



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

MEDIA RELEASE

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SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD DEVELOPMENT APPROVED FOR THE NSW SOUTH COAST

The NSW Government has approved 50 hectares of aquaculture leases on the State's South Coast to assist NSW meet the increasing demand for quality seafood, Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson and Member for the South Coast Shelley Hancock said today.

"Sustainable seafood production is an important focus for the NSW Government as approximately 85% of the seafood currently purchased in NSW is imported," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"Approval has been granted for three aquaculture leases in Jervis Bay, including a 10 hectare site off Vincentia over a previous mussel lease, and two areas of 20 hectares off Callala Beach.

"These leases will now be tendered to commercial enterprises to allow them to grow a number of native shellfish species including Blue Mussels, scallops and oysters.

"The lease can also be used to grow edible seaweeds and other marine algae. This activity is likely to complement a newly established Shoalhaven industry cluster that uses algae to manufacture high-tech biomaterials for the medical, food, cosmetic and renewable energy sectors."

Ms Hancock said the project will be a boost for the South Coast region as it will generate jobs and utilise local businesses during the construction phase and once in operation with processing and retailing farmed seafood

"Approval for the leases was given after careful consideration and requires that over 60 special conditions are met," Ms Hancock said.

"These special conditions will ensure we safeguard the environment and monitor the sustainability of aquaculture in Jervis Bay.

"The leases will continue Jervis Bay's long history of aquaculture which began in the 1930's with oysters."

The State Significant Infrastructure application was approved following an extensive community consultation process in 2013 by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) during which 133 submissions were received.

An additional Visual Impact Assessment Study was also prepared following a request from the Department of Planning and Environment as a part of the approval process.

The project was also referred to the Commonwealth Government for assessment under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The aquaculture leases are located in a Habitat Protection Zone of the Jervis Bay Marine Park, which is a multiple use zone that caters for a wide range of sustainable activities.

As part of the approval, there is a requirement to report annually on lease performance.

Key issues identified in stakeholder submissions included:

- Visual amenity - consent conditions limit the number, height and type of surface support buoys, particularly at the Vincentia site;
- Navigational safety – Roads and Maritime Services have identified appropriate marking requirements and will work with DPI to reduce impacts from navigation lights. The Vincentia lease is located over the former mussel lease and outside the Vincentia Sailing Club aquatic licence zone and the area off Collingwood Beach that hosted the recent Hobie World Championships;
- Impact on tourism – in Australia and around the world aquaculture has boosted tourism opportunities with positive economic outcomes for communities; and
- Land based infrastructure and water access – consent conditions address concerns raised about siting land facilities and access to boating infrastructure.

Preparations are now underway to put the leases out for tender to commercial operators.

Details of the project can be viewed at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture