

**APPLICATION FOR THE VARIATION OF AN AQUACULTURE
LICENCE**

by

Wildblue Holdings Pty Ltd

Abrolhos Islands WA

September 2022

**DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DPIRD)**

APPLICATION FOR THE VARIATION OF AN AQUACULTURE LICENCE

**WildbBlue Holdings Pty Ltd
Abrolhos Islands WA**

File Ref	fA644678
Date of Application	4/07/2022
General Location	Pelsaert Island Group, Abrolhos Islands, WA
Total Area of Proposed Site	4.396 hectares
Authorised Species	Green Algae (<i>Caulerpa lentillifera</i>) Seaweed (Dumontiaceae <i>gigartina</i>) Seaweed (<i>Eucheuma gelatinous</i>) Seaweed (Gelidiaceae) Seaweed (<i>Pterocladia lucida</i>) Seaweed (<i>Solieria robusta</i>) Seaweed - <i>Meristotheca papulose (jigunacai)</i> Seaweed (<i>Eucheuma denticulate</i>) Seaweed (<i>Eucheuma speciosum</i>) Seaweed (<i>Portieria hornemannii</i>) Seaweed (Pyropia) Seaweed (<i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i>)
Culture Method	Growout using longlines
Other Sites (within 5 n mile)	Abrolhos Island Oysters; Sea Urchin Pty Ltd; Pelsaert WA Pty Ltd, WTN Nominees Pty Ltd & Pelsaert (WA) Pty Ltd; West Australian Octopus Pty Ltd; Andrew Joseph & Tracey Lee Basile; Batavia Coral Farm Pty Ltd; Peter and Karen Armstrong; and Bruce Cunningham
Further Information	Contact Druimé Nolan at Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (08) 6319 3659 or druime.nolan@dpird.wa.gov.au .

Information provided by the applicant relevant to an application for the variation of an aquaculture licence.

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Introduction

This document outlines the information for consideration by agencies, stakeholders and community and industry groups regarding a proposal submitted by Wildblue Holdings Pty Ltd (WBH) for the variation of an aquaculture licence (Licence).

Background

On 4 October 2018, WBH was granted a Licence in the Abrolhos Islands, which authorises the aquaculture of several macroalgae or seaweed species (macroalgae are large algae such as kelp, which often occur in dense beds attached to the seabed) at a site within the Pelsaert Island Group of the Abrolhos Islands.

Proposal

WBH has made an application to vary its Licence to add an additional site to its Licence. The additional site will be used primarily for the production of the seaweed species *Eucheuma speciosum*, for which demand is increasing.

Source of Stock and Methods

The site will accommodate a series of growth lines. Cuttings from existing stock will be threaded through the lines, which will be separated by poly pipe. WBH has refined its aquaculture techniques, by conducting its own research and development. These aquaculture methods have proven to be successful for the culture of *Eucheuma speciosum*.

WBH has a land-based nursery aquarium system, which is used to develop fragments of algal colonies before they are deployed onto lines or production panels for grow-out.

WBH's Licence has conditions that permit the collection of seedstock that naturally settles on aquaculture gear within the licenced site.

WBH also has an existing Ministerial exemption which authorises it to collect seaweed fragments from local broodstock collected within a one nautical mile radius of the Wallabi, Easter and Pelsaert Island Groups. The seaweed fragments are placed in the growout plot until harvest.

Diagram

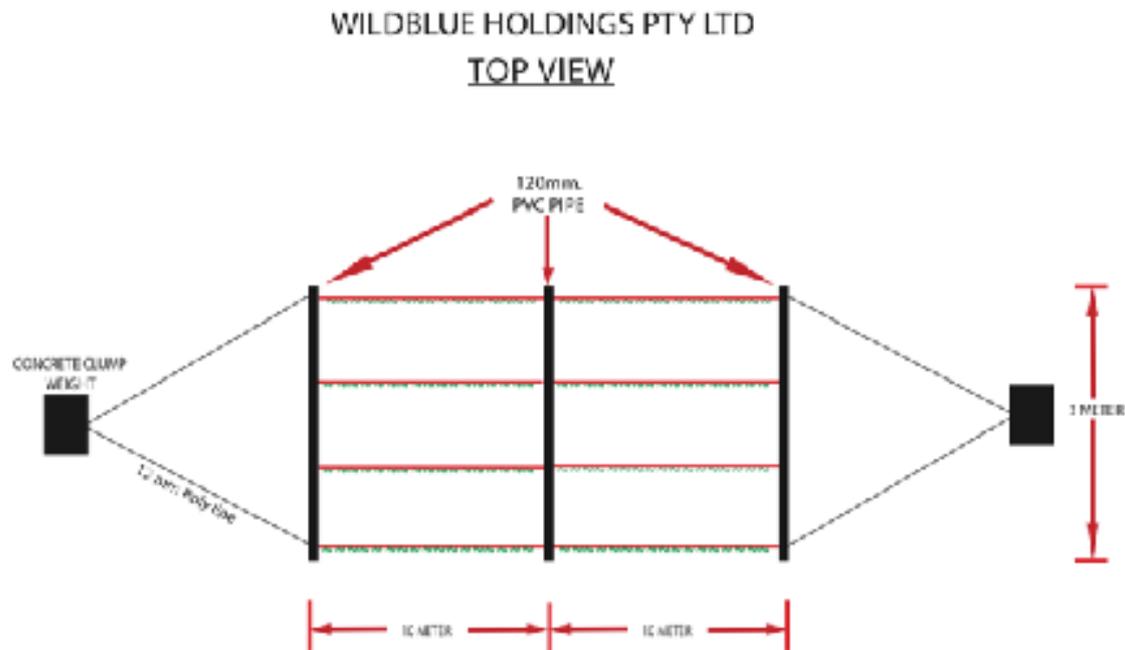


Figure 1:
WBH Seaweed Longline configuration

Management and Environmental Monitoring

The biosecurity risk in respect of diseases and pests for this project is considered low due to the licensed species originating from local waters. As seaweed produce no faecal material and require no supplementary feed, it is unlikely that the water or sediment quality will be impacted by the operation.

Seaweed broodstock will originate from within the Abrolhos Islands to ensure that no exotic pathogens are introduced to the area.

Collection of broodstock and seedstock is subject to reports being made to DPIRD and biosecurity measures as described in the approved Management and Environmental Monitoring Plan (MEMP).

WBH has submitted an updated MEMP, which includes biosecurity protocols and incident and emergency procedures. The risk of disease through seaweed aquaculture is considered low. The MEMP also includes a comprehensive environmental monitoring program to ensure impact to the local environment is mitigated.

The additional proposed site is positioned over sandy substrate and located 1.4 km from Pelseart Island with a depth of one metre. The position and distance of the proposed site from Pelseart Island has been selected to also mitigate impact on nesting birds protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

It is unlikely the operation will have an impact on marine fauna because of its shallow nature and the licensed seaweed species being cultured not being subject to any significant predation. Nonetheless, the proponent will be following a Marine Fauna Management Plan that is guided by the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia Mussel and Oyster Environmental Code of Practice (ACWA 2013), implementing management strategies to protect marine fauna from entanglement and other interactions.

Risks

The additional site proposed by the variation to the Licence poses no significant environmental issues, with identified risks being mitigated by WBH's MEMP.

The species of seaweed proposed for production at the added site occur naturally in the surrounding environment, therefore the risk of the introduction of disease is low. All spores and fronds, produced for grow out will be the progeny of local broodstock and transferred to the site authorised under Aquaculture Licence No.1655 within Pelseart Island, in accordance with the licence conditions.

The selection of the additional site has been developed to mitigate impact to EPBC species and navigational pathways.