

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: News Editor

Aquaculture set to surge

A major forum is about to survey the future of aquaculture in Western Australia, including potential initiatives in the Great Southern's clean ocean.

The Aquaculture Western Australia State Forum will be held in Perth on Thursday 26 May, with the aim of developing a collaborative agenda for the industry.

The forum is an initiative of eight of Western Australia's Regional Development Commissions, including the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), and is also supported by the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia and the Department of Fisheries.

GSDC Deputy Chair Ross Thornton said aquaculture was identified in the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* as an area of opportunity for the region.

"We have established operations that already contribute to the region's economy but there is significant scope to expand the sector," Mr Thornton said.

"Research indicates that demand for quality seafood is projected to increase in line with incomes in key Asian markets.

"Strategic investments in aquaculture to meet some of that market demand will be important to the future development of the Great Southern.

"With the support of \$2.3 million in funding announced in the recent State Budget, Albany will soon host a new multi-species shellfish hatchery, which will help to advance the region towards a stronger future in aquaculture," Mr Thornton said.

The GSDC will be represented at the forum and will supply delegates with information on the region's aquaculture potential.

Presentations will include commercial operators, researchers and representatives from the Department of Fisheries and Department of Regional Development.

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