

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Tropical fisheries to be hit hard by climate change, says UTAS researcher

Climate change will by the middle of this century force the displacement of marine species from tropical to mid and high latitudes, according to a report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) today.

Such a widespread redistribution would have implications for food security, with a projected decline of up to 60 percent in fisheries yield in the tropics.

The Summary for Policymakers prepared by the IPCC's Working Group II, which includes Professor Philip Boyd of the University of Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies as a lead author, was released in Yokohama, Japan, this morning (**Monday 31 March 2014**).

The Working Group II's contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report considers the vulnerability and exposure of human and natural systems, the observed impacts and future

“Displacements of marine animals by the mid-21st century are projected to cause high-latitude invasions and high local-extinction rates in the tropics and semi-enclosed areas.”

Addressing his own specialist field, Prof Boyd stated that the Working Group had concluded with ‘high confidence’ that ocean acidification would affect marine ecosystems for centuries if human-made emissions continue. Highly calcified coral communities were particularly vulnerable.

“Shell thinning in plankton is another example of the negative impact of acid acidification – the thinning has been attributed fully or in part to acidification.”

Local adaptation measures such as conservation or a reduction in human activities such as fishing may not be sufficient to offset the global effects of climate change on marine ecosystems, the Working Group declared, with ‘high confidence’.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Paddy Nixon, saluted the input of Prof Boyd into the report.

“Given that Antarctic, marine and maritime research is one of the University of Tasmania’s five major themes it is not surprising that we are well represented among the ranks of globally recognised academics contributing to the IPCC’s three working groups.

“In addition to Prof Boyd, another significant Tasmanian contributor has been Prof Nathan Bindoff, who is affiliated with IMAS, the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems CRC and CSIRO, and is one of the few scientists to have been a coordinating lead author twice.”

For further information on the Working Group II Summary for Policymakers:

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>
