

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

2022-23



**Government  
of South Australia**  
Department of Primary  
Industries and Regions

# Annual Report on PIRSA's Service Delivery on the Cost Recovery Agreement for the Oyster 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 Oyster aquaculture sector. Submissions received during consultation were considered, with amendments then made to the Draft Policy and supporting Report to finalise the Policy.
3.	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.
4.	Commenced process to develop draft aquaculture tourism development regulations to assist implementation of the Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021, including undertaking key stakeholder consultation and risk assessment of current tourism developments.
5.	Commenced process to amend the SLLCP regarding perpendicular hanging of culture units following requests from the Oyster industry.
6.	Provided comment to the Department for Trade and Investment (DTI) on a number of proposed developments to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA Water Eyre Peninsula desalination plant development application</li> </ul>
7.	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.
8.	Initiated process to reappoint ATAB members and seek two new ATAB members under the Aquaculture Act 2001.
9.	Inducted members of the ATAB regarding the public call process for lease tenure applications.
10.	Provided comment to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport on a number of proposed developments/activities to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streaky Bay fireworks aquatic activity licence</li> <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>
11.	Provided advice to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on a number of proposed legislative reforms to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft national environmental standard for matters of national environmental significance</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Draft national artificial reef guidelines</li> </ul>
12.	Provided comments to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on the Draft Inputs for the State of the Environment Report, including updates to actions on 2018 recommendations.
13.	Provided comment to Infrastructure SA on the Northern Water Supply project to mitigate potential impacts to aquaculture.
14.	Consulted with the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) regarding undertaking a review of the Island Parks of Western Eyre Peninsula 2006 Management Plan (specifically St Peter Island) to progress the Draft Aquaculture (Zones- Ceduna) Policy 2015 and facilitate lease movements within this area.
15.	<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> <li>○ Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Generation Act Issues Paper and Draft Bill</li> </ul>
16.	Ongoing liaison and consultation with relevant government departments, prescribed bodies and relevant stakeholders in relation to zone policy development.
17.	Provided advice to stakeholders/members of the public in relation to existing aquaculture zone allocations (i.e., area, biomass, etc.).
18.	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.
19.	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.
20.	Continued to provide input and support to the Marine Bioproducts CRC to support sector growth.
21.	Continued review of current and future provisions for the rehabilitation of aquaculture leases.
22.	Continued to attend and provide input to the National Aquaculture Committee on behalf of South Australia.
23.	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 Oyster licences. Maintained the eBusiness environment, systems and procedures in order to support day to day administration of leasing and licensing activities, including applicant consultation and liaison, reviewing licence application forms and processes, and ESD templates that increased 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 such as SAOGA).				
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 functions in relation to insurance and indemnity for aquaculture leases, including requesting evidence of cover from lease holders as required.				
5.	Processed annual production returns and environmental monitoring program reports from the Oyster sector. Followed up non-submission of 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. A total of 135 production returns and 352 environmental monitoring program reports were requested for the year.				
6.	Generated annual invoices, ensured accuracy, collected associated fees and payments, followed up unpaid invoices through finance checks.				
7.	Processed requests from lease and licence holders over the counter, through phone calls or e-mail.				
8.	Liaised with fisheries officers to undertake compliance inspections with relevance to unused lease/licence areas after being occupied.				
	<b>Activity 2 – Processing of Lease and Licence Applications</b>				
	Processing of Oyster applications (see table below). <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Oyster: Application Type</th><th>Number</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>New lease/licence*</td><td>1</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Oyster: Application Type	Number	New lease/licence*	1
Oyster: Application Type	Number				
New lease/licence*	1				

		Lease movement*	20	
		Lease renewal	159	
		Lease transfer	34	
		Licence transfer	49	
		Specified person	0	
		Lease division	2	
		Licence division	3	
		Lease amalgamation	1	
		Licence variation*	49	
		Lease/Licence surrender/cancellation	2	
		Seed-stock permit	0	
	*Environmental assessment and inter-agency referral conducted			
9.	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 or contribution to an approved association)			
10.	Issued and processed 111 invoices relating to lease and licence applications.			
11.	Ongoing liaison with applicant/licence holders.			
12.	Senior Management Team reviewed each application for endorsement.			
13.	Internal risk assessment documents specific to each application were produced.			
14.	Internal policies, guidelines and processes relating to application Case Management administration (e.g. payment plans for 8 leases and 9 licences) were adhered to.			
15.	Referrals and liaison with other government and -nongovernment agencies were undertaken as required (e.g. EPA, DIT, AGD, SCAP, Industry).			
16.	Responded to public submissions specific to applications.			

## 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 including lease renewal processes 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 and related correspondence matters as required.
6.	Provided input and assistance into the development of draft aquaculture tourism development regulations to assist implementation of the <i>Aquaculture (Tourism Development) Amendment Act 2021</i> .
7.	Input 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

The main PIRSA Compliance focus during 2022 / 2023 was to monitor / manage implementation of the new Aquaculture Policy that came into effect from August 2022.

Prior to this date, the Regional Manager West engaged on numerous occasions with key SAOGA stakeholders including the Executive Officer, Bay Reps, and some growers, including at the SAOGA AGM held at Port Lincoln. A key focus on the engagement was to ensure growers within each zone, in particular those growers within the Coffin Bay area, knew and understood the requirements of the new Policy and what changes to farming practice they would be required to make. Numerous written correspondence was also forwarded including an information pack for growers and maps that clearly spelt out what they needed to do, including placement of Crosses and Street Signs under the new Policy to be compliant.

The Regional Manager West, the Manager, PIRSA Aquaculture Planning and other Fisheries Officers also attended scheduled meetings held within each zone. The intent of these meetings was to provide further opportunity for growers to confirm their requirements under the new Policy.

The Regional Manager West and other Fisheries Officers received numerous phone calls and responded to emails from growers seeking information / clarification around the Policy requirements.

A key initiative provided by PIRSA Compliance was the up-front communication that site inspections to monitor compliance with the new Policy requirements were scheduled from April 2023 (approximately 6 months after implementation of the new Policy). The aim of providing such advance notice was to ensure growers had more than enough time to undertake any site maintenance required. It also enabled bulk manufacture and distribution of new Street Sign site identification.

Fisheries Officers completed 104 site inspections in the Coffin Bay area in April 2023. PIRSA Compliance is in the process of notifying growers whose sites were assessed as having > the permitted 4,000 metres of line length, with re-inspections of those sites to occur across remainder of 2023 / 2024.

Fisheries Officers followed up reports from the public in relation to site infrastructure debris including baskets and ropes that had come loose and washed up onshore.

SAOGA rehabilitated a site at Fitzgerald Bay following the decision by the respective lease / licence holder to cease operating the site. This followed extensive effort by PIRSA Compliance over several years to get the lease / licence holder to restore the site to a compliant state.

Fisheries Officers conducted inspections of various sites located near Port Lincoln, in the Coffin Bay area and at Streaky Bay. This followed information received by the public and other growers in relation to each site and potential non-compliance. The feedback included alleged non-compliant site and navigational marking, loose baskets observed on the seafloor within and nearby the site(s), infrastructure contained on-site being in poor condition and over-stocking.

Fisheries Officers collected feral Pacific oysters required under the POMS program. Fisheries Officers detected members of the public collecting feral oysters from the Port River area and educated them around POMS related restrictions. Fisheries Officers educated numerous members of the public on the rules relating to using farmed oyster shells and gut as berley.

Information was provided to an individual looking to purchase and sell oysters.

Fisheries Officers liaised with several growers in relation to unpaid licence and lease transfer fees, and the progress of transfer applications.

# Aquaculture Systems

	Deliverables
1.	Accurate and efficient systems maintained and enhanced to provide for effective and efficient management and administration of the Oyster 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 Oyster 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 occur 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 Oyster 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 Oyster 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.	Coordination of State-wide early detection surveillance for Ostreid herpesvirus type-1 microvariant (OsHV-1) / Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS). In 2022/23, ~4462 Pacific Oysters (farmed and feral) were processed. In total, 704 samples were tested, all of which were negative for OsHV-1 / POMS.
3.	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.	PIRSA assessed and approved one intrastate translocation of Native Oysters, under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i> .
5.	<p>Provided advice to various government agencies and organisations/companies to mitigate potential aquatic animal health risks posed by marine developments/activities. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PIRSA provided advice to other companies involved in marine developments to reduce the risk of spreading POMS in adjacent areas to the Port.</li> <li>PIRSA provided advice on biofouling and ballast water management to various companies and vessel operators at their request.</li> </ul>
6.	Communications and awareness: SAOGA newsletter article, SAOGA AGM, factsheets to licence holders on POMS.
7.	The South Australian POMS management plan was implemented. The aims are to contain POMS to the Port Adelaide River System and implement prevention and preparedness activities in the commercial farming regions.
8.	Administrated two Chief Veterinary Officer approvals for biosecurity audits of two oyster hatcheries. Two of the five oyster hatcheries in South Australia are now considered biosecure.
9.	Conducted Emergency Disease Response training and updated PIRSA Emergency Response Plans as required with PIRSA Biosecurity.
10.	Meetings attended, reviewed documents, contributed to national policy developments and represented South Australia on the national Sub-Committee on Aquatic Animal Health (SCAAH).
11.	Attended Aquatic Veterinary Medicine Working Group meetings (under SCAAH), to facilitate progress of veterinary medicine permits with the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA).
12.	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).

13.	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.
14.	<p>Reviewed and updated a notice under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Notifiable Diseases</i></li> </ul> <p>Reviewed and progressed a notice under the <i>Livestock Act 1997</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prohibition on the Use of Abalone as Bait and Berley.</i></li> </ul>
15.	Provided advice to the Tasmanian oyster industry on interstate import requirements of oysters into South Australia.

# Environmental Monitoring and Management

	Deliverables
1.	Developed, assessed and processed annual Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) reports for 352 Oyster licences.
2.	Conducted Ecologically Sustainable Development risk assessments and management of EPA referral for 76 Oyster licence applications related to new (1), licence variations (49), Movements (20), amalgamations (1), divisions (3) and cancellations (2).
3.	Finalised the 2023 South Australian Aquaculture Report which contains a summary of production and management of aquaculture in South Australia in 2021/22, including EMP summary information for the Oyster aquaculture sector.
4.	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.
5.	Responded to environmental issues related to the Oyster Sector.
6.	Responded to ongoing industry requests in regard to applications and management of leases and licences.
7.	Presented at SAOGA information day.
8.	Provided articles for SAOGA newsletter.
9.	Ongoing maintenance of reporting databases for environmental compliance matters, escapes of stock, ecological interactions and marine debris.
10.	Assessed and processed 11 Oyster strategies in association with transfer applications and new licence holders.
11.	Assessment and advice to the PIRSA Fisheries policy group on a seedstock application.
12.	Conducted regular meetings with the EPA to discuss and prioritise environmental issues and projects relating to the aquaculture industry.
13.	Liaised with Fisheries Officers for environmental issues related to the Oyster Sector, particularly in relation to marine debris, site audits and rehabilitation of old sites. This included provision of technical input/mapping regarding environmental compliance and development and operation of aquaculture sites.
14.	Reviewed a number of guidelines/proposals/legislation that may impact the Oyster Sector (e.g. PIRSA/DEW marine mammal interaction procedure, Port Lincoln Desalination Plant, Agrifutures Plastic waste project, National FRDC welfare project, National Environmental Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance, Native Vegetation Act Amendments).

15.	Notification to all licence holders permitted to farm algae of the new management arrangements for algae aquaculture.
16.	<p>Contribution to, support for and implementation of, numerous research projects to assess environmental and economic impacts relating to Oyster aquaculture and research into POMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRDC 2014-027: Pacific Oyster feeds and feeding in South Australian waters: towards ecosystem based management</li> <li>• FRDC 2016-808: Future Oysters CRC-P <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CRC-P Advanced surveillance</li> <li>○ CRC-P species diversification including a pest and biosecurity risk assessment for Rock Oysters</li> <li>○ Rapid diagnostic method for OsHV-1</li> <li>○ Efficacy of knockdown and POMS outbreak on Pacific Oyster populations and OsHV-1 viral load in the Port River</li> <li>○ Role of non-C. gigas hosts for POMS</li> <li>○ Infection model for assessing susceptibility to OsHV-1</li> </ul> </li> <li>• FRDC 2019-039: South Australian Pacific Oyster selective breeding program: Building POMS resistance to reduce risk for the South Australian Oyster industry</li> <li>• Project priority submission to FRDC for IMTA: Aquaculture growth through Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture (IMTA) – Incorporating nutrient modelling into regulatory frameworks.</li> </ul>

## 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, including FRDC Levy Contributions.
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 Oyster 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 was provided 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 Oyster 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.	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 and entered and forwarded to BDO EconSearch for compiling 2021/22 report.
2.	2021/22 annual economic report, incorporating Oyster Sector data, drafted, finalised and published on PIRSA website.
3.	Collected, through annual fees, the Oyster industry's annual contribution to the FRDC.
4.	Provided input to SAOGA newsletter articles.
5.	Attended and presented at the SAOGA Seminar in October 2022 and the Oyster Information Day in February 2023.
6.	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.
7.	Provided lectures to Flinders University and University of Adelaide students on aquaculture policy and aquatic animal health.