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available in real time, via satellite communications, for scientists, regulators and marine farm

m anagers.

D r Ro ss said the information is critical to an underst anding o f changes in the harbour e co lo gy and

the e ffect iveness o f rem ediation strategies and aquaculture pen fallo wing.

“ Oxygen levels are a m ajo r determ inant o f the respo nse of the e nv iro nm ent at the bottom of the

harbour (the benthic zone) to fish farm waste, so it’s important that we’re able to combine real-time

dissolved oxygen data with benthic observatio ns,” Dr Ross said.

“In late 2016 IMAS reported a major deterioration in sediment conditions around salmon farms in

the harbo ur, which coincided with v ery low oxy gen levels.

“ As a result, a whole salmon lease and a number o f pens were subject to m andatory fallowing, and

go v ernment and industry supported this further rese arch by IMAS to allow a better understanding of

the factors affecting oxygen lev els and the likely success o f current and future managem ent

responses.”

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