Alison Turnbull
Seafood Program Leader
Food Safety and Innovation

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
PIRSA

Qualifications

BSc	University of Tasmania
BSc (Hons)	University of Adelaide

Role

Alison Turnbull is the Seafood Program Leader in Food Safety and Innovation at SARDI. The role is responsible for developing and managing research projects associated with seafood safety, market access, product quality and innovation across Australia.

Research focus

Alison's research is focused on the risk assessment of food safety hazards in seafood. Her recent work includes biotoxins in non-traditional seafood vectors such as abalone and rocklobster, heavy metals in seafood and microbiological risks in shellfish.

Alison is also highly involved in research directed at improved market access for the seafood industry. This includes providing an evidence base to the Codex processes to enable development of risk commensurate standards, supporting a proactive industry response to food safety risks, providing research to underpin market access submissions and improving risk communication for both industry and consumers.

Alison works closely with seafood industries, researchers and regulatory bodies in Australia and New Zealand.

Major projects

Alison is currently managing SafeFish – a major initiative funded through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC). SafeFish is a partnership approach to food safety and market access for the seafood industry, involving regulators, industry and researchers who collaborate to address issues identified as high priority for seafood.

SafeFish is a 3 year, $1million program that supports and facilitates research into potential food safety issues, provides scientific briefs to Australian Codex representatives, upskills the seafood industry and regulators in Australia, and supports incident management with technical information.

Alison is also working on a FRDC funded project with the University of Tasmania entitled Harmful algal blooms: improved understanding, seafood risk assessment, and faster toxin and species detection to reduce impacts on aquaculture and fisheries. Her role in this project is to conduct a risk ranking of marine biotoxins in commercial and recreationally important seafood in Tasmania.

As leader of the seafood group, Alison provides scientific input and strategic advice to several other projects in the group such as: Paralytic shellfish toxins in Southern Rocklobster, Novel detections methods for Norovirus in oysters and a survey of Norovirus and Hepatitis A in Australian oysters.

Key publications

Turnbull, A. R. (2015). Researchers as partners to the seafood industry and risk managers in developing appropriate risk management of harmful algal blooms. http://www.cawthron.org.nz/publication/conferences-and-presentations/icha16-proceedings/

Malhi, N., Turnbull, A., Tan, J., Kiermeier, A., Sehmbi, A., Nimmagadda, R and McCleod, C. (2014). A National Survey of Marine Biotoxins in Wild-caught Abalone in Australia. Journal of Food Protection 77(11) pp 1960-7

Turnbull, A., R. Harrison and S.McKeown (2013). Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning in South Eastern Tasmania. Communicable Disease Intelligence, Volume 37

D'Este C, A. Rahman, A. Turnbull (2012). Predicting Shellfish farm closures with Class Balancing Methods. Advances in Artificial Intelligence, Lecture notes in Computer Science, Vol 7691, pp 39-48

Boards/Committees

Chair – Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Advisory Committee

Member – National Food Safety, Integrity and Traceability Taskforce – sub-strategy of the National Food & Nutrition Research Development and Technology Transfer Strategy

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