

**A guide for use by the shark and other  
fisheries for preparation of information  
for consumers.**

**Prof Alexandra McManus**

**Project No. 2014/705**



**AUSTRALIAN  
SEAFOOD  
COOPERATIVE  
RESEARCH CENTRE**

**February 2015**



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*Publication Citation: McManus A. Navigating the Food Standards Code: A guide for small to medium enterprises. Centre of Excellence Science Seafood & Health (CESSH), Curtin University, Perth, Australia. Report 15122014 December 2014. Funded by Seafood CRC Project 2014/705 ISBN 9780987208644*

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**ISBN: 978-0-9874218-2-1**



Australian Government

Fisheries Research and  
Development Corporation



An Australian Government Initiative



## Non-Technical Summary

**PROJECT NUMBER AND TITLE:** 2014/705 - A guide for use by the shark and other fisheries for preparation of information for consumers.

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### PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop a 'how to' guide for small to medium businesses to assist in navigating the Food Standards Code
2. To develop a simple promotional brochure framework and use Augusta Wild Caught Fisheries to illustrate how it could be used in practice.

### OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- Small to medium businesses have a resource to assist in navigating through the Australian Food Standards Code, understanding the requirements of food labelling within *the Code* and a template to develop a marketing brochure.

### LIST OF OUTPUTS PRODUCED

- A user-friendly guide (*Navigating the Food Standards Code: A guide for small to medium enterprises*) to help members of the Australian Seafood Industry negotiate their way through legislation governing food labelling and promotion of products within the Food Standards Code.
- A template for a promotional brochure to assist small to medium seafood businesses to better promote their products.
- A power point presentation to support the promotion of the guide to industry.
- Presentation to the Demersal Gillnet Fishers followed by feedback from those attending the meeting in August 2014.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Australian Seafood Co-operative Research Centre funded this work.

Bev Cooke from Augusta Wild Caught Fisheries came up with the concept and has been the main driver behind this project.

The feedback and support provided to this project by those listed below was appreciated and acknowledged herein:

- The Cooke Family for their guidance, hospitality and willingness to share their story, issues and experiences.
- Members of the Demersal Gillnet Fisheries, particularly those who attended their annual management meeting in August 2014.
- John Harrison, CEO WAFIC for his support of the project.
- Mark Camilleri, Resource Access Manager, WAFIC for his feedback on the components of the Food Standards Code that are of most relevance to WAFIC members.
- Angus Callander for this continued support
- Dr Wendy Hunt for her assistance with the manuscript.

## **Executive Summary**

This project aimed to help members of the Australian Seafood Industry to negotiate the Food Standards Code that governs almost all foods sold in Australia.

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) develops and administers the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code (*the Code*) which governs requirements for food relating to: ingredients; additives (e.g. colourings, vitamins, minerals); food safety; labelling (packaged and unpackaged foods); genetically modified (GM) food; and specific mandatory warning or advisory labels

This guide aims to help small to medium sized seafood businesses to promote and market their products by:

- outlining the chapters of the Food Standards Code (*the Code*) that relate to food sold in Australia
- providing some information about common microbiological testing
- including a format of a brochure that businesses could use to promote the health benefits of their products.

**Food Standards guide:** A review of the Food Standards Code (*the Code*) was undertaken to define which part of *the Code* had the most relevance to small to medium enterprises of packaged or processed foods, based on consultation with industry. A number of members of the seafood industry were consulted and provided advice on what would be of most value to the industry. A guide was then developed summarising key sections of *the Code* including links to specific Standards. Additional information was added about the most recent front-of-pack labelling system (Health Star Rating) with details of links to the education campaign and resources launched on 4 December 2014. The result was a resource entitled 'Navigating the Food Standards Code: A guide for small to medium enterprises.'

**Promotional Brochure:** Marketing experts were then consulted to assist in the development of a framework for industry to use as the basis of a promotional brochure. The owners of one seafood business were interviewed on a number of occasions and a sample brochure developed for their business.

A PDF of the guide will be freely available on the Seafood CRC, WAFIC, FRDC and CESSH websites. A short instructional power point presentation developed to promote the guide will be provided to the Seafood CRC, FRDC and WAFIC for distribution to industry members with details of how to access the guide. A short article will be written for the next FRDC Fish magazine promoting the guide.

# 1. Introduction and Background

Augusta Wild Caught Fisheries (AWCF - previously known as Eagle Bay Fisheries) is indicative of many small to medium seafood businesses around Australia who are seeking to promote and market the benefits of their products. AWCF is a small family business that has been operational since 1980 in the South West of Western Australia. Although a well managed shark fishery, AWCF is constantly faced with uninformed comment about unsustainable fishing practices in their industry and with a lack of consumer understanding about the health benefits of eating the species of shark that they catch. They therefore, wish to promote the sustainable fishing practices of their business and the health benefits of the species of shark that they catch.

There are several obstacles that face small to medium enterprises (such as AWCF) in the effective promotion and marketing of their products in Australia. These include:

- knowing the regulations that must be complied with associated with food products sold in Australia
- understanding the food labeling systems that are mandatory, those that are optional and how to use these to their advantage
- what approvals (if any) are required to get their product into the marketplace.

This guide aims to provide a user-friendly resource that small to medium seafood businesses could use to promote the nutritional composition and health benefits of their products. The step-by-step guide focuses on:

- what is required to develop a nutritional profile
- when needed and what is required in a nutritional information panel
- where to get the most accurate data on what is required on packaging
- a framework of how the information could be used in a promotional brochure aimed at consumers.

## **1.1 Need**

The owners of AWCF identified an important issue facing small to medium seafood businesses, particularly those in regional Australia. These businesses, where they want to promote their products but do not have the evidence on which to base their marketing and promotional material.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The project objectives were to:

- develop a 'how to' guide for small to medium businesses to assist in navigating the Food Standards Code; and
- develop a simple promotional brochure framework and use AWCF to illustrate how it could be used in practice.

## **2. Methods**

The 'how to' guide was developed by CESSH in conjunction with WAFIC and members of the seafood industry.

Following consultation with the industry for advice around matters of most importance to them, the Food Standards Code was reviewed and key points summarised in the user guide (see Appendix 1).

Serving sizes are required to complete a nutritional information panel (NIP) required on most processed and packaged food sold in Australia. As the serving sizes are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Australians, the guide includes the required information from these guidelines. The new front-of-pack Health Star Rating (HSR) system is also touched on in the resource as the federal government is encouraging all food businesses to consider including it on their products.

Two marketers were then consulted to help develop a framework that small to medium businesses could use to develop a promotional brochure for their businesses.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Food Standards Code Guide

A guide to understanding the Food Standards Code (*the Code*) in the Australian context was developed. It is entitled '*Navigating the Food Standards Code: A guide for small to medium businesses*' (Appendix 1).

The guide highlights parts of *the Code* of interest to the seafood industry (mainly Chapter 1 and 2). Each part is summarised under separate sections in the guide with links to the appropriate Standard within *the Code*. Key points raised in each section are highlighted in boxes where appropriate. Furthermore, much of the wording in the resource uses the exact wording in *the Code* for the purpose of accuracy and to reduce ambiguity. The main types of microbiological tests required to develop a food label are also touched on in this part of the guide

### 3.2 Dietary Guidelines for Australians and the Health Star Rating System

As noted in the methods, most processed and packaged foods require serving sizes included on the NIP on the back of packaging. The serving sizes are detailed in the guide as is the new front-of-pack HSR system designed to assist consumers to make healthier choices.

### 3.2 Promotional brochure

The final section of the guide provides a simple framework that businesses can use to develop their own promotional brochure. An example using the framework is also included.

## 4. Benefits and Adoption

### 4.1 Benefits

The project has resulted in the development of a user-friendly guide to help small to medium businesses navigate through the Food Standards Code. This will assist businesses to ensure they are up to date with relevant Standards within *the Code* and are in compliance with its mandatory aspects.

A power point presentation has also been developed to assist in the dissemination of the guide.

### 4.2 Adoption

The guide will be made available online as a PDF on the Seafood CRC, FRDC, WAFIC and CESSH websites. It is intended that the guide will be promoted through seafood industry specific publications and existing networks.

## 5. Further Development

It is envisaged that the user-friendly guide will be included as part of the Seafood CRC series of how to guides.

## 6. Planned Outcomes

### ***Public Benefit Outcomes***

- Better informed small to medium seafood industries on how to understand how to navigate through the Food Standards Code.
- A framework to facilitate the production of a promotional brochure by industry at minimal cost.
- Fulfil a gap identified by the industry.

### ***Private Benefit Outcomes***

- Increase opportunity for individual seafood businesses to develop their own promotional brochure.
- Ability for industry to have a more informed discussion with a marketer if they choose to engage a professional to promote their product.

### ***Linkages with CRC Milestone Outcomes***

#### Output 2.4 - Optimised technical market access

- Milestone 2.4.4 - Technical and market access expertise and capacity developed to support improved market access for Australian seafood (domestic and international)

#### Output 2.5 - Communication of consumer health

- Milestone 2.5.1 - Key factors influencing consumers' benefits and risks behavioural responses to seafood health benefit and risk communication identified

## **8. Conclusion**

This project has provided a comprehensive guide to assist members of the seafood industry to navigate through the main sections of the Food Standards Code (FSC) relevant to the industry. Particular attention is given to standards that relate to mandatory food labelling requirements in Australia.

The guide gives a short explanation of each of the Standards most relevant to the seafood industry plus a weblink to the appropriate Standard in the FSC. It is essential that these weblinks are referred when using the guide as they link to the primary source of legislation. Furthermore, *the Code* changes (on average) 6 times per year so the links have been added to maintain currency of legislative information provided by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).. .

Many small to medium seafood businesses struggle to promote and market their products. Research shows that in order of differentiating their products from their competitors, businesses need to 'tell their own brand story'. This study consulted with industry and expert marketers to develop a template for a promotional brochure to assist small to medium seafood businesses to better promote their products. An example of a brochure developed for a local regional fishery using the template is included in the guide.

## **9. Appendices**

- 9.1 User friendly guide to navigate the Food Standards Code
- 9.2 Navigating the Food Standards Code - A summary guide
- 9.3 Framework for promotion brochure plus example of use in practice