



**Senior Lecturer in Marine Biology  
School of Biological Sciences  
Faculty of Science & Engineering  
Room 024, Biological Sciences building  
Ph: 8201 3959**

**Email:** [Kirsten.Benkendorff@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Kirsten.Benkendorff@flinders.edu.au)

### **Research Interests**

- **Molluscan and intertidal reef biodiversity**
- **Bioprospecting, bioresources and molluscan secondary metabolites**
- **Molluscan aquaculture and immune health**

### **Qualifications**

**PhD Biological Sciences and Chemistry (UW)**

Kirsten is an interdisciplinary researcher. Her research interests encompass the biological and chemical diversity of marine organisms (particularly molluscs), as well as their bioresource value and conservation, particularly invertebrates.

She aims to instil her students with a sense of wonder and appreciation for ALL forms of life that have evolved on earth - particularly invertebrates that might be otherwise overlooked and undervalued.

#### ***Current Research Projects***

Her principal research activities are in the field of “marine bioprospecting” and encompass studies on the biological and chemical diversity of marine organisms (particularly molluscs), as well as their bioresource value and conservation. The predatory marine snail [\*Dicathais orbita\*](#) is the principle species under investigation in her laboratory, as a novel Australian bioresource, with particular benefits as a nutraceutical in cancer and other health application.

Kirsten has developed methods for rapid biodiversity assessment of molluscs on rocky intertidal reefs. First developed to locate species rich hotspots and breeding sites along the Illawarra coast of NSW these procedures have been applied more recently to intertidal reef assessment along metropolitan and remote coasts in South Australia.

#### ***Research Collaborations and Partners***

Assessment of the physical characteristics and biological communities of intertidal reefs along the Fleurieu Peninsula in a project funded by the SA Department of Environment and Heritage.

Developing an intertidal reef monitoring program for South Australia in collaboration with ReefWatch and the SA Conservation Council.

FRDC project with researchers at Melbourne University, investigating the baseline variation in immune parameters and the effects of stress on abalone.

- Conducting multidisciplinary collaborative research on Australia's biodiversity & landscapes
- Providing innovative interpretation of biodiversity research for a wide variety of end-users