



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Senator the Hon Johnathon Duniam
Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Assistant Minister Duniam

Thank you for your letter of 2 March 2022 outlining the Government's Expectations for how the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) will undertake its regulatory functions in the management of Commonwealth fisheries. Those expectations give effect to the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to deliver a deregulation agenda that supports the immediate recovery and ongoing growth of Australia's economy.

This Statement of Intent outlines how AFMA will respond to the expectations expressed in your letter¹, and should be read in conjunction with your Statement of Expectations, together with the laws that apply to AFMA and those that AFMA administers.

Our Role

AFMA is responsible for the efficient management and sustainable use of Commonwealth fisheries resources in a way that maximises the net economic returns to the Australian community.

AFMA administers a range of fisheries-related legislation and policies to achieve regulatory objectives and provides advice on potential changes. AFMA also takes appropriate compliance action within the scope of powers contained in legislation.

Continuous improvement and building trust

We will work to contribute to the Government's economic goals and respond to the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses for the Government and the fishing industry. We will maintain and seek opportunities to enhance our engagement with relevant stakeholders by:

- Continual improvement in strategic engagement with the Commonwealth Fisheries Association as the legislated peak body;
- Strengthening the role of Management Advisory Committees in garnering stakeholder views and identifying management options that achieve AFMA's objectives and Government policy, while also promoting simplicity and not unduly restricting business activity;

¹ [Statement of Expectations](#)



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- Further progressing co-management arrangements with key stakeholders where it makes sense to do so, and where there is low risk of compromising AFMA's regulatory performance; and
- Strengthening engagement with stakeholders to better understand and account for Indigenous and recreational fishing interests.

AFMA will endeavour to be a leader in the region for best practice in fisheries management, and will continue to develop and enhance its operations with foreign governments to:

- In conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), represent Australia's fishing interests;
- Assist in building their fisheries management and compliance capacity; and
- Prevent, deter and eliminate illegal foreign fishing in Australian waters.

Regulatory co-operation

While AFMA will act independently in carrying out our regulatory functions, we will remain committed to working with Government and DAWE, especially through ongoing consultation on key policies that guide our work. AFMA will also continue to enhance cooperation with other Commonwealth regulators as well as fisheries agencies in the states and the Northern Territory to share information, promote efficiency, avoid duplication and promote common approaches to regulation.

Risk-based and data-driven

AFMA will use its full suite of regulatory tools in a targeted and proportionate way, to identify and reduce the risks inherent in the sectors it regulates. AFMA will focus management interventions and compliance actions on areas of greatest harm

AFMA will position its regulatory functions to operate in accordance with best practice principles and to lift its regulatory performance, paying particular attention to:

- Proactive and timely delivery of the Data Transformation and Electronic Monitoring Program over the forward estimates following the Government's April 2021 announcement;
- Without compromising achievement of other legislated objectives, the pursuit of deregulation and the simplification of management measures wherever possible, including in consultation with State and Northern Territory fisheries agencies;
- Contribution to review and enhancement of government policy, especially the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy;
- Enhancement of the existing focus on intelligence driven, targeted, risk-based surveillance and compliance programs;
- Collaboration with other government agencies to implement and achieve the Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy;
- Implementation of programs to better understand, account for and respond to the impacts of non-fishing activities such as climate change on Commonwealth fish stocks and the marine environment; and
- Continually seeking further efficiencies in AFMA's operational costs.



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Collaboration and engagement

AFMA will actively and transparently engage with stakeholders and take their feedback into account when making regulatory decisions.

AFMA will provide clear guidance and other communication to give clarity on how we exercise our powers to assist the fishing industry to comply with the law through tailored approaches and in contemplation of compliance costs.

Governance

AFMA's Commission acts as a strategic non-executive body focusing on high-level regulatory and statutory decision-making as well as stakeholder management. The Commission also provides support to the CEO on organisational oversight.

As the Accountable Authority under the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, AFMA's CEO has sole executive management responsibility on organisational matters. The CEO will rely on and use AFMA's key senior executives to carry out day to day management activities and deal with operational issues. The CEO will delegate functions where he considers this would benefit the executive management of AFMA.

Further information about the delineation of roles between the Commission and the CEO is provided in the Commission Charter².

Corporate Plan and annual report

AFMA will include this Statement of Intent in its Corporate Plan 2022-23 and will explain how the strategic priorities and work programs support it. AFMA will explain how it will strive to adopt the principles in the Government's Regulator Performance Guide (July 2021) with the Government's Statement of Expectations and include reporting against these in its annual report.

I look forward to continuing to deliver efficient and cost-effective management arrangements for Commonwealth fisheries.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wez Norris', with a long, sweeping underline.

Wez Norris
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

² [AFMA Commission Charter](#)