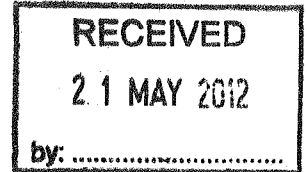


SUBMISSION NO. 34
Inquiry into the Role of Science
for Fisheries and Aquaculture

Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Level 10, Executive Building
15 Murray St
Hobart Tas 7000
Ph: 03 6233 6454 Fax: 03 6233 2272



- 8 MAY 2012

Hon. Dick Adams MP
Committee Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 6021, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Adams *Dick*

I refer to your letter of 29 March 2012 inviting a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry inquiry into the role of science for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Please find attached a submission which is provided for the consideration of the Standing Committee.

I thank you for the opportunity to have input into this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Bryan Green MP
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND WATER

Enc.

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE FOR THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Contemporary management of fisheries and aquaculture is underpinned by policy principles of intergenerational sustainability with increasing emphasis on ecosystem based approaches. The challenge for governments is to maximise the significant economic and social benefits of dynamic fisheries and aquaculture natural resources while ensuring the long term sustainability of these valuable community assets.

Science plays a pivotal role in providing objective data and knowledge from which to develop sound natural resource management policy. The complex natural processes that influence fisheries and aquaculture are characterised by significant gaps in scientific understanding which means that fisheries and aquaculture management decisions are frequently made in the absence of complete scientific knowledge.

With limited resources to invest in fisheries and aquaculture science, careful planning and priority setting is essential for ensuring that research effort is directed toward addressing specific needs to support informed fisheries and aquaculture policy and management decision making.

The fishing and marine farming industries are significant contributors to the Tasmanian economy contributing of the order of over \$500m per annum (calculated on the basis of the beach/farm gate value of catch and production). These industries are significant employers in regional communities and the market value of the entitlements for the two major quota managed fisheries (abalone and rock lobster) is of the order of \$1.5 billion.

The significance of the industry to Tasmania is reflected in the investment made by the State Government in fisheries and aquaculture research. The Government has over the past decade committed to matching industry contributions to the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$350,000 per annum.

The State Government also invests directly in fisheries and aquaculture research through a Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement with the University of Tasmania where the State contributes \$2.6m per annum.

Science will continue to play a vital role in informing fisheries and aquaculture management and policy decision making with ever increasing community expectation that governments must sustainably manage marine ecosystems and environment, while commercial interests are driven to maximising returns from investments made in the fishing and aquaculture industries. The complexity of this task is overlaid with dynamic change processes impacting upon marine ecosystems, of which climate change has taken prominence.

The demands being placed on science are occurring at a time when there will be significant competition for available public investment. The clear implication is a need to ensure that the delivery of science for fisheries and aquaculture is: (1) effectively targeted to meet priority knowledge gaps and needs; and, (2) delivered as efficiently and effectively as is possible to maximise the returns from investment.

With respect to priority setting, it is important that the end users of the science are effectively engaged to ensure that investment in science is directed to priority needs. Priority setting processes must be driven by the end users which includes industry groups and fishery management agencies. Without this focus, there is a risk that scientific research will not necessarily be directed toward priority needs with attendant opportunity costs and loss of confidence by end users and investors.

Efficient and effective delivery of fisheries and aquaculture science is required to maximise the return on investment. This has been recognised at a national level through the Primary Industries Ministerial Council's (now superseded by the Standing Council on Primary Industries) Primary Industries Research, Development and Extension Strategy which aims to remove duplication in primary industries research, development and extension and foster collaboration and cooperation

to promote efficiency in the delivery of research, development and extension across all primary industries.

Whilst jurisdictional complexities can arise in fisheries management in Australia, the unavoidable fact is that different jurisdictions have legislative responsibilities and jurisdiction for which they are responsible.

Constructive engagement and communication, supported by sound science, can assist to address these issues, however, ultimately each jurisdiction must meet its own legislative responsibilities.

Tasmania will continue to manage fisheries falling under Tasmanian jurisdiction in line with government policy and the obligations of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*. Sound science can assist to understand better the interactions between jurisdictions and assist sensible outcomes. However, Tasmania retains the prerogative for management of Tasmania's living marine resources.

Cooperative science to avoid duplication should continue to be supported, and there are processes in place to ensure investment is not wasted. Again, however, each jurisdiction may have different priorities which they will need to pursue without being fettered by other processes.