



11 April 2017  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

**The biosecurity risks associated with the importation of seafood and seafood products (including uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat) into Australia**

I refer to the Inquiry by the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport into the *biosecurity risks associated with the importation of seafood and seafood products (including uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat) into Australia*.

The Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) is the peak national organisation representing Australia's recreational fishing community. ARFF and its members are seriously concerned about the recent discovery of White Spot Syndrome Virus in Australian waterways. We note the Federal Government's response to the outbreak including the banning the import of green prawns. We note that to date White Spot has been detected in prawn farms in the Logan River area and the Logan River in Queensland before Christmas and more recently in Moreton Bay. We understand the outbreak led to the closure of the prawn farms, suspension of wild catch prawning in the river and exclusion zones in Moreton Bay.

We are concerned about the potential effects of this disease as we understand White Spot can not only kill prawns but also crabs, freshwater crayfish and lobsters. We are concerned that the measures taken to date, though welcomed, may not fix the ongoing threat that exists from the transfer of the virus to other waterways in Australia. We understand retail outlets are continuing to sell imported raw prawns, that were imported before the ban and note the intensity of testing of these prawns has been increased. We also note that the disease can be spread within the marine environment by transfer of marine products from one area to another.

We note and acknowledge the immediate response assistance that has been provided to the commercial fishing sector. However, we are concerned that there is also a significant threat to the recreational fishing community and the businesses that underpin it. Particularly if the outbreak is not contained and significant areas of our riverine and marine waterways are affected and are quarantined as a result. It has been estimated that the economic contribution of recreational fishing to the Australian economy and communities is over \$10 billion a year.

We would value the opportunity to address the Committee about our concerns.

Yours sincerely

**Allan Hansard**