

SEAFOOD INDUSTRY TASMANIA



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REGULAR UPDATES

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NOTICE OF TASMANIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY COUNCIL

(TRADING AS SEAFOOD INDUSTRY TASMANIA)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the
Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (trading as Seafood Industry Tasmania)

will be held at **11:00 am on FRIDAY 24 APRIL 2026**

at RACV Hobart Hotel, Level 1/154-156 Collins Street Hobart

AGM AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening
2. Apologies
3. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2 May 2025
4. To present the 2025 Annual Report incorporating the Statement of Accounts, Auditor's Report and President's Report
5. Appointment of Auditor for 2026
6. Mark of respect
7. Any other business that may be properly transacted at the Annual General Meeting

Julian Harrington
Chief Executive/Company Secretary

Seafood Industry Tasmania
PO Box 878 Sandy Bay TAS 7006
P: 03 6224 2332
sit@sit.org.au



Tasmanian Exceptionalism – Winners from the 2025 Tasmanian Seafood Awards

The first in an occasional series featuring winners of the 2025 Tasmanian Seafood Awards. Learn about other winners in the next edition of Seafood Industry News.

The Tasmanian Seafood Awards celebrate the people, businesses and organisations helping to shape a strong, sustainable future for our sector. Over the next few editions, we feature each of the 2025 award winners. Their achievements reflect excellence across safety, innovation, environmental stewardship, business growth, workforce development and community engagement. From small family-run operations to large-scale producers and research leaders, each winner demonstrates the diversity, resilience and professionalism that underpin Tasmania's seafood industry.

Promotion Award: Brendon 'Squizzy' Taylor

The Promotion Award is presented to an entity that has demonstrated excellence in developing and undertaking a promotional activity that has contributed substantially towards improving the public profile of seafood and/or the seafood industry. In 2025, the award was presented to Brendon 'Squizzy' Taylor, widely known as the 'Aussie Lobster Man', for his continued work promoting Tasmania's seafood, particularly southern rock lobster and giant crab to audiences across Australia and beyond.

Over the past six years, Squizzy has created a direct connection between the public and commercial fishing by selling live lobster straight from the wharf, giving locals and visitors the opportunity to purchase premium seafood directly from his boat. He has built strong public trust by openly sharing how seafood is caught, handled and cared for, and by helping customers understand how to prepare lobster in a safe and humane way.

Squizzy's influence has extended through mainstream and digital media, including his starring role on *Aussie Lobster Men*, now in its fifth season, along with national media appearances and an active social media following. He has also represented Tasmania's seafood at major events such as the Australian Wooden Boat Festival and the Sydney Fish Market Expo.

Through authentic storytelling, strong community connection, and a practical 'from the boat to the buyer' approach, Squizzy has strengthened public understanding and pride in Tasmania's commercial seafood industry.

In addition to receiving the Promotion Award, Squizzy was also recognised with the Small Primary Producer Award for his on-water practices and commitment to sustainability.



Images: Brendon Taylor



Small Business Award: Bay of Fires Lobster

The Small Business Award is presented to a seafood business employing the equivalent of under 10 full-time staff involved in any segment of the supply chain that has demonstrated business growth; innovation; excellence in product, service and marketing; and has contributed substantially towards a positive public profile for the seafood industry. In 2025, the award was presented to Bay of Fires Lobster, a family-owned seafood business overlooking Georges Bay in St Helens.

Operated by the Rainbird family, with more than 50 years of fishing heritage, Bay of Fires Lobster has quickly become a trusted destination for fresh, locally caught seafood. After market conditions changed, the family began selling lobster direct from the boat, meeting strong community demand for seafood purchased straight from the source. This direct approach led to the opening of their waterfront venue in March 2024, offering customers the chance to purchase premium seafood, view live lobsters in tanks, and connect with the fishing family behind the product.

In its first year of operation, the business achieved significant growth, increasing sales by almost 60% between March and May 2024 without increasing catch volume. This growth was driven by adding value through customer experience, transparency, and product storytelling.

With a strong focus on fresh local seafood, fair pricing and community connection, Bay of Fires Lobster is building a positive and sustainable future for Tasmania's seafood industry.

Images: Bay of Fires



Large Business Award: Mures Tasmania

The Large Business Award is presented to a seafood business employing the equivalent of 10 or more full-time staff involved in any segment of the supply chain that has demonstrated business growth; innovation excellence in product, service, and marketing; and has contributed substantially towards a positive public profile for the seafood industry. In 2025, the award was presented to Mures Tasmania, acknowledging its continued investment in business growth, customer experience and industry leadership.

Built on a proud legacy back to 1973, Mures has grown into a vertically integrated seafood business spanning multiple venues, retail fishmongers, a wholesale division, a processing facility, and a commercial fishing operation. In 2024, Mures completed major renovations at its Victoria Dock Fish Centre, improving accessibility and functionality and introducing Kelp Bar. These upgrades contributed to a reported 12% increase in income following project completion.

Mures continues to strengthen its customer service and marketing through practical improvements, including upgraded online services, new accessibility resources, and a renewed reservation platform across its dining venues. Since launching in late 2024, the system has expanded Mures' marketing audience by more than 5,400 subscribers and supported stronger customer engagement.

Quality remains central to the business through its 'hook-to-plate' approach, ensuring seafood stays under Mures' care from catch to customer. Beyond its own operations, Mures actively supports Tasmania's seafood industry through events, industry partnerships, and sustainability advocacy, reinforcing its role as a leading seafood, hospitality and tourism business in the state.

Image: Mures Tasmania

Winners from the 2025 Tasmanian Seafood Awards

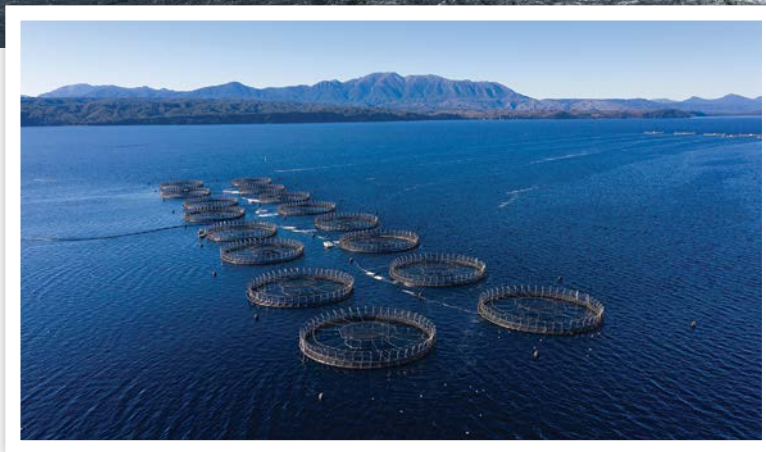
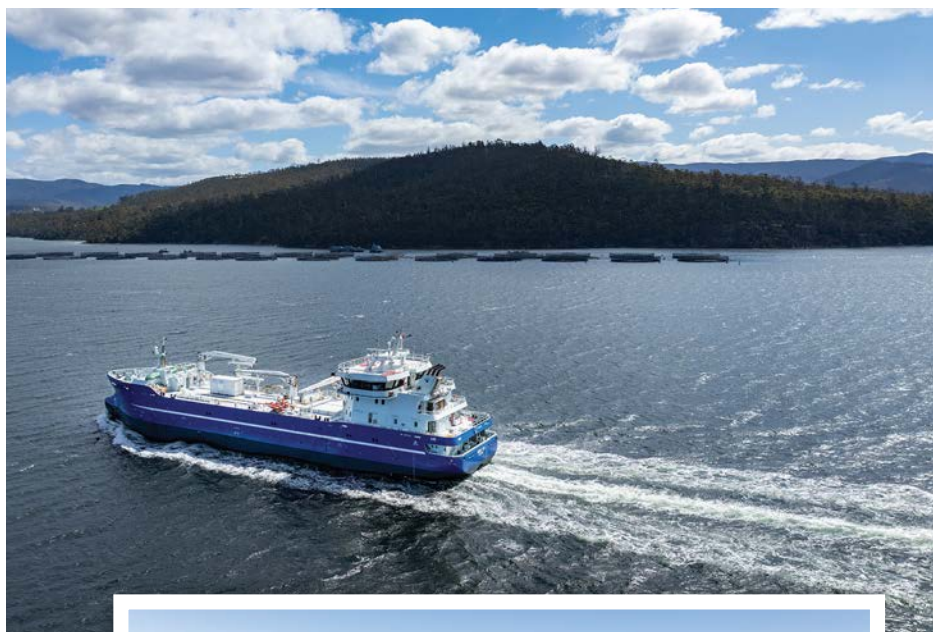
Large Primary Producer Award: Tassal Group

The Large Primary Producer Award is presented to a seafood producer employing the equivalent of 10 or more full-time staff that has demonstrated excellence in the sustainable production of quality seafood through innovation in fishing or aquaculture practices, and that has contributed substantially towards a positive public profile for the seafood industry.

The winner of this award, Tassal Group, employs more than 1,800 people nationally and operates under a comprehensive suite of independently audited sustainability and food safety certifications, including ASC, MSC, Global G.A.P. and BAP. In 2025, Tassal successfully achieved recertification across all standards, reinforcing its commitment to environmental responsibility, animal welfare, and best-practice production systems.

The award also recognises Tassal's investment in practical innovation to improve environmental and operational performance. Recent developments include a purpose-built cleaning system that significantly reduces cleaning time, improves safety, and captures biofouling material for potential reuse. This approach demonstrates how operational efficiencies can be achieved while reducing environmental impact.

Beyond production, Tassal plays an active role in building a positive public profile for the seafood industry. Through active engagement, community advisory groups, education initiatives, and its Better Together community program, Tassal supports regional communities and strengthens trust between industry and the public.



Images: Tassal Group

FIM

FIM is a leading seafood brokerage, advisory and consultancy group in Australia with a combined experience of over 80+ years in the fishing industry – a 'one stop shop' for all seafood investments.

- Abalone and Rock Lobster quota (sales and valuations) in Australia
- State, National and international fishing jurisdictions
- Brokers deals from single quota units to \$multimillion seafood portfolios
- Values seafood assets for major banks, courts, legal firms, SMSF's and family offices
- Quota management services

Phillip (Mate) Simpson ☎ 0418 128 838 ✉ philsimpson@bigpond.com

Alan (Tank) Gray ☎ 0417 357 005 ✉ tankgray@bigpond.com

Small Primary Producer Award: Brendon 'Squizzy' Taylor

The Small Primary Producer Award is presented to a seafood primary producer employing the equivalent of under 10 full-time staff that has demonstrated excellence in the sustainable production of quality seafood through innovation in fishing or aquaculture, and that has contributed substantially towards enhancing community trust in the seafood industry. This award was presented to Brendon 'Squizzy' Taylor, a well-known rock lobster and giant crab fisher recognised for his practical commitment to sustainable fishing and industry leadership on the water and in the community.

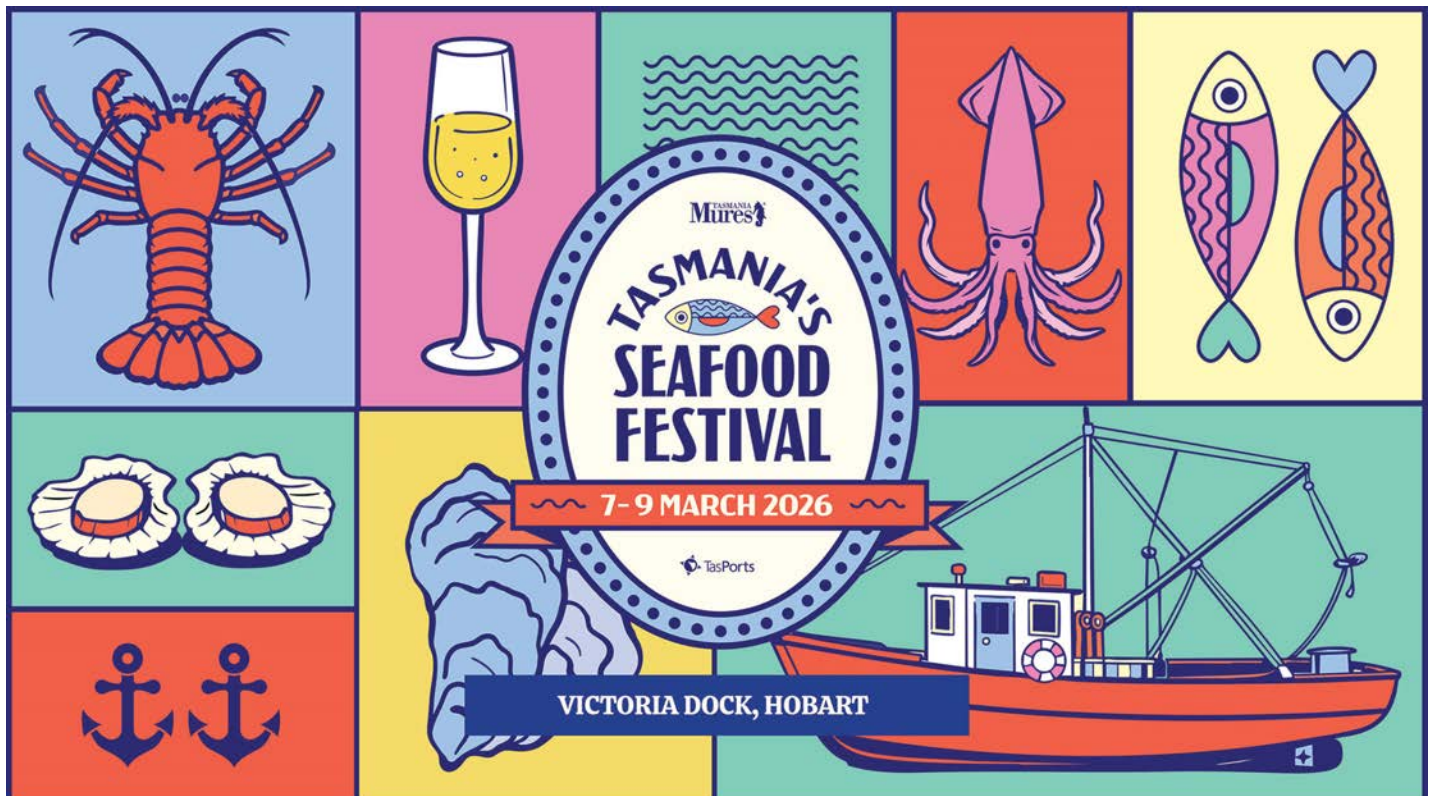
Squizzy has consistently adopted responsible fishing practices, including a strong 'no waste in the ocean' approach, retaining all rubbish onboard and ensuring proper disposal onshore. He has also supported industry-led improvements to protect marine wildlife, including volunteering for the OceanWatch's Whale Entanglement Risk Mitigation project in 2025. This work trialled changes to fishing equipment, including a shorter head float system to reduce the risk of whale entanglement.

In addition to his fishing practices, Squizzy has strengthened public trust in the seafood industry through his direct selling model, providing local families and visitors with access to fresh live lobster from the boat. By welcoming conversations at the wharf and sharing handling and cooking advice, he helps consumers better understand how seafood is responsibly caught and cared for.

Through sustainable on-water practices and strong community connection, Squizzy continues to play an important role in promoting high-quality Tasmanian seafood and supporting the future of the industry.



Images: Brand Tasmania (top)
Brendon Taylor (bottom)



Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd

DR JULIAN AMOS, CEO



The TACL Board

We held our AGM at the beginning of November. Newly elected to the Board are Beau Lesser and Melinda Dallas, replacing Julene Jones and Sue Forward. We thank Sue and Julene for their valuable contribution over the last two years – their input was highly valued.

At a subsequent Board meeting, Joey McKibben was elected Vice President, replacing Avril Brown who stood down from that role. Bryan Denny was elected Treasurer and Melinda Dallas as Secretary.

Overall

No question – 2025 was a difficult year. Market conditions in China have been challenging, and issues in the water remain problematic.

THE MARKET

As reported in the previous edition, in association with the marketing company Honey & Fox, we have embarked on a social media campaign, 'A gift from the wild', to lift the profile of our product.

A significant Fisheries and Seafood Expo was held in Qingdao, China at the end of October. Three of our processors shared the Trade Tasmania stand, promoting wild caught Tasmanian abalone with lobster group Dragon Tasmania. The TACL was also present at that Expo, promoting our social media campaign.

In the water

The current Harvest Strategy needs a Recovery Plan, and that Plan is essential if we are to receive Marine Stewardship Council certification. A final draft is now being written, and we look forward to receiving it by the end of January, at which time full certification can proceed.

We have been keeping a watchful eye on the presence of algal blooms, and weekly monitoring of biotoxin levels is being reported. Presently, all is quiet – let's hope it stays that way!



The salmon industry recently received permission to use a new antibiotic, florfenicol, in the form of a coating on pellet feed. We have been assured it is safe for human consumption and breaks down rapidly. In fact, it was used briefly in the past, and is in common use around the world. However, Public Health issued a public advisory (a cautionary note directed at recreational fishers), and this has led to a high level of public concern.

And that has now led to concerns throughout the entire Tasmanian fishery. A serious monitoring program is now underway, and we remain in constant contact with NRE regarding this matter. To date there has been no adverse effect on our fishery – again, let's hope it stays that way!

We were in constant contact with NRE regarding the TACC settings for this year, prior to their publication.

We argued for a change in the original recommendation, and although our voice was heard, circumstances were such as to encourage the Minister to accept initial departmental recommendations.

We also put forward a suggestion to amend the normal closing and opening times for a number of blocks, and our views were taken on board. In brief, Blocks 5 and 6A will open from the start of the year, together with Blocks 13 C, D and E, while the southern blocks 12A, B and D and Blocks 13A and B will remain closed until 1 May.

2025 is now behind us, and we can only hope 2026 will bring us greater comfort and joy, in line with the Christmas and New Year spirit.



Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council

JANE MCGANN



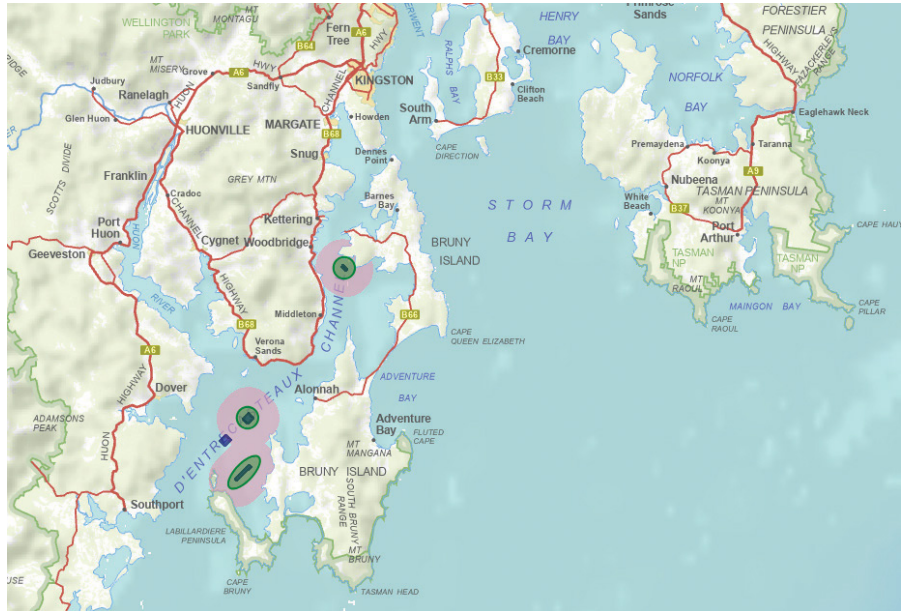
Levy Updates

As you know, TRLC members voted in October for revocation of the translocation levy and establishment of a new levy of an identical amount to “support data related to catch sampling and biomass assessment”. Both actions were supported by NRE. All members received notification of the revoked translocation levy.

The wheels of government can grind quite slowly for new actions. The new levy will not be in place until the 2027–28 quota year as the Department needs time to stand it up. Understanding the TRLC wants to conduct catch sampling and biomass assessment research in the first instance, and that members’ research focus may change over time, the Department is proposing to make it a ‘research levy’ as this will provide flexibility and avoid multiple rounds of levy revocation and initiation.

More Marine Heatwave Tools

We seem to have avoided a marine heatwave this summer, with cooler than normal water for the time of year.



Example of map published on TRLC’s Facebook page showing florfenicol treatment sites with 3 km buffer and a ‘wide berth’ buffer

Regardless, it is worth your while to keep an eye on the current and projected likelihood / severity of a marine heatwave. The Bureau of Meteorology has a new look up [tool](#) which includes forecasts for marine heatwave probability and marine heatwave category.

Videos on best practice for on-vessel handling and management of southern rock lobster, including during marine heatwaves, continue to be available on the TRLC’s Facebook page.

Florfenicol

Florfenicol has been used by Huon Aquaculture and Tassal in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel since 7 November 2025 to treat fish infected with the bacterium *Piscirickettsia salmonis*.

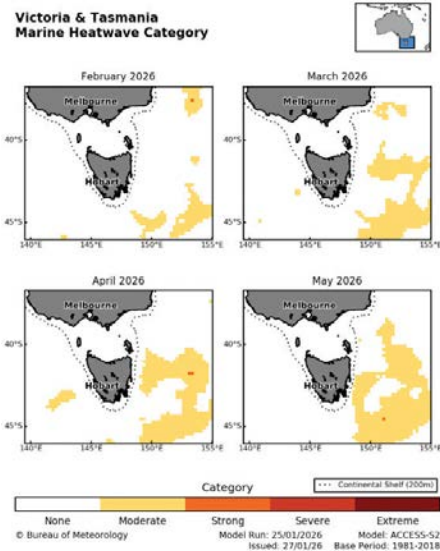
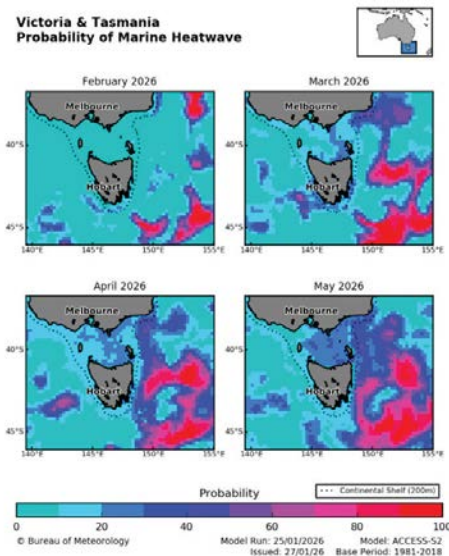
This treatment is necessary to ensure the health of affected salmon stocks.

As a precautionary step to protect market access for our southern rock lobster, the Department closed two rock lobster sub-blocks adjacent to the treatment sites. The sub-blocks remain closed.

In mid-January, the Department released advice to commercial fishers regarding transiting, caufing or tanking. With low levels of florfenicol detected in water near treated salmon pens for up to seven days post treatment, there is a small risk that rock lobster transiting through the area may show trace amounts of florfenicol. In an abundance of caution, NRE Tas has advised fishers transiting through treated areas to give the pens a wide berth.

The Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council supports NRE’s advice. Implementing such strategies, guided by science, mitigates against any risk of florfenicol to Tasmania’s southern rock lobster and ensures the quality of our premium product remains unaffected.

Frustratingly, the map included in the advice only served to confuse fishers as it showed 3 km buffer zones around all potential treatment sites, not just sites being treated. In an effort to mitigate against this confusion, and as an aid for fishers wanting to transit through this area, the TRLC is releasing weekly maps of treated pens showing both the 3 km buffer and a ‘wide berth’ buffer. You can find these maps on TRLC’s [Facebook](#) page.



New marine heatwave forecasting tools available from the BoM



From the Chief Executive

JULIAN HARRINGTON

Long-service leave: a time to reflect

“It’s never a good time to take leave” rang true as I left the SIT office for the Christmas break, planning to return in early February. With a calendar stacked with meetings, seasonal pressures, member demands, and of course looming crises, there is never a perfect window for a 5-week break.

Upon my return, I realised just how much I needed a break. Time relaxing with family and friends, seeing if my boat still floats, and learning how to fish again! A time to reflect on the challenges and issues that will plague us in 2026.

The downtime certainly provided restored mental clarity, and I have returned with some fresh perspectives and renewed motivation to tackle the big issues of 2026.

Tasmania's management dilemma: Science as compass, consultation as anchor

Although commercial access to sand flathead has been banned since November 2023, and prior commercial catches tiny compared with the recreational take, this species is a cultural icon and vital staple for Tasmanian recreational fishers.

Today the humble sand flathead sits at the centre of a fierce debate that matters equally to the commercial sector. The core question is clear: how do we balance urgent scientific warnings and the need for swift protective action with the democratic requirement for inclusive, transparent decision-making, and do so within the tight timeframes that declining stocks demand?

The science is stark and compelling. IMAS’s 2025 assessment shows south-east sand flathead stocks have crashed to just 5% of unfished biomass in a region that delivers 57% of the state’s catch. Overfishing has removed most large, reproductively vital females, with 79-100% of fish in many areas below the 35 cm legal size. Stocks have been officially depleted since 2020-21 and show no recovery despite earlier restrictions on bag limits and minimum size. Ignoring this evidence-based picture jeopardises the long-term survival of flathead populations.

Yet this scientific urgency clashes with strong opposition from recreational fishers and industry bodies. TARFish label the closure disproportionate, pointing to independent analysis by Dr Paul McShane that identifies robust recruitment and no immediate collapse. They contend that the government’s use of emergency powers under the Living Marine Resources Management Act sidestepped the promised 2026 review and marginalised stakeholders, seriously damaging trust. While the 2025 Scalefish Rules Remake consultation saw widespread calls for stricter controls, the sudden closure decision allowed scant meaningful dialogue. Labor’s call for a parliamentary inquiry reflects the same demand for open scrutiny of choices that carry major social and economic consequences.

This conflict poses a deeper dilemma, to rush forward in the name of very concerning science or pause the decision to allow a review and consultation, potentially at great risk to sand flathead stocks!

The reality is, transparent consultation should not be a roadblock. Instead, it should be seen as protection against disengagement and a way to give communities (commercial and recreational) real ownership of sustainability outcomes.

Over recent years, the statutory Fishery Advisory Committee (FAC) co-management framework has been dismantled and replaced by the Non-Statutory Fishery Consultative Group (FCG) ‘communication’ model. Since then, we have seen more decisions that lack broad industry understanding and support and, critically, some decisions that come without any clear, logical rationale.

Industry does not expect to win every argument. What we do expect is meaningful participation in the conversation and a transparent justification for final decisions.

I don’t think it is too much to ask for a fisheries management future in which robust science lights the path while inclusive consultation keeps everyone on board.

Trying to stay afloat!

The start of a new year often brings fresh plans, new goals and different experiences. For many, that can feel energising — but for others, it can also be a stressful time as calendars fill up and expectations build. Throw in the uncertainty of changing management structures, and people can hit boiling point.

As the year gets underway, take a moment to check in with yourself. How’s your gauge looking? If you notice it creeping into the red more often than usual, that’s a sign it might be time to slow down and reach out.

Support is available. If you, or someone you know, needs a hand, you can contact RAW via our website or by calling 1800 729 827. You don’t have to manage it on your own.

Check your gauge.



The Stay Afloat Tasmania seafood industry mental health and wellbeing initiative is proudly supported by our official sponsors





From the President

TIM HESS, AM

As we cast our lines into 2026, the Australian fishing sector finds itself in turbulent waters.

From sweeping marine park closures in Western Australia, to flathead closures in Tasmania and the continued threat of marine heatwaves, the industry is under immense pressure.

In Western Australia, the fishing community is reeling from the recent announcement of a total and permanent closure of the West Coast demersal fishing and the rapid expansion of marine parks. Described by the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) as a profound injustice, this decision has sparked widespread outcry. WAFIC's CEO report highlights that there was no ecological necessity for such a drastic measure, with viable sustainable solutions proposed that allow commercial fishing to resume. The closure threatens livelihoods and disrupts the supply chain that keeps fresh seafood on Australian tables. Public sentiment has rallied behind the fishers, recognizing the vital role commercial operations play in providing affordable, locally sourced protein. As one industry insider put it, this policy simply doesn't pass the "pub test" – it's out of touch with the realities faced by those on the water.

Closer to home, the recent Tasmanian Government announcement of a flathead closure in the SE highlights the impact that the recreational fishery can have on our marine stocks. With a commercial ban on sand flathead since November 2023, and the commercial take being <2% prior to that, this is solely a recreational fishing problem that requires a recreational fishing solution. The IMAS science shows that female spawning biomass, a key proxy for overall reproductive biomass, is depleted to potentially just 5-6% of unfished levels in traditional SE survey sites. This can only be described as critically depleted, being well below the internationally accepted 20% limit point where severe management action is required to rebuild stocks. If this was a commercial fishery, there would have been cries for a closure well before stocks reached the 5% virgin biomass mark. We must have the same set of management rules regardless of the sector.

2026 promises to be a busy time for our Tasmanian fisheries, with a remake of the Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015, inclusive of a framework to manage calamari, needing to be delivered by 1 November 2026; sardine fishery framework and rules to be progressed; the rock lobster harvest strategy needing to be finalised and delivered; and the rock lobster resource sharing debate to continue, amongst much more. Industry appetite for progressing these essential management tools is high, but action

from the under resourced NRE wild fisheries branch is slow.

Underpinning a path forward for our wild catch fisheries was the development of a Wild Fisheries Strategic Plan, a pathway for a long-term sustainable seafood industry. Ian Knucky and Paul McShane were engaged to progress this important piece of work. An online survey and workshops were completed, and a preliminary workshop report was produced. This report highlighted key problems for industry. Unfortunately, it would appear that articulating these problems, and a path forward, is too hard for government, and the project has stagnated.

Similarly, the national Futures of Seafood project is striving to provide a pathway for a long-term sustainable seafood sector in Australia. The draft report provides a good synopsis of the key problems faced by industry, and some suggestions for a more positive pathway forward.

Central to a long-term successful seafood future is a unified industry voice.

On that note, it is great to see Seafood Industry Tasmania working so well with our sector group associations, supporting each other in a unified industry voice. As we all know, when industry speaks with a fragmented or divided message, policymakers, regulators, and the broader community can exploit those differences. This leads to piecemeal outcomes, delayed decisions, or policies that favour one group at the expense of others, ultimately weakening the entire sector. By contrast, a united voice delivers clear, consistent, evidence-based advocacy, which amplifies influence.

In conclusion, 2026 presents a mix of headwinds and opportunities for the Tasmanian seafood industry. As we navigate a path forward, we must stay informed, advocate fiercely, and adapt innovatively to ensure our oceans remain bountiful for generations.

And most of all, we must stay united. As my predecessor noted on many occasions:

United we stand, divided we fall!



Wanted to lease

0-20m scalefish A or B. With wrasse and morwong, but not essential.

Cwth longline hook permit.

Ph Bryan 0417 502 195

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Bird's eye view of the construction at IMAS Tarooma. Credit: Peter Allen

New 'Skate Park' facility supports Maugean skate conservation program

A new purpose-built facility at the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) marks a major step in conservation efforts to protect the Maugean skate.

Located at Tarooma, the new facility, affectionately known as the 'Skate Park', supports the captive management program as part of the Tasmanian Government's Conservation Action Plan.

"This is an incredibly important facility," IMAS Maugean Skate Research Program leader, Professor Jayson Semmens said.

"Our animals are growing very quickly and maturing a lot faster than we thought, and we need to be able to house them as they go through these changes.

"We have over 100 hatchlings now from both captive-laid and wild eggs, but the wild laid egg animals are the oldest. They're approaching two years old and they're getting to a size where we needed a big facility and that's where this one comes in."

The new facility forms part of the University of Tasmania upgrades at

Tarooma to increase the Institute's research capability, enhance its learning programs and improve student, staff and community accessibility.

"It's a bespoke facility – it's been designed specifically for this purpose," said Professor Sean Tracey, Fisheries and Aquaculture Centre Head at IMAS Tarooma.

Professor Semmens added: "It has very large tanks the size of lap pools with each system having about 30 tons of capacity.

It has high-quality filtration systems, and everything is designed to make sure we're giving these skates the best chance of growing, thriving, and eventually being able to be released into the wild, which is the ultimate aim of the program.

"We now have a whole scale of tanks ranging from very small for new hatchlings through to the largest tanks capable of housing mature individuals," he said.



The new facility has very large tanks the size of lap pools and high-quality filtration systems. Credit: Peter Allen



Dr Jennifer Smith Credit: Matt Testoni, IMAS

Professor Semmens said accessibility was a key focus in the design of the facility.

“The larger tanks include space and turnaround points for wheelchair users, with camera systems and screens allowing for viewing the skates. Smaller tanks feature viewing windows positioned at wheelchair height.”

Do prey choices influence lobster success in helping manage barren-forming sea urchins?

Warming sea temperatures over the last 50 years have forced the longspined sea urchin to extend its range hundreds of kilometres south into Tasmanian waters. While this species is on the move, it’s turning reefs into barren landscapes.

So to what extent can southern rock lobster populations manage this ecological threat?

That was the question driving Dr Jennifer Smith’s PhD research, in which she investigated the level at which the primary native predator on Tasmanian reefs would consume this range-extending urchin in the presence of alternative prey types.

“We wanted to explore the effectiveness of lobsters as a control agent, what they’re eating and whether they like to eat the longspined sea urchin,” IMAS PhD graduate said.

Dr Smith spent weeks setting up aquaria, and getting out in the field collecting urchins and lobsters at various sites on the East Coast and at Tarooma.

“The major experiment was a prey preference trial, which was conducted

with lobsters collected from barren habitat where longspined sea urchins were abundant, and then lobsters from a healthy reef and no longspined sea urchins,” she said.

“We did something I call an ‘all-you-can-eat’ food trial in a ‘lobster hotel’ where the lobsters were offered different food options. I monitored what they ate and whether the size of lobster or where they came from made a difference.

“We found that all size classes of lobsters can eat the longspined sea urchin, not just the large ones, but the larger ones ate more. However, all of them would rather eat native fauna if they’re on offer, like abalone, shortspined sea urchin and periwinkles. There wasn’t a favourite, but the lobsters preferred the native options over the longspined sea urchin.”

Read the full story: <https://tinyurl.com/5n9y7jdv>



Sea urchin Credit: IMAS

From pest to possibility: designers turn sea urchin waste into kelp forest fix

What if one of the biggest threats to kelp forests could help bring them back to life?

That question has helped a University of Tasmania team win the Outstanding Science Prize at the [2025 Biodesign Sprint: Ocean Futures](#), a global competition that brings together science, design and creativity to tackle environmental challenges.

The project was developed by UTAS design students Mr David Dal Busco and Ms Shannon Terry, with academic leadership from Dr Vanessa Ward in the [School of Architecture and Design](#), and in collaboration with Dr Masayuki Tatsumi from Sea Forest.

ReURCHIN turns discarded sea urchin shells into biodegradable reef structures that help kelp regrow on damaged seabeds, turning a marine menace into a potential tool for ecological repair.

Dr Ward said ReURCHIN began with a simple idea: work with the problem rather than against it.

“Sea urchins are usually framed as a major threat to kelp forests,” she said. “We asked whether the shells they leave behind could actually be part of the solution to help these forests recover and reduce reliance on plastic-based materials.”

Read the full story: <https://tinyurl.com/yjfhxwu4>



Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania



Timely submission of fishing docket and returns

Commercial fishers are reminded of the importance of submitting fishing dockets and returns within the required timeframes, as specified in section 145(2) of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*. Timeframes can be found in the instructions of each docket and return book.

Information provided through fishing dockets and returns are key to supporting the management of Tasmania's fisheries. This data informs accurate reporting for the State and Commonwealth and is used to calculate royalties and quarterly beach prices.

Fishery managers monitor catch to the limits/caps and total allowable catches (TACs) and use the data to inform seasonal closures and report fishery performance to other government bodies. IMAS access data to monitor population dynamics and produce stock assessments.

Timely and accurate submissions are not just an administrative formality – they are a legal requirement, and they are critical markers of fishery performance, used to demonstrate sustainability and maintain fisheries' authorities to export product.

Developing a sardine fishery

We recently consulted on some policies around the development of a Tasmanian sardine fishery. The Tasmanian Sardine Fishery Policy Paper sets the path towards a sustainable, well-managed commercial sardine fishery delivering long-term economic and social benefits to Tasmanians.

The paper outlines the intentions for the new fishery, explaining the rationale behind the following key policy proposals. These include a precautionary initial maximum harvest rate of 5% (7,500t annually).

The feedback received will help inform a draft management plan (the design of the fishery and its rules), which is the next step in the process of developing this new fishery. You will also be able to have your say on the draft management plan this year, through statutory public consultation.

Scalefish Rules

In late 2025, we asked the public for feedback on the *Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015* (the Scalefish Rules). Formal consultation on any proposed changes will occur in 2026 and any rule changes that are made will take effect 1 November 2026.

We have been sharing information with the public about depleted and depleting scalefish species, the management challenges they face, and historical management that has shaped the fishery today.

Learn more at fishing.tas.gov.au/scalefish-rules-remake.

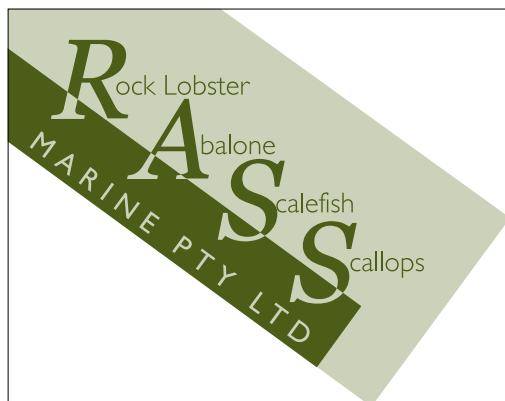
Avian influenza (bird flu)

Bird flu is a contagious, viral disease affecting wild, commercial and domesticated bird species and other animals. Report sudden or large numbers (more than five) of sick or dead birds or other animals to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888. Learn more at <https://nre.tas.gov.au/BirdFlu>.

Contact

Laura Fatovich, Team Leader, Stakeholder Engagement (Marine Resources) laura.fatovich@nre.tas.gov.au.

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Rural Alive and Well



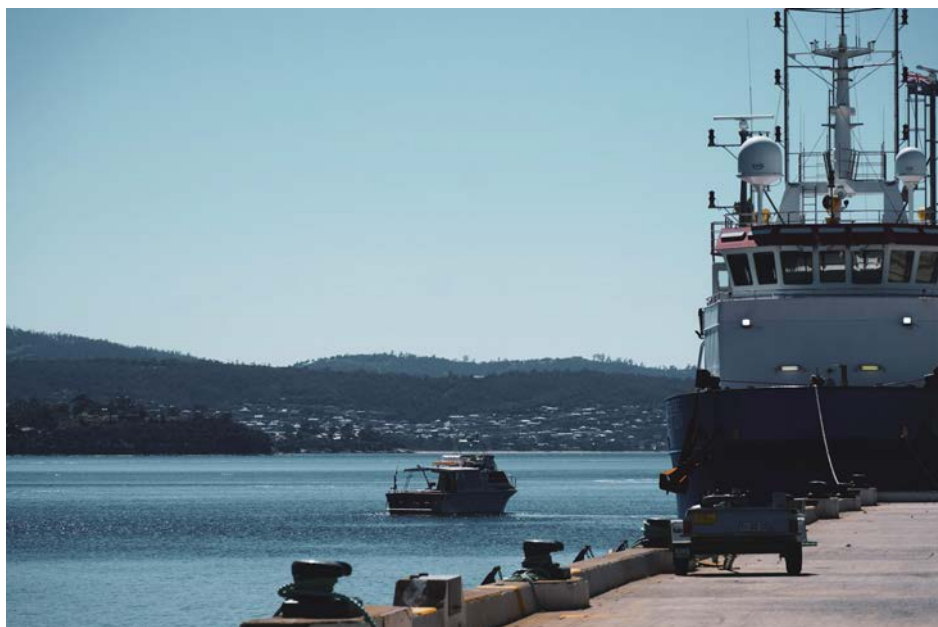
Supporting rural wellbeing, one conversation at a time

Life in rural Tasmania comes with many rewards, but it can also bring unique pressures. Long hours, isolation, unpredictable conditions and ongoing challenges can take a real toll over time. At Rural Alive & Well (RAW), we understand that rural life isn't always easy – and that's why we're here.

Rural Alive & Well is a free and confidential service, providing face-to-face support to people right across rural Tasmania. Our team works alongside individuals, families and communities to help people navigate life's situational stressors, build resilience and feel supported through difficult times. Whether challenges are work-related, personal, or simply the weight of 'everything at once', you don't have to handle it alone.

Our passion is helping rural communities not just survive, but truly thrive. And that starts with looking after the health and wellbeing of the people who live and work in them. We know that reaching out for support can feel hard, especially in tight-knit communities where people are used to getting on with the job. That's why we've made connecting with RAW as simple and straightforward as possible – no fuss, no judgement, just support when you need it.

RAW is proud to partner with Seafood Industry Tasmania to deliver the Stay Afloat program. This important initiative focuses on supporting the wellbeing of people working in the seafood industry, ensuring the sector remains strong and sustainable for generations to come.



Through Stay Afloat, individuals can access one-on-one support in their own environment, alongside education and awareness activities designed to build protective factors and reduce the risk of suicide across the industry.

Getting in touch is easy. You can complete a simple call-back request on our website – for yourself or for someone you're concerned about – and one of our team members will be in touch. Visit ruralaliveandwell.com.au/callbackrequest to get started. Alternatively, you can call us directly on **1800 RAW TAS (1800 729 827)**.

Support is available, and help is only a conversation away.



Seafood And Maritime Training



A word from our CEO James Garde

Challenging times for 2026

This year the industry and Seafood and Maritime Training (SMT) are faced with a decline in government subsidy support on two fronts.

We have been unable to secure enough training subsidies to meet the training demands of the Tasmanian seafood and maritime industry for its workers via Skills Tas Existing Worker Program. In addition, aquaculture was removed from the Australian Apprenticeship Priority List, which has resulted in the removal of Employer Incentive Payments for traineeships.

To deal with these upcoming challenges, SMT's initial response is to use its own resources to subsidise the additional 30%, then increase our course fees by 30% for 2026 to make up the 60% shortfall created by the deficit in existing worker funds. SMT has also started working with our clients to reshape our traineeship offerings to ensure they remain a viable pathway for employers wishing to upskill, retain and attract new staff.

These actions are aimed at ensuring the training that industry wants is available when it is needed, and there is no reduction in supply of SMT training courses.



KMHMS students and teachers enjoying the kinder BBQ and beautiful sunshine

While these initial actions aim to offset the immediate impact of these challenges to employers and participants, we will be continuing to work with industry peak bodies, sector groups, employers and industry representatives to pursue both state and federal governments for a better deal for the seafood industry.

Korean high school students

The end of last year saw SMT host visits from Korean school students keen to undertake aquaculture education and pursue careers in the industry.

A large group of 35 students from the Korea Marine Meister High School (KMMHS) spent four days in southern Tasmania learning about our industry. Two days were spent in the classroom studying aquaculture, maritime and diving operations.

Another two days were spent visiting aquaculture hatchery and processing facilities for both finfish and oysters.

A smaller group of five students from KMMHS completed an intensive 13-day training program at SMT. Their schedule included training in maritime operations, aquaculture across various species, emergency procedures at sea, work health and safety, food safety and biosecurity, alongside participation in an external English language program.

As part of their training, the students took part in field trips to hatcheries, processing facilities and feed centres, providing valuable exposure to industry operations. Following completion of the intensive program, the students have been offered roles within the Tasmania aquaculture industry and plan to spend 2026 working and discovering just how amazing Tasmanian aquaculture is.

Regional courses, the past and future

SMT closed out 2025 with a strong focus on delivering training in regional areas across Tasmania.

SMT delivered DMLA, Coxswain Deck and Coxswain Engineering courses in Strahan during November. In addition, Coxswain Deck courses were held in Smithton in October and St Helens in December.

Looking ahead to 2026, Coxswain Deck courses will again be offered in regional locations, with Smithton scheduled for September, Strahan in October and St Helens in December. If you are interested in joining any of our regional courses this year, please contact the SMT office or apply online – we would love to have you involved.



Great time catching up with ex-SMT staff member, family and friends



Lovely and warm welcome from Danny Mayson-Kinder (the b kinder CEO and Founder) & Mabel Huryk (right) to all attendees



Raffle drawing; from left- David Kinder, Michelle Dolbey, Danny Mayson-Kinder and James Garde

Delivering training in regional areas is a vital part of what we do at SMT. It allows us to directly support industry and regional communities by providing access to the skills and education needed to build careers, strengthen local businesses, and support long-term workforce development in the seafood industry.

End of year festivities with the b kinder foundation

To celebrate the end of another wonderful year of training, SMT hosted a relaxed end-of-year BBQ to thank our staff, trainers, board members and industry partners who help make SMT what it is.

The event was held in conjunction with the b kinder foundation, with SMT proudly recognised as a b kinder workplace. It was a great opportunity for everyone involved with SMT to come together, reflect on the year and enjoy time together in a fun, informal setting.

The day was filled with great food, drinks flowing, and brightly coloured balloons marking the close of a big year in 2025. Adding to the festive spirit, b kinder also sold T-shirts and Christmas cards, raising funds to support their important work.

A wonderful way to finish the year. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make it such a memorable celebration!



KMMHS students studying at SMT

Oysters Tasmania

DUNCAN SPENDER



Oysters Tasmania has produced an industry report drawing on the quarterly production and employment data that oyster growers report to the Department. The report is available at oysterstasmania.org/ourindustry.

The report covers six regions. The information relates to the harvesting of mature oysters so does not reflect the productivity of regions that focus on juvenile oysters.

In 2024–25, 3.2 million dozen oysters were produced, the same amount as in 2020–21, but over this period the regional mix has changed. The share of statewide production coming from the following regions rose or fell:

- Pitt Water and Pipe Clay Lagoon – fell from 34% to 13%
- North Coast – fell from 8% to 2%
- Channel – steady at 7%
- Great Oyster Bay / Mercury Passage – rose from 5% to 11%
- Georges Bay – rose from 20% to 27%
- South East, encompassing Dunalley, Boomer Bay and the Tasman Peninsula – rose from 26% to 40%.

Pipe Clay Lagoon

The Marine Solutions report on Pipe Clay Lagoon has been released.

This assessment of existing literature and data, funded by the Commonwealth Government's FRDC, has set out a combination of environmental factors contributing to reduced growth and increased mortality in Pipe Clay Lagoon.

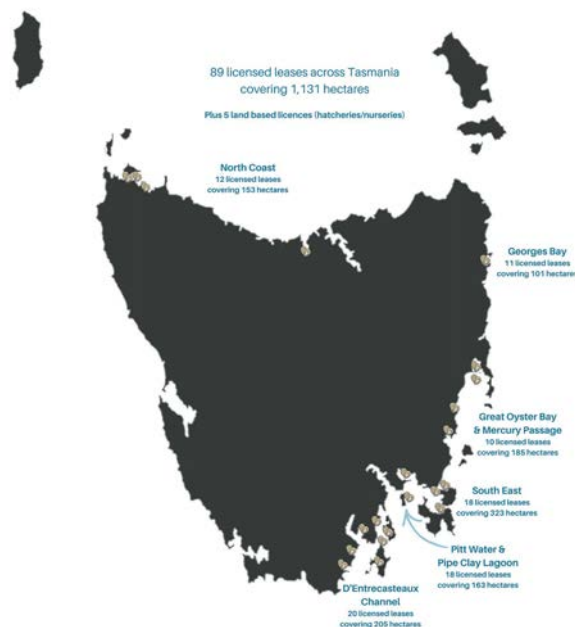
Over recent years, seagrass has proliferated and the lagoon has shallowed, with impacts on water flow, food supply, and the flushing of waste. Significant daily fluctuations in dissolved oxygen and pH have been observed. The daily oxygen level fluctuations are likely to impose significant stress on oysters, particularly when water temperatures are warm.

IMAS is continuing to undertake field work, funded as part of the Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement with the Tasmanian Government, to gather new evidence on these and other factors suspected of affecting growth and mortality in Pipe Clay Lagoon.

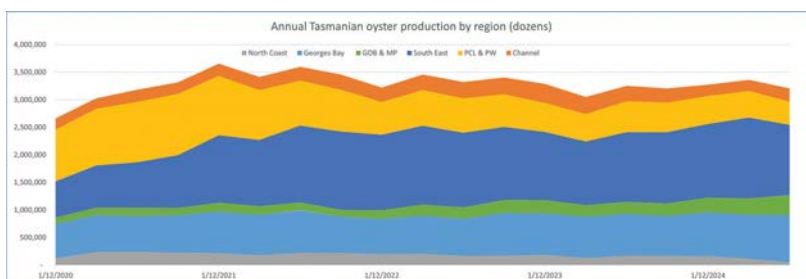
The Marine Solutions report and reports from IMAS are available on the Oysters Tasmania website.



Dr Carryn Manicom of Marine Solutions at Pipe Clay Lagoon



Regions covered by OT report



Regional production of oysters 2020–25

SEAFOOD INDUSTRY TASMANIA



SEAFOOD INDUSTRY TASMANIA (SIT)

ABN 61 009 555 604
PO Box 878, Sandy Bay TAS 7006

117 Sandy Bay Road
Sandy Bay TAS 7005

Chief Executive: Julian Harrington
0407 242 933
03 6224 2332

sit@sit.org.au
facebook.com/TasSeafoodIndustry
sit.org.au

DIRECTORS

Tim Hess / President	0418 140 630
Bryan Denny / Vice President	0417 502 195
Tori Percival / Treasurer	0409 968 208
Michael Blake	0438 627 900
James Dale	0427 981 103
Mark Hursey	0427 141 246
Dean Lisson	0419 599 954
Nick Martin	0400 026 688

SEAFOOD INDUSTRY TASMANIA NEWS VOLUME 58 FEBRUARY / MARCH 2026

Cover image: Yumbah

Next advertising deadline:
23 March 2026

Next article deadline:
16 March 2026

All enquiries including advertising:
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Proudly printed in Tasmania

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Directory

Wild Fisheries

Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd

67 Letitia Street, North Hobart TAS 7000
President: Dean Lisson
president@tasabalone.com.au
CEO: Julian Amos
ceo@tasabalone.com.au
Administrative Manager: Jane Johnson
03 6144 9223
admin@tasabalone.com.au

Tasmanian Commercial Divers Association

PO Box 878, Sandy Bay TAS 7006
President: Rob Langdale
tcdapresident@gmail.com
EO: Sue Grau
executive@tcda.u

Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council Ltd

C/- PO Box 878, Sandy Bay TAS 7006
President: Dawn Jordan 0427 621 428
president@trlc.u
EO: Jane McGann 0474 916 299
eo@trlc.u

Tasmanian Scalefish Fishermen's Association

PO Box 878, Sandy Bay TAS 7006
President: Shane Bevis
03 6247 7634
vessseafood@hotmail.com
Secretary: Colleen Osborne

Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania

286 Windermere Road, Windermere TAS 7252
President: John Hammond 0429 130 238
Secretary/Treasurer: (Mrs) Jill Hammond
03 6328 1478

Tasmanian Rock Lobster Processors Association

President: Ash Marshall
sit@sit.org.au

Aquaculture

Oysters Tasmania

PO Box 878 Sandy Bay TAS 7006
Chairman: Andrew Gregson
chair@oysterstasmania.org
CEO: Duncan Spender 0401 065 131
ceo@oysterstasmania.org

Salmon Tasmania

83 Salamanca Place, Battery Point TAS 7004
CEO: John Whittington 0439 335 429
admin@salmontas.u
www.salmontasmania.u

Australian Abalone Growers Association

EO: Nicholas Savva
eo@aagai.com.au

Government

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/index.shtml

CSIRO - Marine and Atmospheric Research

www.cmar.csiro.au/research/mer.html

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)

www.agriculture.gov.au

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

www.dcceew.gov.au

Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

www.frdc.com.au

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

www.foodstandards.gov.au

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

nre.tas.gov.au

Wild Fisheries Enquiries

Matt Bradshaw 0457 097 534

Recreational Fisheries Enquiries

Matt Bradshaw 0457 097 534

Commercial Dive, Marine Plants and Shellfish Fisheries

Sharna Rainer 0457 124 668

Commercial Fisheries Licensing

03 6165 3000

Permit Enquiries

Holly Rickards 0476 799 222

Abalone Enquiries

Matt Bradshaw 0457 097 534

Scalefish, Squid and Octopus Enquiries

Matt Bradshaw 0457 097 534

Project Manager

Scallops, Giant Crab or Rock Lobster Enquiries

James Parkinson 0457 005 376

Aquaculture Enquiries

Rachel McKay 0447 150 261

Emergency Animal Disease Hotline

1800 675 888

Biosecurity Enquiries

03 6165 3777

Training

Seafood and Maritime Training (SMT)

www.smt.edu.au

03 6286 0400

State

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www.nre.tas.gov.au

www.fishing.tas.gov.au

Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)

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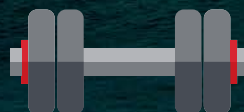
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19 Agnes Street, Jolimont,
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