

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR MARINE AND ANTARCTIC STUDIES

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ATTENTION: CHIEFS OF STAFF, NEWS DIRECTORS

IMAS and industry partners join forces in \$16.9 million rock lobster aquaculture research

Three industry partners – including the world’s largest single buyer of wild lobsters – have joined forces with one of the University of Tasmania’s premier institutes, the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), in cutting-edge rock lobster aquaculture research.

On Wednesday (**1 May 2013**) the Australian Research Council (ARC) confirmed that IMAS would receive \$5 million in funding through the ARC’s Industrial Transformation Research (ITR) Program.

The new ITR Hub will boost research specifically in the areas of hatching lobsters, larval rearing systems and health. Total value of the project is \$16.9 million.

“Research in Aquaculture and Fisheries has a long history of success at the University of Tasmania and the ARC announcement is testament to that,” said Professor Paddy Nixon, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Tasmania.

“Industrial Transformation Research Hub funding is targeted at encouraging collaborative research between industry partners and Australia’s best researchers. IMAS has undoubtedly some of the world’s leading aquaculture scientists and will have three industry partners for this potentially ground-breaking work into commercial rock lobster aquaculture.”

IMAS Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Coasts Centre Director Prof Colin Buxton said: “We are thrilled by the announcement and excited to be joining forces with Australian industry partners JSA Engineers and Plastic Fabrications, and our international partner Darden Restaurants, Inc.

“JSA Engineers will bring expertise in fluid dynamic modelling, and Plastic Fabrications brings proficiency in the design and manufacture of advanced water treatment and integrated larval culture systems,” said Prof Buxton.

JSA Engineers and Plastic Fabrications are Tasmanian companies researching, making and exporting leading edge aquaculture products and supporting the local aquaculture industry.

Darden, the world’s largest full-service restaurant company and the world’s largest single buyer of wild lobsters, is committed to global seafood sustainability. This has prompted Darden to develop aquaculture solutions with the right research partners worldwide.

“We have been working with Darden for the past four years to make rock lobster aquaculture a reality, and this ARC support provides a significant boost to our program,” said Prof Buxton.

Hub Director Assoc Prof Stephen Battaglione from IMAS said: “The ARC ITR Hub places Australia at the cutting edge of aquaculture research, attracting global business opportunities. It provides opportunities for new aquaculture industries in Australia, not only for rock lobsters, but also longer-term through application of novel aquaculture systems to other sectors such as abalone, mud crabs, prawns and marine fish.

“An exciting prospect for this research is the potential for stock enhancement (the release of cultured seed lobsters), with consequent fisheries and conservation benefits for important Tasmanian fisheries,” he said.

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Details of the Australian Research Council’s Industrial Transformation Research Hubs can be found on its website:

http://www.arc.gov.au/ncqp/itrp/hubs_default.htm