

## Environmentally Sustainable

Brisbane Water oyster farmers have made a commitment to the environmentally sustainable production of oysters and to the ongoing protection of the estuary.

This commitment is outlined in the Brisbane Water Oyster Farmers Environmental Management System. The EMS is a voluntary initiative that outlines improvements that oyster farmers can make to their own operations, as well as how they can drive environmental improvements within the catchment.

## Did You Know?

Oysters have been consumed by Aboriginal Australians for thousands of years with some shell middens dating back as far as 6,000 BC.

A Sydney rock oyster can filter 250,000 litres of water in it's life-time.

Each year, oysters commercially grown in Brisbane Water filter the equivalent of 80,000 Olympic swimming pools of estuary water.



## How You Can Help

- Buy oysters from a reputable source. Oyster theft is illegal and carries significant penalties. Oysters sold through the black market are not quality assured and pose a risk to human health.
- Do not dispose of any waste into the estuary.
- Please do not travel through oyster leases or tie-up to marker posts. This can damage infrastructure that is expensive to repair and replace.
- Report pollution incidents to the NSW EPA Environment Line on 13 15 55.

## More Information

If you have any questions about oyster farming in Brisbane Water, or would like a copy of the Brisbane Water Oyster Farmers Environmental Management System, please contact Denise Whitten [Whittensoysters@gmail.com](mailto:Whittensoysters@gmail.com)

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Australian Government

# Oyster Farming in Brisbane Water



# Brisbane Water Oyster Industry

Map:  
Oyster leases in  
Brisbane Water

Brisbane Water is located on the central coast of NSW. The estuary system is home to about 15 oyster farmers who commercially grow shellfish over 151 hectares of designated lease area.

Brisbane Water oyster farmers grow the iconic Sydney Rock Oyster. In 2012-2013, the local industry produced 1.8 million oysters, worth over \$800,000 at the farm gate.

*A rigorous quality assurance program ensures oysters commercially harvested are safe for us to eat*

## Quality Assurance Program

Oysters are filter feeders, straining plankton, suspended solids and inorganic particles from the water. This makes them excellent indicators of estuary health.

To ensure that cultivated oysters are safe for us to eat, farmers maintain a rigorous quality assurance program. This includes fortnightly water and meat testing, with additional bio-toxin assessments conducted once a month.

The data collected also provides an invaluable record of changing environmental conditions, and contributes significantly to our understanding of the waterway and its management.

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## Oyster Farming Practices

Oysters begin their lives as free-swimming larvae. While some local farmers collect larvae themselves, Brisbane Water is not recognised as a good catching estuary. Most farmers therefore catch larvae in other estuaries, or buy juvenile oysters off other farmers elsewhere in NSW.

After catching or buying juvenile 'spat', most farmers use trays, or long-line systems to grow oysters until they are big enough to harvest.



Oyster trays  
Oysters are grown in trays  
which sit on racks installed in the estuary



Long-lines of floating bags  
Oysters are grown in containers that are secured  
onto long-line structures