



18 June 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Grants open for abalone and sea urchin projects

Tasmania's abalone fishery is the world's largest abalone resource supplying over 25 per cent of total annual global production of wild caught product.

The Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund (AIRF) is a joint government and industry program designed to support and increase the sustainability and productivity of the abalone fishery, both biologically and economically.

Applications for grants under the AIRF for 2020 are now open to projects that support and increase the sustainability and productivity of the abalone fishery and also address the impacts of the long spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus rodgersii*).

The long spined sea urchin first reached Tasmania in 1978 and threatens fisheries and ecosystems along the East Coast of Tasmania.

To help address this the AIRF has previously provided support for research, education and harvesting, with a recent report by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies showing the annual catch was greater than the increase in urchin biomass.

The AIRF has also commissioned the development of a five year-response strategy to the *Centrostephanus* issue.

Key areas for further projects the AIRF may support include:

- Recovering/rebuilding abalone stocks (ecology & system processes, strategies & objectives);
- Opportunities/methodologies for abalone stock enhancement;
- Abalone chain of supply and market/product development;
- Effects of global warming on abalone and associated habitat;
- Habitat/*Centrostephanus* survey and mapping;
- Monitoring/measuring habitat and abalone recovery;
- Mitigation measures for *Centrostephanus* including physical intervention;
- Deeper water urchin management - extraction and destruction;
- Fishery development (*Centrostephanus*);
- Market development and product diversification (*Centrostephanus*);
- Public outreach and communications;
- *Centrostephanus* dispersal and movement.

Applications for project funding close on 31 July 2020 and more information can be found at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/airf