

# Queensland Oyster Industry Update 2026

*Industry performance, challenges and priorities*

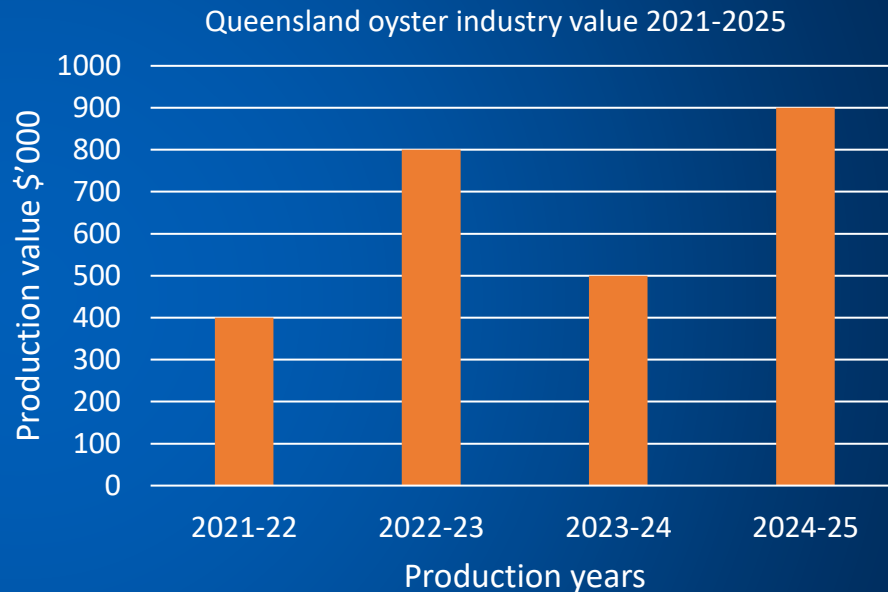
**Presented by:** Aiden Mellor, Scientist, Qld Department of Primary Industry

# Queensland Oyster Industry Snapshot

- Most production is in SE Queensland
- Many leases exist, but not all are active
- A small number of farms produce most oysters
- This drives variability and increases overall risk

# Production Recovering in 2024-25

- Production is low compared to other states
- Production increased 22% (60,860 → 74,335 dozen)
- Industry value increased \$0.5m → \$0.9m
- Average prices strengthened (\$8.53 → \$12.05 per dozen)



# Key Industry Topics

1. Species diversification
2. Land bases
3. Wave mitigation project
4. Surveillance is reducing lease theft

# 1. Species Diversification

- Industry Focus on Expanding Approved Oyster Species

- **Currently Approved**

  - Sydney Rock Oysters (SE Qld)

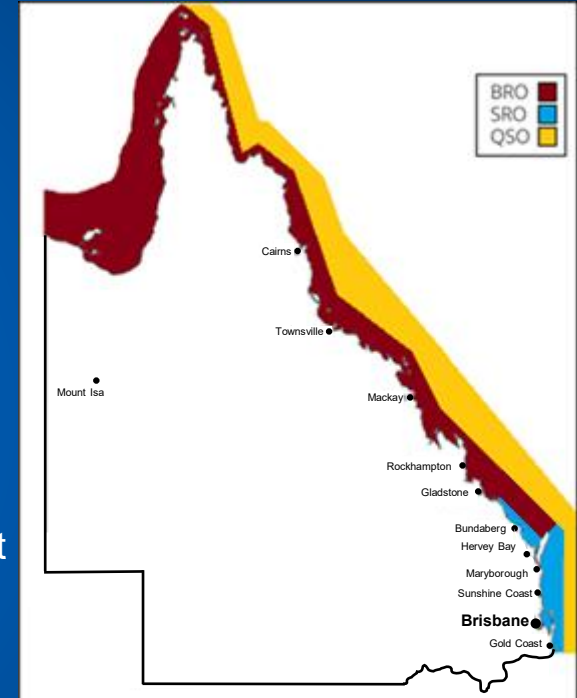
  - Qld Sunshine Rock Oysters (Qld East Coast)

  - Blacklip Rock Oysters (Great Sandy Straits + North)

- **Under Future Consideration**

  - Expansion of Blacklip Rock Oysters South of Great Sandy Strait

  - Triploid Pacific Oysters (Subject to Risk Assessment and Regulatory Review)



## 2. Land Bases in Queensland

- Essential for further development
- Foreshore land in high demand, \$\$\$
- Fisheries QLD raised issue with councils during planning amendments
- Approvals remain slow due to tenure and multi-agency processes



# 3. Wave Mitigation Project

## 3.1 Wave exposure limits expansion

- Most protected areas are QX zones
- Wave energy is problematic to growing oysters
- Damages infrastructure
- Slows down growth rate
- Limits productivity and scope of site expansion
- Addressing wave exposure is a priority for industry growth

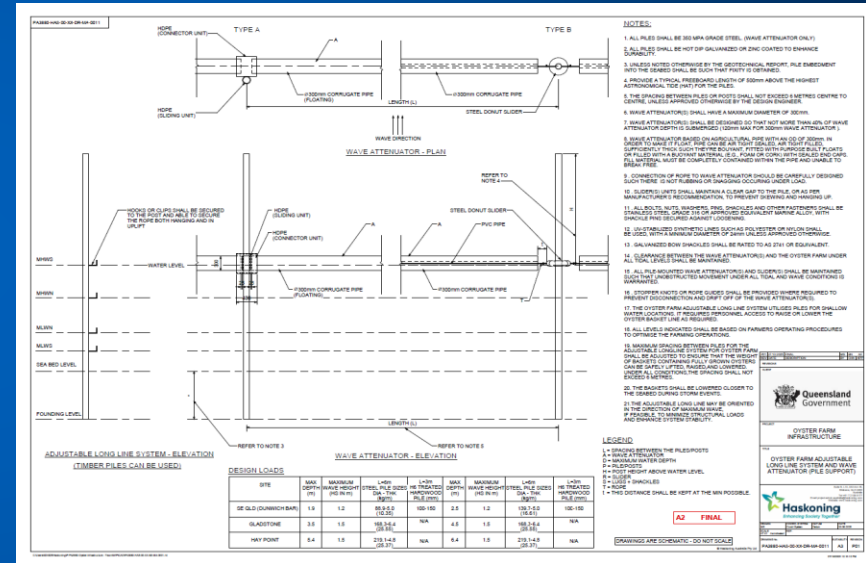


# 3. Wave Mitigation Project

## 3.2 QLD Fisheries Wave Attenuation Project

### Stage 1 – Completed

- Certified standard designs developed
- Designs cover common oyster furniture and wave attenuation options across different conditions



# 3. Wave Mitigation Project

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### Stage 2 – In progress

- Trial permit applications being prepared for installation on existing oyster areas



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### Stage 3 – Planned trials

- Trial of proposed infrastructure on selected oyster leases in Moreton Bay and Hervey Bay



## 3. Wave Mitigation Project

### 3.2 QLD Fisheries Wave Attenuation Project

#### Trials will assess:

- Compliance with regulatory requirements
- Environmental and wildlife interactions
- Social Licence
- Cost effectiveness and practicality for growers

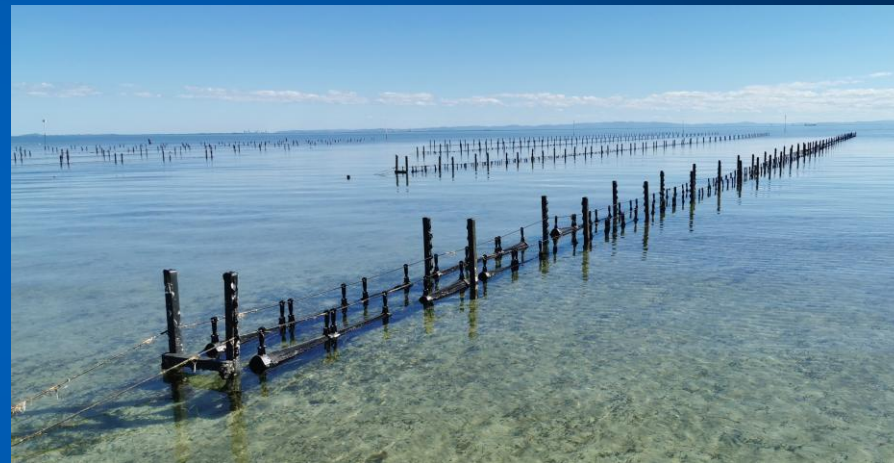


# 3. Wave Mitigation Project

## 3.2 QLD Fisheries Wave Attenuation Project

### Trial outcomes will lead to:

- Refinement of specifications
- **Stage 4:** Policy updates
- **Stage 5:** Grower approvals, permanent installation and Industry uptake



# 3. Wave Mitigation Project

## 3.3 Grower-led Alternative Farming Systems

- New systems improving efficiency and reducing handling
- Designed to fit existing approvals
- May partially offset wave exposure risks
- Active gear trialling is underway
- **Examples currently being trialled:**
- OysterPods (Ben Window)
- ZAPCO cages (Shaun Fisher)



## 4. Surveillance is reducing lease theft

- \$49,959 invested through grant funding
- Cameras installed across high-risk oyster leases
- Solar/battery back up with smartphone app with Live feed, 24/7 recordings with 4G notifications
- Advanced AI configuration setup for vehicle and human detection, PTZ auto-tracking, and nighttime infrared performance
- Growers report a noticeable reduction in theft and unauthorised interference



# Future direction

- 2024–25 delivered growth, with plenty of room for more
- Disease and hatchery capacity are the main bottlenecks
- Species diversification to reduce disease risk
- QX-free areas = more exposed, important to solve the wave mitigation issue
- Access to land bases remain an issue
- Growers are moving, and already trialling new systems

# Queensland Oyster Industry Update 2026

*Building on momentum in a practical and sustainable way*

**Presented by:** Aiden Mellor, Scientist, Qld Department of Primary Industry