

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

2022-23



**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 2022-23

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# Resource Planning

	Deliverables
1.	Monitored aquaculture zone allocations through audit and review, notably with respect to availability of water enquiries from existing and potential aquaculture industry stakeholders.
2.	Released the Draft Aquaculture (Zones - Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2023 (the Draft Policy) and supporting Report for public consultation and referral to prescribed bodies and public authorities to accommodate future expansion of aquaculture sectors, including the Mussel aquaculture sector. Submissions received during consultation were considered, with amendments then made to the Draft Policy and supporting Report to finalise the Policy.
3.	Commenced process to develop draft aquaculture tourism development regulations to assist implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021</i> , including key stakeholder consultation and risk assessment of current tourism developments.
4.	<p>Provided comment to the Department for Trade and Investment (DTI) on a number of proposed developments to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA Water Eyre Peninsula desalination plant development application</li> </ul>
5.	<p>Provided comment to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on a number of proposed developments/activities to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed seabed lease for a grain loading facility off Wallaroo</li> <li>Proposed seabed lease for a deep water port off Port Neil</li> </ul>
6.	Initiated process to reappoint ATAB members and seek two new ATAB members under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
7.	Inducted members of the ATAB regarding the public call process for lease tenure applications.
8.	<p>Provided advice to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on several proposed legislative reforms to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Environmental Standards for Matters of National Environmental Significances</li> <li>Draft National artificial reef guidelines</li> </ul>
9.	Provided comments to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on the draft inputs on the State of the Environment Report, including updates to actions on 2018 recommendations.
10.	Provided comment to Infrastructure SA on the Northern Water Supply project to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture.
11.	Provided advice to DTI regarding proposed amendments to the Planning and Design Code under the Miscellaneous Technical Enhancement Code Amendment to streamline the development assessment and approval process for future marine and land-based aquaculture developments.
12.	<p>Provided advice to the Department for Energy and Mining (DEM) on a number of proposed legislative reforms to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Australia's Green Paper on the Energy Transition</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Generation Act Issues Paper and Draft Bill</li> </ul>
13.	Ongoing liaison and consultation with relevant government departments, prescribed bodies and relevant stakeholders in relation to zone policy development.
14.	Provided advice to stakeholders/members of the public in relation to existing aquaculture zone allocations (i.e. area, biomass, etc.).
15.	Provided input to a range of State and Commonwealth Government environmental and conservation initiatives, to ensure aquaculture zone development objectives and aspirations were adequately taken into account and factored into broader conservation policy development.
16.	Continued to provide input to the Blue Economy CRC Marine Spatial Planning project to mitigate potential impacts to the aquaculture industry from other users of the marine resource.
17.	Continued to provide input and support to the Marine Bioproducts CRC to support sector growth.
18.	Continued review of current and future provisions for the rehabilitation of aquaculture leases.
19.	Continued to attend and provide input to the National Aquaculture Committee on behalf of South Australia.
20.	Provided correspondence, held a series of industry information sessions, and progressively reissued all aquaculture lease and licence certificates as part of implementation of the Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022.
21.	Meetings and advice to SA Water regarding a proposed desalination plant for the lower Eyre Peninsula and potential impacts to aquaculture.

# Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing

	Deliverables												
	<b>Activity 1 – Management of leases and licences</b>												
1.	Ongoing maintenance of internal licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (i.e., flowcharts, checklists and manuals) and performance relating to Mussel Sector licences. Maintained the eBusiness environment, systems and procedures that supported the day to day administration of leasing and licensing activities, including applicant consultation and liaison, reviewing licence application forms and processes, and, ESD templates to increase efficiency in application assessments.												
2.	Ongoing liaison with relevant government (e.g. Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT), Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Attorney-General's Department – Native title, PIRSA conviction checks) and non-government agencies (industry peak bodies).												
3.	Maintained internal lease and licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (checklists and manuals) and performance criteria relating to leases and licences.												
4.	Maintained audit function in relation to insurance and indemnity for Aquaculture leases, including requesting evidence of cover from lease holders.												
5.	Generated 5 annual invoices, ensured accuracy, collected associated fees and payments, followed up unpaid invoices through finance checks.												
6.	Processed request from lease and licence holders over the counter, through phone call or e-mail.												
7.	Processed annual production returns and environmental monitoring program reports from the Mussel sector. Followed up unreturned production returns and environmental monitoring program reports to ensure licence holders met their obligations under the Act and ensured information was collated effectively for the development of economic reporting.												
	<b>Activity 2 – Processing of Lease and Licence Applications</b>												
	<p>Processing of Mussel Sector applications (see table below).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Mussel: Application Type</th><th>Number</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lease Renewal</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>New Leases</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>New licences</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lease Transfer</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Licence transfer</td><td>1</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Mussel: Application Type	Number	Lease Renewal	5	New Leases	2	New licences	2	Lease Transfer	1	Licence transfer	1
Mussel: Application Type	Number												
Lease Renewal	5												
New Leases	2												
New licences	2												
Lease Transfer	1												
Licence transfer	1												
8.	Followed up on outstanding information to facilitate the assessment of lease and licence applications in an accurate and timely manner. (e.g. ASIC, Public indemnity insurance and bank guarantees).												
9.	Issued and processed invoices relating to 7 lease and licence applications.												

10.	Liaised with applicants, licence holders and third party contacts such as Marine Brokers and banks regarding public liability and bank guarantees.
11.	Internal risk assessment documents specific to each application were produced.
12.	Adhered to internal policies, guidelines and processes relating to applications.
13.	Case management administration undertaken.
14.	Referrals and liaison with other government and non-government agencies as required (e.g. EPA, DIT, AGD, SCAP, Industry).

## Legislation

	Deliverables
1	Input into freedom of information requests in relation to PIRSA's administration of the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
2	Strategic input into the implementation of administrative decisions in all program areas as required to ensure they are informed and legally valid and consistent with the Act to promote efficient and transparent government administration.
3	Review of aquaculture related notices issued under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> and related Ministerial delegations for same.
4	Updated sub-delegations of Ministerial powers and functions under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
5	Input into compliance / enforcement / litigation matters as required.
6	Provided input and assistance into the development of draft aquaculture tourism development regulations and supplementary documentation to assist implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021</i> .
7	Input into and review of development of draft consultation Biosecurity Bill to consider impacts on aquaculture
8	Review of broader government referred Cabinet submissions for aquaculture legislative and administrative impacts.



## Compliance Operations

Deliverables
<p>Advance notice of site inspections was provided to the key stakeholder prior to Fisheries Officers undertaking inspections of all Boston Bay, Proper Bay and Louth Bay sites in June 2023.</p>
<p>Fisheries Officers inspected 30 sites located within the zones in June 2023.</p> <p>Fisheries Officers undertaking the inspections assessed each site against the requirements of the <i>Act</i> and <i>Regulations</i>, and lease and licence conditions, with a focus on ensuring navigational and site marking requirements were being met.</p>
<p>As has been the case in recent years, all sites were observed to be well maintained and in good working order. 17 sites of the sites inspected contained instances of site and navigational marking non-compliance, although a number of these were relatively minor issues. The respective lease holder of each impacted site(s) was notified in writing and requested to rectify.</p> <p>Fisheries Officers will reinspect each of the non-compliant sites in due course to ensure the non-compliant issues are rectified.</p>
<p>Clarification of requirement under <i>Aquaculture Regulations 2016</i>, Regulation 24 (Marking Off Lease Areas) was provided to a key stakeholder, including that it affords exclusive occupation of the leased area, however it is optional.</p>

# Aquaculture Systems

	Deliverables
1.	Accurate and efficient systems maintained and enhanced to provide for effective and efficient management and administration of the Mussel Sector, in accordance with the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
2.	Provided for public transparency of use of the State's aquaculture resources (e.g. Public Register is available on the PIRSA website for all stakeholders, including the Mussel Sector, relevant government agencies and general public).
3.	Safeguarded licence holder details by adhering to broader government guidelines (e.g. records management requirements for public service document standards and freedom of information requests).
4.	Included in management of the PIIMS database was assessing reporting functionalities, liaison with the PIRSA IT group, testing updates to the database, reporting of functional issues and troubleshooting with system users.
5.	Included in management of the Public Register system was rollout of updates such as those related to the implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2022</i> , reporting of functional issues to the PIRSA IT group, testing when updates occurred and troubleshooting with system users both internally and externally.
6.	Included in the management of ArcGIS was 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.
7.	Management of the Microsoft Access Database included alignment of databases annually to reflect data requirements of Environmental Monitoring Reports.
8.	Management and maintenance of an electronic lodgement system for environmental monitoring program and production return data for the Mussel Sector.
9.	Maintenance of the electronic reporting system to retrieve data directly from PIIMS in regards to electronic Environmental Monitoring Reports.
10.	Management of records management systems (e.g. Objective) included testing of various functionalities, liaison with the PIRSA IT group and requests for further updates to systems and software.
11.	Ongoing testing, maintenance and troubleshooting of the electronic lodgement system (my PIRSA) for environmental monitoring program and production return data.
12.	Maintain accurate and up to date information on the PIRSA Aquaculture website, including for the Mussel Sector.

# Aquatic Animal Health

	Deliverables
1.	Five invertebrate (including mollusc) mortality events were reported to PIRSA and investigated. Mortality investigations included both aquaculture and wild fish kills. Samples were submitted to the laboratory and tested to rule out disease and harmful algae.
2.	Maintained passive surveillance systems, including summarise relevant pathology reports from the State VetLab, summarise fish kill and aquaculture mortality investigations to demonstrate South Australia's disease freedom for trade and market access purposes.
4.	Provided advice to other government agencies, including the EPA, SA Health, DEM, with regards to heavy metal levels of aquatic species (including mussels and other molluscs) in the Port Pirie area to support continued trade and market access for the broader seafood industry.
5.	Implementation of mitigation strategies in two related mollusc sectors as identified in risk assessments. This is to facilitate effective disease management (disease prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies).
6.	Conducted Emergency Disease Response training and updated PIRSA Emergency Response Plans as required with PIRSA Biosecurity.
7.	Meetings attended, reviewed documents, contributed to national policy developments and represented South Australia on the national Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH).
8.	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).
9.	Attended Aquatic Veterinary Medicines Working Group meetings (under SCAAH), to facilitate progress of veterinary medicine permits with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).
10.	Progressed the project "Improving the availability of safe and effective veterinary medicines for Australia's seafood industry (FRDC 2020-094)". In this project, one of our primary aims is coordinate a national effort to facilitate the progress of priority aquatic veterinary medicines in the seafood industry through to permitting or registration with the APVMA.
11.	Coordinated with SASQAP to ensure risks to the Mussel Sector were mitigated with veterinary medicine use in adjacent sectors.
12.	Reviewed and updated a notice under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Notifiable Diseases</i></li> </ul>

# Environmental Monitoring and Management

	Deliverables
1.	Developed, processed and assessed results of annual Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) reports for 32 Mussel licences.
2.	Progressed and finalised applications for 2 new mussel aquaculture leases/licences.
3.	Assessment and advice to the PIRSA Fisheries policy group on a seedstock application.
5.	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 EMP summary information for the mussel aquaculture sector.
6.	Finalised the sector-based strategy for the Mussel Sector, including ensuring alignment with State plans and strategies relating to aquaculture development.
7.	Ongoing maintenance of reporting databases for environmental compliance matters, ecological interactions and marine debris.
8.	Conducted regular meetings with the EPA to discuss and prioritise environmental issues and projects relating to the aquaculture industry.
9.	Liaised with Fisheries Officers for environmental issues related to the Mussel Sector, particularly in relation to site audits and debris. This included a provision of technical input/mapping regarding environmental compliance and development and operation of aquaculture sites.
10.	Reviewed a number of guidelines/proposals/legislation that may impact the Mussel Sector (e.g. Port Lincoln Desalination Plant, PIRSA/DEW marine mammal interaction procedure, Agrifutures Plastic waste project, National FRDC welfare project, National Environmental Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance, Native Vegetation Act Amendments).
11.	Notification to all licence holders permitted to farm algae of the new management arrangements for algae aquaculture.

## Program Management and Administration

	Deliverables
1.	Managed major service providers' contractual agreements, and any other contractual agreements with industry associations.
2.	Project managed and administered 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.
3.	Provided advice on procurement and invoicing requirements.
4.	Met agreed timeframes on management and administration of external contractual services.
5.	Ensured appropriate management of industry funds and services.
6.	Coordinated and facilitated cost recovery processes and program agreements, including liaising with program providers, managers and financial services as required.
7.	Met with industry on matters relating to cost recovery, licence setting and related policy issues.
8.	Developed, reviewed and implemented cost recovery procedures and program agreements for the Mussel Sector for 2022-23 that are transparent, evidence-based and are developed in a consultative manner.
9.	Ongoing review, development and documentation of the cost recovery process and procedures in line with Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.
10.	Provision of relevant, accurate and timely advice to the Chief Executive of PIRSA and the Minister so they were aware of current and emerging issues faced by PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Mussel Sector.
11.	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.
12.	Finalised PIRSA internal guidelines for assessing fee waiver requests under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
13.	Provided administrative support to the Independent Cost Recovery Review Panel, eg mail outs to all licence/lease holders, meeting coordination, travel bookings and other adhoc administration support during the review.

## Other Aquaculture Activities

	Deliverables
1.	All aquaculture sector production data collated, entered and information forwarded to BDO EconSearch for compiling the 2021/22 report.
2.	2021/22 annual economic report, incorporating Mussel Sector data, drafted, finalised and published on PIRSA website.
3.	Attended and presented at a number of forums and conferences, including the World Aquaculture Conference in Darwin (June 2023) and Sixth FRDC Australasian Scientific Conference on Aquatic Animal Health and Biosecurity in Cairns (July 2023) on aquaculture policy and planning, aquatic animal health or environmental matters.
4.	Provided lectures to Flinders University and University of Adelaide students on aquaculture policy and aquatic animal health.