



shellfish culture

shellfish culture newsletter | Winter 2013



A government grant has helped to double SCL's spat bottle system (above) and improve grading capacity at SCL's farm operations centre (above right)

Government grant boosts jobs and production

A grant from the Tasmanian Government has assisted Shellfish Culture to boost its hatchery production, fast track new farm practise methods, and employ three young Tasmanians.

Shellfish Culture was successful in an application to the Tasmanian Government Investment and Innovation Fund, receiving \$135,000. It assisted a major capital upgrade of facilities, and also contributed to:

- The employment of two aquaculture Certificate 3 trainees and one administration trainee.
- Upgrading and re-locating an underwater grader to SCL's new farm operations site at Pipe Clay Lagoon, helping to increase survival rates for spat.
- Doubling SCL's spat bottle system in the pre-nursery stage where oysters are grown from 500 microns to two millimetres.
- Helping to progress new farm practise methods to make the company more sustainable.

"The underwater grader was developed by Bolduans Bay Oysters and manufactured by ShellQuip. It limits the stress levels on oyster spat," says Kerry Wells, SCL's General Manager. "The grader has stirred interest from overseas hatcheries, and looking ahead, we believe it will also assist farmers in Australia to achieve better survival rates with their product, too."

"The new grader is a critical component of our expansion, which in turn provides oyster farms with greater certainty of stock availability and quality. It also enables Shellfish Culture to ramp-up our production of spawnless oysters which are now such an integral part of Australia's shellfish market".

There were 76 applications to this round of funding under the Tasmanian Government Investment and Innovation Fund, representing 17 key industry sectors.

Of these, ten applications were successful in receiving grant funding which totalled \$1.8 million and which will leverage a further \$5.9 million of private investment.

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Chairman's Report

When Shellfish Culture completed its strategic plan last year, it identified Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome POMS as the major environmental risk for both the business and the oyster industry.

As a result we are now actively looking at further expanding our risk mitigation and business continuity plan. As a Board, we want to be absolutely assured that Shellfish Culture is an environmentally secure site, so that in the event of a POMS outbreak in Tasmania we can continue to be an on-time reliable supplier of seed to the growers.

The precautionary processes we're undertaking will be implemented in liaison with organisations such as Oysters Australia, Oysters Tasmania and Oysters South Australia.

In the meantime, Shellfish Culture is playing its part in the industry-wide response to POMS. We continue to donate spawnless seed for grow out experiments on both the Hawkesbury and Georges rivers in NSW. More recently we have been providing technical expertise to the Sydney

University research team headed by Richard Whittington. The new research is investigating land based production methods in POMS affected estuaries, with some promising results.

The Tasmanian Government should be acknowledged for its Investment and Innovation Fund. Shellfish Culture successfully applied for a grant under this fund, which has been used to expand hatchery and nursery operations. The Fund has allowed us to employ three trainees – two as aquaculture trainees and one in administration.

In our case, the Government grant has boosted employment and contributed to a more efficient spat production system. The Investment and Innovation Fund is an example of how governments can work effectively to boost both employment and industry in Tasmania.



Chairman, Greg Goodman

STAFF PROFILE:

Welcome Chloe

From a grain and cattle property out the back of Mackay, Chloe English has joined Shellfish Culture as a Hatchery Technician.

Growing up in Central Queensland, Chloe spent her holidays boating in the Whitsunday Islands, where she first developed her interest in marine life. "When you think of it, it's not all that far removed from farming on the land" says Chloe of her work as a hatchery technician.

Chloe studied a Bachelor of Marine Studies at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. She then received First Class Honours after her work investigating the impact of farm site selection on the molecular development of pearl oysters. This project involved multiple trips to Broome to collect samples of Silver-lipped pearl oysters, a great bonus to a year of hard work.

Her first job was at the Wayatinah salmon hatchery in Central Tasmania, where she worked and lived



for a year. When Shellfish Culture's Rosie Bennett went on maternity leave, Chloe moved into her role, looking after the company's spat and undertaking laboratory work on the spat's food source, algae.

Chloe now lives in Hobart and says she enjoys the Tasmanian life style. When she is not working she spends time on sport – in particular netball, trail runs and training for a triathlons.

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

Marine Culture

With a pedigree stretching back to the 1980's Marine Culture has seen just about everything nature can throw at the oyster industry. "The challenges never stop," says General Manager Peter "Ripple" Kosmeyer.

"We've weathered everything: floods, toxic algae, drought, Japanese sea stars, European crabs, Pacific gulls, stingrays, and even bushfires. Now it's POMS, and for our South Australian operations, SAMS." But Marine Culture has proved to be a resilient operation, growing into a major Australian oyster supplier despite the industry-wide challenges thrown up by Mother Nature.

Marine Culture produces oysters in three states, with farms in Tasmania, South Australia, and an R&D facility in NSW. "We're now one of the few producers with a presence in each major oyster producing state," says Peter. "Our goal is to reach one million dozen oyster sales in a year. We've nearly achieved that target before and we're determined to reach and surpass it in the near future."

Marine Culture uses spawnless spat from Shellfish Culture for about one third of its production, and standards for two thirds. Twenty to 25 million oysters are under cultivation at any one time, and Marine Culture's main market is the Australian East coast and Adelaide, with most of the Company's oysters being sold to wholesalers, retailers and restaurants.

Dubbed Ripple in his first job because of his love for surfing and the fact that there were three others in the business with the name Peter, "Ripple" puts down Marine Culture's growth and success to the company's 40 employees around Australia.

"It's the guys who make the company, so it's all about the team. There is a real spirit of camaraderie among the staff, and I believe this has developed either because of – or in spite of - the mostly environmental challenges that regularly loom on the horizon for our industry."

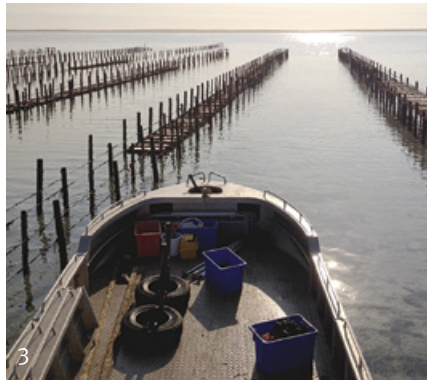
1. New racks at Pittwater in Tasmania

2. Research and development into cultivating spawnless oysters in the Port Stephens area

3. St Peters Island lease near Ceduna

4. Part of Marine Culture's R&D – Spawnless Oysters grown in Port Stephens NSW

5. Peter "Ripple" Kosmeyer with new punt based at Marine Culture's Pittwater farming operations



Shellfish futures: be there to have your say.

shellfish futures 2013
annual industry conference

Shellfish Culture is attending a series of industry conferences this year.

In Tasmania, Shellfish Futures 2013 is on at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island, 11 - 13th October. Shellfish Culture will be there. Hope to see you there, too.

Jon Poke, Chairman of the Tasmanian Shellfish Executive Council, says important issues will be discussed and voted on:

1. How does the industry want to secure funding to restructure the Executive Officer position and Industry representation?
2. Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Programme: what the Industry can expect to face with the trebling of the cost of the program.
3. Industry Benchmarking Report: where do you fit into the industry and what could you do to generate more profit from your business?

Jon says it is important to be at the conference if you want a say in the direction of the industry and how it will be funded.

Shellfish Futures this year will also be looking at industry challenges under the theme "What happens when S%#T happens?" There will be presentations by farmers on the challenges they have faced in recent times, from POMS and algae to the recent unexpected problems that befell the farmers in Pittwater, Tasmania.



Shellfish Culture enjoyed catching up with customers, stake holders, and other industry representatives at the recent NSW Oyster Conference at the Soldiers Point Bowling Club at Port Stephens from 31 July to 1 August, and then at the SAOGA/SAORC Conference in Smoky Bay on the 8th and 9th August.

Nominations for election of director

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 7th November 2013 at Shellfish Culture Ltd, Bicheno Street, Clifton Beach. Mr Jonathon Poke will retire in accordance with Clause 11 of the Company's Constitution and is offering himself for re-election.

Shareholders are reminded that nominations from other persons must be received by the Company Secretary by midnight on 1 October 2013. A nomination form can be obtained from the Company Secretary by email: secretary@shellfishculture.com.au or by telephoning 0488 796 555.

Keep up with the latest on POMS

Shellfish Culture is part of Australia's response to the POMS threat. You can keep up to date with our activities in this publication, and for more on POMS, here is a selection of useful websites and blogs:

In particular, the first mentioned site below at Sydney University has a blog with lots of contributions from readers.

- <http://oysterhealthsydney.wordpress.com/>
- <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/pests-diseases/animal-health/aquaculture/poms>
- <http://oysterstasmania.org/>
- <http://oystersaustraliablog.org.au/>
- www.oysterssa.com.au

News in brief from Shellfish Culture

The 2013 spawning season has started well; four successful runs, two standards and one each of spawnless and thoroughbred.

The new farm is already proving its worth with more stock of larger sizes ready for spring sales.

SCL has purchased the Bicheno slipway on Tasmania's East Coast. As part of the acquisition, this site has now been decommissioned. It is another step in securing spat production from our main hatchery facilities.

OH&S continues to be a high priority for SCL with all relevant staff proficient in Confined space training.