

Queensland Seafood Industry Association

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MEDIA RELEASE

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QUEENSLAND SEAFOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT-SWIRE AGREEMENT ON “PACIFIC ADVENTURER” COMPENSATION

“Costs of lost sales, lost gear, sunken containers must be covered.” says QSIA

THE Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) has tentatively welcomed announcement of an agreement between the Queensland and Australian Governments and Swire Shipping over losses caused by the sunken containers and oil spill from the container ship “Pacific Adventurer”.

QSIA Chief Executive Officer Winston Harris said the industry had been working closely with the Queensland Government in countering the impacts of the “Pacific Adventurer” incident but was also pursuing independent legal action.

“We have not seen the details of the agreement just announced this morning and will need specific information on how private claims will be settled but this is certainly encouraging news.

“The Queensland seafood industry has suffered significant losses because of the ‘Pacific Adventurer’. Seafood sales suffered, fishermen lost gear and lucrative fishing grounds were closed because of the ‘Pacific Adventurer’ incident. In fact, fishing grounds remain effectively ‘off limits’ to trawlers because the containers still on the sea floor make trawling impossible.

“Today’s announcement states that all valid private claimants and local governments will be given priority for compensation through a court-administered fund.

“We will be discussing this today with our solicitors, who are acting on behalf of fishermen and other seafood-related businesses affected.

“At first glance, this is good news for the many operators who have been hurt by the ‘Pacific Adventurer’ incident.”

Mr Harris said costs associated with the “Pacific Adventurer” incident were not limited to the clean-up of oil from southern Queensland beaches.

“Following the loss of containers and oil from the ‘Pacific Adventurer’, the public was concerned about seafood possibly being contaminated by oil, so sales dropped. Then seafood had to be tested, which caused fishermen delays and lost sales. Industry helped fund

advertising to reassure the public. All sectors of the local industry suffered losses, from fishermen to wholesalers to retailers.

“Even now, the 31 containers remain on the seafloor, in prime fishing grounds, making trawling impossible because of the risk of snagging nets and the real risk of capsizing a vessel as a result.”

FURTHER INFORMATION: Mr Winston Harris
Tel 0418 448 616