

# NSW Shellfish Committee

**Wednesday 10 February 2021**

## **Summary of meeting outcomes**

### **Sydney Rock Oyster Breeding Program**

Following the withdrawal of Australian Seafood Industries from an EOI process, Shellfish Committee has supported an option for DPI to manage the commercialisation of the Sydney Rock Oyster breeding program in the short term. An industry reference group will be created to inform the technical committee (DPI Fisheries & CSIRO geneticists) of industry needs as well as focus on commercialising the outputs of the breeding program. The goal is to ensure reliable spat supply to industry with a focus on transferring this to an entity other than DPI after three years. An industry update and expression of interest for this industry reference group will be circulated across the NSW oyster industry.

### **Livestock Impacts on Riparian Vegetation**

Impacts to riparian vegetation caused by livestock is an issue that crosses multiple government agencies. It is known that exclusion of livestock from riparian zones along waterways increases vegetation which in turn reduces impacts to water quality. Incoming correspondence received from the Deputy Director General of DPI Fisheries Mr Sean Sloan advised DPI are finalising its model approach to unrestrained stock and suggested that the oyster industry continue to work collaboratively with Local Land Services and Local Government to support education of landholders to restrain stock from waterways. Use the Fishers Watch Hotline, telephone 1800 043 536, to report stock damaging marine vegetation and contact Council Rangers to report water quality impacts from unrestrained stock.

### **Disease Outbreak Declaration as Natural Disasters**

Rural Resilience NSW confirmed that disease outbreaks are not classed as natural disasters. Larger scale environmental impacts (floods, fire, earthquakes, etc) impacting whole communities are declarable as natural disasters once both State and Commonwealth governments jointly agree. Agricultural disasters are a separate declaration with separate assistance packages to impacted sectors. NSW Shellfish Committee is working to ensure that impacts on oyster industry are considered when assistance packages are drafted.

### **Floodgate Management and Drainage Legislation**

Floodgate and drainage legislation is complex as it crosses no less than seven government agencies (Water, Planning & Assessment, Crown Lands, Natural Resource, Access Regulations, EES & DPI). NSW Shellfish Committee raised awareness of the impacts that flood plain and floodgate management has on the shellfish industry and sought greater involvement with regulatory agencies when addressing floodgate and drainage management. LLS advised they are developing a new model with MidCoast Council to address these concerns.

### **OISAS Review**

The updated NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy (OISAS) is being reviewed by agencies and is due to go on public consultation for submissions in May 2021. DPI Aquaculture Management team intend to directly liaise with industry with proposed meetings in May at Merimbula, Batemans Bay, PSFI, Port Macquarie and Ballina. Once submissions are received and assessed the fourth edition of OISAS will be finalised in July 2021.

### **Oyster Industry Tide to Tip Program**

The annual Tide to Tip estuary clean-up program is scheduled for late February 2021 with 21 clean-up days planned across NSW estuaries.

### **Timber Preservative Project**

The anticipated outcome of this Shellfish Committee project was to get an industry backed position on timber preservative usage and have this included in the revised OISAS. 22 oyster farming businesses were contacted. Key areas still dipping sticks/trays were Karuah, Wallis, Manning and Hastings. DPI were advised that: some are using up the last of their preservative and not buying more; old treated sticks and trays are being used until redundant and then replaced with plastics; a majority of farmers set 2023 or 2025 as a deadline to stop dipping; most were unaware of the sampling program testing for preservative; and a very small number of farmers were reluctant to set a phase out date, although they were making inroads into reducing their use of preservative. Shellfish Committee agreed that the following statement be incorporated within OISAS - *It is the intention of the NSW oyster industry to phase out the use of preservation products to treat timber by the end of 2025.*

### **Dates for 2021 NSW Shellfish Committee Meetings**

- 19 May 2021
- 18 August 2021
- 10 November 2021

Industry members with matters to raise are to be made aware that they should consult the Shellfish Committee industry representatives to raise the item on their behalf, contact details can be found here <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/shellfish/nsw-shellfish-committee>. If items are raised after the deadlines above, they will be held over until the following meeting. If industry members wish to attend the meeting as an observer, an expression of interest can be sent to [food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au)