

ShellMAP Levy

2026/27 shellfish licencing period



Ensuring shellfish are enjoyed safely in Tasmania and around the world



Minimising risk of potential illness



Avoiding food recalls



Optimising market access



Protecting industry and brand

The Shellfish Market Access Program (ShellMAP) plays an important role in ensuring the quality and safety of Tasmanian shellfish. Through comprehensive sampling and monitoring, ShellMAP assesses bays for potential microbial contamination, harmful algal blooms, and other environmental factors that may impact shellfish food safety. As the authority responsible for ensuring both domestic and export market access, ShellMAP provides consistency and reliability for the bivalve shellfish industry. The program operates within Marine Resources in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas).

The ShellMAP levy

Scientific monitoring and testing under ShellMAP is funded by the ShellMAP levy, paid by shellfish growers. Governance of the levy, delivery of industry-focused research projects, and broader industry oversight operate under the ShellMAP Partnership Agreement, a five-year agreement between NRE Tas, Oysters Tasmania, and Seafood Industry Tasmania.

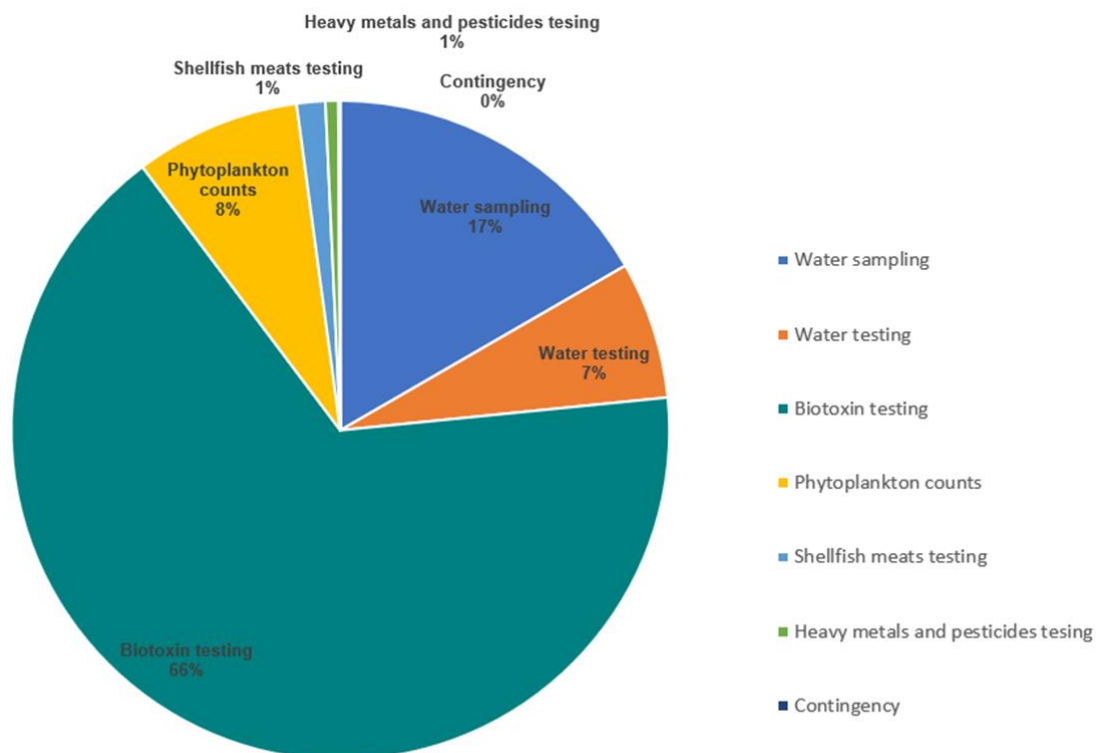
The levy funds scientific monitoring and testing however, does not cover staffing or other program costs, which are funded by NRE Tas. The 2025 total sampling budget (for the 2026/27 licencing period) is **\$840,428**. There are 96 shellfish licences, with 92 aquaculture shellfish licences having an average levy cost of \$7,976. However, individual levy amounts vary, as 90% of costs are shared equally among all aquaculture licences, while 10% is allocated based on testing costs for each growing area.

The 2026-27 levy amount is reduced by the biotoxin budget commitment of \$110,000, which recognises the public benefits of commercial biotoxin testing. Of this, \$98,402 was granted to the Shellfish Industry, ultimately reducing the levy.



Industry contribution snapshot

- \$840,428 in grower funding supports ShellMAP's scientific monitoring and testing program.
- \$616,000 in government funding covers ShellMAP staffing and program operations.
- \$100,000 funding to Oysters Tasmania for Industry Development
- \$98,402 to Shellfish Industry as part of biotoxin budget commitment



Understanding the ShellMAP levy

Biotoxin and phytoplankton testing account for 74% of program costs, as Tasmania is a high-risk region for harmful marine algae. Analytical Services Tasmania operates a world-class biotoxin testing facility, equipped with two LC-MS analytical machines and highly skilled chemists, ensuring 24-48 hour sample turnaround times.

Microbial sampling and testing assess pathogenic bacteria that could impact shellfish food safety. For the 2026–27 licencing period, the program will collect a minimum of six water samples per site, enhancing data quality for annual and triennial reviews under the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program Guidelines.

CONTACT

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Enhancing efficiency and value for shellfish growers and fishers

ShellMAP staff remain committed to using grower contributions effectively, continuously exploring value-adding and cost-saving opportunities for the 2027-28 levy budget. This includes a potential integrated approach to marine biotoxin management. Moreover, the Oysters Tasmania sensor network and ShellPOINT grower portal are already delivering significant value, with their use expected to expand in the coming years.

Recent initiatives implemented in ShellMAP include:

- Implementation of a risk based sampling schedule for biotoxins.
- Implementing salinity only management criteria, utilising the real time sensor network and ShellPOINT.
- Implementing a grower sampling program.
- Revisions of management plans and review documents to improve functionality for growers.



ShellMAP levy distribution model

Historically, the ShellMAP levy was determined by dividing the program budget evenly among all licence holders. However, in 2024 NRE Tas engaged with industry to explore a more equitable approach. As a result, Oysters Tasmania proposed a new levy distribution model, which NRE Tas supported as an industry-driven initiative. This model continues to be used for the 2026–27 ShellMAP levy.

The revised model introduces a 'user pays' element, where actual testing costs are allocated based on each growing area's testing history. Expenses are calculated using the number and type of tests conducted in the previous calendar year (e.g., biotoxin and water quality tests).

The levy is now split 90/10:

- 90% is shared equally among all licence holders.
- 10% is based on testing costs for each growing area.

As a result, levy amounts vary between licences, with the average levy per licence set at \$7,976. For levy-related enquiries, please contact Duncan Spender, CEO, Oysters Tasmania.

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