

**Wild Fisheries With A Future**

**Established 1854**

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Stories were deemed correct at the time of publication.

We apologise for any unforeseen omissions or errors.

**Save the Murray**

A lot of attention has been focussed on the Murray over the past few months and with good reason.

Anyone who has read a newspaper or watched shows such as "Landline" on the ABC, will understand how serious the problems are facing the Murray Darling system and the subsequent effects on South Australia.

Recently a community stakeholder meeting was attended by SFA member Glen Hill and discussed a series of proposals that have been developed with a view to reducing evaporation, improve the habitat of the estuary and increasing flows for the lower lakes & Coorong.

A Murray summit held on 25<sup>th</sup> February at Goolwa involved politicians of the State and Federal government, industry leaders, scientists and interest group representatives including Garry Hera-Singh, SFA President and member Henry Jones. Copies of articles from the "Australian" are available by contacting Garry.

The top ten issues identified by the "Australian" during their coverage of the summit were: Flows, Weirs, Carp, Water

Cap, Politics, Grazing, Irrigation, Tourists, Drainage and Barrages.

As a fisher you may ask, "How does that affect me? I'm concerned but what can I do? I just want to be able to go fishing."

A proposal to remove the current barrages and install a barrage at Wellington has been one of the proposals put forward.

Whilst this proposal has merit for birds and fish, our Industry is concerned at the removal of 20% of the total Murray Darling Basin freshwater reservoir. The socio-economic implications for the lower lakes are far from clear.

For fishers it would totally change the Lakes and Coorong fishery. In many ways it would be ecologically beneficial for the birds and fish, but it would effectively remove the freshwater component of the fishery.

Other similar proposals are also being considered which may ultimately affect your business. SFA is ensuring that the Lakes and Coorong Fishing Industry is having input and/or being consulted in regard to decisions being made on these very important issues.

**Parnka Clean-up**

Following some concerns raised over condition of the area where cockling vehicles are parked, L & C Fishers Mark Elphick and Daryl Edson and their families spent the day cleaning up on the beach side of the Parnka Crossing.

Several large items of rubbish were removed as well as a general tidy up. Readers please note that none of it was theirs. THANKYOU GUYS!!!



Daryl Edson, Mark & Rick Elphick and Phil Black surveying the scene at the parking area.



A new type of boat trailer? No, just a load of rubbish ready to head back across the Coorong.

## President's Piece by Garry Hera-Singh

There is never a dull moment if you are involved in such a diverse industry as the fishing industry.

Issues abound with very few simple solutions and even fewer dollars to tackle some of the basic hurdles facing the fishing industry on a daily basis. The lack of a formal levy process across industry continually hampers the progress of a united industry.

Add the massive increase in fuel costs, associated freight costs, as well as every government utility ever invented costs, skyrocketing, together with motors, fishing gear and requisites, that are all made overseas and greatly affected by the falling dollar. Purchasing and maintenance of gear and equipment is difficult to maintain at the rate and standard required to operate (successfully).

Throw in 100% cost recovery by PIRSA Fisheries, Native Title, Food Safety Act and "Save the Murray" campaign and you begin to realise it takes a special person (or fool) to be a commercial fisherman.

The resilience of fishermen required to handle the vagaries of weather and the boom/bust cycles of fishing is legendary around the world. The plethora and complexities of issues and events facing the modern day fisher is reshaping our character.

The only thing certain for survival for 'tomorrow's fishers' is they will have to receive more dollars per kilogram of product to stay in business. Catching less fish for more money means exporting fish offshore to take advantage of the benefits of the fallen Aussie dollar.

## Management Committee Meeting

The SFA management committee met on March 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss many issues.

- Update the MSC process
- S.A. Conservation Council Membership
- Cost Recovery and Licence Fees
- Cocklefest Involvement
- Voluntary Environmental Data Sheets
- National Competitions policy
- Coorong Channel Marking
- Tauwichee Barrage Lock
- Membership benefits

Contact your delegate or other committee member to discuss details about any of these.

## Membership

It was good to see a few more memberships come in over recent months. Our total of full financial members is now 23. This makes the SFA membership 60% of the fishery

It's not too late to pay your subs. An investment of \$100 ensures that you are being represented at all levels of decision making that directly affect your business. Make sure that you have a vote in matters that affect the management of the fishery.

The committee has decided that a laminated license card and hat be supplied to all members annually as part of the subs. A new batch of hats

Environment Australia (EA) Schedule 4 and substantiating ecologically sustainable development (ESD) of our species and within our fisheries, is going to require substantial help.

EA dabbling in fisheries management issues is a new concept. Setting national benchmarks is commendable. However in the interests of the resource and fishermen, a common sense approach that will WORK is obligatory to all concerned.

Refusing Australian fishermen the ability to sell their product offshore because we do not meet certain sustainability criteria is difficult to understand when Australia imports \$500m of fish product from around the world per annum. Some of these countries have far less desirable and sustainable fishing practices.

An opportunity has arisen for the Lakes & Coorong fishers to address the ESD principles through MSC certification (see over page for a detailed description).

A multi-method, multi-species fishery within a highly modified and regulated hydrological system is an enormous challenge. We are confident that this challenge can be met successfully. The methodology developed will be an important template for fisheries in Australia and around the world.

A federal government agency 'lifting the bar' is a mammoth challenge for a minuscule fishery such as ours. However the guys that make the rules need to understand and realise that assistance will be needed to get us 'over the line'

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Industry Awards and SAFCOL Opening

This year the SA Fishing and Seafood Industry Awards have had a change of format. Instead of a dinner, the Women's Industry Network has taken advantage of the relocation of SAFCOL Central Fish Market to new premises.

Combining the official opening by Hon. Rob Lucas, Minister for Industry and Trade, with the awards ceremony will be a great reason to have a pleasant day out. Food and drinks are available at an all-inclusive and affordable price. Everyone should have an invitation, if not contact Gloria.

RSVP by 20/4/01 to Gloria Jones  
Tel 85370177 Fax 85370355

has been ordered and will take approximately 2 weeks to arrive. Cards will be issued with the hats.

Some members have requested a photographic card. These can be made, however you will need to supply a recent, clear photo of yourself. Forward to Tracy at PO Box 113, and they will be returned when completed. If you require, Tracy has a digital camera that will take an instant photo. Please contact Tracy to arrange a suitable time.

Our latest members are: T C Richards, J D Ritchie. D Reichelt and B Brooks.

## Marine Stewardship Council - Australia

The following is an extract from the Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA) newsletter. It gives an overview of the MSC and its application to the Fishing Industry.

"The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which was established as a joint initiative between the World Wide Fund for Nature and Unilever, is a charitable, non-governmental, international organisation set up to improve fisheries management worldwide.

It aims to develop long term, market based solutions, which meet the needs and objectives of both the environment and commerce.

Central to the purpose of the MSC are its Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing, against which producers may obtain certification and use of the MSC Logo to convey to consumers the assurance that their fish or fish product is from a healthy and well managed fishery.

On October 23, 2000 the Marine Stewardship Council Australian Working Group was confirmed as the formal group representing MSC in Australia. The role of the Working Group is to improve fisheries management and encourage Australian fisheries to pursue certification.

The activities of the Working Group have to date been supported by Simplot Australia (I & J, Birds Eye and Sealord brands) & Unilever (John West Brands) Kailis and France, World Wide Fund for Nature Australia (WWF), the Marine Stewardship Council and the Master Fish Merchants Association (NSW).

### Coorong Good Food Program

A series of Community Forums are being held around the Council District. The steering committee wants to hear from residents, food growers and producers, food retailers, people involved with children, health professionals, local media etc.

The Meningie forum will be held at the Day Care Centre on 4th April at 7 pm. Child minding will be available.

The fishing industry has a representative on the steering committee that is also involved in the working party that is looking at promoting local produce. These working parties are looking to discuss issues important to the local community and for ideas that will help make the program a success.

The first fishery to receive MSC accreditation in Australia is the WA Rock Lobster Fishery. In SA, the Coorong fishery is now being assessed for MSC status."

To update on recent events, the Southern Fishermen's Association has been invited to apply for membership with the Conservation Council of SA and now that we have adopted a revised and updated Constitution and Rules, that should be happening in the near future.

The pre-assessment for the MSC certification has been completed and the next step is stock assessment. Funding is being sourced for an independent stock assessment on the selected species being certified under MSC. These assessments are to be internationally peer reviewed and will form the basis for stock management in this fishery.

The challenge for our fishery and for the certifiers is that we have multi-species, multi-method and a dynamic ecosystem. Our certification and its associated processes may become a template for fisheries not only in Australia but also around the world.

Garry recently along with Katherine Short, WWF Sustainable Fisheries Project Officer had a meeting with Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill in Canberra. Garry took along some smoked and pickled "Coorong Mullet" which proved a big hit.

The outcomes from that meeting and progress of the MSC certification process will be outlined in a future edition.



### The Choices You Make

The last 2 editions of this newsletter has been printed copier paper manufactured from Bagasse which is sugar cane waste. A company that meets the ISO9001 standards makes it. It costs about the same as normal paper and works just as well in printers and copiers.

The simple step of seeking out renewable or recycled products, those with minimum packaging or ones that meet environmental certification standards will make a measurable difference to the environment while having little impact on your lifestyle.

## Native Title

Accompanying this newsletter is an information package about the native title process.

Those who attended the meeting at the Lakefront Motel on March 8th were updated on the current status of the native title claims that affect the fishing industry.

It is important that we keep ourselves informed of facts and not speculate about possible outcomes at this early stage. You may also like to check out the web-sites listed below.

## Women's Industry Network Seafood Community

A meeting will be held for local industry women in April (letter to be sent), to build on the outcomes from the last meeting. It will also be an opportunity to put together ideas for how we can be involved in the Good Food Program. It would be terrific to see as many as possible attend the community forum (detail previous page).

SA WIN has been busy organising the 3rd Annual Fishing and Seafood Industry Awards. The menu looks very tempting and the format is more informal than past years.

A representative of the ATO was at the meeting in Adelaide on the 5th February and provided information on share fishing arrangements.

## End of an Era for Emanuel

### Another story that highlights the plight of Commercial Fishers.

Extract from West Australian Newspapers Ltd. © 2000  
By Michael Zekulich 4/12/00

"After almost 100 years, commercial fishing in Bunbury's Leschenault Estuary is over for four generations of the Soulos Family. It is also the end for all other professional fishermen who have long netted it's waters. From today the estuary will be an exclusive recreational fishing zone. To make this happen, the State Government has spent \$595,000 to buy out the last seven licences.

"It is a sad day for us all" Emanuel Soulos, 74 said. "But there has been no option. The people pressure has been mounting and will continue to mount. "But I do not believe there is a problem with stocks. There is enough fish for all of us but the recreational sector think we take too much. This sort of thing is happening all over Australia.".....

In 1996, the State Government implemented an \$8 million resource sharing initiative for such buy-out schemes in recognition of the increasing competition between the commercial and recreational sectors in WA.

## Bird Count

SFA fishers have been asked to participate in a Coorong Winter Wader Survey organised by David Dadd for June. Three fishermen have offered their time and use of their boats to assist on the day.

David required the intimate knowledge that the fishermen have of the waters and environment. Also involved will be boats and personnel from National Parks, specialist bird counters and there will be a BBQ afterwards at Noonameena.

This is an example of our Environmental Management Plan in action.

## Rural Legends

From time to time nomination forms are received for various awards. Rural Affairs, PIRSA are looking for nominations of women who are rural legends, to acknowledge achievements of women in rural communities.

Legendary status may have been achieved through: community service, environment, sport and recreation, business or adventure. It may include someone who has championed a cause, overcome hardship or are local characters or personalities.

Nominations close August 1st and the winner will be announced on World Rural Women's Day in October.

Last month, estuarine buy-out programs covering the Peel Inlet and Swan River as well as Leschenault retired 40 licences. This represented a 50% cut of the overall potential commercial fishing effort in the State's west and south coast estuarine and inshore fisheries.

In all, the Government has invested \$6 million to remove 73 commercial operators where resource sharing had become a problem. The Minister for Fisheries, Monty House, said ensuring there was an adequate sharing of fish resources for the future meant taking measures such as these to avoid conflict and over-fishing in WA."

Here are some fishing and related issues websites you may like to visit:

Murray Darling Basin Commission	<a href="http://www.mdbc.gov.au">www.mdbc.gov.au</a>
SARDI - Aquatic Sciences	<a href="http://www.sardi.sa.gov.au">www.sardi.sa.gov.au</a>
PIRSA - Fisheries	<a href="http://www.pir.sa.gov.au">www.pir.sa.gov.au</a>
Fisheries Research & Development Corp	<a href="http://www.frdc.com.au">www.frdc.com.au</a>
National Native Title Tribunal	<a href="http://www.nntt.gov.au">www.nntt.gov.au</a>
Bureau of Meteorology (Forecasts)	<a href="http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/sa">www.bom.gov.au/weather/sa</a>
Marine Coastal	