



**SAORC**  
South Australian  
*Oyster Research Council*

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14<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Simon Bell  
Assistant Director  
Competitions Exemptions  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission  
23 Marcus Clarke Street  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Bell

**RE: South Australian Oyster Research Council response to Submission made to ACCC**

We thank the ACCC for the opportunity to respond to the interested party comment received regarding the draft determination reauthorising the SAOGA and SAORC's spat levy in South Australia.

There appears to be considerable confusion in the submission the ACCC has received:

1. The first sentence is to oppose the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome ("**POMS**") levy – this refers to the Australian Seafood Industries ("**ASI**") levy (see Authorisation A91444 granted on 14 July 2014). The ASI levy relates exclusively to POMS research conducted nationally while the SAOGA/SAORC levy supports research into oyster growing more generally in South Australia.

The commenter states that when the ASI levy was proposed it was meant to take the place of the SAORC levy. This assertion is incorrect. Each levy is separate and has a different focus. One was never intended to replace the other.

2. (a) The closure of the Tasmanian border did have major repercussions on the South Australian oyster industry. This was a bio-security measure implemented by the South Australian Government to protect the South Australian industry from POMS. The percentage of mortalities did vary broadly across the industry. Much spat was replaced free of cost and free of levy.



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(b) Growers' losses last financial year were heavily impacted by COVID closures of hotels and restaurants seeing demand for oysters significantly reduce.

3. The SAORC levy is totally for the benefit of South Australian levy payers. The SAORC and SAOGA do not make the research supported by the levy available for interstate entities.

The ASI levy plays an important role in protecting South Australian oyster growers. We realise it will be inevitable that POMS will enter South Australian oyster bays in the future and ASI are breeding POMS resistant spat which will avoid us having the levels of financial harm POMS did to the Tasmanian industry. ASI is achieving significant success in this vital research.

The oyster industry is complex and constantly challenged with issues requiring research. The levies allow the industry to significantly leverage Government and other money to meet these challenges. Disappointingly there are a small number of growers who do not appreciate this.

If you should have any queries regarding this response, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards

Mr. Rob Kerin  
Chairman  
South Australian Oyster Research Council