Australian dollar but you look at that threat as being an external one. In terms of weaknesses, what do you see are the weaknesses in your business as it currently stands?
Interviewee 1:	<p>Yeah, I think the weaknesses is working in an area where there's a lot of other marine activity and a lot of other fishing activity, a lot of it recreational, particularly in the inshore areas. So we've got a very high-end product, say like Pearl Perch, Snapper and a variety of other reef fish, which are really in very high demand and you can get good prices for but the weakness there has been the ability to catch sufficient product because it's accessed by a lot of other people and it's a resource that's been put under considerable pressure for a long time now.</p> <p>So that's a weakness. The weakness is issues with weather, issues with current. Another weakness is the business; because we're dictated to by the weather it means that we can't work regularly. So there may be periods when you can't go to work. It could be anything up to two or three weeks if you get a bad weather pattern that persists. So that the weakness there is that I'll have trouble getting crew.</p> <p>So I can't have regular crew because the business is not profitable enough to allow me to have a permanent crew that I can pay for those periods of down time when the vessel can't go to sea.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's great. Those are those internal factors that we talked about so in terms of opportunities what do you see are some of the opportunities in the market for you?

Interviewee 1:	<p>Oh I think there are potentially a lot of opportunities. I think where we're positioned right now is quite good. I think that for the product we catch we're probably looking at getting pretty much the best prices I think that we could. I can't see any other real opportunities there at the moment other than extending the business operation essentially all the way through from not only catching fish but wholesale and potentially retail. So that would require considerably more investment and at this point in time I'm not inclined to consider that.</p> <p>But other opportunities? Look, we could look at some other species. But really I think in the area I'm operating now I've probably encompassed most of the opportunities that are there. We'd need to look at moving elsewhere along the coast to operate some of the time, to explore other opportunities there.</p>
Eric Perez:	Finally, threats, and by that I mean external threats to the business?
Interviewee 1:	<p>Oh, I think the external threats largely relate to potential impacts on your access to the fishery and to fisheries regulation. I can't see any regulation changes in the next year or two but we certainly have issues with access, as I alluded to with the Commonwealth marine park process and also the involvement of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and potentially introducing closures based on policy decisions associated with threats to sharks, which essentially is unrealistic but nevertheless often Fisheries Management decisions sometimes go that way and can be unpredictable. So I'd see that as being the major threat.</p> <p>Another major threat would be increasing involvement of other operators in the area that I work, over which I've no control. I think probably the only controlling factor there is being able to catch sufficient product. So if there's not very much around and fishermen aren't catching a lot, then particularly those that, if you like, have other financial issues. So if their working - if their returns have to take into account borrowed money for their operation, then they're going to be under more pressure to catch more product. So it's going to be more difficult for them to hang in.</p> <p>I do have a financial basis that allows me to see through some tough times, given that there's no money owing on the business. We've really just – are up for our operating costs and depreciation on the vessel and any wages that accrue. So I'm in a good position, to at least for some time, to work through periods when we're not catching a lot of product.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay. Well thank you, that ends the interview. I appreciate your time and thank you very much.
Interviewee 1:	Thanks.

**APPENDIX 10**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 2**  
**THURSDAY 30 AUGUST, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate a small business?
Interviewee 2:	Originally I started fishing because my father was a fisherman and a lot of other relatives were too and I really enjoyed fishing so I decided to get into the business along those lines at an early age.
Eric Perez:	So when you say you got into it at an early age, what process did you go through to get your first business up and running?
Interviewee 2:	We - I spent two years at the maritime college studying to help get my ticket and further knowledge in - within the industry and other industries and time at sea with other people. Then - and then to get into the business, pretty much it's almost - very - almost impossible for a young fisherman to get in without support so my parents mortgaged a house which helped me into purchasing my first boat.
Eric Perez:	What are your broad aspirations for the business in 2013?
Interviewee 2:	Just surviving. Yeah...
Eric Perez:	Just to clear that, that was survival?
Interviewee 2:	Survival.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 2:	At the moment going ahead we - industry has had a number of quota cutbacks, up to 30 per cent. When we got quota in 2000 we personally had a 50 per cent cut in our catch rate. Then since then the fishing's going along on a - cycles, up and down cycle. Because it's managed by quota we - or the department sees fit to have quota cuts for the times when the fishing's not so good. But what was the rest of that question, sorry, Eric?
Eric Perez:	Yeah, yeah, your broad aspirations for the business in 2013.
Interviewee 2:	So we...
Eric Perez:	Before, you said survival and you said the quota system. Can you just explain very - in simple terms, what you need to do to comply with the quota, what does that mean for your business?
Interviewee 2:	Yeah, to comply with quota, I think it's more probably getting access to the quota. We - in our business, in we own units which we - because we've been doing it 30 years we do own our own units which - but it's still not enough to make our business profitable. So we lease in, which we're lucky we have access to through our parents. Both our parents own quota units which we secure. We try to pay them a reasonable rate where we don't follow the market trend.  We'd sooner see them get a good price when the prices are lower and when the price - quota prices are higher they look after us by keeping more on a stable platform.  We don't tend to follow the trends of everyone else where they'll follow the market prices.

Interviewee 2:	We look right around the whole state to fish so some areas on some years will be better so we tend to follow the fish, so to speak or the areas so we don't go back to the same grounds all the time. We're fairly versatile. We do fish the whole state.
Eric Perez:	Okay so it's survival, quota. Any other aspirations? By aspirations I mean what do you feel might be something positive in the next year? So in 2013 what might be good to look forward to?
Interviewee 2:	Not a lot at the moment.
Eric Perez:	Okay, then, it's...
Interviewee 2:	<p>The markets - no, the markets are really poor at the moment. Our markets into Asia are almost halted at the moment. Our beach price, which is normally really high in August because it's a low catch month but - and the supply - demand for supply is high but at the moment we have a - quite a low price. Nearly all the boats are tied up. Until we get the border issues sorted out in Asia and some sort of government work with the regional governments to get our tariffs at a reasonable rate we're going to have issues going ahead all the time.</p> <p>A positive thing is we've had good puerulus settlement, which is the small lobsters. In the last 12 months we've had one of the best puerulus settlements we've had for 10 years but we won't see that for a number of years. But we're doing some study or research and we're seeing a lot of rock lobster. There's a pulse coming through of a size class that we'll see in the next two or three years and that's a positive.</p>
Eric Perez:	What will you measure to track your progress?
Interviewee 2:	Probably just catch rate, kilogram per effort. I noticed last year we burnt \$70,000 worth of fuel to get the same as what we did the year before with \$40,000 worth of fuel so that's a measurement we keep an eye on. We won't be doing trips when the weather's bad or the fishing's not so good because it's not worth our while. We'll just wait for a little bit better weather although we do work more than majority of other boats.
Eric Perez:	So to be clear, the metric is then fuel costs, weather and then watching a combination of those things and whether or not you take the risk of going out in bad weather and churning up more fuel for possibly not much return, is that - am I right?
Interviewee 2:	Yeah, yep, that's pretty much right unless the fish are moving. Sometimes in the deeper water the fish can move when the weather's bad and you can do better so - but, yeah, it just all hinges on costs and weather and market prices as well.
Eric Perez:	Can you/will you do anything differently from last year?
Interviewee 2:	Probably just pretty much what we said in the last one was we've decided to - like this week we've got the boat tied up. The weather's bad, the markets are bad and fishing's quiet so we just - yeah, we'll not work when it's not viable. Yeah, probably not a lot change, yeah, we probably won't change too much. We might explore using different gear, different lobster traps, maybe heavier. Might go for more steel ones as opposed to stick ones.

Eric Perez:	Is that usual for you to look at gear type or use of gear when you're off the water, so to speak?
Interviewee 2:	Well, yeah, or when we're on the water more we're always trialling different pots or traps. So we're just looking at what seems to work for different areas.
Eric Perez:	What are necessary elements to build and maintain the business?
Interviewee 2:	I think it's very important to maintain the boat well and all your fishing gear. I think that comes above everything else. If you don't have - you don't need a breakdown. If you have a breakdown, you've got to go home; it's a lost trip so it's important to maintain all that. We have a maintenance schedule that we adhere to. We'll just visually keep a lookout while we're on the fishing grounds to see what's coming up and down in the pots, what size - what class and size of fish are coming up in the pots to look forward to work in the future. Some areas you mightn't want to go back for a couple of years and other areas you might want to concentrate on.
Eric Perez:	In terms of - because we're asking here the building and maintenance, do you plan at all for buying new equipment or upgrading gear or do you do that on as-needs basis?
Interviewee 2:	Mainly on an as-needs basis. We do look into the future of new equipment that's coming out, work out when we might be able to afford it and try to purchase it if we can.  Yep and upgrading of pot licenses. So unfortunately when the prices are low the money's not there to buy up but I try to purchase more rock lobster quota units every year to - so we're not having to pay out lease and reinvest back in.
Eric Perez:	Who is your primary customer?
Interviewee 2:	We sell all our - 99 per cent of our rock lobster through a wholesaler or processor within the State and then 60 per cent of that product then is sent to Asia and the other 40 per cent distributed through South East Asia and Australia, Melbourne and Sydney and restaurants and a small amount into the US.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So in - to keep this easy your primary customer is the wholesaler that buys your product?
Interviewee 2:	Yeah. All our product is sold via processors here. We can sell some ourselves but it's - you can sell a small amount locally to fishmongers or the general public. Normally that is only done if the markets have failed overseas and you need to move your fish and the prices are low where the general public can afford them.
Eric Perez:	Who are your best customers?
Interviewee 2:	Yeah, I'm the best. Look after myself. My - do you want me to talk about that?
Eric Perez:	Yeah, yeah, please.
Interviewee 2:	I also market all our own fish. We have a processing factory with live holding tanks and pretty much 100 per cent of the fish off our boat go through that factory. Then it's distributed from there to customers.

Eric Perez:	What process or approach do you take when making decisions within the business?
Interviewee 2:	<p>Generally I'll sit down with my business partner in the boat and we will discuss trying to land the fish at the right time for - to meet the market. The price varies so much in rock lobster, it can move up and down \$10 a day per kilogram which can affect you quite a lot of you've got 1,000 kilograms on board. But generally I'll keep an eye on the lucky days in Asia and you need to be - have the fish in about four or five days before those lucky days.</p> <p>That's about when the prices are at their premium normally. Gut instinct, there's a - you can look back through your records, see when the best times were, the New Year, April's a good month, August generally and nearly all of January, the high prices. So pretty much history, past, we look back at that and try to follow the market. There was another bit - part to that, too, wasn't there?</p>
Eric Perez:	Yeah, it's what process or approach do you take when making decisions within the business. So to sum up, and see if I've got this right in my head, is that the process involves you and your partner on the boat as well as this history in the fishery as well as what the market is doing. So you combine all those things to make your sales decision in the end, it's not just one thing.
Interviewee 2:	Yeah, pretty much. The market pays between one and four different prices depending on the colour and size of the fish so - being - fish, being rock lobster so sometimes we'll target what's bringing the best price. So - and sometimes you've got to weigh that up against what is normally being - paying the better price can be harder to catch. As opposed to something that's easier to catch that you can catch much quicker, come home; unload, less expense as opposed to getting a higher price and taking longer to get it.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Now, you've just answered my next question because I was going to ask, in terms of decision-making where do you draw information to make your decisions? So you've just given me that outline there.
Interviewee 2:	Yeah. Most of the time contact your processor before you go to sea, see what the prices are, but because it's such a fickle market it can change overnight like I said.
Eric Perez:	Okay, let me throw a curly one at you. Would you - in your estimation and given your experience just in your business, would you say that most of the decisions you take in terms of selling of the product is based on mostly external considerations or internal? So your partnership, your own skills and what you've seen happen before versus the market, wholesalers and your customers? So if I could group them that way what drives you more, your internally focussed decision making or is it the external factors?
Interviewee 2:	The external factors, if it's good you can do much better but it's more internal drive. We have quota to catch, we have a certain amount of time to catch it by so it's generally try and fish when the weather's good and the fishing's good. That will keep your costs down and then -

Interviewee 2:	<p>and try to work it around when the market wants the fish. It's not that easy in our business because we work two skippers, one on - two weeks on, two weeks off, roughly. So when the boat comes in one skipper gets off, one crew gets off, the fish come off, the bait goes on the fuel goes on, the food goes on, the bedding comes off, the bedding goes on and sometimes we've left the wharf the same day, so back to sea.</p> <p>I used to work separately on my own boat. We're probably only working 130 to 150 days a year. The boat's probably worth \$450,000 and it sits around for 200 plus days a year not working. So my partner and I decided to combine our entire quota onto one boat, share all the costs and then split the income. That way it keeps all our costs down.</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>Who do you feel are the key stakeholders influencing your business? They can be, again, if we can split them up, maybe some examples of internal stakeholders versus your external. So if I could be so bold maybe the internal ones that you've identified already are you and your partner and you when you were on your own making those decisions so from an internal view of things anyone else a key stakeholder where that's concerned?</p>
Interviewee 2:	<p>Yeah, the quota holders. The majority of quota holders that we - like I said before we get a lot of our quota through our parents who also hold quota units. But a lot of this - the industry is driven by quota holders, investors in the industry but hold rock lobster quota. Then depending on the demand by industry on the quota if there's a shortage of quota in a good fishing year the quota price rises.</p>
Interviewee 2:	<p>If it's a quiet year fishing the quota prices drop off dramatically. So at the moment it's at a very uneconomical point where we - most guys that going to work at the moment break even. They wouldn't be making anything. They'd be losing money.</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>So why would you bother?</p>
Interviewee 2:	<p>Unfortunately this is the way the industry's run. At the start of a season people have to make a decision as to how much quota they want. The price, the quota price was set high at \$22 to \$25 most of the people - per kilogram. Most people leased the quota up at that and it was okay because the beach price was \$50, \$60, \$70 and now it's come back to \$35 to \$50 and general boat costs somewhere between \$15 and \$25 a kilogram to run plus the quota price on top of that.</p> <p>So it's a gamble you take unfortunately this is the way the industry's run. At the start of a season people have to make a decision as to how much quota they want. The price, the quota price was set high at \$22 to \$25 most of the people - per kilogram.</p> <p>At the start of a season or throughout the season as to how much quota you lease in at what price. We as industry need to look at a better solution, otherwise too many guys will get affected or burnt. The same with investors. It would be a better outcome for both parties to try to</p>



Interviewee 2:	keep an even price throughout the year as opposed to some years you can get quota for \$3 to \$5 a kilogram and other times you're paying \$20, \$25 a kilogram.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so that - you've covered very, very succinctly the internal stakeholders. Now, what about external?
Interviewee 2:	External, everybody seems to - external stakeholders. Nearly everyone else that's involved in the fishing industry seems to think that what they do seems to be more important than everyone else. They don't understand why maybe sometimes you didn't get a piece of paperwork in on time or haven't filled something out or haven't made that phone call or - and there's probably 200 different people you've got to keep satisfied. Years ago it was much easier. You come home, paid your bills.
Interviewee 2:	I'm guessing these 200 people are government? Is what you're talking about?
Eric Perez:	A lot of government. There's a lot of government, from surveys to the fisheries to conservation groups, marine parks, associations, meetings, processes. Everyone seems to want to have a say within your industry now whether they're involved or not.
Eric Perez:	What issues are facing your business in the short term (1-6 months)?
Interviewee 2:	The market, the overseas market and the price of quota will be affecting this industry more than anything at the moment. Until - we go to a lot of trouble to - a lot of regulations to look after our fish and our fishery. We have all these requirements when we pack them and with Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and health regulations and same on board, when your product, highly prized product goes to an overseas market where it's unpacked, put into shopping bags and smuggled across the border. With losses on the other end, mortality, which then pushes the beach price down or the over - the price being paid for your product overseas which then pushes down the price, the beach price as well so that affects everybody.
Eric Perez:	What issues are facing your business in the medium term (12-24 months)?
Interviewee 2:	I feel that this will be a problem right through. It started two years ago. My - on the processing side. My company...
Eric Perez:	You mean the issue with the foreign markets?
Interviewee 2:	With the foreign market. Ninety per cent of rock lobster goes into Asia from all different states. Until we have a trade agreement. But until our government can work out an agreement with their government that we can get the fish in legally. My company does have an agreement with another import company in Asia with - where we can shift lobsters through. It's the only agreement I think around in this state.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so you as a business, you've done something to...
Interviewee 2:	We did, yep.
Eric Perez:	...mitigate that longer term. Okay.
Interviewee 2:	We did, we looked into this and we tried very hard to get it off the ground. Because two years ago the border was what they call closed.

Interviewee 2:	All the fish had to go onto the local market, the beach price crashed to \$20, \$25 down from \$40, \$45...
Eric Perez:	So you set up this agreement two years ago?
Interviewee 2:	We set this agreement up two years ago. We tried to get it off the ground with an average price. So we tried to set a beach price at \$45. What happened was the border wasn't patrolled, the beach price went up, no one wanted to sell to us for less than what they could get from everywhere else so they were selling for \$50, \$55 and \$60 when we were stuck on \$45. So no one supported it. So some of - so that was put in hold, say, in limbo. But some of the problems we face is whilst you're trying to do a legal trade you can put the fish in legally and have all the legal paperwork but customs will still hold the fish up because they're not getting bribes and kickbacks.
Eric Perez:	This is - okay, so this is a current and medium-term...
Interviewee 2:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so can I...
Interviewee 2:	Then long-term, because going back to the long-term, this will not be - it will go along for a while good then it will pick up again in a few months. It will go well for a few months then they'll clamp down again. All the processors' tanks fill up here because they can't get the fish in, then the beach price drops. This will be ongoing until something's sorted out.
Eric Perez:	So that's a long-term issue as well, then, yep.
Interviewee 2:	It's massive. Other things, we need to get good puerulus settlement. We also - there's a push for more marine parks which...
Eric Perez:	In the next few years?
Interviewee 2:	Well, yeah, we're hoping that in State that they are going to - we already have more marine parks than anybody else. Australia has 75 per cent of the marine parks; I think we've got enough. So I feel that that's enough. There's - a marine park will not stop poor settlement or anything like that or - the more areas you shut down the more effort goes into the areas you keep open as well. We, as industry, also have issues with the numbers that are fishing within the state.  It is coming back every year at the moment. In early 2000 it was up around 280 operators. It dropped steadily back to about 2005 it was back to 190 operators. When the quota couldn't be caught the lease price dropped dramatically. Another 40 operators came back in because the price was cheap. Price has gone back up now on lease quota and about 30 operators have dropped off in the last two years.
Eric Perez:	What issues are facing your business in the long term (beyond 24 months)? Would you say that the market, overseas market one is the big one?
Interviewee 2:	Overseas market is the biggest one. It's - within our fishery we get to see what stock's on the ground, we put - 80 per cent of our catch goes back in the water alive, it's fed. We personally use about 20 tonne of bait a year which is feeding all the young lobsters that do climb in and out of our pots. We have adequate input controls and output, probably

Interviewee 2:	too many input controls. But we get to see how much stock is on the ground and as a fisherman it - the stocks look healthy.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so for clarification purposes and for the - for my write-up of the assignment I'd have to ask you in terms of the - too many input controls you mean things like net size, where you can fish, how long you can fish, restrictions on quota, versus your output, being how much you can catch?
Interviewee 2:	Yeah, look, we have, say, just on a craypot you've got to have - the craypot's got to be a certain size. It can only have one entrance. The entrance needs to be a certain size. The escape gaps need to be a certain height.
Eric Perez:	That's an output control or input control?
Interviewee 2:	Input.
Eric Perez:	Input, yes.
Interviewee 2:	Input, yes. Output's quota, yep. So - which all that's fine but we need to maybe develop a better catching craypot as well. A lot of - number of studies have been done. When you have output controls of quota and the amount of fish you can take out of the water you probably don't need so many input controls.
Eric Perez:	You mentioned there that you need better equipment or investment in a better type of pot to catch the crayfish in or some other target species, for example your giant crab that we talked about before. Is that investment, and again this is about issues into the future, is that something that should be paid for by industry or should it be assisted by government? Because, again, you guys are paying for a quota so government is seeking to get a certain amount of moneys for the - for your licenses. Now, where do you feel that stands?
Interviewee 2:	We put so much per pot unit into research as well, it's collected from us. So at the moment we have a translocation - what, translocation - what do you - trial going on where we're taking slower growing lobsters from slower growing areas, moved them into higher growing areas and to inshore waters where they'll change colour and be more marketable or more plausible for - for the market. Where we also pay - we pay for that as well from industry. We're so much per pot unit depending on how many...
Eric Perez:	Is that in the form of a levy?
Interviewee 2:	That's in form of a levy, yep.
Eric Perez:	I'll just pause the recording for a second. Okay, so we were discussing the translocation issue.
Interviewee 2:	Yeah, so we - the fishermen pay a levy per pot towards that. Other moneys, some of our association, is also given four tonne of fish, around about that figure, which is caught by fishermen and then the moneys raised from that go towards any industry issues. We're marketing, a lot of it goes towards marketing and other research. These - we're building new puerulus collectors at the moment.  They've been built and we're going to put them on the west coast. That

Interviewee 2:	<p>money was - some of that was raised through there. Other moneys, yeah, the Government could kick in some more.</p> <p>One of our biggest issues has been Centrostephanus on the east coast pretty much wiping out all the kelp beds. The Government has put very little money towards that. It's a real problem. The - our association's done as much as they can with the limited funds.</p> <p>There's been research looked into it and the only way and the best way to deal with this is to get the divers in the water to remove it. They looked at putting up the size limits on rock lobster and that but it's going to be a slow process. It won't - what a diver can take out in a day a large rock lobster will take it a lifetime to eat.</p> <p>So we - the whole general community's very dissatisfied with the amount of commitment and funding that's come from the Government to eradicate these from our water when they've spent millions of dollars on looking for a fox that doesn't seem to exist.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep. Alright, look, just as a final activity here, have you heard of the term or acronym SWOT?
Interviewee 2:	No I [unclear] that term.
Eric Perez:	Yep, it stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and it's a tool designed originally to help businesses look at two things, internal business factors and external factors. So your strengths and weaknesses is what you would call your internal issues and your opportunities and threats are external. So if I asked you from your business point of view and maybe you might think of two or three per category what do you believe - or more if you've got more - on are your business strengths if you had to list them?
Interviewee 2:	Business strength would be for us we own a fair bit of quota so we not always having to look for it and lease it. We have enough quota to be able to go to work all the time. Between the two of us we can sit down and talk and one will share the other one's knowledge and information before the next guy goes to sea all the time as to where the best fishing was on the last trip. We also know what the markets are doing a lot of the time so sometimes we might come home marginally early or stay out a bit later. What was the other...
Eric Perez:	So that was your strengths, so business weaknesses that you see internal to the business?
Interviewee 2:	Just with the strengths, too, there's - we also get to see the amount of stock that's in the water and we just know what's going on. Even on a bad year - like last year was a bad year but what we could see was you could go to an area and catch nothing, very, very little and it was like where are the fish, where are the fish? Go back a month later and you might have two weeks of seeing your pots full of fish. So the fish are there on the bottom, right, whether you'll catch them the next year - and when I kept saying fish, I'm talking rock lobster.

Interviewee 2:	<p>The stocks are there but they're not always moving. Sometimes there's a lot of natural feed comes through, we feel, or some other influence and they just won't pot.</p> <p>We're not like something's going to be trawled, that you see a school of fish and scoop it up. You can put a pot down, it's up to the lobster to get in the pot. You can't make him get in the pot.</p> <p>You can try all you want but he - they - and they climb in and out of the pots as well. It's not a trap, it's actually a pot and they can get out. They get in and out all day long so - but sometimes we - fortunately when you do your bookwork and you're taking or doing research or the Government's doing research into the industry and they see very, very low catches in the pot the alarm bells start going off.</p> <p>But we know if we see them within - if we didn't see that all year, if it went - you fished for a whole year and didn't see any lobsters in your pots you would be worried. But when you see them, they're only a couple of weeks every few months, you know they're there but they're feeding on something else. This has happened back in the '70s. The guys went out and thought, what's happened, we've killed them all, there's no lobsters out here. A year or two years after that they had one of the biggest years they've had. So that's a strength where we as fishermen, being on the ground all the time, can tell what the stocks are like.</p>
Eric Perez:	Yep, so it's your experience.
Interviewee 2:	Yep, from experience.
Eric Perez:	So, weaknesses?
Interviewee 2:	Weaknesses, if on the - our east coast we're - one of the weaknesses would be the <i>Centrostephanus</i> killing a lot of the habitat. Warmer water on our east coast can be an issue. We're not sure, 100 per cent sure, where our puerulus go to and come from and - as to where they choose to settle. Markets, we're very - we're a price taker, not a price giver - maker, I should say. We basically have, yeah, no control over markets and other biggest weakness is paying too much for quota.
Eric Perez:	So let's go into threats before opportunities. In terms of threats, you've identified your foreign market, you've identified issues with marine health and with stock health, and you've identified input and output controls. Is there any other threat outside of those that are impacting your business externally?
Interviewee 2:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Because some - because obviously some of those, like threats, if we're looking at things that are external to your business, the marine bug issues that are in the environment are external to your business...
Interviewee 2:	Yep. I've got a few.
Eric Perez:	The market overseas is a threat. But from that external point of view what others can you identify?

Interviewee 2:	<p>Most of our members in the rock lobster industry are really worried about seismic testing. We have noticed a rapid decline in - within areas for a number of years after seismic testing's happened all through from the west coast to Bass Strait to Flinders and King Island.</p> <p>The same with our scallop fishery where perfectly good beds were alive but they were all just a bit undersize, it couldn't take them. Seismic test boat vessels went through and then they went back next year to harvest the scallops they were all dead. So that's one of our big issues. The other one is the warm water may be on the - on our east coast, crustaceans in their early development cycles can't live or - in a warmer water, the salinity changes and it affects crustaceans more than any other</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay, so changes in climate patterns or weather...fish.
Interviewee 2:	<p>In climate patterns. It's only on our east coast. We - nothing's really too much of an issue. We have one of the best egg productions anywhere on the south and west of coast of anywhere. We're at 80 per cent egg production. We only need something like 20 per cent for the fishery to survive or to be - turnover well, viable. Seals, seals can be an issue. They - their numbers are expanding rapidly. They do eat a lot of scalefish.</p> <p>They also can sometimes hamper a fisherman, a rock lobster fisherman by going around their gear and pulling out all their bait. Occasionally you'll get one that will follow you when you're returning the undersize to the water and will bite on them as well. So our seal populations have exploded to the point of they're actually killing off a lot of the penguin rookeries and that sort of thing and that as well. So there are a lot of deaths in that area.</p>
Eric Perez:	Opportunities?
Interviewee 2:	With opportunities we - there's a big debate as to whether the translocation, it's - the industry's divided as to whether it's a good thing or a bad thing because we're taking lobsters from one area and moving them to another. Whilst it's a more marketable fish that you end up with it's not such an easy fish to catch. So you have to put more effort into the inshore fishing than you do offshore. You can work offshore when the weather's bad, you can't work inshore. So some - so there's a concern there. What was the - sorry, what was...
Eric Perez:	Opportunities, so what...
Interviewee 2:	More markets. We need to look into more markets. We were always working - through our factory we've got some new markets in Asia and there's more markets further afield but we need to be - spend more money on research into getting lobsters to travel further or having someone set up somewhere where you can re-tank the fish and then send them again. As well, it's not a big fishery, it's only 1,100 tonnes so we need to, yeah, basically look for more markets.
Eric Perez:	Is the total allowable catch 1,100 tonnes?

Interviewee 2:	Total, yeah. It was 1,500 and now we're down to 1,100 so it's not a big fishery.
Eric Perez:	No, that's fine, thank you for your time.
Interviewee 2:	No problems.

**APPENDIX 11**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 3**  
**FRIDAY 31 AUGUST, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you get enter the fishing industry?
Interviewee 3:	I was born in a fishing family. I started off fishing with my father. I left, went and joined the army for 20 years, came back and I went back fishing.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay. In terms of what your dad did, was it similar to what you...?
Interviewee 3:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	Any particular reason why fishing - was it because it was a family thing, that your dad had done it for generations before?
Interviewee 3:	Oh just something - well my family's been generational fishermen and I like the water. I knew the day I joined the army that I was going to go back fishing.
Eric Perez:	All right, yep. So leads me to my next question. What are the - from when you were operating your business, what were your broad aspirations for the following year's operations? So if you go back to when you had your business last, the following year, what were you aiming to do?
Interviewee 3:	Oh my aim was to be self-sufficient in the industry, as in owning my licence and owning my own boat and then to get a bigger boat. I suppose it's like climbing the ladder, which I did and I ended up with a fishing boat called The Tuna, which is one of the biggest fishing Cray boats in the fleet. So I achieved what I set out to do.
Eric Perez:	Excellent. So I guess the measure of that was you got the boat that you wanted but in the crayfish fishery down here it's a quota...
Interviewee 3:	It's a quota system. It's caused a lot of pain in industry when we went to it. Of course, there are a lot of people against it. But our industry went on a downward slide so fast that I could see, in my opinion, that it was going to fade out. Just go.
Eric Perez:	Okay. This was post the introduction of the quota system?
Interviewee 3:	This was post introduction to the quota. The quota came in and I was quite happy with the quota. A lot of people weren't happy but I was. However, due to the facts that the scientists gave us were wrong, we've had a bit of trouble since. So we've actually gone from 145 kilograms, down to 105 kilograms per unit, or per pot as we say. That, at this stage looks like we're holding on to 105 because their stock assessment says it's levelled out. There's concern on the East Coast that the stock mightn't have levelled out and it's still on the decline but on the West Coast they believe that it has levelled out.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes, all right. Can you tell me from the last year that you've been fishing to the year before that, were you doing anything differently in terms of running your business?
Interviewee 3:	Yes, I was. I went from actually being the operator of the boat to appointing a skipper on the boat and I stayed as shore manager for the business.



Eric Perez:	Okay, so you transitioned to your - your two career paths, your skipper running your...
Interviewee 3:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Was that just yourself running the operations on the shore base or did you and your wife...
Interviewee 3:	Oh the wife was the book person, which is probably the more important thing, and I was the manager of where they sold the fish, looking after the gear on the boat, making sure that the fuel and all the maintenance and that was done.
Eric Perez:	Out of curiosity, because some of the interviewees talked about the family type nature of their businesses, would you say you and your wife are a partnership, or a team, in that respect?
Interviewee 3:	Oh absolutely, yes.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 3:	Absolutely. My wife is very important to the team.
Eric Perez:	Again, out of curiosity, is her family background in commercial fishing?
Interviewee 3:	Never. No, she's a Queensland girl and...
Eric Perez:	[Laughs] Okay, nothing wrong with Queensland.
Interviewee 3:	No, nothing wrong with Queensland. Daughter of a truck driver.
Eric Perez:	Okay, all right. So in your estimation - you've told me you've had 30 years' experience - what do you think are the necessary building blocks to not just build your business but maintain it over time? So that's kind of a two-parter. In building the business what do you think were the key things and in maintaining it at its level, what were those things as well, from your experience of commercial fishing?
Interviewee 3:	My experience - well I don't intend to build the business anymore. I've reached to where - as I'm retired I don't wish to go any further. However, the main thing for our industry now is to get a stable market. But the best thing that could ever happen to our industry if a free trade agreement (FTA) with the certain Asian governments so that we don't get involved in illegal trades, which our fishery is based on believe it or not.
Eric Perez:	Oh, okay. So is that something that all the fisherman that you know in the rock lobster fishery are trying to change? Is that an free trade agreement to push the government to sign?
Interviewee 3:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	Okay. How's that progressed?
Interviewee 3:	The government's dragging its feet.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Is there a reason for that?
Interviewee 3:	Well it's the government. The government just drag their feet on everything.
Eric Perez:	Do you know off hand what - because I can find this out later, but the value of the exports that we send over there in a year?
Interviewee 3:	About \$75 million.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 3:	So it's - this has been the whole problem and it was one of the problems when we introduced the quota because a lot of the

Interviewee 3:	fishermen so went out, that meant that small towns on the coast lost a lot of employment because people brought out other quotas to make itself more viable and of course the people in a town lost jobs because they weren't there to do the processing and things which they used to do, and the repairs and the shopkeepers. It just - the effect rippled through the community in those small towns.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So you concentrated on the building element and you talked about your markets there, but in terms of maintaining your business what did you do as a regular part of running your business to keep yourself in the game, from a business point of view?
Interviewee 3:	Oh well the most important thing is to keep your gear at A1. Keep your boat A1, happy crew, pay them properly and make sure that your - just keep everything right. The worst thing you can do is go to sea, have a breakdown, come back, because it costs. It costs every time you leave the wharf.
Eric Perez:	Who is your primary customer?
Interviewee 3:	Primary customer - well the Asian market.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So you would sell direct into...
Interviewee 3:	No, I'd sell to a buyer who would end up the customer being an Asian market. All our fish goes to Asia, very few go anywhere else. I'd say 98 per cent of the fish go to Asia.
Eric Perez:	That buyer, would he or she be the centre point for lots of the fleet or would you just pick certain buyers based in Asia or was it someone based here?
Interviewee 3:	No, I used to try and stick with the same buyer. He'd buy the fish off me, then make - well not much the processing, but they pack them and then they send them to these agents - he's just got locked up in Asia.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep. I guess because you're saying that your primary customers are in the Asia-Pacific region, in terms of - could you categorise who was your best customer? Was there a certain region that you sold more product into or was it - was there a regional difference?
Interviewee 3:	No, all these lobster go to the one port and there's half a dozen buyers there that handle all the rock lobster.
Eric Perez:	[Laughs] Okay.
Interviewee 3:	It is. Nobody else is allowed to get their hands on it; they'll just go and wipe them out. It's like a - I've been and seen. I've been to Asia and I went through. I've seen them landed, I've seen them where they do it, I've been to the restaurants and eaten it.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So in doing that, if you did get the free trade agreement what would that do to these connections? They'd just go and do something else I guess?
Interviewee 3:	Well no, what happens - because at the moment it's all built on corruption where they bribe the custom officers. Where people outside will be able to buy lobster without the excise because that's what they're trying to avoid at the moment this [inaudible] that buys our product. So that won't be there. That won't be an impediment on the import into Asia of the Cray. So hopefully if these blokes get out

Interviewee 3:	of jail in time we'll be able to sell them anywhere in Asia. We have got one province that we can sell into but that's a small market and that's - the buyers just don't seem to be interested in getting into that market for some reason.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes. No, that's fine. Now this is, I guess, in terms of the running of the business. Not so much your market, more of an internal thing. But what process, or approach, did you take when making decisions within the business? By that I mean was it a combination of you just knowing your market and your buyer and what prices were doing on a daily or did you have - did you get daily statistics. How did you make your decisions about how to move your product on in your business?
Interviewee 3:	Well, as I said before, I stuck with generally the one buyer because I could trust him and if the prices went up or down, whichever it was, I'd always be at the fore, I'd get a good price. So I had no reason to change the buyer. I trusted him to give me the better price, which always worked out.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay. Was that - I guess in terms of a strategy then to move the product on you based your decision on trusting the guy that you did business with?
Interviewee 3:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 3:	It cut down on the stress level. I mean you come home - a background on a fishing trip - it's about 10 to 14 days. So you come home and you're really stuffed and then you get on the phone, trying to ring up different buyers, and the stress that caused...
Eric Perez:	Oh wow, okay. So it was almost like a stress relief system that you knew once the product was out...
Interviewee 3:	I knew that I didn't have to go through all that. So the stress wasn't there of me having to ring the different buyers and then get into arguments about the price, you're ripping me off or something like that. So I just brought them home. Didn't even ring the buyer - just to tell him that I was coming home.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay.
Interviewee 3:	So I was lucky that way.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So the next question, I guess you've helped me answer that, in terms of I've got here, in terms of decision making, where do you draw your information to make your decision? So you relied heavily on the buyer to do that for you or did you ever - maybe this is a scenario that came up, maybe it didn't - but did you ever consider having multiple points of sale and multiple buyers in case you could get a better deal?
Interviewee 3:	I tried to stay away from that, as I said before. In 30 years of fishing I think I only ever had three buyers.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so you stayed loyal to a buyer and they returned the loyalty.
Interviewee 3:	I knew it was one I think I fished for, for 20 years. But he ended up with a manager that shafted me on the last load they got, because he mixed my Crays up with somebody else's and then he tried to blame

Interviewee 3:	me for the state of the Crays and I never, ever landed crook Crays.
Eric Perez:	Okay, no that's fine. Okay, so who do you feel are the key stakeholders influencing the business when you were running it? So by that I mean internal stakeholders. So the ones closest to your business as well as the external ones. So if you want to start with internal, who was the most important people that you dealt with internally to your business? For example, was it your skipper, was it the crew, was it your wife?
Interviewee 3:	No, the wife was most of the thing. When you're away I mean they'd run the business. It's just the matter of a phone call. I mean where we fish we got no - you've got to use the satellite.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 3:	We don't have any other - but the wife was very important to the business.
Eric Perez:	Yes, so in terms of external stakeholders, who would you identify as being the key external stakeholders that impacted on your business?
Interviewee 3:	Oh the buyer.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Yesterday one of the interviewees mentioned government as being someone sort of...
Interviewee 3:	Oh government - that's the reason I left fisheries - it's one of the reasons I left fisheries and only [quota] regulations are just - they change every day.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes.
Interviewee 3:	We get told what to do. We have a meeting at the industry association but before we have the meeting the government come in and say this is what you're going to do. Either you do it or we do it. So we've always got the gun on our head all the time, and that's based on the alleged scientific evidence and it really pisses you off sometimes.
Eric Perez:	Did you trust the science that they used when they were doing these dock assessments?
Interviewee 3:	I did at first and then - they do things strange, like I was involved in a couple of surveys - they chartered my boat to go out and do the surveys, but they always surveyed when the Crays weren't running.
Eric Perez:	Oh, okay.
Interviewee 3:	I used to say to them why are we doing a survey in this area and you know very well you're not going to catch a Cray because they've just shot up. They're either in the moulting stage or they're in the mating stage and when they're in either they just don't move.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 3:	So they'd charter me, at great expense, to go out with all these pots into areas I knew I wasn't going to catch fish. So I just thought that their research was flawed. I thought it would have been better done when we knew we could catch the Crays then you're going to get a decent sample of what the Crays were.
Eric Perez:	Does that run at a particular time of the year down here, like...
Interviewee 3:	Yeah well May is a bad time. May and end of August, now.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah. Okay well that one's pretty much covered and I've had similar responses to the external stuff.

Interviewee 3:	The other things that are external, like the slipping of your boat. I always used to slip into the main slip.
Eric Perez:	Oh, so infrastructure?
Interviewee 3:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes.
Interviewee 3:	Just with a stroke of the pen we have workplace standards come along and workplace safety whatever it is and they said you've got to scaffold your boat. Well there's an extra \$4,000 a week, just whack, by someone coming around. Things like this.
Eric Perez:	So when you say government you mean all the different agencies that you deal with. Some are in safety and...
Interviewee 3:	Well these are government businesses. XYZ is a government business.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay. Ah okay. So all your ports down here are run...
Interviewee 3:	By XYZ.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Are they - we call them qangos I guess. Are they quasi-government or are they fully government operated?
Interviewee 3:	They're a government business.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah all right.
Interviewee 3:	They belong to the government; they've got to return a dividend to the government.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So in a scenario then - and this is - I'm trying to cast a short, medium and long range issues you would see for the business as it stands at the moment. In the short term, so one to six months, what do you see as potential issues for the fisheries?
Interviewee 3:	Oh, the potential issue is getting our market sorted out, that's a must.
Eric Perez:	Okay, in the short term?
Interviewee 3:	That's in the short term, very short term. I'm talking now.
Eric Perez:	Oh, right now, okay. So 12 to 24 months, is that - in addition to sorting out the market, so you'd hope it will be done soon, but if it's done say in 12 months, between 12 and 24 months, in there any other particular issue that is impacting on the fishery?
Interviewee 3:	Well the market is the main thing as I said before.
Eric Perez:	For example, as an example it may be fuel costs. So do you guys -are you guys impacted, like the trawl fleets in Queensland, for an example, where your major cost is fuel?
Interviewee 3:	Oh, it is. It's one of the major costs, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Just out of curiosity, in terms of your business, from when you started to towards wrapping up your involvement directly on the boat, would you say that you had better practices in terms of fuel use or would you use about the same every year?
Interviewee 3:	No, about the same every year. There's really not a lot you can do to...
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah but just out of curiosity, because in some places some of the fishermen up north can say look, we can fish more intensely for a shorter amount of time and then leave it go and not go out as much, whereas you guys probably don't have that luxury because of where you go geographically, right?

Interviewee 3:	No.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 3:	Well where my - when I went out in my boat, it was a 20 metre boat, which is quite large - when I started the engines to leave they never stopped until they come back home. So there was no...
Eric Perez:	Oh, wow. So constantly...
Interviewee 3:	They were just - 24 hours a day...
Eric Perez:	That's amazing.
Interviewee 3:	Because I had a tank, not a well and had to continue with the flow of water through the Crays to keep them alive because they're no good dead. They've all got to be kept alive. So that's a problem we have. We've got to keep them alive and...
Eric Perez:	They didn't tell me that in the other interviews. So it's a live fish trap.
Interviewee 3:	It's a live export market.
Eric Perez:	Oh, okay. Would you get the kind of money you get for them if it was a dead market?
Interviewee 3:	No.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 3:	We'd look at about a quarter of the price.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay.
Interviewee 3:	Well are you going to pay \$100 a kilogram for a crayfish?
Eric Perez:	I can't get crayfish now so I don't know...
Interviewee 3:	That's right, because they're in Asia.
Eric Perez:	...but it seems like a luxury food. Because the fisheries down here, from what I'm seeing, are more geared to those export markets, you get what you can and hopefully the beach price is one thing, but what you sell it for when it gets to the market is hopefully...
Interviewee 3:	The beach price was what we deal with. To get a good beach price you've got to have a good retail market and that's where the - but it's in Asia. That's the long and the short of it.
Eric Perez:	Is there a - okay, as another scenario because I asked this question yesterday - this is to do with the 24 month really long term view. Is there a Plan B for the fishery if Asia doesn't work out? Can you guys survive in a domestic market?
Interviewee 3:	We could survive but there'd be no - we'd have to find another market or go back to the domestic market. If we go back to the domestic market I reckon our prices would drop by 75 per cent. That will probably put a lot of people to the wall.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Particularly those that might be, for example, overcapitalised. Like who have invested big dollars in boats and not paid them off yet and...
Interviewee 3:	Well that's the other problem with the industry. There's not a lot of money being invested in new boats and gear. So what we've got, we've got an aging fleet, which is going to bite us on the arse in probably 20 years' time.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, that hasn't come up that often, but from your view of this fishery and others, you think the aging of the fleet is going to be a long term problem?

Interviewee 3:	Yes, definitely.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Where did your boat stand on that? I mean was it a relatively new vessel?
Interviewee 3:	Its 30 years old, but it was in good condition. It'd been looked after. Had good owners all the time and it was steel and the steelwork had been looked after.
Eric Perez:	Okay, no that's good. Well look, the last element of the questions that I've got here is asking about - it's like an activity. If I said to you I want to run a SWOT analysis for your business - do you know what the acronym SWOT stands for, S-W-O-T? Okay, it's a research tool that they use that they call strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Your strength and your weaknesses are those things internal to the business that you can identify as giving your business a leg up, or your weaknesses are things that you could do to improve the business. So if I asked you at the height of operating your business what did you see were its strengths, could you give me a couple of examples of the strengths of your business?
Interviewee 3:	Oh, well as I said before, the strengths it is - a good skipper, a good crew and good gear and a good...
Eric Perez:	By good crew do you mean well-trained or...
Interviewee 3:	Well trained...
Eric Perez:	Like for example if I came to you green and I said hey, I'm really keen to work, I want to get on board but I've got absolutely no experience, versus a guy that comes along with a couple of years of experience...
Interviewee 3:	Well you've got to judge haven't you? It's like any other job. You judge whether you feel that the bloke in the way he's talking whether he's really interested, ask him a few questions. The first thing is do you get seasick?
Eric Perez:	Yeah, okay.
Interviewee 3:	I mean I've been caught on that badly twice...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, you take someone out and...
Interviewee 3:	and they've lied. You get out - I mean last time we were out off the Bay, yeah that's just quite a way down. You've got to turn around and come all the way back. If you don't, they die. That's the long and short of... it. You've just got to take them back. You can't risk someone dying on your boat because of their seasickness.
Eric Perez:	Can that kill you can it?
Interviewee 3:	Oh shit yeah.
Eric Perez:	I never knew that sir, in all my time I just thought...
Interviewee 3:	Oh, if someone is violently seasick he will die. You will dehydrate. You'll just die. We had a yacht leave here in sheltered waters. By the time they got to there, which is only a few hours, they had an ambulance there to take him away and he nearly died. It wasn't even rough.
Eric Perez:	Okay. I did not know that.
Interviewee 3:	When they are sick they are absolutely - they can't do anything. They

Interviewee 3:	come to the stage they even want to jump over the side because they think it'll stop the boat rocking.
Eric Perez:	I've learnt something new today.
Interviewee 3:	Yeah seasickness, you read up about it. Have a look at it on the internet.
Eric Perez:	Okay, didn't know that. So you've covered some strengths there. Potential weaknesses, in terms of your business? I don't mean a weakness as in you ran a bad business, I mean a weakness might be that, I don't know, you didn't take all the opportunities to get training offered to people, or maybe...
Interviewee 3:	No, I really - that way I always - I was one of the few people that paid for the crew to go and do a sea safety course...
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, yes.
Interviewee 3:	...and things like that. I was involved in the clean, green movement, which involved - you had to send your crew away, you do crew inductions. An induction being showing them about the boat when they first step on. You had to sign documents...
Eric Perez:	Okay, so you made sure for the longevity of your business and you made sure that they got training if they needed it or...
Interviewee 3:	I did that because in the future that's going to be a part of the business. I mean it's on the shore now. You walk into any factory and you've got to wear a high-visibility jacket, you've got to stay within the lines, you're banned from entering areas. It's just creeping in and it's going to creep into the fishing industry and that's going to be - in my opinion it's not going to be a positive, it's going to be a negative on the industry because it's more ongoing costs that you're going to have to comply with. Your responsibility also goes up if you don't do it you see.
Eric Perez:	Oh, okay. So I guess that's - the internal weakness there was if we're not compliant to the regulation and set yourself up for some pain in the future.
Interviewee 3:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	Okay. All right, so that's the internal stuff. Now the environment in which you work in, so all of the external stuff, opportunities, what did you see in your time as opportunities for your business and the environment in which you dealt with? So for example, did you ever consider another export market other than Asia? Was there an option to do that?
Interviewee 3:	Yes we tried that. We've - a member of the association, we've tried that.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, yeah. Where was that to?
Interviewee 3:	It comes back - we tried America. The European Union (EU's) out of bounds they've got that many regulations and things in the [EU] and their protection is over the top.
Eric Perez:	It's open trade [unclear] fair trade.
Interviewee 3:	You just can't get in there. Especially with the - what do they call it - the carbon footprint you've got to have on your fish and things like that. The further you've got to fly them the bigger the carbon footprint



Interviewee 3:	it's going to be on the fish. So to move your fish they've all got to be live and they've all got to be air flown.
Eric Perez:	Were they measuring that were they as part of...
Interviewee 3:	As part of their things, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Oh wow, okay. All right. What about threats? What was your biggest threat? You've talked about it before, so if the backside fell out of the
Eric Perez:	Asian market for your product you'd pretty much - Plan B would be a domestic market with a quarter of the returns and...
Interviewee 3:	Our biggest threat at the moment is the illegal landing of fish, that's our biggest threat. We've got to get back to a straight market.
Eric Perez:	No I can understand that.
Interviewee 3:	That's - as soon as the free trade agreement comes in with the government it'll be legal.
Eric Perez:	All right, that's good mate. Thank you for your time. That's all I've got at the moment. Like I said, I'll be able to provide you with a report, or a draft of the report at some point to let you know how it's going and then once the report's finalised I'll get copies out to everyone who I've interviewed, so thanks for your time.
Interviewee 3:	Yeah, not a problem.
Eric Perez:	Cheers mate.

**APPENDIX 12**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 4**  
**FRIDAY 31 AUGUST, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate your small business?
Interviewee 4:	Family business, opportunity came up that I could run my own boat so that was the main reason. I got a bit sick of doing what I was doing and - with the welding business and that, so...
Eric Perez:	Okay so you transitioned from your welding career back into fishing?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay and as part of that transition process, was that - did you do that on your own? Or was it something that you took over from your father or family member?
Interviewee 4:	Family pretty much - family business. They upgraded in South Australia and their boat that they had there was sitting around, so we decided to put a licence on that and I fished it. So I actually worked for them and then started buying the boat and...
Eric Perez:	Oh, okay. So you're almost like an apprentice to someone who had a boat working and...
Interviewee 4:	I guess so, that's how it works for the family. You learn off your dad and...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, okay.
Interviewee 4:	Without having that family backing there's no way that you could get into the lobster fishing without a good bank manager. You just have to...
Eric Perez:	Okay, thanks for that. So I guess following that question, what are your - from your view of your business, what are your aspirations for the business for 2013?
Interviewee 4:	2013?
Eric Perez:	Yeah well what's the thing you're aiming for in that year?
Interviewee 4:	Just to make all my pay and make the bills and pay the loans off and that's it.
Eric Perez:	Okay, I guess the follow up to that is how will you measure your progress? I guess if you're not paying the bills and things are tight then...
Interviewee 4:	Yeah - things are falling behind, yeah...
Eric Perez:	Okay, in that context then what - do you have a Plan B if the fishing doesn't improve over time?
Interviewee 4:	Well Plan B is to - like I said earlier - to fall back on my trade skills which I have been doing a little bit more of late. We are looking into other things...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, such as?
Interviewee 4:	Trying to market our own product locally. I'm just - there's the Wooden Boat Festival and things like that coming up. So we're looking at it to see if we can do a stall at that and just do these one off big events.
Eric Perez:	Yeah because one of the previous interviewees I asked about - they

Eric Perez:	said Rock Lobster was their primary fishery as well. I said, what's - what would be your Plan B if the backside fell out of the Asian market. This gentleman didn't have - didn't really think about it. He said, oh I'd have to do something else, I don't know what but it will be something else. Now could you turn your business - as it is now [unclear] not only supply a domestic market?
Interviewee 4:	Looking at local business opportunities. The thing that's holding us back there is some of the rules and regulations about unloading your fish, who you can sell it to.  There's quota issues, they won't allow us to unload and then there's also we'd have to deal with councils and public health and safety. So there's a lot to do. We've looked into it but it's - the other thing is the actual processing of the fish. You have to have a facility where you can cook them and - so that you're following all the regulations.
Eric Perez:	The red tape stuff?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah. At the moment the processor that we're selling to, he's just closed the door. So we were going to be able to cook them there.
Eric Perez:	Not any more.
Interviewee 4:	Not anymore, so that was our Plan B, so we'll just have to see what happens.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, no, no, no understandable. This has kind of answered the third question for me in terms of can you - or will you - do anything differently from last year? So if you looked at 2012 verses most of 2011, are you doing anything different this year than you did last year?
Interviewee 4:	We're just looking at different opportunities I guess. We're looking at a lot more - I'm always one to look into what we can do differently. I've always said I think the local market can support one or two operators but the local market won't cope with all our fish. So that's the thing - up in Queensland like you were saying there before - a lot of your fish goes local whereas down here ours is all going away and the locals can't get any local fish. Which just seems wrong.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, well I guess because the majority of Queensland fisheries are designed to be for domestic consumption. If you've got people catching out of Bundaberg or Hervey Bay invariably that product stays in the community through...
Interviewee 4:	Whether it's more because of the tourism - you've got more restaurants and they're known to supply that sort of stuff. Whereas down here in Tassie, we're known for our produce but where do you go to get it? Nobody knows - you know what I mean?
Eric Perez:	It's being exported.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	So do you export 100 per cent of what you catch?
Interviewee 4:	Well it all goes to the factory so the 95 per cent of it - it goes out of the State.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, you covered that fairly well. So in terms of the business itself - now this is the - looking at your business internally - what are the

Eric Perez:	elements that you can identify that helped to build the business and maintain the business? So it's really a two part question that one. So what do you think are the key things that helped you build the business versus now maintaining it?
Interviewee 4:	Well hard work to start off with. Also say - rewind 10 years ago we had more quota. Whereas we've taken almost a 30 per cent cut in our quota. The price was more consistent even though it was possibly a little bit lower but because we had more quota it outweighed it and our catch rate was a bit better. Whereas our catch rates have fallen down a little bit but they are improving again.
Eric Perez:	That was catch rates.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah but just being as efficient as we can...
Eric Perez:	Okay so as part of the building it's - you talk about efficiencies there.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so in terms of the maintenance then, the impact there is the catch rates and your market price for your product as well as dealing with the total allowable catch that might be growing smaller?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	In terms of maintaining - what do you see are the key things to help maintain the business? So , for example, some of the responses that I've got have been, I know I've invested some money in my career, or I've paid for them to do a bit of study. In your - from your business perspective, what have you done to maintain what you've got?
Interviewee 4:	Cost cutting really at the moment. I call it going...
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah is that - there's no wrong answers...
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, well to maintain it at the moment - it relates to the other bit - is - I've had to lay my crew off so I'm not having to worry about him at the moment. Probably maintenance on the boat - I probably haven't done as much as what I probably should have done. The boat's still fine but there's things that I want to do to the boat but I can't afford to do it at the moment. So that has probably - as far as reinvesting money back into your...
Eric Perez:	Business.
Interviewee 4:	...business, that's not happening as much. What else? The plan was for my back hand to get his Skipper's - which I helped him get. I had to pay for some of his courses what he did. So I put some investment into that and then he was going to slowly take the boat over and then I would start...
Eric Perez:	Okay, letting him...
Interviewee 4:	...letting him and he would lease quota off his own back and then I'd get a bit of that. So then he can start building something up for himself.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's pretty - looking into the future.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	So your vision was - if I can put it in those terms - I want to set up myself so that someone else runs my boat...

Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...I get a percentage out of it and I don't have to break my back doing any more. That about cover it?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah and also it helps get him started as well because...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, that's quite a...
Interviewee 4:	Well you've got all these guys at the moment that have retired from fishing. They're lucky at the moment that there's - because of the quota cut. There's less quota so there's more fishermen available to catch their quota. So even at the moment, people are paying - I feel it's an exorbitant price for lease quota, not knowing what the beach price is going to be in September.
Eric Perez:	What's the worst that the lease quota has come in at? What kind of costs are you looking at there?
Interviewee 4:	Well it's - well people are paying \$25 a kilogram to lease quota and then that's fine if you're going to catch fish during the winter and you're getting over \$50 because you need to be making at least \$25 to break even.
Eric Perez:	To break even, all right.
Interviewee 4:	So if you get \$70 then you're doing really well. Then you're still sitting out at sea for a long time to catch that fish. Say during the summer - when fish are easy to catch - if you pay \$25 a kilogram and you get \$35 or \$25, what's the point?
Eric Perez:	Yeah, doesn't cover your costs does it?
Interviewee 4:	No and there's people that are doing it because they're in this mentality, I can't do anything else.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, okay. In your travels - and I guess this is about maintenance - you said you had a vision for your crew before things happened that were a bit out of your control. Do you think that's a common thing that fishermen invest in their crew to keep them in there?
Interviewee 4:	I think that some people do and they've allowed their crew to take over but there's not a lot. There are fishers that can't afford to pay for a decent crew or keep a crew; they just take anyone they can get.
Eric Perez:	All right. So again a slightly different tact in what you do in your business. Can I ask in terms of decision making in your business. What approach or process do you use when you're making your decisions? An example I've been using and that's come up in my last few interviews is when you're going to sell product are you factoring in market price? What the competition might be doing? You might pick up the paper and read some stuff as to what's happening overseas.  What suite of things do you use to make those decisions? Is it a gut instinct that helps you make the call? Is it - this is what the market should be doing? End of August I'm prepared to...
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, it's pretty much you go on what's happened in the past so you're using historical. When I decide to go fishing it's, what's the beach price when I'm going fishing and is it going to be likely that it will stay there when I return? What's the weather like here? It's the

Interviewee 4:	same for all fishermen but I think it's more prevalent down here because you can't go fishing for two days and then come home. Once you're out there you've got to stay out there. So...
Eric Perez:	...decision making is not just about the - what the market is doing, it's about the environment in which - the physical environment...
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, so we can't do what they do in New Zealand where they go and park their boat around the coast and helicopter their fish out because you're not allowed to do that - there's a management - another management team. The buyers and that know that when there's a good patch of weather coming, they know that there's going to be so many fish coming in - they know that. Even in Asia they'll look up what the weather's doing on the internet and they'll go, okay, the fishermen are going to come in next week.
Eric Perez:	You know that's quite a nice lead in to the next question is - where do you draw your information from to make your decisions? Is it based on a gut feel, is it what your brother's thinking about doing - do you talk to other fishermen? Or is it mostly yourself that makes that...
Interviewee 4:	I would say that I use all those factors but it's - in the end it's up to me whether I decide to go fishing or not.
Eric Perez:	Oh, okay, yeah.
Interviewee 4:	That's all part of it and you use as many resources as you can. I use the internet a lot - look - checking the weather short term and long term. Also to see what the - how much quota's already been caught, just whatever you can find. So use whatever tools there are.
Eric Perez:	No, that's a good, it's...
Interviewee 4:	See if I decide to hang off leasing more quota now it would be because I know if I look at the - I guess the website for the fisheries - and they'll say, well 200 tonnes have been caught up until December. Then I know there's still 800 tonnes to be caught, so I can pretty much safely say that there's going to be cheaper quota about in January or whatever.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay because, yeah - all right let's move - so I'll move away from decision making to issues. Now if I said to you, give me your top five - or give me your key things in the next one to six months that are potential issues for your business.
Interviewee 4:	Well, the biggest issue's uncertainty I guess with the business at the moment and that comes to our main market which at the moment is very uncertain.
Eric Perez:	I've heard that a bit.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that would be one. Any others?
Interviewee 4:	I guess availability of bait.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, yeah.
Interviewee 4:	We always worry about the - and because bait and diesel's our main costs - but I don't think diesel will change too much in the next year or two. It will go up slowly but - the other thing is being a fisherman you get frustrated with all these people that spout off

Interviewee 4:	about our industry and they know nothing about it. That's Greens and politicians. I guess the education of just the general public and how they are all being used by those people.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay, no that's really good. So let's play devil's advocate - 12 to 24 months. What do you see as the issues? Are they the same? Is it more primarily the market? Is it some other thing you see on the horizon? For example, the marine parks?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Is that something that...
Interviewee 4:	Well for us down here because we've had this south east marine bioregion put in place, we're already dealing with it. I guess I - with marine parks, the commonwealth ones don't worry me so much but then again they're always up for review. They might want to put more state ones in which would affect us more. I can't understand why they want to do it.  I would like to see ore marine parks if they're like a little - a square mile one here or there. So they can compare the marine park with what's going on in the actual fishery. Whereas they just lock up these great big areas, like that Tony Burke with that thing up off Torres Straits or whatever. Let's be the biggest marine park in the world for the sake of it, it's just crazy.
Eric Perez:	Yes, I've heard a bit of that. All right, long term - over 24 months. Any particular issue you think that's going to rear its ugly head?
Interviewee 4:	Well my issue is am I still going to be here?
Eric Perez:	Okay, so longevity.
Interviewee 4:	I worry about the ownership of the fishery. You were talking - I shouldn't say names - but the guy you were talking to yesterday and who they're dealing with - bigger companies. They're going to be taking up quota and controlling - who's going to have control of it. I feel like guys like me are just losing control even more.
Eric Perez:	...you're feeling - you think there's a palpable loss of control...
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, even though being on the - and there's a lot of fishermen that would feel this way now. I know there's a lot of people that haven't renewed their membership of the association.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, for that reason?
Interviewee 4:	Well, I don't know but I think so. That's what it feels like to me and they...
Eric Perez:	Okay and perception - you were perceiving that it may not necessarily be wrong.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, well I don't know but I think - I've seen a letter, it's from one of the people that resigned and it's I'm not being represented and people aren't listening to me. I feel a bit that way sometimes. I'll go to a meeting and I'll put my opinions across and sometimes they'll take your opinion - they'll listen to you but then they just - that's it, let's move on.
Eric Perez:	That's fair enough. All right, look we're coming towards the - what I'm calling the activity part of the session. Have you heard of

Eric Perez:	<p>something called SWOT before? SWOT? Okay, it's an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats when you're looking at a business. In that context your strengths and your weaknesses in a business are what they call internal factors and your opportunities and threats are what they call external factors.</p> <p>Just using your own business as an example, could you list for me a couple of things that you think are a strength in your business as it stands now versus what you think are potential weaknesses. The list doesn't have to be 100 things long. If you had some primary things in your head about what's strong and what's not so strong in the business as it stands at the moment. Have you got - can you turn your mind to that?</p>
Interviewee 4:	<p>Yeah, I can, I'm just trying to think. Well I think that the strength that I have is being able to do more than one thing I guess. Being hard working, being able to think outside the square a bit, not just focus on - I'm a fisherman, that's what I do. If there were more opportunities in the actual fishing industry other than Cray fishing that I thought would be worth doing, I would do it.</p> <p>It's - the thing is it just seems to be too difficult. We've been pigeon holed in our different departments. We're in the rock lobster department whereas 15, 20 years ago you could go scalloping, sharking, long lining as well as rock lobster fishing.</p>
Eric Perez:	So the strength, first strength is your ability to multi task as a business owner. Versus a weakness being difficult to move to other fishing fisheries or fishing types, is that right?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, I think that's a weakness.
Eric Perez:	Any other strength you might see in your business. For example, would you - I asked this before but just to confirm - do you see yourself as a solo operator or are you genuinely a partnership?
Interviewee 4:	Well I'd see myself pretty much as a solo operator as far as the work goes but without a strong partnership you wouldn't do it.
Eric Perez:	So, okay so with...
Interviewee 4:	You know what I mean, I need the back up.
Eric Perez:	Your other half does the books?
Interviewee 4:	Well, not really.
Eric Perez:	No.
Interviewee 4:	She does a bit of the running around and everything.
Eric Perez:	Okay so you're more of a sole trader.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah, so that's - so being a sole trader, so you see that as strength or a weakness?
Interviewee 4:	I think - well you could look at it both ways but I think it's a strength because you're - really the buck stops with you. You're the one - if anything goes wrong you can fix it.
Eric Perez:	So is that - are you - just see if I've got this correct and I'll paraphrase it to you. Being a sole person means you have ultimate



Eric Perez:	say in - or final say in what's done. So the decision making and the buck stops with you.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So if you flip it over and sole trader is a weakness. What would you say then?
Interviewee 4:	I'd say it would be a weakness because you're - you look at other businesses where they have more people that can - it lightens your load. Whereas I feel a bit overwhelmed sometimes with everything.
Eric Perez:	So business size?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Yeah. So what you're saying is bigger is less stress on the owner.
Interviewee 4:	I guess so.
Eric Perez:	Is that correct?
Interviewee 4:	There's less burden because we - being a sole operator it's just you've got to do everything. You go out fishing - which is good because you get away from all the outside influences so you concentrate on that. In the back of your mind you've always - you know when you come home you've got to deal with taxation, your bank and accountancy and management. You've got make sure your paperwork's all filled in.
Eric Perez:	That's a nice lead in to a third one which is paperwork.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Paperwork and compliance.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah. So you know that that - and I'm guilty of falling behind on that because I - when I come in from fishing I relax for a little bit - for a day or two. Then I'm - I get stuck into doing work for other people and everything else that's related to fishing falls behind you see. It's hard to switch off from one and turn on to the other.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, that's interesting. All right well, well - if it's okay with you we might move on to those...
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...external things. Now business opportunities, that's the OT being the opportunities and threats. What do you see as opportunities in the market as it stands? If there's not, you can say there's not - what I'm saying is...
Interviewee 4:	Like that local market that I talking about before. I think there's an opportunity there but there's a lot of work to do and that gets back to being the sole person.
Eric Perez:	Another weakness, time - lack of time.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, all right, that's good. Any other opportunities?
Interviewee 4:	Well I'm heading over to Asia and we're looking into that if you like.
Eric Perez:	Okay, trade.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah but that...
Eric Perez:	So like a trade delegation?
Interviewee 4:	I think to myself well why does that fall back on someone like us to go over and do it?

Eric Perez:	You may have to talk to your local member about that one. Threats - can you identify any threats? Now you've identified a few and I can draw them out in the interview so far. So the threat being the back end of the export market falling away, government regulation.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Is there anything else in terms of the environment? So - one gentleman mentioned to me that the attitude of your competitors in the industry can be an impediment to doing your work. Not working together but working against each other.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Yeah?
Interviewee 4:	Well that is because there's always - I've seen it happen just locally down at the wharf when we were selling fish straight to the public. We were taking it in turns and selling fish. Then we had one guy came in and said, well I'm selling fish today as well. He started undercutting the other guys. We started off at \$40 and we said, well we'll try \$45 and people were still buying fish at \$45 and then he's come in and started undercutting us, just to get rid of all his fish. It's just not right is it? That's what people do in business, they just...
Eric Perez:	Look, I'm not here to judge. I'm just trying to get your experiences. Okay, look...
Interviewee 4:	That happens on the bigger scale though. I feel like here in Tassie we get played off against the other states.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 4:	South Australia last year, their average beach price was \$10 a kilogram more than us. See and I don't understand how that can happen.
Eric Perez:	Did I - just so that I'm checking my questions here. Did I ask you about your primary customer?
Interviewee 4:	No.
Eric Perez:	Did I ask you about who your key stakeholders are?
Interviewee 4:	No I don't think so.
Eric Perez:	Okay, well no, I'll go...
Interviewee 4:	Well primary customer was one factory but they have just - like I said - shut the doors. They just can't make enough money to keep their factory going.
Eric Perez:	So primary customer gone.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah and that's only just happened.
Eric Perez:	They were - would you consider them being your best customer until they shut down?
Interviewee 4:	Pretty much.
Eric Perez:	Okay - or best and only?
Interviewee 4:	Well I've sold - over the last six years I've pretty much sold to them and I have sold to a couple of other guys. For six years probably about four times I've sold to someone else. So yeah, I'm a bit like how my dad was with selling fish. Once you sell - you build up a loyalty thing to your buyer. The other thing too - the reason why I

Interviewee 4:	do that is you don't want to have to worry about - another thing to worry about when you're coming in from fishing.  So people get on the phone and they're ringing around 10 different people to organise who they're going to sell their fish too. It's just - I'd rather just be able to come home and know that I'm going to get rid of my fish.
Eric Perez:	So that's another threat then in terms of dealing with few buyers but multiple fishers. Yeah, I've seen some of that play out in our industry and it can get pretty cut throat.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	It doesn't necessarily help any of your businesses to grow.
Interviewee 4:	No, it doesn't and it's just crazy. We should all - I think it's in everyone's interest to try and get the best price. Whether it's the fishermen trying to get the best price off their buyers - and they should be trying to get the best price from their customers. In the end it all comes in and gets circulated around which is better for the whole economy.
Eric Perez:	So in terms of - we talked of - you mentioned some stakeholders before but just to get it clear in terms of the questions here. Who do you feel are your key stakeholders influencing your business? Again, it's probably easier to group them into internal to the business and external to the business. So internally, who do you believe are the key people?
Interviewee 4:	Well internally it's just me and my immediate family. So they're who I'm concerned about first of all.
Eric Perez:	So it's family?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	What about externally?
Interviewee 4:	Externally would be whoever I lease quota off...
Eric Perez:	Okay, quota.
Interviewee 4:	...and pots because I only own a certain amount.
Eric Perez:	Oh you lease pots do you as well?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Anecdotally in Queensland we've got real big problems with people stealing pots. Is that an issue down here?
Interviewee 4:	No, because we're in a remote area and if somebody comes and pinches your pots you know who it is, so I don't think that's...
Eric Perez:	Okay, so that's not an issue.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, whereas maybe up the east coast it might be different because you've got a lot more recreational...
Eric Perez:	So you're telling me in your business you lease quota from person X and lease a pot from person Y? It can be two different people?
Interviewee 4:	Yeah, it can be at the moment.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 4:	We're also talking about trying to attach the pots back with the quota.
Eric Perez:	Do you think that will work?

Interviewee 4:	I think it will be better because that way if I lease 19 pots off someone, I'm getting the quota as well and there won't be this - what's been happening is you could lease up a boat and fish for two weeks of the year right at the end. When say if the quota wasn't going to get caught you could go and lease quota for \$1 a kilogram and lease some pots and do all right.
Eric Perez:	Okay any other external stakeholders? They're - I guess you could call them internal to an extent as well - your quota and your pot.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	External, for example, some have mentioned government. Do you think they're a key one for you?
Interviewee 4:	Well I guess so, there's a lot of stakeholders in - that are all supported. I call it like the pizza really. It's one great big thing and it's shrunk and we've got more now. We've got management then we've also got the recreationals that are a stakeholder in our fishery. You've also got the science area.
Eric Perez:	So it's recreational fishers, science, government.
Interviewee 4:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 4:	Who else is a stakeholder? You've also got the investor side of it which is increasingly getting bigger.
Eric Perez:	No, that's really good. Okay, look thank you for your time and yeah, that ends the interview, thanks very much.

**APPENDIX 13**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEWS 5A AND 5B (5A - MALE / 5B - FEMALE)**  
**FRIDAY 31 AUGUST, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you decide to start a small business in the wild harvest fisheries?
Interviewee 5a:	Family business, opportunity came up that I could run my own boat so that was the main reason. I got a bit sick of doing what I was doing and - with the welding business and that, so... For me, it's just pretty much the ability to work for yourself and the freedom of that, the lines that that goes down. Be your own boss, pretty much and it's just for the love of it.
Interviewee 5b:	For me, I've been born into the seafood industry and being with my partner and his partner in the business, that's led me down this path as well, but it's an industry that I've got a passion for as well.
Eric Perez:	Yep, great. Secondly, in terms of broad aspirations for the business in 2013, so here I'm asking for looking into the future, maybe, at a least, what are those aspirations for next year? So if 2013 was going to be the year of your business, what things do you want, need to happen or want to happen next year?
Interviewee 5b:	I guess, like, we've invested money in this and so we want to be able to actually come out with some profits and pay off some loans and other personal goals like being able to get a home loan and that sort of thing, basically, which is - I guess that's part of the business, but that's our goal, so we want to be able to sell more to make that happen.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. That's what we say is - yeah, just to be profitable and not go backwards, pretty much. It's just and sustain ourselves.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Yeah. No, that's fine. So what - if I asked you how will you measure your success, is it capacity to pay back a loans, all your loans, some of the loans? What would be a measure of success if you got to the end of 2013, how would you say this was a successful first year or second year for us?
Interviewee 5a:	If - yeah, if we can hold our own and then draw a profit after paying our loans, we'll be happy.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Is - without getting a specific figure, is there a percentage of profit that you guys are aiming for on a regular basis in the business? Is there a margin at which you think is this is profitability? Is it 10 per cent? Is it 20...
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, yeah. Well, we - like I'd say, if we could make 10 to 15 per cent on our outlay to pay our things back, on top of that, if we could make 10 to 15 per cent, we'd be happy.
Eric Perez:	All right. This is your - how - you said that you just recently started a business. How old is the business now. You're six months in? 12 months in?

Interviewee 5a:	Just on 12 months.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So then I can ask you this one, then, can you or will you do anything differently this year than you did last year, so when you first started, you've been on this business journey for 12 months. What do you think you could be doing differently? Or is that not - you're still learning or - I don't know. That's why this question is a bit - if you've got 10 years of being able to say, well, I've changed this, that and the other, but has something come up in the last 12 months that's made you change the way you operate?
Interviewee 5a:	Yes and no. You always have different hurdles, I suppose. Just trying to work around seasons and that and I suppose you try and be more prepared next year, now that we've worked out seasons and try and allow for those.
Interviewee 5b:	I guess, that's the same. Like, just from a managing point of view. Like, I - my goal would be to have more organised bookwork and that sort of thing and I'll change the way, how I manage those - like, the financials of that side of it.
Eric Perez:	So okay, this is leading on to the next question. In both your estimations, and I would like to get both your views on this is what do you feel are the necessary bits of elements of building your business versus maintaining it, so you got into the industry, you said, because you had a passion for it and you said you got into the industry because you've got family connections to it, so to make - to get a - to build a business, what do you think are the building blocks to doing that, in your view?
Interviewee 5a:	Well, obviously hard work comes into it. Just through my experience in the last 12 months, just to keep on track of invoices and things like that and give 120 per cent and hopefully...
Eric Perez:	Okay, so you gave me two answers there. One is the internal as being an important - as much of yourself into the business as you can.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Then, worrying about paying your bills, which is external.
Interviewee 5b:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Are you - do you think you're driven more by the internal factors in the building of the business or external? So you're - the people you owe money to or the weather conditions or the market or the people that you're dealing with or is it more internal? I mean, I know this stuff you don't think about all the time, but that's...
Interviewee 5a:	So when you - can you just clarify by internal, so...
Eric Perez:	Internal the business, so between yourselves as owners of the business, you know, you said to me that's the hard work that you want to put in to build a business, so being able to devote time.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Is there anything else internal to the business? So [unclear] that you need to develop to build the business, so are you looking to do, say,

Eric Perez:	more courses to up your skills in book work or is it to put yourself through other certificates or is it to join industry bodies somewhere or is - you know, that kind of stuff that will help to build it, but it's based around you, not around the external, sort of, business?
Interviewee 5b:	Yeah. Well, obviously, the hard work, but from my point of view, as well, like, trying to become more involved in the association that directly relates to our business and being a part of the wider community to, I guess, gain more knowledge and learn about the industry, so then we can build from that.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so that linkage is an external one. Being able to hook up to your industry body. Do you find that that's going to be important for you?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, absolutely.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, yep.
Eric Perez:	So at the moment, and again, you've said you're 12 months strong. Who's your primary customer?
Interviewee 5b:	[Name of customer withheld]
Eric Perez:	Okay. Are they your only customer? Or one of a few?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. They're one of a few.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 5a:	The major - our major customer.
Eric Perez:	Okay. I won't identify them. Obviously, you've just got the one major.
Interviewee 5b:	Sorry, yep.
Eric Perez:	No, no. That's okay. That's all right.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	That's why you can edit these things when you write them up, so anyway, you'll see a copy of the notes. Who would you say is, without naming them, your best customer and why and I guess, the third part to that is or the second part to that is how do you find more of these best customers?
Interviewee 5b:	I guess - can I answer that one? The customer that we're supplying at the moment is moving forward with - at - in our industry and they are growing and so, they are being able to satisfy that what we can supply, it - they can take, so as we grow, they are growing as well, so we're not necessarily looking for lots of other suppliers, customers. Yep.
Eric Perez:	All right. Now, some of the other interviews that I've had, and they're not in similar fisheries, but they've talked about being beholden to a couple of processes or being beholden to the market, which they supply. That if they market goes to, as they say, to shit, they're in a lot of trouble. Do you guys have a Plan B that if this particular customer that you're talking about where to go bust or were to downsize what they're ordering from you, because they're got a bigger base to order from as - have you considered a Plan B in terms of supply?
Interviewee 5a:	Getting in the process of another - a license to - for a Plan B so that,

Interviewee 5a:	yeah, if that in the...
Eric Perez:	To work that license at the same time as you're doing...
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, absolutely.
Eric Perez:	Okay. All right.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, so if it happens that this supplier goes upside down, you know,
Interviewee 5a:	The - this other fishery we're trying to get into is - there's a wider range of market available, freely available, for those species that are...
Eric Perez:	Okay. This is a relatively new, I guess, what they call probing questions in amongst these. Have you guys got a plan for what you're doing in written form? Or is it something that you guys discuss on an ongoing basis when it comes to managing the business?
Interviewee 5b:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	So is it an ongoing discussion between two partners and I don't mean...
Interviewee 5b:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	...yes, you're together.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	You're a couple, but in terms of a partnership, is it an ongoing conversation or is it something that's written down that you go we've got these goals in mind. This is what we're going to do or is it a bit less formal than that?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. No [unclear] just an ongoing discussion, at the moment.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, obviously in the future, we'd look - if we can look - obviously trying to go forward, but yeah, that's one thing in the future we'll sit down and dot point goals, where we'd like to be in years to come.
Eric Perez:	Okay. I'm curious about that. Would you get someone, like, a third party that's got experience in business building to talk to you or is it just something that you'd just do on your own?
Interviewee 5a:	No, it's - we're looking for insight. Anyone that could - would be able to help or if we could be - come to arrangement with someone that was - could be a third party.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Absolutely.
Eric Perez:	What are your views on that? No? Yes?
Interviewee 5b:	Yeah. Like, I know just starting up in the business cycle [unclear] move on to, like, we haven't gone to a financial planner, but we've had discussions with an accountant and that sort of thing.
Eric Perez:	Right, okay.
Interviewee 5b:	As far as, like, well, do you recommend a loan for this or paying this out or how - you know? Just those - that again, I'm coming back to financial, but certainly we would look at, again, getting a third party opinion to give us a bit of plan and maybe help with some direction if - once the business grows.



Eric Perez:	Okay. Yeah. All right, so - okay, this is, sort of, leads on from all these other questions in terms of decision making process, so what approach or processes do you guys use when making decisions within the business and again, feel free to be as candid as you want here, because some have said, well, I - my last interviewee said, well, my decision is very much impacted by the single supplier, that the single buyer that I've got, plus there market fluctuations for my product. With you guys, how does it work? How do you make your decisions? Is it something that's done together or is it based on the one supplier you've got or do you base your decisions on your market in general? Like, how is that done?
Interviewee 5b:	I think it's on a case to case thing, depending on what the decision is, really.
Eric Perez:	Yep, okay.
Interviewee 5a:	It's normally, just, yeah, but weigh up of the pros and cons and through the 12 months just spend a lot of time - just take a risk and if - go with your best option, what we think is the best option, but yeah, just a general discussion.
Eric Perez:	Yeah. You said, like, it's interesting you use the word risk. Now, how much? Is it always a calculated risk on your part or will you sometimes take a risk and be prepared to take a bit of a hit...
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. No, we've been prepared to take a hit. Like, just getting into the industry, we've translocated and I've left - we've left a good job to have a go at it.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	So it's - yeah, it's sort of...
Eric Perez:	Well, as part of that question 1, then - and to going back to why did you start the business, what role were you doing that you left to start the business or was that the mechanic?
Interviewee 5a:	No. It was - I was contract diving for another company.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	...in aquaculture scene.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, basically, putting 120 per cent for someone to reap the benefits.
Eric Perez:	YWhen you're making these decisions, again, I take your point about it being on a case by case basis, but if you're looking at just from your business, where do you draw your information sources? So are you reliant on your family experience? Is it experience with your former job or a combination of things? What are your trusted sources of information, I guess, to make these decisions?
Interviewee 5a:	I guess, our main one is family. Family orientated through [unclear] family obviously.
Interviewee 5b:	Sometimes we'll talk with our customer and see, like, where the market is going and make a decision based on that information.
Eric Perez:	So it's internal and external.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, absolutely.

Eric Perez:	You mentioned family and that's of interest to me. Do you see them as a sort of non-paid volunteer board that you go to for - to help with decisions or are they - like, do you use them just a sounding board or do you really, they say, look, we suggest you do XYZ and you trust that as their gut instinct or how do you manage that? Because I've guess they've got said views of their fishery given you're saying they're four decades, four generations in. How do you guys deal with that kind of feedback? Is it always constructive or you just do what you want anyway? Or - how does that work?
Interviewee 5a:	We tend to take some of it on board, obviously and not just listen to old people that they have [unclear] they've been through it. Done this and time has changed and so we take their views on it and see, well, yeah, if this is like - yeah, we're looking into the future and well, is there where we want to be or do we just follow them? No, we don't follow them all the time. No.
Interviewee 5b:	Having - my father's 67 and so he's been a fisherman, probably, since the age of 14 or 15 or something like that.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay.
Interviewee 5b:	Because he has been in the industry so long and seen a lot of rules and regulations change, he's very cynical about this industry. So I mean, he's very supportive and wants us to go forward, but has - there's been a lot of precaution, so he's said there are lots of risk, but despite that, we've still - move forward with following this.
Eric Perez:	All right. Yep. No, that's good. All right, so going back to the business environment, as well as focusing on your business, I guess, who do you believe and I'd like a response from both of you on this in particular is your key stakeholders? Now, I've been breaking this up in questions to fishermen in terms of internal stakeholders and external, so you've identified your family as an internal stakeholder and that's just technical talk to people you trust.  Are there more of those networks that - do you have colleagues or friends that you talk to in the business? Have you created other internal stakeholders that you talk to?  Is that - like, do you talk to your parents or do you talk to friends that are still in the industry, but not - don't have their own business? Like...
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, I do know a lot of people - and I'm starting to meet a lot more and other people that you can look to and - for advice for as sort of being in the industry or have still got something to do with it, as far as that and they're always - yeah, from what I can gather so far, they're always willing to lend a hand.
Eric Perez:	Because your business is new to this sector, have you guys looked at other businesses to mentor or people to mentor to you guys at any stage? Because it has been mentioned the literature that sometimes mentoring is a way to get the business to move forward from people

Eric Perez:	who have been there and done that. Is that something you've considered?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, well, there's certainly - we're beginning to meet more people in the same industry with small businesses. It might only be a partnership, but that we've talked to and they've offered a lot of advice and from me, I've participated in a program where I've now got a lot of people that I can draw on for mentoring and this business advice and that sort of thing or things like that.
Eric Perez:	Yep. Okay, so that sort of takes care of that internal group. External stakeholders influencing your business. Now, most of the fishermen have indicated government. Is it just government as the key external? Or do you have others that influence you? Like, do your buyers influence you in a big way? The people you sell to? Is your customer a big external stakeholder?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. Yeah, well, they pretty much govern when we - when I go to work and when I don't go to work, so...
Eric Perez:	Fair enough. So in terms of people that do buy off you, how extensive is that network? You've got one key buyer. Do you have restaurants or lots of smaller players that have come for your product or is that something you're still building?
Interviewee 5b:	That's something we'd be still building. We've mainly, sort of, got other wholesalers.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5b:	Or just a couple of other wholesalers on the mainland that we would be able to sell to.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so you've got wholesalers in the State, as well as...
Interviewee 5b:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...on the main - other States?
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Interviewee 5b:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Okay. No. That's good. Okay, so let's look in the looking glass here, in terms of issues facing a business and I've broken this up into short, medium and long term. The next one to six months, what are the key issues you think are facing you guys as a business? Again, be as candid as you want to be.
Interviewee 5b:	Probably financially.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 5b:	Like, financial - like, particularly like that that has been the result of government fees, I guess, so because of that, we're confident that we'll be okay, but I think that's an issue that, like, just because we've had a reasonable outlay of money, just making sure that we can get that back in soon to...
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 5b:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	In the next 12 to 24 months or year to two years from now?
Interviewee 5a:	Hopefully be still going. That's - yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Yep. No, that's fine.

Interviewee 5a:	At this stage in our business, we've - yeah, just if we can aim and we can still be going and still being successful, that will be...
Eric Perez:	Just stay viable.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	What about beyond that? So more than two years and in that one, some have mentioned the marine park process that's happening around the country. Is that going to impact your business at all?
Interviewee 5a:	Well, the industry that we're involved in, the main industry we're involved in is - how do I put it?
Interviewee 5b:	Are you talking about the security of the resources? Like, if the...
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. It's - I don't know.
Interviewee 5b:	Because it's a new...
Interviewee 5a:	A new species that has started to be harvested in our state and...
Interviewee 5b:	The certainty of the biomass, I guess.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so long term is the stock.
Interviewee 5a:	Yep.
Interviewee 5b:	Yeah, the stock assessments and...
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	...how it all pans out as far as that goes.
Eric Perez:	How long does it take for these things to reach a harvestable size? Do they grow quick?
Interviewee 5b:	This is all research that's been carried out now, because it's mainly...
Eric Perez:	You don't know?
Interviewee 5a:	No.
Eric Perez:	Wow. Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah. No, it's new. It's...
Eric Perez:	Well, that's pretty scary then. That's a very big risk.
Interviewee 5b:	That's for one species under our - under the industry, the other species are okay. However, like they - there's not a huge return from those other species, hence why earlier on, we mentioned that we've also purchased as a business another license as a Plan B.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, yep. No, I got that. Well, that's the end of the formal questions. Now, there's one lot of questions that I've got here that - what they call using a SWOT analysis. Are you guys familiar with that from a business point of view?
Interviewee 5b:	No.
Eric Perez:	SWOT analysis? Okay, it's an acronym that stands for - that's all right. Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats, so to - a way to look at your business by looking at what the strengths and weaknesses internal to the business that you guys need to be worried about, versus the opportunities and threat in the environment in which you work. Now, in terms of business strength, you guys have mentioned that you've got family to fall back on to help you with your planning in your business. Any other business strengths that you think you've got there that are - are going to assist you to grow and to manage the business?

Interviewee 5b:	I think just our personal determination and the passion that we've - like, the drive that we've got to make this work.
Eric Perez:	Any weaknesses? As it's not weaknesses as in you guys don't have the capacity to do what it is that you're doing. Is finance a potential weakness? Is market volatility a potential weakness, as in the export market for your key species, is that under threat at all or is fairly steady market? Like...
Interviewee 5b:	It's pretty steady, I guess, going back to just that previous question the goals. Like, maybe, the security of the stock levels could potentially be a weakness, but not at this point.
Interviewee 5a:	In the foreseeable future.
Interviewee 5b:	Not an immediate weakness.
Eric Perez:	Because that's also that's also a threat, as well. The external environment. If the powers that be come back and say that biomass is shit, then you guys don't have a fishery. Is that pretty much it? Or they'll restrict what you [do]?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, it's hard to say what they'll do, because the particular species is pretty much devastating our coastlines at the same time, so it's a little bit up in the air, whether - how they'll go about it. The fish have got to be removed, because it's creating a huge issue...
Interviewee 5b:	So the - your primary - this primary fishery, it's a pest as well as a saleable product.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Opportunities. What do you see as business opportunities? Because [if] you guys have got [anything] - you've got a passion to do what you want to do and you're optimistic about the future. Put 100 per cent behind it, but are there other opportunities that you guys have seen that you want to get out, but that's for later or haven't thought that far yet?
Interviewee 5b:	Not really, but I - I guess, that for me, it's providing opportunities of experience and networking all around. Like, I mentioned with the associations and that sort of thing, it might provide, eventually, maybe, other employment opportunities or an aside thing.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Finally, threats other than the biomass thing that that's probably the key threat facing you in terms of your primary fishery?
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah, absolutely. To not get eaten by a shark.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so there are physical threats to the work that you do.
Interviewee 5a:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 5a:	But yeah, it's only very minimal, so...
Interviewee 5b:	There's, like, two.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, apart from the biomass issue, it's really - the industry is, our particular industry, is only strengthening, so as far as the rest of our species, it's only getting better the last few years, so... Thank you both for your time and yeah, cheers.
Interviewee 5a:	No worries.
Interviewee 5b:	Thanks.

**APPENDIX 14**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 6**  
**FRIDAY 31 AUGUST, 2012**

Eric Perez:	I might start by asking you, why did you choose the seafood industry to operate a small business?
Interviewee 6:	The seafood industry probably chose me. I was seeking a lifestyle that read not so much dollar or economically driven just a lifestyle choice.
Eric Perez:	In terms of your business as it's been in 2012, what are your aspirations or your goals for your business in 2013?
Interviewee 6:	I guess in any business you're trying to grow your business and become more commercially viable or profitable.
Eric Perez:	How will you measure that in terms of your progress for next year? What measure do you use to test for the one year's been better than another?
Interviewee 6:	I guess my checkpoint generally is sitting with my wife doing my Business Activity Statement at the end of each quarter is a really good indicator for me.
Eric Perez:	That's come up in a couple of the interviews. Do you consider yourself... back to the question about partnerships or sole trading; a lot of the interviewees have talked about having their wife in the business so that they're more partnership than sole trader. What do you consider your business statute out...
Interviewee 6:	Mine's more a partnership.
Eric Perez:	What things are you doing differently or have you done anything differently from last year in terms of your business this year? Has there been a significant change?
Interviewee 6:	No, not dramatically, no.
Eric Perez:	If it did, what area would you change, if you had the capacity?
Interviewee 6:	I guess in our fishery you've got a locked in price, so the way to gain profitability is through efficiencies.
Eric Perez:	This one flows from that previous question is, what do you believe in terms of your business are the necessary elements to build the business and then maintain it? So if you looked at a set of factors for each of those, so building it as opposed to maintaining it, what do you see as the building elements of the business?
Interviewee 6:	I guess the key aspect of building our business is better marketing and market exposure.
Eric Perez:	In terms of maintenance?
Interviewee 6:	Again, maintenance is probably just - we target fairly small niche markets with high quality product not big volume, so that the maintenance is just keeping that quality, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Does quality mean you deal in dead product or is it live product?
Interviewee 6:	Both, yeah.
Eric Perez:	So tell me, without naming your customer, who's your primary customer? Are they a chain of other wholesalers, is it a particular market or is it individual?

Interviewee 6:	Yeah, predominantly wholesalers.
Eric Perez:	Are they international or Australian based?
Interviewee 6:	Australian based.
Eric Perez:	Who would you - how would you characterise who you describe as your best customers and how could you find more of them, if that was possible?
Interviewee 6:	Well, I guess we have our key wholesalers that we deal with and then we branch a little bit into dealing directly with some of the better restaurants just locally or whatever and that's your opportunity to grow your margin and make things a bit profitable, is skip out the middle man.
Eric Perez:	Restaurants as in local or interstate as well?
Interviewee 6:	No, no, mainly locally.
Eric Perez:	So that talks about some of the business aspects. In terms of the process you use to make your decisions within the business, what drives your decision-making process when you've got to make a call on an issue in the business? Do you use market data; do you use your intuition? Is it a combination of your experiences? Do you rely on other people?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Who do you feel are your key stakeholders influencing the business and by that I mean, breaking that onto internal stakeholders and then your external stakeholders, so in your business who are the key people that you deal with?
Interviewee 6:	Well, I guess more important than myself is my wife, doing the administration side and whatever else I guess. Your accountant he's definitely a key stakeholder in the business.
Eric Perez:	What about externally?
Interviewee 6:	Externally, you've got your markets and obviously your employee, your deckhand or whatever and like I said, that network of other fishermen, their dealings with their markets and network as well.
Eric Perez:	What about government, is that a stakeholder externally that you have a lot to do with or have interactions with?
Interviewee 6:	I have a lot of government interactions through the other sites of our business but generally a day-to-day basis of running a small fishing part of my business we have very little government interaction.
Eric Perez:	So here's into the looking glass into the future. What do you see as the issues facing your business within the next one to six months?
Interviewee 6:	I guess for all seafood in different degrees the market and the market prices and everything are driven by export and the availability of the producers to be able to export. At the moment they're in fair crisis sort of thing with their export trade and that does generally filter down into the domestic supply as well. You'll get gluts and over-supply of different species into the market that will affect and reflect in...
Eric Perez:	So what's that crisis thing you talk about at the moment?
Interviewee 6:	There's no trade between this State and Asia with their more iconic or higher value fisheries, so then domestically you'll see a glut of a

Interviewee 6:	product in the market that obviously ends up reflecting in the price or lower prices. Inadvertently that will...
Eric Perez:	Shift down somehow.
Interviewee 6:	Yeah, it will filter down, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Let's look a bit further out, 12 to 24 months, so one to two years from now?
Interviewee 6:	Again, it's a fairly unusual time, especially for us in the north-east where we are the global hotspot of ocean temperature rising and acidification and there's so many X factors or unknown quantities that are coming with that. The sizes aren't sure. We're seeing a lot of - well, the range extension of a lot of species into our waters. So I guess you'll see fisheries or species - fishery species that were predominantly New South Wales sort of fisheries, will start emerging here as well.
Eric Perez:	Like? Have you got any examples?
Interviewee 6:	Well, we've got an interest in the sea urchins. Last year we had big commercial catches of yellow tail king fish. We're starting to have little fledgling snapper fisheries, stuff like that, that aren't traditional fisheries.
Eric Perez:	In the north of the State?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	So who's providing you with this information that you've got this where the hotspot in the north of - of the same, is that...
Interviewee 6:	Well, by CSIRO basically, it's the south-eastern part of Australia but in particular the north-east where the temperature at Maria Island's been monitored nearly longer than anywhere else in the southern hemisphere.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so they've got good data there.
Interviewee 6:	They've got really good data and we're warming at 3.8 times the global average.
Eric Perez:	It's a fairly specific number.
Interviewee 6:	Yes, like I said there's a lot of...
Eric Perez:	So the CSIRO has been there for a while, do they do a lot of work with the commercial fishing businesses to tell them what the potential impacts are, or are you gearing to be fishing in a different species? so you go after yellow...
Interviewee 6:	Yellow tail kingfish. People are gearing up now to - like, the other side of our business is processing, see interest there for the sea urchins and getting export ready for them, so that's basically based around a range extension. Yeah, the CSIRO in conjunction with Ocean Watch ran a project...
Eric Perez:	So that's an opportunity then that in that one to two year gap you might see new fisheries being created because of that change in weather and you'll exploit that as a...
Interviewee 6:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Great, okay. Well, let's look beyond two years then. so climate change is one of the things or a changing climate is impacting in that sort of medium term. Anything long term that you see trending



Eric Perez:	at the moment?
Interviewee 6:	I guess about - for all fisheries, not only us, is governance and over-governance.
Eric Perez:	What do you mean by over-governance?
Interviewee 6:	What do I mean by over-governance?
Eric Perez:	Too much regulation is what you mean there?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	I'm sorry being facetious here, you mean too much regulation?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah, over regulated and high amounts of unnecessary reporting and stuff like that. It fits some models but not all of them.
Eric Perez:	As an exporter are you bound not only by State fisheries management rules but do you have export rules as well? Does Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) come in...
Interviewee 6:	We have to be AQIS certified, local government certified, State Government certified.
Eric Perez:	In Queensland there's not much, or any local government. With local government is that to get the permits to sell and have a processing factory in the shire?
Interviewee 6:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	That's what you mean, not a local government doesn't say...
Interviewee 6:	So we have the council...
Eric Perez:	...here's a ticket to go out and fish that would be like...
Interviewee 6:	No, no. We have a council health inspector, a state health inspector and a federal health inspector basically doing the same checks on our facilities.
Eric Perez:	So like other states and territories you've got your safe food group that does food safety for the state and regulates you as well?
Interviewee 6:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	How is that done here, because in Queensland, for example, they have four classes of licences that you - fall into series of wild harvest, a processor, or some other category? do you guys have categories that way or is it one fee fits all?
Interviewee 6:	No, no, no. There are lots more...
Eric Perez:	Lots of fees.
Interviewee 6:	Yeah, high risk, low risk, medium risk. Then obviously some of our product is by-valves and ready to eat products, so that takes you into high risk and a lot of other hurdles.
Eric Perez:	Ready to eat products, things like oysters?
Interviewee 6:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	They're high risk are they?
Interviewee 6:	Yes, yes, because they're a by-valve, so they're - because they're ready to eat and if so bacteria never gets a chance to be cooked out. They're not brought to 65 or 70 degrees or whatever the magic number is so if we had - if they compromise that product with bacteria or...
Eric Perez:	So then the safety systems and traceability is a big deal for that kind of product. so if you sell to me, I'm Joe Blogs, I buy 200 oysters and I sell them but I've kept them in the sun for two days and I've

Eric Perez:	put them out for sale and they've gone bad, then they need to be able to trace where it came from to see whether you're at fault or whether I'm at fault?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah, in a massive cold chain requirements or whatever else, yeah and all traceability.
Eric Perez:	So that's where this over-governance comes into...
Interviewee 6:	Well, like I said, you've got the local government, the council health inspector, the state health inspector...
Eric Perez:	Plus all the fishery staff.
Interviewee 6:	...the federal health inspector plus your fishery staff.
Eric Perez:	Why a federal one, because you guys deal in...
Interviewee 6:	AQIS, well they're not AQIS. AQIS doesn't exist anymore its DAF Bio-Security.
Eric Perez:	Have AQIS been done away with?
Interviewee 6:	No, changed their name, yes. Then we have AFMA as well, as state fishery bodies.
Eric Perez:	Geez.
Interviewee 6:	We've probably in the last and again, this is getting away from the smaller operation but we would be in excess of \$40,000 we would have spent in the last three months on compliance.
Eric Perez:	What proportion of that would be for the fishing business, 10 per cent, 20 per cent, 30 per cent, or is that just for the fishing business on its own?
Interviewee 6:	No, well, that's on my small scale fishing - none of that's included in that's all - stands aside that.
Eric Perez:	So that \$40,000 then is really for the bigger picture?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	No, that's fine. so we're almost to the end here, have you heard of the acronym swot before, s-w-o-t?
Interviewee 6:	I have.
Eric Perez:	It's not a test. What it stands for is strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It's a way to analyse your business using those four as a pillar to examine the business. so without going into a three hour intervention on this, if strengths and weaknesses are internal to the business, what can you offhand list as the strengths that you see in your fishing business as it stands at the moment?
Interviewee 6:	Well, I believe our greatest strength is operating here in Tassie in a clean, green, disease-free environment. That's one of our greatest strengths. We have a very marketable product, that's getting more and more attention, not only nationally but internationally. There's detectable radiation, or whatever, from nuclear plants and whatever through the northern hemisphere. That good clean image is becoming more and more important. I guess our other strength at a state level is that with that over-regulation or whatever we do have fairly strict quota managed fisheries. Hopefully there's enough science and enough regulation that we're very sustainable and we will have fisheries into the future.
Eric Perez:	What about some weaknesses that you can see and this is again

Eric Perez:	internal to the business?
Interviewee 6:	I guess my greatest weakness is in every year the importance of being business minded and business savvy and running the administration side of your business becomes more and more important and if there are not many educated or qualified fishermen in those areas - we all fly more by the seat of our pants sort of thing. I'm not saying - it's worked to date for most operators but I can see fast coming the times when there's going to be casualties of that that are...
Eric Perez:	So let's look at the external environment, so opportunities.
Interviewee 6:	Opportunities?
Eric Perez:	For example, is there a potential to grow your export markets to other areas that you've not thought...
Interviewee 6:	Yes, definitely.
Eric Perez:	...about you looking at that kind of thing?
Interviewee 6:	Yes, yes. No, we are looking further afield, away from the more traditional Asian markets. We're entertaining an inquiry from Dubai at the moment, yes, so that's really exciting.
Eric Perez:	Wow.
Interviewee 6:	I guess their needs, that focus through our industry needs to be pushed, I believe.
Eric Perez:	Finally threats.
Interviewee 6:	Well, going back around I guess just the uncertainty of global warming, whether you believe in it or not but the changing environment that we're in.
Eric Perez:	This is based on the geography of where your business is.
Interviewee 6:	The acceleration of that change.
Eric Perez:	In terms of an opportunity, just because it was covered a lot in other interviews, I thought I'd give you a chance to speak to this. Would you move your business, if it got too difficult, because of the change in climate? Are there any other areas of the State that you could use your trade, or is geographically where you are, is where you need to be?
Interviewee 6:	Yeah, at this point definitely, yeah. But I guess - I don't know.
Eric Perez:	I guess there's a difference between do you want to versus could you and if you could if you had to?
Interviewee 6:	No, you could. We could relocate if we had to, yes, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Thanks for your time. That's the end of the interview.
Interviewee 6:	Cool.
Eric Perez:	Cheers.

**APPENDIX 15**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 7**  
**SATURDAY 1 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate your small business?
Interviewee 7:	I probably followed on from my father being a fisherman. So, I worked outside the industry for 12 months after leaving school, and then really the reason I went fishing was the money in the end. Well, since after world war two. My grandfather, he was a builder, but he went fishing. then my father, he sort of fell into it because it was just there. Well, his father passed away, so there was a boat to run, and dad ran that from when he was 15. So, out of five sons, there are three of us that are involved in fishing.
Eric Perez:	Yes, that's great. In terms of your business aspirations for 2013, if I asked you what are they, do you have any aspirations for next year?
Interviewee 7:	Well, at the moment, the way the markets are, I think it's more - the main goal is to survive and hang in there, because I feel that there will be less people next year. as you know, the industry goes in cycles, and you've got to ride out the lows. Just at the moment, we seem to be struggling to get rid of our product, and we're also coming in at a period of low lease prices into a period of high lease prices and low beach prices. so, there's not much left over in the way of ready bucks.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So in terms of measuring your progress, it would be just to get your market sorted for next year - would that be the measure of a better year?
Interviewee 7:	The measure of a better year is actually, you know, taking a little bit off your principle of all your loans. at the moment, as I said, I'm going through a separation, so it's sort of balancing that with the business, and we've had access problems into Asia with our product at the moment, with the tariffs and that. The government was supposed to negotiate a free trade arrangement over seven or eight years ago - that's a non-event.
Eric Perez:	Still nothing. Okay. Is there a reason for that?
Interviewee 7:	Well, they just - what do you think? They're just not hard enough.
Eric Perez:	Yes, okay. No, fair enough. All right, so - and I've asked this of a few interviewees prior to coming in to speaking with you, about - and this is about this same question here. Do you have a Plan b? If the fishery doesn't recover next year, can you survive by going into another fishery, or would you do something else while the market recovers?
Interviewee 7:	Probably downsize, if anything. As I said, I've got two boats. One of them is currently on the market, but I'm not optimistic that we'd recover - that I'd get the price that I would deem a suitable price.
Eric Perez:	So, that'd be the Plan b at the moment, just to survive and see where it's going.
Interviewee 7:	You know, I'm very optimistic about the future of the stocks. It's

Interviewee 7:	just the frustration of market access, and sort of other people on the side – the fringe dwellers, as a few of us call them - poking their noses in where they're not wanted.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes. So can you or will you do - this is the question - can you or will you do anything differently from last year? Do you have the capacity to do anything differently?
Interviewee 7:	Work harder, and probably try and maintain our place, if not try and expand a bit.
Eric Perez:	So, you'd be prepared to take a risk of running a third boat, or...
Interviewee 7:	No, just sort of utilise the two that we've got a little bit better. I've been coasting probably for the last two years, partly because of markets and partly because of my relationship status.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes. I understand that. All right, so the next question, question four, is, what do you believe are the necessary elements to build the business and then maintain the business?
Interviewee 7:	Well, you've got to be looking ahead. I've always - you know, when I started off, I moved to the State from South Australia in 1990, because it was sort of the last frontier. I was sort of aware of, you know, restructures of industry, so I got in and worked hard while I could, built it up - built it up too well, because we ended up - my brother decided he wanted to go fishing, so we went through family succession planning and helped him get started in it. So, you've got to be aware of what lies ahead, or try and guess what lies ahead, so that becomes - you know, you use your resources to research, you know, online, or attend meetings.
Eric Perez:	So, that's how you maintain the business, by keeping abreast of what's happening across the...
Interviewee 7:	Yes, keep the finger on the pulse. I've been a director of the seafood industry council down here. director - well, I was president of it, too.
Eric Perez:	You were Mr X's boss at one stage?
Interviewee 7:	I was. Actually; Mr X was on the board with me before I was president there. I was on ASIC when that was still functioning, at the same time.
Eric Perez:	The national body? Okay. That's kind of like what the national seafood industry alliance is now?
Interviewee 7:	Yes, yes.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 7:	It was a little bit - probably had a little bit more fangs, but not enough. That was - you know, how that went by the wayside was sad, but yes, money. You know, you can't have your CEO running around putting things on his own private credit card, so...
Eric Perez:	Fair enough.
Interviewee 7:	Embarrassing.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Who is your primary customer?
Interviewee 7:	The end customer, or...
Eric Perez:	Yes, some - you could look at it a few ways. Some of the ways it has been responded to is either the market, and I guess the Chinese

Eric Perez:	market is your primary...
Interviewee 7:	Well, 86 per cent of our product goes to Asia. As to - and that's supplied by buyers here locally. I...
Eric Perez:	So, your primary customers are your buyers, really, that move your product on?
Interviewee 7:	Yes, and I used to try and stick to one or maybe two for loyalty, but there's no loyalty anywhere now, so I've become a bit of a slut. So, I've just...
Eric Perez:	Ok.
Interviewee 7:	I'll go where the dollars are best.
Eric Perez:	Yes, fair enough.
Interviewee 7:	Service comes into it, too.
Eric Perez:	I guess you've helped answer the question six, of who are your best customers - that's not really an issue for you, because you shop around to get the best.
Interviewee 7:	Well, we have to, now. When the margins are so - you know, they're down so much, yes, you really have to shop around. Every dollar counts.
Eric Perez:	One question I haven't asked the others, and it sort of springs to mind now, is, can commercial fishermen in your fishery become buyers into the Asian market, or do you have to be - you have to have associations in Asia?
Interviewee 7:	...Asian market?
Eric Perez:	Yes.
Interviewee 7:	I looked into it - like, with Mr X and Mr Y, where they are set up, I was one of the family people there with them. there, again, you know, relationship issues put paid to that. but having watched what they're going through, yes, it is possible, but you can't fish and be doing that - and being a buyer at the same time, I don't think, unless you're really good at your time management, which I'm not. So, that is possible. It's probably easier if you had your own holding facilities, and you could on-sell to the buyers, and you know, more control over letting your quota go and maximising it. Then that's more money that you've got to outlay too, and it's another risk that you've got to take.
Eric Perez:	Okay. All right, so we'll move away from that series of questions that we've gone through now to looking at how you make decisions in your business. so, do you have a process? Do you take an approach when you make your decisions within the business? Is there a particular formula you use, or is it as an ad hoc type thing, as they...
Interviewee 7:	I try and be proactive, and read what's going to happen within the next 12 months. I guess I didn't see the global financial crises (GFC) coming, but we were lucky there, once, because we had just got our own self-managed super fund, and we had just sold off a heap of shares and had the cash sitting there when everything went pear-shaped. But it's hard at the moment because of the issues getting the product into Asia, and that's where the top dollar is. Then, if

Interviewee 7:	you try and - I mean, the local market can take some, but when you're competing with other states, and other states with different products, you know, they try and screw you down too. So, it's a bit of a gamble more than anything, and you can only - it's about risk minimisation.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so that's the approach you live by?
Interviewee 7:	At the moment.
Eric Perez:	Again, you're getting a step ahead of me, mate. In terms of decision-making and where you draw your information, you say it's a market thing? It's...
Interviewee 7:	You keep an eye on your markets, you be aware of what your governments are thinking - like private industries, you know. They're looking at zoning the east coast and managing it in two, separately, which in one way I think is a good thing. in another way, you don't know where it's going to stop. But as I say to some people, well, you'll probably get your quote increase on the west coast quicker than if they try to manage the whole state as one.
Eric Perez:	Yes, all right. That's fine. Again, you've led me to the next question, which is, who do you feel are your key stakeholders influencing your business? Now, my earlier interviews sort of split this into internal to the business and external. So, if I asked you, internally, who are the key people in your business?
Interviewee 7:	Well, Mr Z, the skipper that I've got on the bigger boat, he and I talk things through and we started off him fishing the boat, and we've had work through different arrangements varying on him catching something like the quota and then him catching - the trip about, that it started off as where he'd lease quota in, and he paid for the use of the boat. Then I'd go and do a trip and take him as a deckhand, but now what we do is, we - if he goes and catches two tonne of fish, we split it.  Say, well, a tonne of that was mine and a tonne of that was his, he pays me out of his tonne for the boat and pays his expenses, and I take my half of the expenses out of the other way, and that sort of gives us a reasonable amount coming in steadily, instead of one big hit and then wait, wait, wait, wait, and then another bit hit, sort of thing. so, it's steadier. so, he's the primary one. I talk to my ex-wife about some of the things, but she's very conservative. but the main person I try and keep happy is Mr Z.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes. So, external stakeholders that influence your business? That can range from government to other commercial fishermen to associations.
Interviewee 7:	Look, I was active in a lot of the associations, but I've just sort of eased back for the last couple of years a little bit, to try and sort out where I'm going. But I do attend meetings regularly. I keep in touch with; you know, the movers and shakers, so to speak. I guess you try and influence other people's thinking, you know, just by communicating with them. I have a bit to do with, you know, the

Interviewee 7:	scientists - we work in with them a lot.
Eric Perez:	CSIRO and...
Interviewee 7:	IMAS.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's the...
Interviewee 7:	It used to be TAFI.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so IMAS is the institute for marine...
Interviewee 7:	Institute for marine and Antarctic studies.
Eric Perez:	...studies. okay, yes.
Interviewee 7:	So, we do a lot of work for them, or with them - you know, like, take surveys, and...
Eric Perez:	Do you do work for them?
Interviewee 7:	We have.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So, there's another way you diversify your income?
Interviewee 7:	Well, yes.
Eric Perez:	Is it lucrative, though?
Interviewee 7:	No, it's not. They want it for nothing, and it can lead to stepping on people's toes when you tell them to get stuffed.
Eric Perez:	Yes, but you're trying to run a business.
Interviewee 7:	Well, you're trying to run a business and work in with them too, and of course, a lot of the time, they want stuff down when you're trying to catch a goodly amount, when the fish are catchable. so...
Eric Perez:	The next three questions - and these are all interlinked, so the first one being, what are the issues in your business? What are the issues facing your business in the short term, and by that, I mean between the next month and six months, critical issues?
Interviewee 7:	A critical issue will be access into the overseas market, and price - the high Australian dollar, which isn't helping. It doesn't help break into new markets, anyway. Probably local issues such as, you know, they're going to cut the quota, or what are they going to do, or bring in the...
Eric Perez:	So, management changes?
Interviewee 7:	That could be up to 12 months away, too.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so that's my next one - the next one to two years?
Interviewee 7:	Well, access to quota. That will be the primary one, and fishing grounds.
Eric Perez:	Yes, and beyond two years, do you see any issues? But like, for example...
Interviewee 7:	Well, beyond two years, you'd be - certainly, to climate change. Still market access - who will go out and find the new markets? I think a lot of our buyers - I wouldn't call them processers, because they don't process, but the fish buyers - I think they sit back waiting for the phone, although one or two are getting a bit more proactive. But in the past, well, I think there are some that have ties with some of the overseas buyers, and they just tend to sit there and stock up, and they seem to know the market a little bit better. But we do have border issues in Asia. I mean, the fish has been smuggled in for years, and people ignore that, and that has really come home to buyers now.



Eric Perez:	In terms of potential sellers for your product, do you go through businesses like the seafood - central fish markets, or for example, the local - is there a Hobart fish market, is there a...
Interviewee 7:	No, there's not. there was a move to maybe look into that- there was a development down at the Hobart wharfs. When things have got really tight, we've sat down at the wharf and sold them off the wharf.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay.
Interviewee 7:	You don't want to do that. The last thing you want to do after 10 days at sea is to come in and be sitting there putting up with people going, they're too dear, or whatever. You know, but it has come to that.
Eric Perez:	Because it's a high-end product, I mean, there's examples in New South Wales and Queensland where selling off the boat is a lifestyle choice for some of these guys. But do you think the public's expectation of your product, because it's a premium one, that they'll pay a bit more for it, but not too much more?
Interviewee 7:	At times - when people come down, the best way to market and sell them off the wharf is actually to weigh it and put a price on it. Like, a piece rate, really, instead of - if you say to someone, it's \$50 a kilo, they seem to think it's \$50 a cray, where it's probably \$30. Once you explain that, a lot of people are happy.
Eric Perez:	What kind of weight is a full-grown cray?
Interviewee 7:	The average cray that we catch is probably about 650, 0.65 of a kilo. But you know, some people like the small ones, and you'd be surprised how many people want the big ones.
Eric Perez:	Yes. I was told, with your industry, that the product can be very fickle in that - if, say, for example, an octopus got in, in a trap with the crayfish, they'll actually drop their legs. Is that correct?
Interviewee 7:	They can. The octopus is more likely to rip them off.
Eric Perez:	Rip them off? Yes.
Interviewee 7:	Yes. I wouldn't say they've dropped their legs because of that. Maybe if they were dropped into a pot of boiling water, they'll shoot their legs. But I mean, the Western Australia product, they - get them in the wind, and they'll shoot their legs off. so...
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 7:	It is a premium product, and it's very - it's a hardy product, apart from certain times of the year when the new shell will run, or soft shell run.
Eric Perez:	But as far as you're concerned, the domestic price you'll get for it is nothing compared to what you'll get by exporting it?
Interviewee 7:	The gap is closing a little bit, because the export price is coming down and the domestic price, you can push people a little bit, because a lot of the other - their other choices of food, like lamb and that, are up to \$30 a kilo anyway, or steak, or whatever.
Eric Perez:	Yes. Okay, so that is a nice way to round off the formal questions. This is just a little activity that I've been doing with each of the participants. have you heard of the acronym SWOT?

Interviewee 7:	SWOT, yes.
Eric Perez:	You've done it? Okay. so, strengths and weaknesses being internal, and opportunities and threats being external to the business - you've gone through a few, so in terms of strengths, you've said that you've got two boats, you've got crew for the boats, and you've got a part-time accountant to help you with your books. apart from the human resource strength, are there any other strengths in your business?
Interviewee 7:	Let's see. There's certainly good personnel and training, are handy, but we've got a good product. That's strength, and that has sort of kept us hanging in there. We've got good management systems in place, but there again; we still have issues ahead of us. you know, probably looking out three or more years, and things we have to deal with. I guess it's getting that culture of change, and being proactive and meeting things instead of being reactive, which is always the case with fishermen. you know, that's a learning thing that you try and get through.
Eric Perez:	So, there's a weakness there, if I may - maybe not in your business, but...
Interviewee 7:	Well, we're reactive, yes.
Eric Perez:	In terms of your own business, could you identify maybe one or two weaknesses that you see there?
Interviewee 7:	Access to quota, on top of - like, we own quota, but we also lease a lot of quota in, because of the cuts and that. I guess we've had a 28 per cent cut over the last two, two and a half years - well, coming to two years. But we're really starting to notice that now, because, you know, we've lost over two tonne of quota. That's, at an average price of, say, \$40, there's \$80,000 out of your turnover each year, which affects - see, well, that's \$8,000 one guy earns less a year, and that. So, that's one weakness, is the access to quota, to keep your turnover up. That's why we'll lose boats out of the industry, because there's less pie to share around.
Eric Perez:	Yes, okay. So, that's internal. Let's look at external - so, opportunities. What do you see as opportunities? So, if I go back to those other questions in terms of, say, short, medium and long term, do you see opportunities there? The way some people have responded to this question is, even if their primary market goes bad, that they've got some other option, which they're considering moving to something else. But it's always a risk. Is that easy for you guys to do as public...
Interviewee 7:	I can't see that happening. There's nothing you'll earn the money out of. All other fisheries have been cut and cut and cut. We've been denied access to different - you know, through marine park processes, and I can see that being ongoing. Look, you know, that's...
Eric Perez:	So, I'll identify that as a threat as well, then?
Interviewee 7:	That's a threat.
Eric Perez:	Yes.
Interviewee 7:	You know, and the - you know, and it limits your access to the

Interviewee 7:	resource. yes, other weaknesses - well, I think we've got a good industry, but it's just our biggest weakness is our marketing, and not having balls enough - or the government not having balls enough to help us with the free trade agreement. But...
Eric Perez:	So, that's an opportunity, then, that it - they - that...
Interviewee 7:	Well, that's an opportunity there, but also, you know, the Asian business - we do rely on that market very heavily, because it's a huge market.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So, when you say marketing, and - okay, you've only got really one very big - if you're saying 85 per cent of your product gets exported. who do you feel and I've asked this only once before, and the answer was a bit mixed - but who do you believe is responsible for that marketing effort? Is it industry, is it government, or is it government and industry, is it a partnership approach?
Interviewee 7:	I'd say the best way would be through partnership, but every time the industry has tried to do things with the government - and when I say the industry, I mean the wild catch part of it, not the buying side of it - they seem to sit back and let us take the pain and fork out. If there is any benefit, they've reaped it, but it has been minimal, I mean.  It will maybe go pick up for a while, and then, you know, it gets dragged back down. I noticed just lately, like, even before when the property prices have been down, the buyers seem to get their margin. But at the moment, they've been pushed on their margin, and all of a sudden, they want to start working together. You know, you just get a little bit cynical about it.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yes.
Interviewee 7:	So, that's there again.
Eric Perez:	So, the threat being the change coming through, that it's - in your estimation, that it's commercial fishermen that take the first big hit, and then possibly others like your...
Interviewee 7:	Well, we can only try. You've got to - the buyers that we deal with here have got to be more proactive and more honest and open, instead of riding along on the coat-tails and...
Eric Perez:	That's an opportunity, yes.
Interviewee 7:	...being sort of [unclear], you know, because they've been in the slipstream a little bit. I think they get protected a little bit, and as if said, they've worked on a set margin on top of - so, they get their money regardless in the past, but now they've been pushed back a little bit and they're starting to feel it. So...
Eric Perez:	Okay. They want to change the way that they do business. Okay, and that's it for the interview, so thank you very much.
Interviewee 7:	My pleasure.

**APPENDIX 16**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 8**  
**SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you choose a seafood industry to operate a small business?
Interviewee 8:	I think it chose me a little bit. My dad used to be a fisherman for a while there, but it's just something I've always loved to do, so.
Eric Perez:	Okay, next one, next question, what are your broad aspirations for your business for 2013. So what's the big ticket item that you want to see next year, if you had a looking glass into next year?
Interviewee 8:	Well a bit more stability would be nice.
Eric Perez:	By stability you mean?
Interviewee 8:	Just to know where our licences are at and where the government's at with more closures and stuff like that and all this sort of stuff.
Eric Perez:	Okay so what do you think you'll measure to track your - that progress? So you want definitive changes from government or you just want what you're saying, just more stability from...
Interviewee 8:	Oh we just need stability. We need to be able to walk outside the door of the house and know we can operate in the boundaries that we operate in, day in day out, and that's it. Not wonder oh well, okay, well you know, if two dugongs wash up dead or some, through no accident of ours, but are they going to turn around and want to shut more areas down to us. Everything's a knee jerk reaction from government and everything gets aimed at groups like us because we're in the line of sight. They come down the creek of a night, we're easy to find because we're the ones with the nets in the water with the flashing lights on it. We're not amateurs that are off blocking creeks off and stuff like that, that they can't find. So everything is aimed at us, all the time. So we've got to be very careful with our step and how we operate.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, so can you, or have you done anything differently to how you operated your business from last year?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah we've had some pretty major changes I suppose over the last 12 months or so. We sell a lot of our own product now, I don't unload in town like I used to, to one local buyer. We market all our own product now and we sell through Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay.
Interviewee 8:	So yeah, we've - I suppose we've had a massive change in the last 12 months. We've really enjoyed it, we sort of like being in charge of our own destiny.
Eric Perez:	Okay, no that's great. What do you feel are the necessary elements to build and then maintain the business? So let's say using last year as an example because it changed, any idea of what you did to help build it and now what you need to maintain it?
Interviewee 8:	I suppose to build more we'd probably like to wholesale more and buy off other fishermen; that's one avenue we've sort of thought

Interviewee 8:	about going down. Mostly because a hell of a lot of fishermen are lazy, as in they're not lazy to go out and catch product but they're lazy in marketing. They couldn't care, as long as they can get rid of it and I suppose I'm probably a little bit guilty myself sometimes because you want to turn around and you want to get back on the water. So that's where, with my partner the two of us make a business then where she can help out.
Eric Perez:	Okay so it's a partnership that you've got here, it's just the two of you?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah, oh actually my dad helps out a fair bit with couriering as well. We bought a little car ourselves that we use as a courier vehicle and dad grabs that and he does one or two trips a week for us too.
Eric Perez:	So the maintenance side of things since you've grown is that you've got someone to deliver product into town from here?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	So who's your primary customer, or do you have multiple customers?
Interviewee 8:	Mostly SA central fish market I suppose. But like I say we've now got people in Melbourne and in Brisbane we sell to, so we can sort of see what the market's doing all over the place and we'll chase the best price
Eric Perez:	So you branch out to Brisbane and Melbourne, okay. Who would you say are your best customers and then the second part to that is how can you find more of them?
Interviewee 8:	A lot of its word of mouth, a lot of it's going meeting people. We flew straight down to Sydney when we first started selling to Sydney. Been down to Brisbane to talk to the blokes that I sell to down there and I sell fish in Townsville, so he's pretty knowledgeable and he's been in it for a long time. Yeah sort of talk to him and he gave me a connection in Melbourne and you just sort of branch out that way. A lot of its talking to other fishermen and networking I think.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so here's - in terms of how you run the business then, what process or approach do you take when you make your decisions within the business? Now you've said that you're in a partnership with your wife, how is it that you make your decisions in the business; is it a gut feel, do you use market information, is it a mixture of things?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah it's a bit of a mixture of things I suppose. You do - like I say with your networking you do talk to people and... yeah you do talk to people and find out what other operators are like. If you do happen to sell product to someone that you thinks a bit shonky and that, it doesn't take long to work it out because bad news gets around really quick, so.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, alright. So the next - I guess in relation to that, in terms of decision making, so making your final decision, where do you draw most of your information from to make those decisions?

Eric Perez:	Now why I ask that question is you've sort of given me the background, you use your networks and the people you know, but essentially is it your own experience or when you make that final decision, or is it...
Interviewee 8:	Yeah that'd be - yeah it'd be our own experience. A lot of times you've just got to take the plunge and you trial things. We don't like going into one market, say for instance we pick up a new market somewhere and he says I want 500 kilo a week, or whatever I want, which might be the bulk of what you're catching. So I won't - we usually don't take the plunge and send everything to him, we'll test the water first, so how it goes, see how the payments come through and stuff, because that's a big part of it too.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay so are you constantly chasing money?
Interviewee 8:	Well most of our buyers are really good now. We have one we chase a little bit but that's just the way he operates. He treats us the same as everyone else, he's pretty lax but...
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, well before when we talked about influences on the business, you mentioned government and my next questions about who do you think are the key stakeholders in your business. Now most have answered this in one way by splitting it up into those that influence internal to the business and those that influence external. So if I said to you internally who's the key influencer stakeholder in the business, you've already mentioned your wife as partner, is there anyone else?
Interviewee 8:	No not really.
Eric Perez:	Okay, what about externally?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah well like you say the government's is a massive driving force.
Eric Perez:	No other groups, you probably [unclear] for you?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah we don't sort of have a big conflict with recreational fishing groups and stuff like that up here. So big rec groups like that, we don't seem to butt heads with them because we're sort of out of sight out of mind where we are over in the bay, which is good.
Eric Perez:	Or until possibly you have more recreational activity there.
Interviewee 8:	Well that's the thing, they keep shutting more and more in the bay down, it creeps us closer and closer to where the hearts are and stuff like that.
Eric Perez:	Alright the next lot of questions is to do with issues facing your business. Now in the next one to six months you talked about having stability from government and their decisions, is there anything else you see coming that you might see as an issue in the short term? So from now to the end of the year, say.
Interviewee 8:	Not off the top of my head.
Eric Perez:	That's alright. Next question, in the medium term, so one year to two years?
Interviewee 8:	You mean like when the crab review and stuff like that, trying to get all that sort of stuff finalised?

Eric Perez:	If you think that's an issue for you in the medium term, yeah.
Interviewee 8:	Well it could be. That was the other thing, we don't know which way that's going to turn. It may impact us that we have to go and buy another licence, because if we end up...
Eric Perez:	Through the crab review process, yeah?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah well we don't know whether the crab review's going to come out with closure or whether it's going to be unitised or whether they're going to leave us alone. Which, they're not going to leave us alone, something's going to come out of it. I think a lot of it will reflect on what happens in the net, like how many licence...
Eric Perez:	Through the net by way of [process] at the moment?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah, well that's my gut feeling. I think if they can take a lot of licences out through the net, but then you've got other people have got their own little personal view that no, no, we only target the net and that's it. I think it was a great idea when they said they're going to - if you want to get rid of your net licence you got rid of the lot. So if you happened to have a c1 attached to it...
Eric Perez:	So you buy a package of licences and then...
Interviewee 8:	That's right, it takes the whole lot out. Because let's be honest, the \$9 million, or whatever the figure was going to be, all you're going to get at the start of it, a lot of people putting their hand up for a lot of money to get rid of a net symbol, if they could only get rid of a net symbol. Then the money would be used up, or a bit chunk of it would get used up for high value for little result. It'll do nothing to help the fishery out, but if they can take out a lot of licences, or a number of licences that have c1s and have reef - have a lot of things on them, it'll reduce down in - it'll filter through to every fishery.  It'll not just have a big impact on net, it'll have an impact right across. Or else you're going to have a displacement of effort. Like if you take a lot of net symbols out, like myself, I could do without my net symbol. It gives me the shits chasing fish most of the time because I've got that many other things I could be doing. So it's not a massive - personally to me it's not a massive impact not to have net. But you could take my crab off me, it's like cutting my left leg off; I might as well not be in the fishery.  So if you've got blokes that are teetering on the edge and say well right, if I can pick up a quick 60 or 80 grand by getting rid of a net symbol, but I can keep crabbing. See all that's done is that's damaged my income then because they're going to be in my back yard fishing on top of me.
Eric Perez:	If a number of C1s aren't taken out, okay I've got it, yeah.
Interviewee 8:	That's right, so at least if you're taking the whole licence you're taking it - a broad spectrum right across the fishery, you're taking the whole lot out.
Eric Perez:	Okay so that leads me to the next one about issues facing the business beyond two years. So you talked about not much at the

Eric Perez:	moment, short term, definitely these crab and net reviews, mid-term. What about longer term?
Interviewee 8:	Well long term I hope to Christ I've got something to give my kids at the end of the day where I can...
Eric Perez:	So the issue for you is in the longer term that you want stability in the business?
Interviewee 8:	Oh definitely. Like I said before you want to be able to walk out your door and you know what you're doing day in, day out and you're here to stay. But when is that ever going to happen? When is the government ever going to say oh righto - we know damn well we're
Eric Perez:	So from hearing you right, for you, stability would mean not having government interference and having a set of rules that are finalised and you're just working to those rules.
Interviewee 8:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, no that's...
Interviewee 8:	Being - having people - or having at least like the banks and final - you know stuff like that, actually recognise your licence as something. Because at the moment they couldn't give a shit, you can have a licence on paper that's worth \$120,000, or even higher sometimes. You got to the bank and say I own my fishing licence, it's worth \$100,000/\$120,000, they say no it's not, it's not worth anything because you could get it taken off you tomorrow. So you can say whatever value you like but it's...
Eric Perez:	It's not going to bother us.
Interviewee 8:	Yeah that's the thing, it really - there is no value to it.
Eric Perez:	Alright. Because we're on this vein now about looking into the future and looking sort of inside and outside the business, I was going to ask you have you heard of an acronym SWOT, S-W-O-T? Okay what it means is the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and it's a business tool that is used to look at businesses and how they're going. So the s and the w part of that is saying what are your strengths and weaknesses. So if I asked for a list of what you think are your business strengths what would you say?
Interviewee 8:	My wife mostly I suppose.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 8:	I think we work well together and we sit down and discuss everything that we're doing.
Eric Perez:	So if you didn't have - okay scenario being let's hypothetically say you didn't have a partner and you were doing this all on your own - would you have as successful a business?
Interviewee 8:	No, no way, no.
Eric Perez:	So the weakness in your business is you need the part to do what it is that you're doing, is that a fair assumption?
Interviewee 8:	Yeah and it has to be - it really has to be a full partnership too. As in okay I might be out on the water catching the product, but my wife is at home, she does all the books she, like I say, packs crabs, couriers them.



Eric Perez:	Keeps that networking thing happening.
Interviewee 8:	If I need bait taken out or if I need stuff, like if I'm net fishing at the same time as well, I come home I can - my food's ready for me I can grab a quick feed I can get going again. Because people don't realised how many hours are involved, it's not just being on the water too, it's about getting home, hanging more nets, making more pots, getting boats fixed.
Eric Perez:	So would you class this part of the conversation as saying that's the weakness in the business is the continual maintenance and servicing of your equipment to get back out there? Or is that just a necessary part of...
Interviewee 8:	That's just a necessary evil.
Eric Perez:	Alright, so what about opportunities in the environment. So this is now - the 'o' and 't' part of this is you've told me the internal strengths and weaknesses which are one and the same really. Having the partnership and what would happen if you didn't have a partnership approach. What about opportunities in the environment, in the market in which you work in, what do you see as key...
Interviewee 8:	There are opportunities there, like I suppose if you're driven enough and you're willing to take the plunge I suppose to look at wholesaling and those sorts of things as well.
Eric Perez:	You've started that but you'd like to grow it, is that what you're...
Interviewee 8:	Oh we're thinking about it, but there's a lot of stuff to consider with that too, you know?
Eric Perez:	Okay, such as? Can you give me a couple of considerations, the key ones?
Interviewee 8:	Well even with your fish and stuff like that you've got to be able to turn around your transport problems from here.
Eric Perez:	Okay, is transport, is it infrastructure or is it a combination of things?
Interviewee 8:	A bit of both, it's expense too. Transport from here is a massive expense.
Eric Perez:	Okay what's the comparison between air freight and land freight, is one cheaper than the next or they're about...
Interviewee 8:	Land freight's not too bad, but the problem being is you've just got that lag time to get it down to Brisbane. Just Brisbane for an example, like some transport companies they're three days to get from - sometimes four and a lot of it you can't get them to pick it up in Ayr, you've got to take it to Townsville.
Eric Perez:	Okay so this is a weakness in some respects as well as bordering on a potential threat. So one of the threats is transportation costs and...
Interviewee 8:	Oh its massive
Eric Perez:	...getting the product to market.
Interviewee 8:	Look even air freight with crabs is such headache. We work like hell to try and catch direct flights as much as we possibly can, but it's chasing - like you know, we've had to source - we've got a

Interviewee 8:	<p>bloke now we deal through who gives us really good freight rates. So he buys cubic metres of air space and we buy that off him for so much a kilo. It works out a lot cheaper than if you're working through like toll or whoever.</p> <p>But to do that - and you're working through a different company, it's hard to get direct flights sometimes and if you don't get direct flights they'll either go to Brisbane on your way to Sydney fish market and they'll get left in Brisbane for a day. So you'll have 150 kilo of live crab - and I've had it happen a couple of times now - you're trying to get there for Friday market and it'll end up getting stuck in Brisbane. Because Friday's your last day, so you've either got to hold it all weekend and cop the deeds right through until Monday...</p>
Eric Perez:	How much product do you lose if that happens?
Interviewee 8:	We lost a couple of thousand not long ago in one consignment.
Eric Perez:	Wow okay and that's dozens of crabs just ending up dead on the way to...
Interviewee 8:	That's right, it got stuck in Brisbane, then it didn't get to Sydney until I think it was 10 or 11 o'clock the next day and the airport was that run over they said they didn't bother ringing the market to tell them they'd turned up then. This happened, that happened, by the time I got home that afternoon and started making the phone calls wondering why I haven't got a market report, they said oh yeah your crab didn't arrive. Then okay we'll chase it down and we find out it had arrived this time. But the market's finished and the bloke that can usually help us out and sell it directly to someone, he didn't happen to be there, he'd flown out somewhere. So he was un-contactable and it was a big snowball effect, but that's just one consignment.
Eric Perez:	Okay, interesting, look that's the - I guess the formal end of the interview. I just had a query, given the other interviews that I've had and I haven't explored this in as much detail as I'd like, but in terms of employees you did mention that your dad helps occasionally. So you could look at him as what, a part-time volunteer or part-time employee sort of thing?
Interviewee 8:	Part-time buy him a bottle of rum every [laughs].
Eric Perez:	Okay well we don't go into how you remunerate him but to you, is that a critical part of the transport chain for you to get your product out of here? Or if you could get an off-siter to help you, would you employ someone as a [decky] to do that work?
Interviewee 8:	No, no I'll never employ anyone.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 8:	Well it costs me \$1 a kilo to get them from here to Townsville, for crab.
Eric Perez:	Wow.
Interviewee 8:	Simply that's - so when you look at it and you can sit down and this is what I said before, like a lot of fishermen are lazy. Now

Interviewee 8:	<p>they'll get \$10 to \$12 below market price just to drive into the shop here and unload them here at the back door. Where they don't get hit for deads, they've don't get him - that's it, you unload them, walk away.</p> <p>When you're sitting and you start working everything out, like okay \$1 a kilo to get them from here to Townsville, then you're looking anything between up to nearly \$3 a kilo to get them from here to Sydney. You've got your box, you've got your this, you've got your that and then if you get troubles with a market and they don't happen to get there or something like that happens. It's all these ongoing costs and that all the time that you've got to sit down and work out and to put another wage on top of that.</p>
Eric Perez:	Be extremely difficult [unclear].
Interviewee 8:	Yeah and people don't - to be honest I like - one of the other reasons why I really love being a fisherman is I like working by myself.
Eric Perez:	Okay yeah that's...
Interviewee 8:	I'm self-motivated and stuff like that, so like some of my mates can work with me fine, but on and off we'll go to the reef or whatever I want to do. That's all good and well but to have someone full-time, I don't...
Eric Perez:	Not in your business planning?
Interviewee 8:	No.
Eric Perez:	Okay no that's fine. Okay thanks for your time mate and I'll get you a copy of the draft report before it goes out so you can read it. Again, if you have anything with how I've referenced things or you think you might be identifiable in the data then I'll deal with that when it comes.
Interviewee 8:	Yeah that's fine.
Eric Perez:	So thanks for that.
Interviewee 8:	Thanks mate.
Eric Perez:	Cheers. That ends the session, thank you.

**APPENDIX 17**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 9**  
**SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	I'll start by asking you why did you choose the seafood industry to operate your small business.
Interviewee 9:	I basically chose the industry because I knew about it from a young age and I chose it because of the lifestyle it gives you, in conjunction with work, you know?
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah. In terms of next year, what are your biggest business aspirations for your business; what are you aiming for next year? Or are you aiming for anything next year?
Interviewee 9:	Always looking for ways to value add more and more and looking for ways to better myself and the way I fish. Yeah just become more - always looking for ways that I try to become more cost effective with the way I run things and...
Eric Perez:	Okay, when you say - because I've had it a few times and I've never followed up but I want to do that now - when you say value add, what does that mean for you?
Interviewee 9:	Marketing.
Eric Perez:	Okay, purely marketing?
Interviewee 9:	Yeah, well you've got to get as much value as you can of the product you catch and trying to cut costs where you can. I've got fuel usage, things like that to make yourself more cost effective.
Eric Perez:	In that respect then how would you measure - what measure will you use or do you use a measure to track your progress or success? If you go to the end of 2013, what's your measure for saying okay, this was a good year or not such a good year.
Interviewee 9:	When I look at the books.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so it's definitely just an income based measure, like how much money you made that year versus the year before or?
Interviewee 9:	Oh it's not all about money too, I do value the free time I get. Like it's not all about just making money, obviously money's a part of it but for the time that I do work I want that time to be rewarding. But obviously I have a goal in the future to do less work.
Eric Perez:	Okay yeah [laughs] okay so that's...
Interviewee 9:	So it's obviously you work hard...
Eric Perez:	I'll come back to that because it's a question coming up later, but that's interesting you say that, I haven't heard that in the interviews yet but that's good to work - aim to work less, which would be nice for everybody. Do you think you've done anything differently from last year to this year? So casting your mind back to 2011, has this year been different for you in terms of how you run your business?
Interviewee 9:	Yeah I suppose every year you are doing little things to fine tune a bit more all the time.
Eric Perez:	Anything stand out specifically from this year to last year in your mind?

Interviewee 9:	I changed - yeah I went into, just recently actually I've done some direct sales rather than - I sell most of my catch through a large market and I'm now getting into direct selling.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, so marketing your own product on your own? Okay.
Interviewee 9:	Yeah direct selling and it's a bit hard to explain but...
Eric Perez:	That's okay; we've got plenty of time.
Interviewee 9:	<p>Yeah I direct sell but the markets still control the money, because the money's guaranteed through the market but it's a smaller commission that they take from the sale. The actual product doesn't channel through the actual market itself, the product goes direct to the receiver and then the paperwork goes through the market and there's lower commission for that work. But the money's still guaranteed because once you start doing individuals in a faraway place like Sydney, there's obviously the possibility of having to chase money.</p> <p>So that dissolves that issue when you still use the market to - I obviously was contacted - I have been contacted on numerous occasions to sell product direct...</p>
Eric Perez:	But the risk is they don't pay for the product.
Interviewee 9:	But the risk is - I mean I haven't been caught out yet but the risk is you have to chase money possibly. Still using the market to sell direct and having a mediator there if anything does go wrong, he's not happy or I'm not happy well then it's good and it's also guaranteed money because they have to have an account that's topped up each week in the market. The commissions of the Sydney fish market have just gone up so it's been a really good time to start getting into these direct sales and it's been going quite well.
Eric Perez:	Oh good, okay. Alright so in your mind and given your knowledge of your own business, what do you think are the elements that help you build and then maintain the business? I mean you don't have to give me a list of 100 things, but in your mind what do you think are the things that you do that helps build the business?
Interviewee 9:	Oh you've got to have quality assurance, a good quality product. I basically - quality assurance and...
Eric Perez:	By that do you mean quality assurance just at your end or trying to ensure that along the supply chain as it gets to market? So how do you, for example, guarantee - because this came up in the last interview - how do you guarantee that the person trucking your product to Sydney and doing the right thing, how do you know that their QA is up to your standard?
Interviewee 9:	Well accidents happen and I've actually got some - I'll show you after the interview - I've got some photos there of some boxes that were damaged...
Eric Perez:	In transit?
Interviewee 9:	In transit but it's all done by air freight but it's - up until now it's

Interviewee 9:	<p>been quite good but it's just a matter of - I've been - I have a close connection with the airlines. I've just started a new account, probably about six to 12 months ago with a different airline company, toll air express. I was previously with Australian express and then what happens with toll air express is I tried to get the product on a direct flight from here to Sydney, rather than the product being hopped through other airports like Brisbane. But the product has to be handled on and off planes, possibilities of being shaken around, dropped; you've got a live product in a Styrofoam box.</p> <p>The direct flights - and then it goes direct to Sydney on a direct flight, providing you've got to keep in touch and link everything together. Then the product goes direct to the receiver and the receiver that I've been dealing with has a live holding facility in Sydney. So then he obviously prefers to grab the product straight from the airport and take it straight to his live holding facility. So it's not taken to the market where it's cold, it's not left there overnight until the next morning where the boxes are opened up, people looking at crabs, seeing how lively they are. The product is taken straight to - and it's been working really well.</p>
Eric Perez:	Well you've answered both parts of that question, so just to be clear in summary that the way that you've built it is by finding a direct route for your product from here to Sydney, or any other point, so a direct flight is the way, the building part of it, but the maintenance is that at the other end you've got someone who's got the facilities to keep your product healthy.
Interviewee 9:	Yeah it's a win-win because he wants the product straight away...
Eric Perez:	Of high quality.
Interviewee 9:	Yeah, he wants a good full quality product and he wants to get it straight from the airport, straight from here and I also don't want to have the - I want a happy consumer that wants to pay good money. He wants to - he's happy to pay for a good product so it's all...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, no that's great.
Interviewee 9:	It compliments each - we complement each other was...
Eric Perez:	Do you have a primary customer? Is it just one market or have you now got...
Interviewee 9:	Oh yeah I actually got a - I know who he is and everything like that, he contacted me and then I contact the market. because the last trip I've done to Sydney - because I have done two trips to Sydney to go down there and see what happens at the other end and to sort of look at things. I've talked to a lot of the buyers about maybe better ways I can grade crabs in the different boxes and maybe they want big - some want big ones, some want small ones, am I going to...
Eric Perez:	So you have multiple buyers, not just the one customer that you deal with?
Interviewee 9:	Oh at the markets you do but I've actually been dealing with one customer. I have other markets as well, like I've got a local

Interviewee 9:	market. So you need to be diversified in the market place, you can't just be relying on one market.
Eric Perez:	Yeah that's great. So is it possible to - and this is grading the customers now - but do you have a - what's your best customer, who are your best customers and how can you find more of them. So in that network that you're talking about it sounds like you've diversified a lot.
Interviewee 9:	Well basically what it looks like at the moment is like I'm not looking for more because I'm only a single man operation. I'm limited in my capacity as to how much volume of product I can do. So if you end up with too many markets and it's - you'll shoot yourself in the foot because you can't create a constant supply for too many markets, it just doesn't work.
Eric Perez:	Yeah no that's - okay so the limitation there is because you're a solo operator there's only so much you can physically do, okay.
Interviewee 9:	If you've got a team of guys working for you it's just not the same because they're not going to do it...
Eric Perez:	The way you want it done.
Interviewee 9:	...the way I'll do it. If they're smart enough and have got enough nouse about them they will be out there having their own license, doing their own thing.
Eric Perez:	So what - okay so getting a little bit away from the customer questions and now about how you do your decision making, this first question is about well what process or approach do you take when making your decisions within the business. So some have answered this by saying they use market intelligence so talk to their colleagues out on the water, they study the market and they make the decision, or it's in conjunction with their partner. So what approach do you take when you're making that decision of business, is it just me, I know what I'm going to do because I've talked to x, y, z or do you have a pattern in how you do it.  Or is it an instinctual thing, like what approach do you take? I know this question comes out of left field a little bit because it's sort of getting the interviewees to think about well, how is it you make that decision?
Interviewee 9:	When I make decisions I approach with caution and I generally do a trial. If a new customer wants to buy my product I will - I won't send him a heap of product in one go, I'll just do a trial. Like with this new guy I've been doing business with now I just say I'll send you just a little bit of product just to see how things - see how it goes. Then do a small consignment and then we'll grow it from there. then once he gets confidence and I get confidence well then it's - I've now grown it that he's buying - at the moment he's buying most of my product. He values that to continue and...
Eric Perez:	So you do have one primary customer, like you have one person that buys the bulk of your product at the moment?
Interviewee 9:	At the moment but I mean that can change depending on what time of year. Because what happens is when the market is a

Interviewee 9:	supply and demand driven market - when there's an over-supply and the product goes down - see I've got a local market which is - this is all confidential right? My local market in, for example, is an all year round market.
Eric Perez:	[Yeah I'm just going to pause the recording just for one second; Eric Perez pausing recording]. Okay, so back to the question and I think we were talking about the seasonality of your customer base.
Interviewee 9:	<p>Yeah well see with my local market I've got an all year round deal, where what will happen is like Sydney Fish Market's very much a supply and demand driven market, right? So when there's a shortfall of supply, well the price goes up. When there's obviously a large amount of demand, especially around Christmas, things like that, that doesn't matter if there's a lot of supply still, the price will still shoot up because of the demand for that product at that time.</p> <p>So okay, my local market here is - he takes a small percentage of the crabs but he still takes a fair - a few - I don't know I haven't actually sat down and worked out the exact amount. When the price shoots up in Sydney and it's for round figures say its \$35 or something like that at the moment, but it costs me \$5 a kilo to get it there by the time I buy a box, pay the freight, all the other add-ons. Well he can't compete even \$30 because local people won't pay - he tries to value-add on they won't pay that much money for crab.</p> <p>So okay, so I've got a deal worked out with him where I get - I take a lower price when the price is up, but it's not on huge volume, it's only a small volume market. But I take a lower price when the price is up in Sydney, but then when the price goes down in Sydney, when there's an over-supply, he'll hold his price up. So it's an all year round...</p>
Eric Perez:	Oh okay.
Interviewee 9:	The thing is it's convenient for me to deal with the local market, especially when I have a bad week and there's not really much worth sending away and it does work well.
Eric Perez:	Yeah you've got some supply, yeah. So in terms of the - again this is the next question on your decision making - you say, you've mentioned that you draw from different sources I guess and you've got different customers and seasonality. Is that - are they your main drivers as well as taking that precautionary approach. Is that how you do your business, it's about taking a calculated risk as opposed to just taking a risk and see how you go? Would that be an accurate description of how you...
Interviewee 9:	I wouldn't say - you're not really - well fishermen are risk takers, that's what we do. Because I mean I fill that fuel tank up full of fuel and I head out fishing, there's no guarantees that I'm going to catch x, y, z amount of product. There are no guarantees. We are risk takers from when we leave the boat ramp, we know on the law



Interviewee 9:	<p>of averages that we're going to catch x, y, z amount roughly. But then if I can tell you exactly how much I'm going to catch each day - if I had to do that I'd be out of business because you just can't.</p> <p>Then you get your rough idea on your different times of year, because you know based on history different months of the year will produce - but then someone's - this year for example, February was one of the quietest years I've seen in many years for crabs in February. So then I diversified into my other fishery which is the [N2] fishery and I did quite a lot of net fishing in February. That's what you need to have; you need to have the diversification in not having to rely on one fishery. You need to be able to diversify and have other things to alternate to in my view, to make a business work properly.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay I get you, yeah so diversifying.
Interviewee 9:	Then you also catch; you catch crab bait and stuff like that with your net fishing symbol as well so it helps the other at different times.
Eric Perez:	Yeah look and again go back to something you said at the start, you talked about who your key internal stakeholders are, so your partner in the business who happens to be your wife. Tasked about the people you deal with in terms of customers, so they're all - you grouped them all under sort of internal stakeholder. But do you think there are any other stakeholders external to the business that influence what you do? The one that's come up time and again in the interviews is government as being one, is that - does that ring true for you.
Interviewee 9:	Oh sure, depending on what decisions they make in relation to allowing imports. I mean the thing is there should be a lot more work done for business - government should be encouraging businesses to use Australian product. Like for example my wife and I went to sizzler and could of weeks ago, went to sizzler for lunch. As I walked into sizzler there was basa fillets, fresh basa fillets and I know that basa fillets are imported fish. I think they're some sort of Vietnamese catfish or something I'm not sure.
Eric Perez:	Catfish, yeah you're right.
Interviewee 9:	So it's a shame that large eateries like [store name deleted], which is widespread across Australia, couldn't embrace a local Australian product. Where it be mackerel, whether it be barramundi, whether it be whatever, and I think if they did do that the clients would be happy to pay and support for that. I mean that's my view, I mean I can't speak for every Australian out there but - and they'd be helping their own countrymen.
Eric Perez:	You're talking about better policy, no I heard that in one interview before but they didn't explain it quite like that so that's really good. So let's do some crystal ball gazing here; so one to six months from now what do you think are going to be the key business issues for you in the next six months roughly? Can you see

Eric Perez:	anything on the horizon that might be a concern for you?
Interviewee 9:	Well we've got the review but the - well the crab fishery review coming up, but I don't think there's going to be a concern. I think if anything, the genuine crabbers will be better off after that hopefully. More security...
Eric Perez:	What about one to two years from now?
Interviewee 9:	I don't know, I think the biggest thing for me that I can see, and for other crabbers, is we are quite unique and fortunate where the mud crab fishery is a wild caught fishery. We don't have aquaculture competitors. As with prawns, as with fish there's huge aquaculture competition in those species and the only real main concern for me is if they develop some way of mass producing mud crabs...
Eric Perez:	Or farming.
Interviewee 9:	...in aquaculture. That would have a massive impact on our wild caught fishery, as far as our price. I just hope, well I hope and I don't know for sure, that the Queensland government takes the initiative to progress the mud crab fishery further because there's good opportunity there to do it.
Eric Perez:	I was just going to say the c1 review was brought up as well in previous interviews and like you, they said that that was the - you know your one to two year outlook, hopefully that would be over and that yeah, you've got no competition. I hadn't thought of it that way but there is no substitute for crab in the market, unlike barramundi, unlike prawn, there is a - okay?
Interviewee 9:	So its pure wild caught fishery. It's a wholly sought after commodity within communities like Sydney.
Eric Perez:	Would that last response do you think hold true for more than two years from now? So to say look, crystal gaze for me out to 2014 or 2015 you would say the same thing, that the issue there is the - a potential problem is if an aquaculture competitor came into the market?
Interviewee 9:	Yeah I suppose it's a potential thing but they'd have to mass produce them. I think there probably are the markets for soft shell crab and things, which would probably be different; I haven't sort of read enough into it and worried enough about it. I'm not trying to worry two years ahead, I'm trying to worry about, you know, because I only worry about things I can control. I don't try to get worried about things I've got no control over.
Eric Perez:	Okay yeah that's good, no that's great.
Interviewee 9:	I can only control what I do, I can't control what anyone else does or...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, alright look that's probably the main part of the questions, but there's an activity that I've been doing with the interviewees as a way to finish things off. As a way to maybe clear some of the cobwebs, because I know you've got some more answers there on certain things. Like, for example, there's an activity that they call SWOT, which is looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within a business. Now under business

Eric Perez:	strengths, one of the things I hear you saying and correct me if I'm wrong, is that an internal strength of your business is that you've diversified your customer base and that you're aware that the seasonality can impact that. So could that be considered a strength, would you see that as a strength of yours? So the next question would be do you see other strengths in your business at the moment?
Interviewee 9:	Well the strength is being able to diversify, I've outlined that one. The strength is I've got more than one market, the other strengths are - I suppose the weaknesses are I'm heavily reliant on my own physique and body to - if I have an injury or if I hurt myself all work ceases.
Eric Perez:	Wow okay, that's a new one I've heard, looking after yourself is a key thing because you're the driver of the business, yeah okay.
Interviewee 9:	You see if I - well my daughter just broke her arm the other day, you know it was just a kids having fun accident thing, and it makes you realise how much you take for granted. Do you want another glass of water?
Eric Perez:	No mate that's good.
Interviewee 9:	It makes you realise how much you take for granted. Then I often think to myself if I hurt myself, or if I am out of action, say for six weeks or so, that six weeks there's nothing coming in.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 9:	So I mean I looked at insurance and I'm too high a risk, you know.
Eric Perez:	Oh wow, okay, I was going to say is there a Plan B but obviously not, so no insurance, wow.
Interviewee 9:	There is but the premium's just - it's unrealistic.
Eric Perez:	Alright, let's get positive here, business opportunities, do you see any into the future?
Interviewee 9:	Yeah I think online. I think in time if online selling crabs and working out some sort of way or network to deliver say a box of crabs to someone's door who's having a party or something. I think that direct selling again, a step further; you're cutting another wholesaler out, or retailer out. Then if you direct sell straight to the consumer from a fisherman, there's a huge opportunity there to value add more. But there's obviously time involved in facilitating all that, you know it's quite a time consuming for someone like my wife doing all the paper shuffle, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Alright and finally business threats.
Interviewee 9:	Oh government policy, you know government is a big...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, no, no, no I'm just being facetious. It's come up - government's come up consistently as the threat now, is a threat...
Interviewee 9:	The threats of green tape, you know. There's red tape and there's green tape and its green tape. It's getting that hard now we're getting constricted so much with regulation, and it's suffocating our opportunity - our - suffocated by green tape and regulation basically because - and it's unrealistic, a lot of it.
Eric Perez:	That's brilliant. Alright, thanks for your time a, cheers mate.

Interviewee 9:	No worries.
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**APPENDIX 18**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 10 (10a - male / 10b - female)**  
**SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Can I ask why each of you chose to operate a small business in the commercial fisheries?
Interviewee 10a:	My father was a commercial fisher so I was introduced to it at an early age. Could see potential it and it's proven that the lifestyle suits my needs.
Eric Perez:	Was he a crab and net fisher or did he do another type of fishing?
Interviewee 10a:	No he was crab and net.
Eric Perez:	And you?
Interviewee 10b:	I don't really have much choice. I married into the...
Eric Perez:	Oh you married into the business? Okay. I guess as a side question and knowing what you were getting into I guess in terms of the business is did you think I'd rather do something else or were you happy to get in and make something of it?
Interviewee 10b:	Fully confident - full confidence in my husband's knowledge in the industry that we could stay with it and make a living out of it.
Eric Perez:	My second question is combined what are your broad aspirations for your business in 2013? Before you answer, what do you see as a measure of success for that bit of aspiration? Have you got something you're aiming at for next year in the business?
Interviewee 10a:	At the moment our aim is to be here in 2013. Obviously the industry is going through some tough times and we've got a lot of impediments out there that could even though we believe we've got a good business plan in place for the future you know we're hoping our plan actually finishes in two years' time when I'm 55, so that's my plan to be able to retire then. I'm just hoping to be able to see that through. Our aspirations for the year is no different to any other year. We'll look at the year at the start of the year and we'll project what our income's going to be and we'll just go out and do it providing we've got the area there to fish.
Eric Perez:	Am I right in saying that your measure of success is just income based in the next year or is it something different? And that's okay - I'm just trying to get what might be your measure of success for 2013. Is it just being viable? Is that the biggest success factor?
Interviewee 10a:	Biggest success is as you age to be able to continue doing what you're doing and generate an income. Your income may not be as much as what you looked at ten years ago but to be able to continue doing it as far as your health and it's a physical job so to be able to maintain that it really means a lot. It means a lot to you at the end of the year to say well I was able to do it.
Eric Perez:	One of the interesting things you both have said is that you have a business plan. Can you outline quickly without too much detail what are the bits of your plan that you've got in place?
Interviewee 10a:	Well I suppose the plan is that I'd like to be able to - we'd like to be able to - certainly retire or semi-retire by the time I'm 55.

Interviewee 10a:	<p>We've worked towards that for several years. Our plan consists of that for instance we need to earn \$2,500 a week, so it's \$10,000 a month that we need to look at the start of the month to say how are we going to earn that? In that there's obviously a maintenance component built into it of x a week. There's a component there we put into our self-managed super. We put \$200 a week for instance that goes into that. there's our running expenses which we know what they are. our ambition is out of that to make certain we've got \$1,000 take home. so we know that it's \$2,500 needs to be generated a week to be able to give us that. anything over and above that then is savings that can be put away.</p> <p>We've sort of got it down fairly pat and we use very good equipment, four stroke outboards, efficiency, and we replace those outboards on a yearly basis and budget for that each year so that a weekly basis we put money away to replace those motors every 12 months.</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>So you tailored the gear on the boat to make sure you do - so you went backwards. You said this is my goal and the equipment needs to help meet the - okay, yeah. That's interesting and you are the first to say that so that's good for this in that most of the planning that the other interviewees have been talking about is really no plan. whilst your plan appears to be not written, it is a plan that you've agreed to jointly over the next couple of years. Is that right?</p>
Interviewee 10b:	<p>We're gearing towards retirement a bit so we're gearing towards slowing down because we're a lot tireder now. This is our third time around back into fishing because he's had, you know, the peak body job, we had the shop, we were fishing before all that and then we ventured out and done different things and back into fishing and yeah our - it's very tolling on the body. So yeah we have to work towards not making a million dollars a year. We don't need that.</p>
Interviewee 10a:	<p>Really what we've worked towards is our super, which we've self managed and invest ourselves to an - and that is to generate an income for us after we're 55. So our aim is to get to 55 that we're self...</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>Funded retirees?</p>
Interviewee 10a:	<p>Self-funded retirees.</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>Got you. Can you or will you do anything differently from last year? Is this year's operating - the operation of the business any different to what it was last year?</p>
Interviewee 10b:	<p>We're not doing as much. Last year he was doing probably a lot more - when he was fishing we were crabbing as well but we sort of - it's sort of one or the other at the moment.</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>That's because of weather or just the fish aren't...</p>
Interviewee 10a:	<p>No that's simply because of age factor.</p>
Eric Perez:	<p>Oh okay, yeah no that's fine. So from both your experiences what do you believe - and a couple of examples would be good here if</p>

Eric Perez:	you can think of a few from each of you - elements to build the business and maintain it. Because you've got - obviously you've got to a point where you've built the business to where you like it or where you need it to be but were those things, what were those key things, that you needed to build it and then keep it at a level that was appropriate because you've already said that your target was x amount of dollars per month. What kind of things did you need to do that? You mentioned the boat and having the gear a certain way. Was there anything else? was it keeping other expenses in check or using less fuel, using it more efficiently? Did that come into play or not really?
Interviewee 10a:	Obviously your knowledge would really come into play. Your knowledge is the basis of everything. the learning how to do things cheaper, whether it's catching a crab, whether it's a more efficient funnel that catches per unit better so that you don't use as many pots so your expenses are down there. Certainly learning to work around green zones was a whole different scenario. We've had to change our operation to work around the introduction of green zones.
Eric Perez:	Okay so for the sake of the tape the green zones being the introduction of the great barrier marine park zoning plan and areas where you can and can't fish and the green zone being an area that you can't commercially fish in?
Interviewee 10a:	Correct. Why I mentioned that is when your knowledge is a really big factor - your intellectual knowledge - of where you're fishing and when in our case we lost 100 per cent of that area that we fished. Very hard to take that knowledge into another area.
Eric Perez:	It was almost like starting again?
Interviewee 10a:	It's starting again and I don't believe you could start again in this industry and succeed to where we're at. You couldn't start again and that's why it's very difficult for new people coming in
Eric Perez:	What's your thoughts on that?
Interviewee 10a:	Exactly that, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Let's move into your customers. would you say you have a primary customer?
Interviewee 10a:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	For the purposes of the tape I don't need to know their name but do you have more than one customer? Do you have lots of good customers or is it just the one?
Interviewee 10a:	No it's the one customer but what we do through that customer is actually sell our product to different markets through that customer and get a premium price for it.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay so they as a go between stop you from having to build your network as they network on your behalf to get a premium price for your homework.
Interviewee 10a:	And if you do your homework on freight components and all that you're better off working through a larger operator but we market our product into specific markets that we get - so you could sell

Interviewee 10a:	the product to the same market I'm selling too but I might be getting two dollars a kilo more because I'm supplying something that's superior or to the marketplace. So your market - market smart is what I say. Just marketing smarter and looking at niche markets.
Eric Perez:	We'll get to that in some other questions because you're sort of answering some of the ones that are coming up but so that I don't lose the point and to make sure I'm hearing you right when you say there's the marketing of the product are you also talking about the quality and condition of the product? So when you sell your product it's in better condition than that of your competitors?
Interviewee 10a:	Exactly.
Interviewee 10b:	Totally.
Interviewee 10a:	I go the extra yard. I mean every fish I catch is alive. it's a net fishery that I work in and a lot of fisherman will just leave the nets, run them, clean them every five hours or whatever and there's dead fish in there or whatever. Still a marketable fish but not to the extent that mine would be that's alive in the net, it's cleared every hour. The net is then put into an ice slurry. It's then delivered within six hours of being caught to the marketplace and then within another 12 hours it's anywhere in Australia. so by going that extra bit...
Eric Perez:	You can command more per fish, per kilo.
Interviewee 10a:	And we tag our fish which identify back to us as a fisherman. And it goes through - then we use a wholesaler, which I think is a very important part of marketing. I don't believe in fisherman marketing directly themselves. I think the wholesaler is a very important part but you need to be able to have an understanding with the wholesaler of what you're supplying and how you're going to market it.
Eric Perez:	Out of curiosity because you've answered this question differently as well, which is good but how long have you had this working relationship with this wholesaler? Again you don't have to mention their name...
Interviewee 10a:	Since I sold them the business.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, alright, got you. I'll leave it at that. so moving a little bit away from the business right now but and this is of interest in terms of how you guys jointly or separately make your decisions so what process or approach do you take when making decisions within the business? Why I ask that is some interviewees have told me they use other fisherman's knowledge, what they know, studying the market and then that helps them make a more informed choice. Is that how you guys play the game when you're dealing with your market or are you happy for the go-between or the wholesaler that you deal with to do all that and you just deliver the product in prime condition?
Interviewee 10a:	I've obviously been in marketing for a long so I probably do it a little bit different than other fishers. I don't believe the market is where someone says that they're doing their own marketing and



Interviewee 10a:	<p>taking a superior price to what you might get a wholesaler. I don't think that's marketing. I think you're really leaving yourself vulnerable in that sort of situation to cop some losses. I've seen too many people go down the drain by marketing their own product for a lot of reasons. You haven't got enough product to send so that stuff's not sold that day and fisherman don't count all that</p> <p>If you're catching 15 kilos of crabs a day that's not warranted because you need really 100 kilos to send to make air freight viable. Fifteen kilos a day a day and you're getting - and you can market them for \$30 a kilo locally you know all of a sudden it's \$450 a day whereas if you were going to try and keep them to market, every day you're losing another one out of those 15 dead at the end of the week you've lost a day's wages. Things like that. People don't...</p>
Interviewee 10b:	All because you think you're marketing yourself, marketing smarter.
Interviewee 10a:	Fisherman will think - other fishers will think oh yeah I've got five dollars more for my product. They've actually lost because they haven't done the homework, the components of dead crabs for instance through it and that sort of scenario. So I'll go and you know I'll go and do marketing, promotional work, with say a peak body organisation where she'll go out and do like a couple of years ago she did the - in the city, we did the what was that big at the...
Interviewee 10b:	The promotion?
Interviewee 10a:	Yeah in the city.
Interviewee 10b:	We'd done one at the Royal Show?
Interviewee 10a:	So we supplied product for that. Donated product and then watched top chefs around the world cook it and whatever. So then I went and talked to those chefs and said okay, this product is beautiful, your barramundi is great, your crabs are wonderful, okay. Now I can put you onto someone that can supply that product but there's going to be 20 per cent to the person I'm going to put you onto and I actually want another 20 per cent. So we want 40 per cent more than what we're getting for our product now. So you sort of - I just think that's a lot smarter way of doing things. Then you build up markets and then all of a sudden they get your fish they say yeah we want yours and we don't want the other guy...
Interviewee 10b:	Because we had the tags like we were saying before, the barra tags, and even though the market we sell to buys off say what ten different fisherman, us promoting our product and then passing on our wholesalers name, they wanted our fish a lot of the times but if we couldn't supply our wholesaler will then pick the next best, the next one. so she can supply it all year round whereas...
Interviewee 10a:	And keep the market going.
Interviewee 10b:	And keep the market going whereas you know individual fisherman that go out and get their own market oh I can't supply this week you know. With wild caught product we've got that

Interviewee 10b:	much completion from aquaculture that to keep a market going you've got to be able to supply it 52 weeks a year.
Eric Perez:	Consistency of supply. That makes sense. I don't think I've got an answer for this one from you yet but in the decision making process Where do you tend to draw your information from?
Interviewee 10b:	Oh okay sorry, we didn't...
Eric Perez:	No it's okay. You answered the first one - just this second one so that I don't forget it. Your process is a pretty clear one. It's a direct networking one but in terms of that decision making where do you draw your information? Is it just experience or is it trust of the person in that supply chain being the wholesaler that you're dealing with?  Or is it purely about yourselves? If you're being analytical about what you do in your business because it might be easy to say well we're fully reliant on the wholesaler but is that really the case when you're making that decision to sell...
Interviewee 10a:	You've got to have trust in your wholesaler and there's got to be openness between the two and...
Eric Perez:	How do you capture that? Just out of curiosity when you say trust and a good relationship do you actually have a contract with him that makes it legal or is it more a gentleman's handshake?
Interviewee 10a:	No it's just a handshake. What you've got to accept is that there's going to be a component of the profit's going to go to that person that you're working with. You've got to acknowledge that and say okay if it's going to be 15 per cent on certain items that may represent \$3 a kilo, it may represent \$1.50 depending on what you're selling. so you know that that's going to be built in.  So I know you're the wholesaler, I know that you're going to be making \$3 a kilo so I've got to - you've got to sort of sit back and say okay what am I getting for that \$3 a kilo? Then when you do your work you look all of a sudden it's going to cost you \$4 a kilo to do it yourself and what you might miss by doing it yourself very really is another day's work because it's going to take up that much of your time...
Eric Perez:	Instead of having the...
Interviewee 10a:	So you can go out and catch some more products so how much are you in front?
Interviewee 10b:	If you've got family of course around you like dad can run your crabs to the airport for nothing well for sure you're on top a little bit more then. You're not missing so much.
Interviewee 10a:	But I suppose we did 11 years wholesale retail, so we sort of know where the money is and where it's not. It's not all in wholesale.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay I didn't get that off you before. Eleven years retail. That's another business.
Interviewee 10b:	Wholesale retail.
Interviewee 10a:	Wholesale retail.

Eric Perez:	Okay. Stakeholders. You've really talked about the person you're dealing with internally and the fact that you're a partnership but in terms of who you feel are the key stakeholders influencing the business now most have responded with those that are internal to the business and those that are external. So you've given me a few ideas internally. So your daughter is a part time fisher, you guys running the business fulltime and the wholesaler that you supply to. Externally who do you believe are the stakeholders impacting on your business? The one that's come up every time and you may not agree is government.
Interviewee 10a:	Managers, yeah, management.
Eric Perez:	Government is one that's come up. Anybody else in the external environment that impacts on what you do in terms of a key stakeholder that you deal with regularly?
Interviewee 10b:	Key stakeholder. Is other fishers in that? Other fishers in our area?
Eric Perez:	Yeah if you believe they are. I mean in terms of too many of them?
Interviewee 10a:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Yeah that's fine. If you can expand on that a bit more I mean other fishers in what sense specifically?
Interviewee 10a:	There's only so much product to go around. I mean we've had a huge influx of fishers here that are competing for the resource on a daily basis that we're out there catching. So you've got to keep diversifying and looking at what you're going to catch to turn over your money. When there's displacement of effort for whatever reason that comes into your region and even if it's for three months of the year it makes a huge impact on your income for the year.
Eric Perez:	Particularly if like you say you've planned a certain...
Interviewee 10a:	So you've got to change that strategy. You've got to have the adaptability to be able to change.
Eric Perez:	So I'll feed that back into that other question about the decision making part of your process is then is your competition or the increased effort in the areas that you fish. That's great. So okay, here's some crystal ball stuff. Issues facing the business in the next one to six months? Is there something you see on the radar that's coming in the next say half year that might impact on the business? There may be nothing.
Interviewee 10a:	I think access to where we actually operate these days is very much...
Eric Perez:	In the short term?
Interviewee 10a:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	What about the next question then the next year to two years?
Interviewee 10b:	I mean our fear is always other people coming into this area.
Eric Perez:	And that's an ongoing one? A constant one?
Interviewee 10a:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	What about something a bit more spaced out? Say a year to two years from now.

Interviewee 10b:	Well like I said, I think those two elements, access and...
Interviewee 10a:	And I think one of the big things is going to be population growth and the increase in the recreational sector. In a lot of ways the conflict it's going to cause, how it's going to stop you from operating, and the amount of resource they take out. I think they're very much hidden.
Eric Perez:	Yeah that's a new one too, the population growth.
Interviewee 10a:	I think population growth works in a lot of different ways. It's not only on the resource, it's also on what is perceived to be accepted in the community that you operate in. You know we operate in a small community but as people come in that don't know you, don't know the area, and they just say look we need to get rid of commercial fishing...
Eric Perez:	We can't have that.
Interviewee 10a:	That's right. That causes - and I - I see that as a major problem in the next...
Eric Perez:	It's a longer-term thing.
Interviewee 10a:	Longer term thing. I see it a major problem.
Eric Perez:	Over two years from now?
Interviewee 10a:	Yeah. Well I would say any time in the next couple of years I see that as a major problem. I mean we have got a huge increase in this area. The city's a big draw card for people. We have got mining. Everyone is coming to the coast and I just see lots of issues with that to my business.
Eric Perez:	That really is the end of the formal questions but there is an exercise that I've been doing with the interviewees that I've had. Have you guys heard of what a SWOT analysis is? Familiar to you? That's alright. SWOT analysis is a business tool that's used to work out what are your business' strengths, weaknesses, what are the opportunities and threats in the environment.  So the 's' and 'w', your strengths and your weaknesses, is what's a strength and weakness internal to the business. So if I asked you what do you both believe are the businesses' strength I could say you've already mentioned one very clearly is about how you get your product to market, so your supply chain is a strength. Is there anything else in your business that you believe is a strength?
Interviewee 10a:	We haven't got a business if I'm not operating. So my knowledge - without my...
Eric Perez:	Your knowledge is a strength of the business.
Interviewee 10a:	It's a strength of the business and if I can't use that for any reason...
Eric Perez:	Then there's a problem.
Interviewee 10a:	There's a problem.
Eric Perez:	What about the other aspects of the business? The bookwork side? Do you do most of that stuff? If you can't do it does it get done by your partner?
Interviewee 10a:	No it doesn't. I mean it's... We would...
Eric Perez:	So that's a strength and also potentially - sorry, a strength and also

Eric Perez:	potentially a weakness. I guess precarious is not the right word but you guys are very reliant on each other to get different aspects of the business continuing. So if one can't fish you have no product to sell, if one can't do the books then you can't track how you're going against your retirement goal?
Interviewee 10a:	[inaudible]
Eric Perez:	Fair enough. What about weaknesses? Any specific weakness that you see within the business? You mentioned one already which was the age and fatigue thing that you've - you know as you're getting - I'm not sure I consider you old by any stretch but you're saying you get tired getting out there and working. Is there anything else in the business that you see as a weakness?
Interviewee 10a:	Obviously health is a weakness but the weakness that can be there if - a lot of things can actually affect the business and the plan that's in our heads, our plan. A lot of things can affect it and if we can't adapt to those changes then we can't meet our goals of putting a new 70 horsepower on that boat out there at the end of the year because those funds aren't put aside the all of a sudden - and I've learnt this from experience - I went broke twice in the fishing game when I started when I was 16. The simple reason is you just use old gear and it blows up and you can't replace it. So there's a weakness in there. If you can't keep running to your plan there's a weakness.
Eric Perez:	Okay I see what you're saying. So you had I guess - would I be right in saying - please correct me if I'm wrong here, that in your travels in the business game you've had some stumbles but you've learnt from those stumbles to get a better and more productive business?
Interviewee 10a:	Exactly.
Eric Perez:	What about opportunities? Given that you've got a plan for the future and you're aiming for something do you see some opportunities that you want to take or are out there but you haven't grasped yet or you are considering?
Interviewee 10a:	We've considered a lot of things but we're now probably gearing down and not going to worry about further investment because there's no security in the industry. So you know there is opportunities out there in some fisheries that look really good but for our - it's too much of a risk at our age to take at all.
Eric Perez:	Business threats other than stability of the fishery which is probably a big threat that you mentioned throughout the interview session. Any other threats out there? You also mentioned i guess increase of effort in the area. Are there any other threats in terms of recreational lobby in the region? Are they a threat to your operations?
Interviewee 10b:	More closures is always a threat you know. Talk of more closure.
Eric Perez:	Conservation management. Are they posing a threat to your business?
Interviewee 10a:	Yes. I think certainly the conservation side of things is always a threat, always has been, always will be. Recreation - I don't think

Interviewee 10a:	the normal recreational - the recreational lobby groups is a major threat to our business. Obviously government are a major threat and a lot of the other things that we've already mentioned. I think you know in our game we've tried to...
Interviewee 10b:	Imports are a...
Interviewee 10a:	Yeah but we've been able to market around imports in our small fishery.
Eric Perez:	That's okay I mean if one sees it as a threat and one doesn't that's I guess part of the business game. Like why do you see imports as a threat?
Interviewee 10b:	Oh they're much cheaper.
Eric Perez:	Okay. You don't believe that might be the same issue because you can market your way past it?
Interviewee 10a:	Yeah I'll walk it, yeah. I mean the people that we market to now may not be able to - I see that there could be a problem there in the near future in particular with marketing of barramundi because we're only getting – you know we're getting a couple of dollars above the market price for it now but the way that's going it's quite possible that unless our price increases with CPI virtually per kilo on that product if we
Interviewee 10a:	can't do I through there then we may have a major issue with that. So we're hoping for it to last but at the moment - at the moment its fine but I'm just unsure whether because of the threat of imports and stuff are we going to get that be able to go up in price to what we need to?
Eric Perez:	Okay that concludes the session. Thank you very much.

**APPENDIX 19**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 11**  
**SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Okay, just to kick things off why did you choose to operate a small business in the seafood industry?
Interviewee 11:	<p>I don't actually know whether there was much choice about it. My husband went fishing from a very early age. They lived down on the river with their families. Their dairy farm backed on to the river and his grandfather was a gillnetter.</p> <p>So he has been fishing since he has been knee high to nothing. At high school he then joined the trawl fleet working Moreton Bay and as soon as he left high school he actually hopped on a trawler and drove north of Cairns and worked up there for a couple of years. Then 17 years ago we found ourselves in town and he decided to go back to the industry.</p>
Eric Perez:	So from the business perspective what are your aspirations for the business for 2013?
Interviewee 11:	<p>I would like to hope that we still have a business. Things are quite upsetting I guess. We are going through trawl reviews, trawl management reviews and prices of fuels have been going up over years and additional regulatory requirements that keep getting imposed on us like fire smothering apparatus in engine rooms and things like this.</p> <p>So our costs keep going up and yet we can't - we don't set the price for what we sell our seafood for. We are price takers and we can't seem to increase that. The prices have been pretty much the same or perhaps going down a bit over the last 15 years.</p>
Eric Perez:	So the measure of progress against that is you being around in 2013 is going to be your measure of success?
Interviewee 11:	I guess so yeah, if we are still here, making enough money still to be here to cover our bills.
Eric Perez:	Question 3, can you or will you do anything different? Have you done anything differently this year to last year in terms of how you have operated the business?
Interviewee 11:	<p>Yeah, we are always trying to do things differently. we are always trying to reduce costs wherever possible, adopt different habits of where we actually anchor during the day so we don't use excessive fuel. Really manage which ports we go into when we unload product and about three years ago we actually started operating the boat 12 months of the year.</p> <p>Because we live here, which is in the north of the State, our fishery is actually closed for a certain period. So three years ago we decided to take the vessel down and work in a southern port during those months so we can have an income and work the boat all year.</p>

Eric Perez:	So as part of the business who is your primary customer?
Interviewee 11:	We actually have two buyers that we sell our product to. One is based in locally and one is based in the south of the State.
Eric Perez:	Any other customer base or is it just the two buyers that you...
Interviewee 11:	We just sell to the two buyers; we don't do any retail selling of our own. We just sell to the buyers or the wholesalers whatever you want to refer to them as.
Eric Perez:	Well, if you look at them as customers are you actively seeking any more buyers for your product or is two enough or is two too much?
Interviewee 11:	<p>No, well two is probably enough because when we are in the south and we catch scallop in bulk we don't bag the scallop up. So the buyer we have down south can deal with bulk scallop and the buyer we have in town deals with our northern prawn and other bits and pieces throughout the other part of the year which is why we have two.</p> <p>At the beginning of this year when we returned to town we actually approached another buyer in town to give us a price to see whether we could sell our product to him and check the price we were getting from our current buyer. The other buyer didn't even get back to us to say that yes he would even look at the product or ask us what product we had on board.</p> <p>So the only message we can get out of that is either he didn't want our product because he couldn't then on sell it or he had enough boats to fulfil his requirements and he didn't any more supply.</p>
Eric Perez:	So the next lot of questions draw on how you do decision making in the business and specifically what process or approach do you take when making decisions within the business?
Interviewee 11:	Our business is run as a partnership and my partner actually operates the vessel. He is the skipper on the vessel and I do all the paperwork and bits and pieces at home. So pretty much the decisions on where he fishes and when he fishes and for how long he fishes is his domain, he decides on all of that.
Eric Perez:	In terms of managing the boat?
Interviewee 11:	In terms of managing the boat.
Eric Perez:	In terms of the finances?
Interviewee 11:	<p>In terms of the finances that's my department. Although my husband does keep his finger on the pulse a fair bit in terms of managing the finances and making sure we are lodging our bas and putting our tax returns in and all of the paperwork that goes with all of that. Paperwork, all that sort of thing, I do all of that.</p> <p>So we talk about all of that neutral stuff that we have to deal with and he does - I ask him where he is going and what's happening. I talk to the vessel every day, at least once.</p>
Eric Perez:	So it's almost three sets of decision making processes, there's the



Eric Perez:	joint stuff and an example of that is a joint decision that you might take together in the business.
Interviewee 11:	Well, it's just a matter of what did we do recently that might have been a joint decision? Organising business cards and who is going to do all of that?
Eric Perez:	So the other two versions of decision making then are the decisions that he as the skipper of the vessel will make when he is out plying his trade versus the decisions you make when you are looking at the books and/or other things when he is not here?
Interviewee 11:	Yes and when we even employ crew, although he has the biggest decision, like we do make that decision jointly but he probably has more of a say because he is going to be living with the guy for three weeks at a time. He needs to assess the boat skills of the crew.
Eric Perez:	So as a follow on to that and in terms of decision making, where do you draw information to make your decisions within the business? So is it industry knowledge? Is it knowledge you get from your buyers? Is it a combination of things? Is it joint decision making between you and he or do you leave it more ad hoc? These are the kinds of categories that have been coming up with other interviews. So my interest is on that spectrum of kinds of ways you can make a decision where do you think you fall into with your business?
Interviewee 11:	<p>We probably use all of them and then some. In relation to whether product is cooked or green and that we need it in certain size cartons we obviously get that information from the buyer as to what the demand is at the time and whether we can get an extra 50 cents a kilogram for something or not.</p> <p>In relation to industry things we have chosen to become very involved in the industry. My husband is actually on an industry committee, so he wants to keep informed of what's happening and what's impacting on industry. So he does gather information from there.</p> <p>He has a network of other fishermen that he actually gathers information from. Some of that other information is where you get net supplies from or where is a cheaper place to get cartons from or something like that.</p>
Eric Perez:	He does that purposely or is that network more informal? Like he has actually built it up to help him with this kind of stuff?
Interviewee 11:	I don't think the purpose was to build it up to help him with it, but now that he has built it up he uses it to his advantage.
Eric Perez:	So it wasn't a tool to start with and now it is?
Interviewee 11:	No, but the boats are all out at sea doing their own little thing so they need to communicate within themselves from a lonely factor I think to prevent that. So they communicate on the radio and on the phone themselves.
Eric Perez:	It's beyond just being social is what I am trying to get out.

Interviewee 11:	Yes and talking about that social aspect we don't actually socially mix with fishermen. We don't actually have BBQs with other fishermen which I think is quite unusual. We will say g'day to them at the wharf but we don't actually go out and mix with them on a social level.
Eric Perez:	Could I ask the follow up question to that is it because the nature of the work is hunting so therefore it's a solo type pursuit in terms of the work that he does? So you are involved with the business but him being what you might class as the last of the hunters out on the boat, it's not a team based business so therefore that might be a reason you don't socialise?
Interviewee 11:	It could be. I'm not sure. He has one mate who he has known since he was 15 and he was working out of a northern port who drove down to town to come to my husband's 21 <sup>st</sup> and came down to our wedding a couple of years later. So that relationship is very long and I would say very strong but we just don't mix in the social circles with them.  I don't know. It's a peculiar thing from my perspective because I'm not used to that. Normally my work friends are my work friends outside of work as well, but in that circle it just doesn't seem to be. That might be just us being unique because I can't say that that is the way it is for all fishermen.
Eric Perez:	I think it would vary across industries. I couldn't make any pronouncements one way or the other, but it's interesting you say that.
Interviewee 11:	Now sorry, the other thing is when you said where we get information from, I'm involved in the banking industry. So a lot of our financial decisions and how we make those financial decisions would be from my experience and expertise in my other career as a banker and as a loans officer in particular.
Eric Perez:	That's helped in managing your part of the business I guess.
Interviewee 11:	Definitely.
Eric Perez:	You have talked about a few stakeholders specifically, so the two buyers that buy your product throughout the year and they would be internal to your business because they are part of the way that you sell your product. You are not chasing them every year with other buyers. So you could look at them as being an internal despite the fact that you are selling the product outside the business.  In terms of other stakeholders, can you identify any other groups or organisations that impact on your business?
Interviewee 11:	Where do you start? There is about, I don't know, six government departments that impact on our business quite heavily. We have AQIS certification.
Eric Perez:	They are for exporting of product?
Interviewee 11:	That's right. We also have maritime services which is the boat safety stuff.

Eric Perez:	Yeah, the safety regulator for boats
Interviewee 11:	<p>They come and do boat inspections and all those sorts of things. Then we actually have where we tie the boat up. We actually own a berth in town and we are shareholders of that company because we own a berth. So I guess they have a fairly big input on what we do and how we do things. We actually tie up down south at a port run berth. So we have interactions with them. They have very high insurance requirements when we tie up down there. We have to make sure we send their insurances off.</p> <p>We obviously then have accountants and the tax department and superannuation guarantee levies that we have to deal with, with our employee and our personal tax and our bas statements.</p>
Eric Perez:	So there's a few, that's fine.
Interviewee 11:	As well as net makers. We have to negotiate with net makers. We have to get suppliers. We buy our net from southern suppliers of nets so then we have transport costs to worry about.
Eric Perez:	That's fairly extensive. You mentioned employees and in gathering the demographics for the interview you mentioned that you have got an employee who's status as an employee is a little different to your average wage earning employee. Can you very quickly go through the arrangement that you have without naming the name of the employee?
Interviewee 11:	<p>Our employees are paid as a percentage of the catch which is the way fishing has been done for ages. Because they are paid as a percentage of the catch the government view that as a piece worker and when you are a piece worker you cannot get workers compensation.</p> <p>So we have actually got them as a share fishing arrangement which seems to be a unique thing and it might line up a little bit with share farming arrangements.</p> <p>So with share fishing they bring their skills and a little bit of tools to the thing which is just basically their personal protective equipment. So that's how we pay them. They need to cover their own accident insurance while they are on the vessel.</p> <p>Then they try and slot in to the position of sub-contractor but because they are only going to be working for us and there are some rules around that that the government like that they are only limited to one boat because you can't jump from boat to boat in the middle of the ocean, we then have some superannuation guarantee implications on that. So we actually pay that out of their gross catch percentage.</p>
Eric Perez:	Now, let's move away from the operational side of the business and look at what I've been calling the crystal balling set of questions here for the future and the issues facing the business in the next one to six months.

Interviewee 11:	Can we just hold the interview there because I have to take my daughter away?
Eric Perez:	No worries, we will pause. Okay, so we are back to the interview and the official part of the business part of the interview is now finished. So now we are into the navel gazing or looking into the future. I want to ask you, firstly, the issues you think you are going to face in the next one to six months, so short term?
Interviewee 11:	Just the certainty of the fishery because we have got the trawl plan review happening and it should have started in 2009 and we have had a change of government and now we have had the budget cuts and people leaving fisheries, just the uncertainty is unnerving.
Eric Perez:	Would that then apply to medium term issues, so one year to two years from now?
Interviewee 11:	Yeah, until we can get this trawl plan put to bed and we know exactly what is happening because there are rumours so you can't sleep at night thinking that 60 per cent of your business is just going to be taken away from you.
Eric Perez:	So would I be correct in assuming that the long term vision, so beyond two years is still to get that assurance about what the framework is for how the fishery is managed?
Interviewee 11:	That's the primary concern. Once that can get put away I think then the fishery needs to start looking at itself and start helping itself but primarily we need to know that there is still going to be a fishery. That we still have access to fishing grounds and we can still fish an applicable number of nights to keep our businesses viable.
Eric Perez:	Got you. All right, well that officially ends the key questions here but there's an activity that I have been conducting with the other interviewees and it's about applying a SWOT analysis to your business. So I'm assuming you are familiar with the acronym?
Interviewee 11:	I certainly am.
Eric Perez:	So if the 's' and the 'w', so the strengths and the weaknesses are internal to the business, can you give me an outline of the some of the strengths you see in your business versus some of its weaknesses?
Interviewee 11:	<p>The strengths I see in our business are our commitment to the business. Our skills within our own business and we really want to see the industry survive. Our optimism, as much as it is in a bit of a shadow at the moment, our optimism for our business and for the industry, I think that is a strength.</p> <p>The fact that we want to get in and help at an industry level, we are just not looking at our own belly button and going, oh woe is us. Yes, we understand that it might be woe is us across the industry but we can see some really good value in our business and in all the small businesses but we need to stick together and do things and unite to make all of us more profitable.</p>
Eric Perez:	So they are your strengths, what about some weaknesses? So you have mentioned the big one being the uncertainty but that's really a

Eric Perez:	threat in the grand scheme of things. In terms of the internal workings of your business, do you see any weaknesses there?
Interviewee 11:	<p>Some of our weaknesses yeah, I don't think we look wide enough to value add. I don't think we have really contemplated that properly. I think there could be some work done there that would strengthen our business, not so much strengthen the business, but get us more money for our product by value adding on the boat. We do have enough space and our licence we can actually have two crew plus my partner on the boat.</p> <p>So potentially we could take advantage of some value adding on the vessel. I don't think we have actually explored that enough which I guess is an internal weakness.</p>
Eric Perez:	If we looked at your opportunities and threats, could you then turn that weakness as being an opportunity, looking at that value add opportunity out there? Is that an opportunity you think is a realistic one?
Interviewee 11:	I think so. I think we need to go and start talking to our buyers and investigating other things that we could do to the product so our buyers can sell it maybe directly to restaurants or something, I don't know. So the processing is done on the boat as opposed to any processing that may happen in the buyer's premise.
Eric Perez:	You mentioned, because part of what you are saying there is about teaming up or at least having a discussion with your buyers about what the opportunities are out there. Is that reflective? Do you feel, and I'm just trying to paraphrase what you are saying and also read in to some of what you are saying to me about that networking, that maybe you need to speak other people as well in the industry about the value add or is it just within your networks at the moment?
Interviewee 11:	<p>No, I think the value add, I think we need to start making, maybe whole of industry wide might be a bit big of a goal to try and achieve. I think regionally there are other people that he does associate with and talk to when he is on the boat that we need to look at doing some value add and perhaps through our buyer or through the other couple of buyers in town as well. There's no point in the boat doing one thing to product because we might only have 200 kilograms of it and then if there is a market with that 200 kilograms we may not be able to satisfy the market because we might have to supply 2 tonne.</p> <p>So you actually then need other boats to do the same value add on their boats to help fill that need. So we need to join together as that but we also need to start doing some of our own, whether we call it promotion in as much as we need to tell the public that we are doing things sustainably and we have got turtle excluders and all this sort of thing as well which goes hand in hand with getting things on menus in restaurants.</p>
Eric Perez:	Would you call that better communications or different type of

Eric Perez	communication or both?
Interviewee 11:	I think just public communication in general. I don't think we do it well as an industry. I think it costs a lot of money as an individual which is why you have to go to a group model to do it.
Eric Perez:	Threats, now you have mentioned two really big ones about the instability or the unknown in terms of the legislative or what they call the regulatory framework for your fishery as well as government. Are there other threats, for example are imports a threat to the prawn fishery as it stands now given that that's your primary fishery?
Interviewee 11:	Imports are a threat on a couple of different levels. If disease comes in with imports that get into the wild stocks, that would be a huge threat and I don't think there are enough controls in that regard. In so much as the threat of market share we have come to accept that to a degree that there is always going to be imports into the prawn products.  I think we, Australians, have really well managed fisheries generally and we do a whole lot of sustainability stuff that we don't promote enough for the consumer to be able to make the choice between our local caught stuff and imports which is what we have to embrace.
Eric Perez:	Thanks for your time. There are a couple of things that you have brought up. so that's the formal end of the interview I guess but you have brought up some things that I would like to follow up just for the sake of recording these responses.  One of them is the family nature of the business. Now, some of the themes that are coming up through the other interviews that we have had is that family business model or I'm a second or third generation fisher person, whether it's the dad in the business or whether it is mum. Do you think there is something unique about that business model that you have encountered given that you have a finance background and you have seen how other businesses operate? Does that give you an edge or is that a hindrance or is it a double edged sword? What's your perception of that?
Interviewee 11:	I think it's a double edged sword. I think you tend to work hard in a family business because it is your business. It is your heart and soul. So I think you put in a lot more hours than you actually recognise you put in and you try your absolute damndest to make thing work and to make things profitable.  The double edged sword is that you probably don't spend enough time doing self-development and understanding business acumens and supply and demand chains and all of those sorts of things to actually have an understanding of how those other business things impact on your small family business. Therefore some of the decisions you make are not fully informed.
Eric Perez:	Well, thank you for being candid in terms of the self-reflection

Eric Perez:	<p>but, and it's not but really, it's a follow up question. I'm interested when you say that you don't have enough time or is it time or is it inclination to do not just personal but professional development?</p> <p>That one is of particular interest here in terms of strategy in that how much do you think it is a percentage of your profit if you could put it that way or as some figure? It doesn't necessarily have to be profit, would you have invested say in your, the guy that's your deckie / sub-contractor, has he asked to do courses? Have you provided him with opportunities to train?</p>
Interviewee 11:	<p>There are some courses that have to be done mandatory, elements of shipboard safety and the like that they have to have certificates for. Other than that there are little organised courses that we could send him on. Most of the training on our vessel is being undertaken by my partner who is training him to do things and processes the way that is to our standard.</p> <p>From discussions with other trawl operators and discussions within, we've had a few deckies over the years, discussions from those deckies, it appears that we operate quite well and we have some really good controls in relation to product quality controls and those sorts of things. As for a standard it would be nice to have some sort of a standard so all trawler operators could put their hand on their heart and say, yes we do this to a standard and we have got well trained developed crew.</p> <p>Because the next thing is, the crew then potentially become skippers. So it's really hard to get experienced crew, so you get someone and they work up. It's a whole different lifestyle. You are at sea for three weeks at a time. You are home for a week at a time. It's just a different thing and as much as people compare us to the mining industry or the army, those people are generally still on solid land and can still order a pizza if they want to.</p>
Eric Perez:	That's good. You have given me the response in terms of an employee. What about personally?
Interviewee 11:	<p>Personally I guess I have had a bit of an advantage because of the industry I am in. I am in finance so I have some personal development through my employment but there are a lot of other wives of fishermen who are only doing the books and dealing with all the paperwork on self-experience and following their nose. Ten years ago I started a women's group/network. The women started getting some training and some things together but over time a lot of those women who were housewives and the fishing business was supporting them have now had to go and find employment. So to actually have those meetings is becoming more difficult because the wives have to work.</p>
Eric Perez:	All right, thanks for your time.
Interviewee 11:	Cheers.

**APPENDIX 20**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 12**  
**SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Can I start with asking you, why did you choose to operate a small business in the commercial fisheries?
Interviewee 12:	My husband has always wanted to be a fisherman, he's been a fisherman for 30 years, so basically he wanted to be self-employed and it's the sort of work he loves.
Eric Perez:	Excellent, okay. What about your view of that? Was fishing your first interest or did you do it to help him - part of the business?
Interviewee 12:	No, I just came into it because I've got another job and I've come from farming, so it wasn't that remotely - it wasn't that far removed from what I sort of knew, but yeah...
Eric Perez:	What kind of farming background did you...
Interviewee 12:	Sugar cane farming.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, local or...
Interviewee 12:	In Bundaberg.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, great. So in terms of broad aspirations for next year, what's your biggest goal or set of goals for 2013?
Interviewee 12:	Next year? Just to continue and to be profitable and to just stay there.
Eric Perez:	Excellent. So your measure of success is just that, or is it more money or...
Interviewee 12:	My measure of success will be to say that we can pay the loan off and that we can pay the crew and we can maintain the boat.
Eric Perez:	Excellent, easy. In terms of this year - and we're almost at the end of it - did you do much different in operating the business this year compared to last year?
Interviewee 12:	Yes. We've upgraded this year, we've gone to a bigger boat. We bought a new boat in January, so this is a new boat, which is considerably different. We've also - at the moment we're doing a major refit on that boat - an upgrade, I should say, rather than a refit because we're putting a new nozzle and prop on, which we knew we were going to do when we bought the boat but we were going to do it at the end of the season. But we've economically found it was better to do it now, so we're doing that now.
Eric Perez:	Okay. From your perspective in the business then, what do you think are the elements that help build and then maintain the business? So that's a two-parter. What do you think in terms of what you do in the business helped to build it, and how do you maintain it once you get it to the certain size or - yeah.
Interviewee 12:	It all comes down to the crew, basically. Me, myself, I just do the bookwork. The crew is what is going to drive it. The business is only going to be as good as the employees we can have, because without a decent skipper and without decent crew, we're not going to be able to go there.
Eric Perez:	So the link then to the maintenance part of the question is, how do



Eric Perez:	you ensure then that you've got good crew and happy crew and a skipper and a happy skipper? Does that mean investing in training good or investing in getting them better pay or a higher percentage of the catch or what's a sweetener for them to stay as a crew?
Interviewee 12:	<p>Well, for the skipper the sweetener is that he gets to run it as it is because it's a family-type business. He gets to run it as if it's his and he just tells us what we want and as long as we can afford it and he knows that before he even asks that. The crew, I think for them it is having a well maintained boat that can go to work and stay at work and not be back in port all the time broken down. We work away from port, we go up north, so it's got to be well maintained.</p> <p>Percentage is a big thing, but turnover, what the crew look at and they all say, but blah blah gets more percentage than me, but high percentage, small turnover, doesn't give you any more money in your pocket. It's just convincing the crew - and when I say convincing, is if they stick around long enough and do a full season and take the highs and lows, they'll see at the end of the year what they actually get.</p>
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, yeah, because it'll average out probably better in the end than if you have a few days or a week or two that are pretty crappy.
Interviewee 12:	Yeah, so to work local and do shorter trips - it depends on their circumstances and what they want. Not all of them want to go away.
Eric Perez:	Okay yeah, that's an interesting bit that you bring up. What's the demographic of the crew you've got? Are they single men or are they...
Interviewee 12:	The skipper's single - well, they're all single at the moment, yeah. Some of them have got families but they do wander a bit. Like, at the moment, all the crew are from Townsville. They're all local. Even though we don't work - we're a Townsville boat, but even though we don't work out of Townsville, they all come from here. So they...
Eric Perez:	And the primary area you fish is in the Gulf?
Interviewee 12:	No, up at Princess Charlotte Bay.
Eric Perez:	Okay yeah, all right. Great.
Interviewee 12:	But we have found before - going back to your question - we do find, and we do ask them that when they start with us, do you have family and family commitments? Because it's not a lifestyle that's going to suit everybody. A lot of them will say they'll go and then it just comes - they have to come home and whatever. So we try to make it very clear that we're away for a lot of time and if you can't commit to that, that's fine, but that's not going to work for you or for us.
Eric Perez:	That's fine. Who's your primary customer in the business?
Interviewee 12:	Wholesalers. Do you want to know a specific wholesaler or just...

Eric Perez:	No, you don't have to name them, but how many wholesalers?
Interviewee 12:	We just have one, one that we've had for a long time.
Eric Perez:	So you don't have any other customers that take your product?
Interviewee 12:	We have. Occasionally we sell a bit to another one, but we don't need to. The supplier we go with takes everything we've got. Been there for quite a few years, we're happy, he's happy...
Eric Perez:	You're not looking for more of that?
Interviewee 12:	No.
Eric Perez:	That's fine. Okay, so they're those first series of questions, and I guess it's the workings of the business, but now when I ask you from a process side of things, what approach do you take when you make your decisions within the business? The responses I've had in the context of the question is, do you go with you market knowledge? Do you go with information you glean from the wholesaler you sell to? Is it your experience? Is it the skipper and your husband and you that get together and make those decisions together? Is it predominantly you leading the decisions?
Interviewee 12:	No, we all talk together, the whole three of us. It's usually - well, it is always - my husband, myself and my son because we're the three that run the business. Because there'll be things that I'll understand that they won't understand, there'll be things that they can bring to the table that I don't, so any time we want to make a decision, it comes back to me to find the money and go to the bank and do the negotiating, but they have to be able to tell me what's reasonable and what's not reasonable.
Eric Perez:	Oh great, so it's a three-way decision making process?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Interesting. Okay, so the follow on to that is - that's very interesting - in terms of the decision making then, where do you draw your information? So do you have - you said you don't have a background in finance.
Interviewee 12:	No. Okay, I just use common sense more than anything. Common sense is the way I do my finance. If I haven't got it coming in, it can't go out. I do all the bookwork, so I am aware - I'm the one who knows what's come in, what's gone out. But I also know that they just have to - they know what they have to spend and what they don't have to spend.  Back to that maintenance, there's no use me saying, no, you can't have it, and then the boat can't go to work because the something is broken. So because we're a family business and we all run around it together, they all - you know, it's talked about all the time. It's negotiated.
Eric Perez:	But it's understood that you're the manager of the money?
Interviewee 12:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So I'm...
Interviewee 12:	If you asked them, they wouldn't have a clue what we've got.
Eric Perez:	So I'm your skipper and I say, look mum, I need to spend \$3000

Eric Perez:	on this particular part for the engine, if I don't have it I can't go to sea, that's your driver to [unclear] actually he can get that money to get the thing fixed, yes?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's great. You mentioned - this next question is about, who do you feel are the key stakeholders influencing your business. Now, you've mentioned you've got a family business structure and that you deal with one, maybe a secondary wholesaler that you might deal with in terms of selling your product. But are there any other internal stakeholders that you deal with in the business or is it just that circle of people?
Interviewee 12:	Just that circle of people.
Eric Perez:	Okay, externally? This one, people have brought up government on a lot of occasions, I'm guessing you're going there.
Interviewee 12:	Yeah. It's government, it's policy, but I suppose the other things that do influence and do have a thing for us is the mother ships, and it is...
Eric Perez:	So the companies running the mother ships, yeah.
Interviewee 12:	Yeah, because that was the primary reason why we went to the bigger boat, because...
Eric Perez:	Let me stop you a second. For the sake of the tape and for the analysis in the paper here, can I ask then, with son being out on a three month stint in the boat or out in the deep water, explain the role of a mother ship and why it's important to the business, just to give the reader a bit of context.
Interviewee 12:	Okay, so the mother ship is the bigger boat that brings the supplies, brings the fuel, brings the water and collects everything back off of the trawler that's been caught to bring it back to port. So the trawler goes to work and stays at work for the extended period, but they haven't got the capabilities of taking enough food, water, can't store all the product that they catch. So the mother ship goes up, takes them up what they need, like, takes up the groceries as if the supermarket's going to them basically...
Eric Perez:	Is that fuel as well?
Interviewee 12:	Fuel goes as well, water goes as well. Then when they come back, they bring our product back.
Eric Perez:	What's the size in comparison? Is the mother ship the size of the super trawler that's been talked about?
Interviewee 12:	I don't know about that big, but they're big. They're big boats. They've got big barges, they've got big containers on the back of them, yeah, they're big boats.
Eric Perez:	So that's how the business survives out in the big water...
Interviewee 12:	That's how those sorts of businesses do - or else you have to be able to do shorter - long trips, that you have enough water and food and everything to go up, do a couple of weeks or a couple of - longer than that probably - and then come back and unload your product. That was - and the boat we had before, we weren't - if they cut the mother ship, so didn't come up regularly every two

Interviewee 12:	<p>weeks like they were doing, we weren't going to be able to stay there.</p> <p>They were talking about extending it and saying they were only going to go, like, once a month. He would not have been able to stay working up there because he'd be full before the mother ship got to him. So that was our kicker to say we need to go to a bigger boat, so the bigger boat can last longer because we do have the capabilities of storing more and being self-sufficient for longer periods of time between when that mother ship comes around.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay, so the critical external stake holder is the mother ship.
Interviewee 12:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	Is there only one company running one mother ship at the moment?
Interviewee 12:	Yes.
Eric Perez:	So if that company goes broke or there's no more mother ship, then you can't do the extended trips.
Interviewee 12:	No. In this boat that we've got now, the bigger boat that we went to this year, we could survive because we would just have to change the way we work, but we would put on the fuel, the water, enough stores, go up, do the trip and then come back to Cairns to unload.
Eric Perez:	Oh, Cairns is the closest port?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah, so he comes back to Cairns and unloads. He could do that because he's got more - to be economical, he's got to be able to have the space to keep enough product to do that.
Eric Perez:	So now it's cheaper to have the mother ship servicing them than option B?
Interviewee 12:	Than come back, yeah.
Eric Perez:	But you do have an option B because you've upgraded the boat. Okay, great.
Interviewee 12:	But then this year, after we upgraded, then the mother ship continued to go every two weeks, but we'd already done the upgrade. But that was fine because that was a...
Eric Perez:	Well, in terms of risk management, do you think it was a good investment to upgrade the boat anyway?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah, because we wanted to - we wanted to get there anyway and when they said they were going to cut their services, that was just our push to actually do it. We talked about it for a lot of years...
Eric Perez:	Had the push not been there, you may not have done it still?
Interviewee 12:	Not yet probably.
Eric Perez:	All right, that's fine. That's really good. So the next lot of questions then are about some crystal ball gazing here, so bear with me as I ask you these questions. What issues do you think are facing your business in the short term? By short term I mean one to six months out from now.
Interviewee 12:	You mean us specifically or the industry?
Eric Perez:	Your - the business in whatever context you want to talk about.

Interviewee 12:	So for us personally at the moment, we're on the slip doing our - putting on the new nozzle and prop, which we wanted, so my thing is the boat has to get back to work and start making some money again, because we've had an extended period out in the middle of the year that we don't normally have. But we budgeted for that, we sorted that out, so we should be fine.
Eric Perez:	I'm sure you did.
Interviewee 12:	So yeah, I think we'll be fine. We will be fine. But that is the thing, if something was to happen now when he went back to work, say someone broke his leg and he couldn't work, that would be my problem because I couldn't - me finding another skipper just to walk on there, I wouldn't have as much reserve as I would normally have because I've just spent \$100,000 on a big refit.
Eric Perez:	Got you, okay. What about in the medium term? So we're looking at here one year to two years out.
Interviewee 12:	Mainly government things, external things that are going to come in, any restrictions we're going to get.
Eric Perez:	So by government things, you mean policy rules...
Interviewee 12:	Closures.
Eric Perez:	Okay, got you. Long term, beyond two years?
Interviewee 12:	Once again it'll be if anything restrictions on the industry so we can't work in the areas we work now, and probably back to crew. A lot of it comes back to crew.
Eric Perez:	All right, well that concludes the formal question part of this, but I also have added to each of the questions that I've been asking people, a SWOT analysis, you've heard the acronym?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay, and it's used in lots of contexts. I'm sure it's used in nursing as well for a different group of people. So for here, if the, 's' and 'w', being strengths and weaknesses, are those things that are internal to your business, what do you acknowledge are some of the strengths in your business?
Interviewee 12:	The strength in business is that we run it as a family business so we have - our overheads are down, we're all aware of what we need and what we don't need and what our capabilities are and the fact that we work together. So we're not - it's not like a boss and a crew that are coming from different directions where sometimes that seems to happen that they have different agendas. We've got one agenda which is for us to be profitable and for us all to make money and all be happy and all do the job we love.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Before you - [unclear] many other strengths, and I have to ask this because you've - the family business thing comes out quite strongly with you, which is a great thing to hear. But I'm a layperson here, so school me up a bit about the family business angle. Do you think you'd be as successful in the business if it wasn't a family-based business? So say the third partner - so if you had your husband and you as one partner and your son as the other, say the third, the second partner was a non-family member,

Eric Perez:	do you think it could work as well?
Interviewee 12:	No, definitely wouldn't.
Eric Perez:	Is that - would I be wrong in assuming that's because there's a degree of trust between the family members that you can't get anywhere else or do you trust your son's judgement because he's been out there and done it as a skipper? Like, is it his level of experience and your husband's experience or is it just that you just trust them implicitly? This is important because there's lots of models out there about what makes a good small business operate. I'd love to know what you think makes your small business operate.
Interviewee 12:	Well, it is the trust because you can trust them because you know - okay, there's a few different levels to that. The fact that you trust them because you know them personally, you trust them because they've got a vested interest in it because it's their business as well, and their expertise, and you just know it - they just have - they have a commitment, they want to be there. It's not just a job for them. A family business, if they don't want to do it, they wouldn't - you know, you can't make them stay. If they don't want to, they won't.
Eric Perez:	Is that your family background coming out?
Interviewee 12:	Probably, but it's true. You know...
Eric Perez:	Has that helped? Just as an aside, out of curiosity, because you've said you come from a farming background, did your experience as having a farming business or being involved through your family, was that similar to this one or...
Interviewee 12:	It's got a lot of similarities in that the seasons - you can't control the seasons, you can't control what you're going to make or what - you know, you can put so much hard work in and it can all just be taken away from you. So that way - I also understand about machinery, that machinery doesn't just work nine to five and things break down and you just can't control that as well. It is - it's not - one, it's the hours, and two, it's the money. It's not, you're going to get paid every week and you're going to get paid the same money. It's the fact that you have to budget that this season's going to have to last you right through to the next season if, you know, if things happen.
Eric Perez:	So in terms of weaknesses - and I'm trying to look here, because weather was probably more of a threat than a weakness - but can you identify any weaknesses in the business that you see at the moment?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah, seasonal stuff which is out of our control, which is, like I said, with the weather. But also there's weaknesses in the business if - I suppose the fact that we only have that one particular wholesaler that we go to, if he was to go for some reason, we'd have to then find another market, which I'm sure we would because our product's got a good name. But it's - once again, it's a trust thing with him that we know that we can just rely on him, that he's going to take everything we catch and he's going to pay it

Interviewee 12:	for us.
Eric Perez:	So this wholesaler takes 100 per cent of your catch?
Interviewee 12:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay. If it comes back to me, I'll ask you the question - but let's move on to opportunities. So what do you see as opportunities in the environment for the business, or do you see any? I mean, you don't have to list them; I'm just trying to open up the possibilities there because I'm hearing a few things but I'd rather you...
Interviewee 12:	<p>The opportunities are for us to - because we've got a bigger boat - to work more efficiently, which is what we're hoping. It's also that he is committed because of the way we structured the business that he has even more of a vested interest than he had before, so he now wants to go and do scalloping that he didn't do before. He's got the bigger boat, he's committed to it. I suppose that is the weakness that I worry about, that he will burn out because he's not having as much down time, because my husband and my son both do the maintenance and everything, that is the thought.</p> <p>Well, where are you going to now find the time to do all that that you did before on that closure over Christmas when you had it off? But that's the juggling act, that's what he wants to do, it's up to him. That's where he comes back to the strengths. Like, we let him make the decisions. We don't try to tell him where he has to be when. He has autonomy, which I think...</p>
Eric Perez:	As a skipper of a boat, yeah?
Interviewee 12:	As a skipper, which you can't - and we tried it with other people with other boats that we owned, and it just doesn't work unfortunately.
Eric Perez:	You mentioned - and this was really interesting - and before I lose this train of thought, you mentioned a threat being burnout. So is health an issue with the skipper and the crew that you want them to stay physically healthy...
Interviewee 12:	And emotionally happy, yes. Emotionally healthy, because that is the thing, because it does - the fishing industry does have a bad reputation for ruining relationships. Not everybody has...
Eric Perez:	As I've heard. I've heard such things, yes.
Interviewee 12:	Yes, and to be honest, he's been down that track but I don't - I'm not sure - and we've seen people before in - because like I said, we've been fishing for 30-odd years and we've seen people have businesses and their sons run the boats and then next minute they get married and they're divorced. We've always said, don't let that happen to you to our son. That's why we give him the choice. We don't say, you have to go to work and you have to do this. So he makes those decisions himself.
Eric Perez:	Excellent. Okay thanks for your time, and like I said before, I'll get a copy of the paper with the questions analysed for you to have a look at.

Interviewee 12:	That's all right.
Eric Perez:	Cheers.



**APPENDIX 21**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 13**  
**SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Okay, just to start things off mate why did you choose the seafood industry to operate your small business?
Interviewee 13:	Because I enjoyed it.
Eric Perez:	Okay, maybe expand on that a little bit, is it the fact that you can work on your own, is it that it's been in the family, like are you a multi-generational fisher, is it something...
Interviewee 13:	No, no, it's just I liked it from a young age, left school early, worked on boats.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	Worked on boats until I was 14 and then just progressed through to owning one myself.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so how long have you been...
Interviewee 13:	Well the father bought in, my father bought in on it a lot of years ago. We just acquired licences and then when I was old enough I just took it over, sort of rolled on.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	Bought a boat and put it on.
Eric Perez:	
	No, that's good. So from this year to 2013 what are your big goals into 2013? Some people I've interviewed have said we just want to survive into next year and we'll be happy with that. Have you got any plans for the boat, you want to expand or...
Interviewee 13:	Oh no, just...
Eric Perez:	...plan to do anything different next year?
Interviewee 13:	Just finish paying everything off really.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, I should have - that's for this year and next year I'll have everything paid off.
Eric Perez:	Okay, now that's...
Interviewee 13:	If things keep going and then just do a few modifications to the boat to make life easier.
Eric Perez:	Okay, now that's good because you've answered the next part of my question is how will you measure success next year. So if you pay everything off...
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...by next year you'll be...
Interviewee 13:	Well that's the plan. If everything keeps going the way it is I should have everything paid off by next year.
Eric Perez:	Okay, just I guess not as an aside because it's an important part of the question I've got to ask, did you actually sit down and do a repayment plan to get your debts out of the way by the end of 2013 or is it just gearing any profits you make to paying that off?
Interviewee 13:	It's just the way the loan is set up when I took it out five years ago.

Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah, that's good.
Interviewee 13:	So that's the payback plan.
Eric Perez:	No worries. Okay, in terms of how you operate on the boat are you doing anything differently this year than you did last year? Any big changes...
Interviewee 13:	Oh, I changed the whole - I changed fisheries.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah, so why...
Interviewee 13:	Just tried something new. I was fish trapping for the last four years, four-and-a-bit years like with the boat I own now and then the last 18 - oh, it may not be that long, it'd be about 12 months now I think I changed over and went long-lining.
Eric Perez:	Okay, wow, alright. What pushed for that change?
Interviewee 13:	I think it was just trying to chase some sort of bigger dollars, bigger money. That and I was a bit bored, a bit sick of fish trapping.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's fine. So again you've answered part of my next question which is what are the key elements that help you to build and maintain the business? So you said you changed from one fishery to the other because of money and that you were bored with what you were doing before. What are you doing now as a long-liner to maintain the business as it is? Are you buying new gear? Are you trying new technology? Is it just completely new so it's all new to you at the moment?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah it's just the whole thing is new. Every trip is trial and error. I never did it before, it was just a complete...
Eric Perez:	You said 12 to 18 months you were doing the long-lining?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, I think it's been 12, yeah 13 months or something.
Eric Perez:	If you tracked it from when you first started to now, is it getting better or staying the same in terms of your ability to capture?
Interviewee 13:	Ability to capture is getting - well in theory it's getting better. Some trips are better than others. I think the general understanding of what you need to do and look for and try and make happen, the actual operations of physically doing it is easy now that you've learnt but now it's just a matter of having an educated guess.
Eric Perez:	That's good, that's great. So in that change I guess we won't look at who your primary customers were before but do you have a primary customer now for your products?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, XYZ Seafood Pty Ltd is one of them and Seafood Ltd.
Eric Perez:	Okay and I'll blurt those names out.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, they're like...
Eric Perez:	So you've got two main buyers, yeah.
Interviewee 13:	You can't - yeah, you've got to because that's the Commonwealth fishery, it's not the state. In the Commonwealth you have to unload to a registered - what do you call it - AFMA receiver.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	I can't...
Eric Perez:	So it's just different arrangements to fishing in state waters versus doing it in the Commonwealth.

Interviewee 13:	Yeah, there's a fair bit of export involved in it.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 13:	A lot of it goes to Japan.
Eric Perez:	That's alright. So when you mentioned your two customers, again we won't use them by name, are they your best customers or do you have another part of the customer base or do you primarily sell just to those two?
Interviewee 13:	They're just the only two that I've ever - QPD is the main one I've used. Because he's a local fellow too it sort of looks after...
Eric Perez:	Helps...
Interviewee 13:	Looks after you but you're here most of the year so...
Eric Perez:	Fair enough. Can you find more of them given that it is a...
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, there are a fair few around.
Eric Perez:	That are accredited under the AFMA...
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Ok yeah. Have you got...
Interviewee 13:	You can send...
Eric Perez:	Have you got any plans to...
Interviewee 13:	You can send them from here, I mean from the cooperative you can send direct to a central market but then local markets won't grade out what needs to go to overseas. You're sort of paying for a service, they know what they're looking at in the fish so they determine whether it's of a certain quality to send overseas.
Eric Perez:	Fair enough. Okay, that covers most of the questions about the business which we'll get back to a bit later but what I'd like to know from you if you can put your mind to it is what processes or what approach do you take when you're making decisions within the business? So now again we're using the context that you switched fisheries, you're in a new fishery. When you're making your decisions in your business is it a blend of your own experience and what you're hearing from other similar fishers, is it the market, are you looking at the market before you go out or is it a combination of lots of things?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, a lot of things I imagine. Fish prices, weather, amount of fish around. With my own sort of set up - this time of year I do a lot of lobster fishing so sort of long-lining generally can be better on a full moon rather than a darker moon and lobsters are better on a darker moon. So you do a couple of weeks of this, couple weeks of that.
Eric Perez:	So it's a seasonality impact then.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, huge.
Eric Perez:	Seasons and the weather I guess.
Interviewee 13:	The weather's a - well the weather is the biggest thing for all year round.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 13:	But seasons of what's there - at certain times of the year you catch a certain thing in a certain place so you've just got to go back to the same spots and work them out.

Eric Perez:	So I guess in terms of the next question, when you make your decisions do you have some place where you specifically draw your information? I notice that you use multiple things but is it really your own experience and the weather or is it the market price? So if the price for something you're targeting today is shithouse will you just leave it go and do something else?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	If you've got an option to. You can't always do it because you've got to go - you've got to get income coming in so you can make your repayments. So just because prices are shit doesn't necessarily mean you can just tie the boat up and not go and just wait for it.
Eric Perez:	You've got to sell what you can.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah but if you've got the option to maybe target something else where prices aren't as bad you weigh it up.
Eric Perez:	This is a new question that I guess I want to ask to the Co-op members as part of the research and your experience with the Co-op, how do you see the Co-op fitting in to how you run your business? The Co-op has all its elements, it has a group of fishermen together, they pay fees for you to be selling into the one area. But from your business point of view how does the Co-op fit into what you do?
Interviewee 13:	I think this Co-op in particular is huge, in not just mine but every fisherman that's here. It'd be massive. There are a lot of Co-ops up and down the coast and a lot that aren't nearly as good as this.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	For prices, like fees and charges and all. Because if you - if the Co-op...
Eric Perez:	Yeah. Okay, so because you're a member here you're not necessarily a member of another Co-op?
Interviewee 13:	No, you've got to apply and pay the money. But the facilities - you couldn't set up - because I came from down the Central Coast where there is no Co-op and I used to work out of my backyard so you had to set up pretty much Co-op facilities in your backyard.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	I don't reckon - the running costs of what you pay here - you couldn't set this up at home and...
Eric Perez:	Be profitable?
Interviewee 13:	Well you'd still be profitable but you'd be better off here with the Co-op.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah, alright.
Interviewee 13:	At the end of the day.
Eric Perez:	How long have you been a member?
Interviewee 13:	Eight, possibly nine years.
Eric Perez:	That's good, that one for me was a connection that in the other interviews we haven't had that your business is part of this broader business so it's a help to you rather than a hindrance, is that...

Interviewee 13:	<p>Oh yeah. You couldn't run a small - obviously a smaller scale you wouldn't need as big an operation in your own backyard for yourself.</p> <p>But I have a freezer at home which I store my own bait in but even now to store your own bait, for what you pay for it and then storage and then power to run it at home you're pretty much breaking even. Then you've got to put up with when it breaks, you've got to fix it yourself. Here you just...</p>
Eric Perez:	Thought you might say that.
Interviewee 13:	Let someone else deal with it.
Eric Perez:	<p>Alright, so the next question is about who do you feel are the key stakeholders or people that influence your business? Now you've mentioned you've got certain buyers in this new fishery that you're in, you've got the Co-op as a stakeholder and you mentioned a certain market down south of Sydney that is another stakeholder.</p> <p>Are there any other people that you deal with that you think have an influence on your business? Now one that's come up in every interview is government is one that impacts on their business. So is that one that you see as one as well?</p>
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, government would be the biggest one. Would have to be the biggest one when it comes to like marine parks.
Eric Perez:	So you mentioned marine parks, do you want to expand a little bit on that?
Interviewee 13:	I'm not too sure what...
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	I don't know, they're just plenty of marine parks coming in...
Eric Perez:	In terms of them coming in how do you think it is going to impact you?
Interviewee 13:	At the moment it's not really affecting me personally. Like there are a lot of areas where you're not allowed to go fishing which I suppose it'd be nice to go fishing there but they've been in place a long time now too and people are still surviving. It's more any new ones that come in because they're getting bigger and they're getting sort of bigger. That's a worry. Marine parks now have been in place for a lot of years and people have...
Eric Perez:	Is that the size of your competitors is growing...
Interviewee 13:	No, I don't think the size - I don't think there are people coming in but I think - but they keep reducing the amount of water that you can fish in so you've got to concentrate in - instead of everyone spread out as soon as you lock an area of fishing up people have got to come closer and congregate to target the fish in one particular area.
Eric Perez:	Got you, okay. Alright. Now let's do some crystal ball gazing here. What do you think are the biggest issues that are going to face your business in the next one to six months?
Interviewee 13:	Any major breakdowns.

Eric Perez:	In terms of the operation and that sort of stuff?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah. The boat itself or...
Eric Perez:	Out of curiosity if something does go pear-shaped on the boat are you looking at big repair costs usually? Do you have something that typically breaks down on your vessel or just...
Interviewee 13:	Nothing major just that things break all the time but nothing major. The biggest thing would be an engine, something mechanically going wrong.
Eric Perez:	That's okay. Let's cast the net, no pun intended, out 12 to 24 months, so one to two years from now, anything you see on the horizon that might impact you as a commercial fisherman?
Interviewee 13:	I don't think so, still just running the operation if something major goes...
Eric Perez:	Fuel, is that...
Interviewee 13:	...wrong. No I don't think fuel is going to go up any more than what it is. I don't know.
Eric Perez:	If the fuel subsidy wasn't there would that impact on you?
Interviewee 13:	Oh yeah, you'd be broke
Eric Perez:	Alright, there you go. So in the longer term, let's say beyond 24 months, okay let's use the scenario - I mean you've also said that in the long term it's really your own head costs that you don't want to go up - but let's say past the next 24 months, so long term, there's a reduction in the fee for your marine diesel, would that significantly impact what you can do?
Interviewee 13:	Oh yeah, absolutely.
Eric Perez:	Would that mean there would be more fishing effort or will you scale down or are these options things that fishermen talk about?
Interviewee 13:	I don't think you can really - in a lot of operations you can sort of use it to setup, say you've got to scale up because when you go to sea you sort of do the best you can with what you've got. So to sort of scale up on your operation you've either got to expand, like start the bigger boats, more gear which is all money that you've got to outlay to make that happen.
Eric Perez:	Yeah.
Interviewee 13:	As long as you don't - if you try and keep - it'll just be your profit goes down and if you can't live on what you're making you've got to start - I don't know if you scale back, I don't even think - scaling back is not going to help you because you're still - to scale back - I think it'd be different if you had say 100 employees and you had - you have six boats and 50 employees, people working for you and you worked out basically that the extra cost coming in...
Eric Perez:	You can just drop the...
Interviewee 13:	I can just drop two boats and still be making the same amount of money without headache.
Eric Perez:	That goes to my next question that I didn't ask at the start of the interview but I will after we're done here, is employees, do you have any?
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, two.

Eric Perez:	Full time or part time?
Interviewee 13:	One full time and one part time.
Eric Perez:	In terms of one of the issues then from an employee view of the world is training or skilling up is that something that's an issue in the business? Do you see training as an investment or as an impost on the business? Be honest.
Interviewee 13:	It can be...
Eric Perez:	I mean there are two very strong standpoints...
Interviewee 13:	Most people that you've got working for you on boats you're flat out - it's law now that they have to go do a deckhand certificate and you're flat out getting them to get off the grog or drugs to go do a half-day course let alone put them through training. It's sort of something that's just not going to happen.
Eric Perez:	Okay, no, that's fine.
Interviewee 13:	Like if you've got someone and they were keen...
Eric Perez:	No, that's the reality.
Interviewee 13:	...and they wanted to sort of do that kind of thing, yeah, you could certainly look at it.
Eric Perez:	No, that's fine.
Interviewee 13:	But the reality is most people that are working as deckies on boats...
Eric Perez:	No, that's fine. That's good and very, very politically correct. The main part of the questions are over but I've got one activity that I've done for the interview at this point and it's called looking at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the business. They call that a SWOT analysis. So I'm going to do a very light-on one here. You can do these in a lot of in-depth things for your business. But the strengths and weaknesses is usually a group, those things that are internal to your business. So could you name for me a few things that you think are a strength for your business at the moment?
Interviewee 13:	Like...
Eric Perez:	For example, do you think having the two crew, is that helping you with the productivity of your boat?
Interviewee 13:	Oh yeah. Yeah, that's one of the biggest downfalls is that you have to have crew to run my operation. The amount of days - the money...
Eric Perez:	Both a strength and a weakness.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	Well you've got to have them to go to work but the amount of days you lose because they don't show up...
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's interesting because it's both really.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	You want them there because you need them to be productive but if they don't show up you're not as productive.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah, when they don't show up.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's fine. In terms of other strengths, I mean is the boat a

Eric Perez:	new vessel? I'm just casting my mind back, it's only a couple of minutes, did you say that you've made any recent upgrades to the boat to help in your capacity to fish or not really?
Interviewee 13:	We put a new engine in and had to refit the boat.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 13:	About two years ago, 18 months ago.
Eric Perez:	Did you think that that's had a positive effect on your capacity to fish or you just had to do it?
Interviewee 13:	Well the boat sunk.
Eric Perez:	Okay, alright.
Interviewee 13:	So we were putting a new engine in when the boat sunk so we didn't have a choice when it came to having to refit it.
Eric Perez:	That's fine.
Interviewee 13:	So it was sort of...
Eric Perez:	You had to do it.
Interviewee 13:	It wasn't a good thing but now that it's back working it is.
Eric Perez:	It is.
Interviewee 13:	It has turned into kind of a roundabout way a good thing.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's fine.
Interviewee 13:	Because I've got good gear now.
Eric Perez:	The other elements of the squat is your opportunities and threats. So what do you see as an opportunity in your income in the business environment that you're in at the moment?
Interviewee 13:	I'd say just there's pretty good management, like with the lobster I think it's been managed pretty well. There have been good years and I think it's just going on what they reckon.
Eric Perez:	You're happy with the fisheries management...
Interviewee 13:	In the way that it's been - the actual - yeah, lobster I would be, the lobster side of things.
Eric Perez:	Ok.
Interviewee 13:	It must be getting...
Eric Perez:	That's a first in these interviews. It's nice to hear that - Are Fisheries being managed well.
Interviewee 13:	I'm not saying that - the people who make the decisions - I think overall the lobster side of things - I think it has to be managing fairly well, every year the catches have been going up and up and up. I think the research that they're doing is pretty promising.
Eric Perez:	Is that in terms of the biomass...
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	With the rules that I know in Queensland you can't take a female crab or you can't take roed-up females, is that the same legislation in New South Wales or is it...
Interviewee 13:	You can't take...
Eric Perez:	...you can take whatever size...
Interviewee 13:	Lobsters are different. Like if - lobster they've bought in a minimum size which allows the lobster to breed twice before it is caught and then they brought in a maximum size and that was a bit



Interviewee 13:	of heartache in the actual industry for a lot short term pain but long term gain. I think the breeding cycle, the breeding stock now has increased, there's been a major change in the lobster industry.
Eric Perez:	Okay, well that's good to know.
Interviewee 13:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	So what about threats? You mentioned marine parks, is that the biggest one at the moment?
Interviewee 13:	Marine parks is one of them. Just rising costs too much I think. If you go back through history and look at fish market prices you can - the value of - everything is going up but the value of fish isn't. So if you go back 15 years ago the average price - I personally wasn't looking at market reports 15 years ago but I have seen some but the average price for snapper then was around the \$8 to \$9 mark.
Eric Perez:	So it hasn't moved.
Interviewee 13:	So the fish prices - hey? So fish prices haven't changed except for - but you're right, everything else has gone up...
Eric Perez:	No worries, well look that ends the formal part of the questions thank you for your time.
Interviewee 13:	No worries.

**APPENDIX 22**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 14**  
**SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	That's it for the demographic stuff so we'll move on to the interview proper. Can I ask, why did you choose this industry to operate a small business?
Interviewee 14:	Why did I choose it? It probably was...
Eric Perez:	Or was it thrust upon you by family?
Interviewee 14:	Well I'm a second generation fisherman so yeah, it's probably chosen for me but I've always enjoyed it, I've always enjoyed going out with my father. Before I started working I used to go out with him so I was always destined to be involved in the fishing industry so it's lucky that I've been able to make a career out of it I suppose.
Eric Perez:	Okay, with that, just one of the things that I've asking in addition to that question about the family business type thing, did you, for example, fund your own way to getting your own vessel or was it a family business that you all invested in or...
Interviewee 14:	No, I funded myself. I've always had the support of my parents and my father is still an active fisherman.
Eric Perez:	Did you ever use him as volunteer labour when you first started?
Interviewee 14:	Not necessarily but we probably shared resources to a little bit.
Eric Perez:	Broad aspirations for 2013, so what would be something good that will happen in terms of the business next year?
Interviewee 14:	Keep operating in the black [laughs].
Eric Perez:	Okay, so staying viable.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, just staying viable, like meeting the challenges that are thrust up against us. I suppose you always have that feeling you're only as good as your last catch so you've just got to try and keep catching I suppose and keep hopefully making money and producing.
Eric Perez:	So would I be incorrect in saying that the measure of success on that then is just being viable next year? Just having the business make money?
Interviewee 14:	I put aside - I don't actually set goals, I don't set targets with that sort of thing because fishing is too fluctuating. The seasons can change from one day to the next. You get a bad run of circumstances that come against you, like you have a breakdown at the wrong time and who knows. But as long as I can keep operating in the black and hopefully growing and moving forward I'll be happy.
Eric Perez:	Have you or will you do anything differently from last year? So before we started the interview you mentioned that you've got a bigger boat.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, I've...
Eric Perez:	So what was the [unclear] bigger boat?
Interviewee 14:	Basically because I'm 40 years of age.

Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 14:	Well I've been flogging the other boat to death with what I've been trying to do with it so the opportunity arose through a friend that owned this boat that I bought and the opportunity was there at the right price and seemed like a good opportunity so I jumped at it. I'm yet to discover whether I could actually make a go of it but I should hopefully be able to.
Eric Perez:	So you were in the same fishery...
Interviewee 14:	Same fishing, doing the same thing. Maybe on a little bit bigger scale but basically just try and do it with a little bit more level of comfort.
Eric Perez:	Are you taking your crew from the old boat...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...to this one or are they are new crew?
Interviewee 14:	No, same crew.
Eric Perez:	Same people, alright.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, I'll probably end up selling the other boat or doing something with it. I won't be keeping two boats.
Eric Perez:	Given the switch in boat size and possibly capacity when you go out to fish, that is catching more product...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...what do you see as the necessary elements to build and maintain the business? You said you transitioned from small boat to bigger boat.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	That's part of the building phase but in terms of maintaining, what do you need to do, do you think, to keep this thing profitable. If your goal next year or the year after is to stay alive, what are the things...
Interviewee 14:	Well I'll probably have to certainly work a bit more - a little bit more gear than I have worked in the past so I'll have to probably set out a few more traps. But basically I just try and - if I can keep catching or keep producing like I have in the last few years I'll be pretty happy. So my profit margin might go down a little bit but my level of comfort and looking after my body - I'm starting to feel the aches and pains. I've had several operations and things like that so it's sort of playing in the back of my mind that yeah, sure - I'm hoping to be able to make enough money to cover the extra cost with running the bigger boat but it's more about extending my longevity in the industry.
Eric Perez:	It's interesting because I've only had a few interviews that have mentioned the health dimension to your fishing now.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	You say you've had some surgeries?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, well there's a lot of lifting involved in the fishing game and a lot of lifting involved in the smaller boat. Like shuffling fish around, like we were just going through a [jagged] season where we might get 200kg, 300kg, 400kg of fish a day and you've got to

Interviewee 14:	lift them probably three, maybe four times a day to shuffle them around the boat and then unloading them on to here. So it's just sort of because I don't have the room, I've got to keep - it's sort of hard to explain but - so yeah, there's a lot of double, triple lifting. So with the bigger boat...
Eric Perez:	Okay, so the OH&S, occupational health issue for your sector is the constant lifting of very heavy...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, well it's playing in the back of my mind. I've got a family member working with me now so it's also looking after his health too because hopefully he's going to have a bit of a career in the fishing industry too. So by going to this bigger boat hopefully it'll set both of us up where I can sort of in the next probably 10 or 15 years I've got probably left in the industry I can sort of hopefully do it without knocking myself around anymore than I already have.
Eric Perez:	That's good. Who is your primary customer?
Interviewee 14:	The Co-op. I don't know...
Eric Perez:	The Co-op.
Interviewee 14:	The Co-op basically. Probably 98, 95 per cent of my product goes through the Co-op and then I sell either locally or to fish markets.
Eric Perez:	Okay and then the Co-op on-sells to - we'll just call it that market somewhere because I can't identify it when I do up the transcripts, it'll just be a Co-op somewhere and a market that you sell to for privacy reasons I guess. That's alright. I guess in terms of the next question is who are your best customers, well if you're only going through the Co-op, you said it's not all of it, who do you sell the other five per cent to? Is it local restaurants or...
Interviewee 14:	No, just a local wholesaler.
Eric Perez:	That five per cent is that premium product that they're buying off you or is it just stuff that the Co-op might handle or...
Interviewee 14:	No, I don't know, would you call it premium? No, it's just part of my catch, that's all.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Are you looking to diversify your customer base? Under the Co-op rules is it a question if you're allowed to diversify? So can you drop what you sell in the Co-op to say 50 per cent?
Interviewee 14:	Well put it this way, it's in my best interests for the Co-op to be here so I will continue to support the Co-op as long as it's viable, keeps the door open. I have no interest in really outsourcing any other markets because (a) or (b) it just takes up too much of my time. You go chasing people for money, people want stuff but then you go around and drop it off to them and they're not there, then you've got to hold it and it's chewing into your private time and your off time. So I just don't like doing it. The only people that I do sell to basically pick it up from here or straight off the back of the boat basically or at the Co-op here. There's no running around fetching [unclear] by me, it's...
Eric Perez:	That's I guess the initial part of the business type questions and this next one is about how you do decision making in the business.

Eric Perez:	So if I asked you what approach do you take on making decisions within the business and by that I mean like you said before is it a hunch thing, is it you know how your market operates, what you've been able to expect out of the Co-op, is it a combination of things?
Interviewee 14:	It's probably a combination of things. A lot of it comes down to experience, gut instinct. I suppose just probably a bit of both of those. You sort of do something and if it doesn't work you don't do it again or you modify it. You pay attention to what other people have done in the past so it's where the experience comes in where you've been around other people that have done things or tried things or done things in the past but haven't done it for a while and you think well maybe that's worth looking at again or doing something like that.
Eric Perez:	Yeah.
Interviewee 14:	But yeah, a lot of it is you read the conditions, read what you think the conditions are best suitable for each day as far as what sort of species you're going to go and target and basically your business decisions sort of follow on from that.
Eric Perez:	So you've probably answered the next question which is, where do you draw your information, so it's a gut feel...
Interviewee 14:	Well communicating with other fishers, like my father is still a fisherman so I communicate with him so between the two of us we'll...
Eric Perez:	There's a lot more to the way you make your decision than just your own gut feeling?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, it's a combination of a lot of probably little things but at the end of the day I'm the type of person that will - who knows what you're going to catch unless you throw a hook in the water or throw a chuck in the water. So you roll the dice basically.
Eric Perez:	Is that something - and why I'm going to ask this is that this came up in some of my interviews across the board about that risk taking, the element of risk when you go fishing?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	It's never a certainty...
Interviewee 14:	Definitely not.
Eric Perez:	Is that a motivator for you or is that sometimes a...
Interviewee 14:	I don't mind taking risks.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 14:	There are some fishermen in this port that are very dictated by their costs. Like they'll be too worried about going and doing something because they don't want to spend the money, they can't afford to lose the money if they bomb out. Whereas I'm more like roll the dice, go and do it, I just back myself that if that doesn't work I'll go and find Plan B or Plan C to cover myself. So I'm always ready to...
Eric Perez:	You do have a Plan B if...
Interviewee 14:	A different type of fishing, like basically if I go out and put stuff in

Interviewee 14:	all my fish traps and I pull the first three fish traps and they're empty and there's no current well I go okay, this is not working, I'll go and try hand-lining. I've got hand-lines on the boat so I'll just go and chase - go and hand-line and usually, hopefully, between the two different fishing methods you'll come up with a pay for the day.
Eric Perez:	That's good.
Interviewee 14:	But there are other fishing methods that I've done in the past too where I might go to sea with two or three ideas in my head and I'll try one fishery, if that doesn't work I'll go and try the next one. A lot of days I'm going to sea I do two different types of fishery. Like yesterday I went lobstering and then I went and pulled my fish traps so I sort of tried to make the most out of the day.
Eric Perez:	Okay, because I was speaking before to Shane about the rules here with carrying different gear types on the boat. You're not restricted - if you've got a similar boat you're not restricted to what...
Interviewee 14:	As long as you've got the endorsement. If you carry the endorsement you can sort of...
Eric Perez:	Carry the gear.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah. Pretty much all my gear is set out there anyway so I've just got to go out and retrieve the traps, load them up, harvest them and then just re-set them.
Eric Perez:	Excellent. So before I ask this next one about the key stakeholder question, the question I asked of the previous interviewee was about looking at the reasons for - the benefits of being part of the Co-op. Now you mentioned before that the Co-op does some things for you, it takes away some of the [administration] that you don't want to do because you know you can just drop the product off and go.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Are there any other reasons you are part of the Co-op? Was that the driver that it would save you some time...
Interviewee 14:	Shared resources that the Co-op has got. Like basically the freezers, the bait, I buy the bait off the Co-op, ice, we get all those at a far cheaper rate than if we were go and source it elsewhere. So it's basically just a matter of pooling a group of fishermen's resources together and basically...
Eric Perez:	[Unclear] fuel?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, fuel, we get fuel. We've got fuel out the front here so you pull in, weigh your fish in, fill your boat up. You're not having to run up the street and try and get jerry cans of fuel or whatever. So the convenience of going through the Co-op...
Eric Perez:	[Unclear].
Interviewee 14:	You've got [Buckley's].
Eric Perez:	Alright.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, to me it's a no-brainer as far as - there are a few fishermen who go and try and do their own thing but to me what you actually end up making you might make a little bit of extra money but it

Interviewee 14:	ends up costing you more in time than it takes for you to do it. So...
Eric Perez:	So you do have some people moored up here that aren't in the Co-op, is that...
Interviewee 14:	There's not that many now but there used to be in the past. Yeah, there are a few people that have tried, they've dabbled with it and they've gone and done their own thing but they generally end up coming back don't they. It's just too hard. There's a few in the Co-op at the moment that want their cake and eat it as well. Yeah. They want the benefits of the Co-op but they want to do stuff...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, that happens in this industry. Okay, now the next question is about who you believe are the key stakeholders. You've mentioned a few already, your father, your mates that are fishing, the Co-op. Any other stakeholders that impact on your business that readily come to mind?
Interviewee 14:	Such like people that have actually either helped me or [unclear] get information off or advice or...
Eric Perez:	No, just any impact on your business. So for example, government [unclear] what government does as a stakeholder influences the way you do...
Interviewee 14:	I suppose the Marine Parks have. It's one government department...
Eric Perez:	What are the implications for you about that process?
Interviewee 14:	Well they've basically changed the areas where I can fish so I've had to sort of adapt and modify my business as those changes come through.
Eric Perez:	Can you, without getting to the [unclear], would you say it's 20 per cent of your profits changed or you've lost some profitability. Like what's been the bottom line impact?
Interviewee 14:	<p>I don't know to be honest. I don't think I've lost too much it's just that I've had to change tact a little bit, change the way I probably thought about things. I suppose being adaptable, if one door shuts you look at - there's got to be another door about somewhere so you just try and use - if they put up areas where you can't fish well you just try and use them hopefully to your advantage and that's what I've had to try and - rather than just sort of look at it from a negative point of view and chuck hissy-fits.</p> <p>I've sort of tried which gets you nowhere. Some fishermen have tried to do that but I've tried to use those negatives or the sentry zones to my advantage by fishing around them and hopefully having a spill over effect of - if the lobsters in that area I can't fish are building up, hopefully they're going to spill out to where I've got my lines and my trap is set right on that line.</p> <p>Yeah, even then it's probably a bit doubtful but still from a broader scale of things I suppose if I look at a big picture thing it's probably - I can draw positives that I know there's a stock of lobsters there that are going to be breeding, producing smaller</p>

Interviewee 14:	lobsters that hopefully come back into the rest of the industry. So yeah, other than that I have got a lot of information from this committee that I'm on, the LOBMAC Committee. That's helped me out a lot in my fishing career.
Eric Perez:	So [unclear] in New South Wales?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, in a way, yeah. It's going through a refurbishment at the moment I suppose might be the best way to describe it. But our MAC, the LOBMAC, is probably one of the few that actually worked and actually achieved things. But just from the fact that I've had contact with other fishers by being on that committee, like there are five of us on the committee and we've been pretty solid now for the last 12 years I think I've been on it. So I've picked up information and ideas and advice from these people. Actually I bought the boat off one of the guys that's on this committee. So it's given me a really big leg up.
Eric Perez:	[Unclear] stakeholders ... helped.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah and these guys are guys that are - I was probably down here when I first went on the MAC and they're up here. So every time they'd say something I'd be listening with open ears and gradually I've been able to use those ideas or that advice and just build my business up to a point where now I've got people doing - following me sort of thing.
Eric Perez:	This next set of questions is what I call in the last interview using the crystal balling. So one to six months from now what do you see as the key issues for your business?
Interviewee 14:	Gees, that's hard. Hopefully just catching fish I suppose. Six months' time I suppose - what is it now - yeah, hopefully by then I'll have this other boat well and truly - I've got a few months under my belt and have a better idea of how I'm travelling. It's all a very new adventure for me so there're a lot of things there I've got to work out. I'm sure I'll have to change things around a little bit. So hopefully by then I'll have most of the cobwebs and anything - all the little glitches sort of ironed out by then...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, cool, okay.
Interviewee 14:	...hopefully I'm in full swing.
Eric Perez:	Medium terms, 12 to 24 months, a tad longer, is it just viability and capacity to get the boat out or would there be something else do you think?
Interviewee 14:	For me personally it'd probably be to see my crew develop a little bit more to a point where I can actually step back a little bit more. That'd be a goal.
Eric Perez:	Interesting that you say that sir because I'd like to ask you why develop [unclear] blossom on their own, you'd do something to help that...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, well basically the whole idea of going down the path of buying this boat was to hopefully - as time goes on I can start stepping back and my family and my crew can start stepping up. So I'm hoping that in another 12 months' time he'll have his



Interviewee 14:	tickets.
Eric Perez:	He's your full timer?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 14:	Have his ticket, have his head screwed on and get through his...
Eric Perez:	Yeah, the training [unclear] head screwing on ... the other skills.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, he's 18 at the moment so we're going through a bit of a transitional...
Eric Perez:	It is baby steps.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, we go one step forward and one-and-a-half one back.
Eric Perez:	I've got a nine year old, I can't wait for 18, that's good.
Interviewee 14:	He's got the intentions that he wants to do it so I'm hoping that hopefully within 12 months - I can see he'll hopefully have a ticket where he can actually start taking the boat out by himself.
Eric Perez:	That's clear so can I ask then if this gentleman wasn't a family member would you be investing this money into this person to be someone who could crew the boat for you and be a good skipper and a good asset to the business?
Interviewee 14:	That's a hard question. Probably straight up no.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's fine.
Interviewee 14:	I don't know...
Eric Perez:	Is the family thing important in...
Interviewee 14:	Well I suppose yeah because coming through it myself, like I started working for my father and I sort of see - to be honest it's very hard to get a start in the fishing industry unless you are family. To be straight up and honest because the money involved these days is just - you cannot - it's very hard to get your foot in the door.
Eric Perez:	What do you mean, so I can't go and get \$30,000 and start my own boat and get...
Interviewee 14:	Well, if you've got \$30,000 you can go and buy a boat but then you've got to go and buy a licence then you've got to go and buy endorsements and then you've got to start working and then you've got to hit the ground running. When you're in a family type situation where you start going out in your teenage years and you start to make that transition where you actually start working and all the time you're learning it makes it a lot easier.
Eric Perez:	Can I ask you - because you're bringing up some really good additional questions here in my mind - so it's expensive to get in, is that a good thing to keep that barrier up so you don't get every man and his dog trying to buy into the fishery?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, definitely.
Eric Perez:	You're an advocate of that, that it's good...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	That it's not cheap.
Interviewee 14:	It puts a value on something. It puts a value on something. Like I've invested into the lobster fishery pretty hard, pretty heavily and I did so under the idea that it wasn't going to be an open fishery.

Interviewee 14:	<p>So instead of having where it was there at one stage 20 years ago every man and his dog could go and chase lobsters, they came in and they made it that virtually if you didn't have a catch history, if you didn't own shares - they issued shares to fishermen that had a catch history - then basically from then on you've got to have shares to be in the fishery.</p> <p>Those shares are worth a fair bit of money now so it puts a value. So the blokes that are fishing - even the blokes that are competing against you, because it's such a good - high value on the shares we've got this big stick over the back of our head that if we do something wrong we can lose our shares. So to me I think it's a good thing but from the point of view of having new entrants coming into the industry it does make it very hard.</p>
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 14:	For someone to come in to do what I'm doing you'd have to have like a semi-retired person or someone who has got a handout, payout, to have that sort of money to take over and do what I've done at market value.
Eric Perez:	What about - I mean that's a good [unclear] responses for the medium term stuff, what about beyond two years from now, what do you see as a key issue? Is it the transition to a family member getting the skills to...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, well basically...
Eric Perez:	...take more responsibility over?
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, hopefully it's just a continuation of the same thing where hopefully in maybe five years, 10 years' time I'm taking more time off or maybe who knows, I might even be operating a different boat. Maybe he'll be showing me enough signs where I can diversify and go and do something different and let him run the business. So that has been tossed up in the air a little bit. Because I've sort of got the two boats at the moment and if we were to look further down the track as far as - and experience and qualification wise, who knows, maybe I'd let him run one of the boats, run the smaller boat and just let him go and have a go. But at the moment he's not ready.
Eric Perez:	<p>Okay, that's really good. Well that ends the more formal part of the interview questions but there is an exercise or activity that I've asked interviewees to bear with me on and that's what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in your business? Now that's an acronym, we call that a SWOT, it's a way to analyse within the business internal factors that drive the business versus external factors.</p> <p>So if I asked you what do you think the strength of your business is - you've mentioned a few, you said it's a family business, family support, you've got good crew, you're training up someone that has a stake in the fishery and you were saying hopefully they'll be there into the future. They're all strengths but are there other</p>

Eric Perez:	strengths that you've seen? Is the move from a smaller vessel to a larger vessel a strength in the business? Is that a natural progression that would have happened anyway despite you planning that or was it something you said yeah I've got to now ante up and take the next step?
Interviewee 14:	<p>Well I think it's probably always been a natural progression but I think it's also just a case of an opportunity arose. If that opportunity hadn't arisen I probably would have been happy just to stick with the boat that I've had and just maybe scale down a little bit, maybe backed off a little bit, changed things a little bit. Who knows. But it's more I was just sort of capitalising on an opportunity. Yeah, but as far as the other, I've always thought that the fishing industry is a very good industry to be involved in to be honest because you have the opportunity there to make a bit of money, run your own business, call your own shots, experience the highs and lows of course like everything.</p> <p>I've had plenty of low times. But basically you just have that job satisfaction and you don't get that in a lot of other careers and a lot of other jobs. I get a lot from the fishing industry. Like you go out and you do something and it pays off and you catch lobsters or fish you get a certain amount of job satisfaction out of it.</p>
Eric Perez:	Yeah. Weaknesses, you mentioned before in the training phase that you're putting a family member through that that's critical for you because he's got to learn more things and he's at a sort of crossroads. So is that potentially a weakness there is that where...
Interviewee 14:	Definitely at the moment it is, I'm getting a lot of grey hairs. There's a saying you can't...
Eric Perez:	A lot more since the last time we met up I can see.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, there's an old saying you can't put an old head on young shoulders. Is that true?
Eric Perez:	That's it.
Interviewee 14:	But yeah, there are weaknesses there, like your time that's involved in being involved in the fishing industry, like the hours. But with most careers - my brother is in the finance sort of industry and he puts in big hours. He earns big money but he had to go to uni, he's put in to where he is now. Like he's got to go around the world working, jetting off to countries. He's got three kids now so we all pay the price.
Eric Perez:	For doing what you're doing.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, but I think the time involved, the time you've got to put in to be a successful fisherman probably is one of the negatives. That's where I'm hoping that maybe if things can work out where I can sort of slowly step back and my deckie can step forward and take over a bit more where I'm not so much hands on as much as I have been. But that's still a fair way down the track though.
Eric Perez:	So in terms of weaknesses just to summarise I think what I'm hearing you say is that - well as quietly as I can - that you're getting a bit older, that it's taking a toll physically on your health

Eric Perez	and...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...the transition to someone else doing the bulk of that heavy work...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...is not necessarily a bad thing for you but...
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, well that's...
Eric Perez:	...it's been a weakness in the business in that you need that transition to happen sooner rather than later for your longevity.
Interviewee 14:	Yeah, I can see - my father has got somebody working for him now but he was working by himself there for quite a while and I can see the effects that it's had on him. There are a couple of other fishermen or one other fisherman that I know who is doing similar sort of fishing as what I do and he works by himself and I think he's in his early 60s, mid 60s.
Eric Perez:	Can I ask what an average week in terms of hours is for you?
Interviewee 14:	Hours?
Eric Perez:	Daily average?
Interviewee 14:	Oh...
Eric Perez:	Roughly, it doesn't have to be...
Interviewee 14:	It'd probably be 10 to 12 hours probably most days, yeah.
Eric Perez:	How many days a week?
Interviewee 14:	Five to six probably. It just depends. Like you do have times where you...
Eric Perez:	You're looking at between 60 and 70 hours a week minimum.
Interviewee 14:	It'd have to be pretty close to that, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Wow, okay.
Interviewee 14:	By the time you any paperwork, like I do all my own BASS and stuff like that so you come home and you've got to fill out your log books. Yeah, there aren't too many days - like if I leave Woolgoolga - I live at Woolgoolga so I've got half-an-hour travel down to here to go to sea anyway so most mornings I get up 2:30 or get up at three o'clock, have a cup of coffee, half-an-hour sort of wake up period and then jump in the truck, drive. I'll be flat out getting back to Woolgoolga before 3:00, 4:00, even five o'clock sometimes.
Eric Perez:	Wow.
Interviewee 14:	So sometimes it could even be more than 10 or 12 hours.
Eric Perez:	Do you think that time has taken a toll on your health?
Interviewee 14:	It certainly doesn't help you that's for sure.
Eric Perez:	So we've moved away from internal stuff, what about business opportunities? Do you see any opportunities on the horizon?
Interviewee 14:	Not necessarily. I've never really been a business type person.
Eric Perez:	No, that's fine.
Interviewee 14:	But I'm happy just doing what I'm doing. There are probably opportunities there if I was to go and expand maybe but I'm already flat out as it is so why would I want and go and...

Eric Perez:	Want to do more, yeah.
Interviewee 14:	...apply more...
Eric Perez:	You're not somebody who'd be the kind of guy that would want to [unclear] over the other business's while ... you'd micromanage that as well or...
Interviewee 14:	No, I don't want to be the richest person in the cemetery.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, because you can't spend your money when you're dead.
Interviewee 14:	No, well as I said money is not a driving factor for me. Money is not the reason I go fishing. Sure it's attractive and it's nice to have the money there and it's good to have that feeling that you can pay your bills but I'd still go fishing even if I wasn't making any money. I'd still go fishing even if I had to go and work for somebody else because I enjoy it.
Eric Perez:	What about finally business threats? You said the Marine Park is probably one and government maybe is another. Are there any other threats, more competition?
Interviewee 14:	There are always threats of competition but competition comes and goes but generally...
Eric Perez:	A scenario, if the Co-op closed down tomorrow...
Interviewee 14:	That'd be a major threat.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, okay.
Interviewee 14:	That'd be a major threat, yeah.
Eric Perez:	Right, okay. That's the end of my questions so thanks very much.
Interviewee 14:	No worries.
Eric Perez:	Cheers.
Interviewee 14:	Thank you.

**APPENDIX 23**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 15**  
**SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	So the first one I'm kicking off with: what drew you to operating a small business in the seafood industry?
Interviewee 15:	Oh, just the passion and the love for fishing.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 15:	Yeah, I just enjoy going to sea and making a living out of catching seafood.
Eric Perez:	I've asked the other interviewees, not just today, but in the other sessions that I've had, was it a family thing or did you sort of stumble into fishing as something you wanted to do?
Interviewee 15:	Yeah, I think more - my father just loved recreational fishing and I ended up fishing with him all my life. I loved it that much that I turned it into a job for myself - a very satisfying job.
Eric Perez:	So what's your big goals or aspirations for next year? So what do you want to achieve in 2013 that you haven't done this year?
Interviewee 15:	Well I guess just being able to go to work, be happy, make a living, an honest good living, and keep the family happy and not go through life putting up with the uncertainties that are coming through the industry from other avenues.
Eric Perez:	So staying viable. So...
Interviewee 15:	Yeah.
Eric Perez:	...It would - if I ask you, what's the measure of your success, would you be just a happy business operating next year, is what you would see as success?
Interviewee 15:	Yeah, I want to stay in it until I retire...
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 15:	...until a retirement age. I can't see myself going back on land and working in a factory behind like four walls. I think that would drive me absolutely insane.
Facilitator:	Yep, no that's fine. So have you or - have you done anything differently from last year in terms of how you are operating the boats or was this year - did you do something different? Did you upgrade your vessel? Anything you can identify that's a change in your practice from one year to the next?
Interviewee 15:	No, not really, but we're always doing things to our boats to make our boats better to work on and safe working environment, because you've only got so much area at sea to work on. You've always got to have it comfortable and working in good order.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 15:	What's that? Oh, yeah I travelled to Eden earlier on in the year.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 15:	Yeah travelled down there to chase the [unclear] kingfish and stayed there for three months.
Eric Perez:	Was that a hard productive three months or did you...
Interviewee 15:	It wasn't as productive as what was supposed to be...

Eric Perez:	Yep.
Interviewee 15:	...and that's only because the fish didn't turn up in their [unclear] like they normally do down there...
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah.
Interviewee 15:	...so yeah, I stayed three months there and then I travelled back home - back to Coffs Harbour.
Eric Perez:	So from your view of your business, what do you see are the elements to help build and maintain the business? Is it taking a risk - you know taking that risk when you go out and fish against the weather, or is it something else?
Interviewee 15:	How would you answer that one [laughs]? Have the Government stay off our back [laughs].
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah, that's...
Interviewee 15:	Because that's just like I said before: that just puts an uncertainty in every fisherman's daily life, their daily routine. Every day you wake up there's something different. If they just stayed off our back and just you know, let us fish, and be happy - I'm happy [laughs], I'd be happy.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, no worries. So who's - in terms of your business, who's your primary customer?
Interviewee 15:	No, not at all. No. My fish are unloaded off the boat and into the Co-op, across the scales, onto the skids. Then the people here deal with it from there.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Have you considered looking for other avenues to sell your product or are you happy for...
Interviewee 15:	No I'm happy to go with the flow, which is what happens here.
Eric Perez:	Okay yep. Do you have an approach when you're making your business decisions in the business? By that I mean, some have said, that they use: their knowledge of their fishery, their mates, other fisherman, family whatever, to help make the decisions in their business. What do you do?
Interviewee 15:	What do I do?
Eric Perez:	Yeah.
Interviewee 15:	Well, I think I'm a fairly knowledgeable fisherman and having said that, I've learnt a lot from the elderly people that have fished in this harbour all their lives. I've taken information off them, absorbed it and utilised it.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Did you set out consciously to do that, or it's just as you came up through the ranks, you just talked to these older fisherman and get their sense of things, or did you go out of your way to talk to some of the older - what you considered, better operators?
Interviewee 15:	Well, I've been mucking around down in the harbour here since I was nine years old. So I've grown up with all the old time fisherman. Everybody in the harbour I've been friends with all my life, so it's been very easy for them to say to me, Mark this is the right way to do things, the wrong way to do things, and that's always been up to me to absorb that, and utilise that.

Eric Perez:	Okay great. So in terms of where you draw your information from, when you have to make a key decision, is it more than just that experience with these older fishers, or do you draw on your market conditions, do you talk to other fisherman when you draw your information or is it just a gut feeling?
Interviewee 15:	Oh, it's more - we do obviously everyone talks, we have our own circle of friends that we talk to, and we give each other information. So we do [ride] on each other for information and work on that.
Eric Perez:	Yeah, because that's been mentioned in a couple of interviews - not here but interstate and I was going to ask you does that - have you gone out consciously to build that network that you talk to, or is that a very close knit group of guys, or families, that share information with each other?
Interviewee 15:	The people I'm close knit to, is like I said before, I've grown up with those families all my life. So it's very easy for me to talk to certainly families in this harbor, because I've been around them all my life.
Eric Perez:	Yep, no that's good. Okay, the next questions I just want to ask particularly because we've got a Co-op set up here is that - what value has the - or non-value has the Co-op board [unclear] how you run your business?  So how does it link in like - each interviewee has given their own perspective. So you sell 100 per cent of your product to the Co-op, so what does it do for your business in that sense?
Interviewee 15:	Well...
Eric Perez:	What I mean by that is - is it an extension, is it a critical part of your business, or is it an [ADJUNCT] that if it's not doing what you need it to do, you'll find other ways to sell your product. I mean what - how do you see it fit in the scope of your business?
Interviewee 15:	Mate, this Co-op's extremely critical to my fishing business. It's actually - how would you say it, it's the flow - like the blood flow to my fishing business. I unload my fish here and they get rid of it for - you know a lot of it goes to fish markets. A lot of it gets sold via restaurants. So, I'm expecting the people - the staff here, when they get rid of my product they'll want the best possible price I can get. Having said that, they do the best they can and I'm happy with that, so this Co-op here is the lifeline to my business.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Now, in terms of stakeholders, you mentioned a few of the people you've grown up with here and particularly government. any other stakeholders that you think have an influence on how you run your business? By stakeholder, I mean groups of people, or individuals around the place. so are you - are there competitors here that you have to watch out for, Or are there any other influences that impact on your business?
Interviewee 15:	Yeah, well, it's a very competitive nature isn't it?
Eric Perez:	It is.
Interviewee 15:	Yeah, so when you say that, competition is pretty high, so it makes



Interviewee 15:	you drive yourself harder to compete.
Eric Perez:	Yep.
Interviewee 15:	In the industry.
Eric Perez:	Any - yeah no, you've answered that one through the whole thing, so we're not going to worry about that. Okay, now this is the bit of the interview where I do a bit of the crystal balling stuff.
Interviewee 15:	[Laughs].
Eric Perez:	Next one to six months, what do you think are the key issues facing your business?
Interviewee 15:	The key issue is government.
Eric Perez:	Yep.
Interviewee 15:	Their decisions on what they're going to do, to help us, or hinder us, in the fishing industry. At the moment, I feel like they're hindering us very severely.
Eric Perez:	Any one particular example of something that is impacting you? When you say that they're doing stuff like - is it a perception, because I haven't asked this except you bought it up quite strongly.  Is it - do you reckon, and trying to use the best language here that I can find for this, is it that they shift the goal posts every time, so that you're not playing the same game at any one stage with them. is it that they're over-regulating you or expecting too much out of you? I'm just trying to get at what you mean by, if it's government, what is it that they are specifically doing that...
Interviewee 15:	Every day - like I said before, the uncertainty in this industry, through government making irrational decisions on what they want to do with us is - is yeah, it's hindering a lot of fisherman. They want to put all these marine parks in and...
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's what I was after. My question is, you've just identified marine parks and everyone else had done the same thing, but maybe historically when you were coming up through the ranks, when you were a newer fisherman, was it the fact that they set a certain TAC, that was unreasonable or gear type restrictions like...
Interviewee 15:	No, they never really - when I started, there was never really that many restrictions. There was the marine park, the original marine park. Now everyone has got fairly used to that original decision haven't they, and it's worked. The bag limits that they bought in for recreational, that's all worked, that's all fine, but every day or every week that goes on, they just want to nitpick and take just that little bit more.  They're just putting decisions out there, that are putting the fear of God into fisherman, through, I believe, through marine parks, which is in the end - if they get what they want, there'll be no industry left.
Eric Perez:	Is it just - you might help me to understand this a bit better. is it just government or have you guys had issues with other non-

Eric Perez:	government groups? I'm thinking about the environmental movement. Is that...
Interviewee 15:	Yeah. Plenty.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 15:	Plenty of issues with non-government movements.
Eric Perez:	All right.
Interviewee 15:	Just people trying to become important. Any, yeah...
Eric Perez:	All right so we've done the short term stuff, what about medium term? So 12 to 24 months out, what do you think some of the key issues? Or are there no [unclear] over the marine park zoning process?
Interviewee 15:	Oh, I don't think so is there, I think our [unclear]. Okay, yeah. The industry restructure, this report that's come out.
Eric Perez:	And what did you think of that?
Interviewee 15:	Well...
Eric Perez:	Could be a good thing, could be a bad thing, if there's a levy introduced say, or compulsory membership to a peak body, what would your thoughts be on that?
Interviewee 15:	Well I don't know yet until it all comes out.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 15:	What comes out of it, we're in a sort of uncertainty with that aren't we. That's what I'm talking about, uncertainty in this industry and what will drive...
Eric Perez:	That's good and if that one's a driver then that's great. So, if I asked then longer term, that would be one of the key ones then for you?
Interviewee 15:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Okay, no that's fine.
Interviewee 15:	The restructure of the industry and long term is the marine parks, because that is never going to stop.
Eric Perez:	Yep. All right, well, that is the business questions over. I'm looking at something that's called the - looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within your business. So, we've covered a few of them so far, but if I was to say to you: what do you think the strength of your business is, what would you say to that?
Interviewee 15:	Strength of my business. Me.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 15:	The sole business owner; because, yeah, without me my business doesn't operate and work.
Eric Perez:	What - because I asked the interviewee before you, how many hours do you think you put in a week on average?
Interviewee 15:	Oh, that's a pretty difficult question, because how would I say, this last four weeks I haven't stopped going to sea. But then prior to that, the weather was so bad in June, we only worked four days, in June. So...
Eric Perez:	So an average is difficult because it's weather dependent. Right?
Interviewee 15:	Yes, it's - you're weather dependent - ocean currents.

Eric Perez:	I'm thinking as a solo operator you do the whole lot. so you run your boat and do your...
Interviewee 15:	Paperwork...
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 15:	I do the whole lot.
Eric Perez:	Government compliance and all that stuff?
Interviewee 15:	Yep.
Eric Perez:	Okay, any weaknesses that you see in the business?
Interviewee 15:	Once again, if there is a weakness in it, it would have to be me. If I don't go to sea. If I don't strive and push myself, to go to sea and work as hard as I possibly can, well then that's a weakness isn't it, because I'm a sole operator.
Eric Perez:	Yep. Business opportunities. What do you see as an opportunity out in the fishing space for you?
Interviewee 15:	Well, I've got to make my own opportunities. Just work and catch as much as I can.
Eric Perez:	Have you considered things like a bigger boat, a smaller boat?
Interviewee 15:	No, I bought the vessel I've got, because I am a solo operator and it's the size that I want. It does everything I want to do, so I've grasped my opportunity there in the boat that I wanted...
Eric Perez:	Okay great.
Interviewee 15:	...when it come up for sale.
Eric Perez:	And threats?
Interviewee 15:	Government, marine parks, restructure of other [fishing businesses].
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's it. Thanks very much.
Interviewee 15:	No problem, happy to help.
Eric Perez:	Cheers.

**APPENDIX 24**  
**TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 16**  
**SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2012**

Eric Perez:	Why did you choose the seafood industry to operate your small business?
Interviewee 16:	Seafood industry - I know nothing better. That's the only thing I know.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yeah, all right.
Interviewee 16:	Grew up on [inaudible].
Eric Perez:	Yep. Can I ask you for next year what's your big ticket goal or aspiration for 2013 for your business?
Interviewee 16:	To expand it.
Eric Perez:	Grow it, okay.
Interviewee 16:	Grow it yeah, big time.
Eric Perez:	So what's going to be the measure of success; is it another boat, is it more crew, is it more skilled crew?
Interviewee 16:	I just bought a new boat. I just added another boat - well actually marketing new products. We're an unknown product. It's not new but it's unknown. That's our target.
Eric Perez:	Okay an unknown product, all right. So it kind of helps me answer the next question - have you done anything differently this year to last year - so you bought a new boat and you're getting into some marketing and...
Interviewee 16:	Deep water - deep water which hasn't been worked for 15 years. It's taken 15 years to get the licences and everything back to be able to go and fish in this deep water.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep. So who's your primary customer?
Interviewee 16:	Our primary customer at the moment where we're making our money has got to be retail.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep and do you have - is it just one or have you got multiple retail customers?
Interviewee 16:	Oh well let's say a dozen.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep...
Interviewee 16:	Oh well it's not - yeah well it is retailing but yeah we've got product in places that actually retail it for us.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep.
Interviewee 16:	We're processing it down to retail - down to packages ready to eat. So we're going right through from catching right through to ready to eat in packets.
Eric Perez:	Okay, all right.
Interviewee 16:	As well as export. We haven't exported much at all this year.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So beyond the business level questions, this is a series of new questions I've been asking recent interviewees about. What approach are you taking when you made your decisions within the business? Now a lot of the responses I've had, you know, they use colleagues in the industry, they use their knowledge of the market and their own experience and in your case is it each of those

Eric Perez:	things, is it just your own intuition? How do you...
Interviewee 16:	My own experience. My own past experience.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Is that what primarily drives you when you're making decisions in the business? What about where you draw your information from? So if it's a solo thing is it a gut instinct or is it you actually draw on some information?
Interviewee 16:	No I'm going on my own information. I know what we did, you know, 25 years ago and - well 19 years ago I bought a boat specifically to fish in the deep water - specifically - and got stopped after two or three years and it's taken 16 years to get the licences back to be able to do it because there is a resource out there that's been absolutely wasted and it's a big one - it's a big resource.
Eric Perez:	Okay and its being kept under wraps at the moment?
Interviewee 16:	Ah no, no. I've had meetings - fisheries - here with this dog fish closure we had a meeting last Thursday - the Thursday before - here with the director and the trawl managers and that and they wanted to close a whole lot of the [unclear] here but I think we're right. We've put lines on water; they're happy, we're happy, so yeah.
Eric Perez:	Off you go, okay.
Interviewee 16:	I think it's going to happen all right. The marine parks were going to affect it but I think we got the line shifted there - the Commonwealth Marine Park, the new one. Hopefully - well we've had a fair bit of success with them actually.
Eric Perez:	Okay, so can I ask the next question because most interviewees today will have been dealing with the coop. How does the coop fit into your business structure?
Interviewee 16:	I don't think coops are going to survive.
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 16:	I honestly don't. I think Shane knows my opinion on this and the reasons why. It's like Queensland...
Eric Perez:	If I asked you what are the three things you think [unclear] making will not survive or have the survivability, what would you say they are? Or is there more than three things?
Interviewee 16:	Well there's not enough profit in the industry now to sustain let's say [unclear]. I don't believe - you know what I mean, that - there's just not the money in it anymore. There's not - with our expenses with fuel, you know - I mean my fuel was 26 cents when I bought that boat 19 years and prawns were \$14. Prawns are now \$14 and fuel's 100 cents or \$1 - you know, \$1.90 or something. See it's gone four times. Our insurance has gone from two per cent on \$200,000 boats to four per cent on \$500,000.  So all these added costs and insurance, all the bullshit regulations and the paperwork, the [unclear] the workers' comp, all that, the paperwork, the safety and that. All the [AQF] credit arrangements, all the paperwork and that that go with it. Log books - log book

Interviewee 16:	systems for the fisheries. Well that all takes time. It costs money.
Eric Perez:	Okay. So you've mentioned, I guess, for the next questions about who are the key stakeholders influencing your business? So you've mentioned a few already. You buy- you have restaurants that you sell to, I guess any other buyers in the system that you might deal with?
Interviewee 16:	I don't think markets are a problem. Access if our biggest problem, access and common sense management.
Eric Perez:	Okay, that's the government stakeholder there?
Interviewee 16:	The government yeah. The ones coming up with all these regulations and that, that we need to do all these things, that in our industry prior all these things were just common sense things, you know, keeping your boat clean, looking after your product. Do you know what I mean? It's got to the stage now where the common sense has gone out of it and regulations had to come in to try and keep it in line.
Eric Perez:	Yep, yep, all right. So some crystal balling here - one to six months from now what are the key issues facing your business?
Interviewee 16:	Cash flow.
Eric Perez:	Okay, yep, that's great. What about the medium term, 12 to 24 months from now?
Interviewee 16:	That's a hard one for me because I'm actually frightened of where I'm going, of how much potential that we've got in the next six to 12 months.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, as in to grow?
Interviewee 16:	As in growing and marketing and manpower yeah.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay that's not too bad then. That's the reverse of what I've been hearing so far.
Interviewee 16:	It's a lot different to what you hear.
Eric Perez:	So in the long term then that would be - your key thing is being able to sustain growth? Would that be a good way to capture that? To sustain your growth so you'd be able to manage it into the future, knowing that you think you're going to grow the business over time?
Interviewee 16:	Just try and slow it down if anything. That's just the way it's going you know what I mean?
Eric Perez:	Yep.
Interviewee 16:	[Unclear] to a bloke on Wednesday afternoon. There's an old bloke, he argued. He owned XYZ for 15 years. Who's he? Do you know him? He made a comment, he said they're not Royal Reds. He said you can't cook for [unclear] like that.  He said, oh we'll make a statement they're the best prawns [unclear]. Not a bad statement. The best prawns he'd ever had. I said to this guy, what price do you - he said well I'm trying to get a price out of Sydney Market for them. He said they're better than them. They're a \$2 prawn in some eyes you know.

Interviewee 16:	Changing that perception. That's what I'm in the process of doing [unclear]. So something that hasn't been caught for [unclear] in good condition for what, 15 years. Since we got stopped 15 years ago. We unloaded four or five tonne of these things some days here. You were moving yeah four or five tonne a week for me. They went out of existence because fisheries - not so much fisheries that really stopped us doing it but they changed the rules and regulations.
Eric Perez:	To stop you fishing for that particular...
Interviewee 16:	Where it stops the ones that - there was about four or five of us that were really targeting those things and we were the ones that got stopped because the older ones had already had a bit of history in it and couldn't sort of make anything out of them. They ended up with the licenses but it has taken 15 years to go - well actually, 14 years I've had - 12, 18 months, two years licenses. But it was about 15 years between being able to get stopped from doing it to be able to go back and do it.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Look that's the core of the main parts of the question, but there's an activity I'd like to run with you very quickly. Strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in your business; what would you say are some of the strengths in your business arrangement?
Interviewee 16:	Strengths as in the better parts of what - I'm just not...
Eric Perez:	Okay. Strengths in your business might be that you've got - most of your crew are trained to a certain level and that makes...
Interviewee 16:	I've got the best crew that I've ever had in my life.
Eric Perez:	Okay. Was that a product of you investing training in them or you've just got good raw crew on that you've been training [unclear]...
Interviewee 16:	I've just been lucky to have good - yeah.
Eric Perez:	Oh okay, yeah. That's what I mean by strengths in the business. So does your partner, for example, run the books in the business or is...
Interviewee 16:	I wish she would
Eric Perez:	Okay.
Interviewee 16:	No she does a little bit of retail - does a bit of retail. She's sort of started that up and got that retail part of it going. It was her idea originally six years ago - retail product.
Eric Perez:	Yep and any business weaknesses that you can see?
Interviewee 16:	Yeah, my head. My head especially today. Just regulation - fisheries regulation and bullshit management.
Eric Perez:	I'll just pause the tape for a moment. Okay we're back.
Interviewee 16:	Just bullshit management where we've got fisheries managers that have no idea of what we're doing and what's going on out there. Do you know what I mean? This is my big struggle, fisheries managers.
Eric Perez:	So they create a weakness in your business?
Interviewee 16:	It's causing all these dramas which we look back and see that it's

Interviewee 16:	not doing any good, it's not doing the staff any good and it's not - you know, it's not doing what we know we can do better and better for the stock.
Eric Perez:	Would I be right in assuming that there [unclear] that management, 15 years ago until now, it's still a threat to your business?
Interviewee 16:	<p>No, it's a lot better now than it was because they are starting to listen; they're starting to talk to us. Do you know what I mean? It's different now to what - you know, 15 years ago there was rules and regulations we knew nothing about it. As an example, that meeting - we had a meeting out here. It was supposed to be just talking about something. Ended up with a meeting because I got a phone call to go to a meeting in Sydney.</p> <p>I got it Tuesday to go on Friday. I think I upset her, she hung up on me. Three days' notice to go to a meeting it's not on. You know where you can shove your meeting.</p> <p>A fortnight later we had a meeting out here at the Marine Science Centre. We drove five minutes, they flew two hours or whatever you know. They come to us to get the answers they wanted and they actually listened to us. That's one of the first which is they are now starting to listen to what people tell them, you know?</p>
Eric Perez:	Does that [unclear] potential opportunities in the business, that you've got government being able to...
Interviewee 16:	Well if we can work in with them everyone can win. The greenies can win, the politicians can win. Everyone can win if we do it right.
Eric Perez:	Okay. You've covered all the [unclear]. That's it, all right, thank you for your time.
Interviewee 16:	No problem.



## APPENDIX 25

Time Period	Codes	Sub-Themes	Themes
Short-term Issues 1 to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over regulation.</li> <li>Regulatory review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules of the game.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to fishery.</li> <li>Effort shift.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where can I fish?</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vessel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry development.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor market development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where can I sell product?</li> </ul>	
Medium-term Issues 12 to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules of the game.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over regulation.</li> <li>Regulation review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where can I fish?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to fishery.</li> <li>Effort shift.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where can I sell product?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor market development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry development.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crew training.</li> <li>Business growth.</li> <li>Business stability.</li> </ul>	
Long-term Issues Beyond 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules of the game.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes to regulation.</li> <li>Over regulation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where can I fish?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to fishery.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing fishery.</li> <li>Stable market.</li> <li>Crew availability.</li> <li>Business stability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry development.</li> </ul>

Source: Interviewee Feedback