



TASMANIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY NEWS

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TSIC REGULAR UPDATES

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

TIM HESS

FRDC 2020-29 – IMPROVING PERFORMANCE OF ITQ FISHERIES

TSIC currently finds itself in the very unfortunate situation where unfounded wharf talk suggests we have a 'behind closed door' secret quest to bring down the ITQ system, with the rumour circulating wide and far! Central to the gossip is the incorrect viewpoint that TSIC, notably the TSIC CE, not only instigated, but is also driving, the FRDC Project (2020-29) – *Improving performance of ITQ fisheries*.

It is important that these fictitious rumours are clarified with facts.

FRDC 2020-29 was instigated within the Human Dimensions Research Group within FRDC in response to the ongoing collection of ITQ-related research priorities from many industry groups around Australia. An EOI was released by the FRDC, and IMAS submitted a successful application to deliver the project.

Although the project was approved in 2020, it took years for the project to start. The TSIC CE was first invited on the Steering Committee of the project in March 2022, but heard nothing after this until March 2023, when he was again asked to join the project Steering Committee.

The first Steering Committee meeting was held in late May 2023. At this meeting, the project team presented an update of the project progress to date, namely a draft literature review of 1443 ITQ papers and documents from around the world, an Excel spreadsheet summary of this literature review and proposed case study fisheries for the project.

The Steering Committee did not make any decisions at the meeting.

Why did the TSIC CE agree to sit on this project Steering Committee? You would have to have your head in the sand to not hear a divergent range of discussions, positive and negative, about ITQs. It is important for peak bodies like TSIC to engage and be in the room for these types of projects in order to keep fully informed.

It should be obvious that TSIC did not instigate this project and TSIC is not driving this project.

Through the journey of this ITQ Project, some people/organisations in our Australian seafood industry have voiced concern that the project is trying to remove ITQs or significantly change how ITQs operate in Australia. This is not the objective of the project.

TSIC always accepts people's right to have their own opinion, but when TSIC is directly accused of instigating and driving a project and of trying to bring down the ITQ system, when in fact it is not, TSIC must defend itself.

Unacceptable fraudulent manipulation

During this ITQ project process, there has been such strong opposition to the project and belief that TSIC is directly involved, someone has gone to next-level fraudulent lengths to try and implicate TSIC. I refer back to the Excel spreadsheet summary of the literature review produced by the IMAS ITQ project team. TSIC first saw this attachment in the papers of the first project Steering Committee meeting, where it was titled 'Agenda Item 5 Worksheet'.

Unbeknown to TSIC and IMAS, this spreadsheet has appeared in people's email inbox with a new title – *TSIC UTAS proposals to change ITQ systems*.

Whoever changed this title has fraudulently attempted to undermine TSIC and IMAS by suggesting we have an actual proposal to change ITQs, when in fact we do not.

Given the serious nature of this fraudulent behaviour, TSIC has commenced an investigation into how and where this IMAS-produced document had its name changed and who circulated it to people in the seafood industry.

A path forward

Despite there being differences of opinion on ITQs by different organisations, sectors and individuals in industry, it is important that TSIC makes every attempt to find some common ground across the Tasmanian seafood industry, as this is one of the core purposes of TSIC as an organisation. Why? Well put simply, lease fishers, owner operators, investors and processors all need each other to make the ITQ system work.

At the most recent joint Sector Group / TSIC Board meeting, TSIC, the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association and the Tasmanian Abalone Council agreed to work together to develop an ITQ policy in the interests of all parts of the Tasmanian ITQ system. We also hope to develop a 5-year plan as part of these discussions.

I am sure there will be plenty of divergent views, but if we are all willing to come to the table with an open mind, I am sure we can work through the complexities of the issue and agree to some form of joint ITQ policy.

'United we Stand, Divided we Fall'. ■

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JETTY TALK



WOMEN IN SEAFOOD NETWORKING EVENT

On 5 May, 30 women from the Tasmanian seafood industry gathered at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Hobart for a networking and mentoring workshop.

The workshop, facilitated by the TSIC and run by Affectus, aimed to connect women in the seafood industry and provide networking and mentoring support.

The day began with some fantastic workshops and gave the attendees an opportunity to network and exchange valuable insights into the seafood industry.

Key industry members were invited to enjoy lunch and participate in a speed dating session. During the sessions, the attendees were able to pick the brains of industry leaders and gain a deeper understanding of their roles within the industry.

During the afternoon, Heidi Smith of Tassal – Our Community, Alison Turnbull of IMAS, and Ellen Duke of Cameron of Tasmania shared their personal journeys and gave tips on building strong networks and promoting gender diversity in the workplace.

Funding of this event was by the Supporting Women to Succeed Grants Program 2021, provided by the Tasmanian Government.

A big thank you to the industry guests and attendees, for coming together and participating to make this successful event. Keep an eye out for more women in seafood networking events in the future! ■

INTRODUCING TSIC'S NEWEST EMPLOYEE LEK KRONGSING

Originally from Sydney, Lek is the newest member to the TSIC team who comes with a background in marketing, events and project management.

Her family moved to Tasmania in 2014 while she set sail to find her own path, studying in Sydney and travelling to the UK right after her graduation.

After having spent two years in the UK, it was time to venture out onto her next journey. During the pandemic, she decided to travel to Bangkok where she worked in a private school as a kindergarten homeroom teacher. The journey along the way was, of course, far from being sweet sailing. She had learned to appreciate all those little moments before returning home Down Under in 2021.

While working for a vocational training institution and waitressing at the Blue Eye Seafood Restaurant in Hobart, Lek also studied and obtained her project management qualification. An opportunity to extend her career in project management occurred in Melbourne, so she took the leap of faith to relocate within two weeks to the city that she had never been to before.

Fast forward to a year later and she is now back in Hobart with her family, hoping to call the city her forever home. ■



2023 TASMANIAN SEAFOOD AWARD NOMINATIONS EXTENDED

We are thrilled to announce that the nomination period for the highly anticipated 2023 Tasmanian Seafood Awards has been extended!

Due to a popular demand and overwhelming enthusiasm from the seafood community, we have decided to extend the nominations until August 31, 2023.

The Tasmanian Seafood Awards is a prestigious annual event that recognizes and celebrates excellence within the Tasmanian seafood industry. The event serves as a platform to showcase the incredible achievements and innovations that continue to drive the growth and sustainability of the industry.

The extension of the nomination period provides an excellent opportunity for seafood producers, businesses, and individuals from all corners of Tasmania to put forward their impressive achievements. Whether your contribution lies in sustainable fishing practices, product development, culinary excellence, or business innovation, it is time to step forward and shine a light on your exceptional work! ■

2021 TASMANIAN SEAFOOD AWARD RECIPIENTS



Environmental Stewardship Award
True South Seafood



People Development Award
Peter Cheesman



Research, Development and Extension Award
Alison Turnbull - IMAS



Fish & Chips Award
Tasmanian Gourmet Seafoods



Eat more Seafood Dining Award
Pearl + Co



Eat more Seafood Experience Award
Tasmanian Wild Seafood Adventure



Recognition Awards
Clive Perryman & John Sansom



Promotion Award
Brendan 'Squizzzy' Taylor



Safety Award
Huon Aquaculture



Small Business Enterprise Award
Kyeema Seafoods



Large Business Enterprise Award
True South Seafood



Young Achiever Award
Ellen Duke



Industry Ambassador Award
The Cameron Family

Thank you to our 2021 Tasmanian Seafood Award Sponsors



Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

SEAFOOD AND MARITIME TRAINING



James Garde (SMT CEO), Shane Gillie and Chadd Mumme represented SMT at World Aquaculture Conference

CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY AT WORLD AQUACULTURE

James Garde (SMT CEO) recently had a chance to speak at the World Aquaculture Conference in Darwin.

James used the opportunity to discuss raising awareness for the benefits of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the seafood industry. With SMT having over 1,000 individuals entering the industry, we needed to ask the question – what would happen if we started mentioning the benefits of diversity in our training?

SMT knows how influential our trainers can be. When our trainers are passionate about a topic it will become part of their delivery and influence the way a student thinks about it. In discussions with TSIC CEO Julian, we came up with a vision of the Tasmanian seafood industry becoming and being recognised as a champion of diversity.

The project was to focus on the benefits of diversity of thought, hoping to motivate the removal of barriers. We didn't want the message to focus on gender and wanted to leave it up to those receiving the message to determine how to promote diversity in their workplace.



Diversity, inclusion and equity presentation at World Aquaculture Conference

We engaged with Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA) experts Kirsten Abernethy and Skye Saunders to develop a project plan. The plan was to engage a group with the concept and get their support to develop the conversation around diversity, inclusion and equity that would work in a training environment.

The workshop attracted a lot of interest and commitment from both our trainers and industry. SMT is now currently developing smaller groups who want to lead the process of embedding the conversations into SMT's training. SMT plans to measure the impact this will have on the seafood and maritime community over the next couple of years.

"CAN YOU CALL ME CAPTAIN NOW?"

Seafood and Maritime Training would like to congratulate Ian Welsman on his drive and dedication to achieving his Master 24m NC.

On the completion of Ian's Master 24m, we took the time to catch up with him and discuss how he felt about completing the course and what are the reasons he comes to SMT for his training.

Ian stated that one aspect he really liked about the course was our limited class sizes, as it allowed for "the teacher to have more time to be involved with the students". Ian also enjoyed the class breaking up into smaller groups when doing the practical activities on the vessels, as it made it easier to see and understand what was being taught.

Ian found the course both challenging and supportive. Ian said he felt that he was given support through his Master 24m journey, with trainers staying back a few times to help with things he didn't understand. The course workload was clearly explained, and he understood that some after-hours study



Ian Welsman, Master <24 NC student

would be required. "We had to commit to it – not just in the daytime – you had to go home and do some homework as well," Ian remarked. Ian said that the training staff were always available to be asked questions so that you never felt like you were being left behind.

Ian said that the course met his expectations and that it was a great course in a great location, with an environment that is set up for learning with computers and classrooms that you can come back to and work on your assessment as you need.

For Ian's career he now has more opportunities in vessel operations. "I can get off maintenance...I've got two tickets, that I got here," he stated.

Overall, Ian said he was very satisfied with his SMT training journey and that he felt when you put the work in with right type of support you can achieve your desired outcomes. Ian thanked the whole SMT team for giving him the right resources and the right people to get the result he was looking for.

The SMT team wish Ian all the best with his career and hope to see him again if he requires any additional training. ■

SCALLOP FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA INC.

BOB LISTER

TASMANIAN STATE SCALLOP FISHERY

Following on from the preseason surveys, a ScFAC meeting was held on 29 June in Hobart to consider the IMAS assessment of survey results.

It was obvious that White Rock contained big scallops in the NE sector but not in sufficient quantities overall to consider an opening this year.

North-west Tasmania was very encouraging, however, and the General Manager Marine Resources eventually approved an open area this year from 7 July west of Point Sorell on the north coast to north of Bluff Hill Point on the west coast.

The TAC has been set at 4990 tonnes or 484 kg per scallop unit.

A spawning biomass closure was declared immediately south of the Boags Marine Park.

The *Dell Richey 11* completed a camera survey of the Boags Marine Protected Area just before the season opened with IMAS observers on board, and whilst their assessment has not yet been released, we believe there are plenty of scallops in this reserved area.

The SFAT issued a media release on 4 July promoting the availability of new season Tassie scallops, which provided additional media coverage to kick the season off.

The season opening was disrupted by high winds and rough seas and at least two vessels delayed their arrival to the open area due to the weather conditions. In the first two weeks of the season opening, around 250 tonnes has been landed and fishermen report that all looks good for another successful season.

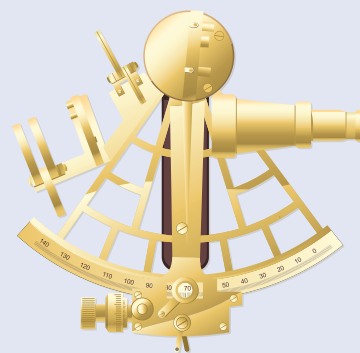
I have observed clean shells and meats 90 to the kilogram and developing roe, and our laboratory testing has shown that there are no biotoxins present in samples tested from north-west Tasmania.

BASS STRAIT CENTRAL ZONE

A ScMAC meeting was held in Melbourne on 8 June and, as a result, Bass Strait waters opened on 8 July with a 3892 tonne TAC which represents 8.75591 kg per SFR.

Four areas have been closed as per the Harvest Strategy.

AFMA advises that at least two vessels have started harvesting in Commonwealth waters. ■



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FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

JULIAN HARRINGTON

TSIC STAFF MOVEMENTS

It is with sadness that I announce to the broader seafood industry that our Project Manager, Courtney, has spread her wings and taken off to a new adventure in the world of marketing.

On behalf of the TSIC Board and staff, I would like to give Courtney our heartfelt thanks for the energy, enthusiasm, creativity and friendship she brought to TSIC and the Tasmanian seafood industry. For those who do not know, it was Courtney's creativity and amazing organisation that created the outstanding 2022 Stay Afloat, 1920s themed gala event.

We wish you all the best on your new journey.

I am excited to announce that Lek Krongsing has recently started at TSIC, taking on a role as Project Officer (Events). We are excited to have Lek on the team and look forward to seeing her make a positive contribution to TSIC and the Tasmanian seafood industry.

Welcome Lek.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

The August to October weather forecast is being influenced by several factors, including the likely El Nino development, potential positive Indian Ocean Dipole development, and record warm oceans globally.

It is predicted that Tasmania will see an unusually dry and warm August to October period (similar to the upper 20% of 1981 - 2018 August to October periods). This is consistent with the water off Tasmania already being warm, especially off the east coast. It looks like being an unusually hot summer.

In a recent Tasmanian Biosecurity Advisory Committee meeting, several farmers commented on the mild winter, with a range of plants and animals not following their normal growth and movement patterns.

Let's hope that these conditions do not result in a range of biosecurity issues over summer.

I will be involved in a number of climate updates from the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and FRDC over coming months.

The first briefing provided a great overview of what is happening on land and in water and is well worth a watch. It can be found on YouTube by searching for *Fisheries Climate Briefing #1: July-Sept 2023 - YouTube* or going to the *FisheriesResearchAU* page and searching under videos.

CLIMATE-RELATED MARINE INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT

The report from the federal Senate inquiry into the spread of climate-related marine invasive species, with a specific focus on the range-extending longspined urchin, is due to be released in mid-September.

From an industry perspective, it is hoped that this report clearly identifies that a strategic and subsidised commercial harvest of urchins is the best control mechanism to support a healthy marine environment on Tasmania's east coast.

TSIC has long been lobbying the federal government for funding to support controlling urchins on our east coast, with our first request a part of our 2019 Federal Election Policy Document. It is hoped that the report will provide the foundation for seeing national funding become a reality.

To further highlight the issue, and the commercial harvest as a key control mechanism, TSIC has funded the development of a promotional communication campaign, being developed by Red Jelly. It is hoped that this will be delivered over the coming weeks.

TASMANIAN SEAFOOD PACKAGING PROJECT

TSIC is excited by the opportunity to work with the Tasmanian Maritime Museum on a Tasmanian Seafood Packaging Project. I have included more information on the project, and how you may be able to get involved, below:

The Maritime Museum of Tasmania is aiming to build a collection of Tasmanian seafood packaging that provides a snapshot of the great growth and diversity of the state's seafood industries today. It is intended that the collection will be both a historical archive of the industry and a resource that the museum can use in its future exhibition program.



Importantly it is hoped the archive will be able to show the innovative use of new packaging technologies for seafood in the state today. Tasmania's use of new technologies for food packaging has a long history from the first successful canning of fish in Australia by Henry Jones IXL in 1905. For this reason, the museum is also interested in examples of earlier seafood packaging to provide a better understanding of today's industry.

The Maritime Museum is seeking examples of the packaging used by your company for the collection.

If you are able to help, examples of your packaging material can be sent to: Maritime Museum of Tasmania 16 Argyle Street, Hobart TAS 7000

If you would like to discuss the project further, please contact the project coordinator, Chris Tassell, at admin@maritimetas.org or on 0418 352 641.

The Maritime Museum of Tasmania appreciates the support of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council in the development of this project. ■



THE STAY AFLOAT TASMANIA SEAFOOD INDUSTRY MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVE IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY OUR OFFICIAL SPONSORS



OYSTERS TASMANIA

DUNCAN SPENDER, CEO



SHELLFISH FUTURES CONFERENCE

Our 2023 Shellfish Futures conference will be held on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 September at Tall Timbers Hotel in Smithton.

Oyster growers, suppliers, researchers, regulators and our partners in Tasmania's waters are all welcome to attend.

Premier Rockliff is set to attend and deliver our Gala Dinner address. Our breeding company will bring oysters from various families they manage for a show and tell. We will have engaging presentations and plenty of time for catch-ups, including at our Beer and Bivalves event.

For more information and to book, head to our website at oysterstasmania.org/shellfishfutures

SMITHTON VISIT

Oysters Tasmania's Frances Huddleston was in and around Smithton in June, catching up with growers, checking in on the installation of sensors, and joining ShellMAP on their shoreline survey.

Frances also progressed a joint project with IMAS and ShellMAP to improve our opening and closure triggers and gather evidence on sources of pollution. This involved preparatory work to install an autosampler and to undertake faecal source tracking, and the convening of a workshop between growers and project members.

Thanks to the many growers (including Kurt McBain, pictured) for their time, boats and engagement.



RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION

Oysters Tasmania has completed a project assessing the scope for oyster farming beyond typical intertidal farms. This project sets out the case for future work of practical benefit to existing Tasmanian oyster farmers to be funded by the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre.

Oysters Tasmania outlined potential research, development and extension projects to the annual meeting of the Shellfish Aquaculture Research Advisory Group convened by the State Government and IMAS in June. This outline is available on our website at www.oysterstasmania.org/resources.

Each project was 'prioritised' so we are now pursuing funding sources.

A key funding source is the industry partnership agreement between Oysters Australia and the federal government's Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. The new Chair and Executive Officer for Oysters Australia will be catching up with growers in September as part of the Shellfish Futures conference, where we will have a dedicated session for growers to voice their priorities for research, development and extension work.

TASWATER

TasWater has committed to co-funding agreed research and science initiatives, dollar for dollar, with Oysters Tasmania, to advance the research and scientific understanding of influences and impacts on the shellfish industry. This cooperation is most welcome. We will keep growers advised on progress.

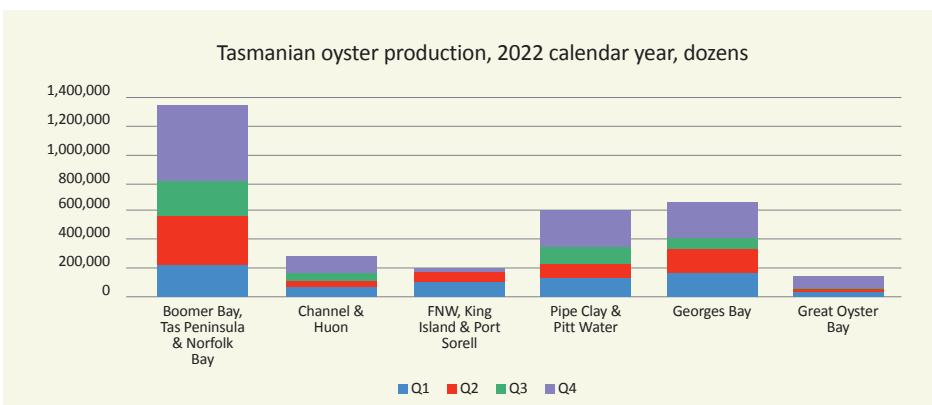
BIOTOXINS

Oysters Tasmania has requested the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) to update our biotoxin management plan in line with the recommendations of a 2021 review, to reflect different risks by area and season.

Oysters Tasmania will also be sending a submission opposing a proposed reduction in a number of regulatory thresholds for biotoxins, given no known confirmed illnesses arising under the current arrangement.

PRODUCTION

Latest data from grower reports to NRE Tas show that we produced oysters with a farmgate value of around \$39 million in the 2022 calendar year. You can see the data at oysterstasmania.org/ourindustry. ■



AUSTRALIAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY

CLAIRE CUNNINGHAM, LIAISON OFFICER



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

REMINDER – SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CHANGES

Changes to Marine Order 504 came into effect on 1 August 2023. If you haven't already, now is the time to review and reassess your:

- Safety management system (SMS)
- Crewing determination
- Risk assessment.

LIFEJACKET WEAR

You are now required to address lifejacket wear as part of your risk assessment and have a written procedure about lifejacket wear as part of your SMS. Vessel owners are also required to consider the management of lifejackets to ensure they are readily available if needed.

Please note the Tasmanian legislation that mandates lifejacket wear for persons on vessels less than 6m in length continues to apply to all Domestic Commercial Vessels operating in Tasmania. This should be included in your SMS risk assessment and written procedures.

TRAINING AND DRILLS – OBLIGATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR OWNERS

Vessel owners must ensure that sufficient training is delivered by appropriately qualified and competent people to all masters and crew, so that they are fully aware and able to safely perform their duties in key onboard operations and emergency situations.

Key things to consider:

- Is induction and familiarisation training for masters and crew conducted in relation to duties, key operations and emergency procedures?
- How will you determine the competency and ability of masters and crew to undertake their duties, key operations and emergency procedures?
- Who will conduct the training and sign them off as competent?
- How often will masters and crew be required to conduct training and drills?

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER IN MY



RISK ASSESSMENT?

You will need to consult with your master and crew (if you have crew) in the development or review of your risk assessment.

Some examples of onboard operations which may require a person to wear a lifejacket include, but are not limited to:

- Single person operations
- Night-time operations
- Open decks and rail heights
- Weather conditions and sea state
- Coastal bar crossings
- Emergency situations.

For more information on the recent changes to Marine Order 504, see the previous edition of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry News and AMSA's website at www.amsa.gov.au/marine-order-504-operational-safety-changes. ■

Train. Drill. Log. Repeat.

CHECKLIST



Training and induction – what to consider

Ensure training and inductions are included in your vessel's risk assessment, detailed in your vessel's safety management system and that you log these activities after you have done them.

IMPORTANT!
Practice emergency procedures.

- ❑ **Do you provide training and inductions for new masters and crew?**
→ Does this happen as soon as practical after they join the vessel?
- ❑ **Do you provide familiarisation training for masters and crew on key onboard procedures like fishing, towing or cargo work?**
→ How often do you ensure you do this?
→ How do you ensure they are competent to undertake their duties safely?
- ❑ **Does your training include drills for all emergency procedures, including master incapacitated and collisions?**
- ❑ **Does your training include the use of life-saving equipment like liferafts, lifejackets, EPIRBs and flares?**
- ❑ **Do you log details of training activities like who participated, what training they did, when it occurred, etc?**
→ Did they sign-off on this log? Either on paper or electronically?
→ Did you know this record needs to be kept for 5 years?

amsa.gov.au



Keep your Safety Management System current.

AMSA



Keep your Safety Management System current.

Be informed of Marine Order 504 updates.

AMSA



MARINE SURVEYORS

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Rod "Roddy" Behrens

20.09.1962 - 27.01.2023

Recently the Tasmanian Seafood Industry lost one of its finest, Rod "Roddy" Behrens.

Rod was an experienced and gifted abalone diver and crayfisherman for several decades, widely liked and respected by his peers, colleagues and the wider fishing community.

Rod was a very happy go lucky, generous guy with a huge smile and a heart of gold. He loved his fishing, and he loved his family and leaves behind his loving partner Ros, and his boys, whom he loved so much, and was so proud of. Jackson (Dec), Jaun who is following in his Dads footsteps, Thor and Jedd. R.I.P Rod, you will be missed.

WHAT'S COMING UP

AUGUST

25th August

Application Close for Years 9 & 10 Working on Water program

31st August

2023 Tasmanian Seafood Awards nomination (extension) deadline close

SEPTEMBER

20th September

Women in Seafood Industry networking event – cooking workshop

25th September

TSIN Article Submission & Advertising by 5pm

OCTOBER

5th October

SITCap networking event – cooking workshop

23rd – 25th October

Years 9 & 10 Working on Water Program

NOVEMBER

3rd November

2023 Tasmanian Seafood Awards

For further details on upcoming dates & events, please contact tsic@tsic.org.au

TASMANIAN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

RENE HIDDING, CEO



Image courtesy: Brand Tasmania

IN SUPPORT OF ITQ FISHERIES IN AUSTRALIA

The Tasmanian commercial rock lobster fishery is a strong example of the free-market ownership model of the 'rights' to commercially harvest our iconic southern rock lobster in Tasmania.

These rights were originally issued to the brave pioneers of our industry sector, many of whom risked their very lives to develop our fishery, as a recognition of their hard work over some 15-20 years of establishing worldwide interest in our *Jasus edwardsii* rock lobster. Not only did they develop the fishery, but they also developed extraordinary markets for our rock lobster in Asia.

Some in our sector seem to hold the view that 'the Chinese would eventually have found our product, in any event'. But that's not how premium markets develop. It took serious investment in the risk of life and limb as well as time and money, by those pioneers, to create the extraordinary, long-lasting interest in our premium fish from around the world.

Those original recipients of this new Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ), which granted them the right to harvest our own wild rock lobster species, mostly held these rights for some years. However, they eventually started making wise investment decisions to divest themselves of some parcels of their quota, in order to fund the construction of new vessels or invest in real estate to better house their families, as just two examples.

Some sold their quota rights to a family member or friend, on the basis that they would 'rent it back' at a fair rate in order to remain an active rock lobster fisher, while continuing ownership of the family fishing boat.

For some obscure reason, Tasmanian rock lobster quota became 'separated from boats', a fact that is now impossible to unravel without destroying the fair investment for some while creating unearned wealth for others.

The beauty and elegance of a strong free-market financial investment structure is that it underpins family investments. The Tasmanian Rock Lobster Quota book has an active daily value, determined in the best spirit of a free market. It's able to be sold off in tiny parcels, or a 20 tonne truckload, to old and/or new players in our industry.

These ITQ structures regularly come under suspicion that quota owners may sometimes be 'too hungry' in dealing with potential lease clients, but the realities of the supply and demand rationale of economics generally sort that out. Nothing and no-one forces a fisher to pay 'over the odds' for a single kilogram of quota.

The key concern of the financial investors in the issued 1,050 tonnes of Tasmanian Rock Lobster Quota, just as it is in other ITQ fisheries nationally, is the issue of security of access. The natural enemy of an Australian free-market economic structure is any State Government that, from time to time, might seek to get its hands on some or all of the quota in a particular ITQ market, mostly by the clumsy threat of denying access to the publicly owned resource in question.

This is usually mitigated by the payment of resource rents by those granted limited access to the resource. In Tasmania, the premium abalone fishery sector resolved this threat during the passage of their own ITQ legislation in the late 90s, establishing an extraordinary Deed of Agreement providing legal certainty for many years.

The TRLFA has its own plans to push for a similar level of security of access, either via its own deed of agreement with the people of Tasmania, or via the current (but somewhat stalled) rewrite of our principal legislation.

However it gets resolved, love it or hate it, the ITQ system in Australia is alive and well and it remains the only viable model to protect and underpin family investment in, and access to, our premium wild resource.

As for 'competition' for the resource with the Tasmanian public, the fact is that our 10,502 commercial rock lobster pots are dwarfed by the 18,000 annually licensed recreational pots, held by an increasingly experienced and well-resourced cohort of fellow Tasmanians. This high level of recreational participation from within our small population is testament to the extraordinary quality of our rock lobster. We remain happy to share the fishery with recreational fishers, despite the odd grumble here and there, usually about how well the other group is doing!

Our commercial sector's investment in the rock lobster fishery remains well protected by our Individual Transferable Quota system of ownership. ■

INSTITUTE FOR MARINE & ANTARCTIC STUDIES

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(Clockwise from top left): Tiger flathead, which is classified as sustainable in Tasmania (Photo: NRE Tasmania); southern rock lobster; blacklip abalone (Photo: NRE Tasmania); longspined sea urchins (Photo: Scott Ling); southern calamari (Photo: Antonia Cooper) and commercial scallops (Photo: Bob Lister).

A NEW DIGITAL HOME FOR IMAS FISHERIES RESEARCH

IMAS fisheries research now has a digital home, with the launch of a new website reporting the health of Tasmania's fish stocks and the research used to underpin the government's management decisions.

The Tasmanian Wild Fisheries Assessments website (tasfisheriesresearch.org) presents over 30 assessed fisheries, including scalefish, southern rock lobster, blacklip and greenlip abalone, calamari, longspined sea urchins and commercial scallops. Historically, these assessments have only been accessible separately and were updated infrequently, limiting their accessibility to the Tasmanian community.

"There are species-specific webpages outlining our research and how it informs the government's management of marine resources, thus ensuring the long-term sustainability of our fisheries," IMAS researcher and website project manager Dr Karlie McDonald said.

"This includes information on stock status, fishery background, commercial and recreational catch, modelling, biology, ecosystem impacts, socio-economic indicators and research that supports current management measures."

Read the full article:
bit.ly/tas-fisheries-research

Or jump straight into the website:
tasfisheriesresearch.org

CHASING BARRELS AND BILLFISH: SEAN TRACEY AND THE SCIENCE BEHIND CONSERVING PELAGIC FISHERIES

IMAS scientist Sean Tracey has spent many years catching tuna, swordfish and other large pelagic fish around Australia, but it's not just the thrill of the chase that drives him.

He is dedicated to fisheries research – and especially to understanding and conserving these fascinating, energetic creatures.

Sean, who is now Head of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Centre at IMAS, has been involved in fisheries and ecosystem research on a state, national and international level for 23 years. But for the past decade he's been particularly focused on studying large pelagic fish species, like tuna and billfish, and the recreational fisheries that target them.

Sean was recently recognised for his work in this area with the International Game Fish Association's (IGFA) 2023 Barry M. Fitzpatrick Conservation Award. Established in 1993, the award honours those who have made significant and outstanding contributions to fisheries conservation.

"It's an honour for the large pelagic research we do at IMAS to be recognised by this IGFA award," Sean said. "It illustrates that IMAS is an international leader in this space through globally relevant science, which opens up new opportunities to continue our research with scientists and fishers around the world."

Drop a line into Sean's story here:
bit.ly/sean-tracey

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF URCHIN REMOVALS ON HABITAT RESTORATION IN FORTESCUE BAY

Our researchers will soon begin monitoring the effectiveness of targeted longspined sea urchin removals at Fortescue Bay in restoring and protecting kelp and seaweed habitat for abalone and other reef-dependent species.

The underway Restoration by Harvest program involves commercial divers conducting targeted 'take-all' harvests – the removal of adult and juvenile urchins – to reduce urchin barrens from the Fortescue Bay boat ramp to Cape Haug (5 km).

As part of the program's first phase, Tasmanian Commercial Divers Association divers recently conducted a take-all harvest that saw around 73,000 urchins of all sizes removed over five days. The larger adults of commercial value were processed for their roe and sold to national and international markets.

Further urchin removals are planned to ensure urchin densities are reduced to levels that will facilitate kelp and seaweed recovery.

Prior to the harvest, IMAS researchers assessed the area's urchin population and associated barrens and found that urchin overgrazing had turned 6% of reef along the shoreline into barren rock. The researchers will now monitor the harvest's effectiveness for habitat restoration over the next 18 months. The results, alongside an evaluation of cost and effort, will determine if expansion of the program to other priority areas is warranted.

Fortescue Bay was chosen for this project as it's a productive but threatened abalone habitat, an important recreational and commercial abalone fishery, home to giant kelp restoration, and frequented by recreational dive charters. This makes the area a restoration priority.

Dive into more details via this new video: bit.ly/fortescue-urchin-removal. This project is funded by the State Government's Abalone Industry Redevelopment Fund, which you can read about here: bit.ly/3Kiqs4R

While you're at it, have a read of our latest longspined sea urchin fishery assessment for 2021/22: bit.ly/3Y2IHkm

USING REAL-TIME DATA TO IMPROVE SEAFOOD SAFETY

Our researchers are working on a project supporting the rollout of Oyster Tasmania's environmental monitoring sensor network.

The project aims to determine how can we use real-time data to improve the way we manage seafood safety risks relating to oysters while helping oyster growers increase productivity.

Rainfall runoff into oyster growing areas may bring animal waste or effluent that contains E. coli and other pathogens. As rain mixes with saltwater, salinity will decrease, providing a proxy for contamination risk.

We're using autosamplers (pictured) to collect samples during rainfall and river flow events, which will be examined for levels of thermotolerant coliforms – indicators of contamination. This data will be assessed alongside salinity, temperature and tide information collected from a new network of 60 sensors across oyster growing and harvest areas to inform improved risk management practices, like area closures.

This project is a collaboration between IMAS, Oysters Tasmania and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania via the Shellfish Market Access Program (ShellMAP).

Find out more: bit.ly/ShellMAP

The Tasmanian Government and Oysters Tasmania have provided significant investment into the sensor network. Learn more: nrmsouth.org.au/a-new-oyster-sensor-network-for-tasmania

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE TASMANIAN DIVE SECTOR

IMAS researchers have begun surveying operators in the Tasmanian dive fishing industry, including abalone, sea urchins and periwinkles, for a study that will inform an updated understanding of the sector's social and economic characteristics.

This study aims to support the industry and State Government in making evidence-based decisions where those are related to economic performance and impact of the sector. The survey will gather socio-economic information to support this research. Commercial fishers in this sector may be contacted by IMAS researchers Dr Steven Rust, Dr John Keane or Dr Jaime McAllister over the coming months to participate in the survey.

Surveys can be done either over the phone or by online meeting and should take approximately 60 minutes. Participation is voluntary and responses will be kept in confidence.

This study has been approved by the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) H0029142. ■



Commercial urchin diver at Fortescue Bay (Photo: Matt Testoni)



(Clockwise from top left): Sean Tracey with a sailfish, black marlin, southern bluefin tuna and broadbill swordfish.



Autosampler at Little Swanport attached to a sensor post

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT TASMANIA



Getting into winter means the opening of the scallop season, with the highest total allowable catch for State waters in over a decade.

We've also been holding winter school holiday recreational fishing clinics to educate the community, engaging people at boat ramps across the state.

Recently we've updated some of our communication channels. We now have our own NRE Tas Facebook page – follow us to keep up with all our news at www.facebook.com/nretasmania. We've also revamped the NRE Tas website, which has our new departmental branding. Check out the new and improved aquaculture pages at www.nre.tas.gov.au/aquaculture.

In July 2023 we released a policy for aquaculture research permits in adjacent Commonwealth waters. It sets out the *policy principles* that will guide government's decision-making in relation to aquaculture research in Commonwealth waters and describes the government's framework for regulating and managing these research activities. Over the longer term, legislative amendments, policy and administrative arrangements would need to be developed before any commercial scale aquaculture could occur in Commonwealth waters relevant to Tasmania.

RENEWAL OF FISHING LICENCES

The deadline for renewing fishing licences is **31 August 2023**.

This includes: Fishing Licence Personal, Fish Processing Licences, Fish Handling Licences, Fishing Licence (Commercial Dive), Fishing Licence (Minor Shellfish), Fishing Licence (Undaria), Fishing Licence (King Island Kelp), Fishing Licence (Marine Plant) and Fishing Licence (Introduced Marine Plant).

As the deadline approaches, we want to kindly remind all Tasmanian fishers and fish processing businesses to take the necessary steps to ensure your licences are up to date and that you are complying with regulatory requirements.

Take action to start the renewal process by completing and submitting the renewal application accurately (along with the required fees) as soon as possible to avoid any potential processing delays. The renewal notices have been sent out by post or email, as indicated by each licence holder.

Get in contact with the Fisheries Compliance and Licensing Branch if you haven't received your renewals, on 6165 3000 or Fisheries.Licensing@nre.tas.gov.au.

LONGSPINED SEA URCHIN

In this 2022/23 season, 533 tonnes of longspined sea urchin (or Centro) were taken by commercial divers, the highest harvest since 2018/19, and the second highest harvest ever!

In joint partnership with IMAS, TCDA, TACL and TSIC, a project to harvest all size classes of Centro in Fortescue Bay got underway in May 2023. The project was highly successful, with the first harvest removing over 22 tonnes of Centro. IMAS will monitor the kelp recovery in the bay, with follow-up harvests to occur in the near future.

The National Centrostephanus Taskforce (convened by Tasmania and comprising representatives from Fisheries NSW, Victoria and Tasmania, as well as FRDC and CSIRO) is in full swing and expected to release a draft strategy for co-management of Centro across its range within the next few months. This is aimed to complement any findings and recommendations that may come out of the Senate Inquiry into climate-related marine invasive species.

FISHERIES DIGITAL TRANSITION PROJECT (FDTP)

Tas eFish mobile app launching soon.

The Fisheries Digital Transition Project is launching the Tas eFish app, a user-friendly mobile application designed to provide a streamlined alternative to the current telephone reporting process for commercial fishers, starting with the Tasmanian rock lobster and giant crab fisheries.

Developed within the reporting requirements mandated by the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* and fishery rules, the Tas eFish app enables commercial rock lobster and giant crab fishers to fulfill reporting obligations faster, simpler and more conveniently while eliminating the need for time-consuming phone calls. The intuitive interface walks users through the reporting process, ensuring accurate and efficient capture of reporting information.

The Tas eFish app will be made available via a public launch around the time of this article going to print. We are very excited to bring you a new digital tool which has been designed to make life easier.

Stay tuned for updates and announcements regarding the official public launch of the Tas eFish app.

RECREATIONAL FISHING APP

From November 2023 all recreational rock lobster fishers will be required to report their fishing activity using an app or the alternative reporting mechanism.

This requirement will help scientists and fishery managers better understand recreational fishing activity to advise better management. NRE Tas is currently refining a mobile application to support the upcoming requirement and is engaging recreational fishers through a reference group to assist with app design and development.

If you'd like any further information about the FDTP, or to get more involved in the project, please reach out to the Project Team who would be more than happy to hear from you. Email fdtp@nre.tas.gov.au. ■

TASMANIAN ABALONE COUNCIL LTD

JULIAN AMOS, CEO



Image courtesy: Dean Lisson

In the last edition I referred to the fall in the total allowable catch (TAC) over time and the adverse effect that was having on the industry.

The fall has been caused by a number of factors, some harvest-based and some nature-based, and the TACL has been supportive of new management arrangements to ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource.

A new management and advisory structure has been put in place to take over from the Abalone Fishery Advisory Committee (AbFAC), and the first meeting of this new body was held on 7 August. This is to be followed by a general meeting of TACL members on 23 August – our Stock Assessment Forum – at which IMAS will present their view as to the status of the stock. Early indications are that the stock levels have stabilised, although the stock in the western zone has responded more slowly. Further information will be available at the meeting.

Work is continuing on Centro, and a program of work is being designed to keep the spread of the urchin to a minimum.

The AIRF has been extended by two years, and funding for the Centro program will be sourced from this fund. Efforts are also underway to encourage a more regional approach to Centro, to include the Commonwealth, NSW and Victoria.

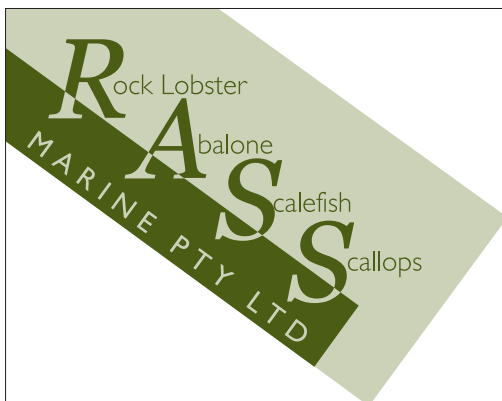
Another 'nature' issue confronting us is the presence of biotoxins in the water from time to time, as a result of algal blooms. Present knowledge would suggest that biotoxins accumulate slowly in abalone (unlike shellfish), but once there will depurate slowly (again unlike shellfish). Blocks on the east coast are presently closed because of the presence of biotoxins in the past, and are now being monitored in the hope that these blocks can be reopened soon. Of some concern is that warming water may encourage more frequent blooms, and with IMAS we are keeping a watchful eye on any developments. We now receive a weekly summary of biotoxin monitoring from ShellMAP, which we distribute to all divers and processors. The efforts by ShellMAP are appreciated and talks are underway for the abalone sector to more permanently align with an integrated monitoring program.

Divers would be aware of our Diver Code, which is now seriously out of date and in need of an update.

The update has now been drafted and circulated to all diver members. It is our intention for the update (the Guide) to replace the code and to ensure divers are aware of the present laws and responsibilities they entail. TACL are keen to ensure any necessary transition is as smooth as possible and we have been working with the company OffshoreSMS to enable its on-water application to align with the Guide.

The harvest strategy is also in need of an update and is presently under review. NRE Tas is driving this agenda and has recently presented a first draft of a possible new harvest strategy. Once preliminary discussions with the department have been finalised, it is our intention to inform members by circulating the draft document.

Internally, the TACL Constitution is also in need of an update and remains under review. It is to be hoped that amendments may be ready to present to the October AGM. Due notice will be given if this is to occur. ■



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Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)

www.afma.gov.au

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

www.amsa.gov.au

The Bureau of Meteorology

www.bom.gov.au/marine

CSIRO – Marine and Atmospheric Research

www.cmar.csiro.au

Dept of Agriculture Fisheries (DAF)

www.daf.qld.gov.au

Dept of Environment and Water Resources (DAWR)

www.environment.gov.au

Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

www.frdc.com.au

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

www.foodstandards.gov.au

NRE Marine Resources (Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania)

nre.tas.gov.au

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www.smt.edu.au

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nre.tas.gov.au

www.fishing.tas.gov.au

Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)

www.imas.utas.edu.au

Marine and Safety Tasmania

www.mast.tas.gov.au

Natural Resource Management South

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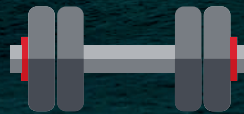
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