



# **The Hon. Andrew Stoner MP**

## **Deputy Premier of NSW**

### **Minister for Trade and Investment**

### **Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday 22 June 2012

### **DREDGING TO AID WALLIS LAKE OYSTER GROWERS**

The NSW Government will provide funding support of \$400,000 for dredging in Wallis Lake to halt environmental conditions that are threatening the \$30 million Oyster industry, Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner announced today.

Mr Stoner said sand build-up in the key finishing areas of the oyster Paddock had resulted in a significant drop in productivity.

“Wallis Lake, on the mid-north coast, supports 29 oyster businesses over 350 hectare of leases and oyster production was valued at \$31.5 million last financial year,” he said.

“However, increasing sand build-up in lease areas and surrounding channels has caused production to slow and has halved the number of premium oysters produced each year.

“This significant drop in production has forced the larger oyster businesses to cut staff levels to half of what they were a year ago.

“The Crown Lands Division of the Department of Primary Industries has consulted with Great Lakes Council and oyster growers to develop a project proposal.

“The project entails dredging 18,000 cubic metres from the channels and 16,000 cubic metres from on the leases.

“The final cost of the project will depend on resolving arrangements for disposal of dredged sand.

“Great Lakes Council has advised it will manage the project and has provided advice on the scope of the project including dredge volumes, disposal options and costs.

“Funding for the dredging will involve contributions from the government’s *Rescuing Our Waterways* program, Great Lakes Council and oyster growers.

“The Government has set aside \$400,000 for this important regional project and now calls on council and oyster growers to make a similar funding commitment.

“Returns from any sale of dredged sand will also be used to help fund the project.

“The department will now ask Great Lakes Council to confirm its project proposal, including financial contributions, as soon as possible, so that funding arrangements and other details can be agreed and an early start can be made on the project.”