



Objective ID: A7033565

22 July 2025

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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HARMFUL ALGAE BLOOM – 2024-25 FEE RELIEF GUIDELINES

Dear licence holder,

The South Australian Government, through the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), is providing targeted financial relief to commercial fishers, aquaculture operators, and charter boat fishery licence holders affected by the 2025 Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB). The relief is intended to offset operational costs incurred during the impacted period of April–June 2025.

Eligible participants will receive a credit or refund equal to 25% of their 2024–25 annual fee, reflecting the impacted quarter.

Applications are open until 30 September 2025.

Applicants must provide evidence of impacts, such as area and catch history, lost fishing days, and business or financial disruptions.

For more details, please refer to the enclosed *Guidelines for the 2024-25 Harmful Algal Bloom Fee Relief Program*.

Should you have any further queries in regard to this matter please email pirsa.fisheriesbusiness@sa.gov.au or via phone (08) 8207 5332

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Feeras'.

Feeras Najjar

**GENERAL MANAGER REGULATORY AND BUSINESS SERVICES
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

Enclosure: 2024–25 Harmful Algal Bloom Fee Relief Program Guidelines

2024–25 Harmful Algal Bloom Fee Relief Program

July 2025

To support impacted commercial fishers and aquaculture operators, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) has released the *2024–25 Harmful Algal Bloom Fee Relief Program Guidelines*. These Guidelines outline who is eligible, what evidence is required, how to apply, and how relief will be assessed. They are designed to ensure a consistent and fair approach to providing support for businesses affected by the current Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) event.

1. About the Program

The South Australian Government is offering targeted fee relief for commercial fishers, aquaculture operators, and charter boat fishery licence holders affected by the 2025 HAB. The initiative is funded through the Thriving Regions Fund.

The purpose of this program is to provide **pro-rata relief (25% of annual fees)** to eligible licence (and lease) holders to alleviate costs incurred during the April–June 2025 quarter, when operations were significantly affected.

2. Funding Available

Eligible operators may receive a credit or refund equivalent to 25% of their applicable (2024-25) annual fee. This relief is capped within the \$500,000 funding pool and will apply to:

- PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture licence fees
- Aquaculture lease and licence fees
- Biosecurity SA Food Safety Scheme and audit fees.

3. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for fee relief, applicants must:

- Hold a current commercial fishery licence, aquaculture lease/licence, or charter boat fishery licence issued by PIRSA;

- Have experienced operational impacts during the April–June 2025 period due to the HAB event;
- Submit an application via an industry association (e.g., MFA, SAPFA, SAOGA), or directly to PIRSA;
- Not have already received relief for the same fees via other government schemes.

4. Application Information

Applications can be submitted up to **30 September 2025**.

Applications can include:

- Areas typically fished or farmed, compared to impacted zones (as identified by Fishwatch and SARDI reporting);
- Catch history for 2024-25, including from **April 2025 – June 2025**;
- Catch history for **April–June** for **2022, 2023, and 2024**;
- Additional supporting information such as:
 - Fishing days lost
 - Disruption to operations
 - Business or personal financial impacts.

Note: These are guidelines only. PIRSA will consider other evidence that credibly demonstrates impact and will assess catch history from CDRs and catch and effort returns. However, for operators still submitting paper logbooks, PIRSA may not yet have access to their most recent data, particularly for April–June 2025. Where this is the case, applicants are encouraged to submit any recent returns or other relevant documentation to support their application.

5. Assessment Process

Applications will be assessed by PIRSA's **Fee Relief Review Group**, comprising senior officers from the regulatory, finance, and legislative teams.

The following approach will be applied:

- **Outcome model:** applicants are either eligible or ineligible, based on evidence.
- Relief will be issued as **25% of total eligible annual fees**, representing the affected quarter (April–June 2025).
- Assessments will be conducted on a **rolling basis**, with recommendations submitted weekly for approval.

6. Examples of Relief Amounts

Below are average annual fees and corresponding relief amounts for the most impacted sectors:

Sector	Annual Fee	Approx. Relief (25%)
Marine Scalefish Fishery	\$7,500	\$1,875
Charter Boat Fishery	\$2,646	\$661
Oyster Aquaculture	\$2,294	\$573

7. How Relief Will Be Applied

Relief will be issued either as:

- A **credit** applied to current debt or future invoices; or
- A **refund**, upon request.

The choice of mechanism will be confirmed with each eligible operator.

8. Lodging Applications

Operators can apply:

- Through their industry association (preferred), or
- Directly to PIRSA at:
Email: pirsa.fisheriesbusiness@sa.gov.au
Phone: (08) 8207 5332

9. Support Services Available

Additional support is available via:

- [Rural Financial Counselling Service \(RFCS\)](#)
- [Family and Business Support \(FaBS\) Program](#)

These services may assist operators facing broader financial hardship beyond what fee relief addresses.

10. Terms and Conditions

Applicants must:

- Submit only accurate and verifiable information;
- Acknowledge that this program is a **one-off measure** and does not create precedent for future events.

11. More Information

For enquiries:

Email: pirsa.fisheriesbusiness@sa.gov.au

Phone: (08) 8207 5332

For program updates and guidance:

Website: pir.sa.gov.au/primary_industry/commercial_fishing/licensing_and_registration/fee_relief