

BIG CATCH IN PRAWN PITCH

REGINA LOVIC - THE BURDEKIN GROWER - WEDNESDAY APRIL 8TH 2015



Dawson MP George Christensen with Pacific Reef Fisheries general manager John Moloney at Parliament House.

AQUACULTURAL expansion in the Burdekin has taken a big step forward with Federal Member for Dawson George Christensen pledging his full support for the cause.

This comes as Pacific Reef Fisheries proposed to establish a \$70 million prawn farm expansion at Guthalungra, with the company waiting for final approvals by year's end.

However, no new farms have been approved by industry regulators in 12 years.

Prawn farmers from the Burdekin recently went to Canberra with a feast of prawns and a message for the future – they have a plan to overcome environmental obstacles, which should see the industry reach new heights of productivity.

Mr Christensen said Australian prawn industry environment credentials are the envy of overseas operations.

“The Australian prawn farming industry is a world leader in production and management, underpinned by years of scientific research into sustainable practice,” Mr Christensen said.

“There is a demand for more Australian prawns and there are operators ready to go to provide the product.

“And the establishment of this prawn farm at Guthalungra would create more than 100 jobs at a time when the region needs it.

“I will be lending Australian Prawn Farmers Association members my full support to get this happening.”

Pacific Reef Fisheries general manager John Moloney and Australian Prawn Farmers Association president Matt West served up their message to politicians at Parliament House late last month.

“We are proposing a comprehensive Stewardship Action Plan be adopted by the entire industry – one that would be professionally developed and engage all stakeholders,” Mr West said.

“There are stringent environmental conditions to be met for prawn farms, and rightly so.

“But 46 independent CSIRO studies have stated unequivocally that prawn aquaculture discharge in estuarine systems is assimilated rapidly.

“This plan would enable us to pursue our vision for where we see the industry in the future and most importantly map out a co-operative but enforceable, bench marked strategy for how we get there.”