

**Summary of meeting outcomes**  
**NSW Shellfish Committee**  
**11 November 2025**

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The NSW Shellfish Committee met via video conference 11 November 2025. Issues considered by the Committee are outlined below.

**Attendees**

***NSW Shellfish Committee members:***

Chair – Prof. Shauna Murray  
NSW Food Authority A/CEO – Mr. Andrew Davies  
Industry representative - Mr. Brandon Armstrong  
Industry representative - Mr. Steve Coxon  
Industry representative - Mr. Shane Buckley  
Industry representative – Mr. Andrew Prowse  
NSW Shellfish Program Manager - Mr. Anthony Zammit  
NSW Aquatic Biosecurity – Mrs. Melissa Walker  
Mr. Andy Myers – OceanWatch  
NSW DPIRD Director Aquaculture – Ian Lyall

***Invited guest attendees:***

Mr. Phil Baker (Secretary) - NSW Shellfish Program  
Ben Ralston – Industry member – Items 1 - 5b(ii)  
Liana Bonner – NSW DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity Policy and Project Officer – Item 7

***Apologies:***

NSW DPIRD Senior Policy Officer Aquaculture – Dr. Emma Wilkie

***Declaration conflict of interest:***

Brandon Armstrong advised of a declaration of conflict of interest to item 5b (ii). Chair approved Brandon's attendance on this item as the conflict was determined to not stand.

**1. Matters raised relating to the Seafood Food Safety Scheme**

**Harvest area management report** – Annual reviews for 16 shellfish harvest areas were conducted since the August 2025 meeting. 43 harvest area closures occurred since the previous meeting, with a total of 534 harvest area closures for the 2025 calendar year to date.

**Biotoxin testing service tender** – The current biotoxin testing service provided by Symbio Laboratories is due to expire in 2026. The NSW Food Authority has approved the advertisement of a tender for the provision of a biotoxin testing service that meets similar parameters of the current contract.

**NSW Shellfish Industry Manual update** – The NSW Shellfish Industry Manual was recently updated to reflect changes made in the NSW Food Regulation (2025) which was recently gazetted. Regulation references were updated and online notification process for businesses in the event of a failed test was added. The new manual can be found on the NSW Food Authority website [here](#).

## 2. Non-food safety matters relating to shellfish

**Posidonia seagrass project** – *Posidonia australis* (commonly referred to as strapweed) is a protected marine plant that grows in many commercial oyster harvest areas and interactions with industry operations are common. Improvements in growing techniques, infrastructure preferences and improved knowledge of industry operations are some of the mitigating measures and best practice strategies put in place in the NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy (OISAS). Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and Oysters Australia have committed funds to investigate impacts of commercial oyster farming on *Posidonia* habitat. A contract tender is current to develop and pilot a monitoring study and work in close consultation with NSW DPIRD and Sapphire Coast Wilderness Oysters.

DPIRD has supported a call from industry to develop science backed policy development rather than the introduction of immediate regulatory controls. Recent surveys of all oyster leases over seagrass indicate a shift in culture methodology away from trays on the south coast and the adoption of floating bag cultivation in many areas. Raising the awareness of the protected status of seagrass and new seagrass friendly cultivation infrastructure is supporting sustainable oyster production.

**Sydney Rock Oyster breeding program** - NSW DPIRD completed QX assessment trials on the Sydney Rock Oyster Breeding Program 2023 year-class families. The mean Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) for the year class were 88% survival for spat and 82% survival for adults, following a single exposure to QX disease. EBVs for growth and condition were also calculated and were 23% and 2% higher than wild oysters, respectively.

DPIRD is well advanced in undertaking the 2025 Sydney Rock Oyster Breeding run at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute mollusc hatchery. The aim will be to produce between 30 – 50 families. The focus of the run will remain on enhancing QX resistance while maintaining commercially important traits of fast growth and condition.

**Focus on water quality** – DPIRD branches of the NSW Shellfish Program and the Aquaculture branch remain focused on water quality improvements to support sustainable aquaculture production. This is being achieved through collaboration between government agencies including Marine Estate Management Authority, Marine Parks, Local Land Services, Department of Climate Change Energy, Environment and Water, Environment Protection Agency, local councils, industry and NSW Farmers Association on water quality improvements, projects and strategies. Updates on water quality initiatives are reported to the CEO/Secretary's EPA – DPIRD water quality group, which highlights the importance of water quality for environmental protection and the oyster industry. Focus areas throughout 2025 have included:

- Agency collaboration, emergency response and data sharing
- Port Stephens flood impact group
- NSW Farmers Port Stephens branch to discuss sewage spills and acid sulphate soil
- Secretary's water quality – Merimbula working group focus on sewage infrastructure
- Nambucca River - potential contamination impacting oyster growth at Beer Creek
- Funding from the NSW Estuary Asset Protection Program to continue the operation of 12 real time water quality sensors across NSW. Capital bid to extend operations including buoys in Jervis Bay and Twofold Bay.

**Triploid Pacific Oyster (TPO) culture** - Procedures will be amended for TPO applicants in estuaries outside marine parks to complete a Review of Environment Factors that addresses environmental, social and economic risks and no longer require 51% of permit holders in an estuary to provide written support for an application.

DPIRD are working on an interim solution to allow 'business as usual' for oyster farmers endorsed for Triploid Pacific Oysters in the Clyde River while a regulation amendment is considered.

**Aquatic Biosecurity update** – DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity presented on the bivalve mollusc translocation framework which detailed a risk-based decision tree allocating existing and potential translocations into different categories based on a number of factors. These factors include the biosecurity of the hatchery, industry classification (established or novel), translocation precedent and the origin of the broodstock (NSW or interstate). NSW Aquatic Biosecurity plans to adopt a modified version of the decision tree as the framework for assessing bivalve mollusc translocations. This method hopes to streamline assessment of requests and where appropriate will enable a standardised biosecurity protocol for the translocation categories and oyster species to be developed.

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*The next meeting of the NSW Shellfish Committee is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026.*