

MARINE & FISHERIES CONSULTANTS  
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## R. M. DAVIES & ASSOCIATES

F78/206

The Secretary,  
Fishing Industry Research Committee,  
C/- Department of Primary Industry,  
Broughton Street,  
BARTON. A. C. T. 2600.

MR LORIMER,

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This is to be regarded as a final  
report on FIRTA Project 1978/12. Could  
you please provide a briefing on this,  
by COB 19/7/83.

Roberta.  
Calder Road, Calder  
Telephone: (004) 42 2475  
Telegrams: Davassoc, Wynyard  
P.O. Box 16  
Wynyard, Tas. 7325

24 March, 1983

Your Reference: F78/206

Dear Mr. Oxenham,

### Survey of Flatfishes adjacent to Tasmania

Thank you for your letter of 16 November: our delay in answering is largely due to time taken to recover our files on the matter.

Our letter of 12 February, 1980 was intended to indicate that we had not completed the work that was intended in our application and with our inability to complete it we felt that some rebate was due. The monies granted (\$8,230.00) had all been expended on capital items as detailed in our letter of 6 December, 1978, while operational costs had more than doubled that figure. Our books for that period show:

	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Income</u>
1977/78	\$10,033.25	\$ 544.45
1978/79	\$11,383.13	\$9345.17
	<u>\$21,416.38</u>	<u>\$9889.62</u>
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The expenditure does not include the capital cost of the vessel or the electronic gear bought to assist in the venture: radio, echosounder, radar and automatic pilot as these were sold with the vessel.

Income includes \$8230.00 received from FIRTA.

The expenditure includes all those items at the cost listed in our Charging & Cost Dissection of 6 December, 1978 (which were capital items) plus wages, fuel, maintenance, subsequent repairs etc. most of which were chargeable to the venture.

When the vessel was sold in 1981/82 due to my inability to work it, and being out of N.A.S.A. of Tasmania survey those items of trawling equipment purchased for the work were retained here and in Hobart. These comprised:

		<u>Original Cost</u>	<u>Current Value</u>
17 fm. & 11 fm. trawl nets	300		
(both complete - buoys etc., 1 lazy line)		\$2257.86	\$1000.00
2 x 500m matched trawl warps	0	no worth now complete with -	
2 x 54m combination rope sweeps)		"Trawlex" connectors	\$ 500.00
2 Otterboards with connectors	300	\$335.00	\$ 300.00
"A" frame & brackets	200	\$330.00	\$ 200.00
Gallows	\$160	\$480.00	\$ 300.00
Twin drum direct drive winch	500	-	\$2000.00
	<u>1300</u>		
	1460		
		<u>Approx. Value :</u>	<u>\$4,300.00</u>

As this gear is all matched to work together and has not had a lot of use it could be mounted on any suitable vessel and operated immediately. The design is modern and in commercial use in advanced vessels in this country rigged for stern trawling and could be used for exploratory or commercial purposes: the 17 fm. trawl is 3 1/4" mesh and the smaller one is 5" of much heavier ply for testing new bottom.

We are no longer involved directly in the primary sector of fishing and having no vessel are in no position to use this gear. We could put it into the T.F.D.A. store in Hobart (where most of the heavy gear is at present, in various warehouses) to keep it together until such time as your Committee decides its ultimate fate. Of the gear purchased with FIRTA money only the stern roller originally costed at \$105.00 has remained with the vessel of which it is an integral part of the transom.

The return of this gear to the Committee would more than compensate for our regrettable but necessary inability to complete the survey and might be encouragement for some other fisherman to attempt a similar project in some other inshore area of this country.

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Following the completion of our initial report which took us to 10 September, 1978 we continued to trawl and echosound the area as weather and the intransigence of deckhands would allow, Concentration was directed to those areas not previously traversed or trawled: around Three Hummock and Robbins Islands to the northwest of Stanley in spring of 1978 but bottom was poor being rocky and uneven and there were large quantities of sponge. Flounder were scarce, apparently having moved inshore, but reasonable catches of mixed commercial species were made (flathead, cod, gurnard and minor sharks) while there were always plenty of cuttlefish, octopus and squid which bodes well for Michael Hardy's venture.

In late summer and autumn<sup>1979</sup> traverses and trawls were made towards Ringarooma Bay in the north east of the island and although there were no flounder taken at that time the indications were that it would be a good ground in late winter: good catches were made of mixed species including good catches of octopus, cuttlefish and squid but these areas needed extensive surveying for the best bottom. Ringarooma Bay appeared to have the potential for flatfish.

The extent of good trawl bottom unencumbered by sponge is limited in northern Tasmania where the bottom nature militates against long runs with otter trawls but as Danny O'Brien (using our marks for a Tasmanian sponsored survey) has found Danish seining is quite a good proposition. Amongst the others who have followed us into this area after finfish two local boats rigged for seining have taken good catches of flatfish but from my observations are depleting the stock by their concentration on the highest yielding grounds (Rocky Cape - Stanley) by evidence of the smaller fish now being taken although this is partly due to the codend size being used. Flounder are a very fragile resource and not suitable for a single species fishery but, with management, could provide an alternate off-season fishery for small boats.

We trust the foregoing satisfies your questions.

Yours faithfully,



for R. M. Davies & Associates