

Wednesday, 18 March 2009

EXPANDED MARINE SCIENCE CENTRE OPENED

Deputy Premier Kevin Foley today officially opened stage two of one of Australia's premier marine research and teaching organisations - the Lincoln Marine Science Centre (LMSC) at Port Lincoln.

The \$6.59 million development nearly doubles the size of the Centre, with the expanded building and laboratories housing around 35 scientists and educational staff as well as catering for increased student numbers.

The South Australian Government contributed almost \$4.5 to the redevelopment and with funding provided through the Federal Government, Flinders University has contributed over \$2m.

Mr Foley says the expansion will enhance the Centre's standing as a global hub for marine research in the southern temperate zone and attract scientists from around the world.

"This project is a great example of science and education underpinning our communities and industries, through innovation and collaboration," he says.

"The State Government's goal to double the State's seafood production to \$2 billion annually by 2015 has been underpinned by the establishment, three and a half years ago, of the Marine Innovation South Australia (MISA) initiative and, as part of this, the Lincoln Marine Science Centre has undergone significant development.

"MISA supports the many new opportunities the expanded centre affords through knowledge and innovation, integrating and expanding South Australia's marine research capabilities, and education and technology transfer."

Flinders Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) and Deputy Chair of the MISA Steering Committee, Professor Chris Marlin, said South Australia is already leading Australia and the world, inventing the technology and research imperatives as the country's emerging aquaculture industry grows.

"The Lincoln Marine Science Centre is at the forefront for abalone, southern bluefin tuna and black mussel research and our wild fisheries research is widely recognised for its ground breaking ecosystem-based fisheries management research," Professor Marlin says.

MISA, a partnership between the South Australian Government, Flinders University, the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), the University of Adelaide, the South Australian Museum and SA seafood industries, was formed in September, 2005.

It has successfully brought together South Australia's leading experts in marine science and seafood production, integrating research and development agencies, educational institutions, industry and government.

MISA supports four high priority research areas: seafood product quality and value-adding, aquaculture innovation, ecosystem services and bio-security. Scientists now based at the LMSC enjoy the advantage of direct access to industry partners and work closely with them to meet industry needs.

Over the past four years, an annual State Government \$2.4 million capability fund has supported the employment of 34 scientists working collaboratively with SARDI Aquatic Sciences, Flinders University, the University of Adelaide, the SA Museum and the Department for Environment and Heritage on nearly 80 projects.

This additional expertise covering areas such as seafood technology and processing, bio-security, oceanography, biological modelling, wildlife ecology, and aquaculture nutrition and genetics has helped generate approximately \$25 million worth of projects.

The Lincoln Marine Science Centre has generated widespread support within the fishing and aquaculture industries and the regional community on Eyre Peninsula.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) Industry Association Mr Brian Jeffries, says the expanded LMSC provides “not only the infrastructure for further progress – it is the proof that industry and researchers are committed to the same goal – growing a sustainable SA seafood industry to contribute to the community”.

“Together Flinders, SARDI and the other tertiary and training institutions will provide the critical mass of expertise which can underpin the States place at the forefront of temperate zone seafood research and production in the Southern Hemisphere,” Mr Jeffries says.