



GEELONG SEAFOOD INDUSTRY STRATEGY

(Summary of Recommendations)
2003





CONTENTS

- Geelong Seafood Industry Strategy 2003 Page 3
- Existing Industry Page 4
- Seafood Industry Strengths Page 4
- Geelong Seafood Industry Vision Page 4
- Objective 1:
Develop the Geelong Region as the base for aquaculture activities in Victoria Page 5
- Objective 2:
Develop Geelong as the seafood processing centre of Victoria Page 5
- Objective 3:
Encourage the continual improvement of the Geelong Region's facilities and infrastructure to attract and maintain fishing fleets Page 6
- Objective 4:
Maximise tourism opportunities from seafood related conferences & the recreational fishing experience Page 6
- Objective 5:
Facilitate world class infrastructure in the Geelong Region for seafood industry investment Page 7



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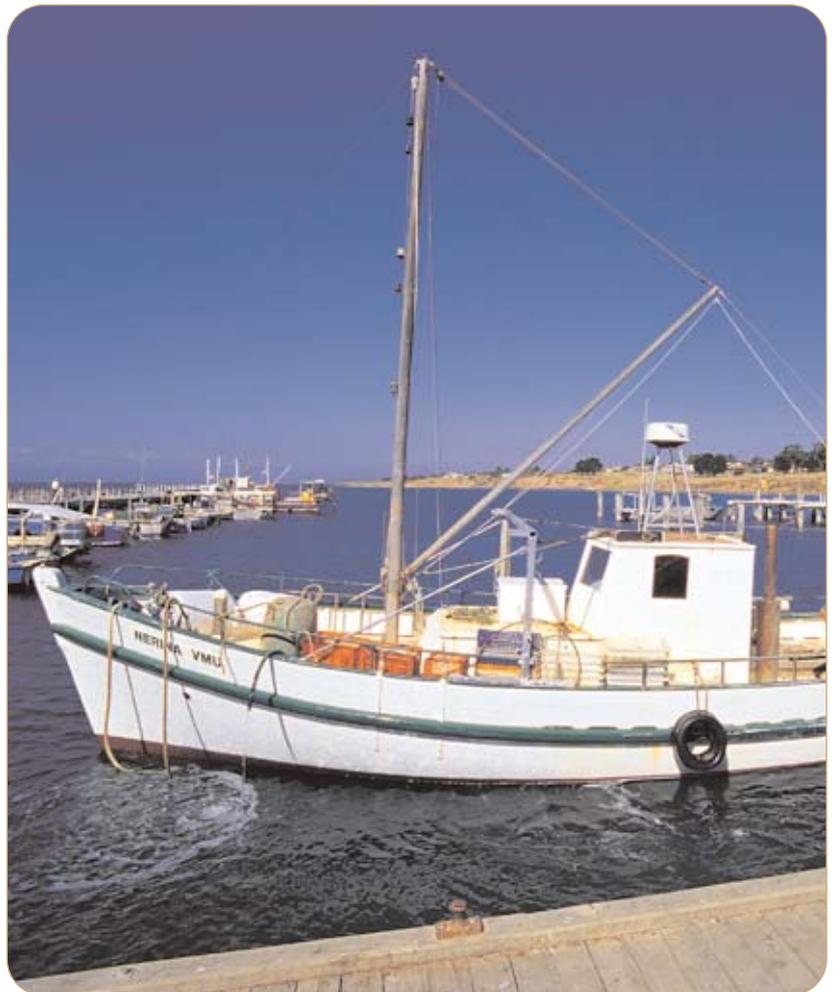
The Geelong Region is home to a comprehensive range of seafood-related activities including wildcatch, aquaculture, processing, retailing, research and development, education and training and tourism. The Region provides significant investment opportunities in seafood and related seafood activities given the range of competitive advantages on offer. The industry currently employs approximately 470 people and contributes some \$70m in regional turnover into the local economy.

In 1995 the City of Greater Geelong established the Geelong Seafood Industry Taskforce, an informal industry group comprising members of the local seafood industry, the education and training sector and State and Local Government. Today, the Taskforce continues to provide advice to the City on seafood related matters, as well as being advocates for the local industry. The Taskforce was instrumental in the preparation of the City's 1997 Seafood Strategy, which focused on addressing difficulties being experienced by the aquaculture industry at the time.

Since the 1997 Strategy was prepared, the local industry has undergone significant change that prompted the need for a review of the Strategy during 2002. Four land based aquaculture operations (abalone and barramundi) have established in the Region; the Victorian State Government has introduced food safety handling legislation that requires more formal training and education; the range of species being farmed in local waters has diversified; and in 2002 the Victorian Government introduced the Marine Parks legislation that established a new land based aquaculture zone at Avalon and new seabased aquaculture zones at Bates Point, Kirk Point and Pinnacle Channel as well as the expansion of the existing zone at Grassy Point.

The Strategy was reviewed by a partnership of Hugh Forrest of Fast Forward Solutions and Louis Vorstermans of the Victorian Aquaculture Council. The project was partly funded by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. The project was also supported by the Surf Coast Shire and Borough of Queenscliffe.

The aim of the 2003 Strategy is to provide a framework for attracting and facilitating investment to and within the Region that complements the Region's current seafood industry base. The 2003 Strategy provides a vision and strategic direction for the seafood industry based on the aspirations of the municipalities in the Region, local industry and related seafood sectors.



A number of commercial fishermen operate from local ports.



Aquaculture forms a large part of the seafood industry in the region.

EXISTING INDUSTRY

Geelong has an extensive and diverse seafood industry including wildcatch, aquaculture, processing, retailing, research and development, education and training and tourism.

Queenscliff is the primary base for many of the Region's wildcatch trawlers who work Victorian waters for finfish, crayfish, scallops and other ocean species. A number of commercial squid fishermen and dedicated rock lobster and abalone fishermen also operate out of the Port of Queenscliff. There are a further 20 licensed commercial fishermen who operate in the Bay from bases within the region.

The Region is home to one of Australia's largest mussel growing areas (sea based aquaculture) with some fifteen (15) active mussel farms. Seaweed, sea urchins and sea cucumbers are also harvested from Corio Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula. There are also four land based aquaculture operations located in the Region dedicated to abalone and barramundi farming. Commercial sales have recently commenced.

Five major seafood-processing plants operate in Geelong, handling finfish, abalone, scallops and squid both local and imported product. The region is also home to one of the state's largest suppliers of bait and bait products.

The local seafood industry is in a unique position to have at its doorstep world class education and research facilities such as the Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute and CSIRO's Division of Animal Health who provide research and development support for business. The Gordon Institute of TAFE provides specialist training for the industry whilst Deakin University provides undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as having a significant research capacity.

The Geelong region is also a popular destination for recreational fishermen especially during summer months.

SEAFOOD INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

The Geelong Region's competitive strengths make it an attractive location for seafood related investment. These strengths include:

- Easy access to waters in Corio Bay, Port Phillip Bay and Bass Strait.
- Access to seafood related infrastructure including various regional ports.
- Access to two international fresh food freight centres located at Avalon (20 minutes) and Melbourne (55 minutes) Airports.
- Existing seafood production and processing facilities.
- Existing wildcatch fishery base.
- Existing land based aquaculture industry.
- The release of new water for aquaculture investment in Corio and Port Phillip Bay.
- A designated land based aquaculture zone.
- World-class training education, research and development facilities.
- The potential for new species to be harvested from the Bay.
- Existing wharfs and jetties.
- Good underground water supplies and clean seawater (export production quality).
- A highly skilled labourforce.
- Geelong is a great place to live and do business.

The strategy review has sought to identify strategic opportunities for the seafood industry, by building on existing advantages, investigating areas that could serve the industry better and seeking opportunities for the future.

GEELONG SEAFOOD INDUSTRY VISION

The Geelong Seafood Industry Strategy 2003, identifies a clear vision for the Region as being to:

"Position Geelong as the Seafood Capital of Victoria".

The vision has a set of supporting objectives in infrastructure, industry, tertiary education, food, aquaculture, tourism and recreation.



A sample of products produced in Geelong.

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop the Geelong Region as the base for aquaculture activities in Victoria.

The aquaculture industry currently provides a considerable proportion of product both in Australia and overseas. As wildcatch yields become unsustainable there will be a greater reliance on aquaculture in the future. Geelong should ensure it is at the forefront of aquaculture technologies and activities.

Strategies to support this objective include:

- 1.1 Actively participate in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's Flagship "Werribee Project" aiming to maximise Geelong as the centre for seafood operations in the region, and to encourage new aquaculture opportunities in the redevelopment plans.
- 1.2 Make Portarlington the "Service Port of Choice" for all new Aquaculture sites in Corio Bay and Pinnacle Channel.
- 1.3 Encourage investors to fill the Avalon aquaculture zone to capacity with high value seafood farmed products.
- 1.4 Ease the pathways to approval for aquaculture sites through active encouragement of potential investors, using the skills of the Seafood Industry Taskforce membership where appropriate, and provide a 'one-stop shop' licensing advice bureau.
- 1.5 Prepare a listing of potential consultants in Victoria who have demonstrated expertise with licensing research and development in the seafood industry (including submissions for EPA, Coastal management approval, archaeological survey, sound engineer survey, flora and fauna analysis).
- 1.6 Encourage the existing fishing fleet and processors to explore ways and means to lift capacity utilisation during off season times, through catching and processing other species.
- 1.7 Facilitate industry organisations and associations in the representation of the interests of their industry stakeholders.
- 1.8 The Geelong Region be the 'Port of Choice' for the services and processing facilities required for the wildcatch fishing fleet and the new aquaculture lots in the Pinnacle Channel and elsewhere in the region when these areas are released.

Creating employment through seafood processing companies.

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop Geelong as the seafood processing centre of Victoria.

Build critical mass to encourage year round processing employment, leading to improved training and to economic recycling of seafood waste.

Strategies to support this objective include:

- 2.1 Encourage development of the Portarlington Industrial Zone, focussing on service bases for the aquaculture industry, and limited processing of local seafood.
- 2.2 Promote Geelong as a value adding centre for seafood. Four seafood processing companies are already located in North Geelong. This area should be encouraged to attract other processors to form a "cluster", and benefit from the advantages that clusters of like industries bring.
- 2.3 Encourage existing processors to boost full time employment, lift capacity utilisation and add value to imported part-processed seafood products in the off season.
- 2.4 Encourage value adding to mussels, abalone and other aquaculture production to take place in the Region.
- 2.5 Encourage further research and development for adding value to waste seafood products produced in the region, leading to the establishment of a recycling processing facility in Geelong.



OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage the continual improvement of the Geelong Region's facilities and infrastructure to attract and maintain fishing fleets.

The Geelong Region has significant investment in seafood related infrastructure facilities. This infrastructure and facilities should be continually improved in order to maintain and increase the value of the industry to the Region.

Strategies to support this objective include:

- 3.1 Work with the State Government to obtain funding for the redevelopment of the Portarlington Safe Harbour, to attract investors for the new aquaculture leases, and to provide improved facilities for existing users.
- 3.2 Work with the Borough of Queenscliffe and Parks Victoria to provide funding to improve and then implement the Port Redevelopment Plan, including slipway and boat refurbishing.
- 3.3 Encourage and facilitate improved boat ramp facilities and security at those ramps used by bay fishermen and divers.
- 3.4 Encourage easy 24-hour access to wharf facilities for boat provisioning and movement of fish to market/processing, particularly around residential areas.

OBJECTIVE 4: Maximise tourism opportunities from seafood related conferences & the recreational fishing experience.

Promote Geelong as a capital for seafood conferences and related tourism experiences.

Strategies to support this objective include:

- 4.1 Encourage and facilitate a seafood or wine and seafood festival each year in a specific month as a retail and trade opportunity to promote seafood.
- 4.2 Encourage seafood related conferences and industry bodies to hold general meetings and other functions in Geelong, preferably in conjunction with a seafood festival.
- 4.3 Identify opportunities for Geelong Otway Tourism, Tourism Victoria, and State Major Events to attract large specialist events to Geelong, where the benefits of the region, including seafood, other foods and wines, can be showcased.
- 4.4 Continue and accelerate the upgrade of recreational boat ramp facilities, including appropriate wash down, fish cleaning, additional parking and security at ramps in the holiday destinations.
- 4.5 Ensure local retail fish outlets support the Seafood Capital concept through education on promoting their businesses, and maintenance of high health standards. Enforce existing local laws appertaining to these standards, to boost compliance.
- 4.6 Encourage the use of public facilities like the Portarlington waterfront and Geelong waterfront for use in celebrations, where seafood consumption is a complementary aim.
- 4.7 Encourage and support the establishment of suitable retail premises around the key wharf facilities of Geelong and Portarlington, to enhance the seafood experience (similar to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco).



Encouraging tourism through retail and trade opportunities.



OBJECTIVE 5: Facilitate world class infrastructure in the Geelong Region for seafood industry investment.

Investors and potential investors should be made aware of the Geelong Region’s impressive competitive advantages for the seafood industry. These strengths should be used to attract world class infrastructure to support the industry.

Strategies to support this objective include:

- 5.1 Promote Geelong as the place to be in seafood production and processing.
- 5.2 Highlight Geelong’s seafood strengths and opportunities promoting investment in the Geelong Region.
- 5.3 Form a relationship with the Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd to investigate the potential to set up a Fish Exchange in the Geelong Region (for example near Avalon Airport) for local and interstate operators to trade seafood, including an electronic trading floor.
- 5.4 Investigate the potential for establishing a seafood waste processing plant in Geelong.
- 5.5 Be the catalyst for Deakin University, Gordon Institute of TAFE, GSAT and other service providers to promote and demonstrate their capabilities to provide training from the fishing boat or aquaculture farm to the restaurant table.
- 5.6 Work with the Borough of Queenscliffe to promote the Queenscliff slipway as the preferred location for refurbishment of recreational, and small to medium fishing and servicing boats.
- 5.7 Establish a slip way and secure boat refurbishment area for larger vessels, including large trawlers and passenger ferries.
- 5.8 Encourage Industry Associations and Seafood related government bodies to headquarter in the Geelong Region (eg SIV, VAC, NRE Fisheries Victoria)
- 5.9 Educate key Council staff in the technicalities related to establishing a seafood/aquaculture operation, so that staff can positively impact on Council’s ability to convert inquiries into investment.

Highlighting Geelong as a leader in seafood production and processing.



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