Seven layers of rules on one shed

A small seafood processor answers to seven layers of law at once. The instruments named here are Tasmania's; every state has an equivalent at layers two to four. Read from the foundation up.

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LAYER	RULE AND WHO ENFORCES IT	WHAT IT LANDS ON THE PROCESSOR AS	DOMESTIC SALE	EXPORT
7	**Label and sale** Trade measurement law (net weight, verified scales), the Australian Consumer Law **country of origin** standard, the **Australian Fish Names Standard**, the recall protocol.	The carton label: name, lot, supplier address. Net weight from a verified scale, glaze excluded. Origin on retail packs, and on wholesale documents by customer demand. The mock recall.	●	●
6	**Market access** Each importing country's conditions, catalogued by DAFF in **Micor**: China (GACC Decrees 248 and 249, CIFER), the EU (listing, TRACES), the US (FDA 21 CFR 123; FSMA 204 from 2028), Japan (FX46).	Listings and their renewals. A certificate template per market. Extra tests per market (EU microbiology per batch, Singapore norovirus). Eligibility tracked **per batch, per market**.	○	● changes with the market
5	**Export control** **Export Control Act 2020** and the **Export Control (Fish and Fish Products) Rules 2021**, administered by DAFF. Applies only when product leaves the country, and is then the heaviest layer of all.	A registered establishment under an **Approved Arrangement** (ten schedules). DAFF audit yearly, six-monthly for bivalves and ready-to-eat. Records kept three years. Declaration of compliance and transfer declarations. The permit through NEXDOC.	○	●
4	**Fisheries law** **Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995** and the rules under it (Processing and Handling Rules 2021 for abalone, lobster and crab; Commercial Dive Rules 2021 for urchin), NRE Marine Resources. Manages the stock, not food safety.	Dockets: the receipt docket within fifteen minutes, green sheet to the regulator, yellow kept **five years**. Weights on a verified scale, quota reconciliation, closures by notice. Nothing for oysters, or for finfish outside the quota species.	◐ quota and dive species	◐ quota and dive species
3	**State seafood scheme** Where Standard 4.2.1 is enforced. Tasmania: **Primary Produce Safety Act 2011** and the Seafood Regulations 2023, Chief Inspector at NRE; ShellMAP for shellfish areas. Elsewhere: NSW Food Authority, Safe Food Victoria, PIRSA, Safe Food Production Queensland, WA Health.	Accreditation or licence (Tasmania accredits only abalone, bivalves and smoked or preserved seafood; NSW licenses about 1,900 businesses). A food safety program per activity, an approved audit at least yearly, the number on the label, area status for bivalves.	●	●
2	**State food law** Every state has a Food Act. Tasmania: **Food Act 2003**, Department of Health, enforced day to day by local councils. Covers everyone who handles food for sale.	Council registration and inspection for businesses outside the state scheme (in Tasmania: urchin, finfish, lobster). Approved auditors. Public health alerts.	●	●
1	**National food standard** The **Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code**, written by FSANZ. Standard 3.2.2 (practices), 3.2.3 (premises), **4.2.1** (seafood), 1.6.1 (microbiological limits), Chapter 1.2 (labels). No penalties of its own; it bites because every state adopts it.	A HACCP-based program with two to four temperature CCPs. Receipt, storage and transport at 5 °C or a validated alternative. A calibrated thermometer. Cleaning, pest, hygiene, training. One up, one down traceability. A written recall plan for anyone selling wholesale.	●	●

THE LESSON OF THE MAP

Layer one, and the HACCP method underneath it, are the same for every processor in the country. Layers three and four change with the state and the species. Layers five and six exist only for exporters and change with the market. Layer seven changes with the pack format and the customer. A domestic shed lives under four or five layers; an exporter under all seven.

- **Same for every processor.** The Code and HACCP: identical for an urchin shed in St Helens and an oyster lease in the Hawkesbury.
- **Changes with the state and the species.** The regulator's name, the term (accreditation, licence, registration), the number on the label, which species are in scope, the audit cadence, the docket rules.
- **Exporters only; changes with the market.** Listings, certificate templates, per-market tests and limits (minus 18 °C for Europe), which documents travel with the consignment.
- **Changes with the pack format and the customer.** Retail pack, wholesale carton or unpackaged; what the customer asks for beyond the legal minimum.

One factory, two regulators: domestic and export

An exporter is regulated twice over for the same shed: the state proves the food is safe to sell in Australia, the Commonwealth certifies to foreign governments, and the foreign government adds its own conditions. Both regulators audit the same evidence.

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Domestic: the state layer

Every seafood business, exporter or not

LAW	Food Standards Code (Standard 4.2.1 seafood, 3.2.2 practices, 3.2.3 premises, 1.6.1 limits), adopted through the state Food Act and the state seafood scheme.
REGULATOR	Tasmania: NRE's Chief Inspector of Primary Produce Safety for regulated seafood, local councils for everyone else. Elsewhere: NSW Food Authority, Safe Food Victoria, PIRSA, Safe Food Production Queensland, WA Health.
THE DOCUMENT	The **food safety program**: a HACCP-based plan, written where the state requires it (regulated seafood, bivalves) and expected by every auditor.
THE NUMBER	Accreditation number (Tas, SA) or licence number (NSW, Vic), printed on the label.
AUDIT	Approved auditor at least once a year for the accredited classes; council inspection for the rest.
RETENTION	No fixed period in the Code or the Tasmanian regulations. Bivalve tags 90 days, wet storage water tests two years (ASQAP); fisheries dockets five years.
TRACEABILITY FLOOR	One step back, one step forward (4.2.1 clause 11). Lot codes come from the state scheme, export or the customer.

The same evidence, read twice

What both auditors ask to see

- The HACCP plan: hazards, CCPs, critical limits, the flow diagram walked on site.
- Monitoring records with actual numbers: receival, cold store, cook, cool, freeze.
- Corrective actions: root cause, disposition of product, action, effectiveness.
- Calibration of every thermometer (plus or minus one degree) and scale.
- Cleaning and sanitising schedules and their verification.
- Pest control, maintenance, water testing; hygiene, illness exclusion, training.
- Supplier and source records; harvest area status for bivalves.
- Lot identification from receival to dispatch, and a recall plan with a mock recall.
- Verification by someone other than the monitor; internal audit and management review yearly.

One factory, one system, two regulators, two annual audits, and an extra chapter for every foreign market.

Export: the Commonwealth layer

Only when prescribed goods leave the country

LAW	Export Control Act 2020 and the Export Control (Fish and Fish Products) Rules 2021, the "Fish Rules". Fish to New Zealand is not prescribed.
REGULATOR	DAFF, Dairy Eggs and Fish program. Importing country conditions catalogued in Micor.
THE DOCUMENT	The **Approved Arrangement** (AA): the same HACCP system plus export chapters, organised to the ten schedules of the Fish Rules, approved by DAFF (form EX26a, 120-day consideration), varied by EX26b.
THE NUMBER	Export registered establishment number; exporter registration; market listings (CIFER for China, EU list).
AUDIT	DAFF at least yearly. Six-monthly for bivalve preparation and ready-to-eat. Low-risk sites (storage, freezing, live holding and packing, vessels) can do an annual online audit. Internal audit and management review are legal conditions since 2025-12-09.
RETENTION	Three years, not altered or defaced, in English, dated, legible.
TRACEABILITY FLOOR	Each export lot linked to its suppliers, identity, quantity and preparation date; inputs and outputs per lot; harvest area, lease and date for shellfish.

THE APPROVED ARRANGEMENT: THE TEN SCHEDULES OF THE FISH RULES, WHICH IS HOW EVERY AA FOLDER IS ORGANISED

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Export documentation	Identification, tracing, integrity and transfer	Management of food safety and suitability	Operational hygiene	Preparation	Product standards	Registration	Structural requirements	Trade description (labelling, fish names)	Transport

A CONSIGNMENT LEAVES THE COUNTRY: THE PAPER LOOP EVERY SHIPMENT RUNS

1 Check the market
Micor and the importer: species eligibility, certificate, tests, labels, listing.

2 Source and declare
Only from registered establishments. A declaration of compliance per product, a transfer declaration per movement.

3 Lodge the REX
The Request for Export in NEXDOC, by an Automated Export Permit Issuer or an agent. EU permits need DAFF staff.

4 Customs
Export declaration to the Australian Border Force returns the Export Declaration Number.

5 Permit and certificate
DAFF issues the permit and, where the market needs it, the health certificate, on plain paper with a QR code.

6 Ship
Recovery, re-direction or recall with DAFF if anything goes wrong after departure.

BEFORE ANY OF THAT: FOUR GATES, EACH HELD BY A DIFFERENT BODY

The fishery
Assessed under the EPBC Act and declared a Wildlife Trade Operation. Fishery level, not processor level; if it lapses, export stops.

The state
Domestic approval first: the state licence or accreditation, and the food safety program it rests on.

DAFF
Establishment registered, AA approved, exporter registered. Renews each financial year.

The market
Listing where the destination requires it (China CIFER, the EU, China's live list). Kept current, per product type.

THE CONSEQUENCE

A market list is a living configuration, not a fixed fact, and eligibility is tracked per batch: one lot can be eligible for Singapore and ineligible for the EU on the same day because of a missing test result.

Anatomy of a food safety plan

Every food safety program in Australia, and every export Approved Arrangement, is built on HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, from the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene). The method, its vocabulary and the records it produces are the same for every species, state and market.

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WHERE THE WRITTEN PLAN COMES FROM

Standard 4.2.1 Division 2 asks every seafood business to **systematically examine** its operations, identify hazards and implement controls commensurate with the risk: HACCP without the acronym. It does not require a written program. The document arrives through one of three doors:

The state scheme. Tasmania requires a program per accredited activity for regulated seafood (abalone, bivalves, smoked or preserved), audited at least yearly. NSW, Victoria and Queensland make a written program a condition of the licence.

Bivalves. Division 3 requires a documented food safety management system for every oyster, mussel, clam and scallop business, with deemed compliance for a Codex HACCP system.

Export. The Approved Arrangement must contain a HACCP plan (Fish Rules s 5-2), and since 2025-12-09 an annual internal audit and management review.

TWO TO FOUR CCPS, ALMOST ALWAYS TEMPERATURE

5 °C	**Receival and storage.** Potentially hazardous food at or below 5 °C, or a temperature the business can demonstrate is safe (3.2.2 cl. 5, 6; 4.2.1 cl. 6, 10).
60 to 21 to 5	**Cooling a cooked product.** 60 °C to 21 °C within two hours, then to 5 °C within a further four, unless demonstrated otherwise (3.2.2 cl. 7).
75 °C	**A cook step.** Core temperature at the end of a hot smoke or a crustacean cook: the validated limit on the processor's own plan.
minus 18 °C	**Frozen storage.** Product for the EU and UK at or below minus 18 °C; recorded as actual numbers, never "hard frozen".
± 1 °C	**The instrument behind every reading.** A thermometer accurate to plus or minus one degree wherever potentially hazardous food is handled (3.2.2 cl. 22): the reason the calibration register exists.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF HACCP: FIVE TO PREPARE, SEVEN PRINCIPLES

PREPARATORY STEPS

1. **Assemble the HACCP team**
   The people who know the product, the process and the hazards.
2. **Describe the product**
   Species, form, packaging, shelf life, storage.
3. **Identify its intended use**
   Raw, ready-to-eat, cooked by the consumer, live.
4. **Construct a flow diagram**
   Every step from receival to dispatch.
5. **Confirm it on site**
   Walk the floor; the diagram must match reality.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. **Conduct a hazard analysis**
   At every step: biological, chemical, physical hazards, and which are significant.
2. **Determine the critical control points**
   The steps where control is essential to prevent, eliminate or reduce a significant hazard.
3. **Establish validated critical limits**
   The measurable criterion that separates acceptable from unacceptable at each CCP.
4. **Establish monitoring**
   The planned observation or measurement of the control parameter.
5. **Establish corrective actions**
   What is done when monitoring shows a deviation.
6. **Validate the plan and verify it**
   Prove in advance the limits work; check after the fact that the system operates as designed.
7. **Establish documentation and records**
   The procedures, the forms, the records and their retention.

THE RECORD CHAIN THE AUDITOR FOLLOWS

Critical limit — the plan
The number, with the clause it answers and the plan version it belongs to. Validated before use.

Reading — the floor
One monitoring event judged against the limit: value, time, who, product and lot.

Deviation — the floor
A reading outside the limit. It cannot vanish; it must resolve into a corrective action.

Corrective action — the register
Four things recorded: root cause, disposition of the affected product, the action taken, and whether it worked.

Verification — someone else
Records reviewed, instruments calibrated, product tested, internal audit done, by a person other than the one who monitored. The origin of the "verified by" field.

Management review — at least yearly
The owner looks at the whole system: audit findings, corrective actions, complaints, changes, and records what was decided.

Document control — always
Which version of each form and procedure is current, an amendments register, the old version withdrawn from the floor.

PREREQUISITE PROGRAMS: THE CONTROLS THAT APPLY EVERYWHERE, NOT AT ONE STEP

Cleaning and sanitising · Pest control · Personal hygiene and illness exclusion · Water and ice quality · Calibration · Supplier approval · Training and competence · Premises and equipment maintenance · Visitor control · Glass, brittle plastic and knives · Hazardous substances · Allergen control · Waste and contamination · Recall plan and mock recall

Standard 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 supply most of these; DAFF's AA checklist and every state template name the rest. The auditor's first question is "where are your CCPs"; the second is "show me the monitoring record for this one".

HACCP from Codex CXC 1-1969 (rev. 2020) and CXC 52-2003; clauses from the Food Standards Code and the Fish Rules 2021, checked 2026-10-26. Learning material, not legal advice.

Five kinds of processor against the rules

Five common types of small Australian seafood processor, and for each, which layers of law they sit under and which record shapes they carry. Tasmania is the worked example for the state layer; the pattern holds in every state.

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	Urchin and abalone Dive fishery receivers and processors	Oysters and mussels Growers who harvest, shuck and pack	Smokehouse and ready-to-eat Hot and cold smoked, cooked, preserved	Finfish fillet and wholesale Receive, fillet, pack, distribute	Live export Rock lobster and abalone holding and packing
The shared engine Layers 1 and 2: Standard 3.2.2, 4.2.1 Division 2, HACCP	● **Identical for all five.** A HACCP-based program with two to four temperature CCPs; receipt, storage and transport records against 5 °C or a validated alternative; a calibrated thermometer and its register; cleaning, pest, hygiene, illness exclusion and training; a disposal area with tags; one up, one down traceability; a written recall plan and a mock recall for anyone selling wholesale.				
State seafood scheme Layer 3, Tasmania: who regulates, which term, which audit	**Abalone:** regulated seafood, NRE-accredited, approved audit yearly. **Urchin:** not regulated seafood; council-registered under the Food Act 2003, no accreditation.	**Regulated seafood.** NRE-accredited, approved audit yearly. ShellMAP classifies every area and sets its daily status.	**Regulated seafood** since the 2023 regulations (smoked or preserved, including canned). NRE-accredited, audit yearly.	**Not regulated seafood** in Tasmania: council-registered, still bound to 4.2.1. Licensed and audited yearly in NSW and Victoria.	**Lobster:** not regulated seafood, council-registered. **Abalone:** NRE-accredited. Both sit under DAFF as well (below).
Fisheries dockets Layer 4: manages the stock, lands as paperwork	● **Yes.** Urchin: Commercial Dive Rules 2021 (hold the original docket, keep five years). Abalone: Processing and Handling Rules 2021 (receipt docket within fifteen minutes). Closures by notice.	○ **No.** Marine farming licences and leases instead; no docket regime.	○ **No,** unless the smokehouse also receives quota species as a licensed processor.	◐ **Only for quota species** (abalone, rock lobster, giant crab). A finfish-only wholesaler carries none.	● **Yes.** Processing and Handling Rules 2021: receipt and dispatch dockets, green sheet to the regulator, yellow kept five years; verified scales; abalone's rule 28 export label.
The bivalve lot 4.2.1 Division 3 and the ASQAP Manual	○ No.	● **The whole of Division 3.** Area classification and open status checked before every harvest; a tag on every container at filling; each batch kept separate; cooled to 10 °C within 24 hours; the tag kept 90 days; water tests kept two years.	○ No.	○ No.	○ No.
Listeria monitoring Standard 1.6.1, Schedule 27	○ No.	○ No; norovirus and Vibrio are the bivalve hazards, managed through the area and the cooling clock.	● **The heaviest record.** Two Schedule 27 rows: not detected in 25 g where growth can occur, 100 cfu/g where it cannot; the validated program decides which. A swab map, a cadence, a result per site, an escalation on a positive.	○ No, unless the business makes ready-to-eat product.	○ No.
Export and market access Layers 5 and 6: DAFF, the Approved Arrangement, Micor	◐ **Common for abalone** (China live listing, EU gastropod certificate), rarer for urchin (EU echinoderm template). A registered establishment, an AA, DAFF audit yearly.	◐ **Export-approved harvest areas only.** High-risk category: DAFF audit every six months. Singapore wants a norovirus test per consignment of frozen oysters.	◐ **If exporting,** ready-to-eat is high risk: DAFF audit every six months; product for the EU and UK at or below minus 18 °C.	◐ **If exporting,** low or medium risk: DAFF audit yearly, declaration of compliance per shipment, the standard fish name on every certificate.	● **The full layer.** An AA under the ten schedules; three-year records; verifier separate from performer; document control; internal audit and management review yearly; GACC live listing for China; declarations per consignment; the REX in NEXDOC.
Label and sale Layer 7: what goes on the carton	**Abalone:** the regulation 17(1)(g) label plus the rule 28 export label. **Urchin roe:** the wholesale minimum (name, lot, supplier) and what the buyer asks for.	The four regulation 17(1)(g) fields (producer, accreditation number, date taken, area): the ASQAP tag by another name.	The retail pack in full: name, lot, supplier, allergens in bold, use-by, storage, nutrition, country of origin mark.	Standard fish name on every document; net weight from a verified scale with glaze excluded; lot and supplier on every carton.	Certificate species and FAO area codes matching the listing; scientific names from the Fish Names Standard.

● Carries it ◐ Sometimes, or only when exporting ○ Does not carry it

Row chips follow sheet 1: blue same for everyone, orange state and species, green exporters only, grey pack format and customer.

THE PATTERN ACROSS ALL FIVE

The engine is Standard 4.2.1 Division 2 and HACCP. There are exactly three segment-specific record shapes (the fisheries docket, the bivalve lot, the Listeria swab map) and one mode, export, that hardens every record: three-year retention, a verifier separate from the performer, controlled versions, actual temperatures. Every other difference is a setting named after a state scheme, a species or a market, not a new system.