



Wildcatch Fisheries SA

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26th November 2014

Committee Secretary

Joint Select Committee on the Australia Fund Establishment

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

australiafund.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Australia Fund Establishment

Wildcatch Fisheries South Australia Inc. (WFSA) is the peak industry body representing commercial fishers in South Australia.

Our submission into this inquiry is a very simple one with two clear points. The first refers to your letter inviting submissions into the inquiry. The letter stated:

"The committee is tasked with inquiring into and reporting on the establishment of a fund to assist rural and manufacturing industries in crisis and to support communities particularly those affected by natural disasters."

With reference to this, we ask for a clear definition of the term 'rural and manufacturing industries'. If it is not currently the case, we ask that the Seafood Industry is included and that this is clearly defined.

At present there is not a consistent framework for defining primary producers and primary production. Many government programs do not classify seafood producers (wildcatch and aquaculture) the same as a terrestrial food producer. In many cases the businesses of seafood producers are also subject the vagaries of nature and their fishery and its performance is subject to environmental variability. The failure of ocean systems or of the water regulation processes intended to protect our freshwater systems are beyond the ability of fishers or of the various fisheries management systems that government's impose upon them to control.

The second point relates to the Seafood Industry in general. Fisheries management is underpinned by an ever improving understanding of dynamic natural systems. Like all primary producers, production is subject to continual variations and events which are outside of our understanding and/or control. To mitigate these inherent risks, fisheries management in Australia also incorporates a high degree of precaution which is demanded of our public resources.

Despite world's best practice, acute issues and exceptional circumstances outside of these frameworks (whether natural or not) will invariably occur. In the face of a variable climate and

increasing resource conflict, the prescriptive nature of fisheries management reduces the ability and latitude for fishing businesses (mostly rural) to adapt and ride out the storms linked to environmental failure.

Whilst we continue to develop adaptive and dynamic management approaches that foster adaption and diversification, our industry and our food security is particularly vulnerable. It is therefore our opinion that Government must work to provide the same safety net and support for seafood producers that many other primary producers have come to enjoy and expect.

Overall, Wildcatch Fisheries SA supports the need for the Australia Fund, in particular, 'assisting rural and manufacturing industries in crisis and supporting communities affected by natural disasters.' However, our support is fundamentally based on the points made above.

On behalf of WFSA members, I appreciate the opportunity to have an input into this inquiry process.

Kind regards,

Jonas Woolford
Chair – Wildcatch Fisheries SA Inc.