



FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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NOTICE TO RIVER FISHERY LICENCE HOLDERS**Ministerial exemption for use of a commercial yabby trap as a non-registered device**

Dear licence holder

I write regarding the ongoing trial of a 'commercial yabby trap' as a non-registered device.

In 2023, yabby pots were replaced with pyramid nets under the Fisheries Management (General) Regulations 2017 and the previous Fisheries Management (Lakes and Coorong Fishery) Regulations 2009 due to the risk to air-breathing animals such as Rakali (Water Rats), Platypus and freshwater Tortoises.

Devices that can be used for the commercial catch of Yabby include pyramid nets and, as part of a trial, a 'commercial yabby trap' under a Ministerial exemption. The trial of the commercial yabby trap will continue to be informed by the SARDI Observer Program. Information collected through this program will inform evaluation of the ecological performance of the gear type.

The SARDI Observer Program has collected information from fishing trips undertaken in 2023/24. However, due to continued low freshwater flows since February 2024, no further observer data have been collected. The commercial yabby trap cannot be considered to be added as a permitted device on commercial fishing licences on an ongoing basis until sufficient data can be collected to adequately assess the device features designed to mitigate the entrapment risk or mortality of air-breathing animals. Therefore, to support this process I would encourage River Fishery licence holders to participate in this trial if contacted.

As delegate of the Minister, I have approved a further Ministerial exemption pursuant to section 115 of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*, to allow the use of a commercial yabby trap, as specified in the enclosed Ministerial exemption notice (ME9903449) to enable River Fishery and Lakes and Coorong Fishery licence holders to use the exempted device to enable ongoing data collection necessary for the evaluation process. This exemption is valid from 17 September 2026 to 16 September 2027, unless varied or revoked earlier.

Please note, the exemption is subject to strict conditions and only applies to commercial licence holders with existing pyramid net entitlements endorsed on their licence and is not available for licences that have yabby pots endorsed. Information is provided below on how licence holders may apply to revoke yabby pots and apply for pyramid nets.



Existing activity, catch and effort reporting requirements remain in place when undertaking activities under this exemption, and “Commercial Yabby Trap (Exemption)” should be entered as the device type opposed to pyramid net.

It is the exemption holder’s responsibility to ensure they are aware of their obligations, and they have a copy of the exemption notice when undertaking the exempted activity. The *Fisheries Management Act 2007* provides that it is an offence to breach a condition of an exemption.

Process to replace yabby pots with pyramid nets

As the Ministerial exemption can only be used by licence holders with pyramid net entitlements, I wish to remind licence holders who still have yabby pots on their licences of the process to revoke and replace these yabby pots with the equivalent number of pyramid nets, noting that pyramid nets can only be lawfully used once they are registered on a licence.

If you have not already done so, licence holders need to complete and submit the enclosed ‘Application to vary gear registrations’ form before using pyramid nets or the exempted device (commercial yabby trap).

Completed application forms can be lodged with PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture:

- Email: pirsa.fisherieslicensing@sa.gov.au
- Mail: PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture, GPO Box 1625, Adelaide SA 5001

Please note that the decision to approve an application for the registration of pyramid nets on a licence will necessarily take into consideration the number of yabby pots on the same licence. For example, if 50 yabby pots are removed from a licence, 50 pyramid nets can be considered.

Should you have any further queries in regard to this matter please contact:

- Michelle Williams, Fisheries Management Officer on 8429 0996, email: michelle.williams@sa.gov.au; or
- Kellie Stevens, A/Manager - Leasing and Licensing on 8207 5332, email: pirsa.fisherieslicensing@sa.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Begg'.

Prof Gavin Begg
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Enclosures: Ministerial exemption notice (ME9903449)
Application to vary gear registrations