

Summary of meeting outcomes
NSW Shellfish Committee
27 August 2025

The NSW Shellfish Committee met via video conference 27 August 2025. Issues considered by the Committee are outlined below.

Attendees

NSW Shellfish Committee members:

Chair – Prof. Shauna Murray
Industry representative - Mr. Brandon Armstrong
Industry representative - Mr. Steve Coxon
NSW Shellfish Program Manager - Mr. Anthony Zammit
NSW Aquatic Biosecurity – Mrs. Melissa Walker
NSW DPIRD Senior Policy Officer Aquaculture – Dr. Emma Wilkie

Invited guest attendees:

Mr. Phil Baker (Secretary) - NSW Shellfish Program
Mr. Andy Myers - NSW Farmers Association
Mr. Marek Rouillon – NSW EPA
Helen Prifti – NSW EPA
Bethany Alexander – DEECCW
Angus Ferguson - DEECCW

Apologies:

Industry representative - Mr. Shane Buckley
Industry representative – Mr. Andrew Prowse

Declaration conflict of interest:

No members declared a conflict of interest on the matters raised in the agenda.

1. Matters raised relating to the Seafood Food Safety Scheme

Harvest area management report – Annual reviews for 22 shellfish harvest areas were conducted since the May 2025 meeting. 168 harvest area closures occurred since the previous meeting, with a total of 466 harvest area closures for the 2025 calendar year to date.

Vibrio risk management – With Spring season imminent and warmer land and water temperatures returning it is a timely reminder that vibrio risk management strategies should be followed by industry. Vibrio risk management strategies are available on the NSW Food Authority website and can be found [here](#).

Blacklip Rock Oyster Cadmium Exemption (FSANZ) – Food Standards Australia New Zealand have received an application to exempt Blacklip Rock Oysters from the Food Standards Code limits for Cadmium in oysters. Cadmium exemptions for Queen Scallops and Bluff Oysters have previously been approved by FSANZ based on dietary allowances. It was noted that oysters and scallops have been exempted from the cadmium requirements in the Codex standards.

ASQAAC meeting – The 47th annual meeting of the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Advisory Committee (ASQAAC) is scheduled for 10 September 2025 in Hobart, Tasmania. The NSW Shellfish Committee supported Mr. Brandon Armstrong as the NSW shellfish industry representative at the upcoming meeting. Brandon will join NSW Shellfish Program Manager Mr. Anthony Zammit as the NSW industry and government representatives respectively.

2. Non-food safety matters relating to shellfish

Oyster shell waste exemption – Guest speakers from NSW Environment Protection Agency (EPA) presented the findings of the shell waste Order and Exemption project. Once finalised, the Order and Exemption will enable the reuse of processed oyster shell waste on land for soil amendment or as a liming agent. Agreed requirements for shell waste reuse will be specified in the Order and Exemption, and broadly will include:

- The shell is to be stockpiled and signposted with stockpile information
- Desiccation for a minimum of 90 days, with at least 30 days of daily solar exposure that is greater than 18 MJ/m².
- Mounds of shell waste to be <2m high.
- Shell is washed with freshwater prior to reuse
- Processed shell waste must have a particle size <2mm
- Processed shell waste must be tested for pH, sodium and electrical conductivity by an accredited lab
- Transaction reports and record keeping requirements.

Water quality– Guest speakers from NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) presented on numerous water quality sensor projects and initiatives including the extension of the oyster industry water quality sensor network. The Committee were in support of agency and industry collaboration to explore data sharing options. Funding is being sought to extend the various water quality projects.

Aquatic Biosecurity update – Since the previous Shellfish Committee meeting DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity received zero reports of unexplained mortalities or suspected shellfish diseases. Window of infectivity studies for QX in Port Stephens has now concluded and findings have identified Tilligerry Creek period is between January to early April while Karuah River is from November to May. Other findings support the hypothesis that a decrease in salinity at the beginning of the window of infectivity period may affect oysters immune system and potentially facilitate infection. Further information can be found [here](#).

The next meeting of the NSW Shellfish Committee is scheduled for 5 November 2025.