

# SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS 2005

## FINAL REPORT

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**Australian Government**

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**Fisheries Research and  
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**Project No. 2004/302**

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The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation plans, invests in and manages fisheries research and development throughout Australia. It is a statutory authority within the portfolio of the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, jointly funded by the Australian Government and the fishing industry.

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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2004/302      SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS 2005

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### OBJECTIVES:

- Plan and deliver the fourth Seafood Directions conference in Sydney in 2005.
- Plan Seafood Directions 2005 to coincide with the "World Fish Inspection and Quality Control Congress."
- Plan and deliver the Australian Seafood Industry Awards 2005.

### OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

Planning and delivering of the fourth Seafood Directions conference & Australian Seafood Industry Awards 2005 in Sydney was achieved (12-14 September 2005).

The IAFI Congress was held from 14-16 September 2005 with a number of events in common. By holding these events side by side, it allowed cross promotion/sales and allowed themes to be carried through to create "Seafood Week."

#### **The Conference itself allowed the industry to:**

- Examine the latest information and initiatives on key seafood industry themes and issues
- Identify solutions and opportunities regarding issues of importance to the future well-being of the seafood industry
- Formulate blueprints for future action and monitor progress regarding implementation through the ASIC report card process.
- Identify and promote seafood industry best practice
- Promote and showcase seafood industry excellence and success stories
- Develop seafood industry networks across all industry sectors, government and non-government organisations and other seafood industry stakeholders
- Transfer information on critical issues to the seafood industry
- Enhance the Australian seafood industry's image, nationally and internationally
- Obtain information and knowledge globally that will benefit the industry's decision making process at all levels

The budget for the conference was developed and closely monitored based on attendance of 300 people for Seafood Directions in Perth and Brisbane, however, it was anticipated the delegate numbers could reach 500 or more given its accessible location.

Care was taken to set fees at an affordable rate for industry participants whilst ensuring budgetary requirements were met.

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Due to a number of unforeseen events, largely resulting from ICMS' management of SD05, the Conference made a lost of \$6,239. However, this figure should not overshadow the success of the Conference.

The final delegate count of 348 was below the mark of anticipated attendance figures of 400+ projected on attendance figures from prior Seafood Directions' conferences. Based on feedback, diminished attendance was attributed to hardships experienced by the industry members. Throughout the build up to the conference reasons cited were:

- Increased financial hardships (e.g. fuel) making the expenditure of attendance difficult
- End of harvest season, inability to leave operations
- Lack of interest due to current political environment

It may be pertinent to introduce another category of registration instead of Student – i.e. Concession that would apply to those members who wish to attend but are financially constrained. Care needs to be exercised to ensure the implications for the budget are considered when constructing such a fee.

\$286,972.30 was raised in Sponsorship revenue for the event with a further \$43,500 being raised for the sale of Exhibition space.

While this is an impressive figure, securing sponsorship was at time extremely difficult due to the lead times, limited/no access to industry databases and direct contacts required.

The Conference allowed key issues affecting the seafood industry to be addressed in a constructive and inclusive way. It was able to identify areas requiring attention and provided potential solutions to the problems facing our industry. Most of all, it facilitated a valuable communication exchange between all sectors of the industry. It is only with this type of participation and coordination that the industry is going to continue to grow and prosper and as such, Seafood Directions remains an invaluable tool in the growth and security of the Australian seafood industry.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**SFM wishes to acknowledge the support received by the following people for the organisation and management of Seafood Directions 2005.**

### ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Grahame Turk (Chair)	Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd
Louise Nock (Principal Investigator)	Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd
Russ Neal	Australian Seafood Industry Council
Patrick Hone	Fisheries Research & Development Corporation
Nick Rayns	NSW Department of Primary Industries
John Roach	Master Fish Merchants' Association
Roy Palmer	Seafood Services Australia

### SUPPORT

Peter Horvat	Fisheries Research & Development Corporation
Martin Bowerman	Journalist

### SPONSORS

- Fisheries Research & Development Corporation
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry
- Volkswagen

- Viscount Plastics (Nally)
- Collex Pty Ltd
- Seafood Services Australia
- Australian Primary Superannuation Fund
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- National Food Industry Strategy
- NSW Food Authority
- Agri-Food Industry Skills Council
- Natural Heritage Trust and the Department of the Environment and Heritage
- Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
- Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines
- Sydney Fish Market

## BACKGROUND

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Many seafood industries around the world conduct national and international industry conferences as a means of identifying and highlighting issues of concern and learning from the experiences of others.

In recognition of the advantages to be gained from hosting a national industry conference, the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC), the SA Seafood Industry Development Board and the Seafood Council (SA) formed a partnership to progress the first national industry conference in 1999.

It was agreed "Seafood Directions" be adopted as the official conference title with ASIC agreeing on the adoption of the conference logo as the official "Seafood Directions" logo. The logo has subsequently been registered by Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC).

Seafood Directions 99 was held in Adelaide and hosted by the South Australian Seafood Council. It was endorsed by ASIC as the inaugural conference and a determination was made for the event to be held bi-annually. More than just a conference, Seafood Directions is an action plan to improve industry.

At the original ASIC meeting a timetable was mapped which detailed the location of the next three conferences –

YEAR	STATE/TERRITORY	HOST ORGANISATION
2001	Queensland	South Australia Seafood Council
2003	Western Australia	Queensland Seafood Industry Association
2005	New South Wales	Western Australia Fishing Industry Council

The success of the inaugural national seafood industry conference in Adelaide included the development of a national industry Action Plan. The Steering Committee met early in 2004 to confirm the four central themes of Seafood Directions 2001 and 2003, these themes also formed part of 2005. They included:

- Industry Profile
- Quality
- Environment
- Access Security

## NECESSITY

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The Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) and other key industry bodies continue to support the holding of a biennial national seafood industry conference to review and discuss priority issues affecting the seafood sector and to use this forum as a means of providing the basis of future planning and direction.

The success of Seafood Directions 2005 supports the need for a future conference to facilitate industry involvement in the development of industry goals and objectives.

## **ADVERTISING**

The Organising Committee published advertisements for SD05 in the following publications:

- 2005 Commercial Fishing Events Calendar – NZ Seafood Magazine
- R&D News
- AustAsia Aquaculture
- Professional Fisherman Magazine
- Seafood Australia Magazine

Rather than spend a great deal of money on advertising, the Committee decided to gain awareness for the conference through email distributions, networking and exposure at relevant conferences leading up to SD05. However, it is necessary to support industry publications through paid advertising as this will then translate into free 'advertorial'.

## **MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Gaining media exposure is a crucial element in the promotion of Seafood Directions. While we gained favourable support from Industry publications in the lead up and post event, it could have been better. Unfortunately, two weeks prior to Seafood Directions the PR Executive at SFM resigned leaving the conference temporarily at a loss. Martin Bowerman was hired a week prior to the event to provide PR assistance, writing media releases which were distributed via SFM etc. Martin's releases generated some interest for the conference by key media but a dedicated professional employed to manage the project is advisable as it is a key resource for securing delegates.

## **WEBSITE MANAGEMENT**

The website for Seafood Directions (<http://www.seafooddirections.com/>) is a mandatory and effective communication tool, providing a valuable platform for information dissemination and delegate registration. It allows for additional pages and updates to be loaded for progressive segments such as securing additional sponsors, program changes and award nominations.

In SD05, online registration was made available for the first time to delegates. In the current climate, this is an extremely effective tool. However, it is important to note many organisations from the catching sector do not regularly make use of the Internet and therefore it remains a requirement to produce printed registration brochures and associated materials.

At the conclusion of the Conference, a new web page is established to record the outcomes of the Australian Seafood Industry Awards (including finalists and winners of each Award category) and Speaker's conference presentations. It is suggested to utilise the existing site, building upon it - useful for reference material and to save costs.

## **VENUE MANAGEMENT**

SD05 was held at Star City Hotel & Apartments, located in Pyrmont, Sydney. The venue:

- Was central for event organisers, sponsors, exhibitors and delegates to access with ease
- Provided all services and requirements and was flexible in accommodating requests
- Had efficient and courteous staff well trained in professional service delivery
- Provided a variety of food and beverage packages for selection
- Provided a variety of rooms and venue areas and was able to accommodate ancillary partnership programs and events at short notice
- Had ease of access for exhibitors, sponsors and delegates

## RESULTS/DISCUSSION

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### BUDGET

#### Financial Overview

Total Income	\$598,654
Total Expenses	\$604,893
GST payable on Income	\$46,747
GST pre-paid on Expenses	\$47,166
Total to be paid / (collected) from ATO	-\$420
Profit/Loss	(\$6,239)

### MARKETING

The following materials were developed using the services of a contract designer and printer, sourced by the conference secretariat, ICMS Pty Ltd.

Type	Print Run	Suggested 2007
Posters	500	0
Teaser cards	25,000	15,000
Letterhead	3,000	0
Sponsorship and Exhibition prospectus	500	500
Registration Brochure	5,000	2,500 <sup>1</sup>
Conference Program	600	Est. on delegate #
ASIA Program/Menu booklet	500	Est. on dinner #

Posters were distributed for display to national industry fishing councils and associated government departments such as the Department of Primary Industries, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry. In hindsight, while a nice addition to the marketing collateral, SFM believe this to be an expense that would be better spent elsewhere.

Teaser cards were distributed to database listings from prior conferences and cooperative referrals. A 'countdown' campaign to encourage 'Early Bird' registrations was instigated with electronic versions of the teaser card transmitted at timely intervals.

The Sponsorship/Exhibitor prospectus was distributed to a potential 'hit list' of sponsors.

Registration brochures were used as inserts into industry newsletters and journals. This is one of the most crucial publications used to promote the conference as it contained a draft version of the program. The program was also available to be downloaded from the website, allowing us to continually update as the program evolved.

Conference programs were distributed via delegate's satchels at the conference.

In relation to producing these materials, it is recommended to deal directly with contracted suppliers such as designers and printers, maintaining control of the process and minimising impacts. Loss of time and extra costs were incurred by dealing through the conference secretariat, resulting in misinterpretation of advice, additional changes, lack in print quality and attention to detail, 'to the bone' deadlines and mismanaged deliveries.

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<sup>1</sup> This was available as a download from the website and therefore not as many require printing. Use teaser cards to direct to website. Limit mail out to sources without internet access to ensure the document is always current.



## OBJECTIVES:

The original objectives stated in the application to FRDC were as follows:

1. Plan and deliver the fourth Seafood Directions conference in Sydney in 2005
2. Plan Seafood Directions 2005 to coincide with the "World Fish Inspection and Quality Control Congress"

The Seafood Directions objectives need to be more prescriptive. It is not merely about planning and delivering a conference but ensuring the following is undertaken:

- Examine the latest information and initiatives on key seafood industry themes and issues
- Identify solutions and opportunities regarding issues of importance to the future well-being of the seafood industry
- Formulate Seafood Directions' outcomes into blueprints for future action and monitoring progress regarding implementation
- Identify and promote seafood industry best practice
- Promote and showcase seafood industry excellence and success stories
- Develop seafood industry networks across all industry sectors, government and non-government organisations and other seafood industry stakeholders
- Transfer information on critical issues to the seafood industry
- Enhance the Australian seafood industry's image, nationally and internationally
- Obtain information and knowledge globally that will benefit the industry's decision making process at all levels
- Identify new trade opportunities in Australia and overseas

Secondly, while Seafood Directions 2005, IAFI (formerly World Fish Inspection and Quality Control Congress) and Fine Food were held in conjunction with each other, **this actually posed a number of significant problems, e.g.:**

- Competition for delegates;
- Competing events/sessions;
- Competition for sponsors.

**In future, it is recommended that they not be run in conjunction with each other** and discussions with Seafood Services Australia (charged with the running of IAFI) agree.

## METHODS

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**As the host of the event, Sydney Fish Market:**

- Established and supported the Organising Committee
- Conducted daily planning and management of the conference and associated events
- Managed and was accountable for event finances and the budget
- Managed the event team
- Contracted and oversaw the Conference Secretariat services
- Regularly reported on progress to ASIC and FRDC
- Managed sponsors

Sydney Fish Market also updated the "How To" manual for Seafood Directions. This was often a frank account of what not to do when managing the event in the hope that similar mistakes will not be made in the future. Two copies of this report have been forwarded to FRDC and one to TFIC.

Sydney Fish Market also recommends that the Principal Investigator sit on the Organising Committee to ensure that learnings are incorporated into the management of the next event.

## CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

Shortly after the process of event management begun on SD05, SFM was notified that ACTS Conferencing Pty Ltd, who had been employed as the conference secretariat for SD05, had been sold to a national company ICMS Pty Ltd. The Conference Manager was immediately changed and at the time was not considered to present a problem.

As event planning continued, it became very apparent that ICMS Pty Ltd was completely incapable of providing the service they were hired to do. After considerable deliberation by SFM and key members of the Organising Committee, it was considered wise to remain with ICMS Pty Ltd, rather than breaking the contract and incurring penalty charges and disruption to the event and delegates already signed on to the conference.

Despite a new Conference Manager taking over the SD05 account (upon SFM's insistence), ICMS Pty Ltd continued to be extremely difficult to work with and in some instances completely incompetent, particularly in the areas of budget management and customer service (in particular delegate and speaker communication). While SFM was able to renegotiate some of ICMS' fees post event, we do not believe that it was adequate compensation. SFM strongly recommends in its 'How to Manual' that the decision to hire a conference secretariat be taken with care and contracts should be reviewed by lawyers to ensure that the organisers have some come back should similar issues arise.

## PROGRAM

The overall theme for SD05 was Netting Profits – Charting a Course for a Profitable Seafood Industry. The final program was segmented into Demand Dynamics, Supply Dynamics and A Vision for the Industry.

The Organising Committee's first steps were to consider objectives and to develop themes:

- That would remain topical
- They would have suitable knowledge about regarding national, international and local priorities
- Were complimentary rather than competing with corresponding events

Subjects for the conference included issues relating to sustainability, resource security, property rights, seafood industry profile, safety and quality, industry development and human capital. In total, there were thirty-two (32) speakers with topics covering:

- Dynamics of the Australian market
- Consumer demands
- Truth in labelling
- Perceptions of the industry
- Seafood quality
- Innovative marketing
- Demand and supply
- The role of imports
- Future fisheries management
- Resource access
- Resource allocation between competing sectors
- What the future holds for the industry

The emphasis of the program content was progressive in that it aimed to identify and influence the direction of the industry and predict trends over the next two years.

It was also important to the Committee that SD05 was not simply a 'talk fest' but rather an opportunity for industry to discuss and chart its own course for the future. As such, all sessions were plenary and there were a number of panel discussions and open forums. A free session for the fishermen was held in response to feedback from industry representation relating to the difficulty of "grassroots" attendance of fisherman and their families.

SD05 Steering Committee strongly recommends the inclusion of a "free session" for fishermen, as this was an invaluable opportunity for all stakeholders to hear the issues at hand and appreciate all points of view.

Finally, it is important to structure the sessions to maximise attendance across all three days. This can be done by spreading out, where possible, more 'crowd pleasing' sessions.

#### ANCILLARY EVENTS

SD05 was held during Sydney Seafood Week<sup>2</sup> scheduled from Monday, 12 September through to Friday, 16 September 2005. The three-day conference commenced on Monday, 12 September and concluded with the Australian Seafood Industry Awards Dinner on Wednesday, 14 September 2005.

To encourage attendance and participation by intrastate, interstate and international delegates the following events were also scheduled during this week:

- IAFI 6<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Seafood Safety, Quality and Trade
- Women's Industry Network Seafood Community Workshops
- Get Fresh With Fish

Held on Sunday, 11 September 2005 at Sydney Fish Market, mini demonstrations for consumers to show them how they can prepare and cook seasonal and under-utilised seafood species. Recipes demonstrated during the sessions were quick and easy with ingredients readily accessible to the home cook. Free demonstrations commenced at 10:00am, 11:30am, 1:00pm and 2:30pm.

- Behind The Scenes Tours

Sydney Fish Market conducted tours, exploring all facets of the Market and its operations, including a tour of the auction floor, sashimi pavilion and crustacean pen.

- Welcome Reception

#### SPONSORSHIP

SD05 Organising Committee raised \$286,972.30 worth of Sponsorship income for SD05.

Securing sponsorship was an ongoing process and was heavily reliant on researching, identifying, approaching and presenting to potential partners and then developing and managing strategic offerings, ensuring benefits were honoured and delivered.

To ensure that relationships were not jeopardised, sponsorships were managed carefully and consideration of the 'tier' of the sponsors was considered at all times to ensure there was consistency and entitlements were delivered as negotiated. Debriefs were also conducted with sponsors, ascertaining feedback regarding outcomes and experiences to ensure that they are recruited for the next event.

For SD05, an external coordinator was hired to develop and secure sponsorship and assist with elements of the event coordination.

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<sup>2</sup> Seafood Week was coined by SD05 Committee and IAFI Committee to maximise on events surrounding that week.

## EXHIBITORS

SD05 secured \$43,500 worth of income from the exhibition space at SD05. Exhibitors were an important addition to build further interest in the conference proceedings as well as providing an additional source of income.

A great deal of interest was generated by potential exhibitors, however there were limitations in providing opportunities to all as exhibition booths were taken up very quickly.

SD05 had nineteen (19) booths, including a combination of double booths, IAFI shared exhibitors, single day and sponsorship exhibitors.

## REGISTRATION FEES

The original budget for the conference was developed and closely monitored based on increased attendance from Seafood Directions in Perth and Brisbane (500).

Care was taken to set fees at an affordable rate for industry participants whilst ensuring budgetary requirements were met.

Many delegates needed to meet their own costs and therefore registration fees for 2005 were divided into pre and post "Early Bird" to encourage early registrations.

## REGISTRATION FEES

	TO 15 JULY 2005	FROM 16 JULY 2005
	\$A	\$A
Seafood Directions 2005 full conference registration	660	790
Attending both Seafood Directions 2005 and IAFI Conferences full registration	1,100	1,300
Seafood Directions 2005 Student registration	520	520
Seafood Directions 2005 Day registration	360	430
Exhibitor aide Seafood Directions 2005 only	300	300
Exhibitor aide Seafood Directions 2005 and IAFI Conferences	540	540

**The final delegate count of 348** was below the mark of anticipated attendance figures of 500 projected on attendance figures from prior Seafood Directions' conferences. Based on feedback, diminished attendance was attributed to hardships experienced by the industry members. Throughout the build up to the conference reasons cited were:

- Increased financial hardships (e.g. fuel) making the expenditure of attendance difficult
- End of harvest season, inability to leave operations
- Lack of interest due to current political environment

As a suggestion, it may be pertinent to introduce another category of registration instead of Student – i.e. Concession that would apply to those members who wish to attend but are financially constrained. The budget needs to be considered when constructing such a fee.

## DELEGATE BREAKDOWN

SD05 Full Conference Registration – Early Bird	96
SD05 Full Conference Registration – Post Early Bird Deadline	47
Combined SD05 & IAFI Full Registration – Early Bird	30
Combined SD05 & IAFI Full Registration – Post Early Bird Deadline	6
SD05 Student Registration – One Fee Only	0
SD05 Day Registration – Early Bird	3
SD05 Day Registration – Post Early Bird Deadline	7
SD05 Exhibitor Aide	2
Combined SD05 & IAFI Exhibitor Aide	3

## PRIMARY ROLE

Delegate	194
Speaker	40
Sponsor	48
Exhibitor	27

## INDUSTRY SECTOR

Aquaculture	23
Catching	45
Education	8
Government	49
Industry Association	35
Media	2
Packaging	5
Post-Harvest	18
Research and Development	29
Retail	14
Other	32

As mentioned previously, allowances need to be made for complimentary cost factors impacting the bottom line such as:

- Sponsorship entitlements
- Media representation
- VIP representation

## AUSTRALIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY AWARDS 2005

The Australian Seafood Industry Awards were announced and presented at the Gala Awards Dinner, held on the third and final day of the conference. The dinner provided an excellent opportunity to showcase and celebrate industry champions in a fun, relaxed, social environment.

The Organising Committee decided to hold the Gala Awards Dinner at a venue separate to the conference, primarily to give delegates the chance to disengage from conference proceedings and hold the event in spectacular surroundings. The Big Top at Luna Park did not disappoint.

Whilst full delegate registration included a ticket to the dinner, there was opportunity for industry to purchase additional tickets to the event without attending the conference. This made anticipating numbers difficult as in most instances people left their bookings to the last minute, regardless of set deadlines. This impacted many elements of the event coordination including:

- In-kind supply of produce
- Seating co-ordination

- Room design and layout
- Contractor and suppliers' services and provisions
- Segments of the venue contract relating to costs

## **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

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An event report was provided to FRDC, which acts to guide future organisers of Seafood Directions. This report examines what strategies were employed and where amendments should be made.

## **CONCLUSION**

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At a time when the seafood industry is struggling with a range of socio-economic pressures, SD05's Organising Committee felt that the delegate attendance of 348 was extremely good. Those who attended SD05 and provided feedback highly praised it.

Due to a number of unforeseen events, largely resulting from ICMS' management of SD05, the Conference made a lost of \$6,239. However, this figure should not overshadow the success of the Conference.

The Conference allowed key issues affecting the seafood industry to be addressed in a constructive and inclusive way. It was able to identify areas requiring attention and provided potential solutions to the problems facing our industry. Most of all, it facilitated a valuable communication exchange between all sectors of the industry. It is only with this type of participation and coordination that the industry is going to continue to grow and prosper and as such, Seafood Directions remains an invaluable tool in the growth and security of the Australian seafood industry.

## **STAFF INVOLVED IN SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS 2005**

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Louise Nock (Principal Investigator)  
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Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd  
Contracted to Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd

### **Advisors**

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