



SENATOR THE HON JONNO DUNIAM

Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries
Assistant Minister for Industry Development
Deputy Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Liberal Senator for Tasmania

Ref: MS22-000289

Mr Wez Norris
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Fisheries Management Authority
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Dear Mr Norris

I am writing to you to outline my expectations regarding the Australian Fishery Management Authority's (AFMA) role as the agency responsible for the efficient management and sustainable use of Commonwealth fisheries resources for the Australian Community. I note these overarching objectives in the context of AFMA's regulatory functions, and its statutory objectives. These expectations give effect to the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to deliver a deregulation agenda that supports the immediate recovery and the ongoing growth of Australia's economy.

While the Australian Government is responsible for setting policy and progressing legislation, AFMA plays an important role in administering fisheries related legislation and policies to achieve regulatory objectives and provide advice on potential changes. AFMA also performs an important function in taking appropriate compliance action within the scope of powers conferred by legislative instruments. I continue to provide my full support to AFMA addressing observed non-compliance and I appreciate our shared responsibility for ongoing review and management of regulatory settings, including making continuous improvements to legislation.

This Ministerial Statement of Expectations sets out my expectations for how AFMA is to deliver these responsibilities. I ask for your response to this letter through a Statement of Intent advising the approach your agency will take to deliver against these expectations.

Ministerial Statements of Expectations

I recognise AFMA's responsibility in delivering sustainable Commonwealth fisheries that maximise the net economic returns to the Australian community. I expect that these overarching objectives will continue to drive AFMA's regulatory actions. I also expect that these objectives will be balanced by avoiding unwarranted costs on regulated entities.

I expect AFMA to continue to provide timely advice to Government and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment regarding the fitness for purpose of legislative instruments it administers, including the need for potential changes to legislation and/or the regulatory approach. In forming this advice, I expect your agency to remain in-step with the operating environment and implications of changes in the fisheries value chain. This extends to consulting and collaborating with industry to ensure that AFMA's regulatory approach remains fit for purpose against your legislated objectives, the Government's deregulation agenda and the regulated entities you engage with.

I expect AFMA to maintain, and seek opportunities to enhance its engagement with relevant stakeholders through a range of means including, but not limited to:

- Continual improvement in strategic engagement with the Commonwealth Fisheries Association as the legislated peak body;
- Strengthening the role that Management Advisory Committees play 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;
- 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.

In particular, I expect AFMA to continue to examine and be ready to respond to the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses for the Government and the fishing industry.

I expect your agency to respond to independent reviews concerning regulatory practices in a way that addresses underlying causes, builds capability and enhances AFMA's regulatory posture while enabling staff to make sensible, lawful decisions. AFMA should further position its regulatory functions to operate in accordance with best practice principles and to lift its regulatory performance.

Without limiting the above, I ask that particular attention be given to the following:

- Proactive and timely delivery of the Data Transformation and Electronic Monitoring Program over the forward estimates following the Government's announcement of significant additional resources to AFMA for these purposes in April 2021;
- Without compromising achievement of other legislated objectives, the pursuit of de-regulation 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, such as the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy;
- Enhancement of the existing focus on 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.

Regulator Performance

The Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 will require you, as the Accountable Authority, to report your agency's regulatory performance in accordance with the Regulator Performance Guide, which is available at deregulation.pmc.gov.au. These requirements will apply for the 2022-23 planning and reporting cycle, with 2021-22 noted as a transitional period.

I ask that this Ministerial Statement of Expectations, and your Statement of Intent, be made publicly available on afma.gov.au and transparency.gov.au as part of your Corporate Plan and/or Annual Report.

I thank you and the AFMA team for your demonstrated commitment to lifting regulatory performance, capability and culture. The role and objectives of AFMA and in delivering these expectations will ensure that AFMA continues to deliver regulatory functions to the benefit of Australians and will support and improve community trust in Government.

Yours sincerely



Jonno Duniam