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MEDIA RELEASE

16 August 2007

Nationally accredited environmental management system facilitators for the seafood industry – an Australian first.

The Queensland seafood industry is leading the way in environmental management training for the nation's primary industries.

This week in Brisbane a group of seafood industry representatives from throughout the States coastline met for the first stage of an Environmental Management System (EMS) facilitators training course. The course is being run in conjunction with a Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSI A) EMS project, to assist industry in developing EMS for four key regions.

The QSI A EMS project is funded under the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry "EMS Pathways for Agriculture: Industry Leadership" program and supported locally by the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

The project aims to provide these regional industry leaders with new skills to complement their years of experience and the supporting resources required to develop environmental management systems for the seafood industry in their local area. The role of the facilitators to lead and mentor local fishers toward the development and implementation of their own plan that is based on responsible fishing practices that are environmentally friendly.

The Wide Bay- Burnett region will have the services of two coordinators, with Elaine Lewthwaite of Hervey Bay and Burnett Heads fisher Margaret Stevenson. The area where Elaine and Margaret will be mentoring fishers is approximately from Baffle Creek to the Wide Bay Bar and the project will commence with the inshore net fishery.

Elaine Lewthwaite said, "The seafood industry in this area has always been committed to sustainability and the importance of responsible fishing practices. The development of an environmental management system by the local fishers, for the area is a process of continually improving every day fishing practices that suit local conditions.

The community and seafood consumers can be confident that their seafood is being harvested using environmentally sound practices. As Margaret Stevenson put it, "It is as simple as fishing in harmony with nature, with an eye to the future"

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