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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Seafood Lovers Encouraged to Join WAFIC and MSC at this Year's Mandurah Crab Festival

Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC), John Harrison, encourages seafood lovers throughout Western Australian to join in on the festivities at this year's Mandurah Crab Festival - for Sustainable Seafood Week.

"This weekend (17 and 18 of March) is a crustacean's lovers paradise. It will be a jam-packed weekend for tourists and locals alike to see live cooking displays, live entertainment and to taste dishes starring the main ingredient – sustainable, Western Australian seafood," he said.

"Sustainable Seafood Week is an important week in calendars not only in Australia but across the world."

"For the WA community the week invites fishermen, chefs, industry professionals and seafood lovers to celebrate our top-notch fisheries, and the hard-work that goes on behind the scenes," he said.

WAFIC will be using the weekend for promotion of locally caught sustainable seafood and to educate seafood consumers about WA's commercial fishing industry- an industry contributing more than 500 million dollars annually to the Australian economy.

"Together with the team from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), WAFIC will be running a joint stall that will include competitions, free samples and lots of fun activities."

"Don Hancey, our WA seafood ambassador, will be preparing smoked Mandurah Mullet as free tasters throughout the day to encourage the community to give the underutilised species a try," Mr Harrison.

"At 2pm on the main cooking stage, celebrity chefs WA seafood ambassador Don Hancey, and MSC global ambassador Bart Van Olphen along with the Minister for Fisheries Dave Kelly, will be cooking up a seafood extravaganza using Mandurah Mullet in front of a hungry crowd."

“The cooking demonstration will highlight the sustainability of the Peel-Harvey Estuary’s sea mullet fishery - the first finfish fishery in WA to receive MSC certification.”

Mr Harrison said that in early 2012, WAFIC partnered with the State Government in a \$14.5 million Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) initiative designed to give each and every one of WA’s 47 commercial fisheries the opportunity to be certified against the global gold standard of best practice in fisheries management.

“In 2000 the WA Rock Lobster fishery was the first in the world to achieve MSC certification. Following the 2012 MSC initiative, Exmouth Gulf prawn trawl, Shark Bay prawn trawl, Peel Harvey Estuary blue swimmer crab and sea mullet, Australian west coast deep sea crab, the West Coast Silver lipped pearl fishery and wild-caught abalone have all been certified.”

“Consumers can be confident that seafood products with the MSC’s blue eco-label are sustainability sourced,” he said.

Mr Harrison concluded by saying that events like the Mandurah Crab Festival are a firm reminder for locals that WA is home to some of the best managed fisheries in the world.

“Our high level of environmental management makes us global leaders in the supply of some of the world’s highest quality and most sustainable seafood.”

“WAFIC recognises and wants to further educate our community that because of the tireless efforts of our professional fishers and others working in the seafood sector - WA fish stocks are in great shape.”

“The only way current and future generations will be able to continue to enjoy seafood is to retain sustainable fisheries management. That’s why WAFIC strongly endorses the blue MSC ecolabel.”

“We look forward to promoting our commercial fishers and meeting all you seafood lovers throughout this weekend’s festivities,” he said.

More details on Sustainable Seafood Week are available at <http://www.msc.org/foreverwild>

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