

Project Launch: Shucking for the Environment



Oyster leases in the Hawkesbury River.

On the picturesque banks of the Hawkesbury River, the Broken Bay Oyster Association launched on 14 June 2011 a ground-breaking document cataloguing their environmental stewardship responsibilities and future aspirations. Being stewards of the estuary, NSW oyster farmers are taking it upon themselves to clean up the waterways, starting in their own backyards, and extending to the very top of the catchments. Oyster farming relies on good water quality, and therefore it is in the oyster farmers' interest to ensure that the catchment and waterways are healthy.



**Sucking an oyster (from left to right):
Rob Moxham (Broken Bay Oyster Association),
Dr Mike Kelly (Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry),
Brad Warren (Executive Chairman of OceanWatch Australia).**

With over a hundred people travelling to the river to attend the event, top Sydney chefs, industry, local community, Ministers from the past, and local councillors were treated to a fabulous day tasting oysters, and experiencing a day in the life of an oyster farmer. The day celebrated the launch of both the Broken Bay Oyster Environmental Management System, and also a state-wide project being driven by OceanWatch Australia and NSW Farmers Association (Oyster Committee). Dr Mike Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, was the guest of honour shucking an oyster to symbolise the launch of the project.



John Stubbs, president of the Broken Bay Oyster Association, leads an Oyster Lease Tour in the Hawkesbury River.

Working with the NSW oyster industry, OceanWatch Australia will develop Environmental Management Systems to address water-quality issues in NSW estuaries. Environmental Management Systems (EMS) are a process designed to identify and manage environmental impacts, risks and opportunities. What this means for seafood lovers are oysters that are produced in an environmentally and socially responsible way.

“In the Hawkesbury, this is a culmination of 10 years work” said Mr Brad Warren, Executive Chairman of OceanWatch Australia. *“The on ground actions of the Broken Bay Oysters Association over that time show the value of the EMS, not only to industry, but also to the local community.”*

OceanWatch Australia expects to replicate this success with over a hundred more oyster farmers in NSW.

This project is supported by OceanWatch Australia and NSW Farmers Association, through funding from the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country.

OceanWatch Australia is a national not-for-profit environmental organisation working to advance sustainability in the Australian seafood industry. OceanWatch key activities involve enhancing fish habitats and improving water quality in estuaries and coastal environments, working with industry and local communities to minimise environmental impacts and introducing industry and communities to sustainable technologies and behaviours.