

# Media Release

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**  
Minister for Environment  
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events  
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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## PUTTING MORE MUSSEL INTO VICTORIA'S SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

The Allan Labor Government is expanding the state's thriving aquaculture sector by opening up an additional 369 hectares of water for farming in Port Phillip's aquaculture reserves – boosting Victoria's seafood industry.

Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos today announced that as part of a \$1.25 million investment into the sector that more water will now be available for aquaculture for the first time since 2017 – a significant step for the growing industry.

High-quality mussels, abalone, barramundi, rainbow trout and more are being farmed in Victoria and consumed by seafood lovers both here and abroad. Victorian aquaculture has gone from strength to strength and now generates more than \$50m per year – exceeding the value of the wild catch sector.

Port Phillip is an ideal location for aquaculture because it has clean, high quality water that's the right temperature, and it's close to transport and research facilities like Queenscliff's shellfish hatchery.

The bay's shellfish and seaweed industry has farms in both Port Phillip and Western Port covering 552 hectares. This investment will open up 27 new sites located within the existing Dromana, Kirk Point-Werribee, Pinnacle Channel, Bates Point, and Grassy Point Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves to cater for the industry's continued growth.

Most of the vacant water is in the Pinnacle Channel reserve near Mud Island, where only three of 16 sites are actively farmed. The sites out for tender in the Pinnacle Channel are the largest on offer at 27 hectares each and are proven to provide good growing conditions for various shellfish.

Before the previous allocation of sites in 2017, Victorian mussel producers harvested approximately 1,000 tonnes of product worth \$3m each year. Growth of around 210 tonnes was expected from the 60 hectares allocated, however that value has since doubled to now produce more than 1,900 tonnes worth \$6.4m in 2022/23.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) will oversee the tender process and manage the new sites, which are expected to primarily be used to produce mussels but also have the potential to house seaweed or native angasi oyster farming operations.

The VFA is in the process of assuming responsibility for the management of aquaculture crown leases from the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, and is now managing both licensing and leasing within the reserves allowing more frequent allocations and simpler administration for farmers.

Tenders are now open to new operators as well as existing businesses looking to expand or diversify their operations. Interested parties can apply via [tenders.vic.gov.au](https://tenders.vic.gov.au) between 25 November and 16 December. For more information head to [www.vfa.vic.gov.au/aquaculturetender](https://www.vfa.vic.gov.au/aquaculturetender).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos

*"We know producers have the appetite to grow their businesses and consumers want to buy local, sustainable, high-quality produce so we're making more water available to support production on Melbourne's doorstep."*

*"Victoria is already home to world-class seafood producers, and we want to keep growing the industry so people here and overseas can enjoy a fresh, Victorian seafood meal with family and friends."*

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