Opportunities in the Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone, Western Australia

The Department of Fisheries is pleased to invite applications for aquaculture licences and leases in the Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone.¹

This zone was declared by the Minister for Fisheries on 22 August 2014 and is the first aquaculture development zone to be established in Western Australia.

Licences and leases will be issued in accordance with the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA), Regulation 67 of the Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995 (FRMR)² and the Fisheries Occasional Publication 127 – Aquaculture Zones in Western Australia – Policy Principles Relating to Considerations for Aquaculture Licence and Leases.³

Image courtesy of Broome Aquaculture Centre


² http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/About-Us/Legislation/Western_Australian_Fisheries_Legislation/Pages/default.aspx

This zone is in Cone Bay, at the northern end of King Sound, about 215 kilometres north-north-east of Broome, a proven location for the culture of barramundi. The tidal influence creates substantial water flow through the sea cages in which the fish are grown, allowing for a high level of productivity with a low environmental impact.

The creation of the zone involved environmental assessment of the whole zone as a Strategic Proposal under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Approval of the Strategic Proposal simplifies an otherwise drawn out and costly process, by enabling existing and future aquaculture operators to refer project proposals to the Environmental Protection Authority as a Derived Proposal.

Through streamlining environmental approval processes, establishing aquaculture development zones greatly reduces the investment risk and cost of large-scale aquaculture in WA. The Government does not propose to recover the cost of establishing this zone from current or future operators within it.

The establishment of commercial marine finfish aquaculture projects in an aquaculture development zone is not expected to cause a significant environmental impact due to:

- the aquaculture development zone’s physical characteristics, particularly the high rates of water exchange that are sufficient to disperse and dilute nutrients before they are assimilated by the ecosystem; and

- the adaptive management controls and environmental monitoring developed for the aquaculture development zone and the individual proposals within it.

**Zone characteristics**

The zone covers about 2,000 hectares with an average water depth of 20 metres over mostly sandy bottom. The boundaries are shown on the map below. New leases granted inside the zone must have a buffer of 50 metres between the lease boundary and the zone boundary to meet acceptable levels of ecological protection.
Existing farm

A barramundi farm already operating in the zone occupies 700 hectares of the total 2000 hectares, and that area is not available for lease applications. Applicants must ensure nominated sites do not infringe on the existing site, shown on the map below.
Zone management

The Department will manage aquaculture development zones according to an integrated management framework, the purpose of which is to:

- establish an overarching, integrated structure for managing the aquaculture activities within the Aquaculture Development Zone;
- provide clear, efficient and effective processes for monitoring, evaluating and reporting;
- guide the development of marine finfish aquaculture;
- implement the monitoring and reporting processes; and
- ensure adaptive management occurs as part of a process of continuous improvement.

For more information, see the *Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone Management Policy.*

Further information

For more information about the Kimberley Aquaculture Development Zone, management of the zone and site allocation, visit [www.fish.wa.gov.au/aquaculture](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/aquaculture) or email aquaculture@fish.wa.gov.au.

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