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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to the Federal Coalition on winning the recent Federal Election. This result provides a level of stability for both the Tasmanian and broader Australian seafood industry, as we are able to continue with already developed political relationships and policies we have driven over the preceding years.

In the context of Coalition Fisheries Policy, TSIC will watch with interest as initiatives such as the Commonwealth Fisheries Resource Sharing Framework and National Fisheries Plan pave a blueprint for Commonwealth, and in turn state-based, fisheries access rights.

We also commend the Coalition government for their support to help those in the Australian seafood industry who suffer from mental health issues. I don’t think we here in Tasmania realise how lucky we are to have the organisation Rural Alive and Well Tasmania. This network provides hands-on support for farmers and fishers in regional communities. Its contribution to mental health in these regions is invaluable, and TSIC is proud to be forging forward with our partnership with RAW.

Another significant benefit of a returned Coalition government for the Australian fishing industry is that the Commonwealth Marine Park Management Plans will remain as they have been negotiated between the commercial and recreational sectors and the government. This relieves the uncertainty and increased impact that would have occurred under Labor’s promise to reinstate their 2012 Marine Park Management Plans. Although Tasmania and the SE of Australia have lived with Commonwealth Marine Parks for the last 10 years, we understand the impost this shift to the Labor network would have had on the rest of the Australian fishing industry.

At the same time, it is also very disappointing that the Coalition provided no commitment to help the Tasmanian seafood industry and broader Tasmanian community with our battle against the invasive long-spined urchin on our East Coast. TSIC will continue to work with the Coalition government for any funding opportunities to support this ongoing battle.

With the announcement of the new cabinet, it was great to see the elevation of local Tasmanian Senator Jonathon Duniam to the roles of Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fishing, as well as for Regional Tourism. From a Tasmanian perspective, this balance of portfolios is perfect, as seafood goes hand in hand with regional tourism.

Jonathon is a proud sixth generation Tasmanian with strong family roots in North-West Tasmania. TSIC has met with Jonathon on several occasions, and he has shown strong support for our industry both during and after these meetings.

I will also take this opportunity to welcome the first ever female Minister for Agriculture, Bridget McKenzie, and also the outgoing Assistant Minister for Fisheries, Tasmania’s Richard Colbeck, on his appointments as Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, and Minister for Youth and Sport.

On the local political scene, the State Budget was handed down in the latter part of May. The Budget included funding for all commitments outlined in the Liberals’ 2018 Election Campaign Policy “Taking Seafood to the Next Level”. Continued funding support includes:

- Commercial Fisheries – The government continues its strong support of our world class wild-catch and farmed seafood sectors with a number of initiatives to assist commercial fisheries, including:
  - the extension of the East Coast Rock Lobster Translocation program;
  - the development and implementation of the Fisheries Digital Transition Project to maximise the efficiencies for fisheries management and quota monitoring through the use of digital licensing and reporting platforms;
  - support to the Abalone industry through the establishment of the Abalone Industry Development Fund and funding for the Abalone Industry Development Trust Fund; and
  - Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council policy support;
  - increased funding to the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies by $1 million to $14 million over five years, from 2018-19, for additional research into the fishing and marine farming industries and ongoing support for the assessment of new and sustainable fisheries opportunities.

ShellMAP Industry Development – The Revamped Shellfish Quality Assurance and Aquaculture Market Access Program. The Department has partnered with the oyster and shellfish industry to coordinate industry development under the ShellMAP program. Funding of $400,000 over four years, from 2018-19, is enabling progression of projects proposed by Oysters Tasmania to improve the capacity of the oyster industry to manage market access programs.

ShellMAP – Oyster and Shellfish Real Time Sensor Monitoring. This 2018-19 initiative of $400,000, over four years, is to enhance the real-time monitoring sensor network. The program is working with Oysters Tasmania to determine the specifications for a sensor network, managing the acquisition of services and management of the network.

Analytical Services Tasmania – Funding of $1 million will be provided in 2019-20 to support the ongoing work of Tasmania’s only environmental analytical testing laboratory, enabling the maintenance of service to industry, the public and government. The laboratory provides essential services to the Director of Environment Protection Authority Tasmania and the Director of Public Health.

Biosecurity – There is also further support in this area.

TSIC thanks the Hodgeman Liberal government for this continuation of support to the Tasmanian seafood industry, which in turn is a vote of confidence in our economic and social contribution to Tasmania.

LINDSAY NEWMAN
**Seismic Surveys**
It was very disappointing to hear that the national regulator NOPSEMA had approved a seismic survey to the west of King Island. In response, TSIC and the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen’s Association made the following media release:

**Seaford industry astounded by NOPSEMA approval**
The Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council is astounded by the recent approval by NOPSEMA for the Dorrigo 3D Oil seismic survey in the Otway Basin between Victoria and NW Tasmania.

Under NOPSEMA frameworks, 3D Oil needed to provide evidence of industry consultation and to provide evidence on how they will mitigate any identified risks.

"With respect to the consultation process, 3D Oil’s approach with TSIC, Seafood Industry Victoria and many affected Tasmanian and Victorian fishers was hugely inadequate," said Mr Julian Harrington, Chief Executive of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council.

"Initially 3D Oil engaged TSIC in the consultation process, as did two other companies proposing activities in the same region.

"The proposed consultation timeframe overlapped a very busy time with significant communications and discussions between NOPSEMA, the national peak body for petroleum, APPEA, the seafood industry, and gas and oil companies proposing works and operations in SE Australia.

"These discussions focused on improvements to the consultation processes, to ensure an inclusive and collaborative approach was taken by the gas and oil industry.

"These discussions ultimately delayed our consultation with the three companies. Two companies accepted this delay, while 3D Oil did not. Instead they informed TSIC that, ‘3D Oil will now seek to employ other methods for contacting relevant fishing licence holders.’

"So here we are today, with two state seafood peak bodies having no idea of the content of the 3D EP, no understanding of the consultation process they employed and who was communicated with, and no understanding of what risks have been identified and mitigated,” said Mr Harrington.

"Is that a collaborative, open and transparent process? Is that the sort of process that a government organisation should advocate?

"Under recently enacted changes to the EP consultation process, companies will have to publish a full EP and allow for a 30-day public consultation process, but 3D Oil snuck this through before this new consultation process was enacted,” said Mr Harrington.

"No wonder they were not happy with the TSIC timeframe for consultation.”

The Tasmanian seafood industry has long held concerns over the impacts of seismic on commercially targeted species, both adults and larvae.

"Recent reputable and peer reviewed research conducted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies has confirmed our industry’s long held suspicions, that seismic has a greater impact on the marine environment than previously reported or acknowledged,” said Mr John Sansom, Chief Executive of the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen’s Association.

"We know that seismic impacts adult rock lobster and scallops, but we have no idea or understanding of the impact of seismic on adult and juvenile giant crabs.

"We also know that seismic activity has a significant impact on krill larvae and zooplankton, but we have no understanding of the impacts on rock lobster larvae, but we could reasonably assume it will be negative.

"This is of great concern for future recruitment in the Tasmanian rock lobster fishery.

"At this point in time, I have no understanding of how 3D Oil have mitigated this concern. I cannot understand how NOPSEMA can make such an approval without industry knowing the content of the EP,” said Mr Sansom.

The Tasmanian seafood industry will continue its push for improved consultation and compensation for the impacts of seismic on the marine environment. This will include the application of the offset principle to all seismic activity.

**Digital Transition Project**
The TSIC CE continues to work closely with DPIPWE for the rollout of the Digital Transition Project. We commend DPIPWE for their open and transparent communication with members on this project, with the project team providing presentations at numerous industry forums, including the rock lobster port visits and general meeting, as well as the recent Abalone Fisheries Research and Advisory Committee.

Although there is a long way to go in this new digital journey, we are positive the final products will greatly improve communications between DPIPWE and industry.

Included in this issues of Seafood Industry News is correspondence on this topic from Minister Barnett on page 17.

**Cyber Fraud**
TSIC is aware of recent instances where emails have been hacked, monitored and used by a third party, without any knowledge of the email owner. This is a very serious fraud, which is becoming more and more widespread – worldwide. I thought it appropriate to provide a warning to all. So how does the fraud work?

A business sends an invoice, which is expected, to a stakeholder. The hacker has managed to gain access to either the sender or recipients email and intercepts that email the tax invoice attachment. They alter the banking details on the intercepted email to another bank account, then put the email back into the inbox as if it was from the original sender. They will accompany the email with a message saying the business has changed their banking details.

If the invoice is paid, voila – the money goes straight into the hands of criminals. You only become aware of the crime when chasing up the payment or alternatively, getting chased to make the payment.

I urge you to be vigilant with all tax invoices coming via email, especially if bank account details have changed. A couple of simple tips:

- **It is not good business practice to attach an invoice to an email saying you have changed your bank account details.**
- If a business changes or appears to change its bank account details, give the business a call and ask directly.
- Change your email password regularly and / or have a sufficiently long and complex password. Advice received from a fraud expert is that passwords should be at least 14 characters and include upper and lower case, numbers and a symbol. Eight digit less complex passwords are easy to hack in this day and age.
- If you are not receiving emails you expect you may be hacked. Change your password.

The most important thing, if an invoice or email doesn’t look right, then simply make a phone call.
NEW PROJECT OFFICER AT TSIC

As of 6 May, Grace Isdale has joined the TSIC and Oysters Tasmania teams. Grace has taken on the role of Project Officer. We’ve asked Grace to introduce herself during her first days here in the office.

Having travelled to Tasmania numerous times over the last seven years, my move to Hobart from my home town of Brisbane feels like a natural progression. I have always been interested in animals, and as I moved through school and university, that interest developed further into sustainability, welfare, and food security. Science education and community outreach are also very important to me, and I have been involved in several community groups over the years aimed at promoting STEM to young people.

My interest in fisheries in particular came about while on an exchange semester at the University of Wyoming in the United States. There I completed courses in fisheries management and limnology, and found that these areas were what I most enjoyed and succeeded in. I got a healthy dose of hands-on experience with those courses, including electrofishing, seine fishing, and dietary analysis, alongside learning about yield models, fishing exploitation rates, and more. Learning about the management, regulatory, and community contexts of fisheries was exciting to me, so I decided to pursue a career in the field.

After completing my undergraduate studies in zoology, geography, and writing at the University of Queensland (UQ), I undertook an honours year in marine biology (also at UQ). My project explored functional immunity and growth performance of Atlantic salmon fed novel sustainable diets. Realising that Tasmania is a hub for fisheries, I set my sights on moving here and am thrilled about the role I have found with TSIC and OT and the beautiful state that I now call home. I’m especially happy to be in Tasmania to explore the great hiking and rock climbing on offer – I did the Overland Track last February – and have big plans for more adventures on my days off.

In my role as Project Officer, I am eager to promote the Tasmanian seafood industry to the wider community as a provider of high quality and sustainable product, and a potential career pathway. I also look forward to meeting TSIC and OT members to develop my understanding of the industry and the current issues we face.

If you’d like to get in touch with me, you can contact me at the following addresses:

TSIC: projectofficer@tsic.org.au
OT: grace@oysterstasmania.org

JETTY TALK

Have a 26TEN Chat

TSIC staff attended a 26TEN Plain English workshop in May. We learned how to think about our readers, organise our information and write more clearly. You, our members, are who we communicate with on a daily basis. You will start to see information from TSIC presented differently.

Staff also joined in a 10 steps to adult literacy workshop to learn about how different backgrounds and upbringings can affect your ability to read and write. It was a real ‘eye opener’ and helped put perspective on how to better support our members. We learned that one in two Tasmanians have difficulty with reading and writing. A huge number, and probably many people you know. 26TEN offers one-on-one support with reading and writing, to help boost people’s confidence.

If you know someone who could benefit from help in reading, writing or numeracy, 26TEN’s Chat website suggests ways to start a conversation with them about it.

Visit www.26tenchat.tas.gov.au or call 1300 00 2610 for more information

Bryan Skepper retires from Sydney Fish Market

After four decades of loyal service to Sydney Fish Market, General Manager Bryan Skepper has announced his retirement, effective July 2019.

Bryan’s story is a true ‘mailroom to corner office’ one, starting in 1975 as Assistant Accountant and working his way to the top, being appointed General Manager in 2012. He has led SFM with wisdom, skill and diligence, through a challenging period for the company.

Because of Bryan’s considerable involvement in planning and negotiating the relocation of the market to a new site at the head of Blackwattle Bay, Bryan will be retained by the company in an advisory capacity to assist his successor with progressing that relocation.

We wish Bryan a long and happy retirement.

Contribution by Grahame Turk AM, Chairman of Sydney Fish Market

T-shirts

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Tasmanian Seafood T-shirts for sale!

The famous ‘Eat more seafood’ t-shirts, worn by the TSIC staff and volunteers at the Wooden Boat Festival, are for sale on the TSIC website www.tsic.org.au. Get yours today from $30.
Following the August 2018 release of An Oral History of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry, Volume 1: North Eastern Tasmania, TSIC compiled a second volume with a focus on the South. Over 500 printed copies of Volume 2 were distributed to members of the public at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February 2019, giving the wider community and tourists an opportunity to learn about the history of our industry.

Volume 2: South focuses on stories and information relevant to the Greater Hobart region, including Storm Bay and the D’Entrecasteaux Channel. The book was compiled using information collected during interviews conducted as part of the TSIC project “Oral history of the Tasmanian seafood industry,” and other available online and shared resources. Many historical photographs are included throughout the book and give a great window into our industry’s history. Read on for some excerpts from Volume 2: South. If you would like a copy of the complete book, drop into the TSIC office, or see the Directory on page 18 for information on how to contact us.

Indigenous culture

The Aboriginal Tasmanians (Tasmanian: Palawa) first arrived in Tasmania (then a peninsula of Australia) around 40,000 years ago. The Tasmanian Aboriginal population was cut off from the Australian mainland by rising sea levels c. 6,000 BC. They were entirely isolated from the rest of the human race for 8,000 years until British contact and then colonisation in 1803. Shellfish (oysters) and crustaceans (crayfish) were an important dietary item of the Aboriginal population, and the task of collecting seafood was reserved for women.

Early European explorers and British colonisation of Hobart

In January 1793, while anchored in Recherche Bay in far Southern Tasmania, Joseph Raoul, who was quartermaster of one of the two ships under French explorer Antoine Raymond Joseph de Bruni d’Entrecasteaux’s command, provided an informative account of the rock lobster populations on hard rocky reefs.

At one place about a hundred rock lobsters were taken by means of a kind of net made up of three circles and some rods, the whole thing being in the form of a barrel. The fish entered the two ends, and by this method they could be captured and later removed.

Reverend Robert Knopwood’s diaries

As a chaplain in the navy, Robert Knopwood was appointed to Colonel Collin’s expedition which, after failure of the Port Phillip settlement, landed on the site of Hobart on 19 February 1804. Reverend Knopwood’s diaries from 1805 – 1808 provide descriptions of his early subsistence or recreational fishing pursuits in the Derwent River, many of which were from his cottage at Risdon Cove to the north of Hobart.

Tuesday 21 May 1805: at 11 I went out afishing and caught a very large Crayfish, the first that was taken in this Colony which I gave to His Honor the Lt. Gov. on my return home to dinner late in the eve rain and wind.
Couta fishing with Ross Wisby

In the 1900s, barracouta, otherwise known as couta, were a staple diet for Tasmanians, and a key target species for a growing number of commercial fishers. Ross Wisby recounted his early experience catching couta during the early 1950s.

The first year I went fishing by myself, I bought the [fishing vessel] Kalua and dad had the Spring Bay, and between us from February to half way through May we caught 6,000 dozen couta. And the only reason we slowed down then was that [the processing factory] Safcol used to have a couple of days a week off. 6,000 dozen all by hand. I think they were worth $2 a dozen, a lot of money in those days.

Scallop fishing

In the early parts of the twentieth century scalloping was undertaken from rowing or sailing boats and by using small dredges in the vicinity of the Hobart Docks, Rose Bay and as far north as New Town Bay. By 1905 the internal combustion engine allowed the full-scale exploitation of scallop resources, and stocks in the Derwent were dwindling. This resulted in the Commissioner of Fisheries, Mr P Seager imposing the first fisheries closure in 1908, when scalloping in the Derwent was 'discontinued to allow beds to recuperate'.

By the early 1920s the few boats that were scalloping moved into the upper D’Entrecasteaux Channel and by the 1950s, the fleet had grown. In an interview with Ross Wisby, he recalled his grandfather’s stories of what could only be the origins of the Tasmanian scallop fishery. ‘My grandfather started scalloping, he was one of the first. And he told me where they first started was up under Parliament House in Hobart. They caught them all down through the Channel. I don’t know, there was up to 100 boats in the channel.’

Rock lobster

Before 1926, the traditional tool for catching rock lobster was the hoop net, or cray ring as it was known locally. Cray pots were first used in Tasmanian waters around 1880, but the local fishers quickly stopped using them, believing they ‘depleted crayfish beds’.

Victorian fishermen reintroduced craypots in Tasmanian waters around 1902. Fisheries regulators immediately banned their use. However, some Victorian and local fishers continued to illegally use cane pots. This created significant angst amongst local fishers.

In response, police actively sought out illegal ‘cray-potters’, however, Tony Harrison describes two incidents that sparked considerable debate:

While investigating the illegal use of craypots near Binalong Bay in NE Tasmania, police shot and killed the skipper of the Myrtle Burgess. There was considerable public sympathy for the Burgess family.

Shortly after, in an attempt to apprehend the skipper of the cray vessel Dauntless for illegally potting off St Helens Point [also in the NE], shots were fired. The police sergeant Tom Challenger was subsequently injured when thrown off the boat and into a dinghy tied alongside the vessel.

The debate culminated in several Government commissioned reports, which ultimately led to the legalisation of craypots in Tasmanian waters in 1926. Around the same time, further regulation decreased the legal length of crayfish by 0.25 inch (6.35mm) to 4.5 inches (115mm) along the carapace; and prohibited the sale of female crayfish carrying eggs.
**Abalone**

Today, abalone is considered a widely desirable, high quality food. This is vastly different from the 1960s, where half a kilo would cost only 5 cents. Ivan Cleaver recalled working in Sandy Bay, Hobart, but still fishing part time. He used to snorkel for abalone in various locations around greater Hobart and on the SE Coast, especially around Hellfire Bluff.

'We used to sell the meat not the shells. Snorkel diving first... The abs used to be that thick that you used to just hop over in the water and of course it was very narrow bottom. And you’d have to start flicking them off to make parking space so you could get your knife under them. They’d go right through into the sand. Every rock. We’d bring back probably 50 – 60 kg, just meats. We’d have little piles of shells along the shore'.

Ken Petith started abalone diving in these early days, when equipment was primitive and the fishery was uncontrolled and unorganised.

'Initially there was so little money in it for us that we dived without compressed air, using snorkels, but abalone was so prolific that there was no problem in earning a living doing it that way'.

**Salmon in the Channel**

Salmon farming in Tasmania began during the mid-1980s, and was prompted by a report from the Tasmanian Fisheries Development Authority, which detailed that a salmon farming industry could thrive in Tasmania. Following this, the first fertilised salmon eggs were purchased from New South Wales, which were originally imported in the 1960s from Nova Scotia, Canada. The eggs were destined for the Marine Research Laboratories in Taroona, and the late Trevor Dix was integral in the development of a salmon hatchery at the Taroona laboratories.

'I had a vision then, primarily because I was a very keen angler in New Zealand, of getting [Atlantic] salmon here. And I knew there were salmon in a couple of the lakes in NSW and they had some in a hatchery in Gaden. I set about finding out about the salmon and ultimately bringing some eggs down to Tasmania. We had then converted the Taroona aquarium from an oyster hatchery into a salmon hatchery and the quarantine people insisted it be a recirculating system. It was a bit primitive but survival was pretty good. In fact, half way through the process a young Norwegian technical grower that was out here and I had to pull the plug on two tanks of salmon [because with the excellent] survival the system couldn’t cope. And we had the choice of having everything die or getting a smaller number through'.

**Boat building**

The Storm Bay was built for local fishermen, George Bridge in 1925. She is named after the source of the vast schools of Barracouta [couta] and the destination of most fishermen of the early 1900s when they set off each morning from Victoria Dock. She was designed by Alf Blore and built by Percy Coverdale at Battery Point, Tasmania. She is a 54 foot boat, with Blue Gum frames and a hull and decks planked with Huon Pine. The Bridge family owned Storm Bay from 1925 until 1963. George's grandson Jim Bridge, followed in the family business and fished for 14 years aboard her during the 1940's and 50's.

"I went [full time fishing] in 1947, on the Storm Bay... She was gaff rigged with topsail, fishing took place while the boat drifted under a double reefed mainsail. The 'couta jig or lure was a piece of white Huon Pine about 6’ long, tapered with two big barbless hooks, attached to a linked wire chain, fastened to a 15 foot Sassafras sapling. With no refrigeration, 'Storm Bay' had a wet well made of 4’ thick Huon pine."

**Pacific oysters at Dover**

In an interview with pioneer oyster farming Ian Cameron, the founder of the oyster business Cameron of Tasmania, the early days of the modern oyster industry were recalled.

'1 firsts got involved in about ’74. Dennis Wivell was the only one that was catching spat, up in the Tamar. That was all stick and rack. And of course that failed. So the industry was just getting started, I think it was about 7 or 8 people involved at the time, but no spat. What are we going to do? Where are we going to go? And that went on for a couple a years before we decided we’d get involved in the industry seriously with a hatchery'.

This is just a sample of the eye-opening contents of An Oral History of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry, Volume 2: South. More intriguing stories, fascinating information, and remarkable historical photographs are available in the complete book.

If you have any stories or photographs to share for the next Oral History book, or any additional information about the above article, please get in touch with the TSIC office.
The finalisation of the Free Trade Agreement

There is currently no promotion of southern rock lobster to China and presented a marketing update to attendees at the latest TRLFA General Meeting in Launceston. Michael reported that southern rock lobster is still considered the best in the market; however, there are pressures on that market that industry is not responding to:

- The finalisation of the Free Trade Agreement between China and Australia has seen the number of importers rise. This has created more competition in that market resulting in reduced importer profit. Some importers have looked at replacement products, such as Russian king crab, WA lobster and Canadian lobster to improve profit margins.
- There is currently no promotion of southern rock lobster to consumers in China. ARLEA believes there is huge scope to grow demand to other areas in China that are not yet developed; however, investment will be required to pursue this.
- With investment in promotion, ARLEA believes that southern rock lobster can maintain its marketing position as most preferred.
- With investment in marketing, ARLEA believes that stakeholders will be getting the most value for the resource.
- All our competitors are investing significantly in promotion and marketing to increase their value and market share.

Michael finalised his report saying that he believed that if all sectors in the commercial industry paid a modest fee, then great things could be achieved for future market stability and the ongoing profitability of all stakeholders.

Overseas

Live export of Maine lobster to China has been hit hard by the China/US trade war. Volumes have reduced by 84% since the tariffs were introduced by China in retaliation for US tariffs imposed by the Trump regime.

With no tariffs into China or the EU, Canada has had the gain from US pain. Canadian lobster exports have increased to fill the void left by buyers not willing to pay tariffs on US product.

Another blow to the Maine fishery is the halving of the Total Allowable Catch for herring. Herring is the chief species used for bait in the fishery. This is the second reduction to the herring fishery in two years and the shortage has been described as a crisis. The Executive Director of the Maine East Coast Fishermen’s Association said, “Prices (for bait) are going to go up, and lobstermen are going to be struggling to find as much bait as they are accustomed to.”

Marketing

The president of both the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Processors Association (TRLPA) and the Australian Rock Lobster Exporters Association (ARLEA), Michael Blake, recently returned from a trip to China and presented a marketing update to

Research Pot Program

The rock lobster two-pot research program has been in operation since 2013. Since then, over 30,000 research pots have been set and more than 200,000 lobsters measured and recorded from 249 vessel participants, at an average of 50 vessels a year.

The aim of the program is to collect additional data on pre recruits to add to the information that IMAS collect from their own catch sampling sites. All the data is used in the stock assessment model that is in turn used to determine the health of the stock, harvest strategies and setting the Total Allowable Catch (TAC).

Participating rock lobster fishers are issued with a permit to carry and use two extra rock lobster pots on their fishing vessel for a season. The two extra pots have the escape gaps closed up in order to capture as many under sized lobsters as possible. All lobsters caught in the research pots must be measured and recorded. All legally sized lobsters caught in the research pots are permitted to be retained by the fisher.

IMAS has advised that the data collected through the program is extremely valuable and would like more fishers to participate in the program. The data provides important information on the size structures of catch and identifies the level of pre recruits entering the fishery that will contribute to future catches. This information is critical for assessing and managing the stock. For example, three years ago, stock rebuilding was behind schedule and the stock assessment indicated that a TACC reduction (below the current level) might be necessary to compensate for ongoing low recruitment. However, the research pot data provided evidence of substantial undersize abundance across large regions. On the strength of this data, it was clear that a TACC reduction was unnecessary and we have since seen these undersized animals grow into the fishery, producing the current high CPUE.

IMAS has increased the number of staff supporting the program in order to improve feedback to participating fishers. Researchers have been pleased with participation rates in the program in stock assessment areas 1, 7 & 8. More participants are urgently needed from stock assessment areas 2, 3, 4 & 5 including King Island for a balanced statewide picture.

For a little time and effort, fishers can help ensure that the industry benefits through getting the best available data.

Any fisher who is interested in participating in the program can contact James Parkinson at DPIW on 6165 3045 or james.parkinson@dpiwep.tas.gov.au for details.
Year at SMT

By any indication it’s been a busy year so far. We have completed 61 courses for 650 students and that’s just to the end of May. This is a good indicator that in general the seafood industry is doing well! Aquaculture continues to be the driver, with healthy numbers from wild-catch and maritime sectors.

Business efficiency project

SMT has just finished hosting two postgraduate students as part of their Corporate Internship Program at UTAS. Lily from China and Hash from Pakistan worked with us for 12 weeks reviewing our student enrolment system with a view to improving the process for clients.

Their recommendations were very well received, and we have stated to implement them. Expect a much more streamlined process for both individual and corporate clients in the coming months.

SMT team building workshops

Exploring the theme of providing the right training at the right time, 28 SMT staff got together over two days to look at the services we provide now and into the future. There were many good ideas that distilled down to four ongoing projects. These will focus on implementing new technology, securing funding, acquiring and maintaining facilities, and delivering the courses industry wants. In the end it’s all about adapting to the changing environment and providing better services.

AMSA update

Discussions are continuing with the aim of streamlining the processing of Certificates of Competency. Progress has been made! Future students will see the benefits soon.
Have you made the grade?

The Shellfish Futures conference program is shaping up nicely... and we’re also looking at having some fun events. There will be the Oyster Olympics, with teams of growers competing against each other to complete oyster-related tasks, like making baskets or shucking oysters. There may be some interstate, government and research teams if we can find anyone brave enough to compete!

With our growers spread out over the state, the conference is the one time of year they’re all in the same space. One of our aims this year is to increase the amount of informal conversations between growers and researchers, supporters and government. We are lucky enough to have a team of national scientists attending this year to summarise the findings and application of research from the Future Oysters CRC-P. The researchers will be staying on to talk details with growers throughout the conference.

It’s also a great opportunity for growers to talk to each other and have an input to Oysters Tasmania’s projects and work. We will conduct an industry workshop on Friday afternoon to look at the hot topics for industry while visitors and supporters tour oyster farms at nearby Little Swanport.

Friday night will see the return of the ‘beer and bivalves’ with the Gala Dinner and Auction on Saturday night. The conference is on 16 and 17 August at the Eastcoaster Resort at Triabunna, with details and tickets from our website: [www.oysterstasmania.org](http://www.oysterstasmania.org).

There will be an early bird rate and a discount for those working in the industry.

ShellMAP looks at our management of algal toxins

The industry’s market access and quality assurance program, the Tasmanian Shellfish Market Access Program (ShellMAP) has started a review of how we manage the risk posed by marine toxic algal blooms in the state. The industry and the Tasmanian Government have been working together to produce a project plan to assess if the current sampling and testing regime is the most cost-effective way to cover that risk.

New face at Oysters Tasmania

We are excited to welcome Grace Isdale to the Oysters Tasmania team. Grace is our new Project Officer, splitting her time between Oysters Tasmania and the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council and is looking forward to meeting you all soon. See Grace’s profile on page 5.
POMS research guides oyster farm management in Tasmania

Many oyster farms in south-eastern Tasmania experienced mass stock mortalities of around 80% when the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) virus first arrived in Tasmania in early 2016.

This summer, data collected by IMAS researchers shows a significant drop in oyster mortalities, to around 5-25% depending on location.

During the warmer months, IMAS researchers collect data on oyster mortalities and environmental conditions in south-eastern Tasmania to help farmers predict when POMS outbreaks are likely to occur.

Farmers can also manage their farm production to reduce mortalities. Two likely reasons for the recent improvement in oyster survival are: the farming of oysters selectively bred for POMS resistance, and the lowering of stocking densities to reduce the host biomass for the virus.

The research shows that water temperatures above 18–20°C are one of the main triggers for POMS outbreaks. However, patterns of mortality within individual farms and within a growing area are not well understood, although water movements may be an important factor. This is a common experience with the POMS virus globally.

The three-year Future Oysters CRC program finishes in August 2019 and final reports will be available later this year.

Tasmania’s salmon industry plans for blue future

In 2017, the University of Tasmania hosted a Global Salmon Conference, bringing together local and overseas scientists, industry, government and the community to discuss the future growth and sustainability of Tasmania’s salmon aquaculture industry. The industry is seeking to safely and sustainably grow salmon production over the next two decades, to increase the benefits to the community.

The overarching aim of the Tasmanian Global Salmon Symposium partnership was to support the industry to be a world leader in environmental, fish health and biosecurity sustainability – creating an industry all Tasmanians can be proud of.

Read the conference report: www.tinyurl.com/Planning-for-Blue-Future
Tasmanian seal-fisheries interactions survey

A new study into interactions between Tasmanian fisheries and native fur seals has drawn together a broad range of experiences and perceptions on this challenging issue.

The honours study was based on results of a 2016 survey of commercial and recreational fishers, resource and environment managers, and the broader community. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey.

The study contrasted survey results with available ecological and historical data to highlight areas of focus for the future.

The survey responses highlighted the challenges of seal interactions for many Tasmanian fishers. These interactions can have financial and mental health implications for fishing communities.

One finding was a strong perception among fishers surveyed (98% of commercial and 85% of recreational) that seal numbers were increasing, and that just over half of these groups believed interactions had increased due to increasing seal numbers.

However, it seems more likely seals have become habituated to fishing operations, so interactions with fishers are changing. Population survey data shows the Australian fur seal population increased from the late 1980s to the early 2000s after near extinction by sealing. But from the early 2000s, pup production (how fur seal populations are measured) has stabilised, although some small colonies have been established at the edge of its range.

In 2013, the whole-population census (Tasmania and Victoria) recorded the first decrease in annual pup production since species-wide protection was given in 1975. And while the long-nosed fur seal has increased in Tasmania, it has done so from a low population level. Currently less than 1500 pups are produced per year and their breeding range is restricted to Tasmania’s south coast.

Investigating new technology, infrastructure, and finding ways to reduce fish rewards for seals from humans are currently the best strategies to reduce these interactions.

Discover more: www.tinyurl.com/sealfisheryinteraction

Bass Strait Central Zone

The SFAT has negotiated with AFMA management on a number of issues in preparation for a new Bass Strait scallop season, hopefully to commence in July this year.

Fishwell Consulting prepared a document on a proposed scallop preseason survey design for 2019, and we have generally supported this concept. The recommendations were to survey 13 known and previously productive beds, mostly east of King Island and NE of Flinders Island, with medium and high priority areas identified.

AFMA subsequently called for an EOI for vessels to undertake the survey and eight applications were received from six concession holders with an AFMA committee selecting the vessels to commence the survey effective from 1 May in conjunction with Fishwell Consulting.

The first of two main survey periods then commenced in early May with the vessels Rachel Maree, Shandara and Odete C and observers eventually covering the agreed priority areas to determine the location and level of preseason scallop stocks. We are very appreciative of the contributions made to the fishery by the skippers of the survey vessels involved.

Following completion of the surveys Fishwell is preparing a detailed assessment of the survey results and its report will be considered at ScrAG and ScMAC meetings in Melbourne on 6 and 7 June. Subject to sufficient stocks and AFMA Commission approval, this would put us on track for a BSCZ season opening in early July. Last year the season opened on 19 July.

In preparation for an expected season opening, the SFAT has once again prepared and circulated a Food Safety Management Plan for the BSCZ scallop fishery.

The plan will ensure that scallops landed in Tasmania this year are once again tested and confirmed as safe for human consumption. Laboratory food safety test reports arranged by the SFAT assist in confirming that BSCZ scallops landed in Victoria are also safe to eat.

SFAT meetings

The next SFAT AGM and General Meeting will be held in Launceston on 12 June where a range of scallop industry topics will be discussed.

Agenda items include the priority to survey in Tasmanian waters in April/May 2020, management fee reductions and costs restructuring, the BSCZ survey results, the UTAS/IMAS report on scallop harvesting and management strategies, and the precautionary approach to scallop food safety.
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Stability and changing your fishing gear

It is important to keep your vessel stable to prevent it from capsizing and to protect the lives of those on board.

Stability refers to the vessel’s ability to return to its upright position after being heeled over by wind, waves, or other forces. Stability is determined by the upward-acting force of buoyancy from the underwater parts of a vessel, combined with the downward-acting force from the weight of its hull, equipment, fuel, stores and load. The stability of your vessel also changes throughout your trip as stores and fuel are used and catch is added.

Generally, stability is increased when weights are added down low or removed from up high, and, conversely, reduced when weights are added up high or removed from down low.

While some grandfathering arrangements mean that certain fishing vessels in Tasmania may not be required to hold a stability booklet or have a stability assessment, you still have a general safety duty to ensure the safety of your vessel and persons on board so far as reasonably practicable. This duty includes ensuring your vessel remains within its stability limits.

Stability calculations by a naval architect help you meet your general safety duties by providing evidence that your vessel has the stability characteristics, at a point in time, that will allow it to safely operate, taking into account the weather, types of operations and loading conditions in which you operate.

Permanent changes

Just like changing an operation requires a risk assessment to identify and mitigate new operational risks, making changes that affect a vessel’s stability also require a review. Examples of such changes are adding a crane, net reel, trawl apparatus, or new tanks, or a combination of changes that result in more than 4% of the vessel’s displacement. In most cases, AMSA allows this review to be conducted against older standards such as the USL code, under the transitional vessel framework.

Carrying extra fishing gear

If you are planning to carry extra fishing gear which isn’t a permanent fixture on your vessel, such as extra pots, you need to consider how this will affect your vessel’s stability. Just because fisheries regulations may allow you to carry more gear, this does not necessarily mean it is safe for your vessel to do so.

If you already have stability calculations, you need to check whether the extra load you intend to carry is within the calculated loading conditions. If it isn’t, you need to get these calculations done.

If you don’t have stability calculations for your vessel and wish to carry additional fishing gear, you are strongly encouraged to get such calculations done. This will give you the assurance that your vessel meets the relevant stability criteria while carrying the extra gear, and it will help you demonstrate that you are maintaining the safety of your vessel ‘so far as reasonably practicable’.

These calculations will consider all of the weight associated with the addition of fishing gear, for instance, the carriage of additional bait, and (hopefully) additional catch.

Other safety considerations when adding more fishing gear

Apart from stability, there are a number of other safety considerations to consider when adding new fishing gear, including:

- visibility for navigation is not obscured
- fishing gear is stowed as close to the centreline and as low as possible and secured to avoid shifting in bad weather.

Also, consider your points of downflooding and ensure hatches and doors are weathertight.

Remember stabilisers do not necessarily provide added stability—they only slow the rolling motion of the vessel.

AMSA has developed an easy to understand guide to fishing vessel stability. Please call into the AMSA Hobart office for a free copy, call AMSA Connect on 1800 627 484 to have a copy posted to you, or download a copy from the AMSA website www.amsa.gov.au (www.amsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/amsa507.pdf)

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Fisheries Digital Transition Project update from Minister Barnett

The Hodgman Liberal Government has just released the 2019/20 State Budget. This year it includes $13.8 million to support our world class wild catch and farmed seafood sector. A key initiative that we continue to back and which is well underway is the Fisheries Digital Transition Project (FDTP).

The initial focus is on the development of a licensing portal which is expected to be launched in early 2020. The FDTP will streamline services, making fisheries licensing and reporting faster and easier, meaning you will spend less time doing paper work and more time getting on with business.

To ensure FDTP delivers what industry needs, DPIPWE is working closely with key stakeholders including representatives from TSIC, IMAS and Tasmania Police.

As part of the development process, DPIPWE is reviewing digital licensing and catch reporting platforms used in other jurisdictions, to identify what works best for both fishery industries and government. DPIPWE will also be seeking feedback from you on the design and asking for assistance with road-testing prototypes and I encourage you to get involved.

In May, FDTP Manager, Daniel Gledhill presented to rock lobster fishers during port visits and the TRLFA AGM, and to members of the Abalone Fishery Advisory Committee. These presentations provided a great opportunity to introduce the project, gain feedback and develop a better understanding of the challenges facing fishers.

For more information, please contact FDTP Manager, Daniel Gledhill daniel.gledhill@dpipwe.tas.gov.au

More ways DPIPWE is Making Life Easier

Staff of the Licensing and Administration branch are continuing to change the way they do business with the commercial fishing industry as part of the Making Life Easier initiative.

As forms are updated, they are being added to the Commercial Licensing Forms page www.fishing.tas.gov.au/forms on the DPIPWE website. Forms listed as a NEW FORM are now able to be filled using Internet Explorer or Google Chrome.

Remember

- You can now elect to receive all communications from the Licensing and Administration branch directly to an email address – including Renewals.
- To do this, simply complete the “Application to Consent to Communication by Electronic Notification” form on the Commercial Licensing Forms page (hint: it’s right at the bottom), and return it to the branch.

Changes implemented since the last Seafood Industry News are:

From 1 May 2019

- Vessel survey reports will no longer be routinely required to add a known commercial fishing vessel to a licence.
- Renewal notices for all fishing licences will now be emailed to licence holders who have elected for electronic communication.
- All applications to add, change and remove vessels from fishing licences have been consolidated into a single form. The NEW FORM is now available for download from the Commercial Licensing Forms page.
- NEW FORM A new Statutory Declaration form has been added to the Commercial Licensing Forms page. Also on that page is a link to the Department of Justice website listing all occupation types that can be witnesses to the declaration.

From 1 June 2019

- A Frequently Asked Questions page www.fishing.tas.gov.au/CommFishFAQ has been developed and added to the DPIPWE website. This is designed to be the first place you can go to find answers to common questions relating to your licence. This will be regularly updated to ensure that it is relevant and remains useful, especially as we work through changes. The Licensing and Administration branch welcome suggestions for content – you can email them to fisheries.licensing@dpipwe.tas.gov.au.
- Renewal notices will no longer be accompanied by a long separate letter. Instead, all relevant information will appear on the notice itself, with extra information appearing on the new Frequently Asked Questions page.

To keep up to date with the all of the changes, keep an eye on the Making Life Easier pages on the DPIPWE website: www.fishing.tas.gov.au/makelifeeasier
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Government
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Australian Maritime Safety Authority
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The Bureau of Meteorology
CSIRO - Marine and Atmospheric Research
www.cmar.csiro.au
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