

SUBMISSION NO. 18.1

Inquiry into the Role of Science for Fisheries and Aquaculture

Summary Recommendations

Submission to Inquiry into the Role of Science for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

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1. Funding should nurture future research expertise

Background: High quality students are attracted to the top research universities all around Australia, so that few good students are available in any one institution. Concentration of funding to a few institutions endangers Australia's ability to train sufficient high quality students in research in this area.

RECOMMENDATION: Introduce an FRDC scheme to support PhD student projects working with Fishery or Aquaculture industry organisations, open to anywhere in Australia. We suggest 10 grants per year of \$10Kpa for 3 years for project operational costs. Selection based on peer review.

Outcome: This measure will drive greater collaboration between industry, universities and state-based fisheries agencies and create a pathway to attract and train high quality research students into the fisheries and aquaculture fields.

2. Bodies that distribute Federal research funds should not have real or perceived conflicts of interest in allocating funds

Background: Federal funds are currently distributed after pre-filtering of applications by state advisory bodies often run by the state-based research providers. This is widely perceived to have favoured state-based research providers. Similarly, only a few research provider institutions are part of the Seafood CRC and NCCARF.

RECOMMENDATION: Implement an open and competitive process whereby federal research funding is distributed by boards that are independent of research providers

Outcome: This measure should ensure fisheries and aquaculture industries have access to the highest quality research providers and infrastructure with the relevant expertise for each project.

3. Key Fisheries and Aquaculture industries require local research expertise

Background: The implementation of the RDE strategy has focused funding to Tas and S.A. and appears to have led to disinvestment in research expertise in Victoria, NSW and Qld by state institutions, to the detriment of key industries. Industry contexts vary between areas, so work based in one state is often not applicable to others.

RECOMMENDATION: Require that large projects on nationally significant fisheries /aquaculture industries involve research collaborators in each affected state.

Outcome: This measure will drive retention of key research expertise and a collaborative approach related to major fisheries and aquaculture industries in each state, and benefit industry in each state.