

Fishers for Giant Kelp Reforestation and Long-Spined Sea Urchin Management

Joint policy statement:

To protect and support the jobs and economic returns of Tasmania's commercial and recreational fisheries, together with the social and cultural benefits they provide (particularly on Tasmania's East Coast) we are jointly seeking the commitment of the major political parties to invest in:

- 1. Giant Kelp (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) reforestation** **\$20m**
Support for a regional scale approach to reforest around 100ha of Giant Kelp that:
 1. Harnesses the scientific expertise gained from Tasmanian projects and scientists
 2. Engages all sectors in delivery

- 2. Long-spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus*) management** **\$50m**
Support for a regional scale, coordinated approach to control and manage the long-spined sea-urchin that:
 1. Prevents further expansion to new reefs;
 2. Reduces the impact on existing reefs to facilitate recovery; and
 3. Facilitates commercial harvesting
 4. Targets areas for full recovery where there is sensitive habitat (e.g. kelp regrowth) or vulnerable species (e.g. handfish) that need protection.
 5. Engages all sectors in delivery

Current situation:

Over the last 50 years, there has been a 95% reduction in Giant Kelp Forests on Australia's East Coast. Tasmania is home to the remaining, small and isolated stands of this nationally important species, which was the first to be listed as a Threatened Ecological Community under the EPBC Act in 2012. In the decade since then, there has been no recovery plan activated to stop and, where possible, reverse the decline.

In addition, it is recognised that ocean temperatures have been rising, and particularly so on Tasmania's east coast. This has seen the long-spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus Rodgersii*) shift its range southward, dramatically increasing in abundance and creating 'urchin barrens' that denude reefs of habitat and food for the highly prized and valuable rock lobster and abalone fisheries. These barrens have led to a devastating impact on Tasmania's East Coast fisheries.

Economic and social imperative

Tasmania's east coast is known for the productivity of its fisheries, supporting significant commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

Recreational fishing – cornerstone of the Tasmanian way of life

Over 106,000 Tasmanian's go fishing each year - that's one in four Tasmanians (over 5 years of age)¹.

75% of recreationally caught rock lobster and 64% of abalone are caught on Tasmania's east coast.

A TARFish survey of recreational fishers in 2020 found that 80% of fishers actively support and would like to participate in kelp reforestation.

Tasmania's recreational fishers spend over \$161 million annually on goods and services relevant to fishing in Tasmania, equivalent to almost \$1800 per active fisher. Direct expenditure on boats and trailers account for a third of the total spend².

Tasmania has the highest recreational boat ownership per capita of any state in Australia at 1:17 - the national average is 1:27 have a registered boat. (2021 statistics supplied by Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST)).

Seafood in the Tasmanian Economy

Economic contribution of high value fisheries

Fishery	Economic Contribution (total GVA) \$M	Employment (direct and indirect)
Rock Lobster	\$100m	611
Abalone	\$81m	248
Total	\$181	859

Employment

More than 25% of all Australian seafood jobs are in Tasmania:

Over 11,500 Tasmanians are directly or indirectly employed in the Seafood industry, representing about 5% of the state's total labour force.^{3,4} Seafood industry jobs added \$818 million in household income for the Tasmanian economy in 2017-18.⁵

¹ [2017-18 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Tasmania](#)

² *ibid*

³ [Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture Industry Contributions 2017/18](#)

⁴ [2016 Census QuickStats: Tasmania | ABS](#)

⁵ [Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture Industry Contributions 2017/18](#)

Production

Tasmania dominates the Australian seafood industry, producing:

- 32% of the country’s harvest value (wild caught and aquaculture) in 2018-19, up from approximately 12 in 2003-04⁶.
- 14% of the total value of the country’s wild caught seafood in 2018-19⁷

Commercial fishing, aquaculture and associated processing are significant contributors to the Tasmania Gross State Product, and in 2017-18 they accounted for \$1.57 Billion of Tasmania’s GSP.⁸

A further \$364 million was generated indirectly by Tasmania’s fishing aquaculture and associated industries located in other Australian states.⁹

In 2020-21, together with Agriculture and Forestry, Fishing contributed over 10% to Tasmania’s GSP, second only to the Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry.¹⁰

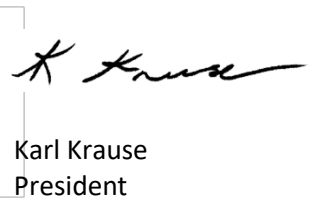
This joint policy statement is endorsed by:




Jane Gallichan
Chief Executive Officer


Julian Harrington
Chief Executive


Julian Amos
Chief Executive Officer


Karl Krause
President

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics 2020

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ [Tasmanian Fisheries and Aquaculture Industry Contributions 2017/18](#)

¹⁰ [State Accounts 2021 | Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance](#)