



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Thursday 5 March 2015

#### **MANGROVE JACK BREEDING BREAKTHROUGH**

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson has today congratulated Southern Cross University's National Marine Science Centre in Coffs Harbour, for successfully breeding Mangrove jack in captivity for the first time in NSW.

"This is a remarkable achievement and advancement in the delicate science of breeding fish, and was made possible by funding from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust," Minister Hodgkinson said.

"Hatchery production of Mangrove jack is extremely difficult and an achievement only matched by a very small handful of other hatcheries Australia-wide.

"Mangrove jack is an excellent sport and food fish and the latest breeding success will also have wider implications for the aquaculture industry," Said Ms Hodgkinson.

The breeding program, led by Dr Ken Cowden, has successfully hatched more than 4,000 fingerlings which are now 10 weeks-old and 50mm in length.

Dr Cowden said Mangrove jack have a unique lifecycle which involves spawning in seawater at offshore reefs, and later migrating into the estuaries and even right up into the freshwater.

"The Mangrove jack life cycle involves movement between fresh and saltwater and makes the species vulnerable to impacts from the construction of dam walls and weirs which can prevent access to the freshwater habitat," Dr Cowden said.

"Therefore, breeding for freshwater impoundment stocking is a great breakthrough.

"The eggs are only 0.8mm in diameter, and the newly hatched larvae just over 2mm, making the species a great challenge for hatcheries to produce."

Southern Cross University in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries hope to stock the fish into a freshwater location in northern NSW in coming weeks.

The Minister said the NSW Government is proud to support the recreational fishing industry, which generates about \$1.6 billion into the NSW economy each year and creates about 14,000 jobs.