



## **Update from the Seafood Trade Advisory Group**

The Seafood Trade Advisory Group has been formed to investigate and address the complex trade and market access issues facing the Australian wild abalone and rock lobster industry and to support intergovernmental negotiations concerning the export of these premium seafood products. The Seafood Trade Advisory Group consists of industry professionals and consultants, the Chair is Mark Webster and Deputy Chair, Nathan Maxwell McGinn. All members have specialised expertise and an understanding of international trade policy instruments currently applied to the lobster and abalone trade with Hong Kong and mainland China.

## **New Economic Research has shown the abalone and rock lobster industries have a significant impact on our local economy**

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Seafood Trade Advisory Group (STAG) met with key government officials and Ministers in Canberra during November and December. The aim of the meetings was to discuss progress in resolving key issues and to reinforce the importance of the abalone and rock lobster trade to China:

- In 2012-13 the combined value (FOB) of Australian Abalone and Rock Lobster contributed approximately \$632 million to the nation's export earnings
- Being predominantly regionally based these industries have a significant impact on their respective local economies, supporting almost 8,500 full time equivalent jobs
- The industries contribute in excess of \$1.25 billion in gross domestic product and more than \$550 million in household income, predominantly within regional communities
- In 2012 -13 TOTAL Abalone exports in all forms were valued at approximately \$186 million (FOB). In the same period, total Rock Lobster exports in all forms were valued at approximately \$446 million (FOB).

## **'White Paper on Agricultural Competitiveness'**

The STAG secretariat is working on a submission for the inclusion of Seafood on the 'White Paper on Agricultural Competitiveness' particularly on those issues concerning trade and market development; seafood is currently excluded from this paper which will ultimately guide government investment.

## **Need for accurate statistics to support trade and market access negotiations**

The STAG's Economics Analysis Group has been working with Newgate Communications and Selwyn Heilbron to provide a compelling picture of the Australian abalone and rock lobster trade with China, and model the beneficial outcomes of a fully liberalised trade agreement with China, this information will then be presented to government officials to ensure that Abalone and Rock Lobster are a priority and the industries' plans for developing the market and the potential economic benefit are highlighted.

## **New Application to be made to China for Sulphur Dioxide in Canned Abalone**

The SO2 group has been working to identify how we can apply to have SO2 content in canned abalone accepted under the *Chinese Measures for Administration of New Food Additives*. The group have now identified the process for application and had this confirmed by DFAT, the group has built relationships in support of the application with the

China Cuisine Association and the China Canned Food Association. Technical support for the application is being received from SafeFish. A Steering Committee has been established to manage and contribute to the project and a timetable for submission and communication has been drawn up for the application to be submitted ASAP

### **Customs clearance time monitor has been established**

Jayne Gallagher, Manager Product and Market Development at the Seafood CRC will be speaking at the ABARE Outlook conference on 4 March 2014 at a session on infrastructure. She will highlight the significant supply chain issues associated with harvesting and transporting seafood from remote locations in Australia through to China. CRC research and customs clearance information collected as part of the STAG activities will be featured in the presentation which will also be made available on the STAG website after presentation.

### **Involved in trading with Hong Kong and China?**

The STAG will continue to work together and with other organisations to support the government with international trade and market access issues concerning the export of Australian wild abalone and rock lobster to Hong kong and China. If you are exporting other products and would like any further information about activities of the Seafood Trade Advisory Group or would like to get involved in the group, please contact us:

#### **General Enquiries**

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