



Chair Report Cost Recovery Implementation Committee (CRIC)

18 November 2025

Dear Stakeholders,

On 4 November 2025, the **Cost Recovery Implementation Committee (CRIC)** held its eleventh meeting to consider the summary of findings from the benchmarking review of the science and compliance programs for the South Australian fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The presentations on the draft reports were provided by each benchmarking consultant:

- Fisheries Science: *Ian Knuckey*
- Fisheries Compliance: *Simon Boag*
- Aquaculture Science and Compliance: *Ian Dutton*

Fisheries Science

The presentation on the draft Fisheries Science report evaluated the current cost recovery framework for fisheries research, monitoring, and assessment. The consultant benchmarked the South Australian fishery sectors against other jurisdictions, and determined the main following findings:

- The catch and effort data are robust but could be improved with expanded electronic logbooks and monitoring.
- Some fisheries are over-serviced in monitoring/assessment relative to risk and value.
- Strong fisheries independent survey (FIS) program, but there is potential to review the frequency and design of the FIS programs.
- There is a need to address hyperstability in catch rate data and update harvest strategies accordingly.
- The collection of recreational data is lagging behind national standards. It is recommended to establish robust, ongoing recreational catch surveys.
- The economic data collection is a strength, but cost transparency and allocation can be improved.

The benchmarking consultant highlighted nine key recommendations, including digital transformation, review of survey frequency, improved recreational data, and increased external review of science. It was noted that there is a need for improved collaboration, communication and accountability.

Fisheries Compliance

The presentation on the draft Fisheries Compliance report focused on transparency, risk-based

management and digital transformation.

The aim of the benchmarking activities is to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and cost structures of the current framework. There were four key recommendation themes from the Compliance benchmarking, which are as follows:

1. Resourcing
2. Digital Efficiency
3. Planning
4. TEPS Management.

From the Fisheries Compliance benchmarking review, there were key findings:

- South Australian fisheries are viewed as professional and generally compliant, with PIRSA recognised for its strong approach though sometimes perceived as over-servicing. Vessel inspection rates are higher than those in comparable jurisdictions, raising questions about efficiency and proportionality.
- PIRSA allocates compliance costs using fully costed officer days; this process is not systematic and shows weak or unexpected relationships between compliance effort, compliance risk, and catch uncertainty.
- A move toward compliance and stock risk-based apportionment is needed to ensure stronger alignment between compliance risk, catch uncertainty, and resource application at the fishery level.
- Despite the adoption of digital technologies that reduce compliance risk, these gains have not translated into fewer physical inspections or lower compliance levies.
- Some fisheries may benefit from long-term arrangements that better reflect the relationships between compliance fees, risk, and catch uncertainty — without undermining the integrity of South Australia's world-class fishery.

The benchmarking consultant provided eleven key recommendations including to align compliance measures with risk, implement digital monitoring systems, coordinate with other jurisdictions for efficiency, and ensure regulatory efforts remain focused and collaborative within legislative frameworks.

Aquaculture Science and Compliance

The presentation on the draft Aquaculture Science and Compliance noted that South Australia has the most comprehensive cost recovery process in Australia, but there were limitations with some of the following:

- Lack of national benchmarks for aquaculture cost recovery.
- Social licence and ESD issues are increasingly important.
- Concerns about value for money, transparency, and alignment of government and industry funding.
- Highlighted the need for facility-specific recommendations and further consultation with sectors.

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The consultant presented 31 recommendations, covering transparency, communication, compliance policy review, targeted training, resource allocation, and science priorities. There was a discussion following the Aquaculture Science and Compliance presentation regarding the proposed recommendations and questioned if they all relate specifically to the science and compliance programs. It was raised with the consultant whether the programs are appropriate or not and are adequate in terms of decision making and industry development.

The Project Leads will review the draft Aquaculture Science and Compliance report in depth and discuss further with the consultant.

Next Steps

The CRIC has agreed on the following **key actions** to move forward:

1. Industry sectors to provide any urgent feedback through the CRIC.
2. The Project Leads to provide feedback to consultants on the draft overarching report.
3. The CRIC to coordinate finalisation and communication of the final report.
4. Final report to be shared with industry and government as soon as possible after completion.

The eleventh CRIC meeting highlighted the key topics of the benchmarking activities, including the evaluation of current frameworks, benchmarking, recommendations and the next steps for finalising and communicating the benchmarking outcome.

The Project Leads will provide feedback to the benchmarking consultants and will coordinate with the CRIC to finalise the report. There will be three standalone reports, with an overarching summary and recommendations from the Project Leads.

The next CRIC meeting is scheduled for **December 2025**, and monthly meetings with the benchmarking consultants will continue.

For more information relating to the Independent Cost Recovery Review and the latest from the CRIC, including the Committee's terms of reference, please visit the [PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture independent cost recovery review webpage](#).

Sincerely,

Mr Brian Jeffriess

CRIC Independent Chair