



MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Global restaurant giant supports IMAS research into seafood sustainability

The world's largest full-service restaurant company has invested US\$900,000 in research being conducted into seafood sustainability by the University of Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

Orlando, Florida-based Darden Restaurants owns and operates more than 2,000 eateries, its best known brands being the Red Lobster, Olive Garden and LongHorn Steakhouse chains.

UTAS's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Paddy Nixon, welcomed the announcement and said that the funds would help establish an experimental aquaculture facility. (The Australian Government announced on June 1 \$5 million in funding for two new UTAS research centres, one being the aquaculture facility).

"Tasmania has long been a leader in this field and this investment recognises IMAS's key role in support of the seafood industry in our region, with its core research themes of fisheries and aquaculture, marine ecology and biodiversity, and ocean and climate," he said.

"Climate change in particular is presenting many challenges for our seafood industry, especially as the Southern Ocean is warming faster than the global average.

"The challenge for researchers, and the industry, is to finding ways to adapt to these changes while at the same time meeting the demand for safe, sustainable seafood. This investment will help meet that challenge," Prof Nixon said.

The Senior Vice-President of Purchasing and Supply Chain Innovation for Darden, Bill Herzig, added: "As one of the largest seafood buyers in the world, Darden understands that global demand for seafood exceeds the available capacity of our oceans' natural resources.

“We believe that wild fisheries and aquaculture will be essential in meeting the growing demand for seafood. That’s why we’re committed to investing in leading research efforts to ensure both methods can be conducted sustainably and in ways that preserve and enhance ecosystems.

“IMAS is a leading research institution for wild harvest fisheries and aquaculture production, and we hope our investment will attract additional investment from the public and private sectors to enhance seafood sustainability efforts around the world,” Mr Herzig said.

Examples of current IMAS projects include: climate change adaptation for fisheries and aquaculture; salmon aquaculture sustainability; lobster lifecycle research; the impact of pollutants on marine ecosystems; understanding the benefits and costs of marine-protected areas; increasing the profitability of lobster fisheries; novel methods of assessing abalone stocks and addressing the threat of invasive marine pests.

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