

I am writing on behalf of Select Oyster Company (SOCo) to express our support for the Commercial Shellfish Aquaculture Leases in Jervis Bay. SOCo is a not for profit wholly owned subsidiary of NSW Farmers Association, that manages the selective breeding program and distribution of selectively bred Sydney rock oysters. Incorporated in 2004 it aims to improve the commercialization of the research phase of the selective breeding program managed by the NSW DPI. The Board consists of a group of 6 professionals, each with a strong background in the Sydney rock oyster industry, including oyster farmers, business managers, environmental scientists and research professionals. Following recommendations from a review of Australia's oyster breeding program, SOCo recently recruited an Operations Manager tasked with improving hatchery operations and stock distribution. This appointment provides a wonderful opportunity to develop commercialization efforts of the breeding program for industry.

The NSW Government recognises the 'need to look at opportunities for sustainable seafood production', and SOCo believes that the development of aquaculture in Jervis Bay would be an important contribution to a sustainable shellfish industry in NSW. Leases will be used to farm species native to Jervis Bay, including blue mussels, scallops and Sydney rock oysters. Bivalves are filter feeders, and important components of the ecosystem as they clean large volumes of water during feeding ¹. As such, the sustainable farming of these native animals in Jervis Bay is likely to have positive effects on the water quality.

While Jervis Bay has a natural population of Sydney rock oysters to produce seed, research shows that spat supply will need to be sourced from hatcheries to meet production potential of up to 2000 tonnes². As SOCo deals with native Sydney rock oysters, it can offer its services to growers in Jervis Bay, thereby perpetuate the commercial supply of hatchery produced Sydney rock oyster seed for farmers.

The risk of spread of invasive species and diseases associated with commercial shellfish aquaculture in Jervis Bay has been assessed, and is recognized as a low risk². Through the selective breeding program undertaken by NSW DPI, there are lines of Sydney rock oysters that are resistant to QX disease and Winter Mortality disease. SOCo manages the dispatch of these selected lines, as such in the unlikely event of disease outbreak in Jervis Bay; there are alternative stocking options for growers. Furthermore, a 'reliable' ²breeding program that eliminates the transfer of diseases and invasive species from other estuaries by stocking in disease free estuaries, such as the DPI selective breeding program is

¹ Coen, et al. 2007. Ecosystem services related to oyster restoration. *Mar Ecol Prog Ser* 341: 303-307

² Joyce, et al. 2010. Environmental and Socio-Economic Considerations for Aquaculture in Jervis Bay, NSW. FRDC. Project No. 2009/328.11. University of Wollongong.

² Joyce et al. 2010.

recognized as a way to significantly benefit the industry and expand sustainable production technologies.³

³ O'Connor and Dove 2009. The changing face of oyster culture in New South Wales, Australia. *J Shellfish Res* 28 (4): 803-811.