



# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

2017/18

# COMMUNICATION & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

## 1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In its SRL Strategy 2022, Southern Rocklobster Limited (SRL) identified the development of a Communication and Stakeholder Strategy as essential to its goal of being an engaged and influential organisation.

SRL's purpose is to represent and lead the fishery across South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. To achieve this it needs to communicate effectively with a broad range of stakeholders and various audience groups.

Many of SRL's stakeholders are not directly involved with the fishery itself and need to be educated about its operational safety, biological and ecological sustainability and the premium quality of its harvest. This may include addressing misconceptions and changing attitudes towards SRL and its operations.



## 2. CURRENT SITUATION

SRL is bolstered by a successful industry, but is heavily reliant on consumer demand in China, where international trade restrictions have impacted on the industry's trade practices.

However, the ratification and implementation of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement presents a significant opportunity for SRL to better compete with countries such as New Zealand and Chile who already benefit from full access to the lucrative China market.

Meanwhile discerning global consumers are becoming increasingly supportive of premium sustainable seafood, and the opportunity therefore exists to further capitalise on Australian Southern Rock Lobster's reputation of being sustainable, safe and of a premium quality.

## STRENGTHS

- Significant Australian fishery producer/exporter
- Premium and sustainable product

## WEAKNESSES

- Reliance, to date, on trade with China
- Reliance on one key market
- Lack of effective communication channels
- Competition
- Price

## OPPORTUNITIES

- China-Australia Free Trade Agreement and direct trade
- Product brand development and in-market promotion/profiling of product
- Support for premium sustainable seafood
- Food trends towards healthy eating, less red meat and rise in disposable income driving consumption in Aus and China

## THREATS

- Indirect trade
- Volatility of community perception
- Climate change
- Supply

### 3. OBJECTIVES

#### **Engage with the whole Southern Rock Lobster supply chain**

In order to represent and lead the fishery across South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, SRL needs to clearly communicate with and listen to stakeholders along its entire supply chain.

The challenge ahead is to broaden this communication beyond people directly involved in the fishing community.

#### **Engage with stakeholders**

Many issues facing SRL also affect stakeholders outside of the fishery such as private businesses, not-for-profit organisations and government agencies.

SRL needs to professionally engage with these stakeholders so that mutually beneficial relationships can be formed in the long term.

#### **Build SRL's political recognition and influence**

Many of SRL's external governance and political issues are national in scope and require measured and sustained political responses and interaction.

The organisation must have political capacity, recognition and influence to be effective in this role.

### 4. AUDIENCE

Via targeted communications and stakeholder engagement, SRL aims to reach a wide audience of various stakeholder groups across Australia and internationally to boost community perception of its industry and product.

In doing so SRL is positioning itself to better respond to industry threats by growing its support base and developing a greater influence over the relevant decision makers.

SRL's key audience targets are (in no particular order):

1. SRL members (TRLFA, SARLAC, VRLA & all licence holders)
2. Customers and consumers
3. Hospitality industry
4. Tourism sector
5. Value chain partners (processors and exporters)
6. Other commercial fishers and fisheries
7. Recreational users and fishers
8. Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) and other relevant funding agencies/partners
9. Seafood Industry Australia
10. Oil and gas and other industries seeking to utilise marine resources 'in competition'
11. Indigenous Australians
12. Commonwealth and state management and research agencies
13. NGOs/ENGOS
14. Relevant state and federal politicians and bureaucrats/political influencers
15. Regulators of relevance to the industry e.g. AMSA, SafeWork, PrimeSafe

## 5. COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

LinkedIn

Website

Electronic Direct Mail (EDMs)

Videos

Media Releases

Survey

Events

Advertising & collateral

Emails

Phone calls

SRL spokesperson

Public relations

Lobbying

Meetings

Social media i.e. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

(only as possible within resourcing limitations)



## 6. RECOMMENDED ACTION POINTS

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Communications Channel</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Various	Set up a LinkedIn account	Social media	2017-18
	Create a social media content calendar to ensure major events/announcements shared with followers		
	Subtly lobby SRL key messages through engaging, informative and educational content		Ongoing
	Launch website as a platform for news updates and detailed information about SRL	Website	2017-18
	Publish educational factsheets on the SRL website		Ongoing
	Publish media releases about major SRL developments on the website and distribute to relevant stakeholders and media outlets	Website Public relations	As required
	Utilise existing SRL videos for digital communications	Website and social media	Ongoing
Send quarterly EDMs to contact database	MailChimp	At least quarterly	
SRL supply chain	Send regular industry email updates to the relevant stakeholders	Email/MailChimp	As required
Various	Identify top-tier media targets to engage with and keep updated about major SRL developments	Public relations	2017-18
	Develop and implement a strategy to actively participate in political debate about current issues and trends that affect the sector		Ongoing e.g. STAG
	Further develop and promote Clean Green via community engagement		Ongoing
	Create a community media strategy to engage in hyper local coverage across print, radio, online and television platforms		2017-18
	Leverage season opening, in each jurisdiction, every year as key time to distribute information		Various (SA, TAS & VIC)

	Target local media in fisheries communities with relevant editorial requests		Ongoing
	Explore commercialisation of Clean Green program	Advertising	2017-18
Regional communities and industry stakeholders	Conduct tailored advertising in local media and industry publications		Ongoing
	Wherever possible, media opportunities will be pursued (via media releases, etc.) with the relevant industry publications (e.g. FRDC's <i>FISH</i> Magazine).	Media Releases	
Government departments	Lobby government departments regarding issues affecting SRL	Lobbying	As required
Various	Play an active role in national issues beyond the fishery		
Industry stakeholders	Hold briefings with industry stakeholders regarding major SRL developments	Meetings	Attend SARMAC, TRIFA, VRLA & other stakeholder meetings at least annually
	Survey stakeholder perceptions	Survey facility e.g. SurveyMonkey	2017-18
SRL fishery	Participate in state rock lobster fishery member meetings	Meetings	At least annually
Regional communities	Hold briefings with local communities regarding SRL issues that affect them		As required/possible
	Hold/attend public events in fisheries communities to raise awareness of SRL and its activities		Events
	Identify community advocacy roles for suitable persons/community representatives	SRL spokesperson	
SRL supply chain	Facilitate joint market development and participation with downstream processing export and distribution partners	Various	2017-18
Seafood industry	Support the Seafood Trade Advisory Group		Ongoing
Regional communities	Maintain regular communications and positive relationships with local councils in fisheries		

	communities		
Industry stakeholders	Identify sources of funds and collaborators to work with SRL on joint issues		

## **7. KEY MESSAGES**

### **ENGAGED AND INFLUENTIAL ORGANISATION**

SRL effectively represents and leads the Australian Southern Rock Lobster industry across South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. Its operations have a significant positive impact on the wider Australian community.

### **SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY**

Australian Southern Rock Lobster is sustainably produced and the fishery's success will continue to grow into the future.

### **PREMIUM PRODUCT**

Australian Southern Rock Lobster is sourced from a clean, green environment under strict food and safety standards to maintain a fresh and healthy product.

# 8. CLEAN GREEN PROGRAM

The industry-owned, independently audited Clean Green program is a world-first Southern Rock Lobster supply chain management strategy aiming to demonstrate the industry's ability to self-manage its responsibilities and interests in the following key areas:



Clean Green is being increasingly recognised by commercial fishers as the best and most viable option to address WH&S, SMS and a range of other legislative requirements.

Importantly, the program also underpins food safety and quality, which will become vital as more product is

imported directly into China as a result of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. SRL must investigate ways of ensuring that the Clean Green program remains current and of use to the industry, along with ways of expanding the program's scope within the catching sector and throughout the supply chain.

## 9. ISSUES MANAGEMENT

With a prominent organisation such as SRL, and the ever-changing industry in which it operates, the potential for complications is extremely high. Having a thorough and highly instructive policy is crucial in managing a potential incident or crisis.

Being on the front foot and ensuring the correct people are ready and willing to front up and make a statement in a timely manner is crucial. In these high-pressure situations, having a series of checklists will also ensure nothing falls through the cracks. These incidents can be extremely stressful but being proactive is always the best approach when dealing with a crisis.

A separate and comprehensive policy should be developed beyond this Strategy. Threats to be identified and addressed include:

### **Live export/animal welfare**

SRL does everything it can to ensure the welfare of animals in its fisheries but is unable to control the entire supply chain, particularly the practices of end users such as restaurants and home cooks.

However, the fact remains that news stories about lobsters being treated inhumanely by end users have the potential to negatively impact on SRL's reputation. SRL therefore needs to have a succinct and effective response available for inquiries associated with the mistreatment of Australian Southern Rock Lobsters, and the relevant spokesperson needs to be adequately briefed on the issue at hand before being interviewed by media.

### **Food safety**

SRL needs to be prepared to respond to issues involving naturally occurring toxins in the marine environment.

The organisation can identify the issue through good management and monitoring practices, close down affected areas, keep affected product out of the supply chain and conduct research into the risks associated with these toxins.

### **Indirect trade**

While the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement has presented an opportunity for SRL to eventually export directly into the country, the current situation is that an indirect trade via Vietnam exists as a result of high product tariffs.

The vulnerability of this market route to political influences in China still poses a significant risk to the industry, and this will only be addressed through the realisation of a direct alternative.

### **Community perception**

The aforementioned animal welfare and food safety concerns – combined with community interest, concern and perception about the industry's sustainability and practices – have the potential to negatively affect the community's perception of Australian Southern Rock Lobster as an industry and as a premium quality product. The current indirect trade of the product also has the potential to negatively impact the community's perception of the industry.

To counteract this, the industry's sustainability credentials and practices – including those outlined in SRL's Clean Green program – need to be regularly promoted to stakeholders via frequent communication and stakeholder engagement.

# 10. MEASUREMENT

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SRL's key communication and stakeholder engagement objectives are to be measured as follows:

1

Provide a consistent flow of information to key stakeholders

4

Be approached by the media for opinions on issues affecting the Australian Southern Rock Lobster industry

2

Attend regular meetings with fishery members and peak industry bodies

5

Positive feedback from community through targeted surveys and feedback platforms

3

Showcase organisational successes in the media

6

Positive feedback from industry in relation to SRL 'adding value' for industry