

FINAL AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY ACTION AGENDA

Initiatives and Actions

December 2002

Acronyms

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| AFFA | Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry |
| AIMS | Australian Institute of Marine Sciences |
| AMSA | Australian Maritime Safety Authority |
| ANTA | Australian National Training Authority |
| ATSIC | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission |
| Austrade | Australian Trade Commission |
| CSIRO | Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation |
| DEH | Department of Environment & Heritage |
| DEST | Department of Education, Science & Training |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade |
| DITR | Department of Industry, Tourism & Resources |
| DOF | Department of Finance |
| DPMC | Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet |
| DTRS | Department of Transport & Regional Services |
| FRDC | Fisheries Research & Development Corporation |

Strategic Initiative 1

Making a National Aquaculture Policy Statement

Opportunity

A positive commitment by Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments to aquaculture development can have a significant bearing on the development of the industry given their various roles in planning and managing resources, and providing infrastructure, and in trade, fish health, food safety, ecologically sustainable development and international relations.

Objective

To send a clear signal to the Australian public, aquaculture industry and domestic and international investors of Australia's strong support for the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry in Australia.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) will work with the State and Territory Governments, through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council, to make a National Aquaculture Policy Statement containing:

- a statement of support for sustainable aquaculture development in Australia;
- an outline of government commitments to sustainable aquaculture development;
- clarification of resource access arrangements and management of aquaculture in Commonwealth waters; and
- an agreement to plan for aquaculture development in advance of growth in the States and Territories.

Responsibility for implementation

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured by the extent to which Commonwealth, State and Territory Government's endorse and deliver a National Aquaculture Policy Statement that publicly supports the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry.

Timeframe

Aim to deliver the National Aquaculture Policy Statement within one year.

Strategic Initiative 2

Promoting a regulatory and business environment that supports aquaculture

Opportunity

There is an opportunity for Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to deliver an efficient regulatory environment that provides certainty to industry, government and communities to plan for the future growth of the industry, where it can grow, how it will grow, and maximising the benefits to rural and regional Australia.

Objective

To support the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry and deliver an efficient, effective and supportive regulatory environment.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) will work with the State and Territory Governments, through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council, to develop and implement nationally agreed best-practice principles for the development and management of aquaculture.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) will work with the State and Territory Governments and industry to streamline aquaculture regulation and management in Australia with the aim of ensuring an efficient and certain regulatory and planning environment for investors and industry.

The Commonwealth Government (DEH) will continue to work with State and Territory Governments to accredit State and Territory environmental assessment processes where they meet the principles encompassed within the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The Commonwealth Government has already put in place bilateral agreements with Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and expects bilateral agreements with other States and Territories to be settled soon.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA) will establish an Aquaculture Development Unit to provide an identity and focus for the Government's existing activity and resources devoted to implementing the Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda, policy development and provide a single contact point in the Commonwealth Government for aquaculture issues and enquiries.

Responsibility for implementation

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured by delivery of an efficient, effective and supportive regulatory environment that meets industry and investor needs.

Timeframe

Aim to:

- develop and implement best practice principles within two years;
- establish an Aquaculture Development Unit within AFFA within 6 months; and
- accredit State and Territory Government processes in line with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* within three years.

Strategic Initiative 3

Implementing an industry driven Action Agenda

Opportunity

The benefits of the Action Agenda to industry will only be realised if industry takes the lead and active role in its implementation. Aquaculture is an emerging industry and has a significant need to access and share new information within the industry and with others on new issues, innovation, investment opportunities, ecologically sustainable development, education and training opportunities, and government policies and programmes.

Objective

To implement an industry driven Action Agenda.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government recognises the National Aquaculture Council as the national peak industry body for the aquaculture industry.

That National Aquaculture Council and Commonwealth Government (AFFA, FRDC) agree to develop an industry communication and promotion strategy.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA) and National Aquaculture Council agree to form an Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda Implementation Committee, including its terms of reference and membership.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA) will jointly fund, with the aquaculture industry, the National Aquaculture Council to manage the secretariat for the Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda Implementation Committee.

Responsibility for implementation

Aquaculture industry and the Commonwealth Government.

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured by:

- industry driving the implementation of the Action Agenda;
- increased industry networking and communication; and
- improved industry coordination and contribution to policy development.

Timeframe

Aim to:

- develop and implement an aquaculture communication and promotion strategy within two years; and
- establish an Aquaculture Industry Action Agenda Implementation Committee within 6 months.

Strategic Initiative 4

Growing aquaculture within an ecologically sustainable framework

Opportunity

There is significant potential to further increase aquaculture production by improving access to resources and ensuring their ecologically sustainable development (ESD).

Objectives

To improve access to natural resources and continual improvement of ecologically sustainable aquaculture practices.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH), through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council, agrees to work with State and Territory Governments to plan for aquaculture development in advance of growth in the States and Territories.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) agrees to work with the Australian aquaculture industry to implement, document and promote the benefits of ecologically sustainable aquaculture development.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) agrees to support the aquaculture industry to increase the implementation of environmental and quality performance systems.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) agrees to work with the National Aquaculture Council and State and Territory Governments to continue development of a voluntary framework for assessing, auditing and reporting on the ecological sustainable development of aquaculture notwithstanding existing regulatory requirements.

Responsibility for implementation

Aquaculture industry and Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured by the extent of increased uptake and sharing of ecologically sustainable aquaculture development practices by the aquaculture industry.

Timeframe

Aim to develop and make available assessment and reporting frameworks for ESD for the aquaculture industry within two years.

Strategic Initiative 5

Protecting the aquaculture industry from aquatic diseases and pests

Opportunity

Australia has significant, clean and disease-free natural resources including land, and inland and marine waters for aquaculture of a wide range of warm and cold water species.

Objective

To protect Australia's clean and disease-free natural resource base.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, FRDC) will continue to work with the National Aquaculture Council and State and Territory Governments to establish an efficient and cost-effective mechanism for approving chemical use in the aquaculture industry.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, FRDC) agrees to work with the State and Territory Governments and National Aquaculture Council to develop and implement a strategy to raise awareness of responsible chemical use in the aquaculture industry.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA) agrees to work with the National Aquaculture Council to review the Commonwealth Government's and industry's commitment to implementing Australia's national strategic plan for aquatic animal health (AQUAPLAN) when current funding for many aspects of this programme cease in June 2003.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA) agrees to continue working with the National Aquaculture Council, other industry associations and State and Territory governments on import risk assessments and other quarantine-related processes as part of a transparent decision-making system.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DFAT) will continue its membership and engagement with countries through organisations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), CODEX Alimentarius Commission, World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Network of Aquaculture Centres in the Asia-Pacific (NACA) to develop quarantine and aquatic animal health standards to reduce the spread of disease through trade in aquatic animals and products.

That the Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH, DTRS, AMSA) and State and Northern Territory Governments will continue to work cooperatively with State and Northern Territory Governments and the shipping industry and port associations to develop a national system for the prevention and management of introduced marine pests as outlined in the 1999 Report of the National Taskforce on the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions, coordinated through the National Introduced Marine Pests Consultative Group.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEH) will continue to work with State and Territory Governments to improve management of translocation of aquatic organisms in line with the principles set out in the 1999 National Policy for the Translocation of Live Aquatic Organisms.

Responsibility for implementation

Aquaculture industry and Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured by the extent to which Australia's clean and disease-free natural resource base is enhanced.

Timeframe

Aim to:

- establish an efficient and cost-effective mechanism for approving chemical use in the aquaculture industry within two years;

- develop and implement a strategy to raise awareness of responsible chemical use in the aquaculture industry within two years;
- review the Commonwealth Government's and industry's commitment to implementing Australia's national strategic plan for aquatic animal health (AQUAPLAN) within two years.

Other actions ongoing.

Strategic Initiative 6

Investing for growth

Opportunity

To achieve a \$2.5 billion aquaculture industry by 2010 will require substantial capital investment in large and small aquaculture businesses. As an emerging industry, aquaculture has at times struggled to access development capital. Given Australia's resource potential and ecologically sustainable development framework, any activities that provide easier access to development capital will deliver sustainable industry growth.

Objective

To increase productive and responsible investment in Australian aquaculture.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, FRDC, DITR) and National Aquaculture Council agree to work together to facilitate investment in the aquaculture industry.

Responsibility for implementation

National Aquaculture Council and the Commonwealth Government.

Success Indicators

Increased investment in the aquaculture industry.

Timeframe

Aim to develop an investment strategy within two years.

Strategic Initiative 7

Promoting aquaculture products in Australia and globally

Opportunity

Australian aquaculture producers have a domestic and international reputation as suppliers of high-quality aquaculture products. Australian producers have a substantial opportunity to build on their existing sustainable competitive advantages to increase sales domestically and overseas.

Objective

To promote aquaculture products in Australia and globally.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, FRDC, Austrade, DTRS) and the National Aquaculture Council will investigate the feasibility of developing, funding and implementing a strategy to identify, develop and exploit product and market segment opportunities for which Australian producers have a significant and sustainable competitive advantage, including development of best practice logistics chain capabilities.

The Commonwealth Government (DFAT) in consultation with the Australian Seafood Industry Council has agreed to establish a Seafood Trade and Market Access Working Group to assist the aquaculture and seafood industries to negotiate country access where industry identifies a strategic export benefit.

Responsibility for implementation

National Aquaculture Council and Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Success indicators

Increased access to domestic and international markets for aquaculture produce.
Increased volume and value of aquaculture exports.

Timeframe

Aim to undertake a feasibility study for developing, funding and implementing a marketing strategy within two years.

Strategic Initiative 8

Tackling the research and innovation challenges

Opportunity

Australian aquaculture mainly consists of the production of high-value species that require advanced aquaculture technologies, and research and innovation to drive their development and improve competitiveness. There is considerable opportunity to maximise the benefits of research and innovation in Australia by improving funding arrangements, strategically focusing the research effort and improving the extension of research outcomes to industry.

Objective

To maximise the benefits of research and innovation, and sharing best practices.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, FRDC, CSIRO, AIMS, DEST), State and Territory Governments and the National Aquaculture Council agree to work together to assist industry and governments to regularly identify and review their research and innovation priorities and funding of these priorities at state, territory and national levels.

The National Aquaculture Council will encourage research and innovation activities that are commercially driven. The aquaculture industry has the opportunity to participate fully in setting priorities for aquaculture research and development by participating in the National Aquaculture Council.

The National Aquaculture Council will encourage adoption of formal agreement mechanisms (e.g. memorandums of understanding) to clearly define research and innovation needs and funding for projects.

The Commonwealth Government (FRDC) will maintain its commitment to provide matching, dollar for dollar funding, up to 0.25 of industry of the three-year average gross value of product, to support research and innovation through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

The National Aquaculture Council will encourage all sectors of the aquaculture industry to commit to investing at least 0.25 per cent of the three-year average gross value of product, to support research and innovation.

The National Aquaculture Council and Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEST) will encourage all aquaculture researchers, research funding providers and extensions officers to promote research outcomes at regional and national aquaculture conferences, on a national aquaculture information portal and by contributing to the Australian rural research in progress (ARRIP) database maintained by the Commonwealth, State and Territory government-funded “Australian agriculture and natural resources online” initiative (<http://www.infoscan.com.au/contents/index.html>).

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, CSIRO, AIMS, DEH) agrees to work with State Governments and the National Aquaculture Council to identify research priorities for improving the industry’s environmental performance and monitoring capacity.

The National Aquaculture Council and Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEST) will take a lead role in fostering international technology alliances between aquaculture farmers and scientists through organisations such as the Network of Aquaculture Centres in the Asia-Pacific (NACA), Aquatic Animal Health Research Institute (AAHRI), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC).

Responsibility for implementation

National Aquaculture Council and Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Success indicators

Increased industry investment in research and innovation.

National strategic focus to investment in aquaculture research.

Formal agreement mechanisms defining research and innovation needs in common use.

Timeframe

Aim to develop and implement a national strategic plan for aquaculture research and innovation within two years.

Other recommended actions ongoing.

Strategic Initiative 9

Making the most of education, training and workplace opportunities

Opportunity

Australian aquaculture mainly consists of producing high-value species that require advanced aquaculture technologies, supported by a highly skilled and flexible workforce. Any actions that improve the skills base and flexibility of an aquaculture workforce and convert its intellectual capital into a highly competitive product or service will directly improve the industry's competitiveness.

Opportunities to improve education, training and workplace performance exist through:

- access to education and training resources that meet the human resource requirements of the aquaculture industry, including Indigenous peoples, at all levels;
- extension of outcomes from research;
- career paths for new and existing industry participants;
- best practices in the workplace, including workplace relations, and occupational health and safety;
- sales of education and training overseas; and
- tertiary institutions responding to industry needs.

Objective

Develop the capacity of the aquaculture industry by converting the intellectual capital of its workforce into a highly competitive product or service.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (ANTA) recognises that implementation of the aquaculture components of the Seafood Industry Training Package would be significantly boosted if further resources were made available for development of learning materials. ANTA has asked the Australian Seafood Industry Council as the National Seafood Industry Training Advisory Body to submit to ANTA a full proposal for development of learning materials for consideration.

The Commonwealth Government (ANTA, AFFA) will continue to work with the aquaculture industry and Seafood Training Australia in the stage two of the current review of the Seafood Industry Training Package reviewing existing aquaculture units for currency and duplication.

The National Aquaculture Council and Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEST) will develop and implement a strategy to substantially improve links between training providers and industry, including identifying culturally appropriate education and training opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, DEWR) will encourage the industry through the National Aquaculture Council to adopt the National Occupational Health and Safety Strategy targets as a minimum to help drive improvements in workplace safety.

Responsibility for implementation

National Aquaculture Council, Commonwealth Government, and education and training providers.

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured after four years by:

- increased access to aquaculture related education and training resources
- improved extension of outcomes from research;
- improvements in best practice in the workplace, including workplace relations, and achieving the National Occupational Health and Safety Strategy targets as a minimum;
- increased sales of education and training overseas; and
- tertiary institutions better responding to industry needs.

Timeframe

Aim to develop and implement an industry education and training strategy within two years.

Strategic Initiative 10

Creating an aquaculture industry for all Australians

Opportunity

Indigenous Australians can become significant stakeholders in the aquaculture industry and contribute to the industry's growth in its early development stage.

Objective

To enhance the growth of the aquaculture industry by improving the opportunities for Indigenous Australians to contribute to, and participate in, its sustainable development.

Actions

The Commonwealth Government (AFFA, ATSIC) has agreed to establish an indigenous aquaculture unit within AFFA to implement the National Aquaculture Development Strategy for Indigenous Communities in Australia and to advise, help develop funding applications and otherwise promote Indigenous aquaculture development.

A member of ATSIC was invited and has joined the National Aquaculture Council.

Responsibility for implementation

National Aquaculture Council, ATSIC, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Success indicators

The success of this initiative will be measured on the basis of increasing indigenous involvement in aquaculture. One benchmark against which to measure the success of this initiative is an unpublished study by the Bureau of Rural Sciences in 2001 that found there were at least 28 aquaculture facilities in Australia with some level of Indigenous involvement.

Timeframe

Aim to:

- establish the indigenous aquaculture unit within AFFA within one year; and
- implement the National Aquaculture Development Strategy for Indigenous Communities in Australia over the next two years.