

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

2023-24



Government
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Department of Primary
Industries and Regions

OFFICIAL

Annual Report on PIRSA's Service Delivery on the Cost Recovery Agreement for the Finfish Sector 2023-24

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Resource Planning

Deliverables
<p>Activity 1 – Strategic resource planning and management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic zone policy planning met the future requirements of industry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2023</i> (LEP Policy) was finalised and came into effect on 2 November 2023 to provide for future expansion of the finfish aquaculture sector in this area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone policy templates and procedures were reviewed to remain up to date with changing circumstances that impact on zone policy development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of finfish leases and licences within an existing aquaculture zone was in accordance with the respective zone’s prescribed requirements including processes related to the Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board (ATAB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commenced preparations to undertake a public call to release lease tenure in the <i>LEP</i> Policy. ○ Completed process to reappoint ATAB members and seek two new ATAB members under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i>. ○ Inducted members of the ATAB regarding the public call process for lease tenure applications.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal policies and guidelines that flow from the amendments to the Act and Regulations were developed and implemented, such as sector-specific strategies, ATAB procedures etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed review of ATAB procedures. ○ Commenced internal policies and procedures relating to the assessment, approval and ongoing management of aquaculture tourism development authorities following amendments to the Act and Regulations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued implementation of Renewal Guidelines in determining renewal terms of leases and corresponding licences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed zones with finfish allocations, for use, productivity and commonly occurring operational concerns, including through enquires from existing and potential aquaculture industry stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenced implementation of the LEP Policy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to undertake modelling for carrying capacity in the Port Neill and Arno Bay zones in response to industry request for additional biomass in these regions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to implement the <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022 (SLLCP)</i>, including through reissuing of aquaculture lease and licence certificates.
<p>Activities 2 & 3 – Zone policy review and development of new regions or emerging sectors</p>

- Ongoing maintenance of core policy development activities and processes, including industry consultation and liaison.
 - Continued to progress process to add algae to the Arno Bay zone policy, including preparing documentation to draft the amendment policy and for the consultation process.
- Ongoing liaison and consultation with relevant government departments and prescribed bodies in relation to zone policy development.
 - Consulted with government agencies and prescribed bodies during finalisation and implementation of the Lower Eyre Peninsula zone policy.
- PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture worked with the South Australian Research and Development Institute Aquatic Sciences (SARDI) to develop outcomes in relation to provisions within the LEP Policy that refer to changes in prescribed maximum biomass and zone locations.

Activity 4 - Provide input to, and alignment with, broader State and national policy development activities and planning frameworks that Impact on South Australian aquaculture zone development processes

- Ongoing input to broader State and national policy, legislative and planning frameworks that influence finfish zone development processes:
 - Department for Trade and Investment (DTI):
 - SA Water Eyre Peninsula desalination plant development application
 - Northern Water development application- Draft Assessment Requirements of the Environmental Impact Statement
 - Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT):
 - Amendments to the *Harbors and Navigation Regulations 2023* - proposed transshipment points near Wallaroo
 - Department for Energy and Mining (DEM):
 - Draft Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Act 2023
 - Draft Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Regulations 2024
 - Draft impact assessment criteria and guidelines for the *Energy Resources Act 2000*
 - Green Paper on South Australia's energy transition
 - Draft Energy Resources Act 2023 and Regulations
 - Sapphire Retention Lease Proposal
 - Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE):
 - Draft National Hydrogen Strategy
 - Draft National Environmental Standards for Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act.
 - Department for Environment and Water (DEW):
 - Animal Welfare Act amendments
 - Proposed Biodiversity Act
 - *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* review
 - Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR):
 - *Offshore Petroleum & Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* consultation requirements

- Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)
State Development Coordination and Facilitation Bill

- Ongoing participation in broader government processes, at a national and state level.
 - Blue Economy CRC Marine Spatial Planning Project
 - National Aquaculture Committee

Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing

Deliverables
<p>Activity 1 – Management of Leases and Licences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained the eBusiness environment, systems and procedures to support day to day administration of leasing and licensing activities, including industry consultation and liaison and reviewing licence application forms and processes. Provided case management functions to licence holders such as discussions prior to application submissions and following up on outstanding information or requirements relating to applications. Maintained ongoing liaison with relevant government (e.g. Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Attorney-General’s Department (AGD)– Native Title and non-government agencies. Maintained internal lease and licence audit functions, including audit procedures (checklists and operating procedures) and performance criteria relating to leases and licences. Continued implementation of an administrative agreement between PIRSA and the EPA through meetings discussing ways to ensure efficiencies are maintained. Processed annual production returns and environmental monitoring reports from the Finfish industry sector. This included reminders and follow-up of unsubmitted reports to ensure licence holders met their obligations under the Act and ensured information was collated efficiently for the development of the annual economic reporting. Generated annual and application fee invoices, collected associated fees and payments, followed up unpaid invoices. Reconciled receipt of annual lease and licence fees, application fees and liaised with Shared Services SA as required. Reviewed lease and licence application forms and amended where required to ensure internal policies, guidelines and processes relating to each application was adhered to. Processed requests from the Finfish sector who made enquiries over the phone or by e-mail. Reissued lease and licence certificates following implementation of SLLCP.
<p>Activity 2 - Processing of lease and licence applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided a high-level case management function for lease and licence activities to streamline administrative processes in an efficient and effective manner. Consideration of further variation to Boston Bay licences (which included EPA referral) was made outside of application fee-for-service arrangements which were originally approved in February 2024. Followed up on outstanding (or additional) information to facilitate the assessment of lease and licence applications and liaised with other government and non-government bodies as required. Processed and issued invoices relating to licence and lease applications.

Legislation

Deliverables
Activity 1 - Administration of the Act and Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of informed and legally valid administrative decisions consistent with the Act to promote efficient and transparent government administration and industry development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to and liaison with Parliamentary committees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal strategic, Crown and Parliamentary Counsel legal input into new internal policies, procedures, documents, correspondence, instruments and decisions under the Act as amended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Amended the <i>Aquaculture Regulations 2016</i> to assist implementation of amendments to the Aquaculture Act for aquaculture related tourism developments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing implementation of the requirements of the Act and <i>Aquaculture Regulations 2016</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Parliamentary Counsel and Crown Solicitor's Office (CSO) to effect policy requirements.
Activity 2 - Legal services and legislative interpretation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of the Act, Regulations and Statutory Policies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction of the Act with requirements of other legislation (e.g., <i>Fisheries Management Act 2007</i>, <i>Native Title Act 1993</i>, <i>Marine Parks Act 2007</i>, <i>Environment Protection Act 1993</i>, <i>Livestock Act 1997</i>, <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i>) and others as necessary.

Compliance Operations

Deliverables
<p>Activity 1 - Operational planning and implementation (section 82 of the Act)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance related issues of key importance and relevance to the Finfish sector were communicated to the sector in a timely manner, including advance notice of site inspections
<p>Activity 2 – Site surveillance (parts 6 and 7; Section 82A; Regulation 25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertook site inspections; ensuring lease and licence holders compliance with lease and licence conditions and requirements of the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i>, <i>Aquaculture Regulations 2016</i> and <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022</i>. Timely communication of inspection outcomes to relevant lease and licence holders, including identification of instances of both compliance and non-compliance Undertook re-inspections of non-compliant sites, including ongoing liaison with responsible lease and licence holders Undertook inspections of sites due to be or that have been rehabilitated. Responded to information provided by members of the public or SA government agencies in relation to compliance issues relevant to the Finfish sector including alleged escape events.
<p>Activity 3 – Aquaculture Compliance liaison (Section 9 of the Act)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought assistance from Fisheries & Aquaculture Policy and Environment staff in relation to compliance activities. Including, but not limited to scheduling of sector specific site inspections, confirmation of licence and lease conditions, positioning of sites, confirmation of sites requiring or subject to rehabilitation and provision of assistance in field-based compliance initiatives.

Aquaculture Systems

Deliverables
Activity 1 - IT systems management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate and efficient systems are maintained and enhanced to provide for effective and efficient management and administration of the aquaculture industry, in accordance with the Act.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for public transparency of use of the States aquaculture resources (e.g., Public Register is available on the PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture website for all stakeholders, including the aquaculture industry, relevant government agencies and general public).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To safeguard lease and licence holder details by adhering to broader government guidelines (e.g. records management requirements for public service document standards and freedom of information requests).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in the management of the PIIMS database is assessing reporting functionalities, liaison with the PIRSA IT group, testing updates to the database, reporting of functional issues and troubleshooting with system users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in the management of the Public Register system is the rollout of updates, reporting of functional issues to the PIRSA IT group, testing when updates occur and troubleshooting with system users both internally and externally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in the management of ArcGIS is the rollout of update 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 troubleshooting with system users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of the Microsoft Excel Database includes alignment of databases annually to reflect data requirements of Environmental Monitoring Reports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of records management systems (e.g., Objective) may include testing of various functionalities, liaison with the PIRSA IT group and requests for further updates to systems and software.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing testing, maintenance and troubleshooting of the electronic lodgment system (my PIRSA) for environmental monitoring program and production return data.

Aquatic Animal Health

Deliverables
Activity 1 - Management of aquatic animal health risks and emergency response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the ability to deliver accurate and timely investigations for minor and major disease events (e.g. unexplained mortality event) and information to lease and licence holders to provide for appropriate response.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 finfish related mortality events were reported to PIRSA and investigated. Mortality events included both aquaculture and wild fish kills. Samples were submitted to the laboratory and tested to rule out disease and harmful algae.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained passive surveillance systems, including summarising relevant pathology reports from the State Vetlab, summarised fish kill and aquaculture mortality investigations for trade and market access purposes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment and advice to the PIRSA Fisheries Management Group on stock release applications to ensure the risks of introduction and spread of disease in the State are reduced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported licence holders regarding chemical use applications.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administered the regulation and compliance for off-label veterinary medicine use. Assessed and processed 10 veterinary medicine use requests to support Ministerial approvals for off label use of veterinary medicines to maintain fish health and welfare. Liaised with industry veterinarians, EPA and adjacent industry where required and other government departments during assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted with progress of minor use permit and registration for veterinary medicines with Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressed the project "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 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of FRDC 2020-094, sought veterinary medicine priorities from the Finfish sector and secured funding for two marine finfish projects to collect data toward permitting products.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with licence holders where technical advice was required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with relevant government [e.g. Interstate authorities (APVMA, government veterinarians), Biosecurity, Environment Protection Authority (EPA)] and non-government agencies (Industry peak bodies).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals and liaison with other government and non-government agencies as required (e.g. EPA, DIT, AGD, State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP), Industry).
Activity 2 - Provide input to and alignment with broader state and national biosecurity policy frameworks, legislation and other processes

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted Emergency Disease Response training and updated PIRSA Emergency Response Plans as required with PIRSA Biosecurity. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended meetings, reviewed documents, contributed to national policy developments and represented South Australia on the national Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided technical 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). |

Environmental Monitoring and Management

Deliverables
Activity 1 – Management of environmental monitoring programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed, assessed and processed annual Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) reports for all Finfish licences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided case management functions to the Finfish sector (e.g. discussions prior to application submissions, following up on outstanding information or requirements relating to applications) including ongoing advice following consolidation of farming activities to Port Lincoln.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of Finfish sector into a publicly available 2024 South Australian Aquaculture Report which contains a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia for the 2022-2023 financial year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised the 2023 South Australian Aquaculture Report which contains a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia in 2021/22, including a summary of EMP information for the Finfish sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 a summary of EMP information for the Finfish sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with the EPA, SARDI and the Finfish sector to finalise the 2019-2023 regional aquaculture environmental monitoring program (AEMP) for the Finfish sector, including review of milestone reports and data from the program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided advice to the Finfish sector and third parties in relation to the collection and analysis of specific data (videos and water samples) required under periodic EMPs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained accurate and timely analysis of data collected from EMP reports (e.g., collect and analyse within timeframes established for the reporting period ending 28 February each year so further action can be taken if required) (refer Program 4: Compliance for actioning noncompliance). Analysis includes assessing EMP data against the Regulations, biomass held on site, and monitoring of sea-cage positions to determine if fallowing occurred on site and were within lease boundaries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed benthic videos and associated data are obtained through periodic EMPs issued under the Regulations for Louth Bay, Arno Bay and Boston Bay areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with industry, SARDI and the Environment Protection Authority to facilitate industry requests for changes in biomass held across sites in Boston Bay and Louth Bay.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised the EMP for Arno Bay at application to relocate leased areas and liaised with EPA with regard to streamlining sampling protocols under the Boston Bay and Louth Bay EMPs.
Activity 2 – Response to environmental issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained an up-to-date finfish escape register on the PIRSA website.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed seal confinement reports as defined in the individual aquaculture strategy relating to interactions with marine mammals and escape of stock.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed monthly reporting of biomass and feed inputs for all sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responded to industry requests and questions and provided mapping in regard to applications and management of leases and licences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with Fisheries Officers for environmental issues related to the Finfish sector, particularly in relation to site audits and investigations of reported and potential protected species interactions, escapes and marine debris through provision of technical input/mapping for aquaculture sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to provide 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 and offshore wind farms).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and approved individual aquaculture strategies submitted by six licence holders in relation to interactions with marine mammals and escape of stock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with the Finfish sector in relation to the adopt a beach program for marine debris.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained an up-to-date database for environmental compliance matters, marine debris and off-label veterinary chemical use.
<p>Activity 3 – Provide input to State and National environmental policy, legislation and strategies</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented the Finfish sector at inter- and intra- departmental and agency meetings and workshops on environmental issues or development of new legislative arrangements/tools (e.g., zone policy discussions, licence applications, EPA’s review of ANZECC water quality guidelines, marine debris, research opportunities).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided input to the draft National Recovery Plan for Australian Sea Lion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided input on behalf of the Finfish sector to internal PIRSA documents, EPA scorecards and the State of the Environment Report which evaluate the health of the marine environment and external legislation or policies that may affect the Finfish sector.
<p>Activity 4 – Identify research needs/opportunities for sustainable aquaculture planning and management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced a review of internal risk assessment guidelines to consider aquaculture tourism developments and update general assessment items relating to the Finfish sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided input into proposal that secured funding for a research project for integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) in southern Australia with project outcomes expected to help inform sustainable planning and management of the Finfish sector in the future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaised with the EPA, SARDI and industry to draft a service level agreement for the next (2023-2027) regional AEMP for the Finfish sector in Lower Spencer Gulf, inclusive of targeted research to monitor impacts of aquaculture nutrients (and other potential sources) on a quarterly basis.

Program Management and Administration

Deliverables
<p>Activity 1, 2 and 3 – (Directorate, Human Resource Management and Administration, Operational and Strategic Business Planning)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed major service providers' contractual agreements, and any other contractual agreements with industry associations – including liaising with 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met agreed timeframes on management and administration of external contractual services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with the Finfish sector on matters relating to cost recovery, licence setting and related policy and environmental management issues.
<p>Activity 4 – Financial management and cost recovery</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided advice on procurement and invoicing requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured appropriate management of industry funds and services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed, reviewed and implemented cost recovery procedures and program agreements for the Finfish sector for the 2023/24 period that are transparent, evidence-based and are developed in a consultative manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated and facilitated cost recovery processes and program agreements, including liaising with program providers, managers and financial services as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing review, development and documentation of the cost recovery process and procedures in line with Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.
<p>Activity 5 – Provision of timely advice to Chief Executive and Minister – PIRSA and other government agencies</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided relevant, accurate and timely advice to the Chief Executive of PIRSA and the Minister, so they were aware of current and emerging issues faced by PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Finfish sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulted with the Chief Executive, Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Director Operations, PIRSA Fisheries Managers, and the Office of the Minister and other parties as needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided feedback on DEW's draft submission for South Australian adoption of Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding – Agreement on a common assessment method for listing threatened species
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided feedback on the draft National Environmental Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and provided feedback on a draft in-water cleaning guidance document for South Australia.

- Provided feedback to the Department of Energy and Mining (DEM) on the 10-kilometre visual amenity layer included in the constraints analysis undertaken by WSP for the Offshore wind component of the study areas for the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Act.
- Reviewed and provided feedback to the EPA for the State of the Environment report and associated web pages.

Other Aquaculture Activities

Deliverables
<p>Activity 1 - Perform economic and production forecasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual production of economic report (currently through BDO Advisory Pty Ltd) which is made publicly available through the PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All aquaculture sector production data collated and entered and forwarded to BDO for compiling 2022/23 report. ○ 2022/23 annual economic report, incorporating Finfish sector data, drafted, finalised and published on PIRSA website. • Production return data reported to Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).
<p>Activity 2 - Marketing research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and timely extension of recommendations from economic and marketing research to the Finfish industry sector. • Representation of achievements of aquaculture in SA at national and international forums and conferences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation to international stakeholders, including a delegation from Shandong, China. ○ Provided lectures to Flinders University students on aquaculture policy and aquatic animal health.