

Summary of meeting outcomes
NSW Shellfish Committee
25 February 2026

The NSW Shellfish Committee met via video conference 25 February 2026. Issues considered by the Committee are outlined below.

Attendees

NSW Shellfish Committee members:

Prof. Shauna Murray - Chair
Mr. Andrew Davies - NSW Food Authority A/CEO
Mr. Brandon Armstrong - Industry representative
Mr. Steve Coxon - Industry representative
Mr. Shane Buckley - Industry representative
Mr. Andrew Prowse - Industry representative
Mr. Anthony Zammit - NSW Shellfish Program Manager
Dr. Emma Wilkie - NSW DPIRD Senior Policy Officer Aquaculture
Mr. Ian Lyall - NSW DPIRD Director Aquaculture
Mr. Andy Myers - OceanWatch / NSW Farmers / Oysters Australia

Invited guest attendees:

Mr. Phil Baker (Secretary) - NSW Shellfish Program
Mr. Adrian Pinkerton – Industry observer
Mrs. Gayle Garbutt – NSW DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity

Apologies:

Mrs. Melissa Walker – NSW Aquatic Biosecurity

Declaration conflict of interest:

No members declared a conflict of interest on matters discussed

1. Matters raised relating to the Seafood Food Safety Scheme

Harvest area management report – Annual reviews for 23 shellfish harvest areas were conducted since the November 2025 meeting. 144 harvest area closures occurred since the previous meeting, with a total of 595 harvest area closures for the 2025 calendar year.

2. Non-food safety matters relating to shellfish

Operation Trident – Reporting recent thefts of commercial quantities of spat and market sized oysters on the NSW South Coast has led to a response from the Rural Crime Investigation squad who intend to conduct on-water surveillance targeting boat ramps and oyster leases. This investigation is only possible due to industry members reporting oyster theft to build a case to warrant the police response. Industry is reminded to report all oyster thefts to Operation Trident on 1800 333 000.

Posidonia seagrass project

NSW Farmers, with support from the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC) and Oysters Australia have initiated an industry-led seagrass monitoring project to build empirical data to constructively respond to concerns over seagrass habitat and identify

industry best practice around seagrass colonies. Following a competitive tender process, Elgin Associates, led by Dr. Nick Yee was unanimously endorsed by the steering committee to conduct the project.

NSW Oyster Conference

The NSW Oyster Conference has grown into the largest gathering of oyster industry stakeholders in Australasia with ~250 people attending the biennial conference. Planning is well advanced for the 2026 conference being held in Merimbula May 26-28.

Tickets for the conference can be obtained [here](#). Nominations are also open for the 2026 NSW Oyster Industry Awards and the Photo Competition, with winners to be announced at the conference. Growers are encouraged to get involved [here](#).

Oysters Australia update

Oysters Australia is the national peak body that provides national oversight in research & development, investment and linkage between research partners, government (both state and federal) and the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC). Oysters Australia Strategic Plan 2020-2025 has ended and a new strategic plan is required for 2026-31. This process will begin shortly, and industry feedback will be sought on RD&E priorities.

NSW Aquaculture Vision Statement

DPIRD is working with committees and associations to update and prioritise key projects identified in the Roadmap to achieve a \$300m aquaculture sector by 2030. The recent \$20m Aquaculture Industry Development Program has greatly boosted initiatives within the Roadmap for private sector parties.

Aquaculture Production Report

The NSW Aquaculture Production Report for 2024-25 has been completed and can be found [here](#). Insights into the report show a decline of 8.3% in Sydney Rock Oyster production and a decline of 11.4% in value, predominately due to the flooding experienced in the reporting period. Pacific Oyster production and value increased by 19.1% and 18% respectively.

Aquatic Biosecurity update – DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity investigated three suspected shellfish disease occurrences since 5 November 2025 in the Hawkesbury River involving Pacific Oysters. Thorough assessment of samples did not identify any notifiable disease or a disease of known concern.

The next meeting of the NSW Shellfish Committee is scheduled for 20th May 2026.