

Utas Science



A \$10-million, government-funded aquaculture facility at the University of Tasmania is currently under way. The facility, which is being managed by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), was arranged this morning.

The new experimental research facility is being built for collaborative aquaculture research, particularly with the Atlantic salmon industry. Tasmania is home to one of the largest aquaculture industries in Australia and largest seafood producer in Tasmania.

Tasmania provides an ideal location for research on salmon farming due to change often occurring here first. The facility will be attractive to students and researchers from the Northern Hemisphere and Chile where salmon are farmed.

Funded by the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments, the Australian Seafood Group and Skretting Australia, it will be unique in the Southern Hemisphere.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the facility was an example of what was possible when impactful research and innovation was supported in partnership with industry and Government.

"Today is an opportunity to recognise and thank our industry backers, along with both governments, for a project which underpins a critical and emerging economic sector for the State," Professor Rathjen said. "The aquaculture industry through IMAS is both a high and low economic multiplier of how innovations are driving industry growth and economic revitalisation for Tasmania."

The Hon. Ian D. Fisher, Minister for Fisheries, said Professor Chris Carter, said that once constructed, Tarooma would be the largest aquaculture facility in the Southern Hemisphere for large production sized finfish. The facility would use cutting-edge recirculation technology and provide environment control to conduct high-level science.

"The broader benefit is to teaching from our Tarooma and Launceston campuses which is a significant part of our research and innovation strategy," he said.

He said the Fisheries and Aquaculture Centre at IMAS has since then in carrying out animal health and nutrition research. Upwards of 100 students have been awarded PhDs in these fields. Many more have done Honours and the University presently has a range of aquaculture courses.

The main focus of research will be health and nutrition.

Professor Carter said: "The partnership between industry to address local needs and major global climate change effects, seafood quality, replacement of marine ingredients, and amoebic gill disease."

Work on the facility is expected to be completed by June. A 10-year agreement is in place between the University of Tasmania and industry for salmon and oyster research.