



PEARL PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION
Australian South Sea Pearls

The World is Australia's Sustainable Pearl Oyster

Australian pearls are known as highest quality and rarest in the world. Now Australian South Sea Pearls have been independently certified as the World's most ethical and environmentally sustainable choice.

Wearers of Australian South Sea Pearls can now rest assured that their pearl came from wild pearl oysters collected in a fishery operating to the highest standards of environmentally sustainable management in the World.

Pearl Producers Association Executive Officer Aaron Irving confirmed today that in a World first, the Australian South Sea pearling industry of Western Australia and the Northern Territory, have been certified sustainable by the independent Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

"The MSC Standard is the global gold standard," said Mr Irving. "The standard is an independent, internationally accredited science based standard, against which the environmental sustainability management of a wild marine resource fishery is rigorously assessed."

Mr Irving highlighted that Australia is the last country in the World where pearls are cultured using a wild oyster fishery at Eighty Mile Beach south of Broome in Western Australia.. "MSC certification recognises our long history of sustainable management and stewardship of our Pearl oyster fishery and ensures the highest level of confidence for our discerning customers in making an ethical purchase choice." he said.

Kimberley representative Josie Farrer MLA, announced the marine environmental stewardship milestone today, celebrating the importance of the certification recognising the environmental credentials of the Kimberley area.

"Pearling is a central part of the story of the Kimberley region, and being the home of the World's first pearls to be certified sustainable, is yet another layer of a rich story of stewardship of our sea country." She said. "This certification is also a reflection of the strong partnership between the fisheries management agencies in Western Australia and in the Northern Territory and the pearling industry that has ensured that the last remaining wild *Pinctada maxima* pearl oyster fishery in the world will continue to thrive for the benefit of generations to come."

Pearl oysters are hand-collected by divers working to strict limits on the total number of pearl oysters taken and their size. They are then seeded to allow the pearl oyster to grow the pearl. The pearl oysters are held on pearl farm leases in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Mr Irving said that the MSC eco-label can be applied to all pearls produced from wild caught pearl oysters and well as mother of pearl and the popular pearl oyster meat.

For further information

Aaron Irving, CEO Pearl Producers Association

www.pearlproducersaustralia.com