

Tara Moriarty

Minister for Agriculture
 Minister for Regional New South Wales
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**Media Release**

\$14.3 Million boost to South Coast's aquaculture businesses to deliver jobs and economic growth

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The Minns Labor Government together with 10 aquaculture businesses are investing \$14.3 million into boosting the local Bega and South Coast oyster, kelp and seafood sector to expand production and sustainability and to create more jobs and drive economic growth.

The aquaculture sector is a natural fit for NSW's coastal communities and landscape, and the Minns Government is driving new economic opportunities by funding modernisation and productivity gains.

The Minister for Agriculture, Tara Moriarty, launched the *NSW Aquaculture Vision Statement* in September 2024 in collaboration with the industry to target a doubling of the sector's economic output to \$300 million by 2030.

Moving forward on that vision the Government last year announced a new \$20 million Aquaculture Industry Development Program to turbocharge productivity gains and seafood production.

In the first round of funding, the NSW Government is investing \$7.4 million and the proponents are funding \$6.9 million, across the following 10 South Coast projects.

NSW Government funding for the projects:

- **\$1,882,750 – Ocean2Earth, expansion of a marine waste recovery**
 - Expand innovative marine waste recovery and biofertilizer manufacturing capability from pilot scale to industrial scale. Enabling the sector to access a cost-free, environmentally compliant outlet to process unavoidable seafood by-products and create new local skilled jobs and value-add capabilities.
- **\$1,284,798 – Wapengo Rocks Wild Organic Oysters, modernise oyster farming operations**
 - Replacing traditional methods with automated on-water infrastructure with 10,000 additional units, solar power, reduce water fouling and grow premium product.
- **\$959,491 – Tollgate Oysters, Clyde On-Grower support precinct**
 - Develop collaborative and expansive oyster farming infrastructure on existing leases that are presently under-used and fixed to traditional farming systems. Introducing new on-water floating bag systems, installation of a complete wet storage system and purpose-built processing and holding sheds.
- **\$896,805 - Auskelp Pty Ltd, enable advanced kelp farming research and production**
 - Purchase, modify and operate a specialised offshore research vessel based at Eden to expand planting, collecting and preparing kelp, plus installing permanent specialist equipment. Vessel will enable large scale seeding of kelp lines and efficient harvesting. Deployment will enable trialling up to 100 one-hectare rigs.
- **\$684,435 – Ritchie Oysters Pty Ltd, improve productivity through automation**

- Supporting modernisation, resilience and expansion by replacing traditional methods with automated on-water infrastructure with 10,000 additional floating units and onshore processing to meet growing demand for premium product.
- **\$544,465 – Sandingroove Oysters, to modernise and upscale facilities**
 - Expanding automation, cold-chain capacity and solar power to better control fouling, improve oyster health and survivability, doubling production from 55,000 dozen to 110,000 dozen oysters per year, and increasing job creation opportunities.
- **\$465,188 - Sapphire Coast Oysters, upgrade oyster nursery and farm infrastructure**
 - New equipment and upgrading of the oyster nursery will improve outcomes for growing Pacific Oyster spat (oyster larvae) through to a strong juvenile size allowing for the supply and restock of oyster farms. Plus, double production size from 55,000 dozen to 100,000 dozen oysters annually by 2030.
- **\$348,480 - OysterLife Unit Trust, electrifying operations towards NetZero aquaculture**
 - This will support Batemans Bay operations to transition towards net-zero by decommissioning fossil-fuel based operational equipment with electric alternatives and adopting cleaner energy solutions across its operations.
- **\$211,000 – Ballantyne Commercial Fishing, improve cold chain (refrigeration) management**
 - Upgrade freezing and refrigeration systems to increase bait and catch capacity, to improve fish handling efficiency, storage hygiene, food safety and market outcomes.
- **\$139,148 – Glasshouse Rock Oysters, implementation of automated and upgraded infrastructure**
 - Upgrade from manual to automated oyster grading equipment to improve processing capacity and increase stock security. Installation of 2,000 new floating oyster basket units will reduce stock losses during weather events and improve product quality.

With these projects, domestic and international customers of NSW seafood will benefit from a reliable, year-round supply of high quality, and carbon reduced food products that taste fantastic.

Further announcements of successful recipients under the Minns Government’s Aquaculture Industry Development Program will be made in the coming weeks.

More than \$200 million from the NSW Government’s Regional Development Trust Fund is currently being delivered through programs and projects that provide strategic and sustainable investment where it is needed to support regional and rural industries, businesses and communities grow.

For more information: nsw.gov.au/regionaldevelopmenttrust

Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional NSW Tara Moriarty said:

“The \$14.3 million funding boost to the aquaculture industry is a game changer for the South Coast by delivering expanded production, plus higher sustainability and resilience that will create jobs and economic growth.

“This funding program is new to the industry and demonstrates the Minns Government’s commitment to growing this coastal industry with an ambitious vision and timetable.

“Our seafood products are amongst the best in the world, and we need to boost production, enhance supply chain efficiency and security, so that our local businesses can take advantage of market demand for quality and low carbon footprint seafood.

“The South Coast has unique qualities that our Government wants to protect and promote to the rest of Australia and the world, and these local businesses are showing how we can do this together.

“We have set out to advance a circular marine economy that can grow the industry while protecting the environment, be resilient and create new businesses and jobs for the future.”

Member for Bega Dr Michael Holland said:

“This investment is a major win for ten Bega Valley and Eurobodalla aquaculture businesses and the local skilled jobs they support, plus the many businesses that support these ventures.

“From modernising oyster farms to improving waste recovery, this investment by our Government supports productivity today while future-proofing the industry against environmental and market challenges.

“Our Government works as a team to deliver what is needed. This program and the funding are a smart response after listening to local businesses and recognising the unique features of aquaculture along our state’s coastline.”

Wapengo Rocks Wild Organic Oysters General Manager Shane Buckley said:

“This funding will help us deploy highly efficient on-water infrastructure and gives us the opportunity to scale our oyster production enough to actively contribute to the outcomes outlined in the Aquaculture Vision Statement that Minister Moriarty launched.

“We will construct a purpose built, state of the art, climate controlled, processing and packaging facility here at Wapengo with expanded wet storage and processing area, as well as install a full solar and battery system, which aligns with our core business value of environmental sustainability.”

Ocean2Earth Executive General Manager Kyran Crane said:

“This funding enables Ocean2Earth to scale our marine waste recovery and fertiliser manufacturing operations, turning seafood by-products into valuable inputs for agriculture.

“It also supports regional jobs, reduces landfill, and strengthens a circular, locally based supply chain.”

RW Rutter and Tro Director Rodney Rutter said:

“This funding means we can upgrade our Wapengo Lake farm to produce strong, healthy juvenile Pacific Oysters and support growers across NSW, especially those needing to restock after floods or disease.

“The new equipment will let us grow and handle oysters more efficiently, increase local supply and create extra jobs as the nursery expands. Ultimately, this project will help strengthen recovery and build long-term resilience for the NSW oyster industry.”

Owner and farmer of Sandingroove Oysters Adrian Pinkerton said:

“Thanks to the NSW Government’s support, we can upgrade our farm with modern equipment that helps us work more efficiently and sustainably.

“This funding means we can improve oyster quality, reduce costs, and build a stronger, more resilient business. It also allows us to share key equipment with neighbouring farmers so the whole region benefits.”

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