

# South Coast Mariculture Regional Tourism, Local Employment and Training Progress Report

This report has been prepared in response to Condition E6 of SSI5657-Mod-1 in relation to the Community Stakeholder Plan. Condition E6 states:

*Within two years of the date of this approval, unless otherwise agreed by the Secretary, the Proponent shall submit a report to the Secretary demonstrating that they have actively attempted to work with local businesses, community groups, local aboriginal communities or other local bodies to incorporate regional tourism and local employment and/or training opportunities into the Project. The report shall outline initiatives undertaken, the success or otherwise of these initiatives and what additional activities (if anything) will be undertaken for the duration of the development.*

## Background

In 2015 South Coast Mariculture Pty Ltd (SCM) won the tender for 50 ha of water space in Jervis Bay. In 2018 we were successful in securing the approval from Fisheries NSW to develop our three aquaculture leases, under permit AP2554 from NSW DPI. This permit allowed us to culture a number of marine bivalve species on the leases.

Since the initiation of the project SCM has worked in close consultation with NSW DPI, local, state and federal government agencies, community groups, private enterprise and numerous other stakeholders to ensure that the planning, development, infrastructure deployment, operations and environmental management of the SCM commercial shellfish aquaculture lease/s (SCMCAL) meet the conditions of the SSI-5657 and that the development has a net positive impact for the environment, employment, the local community, local and regional tourism industry and the Jervis Bay region.

During this time Blue Harvest have been pivotal in the sales and marketing of mussels and oysters produced within South Coast Mariculture. This has contributed to the success of our influence in regional tourism and local employment. For added context, Blue Harvest are a leading Australian Aquaculture service business which provide sales and marketing agency services to aquaculture producers. They have over 20 years of experience in the aquaculture industry and seafood supply chain (i.e from production, processing and quality assurance right through to seafood retail, preparation and end user presentation).

This report looks specifically at how SCM over time have worked with the local community to incorporate regional tourism, local employment and/ training opportunities. A separate Annual Environmental Report is generated to address all other requirements of the Community Stakeholder Plan by updating and reflecting on community consultation and engagement activities within the financial year.

The following report will outline the following:

- Initiatives undertaken to work with local businesses, local communities and local aboriginal communities
- The success of these initiatives
- Additional activities that are planned for the duration of the project

## Working with Local Businesses

### KIX Mill Operations

South Coast Mariculture has worked in collaboration with PhycoHealth (Seaweed Science based company in Woollamia industrial area) through the initial start up phases of our new KIX Mill which was commissioned in November 2024. PhycoHealth uses a KIX Mill to process their seaweed and kindly shared this machinery with SCM through the initial trials which looked at turning our mussels into powder. The aim of the KIX Mill has been to process various by-products from the cook up line, out-of-spec products (i.e. broken shells) from the live and cooking lines, and byssal threads extracted during the debysing process.

This machine has given SCM the opportunity to diversify its product range. This milling process operates under controlled temperatures and processing cycles, producing dehydrated products including dried or powdered meat and/ or shell based products.

South Coast Mariculture are now a proud producer of the following bio products:

- Pet Food: True Grit Mussel Shell Grit - A calcium supplement made from granulated mussel shell for poultry supporting a stronger eggshell, healthier bones and better overall nutrition.
- Pet Food: Mussel Meat Powder - A premium, all-natural dog supplement made from 100% milled blue mussel meat which is rich in protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and essential vitamins and minerals which supports joint health, skin and coat condition, digestion and overall wellbeing.

The development of this mill has assisted SCM in its contribution towards a zero waste economy specifically through minimising bi-product waste and organic matter. Both our True Grit and Mussel Supplements for dogs are examples of unfavourable mussels and/ or shells

that would have otherwise would have gone to landfill. We estimate that this processing has contributed roughly a 30% reduction in waste to landfill.

SCM wish to continue and expand our eco-friendly and sustainably sourced pet food supply. We are currently working with and will continue to work with Bega Valley Eggs to determine the effectiveness of the True Grit Mussel Shell Grit so that chicken farmers have eco-friendly choices that produce high quality eggs.

The KIX Mill initiative has not only been an example of collaboration with other businesses but it has also led to increased employment opportunities within the SCM and Blue Harvest teams. SCM in 2024 substantially expanded their processing facility and through the KIX Mill are now able to process more regularly based on yield because we can cook for other markets, allowing for the increased production of mussels.

SCM are only in the early phases of using the KIX Mill but plan to expand into other markets other than pet food in the future.

### Victorian Mussels

SCM have been working with a Victorian mussel company who supply mussels when supply is not meeting demand in Jervis Bay or we experience unexpected events such as mortality or weather which affect the harvesting of our mussels. We have been collaborating with them for the past two years. This partnership has been very successful and also pivotal to keeping Blue Harvest processing facility stocked with mussels all year round so that we can consistently supply restaurants in the local area and various other NSW markets which positively impact the tourism industry.

SCM and Blue Harvest plan to continue this supply agreement into the future.

### Local and Regional Mussel Sales

SCM contributes to the local and regional tourism industry through supplying our mussels to a number of local restaurants including the Husky Pub, Buds, Malaysian Drago and Le Vespa. We also sell to Nowra based businesses such as Nowra Fresh Seafood Market and VNC Wholefoods.

Our strongest markets are through our supply to major corporate and regional major retailers, as well as shop owners within the Sydney Seafood Market.

### Oyster Fattening Trials

South Coast Mariculture started conducting small-scale oyster fattening trials in 2024 (Twofold Bay leases in January and Jervis Bay leases in August). The experiment was

proposed to gain a better understanding of growth rates and oyster condition. The Sydney Rock Oyster (SRO) are located in Jervis Bay and Pacific Oyster and SRO are located Twofold Bay, both of which are grown in [SEAPA](#) oyster baskets.

SCM have fostered a shared farming approach with three companies who supply their oysters to SCM for the final stages of growth before harvest.

Observations from this year have shown that growth rates were not achieved as hoped. Likely reasons include that there may be too many oysters per basket and that the older oysters may be struggling to adapt to a new environment. Moving forward, SCM will continue the trials however have proposed different strategies to manage growth rates.

### Beach Clean Ups

Since the beginning of operations South Coast Mariculture have organised a number of beach clean ups at Callala beach and Frank Lewis Way bay off the Woollamia wharf to address the concern of rising marine plastic pollution. These events have been a great opportunity to interact with tourists and residents in the area.

Since 2023 SCM have also been collaborating with Ocean Watch Australia who are a national not-for-profit environmental company that works to enhance sustainability in the Australian seafood industry. Each year we have taken part in the Tide to Tip beach clean up day. This is always a massive effort among our staff and volunteers at Ocean Watch where we calculate the volume of waste we collect. This is an example of our continued efforts to protect the marine part and surrounding beach which also contribute to the image of Jervis Bay and the local tourism industry.

SCM plan to continue this tradition into the future.

### World Oceans Day

Since 2022 SCM and local seaweed science business Phycohealth and the Jervis Bay Brewery have come together to create a ticketed event to raise money for the Australian Marine Conservation Society on World Oceans Day. The event includes SCM/ Jervis Bay mussels preparing an array of food packed with mussels and seaweed.

This has always been a fun and successful event which brings lots of locals in the community together to learn more about the food that is produced locally.

### Other Examples of Working with Local Businesses and the Community

SCM have produced an information sheet for Jervis Bay Wild staff to use as a guide to explain marine farming to tourists when they go past the farm on their tour. This has been useful for staff to gain a better understanding of SCM operations.

SCM Marine Operations is part of the Currumbene Creek Boat Owners Facebook group. We are one of the most frequent users of the creek especially during adverse weather events. We use this page to update vessel owners if there are any issues with vessels moored in the creek i.e. broken moorings, flood debris entangled in their moorings, loose or broken sails or awnings. We also provide updates on the changing sandspits and shallow parts of the creek after flooding.

We are often the first point of contact for local mooring contractors and use our vessel and cranes to assist when needed.

### Jervis Bay Shellfish Market

The Jervis Bay Shellfish Market is located at the front of the South Coast Mariculture Factory located at 6 Bolten Road in Woollamia. Its location is centrally located in the industrial area which is a hub for tourist activity i.e. surrounded by other tourist related businesses such as the Jervis Bay Brewery, Flamin Gala Brewery, PhycoHealth, Kraken and Bakehouse bakeries.

Our shop sells a range of products produced by South Coast Mariculture and other seafood produced regionally and across Australia including:

- Sushi made by local Japanese food truck
- Oysters produced as part of our collaborative farming initiative which are initially grown in the NSW region and fattened in Jervis Bay before harvest
- Mussels grown in Jervis Bay and Victoria
- True Grit Mussel Shell Grit supplement for poultry
- Mussel Meat Powder supplement for dogs
- PhycoBucha (Kombucha) made locally by PhycoHealth
- Prawns
- Smoked trout

## Working with the Local and Aboriginal Communities

### Employment and Training

SCM has shown a steady increase in employment each year since 2019. A number of the casual staff members work at the processing facility and some tend to be travellers on 88 day visas, contributing significantly to regional and local tourism in the area.

Most of our full and part time employees are locals in the area. South Coast Mariculture and Blue Harvest Group combined contribute significantly to the employment of Jervis Bay and the Woollamia industrial area. South Coast Mariculture have both previously and currently employ local Aboriginal staff.

2019 - 2020: 7 full time (7)

2020-2021: 9 full time, 1 part time and 11 casual (21)

2021- 2022: 11 full time and 12 casual (23)

2022 - 2023: 17 full time, 1 part time and 17 casual (35)

2023 - 2024: 19 full time, 1 part time and 11 casual (31)

2024 - 2025: SCM - 26 full time, 2 part time, 32 casual (60); BHG 4 full time, 3 part time, 1 casual, 1 maternity leave (8) = 68 altogether

We reach out to Alfred Wellington from the Jerrinja community whenever we are employing new vessel staff to ask if they have any interested and suitable people looking for work. We will continue to maintain this line of communication in the future.

### Staff Training Opportunities

The following training opportunities are offered to employees at South Coast Mariculture and Blue Harvest Group (dependent on role). Operational training in:

- Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) training
- Food Safety Program to maintain high standard of food handling and processing
- Contribute to Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S) training to foster a safe and secure working environment.
- First Aid Training to equip staff with essential life-saving skills in emergencies.
- Skippers and Coxwain tickets
- Waste management training to ensure proper handling and disposal practices.
- Chemical handler training to safely manage and use chemicals by regulatory guidelines.
- Stock health and pest identification training to enhance awareness and early detection capabilities.
- Training on standard operating procedures (SOPs) to promote consistency and adherence to established protocols.
- Approved Sampling training under the NSW Food Authority NSW Shellfish Program
- Fork lift & truck licences
- First Aid

These training efforts have enabled SCM staff to maintain operational excellence, promote environmental stewardship, and ensure health and safety within its workforce.

SCM plan to continue offering these training opportunities in the future and are open to other training opportunities as they see necessary.

### Student Work Experience

South Coast Mariculture has worked with local schools to support student work experience



and educate locals about mussel aquaculture and the marine environment. Several local students from Vincentia High School have gained deckhand experience during term time and the school holidays with the operations crew. SCM takes any opportunities to provide work experience to students who enquire and hopes to train more students in the future.





*Figures 1-5: Local school students gaining deckhand experience*

## Conclusion

To conclude, SCM and Blue Harvest have worked extensively since the beginning of operations to contribute to local and regional tourism and employment through various collaborations with local businesses, aboriginal and community groups. We have worked with local businesses through the establishment of the KIX Mill processing plant which has also created more employment and training opportunities at SCM and also created new bi-products which we sell in our own seafood market, along with other seafood products sold directly to local and tourist customers. We also work collaboratively with a range of businesses who either supply us with or stock our mussels and oysters for local and regional consumption. SCM are proud to regularly be a part of beach cleans up which directly impact the image of Jervis Bay as a tourist hotspot.

In terms of our local community contributions we are a regular host of the World Oceans Day celebrations and our employment numbers have continued to increase each year where we employ both locals and tourists on visas. We have a range of training opportunities available to staff and we also offer student work experience.

Overall we believe our business has been successful in contributing to tourism both locally and regionally and that we have positively impacted employment rates in Jervis Bay through the initiatives discussed above.

In terms of the future, we are forecasting to expand in the processing space so that we can expand into other markets. Any new products we produce will be available firstly in our own



Jervis Bay Shellfish Market which is publicly available to locals and tourists directly and has the potential to grow our workforce even further.