



14 May 2021

Sydney Fish Market
Submission to House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources Inquiry
Australian Aquaculture Sector

Background – Sydney Fish Market

Sydney Fish Market (SFM) is a stayed institution in the NSW and wider Australian fishing industries, providing a secure and reliable marketplace for Australian seafood since 1966.

SFM was first operated as a wholesale fish market by the Fish Marketing Authority, a state-run body. 1994 saw the significant transformation of SFM's structure, as the New South Wales Government privatised the marketing of seafood, and Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd was formed. Since 1994, SFM has been owned equally by the harvest and post-harvest sectors of the NSW seafood industry - the Catchers Trust of NSW and SFM Tenants and Merchants Pty Ltd – making SFM uniquely independent.

In this time, SFM has operated its wholesale auction and working fish market, hosting six seafood retailers offering Australia's biggest variety of fresh seafood. It is the largest market of its kind in the southern hemisphere, trading over 100 different species of seafood each day. In calendar year 2020, SFM sold around 500 species of seafood with a total value of almost \$152m. This means that the market is uniquely positioned to understand the value of farmed vs. wild-caught species in Australia, and the distinct requirements of particular suppliers.



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Submission

As Australia's home of seafood and a cornerstone of the seafood industry in Australia, SFM welcomes the opportunity to submit to this inquiry into the Australian aquaculture sector by the House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee.

The nature and current status of Australia's aquaculture sector;

From the perspective of SFM, aquaculture is a profoundly important source of food security in Australia. Expansion, development, and innovation in this space in turn supports the wild-catch seafood sector by augmenting supply and strengthening the long term sustainability of Australia's seafood industry. Furthermore, aquaculture is a key industry when it comes to supporting local employment within regional communities around Australia.

From a consumer perspective, the current economic and social climate suggests that buying Australian-made produce is now even more of a priority, as Australian consumers seek to support local industries and have confidence in the quality, safety, and environmental impact of their purchase.

Australian aquaculture products are recognised internationally as some of the best quality in the world, and are occupying a growing percentage of seafood supply domestically. SFM believes that Australian aquaculture must be at the cutting edge when it comes to innovation relating to production efficiencies, novel technology and selective breeding programs aimed at maximising commercial returns. There are several reputable institutions within Australia that are making notable progress in these key research areas. Support for innovation within the aquaculture sector is essential to ensuring the ongoing viability of an industry capable of supplying products that are competitive in both local and international markets.

Opportunities for the expansion of the aquaculture sector / new innovations to expand aquaculture;

Annual sales at Sydney Fish Market amount to an excess of \$150 million. The business currently has approximately 800 suppliers of seafood, however, only 7% of these suppliers come from the aquaculture sector. This under representation of aquaculture supply is due to the business model that SFM currently adopts (daily Dutch auction), which is not the preferred trading method for aquaculture businesses that use accurate production forecasts to enter into supply agreements with customers at set prices. The Sydney Fish Market is addressing this issue by diversifying beyond its existing methods of seafood trading including the creation of a digital trading platform.



Due to launch later in 2021, SFM's digital trading platform will provide seafood producers and commercial buyers across Australia with an open, transparent, and efficient marketplace via a best-in-class online trading system. The platform will enable more efficient trade through the facilitation of logistics solutions, an open-data approach and simple payment mechanisms.

SFM's digital trading platform will become the Australian seafood industry's standard B2B online trading environment, providing benefits to all stakeholders, and assisting the industry's long-term vitality and growth.

For aquaculture businesses, the digital trading platform will open up access to SFM's buyer-base nationally, fostering the development of new markets and trade relationships with agreed pricing in a streamlined transparent and robust way. This innovation provides significant opportunity to expand the market for aquaculture products.

In line with our own endeavours to develop opportunities for the aquaculture sector in Australia, Sydney Fish Market supports this enquiry to identify current barriers to industry expansion and support industry growth. A strong Aquaculture industry is imperative if Australia is to be a world-leader in seafood supply into the future.

Greg Dyer
Chief Executive Officer