



## **Update on the Seed Mussel Beds in Castlemaine Harbour – 19/10/2015**

### **Survey summary:**

Following the results from the seed mussel survey in Castlemaine Harbour earlier this month, it has been decided to monitor the growth of the seed prior to the opening of the fishery.

Indeed, the seed found at the start of October was very small: over 63% of the sampled population was comprised between 6 and 12 mm. Although the seed size was very small, the settlement was very large and biomass estimation at the time showed that there was at least 4500 tons on the main seed area.

A further 5 tows were made in the main seed area 18 days after the initial survey. The five samples, which represent 500 mussels, were analysed. The seed showed an increase of 3.7 mm in average (or 46 % increase), from the start of the month. Further analysis showed that over 70% of the seed population is now comprised between 10 and 16 mm.

Due to tidal current and short deadline for the survey, the grab was not deployed. No heavy mortality was observed in samples and the predators are still at the same location (eastern end of the main bed).

### **Recommendations:**

Following the growth of the seed and possible minor loss through mortality, we can expect the seed biomass to have increased over the past weeks. From the 4,500 tons estimated at the start of the month, it is possible that the current tonnage has increase to 6,500 tons (40% increase approximately).

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