

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

2022-23



**Government
of South Australia**

Department of Primary
Industries and Regions

Annual Report on PIRSA's Service Delivery on the Cost Recovery Agreement for the Finfish Sector 2022-23

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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.	Released the Draft Aquaculture (Zones - Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2023 (the Draft Policy) and supporting Report for public consultation and referral to prescribed bodies and public authorities to accommodate future sustainable expansion of aquaculture sectors, including the Finfish aquaculture sector. Submissions received during consultation were considered, with amendments then made to the Draft Policy and supporting Report to finalise the Policy.
3.	Provided correspondence, held a series of industry information sessions, and progressively reissued all aquaculture lease and licence certificates as part of implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022</i> .
4.	Commenced process to develop draft aquaculture tourism development regulations to assist implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021</i> , including key stakeholder consultation and risk assessment of current tourism developments.
5.	<p>Provided comment to the Department for Trade and Investment (DTI) on a number of proposed developments to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SA Water Eyre Peninsula desalination plant development application
6.	<p>Provided comment to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on a number of proposed developments/activities to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposed seabed lease for a grain loading facility off Wallaroo ○ Proposed seabed lease for a deep-water port off Port Neil
7.	Initiated process to reappoint ATAB members and seek two new ATAB members under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
8.	Inducted members of the ATAB regarding the public call process for lease tenure applications.
9.	Provided advice to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on several proposed legislative reforms to mitigate potential

	<p>impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft national environmental standard for matters of national environmental significance ○ Draft national artificial reef guidelines
10.	Provided comments to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on the draft inputs on the State of the Environment Report, including updates to actions on 2018 recommendations.
11.	Provided comments to Infrastructure SA on the Northern Water Supply project to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture.
12.	Provided advice to DTI regarding proposed amendments to the Planning and Design Code under the Miscellaneous Technical Enhancement Code Amendment to streamline the development assessment and approval process for future marine and land-based aquaculture developments.
13.	<p>Provided advice to the Department for Energy and Mining (DEM) on a number of proposed legislative reforms to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ South Australia's Green Paper on the Energy Transition ○ Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Generation Act Issues Paper and Draft Bill
14.	Ongoing liaison and consultation with relevant government departments, prescribed bodies and relevant stakeholders in relation to zone policy development.
15.	Provided advice to stakeholders/members of the public in relation to existing aquaculture zone allocations (i.e. area, biomass, etc.).
16.	Provided input to a range of State and Commonwealth Government environmental and conservation initiatives, to ensure aquaculture zone development objectives and aspirations were adequately taken into account and factored into broader conservation policy development.
17.	Continued to provide 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.
18.	Continued to provide input and support to the Marine Bioproducts CRC to support sector growth.
19.	Continued review of current and future provisions for the rehabilitation of aquaculture leases.
20.	Continued to attend and provide input to the National Aquaculture Committee on

	behalf of South Australia.
21.	Meetings and advice to SA Water regarding a proposed desalination plant for the lower Eyre Peninsula and potential impacts to aquaculture.
22.	Commenced process to add algae to the Arno Bay zone policy, including preparing documentation to draft amendment policy and for the consultation process.

Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing

	Deliverables						
	Activity 1 – Management of Lease and Licences						
1.	Ongoing maintenance of internal licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (i.e., flowcharts, checklists and manuals) and performance relating to Finfish licences. Maintenance of the eBusiness environment, systems and procedures to support day to day administration of leasing and licensing activities, including applicant consultation and liaison, reviewing licence application forms and processes, and ESD templates to increase efficiency in application assessments.						
2.	Ongoing liaison with relevant government (e.g. Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Attorney-General's Department – Native title, PIRSA conviction checks) and non-government agencies.						
3.	Maintained internal lease and licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (checklists and manuals) and performance criteria relating to leases and licences.						
4.	Liaised with Fisheries Officers to undertake compliance inspections with relevance to unused lease/licence areas after being occupied.						
5.	Processed annual production returns and environmental monitoring program reports from the Finfish sector. Followed up unreturned production returns and environmental monitoring program reports with licence holders in order for them to have met their obligations under the Act and ensured information was collated effectively for the development of economic reporting.						
6.	Generated annual invoices, ensured accuracy, collected associated fees and payments, followed up unpaid invoices through finance checks.						
7.	Processed requests from lease and licence holders through phone call or e-mail.						
	Activity 2 – Processing of Lease and Licence Applications						
.	<p>Processing of Finfish applications</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Finfish: Application Type</th><th>Number</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lease renewal</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr> <td>Licence variation</td><td>4</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Finfish: Application Type	Number	Lease renewal	4	Licence variation	4
Finfish: Application Type	Number						
Lease renewal	4						
Licence variation	4						
8.	Followed up on outstanding information that facilitated the assessment of lease and licence applications in an accurate and timely manner (e.g. ASIC, Public indemnity insurance and bank guarantees or contribution to an approved association)						
9.	Issued and processed 7 invoices relating to lease and licence applications.						
10.	Ongoing liaison with applicants, licence holders and third party contacts such as Marine Brokers for public liability insurance.						

11.	Referrals and liaison with other government and non-government agencies undertaken as required (e.g. EPA, DIT, AGD, SCAP, Industry).
12.	Responded to public submissions specific to applications.
13.	Reviewed all lease and licence application forms and amended where required. Internal policies, guidelines and processes relating to application were adhered to. Reconciled receipt of annual lease and licence fees, application fees and liaised with Shared Services SA as required.
14.	Case management administration.

Legislation

	Deliverables
1	Input into 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	Review of aquaculture related notices issued under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> and related Ministerial delegations for same.
4	Updated sub-delegations of Ministerial powers and functions under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
5	Input into compliance / enforcement / litigation matters as required.
6	Provided input and assistance into the development of draft aquaculture tourism development regulations and supplementary documentation to assist implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021</i> .
7	Input into and review of development of draft consultation Biosecurity Bill to consider impacts on aquaculture.
8	Review of broader government referred Cabinet submissions for aquaculture legislative and administrative impacts.

Compliance Operations

Deliverables
<p>Finfish farming sites were re-inspected by Fisheries Officers in July 2022, following a small number of non-compliant issues being identified during inspections completed in May / June 2022.</p>
<p>Advance notice of site inspections was provided to the key stakeholder prior to Fisheries Officers undertaking inspections of all Arno Bay, Louth Bay and Boston Bay farming sites in June 2023.</p> <p>Fisheries Officers undertaking the inspections assessed each site against the requirements of the <i>Act</i> and <i>Regulations</i>, and lease and licence conditions, with a focus on ensuring navigational and site marking requirements were being met.</p> <p>In contrast to 2022, a range of non-compliance issues, the majority being associated with navigational and site marking requirements, were detected. It was pleasing to note that all sites were found to be in good working order and well maintained.</p> <p>The key stakeholder was provided with written confirmation of the site inspection outcomes, including the non-compliant issues identified. Fisheries Officers will reinspect each of the non-compliant sites in due course to ensure the non-compliant issues are rectified.</p>
<p>Fisheries Officers liaised with the key stakeholder in relation to potential rendering of assistance at Fitzgerald Bay to rehabilitate an oyster farming site located in that area. Whilst the key stakeholder was ultimately not required to assist, PIRSA Compliance appreciated the offer of assistance and cooperation.</p>
<p>The key stakeholder relocated finfish farming operations from Fitzgerald Bay in late 2022. Fisheries Officers monitoring the relocation appreciated the good communication from the key stakeholder and observed good rehabilitation of the sites farmed.</p>
<p>The key stakeholder communicated to PIRSA a minor fish escape due to a pump failure in September.</p>
<p>Fisheries Officers attended the key stakeholder's office in Port Lincoln where the key stakeholder provided a comprehensive update of the livestock register and reporting program 'Aqua Manager', and provided a thorough update around farming operations, including reports of potential stock escapes. This update was beneficial to Fisheries Officers and the reporting transparency appreciated.</p>
<p>In November, Fisheries Officers attempted to capture a small quantity of undersize kingfish near Point Lowly for analysis by SARDI. This followed information received by the public that the fish were escapees. The analysis by SARDI was to confirm whether the kingfish were or weren't farmed fish. Due to a reduced number of fish being captured, the results were inconclusive.</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 updated 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 such as those related to the implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022</i> , a 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.	Maintenance of the 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 testing, 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.	34 finfish related mortality events were reported to PIRSA and investigated. Mortality investigations 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 23 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 veterinarians, 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.	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.
7.	As part of FRDC 2020-094, sought veterinary medicine priorities from the Finfish sector and secured funding for two finfish projects to collect data toward permitting products.
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.	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 Working Group (under SCAAH), to facilitate progress of veterinary medicine permits with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines 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>
15.	Reviewed PIRSA Fish Kill response manual with Biosecurity team and provided Fish Kill investigation training to PIRSA compliance officers.

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 4 Finfish variation applications.
3.	Consultation with the EPA to review and amend biomass licence conditions for Louth Bay aquaculture site to 28 February 2028. As part of this, and following a request by Clean Seas for changes in methodology, PIRSA amended the periodic EMP for Louth Bay.
4.	Consultation with the EPA to review and temporarily amend the Louth Bay aquaculture zone biomass limits to 28 February 2028.
5.	Finalised the 2023 South Australian Aquaculture Report which contained a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia in 2021/22, including EMP summary information for the mussel aquaculture sector.
6.	Commenced drafting the 2024 South Australian Aquaculture Report which contains a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia in 2022/23, including EMP summary information for the finfish aquaculture sector.
7.	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 program.
8.	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. Note the final sampling for this project was conducted in January 2023 due to fish being moved from the site in November 2022.
9.	Consultation with Clean Seas to review requirements of the EMP for Fitzgerald Bay, given the early departure of fish.
10.	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.
11.	Responded to public complaints related to the Finfish Sector, including pollution, debris, escapes of aquaculture stock and interactions between marine mammals and aquaculture infrastructure.
12.	Continued to respond to stakeholder issues/concerns in relation to Finfish aquaculture sites in Fitzgerald Bay. 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.	<p>Developed, contributed to, supported and/or implemented, various research projects to assess environmental impacts relating to or applicable to Finfish aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRDC 2018-186: Assessing the capacity for sustainable finfish aquaculture in the vicinity of seagrasses • Project priority submission to FRDC for assessing wild vs farmed kingfish: Refining the technique to distinguish between wild and captive reared escapee Kingfish (<i>Seriola lalandi</i>) in Spencer Gulf waters. • Project priority submission to FRDC for IMTA: Aquaculture growth through Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture (IMTA) – Incorporating nutrient modelling into regulatory frameworks.
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, Arno Bay expansion and use of Fitzgerald Bay.
18.	Provided advice on 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. Port Lincoln desalination plant proposal, offshore windfarms, Port Bonython Hydrogen plant).
19.	Reviewed a number of guidelines/proposals/legislation that may impact the Finfish Sector (e.g. PIRSA/DEW marine mammal interaction procedure, Agrifutures Plastic waste project, National FRDC welfare project, National Environmental Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance, Native Vegetation Act Amendments).
20.	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 2023-24 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 administrative support to the Independent Cost Recovery Review Panel, e.g., mail outs to all licence/lease holders, meeting coordination, travel bookings and other adhoc administration support during the review.

Other Aquaculture Activities

	Deliverables
1.	All aquaculture sector production data collated and entered and forwarded to BDO EconSearch for compiling 2021/2 report.
2.	2021/22 annual economic report, incorporating Finfish Sector data, drafted, finalised and published on PIRSA website.
3.	Attended and presented at a number of forums and conferences, including the International Seaweed Symposium in Tasmania (February 2023), the World Aquaculture Conference in Darwin (June 2023) and Sixth FRDC Australasian Scientific Conference on Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity (July 2023), on aquaculture policy and planning, aquatic animal health or environmental matters.
4.	Provided lectures to Flinders University and University of Adelaide students on aquaculture policy and aquatic animal health.