

NSW Shellfish Committee

Summary of meeting outcomes

Wednesday 28th February 2024

The primary objective of the NSW Shellfish Committee is to contribute to the Food Authority's goal of ensuring the production and sale of shellfish products are safe and suitable for human consumption, by advising on policy and practices introduced into provisions of the Seafood Safety Scheme as it relates to shellfish and developed through a consultative process. Other government agencies may seek to use the broad expertise and experience of the Committee members to obtain advice on matters beyond the scope of the provisions of the seafood safety scheme as it relates to shellfish, or to share information.

Matters relating to Seafood Safety Scheme

Shellfish wet storage requirements

DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety informed the NSW Shellfish Committee (the Committee) that following industry wide consultation and consideration of feedback received; a final version of the NSW Shellfish Wet Storage requirements has been completed. The Committee supported the requirements. Once approved by DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety management, these requirements will be included in the NSW Shellfish Industry Manual as an appendix and compliance will become a condition of a business' Food Authority licence.

The Committee noted a series of wet storage workshops will be held across NSW to bring industry up to date on requirements followed by an industry wide compliance program with any wet storage systems not compliant with the new requirements will be provided improvement notices.

Marine heatwave response plan

The committee noted the prediction and eventuality of a marine heatwave throughout the 2023-24 Summer period has seen sea temperatures increase 3-5°C which is significant enough to see increased mortalities, stress induce immunosuppression of shellfish, changes in phytoplankton assemblages and potential increases in vibrio levels. NSW DPI have produced the Marine Heatwave Response Plan for industry to be prepared for future marine heatwaves. The plan can be access [here](#).

Other matters raised outside NSW Food Authority scope

Introduction to Shellfish Safety Course

The committee received an update on a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funded project (2021-053) to build capability in food safety in Australian shellfish. The project is complete has produced the first shellfish training course aimed at the introductory level for industry. This course outlines the shellfish safety requirements entry level shellfish industry workers should know and understand in order to produce a product that is safe for human consumption. The course is hosted by University of Tasmania and can be accessed free of charge [here](#).

2022-23 NSW Aquaculture Production Report

DPI Fisheries advised the Committee that the final NSW aquaculture production report for 2022-23 has been completed and is now available [here](#). The value of aquaculture in NSW now exceeds the wild caught sector with a value of \$113,203,626 with farmed shellfish contributing \$77,577,759.

Tiered Lease Security Arrangements

DPI Fisheries informed the Committee that following industry consultation in 2022 the Fisheries Management (Aquaculture) Regulation 2017 was amended to implement a tiered lease security system in place of a flat rate system previously implemented. The improved tiered system provides incentive for businesses to comply with the best practice guidelines outlined in [OISAS](#) which allows a reduced lease security of \$30/hectare once the permit holder advises DPI Aquaculture Administration

about the self-compliance of their leases. Businesses not in compliance or not having informed DPI Aquaculture Administration will be charged at the higher rate of \$50/hectare.

Sydney Rock Oyster Breed Program Update

DPI Fisheries informed the Committee that the breeding program achieved another milestone reaching its stated goal of producing 70% QX resistant stock for one exposure with 20% faster growth with no loss of condition. Ongoing funding for the Sydney Rock Oyster (SRO) breeding program was discussed with the Committee supporting a recommendation from the SRO Reference Group for industry to adopt a hybrid program funding model moving forward. This may entail a set levy per hectare as well as a service charge of \$4 per 1000 spat ordered. DPI Fisheries have committed to \$500,000 over the next two years for research into the program but advised without an industry commitment DPI would find it difficult to continue funding. DPI Fisheries will circulate an option paper to industry for consultation.

Posidonia protection

Following recent DPI Fisheries research and images of oyster cultivation impacting Posidonia, DPI Fisheries has been working with industry, Shellfish Committee, NSW Farmers Association and DPI researchers to look at seagrass protection best practice. Seagrass is protected in NSW. The Committee industry members advised further research including benchmarking and mapping is required prior to agreeing to additional best practice and mandatory standards being approved in OISAS. OceanWatch has produced a best practice video for oyster farmers on seagrass protection and NSW Farmers Association has submitted an application to the Environmental Trust for an industry led Posidonia monitoring program.

Dates for 2024 NSW Shellfish Committee Meetings

- 22 May 2024
- 7 August 2024
- 6 November 2024

Industry members with matters to raise should consult with the Shellfish Committee industry representatives to raise the item on their behalf, contact details can be found [here](#). If items are raised after the agenda item submission deadline (2 weeks prior to each meeting), they may be held over until the following meeting. NSW Food Authority licensed shellfish businesses wishing to attend the meeting as an observer can apply with an expression of interest sent to food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au.