

# REEF BUILDER

## SOUTHEAST TASMANIA

**Bringing back native flat oyster reefs in south-east Tasmania.**

NRM South is working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy on a project to restore native Angasi oyster reefs in the Derwent Estuary and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.



© Chris Gillies / TNC Australia  
Georges Bay, Tasmania

**\*Southeast Tasmania reef rebuilding areas**

NRM South's Reef Builder project is part of the Australian Reef Builder Initiative, a \$20 million partnership between the Australian Government and TNC Australia to bring shellfish reefs back from the brink of extinction and support the economic recovery of communities impacted by bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions.



[nrmsouth.org.au](http://nrmsouth.org.au)

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

## Why are we restoring our native reefs?

Tasmania is home to Australia's last remaining Angasi oyster reefs. As well as securing the future of this critically threatened ecosystem, restoring shellfish reefs brings a range of benefits. It improves water quality, boosts fish stocks, provides homes for a diverse range of sea life and generates regional employment.

## History of oyster reefs in southeast Tasmania

Angasi oyster reefs (*Ostrea angasi* – also known as flat oysters) were once common throughout Tasmanian waters and were an important food source for Tasmania's Aboriginal people. To this day, we can still see large middens which tell the story of sustainable harvesting practices that nourished communities for tens of thousands of years. Records from the first European settlers show that native oysters were extremely abundant and regularly harvested in many estuaries around Tasmania. In the years following European colonisation, the native oyster fishery was an important resource, but with intensive and indiscriminate dredging, and changing estuarine conditions, the ecosystems soon collapsed.

Since then, our oyster reefs have not shown signs of recovery. A small population of Angasi oysters in Georges Bay, on Tasmania's east coast, is now the only known remaining reef of its kind in Southern Australia and represents around 1% of the original national distribution.



Sunset Bay, Alonnah

## Rebuilding reefs in south-east Tasmania

NRM South's Reef Builder project is restoring native oyster reefs in the Derwent Estuary and D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Three sites have been identified and the goal is to restore five hectares of native oyster reef. As well as helping to restore a critically endangered marine ecosystem, the project will boost local employment. By employing local maritime construction, earthmoving, aquaculture and engineering businesses, and inspiring local communities to get involved in marine restoration initiatives, the project is bringing a myriad of social and environmental benefits to south-east Tasmania.



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