

NSW OYSTER CONFERENCE

26th - 28th May, 2026 - Merimbula, NSW



2026 NSW OYSTER CONFERENCE

Welcome to Merimbula, and to the 2026 NSW Oyster Conference.

Held every two years, the conference offers a valuable chance to connect with farmers, government representatives, suppliers and other stakeholders, while learning about the latest industry research and development.

We hope you enjoy the event, find the sessions useful, and build relationships that support a productive, profitable and sustainable future.

Conference Outline (more details provided later in this program)

Tuesday 26th May

From 10:30	Registration opens. Please arrive in plenty of time to register your attendance, pick up your name tag, program and conference bag.	
12:30 - 17:00	Conference Sessions	Club Sapphire
17:15 - 21:00	Trade & Information Evening	Club Sapphire

Wednesday 27th May

From 07:30	Field trips	Various
12:45 - 17:00	Conference Sessions	Club Sapphire
18:30 - 21:30	Shed Social Event	Wheelers

Thursday 28th May

07:00 - 08:30	WISA Industry Breakfast	Club Sapphire
09:00 - 13:00	Conference Sessions	Club Sapphire
14:00 - 16:00	Workshops / Hot Topic Discussions	Club Sapphire
19:00 - 00:00	Conference Gala Dinner	Oaklands Event Centre

If you have any questions during the conference, please contact either Andy Myers (0488 656 366) or Simon Rowe (0434 351 977).

BUNDIAN WAY STORY TRAIL

Follow the ancient
1.8km Bundian Way
Story Trail for
sweeping coastal
views and stories of
the people who've
travelled this route for
millennia

Message from Strategic Sponsor

Destination NSW spearheads a whole-of-government approach to visitor economy growth, working with various departments and agencies to market NSW as a destination, to secure and deliver major events, invest in visitor economy infrastructure and support the diverse ecosystem of visitor economy businesses that operate throughout the state.



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Oyster Industry Awards Sponsor



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Silver Sponsor



Bronze Sponsors



Conference Bag Sponsor



We extend our sincere thanks to all sponsors and supporters who have so generously contributed their time and financial support. Their commitment makes this conference possible and significantly subsidises registration costs.

We strongly encourage delegates to engage with the sponsors and exhibitors and help make their investment worthwhile.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS - TUES 26TH MAY



The registration desk will be open from 10:30. Please provide your entries for the Most Beautiful Unopened Oyster Competition, and the Best Dressed Oyster Competition. Please note that lunch is not provided on Tuesday, however food is available to purchase from the club. All conference sessions will take place in the auditorium in Club Sapphire. All breaks and the trade show will take place in Kitty's Bar in Club Sapphire.

SESSION ONE		Chair - Simon Rowe
12:30 - 12:35	Opening comments from Session Chair	
12:35 - 12:45	Welcome to Country	Aunty Glenda Dixon Diringanj Elder
12:45 - 12:50	Welcome from a local grower	Sue McIntyre Broadwater Oysters
12:50 - 13:00	Official Opening Address: David McPherson. Executive Director Resource Management, DPIRD	David McPherson NSW DPIRD
13:00 - 13:25	State of the industry: Achievements, challenges, and the work of NSW Farmers	Rhiannon Heath NSW Farmers
13:25 - 13:50	Industry highlights and an update on the NSW Aquaculture Vision Statement and Roadmap	Ian Lyall & Emma Wilkie - NSW DPIRD
13:50 - 14:10	Global trends in oyster farming & new tech on the horizon	Ewan Mcash Oceanfarmr
14:10 - 14:15	Gold sponsors address	Paul McIlvride BST Oyster Supplies
14:15 - 15:00	AFTERNOON TEA	
SESSION TWO		Chair - Gabrielle Cowley
15:00 - 15:05	Opening comments from Session Chair	
15:05 - 15:25	Breeding for general resilience and the future of the SRO breeding program	Laura Parker NSW DPIRD
15:25 - 15:45	Inside the hatchery - from broodstock selection to the perfect spat	Chris Gillies SeaGen Aquaculture
15:45 - 16:05	Survive or Die! - How big data can improve the odds	Ken Rowe Blue Farm Intelligence
16:05 - 16:20	The Future of Your Industry: Oysters Australia	Patrick Hutchinson Oysters Australia
16:20 - 16:35	My experience with oyster agritourism	Brett Weingarth Captain Sponge's Magical Oyster Tours
16:35 - 16:55	Crafting oyster experiences for visitors	Adriana Biuk Destination NSW
16:55 - 17:00	Field trip information for Wednesday morning	Andy Myers

TRADE & EXHIBITION EVENING - TUES 26TH MAY

Sponsored by ...



Destination
NSW



The Trade Show Opening Night is sponsored by Destination NSW. The event commences at 5:15pm in Kitty's Bay at Club Sapphire, with canapes being served from 6:30pm. The cost of canapes has been covered in your registration, however if you want drinks, or something more substantial to eat, you will need to purchase this yourself.

With ~30 trade & information tables, the evening event provides a dedicated time to meet with those that support the industry. Share a beer, catch up with old friends and meet new people. Exhibitors include:



Destination
NSW



oceanfarmr



Food
Authority



FIELD TRIPS - WED 27TH MAY



Field trip	Meeting time	Meeting location	Return time	Notes
1. Guided walk at Panboola Wetlands	09:05, bus leaves 09:15 sharp	Merimbula Coach Stop (by carpark on Park St)	11:10, back by 11:30	Please be punctual for the bus. It will leave without you. Wear closed shoes and dress appropriately.
2. Bega Valley Circularity Tour	07:50, bus leaves 08:00 sharp	Merimbula Coach Stop (by carpark on Park St)	11:00, back by 11:30	Please be punctual for the bus. It will leave without you. Wear closed shoes and dress appropriately.
3. Wapengo Lake farm tour	07:20, bus leaves 07:30 sharp	Merimbula Coach Stop (by carpark on Park St)	10:30, back by 11:30	Please be punctual for the bus. It will leave without you. Remember to take your lifejacket, wear closed shoes and dress appropriately. Please follow all instructions provided by your tour guide.
4. Merimbula Lake farm tour with Wheelers Oysters	08:30	Merimbula Boat Ramp , Arthur Kaine Drive	10:30	There is plenty of parking available near the boat ramp, and this is walkable from the town centre. Remember to take your lifejacket, wear closed shoes and dress appropriately. Please follow all instructions provided by your tour guide.
5. Pambula Lake farm tour with Broadwater Oysters	09:05, bus leaves 09:15 sharp	Merimbula Coach Stop (by carpark on Park St)	11:00, back by 11:30	Please be punctual for the bus. It will leave without you. There is also parking available at Pambula boat ramp. Remember to take your lifejacket, wear closed shoes and dress appropriately. Please follow all instructions provided by your tour guide.
6. Merimbula Lake & farm tour with AOC & MGO	08:35, bus leaves 08:45 sharp	Merimbula Coach Stop (by carpark on Park St)	11:15, back by 11:30	Please be punctual for the bus. It will leave without you. Remember to wear closed shoes and dress appropriately. Please follow all instructions provided by your tour guide.
7. Pambula Kayak Tour	07:20, bus leaves 7:30am sharp	Merimbula Coach Stop (by carpark on Park St)	11:15, back by 11:30	Please be punctual for the bus. It will leave without you.

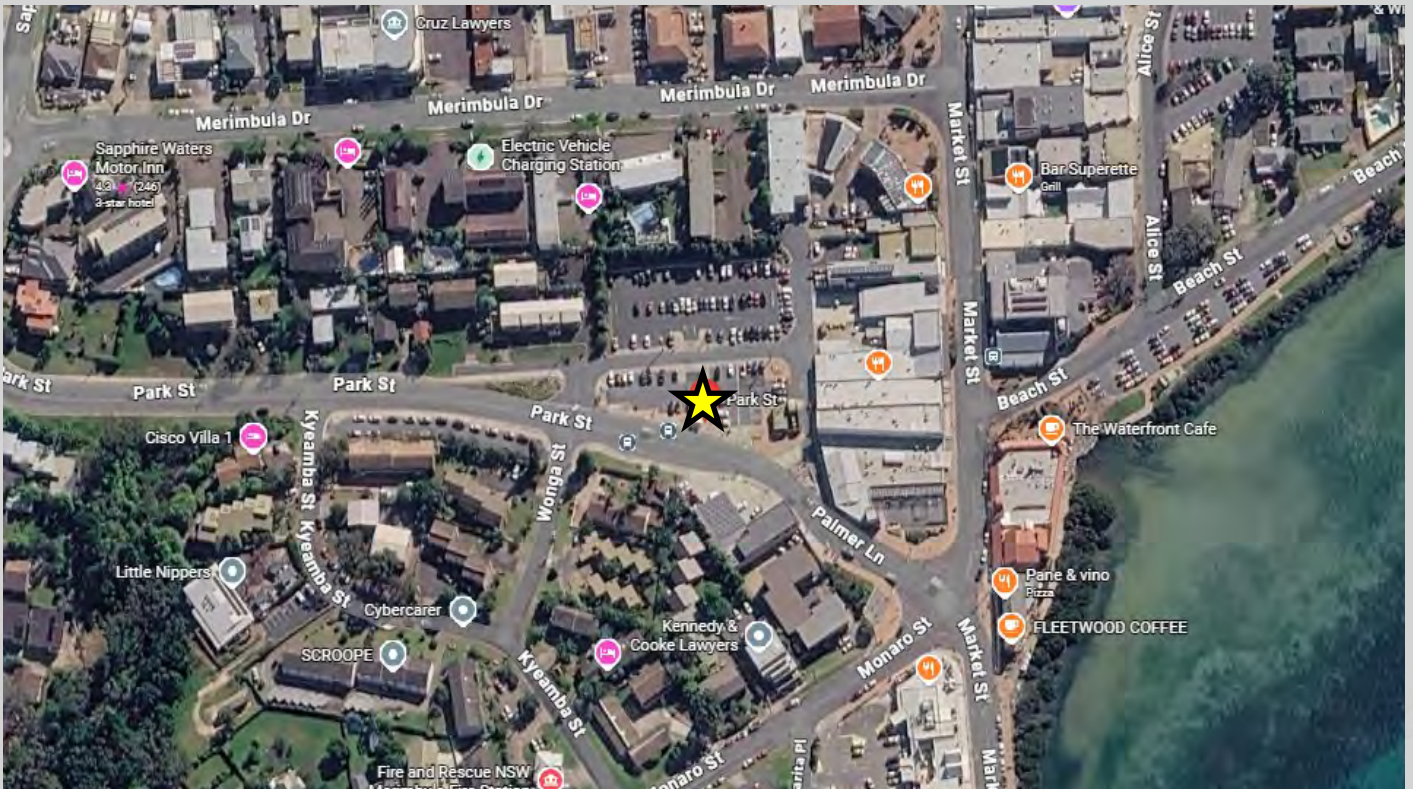
If you are unsure which field trip you are booked on, please visit the registration desk on Tuesday. Please do not change field trips without speaking to Andy Myers - numbers are limited based on vessel capacities.

A big thanks to all farmers who have offered their time and vessels to make these trips possible.

FIELD TRIPS - WED 27TH MAY



Location of Merimbula Coach Stop. On the car-park side of Park Street.



Field trip #4: Location of Merimbula Boat Ramp for Wheelers farm tour. Just south of the bridge.



CONFERENCE SESSIONS - WED 27TH MAY



SESSION THREE		Chair - Carl Bevilacqua
12:30 - 12:35	Opening comments from Session Chair	
12:35 - 12:40	Gold sponsors address	Cameron Hall Tasmanian Oyster Company (TOC)
12:40 - 13:00	OysterMetrics: Using an AI tool to rapidly measure biometrics	Ian Duthie
13:00 - 13:20	The NSW Shellfish Program, and Harvest & Hold	Anthony Zammit NSW Food Authority
13:20 - 13:40	The South Australian Harmful Algal Bloom - Lessons for NSW	Shauna Murray UTS
13:40 - 14:00	Crown Lands Update	Rob Micheli Crown Lands
14:00 - 14:20	Workplace Health & Safety: Farmers obligations	Josh Ingham Ingham & Co
14:20 - 15:00	AFTERNOON TEA	
SESSION FOUR		Chair - Liana Bonner
15:00 - 15:05	Opening comments from Session Chair	
15:05 - 15:15	Farming in Merimbula Lake - what makes this place so special	Hugh & James Wheelers Oysters
15:15 - 15:25	Representing Australia - our oyster experience overseas	Sue McIntyre & Greg Carton Broadwater Oysters
15:25 - 15:35	Exploring new species in Queensland	Max Wingfield QLD DPI
15:35 - 15:45	Update from QLD - wave mitigation & security cameras	Aiden Mellor QLD DPI
15:45 - 15:55	Update from SA	Lynlee Lowe Oysters SA
15:55 - 16:05	Update from WA	Justin Bellanger Aquaculture Council of WA
16:05 - 16:15	Update from TAS	Duncan Spender Oysters Tasmania
16:15 - 16:25	Update from New Zealand	Aaron Pannell
16:25 - 16:30	Gold sponsors address	Aaron Pannell FlipFarm
16:30 - 16:35	Explanation of evenings activities	Andy Myers

SHED SOCIAL EVENT - WED 27TH MAY

Sponsored by ...

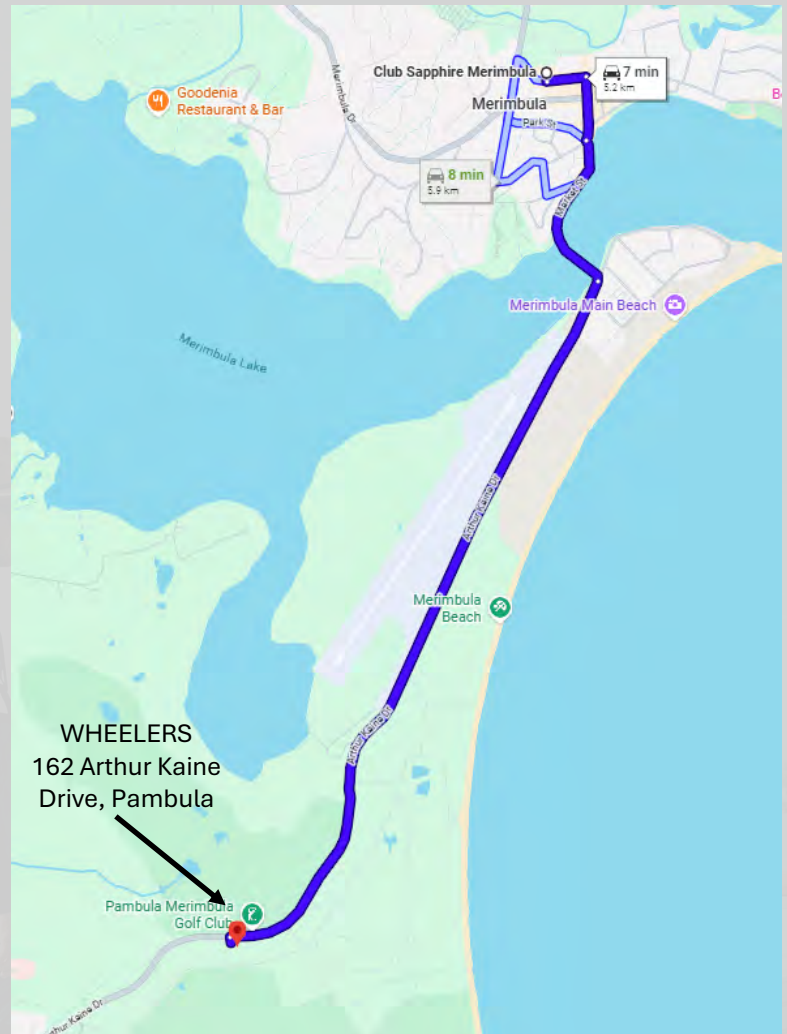


NSW Farmers welcomes delegates to the Wednesday night social event at Wheelers - 5km from Club Sapphire and opposite the Pambula Merimbula Golf Club on Arthur Kaine Drive.

Doors open at 6:30pm for a relaxed, informal evening featuring great food, two complimentary drinks, and plenty of oysters from local estuaries - perfect for catching up with fellow growers and industry colleagues.

The night also plays host to the inaugural Oyster Olympics, a lively showdown of four light-hearted events designed to test speed, skill and oyster-handling prowess. Back yourself, challenge your mates, and compete for a trophy and eternal bragging rights.

Parking is available at the golf club at your own risk, however delegates are encouraged to share lifts where possible. While fire pits will be roaring, the shed will be cold, so please rug up warm. The event concludes at 9:30pm.



Transport to Wheelers:

If you don't want to drive, a complimentary bus has been arranged to drop people to Wheelers from Merimbula. There will be 2 runs, the first starting at 6pm, and the 2nd starting at 6:30pm. It will have three pick up locations:

- Sapphire Waters Motor Inn
- Merimbula Coach Stop (Park St)
- Old Black Dolphin Motel

Transport from Wheelers:

A return bus service will operate back to Merimbula, with up to four services scheduled to depart Wheelers at 8:30pm, 9:00pm, 9:30pm and 10:00pm (if required).

Drop-off points will be the same as those used for collection, however, if you want to kick on, delegates can request to be dropped-off at the Lake View Hotel just north of the bridge.



WISA's Oyster Industry Breakfast

Thursday 28 May, 7:00 – 8:30am

119 Main St, Merimbula NSW 2548



Women in Seafood
Australasia



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS - VOTING CLOSSES MIDDAY ON THURSDAY

Thursday is your last chance to vote in this year's People's Choice Awards. Please scan the relevant QR code to cast your vote. All winners will be announced at the Conference Gala Dinner on Thursday evening.

If you do not have a suitable phone, please see Andy Myers or Simon Rowe, who can submit a vote on your behalf.

**MOST BEAUTIFUL
UNOPENED OYSTERS &
BEST DRESSED**



PHOTO CONTEST



CONFERENCE SESSIONS - THURS 28TH MAY



07:00 - 08:30	WISA Industry Breakfast at Club Sapphire (ticketed event)	
SESSION FIVE		Chair - Warwick Anderson
09:00 - 09:05	Opening comments from Session Chair	
09:05 - 09:25	Vibrio harveyi - the cause or a symptom of mortality?	Elliot Scanes UTS
09:25 - 09:45	Qx Update	Cherly Jenkins NSW DPIRD
09:45 - 10:15	Why are oysters dying - and can we vaccinate them?	Francisca Samsing USyd
10:15 - 10:35	Know thy enemy: Cold case complex mortality investigations	Matt Landos FFVS
10:35 - 10:40	Gold sponsors address	Chris Gillies SeaGen Aquaculture
10:40 - 11:15	MORNING TEA	
SESSION SIX		Chair - Renee Pearce
11:15 - 11:20	Opening comments from Session Chair	
11:20 - 11:40	Comparing methods to manage overcatch	Donna Cawthorn QLD DPI
11:40 - 12:00	FarmDecision TECH Estuary Reports - A new water quality dashboard for NSW	Meg Strang & David Taylor NSW DPIRD
12:00 - 12:20	The carbon footprint of the NSW oyster industry	Andy Myers NSW Farmers
12:20 - 12:40	Leveraging the ecosystem services provided by oyster aquaculture	James Horton Oceanfarmr
12:40 - 13:00	The journey to develop a value-added product	Scott Walter South Coast Mariculture
13:00 - 13:10	Wrap up and explanation of evening plans	Ian Lyall Andy Myers
13:10 - 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 - 16:00	Hot-topic discussion 1: Oyster health and unexplained oyster mortality	Room TBC
14:00 - 16:00	Hot-topic discussion 2: TBC	Room TBC
14:00 - 16:00	Hot-topic discussion 3: TBC	Room TBC

CONFERENCE GALA DINNER - THURS 28TH MAY

Sponsored by ...

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AQUACULTURE



The Conference Gala Dinner, kindly sponsored by Yumbah Aquaculture, will be held at the Oaklands Event Centre, a 7.5km (approximately 10-minute) drive from Club Sapphire.

Doors open at 6:15pm, with guests seated from 7:00pm. The dress code is smart-casual, with prizes on offer for Best Dressed Delegates.

The evening will showcase the 2026 NSW Oyster Industry Awards, along with announcements of the winners of the Most Beautiful Oyster Competitions and the Photo Contest. An auction of oyster farming gear will also be held.

Hosted by Simon Marnie, the Gala Dinner will feature live band entertainment and celebrations continuing through to a midnight finish.

Auction

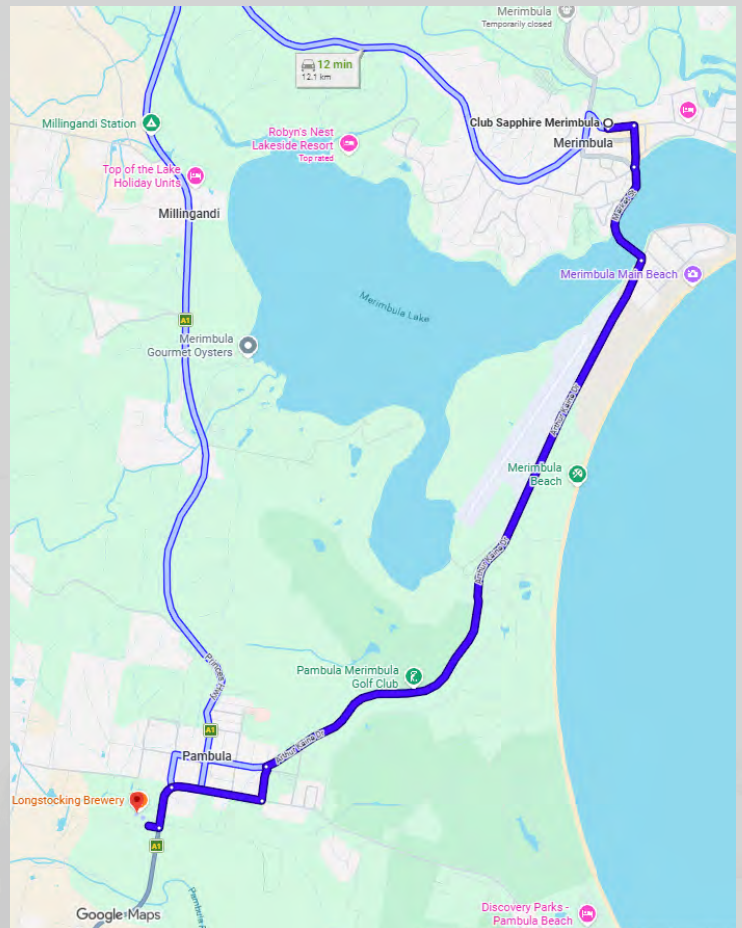
- Items up to auction are shown on the next page.
- The SeaMaster waders have been physically brought to the conference. Winners of these items will need to take them home at the end of the night.
- OceanWatch will invoice the winners for payment following the event.

Transport to Oaklands:

If you don't want to drive, a complimentary bus has been arranged to drop people to the event centre from Merimbula. There will be 2 runs, the first starting at 6pm, and the 2nd starting at 6:30pm. It will have three pick up locations:

- Sapphire Waters Motor Inn
- Merimbula Coach Stop (Park St)
- Old Black Dolphin Motel

If you want to make your own travel arrangements, there is parking on site or you can call Merimbula Taxi's on (02) 6495 2103.













Transport from Oaklands:

A return bus service will operate back to Merimbula, with up to six services scheduled to depart Oaklands at 10pm, 10:30pm, 11pm, 11:30pm, 12pm & 12:30am (if needed).

Drop-off points will be the same as those used for collection

DINNER AUCTION - THURS 28TH MAY



<p>1. \$500 Voucher for Woodshield Posts. Collection from either Booral holding yard (Port Stephens), or the Victorian Factory. Must be redeemed by Dec. 2026.</p>	
<p>2. \$1,500 Voucher for BST Oyster Supplies. Can be used on any mix of products.</p>	
<p>3. 50,000 Sydney rock oyster spat at 8mm. Valid until June 2027. (valuation ~\$5,000)</p>	
<p>4. \$1,000 Voucher to be used for the purchase of Hexcyl Systems oyster baskets and components. 5. \$1,000 Voucher to be used for the purchase of Hexcyl Systems oyster baskets and components.</p>	
<p>6. \$1,000 Voucher to be used for the purchase of FlipFarm System components. Redeemable within 12 months.</p>	
<p>7. ELKA Safety toe waders. For collection at conference 8. ELKA Safety toe waders. For collection at conference</p>	
<p>9. \$1,000 Seapa Voucher. 10. \$1,000 Seapa Voucher</p>	
<p>11. 50,000 Sydney rock oyster spat at 5mm (freight included). Valid until May 2027. (valuation = \$3,575)</p>	
<p>12. 1 large oyster lid necklace in silver, and 1 mini oyster lid in silver (combined valuation ~\$400)</p>	
<p>13. Spat voucher from Tasmanian Oyster Company (TOC) (valuation ~\$4,000)</p>	





Celebrating excellence, leadership and innovation across the industry

The NSW Oyster Industry Awards recognise outstanding individuals and businesses who are shaping the future of the NSW oyster industry through leadership, innovation, sustainability and service. These awards celebrate those who go above and beyond for oysters, estuaries and community.

BEST FARM GATE EXPERIENCE

This award celebrates a farm-gate operator who delivers an exceptional visitor experience, whether through tours, tastings, storytelling, or hospitality.

Nominees:

- The Oyster Barn (Merimbula Gourmet Oysters)
-

INDUSTRY CHAMPION AWARD

This award honours an individual or organisation that has gone above and beyond to support and advance the oyster industry through tireless work and advocacy.

Nominees:

- Robert Redmayne
 - John Stubbs
 - James Wheeler
 - Andy Myers
 - Shane Buckley
-

INDUSTRY LEGEND AWARD (20+ YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY)

An individual who has been in the industry for more than 20 years and whose long-standing commitment, leadership, and contributions have shaped and strengthened the oyster industry. They have a wealth of knowledge they share with others and positively influence the industry.

Nominees:

- Hugh Wheeler
- Stefanos Paschilidis

INNOVATION AWARD

A person or organisation that has introduced a new idea, technology, or approach that has significantly improved oyster farming, processing, or marketing. It honours creativity, problem-solving, and a vision for the future of the industry.

Nominees:

- Ian Crisp
-

RISING STAR AWARD (< 5 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY)

Someone who has been in the industry for less than 5 years who is already making waves. They bring passion, dedication to learning or new ideas and show exceptional promise in the industry.

Nominees:

- Adrian Pinkerton
 - Daniel May - Rock Oyster Depot
 - Narooma Oysters
 - Gabrielle Cowley
 - SeaGen Aquaculture
-

SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION AWARD

Recognise an individual, business, or initiative that has demonstrated outstanding commitment to sustainable practices in oyster farming. From habitat restoration to waste reduction and climate resilience.

Nominees:

- Sue McIntyre
- Merimbula Gourmet Oysters

Award winners are selected by a joint industry - government panel of previous award winners. The 2026 NSW Oyster Industry Awards are generously sponsored by NSW DPIRD.





Nominees

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Pip & Dom Boyton (Merimbula Gourmet Oysters / The Oyster Barn): *Nominated for Best Farm Gate Experience and Sustainability Champion Awards*

Merimbula Gourmet Oysters, owned and operated by Pip and Dom Boyton, is a 45-year-old farm at Millingandi with an open-air Oyster Barn overlooking the lake and mangroves, serving award-winning freshly shucked Sydney Rocks alongside the rare Angasi flat. The business has medalled at every Royal Agricultural Society competition entered and has progressed from traditional rack-and-rail to best-practice floating cultivation, with its on-land nursery contributing broodstock to reef restoration. The Boytons have provided a decade of voluntary NSW Oyster Conference coordination, hold positions on the NSW Shellfish Committee, Seagrass Monitoring Steering Committee, ARAC, Seafood CRC and NSW Farmers (Vice Chair), and serve as SafeFood QA Coordinator. Pip's 2021 Sydney Fish Market auction raised over \$24,000 for growers affected by an East Coast Low.

Shane Buckley (Wapengo Rocks Wild Organic Oysters): *Nominated for Industry Champion Award*

Shane operates Wapengo Rocks Wild Organic Oysters, Australia's first certified organic Sydney Rock Oyster farm. He acquired a post-and-rail lease at Wapengo Lake in 2007 and rebuilt it over six years, achieving Australian Certified Organic accreditation in 2013. His oysters have received gold at the delicious. Harvey Norman Produce Awards, and the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. Shane is a long-standing industry representative on the NSW Shellfish Committee, continues to modernise these operations through the application of new technology.

Gabrielle Cowley (Australia's Oyster Coast): *Nominated for Rising Star Award*

In under five years, Gabre has led communications, marketing and brand development for one of the industry's largest organisations, elevating the profile of Australian oysters — particularly the Sydney Rock — through consistent, provenance-led messaging that educates consumers and reinforces premium value. Her approach is distinguished by grassroots engagement: regular farm visits, direct conversations with growers and attendance at industry events in her own time. She also coordinates the Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA) presence at the oyster conference and has championed the industry photo competition. Gabe contributes without seeking recognition, and is widely respected for her humility, professionalism and authentic passion for the industry.

Ian Crisp (Coastal Oysters): *Nominated for Innovation Award*

Ian has been a pioneer of NSW aquaculture, largely responsible for introducing mechanised longline farming to the state. In the 1990s, working alongside his partner Rose, he identified wild Akoya pearl oysters growing amongst his Sydney Rock stock and developed this into a viable industry, founding Broken Bay Pearls in 2003. Ian has also provided sustained support to government committees and industry associations across his career, and has been a key driver behind the Manning River Oyster Farmers Association.

Daniel May (Rock Oyster Depot): *Nominated for Rising Star Award*

Daniel founded Rock Oyster Depot in 2022 to promote premium, traceable Sydney Rock Oysters from independent growers along Australia's east coast. After operating at Kings Cross Organic Food Market from 2022 to 2024, he was invited to join Carriageworks Farmers Market, where he curates oysters from up to ten growers each week and has introduced dry shucking to Sydney markets. A boutique wholesale arm launched in 2024 services chefs seeking full traceability. Now an official RAS judge and a presenter at the 2026 Sydney Royal Easter Show Oyster Masterclass, Daniel has been a strong advocate for improved grading standards, post-harvest handling and fair pricing for quality.



Nominees

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Sue McIntyre (Broadwater Oysters): Nominated for Sustainability Champion Award

Sue is a long-term advocate for environmental conservation on the Far South Coast and a key figure in Sapphire Coast Wilderness Oysters, with sustained engagement with local government and a clear commitment to community education on the benefits of the oyster industry. With her husband Greg Carton, she has operated Broadwater Oysters at Pambula Lake for almost 30 years — a multi-award-winning farm-gate business recognised by Landcare as ‘Champions of the Catchment’ for sustainable practices. Broadwater Oysters has been recognised in the NSW Government Green Globe Awards, and Sue has received an Outstanding Service Award from DPI Fisheries NSW.

Kris McKeahnie & Victoria Pechotsch (Narooma Oysters): Nominated for Rising Star Award

Three years ago, Kris and Victoria made the significant decision to leave their cattle and sheep farming operation near Cooma — selling their property, livestock and family home — and relocate with their blended family of five children to pursue oyster farming. They have since worked extensively to establish themselves in a new industry: producing high-quality oysters, applying sustainable practices to care for the Narooma estuary, and contributing to the positioning of Narooma as a destination for premium seafood. Their transition reflects considerable resilience and long-term commitment, and provides a clear example to their children regarding adaptability, sustainability and family enterprise.

Andy Myers: Nominated for Industry Champion Award

Andy has been a consistent contributor to the NSW oyster industry for 15 years, working through OceanWatch, NSW Farmers and Oysters Australia. His contributions include developing Environmental Management Systems with dozens of estuary groups, founding the Tide to Tip Clean-Up Initiative (now with 100+ clean-ups under its belt), organising NSW Oyster Conferences, delivering the first statewide carbon and nutrient removal audit for the industry, leading the 2020–25 Oysters Australia Strategic Plan, and developing the Responsible Oyster Farming Training Program now completed by 220 growers. Around \$2 million in grants have been devolved to industry through programs under his management.

Stefanos Paschilidis (Smoked Point Oysters): Nominated for Industry Legend Award

Stefanos is a generational oyster farmer with more than 50 years’ experience in the NSW industry. Over that period he has consistently adapted to new technologies and methods as the industry has evolved, and has remained known among peers for his willingness to support other growers and share knowledge. His career has spanned significant shifts in cultivation practice, market conditions and regulatory frameworks, throughout which he has maintained a quiet, considered approach to the craft. Now approaching retirement, Stefanos is widely regarded as one of the most respected and humble figures in the NSW oyster community.

Adrian Pinkerton (Sandingroove Oysters): Nominated for Rising Star Award

Adrian is a first-generation oyster farmer who entered the industry following a career as a chef in Merimbula. He runs Sandingroove Oysters with his wife Jaclyn, operating across three estuaries: Bermagui for catching wild spat, Pambula for growing out juveniles, and Merimbula for shaping and finishing. His work focuses on innovation across biofouling management, cost-of-production economics, mortality reduction, contribution to the breeding program, sharing knowledge and equipment with neighbouring farmers, and oyster marketing. Adi is a member of the seagrass monitoring program steering committee and has recently joined the NSW Farmers Oyster Committee.



Nominees

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Robert Redmayne (Seven Seas Oysters): Nominated for Industry Champion Award

Robert has contributed significantly to the often-unrecognised work of industry committees, consistently advocating for the interests of everyday growers and, on multiple occasions, deferring personal opportunities to enable others to advance. His contributions over several years to the oyster breeding program committee and Oysters Australia R&D have been characterised by clear vision and sustained advocacy on issues that directly affect grower outcomes. This form of consistent, behind-the-scenes leadership, frequently unpaid and unseen, has underpinned a number of the technical advances and policy outcomes from which the broader industry now benefits and reflects a long-standing commitment to collective progress over individual recognition.

SeaGen Aquaculture: Nominated for Rising Star Award

Established in 2022, SeaGen has rapidly developed a strong reputation for producing consistent, high-quality hatchery spat, directly addressing one of the industry's most variable inputs. NSW growers consistently report strong early growth, good survival and reliable performance on leases. The business is distinguished by its commitment to continuous improvement through grower partnership: spat performance is actively monitored on leases, with that information feeding back into broodstock selection and production. Expanded nursery operations now enable growers to access larger oysters directly, reducing on-farm labour and early-stage losses. Open communication and regular knowledge sharing have also supported broader industry confidence in hatchery-produced spat.

John Stubbs: Nominated for Industry Champion Award

John is a long-standing and highly respected Hawkesbury oyster farmer whose career has been defined by sustained advocacy, leadership and service to the industry, particularly during times of crisis. Mentored in his early career by Hawkesbury figure Robbie Moxham, he subsequently helped found Broken Bay Oyster and more recently, Hawkesbury River Oyster Co. He has served as SQAP Coordinator for the Hawkesbury for many years, and led the establishment of the first Memorandum of Understanding between the oyster industry and local council in 2011. During the 2013 POMS outbreak in the Hawkesbury, he coordinated biosecurity responses and collected critical data that has continued to inform industry responses since. John retired recently, with his son Luke, following in his father's footsteps.

Hugh Wheeler (Wheelers Oysters): Nominated for Industry Legend Award

Across more than four decades, Hugh has built a substantial farming operation in Merimbula, and alongside it, a business that has helped redefine how oysters are experienced and valued locally. At a time when most NSW production was sold through wholesale channels, Hugh integrated tourism into the business, initially a seafood retail outlet, subsequently tours, and later a restaurant, bringing visitors into direct contact with the product, supporting local demand and contributing to Merimbula's standing as one of Australia's premier Sydney Rock Oyster estuaries. His influence extends beyond his own operation to the generations of deckhands, growers and family members who have learned the trade from him.

James Wheeler (Wheelers Oysters): Nominated for Industry Champion Award

A second-generation Merimbula grower, James has spent the last few years rethinking how a premium Sydney Rock Oyster gets from his farm to the plate. Rather than ride the swings of traditional wholesale markets, he has built direct relationships with some of the country's best kitchens - Saint Peter, Margaret and ARIA among them — working alongside chefs on grading, presentation and flavour to position the SRO as a serious provenance product. He shares this approach with other growers, conducts oyster farm tours that connect consumers with sustainable aquaculture, and contributes through MQAP and NSW Farmers on issues including water quality, food safety, biosecurity and the future of NSW aquaculture.

yumbah
AQUACULTURE

Growing tomorrow's oysters, today.



Yumbah Aquaculture is proudly cultivating Sydney Rock and Pacific Oyster spat, backed by generations of expertise.

Driven by a commitment to quality, sustainability, and long-term supply.

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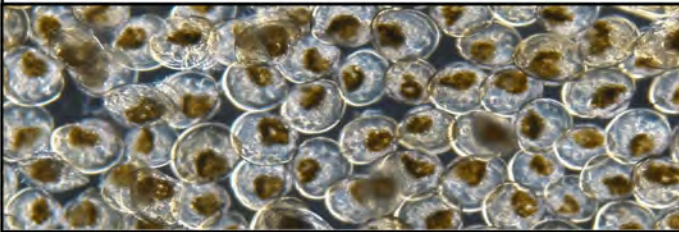
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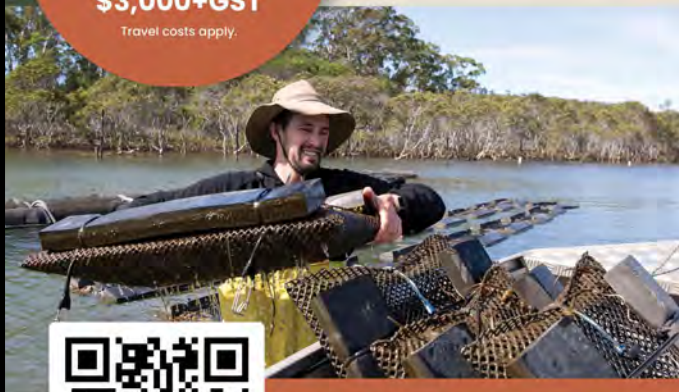
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Feedback Matters.



The **Oysters Australia Strategic Plan 2026–2031** will guide the national direction of the Australian oyster industry for the next five years. Getting it right depends on hearing directly from growers and industry stakeholders across Australia. **We want to hear from you.**

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A massive thanks to the organising committee for all your hard work pulling the conference together:

- Pip Boyton
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Post Conference Survey

Please share your feedback regarding the 2026 NSW Oyster Conference in this quick survey.

We value your honest feedback so that we can continue to make this conference more useful and more enjoyable for the industry. Your responses are completely confidential and anonymous.

