

PIRSA Algal Bloom Fee Relief Program

To support impacted commercial fishers and aquaculture operators, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) has released the *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 individuals and businesses affected by the current Algal Bloom event.

Note these Guidelines have been updated in response to recent temporary, management arrangements. The updated Guidelines are applicable for Q2 to Q4 2025-26 financial year, commencing 1 October 2025.

1. About the Program

The South Australian Government is offering targeted fee relief for commercial fishers, aquaculture operators, and charter boat licence holders affected by the Algal Bloom.

The purpose of this program is to provide **pro-rata relief (25% of annual fees for each impacted quarter)** to eligible operators to alleviate costs incurred during impacted quarters throughout the financial year, when operations were significantly affected.

2. Funding Available

Eligible operators may receive a credit or refund equivalent to 25% (for each impacted quarter) of their applicable (2025-26) annual fee.

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

Note in response to the recent temporary, precautionary closure of the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone (from 1 November 2025 until 30 June 2026 subject to regular science review), PIRSA will apply the following fee relief options to licence holders impacted by the closure:

1. Licence holders of the Marine Scalefish, Blue Crab and Charter Boat fisheries who have been impacted by the closure of the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone in

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response to the algal bloom event, will receive automatic fee relief for the remaining financial year (Q2 – Q4). This means automatic approval for subsequent quarters, with no need to re-apply for fee relief through the Algal Bloom Fee Relief Working Group, from impacted period to 30 June 2026. This fee relief scenario is dependent on the below conditions:

- a. Licence holders with 100 or more combined quota units (King George Whiting, Southern Garfish, Southern Calamari) as of 1 October 2025 in the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone will automatically be eligible for fee relief.
 - b. Licence holders with less than 100 combined quota units (King George Whiting, Southern Garfish, Southern Calamari) as of 1 October 2025 in the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone, however, have averaged at least 30% of their fishing days over the past three years in the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone fishing zone, will automatically be eligible for fee relief.
2. Marine Scalefish Fishery licence holders who have been impacted by the closure of the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone in response to the algal bloom event, but were/are deemed ineligible for fee relief through the Algal Bloom Fee Relief Working Group, will receive fee relief for the remaining financial year (Q2 – Q4), for the cost-recovered value of GSV quota units (King George Whiting, Southern Garfish, Southern Calamari) only. Payment of the Marine Scalefish Fishery Base Fee is still required.

The Algal Bloom Fee Relief Review Group will continue to review fee relief applications from other licence holders on a weekly basis and assessing each impacted quarter at a time, until 30 June 2026.

Fish Processor and Restricted Fish Processor Fee Relief

PIRSA will be providing additional support measures to impacted licence holders by extending the fee relief to include Fish Processor Registration fees.

1. Licence holders of the Marine Scalefish and Blue Crab fisheries who have been approved for fee relief through the Algal Bloom Fee Relief Working Group, and have been impacted by the closure of the Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone in response to the algal bloom event, will receive fee relief for 75% of their annual fee (Q2 – Q4 of 2025-26).
2. There will be a pro-rata arrangement for other impacted licence holders who have been assessed by the Algal Bloom Fee Relief Review Group, which would be from Q2 – Q4 of 2025-26, with 25% of fee relief for each impacted quarter.

Transactional Leasing and Licensing Application Fees

In addition to the above fee relief, PIRSA is making transactional applications (both online and paper based), including quota transfers and vary boats, to be free of charge for each of the impacted quarters, Q2 – Q4 (2025-26). This applies to all fishery and aquaculture sectors until 30 June 2026.

If you have made an application payment after 1 October 2025, PIRSA will automatically credit the payment and apply any eligible credits to impacted lease and licence holders within the 2025–26 financial year, either against current debt, future invoices, or as a refund upon request.

3. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for fee relief, applicants must:

- Hold a current commercial fishery licence, aquaculture lease/licence, or charter boat licence issued by PIRSA;
- Have experienced operational impacts due to the Algal Bloom 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 June 2026**.

Applications can include:

- Areas typically fished or farmed, compared to impacted zones (as identified by Fishwatch and SARDI reporting);
- Catch history 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 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

- 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

If you have any queries regarding fee relief, please contact PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture to discuss your eligibility.

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