

PIRSA

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

2019-20



Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries
and Regions

Annual Report on PIRSA's Service Delivery on the Cost Recovery Agreement for the Finfish Sector 2019-20

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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.	Commenced the review of the <i>Aquaculture (Zones-Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> to accommodate future expansion of aquaculture sectors, including the subtidal Finfish Sector. Established the Lower Eyre Peninsula Review Advisory Committee to make recommendations for the review of the <i>Aquaculture (Zones-Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> , with two meetings held during this period. Drafted a Statement of Intent outlining proposed amendments to the zone policy, including consideration of the needs and expectations of the Finfish Sector, as presented to the Committee in April 2020.
3.	Finalised the Draft Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2020 and supporting Policy Report for approval, and commenced implementation. The policy development process included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two month public consultation period • Two public briefings (Adelaide and Port Lincoln) to assist submissions • Three aquaculture sector briefings, including with the Finfish Sector, to assist submissions • Review of submissions and amendments to the Draft Policy and Policy Report
4.	Assisted the Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board (ATAB) to develop draft procedures for meetings, in accordance with the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
5.	Ongoing liaison and consultation with relevant government departments, prescribed bodies and relevant stakeholders in relation to zone policy development.
6.	Provided advice to stakeholders/members of the public in relation to existing aquaculture zone allocations (i.e. area, biomass, etc.).
7.	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 in to broader conservation policy development.
8.	Provided advice to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) on proposed port facilities in Spencer Gulf and Kangaroo Island.
9.	Provided formal response to DIT regarding a mandated referral to PIRSA for aquaculture developments outside of aquaculture zones and land-based aquaculture developments under the proposed Phase 2 of the Planning and Design Code. The referral is an important mechanism for PIRSA to minimise the regulatory burden on the aquaculture industry created by the planning approvals process.
10.	Reviewed and provided a submission to DIT on the draft Phase 2 and 3 of the Planning and Design Code, which replaces all development plans for the State, to streamline development approvals for future marine-based aquaculture development outside of aquaculture zones, as well as land-based aquaculture development, and to mitigate impacts from other forms of development on the aquaculture industry.

11.	Held an aquaculture development scenario testing workshop with DIT, Department for Environment and Water (DEW), Environment Protection Authority (EPA), council planners, and aquaculture industry representatives, to assist industry understand DIT's new planning system and to provide feedback.
12.	Provided input to DIT's review of referral fees under the <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> , in regard to PIRSA's provision of advice to the relevant planning authority for aquaculture development applications.
13.	Reviewed and provided a response to the EPA on their Dredge Guidelines to mitigate potential impacts to the aquaculture industry.
14.	Ongoing liaison and consultation with DIT to streamline the process for aquaculture lease holders to surrender/remove associated lands title leases.
15.	Undertook a two month public call for lease tenure applications within the <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> and <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Tumby Bay) Policy 2015</i> to be submitted to the ATAB for consideration, which included lease tenure for the Finfish Sector.
16.	Facilitated and provided support to an ATAB meeting for consideration of lease tenure applications for the <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> and <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Tumby Bay) Policy 2015</i> public call. Draft internal procedures for ATAB meetings to assess applications for lease tenure were also tabled.
17.	Commenced process to draft and make variation regulations to amend the <i>Aquaculture Regulations 16</i> , in relation to contemporising and streamlining prescribed bodies under regulation 5 for referral of draft aquaculture policies under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
18.	Commenced review of current and future provisions for the rehabilitation of aquaculture leases.
19.	Facilitated the preparation of an industry led application to address workplace wellness for the seafood sector in South Australia.
20.	Provided administrative information to Clean Seas Seafoods Limited to assist with their Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification process.
21.	Amended the Louth Bay aquaculture zone in the <i>Aquaculture (Zones – Lower Eyre Peninsula) Policy 2013</i> via Gazette to temporarily increase the biomass for farming of aquatic animals in a manner that involves regular feeding.

Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing

	Deliverables																
1.	Ongoing maintenance of internal licence audit functions, including auditing procedures (i.e. flowcharts, checklists and manuals) and performance relating to Finfish licences.																
2.	Completed database maintenance and updates as required.																
3.	Completed update to electronic Production Return and Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) reporting including design and testing of each new report.																
4.	Review of renewal and transfer applications to ensure correct information is received at the time of application.																
5.	Updated licence/lease records as required.																
6.	Maintenance of systems and procedures to support day to day administration of leasing and licensing activities related to the Finfish Sector.																
7.	Conducted audits of internal processes and functions including application checklists.																
8.	Records management of leasing and licensing documentation.																
9.	<p>Processing of Finfish applications (see table below).</p> <table> <tr> <th>Finfish: Application Type</th><th>Number</th></tr> <tr> <td>New lease*</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>New licence*</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Licence Variation*</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lease renewal</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lease amalgamation</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Licence amalgamation</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lease movement*</td><td>3</td></tr> </table> <p>*Environmental assessment and interagency referral conducted</p>	Finfish: Application Type	Number	New lease*	1	New licence*	1	Licence Variation*	10	Lease renewal	5	Lease amalgamation	1	Licence amalgamation	1	Lease movement*	3
Finfish: Application Type	Number																
New lease*	1																
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Licence Variation*	10																
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10.	Processed annual production returns from the Finfish Sector. This included follow-up on unreturned production returns to ensure licence holders meet their obligations under the regulations, collation and analysis of information.																
11.	Finalised PIRSA internal guidelines for determining lease performance criteria and terms for aquaculture leases and licences, including determination of terms for applications to extend the term of aquaculture productions leases up to 30 years.																
12.	Assisted lease holders with the process to surrender historical associated lands title leases through DIT and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.																
13.	Processed requests for information from licence holders via front counter, phone or e-mail.																

14.	Liaised with government stakeholders to verify the credentials of lease/licence holders for application processing as required.
15.	Issued invoices relating to annual fees (including quarterly reminders), licence renewals, transfers and/or surrenders for 22 Finfish licences.
16.	Reconciled receipt of annual lease and licence fees, application fees and liaised with Shared Services SA as required.
17.	Established a process for assessing and considering tourism based infrastructure on aquaculture leases, in consultation with DIT and the EPA.

Legislation

	Deliverables
1.	Finalisation of proposed amendments to the Act to enable the extension of the term of aquaculture production leases from 20 to 30 years, and to enhance notification requirements to persons with a registered interest on leases prior to a lease being cancelled. These Act amendments were included in amendments made under the Treasurer's Statutes Amendment and Repeal (Simplify) Act 2019. Input into implementation matters.
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.	Provided input into the finalisation of the draft Aquaculture (Standard Lease and Licence Conditions) Policy 2020 for approval, including a review of over 300 lease and licence conditions with the Office of Parliamentary Council (OPC) and the Crown Solicitor's Office to ensure these remain modern and reflective of the aquaculture industry's practice.
4.	Review of aquaculture related notices issued under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> and related Ministerial delegations for same.
5.	Updating of Ministerial delegations including sub-delegations under the <i>Aquaculture Act 2001</i> .
6.	Input into compliance / enforcement/ litigation matters as required.

Compliance Operations

	Deliverables
1.	<p>Site surveillance inspections were undertaken by Fisheries Officers to ensure lease and licence holders comply with the Act, associated Acts, Regulations, policies and specific lease and licence conditions, and to investigate complaints from the public. Surveillance activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine site inspections undertaken by Fisheries Officers. • Reports made to PIRSA subsequent to compliance inspections outline any compliance issues with a site and include photographs and site waypoints. • Follow up inspections as required for sites that have identified compliance issues. • These inspections were carried out within a reasonable timeframe, with due consideration of the risks to other users of the waters or resource. • Inspections also undertaken on sites that have been or are due to be, rehabilitated by lease or licence holders or contractors of lease and/or licence holders on an as required basis.
3.	<p>Finfish sites in Boston Bay were inspected, with several navigational marking related instances of non-compliance detected. Following liaison with growers, all instances were addressed.</p>
4.	<p>Communication and monitoring activities are undertaken by PIRSA and related SA government agencies to ensure compliance by Finfish lease and/or licence holders with legislation (Act, other Acts, Regulations and policies) and conditions of leases and/or licences.</p> <p>In late 2019, a fish escape event was reported. Fisheries Officers received and responded to a number of inquiries from members of the public in relation to the reported escape.</p>
5.	<p>Procedures and processes required for response to notifiable events (e.g. entanglements, high mortalities) in an efficient and timely manner were developed and implemented by all agencies concerned.</p>

Aquaculture Systems

	Deliverables
1.	Accurate and efficient systems maintained and enhanced to provide for effective and efficient management and administration of the Finfish 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 Finfish 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 trouble-shooting with system users.
5.	Included in management of the Public Register system was rollout of updates, reporting of functional issues to the PIRSA IT group, testing when updates occurred and trouble-shooting 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 trouble-shooting 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 Finfish Sector.
9.	Development of an 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 maintenance and trouble-shooting of the electronic lodgement system (my PIRSA) for environmental monitoring program and production return data.

Aquatic Animal Health

	Deliverables
1.	Twelve finfish related mortality events were reported to PIRSA and investigated. Samples were submitted to the laboratory and tested to rule out disease. No significant or notifiable diseases were detected.
2.	Harmful algae bloom (<i>Karenia mikimotoi</i>) was investigated and monitored in the Boston Bay and Louth Bay area, and Hardwicke Bay. No fish mortalities were attributed to this bloom; however, high mortalities (sea cucumbers and abalone) were reported and investigated at Hardwicke Bay in August 2019. Based on high algae counts in water samples and histopathology results, the likely cause of the mortality was attributed to a harmful algae bloom (<i>Karenia mikimotoi</i>).
3.	Maintained passive surveillance systems, including summarising relevant pathology reports from the State Vetlab, summarised fish kill and aquaculture mortality investigations to demonstrate South Australia's disease freedom for trade and market access purposes.
4.	Administered the regulation and compliance for off-label veterinary medicine use. Assessed and processed 56 veterinary prescriptions to support Ministerial approvals for off label use of veterinary medicines to maintain fish health and welfare. Liaised with industry veterinarian, EPA, adjacent mussel industry and other government departments during assessment.
5.	Assisted with progress of permit and registration for veterinary medicines with APVMA through meetings, workshops and communications with APVMA, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), National Aquaculture Council, aquaculture industry sectors, EPA, PIRSA rural chemicals, veterinarians and researchers.
6.	Assessment and advice to the PIRSA Fisheries Policy Group on Finfish stock release applications to ensure the risks of introduction and spread of disease in State waters are minimised.
7.	Commenced the project (Department of the Agriculture, Water, and the Environment /FRDC: 2019-088) "Development of a national sector-specific biosecurity plan guideline and template for the sea-cage finfish (non-salmonid) industry of Australia." This included a workshop between industry and government representatives, including from other jurisdictions.
8.	Conducted Emergency Disease Response training and updated PIRSA Emergency Response Plans as required with PIRSA Biosecurity SA.
9.	Provided advice and reviewed documentation in relation to disease risks posed by aquatic pests (including a compliance case), biofouling and ballast water management.
10.	Communications sent to all fish processors reminding them of the disease risks and current legislative restrictions for processing and distribution of fish waste for bait and berley, including the duty to prevent the introduction and spread of notifiable diseases.
11.	Attended meetings, reviewed documents, contributed to national policy developments and represented South Australia on the national Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH).
12.	Chaired the National Aquatic Veterinary Medicines Working Group (under SCAAH), to facilitate progress of veterinary medicine permits with the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine

	Authority (APVMA), and progress of the national strategic plan for aquatic animal health (including objective 4: Improving availability of appropriate veterinary medicines).
13.	Reviewed and updated the notice <i>Prohibition of Entry into and Movement within South Australia of Aquaculture Stock Notice 2020</i> under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> .

Environmental Monitoring and Management

	Deliverables
1.	Developed, assessed and processed annual EMP reports for 22 Finfish licences.
2.	Conducted Ecologically Sustainable Development risk assessments and management of EPA referral for 14 Finfish licence applications related to new (1), movement (3) and other licence condition variations (10, including species addition, conversion, and change to biomass limits).
3.	Prepared the Zoning In - South Australian Aquaculture Report 2017/18 and commenced drafting the 2018/19 report which contains a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia, including EMP summary information for each aquaculture sector.
4.	Reviewed the draft report for the 2015/16 to 2018/19 (4-year) Regional Environmental Monitoring Program for the Finfish Sector in Lower Spencer Gulf.
5.	Developed and implemented the 2019/20 to 2023/24 (4-year) Regional Environmental Monitoring Program for the Finfish Sector in Lower Spencer Gulf (in conjunction with EPA, SARDI and industry) that included specific research to monitor impacts of aquaculture nutrients on seagrass. This included a number of workshops between PIRSA, SARDI, industry and the EPA to discuss the design of the program. As part of this, SARDI modelled nutrient outputs to determine suitable sites for sampling.
6.	Implementation of a research project (FRDC 2018-186) to assess impacts of Finfish aquaculture on seagrasses in Fitzgerald Bay as part of the ongoing environmental monitoring program for Finfish aquaculture expansion in the Fitzgerald Bay aquaculture zone.
7.	Developed periodic EMPs for Finfish licences in the Fitzgerald Bay and Louth Bay aquaculture zones in consultation with the Finfish Sector and the EPA.
8.	Ongoing assessment of periodic EMPs for Arno Bay and Boston Bay aquaculture zones.
9.	Discussion with the EPA to review and amend EMP requirements as requested by industry, leading to an improved and more efficient monitoring program for industry.
10.	Responded to environmental issues related to the Finfish Sector, including marine debris, pollution, escapes of aquaculture stock and interactions between marine mammals and aquaculture infrastructure.
11.	Responded to stakeholder submissions in relation to Finfish lease/licence applications (e.g. new sites and movement of sites), including seeking SARDI advice regarding environmental concerns. This also included PIRSA attending a community meeting at Whyalla and multiple Ministerial and Divisional communications (3) with concerned stakeholders in regard to finfish aquaculture in Fitzgerald Bay.
12.	Ongoing maintenance of reporting databases for environmental compliance matters, escapes of stock, interactions and marine debris.
13.	Conducted bi-monthly meetings with the EPA to discuss and prioritise environmental issues and projects relating to the aquaculture industry.

14.	<p>Liaised with Fisheries Officers for environmental issues related to the Finfish Sector, particularly in relation to marine debris, escape and site audits. This included provision of technical input regarding environmental compliance and development and operation of aquaculture sites.</p>
15.	<p>Contribution to, support for and implementation of, various research projects to assess environmental impacts relating to or applicable to Finfish aquaculture, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRDC 2018-186: Assessing the capacity for sustainable finfish aquaculture in the vicinity of seagrasses
16.	<p>Focussed on meeting the Finfish Sector's needs in relation to company strategies for farming, and investigating opportunities for expansion. This included discussion with SARDI, EPA and industry and subsequent amendment of the Louth Bay biomass limits at a zone and site level.</p>

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 the 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, lease and licence fee setting and related policy issues.
8.	Developed, reviewed and implemented cost recovery procedures and program agreements for the Finfish Sector for 2020/21 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 was provided to the Chief Executive of PIRSA and Minister so they were aware of current and emerging issues faced by PIRSA and the Finfish Sector.
11.	Consulted with the Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Director Operations, PIRSA Fisheries Managers, and the Office of the Minister and other parties as needed.
12.	Provision of information to inform responses and decisions in relation to public and industry concerns raised with the Chief Executive of PIRSA and the Minister.
13.	Provided assistance to the Finfish Sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other Aquaculture Activities

	Deliverables
1.	2017/18 annual economic report, incorporating Finfish Sector data, finalised and published on PIRSA website.
2.	2018/19 annual economic report, incorporating Finfish Sector data, drafted.
3.	All aquaculture sector production data collated and entered, and forwarded to BDO EconSearch for compiling 2018/19 report.

