

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Shellfish Committee

Date 7th August 2024

The NSW Shellfish Committee met via video conference on 7th August 2024. Issues considered by the Committee are outlined below.

Attendees

NSW Shellfish Committee members:

Industry representative - Mrs. Pippa Boyton
Industry representative - Mr. Brandon Armstrong
Industry representative - Mr. Sam Gordon
Industry representative - Mr. Shane Buckley

NSW DPIRD – Biosecurity & Food Safety:

A/CEO NSW Food Authority – Dr. Eric Davis
NSW Shellfish Program Manager - Mr. Anthony Zammit
NSW Aquatic Biosecurity Manager – Mr. Ben Rampano

Invited attendees:

NSW Shellfish Program Senior Shellfish Officer – Mr. Phil Baker (Secretary)
NSW Dept. Crown Lands Director Regional Operations East – Mr. Tim Deverell
NSW Dept. Crown Lands Area Manager Hunter – Mr. Rob Micheli
NSW DPIRD Program Leader Aquaculture – Mr. Ian Lyall
NSW DPIRD Senior Policy Officer Aquaculture – Dr. Emma Wilkie
NSW DPIRD Senior Aquatic Veterinary Policy & Project Officer – Dr. Jeffrey Go
NSW Oyster Extension Officer – Dr. Laura Stoltenberg
NSW Farmers Oyster Project Manager – Mr. Andy Myers
NSW Agriculture and Biosecurity – Mr. Julian Farrugia

Apologies:

Chair – Prof. Shauna Murray
CEO NSW Food Authority – Dr. Lisa Szabo

Declaration conflict of interest:

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

1) Industry updates

Members provided updates on the following key and emerging issues in their respective industry sectors:

- Nil

2) Matters raised relating to the Seafood Food Safety Scheme

Harvest area management report – Annual reviews for 17 shellfish harvest areas were conducted since the May 2024 meeting and NSW Shellfish Program remain on track for completion of all 80 harvest area annual reviews for the calendar year. 129 harvest area closures occurred since the previous meeting, with a total of 521 harvest area closures for the 2023/24 financial year.

Australian Tax Office reporting requirements for local shellfish programs

The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has a new requirement for non-charitable not-for-profit entities with an Australian Business Number (ABN) to lodge an annual not-for-profit self-review return to assess their income tax exemption. The NSW Food Authority successfully applied to the ATO for an exemption for all local shellfish programs to lodge an annual not-for-profit self-review. All local shellfish programs were issued a copy of this advice.

NSW biotoxin laboratory contract extension

In September 2021 the then NSW DPI (now DPIRD) signed a contract with Symbio Laboratories to provide shellfish biotoxin analytical services. The contract provided for an initial 3-year deal with an option to extend the contract for an additional 2 years pending a review of the fees and charges. Symbio Laboratories have performed very well in providing a critical service with rapid turn-around times with capacity to handle high volumes of samples during bloom events or peak selling periods and as such DPIRD has agreed to extend the contract with a 7% price increase. The new pricing structure will apply from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2026.

Industry disaster preparedness and wet storage requirements workshops

In May 2024, NSW Food Authority alongside NSW Farmers held a series of industry based workshops in Ballina, Port Macquarie, Forster, Port Stephens, Mooney Mooney, Nowra, Narooma and Merimbula. The workshops highlighted strategies, options and suggestions for industry facing natural disasters as well as to outline the shellfish wet storage requirements. Funding was received from the Early Needs Recovery Program and the Storm Flood Industry Resilience Program. A total of 108 farmer registrations were received and feedback was extremely positive.

3) Non-food safety matters relating to shellfish

Crown Land NSW permitted land use for oyster farming activities

NSW Shellfish Committee received a draft fact sheet on permitted land use activities for oyster farming on Crown Land sites. NSW Crown Lands recognise the importance of crown land tenured sites that are strategically located near oyster growing areas and together with the NSW Planning system seek to protect these sites from inappropriate uses and land-use conflict. Shellfish businesses operating on a Crown Land tenured site are encouraged to ensure their current operations comply with the tenure of their site.

Shell waste order and exemption

NSW DPIRD Fisheries Aquaculture were funded by the Early Needs Recovery Program to explore avenues of resource recovery for oyster shell. Oyster shell from five locations has been analysed for composition. This information is being used to get an exemption in EPA legislation for shell to be used in the circular economy. Results will be available at the NSW Oyster Industry conference.

Posidonia seagrass protection –

NSW DPIRD has been working closely with NSW Shellfish Committee, NSW Farmers' Association and regional industry groups to highlight seagrass protection. NSW DPIRD has identified leases across the state where this threatened species is prevalent. NSW DPIRD are developing a Posidonia policy, in consultation with industry. As leases are transferred or sub-let, NSW DPIRD will be considering adding seagrass protection conditions to aquaculture permits and leases. The conditions added will be consistent with [Section 6.6 of OISAS](#). NSW Farmers' Association has made application for funding for industry monitoring of seagrass. Research will inform future policy development in consultation with permit holders. This will include describing "routine aquaculture activity" in legislation as a defence to harm of seagrass. A working group consisting of DPIRD, NSW Farmers Association and

industry members will be established to discuss appropriate response to seagrass protection.

Biosecurity update – An application to import diploid Pacific Oyster spat from a South Australian hatchery was received with an accompanying independent pathogen risk assessment for translocation of spat. An internal department expert group has reviewed the application and accompanying risk assessment and this will be submitted to the NSW Chief Veterinary Officer for approval.

4) Other matters raised

NSW oyster industry conference

The NSW oyster industry conference is fast approaching on the 4th – 5th September 2024 at Port Macquarie. Registrations can be made [here](#).

The date for the next meeting of the NSW Shellfish Consultative Committee is 6th November 2024.