



## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

The Development of Northern Australia

## MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 20 August 2015

Chair: Hon Warren Entsch MP

Deputy Chair: Hon Alannah MacTiernan MP

# Opportunities for Expanding the Aquaculture Industry in Northern Australia: Queensland Hearings

The Northern Australia Committee will be holding hearings in Queensland from 24, 26 and 27 August as part of its inquiry into opportunities to expand the aquaculture industry in Northern Australia.

Global annual production of prawns alone amounts to 7 million tonnes, of which 3.9 million tonnes are produced through aquaculture. Globally, China is the biggest aquaculture producer (1.2 million tonnes) followed by Vietnam (0.5 million tonnes); and Indonesia, India, and Ecuador (each producing about 0.3 million tonnes). In comparison, Australia produces only 4000 tonnes annually.

Committee Chair, the Hon Warren Entsch MP, said: 'There is a huge opportunity for the expansion of Australia's aquaculture sector, especially in Northern Australia, which could capitalise on the global and Australian demand for prawns, fish, shellfish and other aquaculture species.'

'A good example is the proposed Sea Dragon Project, where the aquaculture sector is poised for expansion on the Northern Territory–Western Australia border. The Sea Dragon Project is estimated to generate, at full production, 100 000 tonnes annually of premium black tiger prawns and \$800 million in exports,' Mr Entsch said.

Witnesses at the hearings in Cairns, Townsville, and Brisbane include

- Sea Farms Group (the proponent of the Sea Dragon Project)
- Australian Prawn Farmers Association
- Pacific Reef Fisheries (proposing a new prawn farm at Guthalungra)
- James Cook University
- Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

'It is important that the environmental impact of new aquaculture developments has minimal or no impact on the Great Barrier Reef,'

'New technology and improved farm design and management is already mitigating potential contamination of the Reef catchment and in many cases, there is actually a net benefit to water quality at the outlet point. These factors will also help to allow the development of an industry which will contribute significantly to regional economies,' Mr Entsch said.

Hearing programs are available at: [www.aph.gov.au/jscna](http://www.aph.gov.au/jscna)

**For media comment:** Please contact Heather Beck, Media Adviser to the Committee Chair, Hon Warren Entsch MP, on (02) 6277 4803 or 0427 585 668.

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