

AQUATIC DEED CUSTODIANSHIP

SPECIFIC SERVICES

Together, aquaculture and fisheries industries and governments are working to prevent diseases affecting aquatic animals and respond more effectively when outbreaks occur. An agreement to prevent aquatic emergency animal disease (EAD) outbreaks, and to manage and fund aquatic EAD responses is a key component of this work. This agreement is called the Aquatic Deed, and a draft for discussion amongst potential signatories is largely complete.

Before becoming a signatory to the Aquatic Deed, industry peak bodies and governments must become funding members of Animal Health Australia (AHA) – the ‘custodian’ of the Aquatic Deed. This is because the funding of the custodianship of the Aquatic Deed is achieved through core subscriptions by funding members of AHA and not the signatories to the Aquatic Deed.

During initial discussions with stakeholders on the cost sharing of the funding for AHA, as the custodian of the Aquatic Deed, three options were put forward. The majority of stakeholders elected to follow the ‘entry level’ approach, at least initially, and this is the only approach that is considered further here.

The services to be provided by AHA take into account common elements that can leverage synergies from terrestrial to aquatic industry-government partnerships, as well as recognising differences, including the lower aquatic industry gross value of production (GVP) in comparison to terrestrial animal industries, the number and spread of participants and the relative benefits to aquaculture and capture fisheries participants.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP OF ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA

Membership of AHA will be funded equally one-third by the Commonwealth government, one-third by state and territory governments in aggregate, and one-third by industry signatories in aggregate.

Commonwealth Government	\$116,410
State and Territory Governments	\$116,410
Industries	\$116,410
Total	\$349,230

Within the state/territory and industry groups the respective third of the costs are split between participants on the basis of a three-year rolling average GVP, subject to a minimum contribution of \$5,500.

States and territories breakdown

STATE/TERRITORY	COST SHARE WITH MIN SUBSCRIPTION ¹
Victoria	5,500
New South Wales	6,810
South Australia	20,320
Queensland	14,343
Western Australia	25,350
Tasmania	38,587
Northern Territory	5,500
Total	\$116,410

¹ Adjustments have been made to reflect the minimum member contribution for any individual jurisdiction or industry of \$5,500. Thus Victoria, Northern Territory, barramundi and abalone figures have been adjusted to \$5,500 each, and others reduced proportionally.

Industries breakdown

STATE/TERRITORY	COST SHARE WITH MIN SUBSCRIPTION ²
Abalone	5,500
Barramundi	5,500
Prawns	8,524
Salmon	62,543
Edible Oyster	9,119
Pearl Oysters	6,740
Southern Bluefin Tuna	12,984
Wildcatch (example 10%) ³	5,500
Total	\$116,410

SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA

1. Maintenance of the Aquatic Deed

AHA, as the custodian of the Aquatic Deed, will maintain the integrity, currency and accuracy of the Deed to ensure it is effective⁴, efficient⁵ and fit-for-purpose⁶ and reflects the current views of the signatories. This will ensure there is a strong and robust framework and to ensure signatories have the necessary tools readily available to deal effectively and successfully with aquatic EADs. The custodian will also provide explanations, clarifications or guidelines in the form of guidance documents on issues raised by any party to the Aquatic Deed.

AHA will address the following specific components:

- Provide strategic advice on industry and government aquatic EAD issues, priorities and funding options for projects.
- Update and maintain the currency, accuracy and relevance of the text of the Aquatic Deed on an ongoing basis.
- Convene one workshop⁷ of all signatories per year to review the Aquatic Deed, approve in-principle any updates or changes needed, clarify Aquatic Deed details and requirements, and endorse the work plan for the coming 12 months.
- Establish and lead working groups to address specific issues as required.
- Facilitate collaboration across governments and aquatic industries to enhance aquatic emergency animal disease preparedness and response.
- Manage the review of the Aquatic Deed every five years.⁸

The resource and operational estimate requirements for this component are:

- 1.0 FTE⁹ at the AHA 'Manager' classification level (\$109,242 - \$130,050 total remuneration package TRP¹⁰)

2 Adjustments have been made to reflect the minimum member contribution for any individual jurisdiction or industry of \$5,500. Thus Victoria, Northern Territory, barramundi and abalone figures have been adjusted to \$5,500 each, and others reduced proportionally.

3 The proposed cost share contribution from the wildcatch sector is based on an estimate of the relative benefit arising from a response for the aquaculture and fisheries sectors as well as the private benefit within the wildcatch sector relative to the public benefit to recreational and indigenous fishers combined with the public benefit associated with the protection of an indigenous fish species. The proposal is to use 10% of the wildcatch GVP as the basis of the cost sharing contribution to reflect the estimated relative share of benefits to aquaculture (90%) and commercial fisheries (10%).

4 Effectiveness is about doing the task right, completing activities, achieving goals and producing the intended or expected result.

5 Efficiency is about doing things in an optimal way, for example doing it the fastest or in the least expensive way or performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time, effort and resources.

6 Fit-for-purpose is: current, clear and practical, and supported by governments and industry.

7 Signatories pay for their own travel, accommodation and attendance at the Aquatic Deed Workshop as part of normal commitments.

8 At the first five-year review, an assessment will be made of the operational implementation of the Aquatic Deed and decisions made on the scope of future operations.

9 Full time equivalent staff member.

10 The TRP includes base salary, superannuation and the cost of any salary packaged benefits provided by Animal Health Australia, including any FBT that may be payable on those salary packaged benefits. The TRP costed to the maintenance of the Aquatic Deed would be the actual cost of the individual within the classification range, subject to skills and experience. The rates used in the indicative costing models are averages.

2. Training, including response capacity and capability

This element has been identified by all industries and governments as a vital component to ensure all signatories to the Aquatic Deed have access to sufficient, adequately and appropriately trained personnel to respond to an aquatic EAD incident.

AHA will address the following specific components of training:

- Ensure that all signatories to the Aquatic Deed, as well as associated industries, have access to the EAD Foundation online course, which provides an understanding of Australia's EAD preparedness and response arrangements.
- Provide specific training for industry and government personnel involved in the:
 - National Management Group (NMG)
 - Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (CCEAD)
- Deliver training for industry liaison personnel, who provide coordinated input and advice from affected industries in an aquatic EAD response.

Other elements of training to perform functions within an EAD response centre or biosecurity training are the responsibility of government and industry signatories to the Aquatic Deed, as part of normal commitments and risk mitigation activities in an aquatic EAD response or during business as usual - See section 4.

It is expected that training needs will be greater in the first two years of the operation of the Aquatic Deed, after which it is likely to plateau.

The resource and operational estimate requirements for this component are:

- 1.0 FTE at the AHA 'Coordinator' classification level (\$72,828 - \$98,838 TRP).

3. Support systems, including communications and engagement

While it is recognised that many aquatic industry sectors already have good communication strategies

and plans in place, coordination at the national level will be required in the event of an aquatic EAD incident.

During a cost shared response, communication is mostly handled by the Commonwealth Government, jurisdictions, affected industry(s) and the National Biosecurity Communication and Engagement Network. AHA will support and assist these parties to ensure key messages are distributed and understood by those involved in the EAD response. Costs incurred by AHA for this work would be added to the total response costs and cost shared as part of the response.

Communications costs outside of a response in 'peacetime' are also important to ensure that all parties and stakeholders are fully informed of matters pertaining to the Aquatic Deed and its management.

The resource and operational estimate requirements for this component:

0.3 FTE at the AHA 'Officer' classification level (\$46,818 - \$67,626 TRP).

4. Biosecurity planning and risk mitigation

It is well recognised that robust and comprehensive risk mitigation measures, to prevent aquatic EADs from occurring in the first place, are a high priority for the aquatic sector.

The proposed Aquatic Deed places a number of obligations and responsibilities on parties to the Deed. These include:

- The development, implementation and monitoring of biosecurity plans and statement at organisational national, jurisdictional, local and farm level.
- The development, implementation and monitoring of normal commitments¹¹.
- The development, implementation and assessment of aquatic animal health performance standards and benchmarks.

¹¹ Normal commitments means a party's activities and resource commitments to an EAD response that are not eligible for cost sharing. Eligible response costs above normal commitments can be shared. Normal commitments are "business as usual" and underpin a party's capability and capacity to detect and respond to a suspect or confirmed EAD in a manner and extent consistent with this Deed and AQUAVETPLAN.

- Having sufficient personnel trained to participate in CCEAD, NMG, industry liaison and other functions in a control centre during an aquatic EAD response, to ensure effective and efficient response capability and capacity.

Under the entry level approach for the custodian of the Aquatic Deed, which has been adopted, AHA does not provide training in biosecurity or the development and implementation of biosecurity plans or other mitigation measures and they remain the responsibility of government and industry signatories to the Aquatic Deed.

The current proposal is that the entry level approach will be revisited when the Aquatic Deed is reviewed after five years of operations. Decisions can be made by government and industry signatories to the Aquatic Deed, at that time, whether to expand the approach to include additional risk mitigation options, training or AQUAPLAN.

Any signatory to the Aquatic Deed can approach AHA to provide training in biosecurity, assistance in the development and implementation of biosecurity plans, exercises, development of training materials, case studies or other mitigation measures. These activities would be managed as an AHA special project with a separate funding mechanism, outside of the Aquatic Deed project.

AHA does foresee that a phased approach may be considered whereby the entry level approach would apply initially, followed by the addition of special projects for individual or groups of signatories at their request, until a decision is made to expand the Aquatic Deed project to include them as part of the core activity.

AHA will, where possible and within budgetary constraints, assist government and industry signatories to the Aquatic Deed in facilitating biosecurity planning and implementation and the development of normal commitments, aquatic animal health performance standards and benchmarks and other risk mitigation measures.

FUNDING OPTIONS BY INDUSTRY PARTIES TO THE AQUATIC DEED

The Aquatic Deed provides for the Commonwealth Government to pay (underwrite) affected industries funding obligations in an aquatic EAD response, on their behalf. The Aquatic Deed also requires that a levy arrangement on aquatic product or alternative funding arrangements for each industry party to the Deed will need to be developed and put in place before the Commonwealth Government will underwrite the industry cost share contribution.

Levy arrangements need to comply with the Commonwealth Government's Levy principles and Guidelines. These include three key principles:

- widespread consultation with actual and potential levy payers
- majority support for the proposal
- that opportunity was provided for objections and that those objections were seriously considered, and where valid, addressed.

This levy or alternative arrangement will need to be agreed between each Industry Party to the Aquatic Deed and the Commonwealth Government.

Biosecurity levies provide a mechanism for payment of industry contributions as well as the repayment of that contribution to the Australian Government over a maximum period of ten years.

The levy system might also be used as a funding mechanism for:

- Core membership subscription to AHA
- Biosecurity training and implementation
- Special, industry – specific projects.