

## Hon Geoff Brock MP

Minister for Regional Development

Wednesday, 8 November 2017

### **Biosecurity boost for Cowell oyster business**

The biosecurity of the state's oyster industry will be bolstered by a \$267,500 Regional Development Fund grant to Eyre Shellfish at Cowell.

The \$535,000 project is Stage Two of a \$4 million project that will see enhanced biosecurity at the Pacific Oyster hatchery and nursery – with the construction of an additional hatchery, nursery, dam and water raceway.

The State Government grant will help create nine FTE jobs through the project's construction phase, with an additional four ongoing FTEs bringing the business' staff numbers to ten.

### **Background**

Oysters are one of South Australia's most valued premium seafood products with the state producing around 5400 tonnes annually – generating \$38 million for the local economy in 2015-16.

Eyre Shellfish was established in 2016 in response to the need for South Australian-produced oyster spat, due to the detection of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) in Tasmania.

The detection led to a ban on the importation of Pacific Oyster spat from Tasmanian hatcheries into South Australia. This ban was needed to ensure South Australia remained POMS free. The state's oyster farmers previously received regular consignments of oyster spat from well-established hatcheries in Tasmania.

The State Government, through Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) has provided considerable support to oyster growers since the initial outbreak of POMS in Tasmania.

This support includes financial and operational assistance to increase spat production from two existing hatcheries and the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), the research division of PIRSA, along with the establishment of two new hatcheries on the Eyre Peninsula – including Eyre Shellfish.

The Regional Development Fund drives economic growth through grants to boost investment in regional infrastructure and the creation of jobs in South Australia.

This project supports the State Government's economic priority of 'Premium food and wine produced in our clean environment and exported to the world'.

**Quotes attributable to Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock**

Based in the pristine waters around the Eyre Peninsula, this business will be a fantastic contributor to the South Australian oyster industry – which is worth more than \$32 million per year.

This project will create another layer of biosecurity protection for this growing industry.

**Quotes attributable to Eyre Shellfish General Manager Greg Bowers**

We have designed our Cowell site with biosecurity front and centre of its design.

The support of the RDF grant means we can ensure that our systems and processes – including quarantined rooms, and water treatment and storage – meet specific biosecurity standards, reducing oyster stress and the risk of diseases such as POMS.

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