



## Final Report

# Seafood Directions 2017

International Convention Centre Sydney, NSW  
27-29 September 2017

## Seafood Directions 2017 Overview

In May 2016, The Association Specialists were contracted to manage the biannual National Seafood Industry Conference, Seafood Directions, at the International Convention Centre Sydney.

The event included the following:

- The conference was held across three days (Wednesday 27 September – Friday 29 September 2017).
- The International Convention Centre Sydney was the main venue for the conference.
- The Novotel Darling Harbour and the IBIS Darling Harbour were the main sources of accommodation for the conference.
- The overall conference program consisted of plenary sessions, invited speakers, 2 concurrent sessions, twenty-six abstract presentations and various panel discussions.
- The conference featured two pre-conference activities including an overnight Huon Field Trip and an Economics Masterclass Pre-Conference Workshop.
- The conference also incorporated daily Sydney Fish Market, Behind the Scenes Tours, from Wednesday 27 September - Friday 29 September 2017.
- The Welcome Reception was held in the Exhibition area, in Parkside 1, on Wednesday, 27 September 2017.
- The National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner was held in the Grand Ballroom at the International Convention Centre Sydney on Thursday, 28 September 2017. The dinner attracted nearly 400 attendees.
- The “Power Up” Breakfast was held on Friday, 29 September and was organised by WINSC.
- The trade component was held in the exhibition space, where each catering break was held and fourteen exhibitors showcased their products and services.
- All plenary sessions and one breakout stream (i.e. all sessions in Parkside 2) were Live Streamed internationally to registered delegates.
- The event attracted a total of 355 registrations.

## Scope of Services Provided

The Association Specialists were contracted to provide the following services:

- Project Management / General Administration
- Venue Logistics
- Delegate Registration and Accommodation Management
- Speaker Travel and Accommodation Management
- Marketing and Promotion of the Event
- Speaker Management & Audio-Visual Management
- Abstract Management
- Social Functions Coordination
- Food & Beverage Management
- Financial Management
- Subcontractor Management
- Overall Staging and Onsite Management
- Post Event Coordination

## Organising Committee

- **Tricia Beatty**  
Executive Officer, Professional Fishermen's Association
- **Doug Ferrell**  
Director, Fisheries Analysis, Department of Primary Industries
- **Jayne Gallagher**  
Managing Director, Honey & Fox
- **Patrick Hone**  
Executive Director, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)
- **Aaron Irving**  
CEO, Pearl Producers Association
- **Veronica Papacosta**  
Chair, Seafood Industry Australia
- **Lowri Pryce**  
Executive Officer, OceanWatch Australia
- **Bryan Skepper**  
General Manager, Sydney Fish Market
- **Stephanie Williams**  
Marketing and Communications Manager, Sydney Fish Market

## Professional Conference Organiser

### Seafood Directions 2017 Professional Conference Organiser

Madeleine Catlin

C/- The Association Specialists Pty Ltd

PO Box 576, Crows Nest NSW 1585 Australia

P: +61 2 9431 8600

F: + 61 2 9431 8677

E: [seafooddirections2017@theassociationsspecialists.com.au](mailto:seafooddirections2017@theassociationsspecialists.com.au)

## Conference Venue

Seafood Directions 2017 was held at:

International Convention Centre Sydney

14 Darling Dr, Sydney NSW 2000

(02) 9215 7100

The International Convention Centre Sydney was chosen and announced as the 2017 conference destination. The venue, described as Australia's "beacon of innovation, learning and entertainment" perfectly complimented the theme of this year's conference, "Sea the Future."

The venue could comfortably accommodate a main plenary room of 440 delegates and additional concurrent sessions. Parkside 1 easily accommodated fourteen exhibition booths, with enough space for catering and delegates. The Grand Ballroom held the National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner, which seated 40 tables of 10. The foyer area was used for the dessert buffet and encouraged additional networking opportunities.

## Event Statistics

### Registration Statistics

Sponsor/Exhibitor Registrations	16
Full Registration - Earlybird	100
Full Registration	85
Commercial Harvester Registration	72
One Day Registration - Earlybird	6
One Day Registration	29
Student Registration	4
Invited Registration	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>355</b>

### Social Functions

Gala Dinner	395
-------------	-----

### Demographics

Australia	334
Indonesia	2
New Zealand	7
Vietnam	2
Tanzania	1
United States	1
India	6
Canada	1
Norway	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>355</b>

### Australia by State

ACT	52
NSW	111
WA	24
NT	10
QLD	44
SA	42
TAS	26
VIC	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>334</b>

A full delegate list is included in the appendix.

## Marketing and Promotion

Promotion consisted of an integrated plan involving the use of:

### Database

The need for a comprehensive and collated database became apparent early in the process. Each Committee member forwarded their individual databases of contacts to TAS for inclusion in a central Mail Chimp database. It was noted that all these contacts must remain confidential, be used for conference purposes only and not be distributed to alternate networks.

### Save the Date and Registration Flyers

Initial marketing began with a distribution of the electronic Save the Date flyer in October 2016. The Save the Date flyer was uploaded online, sent via Mail Chimp to over 3000 contacts and distributed by each Committee member to their various networks. A follow up Registration Flyer was created mid-2017 and contained registration information including prices, speaker information and general conference information. This was distributed via the Mail Chimp database, uploaded to the website and sent out via committee members.

### Email Blasts

The centralised database of contacts facilitated streamline communication for the conference proceedings. A total of 16 general email blasts were completed regularly and included: call for abstracts, abstract reminders, registration reminders, early bird reminders, social function information accommodation reminders, speaker profiles, awards dinner information and live streaming information. Each email blast contained a direct link to the abstract submission and/or online registration page and the Seafood Directions 2017 website. This ensured that conference communication was delivered from one place, rather than from various networks. Towards the lead up to the event, one mail blast was scheduled for each week to ramp up the marketing prior to the event. This database will be especially useful for future years, as it will be updated with the 2017 attendees prior to hand over to the 2019 State Body. The information on past attendees has been lost each year and the creation of a centralised list will mean a collated and updated list for future conferences.

### Conference Website

The conference website also required updating for the 2017 Conference. The original version was not compatible with mobile devices and could not be easily updated by The Association Specialists. The Committee voted to move the previous conference website and archive to a new platform “Fat Beehive” for the 2017 conference. This proved to be substantially cost effective, as the Conference Event Manager managed all uploads and updating including registration information, accommodation, speakers, program, workshop details, pre-event information and the conference archive post event.

### Industry Collaborations

The Association Specialists (TAS) conducted significant research initially, to identify industry bodies who may be interested in collaborating with Seafood Directions and promoting the conference. TAS created a list of over 90 contacts, for which the committee then filtered through and included any direct contacts/ email addresses for marketing purposes. TAS contacted the organisations and requested website listing and collaborations. International and national websites affiliated with the industry were asked to post information on Seafood Directions 2017, including ESAM Australia and Notus. There was also an overwhelming amount of support from industry bodies which included conference information in their newsletters and mail outs to membership bases and in blogs. In particular, Fish eNews posted numerous accounts of Seafood Directions across the 18-month planning process, targeting the Western Australian region and posting all key updates, including weekly runs in the event section leading into the conference. Notus also included an e-newsletter to over 8,000 industry contacts, the FRDC supported the conference through broadcast emails and The Aquaculturalists blog included conference information in the lead up to the conference. Welcoming a wide range of Steering Committee members from different areas of the

industry helped immensely in reaching as many people as possible prior to the event. All Committee members were instrumental in disseminating conference information and also helped to identify any missing attendees closer to the event via regular delegate list updates. This helped to reach as many industry professionals as possible, in a cost-effective way.

### **Social Media**

The aim of the 2017 conference was to build the Seafood Directions social media presence, to fit within the theme of “Sea the Future.” As such, use of the Seafood Directions hashtag was promoted in the conference app and on all holding slides throughout the conference. A separate social media schedule was developed and followed throughout the conference planning process. Posts occurred twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday and these were managed by the Seafood Directions Professional Conference Organiser. The posts included speaker profiles, ‘teaser’ excerpts about the conference, video ‘teaser’ from speakers and Committee and general registration and social function information.

During the conference, an overwhelming social media presence was monitored through the event apps “event feed.” This highlighted the many tweets from conference delegates and was monitored using the hashtag. This helped to enhance the conference social media presence, with a substantially increased following across all platforms. The social media presence also helped to engage conference attendees, with twitter screens located in each room and a twitter moderator up on stage for each session. The Twitter Moderator referred to the tweeted delegate questions to feed back to the session chair during question time and panel discussions. This proved an effective way of passing on questions, especially from those who may not want to get up in front of an audience. Importantly however, the twitter feed gave Live Streaming delegates the chance to engage with the session, from afar. This was unprecedented; an innovative approach to growing the community in a way that mirrored the tone of ‘Sea the Future’ as we endeavoured to capture the entire seafood industry.

The objective through the conference planning and execution was to enhance social media in order to support future planning. In the few days prior to the conference and three weeks after, the Facebook page reached an overwhelming 203% increase in reach, a 372% increase in post engagement and a 167% increase in page views.



### Reach

September 24 - October 21



3,221

People Reached ▲203%



### Post Engagements

September 24 - October 21



665

Post Engagement ▲372%



### Page Views

September 24 - October 21



147

Total Page Views ▲167%

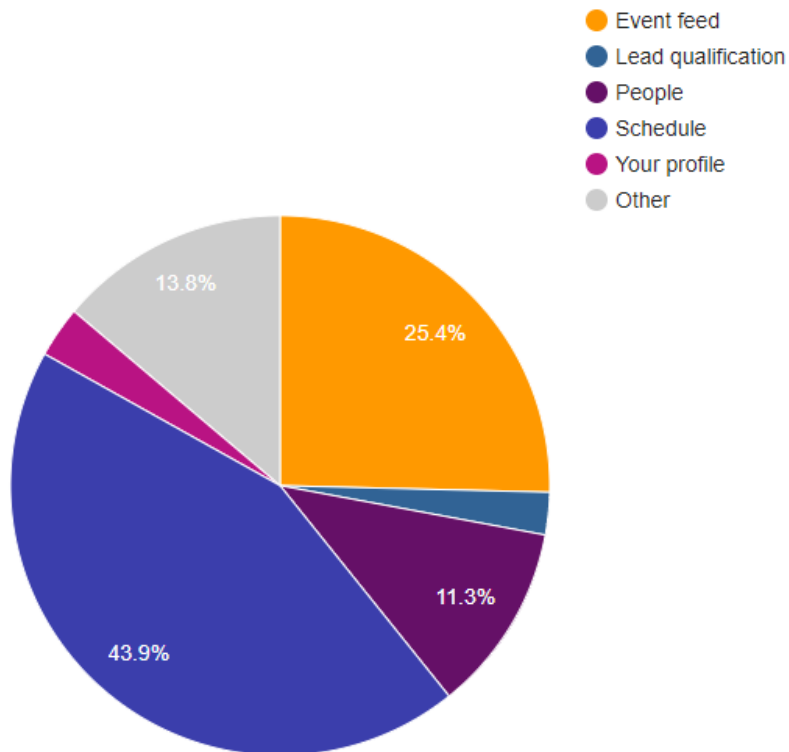


The success of the conference and the attendance numbers relies heavily on the ability to communicate and reach relevant audiences. If social media can continue to grow and develop for the 2019 conference, then the conference should continue to build its reach.

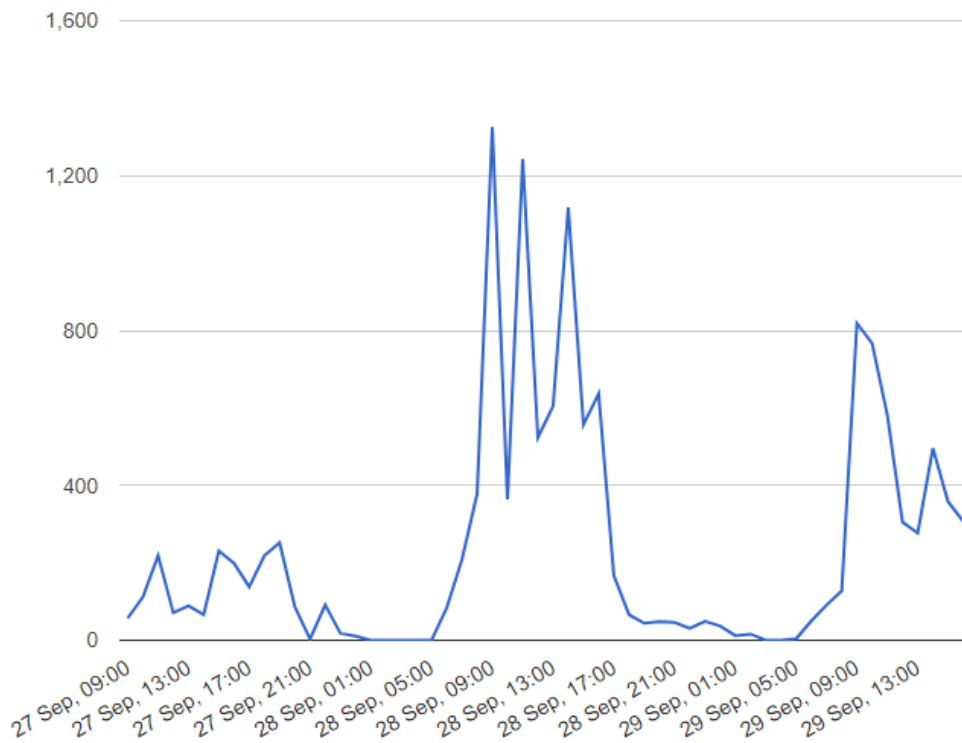
### Conference App

This year Seafood Directions 2017 utilised a conference app. The app included features such as program, venue and map information, speaker profiles, delegate profiles and exhibitor information. It also allowed for the ability for push notifications to be sent out via the app, allowing another opportunity for sponsors to engage, the Committee to engage with the audience and for any relevant changes/ notifications. Seafood Directions also included “Exhibitor Lead Tracking” as a function on the app. This was an additional cost to the conference, however allowed exhibitors to scan the QR codes on delegate name badges to capture leads and store contact information for future purposes. The app also encouraged session evaluations, speaker evaluations, live polling and event survey uploads. The app was well received by delegates and was a great addition to the conference.

**Most popular features at Seafood Directions Conference 2017**



**Hourly usage by attendees at Seafood Directions Conference 2017**



### Speaker and Committee Teaser Videos

To engage delegates and as a marketing push prior to the conference, invited speakers and committee members were urged to provide short “Teaser” videos for upload to the website and to social media. This proved an effective means of marketing as the first upload of the video reached 1,930 people (compared to the average 400 of other posts) and 187 post clicks. The videos were the most shared articles across social media platforms and offered symbiosis with the theme “Sea the Future” and new technology.

## Program

The program structure consisted of:

- Plenary sessions, invited speakers, 2 concurrent sessions, twenty-six abstract presentations and various panel discussions.
- Two pre-conference activities including an overnight Huon Field Trip and an Economics Masterclass Pre-Conference Workshop.
- Daily Sydney Fish Market Behind the Scenes Tours, from Wednesday 27 September - Friday 29 September 2017.
- The Welcome Reception was held in the Exhibition area, in Parkside 1, on Wednesday, 27 September 2017.
- The National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner was held in the Grand Ballroom at the International Convention Centre Sydney on Thursday, 28 September 2017. The dinner attracted just under 400 attendees.
- The “Power Up” Breakfast was held on Friday, 29 September and was organised by WINSC.
- The trade component was held in the exhibition space, where each catering break was held and fourteen exhibitors showcased their products and services.
- All plenary sessions and one breakout stream (i.e. all sessions in Parkside 2) were Live Streamed internationally to registered delegates.
- The event attracted a total of 355 registrations.

## Social Functions

A Welcome Reception and the National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner were held as part of the official conference program:

### Welcome Reception

Date: Wednesday, 27 September 2017  
Venue: Parkside 1, International Convention Centre Sydney  
Time: 1700-1900 hours  
Cost: Included in full delegate registration, Guest Tickets \$80 per person

The Welcome Reception showcased freshly shucked oysters, courtesy of Signature Oysters and Smart Oysters and fresh prawns supplied by Love Australian Prawns. The Association Specialists negotiated with the venue to allow these to be brought in free of charge and distributed to attendees. The fresh prawns and oysters was an effective way to kick off the National Seafood Industry Conference and encapsulated the essence of the event.

### National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner

Date: Thursday, 28 September 2017  
Venue: Grand Ballroom, International Convention Centre Sydney  
Time: 1900 – 2300 hours  
Cost: Included in full delegate registration, Guest Tickets \$175 per person

A significant amount of negotiation was undertaken by The Association Specialists with the International Convention Centre Sydney to allow for fresh produce to be locally sourced and supplied for the Awards Dinner. The Association Specialists (TAS) met with the ICC on many occasions to coordinate the supply channels and ensure that premium seafood was delivered on the night.

Pre-dinner drinks were served as people arrived in the foyer and took their seats (allocated seating). Guests enjoyed a three-course seated menu, with specialty seafood, while being entertained by the band “The Merchants.” The entrée was a platter of prawns, oysters, sashimi, caviar, kingfish and tuna. The main was a Mulloway fillet served with asparagus, leek and potato. The dessert buffet which was served in the foyer of the Grand Ballroom included a choice of four bite sized selections and had four selections of bite sized dessert.

## Sponsorship & Exhibition

The conference included a medium-sized trade component which was driven by both TAS and the organising committee members. A database of over 210 contacts from the seafood industry, based on previous years as well as additional online research, was used on a regular basis to publish the Sponsorship Prospectus and keep parties informed on conference progress. Personal emails and calls were also used to form relationships and secure sponsorship.

Prices include GST

<b>Sponsorship Category</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1 x Principle Sponsor	Sydney Fish Market	\$35,200
1 x Gold Sponsor	Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	\$25,300
1 x Award Dinner Sponsor + Exhibitor	OceanWatch Australia	\$12,925
1 x Silver Sponsor	Union Pay	\$11,000
1 x Silver Sponsor	Austral Fisheries	\$11,000
1 x Silver Sponsor	Department of Primary Industries	\$11,000
1 x Coffee Cart Sponsor + Awards Sponsor	A Raptis & Sons	\$11,000
1 x Esky Bag Sponsor	Fish X	\$8,800
1 x Award Sponsor + Exhibitor	Australian Maritime Safety Authority	\$6,325
1 x Session Sponsor	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources	\$5,500
1 x Exhibitor + Full page Advert	Chilltainers	\$3,800
1 x Lunch Break Sponsor	WWF Australia	\$3,300
1 x Award Sponsor	The Star Sydney	\$3,300
1 x Award Sponsor	Professional Fishermen's Association, Coffs Harbour Fishermen's Co-op and the Commercial Fishermen's Co-op	\$3,300
1 x Award Sponsor	Sanford Limited	\$3,300
1 x Award Sponsor	Viscount Plastics Australia	\$3,300
1 x Award Sponsor	Woodside	\$3,300
1 x Award Sponsor	NSW Fishing Industry Training Committee	\$3,300

1 x Award Sponsor	WAFIC	\$3,300
1 x Exhibition Booth	ESAM Australia	\$3,025
1 x Exhibition Booth	Australian Fisheries Management Authority	\$3,025
1 x Exhibition Booth	Notus	\$3,025
1 x Exhibition Booth	Seafood Industry Australia	\$3,025
1 x Exhibition Booth	TunaSolutions	\$3,025
1 x Exhibition Booth	Techni Ice	\$3,025
1 x Exhibition Booth	Smart Oysters	\$3,025
1 x Award Sponsor	Honey & Fox Pty Ltd (half price)	\$1,650
1 x Phone Charging Station Sponsor	Womens Industry Network Seafood Community	\$1,650

Fresh seafood was also sponsored in-kind for the Welcome Reception. Love Australian Prawns and Signature Oysters sponsored freshly shucked oysters and fresh prawns for conference delegates. They received a satchel insert and recognition in the program book and onsite in return.

PWC and Commonwealth Bank also sponsored in the way of providing keynote speakers for the conference. They received recognition on signage and in the program book in return.

Extensive research went in to developing a comprehensive sponsorship database and forming relationships with various sponsors. One of the biggest challenges from the hand over from 2015 was that with a completely new set of people and conference organisers, a lot of those relationships were lost and limited to no contacts from previous sponsors were passed on.

## Live Streaming

The Committee pioneered Live Streaming for Seafood Directions 2017. The premise behind Live Streaming was to capture the audiences who may not be able to easily access the conference in person. Its objective was to ensure that the proceedings, discussion and decisions arising out of Seafood Directions were translated to the entire seafood industry, irrespective of whether you can make it to the conference. Audio Advice were engaged to manage and distribute the Live Streaming process. They did this via an online medium, which was able to be live streamed internationally without an issue. Delegates registered via a separate link in the registration system and then were emailed the link upon receipt of payment. The delegates also had the opportunity to go back and view past presentations for up to a month after the conference. All recordings were downloaded and TAS uploaded them to the website a short time after the conference. The number of Live Streaming delegates for 2017 was just over 10, however there is a strong feeling from the committee that if the next conference again engages with live streaming that the process will continue to grow and hopefully one day allow everyone in the industry to access information in real time.

## Financials

A dedicated, pre-existing conference bank account with Commonwealth Bank Australia ensured all transactions were recorded in accurate detail. Monthly bank statements were reconciled by The Association Specialists using Quickbooks to maintain up-to-date financial records.

A copy of the current profit and loss report has been included with this report.

The profit and loss report as at 15 November 2017 shows a net profit of **\$56,349.56 (ex GST)**.

## Feedback

There was an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from the 2017 Conference. The conference was well attended and well received.

A post-event survey was distributed via the conference app and consisted of a link for an online feedback survey asking 17 questions.

Of these attendees:

- 95% of attendees rated the content of the program and quality of speakers 4 or above
- 100% of attendees rated the National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner 3 or above

*“Excellent - it was the best Seafood Directions I remember for generating ideas and discussion about how to move the industry in new and expanding directions.”*

Respondents also suggested that there was a good variety of presentations across *“seafood and non-seafood speakers It really stuck to the theme of future.”* The venue and location was praised by delegates and the networking opportunities, during both the conference and the Awards Dinner was an added benefit. Delegates referred to the venue as *“handy and impressive location; inspiring speakers; networking possibilities.”*

When asked what the top three things which delegates enjoyed most about the conference the popular answers were:

- Seeing SIA being up & running
- Aquaculture stream / combined conference
- “Sea the Future” theme
- The quality of presentations
- The smooth running of the event
- The contacts with stakeholders
- The information regarding innovations
- The positive vibe from industry
- *“The people, The people, The people”*
- The opening ceremony by the Tribal Warriors



When asked what key learnings delegates took from the conference, the popular answers were:

- Future of technology
- The seafood industry is already moving forward
- The industry is diverse
- A more effective way of communicating is needed to gain resonance with the community
- To be better prepared and plan for change
- To use all available resources to capitalise on the opportunities for sustainable and profitable growth
- What the future can look like, we may not be looking far enough ahead
- Consumers really don't have time to care about where their produce comes from
- Future proofing is real
- Better safety We need to be better at safety
- More discussion more often Different parties really need to talk more often
- Targeting promotion avenues where your customers are
- Storytelling; the need to connect the exciting tech possibilities with the realities of small scale fisheries; traceability is important
- Can't use logic and fact to change opinion based on fear and emotion
- Collaboration is critical

#### Further Feedback:

##### **NB: Measured enjoyment out of 3 and above**

- 40% of respondents had not attended the conference previously
- 97% of respondents said that the information prior to the event was easy to access and useful
- 98% of respondents enjoyed the National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner entertainment
- 100% of respondents enjoyed the catering at the National Seafood Industry Awards Dinner
- 95% of respondents suggested that the exhibition would impact their decision making or be useful for the future. Some of the reasons for this included: *"new products not seen before," "a well attended event with people across a broad range of backgrounds lots of people from a wide background"*

Delegates suggested future topics to include:

- *“Feedback from new entrants on their experiences - what they found problematic”*
- More from fishers
- A further focus on changing attitudes in the industry; not being seen as the underdog or tolerating a mindset ‘that’s just who we are’ in relation to safety/price/community attitudes/ new markets opportunities etc
- Foreign ownership and Ratio % ownership/control of ITQ
- More outsider perspective

Delegates suggested that areas of improvement could include:

- Longer breaks
- Structured networking session
- Displaying the twitter feed to the audience
- Parallel sessions timing the same so that people can move easily between sessions
- Mental Health Exhibition stand
- Better representation from state regulators
- More partner events
- More even room sizes
- More fishermen
- The Dinner on the second day
- Provide slide presentation on app or allow downloads pre-event
- Longer Panel sessions

Overall the feedback from the conference was extremely positive and left the industry excited for the future. Delegates written feedback includes:

*“Thank you to all involved for an excellent conference!”*

*“Just wanted to pass along my congratulations on the conference, feedback from the NZ attendees was that it was a great couple of days.”*

*“I just wanted to say thanks so much for organising my pass to the Seafood Directions Conference last Friday. I really enjoyed my time at the conference and also the dinner the night before. The fishing industry has a bright future ahead!”*

*“Wanted to say thank you for your work in this conference, was great event. And for going above and beyond to get me to the conference!”*

*“Congratulations and thanks to you and your committee for a fantastic conference. I always have great fun and enjoy and really value the networking but I thought the program was very excellent. As I say to people I have returned bubbling with futuristic and disruptive thoughts, and heaps of new science and research ideas.”*

*“Congrats on such a well organized conference – both contents wise and the entire flow of the event. Indeed it was well themed in showcasing the role disruptive technology will play to support all of us in our respective interests. It was indeed very impressive. well done – and I am sure you are relieved as so much of hard work has gone into this.”*

*“Great event – I watched online and the quality of speakers was good as was the organisation of the two days. Not sure who was on the organising committee, again well done.”*

*“It was a pleasure to be part of the event which was extremely well run, and all parties very good to deal with.”*

## Recommendations

Recommendations for future meetings would include:

- Investigate option for longer sessions
- To have presentation PowerPoint slides available to delegates prior to the conference.
- Clearer communication about the National Seafood Industry Award judging process, including who is responsible
- Potentially, start the State Award Judging Process earlier in the year
- More information on session content available on the website prior to the event
- Have a holding slide for panel discussion which lists the speakers
- Continue to grow the database for communication purposes, as it was challenging to have effective communication prior to this database
- Grow social media and continue to do regular updates

- Continue to have a centralised place for all registrations incl. breakfasts/workshops

## Appendices

This report is accompanied by copies of the following documents:

- Critical Path
- Sponsorship & Exhibition Prospectus
- Final Program Book
- Delegate List
- Profit and Loss Statement
- National Seafood Industry Awards Process 2019
- National Seafood Industry Awards Guideline 2019
- National Seafood Industry Awards Judging Sheet 2017