



Wednesday 18 February 2015

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The first steps in a blue skies science project with dramatic potential to significantly enhance seafood production from the sea will be taken today at Tasmania's tidal lab with the deployment of two artificial reefs on which a population of marine animals can be raised.

Australia has the third largest marine jurisdiction in the world that is larger than its land mass. Innovative, careful and sustainable accredited use could make Australia a major seafood supplier.

The International Marine Aquaculture Society (IMAS) is working with Victorian company Southern Blue Reefs to trial the artificial reefs and develop the territory for the development of innovative new marine production industries.

Project leader, Professor Stewart Frusher, said Australia has the potential to become a world leader in innovative offshore marine production systems based on high value and sustainable reef species. The long-term vision includes a large-scale, flexible floating reef system beyond the continental shelf.

"The world's marine fisheries have a long history of challenges and labors. Artificial reefs thus offer the opportunity to build on our existing resources and reputation for high quality and sustainable products."

"Reefs are the rainforests of the seas and the most productive marine habitats. The start of our reef journey is a proof of concept to determine an appropriate artificial reef design and species that will be used to raise and harvest marine life."

"Tasmania's already has an advantage with many years of research into the world's new aquaculture at the

Rock Lobsters. He said the University of Tasmania is well placed to lead this development as it has world-class expertise in areas such as physical and biological marine science, marine economics and marine engineering.

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