

Aquaculture venture off Two Rocks

On Monday, 24th November, the Aquaculture Development Council (ADC) announced it would be conducting a two year open ocean aquaculture farm trial off Two Rocks, which will be an Australian first.

The project is located ten nautical miles off Two Rocks and is expected to pave the way for a new and sustainable fresh fish supply.

The trial farm will occupy a total area of about 50 hectares and will comprise up to six sea cages, each holding approximately 50 tonnes of yellowtail kingfish.

ADC member, Greg Jenkins, said the Ocean Aquaculture Project has been researched and implemented by the ADC and is supported by the Department of Fisheries.

Unlike previous aquaculture

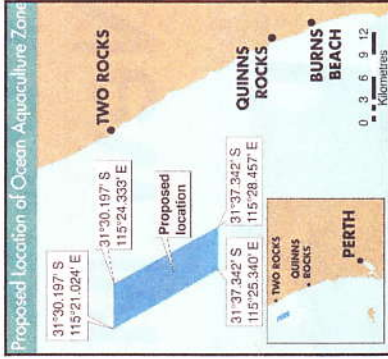
attempts in Australia, this farm will trial the grow-out of fish in ocean waters as opposed to sheltered near-shore waters.

Extensive research and consultation has been undertaken with aquaculture experts from the universities of New Hampshire and Miami.

Economic, technological and environmental feasibility studies have concluded that the best opportunity for a viable aquaculture farm in Western Australia is in the open ocean off Two Rocks.

Some recreational and commercial fishing activities occur in the area surrounding the trial farm site, however there will be minimal impact on these activities.

Sea floor mapping is currently being conducted. Once complete, a site will be chosen that is predominately sandy,



contains no seagrass and does not support any significant reef structures.

Offshore aquaculture production is acknowledged as the future growth area.

Mr Jenkins said: "Extensive research and governance processes are in place to ensure both minimal impact to the environment or community health



and safety; and the open and transparent management of the Ocean Aquaculture Project."

If the two year concept trial proves successful, it is anticipated the project will open the way for an important marine finfish aquaculture industry in Western Australia.

Infrastructure for the project is expected to be in the water by mid 2009, fish stock in the pods

by the end of 2009 with the first saleable product available 12 months later.

The trial is expected to cost up to three million dollars.

Yanchep Beach Joint Venture, who are creating a variety of employment opportunities in the region have been working closely with the ADC.