

QLD Investigate Ocean to Plate

We now find ourselves operating in an industry dictated by price increases and food shortages with seafood being amongst the hardest hit. The sustainability of the global fishing industry and the techniques used are constantly under the microscope by consumer and environmental groups. Many suppliers are now increasing prices on the back of these social, environmental and economic impacts. Despite increased prices, the overall profitability of the commercial fishing industry is continuing to decrease. In response to this situation a seafood study has been undertaken to examine the domestic supply chain for Queensland caught prawn, coral reef fin fish, and inshore finfish species. The study is jointly funded by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association and the Queensland Seafood Marketing Association.

Mr Tim Mulherin, Primary Industries and Fisheries Minister, is playing an active role in the study and acknowledges the critical situation faced by the Queensland seafood industry. "I understand that the industry is struggling and by carrying out this study we are looking to a long-term solution, not a band-aid measure," Mr Mulherin said. "The Government is not sitting on its hands. We are working closely with industry's peak bodies. Changes to management arrangements during the past eight years have ensured that Queensland's fisheries will remain ecologically sustainable into the future. However, it is not just access to a sustainable resource that fishers need in order to be profitable. Many factors are currently impacting the industry's ability to remain viable."

Mr Mulherin recognises that this will be a complex study with so many variables influencing the price of seafood. On top of the most prominent challenges, such as high fuel costs, the economic pressures on the Australian consumer must also be considered as this directly affects the sales of seafood. Mr Mulherin said "In the industry's favour is that we have a world-class product, which in my view cannot be beaten. Queensland seafood such as prawns, scallops and bugs are clean and green product when compared with some of the cheaper imported alternatives. I would encourage all Queenslanders to support our primary producers by demanding locally caught seafood. That way you know you will be getting high quality and sustainable seafood."

Due to the complexity of the study it will be some time before any definitive findings are known. The study will in no way affect the availability of seafood and PFD is proud to offer a wide range of Australian and imported seafood.

Primary Industries and Fisheries