

# NSW Shellfish Committee

**Wednesday 27 May 2020**

## **Summary of meeting outcomes**

### **Shellfish Committee Input in Estuary Entrance Opening Strategies**

As a result of the recent drought impacting water flows, a number of NSW intermittent closed and opened lakes and lagoons (ICOLLS) have closed to the sea. This can lead to a decline in water quality and severely impact shellfish farming operations. NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment ([Environment, Energy & Science Division](#)), oversee the estuary entrance opening management plans with local Councils responsible for implementing them. The NSW Shellfish Committee have requested input into these management plans to make specific reference to safeguarding the shellfish industry.

### **Export and Local Program Compliance**

Due to a number of external impacts affecting shellfish sales (fires, drought, floods and COVID) there has been a greater interest in exporting shellfish to create alternative markets. Export is the jurisdiction of the [Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment \(DAWE\)](#), one key criteria they consider when granting export approval is each local program's management plan compliance effort. As part of their assessment for harvest area export listing DAWR review local shellfish program management plan compliance over the past three annual reviews.

Management plan compliance is calculated at the end of each local program annual review period and considers adverse sampling, open/closures and biotoxin management plan compliance. This figure is also used to enable the local program to implement the harvest and hold scheme for early openings. Local shellfish programs should ensure that their compliance rates are consistently high to ensure that opportunities for new markets are not missed.

### **Triennial Heavy Metal Survey 2020**

Every three years the NSW Shellfish Program conduct heavy metal, chemical and pesticide residue sampling in shellfish across NSW. This sampling is due in 2020. All local programs will be asked to submit samples from select growing areas for analysis. The NSW Shellfish Program will be in contact with local program coordinators to arrange sample collection in the last quarter of the year. Results are generally received around February the following year.

### **NSW Food Authority State Levy and DPI Fisheries Trust Expenditure**

The NSW Food Authority state levy and the DPI Aquaculture trust expenditure have been calculated. The NSW Shellfish Program cost sharing arrangement was re-calculated for the next three years, it is now 46% government and 54% industry (previously 42% government/58% industry). The NSW Food Authority State Shellfish Levy for 2020/21 has been set at a fixed fee of \$1516.60 plus \$31 per hectare. The DPI Aquaculture trust expenditure was set at \$822,829. Both the state levy and the trust expenditure were endorsed by the committee.

### **Macleay River QX**

Recent mortalities observed in farmed oysters in the Macleay River have been attributed to QX following positive test results in Sydney Rock Oysters that were tested at the NSW DPIs Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute. While not unexpected in the Macleay River, a known location for QX risk since 2006. NSW DPI quickly advised all farmers in the estuary and are working with Macleay River shellfish businesses to monitor the situation. Movement of shellfish from the Macleay River has been restricted since 2006 under formal QX risk classification and zoning.

Any industry member that observes stock losses in their estuary are reminded of the requirement to report it to both DPI Aquaculture Management and DPI Aquatic Biosecurity immediately.

### **Emergency Response**

Shellfish Committee considered two reports detailing bushfire response and COVID-19 impacts. The first report prepared by Rebecca Hamilton of South Coast Wilderness Oysters summarised the outcomes of the February bushfires recovery workshops at Merimbula and Batemans Bay that were coordinated with OceanWatch. The input from oyster farmers will now be used to develop an industry Emergency Response Plan that can be linked into OISAS. This should help better manage risks leading into a disaster scenario, and provide a clearer strategy to respond to an event. The second report was prepared by Andy Myers (NSW Oyster Extension Officer) and summarised the Survey Monkey data on COVID-19 impacts. Shellfish Committee want to acknowledge and thank growers for this information. On several occasions the data was used to justify impact and secure grants and fee waivers for the industry. The survey was timely, had a large number of submissions and was essential of informing government of industry impact.

### **Dates for remaining 2020 NSW Shellfish Committee Meetings**

- 12 August 2020 (Items deadline 20 July 2020)
- 4 November 2020 (Items deadline 12 November 2020)

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)