



Media Release

Fitzgerald Street, Geraldton Western Australia 6530
Tel: (08) 9956 2700 Fax: (08) 9921 7705
www.centralwest.wa.edu.au

FISHING INDUSTRY HOOKS SUPPORT

Over the past 3 years the Crayfishing Industry has been experiencing changes that have impacted heavily on the workers of the industry. The Midwest region has been substantially affected, with the origins of the area being built on the strength of the Fishing and Agricultural industries.

The Midwest fishing industry is currently facing several challenges that threaten to lead to extensive unemployment and dislocation of workers. Since the 2008/09 crayfishing season there has been a 35% reduction in the number of boats fishing in the Midwest fishery. This reduction in the fleet has forced more than 160 people to leave the industry.

Durack Institute of Technology (formerly Central West TAFE) identified the changes affecting the industry early, in particular to the fishermen and their families. Extensive communication strategies were deployed to meet with the fishermen and inform them of the College's Fishing Industry Project. Meetings were conducted with the Professional Fishing Association members, one on one discussions along the coast and at the Abrolhos Islands plus emails, newsletters and text messages were sent advising of the project and offering assistance.

After meeting with the Professional Fishing Association and further assessing the needs of the industry, Durack Institute of Technology formed partnerships with local agencies for support in the areas of future employment, health and the transition into alternative employment.

Durack Institute of Technology identified the need to support the fishermen and their families by providing guidance and establishing networks to enable them to diversify the skills they currently have or to develop new skills to assist them to move into a different industry.

For example, the off shore oil and gas industry together with the imminent mining boom in the Midwest region have provided opportunities for the fishers to develop their skills in these areas begin a new pathway for their future career.

Initially DIT gained funding to support the program through the 2009 Workforce Development Grants and Royalties for Regions. A Fishing Forum was held in September 2009 at Durack Institute of Technology's Batavia Coast Maritime Institute. The Forum developed networks and opportunities for the College to identify the skills required in other industries now and for future employment. It also provided the fishermen with information and a clearer understanding of the areas they could transition in to and what skills and knowledge would be required of them to make this move.

Networks that were established at this Forum and continue to develop are primarily in Off Shore Oil and Gas, Mining, Business and the Civil Construction industries.

Durack institute of Technology assesses each individual fishing industry client's needs and then develops an individual learning program based on their requirements. This gives them a plan to work from and also guidance on the necessary training to achieve the skills they need to get the job they want. Specific skill sets and recognition of prior learning area study modes that have been successfully utilized throughout this project.

The clients are also assisted with Resume writing guidance and information sessions are conducted on how to prepare a job application.

Over the past 5 months as a direct result of the fishing industry program Durack Institute of Technology have developed a database of 112 fishing industry workers seeking assistance from the scheme. From this database, to date, DIT has supported 54 people to develop various skills and obtain qualifications to expand their opportunities and prospects for the future.

For more information on the Fishing Industry Project please call Kelli Gordon at Durack Institute of Technology on 08 9956 2717.