



11 December 2016

Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Re: White Spot Disease, Industry Assistance, State, National and Export Implications

1) Industry Assistance

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) has been actively participating in the response to the outbreak of White Spot disease. The current situation facing industry in the Logan River and the subsequent movement control order will have significant financial implications in what is normally the most profitable time of year for the sale of prawns and crabs.

QSIA urgently seeks your views on the following questions:

- 1) Can the Federal Government activate emergency assistance for impacted commercial trawl and crab fishers?
- 2) If so, what forms could that assistance take – direct financial assistance, low cost loans for example?

This situation is unprecedented and QSIA supports the containment response that the State Government has implemented. However, the financial impacts on industry are also unprecedented and affected fishing families need help.

Industry will be meeting on Tuesday 13 December at Victoria Point. QSIA has been in discussion with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and I understand Fisheries Queensland and Biosecurity Queensland will be attending this meeting. After this meeting we will have a more comprehensive understanding of the financial impacts on fishing families.

QSIA would welcome attendance at this meeting by representatives of your office or Department. Further details regarding this meeting are attached for your information.

2) State and National Implications

As you will understand, this situation has implications for crustaceans harvested and farmed across Australia. The disease potentially puts at risk \$120 million in landed value in prawn, crab and rock

lobster product in Queensland alone. This figure could be expanded to between \$300 to 360 million in lost value to the Queensland economy.

The valuable clean green reputation of Australian seafood may now be tarnished by the outbreak of this disease. QSIA is concerned about how this situation was allowed to occur. Key questions raised by this incident include:

- White Spot disease:
 - a. How often has it been detected in imported, uncooked 'green' prawns?
 - b. What percentage of imported green prawn are actually tested for this disease?
- What assistance can the Federal Government provide to help assure the public that seafood is still safe to consume?

3) Export Implications

Obviously, there are implications stemming from this disease outbreak for valuable export markets for Australian prawns and other crustaceans. For example, Queensland and national exports could potentially be at risk. Certainly, Australia's reputation as a 'clean green' source of seafood is at risk.

I would appreciate your advice on what assistance may be available to maintain the reputation of Queensland and other Australian crustacean products in international markets.

4) Immediate Assistance

However, in the first instance, I seek your help with financial assistance for impacted commercial fishers and their families at what is traditionally the most profitable time of year for the affected fishing families, who are now suffering financial loss through no fault of their own.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Eric Perez, QSIA CEO on 0417 631 353 or eo@qsia.com.au.

Regards, Keith



Keith Harris
President
Queensland Seafood Industry Association

Cc:

1. Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.
2. Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan, Minister for Resources and Northern Australia.
3. Hon Stuart Robert MP, Federal Member for Fadden.
4. Mr Bert van Manen MP, Federal Member for Forde.
5. Mr Andrew Laming MP, Federal Member for Bowman.

Attachment: Industry Meeting, Victoria Point, Queensland

1) Attendees

Commercial fishing businesses – beam trawl and crab fishers.

Officers from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Biosecurity Queensland.

2) Venue

Victoria Point Community Hall – corner Colburn Avenue and Link Road (entrance on Link Road), Victoria Point.

3) Date

Tuesday 13 December 2016.

4) Time

9.30am-12.30pm.

5) Contact

Eric Perez, QSIA CEO – M: 0417 631 353 or E: eo@qsia.com.au