

APPLICATIONS FOR AN AQUACULTURE LICENCE AND LEASE

by

Rat Island Coral Aquaculture Pty Ltd

Abrolhos Islands WA

June 2018

**DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DPIRD)
APPLICATIONS FOR AN AQUACULTURE LICENCE AND LEASE
Rat Island Coral Aquaculture Pty Ltd
Abrolhos Islands WA**

File Ref	L57/17
Date of Application	21 September 2017
General Location	Rat Island, Abrolhos Islands, WA
Area of Proposed Sites	5.078 hectares
Species	various coral species
Culture Method	grow-out
Other Sites (within 5 n mile)	Radar Holdings Pty Ltd, Grange Court Pty Ltd, Abrolhos Aquaculture Australia Pty Ltd
Further Information	Contact Danielle Hartshorn at DPIRD Aquaculture Branch on (08) 6551 4305 or danielle.hartshorn@dpiird.wa.gov.au .

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

Rat Island Coral Aquaculture

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Introduction

This document outlines the information for consideration by agencies, stakeholders and community and industry groups regarding an application submitted by Rat Island Coral Aquaculture Pty Ltd (RICA) for an aquaculture licence and lease.

Background

RICA has made an application to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Department) for an aquaculture licence and an aquaculture lease in waters off Rat Island, within the Easter Island Group of the Arolhos Islands.

Proposal

RICA is seeking to establish a coral aquaculture operation at two sites off Rat Island (Attachment 1). Each site is 2.539 hectares. The proposed coral species for aquaculture are outlined in Attachment 2.

RICA's proposed coral operation will be used for commercial aquaculture purposes but will also have ecotourism and scientific values, potentially providing an opportunity for hobby divers and university students to visit and study coral and live rock within the proposed aquaculture site.

The proponent also proposes to apply for an exemption to enable it to collect broodstock of the proposed species.

Source of Stock and Methods

The proposed aquaculture production system comprises an extensive open water system using up to six racks within each aquaculture site. The proposed materials for the aquaculture gear will be racks made up of PVC piping, concrete blocks for anchoring and ropes to connect the racks.

With regard to broodstock, RICA proposes to collect endemic coral and live rock broodstock from the eastern side of Rat Island using hand tools to collect coral fragments approximately 40 mm length. Less than one quarter of each coral will be harvested to minimise stress and aid in recovery.

Once the fragments have been harvested, the lower epidermal surface of coral fragments will be glued to poly pipe 'plugs' filled with cement and inserted into the artificial reef habitat within the racks. The coral fragments will remain on the growout structures until they reach market size.

Diagram

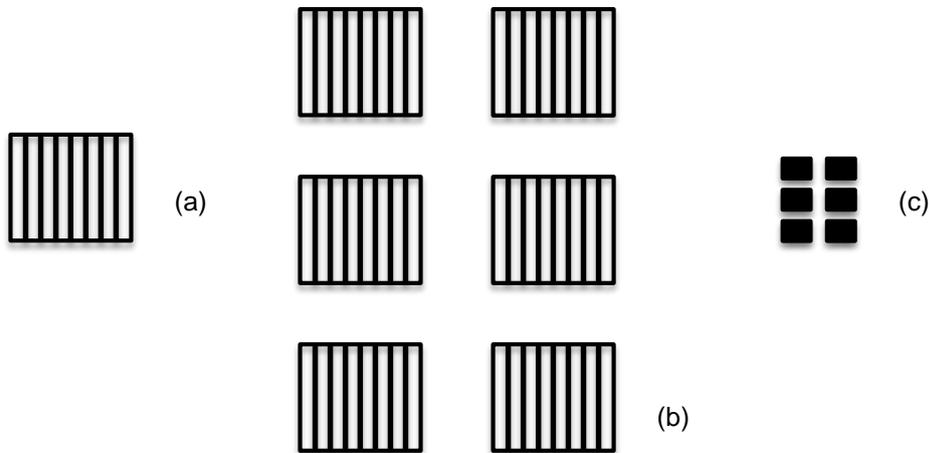


Figure 1: Presents a single rack, comprising of nine 'runs' per platform (a). Each rack potentially holds 540 coral fragments. Each site will comprise of up to six racks (b).

Management and Environmental Monitoring

The biosecurity risk of this project is considered low due to the proposed species originating from local waters and not requiring additional or supplementary feeding.

To ensure that there is minimal environmental change, RICA is proposing to install a total of four monitoring stations - two adjacent to and two within the aquaculture site. In addition, visual underwater surveys will be conducted at each of the stations prior to establishment of the site and will continuously be monitored every three months.

The proposed land-based facility comprises an existing facility or camp that is currently leased by the proponent and located on Rat Island. No new infrastructure will be developed for this operation.

RICA has submitted a Management and Environmental Monitoring Plan (MEMP), which among other matters deals with environmental monitoring and biosecurity. The environmental monitoring proposed by the MEMP is considered suitable for the project and the biosecurity section outlines controls such as quarantine protocols in the event of a disease outbreak. The Department has reviewed the MEMP and considers the risk of negative environmental impact and disease through coral aquaculture is low.

All broodstock will be subject to broodstock exemption conditions that deal with biosecurity and environmental risks. The exemption will also define the broodstock collection area to ensure that only endemic coral species from the Abrolhos Islands will be sourced.
