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Australia's biggest reef restoration project begins next phase

Work commenced today on the ambitious second phase of Australia's largest reef restoration project – Windara Reef – just south of Ardrossan, Gulf St Vincent.

Building on the 1,200 square metres of reef already constructed over an area of four hectares, this second phase will add an additional 11,000 square metres of reef over a further 16 hectares.

“That’s an equivalent footprint to 10 Adelaide Ovals,” said Rich Gilmore, Country Director for The Nature Conservancy in Australia.

“We’re tremendously proud to be leading the creation of this reef with a range of partners including the Australian and South Australian governments who’ve provided funding and ongoing operational support.”

The Australian Government has invested \$990,000 into this project and it’s a pleasure to witness the commencement of works today,” said Federal Member for Grey, Rowan Ramsey MP.

“It’s great to see this natural infrastructure take shape that, once complete, will support the regional economy through job creation and tourism such as through an increase in recreational fishing as a result of the reef.”

South Australia’s Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Tim Whetstone, said the expanded reef will enhance fishing experiences and provide new habitat for highly valued fish species.

“This is an exciting project that will benefit fishers for generations to come,” Minister Whetstone said. The latest construction works by Adelaide-based construction firm Maritime Constructions will deposit 10,000 tonnes of locally sourced limestone onto the seafloor to provide the necessary solid reef base.

More than seven million juvenile Australian Flat Oysters will be laid on top of this reef base. The young oysters have been pre-seeded onto recycled oyster shells by local oyster farmers and hatcheries.

“The Yorke Peninsula Council is thrilled to be involved in the Windara Reef project,” said Mayor Ray Agnew OAM.

“The environmental benefits of the project are evident, but this reef also means a lot for our local economy. It will enhance Yorke Peninsula’s reputation as a great place for recreational fishing, thereby boosting tourism activities and creating more local jobs.”

“The project is proving that the protection and reinstatement of natural infrastructure brings tremendous benefits for both people and nature,” concluded Gilmore.

Other Windara Reef details:

- The project is a partnership between The Nature Conservancy, the Australian Government, South Australian Government, Yorke Peninsula Council, RecFish SA and University of Adelaide. Additional financial support comes from The Ian Potter Foundation, John T Reid Foundation, Good Thnx Foundation, NAB Foundation and several local entrepreneurs.
- Shellfish reefs once occurred naturally in bays and estuaries all along Australia's southern coastline but have all disappeared (with one exception in Tasmania) due to over exploitation.
- The purpose of the new, restored shellfish reef is to reinstate their associated natural benefits including improved water quality (due to the filtration powers of oysters), improved fisheries productivity and better fishing opportunities, increased biodiversity and an improved regional economy.
- Construction of Windara Reef Phase 2 is due to be completed by December 2018.
- To recognise the local Aboriginal peoples' connection with sea country, a Narungga name was chosen for the reef. 'Windara' refers to the eastern area of the Yorke Peninsula region.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organisation dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we focus on getting things done efficiently and with the greatest positive impact for conservation. We're a trusted organisation working in 72 countries on innovative solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We're tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. To learn more about The Nature Conservancy in Australia, visit our [website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#).

All media enquiries to: Anita Nedosyko, Marine Restoration Coordinator, TNC Australia
E: anita.nedosyko@tnc.org | M: 0400 779 279 | natureaustralia.org.au