



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events

MEDIA RELEASE

****Note: Map of the final location, artist's impression and image attached, caption below****

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LOCATION FOR SOUTH COAST ARTIFICIAL REEF REVEALED

Shoalhaven is set to become the State's latest recreational fishing hotspot, with the final location for the South Coast's first offshore artificial reef unveiled today by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, and Member for Kiama, Gareth Ward.

Ms Hodgkinson said the South Coast artificial reef will be located about four kilometres offshore from Shoalhaven Heads, or about six kilometres from Crookhaven Heads.

"This exciting project will lure fish, recreational anglers and tourists to the South Coast, providing a welcome economic boost for the region," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"The reef will feature 30 to 50 giant concrete modules, which will form a series of clusters about 30 metres below the surface of the water that will create the reef.

"Final environmental approvals are still being obtained, it is expected the reef will be deployed in October this year."

Ms Hodgkinson said the reef will cost about \$900,000 to construct and is a great example of how the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is reinvesting funds from the sale of the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee into projects which directly benefit recreational anglers.

"The South Coast offshore artificial reef is one of two the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government has announced since the deployment of the popular Sydney reef – the State's first – in 2011," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"This reef has been designed to create new, high quality fish habitat for a wide range of fish species and other aquatic life, and provide a productive fishing location for boat fishers.

"Bait fish are expected to colonise the reef, which will then attract larger target species, including snapper and kingfish.

"Recreational fishing expenditure in NSW has been estimated at about \$1.6 billion each year, with about 14,000 jobs created, according to a recent study by the University of Wollongong.

"The study found that recreational fishing on the South Coast alone already generates \$395 million in economic output each year and creates about 1800 fulltime jobs."

Mr Ward said the move will bring Shoalhaven another step closer to becoming the recreational fishing capital of the State, with the reef just one of many initiatives implemented by the NSW Government.

“The reef will be a boon for tourism and recreational anglers on the South Coast, being easily accessible from boat ramps within the entrance of the Shoalhaven River including Shoalhaven Heads, Crookhaven Heads and Greenwell Point,” Mr Ward said.

“Following the announcement by the Minister that the NSW Government would look at the placement of artificial reefs off the NSW coast, I wrote to the Minister and asked if we could have one in our region.

“I know how popular recreational fishing is and its importance to our local tourism economy.”

Member for South Coast, Shelley Hancock, said the artificial reef will be a major drawcard for recreational fishers, and will provide additional tourism opportunities for local residents.

“This artificial reef is expected to be very popular with fishers, and will provide just another excuse for visitors to come to the wonderful South Coast,” Mrs Hancock said.

“Expressions of interest for the tender process for construction will take place after May.”

Once the Shoalhaven reef is deployed, the next offshore artificial reef – which the NSW Government announced in February – will be deployed in the Port Macquarie area.

Caption: NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, and Member for Kiama, Gareth Ward, announce the final location for the South Coast offshore artificial reef at Shoalhaven Heads this morning.