



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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AQUACULTURE RESEARCH LEASE PROPOSED OFF PORT STEPHENS

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, today announced that the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has lodged a planning application to establish a marine finfish aquaculture research lease off the coast of Port Stephens.

Katrina Hodgkinson said the application has been lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure and would allow the NSW Government to extend its successful marine hatchery research.

“The application seeks to establish a 20 hectare lease (370 metres x 530 metres) located 3.5 kilometres off Hawks Nest for a period of five years,” Katrina Hodgkinson said.

“The lease would allow NSW DPI researchers to extend their ground-breaking research on species such as Yellowtail Kingfish and Southern Bluefin Tuna, which is currently underway at the Port Stephens Fisheries Institute.

“Key outcomes from the research would be proving species suitability, validating equipment and technology and to conduct environmental monitoring.

“Some 85 per cent of seafood consumed in NSW is currently imported and the NSW Executive Food Security Group has stated that aquaculture will need to play an increased role in sustainable seafood supply in the future.

“Aquaculture research is vital to secure a viable and sustainable aquaculture industry for NSW,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

It is hoped that this future research can be linked to the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre, which currently has a research partnership with DPI and Clean Seas Tuna Limited to develop hatchery technology for Southern Bluefin Tuna.

Katrina Hodgkinson said to obtain planning approval for this project a detailed environmental assessment document will be prepared and input from other agencies has been formally requested.

“The full application and environmental assessment is expected to be completed by early next year, at which time the application will go on public exhibition.

“DPI has begun advising local stakeholders to ensure that the local community is fully informed of the process,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Anyone interested in finding out more on the research lease can visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au.