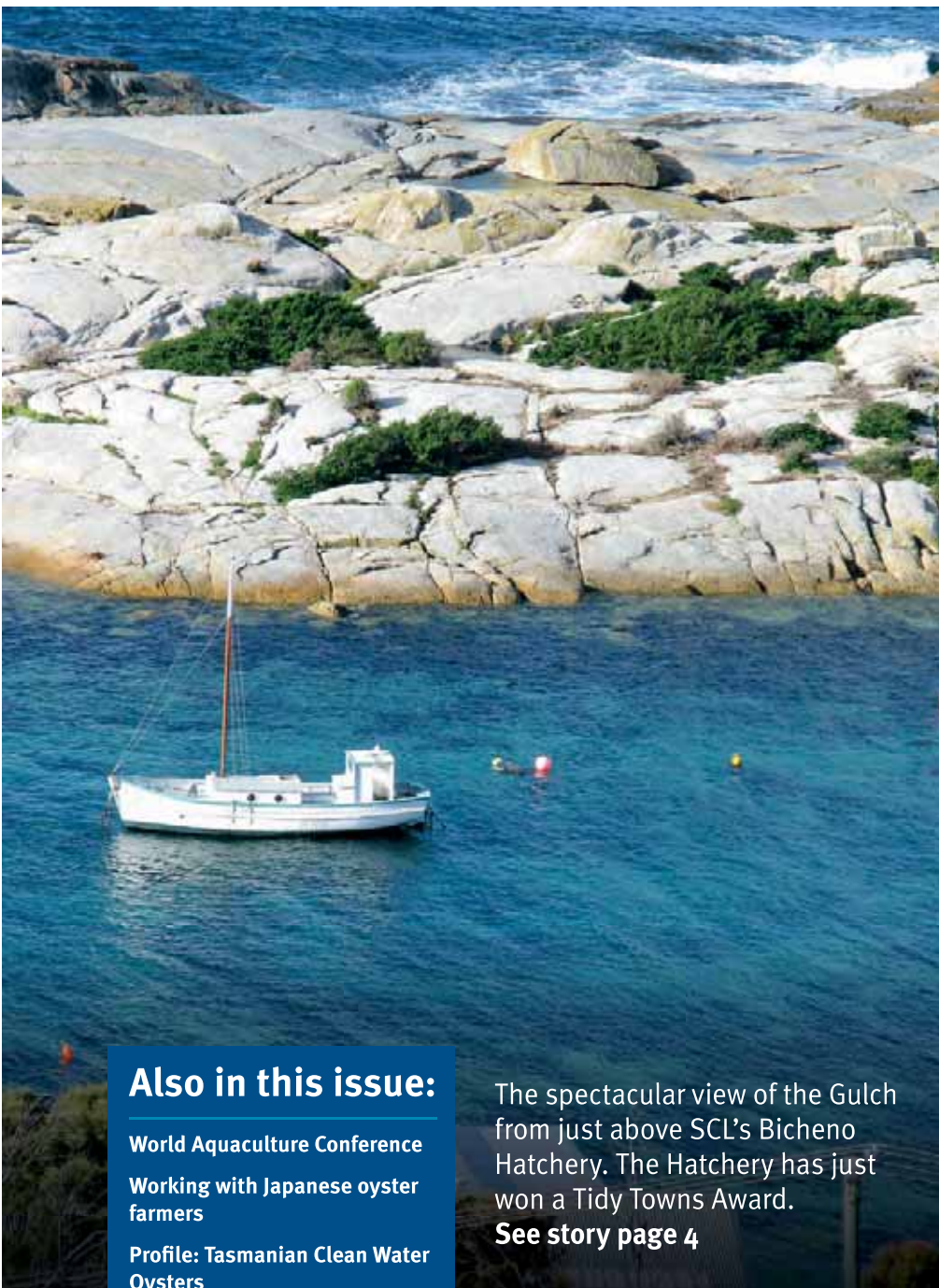




# shellfish culture

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## A step towards biosecurity

As part of its long term plan to make Shellfish Culture (SCL) a biosecure organisation, the company has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the risks posed by disease, specifically POMs (Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome).

Shellfish Culture engaged Drs Paul Hardy-Smith and John Humphrey of Panaquatic Health Solutions to undertake the risk assessment. Panaquatic provides aquatic animal health services to national and local governments, multinational companies and fish farming enterprises in Australia and elsewhere.

The key objectives of this work were to provide an understanding of the risk that POMs poses to SCL's business; minimise the risk of POMs gaining entry to SCL's production sites; and identify what SCL can do if other diseases not yet occurring in Australian waters were to gain entry to its production sites.

This risk assessment has provided a foundation for the board and management to build upon over coming years to minimise the impact of disease on Shellfish Culture's operations and the industry as a whole.

Recommendations include the implementation of a biosecurity plan which will be developed in conjunction with the Chief Veterinary Officers of Tasmania and South Australia and will be audited by a third party.

The plan will have strict guidelines for stock movement, stock health, laboratory testing, staff and equipment movements and training programs for staff.

"Our long term vision is to have fully biosecure facilities to be able to produce pacific oyster seed in the face of any threat whether it is POMs or any other disease not yet seen in Australian waters," said Kerry Wells, SCL's General Manager.

### Also in this issue:

World Aquaculture Conference

Working with Japanese oyster farmers

Profile: Tasmanian Clean Water Oysters

The spectacular view of the Gulch from just above SCL's Bicheno Hatchery. The Hatchery has just won a Tidy Towns Award.

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## Chairman's Report

As you will read in this edition, Shellfish Culture has now completed a comprehensive risk assessment which is an important step as we move towards developing a biosecurity plan that will ultimately benefit ourselves, our customers, and our industry in general.

As the industry well knows, we operate in a sector where risk must be a constant consideration in every decision we make. As an industry sector we are particularly prone to water borne diseases.

Our strategic plan identified POMs as the major environmental risk for both our business and the oyster industry. The Board is focused on ensuring SCL moves towards a biosecure enterprise.

The vision that drives the company is to ensure we are an on-time supplier of premium quality oysters that meet customer needs. Without a robust risk mitigation strategy, especially in relation to environmental factors and disease, our vision wouldn't amount to much more than wishful thinking.

Another plank to achieving our vision is showing fruition this year, with a good supply of spring seeds in stock and available for customers.

Boosting stock levels to meet spring ordering demand was one of the main reasons that we last year acquired farm water in Pipeclay Lagoon.

The staff have worked very hard upgrading the farm operations at Pipeclay Lagoon, and placing the company in a good position to meet the upcoming seasonal demand.



Chairman, Greg Goodman



Tasmanian Clean Water Oysters MD Dan Roden

## Customer profile: TASMANIAN CLEAN WATER OYSTERS

The only downside to an otherwise perfect oyster farm location becomes evident as you drive towards Tasmanian Clean Water Oysters, located at St Helens on Tasmania's east coast: flood markers by the roadside and raised causeways.

"Rain and flooding are our biggest threat here," says the company's Managing Director, Dan Roden.

Tasmanian Clean Water Oysters commenced as a family business in 1999. Because of good planning, within its first 12 months it was a fully developed and trading farm. Dan Roden bought into the business about seven years ago. With an Honours degree in Aquaculture Dan had been working extensively with industry from hatchery production through to sales and marketing.

"One of the first challenges we identified was that when the farm commenced operations, all the infrastructure and ancillary gear was acquired new. This became a financial headache down the track when everything became due for replacement about the same time. So we've restructured to stagger the replacement program and the last four or five years has seen us gradually upgrading everything. Recently we acquired a third, new oyster barge."

In the last three years, the company has acquired an additional 10.6ha of water to increase production by 20%. The farm now consists of 34ha of intertidal water and 5ha of sub tidal water.

"Our goal is to produce 280,000 dozen oysters which is 80,000 more than we're currently producing."

Dan is introducing best practice on the farm. Much of the original operation has been modelled on Marine Culture at Little Swanport in Tasmania, with the current focus and regular visits to other leading oyster producers, such as Jon Poke on Tasmania's North West coast.

"Apart from those times that flooding occurs, we're practically a year round operation. Our customers range down the eastern seaboard from Cairns to Melbourne. It means that when the wet season is on in north Queensland and visitor numbers are down, demand is at its peak in places like Sydney and Melbourne. When the south goes into winter, the northern demand fires up."

The company is also experiencing an almost daily influx of visitors wanting to buy direct from the farm. "We're particularly noticing a big increase in Chinese tourists who want to eat our oysters." In response to this demand, the company is planning to establish a visitor friendly sales outlet on site.

The farm buys about 90% of its product from Shellfish Culture. It's a mix of standard, thoroughbred and spawnless oysters. "We use their variety of products to suit our production cycle which is year round," says Dan. "Spawnless oysters have worked very well for us, giving us a year-round market supply ability. This year, I thought the spawnless oysters were particularly excellent."



# World Aquaculture Conference

## ADELAIDE 2014

Adelaide recently hosted the World Aquaculture Conference. SCL had staff attending the Conference and Trade Show and also had a booth as part of the Trade Show.

It was a very busy week with hundreds of conference-goers visiting the booth, both industry and research participants. There were many positive comments about the presentation of the booth and enquiries from national and international guests.

Mature oysters of superb quality were supplied for tasting by Coffin Bay Oyster Farm and Turners Oysters. Many thanks to Lester Marshall of Coffin Bay Oyster Farm and Simon Turner of Turners Oysters for supplying and shucking the wonderfully presented oysters.

Conference participants took part in a range of discussions on issues such as biosecurity, POMS management, grow-out techniques, selective breeding and the effects of toxic algal bloom on mollusc hatcheries.

SCL Hatchery staff also attended a Hatchery Technology Workshop and SCL Bicheno Hatchery Manager, Michel Bermudes, made a presentation to the workshop.

*Prior to the Conference, Andy Day, SCL's Pipeclay Lagoon Hatchery / R&D Team Leader, organised a presentation to be shown at the SCL conference booth, with pictures and footage highlighting SCL. This was a drawcard, with several international participants enquiring if the presentation was available for purchase. Watch out for the presentation being uploaded to the SCL website.*



*From top: SCL's booth at the World Aquaculture conference; Kerry Wells (left), Jan Potter, and Cowell seafood and aquaculture teacher Michael Barker (right)*

### Cowell Area School

The Cowell Area School showcased its educational program as an extension of the SCL booth at the world Aquaculture Conference, raising much interest from international delegates wishing to incorporate a similar program in their countries.

Jan Potter, Principal of the Cowell Area School, presented Kerry Wells, SCL General Manager, with a plaque in recognition of SCL's involvement with its educational program.

The Cowell Area School has its own oyster farm run by a manager and staffed by the students. SCL has hosted students in Tasmania to assist them with work experience that furthers their studies. SCL looks forward to continue working with Jan and her staff at the school.

## Liaison with Japan

Shellfish Culture has recently co-hosted in conjunction with several key customers and suppliers, 12 Japanese oyster farmers for a week, several days which were spent at its Pipeclay Lagoon complex.

It's a joint initiative with Austrade, SEAPA and S.E.D. "Japanese farmers are very interested in the way Australians farm oysters, and they want to learn our techniques," says SCL's General Manager, Kerry Wells. Most of the visitors are from one of Japan's main oyster production areas, Miyajima.

Austrade has facilitated the visit, and there will be a return visit by Shellfish Culture to Japan in August. "The Chairman and I will be going to Japan to meet the farmers following their week with us in Tasmania, to see how they are progressing with implementing any of our Australian practices."



## New Company Secretary

Shellfish Culture has appointed a new Company Secretary following the recent sad loss of Christine Woodward. Maree Sharples can be contacted on 0428 141 008 for information on sales and transfers of shares and other company related matters.

It has been a sad time for Shellfish Culture recently with the loss of two great company stalwarts, Jayne Wilson and Christine Woodward.

### JAYNE WILSON

Jayne Wilson who died recently has been remembered as a great business mentor to managers at Shellfish Culture over many years.

Jayne was company secretary of Shellfish Culture for 20 years, taking on the role in 1992.

Former long serving Board member Leon Doyle says Jayne worked with several different chairmen, and many board members over the years of her involvement with the company. "She was very personable, and very knowledgeable of the company and the industry. She could talk to anyone at every level and was respected by all – from chairmen to farm hands."

As well as SCL's Company Secretary, Jayne performed the roles of company accountant and financial controller.

A passionate bushwalker, Jayne Wilson was a chartered accountant who served over many years on a number of boards, and when she died, she was a member of the TT-Line board.

"In the early days of Shellfish Culture, many of the managers were young and relatively inexperienced. Jayne took a personal approach to mentoring them in their business skills. She will be sorely missed.

"People like Jayne only come along every so often," said Mr Doyle.

### CHRIS WOODWARD

Shellfish Culture was shocked by the recent death of its Company Secretary, Christine Woodward. Chris has undertaken the role for the last two years.

When she joined Shellfish Culture she had little knowledge of the oyster industry, but she very quickly became familiar with the company and industry environment.

Chris was highly respected by the Board of Shellfish Culture and carried out her role with a passion. She exuded a quiet authority and meticulously dealt with share transfers and compliance issues and the other responsibilities that fall to a Company Secretary.

"On a personal note," says Shellfish Culture's Chairman, Greg Goodman, "the Board will also miss Chris' lovely cooking and the morning teas she prepared for us."



Frank Kerruish at work at Pipeclay Lagoon

## OUR PEOPLE: Frank Kerruish

### Pipeclay Lagoon Nursery Team Leader

Frank has worked with Shellfish Culture for 17 years. "It's great to be out on the farm early in the morning. I wouldn't have been doing it all these years if I didn't enjoy it," he says.

Frank is a Hobart boy born and bred and lives close to Shellfish Culture's Pipeclay Lagoon. As Nursery Team Leader, he oversees five staff.

"I'm usually at work by 5.30am and get straight into preparing and setting up machinery and gear for the day's schedule. Our schedule can be affected by tides and wind, but we aim to bring in two boat loads a day, each up to 800 tubes; grade them, and then put them out in the water again.

Frank started his working life as a painter until a friend told him of a job coming up at Shellfish Culture. He commenced working at Pipeclay Lagoon as a nursery technician, and after 17 years, Shellfish Culture says it can be pretty confident that there's not much Frank doesn't know about nursery operations.

In the early days with limited staff numbers, employees were on a weekend roster, whether they were nursery or hatchery, which meant a lot of multi-tasking. Frank has also been trained in algae culture and preparation. For several years, Frank and his family lived on site at the SCL house. During this time Frank was on call 24/7. Call outs are now a lot less frequent than in the early days, due to remote monitoring of systems.

## Award for aquaculture excellence



The Tidy Town Awards Program, conducted by the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, has expanded from an anti-litter program to a range of activities within community development.

This year SCL's Bicheno Hatchery has received an award for "A first class enterprise which clearly values aqua-cultural excellence". Staff from the hatchery; Elise Wilson, Kate Bowie and Lochlan

De Beyer, attended an awards ceremony in Bicheno, where the Mayor of Glamorgan Spring Bay, Bertrand Cadart, presented the award (pictured).

"The prize is testament to the commitment, pride, and dedication of our four staff at Bicheno who work under Hatchery Manager Michel Bermudes," said Kerry Wells, General Manager of SCL.