



FRDC STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING

March 2021

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FRDC Organisational Updates

New Indigenous Statement of Intent

The FRDC has developed an Indigenous Statement of Intent in recognition of the continued tenure over and connection with their traditional lands and waters that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have had for tens of thousands of years.

The Statement is the latest step on a journey the FRDC has been taking for some time. At the 2017's Seafood Directions conference, the FRDC Managing Director Patrick Hone identified a number of goals for the Australian seafood industry. These included recognising that Indigenous culture, in which fishing has been a way of life for thousands of years, is the shared culture of all Australians and improving the participation of Indigenous people in the sector.

The Statement has recently been endorsed by the FRDC's board; it formalises the organisation's aspirations and outlines a range of activities to realise those aspirations.

A decade ago, the FRDC set up its [Indigenous Reference Group \(IRG\)](#) to help advise the FRDC in its investments in relation to Indigenous fishing and aquaculture. While the IRG will continue its advisory role, the Statement of Intent embeds these aspirations within both the internal culture of the FRDC and the research and development activities it funds across its entire portfolio. the FRDC in its investments in relation to Indigenous fishing and aquaculture. While the IRG will continue its advisory role, the Statement of Intent embeds these aspirations within both the internal culture of the FRDC and the research and development activities it funds across its entire portfolio.

As well as directly funding research activities, the FRDC will seek to act as a conduit in the space for Indigenous fishing. This includes linking with organisations seeking to do similar work, such as the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, CSIRO, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and various state governments.

The FRDC will:

- acknowledge the special relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with their traditional lands and waters;
- value the experiences, knowledge, perspectives, and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples, including in a formal sense within projects where appropriate, and protect these as we would any other intellectual property elements;
- consistently seek to demonstrate informed respect for Indigenous Australians and work with our partners to achieve the same in developing research, development and extension projects and realising their outcomes;
- incorporate Indigenous knowledge where relevant into research projects and delivery of outcomes.

FRDC's Indigenous Statement of Intent is available [here](#).

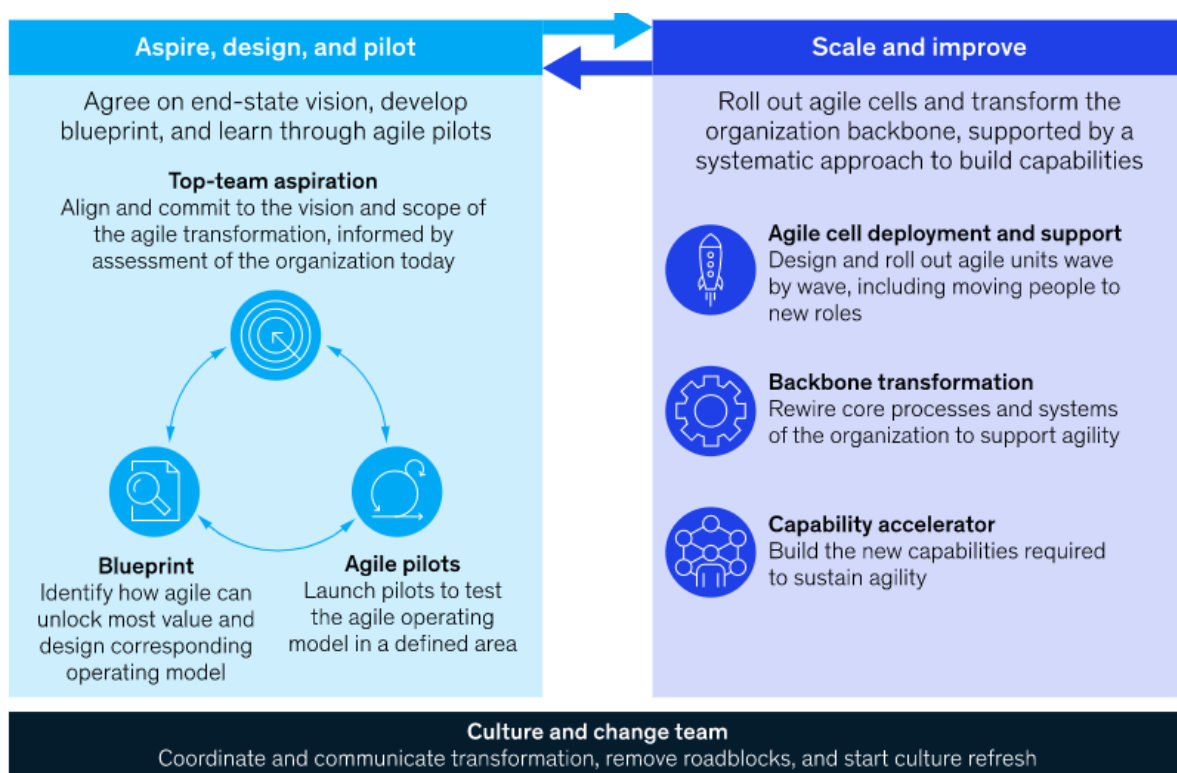
FRDC Workforce Plan 2021-23

In 2020 the FRDC partnered with Mercer Human Resources to develop the FRDC's 3 year Workforce Plan. The Workforce Plan's approach was to:

- o Align on Strategy and Future Workforce Vision
- o Define Future Workforce Resourcing Requirements
- o Develop a new Workforce Plan and Structure

Design principles were developed and used to guide the FRDC's proposed organisational structure and workforce model. In developing the design, consideration was given to the FRDC's R&D Plan 2020-25 and its key areas of strategic focus.

The design focus was to ensure support to the FRDC's value chain, and linkages between key processes and organisational structure. The FRDC has adopted an agile model for delivering multi-disciplinary and innovative activities. The new workforce model incorporates agile ways of working, which seek to combine velocity and adaptability with stability and efficiency. Self-organised cross-functional teams will help to develop system responses to emerging challenges and opportunities ([see Harvard Business Review article](#)). The agile system is illustrated in the conceptual diagram below ([from McKinsey.com](#)).



The FRDC's Workforce Plan aims to achieve the following vision:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Create a great place to work for our employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform our workforce culture and improve employee morale • Provide a sense of purpose, pride and passion for our employees • Create an inspiring and collaborative work environment that embraces innovation, growth, and agility • Support and empower employees to develop skills and capabilities for the future • Equip our leaders to champion the organisation's purpose | <p>Create more effective and innovative ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt agile work practices to address multi-disciplinary activities • Address the balance between "doing versus facilitation" • Establish a balance between strategic programmatic focus and project focus investments • Drive new strategic business alliances (non-traditional investor partners) and innovation • Restructure the Finance & Business Services area and increase finance/accounting capacity • Strengthen the Communications and Engagement area including extension • Establish an ambidextrous culture to drive innovation • Address back-up for staff including succession planning • Shift to a culture of accountability, to encourage prioritisation of actions that create the greatest outcome and benefit for FRDC |
| <p>Create greater impact and value for our stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the new R&D Plan to achieve a positive impact • Increase our focus on clients/stakeholders by putting them at the heart of what we do • Constantly manage/monitor our strategy and performance to ensure we are focusing on the right things • Adopt a more commercial focus to service delivery • Ensure high quality service delivery by all partners through proactive and consistent partner management and governance | |
| <p>Create community impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace our corporate social responsibility (CSR) and be recognised as a valued part of our community – refer to page 41 for suggestions and considerations for CSR activities | |

The FRDC review of communications

The FRDC has progressed action to review and refine its communication and associated activities, such as knowledge brokering and extension. Likely directions include building on successful FRDC publications, such as FISH magazine, a greater focus on communicating our research not only as it completes but also as it happens and a strengthening of the FRDC brand. New staff has been appointed to help with extension and adoption.

FRDC staff update

The FRDC's [R&D Plan 2020-2025](#) brings with it new focus, and new ways of operating. Over recent months the FRDC has undergone a workforce restructure to ensure close alignment of people and purpose. This has involved the formation of a dedicated business unit focussing on Strategy & Innovation. The team, comprising Matt Barwick, Jen Marshall and Toby Piddocke, will be responsible for facilitating strategy, planning, performance monitoring and innovation activities for the FRDC.

Jamie Allnutt has recently been appointed as Transformational Extension & Adoption Manager. This new role represents a significant change in the FRDC's approach to promoting adoption of R&D, and behavioural change. Many of you will be familiar with Jamie through his role delivering the National Carp Control Plan.

Joshua Fielding is currently on secondment at Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) until October 2021. The portfolios that Josh manages are being transferred to other FRDC Portfolio Managers, however should you have any queries regarding who to contact in Josh's absence, please contact frdc.programs@frdc.com.au

Peter Horvat After 17 years talking and promoting Australian seafood and more importantly the valuable research that underpins it, Peter Horvat is farewelling the FRDC. Over this time, he has made significant contributions to the organisation and how the FRDC communicates, engages and drives research to better understand the community perceptions of fishing and aquaculture. Not to mention overseeing the production of 70 editions of FISH Magazine. We wish Peter the best for the future.

Priti Narayan has come on board as the Finance Manager (Accountant). Priti is a Chartered Accountant with over 14 years of experience with private practice and Government Organisations.

Improved service provision

The Programs Team is responsible for managing the projects FRDC funds. This unit, now called the FRDC Research & Investment Team, is trialling an innovative approach for improved service provision to stakeholders, involving focussed delivery of two elements – engagement (i.e. attendance at strategic meetings, priority development) and process (i.e. milestone and variation processing). This is anticipated to remove bottlenecks in the FRDC system making the FRDC nimbler in undertaking the management and the financial administration of RD&E investments, while allowing the relative strengths of the team to be realised.

As some stakeholders may have noticed, this includes the shifting of FRDC portfolio managers among projects and activities. This will more broadly result in there not being any one designated manager to an activity as processing can be attributed to any member of the team based on capacity.

As always, please contact the FRDC Research and Investment Team (formerly Programs) Inbox - frdc.programs@frdc.com.au - for any project related submissions or queries (i.e. progress reports, variation requests, invoices and financial acquittals).

New look and approach for the Annual Operational Plan

Each financial year the FRDC produces an Annual Operational Plan (AOP) that describes research, development and extension activities proposed to be funded in the next financial year, how funded activities will give effect to the current R&D Plan, and provides an estimate of likely expenditure and income for the relevant financial year. A link to the current AOP for 2020-21 can be found [here](#).

The FRDC is evolving the function, look and feel of our AOPs, to expand their appeal and relevance to a broader range of stakeholders, provide improved 'line of sight' to the needs articulated by stakeholders across fishing and aquaculture, better describe collaborative partnerships, and make this important articulation of our annual strategy easier to understand.

We look forward to hearing feedback on our AOP for 2021-22 following its launch in the new financial year.

Update on national Research Advisory Committee position appointment process

The FRDC is in the process of re-instigating the jurisdiction-based Research Advisory Committees (RACs) to support the delivery of the 2020-2025 RD&E Plan by providing advice to the FRDC on priorities and investment needs relevant to public good and for sectors not covered under Industry Partnership Agreements. The primary roles of the RACs will be to:

- Act as the lead mechanism to identify, synthesise and aggregate priorities articulated by stakeholders
- Consider avenues for delivery of R&D outputs to end users through identification of suitable extension activities
- Assist in monitoring invested activities to aid in the delivery of outputs to end users
- Aid in identifying potential external technical reviewers of applications – this may include RAC members with suitable expertise (and where there are no conflicts of interest)

A call was put out to fill chair and member positions for the new national RACs. Overall, there was a fantastic response to the call, with approximately 200 expressions of interest for either chair &/or member positions across Australia. The various RAC selection panel and FRDC management are reviewing the applications and anticipate confirming appointments by the end of March. This will be followed by a brief online induction session prior to RAC meetings expected to be scheduled for April.

RAC Chair and member appointments to the revamped RACs will be for a period of two years. Upon which, the FRDC will seek to (re-)appoint members. Of note, the FRDC would encourage applications from graduates of leadership programs (of which many applied this round) as well as from a broad diversity of stakeholders – noting that only 20% of the applicants were female and 2% were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, there is a considerable underrepresentation of the diversity that makes up the Australian fishing and aquaculture community.

FRDC Board election year

In 2021, the current FRDC Board of Directors term ends, and a new Board will be appointed.

More details about the positions of Non-Executive Directors at FRDC can be found here

<http://www.frdc.com.au/about/frdc-directors-vacancies>

Mr John Williams reappointed

On 24 February 2021, the Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, reappointed Mr John Williams as Chairperson of the FRDC for three years to 9 March 2024.

FRDC Board meeting dates and locations

| Date | Meeting | Location |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 21-22 April 2021 | Stakeholder engagement visit | Hobart |
| 5 May 2021 | Board meeting | Teleconference |
| 16 -17 Jun 2021 | Stakeholder engagement visit | Geraldton |
| 23 Jun 2021 | Board meeting | Teleconference |
| 18 Aug 2021 | Board meeting | Canberra |
| 25 Nov 2021 | Board meeting | Canberra |

Research Insights

Seafood lessons from COVID-19.

A recent report funded by the FRDC has analysed how COVID-19 affected the seafood industry in Australia, with the aim of using this knowledge to prepare the sector for future shocks.

Conducted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), the study found that the overall impacts of COVID-19 have not been uniform, with sectors supplying domestic retail markets mostly able to prosper, while producers selling into export markets and the domestic dine-in food service sector were often brought to their knees.

IMAS University of Tasmania Research Fellow and study leader, Dr Emily Ogier, said the research focused on the short-term impacts of the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, from January to June 2020, on the Australian seafood industry and examined the impacts at a sector level, rather than at an individual business level. The report found that Government support measures assisted the seafood industry weather some of the negative impacts on profitability and business continuity.

The report provides valuable insights that will help the industry tackle future shocks. It aims to gain a broad understanding of the immediate economic impacts to the industry from the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While not comprehensively surveying all sectors within the industry, this initial study represents an important first step to futureproofing. For the FRDC, this report will provide a reference point for further impact analysis to help us identify future research needed to improve early warning systems and diagnostic capacity of our seafood industry, should future shocks or disruptions occur.”

The report [‘Impact of COVID-19 on the Australian Seafood Industry January-June 2020’](#) is a product of FRDC Project 2016-128: *Human Dimensions Research Subprogram management*.

Dr Emily Ogier presented the finding of this study at ABARES Outlook 2021 Conference on 4 March, as part of the Fisheries and aquaculture – lessons from a pandemic Session. The video of the session can be found [here](#) and Dr Ogier’s contribution starts at 16:55 minutes.

Investments into benchmarking Australia’s fishing and aquaculture community – plastics, fuel, circular economy and cross-sectoral values

At the end of 2020, the FRDC sought expressions of interest to undertake targeted projects to address national priorities identified by stakeholders during the FRDC R&D Plan development process. Four projects have been contracted and are underway – they include:

- 2020-089 Energy use and carbon emissions assessments in the Australian fishing & aquaculture sectors: Audit, self-assessment and guidance tools for footprint reduction
- 2020-088 [Quantifying inter-sectoral values within and among the Indigenous, commercial, and recreational sectors](#)
- 2020-078 Circular Economy Opportunities for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Australia (CEOFAA)
- 2020-084 [An audit of plastic use in the fishing and aquaculture sectors](#)

All of these projects include stakeholder engagement across the Australian fishing and aquaculture sectors to gain insights into energy use, plastic consumption, community aspirations etc. The FRDC is seeking your support to ensure the data collected is comprehensive and robust.

Current Senate Inquiries

Senate Inquiry – The Fisheries Quota System Finfish Aquaculture

The FRDC lodged a submission on 12 March 2021 for consideration by the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport specifically addressing:

“The fisheries quota system and examining whether the current ‘managed microeconomic system’ established around a set of individual transferable quotas results in good fishing practice”.

A total of six terms of references were addressed on economic, ecologically sustainable and social considerations of the effects of Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ). As a research and development funding organisation, the FRDC has focused its responses on the evidence-based science that informs ITQs. The Senate will report by 24 June 2021 (See [Link to Senate Inquiry home page](#) for more information).

Note: For a comprehensive list of key literature investigating ITQs (FRDC final Reports; national and international papers) see [Link](#).

Tasmanian Inquiry – Finfish Aquaculture

The FRDC provided a [submission](#) to the Tasmanian Government Legislative Council inquiry into Finfish Farming in Tasmania which was 1 of [224 submissions](#) submitted.

Senate Inquiry – Seismic

Concerns over the potential impacts of seismic testing on the marine environment prompted the Senate to call for an inquiry into the “[Impact of Seismic Testing on Fisheries and the Marine Environment](#)” in September 2019. The inquiry had particular reference to the available science into the use of seismic testing and the regulation of seismic testing in Commonwealth, State and international waters.

The [FRDC submission to the Senate’s inquiry](#) focused on the FRDC’s RD&E investment in Australia’s fisheries and aquaculture sectors as well as the Australian marine resource and their interactions with the Australian petroleum industry. [Other submissions](#) were also provided from a range of seafood industry organisations, research institutions and government bodies. The outcome from the inquiry is still pending and is expected in May 2021, and the final public hearing was held on March 18th.

Whole of Agriculture updates

Agricultural Innovation Australia’s new board

Agricultural Innovation Australia Ltd (AIA) recently appointed three directors to its inaugural board.

Joining the inaugural AIA Board are: Mr Bernie Brookes AM as Chair, Dr Anne Astin AM PSM and Ms Heather Stacy AM.

The board’s immediate priority will be the identification and appointment of AIA’s Chief Executive Officer.

The AIA is the product of Australia’s 15 Rural Research and Development Corporations (including the FRDC) joining forces to drive cross-industry research, leverage private sector investment and target transformational innovation. For the FRDC, being part of the AIA aligns with its R&D Plan outcomes and strategies, in particular of building capability and strengthening adoption.

National Agricultural Innovation Agenda Reform

The Australian Government recently announced an ambitious [national agricultural innovation agenda](#) to drive innovation across Australia’s agrisystem in support of achieving a \$100Billion target for the value of agriculture by 2030. There are five pillars to the reform:

- strengthening **ecosystem leadership**, cohesion and culture through clear strategic direction and increased collaboration
- improving the balance of **funding and investment** to deliver both incremental and transformational innovation, and growing private sector and international investment
- embedding **world-class innovation practices** through greater transparency and entrepreneurship
- **strengthening our regions** to achieve greater uptake of innovation
- creating the **next generation innovation platform** by improving the foundations of agricultural innovation, including data and regulatory settings.

As part of this reform, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment have been consulting with stakeholders across relevant industries to explore missions that could inspire change in Australian agriculture's innovation capacity and culture. Areas being considered include soil health, environment and sustainability, trade and export, climate, water, and drought, biosecurity, animal welfare, workforce and labour, and social license.

Stay tuned for more opportunities to engage with this important process to shape a future for fishing and agriculture:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/innovation/national-ag-innovation-agenda#worldclass-innovation-and-strengthened-regions>

The FRDC signed up to GrowAg

In the search to increase economic, social and environmental benefits for fishing and aquaculture, and the wider community, it is important to not lose sight of the ideas that have already been developed, but have not yet realised their true potential. Sometimes it can be as simple as connecting the person that has the solution, to another that needs it.

The FRDC has been working with other Research and Development Corporations from across the fishing and agriculture landscape to develop a digital platform to connect inventors, researchers, collaborators and developers wishing to commercialise ideas across Australia's agrisystem. The new platform, GrowAG, will be launched soon, and the FRDC is proud to be a partner in this collaborative venture. Watch this space <https://www.growag.com/>

OzAg Data Exchange

Adding an additional piece of the puzzle to drive increased benefits and value from fishing and aquaculture through increased adoption of digitisation and advanced analytics ([R&D Plan Enabling Strategy I](#)), the FRDC has also signed up as a partner in the [Australian Agrifood Data Exchange](#). The vision of the initiative is to develop an Agrifood Data exchange that is designed, owned and governed by the Agrifood industry to enable safe exchange of data and the generation of valuable insights to increase industry's ability to compete in the global market.

Global initiatives

High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy

Australia and 13 other coastal countries have come together to establish the [High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#) (Ocean Panel).

In our last Stakeholder briefing we mentioned the panel was being launched in December 2020. If you were unable to watch the event on the day, you can now access the video [here](#).

The Ocean Panel is a unique initiative by 14 world leaders who are building momentum for a sustainable ocean economy in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

Communications and Events

World Fisheries Congress 2021

The World Fisheries Congress 2021 (WFC2021) is set to take place in Adelaide from 20 to 24 September 2021.

Delegates will be invited to participate in person or online through a hybrid program, so the congress can continue to connect the global fisheries and aquaculture community to discuss the sustainable development of the world's oceans, lakes, estuaries, and rivers.

Virtual sponsorship benefits are now available.

Sponsoring or exhibiting at the WFC2021 is an opportunity to highlight your brand to the world fisheries community.

As the Congress will now take place both in person and online, this presents a unique opportunity for virtual sponsorship.

A range of virtual sponsorship benefits have been added to the Sponsorship Prospectus, to maximise exposure and engagement with congress participants before, during and after the event. This includes the option of a completely virtual sponsorship package for those who are unable to travel.

For more details, view the updated [WFC2021 Sponsorship Prospectus](#)

Business Grants now available to support attendance at the WFC2021

Australian businesses exhibiting, sponsoring or sending delegates to attend the WFC2021 are now able to apply for funding to cover up to 50% of eligible costs. Applications close 30 March 2021 or prior, if funding is exhausted. Further information is available on the [Australian Government's website](#)

Projects approved since last update in December 2020

NOTE: some projects may have not yet been contracted

| Project Number | Title | Applicant | Principal Investigator | Budget (\$) |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 2019-139 | Evaluation of nanobubble technology in aquaculture | NSW Department Of Primary Industries | Igor Pirozzi | 294869 |
| 2019-150 | Feasibility study - Assessment of the pearl oyster farming industry capacity to retrospectively investigate stock health concerns | University of Adelaide | Charles Caraguel | 148500 |
| 2019-165 | Design aspects of well-functioning ITQ markets | CSIRO Oceans and Atmosphere Hobart | Ingrid van Putten | 84000 |
| 2019-196 | Investigation of common microorganisms and pathways in pearl oysters affected by health issues | DPIRD WA | Cecile J. Dang | 675146 |
| 2019-215 | Seventh National Abalone Convention 2019 | Abalone Council of Australia | Dean M. Lisson | 25000 |
| 2020-029 | Responding to unintended consequences – evaluating changes to fisheries under ITQ systems | IMAS Tarooma | Caleb Gardner | 201212 |
| 2020-059 | Western Rock Lobster (WRL) Research, Development and Extension Program, including resources and processes to consolidate and coordinate WRL RD&E planning and funding so that overall RD&E outcomes are delivered in an efficient and cost-effective way | Western Rock Lobster Council Inc. | Matt H. Taylor | 600000 |
| 2020-062 | Minimising plastic in the western rock lobster industry (Phase 1 – scope and identify) | Western Rock Lobster Council Inc. | Matt H. Taylor | 30000 |
| 2020-078 | Circular Economy Opportunities for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Australia (CEOFAA) | University of Technology Sydney | Kate Barclay | 150000 |
| 2020-084 | An audit of plastic use in the fishing and aquaculture sectors | Equilibrium OMG Pty Ltd | Damien Wigley | 99900 |
| 2020-088 | Quantifying inter-sectoral values within and among the Indigenous, commercial and recreational sectors | Natural Capital Economics | Buyani Thomy | 91572 |
| 2020-089 | Energy use and carbon emissions assessments in the Australian fishing & aquaculture sectors: Audit, self- | Blueshift Consulting | Robert A. Bell | 98500 |

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|----------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| | assessment and guidance tools for footprint reduction | | | |
| 2020-093 | Discussion Paper on seafood traceability and labelling | Intuitive Food Solutions | Meaghan Dodd | 18000 |
| 2020-096 | National Pacific Oyster Breeding Program: Completing POMS Resistance in Spat and Transition to Selection for Traditional Commercial Traits | University of Tasmania | Andrew Trotter | 177610 |
| 2020-098 | Consumer and market data to inform Love Australian Prawns 2021-22 | Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries | Rachel King | 21138 |
| 2020-099 | Measuring consumer perceptions within Australian prawn category and wild prawn strategy formulation | Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries | Rachel King | 55920 |