

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

2023-24



Government  
of South Australia

Department of Primary  
Industries and Regions

OFFICIAL

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

Information current as of August 2024  
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# Resource Planning

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 – Strategic resource planning and management</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic zone policy planning met the future requirements of industry.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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 mussel aquaculture sector in this area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zone policy templates and procedures were reviewed to remain up to date with changing circumstances that impact on zone policy development.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation of Subtidal Mollusc (mussel) 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"> <li>○ Commenced preparations to undertake a public call to release lease tenure in the LEP Policy.</li> <li>○ Completed process to reappoint ATAB members and seek two new ATAB members under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i>.</li> <li>○ Inducted members of the ATAB regarding the public call process for lease tenure applications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal policies and guidelines that flow from the amendments to the Act and Regulations were developed; such Sector-based aquaculture strategies, and ATAB procedures etc.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Completed review of ATAB procedures.</li> <li>○ Commenced internal policies and procedures relating to the assessment, approval and ongoing management of aquaculture tourism development authorities following amendments to the Aquaculture Act and Regulations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued implementation of Renewal Guidelines in determining renewal terms of leases and corresponding licences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review zones with mussel allocations, for use, productivity and commonly occurring operational concerns, including through enquires from existing and potential aquaculture industry stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commenced implementation of the LEP Policy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to implement the <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022 (SLLCP)</i>, including through reissuing of aquaculture lease and licence certificates.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities 2 &amp; 3 – Zone policy review and development of new regions or emerging sectors</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of aquaculture zones in suitable areas for the creation of new locations for the farming of mussels and other species. All tasks associated with zone policy development activities are undertaken and completed.</li> </ul>

- Ongoing maintenance of core policy development activities and processes, including industry consultation and liaison.
- 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 LEP 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 Subtidal Mollusc (mussel) 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 (EIS)
  - 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 (DCCEEW):
    - 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)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State Development Coordination and Facilitation Bill</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing participation in broader government processes, at a national and state level.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Blue Economy CRC Marine Spatial Planning Project</li> <li>○ National Aquaculture Committee</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 - Management of leases and licences</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 that increased efficiency in application assessments.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained ongoing liaison with relevant government (e.g., Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Attorney-General's Department (AGD) – Native Title) and non-government agencies (industry peak bodies).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained internal lease and licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (flowcharts, checklists and manuals) and performance criteria relating to leases and licences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued implementation of an administrative agreement between PIRSA and the EPA through meetings discussing ways to ensure efficiencies are maintained.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained of audit functions in relation to insurance and indemnity for aquaculture leases, including requesting evidence of cover from lease holders as required.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed the submission of updated bank guarantees for 29 mussel licences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed requests from lease and licence holders through calls or e-mails.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed annual production returns and environmental monitoring program reports for all licences. 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. All reports were monitored.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed all lease and licence application forms and amended where required to ensure internal policies, guidelines and processes relating to each application was adhered to.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reissue of lease and licence certificates following implementation of SLLCP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2 - Processing of lease and licence applications</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided case management functions to licence holders such as discussions prior to application submissions, following up on outstanding information or requirements and ongoing discussions relating to applications.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertook administrative processing of Mussel sector applications submitted under the Act as required (e.g., renewals, transfers).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced internal risk assessment documents specific to each application were produced.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issued and processed invoices relating to lease and licence applications.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorsement of applications by Senior Management Team.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced internal risk assessment documents specific to each application.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhered to internal policies, guidelines and processes relating to applications.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrals and liaison with other government and non-government agencies as required (e.g., EPA, DIT, AGD, State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP), Industry).</li> </ul>

## Legislation

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 - Administration of the Act and Regulations</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of informed and legally valid administrative decisions consistent with the Act to promote efficient and transparent government administration and industry development.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to and liaison with Parliamentary committees.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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"> <li>○ Amended the <i>Aquaculture Regulations 2016</i> to assist implementation of amendments to the Aquaculture Act for aquaculture related tourism developments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing implementation of the requirements of, and developments under the Act and Regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Parliamentary Counsel and Crown Solicitor’s Office (CSO) to effect policy requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2 - Legal services and legislative interpretation</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation of the Act, Regulations and applicable Statutory Policies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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>,</li> </ul>

*Livestock Act 1997, and Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*) and others as necessary.

## Compliance Operations

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 - Operational planning and implementation (section 82 of the Act)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance related issues of key importance and relevance to the Mussel Sector were communicated to the Sector in a timely manner, including advance notice of site inspections</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2 – Site surveillance (parts 6 and 7; Section 82A; Regulation 25)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertook site inspections; ensuring licence holder compliance with licence conditions and requirements of the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001, Aquaculture Regulations 2016</i> and <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022</i>.</li> <li>Timely communication of inspection outcomes to relevant licence holders, including identification of instances of both compliance and non-compliance</li> <li>Undertook re-inspections of non-compliant sites, including ongoing liaison with responsible licence holders</li> <li>Undertook inspections of sites due to be or that have been rehabilitated.</li> <li>Responded to information provided by members of the public or SA government agencies in relation to compliance issues relevant to the Mussel Sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 3 – Aquaculture Compliance liaison (Section 9 of the Act)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sought assistance from Fisheries &amp; 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.</li> </ul>

# Aquaculture Systems

Deliverables
<b>Activity 1 - IT systems management</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management of the Microsoft Database includes alignment of databases annually to reflect data requirements of Environmental Monitoring Reports.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting of the electronic lodgement system (my PIRSA) for environmental monitoring program and production return data.</li> </ul>

# Aquatic Animal Health

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 - Management of aquatic animal health risks and emergency response</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were no mussel mortalities reported to PIRSA in the 2023-24 period. 15 invertebrate (including mollusc and crustaceans) 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitored and responded to harmful algae blooms.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were no translocation application submitted to PIRSA in the 2023-24 reporting period.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaised with applicant/licence holder where technical advice, including for the use of mussel as bait / berley.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing liaison with relevant government [e.g. Interstate authorities (Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA), government veterinarians), Biosecurity, Environment Protection Authority (EPA)] and non-government agencies (Industry peak bodies).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referrals and liaison with other government and non-government agencies as required (e.g. EPA, DIT, AGD, State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP), Industry).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2 - Provide input to and alignment with broader state and national biosecurity policy frameworks, legislation and other processes</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted Emergency Disease Response training and updated PIRSA Emergency Response Plans as required with PIRSA Biosecurity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended meetings, reviewed documents, contributed to national policy developments and represented South Australia on the national Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> </ul>

# Environmental Monitoring and Management

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 - Management of environmental monitoring programs</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed, assessed and processed annual Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) reports for 32 Mussel licences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided case management functions to licence holders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 Mussel sector.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 Mussel sector.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responded to aquaculture inquiries from the Mussel sector and interested stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2 - Response to environmental issues</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaised with Fisheries Officers for environmental issues related to the Mussel sector, particularly in relation to site audits. This included a provision of technical input/mapping regarding environmental compliance and development and operation of aquaculture sites.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to provide advice on developments in Spencer Gulf as they relate to the Mussel 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).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted regular meetings with the EPA to discuss and prioritise environmental issues and projects relating to the aquaculture industry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 3 - Provide input to and alignment with State and National environmental policy, legislation and strategies</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mussel sector represented at inter- and intra- departmental and agency meetings, particularly in relation to environmental issues, development of new legislative arrangements/tools (e.g. amended Lower Eyre Peninsula zone policy).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input was provided on behalf of the Mussel sector to internal PIRSA documents, strategies/work plans and external legislation or policies that may impact the Mussel sector (e.g. EPA scorecards and State of the Environment Report which evaluate the impact on marine environment)..</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 4 - Identify research needs/opportunities for sustainable aquaculture planning and management</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided input to proposal to secure research funding for integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) in southern Australia with project outcomes expected to help inform sustainable planning and management of aquaculture in SA in the future.</li> </ul>

- Commenced review of internal ESD risk assessment guidelines to consider aquaculture tourism developments and updated general assessment items relating to the Mussel sector.

## Program Management and Administration

Deliverables
<b>Activities 1, 2 and 3 - (Directorate, Human Resource Management and Administration, Operational and Strategic Business Planning)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic direction was provided to aquaculture development in South Australia.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and development of human resources.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed, reviewed and implemented policies and procedures relating to administrative practices.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed, reviewed and monitored customer satisfaction standards and implemented recommendations for improvement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed major service providers' contractual agreements, and any other contractual agreements with industry associations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed, reviewed, monitored and implemented PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture's budget and business plan.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated alignment of PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture strategies and actions with State plans and strategic frameworks.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 4 - Financial management and cost recovery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing review, development and documentation of the cost recovery process and procedures in line with Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated and facilitated cost recovery processes and program agreements, including liaising with program providers, managers and financial services as required.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided advice on procurement and invoicing requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed, reviewed and implemented cost recovery procedures and program agreements for the Mussel sector for the 2023/24 period that are transparent, evidence-based and are developed in a consultative manner.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 5 Provision of timely advice to Chief Executive and Minister – PIRSA and other government agencies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed and provided feedback to the EPA for the State of the Environment report and associated web pages.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided feedback on the draft National Environmental Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided accurate and timely advice to the Chief Executive of Primary Industries and Regions and the Minister so they are aware of current and emerging issues faced by PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Mussel sector.</li> </ul>

## Other Aquaculture Activities

Deliverables
<p><b>Activity 1 - Perform economic and production forecasting</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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"> <li>○ All aquaculture sector production data collated and entered and forwarded to BDO for compiling 2022/23 report.</li> <li>○ 2022/23 annual economic report, incorporating Mussel sector data, drafted, finalised and published on PIRSA website.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production return data reported to Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity 2 - Marketing research</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and timely extension of recommendations from economic and marketing research to the Mussel sector.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation of achievements of aquaculture in SA at national and international forums and conferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sixth FRDC Australasian Scientific Conference on Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity</li> <li>○ 13th Asia Pacific Marine Biotechnology Conference</li> <li>○ Delegation from Shandong, China</li> <li>○ Provided lectures to Flinders University and University of Adelaide students on aquaculture policy and aquatic animal health.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>