

Annual Report on PIRSA's Service Delivery on the Cost Recovery Agreement for the Finfish Sector

2021-22

Annual Report on PIRSA's Service Delivery on the Cost Recovery Agreement for the Finfish Sector 2021-22

Information current as of 30 June 2022
© Government of South Australia 2022

Disclaimer

PIRSA and its employees do not warrant or make any representation regarding the use, or results of the use, of the information contained herein as regards to its correctness, accuracy, reliability and currency or otherwise. PIRSA and its employees expressly disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person using the information or advice.

All Enquiries

Manager Business Services, Fisheries and Aquaculture
Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA)
2 Hamra Avenue, West Beach SA
GPO Box 1625, Adelaide SA 5001
T 08 8207 5333
E Tina.Smith3@sa.gov.au

Contents

Resource Planning.....	4
Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing	6
Legislation.....	7
Compliance Operations.....	8
Aquaculture Systems	9
Aquatic Animal Health.....	10
Environmental Monitoring and Management.....	12
Program Management and Administration.....	14
Other Aquaculture Activities.....	15

Resource Planning

	Deliverables
1.	Monitored aquaculture zone allocations through audit and review, notably with respect to availability of water enquiries from existing and potential aquaculture industry stakeholders.
2.	Continued the review of the <i>Aquaculture (Zones-Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> to accommodate future expansion of aquaculture sectors, including the Finfish aquaculture sector. The Lower Eyre Peninsula Review Advisory Committee continued to work with industry sectors and other government agencies to make recommendations for the review. The Statement of Intent outlining proposed amendments to the zone policy, including consideration of the needs and expectations of the Finfish Sector, was finalised and endorsed by the Committee. A draft <i>Aquaculture (Zones-Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2022</i> and supporting report was developed based on the Statement of Intent, and preparations commenced for public consultation on the draft policy.
3.	Finalised the <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022</i> , which was approved on 16 February 2022, and commenced implementation of the Policy.
4.	Ongoing liaison and consultation with relevant government departments, prescribed bodies and relevant stakeholders in relation to zone policy development.
5.	Provided advice to stakeholders/members of the public in relation to existing aquaculture zone allocations (i.e., area, biomass, etc.).
6.	Provided input to a range of State and Commonwealth Government environmental and conservation initiatives, to ensure aquaculture zone development objectives and aspirations were adequately considered and factored into broader conservation policy development.
7.	<p>Provided advice to the Attorney General's Department (AGD) on a number of proposed developments to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ports Grain Handling and Export Facility development application • Hawsons Iron Ore development application • SA Offshore Windfarm Pty Ltd Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping report • Port Spencer Grain Export Facility EIS addendum • Whalers Way Orbital Launch Complex EIS • SA Water Eyre Peninsula desalination plant development application
8.	<p>Provided advice to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on a number of proposed developments to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart's Landing boat ramp • Port Playford Export Facility port limits
9.	<p>Provided advice to the Department for Energy and Mining (DEM) on the following proposed developments to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Bonython hydrogen plant • Port Augusta Export Facility offshore transshipment points
10.	Continued to provide advice to AGD regarding a mandated referral to PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture for marine-based developments under the <i>Planning, Development and</i>

	<i>Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017</i> to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture operators and aquaculture zones.
11.	Continued to provide advice to AGD regarding proposed amendments to the Planning and Design Code under the <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> to streamline the development assessment and approval process for future marine and land-based aquaculture developments.
12.	Finalised process to reappoint three ATAB members under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
13.	Finalised procedures of the ATAB and PIRSA internal guidelines for ATAB appointments and the public call process for lease tenure applications.
14.	Provided formal comment on the State Landscape Strategy in regard to promoting aquaculture development.
15.	Led the development and passage of the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021</i> to amend the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> to streamline the assessment and approval process for aquaculture related tourism developments.
16.	Provided input to the Blue Economy CRC Marine Spatial Planning project to mitigate potential impacts to the aquaculture industry from other users of the marine resource.
17.	Provided input and support to the Marine Bioproducts CRC to support sector growth.
18.	Continued process to draft and make variation regulations to amend the <i>Aquaculture Regulations 16</i> , in relation to contemporising and streamlining prescribed bodies under regulation 5 for referral of draft aquaculture policies under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
19.	Provided ongoing administrative information to Clean Seas Seafoods Limited to assist with their Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification process.
20.	Amended the Louth Bay aquaculture zone in the <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> via Gazette to temporarily increase the biomass for farming of aquatic animals in a manner that involves regular feeding.
21.	Continued to attend and provide input to the National Aquaculture Committee on behalf of South Australia.
22.	Meetings and advice to SA Water regarding a proposed desalination plant for the lower Eyre Peninsula and potential impacts to aquaculture.

Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing

	Deliverables								
1.	Ongoing maintenance of internal licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (i.e., flowcharts, checklists and manuals) and performance relating to Finfish licences.								
2.	Completed database maintenance and updates as required.								
3.	Completed testing and amending electronic Production Return and Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) reporting.								
4.	Review of renewal and transfer applications to ensure correct information is received at the time of application.								
5.	Updated licence/lease records as required.								
6.	Maintenance of systems and procedures to support day to day administration of leasing and licensing activities related to the Finfish Sector.								
7.	Conducted audits of internal processes and functions including application checklists.								
8.	Records management of leasing and licensing documentation.								
9.	<p>Processing of Finfish applications (see table below).</p> <table> <tr> <th>Finfish: Application Type</th><th>Number</th></tr> <tr> <td>Lease renewal</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr> <td>Licence variation</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lease movement*</td><td>1</td></tr> </table> <p>*Environmental assessment and interagency referral conducted</p>	Finfish: Application Type	Number	Lease renewal	8	Licence variation	0	Lease movement*	1
Finfish: Application Type	Number								
Lease renewal	8								
Licence variation	0								
Lease movement*	1								
10.	Processed annual production returns from the Finfish Sector. This included follow-up on unreturned production returns to ensure licence holders meet their obligations under the regulations, collation and analysis of information.								
11.	Processed requests for information from licence holders via front counter, phone or e-mail.								
12.	Liaised with government stakeholders to verify the credentials of lease/licence holders for application processing as required.								
13.	Issued invoices relating to annual fees (including quarterly reminders), licence renewals, transfers and/or surrenders for 19 Finfish licences.								
14.	Reconciled receipt of annual lease and licence fees, application fees and liaised with Shared Services SA as required.								
15.	Reviewed all lease and licence application forms and amended where required.								

Legislation

	Deliverables
1.	Assessed and responded to freedom of information requests in relation to PIRSA's administration of the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
2.	Strategic input into the implementation of administrative decisions in all program areas as required to ensure they are informed and legally valid and consistent with the Act to promote efficient and transparent government administration.
3.	Provided input into the finalisation of the draft <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2020</i> for approval, in conjunction with Office of Parliamentary Council (OPC).
4.	Review of aquaculture related notices issued under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> and related Ministerial delegations for same.
5.	Updating of Ministerial delegations including sub-delegations under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
6.	Input into compliance / enforcement/ litigation matters as required.
7.	Provided input into draft amendments to the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> through the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Bill 2021</i> to streamline the assessment and approval process for aquaculture related tourism developments.

Compliance Operations

	Deliverables
1.	<p>Site surveillance inspections were undertaken by Fisheries Officers to ensure lease and licence holders comply with the Act, associated Acts, Regulations, policies and specific lease and licence conditions, and to investigate complaints from the public. Surveillance activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine site inspections undertaken by Fisheries Officers. • Reports made to PIRSA subsequent to compliance inspections outline any compliance issues with a site and include photographs and site waypoints. • Follow up inspections as required for sites that have identified compliance issues. • Inspections also undertaken on sites that have been or are due to be, rehabilitated by lease or licence holders or contractors of lease and/or licence holders on an as required basis.
2.	<p>Fisheries Officers inspected finfish farming sites at Fitzgerald Bay, Boston Bay and Proper Bay to determine compliance with navigational marking requirements and the requirement to maintain sites in good working condition. Compliance with these requirements was determined to be at a high level overall.</p>
3.	<p>Fisheries Officers followed up information and other reports attributed to farming operations. Follow up investigations were conducted including liaison with the Company allegedly involved.</p>
4.	<p>Communication and monitoring activities are undertaken by PIRSA and related SA government agencies to ensure compliance by Finfish lease and/or licence holders with legislation (Act, other Acts, Regulations and policies) and conditions of leases and/or licences.</p>
5.	<p>Procedures and processes required for response to notifiable events (e.g., entanglements, high mortalities) in an efficient and timely manner were developed and implemented by all agencies concerned.</p>

Aquaculture Systems

	Deliverables
1.	Accurate and efficient systems maintained and enhanced to provide for effective and efficient management and administration of the Finfish Sector, in accordance with the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
2.	Provided for public transparency of use of the State's aquaculture resources (e.g., Public Register is available on the PIRSA website for all stakeholders, including the Finfish Sector, relevant government agencies and general public, and a PIRSA website page was developed specifically for finfish farming in Fitzgerald Bay).
3.	Safeguarded licence holder details by adhering to broader government guidelines (e.g., records management requirements for public service document standards and freedom of information requests).
4.	Included in management of the PIIMS database was assessing reporting functionalities, liaison with the PIRSA IT group, testing updates to the database, reporting of functional issues and trouble-shooting with system users.
5.	Included in management of the Public Register system was rollout of updates, reporting of functional issues to the PIRSA IT group, testing when updates occurred and trouble-shooting with system users both internally and externally.
6.	Included in the management of ArcGIS was the rollout of updated software, appropriate training for use of the program, recognition, requests and testing for software fixes, liaison with the PIRSA spatial group, reporting spatial information and trouble-shooting with system users.
7.	Management of the Microsoft Access Database included alignment of databases annually to reflect data requirements of Environmental Monitoring Reports.
8.	Management and maintenance of an electronic lodgement system for environmental monitoring program and production return data for the Finfish Sector.
9.	Development of an electronic reporting system to retrieve data directly from PIIMS in regard to electronic Environmental Monitoring Reports.
10.	Management of records management systems (e.g. Objective) included testing of various functionalities, liaison with the PIRSA IT group and requests for further updates to systems and software.
11.	Ongoing maintenance and trouble-shooting of the electronic lodgement system (my PIRSA) for environmental monitoring program and production return data.
12.	Maintain accurate and up to date information on the PIRSA Aquaculture website, including for the Finfish Sector.

Aquatic Animal Health

	Deliverables
1.	13 finfish related mortality events were reported to PIRSA and investigated. This included both aquaculture and wild fish kills. Samples were submitted to the laboratory and tested to rule out disease. No significant or notifiable diseases were detected.
2.	Maintained passive surveillance systems, including summarising relevant pathology reports from the State Vetlab, summarised fish kill and aquaculture mortality investigations to demonstrate South Australia's disease freedom for trade and market access purposes.
3.	Administered the regulation and compliance for off-label veterinary medicine use. Assessed and processed 33 veterinary prescriptions for the Finfish Sector to support Ministerial approvals for off label use of veterinary medicines to maintain fish health and welfare. Liaised with industry veterinarian, EPA, adjacent mussel industry and other government departments during assessment.
4.	Assisted with progress of minor use permit and registration for veterinary medicines with APVMA through meetings, workshops and communications with APVMA, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), aquaculture industry sectors, EPA, PIRSA rural chemicals, veterinarians and researchers.
5.	Assessment and advice to the PIRSA Fisheries Management Group on Finfish stock release applications to ensure the risks of introduction and spread of disease in the State are minimised.
6.	"Development of a national sector-specific biosecurity plan guideline and template for the sea-cage finfish (non-salmonid) industry of Australia" were published on the DAFF website. These guidelines were developed as part of FRDC project 2019-088 led by PIRSA.
7.	Progressed the project titled "Improving the availability of safe and effective veterinary medicines for Australia's seafood industry (FRDC 2020-094)". In this project, one of our primary aims is to coordinate a national effort to facilitate the progress of priority aquatic veterinary medicines in the seafood industry through to permitting or registration with the APVMA.
8.	Conducted Emergency Disease Response training and updated PIRSA Emergency Response Plans as required with PIRSA Biosecurity.
9.	Provided advice and reviewed documentation in relation to disease risks posed by aquatic pests, biofouling and ballast water management.
10.	Provided advice to other government agencies, including the EPA, SA Health and DEM, with regards to heavy metal levels of aquatic species (including finfish) in the Port Pirie area to support continued trade and market access for the broader seafood industry.
11.	Attended meetings, reviewed documents, contributed to national policy developments and represented South Australia on the national Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH).
12.	Reviewed and commented on the Technical Issues Paper: Import of live sturgeon for aquaculture.

	Advice to the Chief Veterinary Officer (Biosecurity) as required, including for mortality / disease cases, state based emergency response preparedness and for national committees (e.g. Animal Health Committee, National Biosecurity Committee).
13..	Attended the Aquatic Veterinary Medicine Technical Advisory Group (under SCAAH), to facilitate progress of veterinary medicine permits with the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA).
14.	Reviewed and updated a notice under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Notifiable Diseases</i>

Environmental Monitoring and Management

	Deliverables
1.	Developed, assessed and processed annual EMP reports for 19 Finfish licences.
2.	Conducted Ecologically Sustainable Development risk assessments and management of EPA referral for 1 Finfish movement application.
3.	Consultation with the EPA to review and amend biomass licence conditions for Louth Bay aquaculture site.
4.	Consultation with the EPA to review and temporarily amend the Louth Bay aquaculture zone biomass limits.
5.	Commenced drafting the 2022 South Australian Aquaculture Report which contains a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia in 2020/21, including EMP summary information for each aquaculture sector.
6.	Continued the 2019/20 to 2023/24 (4-year) Regional Environmental Monitoring Program for the Finfish Sector in Lower Spencer Gulf (in conjunction with EPA, SARDI and industry) that included specific research to monitor impacts of aquaculture nutrients on seagrass. Reviewed milestone reports and data from this EMP.
7.	Continued the research project (FRDC 2018-186) to assess impacts of Finfish aquaculture on seagrasses in Fitzgerald Bay as part of the ongoing environmental monitoring program for Finfish aquaculture expansion in the Fitzgerald Bay aquaculture zone. Reviewed milestone reports and data from this project.
8.	Consultation with the EPA to review and amend EMP requirements for Fitzgerald Bay, leading to an improved and more efficient monitoring program for industry.
9.	Reviewed data and benthic video footage from periodic EMPs for Finfish licences in the Boston Bay, Arno Bay, Fitzgerald Bay and Louth Bay aquaculture zones.
10.	Responded to public complaints related to the Finfish Sector, including pollution, debris, escapes of aquaculture stock and interactions between marine mammals and aquaculture infrastructure.
11.	Worked with the Finfish Sector to develop a new strategy to minimise escape of stock and interactions with marine mammals, including developing a method to report non-adverse interactions on a monthly basis to assist industry in their reporting requirements.
12.	Continued to respond to stakeholder issues/concerns in relation to Finfish aquaculture sites in Fitzgerald Bay, including meeting with the Conservation Council SA on their Finfish discussion paper. Multiple Ministerial and Divisional communications with concerned stakeholders in regard to finfish aquaculture in Fitzgerald Bay.
13.	Ongoing maintenance of reporting databases for environmental compliance matters, escapes of stock, interactions and marine debris.
14.	Conducted regular meetings with the EPA to discuss and prioritise environmental issues and projects relating to the aquaculture industry.

15.	Liaised with Fisheries Officers for environmental issues related to the Finfish Sector, particularly in relation to marine debris, escape and site audits. This included provision of technical input regarding environmental compliance and development and operation of aquaculture sites.
16.	Contribution to, support for and implementation of, various research projects to assess environmental impacts relating to or applicable to Finfish aquaculture, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRDC 2018-186: Assessing the capacity for sustainable finfish aquaculture in the vicinity of seagrasses
17.	Focussed on meeting the Finfish Sector's needs in relation to company strategies for farming and investigating opportunities for expansion. This included consultation with SARDI, EPA and industry and subsequent amendment of the Louth Bay biomass limits at a zone and site level.
18.	Reviewed the outcomes from the Tasmanian Salmon Inquiry in relation to how the South Australian industry operates and PIRSA's regulatory framework.
19.	Provided advice on a number of Port developments in Spencer Gulf as they relate to the Finfish Sector to ensure impacts are considered and managed by the proponents of the proposed development (e.g. T-Ports Wallaroo, Port Bonython Hydrogen plant, Point Lowly transshipment point).
20.	Reviewed a number of guidelines/proposals that may impact the Finfish Sector (e.g. PIRSA/DEW marine mammal interaction procedure, National Environment Science Program seal research proposal, Offshore windfarms development application, the Blue economy CRC for Marine Planning, EPA dredge guidelines, Port Lincoln desalination plant proposal).
21.	Development of specific licence conditions and macroalgae management areas to mitigate biosecurity risks associated with growing algae on existing licensed sites, including liaising with SARDI and Biosecurity SA and notification to all licence holders permitted to farm algae of the new management arrangements for algae aquaculture.

Program Management and Administration

	Deliverables
1.	Managed major service providers' contractual agreements, and any other contractual agreements with industry associations.
2.	Project managed and administered external contractual services and agreements – including liaising with the PIRSA Accredited Purchasing Unit, preparing acquisition plans and selecting evaluation criteria, managing tender processes, drafting purchase recommendations and liaising with the Crown Solicitor's Office to develop contractual agreements.
3.	Provided advice on procurement and invoicing requirements.
4.	Met agreed timeframes on management and administration of external contractual services.
5.	Ensured appropriate management of industry funds and services.
6.	Coordinated and facilitated cost recovery processes and program agreements, including liaising with program providers, managers and financial services as required.
7.	Met with industry on matters relating to cost recovery, lease and licence fee setting and related policy issues.
8.	Developed, reviewed and implemented cost recovery procedures and program agreements for the Finfish Sector for 2021-22 that are transparent, evidence-based and are developed in a consultative manner.
9.	Ongoing review, development and documentation of the cost recovery process and procedures in line with Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.
10.	Provision of relevant, accurate and timely advice was provided to the Chief Executive of PIRSA and the Minister, so they were aware of current and emerging issues faced by PIRSA and the Finfish Sector.
11.	Consulted with the Chief Executive, Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Director Operations, PIRSA Fisheries Managers, and the Minister and other parties as needed.
12.	Provision of information to inform responses and decisions in relation to public and industry concerns raised with the Chief Executive of PIRSA and the Minister.
13.	Provided assistance to the Finfish Sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other Aquaculture Activities

	Deliverables
1.	All aquaculture sector production data collated and entered and forwarded to BDO EconSearch for compiling 2020/21 report.
2.	2020/21 annual economic report, incorporating Finfish Sector data, drafted, finalised and published on PIRSA website.
3.	Facilitated the establishment for, and provided executive officer support to, the South Australian Seafood Advisory Forum.