Aquaculture in South Australia

South Australia is home to a well-established and highly developed seafood industry, with the state’s aquaculture sectors producing high value niche products, particularly Southern Bluefin Tuna, oysters, mussels and abalone. Demand far outweighs supply for South Australian seafood from the nutrient-rich waters of the Southern Ocean, and there are immediate investment opportunities for further commercial development of under-utilised species such as King George Whiting, kingfish, Blue Swimmer crab, sea cucumber, seaweed and Western King Prawn. South Australia’s sophisticated, fully integrated infrastructure ensures there is an easily accessible roadmap to both domestic and export markets for our highly sought seafood.

The Government of South Australia is committed to supporting investment in aquaculture in our state. Our Case Management approach facilitates potential projects across government, which has resulted in new aquaculture investment projects successfully launching across South Australia.

Key features of the aquaculture industry are:

•  Premium high-value species
•  Lower costs-of-production
•  Full traceability and advanced logistical infrastructure
•  Pristine waters and clean environment
•  World leading research and development institute based in metropolitan Adelaide
•  Strong policy and regulatory environment

South Australia is recognised as a world leader in the ecologically sustainable development of aquaculture, with one of Australia’s most comprehensive legislations in place to protect and manage the state’s aquatic resources.

Home to the most diverse range of aquaculture in Australia, including subtidal and intertidal mollusc farming, sea-cage farming of finfish and a range of landbased systems, more than 80% of marine life found in southern Australian waters is found nowhere else on Earth.

The protection of the aquatic environment through environmental monitoring, aquatic animal health programs and strict zoning requirements ensures South Australian seafood retains a high standard of environmental credentials while providing certainty and opportunity for industry investment.

The Government of South Australia invests significantly in research and innovation in the state’s aquaculture industry. The South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) is a world-class leader in seafood and sea species research and works closely with industry to develop and commercialise new projects. PIRSA administers rigorous aquaculture policy that both supports and protects your investment in aquaculture in South Australia.

South Australia is ranked nationally as one of the lowest cost-of-production states in Australia. With a hard-working and comparatively lower cost workforce than other states, as well as excellent logistical infrastructure for immediate cold-chain transport and full traceability of produce, South Australia is a natural leader in the production and export of premium seafood.
Aquaculture zones in South Australia

Aquaculture zone policies are statutory policies that dedicate or prioritise spatial areas of South Australia’s marine environment for the purposes of aquaculture activity, which essentially includes:

- Species that may be farmed
- The type of aquaculture system that is allowed
- Limitations on biomass or leasable areas in a given location

Legend

- Barramundi
- Tuna & Finfish
- Abalone
- Mussel
- Oyster
- Yabby/Marron
- Algae
Aquaculture leasing and licensing process

**Approach PIRSA:**
- Assistance with proposal development
- Feasibility and legislative advice
- Government liaison

**Questions to consider:**
- Which species will you culture?
- Where will your operations be located?
- Which farming method will you use?
- What is your expected output in tonnage for this development?
- Can you demonstrate your expertise in this area?

**Lodge Expression of Interest**

**Apply for Aquaculture lease**

**Apply for Aquaculture licence**

**Full assessment $$$**
- Public notification
- Ecologically Sustainable Development Assessment
- Assessment against Environment, Transport, Development and Native Title Acts
- Aquaculture Tenure Assessment Board Approval (ATAB)

$$ = Payment required to lodge your detailed project application.
Step by step guide

Approach PIRSA

When considering an investment in aquaculture, the first step is to approach PIRSA, who will provide initial advice on your project, on aspects such as location, species, regulations and the approvals process. PIRSA offers you a wealth of experience in aquaculture investment projects, and is a dedicated source of up-to-date industry information. A well scoped proposal will increase the likelihood of a successful application and lay the foundation for a successful project.

Lodge Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest (EOI) is the first official step in the application process. PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture will complete a quick assessment of your proposal to formally advise on the feasibility of your project and whether you should proceed to the next step, full assessment. There is no cost for lodging your EOI.

Full Assessment

At this stage you will need to prepare and lodge a detailed project application, including applying for an Aquaculture Lease and an Aquaculture Licence. Land-based aquaculture applications do not require an aquaculture lease. You will need to pay an application fee to lodge your detailed project application. PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture will undertake an in-depth analysis and refer your application to other South Australian Government agencies that have jurisdiction over your project. PIRSA offer a one-stop-shop service and once submitted, will manage your application throughout the full assessment process.

Application Approved

A full application usually takes between six to 12 months to be approved. The process can take longer depending on the extent, complexity and size of the aquaculture proposal. The Aquaculture Tenure Assessment Board (ATAB) is responsible for considering your application and will make a formal recommendation to the Minister for approval.

Start Operations

Once your licence has been approved and formally issued you are ready to start building your project infrastructure and operations.

Here to help

To ensure the success of your application, PIRSA offers services that will assist with the formal development and delivery of your proposal or project. Some of these services may incur costs. We can also refer you to professional fee-for-service independent consultants.

Industry associations

There are specific industry associations that represent well-established species in South Australia. They can provide current and relevant information on species and farming methods.

Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia can assist potential investors with refining industry development concepts as well as help to find funding sources.

Local Government

Local Government refers to the system in which 68 local councils operate in South Australia. Each local council is responsible for the planning and approval of infrastructure and building applications within the local community it serves.

Independent consultants

There are various independent consultants available, who can provide technical advice, due diligence and feasibility expertise.
About Primary Industries and Regions SA

Primary Industries and Regions SA is a key government agency responsible for the economic development of primary industries and regions in South Australia. PIRSA oversees South Australia’s agriculture, seafood, forestry, wine and food industries.

With a vision for growing sustainable and competitive regions, PIRSA drives the Government of South Australia’s economic priority Premium Food and Wine Produced in our Clean Environment and Exported to the World.

This priority encompasses objectives to boost production, encourage a market-driven focus, ensure sustainable management, lead cutting edge research, and protect and enhance the integrity of South Australia’s primary products through robust biosecurity and food safety programs.