

# **Trialing Regional Grower Groups to Extend and Build on CRC Outputs**

**Tom Lewis, Ray Murphy, Don Defenderfer  
and Rachel King**

**Project No. 2012/732**



**May 2015  
FINAL REPORT**



***This project was conducted by***

- ***Australian Seafood CRC: Box 26, Mark Oliphant Building, Laffer Drive, Bedford Park, SA 5042***
- ***RDS Partners: Level 4 / 29 Elizabeth Street, Hobart, TAS 7000***
- ***Oysters Australia: PO Box 306, Croydon Park, NSW 2133***

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Office Mark Oliphant Building, Laffer Drive, Bedford Park SA 5042  
Postal Box 26, Mark Oliphant Building, Laffer Drive, Bedford Park SA 5042  
Tollfree 1300 732 213 Phone 08 8201 7650 Facsimile 08 8201 7659  
Website [www.seafoodcrc.com](http://www.seafoodcrc.com) ABN 51 126 074 048

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## Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary .....	- 1 -
1. Introduction.....	- 6 -
2. Methods .....	- 9 -
3. Results .....	- 13 -
4. Discussion .....	- 20 -
5. Benefits and Adoption.....	- 23 -
6. Further Development .....	- 23 -
7. Planned Outcomes .....	- 23 -
8. Conclusion .....	- 25 -
9. References .....	- 26 -
10. Appendices .....	- 27 -

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# Non-Technical Summary

## Trialing Regional Grower Groups to Extend and Build on CRC Outputs Project No. 2012/732

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Tom Lewis  
tom.lewis@rdspartners.com.au  
(03) 6231 9033

**ADDRESS:** Level 4 / 29 Elizabeth Street, Hobart TAS 7000

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

#### Project objectives

1. The establishment of six regional oyster grower groups in Tasmania (2), SA (2) and NSW (2).
2. The evaluation of blogs, video vignettes and webinars as tools to increase grower links and learning opportunities.
3. To work to ensure the project (e.g. grower group extension model) has a self-sustaining legacy after the life of the CRC
4. To support the establishment and support of commercial grower groups by a commercial provider on a voluntary, non-exclusive basis

#### Project variation objectives - additional to objective 2 above

5. To further improve communication and engagement with Australia's oyster growers
6. To evaluate grower perceptions of communication channels and effectiveness

### ABSTRACT

The Oysters Australia Board and the Seafood CRC identified the need to develop and deliver practical, grower-focused extension and communication activities to increase the return from CRC research and development outputs.

This project was designed to deliver and test the efficacy of grower group activities in extending CRC-related research and development (R&D) information to the Australian edible oyster industry. However, following an initial trial and evaluation of the success of grower groups in NSW, SA and TAS, the concept of establishing formal grower groups as a means of information extension and industry development was something that only a small proportion of survey respondents valued and was not the best use of this project's available resources. Therefore, grower group meetings were not continued and the project scope was formally varied.

The need to increase the reach of web-based information (e.g. Oysters Australia eNews, blog website, etc) was identified, and so the project was varied to develop and create *Australia's Talking Oysters*, a video news item with recordings of growers talking about project results and news, which would be supported by the eNews format and the regularly updated blog site. Production of an extended 'timeless' version of *Australia's Talking Oysters* was also

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added to the project scope to promote the utility of current CRC-supported projects and the need for continued industry investment in RD&E activities.

An annual summary of R&D return on investment was prepared and distributed to all levy payers.

A final survey regarding grower perceptions of communication channels and effectiveness was conducted to inform Oysters Australia communications strategy.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of oyster industry communication channels - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness – oyster growers rated emails and text messages from other growers as the most effective communication channel (rating of 7.1), followed equally by phone calls from other growers (rating 6.4) and annual state industry conferences (also rating of 6.4), then word of mouth from other growers (rating 6.3) and industry magazines (rating 6.2).

For non-growers, the Oysters Australia eNews (rating 6.2) is considered the most effective communication channel followed by annual state industry conferences (rating of 6.1).

Grower ranking of their overall top five communication channels were:

- annual state industry conferences
- emails and text messages from other growers (equal second)
- phone calls with other growers (equal second)
- Oysters Australia eNews
- State industry websites

Non-growers ranked the following communication channels as their top five:

- Oysters Australia eNews
- State industry eNews
- Australia's Talking Oysters – You Tube videos (equal third)
- State industry websites (equal third)
- annual state industry conferences (equal third)
- industry magazines (equal third)

Web-based communication sent directly to oyster grower's email or phone, such as the eNews and *Australia's Talking Oysters* video, was received positively by growers as an effective communication channel for R&D activities. Growers that received these items in this format were very likely to read or view them and will generally read all or most of the content.

Web-based communication that required an active search by the potential viewer, such as the industry Blog website and Facebook page, were received much less positively than those sent directly to the growers' email or phone. Of all the industry communication channels, the Industry Blog website (rating of 4.2), Blog conversations (rating of 3.6) and Facebook conversations (rating of 2.8) had the lowest ratings of effectiveness – among both oyster growers and non-growers alike.

The project has demonstrated that new communication formats, such as electronic eNews and video news items, are received positively by oyster growers and can be effective communication channels for R&D activities. However, successful distribution and uptake of

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information in these formats should be through the tools that most growers already use in their everyday business operations – the mobile phone and email messaging.

Peak visitation to the industry Blog website was closely linked to the release of each edition of the eNews and/or *Australia's Talking Oysters* videos. To maintain and improve the industry Blog website as a central industry R&D communication channel, we recommend that future editions of the eNews and/or *Australia's Talking Oysters* videos to subscriber's mobile phones and email be released regularly and consistently – e.g. at least once every two to three months. To improve uptake, we also recommend that each phone message or email of this type is followed up with a reminder message around 7 days after the initial message being sent.

Growers have strongly indicated that emails and text messages **from other growers** as the most effective communication channels. We suggest that encouraging growers to forward and promote R&D communication by emails and text messages **to other growers** be explored as an effective way to increase the reach of Oysters Australia web-based communications.

Growers who attend continue to highly value their annual state industry conferences as an effective communication channel. Oysters Australia participation in, and communication through, annual industry state conferences should continue to form an integral part of the Oysters Australia communications strategy – and is essential to maintain and improve trust and credibility with industry.

#### **OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

- Improved utilisation of resources towards effective communication of R&D information to the Australian edible oyster industry
- Increased adoption of new and effective communication channels for R&D activities among the oyster industry
- Improved understanding of the effectiveness of communication channels within the oyster industry

#### **OUTPUTS**

- In April and May 2013, regional grower group meetings were convened and held in the following six areas: Port Stephens, NSW (6 participants); Pambula, NSW (19 participants); Coffin Bay, SA (10 participants); Smoky Bay, SA (7 participants); Smithton, TAS (5 participants); and Hobart, TAS (10 participants)
- The Oysters Australia Industry Blog website<sup>1</sup> was launched on 29 August 2012. Between the launch and 30 October 2014 (26 months), 140 blogs were published and 22 comments were posted. During this time, there were 4,936 visits to the site, 3,508 unique visitors and 13,079 page views
- An Oysters Australia Blog Facebook page<sup>2</sup> was launched with the Blog website – however, Facebook conversations were low in number
- Eight editions of the Oysters Australia eNews were made available from the Blog website as well as being available as a standalone electronic document sent to growers and researchers via an opt-in subscription. The eNews mailing list has grown to 292 subscribers. Only one person has unsubscribed.
- Three episodes of *Australia's Talking Oysters*<sup>3</sup> – YouTube videos were prepared and distributed with Issue 6, Issue 7 and Issue 8 of the eNews

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<sup>1</sup> <http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/OystersAustraliaBlog>

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- An annual summary of how the industry R&D 'per hectare' levy was invested was prepared and distributed - between August and October 2014 - to all R&D levy payers
  - The annual state meetings (in SA & TAS) were used to communicate with and engage Australia's oyster growers. R&D investment details and outputs were communicated by Rachel King and Trudy McGowan.
  - Results from a survey on the effectiveness of industry communication channels are presented in this report
  - The extended 'timeless' version of *Australia's Talking Oysters - Australia's investment in oyster future*<sup>4</sup> will be posted on the Blog website, distributed to the eNews subscriber list, posted on Oysters Australia website and made available for any media coverage surrounding the close of the Seafood CRC.

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<sup>3</sup> Episode 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPo7nlkTyhc&feature=youtu.be>;

Episode 2 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A8HiQY\\_fsY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A8HiQY_fsY);

Episode 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUDRwcpy2D4>

<sup>4</sup> *Australia's Talking Oysters - Australia's investment in oyster future*

<http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/australias-talking-oysters-timeless-edition-2015>

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- Ewan Colquhoun from Ridge Partners; Carlyn Sherriff from Rural Directions; and Tom Lewis, RDS Partners who presented at the grower group meetings in April and May 2013
- Oyster growers who attend the grower group meetings in April and May 2013 and then provided useful feedback that provided rationale and justification to vary the project scope for better outcomes to industry.
- Lynsey McLeod, Progressive Content, for maintaining the Blog website, formatting and distributing the Oysters Australia eNews and *Australia's Talking Oysters*
- Bruce Zippel; Juliet Corish; Matt Cunningham; Richard Barrie; Justin Goc; Emma Wilkie; Gary Zippel; Prue Woodford; Ian Jefferds; and David Maidment - are thanked for contributing to the *Australia's Talking Oysters* videos.
- Growers and non-growers who provided useful feedback and comments on the whole project when we conducted a survey of the effectiveness of oyster industry communication channels.
- Bob Drake; Matt Wassing; Kiwi Evans; Judd Evans; Jon Poke; and Joshua Poke are thanked for contributing to *Australia's Talking Oysters - Australia's investment in oyster future*.
- Tom Waugh, Aerial Inspections for filming and post-production of *Australia's Talking Oysters - Australia's investment in oyster future*. Benny Edwards and Gerard Wood for filming of *Australia's Talking Oysters - Australia's investment in oyster future*.

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# 1. Introduction

## **Background**

The Australian Seafood CRC Oyster Consortium spent 2007-2011 in planning, project commission and communication of available results. It opted to use state-based, face-to-face forums as the most effective means to communicate, while also building trust and credibility with industry.

The Seafood CRC worked to ensure that it extended its findings to oyster growers in local and regional places where they are most likely to form a course of management change – recognising that 40 minute presentations at state conferences can only achieve so much.

The Oysters Australia Board and the Seafood CRC identified the need to develop and deliver practical, grower-focused extension and communication activities to increase the return from CRC research and development outputs.

RDS Partners' experience in working with terrestrial farming enterprises had shown that properly formed and managed industry-driven grower groups can become self-sustaining and provide ongoing value to members – sometimes for decades.

This project was designed to deliver and test the efficacy of grower group activities in extending CRC-related research and development (R&D) information to the Australian edible oyster industry.

The project was developed in consultation with the Oysters Australia Board, state-based oyster peak bodies and the Seafood CRC. The project was endorsed by the Oysters Australia Board and the CRC Research Advisory Committee.

## **Need**

Oysters Australia identified the need for development and delivery of a robust, ongoing mechanism to extend and build on outputs from Seafood CRC research and the CRC Research Advisory Committee indicated interest in testing grower group models as extension and communication mechanisms for CRC research investments.

Oyster growers from Tasmania, SA and NSW indicated that many would value the support to form and establish grower groups but lacked the time or knowledge to do so effectively.

The project was designed to deliver against these dual CRC and industry needs by providing the necessary initial support to establish a number of oyster industry grower groups and to build into these groups the independent capability to maintain the on-going, peer-learning opportunities that grower groups could facilitate.

However, following an initial trial and evaluation of the success of grower groups in NSW, SA and TAS, the decision was taken to discontinue the grower group meetings and the project scope was formally varied in October 2013.

The project team identified the need to increase the reach of web-based information (e.g. Oysters Australia eNews, blog website, etc) and to clearly demonstrate the R&D effort being

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undertaken for the benefit of the Australian oyster industry and R&D outputs funded through Seafood CRC projects.

## Objectives

1. The establishment of six regional oyster grower groups in Tasmania (2), SA (2) and NSW (2).
2. The evaluation of blogs, video vignettes and webinars as tools to increase grower links and learning opportunities.
3. To work to ensure the project (e.g. grower group extension model) has a self-sustaining legacy after the life of the CRC
4. To support the establishment and support of commercial grower groups by a commercial provider on a voluntary, non-exclusive basis.

## Variation to the objectives

In the first stage of this project, we tested the concept of convening grower group meetings (two each in NSW, SA and TAS) in April and May 2013. Regional interest in establishing regional groups in the future was mixed. Some growers were open to the concept and interested in how such groups could evolve in their region whereas others felt the concept potentially duplicated existing structures. A subsequent survey of workshop participants was conducted to ascertain perceptions of the workshops and how extension activities could be more focused from an industry perspective. Survey results indicated that opinions on the feasibility and desirability of forming an ongoing regional grower group in their region was mixed. The concept of establishing formal grower groups as a means of information extension and industry development was something that only a small proportion of survey respondents valued.

In a meeting of the project team with Seafood CRC program managers (Emily Mantilla, Graham Mair) on 22 August 2013 it was agreed that, based on the survey results, running a second round of grower group meetings would not be the best use of remaining project funds.

As such, the project scope was formally varied in October 2013. Objective 2 was retained in the varied project. Objective 1, Objective 3 and Objective 4 were not continued in this variation.

The varied project was designed to create *Australia's Talking Oysters*, a video news item with recordings of growers talking about project results and news, which would be supported by the eNews format and the regularly updated blog site. An extended 'timeless' version of *Australia's Talking Oysters* would promote the utility of current CRC-supported projects and the need for continued industry investment in RD&E activities.

An annual summary of R&D return on investment would be prepared and distributed to all levy payers.

A final survey regarding grower perceptions of communication channels and effectiveness would be conducted to inform Oysters Australia communications strategy.

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The additional objectives of the project variation were:

5. To further improve communication and engagement with Australia's oyster growers
6. To evaluate grower perceptions of communication channels and effectiveness

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## 2. Methods

### **Regional Grower Groups**

In April and May 2013, regional grower group meetings were convened and held in the following six areas:

- Port Stephens, NSW
- Pambula, NSW
- Coffin Bay, SA
- Smoky Bay, SA
- Smithton, TAS
- Hobart, TAS

Pre-promotion and communication regarding the meetings was extensive, utilising: regional and national email networks; newsletters; national and state-based websites; and 1:1 phone calls. The meetings were organised by RDS Partners in conjunction with Oysters Australia and the other speakers.

The meetings focused on three areas of content:

- Consultation regarding the introduction of a National Levy (presented by Ewan Colquhoun from Ridge Partners);
- Benchmarking (presented by Carlyn Sherriff from Rural Directions); and
- The formation of Regional Grower Groups (presented by Tom Lewis, RDS Partners)

The meetings were co-facilitated by RDS Partners and Rural Directions.

Feedback was collected from participants at each of the regional grower group meetings regarding interest in future establishment of formal regional grower groups.

Following the six meetings, an online survey of grower meeting participants (Survey Monkey via email – see Appendix 3) was undertaken to evaluate the success of the first round of regional grower group meetings and to assess the feasibility, desirability and content of future meetings.

Feedback collected from participants at the meetings and from the online survey was collated and used to inform the project team and Seafood CRC program managers as to whether a running a second round of regional grower group meetings was the best use of remaining project funds.

### **Oysters Australia Industry Blog website & Facebook page**

The Oysters Australia Industry Blog website<sup>5</sup> was launched on 29 August 2012. The Blog website was widely promoted at every available face-to-face and written opportunity.

Since its launch, the Blog has housed articles contained in all eNews issues. Other topical issues were posted to the Blog including linked video (and audio) vignettes, national and international news and other relevant news items. The blog site was also linked to an Oysters Australia Blog Facebook page<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/OystersAustraliaBlog>

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Characteristics of Blog website usage and website and Facebook conversations were monitored through Google Analytics. Usage statistics were monitored and assisted in on-going updating and evaluation of the success of the blog.

### **Oysters Australia eNews**

The first issue of the Oysters Australia online newsletter (the eNews) was emailed as a pdf to the Oysters Australia mailing list in early August 2012. This was just prior to the launch of the Blog website on 29 of August 2012. Seven further issues were released as follows:

- Issue 1 August 2012
- Issue 2 November 2012
- Issue 3 April 2013
- Issue 4 July 2013
- Issue 5 December 2013
- Issue 6 March 2014 (featuring Episode 1 *Australia's Talking Oysters*)
- Issue 7 April 2014 (featuring Episode 2 *Australia's Talking Oysters*)
- Issue 8 September 2014 (featuring Episode 3 *Australia's Talking Oysters*)

The eNews was available from the Blog website as well as being available as a standalone electronic document sent to growers and researchers via an opt-in subscription. The eNews was also distributed via Oysters Australia member organisations to their state-based stakeholders.

### **Australia's Talking Oysters – YouTube videos**

Selected industry representatives and researchers were invited to contribute a short video presentation on a pre-determined topic. For most speakers, scripting assistance was provided through Oysters Australia. Speakers were encouraged to record themselves on a smart phone in an 'authentic' location – we aimed to 'keep it simple and keep it real'.

Video content typically was recorded on smart phones, with one or two segments being recorded in a more 'professional' manner by some contributors.

Between three to five short videos were included in each episode with a total running time of each episode of around five to ten minutes.

Three episodes of *Australia's Talking Oysters* – YouTube videos were prepared and distributed with Issue 6, Issue 7 and Issue 8 of the eNews. *Australia's Talking Oysters* was made available from the Blog website. Viewers could select to watch the full episode or each individual video separately. For episode 1 and 2, the transcript of each video was also posted online.

These episodes of *Australia's Talking Oysters* were released with the following speakers and topics:

#### **Episode 1 - March 2014 (duration 5:04 mins)<sup>7</sup>**

- Bruce Zippel – Chair, Oysters Australia
  - Oysters Australia greetings and future
- Juliet Corish – NSW DPI Manager Animal Biosecurity
  - Port Stephens oyster deaths

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<sup>7</sup> Episode 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPo7nlkTyhc&feature=youtu.be>

- Matt Cunningham – General Manager ASI
  - POMS resistance breeding update
- Richard Barrie – Nambucca Oysters
  - Survey of foodborne viruses in Australian oysters

Episode 2 - April 2014 (duration 4:35 mins)<sup>8</sup>

- Justin Goc – General Manager Barilla Bay Oysters
  - Early warning oysters: a potential future Oysters Australia investment
- Emma Wilkie– Operations Manager Select Oyster Co
  - SOCo & new SRO hatchery production
- Gary Zippel – Zippel Oysters
  - Oysters-only Farmer Day at WAA14 on 8 June, Adelaide

Episode 3 - September 2014 (duration 9:44 mins)<sup>9</sup>

- Bruce Zippel – Chair, Oysters Australia
  - Decision to delay national levy proposal
- Matt Cunningham – General Manager ASI
  - ASI & POMS resistance breeding levy for Pacific Oyster growers
- Prue Woodford – Co-ordinator Sustainable Oyster Assessment Program
  - Recording a history of oyster growth and mortality
- Ian Jefferds – General Manager Penn Cove Shellfish
  - Shellfish business advice from the US
- David Maidment – oyster grower Narooma NSW
  - Diversifying into Angasi oysters

For the extended ‘timeless’ version of *Australia’s Talking Oysters - Australia’s investment in oyster future*, selected industry representatives (two each in NSW, SA and TAS) were invited to be filmed by professional cinematographers in an ‘authentic’ location on an agreed R&D topic. The content covers the history of the state’s industry as context for some of the R&D investments via the Seafood CRC. The video was produced to reflect the impact of R&D investment on the shape & direction of an industry. To explain this, the industry's development over time in each state is given alongside the importance of some main investment areas to shape the future.

Scripting assistance was provided through Oysters Australia. The structure and content of the video was developed by Oysters Australia in consultation with the cinematographer undertaking the video postproduction.

*Australia’s Talking Oysters - Australia’s investment in oyster future*<sup>10</sup> had the following speakers and topics:

- Bob Drake - NSW oyster farming development history
  - NSW boom & decline from QX
- Matt Wassing - NSW oyster farmer
  - Potential industry in stock & markets
- Kiwi Evans – SA oyster farmer

<sup>8</sup> Episode 2 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A8HiQY\\_fsY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A8HiQY_fsY)

<sup>9</sup> Episode 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUDRwcpy2D4>

<sup>10</sup> *Australia’s Talking Oysters - Australia’s investment in oyster future*  
<http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/australias-talking-oysters-timeless-edition-2015>

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- SA industry development
  - Judd Evans - SA oyster farmer
    - Benchmarking & SA industry development
  - Jon Poke – TAS oyster farmer
    - Tasmanian industry development
  - Joshua Poke - TAS oyster farmer
    - Tasmanian industry future

### **Oysters Australia R&D investment summary**

Oysters Australia's main job is to manage, co-ordinate and communicate grower's R&D levy investment projects. Oysters Australia has managed this R&D levy investment since 2011 through the Australian Seafood CRC (CRC). Extra CRC matching funds have been used to buy into more projects.

An annual summary of how the industry R&D 'per hectare' levy was invested was prepared and distributed - between August and October 2014 - to all R&D levy payers (see Appendix 4).

The summary showcased the R&D effort and output funded through Seafood CRC projects and was designed to clearly demonstrate the amount of work being undertaken for the benefit of the Australian industry.

The R&D investment summary was distributed by email to licence holders in QLD, by mail in NSW and SA through NSW DPI, and PIRSA, and physical copies distributed at Shellfish Futures in Smithton. Licence holders in TAS received the summary either by email through Oysters Tasmania or as a hard copy hard distributed at the annual industry conference - *shellfish futures*.

### **Annual state industry conferences**

In 2014, annual state industry conferences were held as follows:

- South Australia           7-8 August, Streaky Bay
- Tasmania                   17-18 October, Smithton

The annual state meetings were used to communicate and engage Australia's oyster growers. R&D effort and outputs are normally communicated by Rachel King at each meeting.

### **Grower survey on perceptions of communication channel effectiveness**

In November and December 2014, an online survey of industry (Survey Monkey via email – see Appendix 5) was undertaken to gauge grower perceptions of communication channels and effectiveness to inform the Oysters Australia communications strategy.

The online survey was distributed by email through the Oysters Australia executive to all 292 Oysters Australia eNews subscribers. The online survey was also distributed by email through each of the state industry executives in QLD, NSW, SA and TAS to their industry mailing list.

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## 3. Results

### Regional Grower Groups

In April and May 2013, regional grower group meetings were convened and held in the following six areas:

- Port Stephens, NSW 6 participants
- Pambula, NSW 19 participants
- Coffin Bay, SA 10 participants
- Smoky Bay, SA 7 participants
- Smithton, TAS 5 participants
- Hobart, TAS 10 participants

The meetings were seen as a major hands-on step in exposing the concept of regional grower groups to oyster growers, the goals of the project and the potential benefits to growers. Regional interest in establishing regional groups in the future was mixed. Some growers were open to the concept and interested in how such groups could evolve in their region whereas others felt the concept potentially duplicated existing structures.

Twelve (12) responses were received to the online survey sent to grower group workshop participants:

- Port Stephens, NSW 1 response
- Pambula, NSW 2 responses
- Coffin Bay, SA 3 responses
- Smoky Bay, SA 0 responses
- Smithton, TAS 3 responses
- Hobart, TAS 3 responses

Feedback on the feasibility and desirability of forming an ongoing regional grower group in their region was mixed. Overall, the concept of establishing formal grower groups as a means of information extension and industry development was valued by only a small proportion of survey respondents.

In a meeting of the project team with Seafood CRC program managers (Emily Mantilla, Graham Mair) on 22 August 2013 it was agreed that, based on the survey results, running a second round of grower group meetings would not be the best use of remaining project funds.

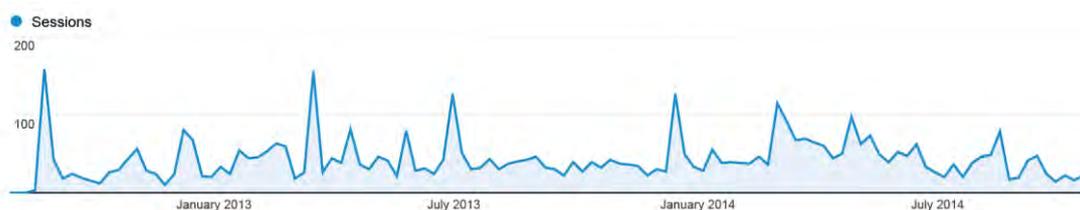
### Oysters Australia Industry Blog and Facebook page

The industry blog website was launched on the 29 August 2012. Between the launch and 30 October 2014 (26 months), 140 items were published. All items were posted from the project team of Oysters Australia and RDS Partners. Twenty-two comments were posted during this time.

The following statistics give an overview regarding the blog site's use in the 26 months since its inception:

- 4,936 visits to the site
- 3,508 unique visitors
- 13,079 page views

- 2.65 pages viewed per visit
- 2.54 minutes was the average visit time on the website
- 57% of visits end on the first page of the website the visitor sees
- 71.1% new visitors; 28.9% returning visitors



**Figure 1. View pattern for Australia's Talking Oysters blog site**

Figure 1 shows that peaks in website visitation coincided with the launch of the Blog website and the release of each edition of the eNews.

While overall usage and engagement with the site was healthy, Facebook and Blog conversations are low in number. Data shows that users read the content of the site on a regular basis but were not necessarily interested in making comments or stimulating conversations.

Of the 3,508 visitors to the website, 2540 (~72%) were from Australia. Of the Australian users of the website around:

- 34% were from NSW
- 22% were from TAS
- 15% were from VIC
- 14% were from SA
- 10% were from QLD
- 3% were from WA
- 2% were from ACT
- <1% were from NT.

### **Oysters Australia eNews**

The eNews mailing list has grown to 292 subscribers. Only one person has unsubscribed.

The following table shows the number of subscribers and opening rate of each eNews edition. Clicks refers to the percentage of users who opened the eNews and then 'clicked' on an item to read more. The average opening rate was 66% and the average click rate was 35%.

Issue	Date	Subscribers	Opens (%)	Clicks (%)
1	August 2012	-	-	-
2	November 2012	15	80	60
3	April 2013	30	67	37
4	July 2013	52	67	39
5	December 2013	260	63	22
6	March 2014	283	64	30
7	April 2014	286	63	32
8	September 2014	292	60	28

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### Australia's Talking Oysters – YouTube videos

The number of views of *Australia's Talking Oysters* increased from Episode 1 to Episode 2 but then declined significantly for Episode 3. Episode 3 was viewed much less than the previous two episodes.

Episode 1 - March 2014	291 views
Episode 2 - April 2014	336 views
Episode 3 - September 2014	159 views



**Figure 2. View pattern for Episode 1 of *Australia's Talking Oysters***

Figure 2, showing views of Episode 1 of *Australia's Talking Oysters*, demonstrates that most viewing occurs in the days immediately following distribution to the mailing list -with few views after about 2-3 weeks following release. This viewing behaviour was also seen for the other episodes.

There was an indication that some people opted to watch a particular speaker within an episode - with some small peaks in the retention rate occurring at the start time for different speakers.

The most popular device to watch the videos were computers (73% of views), followed by a mobile phones (15%) and then tablets (9%).

### **Grower survey on perceptions of communication channel effectiveness**

#### ***Demographics***

Sixty (60) responses were received to the online survey (Appendix 5) sent to Oysters Australia eNews subscribers and via member states. Of these, 39 (65%) identified as oyster growers. The other 21 respondents (35%) identified variously as: researchers, industry suppliers; industry management; consultants; government; ENGO; and journalist.

Not all survey respondents chose to provide an answer to every question.

Oyster grower respondents were from the States of SA (38%); NSW (36%); TAS (18%); and QLD (8%).

### **Effectiveness**

When asked to rate the effectiveness of oyster industry communication channels - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness – oyster growers rated emails and text messages from other growers as the most effective communication channel (rating of 7.1), followed equally by phone calls from other growers (rating 6.4) and annual state industry conferences (also rating of 6.4), then word of mouth from other growers (rating 6.3) and industry magazines (rating 6.2) (Table 1).

Non-growers rated Other as the most effective communication channel (rating of 8.7), although this was biased by a very small number of respondents (n=3) choosing to rate this option. For non-growers, the Oysters Australia eNews (rating 6.2) is considered the most effective communication channel followed by annual state industry conferences (rating of 6.1).

Grower ranking of their overall top five communication channels were:

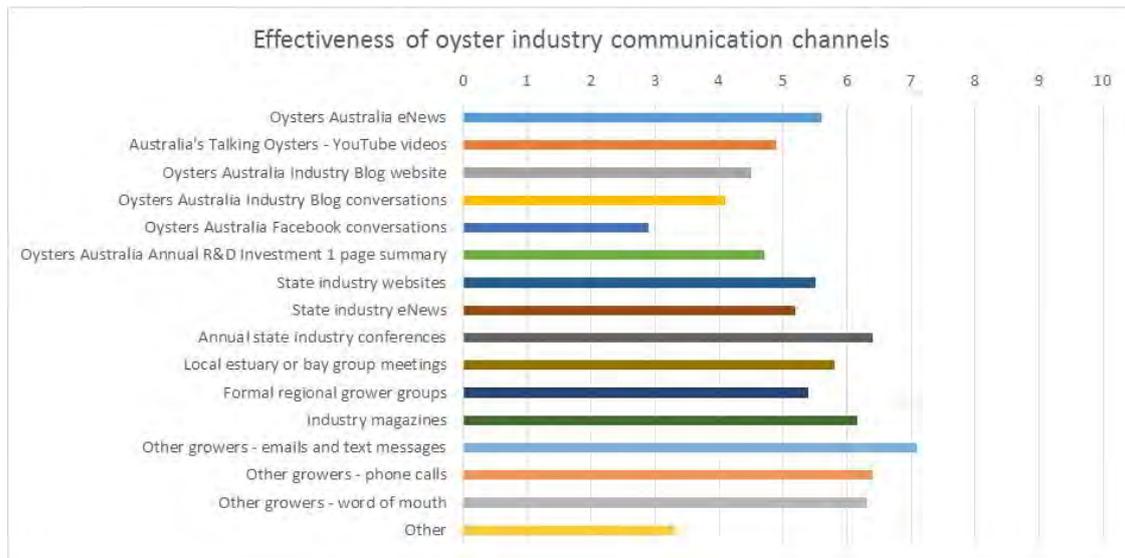
- annual state industry conferences
- emails and text messages from other growers (equal second)
- phone calls with other growers (equal second)
- Oysters Australia eNews
- State industry websites

Non-growers ranked the following communication channels as their top five:

- Oysters Australia eNews
- State industry eNews
- Australia’s Talking Oysters – You Tube videos (equal third)
- State industry websites (equal third)
- annual state industry conferences (equal third)
- industry magazines (equal third)

**Table 1. Effectiveness of oyster industry communication channels**

<b>Communication channels</b>	<b>Rating Average (growers n = 32)</b>	<b>Rating Average (others = 14 )</b>	<b>Rating Average (combined = 46)</b>
Oysters Australia eNews	5.6	6.2	5.8
Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos	4.9	5.6	5.1
Oysters Australia Industry Blog website	4.5	3.6	4.2
Oysters Australia Industry Blog conversations	4.1	2.5	3.6
Oysters Australia Facebook conversations	2.9	2.5	2.8
Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary	4.7	4.7	4.7
State industry websites	5.5	4.6	5.2
State industry eNews	5.2	5.5	5.3
Annual state industry conferences	6.4	6.1	6.3
Local estuary or bay group meetings	5.8	4.7	5.4
Formal regional grower groups	5.4	3.8	4.9
Industry magazines	6.2	5.4	5.9
Other growers - emails and text messages	7.1	5.3	6.6
Other growers - phone calls	6.4	5.9	6.1
Other growers - word of mouth	6.3	4.4	5.7
Other	3.3	8.7	5.6



**Figure 3. Effectiveness of oyster industry communication channels for growers (n=32)**

### ***Oysters Australia eNews***

About 70% of respondents to the questions ‘Do you receive the Oysters Australia eNews via a message to your phone or email?’ answered in the affirmative.

Of these respondents who indicated that they received the Oysters Australia eNews, over 95% indicated that they either always read the eNews or read it most of the time and 85% reported that they read all of, or most of, it.

Email was the main way that most people received and accessed the eNews and this was also the preferred method for most people (77%) to receive and access the eNews. However, some people did indicate that they would prefer to receive and access the eNews via SMS or MMS to their mobile phone or just access it though the Blog website. One person wanted a hard copy mailed to them in the post.

Some general comments received around the eNews were that it was an enjoyable read, but you needed to have the time to look at it. Some considered the ‘news’ largely irrelevant.

One grower commented that *“I am 58 and youtubes blogs enews etc are foreign to me and other farmers out working in the water”*.

### ***Australia’s Talking Oysters – YouTube videos***

Just under 60% of respondents had received all three episodes of *Australia’s Talking Oysters* and a further 18% had received at least one or two of the episodes.

Of the respondents who received *Australia’s Talking Oysters*, 60% indicated that they always viewed the videos and 33% sometimes viewed the videos. Of these, around 90% reported that they viewed either all or most of *Australia’s Talking Oysters*. The other 10% indicated that they only watched the speakers that interested them.

Email was the main way that most people received and accessed *Australia’s Talking Oysters* and this was also the preferred method for most people to receive and access the videos. However, 25-30% of people received and preferred to receive the videos via MMS. Around 10% of people would prefer to receive and access the videos though the Blog website.

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Some general comments received around the *Australia's Talking Oysters – YouTube videos* were that:

- *a great forum for disseminating relevant information if done right*
- *good to hear other growers views on issues and what is happening in their sphere of operations*
- *not all topics were universally interesting*
- *don't watch YouTube videos because download speeds to slow.*

### ***Oysters Australia Industry Blog website and Facebook page***

About 55% of respondents to the questions 'Do you visit and read the Oysters Australia Industry Blog website' answered in the affirmative.

Those respondents that did visit and read the Oysters Australia Industry Blog website most commonly visited the website on a monthly basis (around 70% of those who visit the Blog website).

Three survey respondent reported that they had posted a comment on the Blog website.

Almost 85% of respondents reported that they did not visit the Oysters Australia Industry Facebook page and none had posted a comment on the Facebook page.

Of all the industry communication channels, the Industry Blog website (rating of 4.2), Blog conversations (rating of 3.6) and Facebook conversations (rating of 2.8) had the lowest ratings of effectiveness – among both oyster growers and non-growers alike (Table 1).

Some general comments from survey respondents were that they were *not really into blogs or facebook* and that it *wasn't their scene*, but that the blog was *good if you were into that sort of thing*. One person noted that unless they were notified of when new stuff was posted on the blog website they wouldn't read it. Another thought that they would have to register separately to access the blog.

One comment was that Facebook was *a kid's chat site - don't need this crap – unprofessional* while another stated that they *find social media offensive and invasive*.

### ***Oysters Australia R&D investment summary***

Less than half (44%) of the oyster grower respondents reported that they had received the Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary (Appendix 4) - but all who said that they received it had read the investment summary. Those growers that received the investment summary rated it as a relatively effective (rating of 6.8) communication channel.

Around 20% hadn't received the R&D investment summary and a third didn't know if they had received it.

One person commented that they were *always interested in R&D investment reports* whereas another comment was that the R&D summary was *all about yesterday - next budget would be so much more useful*.

### ***Annual state industry conferences***

Around 55% of oyster grower respondents indicated that they had attended their annual state industry conference in 2014.

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Growers who attended their state industry conference clearly rated this as the most effective communication channel (rating 8.4).

Some comments on the industry conferences were that they were usually good, one person stating they *attend every year when able and also try to get to other state conferences when able*. Some respondents indicated that they had attended previous years' conferences but not in 2014.

One comment was that the state industry conference was *still the most effective way of disseminating information with immediate group discussion and feedback on issues affecting the oyster industry*. However, others stated that *the current approach is inconsistent and that they were not as effective as they could be*.

### **Regional Grower Groups**

Almost 30% of grower survey respondents indicated that they attended one of the trial regional grower group meetings held in April and May 2013.

Of those growers who commented on how desirable the idea of forming an on-going regional grower group in their region would be, around a half said it was very desirable and about a third said it was somewhat desirable.

Growers who responded to this question thought that formal regional grower groups would be a reasonably effective communication channel (rating 6.6) and of those growers who commented on the feasibility of forming an on-going regional grower group in their region: around 25% said it was very feasible; around 45% said somewhat feasible; and around 25% said it was not very feasible.

This mixed feedback from growers - received in late 2014 and early 2015 - on the desirability and feasibility of forming an ongoing regional grower group in their region supports the mixed feedback received in 2013 to the same questions that were posed to those growers who attended the trial regional grower groups in April and May 2013.

Some comments indicated that regional grower groups could have been trialled in other regions – particularly northern NSW and Coorong, SA, or that the local bay or estuary groups served this purpose already. Other comments were that regional grower groups were only desirable if they did not involve Oysters Australia or the NSW Farmers. One person thought that SAOGA served the purpose of a regional grower group. Another commented that *Growers are trying to minimize time at meetings, so with Bay, Regional and State meeting I believe it is too much*. One person noted that willing participation is the key to the success of these groups, citing that *the turnout at annual industry conferences is an indication of industry willingness*.

One comment of particular relevance to future regional grower group related to local estuary and bay meetings where it was noted that *with a lot of new and younger growers entering the industry, they are becoming very good meetings*.

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## 4. Discussion

Trailing and evaluating the development and delivery of practical, grower-focused extension and communication activities – to increase the return from Seafood CRC research and development (R&D) outputs – was the initial key focus of this project.

The initial emphasis of the project was to deliver and test the efficacy of regional grower group activities in extending CRC-related R&D information to the Australian edible oyster industry. It was anticipated that once these regional grower groups were successfully established, the main aim of the project would then be to ensure the grower group extension model was self-sustaining and supported by a commercial provider - beyond the life of the CRC.

A key achievement of the project was in exposing over 50 oyster growers from NSW, SA and TAS to the concept of regional grower groups and the potential benefits to growers of these groups. While some growers were open to the concept and interested in how grower groups could evolve in their region, others felt the concept potentially duplicated existing structures. Interest in establishing regional grower groups, and feedback on the feasibility and desirability of forming ongoing groups into the future on regions, was mixed - and consistently so - throughout the project.

Overall, we learnt that the concept of establishing formal grower groups as a means of information extension and industry development was something that only a small proportion of growers valued and was not the best use of this project's available resources. As such, the establishment of grower groups was not pursued beyond the first round of meetings.

In addition to testing the efficacy of regional grower groups as a communication channel for R&D activities, web-based tools such as blogs, video vignettes and webinars were also evaluated in the early stages of the project. The initial evaluation of these tools demonstrated that electronic newsletters (*i.e.* the Oysters Australia eNews) helped expose growers to key issues of relevance, research projects and industry developments. We learnt that usage of the industry blog website was healthy, but that although users were reading the website content on a regular basis they were not interested in making comments or stimulating conversations.

With the decision not to continue regional grower group meetings, the emphasis of the project on the reach of smart phone, email and web-based information in extending CRC-related R&D information to the Australian edible oyster industry was increased.

Key achievements of the varied project were the:

- i) Launch of the industry blog website – with 140 blogs published and over 3,500 unique visitors to the site
- ii) Release of eight (8) issues of the Oysters Australia eNews – with the eNews mailing list growing to almost 300 subscribers;
- iii) Release of three (3) episodes of *Australia's Talking Oysters* – YouTube videos containing 12 oyster industry video presentations;
- iv) Distribution to all R&D levy payers of an annual summary of how the industry R&D 'per hectare' levy was invested; and
- v) Scheduled release of a timeless edition of *Australia's Talking Oysters - Australia's investment in oyster future* showcasing key aspects of the Seafood CRC R&D outputs
- vi) Evaluation of grower perceptions of communication channels and their effectiveness.

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Web-based communications sent directly to oyster grower's email or smart phone, such as the eNews and *Australia's Talking Oysters* video, were received positively by growers as an effective communication channel for R&D activities. Growers that received these items in this format were very likely to read or view them and will generally read all or most of the content. However, there was some indication that some growers were only interested in certain topics or speakers, suggesting that future content in this format may benefit from a focus on particular issues or topics. Notwithstanding this, a broad range of topics presented together is also likely to appeal to many growers.

It is worth noting that the successful release of *Australia's Talking Oysters* prompted the Seafood CRC Aquaculture Production Innovation Hub to develop and distribute a similarly well received video news product - *What's Hatching* – that provided research updates and described extension activities from the CRC Hub.

Web-based communications that required an active search by the potential viewer, such as the industry Blog website and Facebook page, were received much less positively than those sent directly to the growers email or phone. Of all the industry communication channels, the Industry Blog website (rating of 4.2), Blog conversations (rating of 3.6) and Facebook conversations (rating of 2.8) had the lowest ratings of effectiveness – among both oyster growers and non-growers alike.

This survey data demonstrated that new communication formats, such as electronic eNews and video news items, are received positively by oyster growers and can be effective communication channels for R&D activities. However, successful distribution and uptake of information in these formats should be through the tools that most growers already use in their everyday business operations – the mobile phone and email.

Peak visitation to the industry Blog website was closely linked to the release of each edition of the eNews and/or *Australia's Talking Oysters* videos. To maintain and improve the industry Blog website as a central industry R&D communication channel, we recommend that future editions of the eNews and/or *Australia's Talking Oysters* videos to subscriber's mobile phones and email be released regularly and consistently – e.g. at least once every two to three months. To improve uptake, we also recommend that each phone message or email of this type is followed up with another reminder around 7 days later.

Growers have strongly indicated that emails and text messages **from other growers** as the most effective communication channels. This suggests that encouraging growers to forward and promote R&D communication by emails and text messages **to other growers** be explored as an effective way to increase the reach of Oysters Australia web-based communications. While some growers readily accept communication directly from an industry body such as Oysters Australia, for others receiving the same information via an industry colleague is preferred – and thus more effective.

The Australian Seafood CRC Oyster Consortium initially opted to use state-based, face-to-face forums as the primary means to communicate with industry members, while also building trust and credibility with industry. Recognising that 40 minute presentations at a state conference can only achieve so much, the Oysters Australia Board and the Seafood CRC identified the need to develop and deliver practical, grower-focused extension and communication activities to increase the return from CRC research and development outputs. This project has demonstrated that web-based information (e.g. Oysters Australia eNews,

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blog website, etc) can be an effective communication channel regarding R&D activities and outputs and should continue within the Oysters Australia communications strategy. However, growers who attend continue to highly value their annual state industry conferences as an effective communication channel. Oysters Australia participation in, and communication through, annual industry state conferences should continue to form an integral part of the Oysters Australia communications strategy – and is essential to maintain and improve trust and credibility with industry.

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## 5. Benefits and Adoption

The Seafood CRC, Oysters Australia and the Australian oyster industry have benefitted from the initial trialling of regional grower groups. By exposing around 50 oyster growers from NSW, SA and TAS to the concept of grower groups, and then assessing feedback from growers on the feasibility and desirability of forming ongoing groups into the future, we have determined that this was something only a small proportion of growers valued. By conducting this initial evaluation and then deciding quickly that grower groups were not the preferred option, available project funding and the available time resources of oyster growers could be used more effectively by investigating other communication channels.

The Seafood CRC, Oysters Australia and the Australian oyster industry have benefitted from this project through improved communication and engagement with Australia's oyster growers. Through this project, the oyster industry and other stakeholders - such as researchers, managers, and industry suppliers – have experienced and adopted new communication formats, such as electronic eNews and video news items, and have indicated that these formats can be effective communication channels for R&D activities.

## 6. Further Development

The Oysters Australia communications strategy should be updated to reflect the learnings from this project regarding grower perceptions of communication channels and the effectiveness of these channels.

Commissioning regular and ongoing editions of the Oyster Australia eNews including further episodes of *Australia's Talking Oysters* videos would continue to maintain and improve the communication and engagement with Australia's oyster growers that has now been established through this project.

Growers have strongly indicated that emails and text messages **from other growers** as the most effective communication channels. We suggest that encouraging growers to forward and promote R&D communication by emails and text messages **to other growers** be explored as an effective way to increase the reach of Oysters Australia web-based communications.

Oysters Australia's participation in, and communication through, annual industry state conferences should continue to form an integral part of the Oysters Australia communications strategy – and is essential to maintain and improve trust and credibility with industry.

## 7. Planned Outcomes

### ***Private Benefit Outcomes***

To meet CRC and industry needs, this project sought to establish strategic and ongoing mechanisms to extend and build on the oyster-related outputs from Seafood CRC research - benefitting the oyster industry as a whole, through empowering, networking and skilling oyster industry growers.

The original planned outcomes were based largely on the proviso that self-sustaining, ongoing regional grower groups would be successfully established and that the benefits

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would be primarily assessed through feedback from participating oyster growers and the commercial support provider. These planned outcomes were:

- Increased profitability/efficiency within Australian oyster industry through uptake and adoption of CRC research outputs (assessed through consultation/feedback from participating oyster growers, including through collaboration with the benchmarking project team).
- Ongoing (through collaboration with a commercial provider; post-CRC) grower group engagement through Oysters Australia for development of research priorities, uptake of research and development outputs and regionally-focused capability and capacity building.
- Ongoing (through collaboration with a commercial provider; post-CRC) industry extension activities, through Oysters Australia, based on skills, knowledge and structures established with CRC support.
- Ongoing (through collaboration with a commercial provider; post-CRC) industry succession planning and leadership development, through Oysters Australia support of grower group activities.

However, self-sustaining, ongoing regional grower groups have not been established. The concept of establishing formal grower groups as a means of information extension and industry development was something that only a small proportion of survey respondents' values. As such, the benefits of grower groups to the oyster industry as a whole – had they been established - could not be measured.

Although ongoing regional grower groups were not established, growers did indicate that they were willing to access R&D outputs through web-based communication tools such as blogs, video- and audio- vignettes and webinars. While these communication channels have provided a moderately effective way of communicating with growers, it is unknown to what extent they have created measurable change within the oyster industry – e.g. to what extent, if any, they may have increased profitability/efficiency through uptake and adoption of CRC research outputs,

### **Public Benefit Outcomes**

The original planned outcomes suggested that the public would benefit from this project by the evolution of a more efficient, informed and professional oyster industry (through the establishment of regional grower groups) that will in the long term be more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. The social return on investment of this project for local communities was identified as potentially significant.

As stated above, ongoing regional grower groups were not established. While web-based communication channels have provided a moderately effective way of communicating with growers, it is unknown to what extent the oyster industry has evolved to be more efficient, informed and professional – leading to greater long-term sustainability.

Other seafood based industries were identified as potential beneficiaries of the project, as they may be able to adopt similar extension and communication processes to assist them to better understand and adopt research findings. The successful release of *Australia's Talking Oysters* prompted the Seafood CRC Aquaculture Production Innovation Hub to release a similar video news - *What's Hatching* – that provided research updates and described extension activities from the CRC Hub.

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## 8. Conclusion

The project trialled six regional oyster grower groups in Tasmania (2), SA (2) and NSW (2). The original planned objectives and outcomes were based largely on the proviso that self-sustaining, ongoing regional grower groups would be successfully established. However, it was concluded that the establishment of ongoing regional grower groups could not be supported as a means to communicate R&D activities and outputs.

The project has demonstrated that new communication formats, such as electronic eNews and video news items, are received positively by oyster growers and can be effective communication channels for R&D activities. However, successful distribution and uptake of information in these formats should be through the tools that most growers already use in their everyday business operations – the mobile phone and email messaging.

Growers have indicated that they are willing to access R&D outputs through web-based communication tools such as video- and audio- vignettes, blogs, and webinars. These communication channels have provided an effective way of communicating with growers. It is, however, too early to tell to what extent these tools have assisted the oyster industry in its efforts to become more efficient, informed and professional.

Other seafood-based industries have been able to learn from this project and adopt some of the trialled extension and communication processes to communicate their own research findings.

Growers have strongly indicated that emails and text messages **from other growers** as the most effective communication channels. We suggest that encouraging growers to forward and promote R&D communication by emails and text messages **to other growers** be explored as an effective way to increase the reach of Oysters Australia web-based communications.

Growers who attend continue to highly value their annual state industry conferences as an effective communication channel. Oysters Australia participation in, and communication through, annual industry state conferences should continue to form an integral part of the Oysters Australia communications strategy – and is essential to maintain and improve trust and credibility with industry.

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## 9. References

*Australia's Talking Oysters* - Episode 1 - March 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPo7nlkTyhc&feature=youtu.be>

*Australia's Talking Oysters* - Episode 2 - April 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A8HiQY fsY>

*Australia's Talking Oysters* - Episode 3 - September 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUDRwcpy2D4>

Oysters Australia Blog Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/OystersAustraliaBlog>

Oysters Australia Industry Blog website

<http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/>

*Australia's Talking Oysters* - *Australia's investment in oyster future*

<http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/australias-talking-oysters-timeless-edition-2015>

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## 10. Appendices

### **Appendix 1: Intellectual Property**

No intellectual property is arising from the research

### **Appendix 2: Staff**

Ray Murphy	RDS Partners
Tom Lewis	RDS Partners
Don Defenderfer	RDS Partners
Morag Anderson	RDS Partners
Rachel King	Oysters Australia
Lynsey McLeod	Progressive Content
Emily Mantilla	Australian Seafood CRC
Tom Waugh	Aerial Inspections
Benny Edwards	
Gerard Wood	New Era Media

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## Appendix 3: Regional Grower Groups Meeting Feedback Survey

### Regional Grower Groups Meeting Feedback

#### Welcome

This short survey is intended primarily for oyster farmers who attended the recent R&D Levies, Benchmarking and Regional Grower Group Meetings which were held in NSW, South Australia and Tasmania.

However we welcome feedback from any oyster farmer interested in the idea of forming regional grower groups.

We value your feedback.

We are particularly interested in feedback from you about the desirability and feasibility of establishing grower groups in your region as a means to better assist regional communication and the extension of CRC research results to farmers.

Your input will help shape the focus and direction of future meetings which are scheduled for autumn 2014.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to complete this survey which is part of the CRC project Trialling Regional Grower Groups.

(For more information about the CRC project see the project's web page at: <http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/> or contact [don.defenderfer@rdspartners.com](mailto:don.defenderfer@rdspartners.com))

## Regional Grower Groups Meeting Feedback

### Regional Grower Groups Meeting Feedback

#### 1. Which regional grower group meeting did you attend?

- Port Stephens
- Pambula
- Coffin Bay
- Smoky Bay
- Smithton
- Hobart

#### 2. Was the overall purpose of the meeting made clear to you?

- Very Clearly
- Adequately
- Not very clearly

Comments welcome:

#### 3. Was the Benchmarking presentation (made by Carlyn Sherriff) clearly presented to you at the meeting?

- Very Clearly
- Adequately
- Not very clearly

Feel free to make any comments you would like about the Benchmarking presentation

#### 4. Was the Benchmarking presentation of value to your business?

- High Value
- Medium Value
- Low Value

## Regional Grower Groups Meeting Feedback

**5. Was the National R & D levy presentation (made by Ewan Colquhoun) clearly presented to you at the meeting?**

- Very Clearly
- Adequately
- Not very clearly

Feel free to make any comments you would like about the Levy presentation

**6. Was the National R & D Levy presentation of value to your business?**

- High Value
- Medium Value
- Low Value

**7. Was the concept (presented by Tom Lewis) of forming a regional grower group in your region clearly explained to you at the meeting?**

- Very Clearly
- Adequately
- Not very clearly

Feel free to make any comments you would like about the discussion of regional grower groups

**8. How feasible (e.g. practical) is the idea of forming an on-going Regional Grower Group in your region?**

- Very feasible
- Somewhat feasible
- Not very feasible

Please indicate some brief reasons for your response:

## Regional Grower Groups Meeting Feedback

**9. How desirable is the idea of forming an on-going Regional Grower Group in your region?**

- Very desirable
- Somewhat desirable
- Not very desirable

Please indicate some brief reasons for your response:

**10. What things would entice you to join a Regional Grower Group in your region?**

**11. What things would prevent you from joining a Regional Grower Group in your region?**

**12. What topics would you most like to learn about or discuss at future regional grower group meetings?**

**13. Please feel free to make any additional comments you would like to make regarding regional grower groups**

**14. Optional feedback. If you would like to be contacted in the future, should we need any further feedback from you, please indicate**

Name

Email address

Phone number

## Appendix 4. 2014 Research & Development investment summary



This is your Research and Development (R&D) investment report for 2014. This is a report on how your R&D 'per hectare' levy has been invested (see over). This page explains available R&D funds per year and shows results of how you wanted R&D funds spent in future. We have also explained some next stage investments we're working on for a 2015 start.

In 2011, the three big producing oyster states formed Oysters Australia. Oysters Australia's main job is to manage, co-ordinate and communicate grower's R&D levy investment projects. Oysters Australia has been managing your R&D levy investment since 2011 through the Australian Seafood CRC (CRC). We used the extra CRC matching funds to buy into more projects.

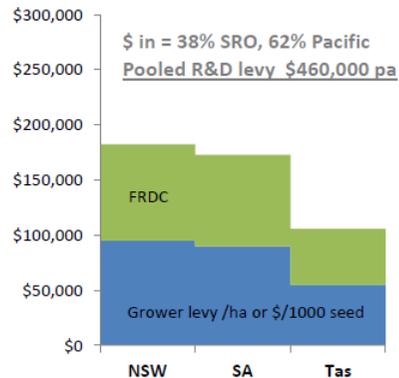
### Your 2014 Research & Development investment report

Previously, each oyster producing state managed their R&D levy funded projects separately and via a cross sector advisory Board. This meant less 'buying power' for each state and few cross-species projects - even when it made sense to co-invest.

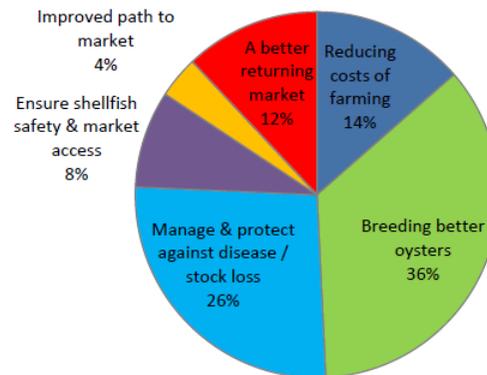
In 2015, the Australian Seafood CRC will close. Oysters Australia will now manage your R&D levy through Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) using FRDC matching funds.

*A final note!* In 2013 Oysters Australia started talks on a proposal to replace the state based R&D levies with a national levy. A replacement levy could also allow non R&D investment (eg marketing, biosecurity, etc). In June, Oysters Australia changed the target date for a national levy to 2017. Growers need full costed proposals and levy mechanics to make that decision and that's what we'll be working on.

#### Your estimated 2014-2019 R&D levy \$



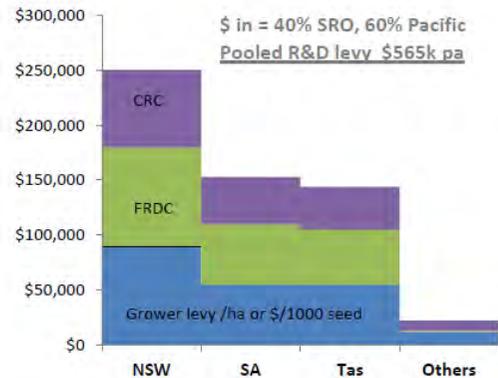
#### What R&D problems you would spend your R&D levy \$ on (from 2013 survey)



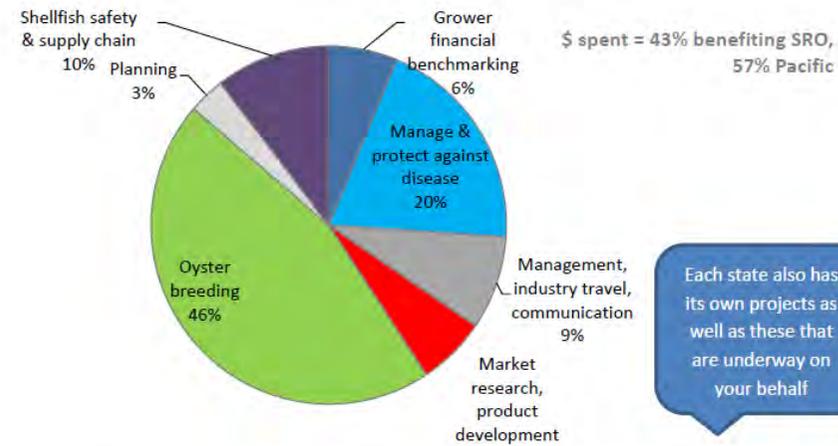
There are high priority 'breeding better oyster' investments underway now but nothing new for 2015. **The next significant investments** are likely to be in the area of '**managing & protecting against disease/mortality**'. Oysters can die because of disease or environmental problems: some causes we know about, others we're yet to see. But growers want to know when their stock is struggling rather than count the shell when it's too late.

Two tools, accessible by mobile phone app, are already being developed to address two current main priorities: 1) measuring production performance & 'normal' mortality and 2) an early warning alert of oyster stress to reduce losses from disease or environmental causes. Further investment is likely in 2015.

Your R&D levy \$ investment 2007-2014



Your R&D levy \$ investment by priority 2007-2014



Each state also has its own projects as well as these that are underway on your behalf

**Some project results & further information:**

**Breeding better oysters:** Project “*Selection for condition marketability and survival in Sydney rock and Pacific oysters*” demonstrated that condition can be measured with low cost machinery. It measured the heritability of condition compared to other in-demand traits. The SRO and Pacific breeding programs will be asking growers and making decisions shortly about where to incorporate results in breeding priorities. Project “*Genetic selection for resistance to Pacific oyster mortality syndrome*” is a current project and aims to deliver 70% POMS resistant adults in commercially available stock by 2018.

**Market research and development:** Seafood CRC commissioned consumer research on oyster perceptions and consumption patterns led to the Project “*Evaluating the impact of an improved retailing concept for oysters in Fishmongers*”. Stage 2 of the project is about to commence across 20 independent stores in Australia.

**Shellfish safety:** Project “*A critical evaluation of supply-chain temperature profiles to optimise food safety and quality of Australian oysters*” and project “*Protecting the safety & quality of Australian oysters with integrated predictive tools*” tracked the time, temperature and food safety of oysters in transit. For SRO growers, a reduction in refrigeration requirements was supported out of this research.

For latest news and research results see [oystersaustraliablog.org.au](http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au) or contact Rachel King at [oystersaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:oystersaustralia@gmail.com)

## Appendix 5: Grower survey on perceptions of communication channel effectiveness

### How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

#### 1. Surveying the effectiveness of oyster industry communication channels

The Australian Seafood CRC and Oysters Australia strongly encourage you to participate in this survey so we can most effectively communicate with you about the issues that are important to you and your oyster industry.

Your perceptions on the effectiveness of communication channels in the oyster industry will be invaluable in informing and guiding the Oysters Australia communications strategy.

Most of the questions are simple multiple choice and can be answered very quickly.  
It should only take you 5-10 mins to complete the full survey.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey for your oyster industry.

#### 2. Background info

**\* 1. I am an oyster grower?**

Yes

No

If no, please specify

**\* 2. I grow oysters in**

New South Wales

South Australia

Tasmania

Queensland

Other

I'm not an oyster grower

Other (please specify)

#### 3. Rate communication effectiveness

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**\* 1. Please rate the effectiveness of all of these oyster industry communication channels. How effective are all of these ways of communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness**

	1 (not effective at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (maximum effectiveness)
Oysters Australia eNews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Industry Blog website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Industry Blog conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Facebook conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State industry websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State industry eNews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Annual state industry conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local estuary or bay group meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal regional grower groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Industry magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other growers - emails and text messages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other growers - phone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other growers - word of mouth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>									

## 4. Rank communication effectiveness

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**\* 1. What are the top five most effective oyster industry communication channels for you? Rank the top five ways of communicating with you - where 1 is the most effective for you and 5 is still effective but only just in your top five**

	1 (most effective for me)	2	3	4	5 (still effective but only just in my top five)
Oysters Australia eNews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube Videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Industry Blog website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Industry Blog conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Facebook conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State Industry websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State Industry eNews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Annual state Industry conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local estuary or bay group meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal regional grower groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Industry magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other growers - emails and text messages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other growers - phone calls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other growers - word of mouth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

### 5. Oysters Australia eNews

**\* 1. Do you receive the Oysters Australia eNews via a message to your phone or email?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

### \* 2. Do you read the Oysters Australia eNews?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not very often
- Never

Comment

### \* 3. How much of the Oysters Australia eNews do you read?

- All of it
- Most of it
- Only the items that interest me
- None of it

Comment

### \* 4. How do you currently access and read the Oysters Australia eNews?

- Text message (SMS)
- Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)
- email
- Industry Blog website
- I don't access and read the Oysters Australia eNews

Comment

### \* 5. How would you prefer to access and read the Oysters Australia eNews?

- Text message (SMS)
- Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)
- email
- Industry Blog website
- I don't want to access and read the Oysters Australia eNews

Comment

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**\* 6. Please rate the effectiveness of the Oysters Australia eNews. How effective is the Oysters Australia eNews in communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness**

	1 (not effective at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (maximum effectiveness)
Oysters Australia eNews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 6. Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos

**\* 1. Did you receive all three episodes of 'Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos' via a message to your phone or email (Episode 1 - March 2014; Episode 2 - April 2014; Episode 3 - Sept 2014)**

- Yes - all three episodes
- Only one or two episodes
- No - I didn't receive any
- I don't know

Comment

**\* 2. Did you view the Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Comment

**\* 3. How much of each Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos did you view?**

- All of it
- Most of it
- Only the speakers that interested me
- None of it

Comment

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

### 4. How did you access and view Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos

- Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)
- email
- Industry Blog website
- I didn't access and view Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos

Comment

### 5. How would you prefer to access and view Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos

- Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)
- email
- Industry Blog website
- I don't want to access and view Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos

Comment

### \*6. Please rate the effectiveness of the Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos . How effective were the Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos in communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness



## 7. Oysters Australia Industry Blog website

### \*1. Do you visit and read the Oysters Australia Industry Blog website?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**\*2. How often do you visit and read the Oysters Australia Industry Blog website?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Once a year
- Never

Comment

**\*3. Have you ever posted a comment on the Oysters Australia Industry Blog website?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

**\*4. Do you visit and read the Oysters Australia Industry Facebook page?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

**\*5. Have you ever posted a comment on the Oysters Australia Industry Facebook page?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**\*6. Please rate the effectiveness of these oyster industry communication channels. How effective are these ways of communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness**

	1 (not effective at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (maximum effectiveness)
Oysters Australia Industry Blog website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Industry Blog conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oysters Australia Facebook conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 8. Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary

**\*1. Did you receive the Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

**\*2. Have you read the Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Comment

**\*3. Please rate the effectiveness of the Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary. How effective was the Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary in communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness**

	1 (not effective at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (maximum effectiveness)
Oysters Australia Annual R&D Investment 1 page summary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 9. Annual state industry conference

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**\* 1. Did you attend your annual state industry conference in 2014?**

- Yes  
 No

Comment

**\* 2. Please rate the effectiveness of the annual state industry conference. How effective is your annual state industry conference in communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness**

	1 (not effective at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (maximum effectiveness)
Annual state industry conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 10. Regional Grower Groups

**\* 1. In April and May 2013, we tested the concept of regional grower group meetings and held two meetings in each of NSW, SA and TAS. Did you attend one of these regional grower group meetings?**

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

Comment

**\* 2. Which regional grower group meeting did you attend?**

- Port Stephens  
 Pambula  
 Coffin Bay  
 Smoky Bay  
 Smithton  
 Hobart  
 I don't know  
 I didn't attend a grower group meeting

Comment

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**3. How desirable is the idea of forming an on-going regional grower group in your region?**

- Very desirable
- Somewhat desirable
- Not very desirable

Please indicate some brief reasons for your response

**4. How feasible (e.g. practical) is the idea of forming an on-going regional grower group in your region?**

- Very feasible
- Somewhat feasible
- Not very feasible

Please indicate some brief reasons for your response

**5. How effective do you think a formal regional grower group would be in communicating information about the oyster industry to you? - where 1 is not effective at all and 10 is maximum effectiveness**

	1 (not effective at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (maximum effectiveness)
Regional grower group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 11. Oyster Industry Benchmarking

**1. The Oyster industry benchmarking project has been completed. Please rate the likelihood that you will want to know how your business performs against other oyster businesses in future**

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Not Interested
- I don't know

Comment

## 12. Comments on effectiveness

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

**1. Are there any comments you'd like to make about the effectiveness of these oyster industry communication channels? What works? What doesn't work? Opportunities for improvement?**

Oysters Australia eNews	
Australia's Talking Oysters - YouTube videos	
Oysters Australia Industry Blog website	
Oysters Australia Industry Blog conversations	
Oysters Australia Facebook conversations	
Oysters Australia R&D Investment Report	
State Industry websites	
State Industry eNews	
Annual state Industry conferences	
Local estuary or bay group meetings	
Formal regional grower groups	
Industry magazines	
Other growers - emails and text messages	
Other growers - phone calls	
Other growers - word of	

---

## How effective are oyster industry communication channels?

mouth

Other (please  
specify)

### 13. Optional info

#### 1. Optional feedback

Name

email address

Phone number