

Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Submission No: 16
Submitted by: Australian Prawn Farmers Association
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:



AUSTRALIAN
**Prawn
Farmers**
ASSOCIATION

Submission to the
State Development and Regional Industries Committee
on the
Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

13/12/2023

Error! Bookmark not defined.

By:

Australian Prawn Farmers Association

E: [REDACTED]

M: [REDACTED]

Contents

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association.....	3
The nature and current status of Australia's prawn farm sector	3
APFA response to the Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.	4
Table of response	4

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) is the peak representative organisation for the Australian farmed prawn industry.

Established in 1993, APFA represents the common interest of members, promotes and supports all aspects of the industry and is committed to assisting prawn farmers' efforts to be prepared for risks, innovative, profitable, competitive and world leaders in the global prawn farm industry. APFA provides the link for communications between growers and related sectors including infrastructure suppliers, the finance sector, retailers and exporters, technologists, researchers and all levels of government.

APFA membership consists of 95% of operating prawn farms in Australia and a large number of supply chain representatives.

The nature and current status of Australia's prawn farm sector

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) latest worldwide statistics on aquaculture shows world aquaculture production of 82.1 million tonnes of aquatic animals with a value of approximately US \$250 billion (FAO, 2018). The forecast is that aquaculture will supply the majority of aquatic protein in people's diets by 2050 (FAO, 2018).

As demand for seafood continues to rise and wild-caught fisheries reach ecological sustainable levels, any substantial growth in seafood production will need to be driven by aquaculture (DAFF 2021).

In 2020-21 Australia's aquaculture GVP increased to \$1.73billion accounting for 56% of total GVP (ABARES 2021).

The Australian prawn farm industry farms prawns indigenous to Australia and in the last few years has undergone rapid and significant growth in production. Preliminary 2022-23 data shows the industry is currently valued at over \$200million, again a significant jump from 2021-22 figures at \$180million (ABARES).

98% of Australian prawn farms are located in Queensland. The combined Queensland aquaculture industry employed 889.4 FTEs (QDAF 2021-22). The prawn farming sector is the largest employer at 597.8 FTE workers or 67.2% of the industry's total labour force (QDAF 2021-2022).

Strong ongoing significant growth is planned in Queensland with the industry becoming an important regional economic driver including in the areas of regional investment, labour, new skills and training, increased transport investment and increased feed manufacture investment, all contributing to improved social and economic outcomes for regional communities.

Investors are now also looking at aquaculture opportunities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia due to the challenges associated with the legislative framework in Queensland.

APFA response to the Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.

The Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and hopes that genuine consultation and engagement will occur by the Queensland State government and the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (the Department) regarding the proposed changes which has operational implications for Queensland’s prawn farming sector and Queensland’s aquaculture in general.

While APFA strongly supports Queensland Government’s commitment to growing the Aquaculture sector and streamlining regulatory requirements, this must be delivered in a practical and sustainable way which also protects and grows food production and Queensland’s food security, as well as the flow on of ongoing investment in regional jobs and local communities.

It must be acknowledged that our industry relies on a clean and healthy environment for their operations and support appropriate regulation to protect the environment and are caretakers of the environment in which they operate.

Whilst APFA supports any proposed streamlining of regulatory licencing processes, it strongly recommends that these processes come with procedural fairness, reasonable time frames for assessment, reasonable costs structures and rights of review and appeal.

Table of response

Bill Clause	APFA Response
159	<p>The APFA is unclear about whether Resource Allocation Authorities will continue to be issued by DAF. Clause 159 (Explanatory Memorandum) states “The clause also omits subsection (4) relating to resource allocation authorities which will no longer be issued.”. However, the remainder of the Part continues to reference resource allocation authorities.</p> <p>The continued use of resource allocation authorities should be clarified.</p>
161	<p>The APFA notes the reference to the inclusion of consideration of the impact of the <i>Coastal Management Act</i>, <i>Environmental Protection Act</i> and the <i>Marine Parks Act</i> on decisions to be made by the Chief Executive when considering whether to issue an Aquaculture Authority.</p> <p>Including this link to those relevant legislative provisions ought to aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen the Chief Executive’s ability to work with other relevant Departments [such as Dept of Environment and Science (DES)] regarding issues such as Environmental Authority limits, relevant species and other matters pertaining to environmental licencing. - Provide relevant science-based guidance to decision-making criteria. - Place emphasis on the importance of operational fisheries provisions but not seek to over-regulate on-farm activities that should be the sole responsibility of the operator, provided EA conditions are met, such as nutrient concentration limits.

163	<p>The APFA supports the Explanatory Notes' commentary that a licence should only be refused by operation of law, and not by discretion. This is the only way to ensure business certainty, particularly if the Authority is one that will require annual application or renewal.</p> <p>The APFA request that the authority be for a period longer than 12 months, given the operational capital, investment and certainty needed to continue to invest in aquaculture.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the period of the licence and the application of further costs to operations to ensure the fee for holding an aquaculture authority is not onerous to operators in this already heavily-regulated industry.</p>
166	<p>The APFA notes the unilateral ability to impose regulatory conditions on authorities without the consent of the applicant. The APFA does not support this provision without procedural fairness, rights of review and/or appeal and appropriate dispute resolution procedures and time frames.</p>
169	<p>The APFA queries the definition of "associated aquaculture activity". The APFA recommends the use of notes or examples in this section, as this provision was not discussed in the explanatory notes.</p>