



GERALDTON
FISHERMEN'S
CO-OPERATIVE

Rock Lobster Exporters

the BROLOS Catcher

July 7, 2017

Issue No. 141

From the Chair



What a fantastic day last Friday! Almost four hundred people joined us to celebrate the official opening of our magnificent new live lobster facility in Welshpool.

The opening will be covered in depth in this edition of the Brolos Catcher, so I just want to say a huge thankyou to everyone involved in this project, starting with the design committee which included Wayne Hosking, Glen Davidson and Basil Lenzo.

They were joined by consultant Paul Ridout, who subsequently became the General Manager of this facility. They then proceeded to recommend the lead contractor, DRA Global to undertake this challenging project.

Many of our own staff have been involved throughout the past eighteen months, and we are extremely grateful for their efforts and patience.

Thanks to those people and others, we have ended up with possibly the world's best Recirculation Aquaculture Sysytem facility, that we expect to deliver significant benefits to our members for many years.

Also, thanks are due to the committee responsible for planning the opening ceremony, including Wayne, Leith Teakle, Matt Harrison, Carolyn Najar, Maxine Dwyer and myself. A lot of work went into ensuring that the occasion was suitably celebrated and that all of the attendees had a great time. For those unfortunately unable to be there, there will be an opportunity later to come and view this exciting development.

Thanks again to all involved!

John Ritchie



Above: John Ritchie (top) and Hon. Dave Kelly MLA (bottom) address the 400 strong crowd.

Welshpool Grand Opening

After three years of strategy, planning, design, and construction, GFC's Welshpool Live Lobster Export Facility has finally been revealed. Last Friday 30th June GFC held the Grand Opening ceremony, throwing open the doors to Co-op members, their partners, members of the Western Rock Lobster industry, and government representatives. The day was, by any objective measure, a magnificent success. It was with tremendous pride that guests were welcomed to see, up close, everything that we, Co-op staff and members together, have built over these last few years.

The opening ceremony was attended by nearly 400 guests. Dignitaries included Hon. Dave Kelly MLA, Minister for Fisheries, Shadow minister Ian Blayney MLA, and Fisheries WA Director General Heather Brayford.

The ceremony began with the premier of 'A Day in the Life of a Brolos Fisherman', a short documentary tribute to GFC members.

Next, GFC Chairman John Ritchie reflected on the long and proud history of GFC, and the leading role that GFC and its members have played in the fishery. About the Welshpool facility, he said "The decision to build this facility was strongly influenced by two of our strategic areas of focus; lobster quality and market innovation. Its sheer size, its state of the art equipment and its proximity to the airport will result in a superior quality live lobster for clients worldwide."

(Continued on page 4)

Pictured: GFC's world-class Research & Development Manager Joel Durell explains the intricacies of Welshpool's Recirculation Aquaculture System as guests trace their way around the tour route, taking in the expanse of the facility's 21 tanks from both the ground and first floors.



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brolos.com.au

Ocean Street Geraldton Western Australia 6530

t +61 8 9965 9000 f +61 8 9965 9001 e brolos@brolos.com.au

For all enquiries and contributions for the Brolos Catcher,
contact: Matt Harrison, Stakeholder Communication &
Engagement Manager

P 9435 8935 M 0439 104 766 E matthewh@brolos.com.au

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GFC CEO Wayne Hosking then traced the development of the new facility from inception, through to design and construction. Wayne pointed out that what GFC fishermen had created was truly unique: a full-service company from pot to plate, with Welshpool now the jewel in an impressive crown. It was also Wayne's privilege to thank the many people who had contributed to this achievement, with special mention of staff and members, past and present, without whom none of this would have been possible.

Finally, Hon. Dave Kelly MLA took the stage. He spoke about the Western Rock Lobster fishery being iconic in terms of WA fisheries, playing an important role in the economy and social fabric of Western Australia. He congratulated the Co-op on this truly world-class facility.

Then in a poignant moment, GFC's founding Chairman Bill Newbold joined the Minister in unveiling the plaque marking the official opening of the Welshpool Live Lobster facility. It was a fitting reminder of just how far the Co-op has come, from humble beginnings back in 1950, when Bill could hardly have imagined the incredible successes that lay ahead.

The opening Ceremony was immediately followed by a self-guided tour of the facility. The tour route featured 11 stations at key points around the facility where GFC staff were available to answer questions and provide information. It was also time for the food, drinks, music and conversations to flow as guests celebrated this unique milestone.

The opening of the new facility will, no doubt, go down as a landmark day in Geraldton Fishermen's Co-operative's 67-year history. Now begins the work of putting this new facility to work for you, our members.



Above: Production Controller, Oyenmwun Salami (left) discusses his work monitoring seawater quality in the lab during the facility tour.



Pictured: Welshpool Facility Operations Managers, Clayton Smith (above) & Tom Hinchley (left) show off their knowledge and expertise during the facility tour.



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Click here to see
all the photos
from the day.



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Co-op Opens Green Channel Doors for Industry

GFC's efforts to develop direct channels into the China market are starting to bear fruit. Since successfully representing industry in Free Trade Agreement negotiations 3 years ago, GFC has embedded itself in the China market with our own Chinese company, office, staff and live lobster storage tanks. With over 20 Mandarin and Cantonese speaking staff, and our own Chinese internet sales platforms and distribution networks, GFC is leading the industry in direct trade.

“ GFC has sold 250 tonne directly into 8 different mainland Chinese cities... to importers and distributors... hotels and restaurants. ”

Owning a Chinese company provides GFC with numerous options not available to more traditional exporters. Most importantly, GFC now has the ability to better serve its customers' needs and to supply Brolos lobster into an ever increasing number of markets across China.

Already this season, GFC has sold 250 tonne directly into 8 different mainland Chinese cities, including sales to importers and distributors as well as to individual hotels and restaurants.

Direct trade dramatically reduces risks associated with a single, indirect channel into our main market. Furthermore, all indicators point to dramatic shifts in the way seafood is traded in China, and Brolos lobsters are now sold daily on a

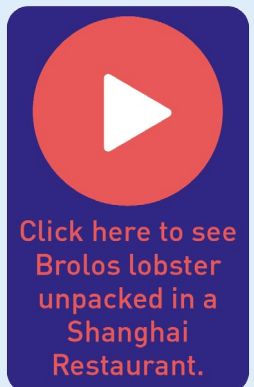
range of electronic platforms. GFC has firmly established itself as the largest online wholesaler of rock lobsters in China.

GFC has developed key relationships within the Australian and Chinese Governments, having attended functions with the leaders of both countries, as well as working closely with Chinese and Australian trade division officials. GFC was recently awarded a \$200,000 Asian Market Export Grant to develop new supply chains and markets in China.

GFC's strategy relies on building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with existing customers, while exploring ways to better service their needs in a changing market. In addition, GFC is actively looking for new markets in new areas and demographics which value your product. To this end, GFC has built strategic relationships with import agents, transport and logistics providers, promotions firms, market research firms, online sales platforms and technology firms.

The tides are turning and 2017/18 is likely to go down in history as the turning point for direct trade to China, with GFC clearly at the forefront of protecting and growing the interests of our industry now, and into the future. Of course it's hard to distill into words everything we've been doing, which is why we encourage all our fishermen to join one of our China Tours to see everything we've been doing in 3D!

“ GFC was recently awarded a \$200,000 Asian Market Export Grant to develop new supply chains and markets in China. ”





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brolos.com.au

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t +61 8 9965 9000 **f** +61 8 9965 9001 **e** brolos@brolos.com.au

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