



# Michael CRANDON MP

## Member for Coomera

*Part of the Local Community since 1978*



Wednesday, 5 July 2017

Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

[minister@maff.gov.au](mailto:minister@maff.gov.au)

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

*Your Ref: MC17-003296*

Re: White Spot Virus (WSV) wiping out the farm prawn industry on the Logan River, which is wholly within the State Seat of Coomera, for which I am the State Member.

In your letter to me dated May 23rd 2017 (copy attached), you state:

*"I am taking the outbreak very seriously and am committed to its eradication."*

You further state that:

*"My department and the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries are working to determine how the outbreak occurred. There are a number of possible sources, such as contaminated imported feed. Contaminated equipment, poor on-farm biosecurity practices, as well as imported uncooked prawns used as bait."*

I make the following observations regarding the above mentioned "possible sources":

The only CONFIRMED source of WSV has been in raw imported prawns.

The evidence given to the Senate Enquiry that is in progress, has confirmed that your department, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources were, through its biosecurity division, aware that there were huge amounts of contaminated prawns being brought into Australia, as early as March 2016. Neither Biosecurity Queensland nor the industry were made aware of this fact, until after the outbreak.

On the other hand, the enquiry heard evidence that there was no contamination of imported feed.

Given the above and the fact that WSV was not present in Australia prior to this outbreak, it is impossible to conclude that equipment could have been contaminated, nor could poor on-farm biosecurity practices have caused the outbreak.

Put another way, the WSV had to be imported, the only confirmed importation was via raw imported prawns. The WSV outbreak could not have come to the farms from any other source, other than raw imported prawns.

We now know that WSV has been detected in the wild and the only way it could occur in the wild in Australia, is through contamination of the natural environment. This must have occurred through fisherman innocently using raw prawns, intended for human consumption, as bait. There is no other logical explanation.

This brings me to the purpose of this letter:

I remind you again of the statement in your letter to me: *"I am taking the outbreak very seriously and am committed to its eradication"*.

With those words in mind, I was dumfounded to hear that you are allowing importers to import raw marinated prawns into Australia, from Mid-July.

This fact is evidenced by the second attachment to this letter, which is a photo copy of page 29 of an interim report from the Senate Enquiry. This report references "Biosecurity (Suspended Goods - Uncooked Prawns) Amendment (Exceptions) Determination 2017 (No4), s.2. page 29".

In quoting from the above, this report at 3.42, states in part, "Imports of such product will be allowed to commence eight weeks after the amendment is registered (mid-July 2017).

At 3.43, the report quotes from the abovementioned Determination. In my reading of the quote, the only inference that can be made is that a signature, from an unknown person, in a foreign country, that is known to be a source of WSV, is good enough to allow the importation of raw prawns into Australia.

Minister, this is an unbelievable decision for the following reasons!

We are yet to bring WSV under control, in the wild, in Moreton Bay.

We have placed severe restrictions on our local fishers and wormers, who number in the vicinity of 300 businesses.

We are some five months away from receiving a final report from the Senate Enquiry.

Yet we are prepared to allow raw prawns to be imported again!

Minister, I implore you to continue the ban on raw prawn imports, to guarantee no further outbreak from an external source can impact the industry in Australia.

I look forward to your favourable consideration of this request in response to this very serious issue, not only for the Coomera Electorate farmers, but for the whole local industry and indeed the industry right around Queensland and Australia.

Regards,

**Michael Crandon MP**  
**Member for Coomera**