

**APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT OF A PEARL OYSTER FARM
LEASE**

by

Maxima Pearling Company Pty Ltd

Broome – Cape Villaret A

October 2021

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

APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT OF PEARL OYSTER FARM LEASES

Maxima Pearling Company Pty Ltd

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|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| File Ref | 1064/21 |
| Date of Application | 13 September 2021 |
| General Location | Cape Villaret, Broome (see site plan below) |
| Area of Proposed Site | 2.255 square nautical miles |
| Proposed Species | Pearl Oyster (<i>Pinctada maxima</i>) |
| Culture Method | Subsurface longline culturing techniques |
| Other pearl farm leases (within 5 nautical miles) | Nil existing sites One proposed site – Cygnet Bay Pearl Consolidated Pty Ltd |
| Further Information | Contact Lauren Wright at DPIRD Aquatic Resource Management on Lauren.Wright@dpird.wa.gov.au |

**Information provided by the applicant relevant to applications for the grant of
pearl oyster farm leases**

Maxima Pearling Company Pty Ltd

October 2021

Introduction

This document outlines the information for consideration by agencies, stakeholders and community and industry groups regarding a proposal submitted by Maxima Pearling Company Pty Ltd (Maxima) for a pearl oyster farm lease site.

Proposal

On 13 September 2021, Maxima submitted an application to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) for a pearl oyster farm lease site. The site comprises an area of 2.255 nautical miles (see attached site plan) and was previously held by Maxima until it was relinquished in 2019. The application is for the same site.

Maxima seeks to undertake culture, grow-out and harvest of *Pinctada maxima* pearl oysters which produce Western Australian South Sea Pearls and can also be harvested for pearl meat and mother of pearl shell.

Source of Stock and Methods

In the Western Australian *Pinctada maxima* Fishery, pearl oysters can be sourced by licence holders from the wild fishery or grown in land-based hatcheries.

The pearl oysters will be seeded and then maintained on the proposed lease site using subsurface culture long-line techniques until harvest.

Environmental Considerations

The proposed area has been surveyed by using divers to drift across the area for the length of proposed site. Each drift was achieved in a 14 minute period. The average depth of the area is 16m. The drift diver data, Maxima's historical knowledge of the site and high-resolution echo soundings were used to build an accurate lay out of the site.

Benthic habitat

The benthic substrate within the proposed lease areas consists largely of light garden bottom with small areas of shell grit and sand.

Water movement/circulation

The water movement through the area is variable, depending on the stage and amplitude of the tide. The area is one of high tidal movement with the area flushed with each change in tide. The flood tide moves in a south easterly direction and ebbs

in a north westerly direction. The tidal range is up to 9m. The tide direction become variable as you move off the eastern boundary towards the coast.

Important biological resources

Some pelagic sea life is seen in the area as well as demersal sea life recorded on the sea floor. The area is not a notable area for breeding or feeding of any species.

Potential Environmental impacts

As the sea floor is light garden composition, there will be very little environmental impact on the sea floor.

The proposed Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park is the closest marine park over six nautical miles away to the North East.

Proposed infrastructure

The proposed site will be serviced on day trips by a pearling vessel from Broome. At times it will be required that a Pearling mother vessel uses a mooring to provide a work and living platform for pearling workers if activities are expected to last more than one day. It is the intention of the applicant that subsurface culturing techniques will be adopted at this proposed lease. Anchors and weights will be installed by divers on the sea floor that the long line hardware are attached to; lines can be removed and replaced with new ones without disturbing the anchoring system or the attached organisms that will grow over time. Subsurface infrastructure will be marked with surface floats.

Visual amenity

Due to the minimal infrastructure required there will be very low visual impact to those in the area. Furthermore, with the lease being located offshore, any boundary buoyage marking or lighting will be minimal in its impact. The only visible infrastructure will be black 400mm floatation buoys and any boundary markers/lighting enforced by the Department of Transport.

Public access

The proposed site is located in a low usage area and away from any known shipping channels and as a result will pose no navigational problems for vessels using the area. The lease will be marked with appropriate marker buoyage.

Pearl oyster farm leases are non-exclusive, meaning there is no impediment to other users traversing the farm lease or using the area for fishing or other recreational activities, provided culture infrastructure is not interfered with.

Having a long history of operation on the site, Maxima can confirm the proposed lease area is not known as a recreational or commercial fishing ground. Boat traffic is minimal as the lease is situated six nautical miles offshore. Pearling activities are prevalent in the area.

It is not anticipated that the proposed site area will have any significant environmental impact on the surrounding area due to the above conditions and the adoption of the pearling industry 'best management practice'.

Benthic image



Tidal flow



BROOME - CAPE VILLARET MAXIMA PEARLING COMPANY PTY LTD PEARL FARM LEASE APPLICATION - SITE PLAN

ALL THAT PORTION OF TERRITORIAL WATER WITHIN THE BOUNDARY DESCRIBED AND COLOURED GREEN ON THE PLAN BELOW COMPRISING A TOTAL AREA OF 2.255 SQUARE NAUTICAL MILES

