

ABALONE RESEARCH FUNDING AND PROJECTS

The TACL Is the industry body.

The industry is constituted of quota unit holders, dive licence (FLAD) holders and/or divers, and processors.

The TACL represents the interests of entities and individuals holding 3025 quota units (out of a total of 3460 units), 67 of the 88 FLAD owners and 74 of the 97 divers.

Each quota is allocated an amount of fish each year, according to a formula which sets a Total Allowable Catch (TAC), and divers catch fish to that quota.

Each quota holder pays an annual “access fee” (approx. \$100 per unit) and a royalty of 7% on the beach price of all fish caught on the quota. The beach price ranges from around \$30 to \$70 per kilogram

FLAD owners pay an annual licence fee of approx. \$200.

The annual catch is presently somewhat shy of 800 tonnes, from a previous high of over 2600 tonnes – so a present royalty return to the State of over \$3m per annum. The TACL receives funds from a levy imposed on all participants in the fishery, but not all participants are members.

Funds for R and D

Two funds have been set up in recent times to foster research and development within the industry, the AIDF and the AIRF. Both funds have reached end-of-term under the current arrangements, with the AIRF being extended in the current budget for a further 2 years.

Research is rarely an on-off affair, research findings are not always rapidly resolved, nor is the development of new approaches and new fishery management techniques a simple exercise to accomplish. We need to take a long-term view.

We need to ensure that the decisions we make regarding the annual catch are made with full, clear and complete scientific backing. We need to ensure the continuation of a state-based program for Centro research and control, for biotoxin research and diver compliance and safety. (NB Centro refers to *Centrostephanus rodgersii*, an invasive sea urchin which wreaks havoc on abalone habitat).

A failure in any of these areas could spell the collapse and the closure of the fishery, with ramifications for all State fisheries.

The State has entered into a partnership arrangement with IMAS, enabling IMAS to be the government’s principal research agent.