

Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Shucking for the Macleay River

On the picturesque banks of the Macleay River, local oyster farmers today launched a ground-breaking document cataloguing their environmental stewardship responsibilities and future aspirations.

With the assistance of OceanWatch Australia, local oyster farmers have joined forces to prepare an Environmental Management System (EMS), designed to protect water quality in the Macleay River. Farmers have not only identified improvements that can be made by the oyster industry, but have also pooled their extensive knowledge of the region to highlight risks to water quality that may arise from the surrounding catchment.

Those attending the launch event were treated to a fabulous day tasting oysters, and experienced a day in the life of an oyster farmer. Representatives from Local and State Government agencies were in attendance, as well as various organisations with interests in natural resource management.

Whilst farmers used this opportunity to discuss some of the risks that arise from floodplain modification and from agricultural practices, the industry was quick to recognise that it has a responsibility to cultivate oysters as sustainably as it can.

Local oyster farmer, Todd Graham, said *“oyster farmers are committed to providing consumers with high quality oysters grown using environmentally sustainable methods.*

The oyster industry is continually improving, and the EMS provides us with a plan to not only improve the performance of the industry, but also the water quality in the river. This will not only benefit oyster farmers, but is a real win for the environment and the local community.”

To help implement their EMS, oyster farmers have been assisted with incentive funding from the Australia Governments Community Landcare Grants. Old oyster infrastructure based on tarred and treated timber is being removed from the estuary, and replaced with long-lasting, environmentally friendly materials.

Funding for EMS development was provided through the Australian Government and North Coast Local Land Services.

Ends

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Photo: Stars of the future. Juvenile oysters being grown on hard-plastic trays.