

SUBMISSION NO. 13
Inquiry into the Role of Science
for Fisheries and Aquaculture



School of Environment, Science and Engineering



3, May, 2012

To: The House of Representatives Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Committee, Inquiry into the role of science for fisheries and aquaculture,

Dear Inquiry members,

I am the Director of Research and Development at the National Marine Science Centre (NMSC), Southern Cross University. The NMSC is a state-of-the-art \$12 million research and teaching facility that specialises in sustainable aquaculture research. I would like to make submission to the inquiry informed by my experience in my current position; my previous experiences as a research scientist and hatchery manager at a state government fishery department and, my previous experience as an aquaculture researcher in Europe.

There is little doubt with falling wild catches and increased demand that there is a need to better understand how to maintain sustainable supply of fish for the domestic and export market. One of the important aspects of this is an expansion of sustainable aquaculture in Australia. Unfortunately, it appears that Australia is not meeting the potential for sustainable aquaculture that is suggested by our enormous coastline, variety of water temperatures, and vast marine biodiversity. One way to address this problem is to ensure that research dollars that are made available for aquaculture research are allocated in an efficient way that maximises outcomes.

This submission relates to the way federal fisheries and aquaculture research funding is allocated. It is my opinion that:

- The input to federal funding decisions by state based advisory committees has the potential to distort allocation of federal research funds. These advisory committees are setup by and controlled by state government fisheries departments. State fisheries departments are often research providers and use federal funding as an important source of income. This creates a perceived and/or real conflict of interest.
- The perceived poor track record of state advisory committees in directing funding to non-state government research providers has lead these providers (essentially universities) to disengage from many federal funding rounds.
- In the interests of improving the competition for federal funds state government inputs to federal funding should be reduced. There should be no formal or informal rules that govern allocation of federal funds based on state boundaries, or that correspond with the geography of the current industries. This would improve the amount of competition for research funding and improve outputs.
- Institutions that stand to benefit from funding decisions should not have input into the allocation of federal funds.



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Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. I will make every effort to make myself available to make further comment on this or other issues arising from this inquiry if required.

Sincerely

Dr Symon Dworjanyn

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