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From the President

TIM HESS, AM

As President of Seafood Industry Tasmania (SIT), I have spent decades working on and around our boats, farms and wharves.

The past few months have tested every one of us, whether through localised Tasmanian concerns about antibiotic use and the technical risks it poses to wild-catch domestic and international trade, or the international conflict in the Middle East driving escalating oil prices. Once again, Tasmanian and Australian seafood faces serious challenges.

These pressures highlight the interconnected threats to our industry. We must address them collectively to protect jobs, livelihoods, and our shared reputation for producing clean, sustainable seafood.

If you think you are feeling the pinch at the fuel bowser, spare a thought for fishers in other states. In North Queensland, fishers are already reporting diesel at more than three dollars a litre, if they can get it at all. Supply fears have triggered panic buying and forced some operators to tie up vessels or slash trips. Similar stories are coming from Western Australia, the Northern Territory and even parts of Victoria. Here in Tasmania the impact is just as real. Diesel has climbed sharply, with reports of \$2.55 a litre at some servos and warnings of further spikes. Our Premier has rightly called on the ACCC to stamp out any gouging, but the underlying pressure remains.

For wild-catch operators, fuel is not a minor overhead; it is the difference between a profitable day at sea and staying tied up at the dock. A typical rock lobster vessel burns hundreds of litres per trip. Margins evaporate when diesel prices rise so sharply, and therefore longer-range grounds become uneconomic. The flow-on to Tasmania's economy is immediate: processors, restaurants, exporters and families all feel the effects.

Our seafood sector supports thousands of jobs and delivers hundreds of millions in annual value. When boats cannot fish, the entire chain, from wharf to plate to the Tasmanian economy, suffers.

National and state fuel supply discussions are occurring daily, and SIT is actively relaying industry concerns to both federal and state government and seeking every practical relief measure available, whether through targeted rebates or freight subsidies.

At the same time as fuel prices bite, our industry has been grappling with another complex challenge, the florfenicol issue. The recent suspension of the emergency permit for this antibiotic in salmon farming, following detection of residues in wild fish, abalone and rock lobsters, has rightly alarmed many in the wild-catch sector. Market access for Tasmanian seafood, both farmed and wild, is not negotiable. Any perception of residue risk can slam doors in export markets and erode consumer confidence at home.

SIT and the sector associations have worked closely and constructively on this issue. Regular briefings and coordinated engagement with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania have ensured that science, not politics, drives decisions. I acknowledge the 'wharf talk' that sometimes labels SIT as biased because salmon farming forms a part of our membership. That perception is understandable when one subsector dominates headlines. But let me be crystal clear: we fully understand the significance and consequences of market-access issues for every part of our industry. Residue detections in wild species directly threaten the hard-won reputation of Tasmanian rock lobster, abalone, commercial dive and every other wild-caught product. We have ensured the wild-catch voice has been heard, loudly and consistently, at every level of discussion.

Our sector association colleagues have sat at the same table, shaped the same messages and helped craft the same regulatory responses. This is not rhetoric; it is documented collaboration.

Our Chief Executive will provide further detailed briefing on the florfenicol situation in his article in this issue of Seafood Industry News. I understand the relative member and media silence on this issue to date, a targeted strategy to best protect export markets, and a strategy supported by DAFF and the sector associations. But now is the time for transparency and shared understanding as we look forward to the needs of wild-catch and salmon aquaculture.

Which brings me to the most important message of all. These twin pressures – fuel volatility and the florfenicol fallout – remind us that we are one seafood industry. In the eyes of the average consumer, we are not Tasmanian salmon versus wild-catch. We are not aquaculture versus capture. We are one Tasmanian seafood industry. One brand. One future.

Tasmanian seafood is world-renowned because we have historically presented a united front. Disagreements are inevitable, but they belong behind closed doors. Once decisions are made or positions agreed, we speak with one voice to regulators, to governments, to markets and to the public. Wharf gossip that pits one sector against another only weakens us all. It hands ammunition to those who would prefer to see us divided and diminished.

What I do know, however, is our boats will keep fishing. Our farms will keep producing. Our processors will keep delivering premium product to the world. And Tasmania's seafood brand – clean, sustainable, traceable – will continue to command the respect and premium it deserves.

We are one industry.



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More Tasmanian Exceptionalism – Winners from the 2025 Tasmanian Seafood Awards

The second 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.

Small Business Award: Tasmanian Wild Seafood Adventures

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 the Tasmanian Wild Seafood Adventures (TWSA), owned and operated by commercial diver Shane Wilson, for building a stand-out tourism business that connects visitors directly with Tasmania's seafood producers and wild-catch industry.

TWSA has achieved strong business growth in the past year, with a 72.6% increase in passengers on its vessel *Cuttlefish* between 2023-24 and 2024-25. This growth reflects the increasing popularity of the business and the quality of the experience delivered.

To strengthen year-round trade, TWSA introduced a new winter offering, Sea to Sky, a night cruise designed to attract guests during the quieter months. This was supported by a targeted marketing strategy that delivered widespread media coverage across television, print and online platforms, as well as inclusion in Tourism Tasmania's Off Season campaign.

Customer satisfaction has remained consistently high, with ongoing five-star TripAdvisor reviews and 29% of bookings generated through word-of-mouth recommendations. TWSA's authentic approach, led by experienced fishers and divers, creates a memorable connection between guests and the seafood they enjoy, strengthening trust and pride in Tasmania's seafood industry.



People Development Award: Turn the Tide Program – WISA

The People Development Award is presented to an entity that has demonstrated excellence in developing and undertaking a people development activity that has contributed substantially towards a higher-performing workforce for the seafood industry. In 2025, the award was presented to Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA) for its national professional development initiative, Turn the Tide Program, which is helping build a more skilled, resilient and inclusive seafood workforce.

Launched in 2023, Turn the Tide delivers practical leadership development through a mix of in-person intensives, online workshops, mentoring and peer networks. The program is designed specifically for seafood industry participants and supports women across a wide range of roles, regions and career stages.

Since launching, 894 women have participated nationally, with 83 seafood businesses involved. A total of 172 individuals have received formal mentoring or leadership training, and nine women were supported through bursaries to attend Seafood Directions in Hobart in 2024. Participants have reported measurable benefits, including a 31% increase in confidence and a 70% improvement in facilitation skills, with many progressing into expanded roles, promotions, board appointments or further study.

Tasmania has had strong representation, with 34 women taking part through formal mentoring and leadership pathways, highlighting the program's reach into regional and coastal communities.

Turn the Tide Program is a strong example of targeted workforce investment that builds leadership, strengthens retention, and supports the long-term success of Australia's seafood industry.



Health and Safety Award: Switch On to Safety: Tassal's Wristband Campaign

The Health and Safety Award is presented to an entity that has demonstrated excellence in developing and maintaining a culture of safety that has contributed substantially towards improving the health and safety of the seafood industry. In 2025, the award was presented to Tassal for its Switch On to Safety wristband campaign, a simple and effective approach to reducing preventable injuries and strengthening safety culture across operational sites.

In response to a rising trend in hand and crush injuries, Tassal launched the 2024 Safety Wristband Campaign to target high-risk hazards, including hand and finger injuries, rope snapback risks, and crush zones. The campaign introduced wearable wristbands as highly visible reminders, designed to prompt workers to pause, identify hazards, and make safer decisions before starting each task. The wristbands are rotated regularly to keep the message fresh and encourage ongoing safety conversations.

A key strength of the initiative is that it was built with employees, not just for them. Operational staff were invited to take part in a slogan competition, generating more than 100 entries from teams nationwide. This created strong ownership and engagement across crews and shifts, with winning messages including "Crush the day, not your hand" and "Think before you grip, save your fingertip."

By making safety personal, practical, and easy to apply on the job, the campaign has supported stronger awareness, peer accountability, and sustained attention to everyday risks, demonstrating a safety approach that can be adopted across the wider seafood industry.

Young Achiever Award: Jock Mure

The Young Achiever Award is presented to a person under 35 years of age, who has demonstrated that they have made a positive difference to the seafood industry and have the potential to continue to develop as an effective and respected seafood industry leader. In 2025, the award was presented to Jock Mure, General Manager of Mures Fishing, for his hands-on leadership, commitment to sustainability, and meaningful contribution to the seafood community.



A third-generation fisher, Jock plays a key role across Mures' fishing operations, processing facility, wholesale and product departments, and broader business growth. He has built a strong understanding of the seafood supply chain by working across all areas of the business, strengthening both operational performance and customer-focused delivery.

Jock has helped grow demand for key Tasmanian species by improving supply consistency and creating stand-out seafood experiences. This includes developing a reliable Southern Bluefin Tuna supply chain and launching the Southern Bluefin Tuna Carving Ceremony, which has been promoted through Tourism Tasmania's Off Season Campaign and interstate markets.

He also contributes to the future of the industry through active involvement in events and education, including Seafood Directions, the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, and Working on Water Program for Year 9 and 10 students. Jock is a strong advocate for responsible fishing practices and works closely with local fishers, research partners and industry groups to promote innovation, sustainability, and public trust in seafood. Jock continues to contribute to the seafood industry by supporting and promoting sustainable fishing practices through strong leadership and commitment, serving as a role model for future generations.

Industry Ambassador Award: Stuart Richey

The Industry Ambassador Award is presented to a person who has demonstrated that he or she has made a substantial positive difference to the seafood industry over at least 20 years, and who has been a highly effective and respected seafood industry leader. In 2025, the award was presented to Stuart Richey of Richey Fishing, acknowledging a lifetime of dedication to commercial fishing, contribution to industry development, and strong representation of fishers at both state and national levels.



Stuart has been involved in the fishing industry for decades, building Richey Fishing into a respected operation with quota and licences across several key fisheries, including Australian salmon, scalefish, scallops and squid. He has also played a major role in expanding processing and market opportunities through his involvement in Tasmanian Blue Seafoods, developing new export markets for scallops, and supporting value-added seafood production in Tasmania.

Committed innovators, Stuart and the Richey family pioneered aerial fish spotting in Tasmania and were early leaders in new fishing methods and product development, including squid jigging technology and freezing at sea, approaches that are now standard practice in the industry.

Beyond his own business, Stuart has contributed extensive time to industry representation and policy, including longstanding service on advisory committees and major national organisations such as AFMA and FRDC. His leadership and influence have helped shape fisheries management, safety and sustainability outcomes for the wider Australian seafood sector.

Working on Water, a school perspective

We were excited to receive this article about our 2025 Working on Water, written by one of the teachers accompanying Rosebery District School students. This is the first time we've had someone else writing about WoW. Hopefully, it won't be the last.

Recently, seven Year 10 students from Rosebery District School were selected to participate alongside 35 other Tasmanian students in the Working on Water program in Hobart. The three-day program gave students the opportunity to explore a wide range of careers and potential pathways on, in and around the water.

A highlight of the trip was when the students observed all stages of salmon farming – from the hatcheries through to visiting the leases out on the water. Many were surprised by how complex the process was and how many different stakeholders are involved in ensuring the salmon make it to our plates.

They also explored commercial fishing vessels and one of the boats used by the Marine Police, which gave them valuable insight into what a working career on the water might look like. The students visited the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) in Taroona, where they learned from young scientists about the research taking place and explored course options offered by the University of Tasmania and IMAS. They also had the opportunity to chat with graduates from the Australian Maritime College about their study and career pathways.

They then enjoyed a fish and chips lunch at Mures Seafood Restaurant, where they met members of the Mure family and learned about their fishing business and how seafood is managed from ocean to plate.

The students also took part in a series of rotation activities with representatives from Skretting, Tassal and Pennicott, gaining insights into aquaculture, sustainable seafood production, and marine tourism.

A special thanks to Tassal, Huon and Petuna for their generosity and help in making this trip possible for our students. What an incredible experience it was for our students!



“ The working on water program was a great opportunity to take a look at all the different jobs available in and around water. It was really interesting looking at the fish food factory, travelling to the fish pens and looking at all the different boats.

“ The working on water program was a fun 3-day learning experience. We learnt about boats, and I saw a starfish.





“ When we went to Hobart it was exciting. We learnt about fish, boats, fish food/farms, and whilst I didn't stay the whole time, I enjoyed it.

“ I enjoyed being on all of the boats and learning about how the fish farms work. I was lucky to get the chance to see behind the scenes of the boats and factories. I enjoyed it very much.



“ It was very interesting seeing the process of the salmon from birth to the farms and all of the work that goes into it.



“ I believe the trip was really fun and showed me a possible side-job that could involve the water as well as showing me how the 'waters' of Tassie lead to so many great jobs.”

Strahan Coffee Catch Up: Checking in With Our West Coast Seafood Community

ALAINA BOS

On Monday 2 March, the Seafood Industry Tasmania (SIT) team hit the road from Hobart to the West Coast, ready to spend some time with our Strahan seafood community.

Early Tuesday morning, our team set up outside *The Kitchen* on the Esplanade for an informal 'coffee catch up' with fishers, their families, and others working across the seafood sector. This was an opportunity for the local community to stop by, have a chat and check in, on their way to work, while enjoying a free coffee. The conversations were relaxed but meaningful, and the feedback received highlighted the value of creating simple, supportive spaces for connection within our industry.

This event was a part of the Stay Afloat Tasmania initiative, supporting mental health and wellbeing across the seafood industry. While our partners from Rural Alive and Well (RAW) were unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances, they will be present at future Stay Afloat events around Tasmania throughout the year.

We're grateful to all who joined us. The honesty, humour and genuine care shown by the West Coast community is exactly why these catch-ups matter.

We look forward to continuing these community visits and strengthening wellbeing support across Tasmania's seafood sector.



Practising what we preach: a moment to reset

After the morning session, the SIT team took our own advice and made time to connect and reset. There's no better place to do that than on the beautiful, rugged West Coast.

We were warmly welcomed into Granville Harbour – or to 'a piece of heaven' as it is affectionately described by resident and retired SIT Board President Lindsay Newman and his wife Anna. With perfect weather, we wandered through Anna's garden, admiring her favourite blooms and sampling strawberries straight from the patch. It was one of those small, grounding moments that remind you why looking after yourself and each other matters.

Before leaving we walked out to view Granville Harbour itself, and it was wild, windy and utterly stunning. The coastline feels raw and untouched, with big skies, big swell, and conditions that can shift in an instant – something every West Coast operator would know well.

Taking advantage of our time on the West Coast, our final stop was onto Ocean Beach, just outside Strahan. From a distance, it looks calm and inviting, but as the locals know, its beauty can be deceptive. Tassie's longest beach stretches more than 30 kilometres, is fully exposed to the Roaring Forties, has powerful surf, shifting sand bars and strong, unpredictable rips. With no patrols and a high hazard rating, it's a place best admired from the sand, a dramatic reminder of the energy and unpredictability of the West Coast.

Thank you, West Coast

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for a coffee or offered a few minutes of their morning, and to Lindsay and Anna for welcoming us into their beautiful 'backyard'.

We're looking forward to more regional visits and continuing to strengthen wellbeing support across Tasmania's seafood sector.



UPCOMING COMMUNITY CATCH-UPS

Keep an eye out for future Stay Afloat Tasmania and RAW visits:

Stanley	Early May 2026
Smithton	Early May 2026
Dover	Late August 2026
St Helens	Early November 2026

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



Oysters Tasmania

DUNCAN SPENDER



Policy and funding

Oysters Tasmania has been making our industry's case with various government agencies.

We have called for simplification of the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme given that our growers can spend ages making relatively small claims, such that it is often not worth it.

We have outlined to AMSA their excessive vessel and crew requirements for oyster farmers operating in protected waters.

We have outlined to federal and state authorities the long-term damage to our industry from cuts in aquaculture training support and insufficient funding of Seafood and Maritime Training.

We have also joined the chorus of industries outlining the impact of fuel price rises.

The federal government's Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has suspended the emergency permit for the use of florfenicol in salmon in Tasmania. We are seeking data from the testing regime that has been carried out to date, and will engage in discussions alongside all seafood sectors regarding any future applications to use the antibiotic.



Joint scholarship winners: Sam Dyke and Deb Gardner

The state government has advised that it will again contribute \$110,000 towards biotoxin testing costs, in recognition of the benefit of this testing to the recreational sector. This means the ShellMAP levy issued this month will collect \$98,402 less from oyster growers than would otherwise be the case.

Michael Cameron scholarship

Michael Cameron was an industry pioneer whose contribution to the Tasmanian oyster industry went well beyond Cameron of Tasmania. Oysters Tasmania's scholarship named in his honour has been jointly awarded this year to Deb Gardner at Ma Bruny Oysters and Sam Dyke at Oyster Bay Oysters. The scholarship will assist Deb to undertake a nationally accredited course on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (and we plan to then tap into Deb's knowledge to update the industry food safety program template). The scholarship will assist Sam to undertake an agribusiness degree at Marcus Oldham college.

Attitudes to our industry

CSIRO has recently released a survey of more than 900 Tasmanians. The respondents include aquaculture workers, marine scientists, officials, commercial fishers, members of environmental and Indigenous groups, marine tourism operators, 'water enthusiasts', and other members of the general public.

Respondents reported having limited information about oyster farming. They ranked oyster farming as posing the second lowest threat to Tasmania's coastal waters, and as the second lowest activity of concern, after seaweed farming. The environmental sustainability and governance of oyster farming was viewed favourably.



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Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania Inc.

BOB LISTER

Overall scallop season 2025 was satisfactory for most fishermen and processors with Tasmania producing good results, except that the season finished early as all open areas became uneconomical to harvest and Bass Strait was extremely disappointing.

One highlight was that meat quality, beach prices and retail markets stayed strong; however, starfish were a big problem in both areas.

For last year Tasmania's harvest was 1612 tonnes from 5 vessels and the Commonwealth fishery recorded a record low 96.8 tonnes of which 48.2 tonnes was research catch from six vessels some of which came from Tasmania.

Just to show how difficult it is to predict a good or bad season, in the last four years before season 2025 Tasmania had an average harvest of 1771 tonnes with a high of 3398 tonnes and a low of 56 tonnes and Bass Strait has averaged 1441 tonnes with their highest catch being 2330 tonnes and a low of 449 tonnes.

For season 2025 most Tasmanian catch was from the east coast of Tasmania and vessels went looking in Commonwealth waters mainly east of King Island and northeast of Flinders Island but with little to show for their efforts.

It remains to be seen what scallop season 2026 will produce in both jurisdictions; however, industry are all optimistically hopeful of a good result.

Over the last couple of weeks we have had the opportunity to put to NRE Tas what changes we would like for the upcoming Tasmanian season to better improve management and the economics of the fishery.

We feel strongly that following a successful targeted survey the whole Area, of which there are six, should be opened, subject to any undersize and spawning closures, ensuring there is no need to continually open small areas that may be fished out quickly and the ongoing delays that always occur before a new area can be identified and opened. Multiple areas can be open at the same time and in our view it is not necessary to have a closed biomass region for each Area.

It would be preferable for all research surveys to be completed before the season starts but that may not be possible. One way or another we need full flexibility and perhaps may need to complete targeted surveys until at least the end of November in order to meet the pent-up retail demand that is always there until at least Easter.

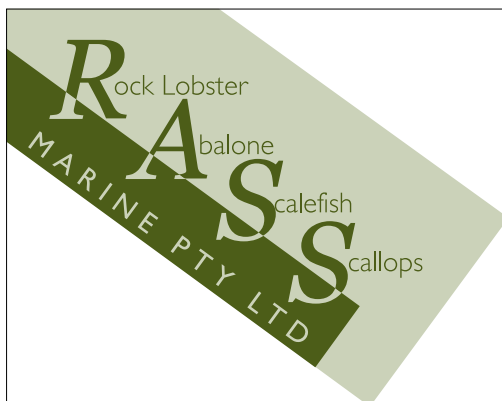
The 85mm minimum shell size has worked well in NW Tasmania and industry has requested that it be extended all along the north coast and east coast to north of Eddystone Point.



It is important that we do not lose the harvest potential of these areas particularly as scallops in these beds can reproduce after two years but remain under 90mm after four or five years due to low nutrients in the water column. Significantly, in Commonwealth waters north of Babel Island immediately adjacent to Tassie waters the size minimum is 85mm.

Many years ago we divided Tasmania into six Areas for survey purposes with a 50 tonne research component; however, these arbitrary lines on water are not suitable for scallop management areas and we have proposed that they be redrawn in line with known scallop beds.

It remains to be seen how NRE Tas consider these recommendations to improve fishery management and economics but we should know soon as the 2026 scallop season is scheduled to commence by mid-June.



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From the Chief Executive

JULIAN HARRINGTON

As Chief Executive of Seafood Industry Tasmania, I write at a pivotal moment for our industry and organisation.

Recent months have brought intense scrutiny and operational challenges, particularly around the use of florfenicol (FFC) in salmon aquaculture and its implications for wild-catch fisheries. These issues have tested relationships across our industry, but they have also underscored a fundamental truth: Tasmanian seafood succeeds when we act as one united voice.

The President's article in this magazine rightly acknowledged 'wharf talk' suggesting SIT might favour salmon farming due to its economic size and membership of SIT. This perception is understandable when one subsector attracts disproportionate attention. However, as the President stated clearly, SIT fully recognises the gravity of market-access risks for every part of our industry, from wild harvest to processing sectors. Residue detections in wild species, such as rock lobster, abalone, commercial dive species and others, directly jeopardise the hard-won reputation of Tasmanian seafood. We have ensured the wild-catch perspective is heard loudly and consistently at every level. This is not mere rhetoric; it is evidenced by documented collaboration, including joint submissions, coordinated engagement with regulators like the APVMA and Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE), and shared messaging.

A key example is the preliminary, non-binding discussion held on 11 March 2026 at the SIT office. Attendees included CEOs and executives from Salmon Tasmania, Tasmanian Abalone Council, Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council, Tasmanian Commercial Dive Association, Tasmanian Rock Lobster Processors Association, Oysters Tasmania and SIT.

No decisions or commitments were made; the meeting aimed to initiate open dialogue on potential future FFC use and establish a process for ongoing sector collaboration.

Participants shared frank perspectives on the background: Salmon Tasmania explained FFC's emergency approval in November 2025 to address a major *Piscirickettsia salmonis* outbreak, its effectiveness in reducing mortality, and the comprehensive monitoring by EPA and NRE that found no environmental or human health risks from treatments. The suspension of the permit stemmed from trade criteria under the label not being met, not safety or efficacy concerns.

Wild-catch representatives highlighted frustrations, late notification of FFC use, confusion over monitoring programs, financial impacts from precautionary closures, displaced fishing effort, and reputational/trade risks despite low-level detections. Sectors emphasised the need to protect export markets with zero-tolerance policies for residues in wild products.

Despite these challenges, the meeting revealed strong willingness to find balance. Three pathways emerged:

- **Plan A:** No future FFC use (preferred by wild-catch voices to fully eliminate risks, though not feasible short-term for salmon due to animal welfare needs).
- **Plan B:** Co-developed management arrangements between wild-catch and salmon sectors to meet trade criteria (e.g. science-based controls on pathways, uptake, depuration and monitoring).
- **Plan C:** Salmon develops arrangements independently.

Plan B appears the most constructive, offering common ground for collaboration. Shared principles include co-habitation without harm, recognition that problems for one sector affect all, support for salmon animal welfare and economic viability alongside wild-catch market protection, evidence-based transparency, and 'make good' provisions if impacts occur.

Agreed next steps focus on prioritising R&D (e.g. pathways from treatment sites, processor risks, depuration rates - potentially via FRDC/Salmon IPA funding), and exploring a collaborative process.

SIT has taken a facilitation role in this dialogue, ensuring every voice, from small-scale divers to large-scale operators, carries weight. We sit between sectors, advocating for the entire Tasmanian seafood industry, which relies on our clean, green brand for premium markets.

The coming period demands careful navigation. Salmon faces disease pressures requiring therapeutic options until vaccines and breeding advance resilience. Wild-catch sectors face legitimate trade vulnerabilities.

By keeping disagreements constructive and private, sharing evidence openly, and presenting jointly to regulators, governments and markets, we safeguard jobs, regional economies and our global standing. SIT remains committed to this path, transparent, inclusive and evidence-driven.

Tasmanian seafood is one industry with one future. Through collaboration like the 11 March discussion, we will leave no stone unturned as we explore opportunities for stronger co-existence and sustained success.

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



Rogue sea urchin marks westernmost sighting

A rogue longspined sea urchin has been discovered in Tasmania's remote southwest waters, marking the most westerly sighting of the species in the state.

Warming sea temperatures over the past 50 years have increased suitable habitat for longspined sea urchins hundreds of kilometres south into Tasmanian waters, where dense populations have transformed reefs into barren landscapes along parts of the east coast.

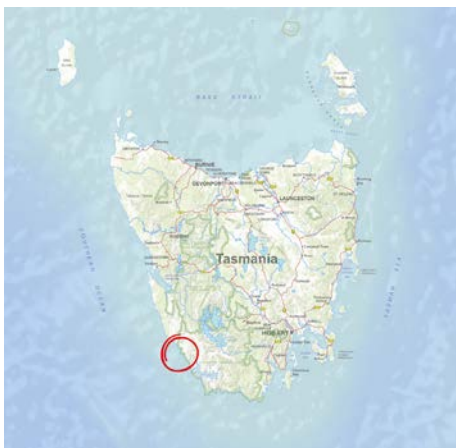
Now, a lone urchin has been discovered between Port Davey and Low Rocky Point, well outside the species' usual range.

"This is quite notable because it's the westernmost urchin ever reported in the state," said Dr John Keane, a senior research fellow at the University of Tasmania's IMAS.

"We typically see dense populations on the east coast, and some around Port Arthur. However, sightings are increasing across our southern reefs.

"While a single individual is not a problem, this sighting highlights the extent of the threat if our waters continue to warm."

The primary control measure for the longspined sea urchin in Tasmania is the state government's incentivised harvest program, which has supported commercial removal efforts since 2018. To date, commercial divers have removed more than eight million urchins from Tasmanian reefs.



The most western record of a longspined sea urchin highlights the potential threat from the spread of the species.
Credit: LISTmap NRE



The 127 mm diameter Centro was discovered between Low Rocky Point and Port Davey. Credit: John Keane

We are now linking this observation with a new PhD student project investigating larval survival and connectivity of the longspined sea urchin around Tasmania.

Valentina Nunez Espinosa joins IMAS from Chile where she modelled the large increase in the population of a different species of Centro - *Centrostephanus sylviae*.

To aid her research we are seeking commercial and abalone divers who dive in the south and southwest (blocks 9 to 16) to collect the Centro they see under a scientific research permit.

Urchins will be sized and aged estimated, and this information combined with oceanographic models to predict where they may have originated from.

Divers willing to participate will be named on the permit (one-year duration), provided with the permit + log-sheet, and IMAS will arrange collection on return to port. Please email John.Keane@utas.edu.au

Read the full story: <https://tinyurl.com/2aur7c36>



Banded morwong at Schouten Island.
Credit: Maya Lovelock-Dodos

Working together for a sustainable banded morwong fishery

Years of collaboration between fishers, scientists and fishery managers have helped ensure Tasmania's banded morwong fishery remains sustainable.

It comes as the University of Tasmania's IMAS released the [Tasmanian Banded Morwong Fishery Assessment for 2024-25](#).

"The sustainability of the banded morwong has been enabled by an ongoing strong collaboration between industry, fishers and scientists who are jointly driving the success of this fishery," IMAS researcher and co-author Dr Nils Krueck said.

"Fishers regularly share local knowledge and participate in annual fishery forums, which has led to industry support of research through gear innovation and direct participation."

The assessment shows stocks remain sustainable based on data collected between March 2023 and February 2025, with fishers catching 99.1% of the 33.4 tonne Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the season.

"The banded morwong fishery is one of Tasmania's best-managed fisheries, with annual TAC setting, biennial biological surveys to inform stock assessments, minimum and maximum size limits to protect juveniles and large breeders, and a seasonal spawning closure to safeguard reproduction," said IMAS senior researcher and lead author, Dr Katie Cresswell.

"The fishery is sustainable, with spawning stock biomass currently estimated at 40% of virgin levels (36%-44%), which is close to common target levels safely above the limit reference point, which is set at 30% for this fishery.

"Following a history of heavy fishing in the early years of the fishery, catch rates have steadily increased over the past 12 years, which supports the assumption of positive stock trends."

Read the full story: <https://tinyurl.com/2z3zzawz>

Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd

DR JULIAN AMOS, CEO



Florfenicol

The use of florfenicol by the salmon industry has caused increasing concern. The industry operated under an emergency permit issued by the APVMA in November, with pens treated in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel thereafter. Each pen was treated only once, but with more than one pen to a lease, the lease site could be targeted more than once.

Of particular concern was the effect its presence would have on the processing facilities in NW Bay and on boats transiting through the Channel. At the time of writing, no florfenicol has been found at these places.

Florfenicol is insoluble. Samples of non-target species, including abalone, have been taken and tested at various distances away from treated pen. Some have been reported positive at the lowest detectable level. A single sample taken 10 km distance from the dosing site tested positive. How florfenicol gets to the animal and how it is absorbed remains unknown.

This discovery of detectable levels of antibiotic in non-target species led to the withdrawal of the permit, and no further dosing has occurred since the beginning of March. However, the salmon industry is still keen to continue to use florfenicol and will be seeking a permit going forward.

Although florfenicol is deemed to be safe for human consumption, it does pose a trade risk to us as many countries have zero tolerance for its presence. We are working in conjunction with other wild fisheries to ensure our fishery is properly protected.

Our fishery was only marginally affected this time around because the Channel blocks had already been closed to commercial fishing. Although these blocks are due to open April 1, they will now remain closed until the all-clear is given. Sampling and testing is continuing.

Marine Stewardship Council Certification

Full certification is now underway. One element to achieving this is the need for a recovery plan when an area has been closed.

The plan has now been drafted, and discussions have taken place between the MSC auditor, NRE, IMAS and the TACL. Essentially, the draft plan has two trigger points, one when the biomass is down to 50%, and closure once it reaches 20%. Discussions are continuing.

Marketing

The TACL has embarked on a marketing program to lift awareness of our industry and our product in China. Our theme is "Wildness".

The Project has been designed in two stages - the first to establish a presence on Chinese social media platforms for our premium product, and the second to drive that awareness further and targeting particular interests (e.g. chefs). Stage 1 has now been completed. The results can be viewed from our website (tasabalone.com.au), where a link to our Wild Abalone Tasmanian marketing website is available. Stage 1 has been extended to enable work to be done on establishing a trademark, a necessary prerequisite for Stage 2. We have submitted an Application for Stage 2 funding.



Nic Shelverton with an ocean perch Credit: IMAS

From the ocean to the lab: honours student awarded University Medal

For Tasmanian honours student Nic Shelverton, a year of long days on the water and in the lab has been rewarded with a prestigious accolade for excellence in research.

Nic was one of 19 honours students at the University of Tasmania who was awarded a University Medal, an award that recognises high-achieving students.

"It's really humbling to get this recognition," said Nic, who completed his honours at IMAS.

"There is a lot of sacrifice that goes into your honours year so it's incredible to be honoured in a way that really reflects my effort."

Nic's research focused on the biological characteristics of ocean perch - a species with growing potential in Tasmania's recreational fisheries.

"In Tasmania, we're lucky to have a host of valuable and unique marine species - not just as sports fish, but as table fish as well," he said.

Over the last couple of decades some popular marine species have depleted both recreationally and commercially.

Ocean perch is one of the most caught species in offshore waters in Tasmania and is already prevalent in recreational fisheries in Tasmania, but at a low retention rate.

"There's a potential for ocean perch to turn into a really popular recreational fish species in the future. But in order to adequately manage these developing fisheries, we need a good understanding of their biology," Nic said.

That's where Nic's honours research comes in. His work characterised the fundamental biological traits of ocean perch including age, growth and reproductive dynamics.



Nic Shelverton recently graduated with his honours and received a prestigious University Medal. Credit: Nic Shelverton

Read the full story: <https://tinyurl.com/4eytvpzm>



Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania



Antibiotic treatment – administration of florfenicol

Effective from 4 March 2026, the APVMA suspended the permit for the use of florfenicol. Florfenicol can no longer be used under the provisions of the permit.

To ensure Tasmanian seafood continues to meet market requirements we have engaged with IMAS to support impact assessments of florfenicol on non-salmon species. IMAS is undertaking sampling of wild fisheries species including rock lobster, abalone, sea urchins, mussels and periwinkles near salmon leases that have recently been treated with florfenicol.

Interim testing results:

- IMAS has collected over 840 samples with 209 results pending.
- 165 samples have had positive detections at very low levels, the furthest detection being at Standaway Bay (approx. 10.6 km from sites).
- Positive detections have been found in parts of abalone (viscera and foot), lobsters (hepatopancreas/tomalley), bryozoans (pooled), urchins (viscera) and whelk.
- There have not been any detections in lobster tails, oysters, or mussels.

Laboratory results have identified trace amounts of florfenicol up to 0.06 mg/kg.

No detections have been reported (to date) in wild mussels, oysters or rock lobster meat.

Further sampling and analysis are underway to determine spatial extent, duration and potential mechanisms of uptake for the species.

We are taking a precautionary approach consistent with fisheries management practice.

For more information, visit [Regulator Statement – Managing florfenicol use and protecting Tasmania’s wild fisheries’ markets](#) | [Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania](#).

Tasmanian sardine fishery

Public feedback on the design of the fishery was welcomed from 23 December 2025 to 6 March 2026 through a consultation process. A report on what we heard will be published. The Draft Management Plan will be open for public consultation later in 2026.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING
FISHWATCH ☎ 0427 655 557



Cooking up sardines at Tasmania’s Seafood Festival

Tasmania’s Seafood Festival

Fish Tales, who are working on a sardine human market development program with us, were at Tasmania’s Seafood Festival in March, cooking up sardine fillets and asking patrons to complete surveys about sardine. We also presented on underutilised species, with tastings of smoked Australian salmon, and our Dive Fishery Manager talked about the Centro challenge, encouraging people to give Centro a go.

New recreational flathead rules

New flathead rules are now in effect across Tasmania. A sand flathead closure applies in the new south-eastern zone. Statewide, all species of flathead must be landed whole or as fillets with intact frames (head and tail attached).

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>

Agfest

We will be at Agfest again in the Fishing Hub, talking all things fisheries. Please come and say hello if you are in the area.

Contact

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



Rural Alive and Well



Supporting Rural Wellbeing, One Conversation at a Time

Introduction

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.

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 across 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/community.

Staff Spotlight: Meet the Team

Samara Ford has been part of the team for 14 months and is the lead for our **Stay Afloat Program**. Samara works closely with individuals and communities across the seafood industry, providing practical support, guidance and a listening ear. Her passion for rural wellbeing and her deep understanding of the challenges faced by industry workers help ensure people feel supported, heard and connected.

Samara is a lifelong local of the Huon Valley who brings both professional experience and heartfelt compassion to everything she does. With over 10 years working in Outreach and more than 20 years co-running a small family business with her husband, Samara has built strong connections within her community and a deep understanding of life's situational stressors.

Her journey has also been shaped by personal loss, after the passing of her 3-month-old son in 2002. This experience has given Samara a profound sense of empathy and a genuine desire to support others through challenging times.

Samara is passionate about helping people explore their options, understand the pros and cons, and feel empowered to make informed decisions that are right for them – while also gently guiding them to consider any potential consequences along the way.

Outside of her work, Samara has a love for animals (with the exception of birds!), tractors and much prefers being outdoors whenever she can.

Call to Action / How to Access Support

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 <https://ruralaliveandwell.com.au/> to get started. Alternatively, you can call us directly on 1800 729 827

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



Seafood And Maritime Training



PD Day a big hit with SMT trainers

SMT trainers recently came together for a Professional Development Day that proved to be both productive and enjoyable, with 100% of attendees agreeing the session met its objectives and was well worth the time.

The day focused on fresh ideas to boost student engagement, reflect on teaching practices, and share practical tips that trainers can use straightaway in the classroom. The sessions were interactive, with plenty of discussion, laughter and idea-sharing throughout the day. The TCCI presentation was a stand-out, receiving great feedback for its energy and practical advice.

Some of the favourite takeaways included new engagement techniques, the 'Start, Stop, Keep' reflection model, and simple but powerful questions like, 'Have I explained that clearly?' – a reminder that small changes can make a big difference to student learning.

Trainers were keen for more opportunities like this, with suggestions for future PD including AI and online delivery, cross-team learning, and keeping up to date with industry skills.

SMT is proud to support its trainers with professional development that is practical, relevant and enjoyable, helping ensure our students continue to get the best possible training experience.



Dave Kinder takes Rotary for cruise

Annual fundraiser 'Rotary Club of Hobart Sail' Day 2026 on 27 February

Dave Kinder from Seafood and Maritime Training kindly took the time to Master the Mustique, helping guide guests on a memorable cruise along the River Derwent. The journey took passengers through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel to Rat Bay, where the vessel anchored so everyone could relax and enjoy the surroundings.

The day was blessed with perfect weather, creating ideal conditions for cruising and taking in Tasmania's spectacular waterways. On board, guests enjoyed drinks and a wonderful meal prepared by the chef at Glen Albyn Estate, rounding out a truly enjoyable afternoon.

It was a great day of fundraising and appreciating the beautiful scenery from the water.



TCCI presentation by Stacey Joseph from TCCI

Trainer profile – Dr Carryn Manicom gets the ‘coolest’ area to work and study in

In recent years, anyone who has completed a Certificate III in Aquaculture will likely have had the privilege of being trained by Dr Carryn Manicom, who delivers our Water Quality training.

Carryn brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the course, along with a genuine passion for the environment and teaching. As Carryn mentioned, it's the 'coolest' area to get to study and work in.

Carryn has always had a love for plants, animals and the natural environment, and has never regretted her decision to study Zoology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She later moved to Townsville, Australia, where she completed her PhD, focusing on lizards in tropical ecology.

From there, Carryn relocated to Tasmania and worked as a lecturer at the University of Tasmania, where she developed a strong passion for teaching and sharing her knowledge of ecology and biology with students. She currently works with Marine Solutions as a project officer, carrying out field-based water quality and ecological monitoring in marine and estuarine environments, as well as preparing technical reports.

Although she enjoys her field work, Carryn missed the teaching aspect of her career, so joining Seafood and Maritime Training as a casual trainer has been an ideal fit. The role allows her to share her knowledge while staying connected with people working across the aquaculture and seafood industries.

Carryn particularly enjoys the diversity of students she meets through training. Classes often include people working in a wide range of roles, from work crews and feeding teams to hatchery attendants, divers, animal health workers and wildlife officers. She values the different perspectives the students bring and enjoys the conversations about their roles and their views. Carryn adores discussing the marine environment and how everything is connected.

Outside work and training, Carryn is a busy mum who enjoys being on the water whenever she can find the time. She loves sailing on weekends, visiting the beach, and getting out on the water for stand-up paddle boarding.



From Certificate IV to manager – Devon Leslie steps up at Smithton Shellfish

Devon Leslie, who recently completed his Certificate IV in Aquaculture with Seafood and Maritime Training, has started the year with an exciting career move, taking on the role of Manager at Smithton Shellfish in late January.

We spoke with Devon about how undertaking the Certificate IV helped prepare him for the transition into management. He explained that the qualification was both valuable and practical, giving him the skills needed to step confidently into the role.

Devon said the course was “really good and very helpful”, particularly in areas such as business management, staff training requirements, and the delegation of tasks. He found that the Certificate IV helped him approach his work in a more professional and organised manner.

At the time of studying, Devon was working as Assistant Manager, where he was responsible for stock management and logistics. Completing the qualification strengthened the professional side of his role and gave him a better understanding of how to manage both people and production.

One of the highlights of the course for Devon was the Leadership and Teamwork workshop, along with the business planning activities. He enjoyed learning how factors such as hectares under production, stock levels, costs and profits all work together to influence the success of a business.

Devon said the qualification was “definitely worth doing” and well worth the time he invested. He also gained a strong understanding of WHS requirements, the importance of staff inductions and toolbox meetings, and why accurate record keeping is essential. The course also reinforced the importance of biosecurity, including the laws, permits, restrictions and protocols that help keep the aquaculture industry safe and sustainable.

Although stepping into the manager's role was daunting at first, particularly when dealing with staffing and operational pressures, Devon is enjoying the challenge. He is looking forward to keeping production running smoothly, maintaining the farm to a high standard, and helping the business remain profitable, or as he puts it, “keeping everything rolling in an organised fashion”.



Devon Leslie at worksite

Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council

JANE MCGANN



Last commercial translocation completed

March heralded a successful conclusion of the 2025-26 translocation operations. With science showing that translocation is no longer needed to support east coast stocks, the Minister supported our October TRLC member vote and approved cessation of the commercial fishery translocation program.

While there is no more commercial fishery funded translocation, the recreational program continues for a further two years, which means we will still see movement of undersized rock lobsters from the south west coast to the east coast. Notwithstanding that the ongoing program is only for the benefit of the recreational sector, the TRLC will support successful and professional translocation operations by the commercial rock lobster sector for the benefit of recreational fishers.

Florfenicol

The entire wild-catch sector breathed a sigh of relief on 4 March when the APVMA suspended the emergency permit allowing florfenicol treatment of salmon in Tasmania because of the 'risk of residue exposure to non-target species' (such as rock lobster). While treatment has stopped, closed blocks will not be reopened until the Department is confident there is no risk of florfenicol uptake by rock lobster in those blocks. This means that IMAS testing of wild-catch species continues. It is anticipated that closed blocks will not reopen for several weeks.

Since November, the rock lobster, rock lobster processor, commercial dive and abalone sectors, together with SIT, have spent many, many hours on florfenicol-related matters. Despite suspension of the emergency permit, it seems likely that the salmon industry will seek to use florfenicol in the future under a separate permitting process. We need to plan for this possibility.



The wild-catch sectors are working together to navigate a pathway forward that protects our fishery, protects our markets, and protects the health of farmed salmon.

Harvest strategy

The rock lobster harvest strategy is nearing completion. The working group, comprising the commercial sector, the recreational sector, IMAS and NRE Tas, is due to meet for the last time in April or May. The Department will make final changes to the strategy and send it to the Minister for approval. Once approved, this non-statutory process will be used to inform statutory decision-making for the rock lobster fishery.

It is anticipated that next year's TAC will be set using input from the harvest strategy. We hope that more details about the harvest strategy will be available from the Department for our May member meeting.

Southern Rocklobster Limited

In March, the SRL board met to review and renew the organisation's strategic plan, which will guide the organisation through to 2028. With two representatives on the SRL board, the TRLC is integral to the strategic planning process. We have asked SRL EO Tom Consentino to present the new strategic plan at the May meeting.

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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/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

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03 6165 3777

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Seafood and Maritime Training (SMT)

www.smt.edu.au

03 6286 0400

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

www.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

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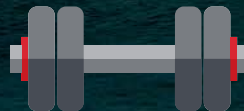
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