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1 May 2015

Dr John Carter
The Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA
Canberra ACT 2600

Professor Chris Cocklin
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Dear Dr Carter

James Cook University (JCU) welcomes the Committee's Inquiry into Opportunities for Expanding the Aquaculture Industry in Northern Australia.

Tropical northern Australia is the epicentre for some of Australia's biggest aquaculture industries, including farmed prawns, barramundi, pearls and crayfish, which collectively account for ~\$300 million of aquaculture product annually.

There is significant transformative capacity and economic potential for aquaculture industry in northern Queensland, leading to job creation and skilled workforce development, the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to the Asia Pacific region from northern Queensland, and potential flow on effects to tourism and edu-tourism. A focus on aquaculture holds in prospect the development of a new industrial focus - at scale - for the north.

JCU has considerable investments and research expertise in aquaculture and cognate fields of marine science, fishing, coral reef ecology, tourism and regional economic development. The presence of other significant Commonwealth and State scientific assets in the region including CSIRO, AIMS, GBRMPA, and scientists located in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry means northern Queensland has a globally significant community of expertise.

In 2014, JCU in association with key industry partners MBD Energy, Mainstream Barramundi, Seafarms, FinFish Enterprise, Pacific Reef Fisheries, along with Townsville Ports, developed a discussion paper targeting a potential aquaculture development in Townsville.

With the permission of our partners, I have attached a copy of this discussion paper as it addresses key issues in scope for the Committee.

During the Northern Australia inquiry process, the Committee visited the algal research facility at JCU which contributes to applied aquaculture R&D and innovation in relation to feedstock, bioremediation and ecologically sustainable aquaculture development. We would be pleased if the Committee wished to visit other aquaculture facilities at the University during the course of your deliberations.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office - sdvc@jcu.edu.au or (07) 4781 6884 if the Committee would like more detailed information on any of the issues canvassed in the discussion paper.

Yours sincerely

Professor Chris Cocklin
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor