

Reaching Out

LLCI032-009

Shoalhaven River Roundtable

OceanWatch Australia



A multi-agency & stakeholder meeting

The issue

There are around 12 oyster farmers that operate on the Shoalhaven River estuary. Their capacity to produce healthy oysters, and in turn run profitable businesses, is closely related to the health of the waterway. Healthy Estuaries = Healthy Oysters. Oyster farmers have long recognised that activities in the catchment can impact on downstream productivity, and the actions of landholders and land-managers are largely beyond the control of the seafood industry. There are many agencies involved in managing land & water, and precious few opportunities for the oyster industry to voice concerns, influence priorities and direct action.

The solution

With the support of local oyster farmers, OceanWatch has organised regular roundtable meetings in the Shoalhaven for the last 4-5 years. Meetings are organised approximately every 6 months, and initially provided an opportunity for oyster farmers to meet with local council (Shoalhaven City Council) & the water board (Shoalhaven Water), to discuss developments, planning and sewerage concerns. The scope of these meetings has expanded recently to include South East Local Land Services, and NSW DPI (Aquatic Ecosystems Unit). The Local Landcare Coordinator has taken over organisation of these meetings in recent years. This involves organising dates & venues, inviting organisations, setting the agenda in partnership with the local oyster industry and writing up minutes.

The impact

The roundtables provide an ideal opportunity to discuss issues and solutions with stakeholders, for the common good of the Shoalhaven River estuary. To also builds relationships between agencies and the oyster industry, so that high impact, time-sensitive scenarios such as sewerage spills can be tackled efficiently and with open communication. The agenda for the roundtable meeting is typically organised a week or two beforehand at a closed meeting between the Local Landcare Coordinator and the oyster industry. This allows farmers to discuss issues internally, and have frank discussion about the best way to approach government agencies.



Key facts

- Regular Shoalhaven roundtable meetings provide a great forum for the local oyster industry to discuss issues & solutions with government agencies such as the Shoalhaven City Council, Shoalhaven Water, South East LLS & NSW DPI.
- The meetings build relationships between stakeholders with an interest in the health of the Shoalhaven River estuary.

Project Partners



The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative Program that enables the promotion of these case studies on the Gateway, is funded by the NSW Government and is supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW



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