

MILESTONE PROGRESS REPORT



FRDC PROJECT NUMBER:

2021-036: Management & delivery of the Oysters Australia RD&E Plan 2020-2025

DATE DUE: 31/05/2025

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Anne Stünzner

OVERALL PROJECT PROGRESS: On schedule

Milestone Status

Has this milestone been achieved (Yes/No)	Yes
Will the project be completed according to the current milestone schedule (Yes/No)	Yes

PROJECT PROGRESS AGAINST PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objective 1) By June 2026, commission and manage a portfolio of RD&E projects which address the strategic outcomes outlined in the Oysters Australia Strategic Plan

Since the launch of the Oysters Australia Strategic Plan 2020-2025, nineteen projects have been approved for funding through the oysters IPA and have progressed to contract with the FRDC. The value of these investments is \$9,876,100.54; this is an increase of \$1,100,000 on the previous year.

Objective 2) Maintain a functional, cohesive Oysters Australia RD&E Group to build knowledge & guide strategic investment

OA maintains an RD&E Committee which has met twenty times since launch of the Strategic Plan (four times in the 2024-25FY). In the last year, the RD&E Committee has taken numerous opportunities to invite thematic experts and project leads into meetings, to help build the knowledge of Committee members. The RD&E Committee and Board are committed to the eight themes established in the previous year's workshops. These include:

- Circular Economy
- Climate Change
- Breeding & Hatchery Programs
- Marketing & Supply Chain
- Disease
- Farm technology
- Food Safety
- Regulation & legislation

Objective 3) By June 2026, ensure that all new R&D funded through the Oysters IPA is extended to industry, encompassing all development and maintenance of a hub of project resources and communication material on the Oysters Australia website

OA provides regular updates to state industry associations and research committees. It also maintains a website which includes details of projects and outputs. OA staff work with project

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proponents during the planning and delivery phase to ensure that outcomes are extended to end users in an appropriate manner.

Objective 4) Over the life of the project, provide coordination and leadership on matters of national importance to the oyster industry

Oysters Australia has continued to provide coordination & leadership on numerous matters of national importance. This includes matters relating to the Aquaplan (National Disease Prioritisation List), Biosecurity Protection Levy, Financial Assistance models, National Surveillance Strategy, aquaculture literacy, training and education and circular economy projects. SA Karenia bloom Oysters Australia are also members of Australian Aquaculture Council as well as sitting on the FRDC Workforce Development Committee and SIA Circular Economy Taskforce as well as participating in the FRDC translocation project.

1. ORIGINAL MILESTONE DATE AND DETAIL:

26-05-2023 Management and delivery of Oysters Australia’s Strategic plan 2024-2025

2. PROGRESS AGAINST MILESTONE DETAIL (Achieved):

Objective 1) By June 2026, commission and manage a portfolio of RD&E projects which address the strategic outcomes outlined in the Oysters Australia Strategic Plan

Since the launch of the Oysters Australia Strategic Plan 2020-2025, nineteen projects have been approved for funding through the oysters IPA and have progressed to contract with the FRDC. The value of these investments is \$9,876,100.54, this is an increase of \$1,100,000 on the previous year. This total includes OA’s biggest investment to date of \$933,028.00 for 2023-113: Implement genomic selection within the National Pacific Oyster breeding program.

OA will be going to tender through the RD&E Committee to call for expressions of interest around themes of work identified through the 8 planning workshops held in April and May 2024 in the new OA Strategic Plan as forms the base for the next OA IPA Agreement.

These projects broadly deliver on the five strategic areas identified for investment in the Oysters Australia RD&E Plan.

Table1. Strategic themes the Oysters Australia RD&E Plan & the desired outcome

Program theme	Desired Outcome
1. Production & Innovation	Increase the sustainable, efficient production of oysters and their management on farm
2. Risk Management	Minimise the impact of disease, waterway contamination, climate change and other risks
3. People & Knowledge	Knowledge, skills & networks are developed, increasing the industry’s human & data resources
4. Post Harvest & Market Development	Build consumer demand for oysters and increase profitability through the supply chain
5. Industry Profile & Regulation	The oyster industry is recognised as a legitimate and responsible user of public resources, and operates under constructive regulation

Given the run of disasters faced by the industry in recent years, investment has been weighted towards breeding programs for risk mitigation and people / knowledge, with less focus on market development.

Table 2. Project alignment with OA Strategic Themes

Project	Alignment with OA Strategic Themes				
	Prg. 1	Prg. 2	Prg. 3	Prg. 4	Prg. 5
2025-001: Transdisciplinary investigation framework for mortality events of unknown aetiology in farmed oysters		X	X		X
SafeFish:		X	X	X	
2024-057: Integrating Seagrass Monitoring and Nature Positive Frameworks for NSW Oyster Aquaculture.	X		X		X
2024-056: NSW Sydney Rock Oyster Technical Review	X		X		
2023-113: Implement genomic selection within the National Pacific Oyster breeding program	X	X	X		
2023-103: Detecting paralytic shellfish toxins in oysters - initial assessment of AquaBC rapid test kit		X	X	X	
2023-070: The feasibility of a financial safety-net: Investigating financial mechanisms to protect oyster growers from disease outbreaks					X
2023-035: Precision Oyster Farming with Artificial Intelligence: Oyster Metrics			X	X	X
2022-191: Safeguarding our Sydney Rock Oyster industry against QX disease	X	X	X		
2022-023: Reduction of oyster waste: Establishing best practices for controlling wild spat under commercial production	X		X		
2021-122: Assessment of the utility of genomics for Sydney rocks oyster breeding (~\$620k)	X	X	X		
2021-083: Developing the tools and articulating the value proposition for genomic selection in Pacific Oyster selective breeding (~\$371k)	X	X	X		
2021-075: Understanding water quality risk for the sustainable and efficient production of Pacific and Sydney rock oysters (~\$86k)		X	X		
2021-097: Environmental risk factors that may contribute to vibrio outbreaks – A South Australian case study (~\$59k)		X	X	X	
2021-053: Building capability in food safety in Australian shellfish (~\$316k)		X	X	X	

2021-036: Management and delivery of the Oysters Australia RD&E Plan 2020-2025 (~\$332k)	X	X	X	X	X
2021-032: Provision of strategic advice to Oysters Australia – identifying opportunities and associated value for the Australian oyster industry in carbon neutral accreditation and Environmental Accounts (~\$17k)	X		X	X	X
2021-018: SafeFish 2021 – 2025 (~\$111k)		X	X		
2020-096: National Pacific Oyster breeding Program: Completing POMS resistance in spat and transition to selection for traditional commercial traits (~\$178k)	X	X			
2020-064: South Australian Pacific oyster mortality trials (~\$332k)	X	X	X		

Objective 2) Maintain a functional, cohesive Oysters Australia RD&E Group to build knowledge & guide strategic investment

Since the launch of the OA Strategic Plan in late 2020, Oysters Australia has convened nineteen RD&E meetings, three of which have occurred in the 2024/2025 year and going forward, meeting dates are now set at the AGM for the following year and happen quarterly.

OA has undertaken a skills matrix assessment of Board members in preparation for the proposed new Strategic Plan to underpin a renewed IPA bid. The RD&E Committee operate under a Terms of Reference, and observers are very welcome.

In the last year, the Committee has taken numerous opportunities to invite thematic experts and project leads into meetings, to help build the knowledge of members. Guest presenters have included:

- Francisca Samsing: Transdisciplinary investigation framework for mortality events of unknown aetiology in farmed oysters.
- Andrew Trotter & Henry Hewish: Implementation of the genomic selection within the National Pacific Oyster breeding program
- Greta Pecl: Sea Change Australia
- Alison Turnbull: Safe Fish 2025-30
- Jackson Taber: Middle Management Training

The FRDC has been present at all RD&E Committee meetings, and OA has been encouraging a greater involvement from WA, NT and QLD, who currently don't contribute to the Oysters IPA. Justin Bellenger, CEO of the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia has been invited to attend OA RD&E Meetings. Unfortunately, Queensland representative Leesa Robson has had to resign as observer on the committee.

The RD&E Committee held a face-to-face meeting in September 2024 in Tasmania (TAS) at Barilla Bay. The EO spoke at the OT Shellfish Futures Conference and attended the Seafood Direction

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Conference, also held in Tasmania in September 2024. The next Face to Face OA RD&E Meeting will be in August 2025 in Port Stephens, NSW.



Barilla Bay site visit with the OA RD&E Committee

Objective 3) By June 2026, ensure that all new R&D funded through the Oysters IPA is extended to industry, encompassing all development and maintenance of a hub of project resources and communication material on the Oysters Australia website

Oysters Australia maintain a hub of project information and resources on the Oysters Australia website. This includes the latest information about:

- Vibrio <https://www.oystersaustralia.org/vibrio>
- Production figures: <https://www.oystersaustralia.org/productionhistory>
- Export & Import: <https://www.oystersaustralia.org/exportimport>

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The website has been updated and streamlined, so that all projects involving OA are consolidated into a single list regardless of funding source (eg. Oyster IPA, CRC-P). Individual project pages are being hyperlinked from this. The EO is also speaking at the Scottish Shellfish Conference in September in Oban, Scotland.

It's been recognised that project outputs are not easily accessible through the Oysters Australia website, or from the FRDC website. Meetings are scheduled to be held with the FRDC to improve the identification of these useable assets, and to ensure that these are extended in an appropriate way to the end user.

Oysters Australia take opportunities to update the industry on the progress of RD&E investments. Examples of these include:

- Written updates via the SAOGA newsletter
- Presentation to ARAC
- Site visits to Barilla Bay, Orford.
- Quarterly meetings with NT, WA, QLD, SA, NSW and Tas Oysters growers to feed into AAC meetings.
- Project steering committee - understanding the risks associated with climate change on infectious diseases affecting the seafood industry.
- Australian Aquaculture Council, Oyster Representative.
- FRDC & RCC Circular Capacity Building Event, Circular Advantage

Objective 4) Over the life of the project, provide coordination and leadership on matters of national importance to the oyster industry

Over the course of the project, Oysters Australia has provided national coordination and leadership on a number of important matters including: (new matters during the 24-25 FY highlighted in red).

- ABARES commodity forecasts and accurate IPA contributions
- Anti-microbial usage (CSIRO project)
- Plastics audits
- Review of NAC
- Centre of Excellence for Aquaculture Futures
- Biosecurity preparedness & response (DAWE project)
- Circular Economy (FRDC funded project)
- Market Transparency workshops
- Aquaplan
- SafeFish
- Fish Names Committee (change to Pacific oysters)
- Provenance (ANSTO workshops)
- National Surveillance Strategy
- SIA's Aquaculture Advisory Committee
- Participation in FRDC Stakeholder Workshop (Nov. 2022)
- Participation at Seafood Directions (Sept. 2022)
- AgVet Chemical Usage – Minor Use Permits.
- National Seafood Safety Project (SIA)

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- Chemical & pesticide contamination
- Aquaculture Literacy Project (SIA)
- National disease prioritisation list (AquaPlan – DAFF)
- Biosecurity Protection Levy
- Participation in Tropical Rock Oyster Workshop
- FRDC Workshop 2023
- Shellfish Futures 2023
- Biosecurity Protection Levy Submission
- FRDC Workforce Development Committee
- FRDC Translocation Workshop and ongoing support
- Ready Set Go Oyster Planning Process
- Blue Economy CRC & SIA Circular Economy Working Group
- **Seafood Directions Hobart 2024**
- **Shellfish Futures 2025**
- **Project steering committee - understanding the risks associated with climate change infectious diseases affecting the seafood industry.**
- **Blue Economy CRC Circular Economy Steering Committee**
- **AAC Selection Panel for new Board Members 2025**
- **SIA AAC Member**
- **FRDC & RCC Circular Capacity Building Event, Circular Advantage**
- **Queensland Futures of Seafood Commercial Industry Interactive Session.**
- **Seawatch Oyster basket recycling event.**

PUBLICATIONS/PRODUCTS

- Progress & final reports available from projects funded through the IPA.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. Acknowledgement – Projects are required to acknowledge the FRDC under their individual project agreements with the FRDC. Oysters Australia made one acknowledgement of the FRDC, when presenting at the Oysters Tasmania Shellfish Futures Conference in Orford in September 2024.
2. Minimum requirements for Research Provider Publications - Oysters Australia haven't made public announcements regarding this project. Projects are required to acknowledge the FRDC under their individual project agreements with the FRDC.
3. Notify FRDC immediately if you consider that there is potential for the project to result in the production of intellectual property – Individual projects sign agreements with the FRDC and are required to report this directly.
5. Media - Oysters Australia haven't made public announcements regarding this project.
6. PI provide updates of R&D portfolio development and progress at OA Executive & RD&E Committee meetings – The PI (also the Executive Officer of Oysters Australia) provides updates at every Directors meeting, and also at every RD&E Committee meeting.
7. Acknowledge that the FRDC will review the effectiveness of the project based upon the level of commitment of IPA funds to undertake R&D priorities – Due to active project recruitment, our current RD&E project portfolio will result in IPA deficit of \$107,728.00 in 2025/2026 - this is a \$548,000 improvement on the previous year.

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8. There have been four significant project investments in 2024/25 which have reduced the previous surplus to a deficit of \$107,000 in 2025/26. These projects settle the previous lack of parity between funding and States.
9. OA Review their strategic plan and provide annual advice to FRDC on research priorities for the coming year – Oysters Australia has provided advise to FRDC on industry RD&E priorities for the 2022/23 FY, 2023/24 FY as well as the 2024/25 FY.
10. Oysters Australia is currently preparing the outline approach for the preparation of the new Strategic Plan due in 2026.
11. Oysters Australia sought an increase in the project 2021-036: Management and delivery of the Oysters Australia RD&E Plan 2020-2025 due to rising operational costs.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES ARISING:

N/A

CONTACT WITH BENEFICIARIES:

N/A

PROGRESS AGAINST COMMUNICATION & EXTENSION PLAN:

Communication about oyster R&D projects and outputs has been very good over the last few years. The RD&E Committee meet mostly every quarter and includes representatives from OA member organisations in SA, Tasmania & New South Wales. The Committee has also extended an invitation to WA and QLD and NT to participate in discussions, and this invite has been accepted on a number of occasions. Oysters Australia now also includes a communication clause in all projects to put the emphasis on RD&E providers to deliver effective communication as a reportable requirement for funding.

OA also takes an active role in planning projects and reviewing applications to ensure that extension and communication is appropriate to the end users. The use of webinars and video summaries are encouraged and have been taken up by several project PI's.

Of note this year, Oysters Tasmania and South Australia Oyster Growers have increased their GVP contributions to reflect the increased and growing production of oysters post several years of disease impacts. Tasmania has increased \$82,000 in 2023/24 to \$97,500 in 2024/202. South Australia Oyster Growers have increased their contributions from \$110,000 2024/2025 to a predicted \$130,000.00 in 2025/2026. NSW remains steady at \$130,000. This will increase the total of matched contributions from \$498,155.00 in 2022/23 to \$755,000 in 2025/26.

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Official figures from FRDC

Oyster GVP Determination (as at June 2024 by year for last 4 years)

Year	Tas	SA	NSW	QLD
2024-25	46,594,080	58,643,000	73,371,870	837,720
2023-24	39,824,000	50,123,000	62,711,000	716,000
2022-23	40,516,000	58,840,000	71,435,000	800,000
2021-22	43,474,000	47,780,000	58,428,000	647,000

Estimated determination for 2024-25 Average GVP (average 2022-23/2023-24/2024-25 - above)

Average 3 year GVP	Tas	SA	NSW	QLD	Total
Estimated 2024-25	42,311,360	55,868,667	69,172,623	784,573	
0.25%	105,778.40	139,671.67	172,931.56	1,961.43	420,343

Actual Contributions received to 2024-25

Oysters	2021-22 actual received	2022-23 actual received	2023-24 actual received	2024-25 actual received
TAS	99,600.00	49,600.00	82,000.00	TBA
SA	51,000.00	60,000.00	85,000.00	110,000.00
NSW	133,601.27	134,463.49	149,285.00	170,455.83
QLD	-	-	-	-
Total	284,201.27	244,063.49	316,285.00	280,455.83

Oysters Australia has also had some flux in respect to both the Board and RD&E Committee members. One Oysters Australia Director has resigned due to changing work commitments. Patrick Taskunas resigned from the OA RD&E Board when he stepped away as CEO of Tasmanian Oyster Company (ToC). Patrick was replaced by Cameron Hall, the new incoming CEO at ToC. The RD&E Committee also saw two new members from NSW. Anna Simmonds was replaced by Angus Rivett as the NSW Farmers representative and Robert Redmayne stepped in as the ARAC representative.

Membership	Name & approx. appointment date
Reps from each member organisation of OA (6 nominees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian Duthie (TORC) - 10+ yrs • Michel Bermudes - Nov 2023 • Gary Zippel (SAOGA) - 5+ yrs • Jocey Pocock (SAOGA) - Dec 2022 • Angus Rivett (NSW Farmers) - June 2024 • Robert Redmayne (NSW ARAC) - June 2024
Executive Officer of each member organisation of Oysters Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duncan Spender (CEO - OT). - Mar '2022 - Lynlee Lowe (EO - SAOGA). - Jul 2020 - Andy Myers (NSW) - Aug 2023
Chair of Oysters Australia	- David Jordan - March 2023

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Executive Officer of OA	- Anne Stunzner	- August 2023
Representative from the FRDC	- Wayne Hutchinson	- Jan 2020
Appointed discipline experts as needed	- Nil	
Additional jurisdictional representatives	- Justin Bellanger	- March 2024

VARIATIONS TO PROJECT:

N/A

Original due date	Original Detail	Original Cost	Status	Requested due date	Requested Detail	Requested new Cost