

A Fishy Affair

The April Members meeting turned out to be quite a fishy affair. Ellis Higgins led a 'conversation' about sustainable fish and fishing with 20 interested members joining in. The relaxed and informal evening was an opportunity for members to meet and share a snack but also to learn about an issue that is important for all of us.

Ellis talked about his love of fishing, in particular his passion for spear fishing and how this is controlled with limits being placed on catching different sorts of fish and restrictions in certain areas. His work with the Australian Underwater Fishing Federation collects data to help management of fish categories, the information being provided to CSIRO to help determine how fish species are changing with the impact of warmer sea temperatures moving south. Fish farming is becoming an increasingly contentious issue with greater concerns about its sustainability (eg to produce 1kg of salmon takes 1.7kg of fish food) citing a book entitled 'Toxic' by Richard Flanagan highlighting many of the issues. He recommended the TED talks by Dan Barker where 'farming extensively not intensively' is one of the key messages. He also covered briefly how the University of Wollongong is conducting work on the control of sea urchins and his own not always successful experiences with aquaponics.

Most of the discussion which followed was about what could we do and our own individual responsibilities and actions. This is best summed up as seeking small whole local fish to eat such as flat heads, leather jackets, whiting and sea bream to name but a few, also mussels from Jervis Bay and oysters from Greenwell Point certainly keep away from blackmarketeers in pub carparks. A Slow Fish Guide by Amanda Lopez was recommended as were the Sustainable Seafood Guide on goodfish.org.au and the DPI App FishSmart.

Overall it was an entertaining and informative evening much enjoyed by those present.

