

Media briefs

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IMAS hosts International Temperate Reefs Symposium this week

Marine scientists and students from around the world will gather at the University of Tasmania in Hobart from 8–12 January for the International Temperate Reefs Symposium (ITRS) hosted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

ITRS is the premier conference for marine scientists whose research focuses on cooler (temperate) reefs – from estuaries, coastlines and kelp beds to deep-sea reef ecosystems.

IMAS ecologist and conference convenor, Professor Craig Johnson, said over 260 scientists and students from 19 countries will be attending the conference.

“The symposium covers natural rocky reefs, man-made structures, and biogenic surfaces which are hard structures created by marine organisms,” Prof Johnson said.

“While ecology is the key focus, we’ll also be exploring human links with temperate reefs, and how we might future-proof reef ecosystems in the face of a changing climate.

“Human impacts and global ecological change in the distribution and abundance of species is one of the symposium’s key themes,” he said.

Grand challenges and glimmers of hope for our changing temperate reefs

Improving management responses to the impacts of climate change on temperate marine reefs is a challenge, but there is hope, according to University of Victoria (Canada) researcher Professor Amanda Bates.

“Climate change related threats to biodiversity are increasing, but our research shows that conservation efforts are more likely to succeed where human population density is lower, and will have better outcomes when plans are built on the knowledge of resilience in reef communities,” said Prof Bates, whose research spans marine community ecology and physiology.

“The success of conservation plans developed in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and communities is inspiring, and gives us hope for oceans with a healthier future.”

Professor Bates holds the Impact Chair in Ocean Ecosystem Change and Conservation at the University of Victoria, and is a Pew Marine Fellow, and will give the Symposium’s opening

Toolbox for our times: investigating marine species and ecosystem responses to environmental stress