



5 April 2019

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Removing a thorn in the side of Tasmania's abalone industry

The Hodgman Liberal Government is tackling the long spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus rodgersii*), which attacks our east coast reefs and threatens the commercial, recreational and indigenous fisheries that depend on them.

We have established a \$5.1 million, 5-year Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund (AIRF) by diverting a portion of royalties to support industry-led projects to tackle the pest and increase abalone stock rates.

The AIRF works closely with the abalone industry to fund programs that increase the sustainability and productivity of the abalone fishery both biologically and economically. A key element of this, is the removal of long spined sea urchins from Tasmanian waters and supporting local processors such as RTS Pauaco Pty Ltd to create a new seafood market, harvesting the urchin roe.

Last year, 188 tonnes were taken from highly valued rocky reef habitat and that record number has already been surpassed this year with an estimated 400 tonnes expected to come out of the water by the end of the 2019 season.

The AIRF committee oversees the development of strategic work programs and prioritises projects and research. To help guide this process, Expressions of Interest are now open for projects that further the objectives of the AIRF.

Examples of the areas and types of suitable projects include:

- abalone stock enhancement;
- habitat survey and long spined sea urchin barren mapping;
- management and mitigation of long spined sea urchins;
- effects of changing climate on abalone and abalone habitat;
- improved supply chain innovation for abalone or long spined urchins;
- fishery/market development including product diversification for abalone or long spined urchins;
- public outreach and education

Expressions of interest close at 5pm 6 May 2019.

For more information including application forms visit dpipwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/sustainable-fisheries-management/fisheries-management-strategies/long-spined-sea-urchin-strategy

The Tasmanian Government is also maintaining funding to the Abalone Industry Development Trust Fund with \$800,000 over 4 years to help enable the wild abalone industry to develop new market opportunities and increase the value of the catch.

These commitments are part of the Government's \$12.7 million in additional funding to help build our sustainable seafood sector and support stronger regional economies.