



QLD COMPETITION AUTHORITY

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Department of
**Environment and
Heritage Protection**

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25 AUG 2014

Dr Malcom Roberts
Chair
Queensland Competition Authority
GPO BOX 2257
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Attn: Alex Dobes, Principal Analyst

Dear Dr Roberts

Malcolm
Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the Queensland Competition Authority's (QCA) Draft Report on the Review of Aquaculture Regulation in Queensland.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection understands that the QCA has recommended a new regulatory framework that aims to facilitate the expansion of the aquaculture industry while maintaining environmental controls. The main elements of the framework relevant to the department are the creation of terrestrial aquaculture development areas; more predictable approval processes with explicit environmental conditions set in a publically available code; and providing certainty about the future price and availability of offsets.

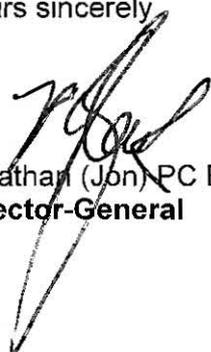
I support the review and the department will assist in establishing a regulatory framework that allows for the development of a sustainable aquaculture industry in Queensland. I recognise that there is significant potential for expansion of the aquaculture industry provided appropriate environmental performance can be demonstrated.

In that context, I support the QCA's recommendation to develop terrestrial aquaculture development areas with clear conditions set in a publically available code. The key environmental issue with aquaculture facilities relates to whether the receiving environment has the assimilative capacity to accept the additional nutrients and sediment without affecting environmental values. As discharge limits are guided by the Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009 and healthy waterways management plans, it will be important to consider the net assimilative capacity and water quality objectives of the receiving environment when identifying development areas and setting discharge limits.

While establishing aquaculture development areas may be challenging, I envisage that the most appropriate mechanisms to set environmental standards in these development areas will be through a combination of model operating conditions and an operational policy. I understand that this is consistent with the intention of the QCA when it refers to regulatory codes in its draft report. In fact, the department is currently working with industry to revise its current operational policy for setting water quality discharge limits from marine prawn farms, to expand its use to include other types of land based aquaculture. The revision of this policy is an industry-led project and is due for completion in March 2015. Once completed, this policy could be used in conjunction with model operating conditions to provide proponents with greater certainty about the environmental conditions the projects will need to satisfy.

I hope this information is of assistance in preparing the final report. Should your staff have any further enquiries, please ask them to contact Mr Dean Raihman, Manager, Environmental Regulatory Practice and Support of the department on telephone 3330 5601.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan (Jon) PC Black
Director-General