



Clipper Pearls boss Pat Moose, left, and Cygnet Bay Pearls general manager James Brown gave evidence to the Federal inquiry in Broome into opportunities for expanding the aquaculture industry in northern Australia. Picture: Glenn Cordingley

# Pearling boss hails research

■ Glenn Cordingley

The boss of a Broome family pearling dynasty has welcomed moves to establish a task force to fund research into the cause of a disease decimating the industry.

Cygnet Bay Pearls general manager James Brown said an Australian Parliament committee "did its job well" in compiling a report on expanding aquaculture across northern Australia.

The inquiry took in evidence from a number of people during a visit to Broome last year, including Mr Brown. It examined the current state of aquaculture in northern Australia, its regulatory framework, and opportunities for further developing the industry in the region.

The number one recommendation was to establish a Pearling Industry Recovery Task Force to stop the continued spread of oyster oedema, which has decimated pearling stocks off Broome.

"(The inquiry) listened to industry and stakeholders and that is clear from the wide range of issues that the report's recommendations tackle," Mr Brown said.

"It will be interesting to see how those recommendations are implemented, but in general if it drives more resources towards the issues holding back aquaculture development in our region, I for one will be very pleased."

Federal Member for Perth Alannah MacTiernan headed the committee in Broome in the absence of chairman Warren Entsch.

Ms MacTiernan spoke in Parliament about the report shortly after it was tabled.

She expressed her "extreme concern" about the lack of urgency of the response to oyster oedema and said there was a need to fund research into the disease.

Ms MacTiernan said industry bodies were dominated by players with interest in overseas pearling, "so for them it is not such a priority".

"But I do urge us to understand that this is not only about the pearling industry but also about the whole tourism industry, particularly in Western Australia and more particularly in Broome," she said.

"If we get to a point where the pearl industry in Broome becomes unviable, that will very much undermine the tourism industry in Broome and the Kimberley generally, and that will have a significant impact on those communities."

The committee also said the Australian Government should provide funding assistance for developing road and port infrastructure to service the Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone in the Dampier Peninsula and Project Sea Dragon in the Northern Territory, subject to establishing a positive cost-benefit analysis.

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# Public walkway at jetty to be closed for works

■ Glenn Cordingley

The public walkway alongside the Port of Broome jetty and adjacent pedestrian access to the beach area will be temporarily closed from May 15 to early September for maintenance work.

The walkway will also be shut to the public from the halfway point from March 15. The closure will extend to two-thirds of the walkway from April 15.

Port of Broome remediation

works have been progressing on the wharf head since November 2015.

From March 15, the final phase begins that will eventually lead to the closure of the public walkway and access to the beach area under and adjacent to the wharf.

The replacement of the concrete deck along the wharf neck will be conducted on one lane at a time to enable vehicle access to the wharf at all times, so customer cargo can still be transferred from ship to shore

and ship loading can occur.

Kimberley Ports Authority chief executive Kevin Schellack said the only way to ensure the complete safety of the public was to temporarily close the walkway and adjacent beach area to pedestrian access.

"Equipment will be utilised underneath and atop the wharf neck in one lane while the other lane will be accommodating vehicle movements, including trucks with heavy or wide loads posing a danger to

the public should the walkway remain open," he said.

Mr Schellack said the KPA regretted the community inconvenience, particularly to people fishing from the walkway. He said works were expected to be finalised by early September, enabling pedestrian access to the complete walkway and adjacent beach.

Mr Schellack said the Wharf Extension of Life project was progressing well and the September finish signalled an earlier than expected completion.



Helen Brown and husband Eric at their public housing property in Broome. Picture: Glenn Cordingley

# Pensioners struggle with rent increases

■ Glenn Cordingley

Two Broome pensioners living in

income, with 25 per cent the standard across the country.

In WA, he said, exemptions and

before pension day each fortnight," she said.

"Increasing the cost of living

# Cops crack down on alcohol

■ Glenn Cordingley

A police operation to clamp down on antisocial behaviour and excessive alcohol consumption in Broome has led to rivers of beer, wine and spirits being poured down the drain.

The all-day sting on Thursday targeted parts of Chinatown and Male Oval as well as Town Beach and private houses with imposed liquor restrictions.

Senior Sergeant Brendon Barwick said about eight cartons of beer, 24 bottles of wine and two bottles of spirits were destroyed under the Liquor Control Act.

Nine liquor infringements and a move-on notice were issued by officers during the operation, along with a fine for disorderly conduct.

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