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Red tape reduction to benefit tuna industry

South Australia's Tuna industry is set to benefit from a new project that will reduce red tape for businesses and deliver savings to the industry.

Minister for Fisheries Gail Gago says legislative processes between PIRSA and the EPA will be streamlined to decrease the time it takes for licences to be assessed between government agencies.

"The new streamlined processes will mean that licence holders will be able to start their farming up to six weeks earlier," Ms Gago said.

"The project is part of the Premier's Public Sector Renewal Program, and will deliver this new process within 90 days.

"Southern Bluefin Tuna is the State's largest single aquaculture sector, accounting for almost 55% of the State's gross value of aquaculture production, valued at \$229 million.

"Tuna operations follow a tight stocking and harvest schedule, where the Tuna are wild caught in the Great Australian Bight and then transported to the long-established Port Lincoln farming aquaculture zone for ranching for between six and eight months.

"The licensing, monitoring and reporting arrangements required for these activities involves both PIRSA and the EPA. By working with industry on this project, both agencies are of the view that they can streamline these processes to provide greater benefit to industry," she said.

Minister Gago said that while the acceleration of administrative processes would benefit farming operations, environmental standards would not be compromised.

"The project also aims to provide a sustainable environmental outcome, which includes the development of a coordinated environmental audit program with engagement of KPMG to cover risks assessed by EPA and PIRSA through the licence assessment process for Tuna licences," she said.

"South Australia is recognised worldwide for its robust and comprehensive policy and legislative frameworks, which ensure ecologically sustainable aquaculture development while providing certainty and opportunity for investment."

The project is due for completion by 30 June 2013 with a short-term view of implementing immediate process changes, as well as identifying longer-term regulatory reforms for further investigation by PIRSA and EPA.

The *Streamlining regulation of South Australia's Tuna industry* project is a new industry/government initiative, with participants comprising the Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association, Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA), the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), the Public Sector Reform Program (PSRP) and consultancy firm KPMG.

The project is part of the State Government's strategic priority of Premium Food and Wine from our Clean Environment.

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