



Developing the domestic market for Australian Wild Abalone

Farming Together Project #1330
Final Report Summary



**Abalone Council
Australia Ltd**



**Farm Co-operatives
& Collaboration**
Pilot Program

Prepared by  **Honey & Fox**

Background to project

The domestic market is largely untapped for Australian Wild Abalone producers who have traditionally sent their product to export markets. There is an emerging opportunity now in the domestic market from Asian visitors who are visiting Australia to try our famous Abalone – yet are finding it difficult to find.

Developing the domestic market will help reduce risk for producers who might be reliant on a single market and will help Australia's supply chain learn how to source, handle and cook the products that the Chinese have prized for centuries.

Aims and objectives

- The aim of this project is to **create a collaborative approach to marketing Australian Wild Abalone to the rapidly growing Asian visitor market in Australia**
- This project has a secondary aim of **creating and building capacity and capabilities among the producers and their supply chain partners to successfully develop and capitalize on this market opportunity.**



Activities

1. Desktop research to understand what Asian visitors to Australia are looking for when they visit – with particular reference to Australian wild caught Abalone
2. Supply chain and consumer insights to gather data and support targeting of consumer education and promotion efforts in the Australian domestic market
3. Trial activities (as guided by the member's needs) in Sydney and a regional location
4. Final report summarising findings and providing recommendations and guidelines on how best to capitalise on the rapidly increasing Asian visitors to Australia



Results/Project Outputs

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Activity 1: Desktop research

- Research undertaken using Australian and Chinese sources in both English and Simplified Chinese
- Summary reports from 8 relevant research reports were collated and analysed for implications/trends for the AWA group
- Comprehensive review of Chinese digital media with search terms focusing on Australian seafood generally and Australian wild caught Abalone specifically
- Final desktop research and analysis report produced summarising key findings published on website for AWA members to download





Activity 2: Supply and consumer insights

- 600 interviews undertaken with Asian visitors already in Australia – surveys completed in Simplified Chinese. A report summarising key findings produced
- Online questionnaire completed by 500 people in China who are intending or wish to visit Australia in the future. A report summarising key findings produced.
- 10 Supply chain interviews undertaken in Australia – Chefs and retailers to understand barriers and opportunities in the domestic market for Australian wild caught Abalone. Results included in the the summary report.

Activity 3 – Marketing trial 1



- Trial marketing exercise undertaken by Abalone Association of NSW and Sydney Fish Market.
- The supply chain and consumer insights results indicate that Australian supply chain partners are generally unfamiliar with Australian wild caught Abalone while consumers found it difficult to find while they were visiting.
- The trial produced information and marketing collateral for the AWA members to use when undertaking discussions with wholesalers and retailers.
- Posters have been developed for use in seafood retailers in Sydney and regional NSW.
- The material can be adapted for use by other AWA members



Activity 3 – Marketing Trial 2



- The desktop research and analysis pointed out the importance of being active on China's unique digital media platforms such as Weibo.
- A trial was undertaken in Tasmania to test different ways to get Asian visitors to sign up as followers of the WeChat page of an Australian Wild Abalone member company
- The trial occurred over several weeks during the busy Easter and April holiday period
- Results were clear that having a Mandarin speaker to engage directly with visitors achieved a higher WeChat engagement and product sales.
- Information about the trial, the collateral produced and a report with recommendations/suggestion for others has been shared with all AWA members

Activity 4: Guidelines and recommendations

- Based on all the project activities a set of checklists and recommendations has been developed to
 - a) assist all AWA member companies to implement action in their businesses to capitalise on opportunities to build a domestic market targeting Asian visitors
 - b) guide future investment by the AWA program in collaborative consumer education and promotion activities to support the development of a domestic market
- Two newsletters have been produced to inform all AWA members and Australian wild caught abalone producers about the activities undertaken
- A dedicated website has been established for publishing the reports and making the information accessible to all members



Recommendations for AWA enterprises and the AWA Program

Based on the China and Australia based research and the marketing trials conducted in Sydney and Tasmania

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Recommendations - Marketing and Digital

- ✓ Ensure websites and digital presence are optimised for Mandarin language and Asian culture
- ✓ To generate traffic the website needs to be search engine optimized. Check where the site features on a Baidu and Google search
- ✓ Give people a reason to visit and stay on the website by providing useful information about the product, other products and local attractions. This will increase the chances that travellers will visit your business and/or seek out and purchase your products
- ✓ Ensure websites are mobile optimized and consider how fast your site will load (noting that the firewall will slow down sites hosted in Australia and using Google technology.
- ✓ Enhance AWA digital and social media presence in China to cover the major platforms. Consider travel sites such as Mafengwo and Qyer
- ✓ Create Weibo and WeChat accounts and contribute regular engaging content that resonates with Chinese consumers. Engage with other Weibo users by regularly monitoring user generated content.

Recommendations - Marketing and digital

- ✓ Depending on level of commitment to the market and available resources, create a WeChat Official Account
- ✓ Incorporate a FAQ section on the website and a contact page – ensure that any questions and queries are answered in a reasonable time
- ✓ Integrate digital payment solutions such as WeChat Pay, Alipay and UnionPay to facilitate both online and offline product and experience purchases.
- ✓ Consider the following ideas to create engaging interesting content for China’s millennials. Keeping things interesting will prompt visitors to share on social media and become advocates
 - Produce short video in Mandarin that showcases how the product is harvested and processed. Include information about where to source the product.
 - Create a digital interaction wall where messages and photos can be viewed and posted.
 - Virtual reality ideas include a virtual ride on a boat where the user can then share their ‘photo at sea’ with their friends on social media. Virtual reality units can cost less than AUD \$2 making it feasible.
 - Include social media and sharing opportunities throughout the offerings. For example, include voting on a cooking or product demonstration via WeChat; participants can easily share their votes and experience immediately providing enterprises or individuals an opportunity to gain social media followers and track their movements.



Recommendations - Site visits and tours

- ✓ If offering tours and visits consider enabling online booking options and deals.
- ✓ If offering an on-site visitor experience provide free wi-fi to encourage real time engagement and advocacy. Free wi-fi is considered a must for Chinese. They experience free wi-fi throughout their home cities and expect that foreign destinations have this easily available.
- ✓ Educate and (as appropriate) incentivise travel agents providing day trips to encourage them to include the business as an itinerary item. Provide them with an education package that includes information about the best time of day or season to visit, products to order and attractions nearby to help create suitable tour packages.
- ✓ Ensure appropriate signage and menus in Mandarin
- ✓ Partner with others in your regions and with the local tourism organisations



Further information

- www.awadomestic.com

