

Cost Recovery Implementation Statement for the Blue Crab Fishery

1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024



**Government
of South Australia**
Department of Primary
Industries and Regions

Cost Recovery Implementation Statement

Information current as of February 2023
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Introduction

Wild catch commercial fisheries in South Australia are managed in accordance with the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Cost Recovery Policy. This policy requires commercial fishery licence fees to fund services related to commercial fisheries management costs. PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture continue to manage the process of consulting with service providers and relevant industry associations to establish fishery-based management programs, which form the basis of annual licence fees.

For each sector, the program required to manage the fishery has the following components:

- Assessment and Research Services.
- Fisheries Management Services.
- Compliance Services, including communication, enforcement and monitoring activities.
- Support Services, including Legislation, Licensing and Business Services (Directorate).

This documentation provides a framework to assist in establishing appropriate research, policy, compliance and support services to manage a fishery.

Consistent with Principle 7 of the PIRSA Cost Recovery Policy, an annual schedule of meetings for stakeholder engagement and support for the cost recovery process in relation to commercial fisheries is outlined below:

Annual schedule of meetings		
Date	Activity	Parties
Sept/Oct	Review long-term objectives for fishery and update if necessary. Identify priority outcomes for upcoming financial year.	PIRSA and industry association
October	Develop policy, research and compliance work programs in readiness for discussions (fisheries managers with industry) in November.	PIRSA
November	Discuss proposed programs with relevant industry associations and reach agreement on programs for the upcoming period. Industry associations to consult with wider industry.	PIRSA and industry association
February	Formal meetings with industry associations to finalise work programs and summarise costs.	PIRSA and industry association
March	Submit proposed licence fees to Minister. Prepare Ministerial Notice briefing to vary and prescribe lease and licence fees for the next financial year.	PIRSA and government agencies
June	Invoices sent for annual licence fees.	PIRSA

* Dates above are indicative only and may vary due to unforeseen circumstances that may arise throughout any year.**

Summary Table

2022-23 (\$)	PROGRAM AREA	2023-24 (\$)	COMMENTS	DAYS	FTE
RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT					
167,316	Stock Assessment and Monitoring	155,562	1 year research project scope		
7,437	Economic Assessment	7,660	As per contracted services 2023-24		
429	Other Research	275	Contribution towards Threatened and Endangered Species		
PIRSA RELATED COSTS *					
35,000	Fisheries Management	36,680	Same level of service as previous year	40	0.20
9,420	Legislation	9,870	Same level of service as previous year	10	0.05
9,480	Licensing	9,940	Same level of service as previous year	10	0.05
3,480	Directorate	3,644	Same level of service as previous year	4	0.02
75,284	Compliance	78,883	Same level of service as previous year	59	0.30
22,490	Quota Monitoring	23,556	Same level of service as previous year	26	0.13
	Information Services	17,261	Logbook Program – Entry, validation, management and reporting of data		
\$330,336	TOTAL	343,331			

* The indexation rate of 4.8% confirmed by the Department of Treasury and Finance has been applied to the 2023/24 PIRSA program costs

Licence Fees 2023-24 (\$)	
Base Fee	5,335
Unit Fee (Blue Crab Pot)	27.25
Unit Fee (MSF Net)	31.75
Total of Licences	9
35 Licence Fees 2022-23 (\$)	
Base Fee	3,289
Unit Fee (Blue Crab Pot)	27.75
Unit Fee (MSF Net)	30.50
Total of Licences	9

Program Daily Charge Out Rate 2023-24

	DAILY RATE (\$)					
	Compliance	Quota	Directorate	Legislation	Licensing	Fisheries Management
Total Employee Expenses	692	453	640	764	521	618
Total Operating Expenses	350	151	127	64	145	166
Deprecation and Capital Costs	56	0	0	0	0	0
Total Other Expenses*	239	304	145	159	328	133
TOTAL DAILY RATE	1,337	906	911	987	994	917

Please Note: All dollar values have been rounded to the nearest dollar figure.

* Other expenses includes ICT, finance, human resources, WHS, accommodation, insurance and other costs incurred corporately in providing services to divisions, apportioned across PIRSA using a range of cost drivers such as number of logons, headcount, volume data and other workload indicators, in accordance with PIRSA's cost recovery policy.

Fishery Management Objectives

Long term objectives	Outcomes	Fisheries Management	Compliance	Assessment and Research	Leasing and Licensing
Ensure the Blue Swimmer Crab resource is harvested within ecologically sustainable limits.	<p>Implementation of Management Plan under <i>Fisheries Management Act 2007</i>.</p> <p>Maintain integrity of the quota system.</p> <p>Support any strategic research activities within the BCF.</p>	<p>Implement plan, including TACC setting and updated Harvest Strategy protocols.</p> <p>Support progression of eCatch reporting arrangements.</p> <p>Support any strategic research activities within the BCF, including industry priority investigating transition from research pots to commercial pots for surveys</p> <p>Commence a review of the current management plan that expires in January 2023</p>	<p>Implement compliance program, informed by risk assessment.</p> <p>Ensure integrity of quota system.</p>	<p>Conduct FIS consistent with updated Harvest Strategy.</p> <p>Produce FIS advice note and stock assessment report to assess fishery performance, in accordance with Management Plan.</p> <p>Support implementation of outcomes of Harvest Strategy review.</p> <p>Support any strategic research activities within the BCF</p> <p>Support a review of the current management plan that expires in January 2023</p>	<p>Provide ongoing support for licensing, quota and transfer queries.</p>
Allocate access to Blue Swimmer Crab resources to achieve optimum utilisation and equitable distribution	<p>Stock maintenance.</p> <p>Develop management arrangements to mitigate conflict issues between sectors.</p>	<p>Review allocations consistent with Management Plan and allocation policy.</p> <p>Support process to review area of fishery</p>	<p>Implement compliance programs for commercial and recreational fisheries,</p>		

Long term objectives	Outcomes	Fisheries Management	Compliance	Assessment and Research	Leasing and Licensing
to the benefit of the community.			informed by risk assessment.		
Minimise impacts on the ecosystem.	Progress DAWE recommendations under EPBC Act accreditation.	Continue implementation and management of DAWE recommendations through existing programs and reporting.	Implement compliance program, informed by risk assessment.	Produce Overall TEPS report (all fisheries).	
Cost effective and participative management of the fishery.	Effective engagement with industry in accordance with agreed co-management arrangements and communication strategy	Follow co-management arrangements, and timelines including maintaining regular communication with industry representatives.	Support industry by following co-management arrangements, and communication strategy for Blue Crab Fishery.	Support industry by following co-management arrangements, and communication strategy for Blue Crab Fishery.	Provide ongoing support for licensing, quota and transfer queries.

Fisheries Management Program

Program Manager:

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Program summary

The Fisheries Management Unit of PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture undertakes activities such as day-to-day management, long-term planning and policy development for South Australian commercial, recreational and Aboriginal traditional fisheries.

The Fisheries Management unit has the following core functions:

- Administer the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* and regulations.
- Day-to-day management of fisheries resources, to ensure catch and effort levels are commensurate with resource sustainability.
- Develop and implement Management Plans, including Harvest Strategy development and ESD risk assessment, in accordance with the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*.
- Provide advice to the Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and Chief Executive and on matters relating to fisheries
- Represent the Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture on committees and other forums on matters related to the administration of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*.
- Develop over-arching policy frameworks to support fisheries management.
- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, with a particular focus on the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.
- Progress Australian Government recommendations under EPBC Act (1999) assessment.

Objectives

To provide day-to-day fisheries management services for the Blue Crab Fishery to government and industry, as well as advice and facilitation of fisheries policy and management issues, through the Fisheries Management Program.

Program strategies and supporting actions and initiatives

Anticipated outcomes

1. Prepare day-to-day necessary legislative instruments and/or advice required for the management of the Blue Crab Fishery (regulations, closure notices, licence conditions, Ministerial exemptions etc).

2. Provide advice to the Minister or his/her delegate on setting total allowable commercial catch and effort levels for the Blue Crab Fishery.
3. Prepare policies to support fisheries management.
4. Prepare submissions to enable regular assessment of the Blue Crab Fishery under the EPBC Act.
5. Prepare annual report to the Australian Government on EPBC Act requirements for the Blue Crab Fishery
6. Support preparation of regular fisheries status reports
7. Develop and maintain day-to-day productive working relationships and outcomes through cooperative management and collaboration with stakeholders.
8. Further the development of co-management arrangements.

Performance indicators

1. Strong industry and government involvement in co-management relationship and adherence to formally agreed co-management arrangements.
2. Develop and implement Management Plan. Management Plans to include Harvest Strategies that protect sustainability of the fishery based on ESD risk assessment processes.
3. Australian Government recommendations met in relation to EPBC assessment.
4. Setting of TACC for Blue Crab Fishery.

Program effort allocation

The table below includes an abbreviated suite of core activities and initiatives used to manage risks and reflect the anticipated split of effort and associated costs.

Activity	Days	FTE	Cost (\$)
Fisheries Management	40	0.20	36,680

Please Note: All dollar values have been rounded to the nearest dollar figure.

	Deliverables	Due date
1.	Participate in inter and intra-departmental meetings and workshops on issues relevant to fisheries management.	Ongoing
2.	Liaise within the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, with SARDI Aquatic Sciences, other parts of PIRSA and other State and Commonwealth agencies on matters relevant to fisheries management.	Ongoing
3.	Liaise within PIRSA, with other government agencies and with industry representatives in implementing decisions relevant to fisheries management.	Ongoing
4.	Conduct regular assessment or review of existing management arrangements for fisheries management, including analysis of statistical information on fisheries and interactions with threatened, endangered and protected species.	March 2024
5.	Coordinate consultation with fishery stakeholders through established co-management processes. For TACC setting; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-TACC presentation of FIS advice • TACC Meeting 	Ongoing April 2024 May 2024
6.	Participate in industry liaison in the field and on vessels to strengthen fishery management knowledge and understanding and develop rapport with licence holders.	Ongoing
7.	Participate in industry development initiatives related to fisheries management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate commencement of a review of the current management plan that expires in June 2024 	June 2024
9.	Attend to general correspondence and enquiries relevant to the Blue Crab Fishery.	Ongoing
10.	Provide advice to Minister in relation to the management of fisheries and Ministerial correspondence.	Ongoing
11.	Communicate on fisheries management issues to key stakeholder groups and the broader community.	Ongoing

Legal Services Program

Program Manager:

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Program summary

PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture Directorate provides legal services to the Executive Director and all other members of the Division, in particular the policy group, on a daily basis. Among other things these services include strategic advice and problem solving, review of draft documentation and correspondence, statutory interpretation and the provision of general advice and statutory interpretation, in consultation with the Crown Solicitor's Office where necessary, regarding any legal issues relating to proposed actions and the implementation or administration of blue crab fisheries management and regulatory arrangements through existing legislative frameworks and licence conditions. Consideration is also given to the impacts and effects of other related legislation if and when required.

Objectives

To provide legal services supporting the implementation of necessary, appropriate and effective statutory and administrative changes to government administration of all fishery sectors, as well as strategic advice and facilitation of related policy development, legislative and regulatory issues, through the Legal Services Program.

Program strategies and supporting actions and initiatives

Program effort allocation

The table below includes an abbreviated suite of core activities and initiatives used to manage risks and reflect the anticipated split of effort and associated costs.

Activity	Days	FTE	Cost (\$)
Legislation	10	0.05	9,870

Please Note: All dollar values have been rounded to the nearest dollar figure.

Anticipated outcomes

	Deliverables	Due date
1.	Co-ordinate and review the introduction, amendment or revocation of Fisheries legislation in line with Fisheries Policy decisions i.e. Act or regulation amendments, the introduction of new regulations and drafting of other legislative and administrative instruments such as delegations, licences, permits, closures or exemption instruments as required under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 2007</i> (the Act). New regulations or amendments require the drafting of Cabinet submissions and supporting documentation, including the preparation of drafting instructions, for consideration by Cabinet. This service includes co-ordinating and review of the cabinet process and working with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and the Crown Solicitor's Office and other government agencies to ensure that proposed regulatory arrangements are accurately described, drafted and scrutinised before being implemented.	Ongoing
2.	Review licensing arrangements required on an as needs basis to lawfully implement approved fishery management policy and measures within the limitations of the Act. The service includes working with the Licensing program (part of Leasing and Licensing) and policy program to ensure licence conditions are effective and where necessary to implement efficient administrative systems and finalise forms and instruments that are legally sound.	Ongoing
3.	Problem solve and review policy developments together with the provision and co-ordination of legal advisory services in liaison with the Crown Solicitor's office relating to and the lawful implementation and administration of the Act, regulations and fisheries management policies, interaction with other Acts, and the defence of those policies and arrangements raised in litigation or industry correspondence.	Ongoing
4.	Coordinate applications for Ministerial exemptions under Part 10 Division 1 and Permits under Part 7 Division 2 of the Act and review draft notices.	Ongoing
5.	Additional legal services to support and review, on an as needs basis, the legislative compliance of decision-making documentation created for the Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Director Operations and other delegates of the Minister under the Act to safeguard the ongoing sustainability of a fishery in any particular year (where required), depending on positive or negative scientific indicators, to implement new fisheries management arrangements (for example the introduction or variation of a quota system, carry over of quota arrangements) or new administrative or compliance arrangements (for example, changes to licensing processes, conditions, introduction of closures).	Ongoing
6.	Support compliance for statutory interpretation, problem solving and correspondence advice (per above).	Ongoing

Leasing and Licensing

Program Manager:

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Program summary

The Fisheries Leasing and Licensing unit of PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture is responsible for the management of licensing and quota monitoring services.

This business unit provides a range of services related to the timely processing and management of information leading to the issue of licences and other reporting services.

The unit administers a licensing call centre for licence inquiries and other administrative services. The success of these functions is based on maintaining the Primary Industries Information Management System (PIIMS) database.

Objectives

To provide leasing and licensing services to government and industry through the Leasing and Licensing Program.

Program strategies and supporting actions and initiatives

Anticipated outcomes

1. Issue licences to licence holders in an accurate and timely manner.
2. Provide accurate and timely information related to licences.
3. Provide reports as required.

Program effort allocation

The table below includes an abbreviated suite of core activities and initiatives used to manage risks and reflect the anticipated split of effort and associated costs.

Activity	Days	FTE	Cost (\$)
Leasing and Licensing	10	0.05	9,940
Quota Monitoring	26	0.13	23,556

Please Note: All dollar values have been rounded to the nearest dollar figure.

	Deliverables	Due date
	Services to directly support the fishery	
1.	Issue and maintain fishery licences.	Ongoing
2.	Database management for licence and licence holder information.	Ongoing
3.	Monitor and support eBusiness systems.	Ongoing
4.	Quota monitoring and management including applying overcatch and undercatch adjustments.	Ongoing
5.	Collect licence fees and associated payments.	Ongoing
6.	Compose and send quarterly instalment notices.	Ongoing
7.	Record and track unpaid invoices.	Ongoing
8.	Compose and send late payment instalment notices for unpaid quarterly instalments.	Ongoing
9.	Draft and issue notices to fishers.	Ongoing
10.	Process requests for information from fishers who make such inquiries over the counter, through the call centre, via facsimile or e-mail. For example, helping fishers to process information relevant to licensing and quota, application for licence transfers, boat changes, gear enquiries and fishing regulations.	Ongoing
11.	Regularly update information about licence holders.	Ongoing
12.	Research and prepare documents for public record.	Ongoing
13.	Liaise with government stakeholders to verify the credentials of fishers.	Ongoing
14.	Liaise with PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture, SARDI Aquatic Sciences, Crown Solicitors and other state and local agencies on matters relevant to the fishery.	Ongoing
15.	Draft and update licence conditions over the duration of the licensing year as determined by the Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture.	Ongoing
16.	Provide information to licence holders relating to the requirements pursuant to licence administration.	Ongoing
17.	Manage calls from fishers regarding late payment notices, fees and general enquiries about their licences.	Ongoing
18.	Provide support regarding an increased frequency of last minute administrative enquiries from fishers. e.g., master changes, boat variations	Ongoing

	and quota transfers, as well as provide advice and support to fishers on licence information, to complete the required forms.	
	Services to support fisheries management	
1.	Participate in inter and intra departmental meetings and workshops on issues relevant to the fishing industry.	Ongoing
2.	Liaise with relevant staff within PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture in implementing decisions relevant to the fishery.	Ongoing
3.	Interrogate the PIIMS database to extract information for other stakeholders to use in preparing reports.	Ongoing
4.	Prepare reports requested by internal and external customers including maintenance of a public register of licence holders.	Ongoing
5.	Liaise with information technology providers to maintain PIIMS and administer licensing requests.	Ongoing
6.	Generate quota management reports to update stakeholders on varying Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) returns and end of season quota holdings.	Ongoing

Directorate Program

Program Manager:

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Program summary

Business Services, within the Directorate Unit of PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture, provides a range of services to support fisheries management. These include coordinating the cost recovery process and establishing agreements with service providers; coordinating program provider reports; administering external contracts and agreements; and providing audit, financial and human resource functions.

Objectives

To provide support services to government and industry, as well as advice and facilitation of corporate related policy and management issues, through the Directorate Program that incorporates the Fisheries and Aquaculture Business Services unit.

Program strategies and supporting actions and initiatives

Program effort allocation

The table below includes an abbreviated suite of core activities and initiatives used to manage risks and reflect the anticipated split of effort and associated costs.

Activity	Days	FTE	Cost (\$)
Directorate	4	0.02	3,644

Please Note: All dollar values have been rounded to the nearest dollar figure.

Anticipated outcomes

	Deliverables	Due date
1.	Coordinate and facilitate cost recovery processes and program agreements, including liaising with program providers, managers and financial services as required.	Ongoing
2.	Meet with industry on matters relating to cost recovery, licence setting and related policy issues.	Ongoing
3.	Develop and review cost recovery policy, processes and program agreements	Ongoing
4.	Manage major service providers' contractual agreements, and co-management services contractual agreements with industry associations.	Ongoing
5.	Project manage and administer external contractual services and agreements – 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.	Ongoing
6.	Provide advice on procurement and invoicing requirements.	Ongoing
7.	Consult 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.	Ongoing
8.	Ongoing review, development and documentation of the cost recovery model, framework, processes and roles.	Ongoing
9.	Meet agreed timeframes on management and administration of external contractual services.	Ongoing
10.	Appropriate management of industry funds and services.	Ongoing
11.	Provide an Annual Report on PIRSA's service delivery of the Cost Recovery agreement to industry Executive Officer.	September

Fisheries Compliance Operations Program

Program Manager:

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Program summary

PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture teams coordinate compliance activities (outputs) to build awareness and behavioural outcomes that have a long term beneficial impact in the Blue Crab (BSC) Fishery. The objective of the compliance activities (outputs) is to minimise the risks to aquatic resource sustainability, resource allocation and access rights and ultimately commercial economic viability.

The coordination of the compliance outputs is guided by the compliance program outlined below in the Compliance Delivery Outputs and Outcomes, which was developed in consultation with the BSC Industry. These outputs are aimed at educating fishers, deterring opportunistic and financially motivated crimes, enforce the rules and regulations and reducing overall compliance risks to resource sustainability.

Legislative and regulatory framework

Fisheries Management Act 2007

Fisheries Management (Blue Crab Fishery) Regulations 2013

Fisheries Management (Fish Processors) Regulations 2007

Fisheries Management (General) Regulations 2007 Schedule 2

Fisheries Management (Demerit Points) Regulations 2009

Blue Crab Fisheries Management Plan

Program effort, funding and resources

The level of effort required to deliver the compliance program in accordance with the dedicated plan is reviewed annually taking into account:

- previous effort required to deliver established programs developed over last 10 years.
- the identified risks to the fishery and any associated changes.
- shifts or changes to the fishery management.
- changes to fishing practices.

- additional pressures or influences on fishers or the fishery.
- intelligence holdings.
- trends or change behaviours that required monitoring and/or investigation.
- cost effectiveness and identified efficiencies.
- any other relevant information required to deliver an effective compliance program to monitor and enforce the rules and regulations for each fishery.

The table below includes the number of days predicted to reflect the anticipated split of effort and associated costs to deliver the compliance outputs for 2023/24.

Compliance Outputs	Days	FTE	Cost
Education and Awareness	15	0.08	20,055
Effective Deterrence, Monitoring and Surveillance	30	0.15	40,110
Enforcement	14	0.07	18,718
TOTALS	59	0.30	78,883

Please Note; to comply with Work Health and Safety obligations and evidentiary requirements, operational activities are generally required to be undertaken by a minimum of two (2) officers at any time.

IT systems, technology and data

Fisheries and Aquaculture Compliance Operations are supported by a number of electronic systems which continue to be refined to allow optimum delivery of information in a reliable and timely way. Some of the key systems that assist to drive the compliance outputs include:

- IBase and Analyst Notebooks (Intelligence system).
- FACT (Fisheries and Aquaculture Information Collection Tool).
- Timewise (Effort Reporting Tool).
- Evidence.com (Video Evidence Collection Tool).
- PIIMS (Primary Industries Information Management System – Quota and Licence Information).
- eCatch.
- eBrief (prosecutions system).
- Commercial Fishing Application.

Delivery outputs

The coordination of compliance outputs is guided by an industry specific compliance plan which was developed in consultation with the BSC Industry. The plan ensures compliance effort is intelligence driven, efficient, cost effective and outcome focused. The compliance plan comprises three core outputs

(Education and Awareness, Effective Deterrence and Appropriate Enforcement) and is optimised towards increasing voluntary compliance and maximising effective deterrence.

Analysis of intelligence and information holdings is regularly conducted to identify the major compliance related risks to the sustainable harvest of Blue Swimmer Crabs. The combination of strategies, actions, and initiatives are critical to focus the primary compliance effort to manage the risks and achieve targeted outcomes. The details are identified herein.

Intelligence

- Information collection.
- Analysis and testing of information voracity.
- Provide recommendations for targeted operations.
- Develop strategic assessments.

Education and awareness

- Conduct education meetings for new entrants into the fishery (licence holders/ registered masters) and participate in industry days.
- Provide electronic distribution of educational material to fishers and licence holders.
- Ensure all interested parties understand their respective obligations.
- Develop Industry communication and relationship program to facilitate discussion of topics such as the Quota Management System Integrity review and subsequent change management process.
- Ongoing one on one education during inspections.

Effective deterrence, monitoring and surveillance

- Ensure all aspects of the Quota Management System are monitored such as prior reporting and chain of custody requirements in catch disposal records (CDR) including auditing.
- Ensure all aspects of commercial fishing activities are monitored such as inspections of catch at sea, when landed, in transit and change of ownership at fish processing premises.
- Ensure information from mandated data loggers is being obtained by SARDI.
- Conduct intelligence driven operations and use appropriate enforcement action.
- Respond to reported incidents/issue.
- Communicate activities in formal reporting.
- Follow up of incorrect, incomplete reporting.

Enforcement

- Investigate reports of non-compliance and where appropriate take action.
- Issue expiations and caution notices and court enforced actions.
- Communicate enforcement outcomes in formal reporting.
- Service of suspension.

Risk assessment and management (work priorities)

PIRSA use information obtained from intelligence, monitoring, surveillance and enforcement processes to assess compliance risks to the fishery. This subsequently informs work priorities for service delivery. The priorities are prone to change during the year however the following are currently relevant to the Blue Swimmer Crab Fishery.

1. Quota Management System Integrity.
2. Fish in closed areas

Bio-security risks also remain a significant risk to the BSC Fishery.

Deliverables

In line with the annual performance report, the compliance deliverables will be presented separately.

Stock Assessment and Monitoring Program

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1. Project details

1.1 Title

Blue Crab Fishery

1.2 Subcontractor/Collaborator

South Australian Blue Crab Pot Fishers Association

1.3 Timeframe

Commencement Date: 1 July 2023

Completion Date: 30 June 2024

1.4 Summary

This scope of work will provide PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture with the information required for the ecologically sustainable management of the Blue Crab Fishery (BCF) in South Australia. The primary outputs from the research program in 2023/24 are:

- (1) Annual fishery-independent surveys (FIS) (due 30 April 2024);
- (2) Advice Note on FIS (due 15 May 2024); and
- (3) Annual stock assessment report (due 30 June 2024).

Secondary outputs include presentations provided to PIRSA and industry on survey results and other information to inform TACC discussions.

2. Project description

2.1 Background

The blue swimmer crab *Portunus armatus* is widely distributed in tropical coastal margins of Australia but also occurs in isolated populations in the temperate gulf waters of South Australia and on the West Coast. Historically, blue swimmer crabs were taken as a by-product of prawn fishing, however since the early 1980's targeted commercial fishing of crabs has been undertaken in three regional fishing zones in South Australia (West Coast, Spencer Gulf, Gulf St Vincent). Research primarily focuses on the pot fishing sectors in Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent, which collectively harvest ~99% of the total allowable commercial catch (TACC).

2.2 Need

The provision of accurate information on blue swimmer crab stocks is critical to ongoing management strategies for the sustainable harvesting of the resource. The annual assessment will provide PIRSA with the capacity to monitor the ongoing performance of the fishery and initiate, where necessary, adaptive management strategies in a timely manner.

2.3 Objectives

2.3.1 Fishery independent surveys

To undertake FIS of the BCF. Data to be incorporated into annual stock assessments to provide information independent of the commercial fishery. The objective is to provide a measure of relative abundance not altered by changing fishing patterns.

2.3.2 Commercial logbooks

To analyse fisher logbook information. Data to be incorporated into annual stock assessments to provide information on the commercial fishery.

2.3.3 Survey advice note

To provide advice on survey results assessed against the performance indicators for the fishery.

2.3.4 Stock assessment report

To integrate data available for the fishery and to provide a stock status classification of the resource.

2.4 Methods

2.4.1 FIS data:

- Collate, validate and analyse FIS data.
- SARDI to provide observers for surveys conducted throughout the season.

2.4.2 Fisher logbook information:

- Analyse fisher logbook information.

2.4.3 Survey advice note

- Provide a summary of survey results.
- Undertake assessment of performance indicators against reference points specified in the Harvest Strategy.

2.4.4 Stock assessment report

Provide annual report and presentations as required.

3. Deliverables

The key deliverables of the 2023/24 BCF stock assessment and monitoring program are tabulated below; additional work related to the core program is also identified:

Funding Source	Deliverable	Due Date
This SLA	Surveys for Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent zones of the BCF completed	30 April 2024
This SLA	Advice Note on FIS results delivered	15 May 2024
This SLA	Stock assessment report delivered	30 June 2024
This SLA	Advice Note and fishery assessment presentations to PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and South Australian Blue Crab Pot Fishers Association (SABCPFA) representatives delivered as required	30 June 2024
Other SLA	Assessment of the South Australian Marine Scalefish Fishery	30 June 2024
PIRSA	Support PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and industry in review of Management Plan	30 June 2024
PIRSA	Support PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and industry in industry initiatives	30 June 2024
FRDC	Project completion: Evaluation of a smart-phone application to collect recreational fishing catch estimates, including an assessment against an independent probability-based survey, using South Australia as a case study (FRDC project 2020/056; Principal Investigator: Dr Crystal Beckmann)	31 December 2023
FRDC	Contribute to Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks Report	30 June 2024

3.1 Service Provided:

3.1.1 *Collection of Basic Fisheries Statistics*

- Manage a comprehensive fishing logbook program.
- Collate fishing logbook returns and provide an in-confidence service.
- Validate returns including consultation with fishers to correct returns.
- Enter data and maintain storage in a secure location.
- Ongoing database administration, maintenance, and development.

3.1.2 *Fishery Independent Survey*

- Fishery-independent surveys are to be conducted in Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent using commercial vessels. Surveys to be conducted in each gulf during March/April. The cost of hiring commercial vessels is included in the budget.

3.1.3 *Review of management strategies and plan*

- Work with the industry and the fishery manager to review the research plan and the Management Plan.
- Investigate opportunities for new projects and potential additional funding sources.

3.1.4 *Analysis and interpretation*

- Interpret results of the research program in the stock assessment report.
- Update SA fisheries status report as required.

3.1.5 *Project management*

- Supervise project, quality control, management of deliverables.
- Respond to requests from PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture.

3.1.6 *Reporting*

- Attend Blue Crab industry meetings including preparation and follow up.
- Keep the industry abreast of research projects relevant to the Blue Crab Fishery.

3.2 **Outcomes:**

- Stock assessment of the BCF.
- Advice on the survey results against the performance indicators and reference points in the Management Plan.
- Advice to support fishery management from stock assessment outputs.

3.3. **Outputs and extension:**

- Provide an annual survey report (in the form of an advice note to PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture) that summarises survey results by 15 May 2024.
- Provide a stock assessment report on the Blue Crab Fishery to PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture by 30 June 2024 that documents, analyses and interprets the available data and assesses the fishery against the performance indicators identified in the Management Plan.
- Annual presentation to PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and the SABCPFA on the advice note and stock assessment of the BCF, if required.

4. Funding arrangements

4.1 Project costing policy

This one-year research program Scope and Costing has been costed at a Discounted rate.

4.2 Project cost

Financial Year	Total Funded \$ (GST N/A)	Total SARDI In-kind \$ (GST N/A)	Total Project Cost \$ (GST N/A)
2023/24	\$222,232	\$39,471	\$261,703
TOTAL COST	\$222,232	\$39,471	\$261,703

4.3 Milestone and payment schedule

Date	Milestone	Payment (\$) Ex GST
31 December 2023	Payment 1 of 2023/24 SLA	\$111,116
15 May 2024	Advice Note: 2024 Surveys	
31 May 2024	Payment 2 of 2023/24 SLA	\$111,116
30 June 2024	Stock assessment report	
SUBTOTAL		\$222,232
GST		NO GST
TOTAL COST		\$222,232

5. Project staff

Staff	Stock assessment FTE
Principal Scientist (SLA)	0.10
Research Officer (SLA)	0.38
Research Scientist (SLA)	0.34
TOTAL	0.82

6. Project cost summary

Cost	Detail	Stock assessment 2023/24 Total (\$) Ex GST
Salaries (FTE)		0.82
Salaries (\$)		\$109,549
Operating (\$)		
Payment to industry for surveys (\$)		\$34,000
Fieldwork (\$)		\$12,000
Laboratory (\$)		
Travel (\$)		
Office and communication (\$)		\$1,200
Capital equipment (\$)		
SARDI overhead (\$)		\$65,483
SARDI inkind (\$)		\$39,471
Total Cost (\$)		\$261,703
Revenue – PRICE		
Licence holders (\$)		155,562
PIRSA F&A (\$)		66,670
Total Revenue (\$)	85%	\$222,232
SARDI Investment (\$)	15%	\$39,471

Explanation of costs above:

Payment to industry for surveys - Direct costs of using industry vessels and staff to undertake surveys

Fieldwork - Fieldwork costs including vessels, travel and OHS requirements

Laboratory - Costs for processing samples

Travel - Costs for attending meetings with industry, PIRSA F&A and stakeholders

Office and communication - Stationery, communications, and publications

SARDI Overhead - Indirect costs that cannot be directly attributed to a specific business activity, product, or service

SARDI in kind – SARDI investment through supporting costs for specific equipment, capital depreciation, infrastructure, and research facilities



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