



October 17th 2014

To the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

Re: Inquiry into the industry structures and systems governing the imposition of and disbursement of marketing and R&D levies in the agricultural sector

The Select Oyster Company P/L (SOCo) is writing to you in relation to the inquiry regarding the industry structures and systems governing the imposition and disbursement of marketing and research and development levies in the agricultural sector, with specific reference to, and support for the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

SOCo is the provider and managing body of commercially available selectively bred Sydney Rock Oyster (SRO) seed for the NSW and QLD oyster industries. As a stakeholder of the FRDC, SOCo, and the SRO industry has benefited from FRDC funding and support, and in particular would like to refer to items f) and g) in the terms of reference, namely: the transformation of R&D and marketing into increased returns at the farm gate, including the effectiveness of extension systems; and, collaboration on research to benefit multiple industry and research sectors.

SOCo, and the oyster industry has benefited directly from FRDC levy allocation. The FRDC has been funding key priority projects identified by industry peak bodies in the health, sustainability and profitability of the several shellfish industries, and the oyster industry. The FRDC has been an integral component of R&D funding for the development and commercialization of the SRO selective breeding program, providing the industry access to fast growing, disease resistant lines of SRO (project 2005/209) that are vital for the survivorship of several businesses particularly in disease-afflicted regions. The oyster breeding program is also an outstanding example of industry-government collaboration on research to benefit the Pacific and the SRO industries, and research sectors. On extension support, SOCo received funds from the FRDC on behalf of the Australian Government to host an aquaculture expert from the USA to conduct valuable industry extension work in NSW, Tasmania and South Australia as requested by industry groups, and which received consistent, positive feedback from industry. SOCo would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the FRDC in the ABARES Science and Innovation Awards, for young people of the Australian fisheries industry to harness and apply innovative ideas at the forefront of fisheries development. Furthermore, we applaud the FRDC support of the Nuffield Australian Farming Scholarship program which gives fisheries industry members the opportunity to study progressive production practices throughout the world. The 2015 recipient will be using this scholarship to promote the SRO industry internationally, while improving marketing of the product within Australia.

These are just a few of the many FRDC contributions to the Australian fisheries industry and SOCo wish that the future of such opportunities remains accessible. The SRO industry in particular is at an exciting and pivotal era, embracing emerging production technologies, hatchery seed supply and a family breeding program. We therefore write in support of the FRDC levy management and allocation system. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of this submission.

Regards,
Jane Clout
Director and Chair
Select Oyster Company