



Niall Blair

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 31 March 2017

WHITE SPOT TOP PRIORITY FOR FISHERIES MINISTERS

Plans to control the outbreak of white spot disease (WSD) in south-east Queensland were a key priority for Australian fisheries ministers this morning when they met in Sydney.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair said it was essential to have a co-ordinated approach between State and Commonwealth jurisdictions in order to contain and eradicate the outbreak.

“All Ministers were supportive of my call for a national co-ordinated strategy to educate stakeholders on movement restrictions and alert fishers to the biosecurity risks of using prawns intended for human consumption, as bait,” Mr Blair said.

“White spot disease is a highly contagious viral infection that affects crustaceans, causing high rates of mortalities. While cooked prawns remain safe to eat, this new national focus will be on eradicating WSD in order to protect our aquaculture and fishing industries.

“The NSW Government has already contributed significantly to the national response through the testing of over 17,000 prawn samples from the wild, as part of the surveillance program being undertaken in south-east Queensland.

“We will also contribute funding towards a multi-media campaign to ensure everyone in the fishing community is aware of the risks.

“We particularly need our recreational and commercial fishers and aquaculture businesses to know what white spot is - how to identify it and what to do if they suspect the disease is present.”

Fisheries ministers also discussed the contribution recreational fishing makes to the economy.

NSW leads the country in supporting recreational fishing with internationally acclaimed programs through offshore artificial reefs, fish aggregating devices, and stocking programs.

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