

Communique - FRDC Board Engagement – 21 and 22 April 2021

The FRDC Board came to Tasmania to listen and understand issues that impact the fisheries and aquaculture in Tasmania, and explore how FRDC can help ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of the sector.

It was also an opportunity to recognise that Tasmania is the largest and most diverse and dynamic fishing and aquaculture jurisdiction in Australia.

Over two days the Board met representatives and leaders from the wildcatch, recreational, indigenous and aquaculture sectors. The Board was inspired by what is happening in Tasmania and enlightened about some of the challenges.

There were many success stories such as the critical role FRDC research played in: support of the recovery of the oyster industry; the growth of the aquaculture sectors; and the integrative fisheries research undertaken through world leading organisations such as IMAS and CSIRO.

The visit also highlighted several challenges including:

- the significant instability and stress within the wildcatch sector resulting from COVID-19 and China trade issues
- industry exposed by reliance on single China market
- improving communication to build social license and community understanding of the value of the sector
- the conflict or lack of collaboration between groups representing fisheries
- peak or representative groups struggling with their business model
- meeting the need for faster research and development that meets industry needs
- increased effort on extension which would lead to greater adoption
- how the sector can deal with plastics and waste, and
- increasing indigenous recognition and involvement in fisheries

Many of these challenges align with the issues identified in the Fish Forever 2030 Plan. The Plan, facilitated by the FRDC, provides a framework for addressing many of these challenges. The Board will work, through the Fish Forever 2030 Plan, to create strategies and projects to achieve impact in response to the needs, opportunities and issues identified during the visit.

The Board would like to officially recognise the incredible success of the sector and the leadership and resilience of the people involved. The Board also acknowledges the stress that some businesses and sectors are under.