

The Centre for Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Enabling the success of Aquaculture Industries



• INNOVATIVE • COLLABORATIVE • INDUSTRY RELEVANT • INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED



The laboratories at Mount Pleasant were built in 1956. The foundation stone reads:

“These laboratories were built by the Government of Tasmania for the advancement of scientific agriculture in the state.”

After 60 years, Mt Pleasant still has the same role and the Centre for Aquatic Animal Health & Vaccines is an embodiment of that aspiration.

A collaborative venture between the Tasmanian Government, Tasmanian Salmon Growers Association and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.



Introduction

The Tasmanian Government has responsibility for maintaining the island's biosecurity and disease-free status in both farmed and natural biological resources. In having the competency to respond to emergency animal disease, border control and disease management it plays an integral role in the ongoing growth of the salmonid industry.

Intensive rearing of aquatic animals in captivity has been made possible by innovations in engineering, materials science, chemistry and a broad range of biological sciences. Aquaculture production is driven by technology.

The passing of the Salt Water Salmonid Culture Act in 1985 led to the informal provision of animal health diagnostic services by the Tasmanian Government through the present Animal Health Laboratory (AHL). The laboratory also provided policy and technical advice to governments and occasionally farms.

The Act required salmon producers to undertake research into animal husbandry and as a consequence, the AHL began to undertake commissioned work.

Over time salmonid aquaculture grew, and along with it, extensive expertise in animal health diagnostic services provided by the AHL. A formalised Tasmanian Salmonid Surveillance Health Program replaced the initial arrangements and smaller scale programs were introduced for oysters and abalone. All programs were managed through the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer. A Fish Health Unit grew from the diagnostic and research services provided to the salmonid industry and as the industry expanded research evolved from a peripheral activity to a key work area.

These cooperative efforts spanning over thirty years, laid the foundation for a unique partnership between government and the salmonid industry in the management of animal health. Industry partners now want to significantly expand research activities and this has led to the establishment of The Centre for Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines (The Centre). The Centre is a tri-partite arrangement between the State Government of Tasmania,

represented by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment (DPIPWE), the Tasmanian Salmonid Growers' Association (TSGA), representing the Huon Aquaculture Company (HUON), the Tassal Group and Petuna Aquaculture, and the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC), a statutory body of the Commonwealth Government.

The Centre is based at DPIPWE's Mt Pleasant Laboratories, Launceston. Its purpose is to provide diagnostic and research services to Tasmanian aquaculture industries, particularly the salmonid industry.

The initial phase for The Centre is being realised through significant investment by the three partners in laboratory and fish holding infrastructure to enable expanded diagnostic and research activities. The second phase will be the acceptance of a five year funded research program.

This strategic plan will guide the development of The Centre and its activities over the next five years.

Vision

NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED

Around the world we are known for the success of the Government-Industry partnership
and the integration of aquatic animal health diagnosis and research

DELIVERING INNOVATIVE, COMMERCIALY DIRECTED RESEARCH

Our research programs are guided by industry needs

ENABLING THE SUCCESS OF AQUACULTURE INDUSTRIES

Our diagnostic and research programs protects biosecurity, aquatic animal health
and underpins industry growth

Values

Values guide future choices and shape organisational culture:

In all that we do we will be:

- **Objective and scientifically robust**
- **Innovative and adaptable**
- **Business like**
- **Responsive to the goals of Government and Industry stakeholders**
- **Collaborative**

Mission and Work Priorities

To achieve the vision The Centre for Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines will have a pivotal role in **promoting aquatic animal health and managing disease risk with a focus on Tasmania's aquaculture industries**

We are involved from 'hatch to harvest' in:

- Aquatic animal surveillance
- Health testing and disease diagnosis
- Research and development to meet government and industry needs
- Communication and dialogue on work outcomes



Future directions

To achieve the vision we will concentrate on three future directions:

- 1. Aquatic animal health - diagnosis and research**
- 2. Resourced to succeed**
- 3. Government and industry partnership**

Direction 1: Aquatic Animal Health - Diagnosis and Research

Background

The health of farmed aquatic animals is recognised by all stakeholders as a shared responsibility critical to sustainable, economically viable production.

Farms are responsible for stock husbandry and on-farm biosecurity measures. The Government is responsible for ensuring farms operate in a biosecure environment with control measures and systems to prevent the spread of disease. Also, Government maintains and operates laboratory diagnostic services used for disease detection, monitoring and surveillance.

While Government does not necessarily have a responsibility to provide research services, DPIPWE has done so over many years; the main reason being that the focus has been on the development of improved diagnostic procedures for disease conditions and fish vaccines. This research has benefited the salmonid industry and Government and the model underpins an evolving partnership. The industry has articulated its research needs and provided direct funding. As research provider, Government has taken the view that it should deliver industrially focused research that makes a quantifiable economic difference.

The Centre integrates the work of the Fish Health Diagnostic Group and the Fish Health Research and Vaccines Group. It involves four areas of endeavour:

- Health testing and disease diagnosis
- Disease surveillance
- Research into the development of vaccines for bacterial and viral infections
- Responsive fish diagnostic capabilities

Research in the past has had a peripheral status but will now be a key area of activity for the Centre. Recent investment in laboratory refurbishment and the biosecure live fish holding facility has increased the core capability of The Centre.

Strategic Outcomes

- 1.1 Diagnostic services that respond readily to Government and Industry stakeholder needs
- 1.2 An Industry agreed research program
- 1.3 Safe and effective vaccines
- 1.4 Independent advice to stakeholders



Direction 2: Resourced to Succeed

Background

Organisational success requires continued investment in physical infrastructure including biosecure laboratories, fish holding systems and waste treatment facilities.

Staffing levels need to be adequate for the programs and projects being undertaken. Additionally, staff must be qualified, skilled and motivated to achieve The Centre's directions and objectives.

Compliance with biosecurity standards and an accredited laboratory environment is essential for scientific credibility and industry security.

The work of The Centre needs to be supported by continual improvements in scientific technologies, quality control systems and risk management.

Strategic outcomes

- 2.1 Ongoing compliance with biosecurity standards
- 2.2 Qualified, skilled and motivated staff
- 2.3 'Fit for Purpose' physical infrastructure
- 2.4 Contemporary technologies
- 2.5 Effective systems and procedures
- 2.6 Maximised return on investment

Direction 3: Government and Industry Partnership

Background

The partners in The Centre share a vision but each has a different motivational driver.

The Government is responsible for border protection and the maintenance of biosecurity for primary industries. It is also committed to supporting the salmonid industry.

DPIPWE is directly responsible for the operation, management and budget of The Centre's diagnostic group. The Centre's research group has a specific industry focus and its strategic activities are guided by a steering committee with representatives from DPIPWE, TSGA, HUON, Tassal, Petuna, FRDC and CSIRO.

The Salmonid Industry seeks to operate sustainably in an environmentally responsible manner and to grow over the coming 15 years.

The Fisheries Research & Development Corporation has a responsibility to support aquaculture industries as well as having a long-term national strategic view to ensure that key infrastructure and competencies are maintained for the benefit of aquaculture and fisheries industries.

There is a five-year plan underpinned by agreed funding and business development. There is an operational plan to deliver the strategic plan.

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Productive partnerships and working relationships
- 3.2 Respected reputation for the Partnership and The Centre
- 3.3 Sustainable business model



The difference The Centre makes

From 'hatch to harvest' our work contributes to the biosecurity and economic wellbeing of our Island and enables the Tasmanian aquaculture industry to achieve production targets and ensure trade and market credibility.

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