

The launch of a new CSIRO seafood handbook of approved marketing names for imported seafoods provided a rare opportunity for several of the import sector's most notable seniors, as well as new generation of leaders, to get together recently.

Icons gather for launch of imported species handbook



1. Well known Sydney trader, Clive Smith; New Zealand Trade Commissioner, Sue Reid; Trend Seafood's David Bateman (chair of VFFMA), and Seafood Importers Assn chair, Harry Peters
 2. David Cozjin; Tas Pacific's Robert McNeil and Roy Palmer
 3. Industry icons - Clive Smith, Harry Peters, Cyril Lee, David Cozjin and Bob Mostyn. (No wonder the camera blurred)
 4. Still smiling - lobster and prawn export pioneer, Keith Teirney, with David Bateman

Around fifty industry and government representatives met at Nick Manettas's seafood restaurant (Nick's Seafood Grill) at King Street Wharf in Sydney, to see Woolworths national seafood manager, Barry Ross, officially launch the new identification guide titled Australian Seafood Handbook - Imported Species.

The guide is a companion volume to the Australian Seafood Handbook - Domestic Species, which was finally published in 1999 after almost 20 years of consultation and debate.

Background to the development of the Imported Species volume was very capably introduced by Noel Gallagher, chairman of Seafood Traders of Australasia - a half-century veteran of global marketing of seafoods, and a the most experienced industry member of the recently formed Fish Names Committee.

"Used in tandem with the updated Australian Fish Names List, importers now have a powerful, world-class reference tool

for seafood species identification which will trigger reforms in the seafood industry - primarily benefiting consumers," Mr Gallagher said.

He outlined the long history of the official marketing names process, and the essential role imported seafood has played in providing Australians with a plentiful supply of seafood year round, as well as developing marketing channels for local producers.

Imported products now provide more than 60% of seafood sold in Australia (probably significantly more if greenweight/processed weights were compared equally in statistics).

Consumption of imported seafood has reached 140,000 tonnes a year or 50% more than levels of ten years ago, with an industry value today of about a billion dollars. CSIRO 'futurologists' predict this demand will double within 20 years.

"We've gone from basic British cod and haddock consumers in the 1950s to today importing more than two hundred species from fifty countries," said co-author of the new book, Gordon Yearsley.

"Together with the tremendous variety of more than eight hundred species commercially harvested or farmed in our own waters - that shows a very healthy appetite for seafood," he added.

Funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and supported by the fishing industry, the handbook profiles a hundred and thirty species or species groups, and is an important educational facility for the seafood processing and food service trade. Edited by Mr Yearsley, Dr Peter Last and Dr Bob Ward, from CSIRO Marine Research, the guide is intended to assist importers, buyers and processors in correctly identifying imported species.

Additional features of the guide are genetic protein fingerprinting to distinguish



The Lee clan and associates. From left: Vincent Lee; Oceanic Food's Sydney sales manager, Richard Allan; family head Cyril Lee; Premier Foods principle, Geoff Dowdle; and Victor Lee

species, and standardisation of marketing names to minimise confusion in the market.

Mr Yearsley said half the quantities of imported seafood come from just two countries - New Zealand and Thailand. "With efficient international chilled and frozen freight capacities, and diversified markets, the number of seafood imports has expanded enormously. For example the quantity of chilled fish imported has grown 30% in just four years."

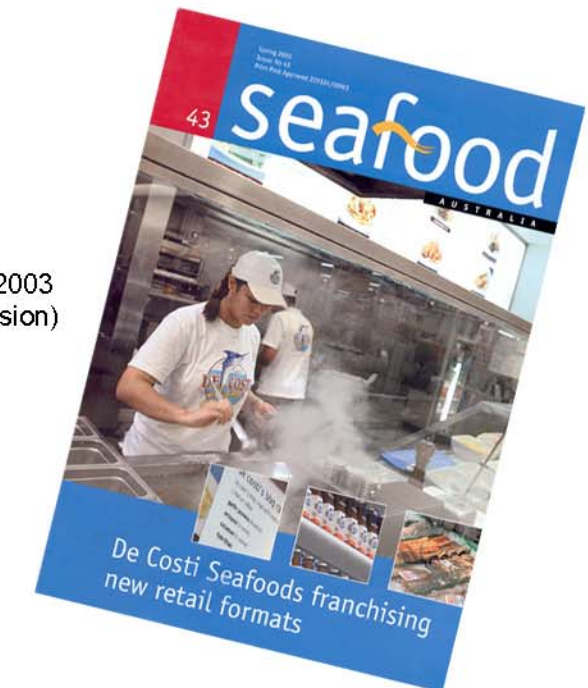
Mr Harry Peters, Chairman of the Seafood Importers Association of Australasia Ltd, said seafood imports have provided a unique balance which kept seafood on every household menu and generated a considerable rise in per capita consumption.

"Importers of seafoods have operated in harmony with the domestic fishing industry to level out supply with demand. This provides Australians with a variety of products from all over the world at prices affordable to the average consumer," Mr Peters said.



Seafood Handbook co-author, Gordon Yearsley

The Australian Seafood Handbook - an identification guide to imported species, is a 240 page hardback book. Available from CSIRO Publishing (1800 645 051 or www.publish.csiro.au) and book stores. It can also be obtained from Seafood Services Australia by going to www.seafoodservices.com.au and selecting the on-line bookshop link. Price: \$49.95.



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