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# Community-focused research project to explore regenerative farming in Australian waters

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

## The project will explore regenerative farming off New South Wales

The Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), the University of Wollongong and local aquaculture industry leaders are collaborating on a new community-focused project focused on regenerative farming. The project aims to explore the integration of Indigenous, community and economic values in the emerging seaweed and shellfish farming sector in the waters off the south coast of New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

“Working with community and industry leaders at the onset of an emerging industry allows a deep exploration of what contributes to social license and how new and emerging industries like seaweed farming can work in partnership with local communities to maximize environmental, social and economic benefits from day one,” said Angela Williamson, director of blue policy and planning at Blue Economy CRC.

Shellfish farming dominates Australia’s regenerative farming footprint. The NSW south coast is already home to a healthy and vibrant oyster industry along with two mussel farms in Jervis Bay and Eden,



A community-focused research project will explore the responsible growth of regenerative farming in waters off New South Wales south coast. Photo courtesy of Blue Economy CRC.

with the capacity to grow responsibly. However, Australia's coastal waters are home to thousands of native seaweed species and offer the potential for a thriving seaweed industry that can contribute to not only local economic growth but also play a role in improving water quality.

The project examines the potential to further develop regenerative farming in the waters off the south coast of NSW, including optimizing marine space through the co-location of seaweed and shellfish on the same sites.

A banner for the Responsible Seafood Summit 2023. On the left is the logo for Responsible Seafood Summit, featuring a stylized blue eye. To the right of the logo, the text reads "Responsible Seafood SUMMIT" in white. Further right, the event details are listed: "SAINT JOHN NEW BRUNSWICK CANADA OCTOBER 2-5 2023". A red button with the word "REGISTER" in white is positioned to the right of the event details. The background of the banner is dark blue with a faint world map and several red airplane icons. In the top right corner, the logo for the Global Seafood Alliance is visible.

(<https://events.globalseafood.org/responsible-seafood-summit>).



## Australian shrimp growers demonstrate how to farm black tigers with WSSV knocking on their door

Successfully producing black tiger shrimp in the presence of White Spot Syndrome Virus shows the drive and toughness of shrimp producers Down Under.



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The project team will work alongside community members, Indigenous rights holders and other marine estate users to understand what matters to them when it comes to growing the blue economy, and what is needed to address community sentiment and grow community support for regenerative aquaculture opportunities in the local area.

“Our role in this collaboration is to conduct research that will explore how communities feel about these new activities, and identify how these businesses can work with local residents to share the benefits of the developments and address any areas of concern,” said Dr. Michelle Voyer from the University of Wollongong.

A series of community-focused consultations and events are planned in the next few months, including a phone-based survey and open community information sessions. The results will form advice to industry and government partners about potential pathways for “meaningful and genuine collaborations” when they undertake formal impact assessment and approval processes.

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