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SIT are sending regular updates to members via email. If you have not received these newsletters, that means we don't have your email address.

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From the President

TIM HESS, AM

SIT's role in the florfenicol discussion

Seafood Industry Tasmania is in an unusual position in the current debate around the potential use of florfenicol (FFC) in Tasmanian marine waters. As the peak body representing Tasmania's broader seafood industry, SIT represents both salmon aquaculture and wild-catch fisheries. Those sectors have different interests, different risks and, understandably, different policy positions when it comes to the use of therapeutants.

It is therefore important to be clear; SIT has no overarching policy either supporting or opposing the use of FFC. Those policy positions properly belong with the respective sector associations.

The salmon industry has made it clear that it believes access to FFC will be necessary this coming summer to manage disease, protect fish health and meet animal-welfare obligations. It is therefore seeking approval for a lawful pathway to use the treatment if required.

Wild-catch fisheries have equally maintained a policy position opposing the use of therapeutants in Tasmanian marine waters. That position is understandable. The only way to provide absolute certainty that residues from a particular therapeutant cannot affect wild-caught seafood is for that therapeutant not to be used in the marine environment. Where export markets, residue limits, seafood testing and customer confidence are involved, that certainty has significant value.

However, there is another reality that cannot be ignored. Whether FFC, or other therapeutants, are ultimately used in Tasmanian waters is not a decision entirely within the control of SIT, the wild-catch sectors or salmon. Some therapeutants can already be lawfully used, and future regulatory decisions will be made through processes extending beyond industry representative bodies.

Simply refusing to participate in the discussion therefore does not remove the risk.

For SIT, there is value in being in the room, understanding what is proposed and planning for the worst-case scenario from a wild-catch perspective. Engagement should not be confused with endorsement.

SIT has been bringing wild-catch sectors and salmon representatives together to discuss the issue. Our role is to facilitate discussion, ensure relevant information is shared, identify where further evidence is required, collate information and ideas into formal documents to ensure consistency of information across different associations, and help the respective industries understand whether there is any pathway forward.

The salmon industry has developed a proposal intended to address concerns raised by wild fisheries. That proposal provides a basis for further discussion, but it is not an agreement. Important questions remain around residue dispersal and uptake, testing and monitoring, market-access protections, transparency, consultation, accountability, and the allocation of commercial risk should an adverse market consequence occur.

The wild-catch sectors have maintained their policy opposition to therapeutant use in Tasmanian waters throughout this process. Participation in discussions does not mean that position has changed.

To be clear, SIT's role is to facilitate an informed, industry-led process. We are not here to negotiate away individual sector policies or make decisions on their behalf. The eventual outcomes must be determined by the respective sectors, based on the evidence available and whether any proposed arrangements adequately protect their interests.

Sometimes effective representation is not about taking a side. It is about ensuring each sector is properly informed, properly represented and in the room when decisions affecting its future are being considered.

A path forward for meaningful consultation

Another continuing frustration for SIT is the time being taken to progress a range of fisheries management processes and government decisions. Delays create uncertainty for businesses, make forward planning difficult and, in some cases, allow known management issues to persist longer than they should.

Overlaying this is an ongoing concern about how industry consultation has operated since the former Fisheries Advisory Committees (FACs) were disbanded. While the current arrangements provide opportunities for engagement, SIT remains concerned that the pathway from industry input, through technical and policy consideration, to final recommendations and government decisions is not always sufficiently clear or transparent.

Consultation should be more than providing an opportunity to comment after proposals have substantially developed. Industry, government and research all bring different expertise to fisheries management, and the best outcomes are achieved when those perspectives are brought together early, with clear roles, good governance and a shared understanding of how advice will inform decisions.

SIT's Board and sector groups have supported SIT's development of a new consultation framework, which has been presented to the Minister for consideration. The intent is not to recreate the former FAC model exactly, nor to give any one party control of the decision-making process. Rather, it is about establishing a more structured, transparent and collaborative approach to developing recommendations.

We are hopeful this provides an opportunity to recalibrate the relationship between industry, government and research.

A good framework should clearly identify the issue being considered, bring the right expertise to the table, provide genuine opportunity to test options and evidence, document areas of agreement and disagreement, and clearly explain how recommendations progress to decision-makers.

Ultimately, government must make government decisions. But those decisions will be better informed, and more readily understood by industry, when the process leading to them is transparent, timely and built on genuine collaboration.

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WISA: Supporting women across Tasmania's seafood sector

ALAINA BOS



SIT–WISA monthly catch-ups

Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA) brings together women from all corners of the seafood industry, creating opportunities to connect, learn and support one another.

Through networking, mentoring and professional development initiatives, WISA works to strengthen industry relationships and encourage more women to thrive in seafood careers. Working alongside Seafood Industry Tasmania (SIT), WISA helps bring seafood women together through a range of events, workshops and networking opportunities, creating a supportive environment where participants can connect, learn and grow within the industry

A major achievement in recent years has been the rollout of WISA's Turn the Tide program, a national initiative launched in 2023 through the Australian Government's Women's Leadership and Development Program. The program has provided Tasmanian women working across the seafood sector with access to mentoring, leadership development, networking opportunities and professional support, helping to strengthen connections and build future industry leaders.



SIT–WISA cooking

Turn the Tide was awarded the People Development Award at the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Awards 2025 and the National Seafood Industry Awards 2026, highlighting its positive impact in building confidence, leadership skills and career pathways for women across the seafood sector.

In partnership with SIT, WISA continued to deliver a range of activities throughout the year, including regular Women in Seafood catch-ups in Hobart. These informal gatherings provided valuable opportunities for industry members to connect, share experiences and strengthen relationships across Tasmania's seafood community.

A highlight was the Stretch, Strengthen & Connect with SIT and WISA yoga event held at Udara Movement Studio which combined movement, mindfulness and networking. The session encouraged participants to prioritise their wellbeing while connecting with others from across the industry.

WISA and SIT have also continued to offer a variety of networking opportunities, including seafood cooking workshops that brought women together in a relaxed and engaging environment. These events provided participants with the chance to learn new skills, share experiences, and build lasting connections while celebrating Tasmania's seafood industry.



SIT–WISA yoga event

Together, these initiatives reflect WISA's ongoing commitment to fostering a connected, supportive and resilient seafood industry, while ensuring women are recognised and encouraged as valuable contributors across the sector.

As WISA Tasmania farewells Dr Heidi Mumme from her role as Tasmanian Director, SIT would like to sincerely thank her for her dedication, leadership and support of women working throughout the seafood industry. Through her passion and commitment, Heidi has played an important role in growing WISA's presence in Tasmania, creating opportunities, strengthening connections and helping women across the sector build confidence and leadership skills. Her contribution has been greatly valued, and we wish her all the very best for the future.

Interested in future SIT/WISA events? Call 6224 2332 or email sit@sit.org.au

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Women in Seafood Australasia

Jetty Talk

Seafood Stories Worth Catching Up On

If you haven't had a chance to watch it yet, Inside Sydney Fish Market is well worth adding to your viewing list.

The six part SBS documentary series takes viewers behind the scenes of one of Australia's most iconic seafood destinations, offering a fascinating look at the fishers, wholesalers, retailers and seafood professionals who work tirelessly to bring fresh seafood from ocean to plate. The series also captures a significant moment in the market's history as the Sydney Fish Market prepares for its move to a new home.

Narrated by Rick Stein, the program showcases the people, passion and hard work that underpin the seafood industry, making it a great watch for anyone with a connection to the sector.

Inside Sydney Fish Market episodes available to stream on SBS On Demand.

Definitely one for seafood industry members to check out when they have a spare evening.

For more information, visit: **www.sydneyfishmarket.com.au**.

World Stage Success for Tassie Oyster Shucker

Congratulations to Zoe Jacobson, who recently represented Australia on the world stage, placing an impressive 13th at the World Oyster Opening Championship.

Competing against some of the best oyster shuckers from around the globe, Zoe's result is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the skill, professionalism and passion found throughout Tasmania's oyster industry.

Keep an eye out for the next issue of *Seafood Industry News*, where we'll be featuring Zoe's journey, competition experience and what it takes to compete at the highest level of oyster shucking.

Well done, Zoe!

Do you Know of a milestone, community event or interesting story happening around Tasmania's jetties, ports and waterfronts? We'd love to hear from you for a future Jetty Talk feature.

Email sit@sit.org.au or call the office 6224 2332

Tasmanian Commercial Divers Association

TASMANIAN COMMERCIAL DIVERS ASSOCIATION

SUE GRAU

General meetings

The TCDA held a General Meeting in July at Swansea and its AGM in August at the SIT office. These meetings provided members with an opportunity to contribute to key issues including catch quota settings, the financial sustainability of the organisation, and strategic priorities.

Members acknowledged the achievements of the TCDA Committee and the Executive Officer over the past year, particularly the management of the ongoing florfenicol issue and the significant time this has required.

The Committee also recognised the work of Julian Harrington, Chief Executive of SIT, for facilitating and coordinating the wild-catch sector's response to the use of therapeutants in Tasmanian waters.

New TCDA Committee

Following the AGM, the TCDA welcomes a new Committee and is now operating with co-Presidents Scott Bedford and James Onn. Lachie Tainsh has taken on the Treasurer and Secretary roles, and other Committee members are Rob Langdale, Tom Chadwick and Corey Ingram.

Members thanked Rob Langdale for his term as President and for continuing on as a Committee member, and also acknowledged retiring members Barry Bennett and Julian Larby for their service. Sector associations rely on volunteers to oversee strategy and activities, and the contribution of their time is deeply appreciated.

Tas eFish app

TCDA is working with NRE to encourage divers to use the new app to record real-time catch data. This will be particularly valuable in areas with low quotas, enabling closures to occur as close as possible to the catch limit. It will also serve as an important trial of the app for the commercial dive sector.



Jetty Talk

Dover community comes together for Stay Afloat BBQ

ALAINA BOS

The Dover seafood community came together recently for a free Stay Afloat Tasmania BBQ at the Port Esperance Sailing Club, enjoying a fantastic evening of great weather, great food and even better conversation.

Proudly delivered by Seafood Industry Tasmania and Rural Alive & Well (RAW), the event brought together seafood industry members, families and community members in a relaxed setting to connect, catch up and strengthen local relationships.

With burgers hot off the grill and plenty of stories shared, the evening highlighted the importance of community connection and provided an opportunity to learn more about the support available through the Stay Afloat Tasmania program.

Seafood Industry Tasmania thanks everyone who attended and helped make the event such a success. Events like these continue to play an important role in supporting the wellbeing and resilience of Tasmania's seafood communities, reminding us that sometimes the best conversations happen around a barbecue.







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

Pennicott Sets Sail for Maria Island

Visitors to Tasmania's East Coast will soon have another way to experience one of the state's most iconic destinations, with Pennicott Wilderness Journeys recently acquiring Maria Island Cruises.

From 15 October, the new daily cruise departing from Triabunna will take guests along the spectacular coastline of Maria Island and Ile des Phoques, home to thousands of seals, before heading ashore to explore the island's famous wombats and the World Heritage listed Darlington Convict Settlement.

Operating aboard the custom-built Freycinet Explorer, the tour combines wildlife, history and stunning scenery, along with a ploughman's-style lunch featuring Tasmanian produce.

Great to see continued investment in Tasmania's coastal tourism sector and another opportunity to showcase the natural beauty of Maria Island to visitors from around the world.

For bookings and information: www.mariaislandcruises.com.au • www.pennicottjourneys.com.au • (03) 6234 4270

Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd

DR JULIAN AMOS, CEO

Florfenicol

We are anticipating a decision by the APVMA very shortly. Florfenicol is an antibiotic, and Salmon Tasmania (ST) has lodged an Application with the APVMA for a Minor Permit, which if granted will enable the salmon industry to once again use florfenicol in the pellets fed to fish.

The process followed by the APVMA will be to issue a Trade Notice, specifying conditions of use, and we will be making a submission to the APVMA at the time.

It is indeed possible that the APVMA will approve the application for a Minor Permit, but with conditions applied, such as dosing levels etc. Plans are afoot to proactively manage any such approval, which will essentially involve block closures and a sampling/testing protocol. We have been provided with a draft from NRE regarding these plans and have provided comment on them.

Florfenicol is not, we are told, dangerous to human health, but its continuing presence in the marine environment does pose an existential threat to our industry because, unlike salmon, abalone and other wild fisheries do not have a set MRL (maximum residue limit), here or elsewhere, and as such ANY presence of florfenicol can cause closure and an adverse market reaction.

However, we must recognise that a permit could be issued and we must take appropriate precautions to ensure we are not adversely affected.

We continue to express our grave concern at the use of therapeutants in our marine environment, and have urged ST to explore other options, including de-stocking and moving pens out of the Channel.

Marine Stewardship Council certification

Full certification is almost complete. We have been advised by the auditor that all necessary matters have been addressed and that it is likely full certification will be granted, and possibly within a month.

You will recall that full certification includes the endorsement of a Recovery Plan, which essentially provides the parameters that need to be followed for an area to be reopened, once closed.

The principles of the Recovery Plan have now been endorsed – matters of detail are to be sorted over the next 12 months.

Marketing

The TACL has embarked on a marketing program to lift awareness of our industry and our premium product in China. Our theme is 'From the Wild'.

Having reached out to the Chinese audience in Stage 1, we have now entered Stage 2 of the campaign, and this will continue for the rest of this year. Already over 1 million people have been exposed to the campaign on the social media platforms WeChat and Red Note.

Stage 2 will require establishing a trademark and a more focused targeting of our support base in China. More detailed information regarding the project can be found on our website – www.tasabalone.com.au, which has now been updated.

General Meeting

A General Meeting was held on 19 August, followed by a Fishery Reference Group meeting, where industry, NRE and IMAS came together to discuss a range of fishery management topics.

I need to emphasise the importance of our members being able to maintain dialogue with the regulatory authorities, to ensure that our concerns are heard, and understood. It is a most valuable forum.

Finally

Our AGM has been set for 7 November and will be held at Wrest Point.

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.

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Oysters Tasmania

DUNCAN SPENDER

El Nino

Lower than usual rainfall and higher than usual land and water temperatures are forecast for Tasmania, particularly for the east and south, over the coming months. Growers can take this into account when deciding on heights, depths, handling and harvesting, and when managing their cool chain, and are encouraged to promptly report any unusually high mortalities.

Weather-related recall risks

Oyster-growing waters are sampled and tested at least seven times a year. While the purpose of this testing is to work out the next year's closure thresholds, if test results are bad, ShellMAP may need to close the harvest area, with the closure backdated to the time the sample was taken. Any product harvested and sold since that time would need to be recalled if possible.

This means it is important to minimise the time between sampling and bad test results being communicated to growers. Oysters Tasmania has been engaging with ShellMAP and the lab to attempt to minimise this gap.

The risk of testing delays is exacerbated by national guidelines requiring that sampling occur during 'adverse pollution conditions', which can occur at the same time statewide. This means a lot of samples can arrive at the lab all at once, potentially overwhelming the lab. ShellMAP and Oysters Tasmania are keeping abreast of developments with new labs so we can jump on any opportunity to spread the workload and minimise delays.

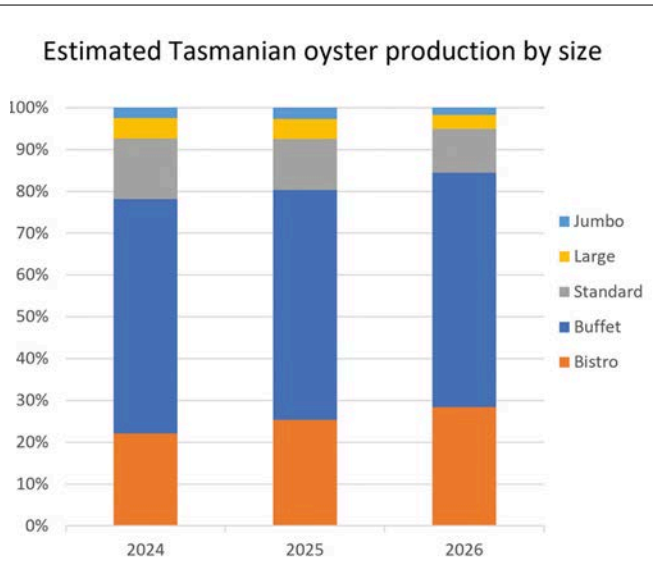
To minimise the risk of recalls, it is also important that growers know when sampling is being done, so they have the option of harvesting before sampling, and not harvesting after the time of sampling. So ShellMAP are now forewarning growers when sampling will occur.

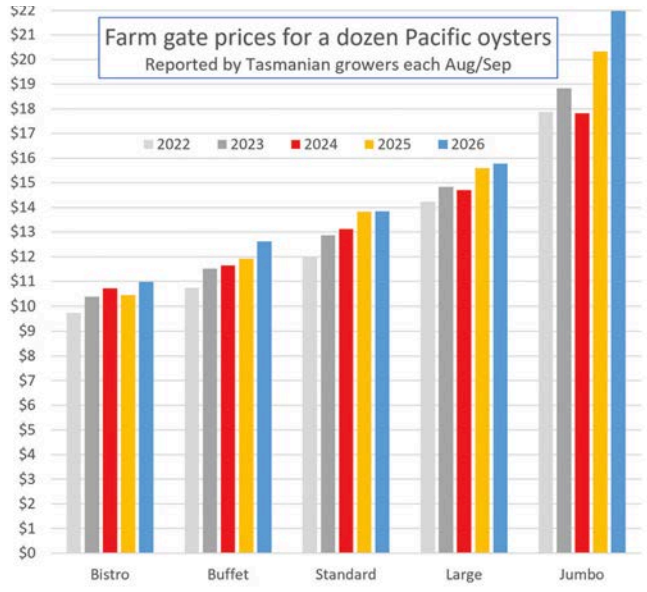
Despite the risk of recalls whenever water sampling occurs, there is an advantage to industry in more than the minimum amount of water sampling being done. This is because each additional sample increases the chance that the next year's closure thresholds will be more generous.

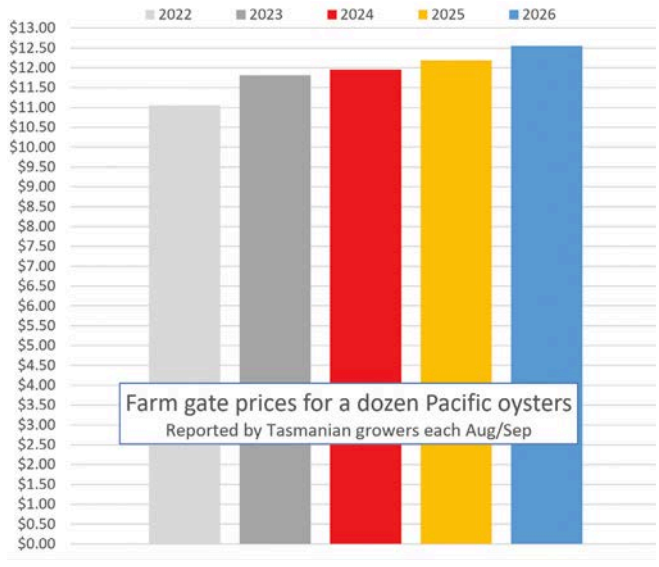
The same lab that does water tests also does our meat testing. So if you are planning on sending in meats, give the lab a heads-up so they can better manage their workload.

Prices and sizes

Check out the charts to see the prices and sizes reported by growers at our Shellfish Futures conference. The report is available at oysterstasmania.org/ourindustry.







Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania Inc.

BOB LISTER



Tasmanian Scallop Fishery

From 25 July, the open area for scallop harvesting was expanded north of Eddystone Point including Banks Strait, Ringarooma Bay, west of Flinders Island and an area near Babel Island.

At the same time the statewide TAC was declared at 2500 tonnes, which included an increase in the previous Central East area TAC from 500 to 700 tonnes all based on a 90mm shell width.

Six vessels have participated in the fishery this year and based on telephone movement reports 1048 tonnes of shells have been harvested to 18 September.

Overall harvesting has been satisfactory with most vessels reporting an average one bin per hour (approx. 400kg) catch rate but with unwanted dead shells and heaps of sea stars. Recovery has ranged from 14 to 17% and better with meats between 40 and 90 per kilogram. Most vessels have harvested some enormous meats much to everyone's surprise.

In some areas scallops have shot their roe, making it difficult for fishermen, but the feeling is that we should have sufficient stock to keep harvesting into November.

Unfortunately there are no alternative areas to fish so once the open areas are exhausted, the season will likely come to an early end before the scheduled close at the end of the year.

One vessel looked into the Ringarooma Bay area and as expected it proved unproductive with dead shells presumably dying from old age and sea stars, and another vessel has concentrated on the Babel Island open area with encouraging results. Most other vessels have harvested around the Long Point area north to Eddystone due to the high winds and poor sea conditions further up north, with one vessel returning to port to replace broken gear.

We understand that efforts are being made to find a commercial interest in sea stars as they are everywhere and a big issue for the scallop fishery. Scallop harvesters are very efficient at catching both the eleven arm and northern Pacific sea stars so a profitable outcome for these pests would be fantastic.

Overall fishermen and processors are happy. The retail price, generally between $55 and $59, does not appear to have deterred retail buyers and does give fishermen a fair return for all their efforts.

There has been no interest in harvesting in Bass Strait this year due to very low stock numbers probably caused by the masses of ever-present sea stars.

So if you are a scallop lover (and who isn't) make sure you buy your beautiful family scallop meals very soon before the season comes to an end.

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Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council

JANE MCGANN



As outlined in the Board's Marine Therapeutants Policy, the TRLC continues to oppose the use of therapeutants in the marine environment, whether they are currently registered for use, as is the case for oxytetralcycline (OTC), or may be approved for use, as is the case for florfenicol (FFC).

FFC, used last summer by salmon aquaculture under an emergency permit that was subsequently revoked after it became clear that it is taken up by rock lobster and abalone, is once again being considered for use; a minor use application for FFC was submitted to the APVMA (Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority) in mid-June.

Regardless of whether the APVMA approves FFC for salmon aquaculture, it is clear that the use of therapeutants in the marine environment creates an existential risk for all Tasmanian seafood for which there is no MRL (maximum residue level), wild catch or farmed. In Australia, whereas farmed salmon has MRLs for both OTC and FFC, none exist for other species. Under the Australia New Zealand Food Standard Code, in the absence of a specific MRL, a strict zero-tolerance rule applies: no detectable antibiotic residues are permitted in non-target commercial species. This is not a health risk – Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has assessed that trace detections of antibiotics in wild-caught fish do not pose a consumer health or safety risk. Rather, it is a trade risk. If there is detectable antibiotic in species, including rock lobster, for which there is no MRL, that product may be excluded from the market.

Last summer, this risk became manifest through FFC. That OTC has previously been used by salmon aquaculture without comment or consequence (i.e. subblock closure) was more luck than a comment on the trade risk of its use. Not only are we more aware of the trade risks incurred through antibiotic use, our markets are also more aware.

The TRLC does not support the use of FFC or any other therapeutants. We acknowledge we do not have control over whether therapeutants are approved for use in the marine environment or whether or when they are actually used. We also acknowledge that salmon aquaculture has a legal responsibility to ensure the health of their animals.

The only way to protect our markets is to ensure no product with antibiotic residue gets to market. This can only be achieved through either not using antibiotics or through subblock closures around areas where antibiotics are used.

The Marine Therapeutant Policy identifies that if therapeutant is used or otherwise occurs, and results in adverse impacts on wild-catch fisheries, seafood markets or Tasmania's wild seafood brand, all affected businesses and stakeholders must be fully and appropriately compensated for all direct and consequential losses.

This policy is not directed towards only FFC, but to all therapeutants in the marine environment. The TRLC continues to advocate for the protection of Tasmania's wild fisheries, commercial fishers and processors, seafood reputation, market access, and the regional communities that depend upon them. Accordingly, the TRLC will not support any policy, regulatory framework or management arrangement that creates unacceptable or avoidable risks to these interests.

This policy position does not diminish our commitment to constructive, transparent and evidence-based engagement with government, regulators and the aquaculture industry. The TRLC will continue to participate in good faith to ensure it remains informed, contributes to robust decision-making, and advocates for outcomes that protect the long-term interests of Tasmania's wild fisheries and seafood industries.

Recently, salmon aquaculture presented the wild-catch sector with a "proposal to support the commercial sector". The TRLC Board has reviewed this draft document, agreeing with the principles underlying its development – evidence-based, independent, transparent and fair. The Board also agreed to continue to engage with the salmon industry to develop a framework for support. Engagement on compensation, mitigation and make-good arrangements is contingency planning only and does not constitute support for therapeutant use.



From the Chief Executive

JULIAN HARRINGTON

Rock lobster port visits

In late September / early October I joined the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council (TRLC) for the annual port visits around Tasmania. These visits continue to be one of the most useful ways of hearing directly from fishers about what is happening on the water and in their businesses.

There is no substitute for those conversations on the wharf. Issues around operating costs, changing fishing patterns, access, regulation, safety and the increasing administrative burden on vessel operators all came through strongly. Just as importantly, the visits provide an opportunity for SIT to explain some of the work occurring behind the scenes.

I would like to extend a thankyou to the TRLC Board for extending the invitation for SIT to attend these important visits.

AMSA: Know the priorities and understand the process

AMSA has announced a new National Maritime Stakeholder Forum as the centrepiece of a new industry-engagement approach. This national forum will replace the tried and proven regional safety committee and national safety committee processes, and leaves SIT with a level of uncertainty around how it will directly connect with AMSA.

From a vessel operations perspective, AMSA's 2026–27 National Compliance Plan identifies electrical safety, watchkeeping and lookout practices, and fatigue management as specific priorities for domestic commercial vessels. These are therefore areas operators should expect to receive increased attention through inspections, education and compliance activity over the coming year.

For fishing businesses, the message is relatively simple: make sure your Safety Management System is current, but more importantly make sure it reflects what actually occurs aboard your vessel. Fatigue arrangements, crewing, watchkeeping, qualifications and operational procedures need to work in practice rather than simply exist in a folder. AMSA can assess an SMS as part of its regulatory activities.

Watchkeeping is an important issue for fishing vessels. You cannot simply put an unqualified crew member on the wheel. If they are not appropriately qualified, they must be directly supervised. If they are taking charge of the navigational watch while the master rests, they need a qualification that authorises that role. For vessels under 24 metres, this may include a Coxswain Grade 1 Near Coastal.

Another message worth reinforcing is to understand your position if you are involved in a marine incident. There is a legal obligation to report marine incidents, and operators should cooperate with legitimate safety and regulatory requirements. However, an incident report can also lead to further investigation, and AMSA expressly notes that information gathered following an incident may inform compliance or enforcement activity.

If AMSA wants to interview you following a marine incident, first establish whether the interview is voluntary or whether information is being formally required under a statutory power. If the interview is voluntary, you are not obliged to participate. SIT strongly recommends obtaining legal advice before agreeing to a voluntary interview, particularly where there is any possibility of compliance or enforcement action. If AMSA is exercising a compulsory power, different obligations apply – understand the basis of the requirement and seek advice about your rights before responding.

Industry puts forward a calamari solution

SIT has recently delivered an industry-developed southern calamari management proposal to Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Gavin Pearce.

The proposal follows considerable frustration about the time being taken to establish longer-term management arrangements for a fishery that requires action. Rather than simply identifying the problem, industry has attempted to put a workable solution on the table.

At a high level, the proposal seeks to protect spawning biomass, including through appropriate spawning closures; constrain latent commercial effort while recognising fishers with genuine historical reliance on the fishery; introduce interim access arrangements; and provide for more adaptive catch controls supported by better monitoring, research and assessment.

Importantly, the proposal has been endorsed by the SIT Board and the President of the Tasmanian Scalefish Fishermen's Association and has also been discussed with a number of active calamari fishers, with strong in-principle support for moving forward.

There will always be different views on the detail of fisheries management. SIT's role is not to pretend those differences do not exist. It is to bring practical industry knowledge together with the available evidence and put forward workable solutions.

Whether talking to rock lobster fishers on a wharf, dealing with AMSA or developing a management proposal for calamari, that remains the objective: listen to industry, identify the problem and pursue a practical outcome.

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

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Dr Dean Giosio, Professor Quinn Fitzgibbon and Dr Tara Kelly with a southern rock lobster. Photo: Jihye Yoon, IMAS

New technology traces southern rock lobster 'fingerprints'

The unique 'fingerprints' of southern rock lobsters will soon be traceable after scientists developed a new integrated artificial intelligence (AI) system aimed at creating transparency for the live export industry.

With the click of a button, researchers from IMAS have developed technology capable of tracing rock lobsters through processing and export using a simple image captured on a mobile device.

"We've created a non-invasive traceability system for live southern rock lobsters that is incredibly robust, scoring 100% accuracy on the test set and real-world data, with processing times of less than a second," said Dr Dean Giosio, an aquaculture engineer at IMAS.

This AI model effectively removes the need for physical lobster tags.

"Lobsters have unique patterns and the AI model recognises individual lobsters based on those features. It's essentially a fingerprint which allows us to digitally tag lobsters," said Dr Tara Kelly, a junior researcher in aquatic animal physiology at IMAS.

The project, led by Professor Quinn Fitzgibbon and completed in collaboration with Fiordland Lobster Company and the South Australian Lobster Company, involved capturing images of more than a thousand southern rock lobsters to train and test the machine-learning model.

Professor Fitzgibbon said having traceable rock lobsters is key for creating transparency and strengthening trust across the entire sector – for fishers, processors, exporters and consumers.

"Being able to verify where a lobster has come from and how it has been handled and transported creates reassurance for provenance claims and improves confidence in southern rock lobster as a premium product for Australia and New Zealand," Professor Quinn said.

Beyond post-harvest processing and export, the technology has the potential to transform the southern rock lobster fishery.

"If fishers catch lobsters that are too small or a female carrying eggs, they can take an image and return the lobsters to the water. There is then the potential to identify that individual lobster if they are caught again in a future season," Dr Kelly said.

Read the full story:
https://tinyurl.com/9hse7nze

Researchers tackling ocean change and biodiversity named Tasmania's Young Tall Poppies of the Year

University of Tasmania researchers **Dr Harriet Goodrich** and **Dr Tori Graham** have been jointly named the 2026 Young Tall Poppies of the Year for Tasmania.

Dr Goodrich is investigating how fish respond to warming oceans and the stress of capture, while Dr Graham's research puts people at the heart of efforts to protect biodiversity.

Their honours were announced at the Australian Institute of Policy and Science Summit Gala Dinner in Sydney on Friday, 11 September.

The pair were among five University of Tasmania researchers to receive Young Tall Poppy Science Awards this year.

The awards recognise early-to-mid-career researchers who combine scientific achievement with a commitment to engaging and inspiring others.

Fish physiologist Dr Goodrich, from IMAS, studies how fish respond to environmental change and the stress of capture.

Her research looks for signs of these responses in fish metabolism, behaviour, guts, gills, blood, tissues and genes.

This allows scientists to understand not only whether a fish has been affected by warming, low oxygen, feeding or capture, but the biological mechanisms responsible.

The findings can help identify which fish and populations are most vulnerable, predict how they may respond as conditions change, and inform decisions about aquaculture, fisheries and conservation.



Dr Tori Graham and Dr Harriet Goodrich

"I'm super excited to represent lutruwita/Tasmania through this award. It's a huge win for fish and speaks to the value of curiosity-driven science in understanding how our natural world works, and why that understanding matters for fisheries, aquaculture and marine conservation," Dr Goodrich said.

Conservation scientist Dr Graham examines how protected areas and public policy can safeguard biodiversity in a rapidly changing world.

Read the full story:
https://tinyurl.com/54pv6jfh

A new wave of marine science breaks the latest on Australian lobsters and sea urchins

Beneath the surface of Australia's southern and eastern waters, two very different stories are unfolding.

New research led by IMAS has used cutting-edge ocean modelling to trace the larval journeys of two species, southern rock lobster (*Jasus edwardsii*) and longspined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus rodgersii*). The findings have significant implications for how Australia manages both.

Where do baby lobsters come from?

Southern rock lobster spend the first two years of their lives as larvae, drifting on ocean currents across vast stretches of coastline before settling and becoming the adults that fishers and seafood lovers know well.

Adult lobsters stay put, but those early larval stages mean that what happens in one region can determine recruitment outcomes thousands of kilometres away.

"Managers are trying to manage levels of adults so there are enough new recruits coming through," Principal Investigator and lead IMAS researcher, Dr Katie Cresswell said.

"Frankly, they just had very little idea where exactly the larvae were actually originating from."

To answer that question, the research team built a biophysical model, seeding millions of virtual larval particles at spawning locations from Western Australia to New South Wales and around Tasmania, then tracking their movement day by day through 30 years of oceanographic data.

The result was striking. South Australia, particularly its southern waters, emerged as the dominant source of larvae of the Australian stock.



Juvenile lobster. Photo: IMAS

An estimated 60% of larvae settling in that region originate there, and it supplies larvae across Tasmania and Victoria too.

The research highlights South Australia's outsized role as a source of recruits for the broader fishery. With South Australian Management Plans already targeting a rebuild of spawning biomass to 20% of virgin levels, and increases observed in both zones over the past four years, continued progress on this objective stands to benefit recruitment well beyond South Australia's own waters.

The urchin that won't leave

The longspined sea urchin tells a different story, a more alarming one.

Originally native to mainland Australia, warming ocean temperatures have allowed the species to extend its range southward into Tasmania, where it has become one of the most destructive forces on the state's reef ecosystems.

A key question for managers has been whether Tasmania's urchin population is self-sustaining, or whether it still depends on larval supply from the mainland. The modelling provides a clear answer: the Tasmanian population is now reproducing itself. As long as the waters stay warmer, it is here to stay.

The model shows larvae spreading towards new areas in western Tasmania, threatening productive fishery areas for other species.

Keeping densities suppressed in south-east Tasmania offers the best chance of preventing further range extension into productive abalone habitat.



Juvenile longspined sea urchin. Photo: John Keane

Tasmania's incentivised commercial urchin harvest has been doing important work in this space, with Dr Cresswell's other work predicting that without the fishery, urchin densities would be double what they are today.

Read the full story:
https://tinyurl.com/yu3cm23f

Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Tasmanian Government

Rock lobster season dates 2026–27

The rock lobster recreational and commercial season dates have been set.

The dates maintain general status quo arrangements for the east coast recreational and commercial fisheries. The commercial season opening dates are 15 November (all waters except for the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone (ECSRZ) and the North East Catch Cap).

The opening dates for the commercial catch caps (the North East Catch Cap and East Coast Catch Cap) have not been set yet. These will be discussed at the next Crustacean Fisheries Consultative Group (CFCG) meeting, which is expected to be held in late October. CFCG members' feedback will be sought after the meeting and advice will be prepared for the Minister in November as part of the standard annual process for setting the TAC, catch cap tonnages and catch cap opening dates. The Minister will decide the opening date for the catch caps by early January 2027.

For more information, visit **https://fishing.tas.gov.au/commercial-fishing/commercial-fishing-seasons.**

Scalefish rules

We have extended the Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015, to provide continued operation of the management plan while policy development and consultation information and processes are finalised.

Thank you for your patience as we work through the extended process. The proposed rule changes are expected to be open for public consultation from late 2026 to early 2027, with new rules to commence on 1 July 2027.

The updated timeline will ensure:

- a more thorough review and modernisation of the rules
- more time for stakeholders to be able to have their say on proposed changes
- more time to consider submissions received during consultation
- more time for the community to familiarise themselves with any rule changes before they take effect.

Our priority is to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and supported to have their say during the consultation period.

The main aim of remaking the Scalefish Rules is to support the recovery of depleted and depleting species. Species like southern calamari and striped trumpeter fall into this category. Fishing pressure for these species is likely too high for recovery, so management changes are needed.

The remake may also consider changes to:

- make sure that other species, including emerging species, remain sustainable into the future
- make rules more effective.

Sardine fishery

From December 2025 to March 2026, we consulted on proposed policies for a new commercial sardine fishery.

We are now developing a Harvest Strategy prior to fishing commencing, rather than what was proposed in the Policy Paper (a Harvest Strategy being developed within the first two years of the fishery operating).

We also commissioned research to understand the potential social and economic benefit for Tasmanians from a local sardine fishery. With a Tasmanian-based fleet and potential onshore processing capacity, the report has estimated that a 7,500t sardine fishery could contribute up to $9.4 million GVA, and be associated with up to 60 full -ime jobs, both directly and indirectly, in the State.

We engaged national seafood consultancy firm Fishtales to validate high-value consumer market opportunities for Tasmanian sardines and develop associated commercialisation pathways. This involved product tastings and structured interviews across a range of high-end restaurants, casual venues, institutions, major retailers and suppliers around Tasmania and Australia, as well as consumer research to understand demand that could be realised for the fish in different formats.

All this information, including the reports, is available online at **https://fishing.tas.gov.au/commercial-fishing/commercial-fisheries/sardine-fishery**.

Development of an Aquaculture Therapeutant – Wild Fisheries Management Plan

Findings from florfenicol research programs have directly informed regulatory and management decisions for Tasmania's wild fisheries. We have proactively developed an Aquaculture Therapeutant – Wild Fisheries Management Plan (the Plan).

The Plan provides a consistent framework for managing potential risks to wild fisheries and market access associated with the use of veterinary therapeutants in aquaculture. If adopted it will establish a conservative approach to monitoring and, where necessary, fisheries management measures to protect the ongoing market access of Tasmania's wild fisheries.

The Plan as drafted does not endorse or approve the use of any therapeutant. Approval of veterinary medicines is primarily a matter for Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

Rather, the Plan recognises that, where therapeutants are used in the marine environment, appropriate measures need to be in place to identify and manage potential impacts on wild fisheries.

At the time of writing, the Plan is currently in draft form and has been circulated to relevant wild fisheries industry representatives for consultation.

Bird flu

Bird flu has been detected in Tasmania. If you see sick or dead birds or other wildlife:

- AVOID contact.
- RECORD the location and, if safe, take photos.
- REPORT it immediately to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Stay up to date by visiting https://nre.tas.gov.au/birdflu.

Elevated risk of marine heatwave conditions

Tasmania is entering the warmer months with an increased risk of marine heatwave conditions.

Marine heatwaves are sustained periods of unusually warm ocean temperatures that can place stress on marine ecosystems and affect fisheries, aquaculture and coastal environments. While marine heatwaves can be forecast, the impacts on particular species, habitats and industries are often difficult to predict.

Tasmanian waters are warming almost four times faster than the global average, making it important for industry and the community to stay informed about changing marine conditions.

Recent years have seen significant investment in preparedness, including industry workshops, cross-agency scenario exercises, improved monitoring and forecasting, and coordinated response planning. preparedness is not about predicting a specific event. This is to help us all be better positioned to understand changing conditions, share information quickly, and respond appropriately if impacts occur.

Previous marine heatwaves in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia have been associated with:

- changes in the distribution and abundance of marine species
- changes in fish movement, behaviour, catchability and recruitment
- stress on kelp forests and other marine habitats
- disease events affecting marine species
- mortality events in some fisheries, such as abalone

Marine heatwaves may also contribute to environmental conditions that favour other marine stressor events, such as harmful algal blooms. However, marine heatwaves do not automatically result in harmful algal blooms, disease outbreaks or fish kills. These events depend on a range of environmental and biological factors that remain difficult to predict.

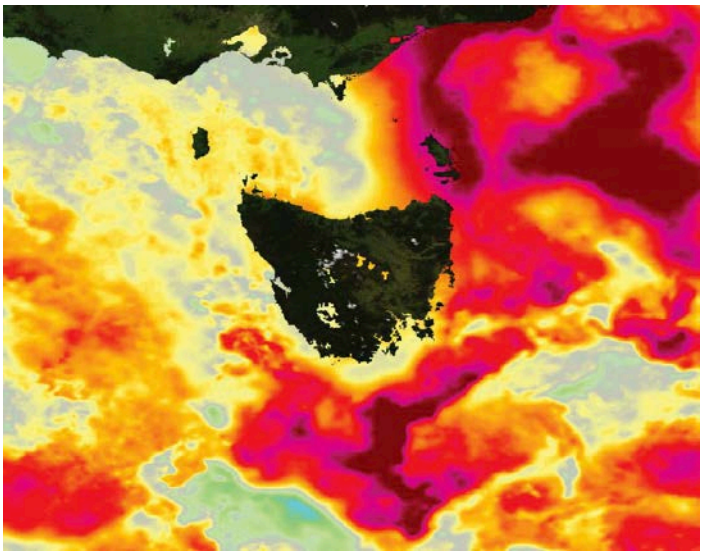
Report signs of marine stressor events

Commercial fishers and aquaculture operators are often among the first to observe changes in the marine environment.

Observations made on the water can provide valuable information that helps improve situational awareness and supports understanding of marine stressor events as they develop.

We encourage fishers to report unusual observations, including:

- fish, shellfish or other marine animals that appear sick or are dying
- fish kills or unusual mortality events
- unusual species sightings or distribution changes
- bleaching or dieback of kelp, seagrass or other marine habitats
- other unusual environmental conditions or changes.



A snapshot of sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies at September 27, 2026 from NASA Worldview

When making a report, photographs, dates and location details are particularly valuable.

Visit [Report Signs of a Marine Stressor Event | Fishing Tasmania] for information on how to report different observations. Sick or dead seabirds, marine mammals, or fish (including shellfish, abalone and rock lobster) need to be reported immediately to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline, 1800 675 888, to be triaged by wildlife and veterinary specialists. Avoid contact with a sick animal.

Stay Informed

Forecast confidence will improve as summer approaches and conditions continue to be monitored.

The seafood industry is encouraged to stay informed through:

- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) [Marine Climate Forecast Briefings]
- Bureau of Meteorology [marine and ocean temperature outlooks]
- Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) [OceanCurrent] platform
- [NASA Worldview] and State of the Ocean sea surface temperature products

More information about [the outlook], and links to these resources are available through the [Marine Stressors | Fishing Tasmania] webpage.

Contact

Laura Fatovich, Team Leader, Stakeholder Engagement
laura.fatovich@nre.tas.gov.au.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING
FISHWATCH 0427 655 557

Seafood And Maritime Training

Chadd travels

SMT's Aquaculture Training Manager, Chadd Mumme, has been busy on the road and in the air recently, getting out and about to connect with industry and promote opportunities in aquaculture training.

On 27 and 28 August, Chadd attended the Shellfish Futures Conference at the Panorama Hotel in St Helens. The event brought together oyster growers, suppliers and industry representatives for networking, discussions and the latest industry updates.

Chadd took the opportunity to connect with industry and discuss SMT's Certificate IV in Aquaculture program for 2027, highlighting the training opportunities available to support the future of Tasmania's aquaculture workforce.

Earlier in the year, Chadd also travelled to Sydney for the Seafood Directions Conference, held from 28 to 30 July. The conference provided another great opportunity to connect with seafood industry professionals, share ideas and keep up to date with developments across the industry.

With plenty of kilometres travelled and conversations had, Chadd's recent trips have been a great way to strengthen SMT's connections with the seafood and aquaculture industries.



Chadd at Seafood Directions



SMT welcome sign at Korea Marine Meister High School

SMT building stronger links with Korea Marine Meister High School

SMT trainer Ben Tucker has been in South Korea delivering a week-long, non-accredited Coxswain Certification Course for Aquaculture at Korea Marine Meister High School in Pohang.

Korea Marine Meister High School is a specialised vocational high school that trains future leaders for careers in the maritime and ocean industries.

The course provides a group of students with theoretical coxswain knowledge, with a focus on skills and knowledge relevant to the aquaculture industry.

SMT has developed a close relationship with Korea Marine Meister High School, with students visiting Tasmania as part of their studies and gaining valuable experience within the Tasmanian aquaculture industry.

The partnership provides a great opportunity to share knowledge and experiences between the two countries while supporting the next generation of maritime and aquaculture professionals.

Trainer profile – Jonty Wall

Meet Jonathon 'Jonty' Wall, SMT's Dive Trainer and Assessor and a man who clearly doesn't believe in sitting still for too long.

Jonty trains and assesses students undertaking SMT's Aquaculture Diver Skill Set and Dive Supervisor Skill Set, bringing years of hands-on commercial diving experience to the role. He spent years working as a commercial diver in the aquaculture industry, progressing into dive team leader and supervisor roles. So, what does he love about diving?

"I love diving – no noise, calm, quiet, no people, just fish. And you get to problem-solve a situation on your own."

He also enjoys the challenge of running dive teams, particularly the social and logistical side of teamwork. "Working out what everyone's strengths and weaknesses are, then using those to work towards a common goal."

After a six-month trip through Southeast Asia, Jonty returned wanting to try something different while keeping a foot in the industry. That's when he made the move into training and assessment.

Now, two years into his role at SMT, Jonty says he loves teaching, passing on his knowledge and seeing the passion in people getting started in the industry. He also enjoys the flexibility of training and assessing while still getting his hands (and probably the rest of him) wet with casual and contract dive work on salmon and barramundi farms.

When he's not underwater or in the training room, Jonty likes to be 'on the go' and with two kids, he certainly gets plenty of practice! His idea of relaxing includes hiking, surfing, fishing, mountain biking and trail running. In fact, 'flat out busy' is probably a more accurate description of Jonty's preferred lifestyle.

Whether he's underwater, in the classroom or chasing his kids around the great outdoors, one thing is for sure – Jonty doesn't seem to spend much time standing still.







Rural Alive and Well

Supporting wellbeing across Tasmania's seafood industry

The seafood industry is about much more than growing, catching and harvesting seafood. Behind the scenes, businesses and individuals are navigating an ever-changing landscape of rules, regulations, compliance requirements and workplace pressures.

Over the past month, the Stay Afloat Tasmania program has continued to connect with people across the industry through proactive visits, workplace support and referrals to Rural Alive & Well (RAW). It has been encouraging to see an increase in people reaching out for support and connecting with the services available to them.

One topic that continues to come up in conversations across the industry is the added pressure of compliance. Keeping up with regulatory requirements and implementing policies and procedures can be demanding, particularly alongside the day-to-day challenges of running a business.

Support is available for work-related challenges, personal concerns, or simply when everything starts to feel like too much. RAW's team can provide face-to-face support in your own environment, helping individuals and communities build resilience and navigate life's challenges.

RAW is proud to support the people behind Tasmania's seafood industry, because looking after the wellbeing of our people is an important part of building a strong and sustainable industry for generations to come.

Need support?

Getting in touch is easy. For free and confidential support you can request a call-back for yourself or someone you're concerned about, and a RAW team member will be in touch.

Visit ruralaliveandwell.com.au or call 1800 729 827.

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



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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
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Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)
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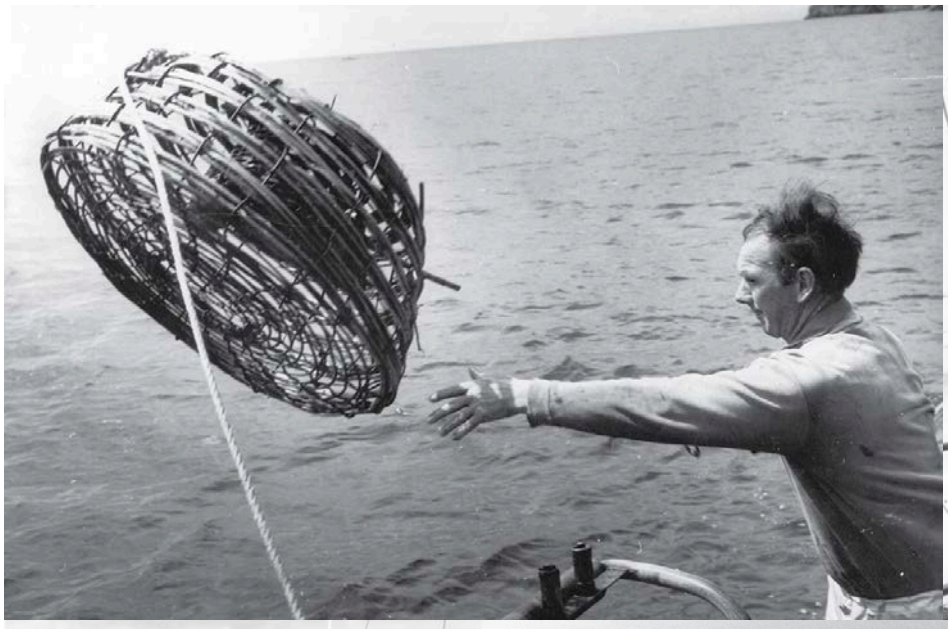
NRE Tas – Marine Resources (Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania)
nre.tas.gov.au
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03 6165 3777

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03 6286 0400

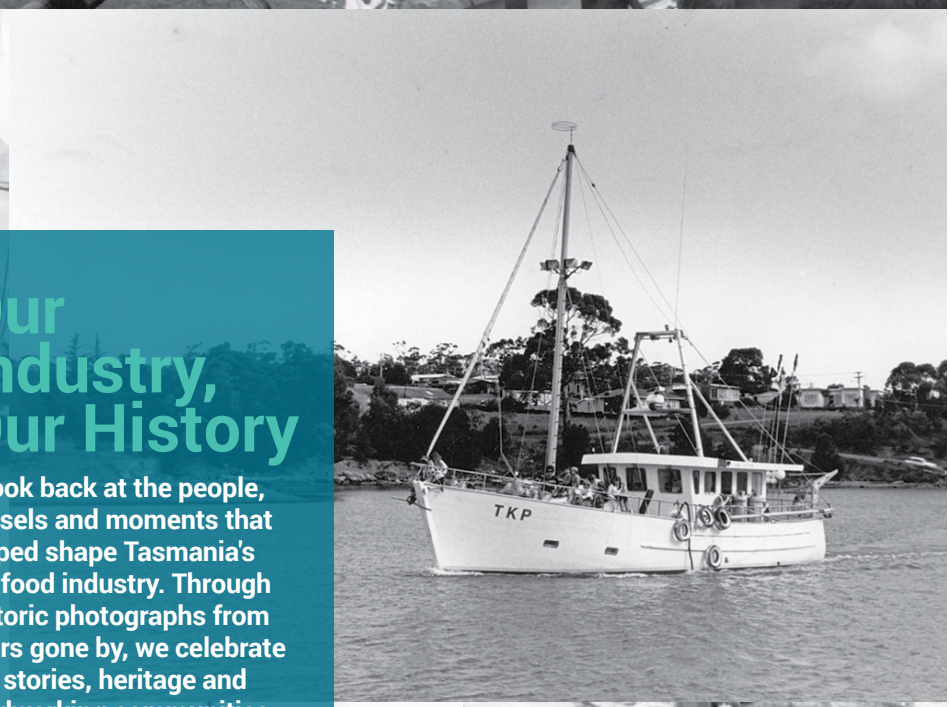
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NRE Marine Resources (Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania)
www.nre.tas.gov.au
www.fishing.tas.gov.au
Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)
www.imas.utas.edu.au
Marine and Safety Tasmania
www.mast.tas.gov.au
Natural Resource Management South
www.nrmsouth.org.au









Our Industry, Our History

A look back at the people, vessels and moments that helped shape Tasmania's seafood industry. Through historic photographs from years gone by, we celebrate the stories, heritage and hardworking communities behind our industry.





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