

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Shellfish Committee

20 May 2026

The NSW Shellfish Committee met via video conference 20 May 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. 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
Dr. Jeffery Go – NSW DPIRD Aquatic Biosecurity
Allen Benter – NSW DPIRD Climate & Natural Resources

Apologies:

Mrs. Melissa Walker – NSW Aquatic Biosecurity
Mr. Andrew Prowse - Industry representative

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 15 shellfish harvest areas were conducted since the February 2026 meeting. 114 harvest area closures occurred since the previous meeting, with a total of 201 harvest area closures for the 2026 calendar year to date.

State shellfish levies and local shellfish program grants 2026-2027 – The NSW Shellfish Program fees (referred to by industry as the state shellfish levy) and the local shellfish program grant (referred to industry as the local shellfish program subsidy) has been set for 2026-2027 financial year. The cost sharing agreement between government and industry is required to be recalculated on a triennial basis with 2026-2029 period remaining unchanged at 53% government, 47% industry

The projected cost of the NSW Shellfish Program for 2026-2027 financial year is \$2,311,556 representing a 1.98% increase on the previous year. This increase is attributable to increases in laboratory analysis cost and increased operating costs. In line with cost sharing agreement the NSW Government is providing 53% of this cost (\$1,225,124.94) while industry contribute the remaining 47% (\$1,086,431.55). The industry contribution includes a

fixed licence fee of \$1,695.66 per licence holder, plus \$31 per hectare of lease area which is legislatively bound within the NSW Food Regulation 2025.

Sewage spill reporting – A report of sewage spill notifications and impact to industry from 2009-2025 was prepared for the committee. It is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) licence requirement that all coastal local government councils (or applicable water authority) notify the NSW Food Authority of all sewage spills from reticulated sewerage networks. Each sewage spill is assessed individually on the information received and where impact to a shellfish harvest area occurs, or there is insufficient information to conduct an effective risk assessment, the harvest area will be closed for a minimum of 21 days. The Food Authority and local councils working relationship is effective and has been refined and improved over years of collaboration. Data reported showed the number of sewage spill reports correlates with rainfall, whilst dry weather spills are most often caused by blockages or chokes in the sewerage infrastructure.

An increase in rainfall generated sewage spills is indicative of stormwater inundation into the reticulated sewerage network and where this is identified the NSW Food Authority works with local government and the EPA to identify the cause of the inundation and work towards remediation.

2. Non-food safety matters relating to shellfish

Remote sensor dashboard – Dr Allen Benter, Technical Specialist with DPIRD (Climate & Natural Resources) presented the Estuary Reports Portal, a remote sensing project to the committee. This portal will assist shellfish businesses to make harvest decisions in one single, easily accessible site available on both mobile devices and computer desktops. The portal can be found [here](#). The site is still evolving and feedback from users is encouraged.

Public tender for aquaculture leases

A competitive tender for aquaculture leases is scheduled for September 2026 with applications for new lease inclusions with expressions of interest closing 1 June 2026.

Nil production permit holders

An audit on aquaculture permit holders was recently undertaken and identified 14 businesses with nil production for the past five consecutive years. These businesses will be given a show cause notice on the cancellation of their aquaculture permit. Permit holders intending to commence or resume commercial production may be asked to update their commercial farm development plan.

Triploid Pacific Oyster production in Marine Parks

Cultivation of triploid Pacific Oysters (TPO) in Marine Parks including regulation clarity and consistency has been raised as a very high priority by industry. To allow cultivation of TPO in Marine Parks a legislative amendment is required.

The next meeting of the NSW Shellfish Committee is scheduled for 19 August 2026.