

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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VICTORIAN AQUACULTURE MUSSELS UP TO MEET DEMAND

More Victorian mussels will be on dinner tables around the country as several Port Phillip-based growers expand their operations – set to increase to local production to record levels – thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos today announced that water unlocked this year in Port Phillip's Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves (AFR) is now being put to use for mussel farming.

Made possible by a \$1.25 million investment by the Labor Government – 18 sites covering 290 hectares in the Kirk Point-Werribee, Pinnacle Channel, and Grassy Point AFRs have been allocated to existing growers.

Most of the allocated water was in the Pinnacle Channel reserve near Mud Island, which has been proven to grow high quality shellfish. Some farmers have already placed mussel ropes in the water within the new sites and could be harvesting mussels in 2026.

The allocation of previously unused water is expected to take mussel production to record levels – boosting output by 700 tonnes and supporting more jobs across the supply chain as production ramps up.

Port Phillip is an ideal location for aquaculture – boasting clean, high-quality water that is the right temperature while also being close to transport and facilities like Queenscliff's shellfish hatchery. It is regarded by growers as one of the most productive mussel growing regions in the country.

In 2023/24, the Victorian mussel industry produced 1,700 tonnes of blue mussels valued at \$6 million, as part of a broader Victorian aquaculture industry worth more than \$58 million.

Victorian-grown mussels are already exported to markets across the Asia-Pacific, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, the Maldives, Japan and the Philippines – and with more product in the water, there is strong potential for export volumes to grow.

Mussels are a healthy, protein-packed seafood that are delicious steamed or added to pasta or a seafood paella. They have a relatively long shelf life and are widely available throughout Victoria while remaining fresh and affordable.

Mussel spat seeded onto ropes comes mainly from the Queenscliff-based Victorian Shellfish Hatchery. The facility was established in 2008 as a joint venture between the Victorian Government and mussel farmers and now operates as an independent company helping produce blue mussels as well as Sydney rock and Angasi oysters.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority has also taken over the leasing of the state's aquaculture reserves, reducing red tape for farmers and enabling more frequent allocations of water in years to come.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos

"Port Phillip's blue mussels are world-class produce grown right here on Melbourne's doorstep and we're investing in the sector so Victorian seafood can be enjoyed by more families here and abroad."

"Mussels are healthy, versatile and can be packaged in a variety of ways. That means you can pick them up at supermarket delis or your local fishmonger and they remain fresh, delicious and affordable for Victorian families."

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Quote attributable to VFA CEO Travis Dowling

“Victoria is home to world-leading seafood producers, and we’re committed to supporting the growth of the industry so seafood lovers here and abroad can enjoy fresh, Victorian mussels, fish and shellfish with their loved ones.”