

EPA's role in aquaculture management

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EPA 1044/14: This information sheet summarises the EPA's role in the management of the aquaculture industry.

Introduction

Aquaculture in South Australia is regulated under the *Aquaculture Act 2001* which is administered by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Group of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA). The EPA is a mandatory referral agency under this Act for all aquaculture licence applications and amendments, and for lease conversions that occur outside an aquaculture zone. The EPA also provides advice on PIRSA policies, legislation and environmental monitoring programs and responds to various environmental issues that may be associated with aquaculture. In undertaking this role, the EPA adheres to the objects of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* and relevant environment protection policies.

Industry engagement

The EPA conducts regular environmental surveys of aquaculture industry operations, with the aim of developing positive relationships with industry and increasing industry awareness of their environmental obligations under EPA legislation. In addition, the surveys provide information on potential environmental issues, which can then assist the EPA with their assessment of licence applications and provision of advice on PIRSA policies and guidelines relating to aquaculture.

Project work

The EPA is involved in the coordination and contribution of project work associated with the environmental management of aquaculture. These have included:

- Initiating and contributing to a feasibility study investigating options for the recycling of oyster baskets.
- Contributing to a Change@SA Premiers Project that developed a streamlined process for the licence assessment of southern bluefin tuna aquaculture, developed protocols for the assessment of chemical use in the aquaculture industry and provided broad objectives for the review of environmental monitoring programs for industry.
- Developing environmental codes of practice for industry sectors. Currently the EPA has codes for the oyster and abalone industries.
- Developing guidelines to assist industry with meeting environmental requirements associated with various aquaculture activities.

Key environmental issues

The EPA considers and responds to the following environmental issues which may be associated with aquaculture:

- **Water quality** – addition/discharge of nutrients into any waters resulting from uneaten feed and faeces; use of chemicals and fuels on aquaculture sites.

- **Waste** – disposal of mortalities and processing waste; cleaning of infrastructure; removal of biofouling; disposal of disused culture equipment.
- **Site contamination** – settlement of uneaten feed and faeces that may result in anoxic sediments; chemical and fuel spills.
- **Noise** – storage, cooling and processing facilities; pumps; filtration equipment; vessels entering and leaving the sites at variable hours; operation of machinery; construction and maintenance; equipment cleaning.
- **Odour** – management of organic waste including disposal of mortalities and fish waste; biofouling on equipment such as cages and racks.
- **Shading and scouring** – in particular to seagrass from inappropriate positioning of aquaculture infrastructure.

Resources

Codes of practice

- Code of practice for the environmental management of the South Australian oyster industry.
NB: This code is currently under review.
- Code of practice for the environmental management of the South Australian abalone aquaculture industry
- Code of practice for vessel and facility management (marine and inland waters)
- Code of practice for materials handling on wharves

Guidelines

- Environmental guidelines for completion of PIRSA aquaculture licence applications (land-based) EPA requirements–information for applicants
- Environmental guidelines for completion of PIRSA aquaculture licence applications (marine) EPA requirements–information for applicants
- Environmental guidelines for completion of PIRSA aquaculture lease conversions EPA requirements–information for applicants
- Environmental assessment guides for planners–aquaculture (marine)
- Managing aquaculture stock mortalities
- Draft guideline for construction of wastewater lagoons
- CCA timber waste – storage and management
- Bunding and spill management

Specific projects

- Feasibility study into the recycling of oyster baskets
- Change@SA Project reducing red tape for the tuna industry
- Inland aquaculture–improving economic and environmental efficiency aquaculture and the Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy

Disclaimer

This publication is a guide only and does not necessarily provide adequate information in relation to every situation. This publication seeks to explain your possible obligations in a helpful and accessible way. In doing so, however, some detail may not be captured. It is important, therefore, that you seek information from the EPA itself regarding your possible obligations and, where appropriate, that you seek your own legal advice.

Further information

Legislation

[Online legislation](#) is freely available. Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Service SA Government Legislation Outlet
Adelaide Service SA Centre
108 North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone: 13 23 24
Facsimile: (08) 8204 1909
Website: <shop.service.sa.gov.au>
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General information

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