



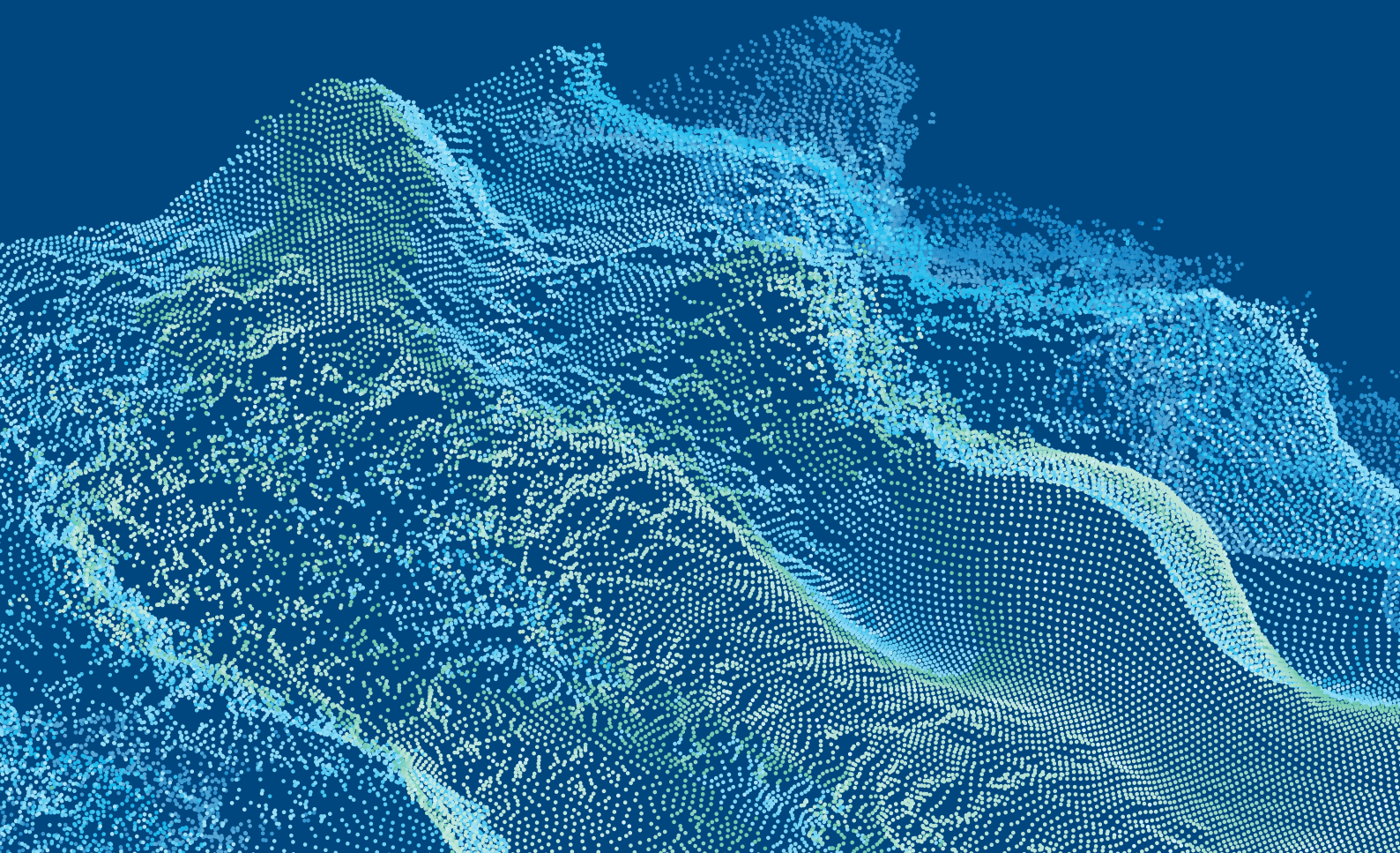
Australian Government  
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

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# CORPORATE PLAN **2022-23**

(for the period 2022-23 to 2025-26  
including Annual Operational Plan)





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# INTRODUCTION

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority is pleased to present the Corporate Plan 2022–23.

The Corporate Plan describes AFMA's priorities, the key activities and associated investment to achieve our legislative objectives over the next four years (2022–23 to 2025–26). It also outlines key challenges and known issues that will likely disrupt business services over the same period, and AFMA's approach to risk management and mitigation. Challenges such as COVID-19 and adapting our management approaches to account for the continued impacts of climate change and environmental variability on our fisheries, are critical to meeting our responsibility to ensure the ecologically sustainable development of Commonwealth fisheries for the benefit of the Australian community.

For the first time, AFMA has combined our Corporate Plan 2022–26 with our Annual Operational Plan 2022–23 for ease of use and clarity.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has created significant disruption to all sectors of the Australian economy, including the fishing industry. Its impact, both on the Commonwealth fishing industry and AFMA business operations, will continue to be felt in 2022–23 and may affect delivery of some aspects of the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan recognises our commitment to engage positively and transparently in delivering ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries on behalf of the Australian community. This Corporate Plan has been written to respond directly to Government's Statement of Expectations and AFMA's [Statement of Intent](#) under the Regulator Performance Guide.

The Corporate Plan should be read in conjunction with AFMA's Portfolio Budget Statements that describe our outcome, strategic directions and performance measures for 2022–23.

## Statement of Preparation

I, Wez Norris, as the accountable authority of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, present the AFMA Corporate Plan for the periods of 2022–23 to 2025–26, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (PGPA Act) and Division 7 of the Fisheries Administration Act 1991 (the Act). In accordance with section 72(1) of the Act, I consulted with the peak industry body, the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA), prior to and during preparation of this plan.



**Helen Kroger**  
Chairman, AFMA Commission



**Wez Norris**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Accountable Authority of AFMA



# PURPOSE

AFMA's purpose is to pursue the ecologically sustainable development (ESD) of Commonwealth fisheries for the benefit of the Australian community. This will be done by understanding and monitoring Australia's marine living resources, regulating Commonwealth commercial fishing and deterring illegal foreign fishing. As part of our application of ESD, AFMA also considers the interests of recreational and Indigenous stakeholders.

AFMA's legislated functions and objectives require the pursuit of efficient and cost-effective fisheries management consistent with the principles of ESD, including the precautionary principle, and maximising the net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries. Collectively, the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* include 10 objectives that AFMA is required to pursue or have regard to (see Table 1). Over the next four years, AFMA will implement fisheries management in pursuit of sustainable and profitable fisheries by:

- assessing and mitigating risks to species' sustainability, including ecological and compliance risks;
- simplifying regulations to reduce operational and cost burdens for industry;
- deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by foreign vessels;
- strengthening communication with, and accountability to the community including commercial, recreational and Indigenous stakeholders; and
- achieving cost recovery targets.



*August School of southern bluefin tuna in floating pontoon. Photograph taken by AFMA staff member Jarrad James.*

**TABLE 1 AFMA's legislated objectives – objectives that AFMA must pursue are shaded blue and those that AFMA must have regard to are unshaded.**

Act and section	Summary of objective
<i>Fisheries Administration Act 1991 – section 6</i>	Implement efficient and cost-effective fisheries management.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Ensure the exploitation of fisheries and related activities is consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. <sup>1</sup>
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Where Australia has obligations under international agreements, ensure the exploitation of fish stocks and related activities in the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) and the high seas are carried out consistently with those obligations.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	To the extent that Australia has obligations under international law or agreements, ensure that fishing activities by Australian flagged vessels on the high seas are conducted consistently with those obligations. <sup>2</sup>
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Ensure accountability to the fishing industry and the Australian community in the management of fisheries resources.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Achieve government targets in relation to the recovery of AFMA's costs.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Ensure that the interests of commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers are taken into account.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Ensure, through proper conservation and management measures, that the living resources of the AFZ are not endangered by over-exploitation.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Achieve optimum utilisation of the living resources of the Australian fishing zone.

AFMA is also required to ensure, as far as practicable, that measures adopted must not be inconsistent with the preservation, conservation and protection of whales.

Note 1: The principles of ecologically sustainable development are defined in the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*

Note 2: This objective is listed as one that AFMA must pursue in the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and as one that AFMA is to have regard to in the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*.

## AFMA Values

In all our relationships AFMA staff abide by the Australian Public Service values. These are:

- **Impartial** – we are apolitical and provide advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence
- **Committed to service** – we are professional, objective, innovative and efficient
- **Accountable** – we are open and accountable to our stakeholders across the Australian community
- **Respectful** – we respect all people, including their rights and their heritage
- **Ethical** – we demonstrate leadership, are trustworthy, and act with integrity.

These values support our collaborative efforts with commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers and other stakeholders across the Australian community and are further to our responsibilities on behalf of the Australian community to ensure ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries.

# AT A GLANCE

## Performance Measures 2022–23

	Measure	Target
 <p>Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with principles of ecological sustainable development</p>	1. The number of stocks for which management measures are based on species-appropriate scientific assessment	No change or increase
	2. The percentage of species assessed as 'residual High Risk' under Ecological Risk Assessment	No change or decrease
	3. The number of AFMA-only stocks assessed as 'subject to overfishing' in the ABARES Fishery Status Report	Zero
	4. AFMA advocates measures in relevant negotiations to address stocks shared with states and territories that are assessed as 'overfished' or 'subject to overfishing' in the ABARES Fishery Status Report	Qualitative assessment
	5. Status of Wildlife Trade Operations (WTOs) under the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act)	All WTOs maintained
 <p>Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries</p>	6. The number of stocks with target reference points based on Maximum Economic Yield (MEY), an agreed proxy thereof or a multi-stock harvest strategy	No change or increase
	7. Net Economic Return, as assessed in the ABARES Status of Fish Stocks Report	Positive trend over rolling 3-year average
 <p>Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards</p>	8. Treatment of identified domestic compliance risks as outlined in the National Compliance and Enforcement Program (NCEP)	>90 percent of NCEP performance targets met
	9. Incidence level of illegal foreign fishing vessels operating in the Australian Fishing Zone	Lower than previous 3-year average
	10. Compliance rate with international obligations as assessed in Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (implemented by AFMA)	>90 per cent
 <p>Deliver effective, cost efficient and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources</p>	11. Cost recovery budget	≤ 2005–06 once adjusted for CPI
	12. Corporate overheads compared to total budget	<25 per cent
	13. Engagement with legislated peak body.	CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting
	14. Number of services offered digitally.	Increased trend in number of empirical data collection services offered electronically




## Key Activities

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) Fishery Status Reports 2021 reports that for the eighth consecutive year, no Commonwealth fish stocks solely managed by AFMA are subject to overfishing. In addition, ABARES' most recent fishery statistics indicate that the annual gross value of Commonwealth fisheries production (GVP), the landed value of product, has been maintained at around \$400 million, with significant multiplier benefits to the broader Australian community in domestic jobs, regional development and exports.

### PURPOSE

Ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries, through understanding and monitoring Australia's marine living resources and regulating and monitoring commercial fishing, including domestic licensing and deterrence of illegal foreign fishing.

Goals	Activities	Results
 <p><b>Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development</b></p>	<p>AFMA will integrate long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations, apply the precautionary principle and conserve biological diversity. In doing so, we will work with commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers.</p>	<p>AFMA-managed fisheries are accepted as sustainable with integrated Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA)/ Ecological Risk Management (ERM) systems, government harvest strategy and bycatch policies and science that is publicly available.</p>
 <p><b>Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries</b></p>	<p>AFMA will review and, where relevant, develop management arrangements that facilitate and encourage maximisation of net economic returns in Commonwealth fisheries.</p>	<p>Fisheries are managed by individually transferable statutory fishing rights with enabling regulation that aims to maximise economic returns.</p>
 <p><b>Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards</b></p>	<p>AFMA will maintain a risk-based approach to compliance by domestic vessels and cooperate across government and engage internationally to maintain effective monitoring, control and surveillance of fisheries activities in the AFZ and waters adjacent to the AFZ.</p>	<p>Domestic fisheries regulation is focused on 'harms', by removing unnecessary regulation and making it easier to comply, backed by a proportionate penalties regime.</p> <p>The incidence of foreign IUU fishing is reduced</p>
 <p><b>Deliver efficient, cost-effective and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources</b></p>	<p>AFMA will continually examine practice and policy and transparently engage with stakeholders to deliver cost effective and efficient services and management arrangements.</p>	<p>Stakeholders are confident in AFMA performance with alignment of AFMA and stakeholder expectations and shared objectives through active engagement.</p>

# OPERATING CONTEXT

## Environment

AFMA managed fisheries extend from the northern-most tip of Australia to fishing in Antarctica, encompassing a huge diversity of ecosystems. The ABARES Fishery Status Reports 2021 evaluated 100 fish stocks across 22 fisheries, including those managed both solely and jointly by AFMA. The Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy 2018 notes that more than 2,000 species are categorised as bycatch across Commonwealth fisheries.

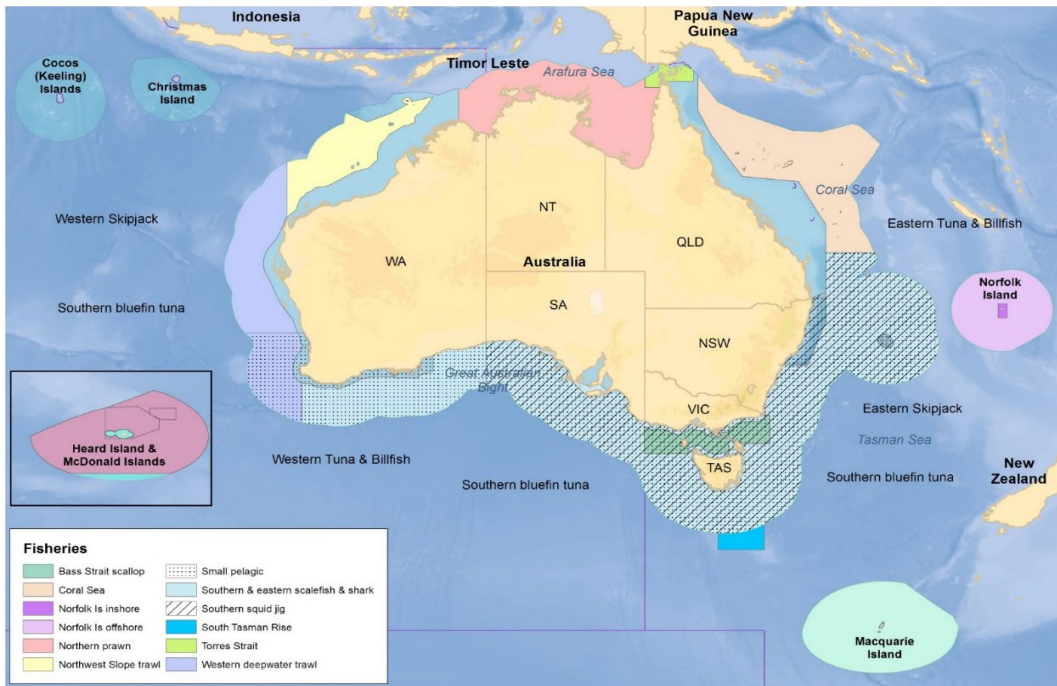
We regulate and manage fisheries activities across an extensive maritime area, generally extending from three nautical miles out to sea to the extent of the AFZ and including managing Australian-licensed fishing boats operating on the High Seas. There are some exceptions to this coverage captured as part of Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) arrangements, with various state/territory governments managing some stocks across state and Commonwealth waters and vice versa.

Managing fisheries across this broad area also requires working with stakeholders and government agencies with responsibilities in the maritime domain, including state and international fisheries agencies, and in areas such as border control, maritime shipping, oil and gas exploration and marine conservation.

AFMA provides compliance and monitoring services to some state/territory governments as well as fisheries management and other services to the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

Environmental impacts, such as the increasing effects of climate change on Commonwealth-managed fisheries, particularly off south-eastern Australia, will be key challenges for AFMA over the next four years and beyond. Understanding these impacts, and responding accordingly, will necessitate AFMA's continued heavy reliance on research and data to support science-based decisions in managing Commonwealth fisheries into the future.

Taken together all these factors present a complex and challenging ecological and geo-political management environment.



Map of AFMA managed Commonwealth fisheries

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact AFMA's operating environment. AFMA has modified its operations as required and in response to broader Government planning. As Australia and the world becomes more open to international and domestic travel, and as vaccination rates increase, AFMA anticipates differing working arrangements and changes in demand for Government services.

From a fishery perspective, COVID-19 response measures here and across the world have had varied impacts on consumer demand. Demand for high-end restaurant product has generally declined, while retail sales of seafood within Australia have strengthened. Substantial increases in freight and fuel prices have reduced profitability in many Commonwealth fisheries.

The pandemic has also necessitated changes to AFMA operations. The AFMA Commission has been conscious in its decision making to exercise flexibility to support industry and continue essential services and processes, sometimes in the absence of the usual level of information. Travel restrictions have impacted the deployment of enforcement officers and Observers, though these restrictions have been easing over the past quarter. International and regional fishery management meetings remain largely virtual, while domestic in-person meetings are resuming. Workplace arrangements have developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic including implementing COVID-19 safe operational protocols to facilitate continued operational and international engagement activities. COVID-19 has also changed the nature, level and scope of Australia's domestic and international compliance risks. AFMA is implementing a diverse range of compliance responses to mitigate these.

AFMA will maintain a flexible approach to dealing with COVID-19 related issues and needs as they arise – within the confines of legislated objectives and duties.

# CAPABILITY

## Governance

AFMA's regulatory and management powers are governed by the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*. For the purposes of the PGPA Act, AFMA is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity. Our corporate goals provide the focus for allocating our resources and monitoring our performance to support positive outcomes and future improvement.

The AFMA Commission oversees AFMA's domestic fisheries management functions including the determination of total allowable catches (TACs) and total allowable (fishing) effort (TAEs). The Commission is comprised of six independent Commissioners with expertise in natural resource management, economics, legal and governance matters, research and fishing industry operations and the CEO. The CEO is responsible for assisting the Commission by giving effect to its decisions, as well as exercising AFMA's foreign compliance functions and powers. The CEO is AFMA's Accountable Authority under the PGPA Act and the Agency Head under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

AFMA operates within the Commonwealth Performance Framework.<sup>1</sup> We publish an annual report that includes AFMA's Annual Performance Statement. This provides performance results and an assessment of performance against our stated purpose. AFMA Management provides ongoing monitoring and quarterly reporting to the Executive, the Commission and the AFMA Audit and Risk Committee.

## Workforce Plan

AFMA's operating environment, including the delivery of regulatory services, is continually evolving. AFMA's workforce must be nimble and adapt to meet both current and future demands. AFMA is about to release our first ever Strategic Workforce Plan to ensure that AFMA's workforce has the skills to meet current and future priorities and is equipped to achieve AFMA's strategic goals.

Early insights from this work have identified key workforce themes which include:

- The nature of jobs and the skills needed to achieve AFMA's strategic objectives is changing. External drivers such as the economy (local and international), environment, COVID-19, and international relations mean there is a need to change the way we work in response to these challenges. Compliance activities have an increasing reliance on digital competencies such as data and forensic analytics.
- Recruitment – the increased need to work across teams and diversify roles as well as have people with the necessary skillsets has implications for role design. Recruitment is an opportunity to re-design roles as new people come into the agency. Labour market factors such as the high demand for skilled workers present challenges for recruitment. We need to re-think how and where we find the right people, and what we offer as an agency.

1 <https://www.transparency.gov.au/portfolio-budget/finance/2017-2018/user-guide/enhanced-commonwealth-performance-framework>



- Development and succession planning – AFMA has an ageing workforce with many long-term employees. As these employees retire there will be a significant loss of knowledge and experience. This will be exacerbated by the small size of the agency. We will look at ways business continuity can be managed effectively going forward including succession planning. Targeted development would support both succession planning as well as increase employee engagement.

Actions will focus on ensuring workforce activities align to new ways of working and our strategic objectives, ensuring our people have the right skills and capabilities, managing business continuity risks and providing a working environment that supports high performance and engagement.

## Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Through our ICT Strategy, AFMA continues to deliver high quality and efficient regulatory services. The ICT Strategy is future focused to serve the agency as business models change including supporting increased online and mobile communications and collaboration approaches. How AFMA interacts with its stakeholders, external organisations and other government agencies moving forward will rely greatly on how well information is managed to better support, protect and serve the Australian community including the Commonwealth fishing industry.

AFMA continues to invest in robust, secure and agile platforms that can keep pace in a constantly evolving technology environment. We align our platforms and systems to Whole of Government strategies (such as the *Government's Building Trust in the Public Record* policy) and will continue transition to a cloud-based capability to enhance the client services offered to our stakeholders for improved collaboration and business operations.

AFMA is committed to strengthening how we create, collect, manage and use our key information assets. Over the next year, we will focus on enhancing systems to support greater usage of our core information and data. This will be achieved by continuing to develop the Agency Data Capture platform to streamline digital data collection and support a stronger business intelligence environment and evidence-based decision making.

With the introduction and expansion of key digital technologies, the risk oversight and management of AFMA systems brings new challenges, in particular the delivery of a consistent and resilient cyber security network. AFMA is committed to implementing secure and resilient systems and is informed by the Australian Government's Information Security Manual and the *Australian Cyber Security Centre's Essential 8* maturity model.

## Financial capability

AFMA is funded by a combination of government appropriations, cost-recovered levies, fee-for-service charges, revenue for the delivery of services to other government agencies and other administered revenue.

The AFMA Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) outlines the cost recoverable activities AFMA undertakes and how they are recovered. The CRIS is reviewed annually to reflect any changes to AFMA's cost recovery model and to provide updated revenue and financial estimates. For 2022-23, approximately 35 per cent of AFMA's budgeted revenue is expected to come from cost recovered regulatory and research activities.

AFMA has been successful in minimising cost recovery charges, consistent with the *Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines*, through the efficient implementation of cost recovered activities. AFMA's cost recovery framework is underpinned by the application of the following three principles across all stages of the cost recovery process:

- efficiency and effectiveness
- transparency and accountability
- stakeholder engagement.

## Relationship Management

AFMA maintains regular contact with the Chair and Board of the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) as the peak body prescribed under the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*. AFMA staff are also in regular contact with the fishery-specific representatives (members of the CFA) both on an informal basis and through formal consultative structures such as Management Advisory Committees (MACs). AFMA recognises that meaningful consultation yields mutual benefits and works with the CFA through agreed mechanisms to ensure that industry input is incorporated into management and planning processes.

AFMA recognises that the services, decisions and actions we take in performing our regulatory roles affect individuals, businesses and organisations. While we have always engaged with the stakeholders impacted by our work, we remain committed to improving the quality and transparency of our engagement.

The AFMA Commission has approved AFMA's Stakeholder Engagement Framework and AFMA's Communication Plan 2022–24. In concert, these describe our core objectives in engaging with stakeholders including the general public and outline the specific tools we will employ to achieve those objectives.

AFMA recognises the need to improve engagement with the recreational and Indigenous fishing sectors. AFMA, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) and have jointly funded a project to develop a Commonwealth Fisheries Indigenous Engagement Strategy. The Commonwealth Fisheries Resource Sharing Framework was launched in 2021 and provides a basis for considering some interactions between different fishery sectors.

## Performance Monitoring

Monitoring progress and accountability in delivering our objectives is a key responsibility for AFMA staff. Individual performance agreements and periodic reviews by managers, committees, Senior Executives, the Commission and stakeholders all help ensure that we remain on target.

Each quarter the AFMA Commission receives a report on progress against the key activities listed with the performance measures. AFMA has reviewed and amended the measures and performance indicators detailed in the Corporate Plan. Enhanced application of internal business metrics will also inform decisions by the Senior Executive and drive AFMA's operating performance. In undertaking the key activities, we will continue to liaise with peak industry bodies such as the CFA and use MACs and Resource Assessment Groups (RAGs), along with other sector-specific bodies, including those for recreational and Indigenous fishers, to consult with stakeholders and obtain and disperse scientific, economic and other expert advice to address Commonwealth fisheries issues.

# RISK

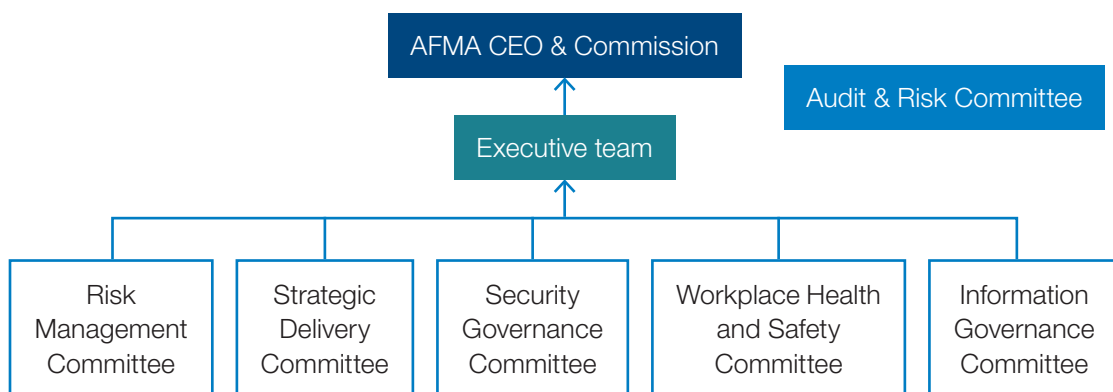
AFMA is committed to effective risk management and oversight. We take a strong but measured approach to risk management, identifying opportunities that encourage business improvements and innovation in pursuit of our corporate goals. Our internal control measures identify, assess, monitor and manage material risks related to our business activities, and help ensure that our risk posture is fit for purpose.

Our Risk Management Framework (RMF), based on ISO 31000, comprises an internal risk appetite statement, strategic and enterprise risk registers and risk management guidelines. The RMF has been developed to encourage AFMA staff to proactively engage with risk to make well informed strategic and operational decisions. Whilst the RMF needs to be robust and responsive, supporting oversight and ensuring cohesion across the agency in the face of new and emerging risks remains a cornerstone of the framework. To achieve this, AFMA is focused on further developing risk capability across the organisation, and building on our 2020–21 risk work, improving the visibility of operational and shared risks across the agency.

## Risk Governance

AFMA has systems for internal control, risk oversight and management. AFMA seeks to continuously improve these systems and the agency's risk management capability through review, training, guidance and knowledge sharing. AFMA has undertaken a review of COVID-19 operational risks and completed the Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking program.

To support transparency and oversight, AFMA convenes several standing committees, each focusing on key elements of our organisation and associated enterprise risks. These committees support collaboration and provide the CEO and the Executive with the information required to inform effective strategic planning and decision making and the workplace health and safety of officers. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the collaboration and communication channels supporting risk management within AFMA.



**FIGURE 1: AFMA Committee structure**

AFMA's Audit and Risk Committee has been established under section 45 of the PGPA Act and Section 17 of the PGPA Rule. The Committee provides independent advice to the CEO on AFMA's risk management arrangements and systems of internal control.

# REGULATOR PERFORMANCE

Under the Regulator Performance Guide, the government has issued a Statement of Expectations to AFMA, and AFMA has responded with a Statement of Intent that identifies how we will deliver on government expectations. These statements are published on our website<sup>2</sup> and provide a transparent account of government policy and objectives relevant to fisheries management.

## Reducing unnecessary or inefficient regulation

This Corporate Plan for the first time includes measures that demonstrate our performance against the three new principles of regulator best practice described in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Regulator Performance Guide<sup>3</sup> (July 2021):

- 1. Continuous improvement and building trust:** regulators adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving their performance, capability and culture, to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings.
- 2. Risk-based and data-driven:** regulators maintain essential safeguards, using data and digital technology to manage risks proportionately to minimise regulatory burden and to support those they regulate to comply and grow.
- 3. Collaboration and engagement:** regulators are transparent and responsive, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way.

From 2022–23 onwards regulator performance against the Guide will be an integral part of our overall non-financial performance reporting under the PGPA Act.



Scallop Dredge Devonport Tasmania. Photograph taken by AFMA staff member Clayton McCloud

2 <https://www.afma.gov.au/about/objectives-functions-powers>


3 <https://deregulation.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/regulator-performance-guide.pdf>



# PERFORMANCE

## 1. Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with principles of ecological sustainable development

AFMA manages Commonwealth fisheries on the basis that minimising the impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem and ensuring sustainable harvests leads to better ecological and social outcomes for the Australian community. We rely on rigorous science and stakeholder engagement in accordance with AFMA's Strategic Research Plan as well as through our MACs, RAGs, stakeholder forums, and specialist working groups, workshops and other advisory bodies and forums.

**STRATEGY 1**  Development and implementation of management arrangements that enables the sustainable harvest of fish resources.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

- fisheries management arrangements developed and implemented consistent with Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Commonwealth Bycatch Policy
- updating and implementing AFMA's revised Ecological Risk Management Framework to reflect improvements in supporting risk assessment processes and improve efficient application across fisheries
- adapting management arrangements to respond to environmentally driven changes in multi-species fishery dynamics.

### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022-23

- Review harvest strategies in the Northern Prawn, Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop, Southern Squid Jig and Small Pelagic Fisheries.
- Review Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery Swordfish Harvest Strategy, commencing in 2023.
- Revise harvest strategies in the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery (TSFF).
- Work with CSIRO to develop a multi-species harvest strategy approach for the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fisheries (SESSF).
- Support the DAWE review of the Harvest Strategy Policy to ensure that it incorporates multi-species, climate and ecosystem considerations.
- Revise and update Ecological Risk Management guiding documentation and processes.
- Utilise the Climate Adaptation Handbook (including as a framework for stakeholder consultation) to identify key ecological risks and potential adaptation responses in the SESSF fishery.
- Implement additional measures, including closures, to reduce fishing pressure on a number of species under pressure from climate-related variability in the trawl sector of SESSF.
- Assess and prioritise potential management adaptations, and develop a plan for implementation.

**Links to measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**

**STRATEGY 2** Investing in science and applying the results to inform decision making on management of fish stocks and the impact of commercial fishing on the broader marine environment.

**AREAS OF FOCUS**

- commissioning species appropriate scientific assessments of key commercial species on a regular basis according to their status, role in the fishery and knowledge base
- having each assessment reviewed by a RAG
- continuing development of new cost effective methods and approaches to inform decision making, including methods to account for climate variability
- reviewing the assessment approach to incorporate risks associated with climate variability in a multi-species fishery context.

**ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022–23**

- Stock assessments undertaken for tiger and redleg banana prawns, Bight redfish, blue eye trevalla, blue grenadier, deepwater shark east and west, mirror dory, oreo smooth – other, silver trevally and tiger flathead.
- Stock assessments undertaken for relevant Torres Strait fisheries (black teatfish and potentially white teatfish and Spanish mackerel), mackerel icefish, Macquarie Island Patagonian toothfish.
- Support research for assessments such as NPF fishing power, acoustic surveys for orange roughy and blue grenadier and biomass survey for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery to inform Total Allowable Catch (TAC) setting process.
- Support research for assessments such as the TRL fishery independent survey and finfish biological sampling.
- Hold RAG meetings as scheduled.
- Support the development of a multi-species Harvest Strategy for the SESSF.
- Develop a plan to rollout the Climate Adaptation Handbook to identify key ecological risks and potential adaptation responses in priority fisheries.
- Identify options to integrate consideration of existing and future climate impacts into Commonwealth fisheries regulatory and decision-making frameworks.
- Identify alternative sources of fishery independent and environmental data to support stock assessment and management decisions.
- Revise SESSF assessment schedule to focus on priority stocks and allow redirection of some resources to more strategic research priorities.
- Identify new or alternative research and monitoring to address management priorities, including emerging gaps, multi-species considerations, and climate and ecosystem effects.

**Links to measures 1, 7, 11**

**MEASURE 1**

The number of stocks for which management measures are based on species-appropriate scientific assessment

## REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

## RATIONALE

Science-based management is essential for implementing ESD principles and directly reflects the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy, as well as contemporary best practice fisheries management. In the context of multi-species fisheries and increasing climate impacts, the existing species-specific approach to assessment and management needs to be recalibrated to better integrate environmental variability, climate risks, and multi-species considerations.

## TARGET

This target aims for continual incremental improvement, but also notes that a very high baseline has already been achieved and new species requiring assessment may be few.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-2026
No change or an increase in number	As per 2022-23

**MEASURE 2**

The percentage of species assessed as 'residual High Risk' under Ecological Risk Assessment

## REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

## RATIONALE

The purpose of the ecological risk assessment framework applied by AFMA is to identify species that are placed at risk by fishing activities and determining and prioritising mitigation measures. Tracking the number of high-risk species responds to several legislated objectives.

## TARGET

This target aims for continual incremental improvement. A very high baseline has already been achieved and it may take time to address risks once they are identified.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-2026
No change or a decrease in number	As per 2022-23

### MEASURE 3

The number of AFMA-only stocks assessed as ‘subject to overfishing’ in the ABARES Fishery Status Report

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. **Continuous improvement and building trust**
2. **Risk-based and data-driven**

#### RATIONALE

The ABARES Fishery Status Reports provide an independent assessment of the biological status of fish stocks and the economic status of fisheries managed, or jointly managed, by the Australian Government. ‘Subject to overfishing’ is an assessment of whether current levels of fishing mortality (landed catch, discards and other sources of mortality) will cause the stock to become overfished. Stock status is expressed in relation to the reference points prescribed in the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy.

#### TARGET

Fishing mortality is an indicator over which AFMA has relatively strong control and can respond to changes relatively quickly. Management measures should act to respond to increased fishing mortality relative to reference points in a harvest strategy.

2022–23	2023–24 – 2025–2026
Zero	As per 2022–23

### MEASURE 4

AFMA advocates measures in relevant negotiations to address stocks shared with states and territories that are assessed as ‘overfished’ or ‘subject to overfishing’ in the ABARES Fishery Status Report

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. **Continuous improvement and building trust**
2. **Risk-based and data-driven**
3. **Collaboration and engagement**

#### RATIONALE

Despite the OCS arrangements, the jurisdictional arrangements for fisheries result in many cases where species are impacted by fisheries that are managed both by AFMA and one or more other jurisdiction. This may lead to imprecise information and substantial difficulty in management decision-making and is likely to be further complicated by changes in presence and abundance of species due to climate change. Addressing these issues will rely on mutual actions being taken



by relevant jurisdictions. AFMA will work with DAWE in negotiations to address the issue. AFMA will continue to work towards more quantitative measures and targets to address multijurisdictional fisheries management issues.

#### TARGET

AFMA will continue to work towards more quantitative measures and targets to address this issue.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-2026
Qualitative assessment	As per 2022-23

### MEASURE 5

#### Status of Wildlife Trade Operations under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

#### RATIONALE

Fishery Assessments are conducted for all AFMA managed fisheries under the EPBC Act. The assessments are conducted by DAWE against the 2nd edition of the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries* (the Guidelines). The Guidelines outline specific principles and objectives to ensure a strategic and transparent way of evaluating the ecological sustainability of fishery management arrangements. Those fisheries seeking to export product require Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) certification. Approval of a WTO is made through an instrument signed by the Minister for the Environment or their delegate and published in the Gazette. AFMA seeks best practice fisheries management that meets or exceeds the Guidelines.

#### TARGET

AFMA seeks best practice fisheries management that meets or exceeds the Guidelines.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-26
All WTOs are maintained	As per 2022-23

## 2. Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries

AFMA pursues its economic objective by setting harvest level targets that seek to maintain each key commercial stock at a level that will support the Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) of that stock, as set out in the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy. This level is known as  $B_{MEY}$ . In some cases, alternative targets to  $B_{MEY}$  may be used by AFMA to meet international arrangements, achieve ecological or stock recovery objectives or seek fishery-wide (rather than species-specific) MEY.

**STRATEGY 1** Implement management arrangements that seek to maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the sustainable management of Commonwealth fisheries.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

- setting TAC or TAE levels for all major fisheries in accordance with the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy
- working with commercial fishers on the delivery of AFMA's Data Strategy including enhancements to database systems to support the efficient management of resources
- monitoring the impact of management measures on the economic performance of AFMA's key commercial stocks<sup>4</sup> in its major fisheries<sup>5</sup> (those with Fisheries Management Plans).

### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022–23

- Set Total Allowable Commercial Catch limits for:
  - five species in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery.
  - four species in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery.
  - two species in the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery.
  - Patagonian Toothfish in the Macquarie Islands Toothfish Fishery.
  - Southern Bluefin Tuna in the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery.
  - two species in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery.
  - 34 stocks in the SESSF.
  - two stocks in the East Coast Deepwater Trawl Fishery.
  - seven stocks in the Small Pelagic Fishery.
- Set the TAE for:
  - the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF).
  - the Southern Squid Jig Fishery.

4 Key commercial stocks of a fishery as defined by the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines.

5 Under AFMA's risk-cost-catch framework, consideration is given to the level of management required and whether it is proportional to the risk and catch in the fishery. Setting and pursuing MEY targets or proxies may incur greater management costs.

- Stock assessments undertaken for tiger and redleg banana prawns, Bight redfish, blue eye trevalla, blue grenadier, deepwater shark east and west, mirror dory, oreo smooth – other, silver trevally and tiger flathead.
- Stock assessments undertaken for relevant Torres Strait fisheries (black teatfish and potentially white teatfish and Spanish mackerel), mackerel icefish, Macquarie Island Patagonian toothfish.
- Engage industry through existing consultative fora and specific stakeholder advisory committee to identify enhancements to AFMA's data systems and expand AFMA's Business Intelligence capability including exploring possible tools and self-service capability for industry.
- Incorporate all industry data collection programs into the Agency Data Capture Platform.
- MEY estimated for the Tiger and Banana prawn fisheries within the NPF.
- Continue improve AFMA's economic/financial information (quota trade prices) and consider fishery-specific economic indicators if possible.

**Links to measures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13**

## **STRATEGY 2** Improve monitoring and reporting on AFMA's economic objective.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

Develop and implement guidance on how we monitor performance against our economic objective ('maximising the net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries'). This will define terms that are to be used in future discussions about this objective, including identifying the indicators on which AFMA's performance against this objective is to be monitored and assessed.

### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022-23

- Guidance on how AFMA measures performance against Net Economic Returns objective approved by the Commission.

**Links to measures 6, 7**

## MEASURE 6

The number of stocks with target reference points based on MEY, an agreed proxy thereof or a multi-species harvest strategy

### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

### RATIONALE

Where stock-specific  $B_{MEY}$  is unknown, a proxy of 0.48 times the unfished biomass, or 1.2 times the biomass at maximum sustainable yield ( $B_{MSY}$ ), should be used.

### TARGET

This target aims for continual incremental improvement, but also notes that a very high baseline has already been achieved and new species requiring assessment may be few.

2022–23	2023–24 – 2025–26
No change or an increase	As per 2022–23

## MEASURE 7

Net Economic Return, as assessed in the ABARES Status of Fish Stocks Report

### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

### RATIONALE

The ABARES Fishery Status Reports provide an independent assessment of the Net Economic Return provided by AFMA's fisheries, which responds directly to AFMA objectives and this goal.

### TARGET

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose and consider the effects of external factors which may also affect economic returns. This target aims for continual incremental improvement.

2022–23	2023–24 – 2025–26
Positive trend over rolling 3-year average	As per 2022–23

### 3. Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards

AFMA will continue to apply the principles and strategies outlined in the Australian Fisheries National Compliance Strategy and AFMA's National Compliance and Enforcement Policy<sup>6</sup> with a focus on approaches encouraging voluntary compliance<sup>7</sup> by domestic fishers while maintaining an enforcement capability and taking deterrence action against conscious non-compliance.

AFMA will lead responses and coordinate action with other government agencies to address threats caused by illegal foreign fishing in the AFZ. AFMA will also engage with counterpart countries and international agencies, and actively participate in international forums, to combat foreign illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in areas on the high seas where Australia has an interest. We will also continue to work alongside partners in building regional capacity to address IUU fishing.

#### **STRATEGY 1** Operate an effective domestic compliance regime using measures that are proportionate to the risks.

##### AREAS OF FOCUS

- completing risk assessments for the domestic compliance program and implementing measures to address key threat areas
- working in partnership and enhancing relationships with state and federal agencies
- broadening the scope of compliance and enforcement measures within the legislation AFMA administers
- implementing penalty provisions in legislation and making fisheries management arrangements more uniform and understandable.

##### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022–23

- Apply current risk assessment to develop the 2022–23 NCEP.
- Create Compliance Risk Management Teams to develop intervention measures to target key threat areas.
- Apply key performance indicators to monitor incident trends to assess whether compliance levels are improving, levelling out or declining.
- Use a mixture of education and stakeholder engagement strategies to promote voluntary compliance and undertaking remedial action where necessary, including the issuing of cautions, warnings, infringements notices and the prosecution of offenders, to deter non-compliant behaviour.
- Collaborate with other regulatory and law enforcement organisations to deliver compliance activities.
- Provide fee for service compliance and monitoring activities for state and federal counterparts.

6 <https://www.afma.gov.au/domestic-compliance>

7 Voluntary compliance is the idea that compliance is achieved as a result of the community (or individuals) choosing to willingly or voluntarily comply with rules, regulations or even general philosophies. Voluntary compliance is not compliance due to an understanding and/or fear of the consequences of not complying; that is deterrence. In essence voluntary compliance is the act of complying regardless of (or without) any possible repercussions.



- Introduce a suite of legislative amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* and the *Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985* to strengthen compliance measures.
- Further consider the implementation of provisions of the *Regulatory Powers (Standardisation Reform) Act 2021* into the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*.
- Complete the consequential legislative measures in the effect of primary legislation being successfully passed.
- Review key licensing policies applicable to the Torres Strait.

#### Links to measure 8

## STRATEGY 2 Detect and deter foreign IUU fishing.



### AREAS OF FOCUS

- implementing multifaceted strategies to monitor and eliminate IUU foreign fishing in Australian waters and on the high seas where Australia has an interest
- increasing engagement with other Australian government and non-government agencies to enhance Australia's existing maritime domain awareness to inform risk-based approaches to IUU fishing threats
- cooperating and engaging with neighbouring countries and key regional and international fisheries bodies to detect and deter illegal foreign fishing in Australian waters and on the high seas where Australia has an interest.

### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022–23

- Review international risks to Australia's fisheries management regime and update AFMA's International Compliance and Engagement Program to target identified risks.
- Update legislative instruments that reflect Australia's international fisheries obligations under international law.
- Contribute subject matter expertise to engagement programs led by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and DAWE.
- Continue to deliver the fisheries component of Australia's monitoring and surveillance of the Australian maritime domain, including through support for the Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Program.
- Develop and apply alternative measures to deter illegal foreign fishing.
- Deliver the monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) capacity building and training components of the DAWE/AFMA MOU (South East Asia Program) and any components of any DFAT-funded Pacific activities as they are rolled out.
- Participate in multilateral international fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance operations.
- Collaborate with international partners to assist their return to pre-COVID levels of monitoring and surveillance activities, including assisting with implementation of COVID-19 safe responses related to fisheries.
- Support regional and international MCS forums to enhance regional capacity to address IUU fishing, including supporting the work of the International MCS Network, including participating in its Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop.

#### Links to measure 9

**MEASURE 8**

Treatment of identified domestic compliance risks as outlined in the National Compliance and Enforcement Program (NCEP)

## REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

## RATIONALE

Compliance rates with rules underpinning the sustainability of Commonwealth fisheries. Some intervention measures result in metrics that demonstrate a change in behaviour of stakeholders. High compliance rates are expected to accrue from the activities, but 100 percent compliance is not regularly achievable in any industry.

## TARGET

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-26
>90 percent of NCEP performance targets met	As per 2022-23

**MEASURE 9**

Incidence level of illegal foreign fishing vessels operating in the Australian Fishing Zone

## REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

1. Continuous improvement and building trust
2. Risk-based and data-driven

## RATIONALE

AFMA leads the Australian government response to the illegal exploitation of natural marine resources in the Australian maritime domain. Monitoring the incidence of incursions over time and assessing the impact of any incursions demonstrates AFMA's role in delivering high quality advice and fisheries expertise as part of the Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy.

## TARGET

The target recognises that the incidence of illegal foreign fishing vessels is highly variable and driven by many external factors and is aimed at measuring changes in the trend. AFMA/Australia's ability to detect and take action against such foreign fishing vessels is also externally influenced.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-26
Lower than the previous 3-year average	As per 2022-23

**MEASURE 10**

Compliance rate with international obligations as assessed in Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (implemented by AFMA)

REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

- 1. Continuous improvement and building trust
- 2. Risk-based and data-driven

RATIONALE

AFMA is responsible for ensuring that certain international fisheries obligations are implemented via fisheries management arrangements. Non-compliance with international obligations is independently assessed by International Fisheries Management Organisations (IFMOs) and provides an international measure of Australia’s compliance with its international obligations. Ninety percent represents a high level of compliance. It also recognises that compliance assessments and methodologies differ between IFMOs, including the level of subjectivity involved in making compliance assessments.

TARGET

Ninety percent represents a high level of compliance that not many countries achieve. It also recognises that compliance assessments and methodologies differ between International Fisheries Management Organisations, including the level of subjectivity involved.

2022–23	2023–24 – 2025–26
>90 percent	As per 2022–23

**4. Deliver effective, cost efficient and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources**

Minimising cost recovery charges to Commonwealth concession holders through the efficient implementation of cost recovered activities remains a key AFMA commitment. In 2010, AFMA made a commitment to industry that it would keep cost recovery at or below the rate applied in 2005–06 once adjusted for Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases. AFMA has out-performed that commitment at a whole-of agency level. In 2021–22, the levy base is \$13.87 million, compared to \$13.68 million in 2005–06.

Pursuing initiatives to reduce regulation and administrative burden on those we regulate and applying the data we collect to better inform our stakeholders and support our science-based fisheries management decisions will provide further opportunities to improve transparency and accountability. Government investment of \$20.1 million over four years, commencing 2021–22, to deliver a more cost-effective, simplified approach to vessel monitoring and reporting will underpin AFMA’s delivery against this performance measure.

AFMA will work with key stakeholders to identify opportunities for additional, formal co-management arrangements, in line with Fisheries Management Paper 17: Co-management in Commonwealth fisheries, which will be finalised shortly. Enhancing our stakeholder engagement, including through meaningful consultation processes with the CFA, applying appropriate communication tools and increasing the level of public reporting will support accountability to our stakeholders.

**STRATEGY 1** Enhance business processes and systems, information flows and financial management arrangements to improve business efficiency.

#### AREAS OF FOCUS

- utilising key reporting metrics to ensure AFMA's cost recovery framework is underpinned by the principles of efficiency and effectiveness; transparency and accountability; and stakeholder engagement.

#### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022-23

- Continue annual reviews of the Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) in consultation with the CFA to ensure AFMA's CR model is efficient and fit-for-purpose.
- Provide financial reports to the Commonwealth fishing industry of actual and budget cost recovery expenditure by AFMA CRIS activity groups and by individual fishery.
- Provide information sessions with the fishing industry (as required) to step them through the CRIS document and the formulation of activity costs.
- Make details of industry feedback on the draft budget and CRIS available to industry in the form of a change request register.
- Review the structure and content of AFMA Corporate and Annual Operating Plan, including performance metrics.

#### Links to measures 11, 12

**STRATEGY 2** Increase AFMA's performance, accountability and stakeholder engagement.

#### AREAS OF FOCUS

- engaging with consultative forums through both video conference facilities and face to face meetings, as necessary drawing on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic
- conducting a review of MACs and RAGs
- implementing a co-management policy framework to help fishing industry groups engage with AFMA in sharing responsibilities for the sustainable management of Commonwealth fisheries
- implementing AFMA's Stakeholder Engagement Framework and Communications Plan
- participating in the development of an Indigenous fishing interest engagement strategy
- developing processes to enhance recreational sector input to Commonwealth fisheries management.

#### ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022-23

- Work with industry to seek reduced costs of doing business through remote meetings where appropriate. Offer a mixed model approach for face to face meetings.
- Implementing AFMA's Data Strategy, including a Client Relationship Management system, enhancing and/or replacing key AFMA systems.
- Consult with the CFA and other key fisheries peak bodies on a final draft FMP for co-management. Finalise the FMP through its adoption by the AFMA Commission.

- Develop and implement strategies and tools to enhance AFMA's capability to monitor timely feedback from stakeholders.
- Conduct benchmarking, pop-up and annual surveys.
- Collaborate with other government agencies with particular focus on recreational and Indigenous fishers.
- Participate/sponsor fisheries events that support AFMA's objectives and explore opportunities for education campaigns.
- Sponsor and support the indigenous engagement strategy project including participating as a member of the project steering committee and continue to liaise closely with the FRDC Indigenous Reference Group.
- Work with key recreational fishing representatives to ensure that AFMA can obtain and understand recreational perspectives outside of issue-specific consultation through MACs.

**Links to measures 7, 11, 13 (some activities will inform new measures in the future)**

**STRATEGY 3** Modernise and integrate AFMA's key data management systems in line with AFMA's Data Strategy to reduce regulatory burden, improve internal business intelligence and provide transparency of data and information to AFMA, the scientific/research community, fishing industry and the broader Australian community.

**AREAS OF FOCUS**

- developing and broadening the application of independent electronic monitoring programs across Commonwealth fisheries
- enhancing the Agency Data Capture platform, specifically focusing on enhancing the timely access of key data into AFMA
- through the implementation of AFMA's Data Strategy, working with key government agencies (e.g. CSIRO, ABARES, AMSA, AAD, BOM) to enhance AFMA's ability to share and access relevant data to maximise AFMA's capacity to achieve the agency's legislative objective
- working through existing consultative arrangements to understand the needs of stakeholders in relation to accessing and utilising data for business purposes and to reduce regulatory burden.
- building the internal business intelligence capability to enhance evidenced-based decision making and reduce regulatory burden.

**ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN – KEY ACTIVITIES 2022–23**

- Design, develop and implement the Standards based Electronic Monitoring program in consultation with stakeholders.
- Develop technical and fishery specific standards for the current Electronic Monitoring program users.
- Deliver hardware solutions and training to support the internal review process.
- Develop and commence trials in fisheries not currently using the electronic monitoring program.
- Continued expansion of the Agency Data Capture platform, including developing a digital reporting platform for the collection of observer data (e-observer) and streamlining and incorporating industry data collection programs.



- Continue the development of the Technology Architecture that supports AFMA's Data Strategy outcomes, including the technical capability for sharing and accessing relevant data across key government agencies to support fisheries management decisions.
- Engage stakeholders through existing consultative fora to identify key data and information sought by stakeholders and commence exploration of possible avenues for sharing this data.

**Links to measures 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13**

## MEASURE 11

### Cost recovery budget

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

##### 2. Risk-based and data-driven

#### RATIONALE

This measure has direct linkage to the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines, AFMA objectives and previous commitments to industry to exercise restraint in the growth of the levy base.

#### TARGET

This target reflects a long-standing commitment.

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-26
At or below 2005-06 once adjusted for CPI	As per 2022-23

## MEASURE 12

### Corporate overheads compared to total budget

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

##### 2. Risk-based and data-driven

#### RATIONALE

In applying this measure AFMA will be able to clearly demonstrate to stakeholders its performance (over time) in the delivery of cost-effective fisheries management.

#### TARGET

2022-23	2023-24 – 2025-26
<25 percent	As per 2022-23

## MEASURE 13

### Engagement with legislated peak body

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

- 1. Continuous improvement and building trust
- 3. Collaboration and engagement

#### RATIONALE

Applying this measure will provide transparency and accountability to the Australian Government and broader Australian community that AFMA's performance (as the Commonwealth fisheries regulator) is effective in delivery of its regulatory functions through transparent feedback from its stakeholders.

#### TARGET

This target is qualitative and based on a joint assessment by CFA and AFMA.

2022–23	2023–24 – 2025–26
CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting	As per 2022–23

## MEASURE 14

### Number of services offered digitally

#### REGULATOR PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLE

- 1. Continuous improvement and building trust
- 2. Risk-based and data-driven

#### RATIONALE

Digital service delivery, including digital data collection tools (logbooks, catch disposal records, port sampling, observer programs, etc) and licensing services, increases the efficiency of the service delivery and ensures timely access to data to support science-based decision making. It also reduces administrative and regulatory burden on industry by allowing 24/7 self-service access to key services reduces the need for AFMA administrative intervention or management. These initiatives decrease business costs and support timely data to inform management and compliance programs.

#### TARGET

2022–23	2023–24 – 2025–26
Increased trend in number of empirical data collection services offered electronically	As per 2022–23

# LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

The corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act; and
- the PGPA Rule 2014.

The table details the requirements met by AFMA's corporate plan and the page reference for each requirement.

Requirement	Page(s)
Introduction	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of preparation</li> <li>• the reporting period for which the plan is prepared</li> <li>• the reporting periods covered by the plan</li> </ul>	
Purposes	2
Key activities	13–28
Operating context	8–13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Enabling Capability</li> <li>• Risk</li> </ul>	
Performance	13–28
List of requirements	29
Contact Us	33
Glossary of terms	33

# APPENDIX 1 – ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN 2022–23

Key activities that AFMA intends to undertake in 2022–23 to address or progress each Strategy in the Corporate Plan are outlined above in conjunction with the Goals, Strategies, Areas of Focus, Measures and Targets<sup>8</sup>. In addition to those key activities, AFMA will continue to deliver a comprehensive program of routine, ongoing and regular activities in 2022–23 in support of the Corporate Plan.

## Management of domestic commercial fisheries (Goal 1)

- Implement bycatch programs, strategies and monitoring activities
- Educate fishing operators on fisheries management requirements
- Collaborate with science organisations to better understanding fish stock dynamics, bycatch, the marine environment and the impacts of climate change on fish stocks
- Administer MACs, RAGs and other sector specific bodies
- Assess fisheries under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* including export approvals, develop Threatened, Endangered and Protected (TEP) species management strategies
- Administer Economic Working Group and ERM Steering Group

## Research management (Goal 1)

- Administer AFMA's research program and contracts including the AFMA Research Committee, developing/reviewing specific fishery research plans through MACs and RAGs and participating in the FRDC's Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee (COMRAC) process by providing advice and priorities for potential funding
- Ongoing identification of strategic research needs, development of priority scopes and assessment of new research proposals
- Research contract management

## Communication (Goal 1–4)

- Produce a range of communication and media material associated with AFMA's programs, strategies, consultations, research and activities, to promote understanding and recognition by industry, stakeholders and the general public of AFMA's continuing effectiveness in pursuing the management of Commonwealth fisheries (Goal 1)
- Publish data to data.gov.au with links via the afma.gov.au website, and communicate its public availability via AFMA news stories and social media channels (Goal 2)

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<sup>8</sup> See headings "Annual Operating Plan – Key Activities 2022–23" between pages 17 and 35.

- Monthly planned communications via website, SMS and social media targeting specific compliance messages and including any court outcomes and/or penalties and the results of any major/joint operations (Goal 3)
- Communicate AFMA's projects and innovations, latest updates to fisher applications and services and opportunities for stakeholder engagement through AFMA's digital communication channels (Goal 4)

## Data collection and management (Goal 2)

- Administer electronic monitoring program
- Administer the AFMA observer program
- Administer the vessel monitoring program across the Commonwealth commercial fishing industry and some state managed commercial fishing vessels
- Review data collection methods and, as necessary, arranging independent fishery surveys as inputs to setting recommended biological catches and TACs

## Take into account traditional, Indigenous and non-commercial fisheries activities (Goal 2)

- Consult with Indigenous and recreational fishers and other stakeholders in the management of Commonwealth commercial fisheries to ensure their interests are taken into account

## Input into defining international treaty standards and developing regulation activities (Goal 3)

- Engage with regional and bilateral partners to inform Australia's participation in international processes

## Domestic fisheries compliance enforcement activities (Goal 3)

- Undertake compliance activities in accordance with AFMA's risk based approach

## Foreign fisheries compliance enforcement and capacity building (Goal 3)

- Combat illegal, unreported and unregulated foreign fishing in the Australian Fishing Zone and Torres Strait Protected Zone and in international waters where Australia has an interest

## Policy support (Goal 4)

- Provide and develop advice and policy in accordance with the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*, the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*, and other relevant legislation
- Liaise with state/territory agencies and other organisations on broader marine resource policies and management with a focus on cost effectiveness
- Review existing internal Policies and Guidelines to ensure that they are consistent with Commonwealth legislation



## Licensing / registration and revenue collection (Goal 4)

- Improve AFMA's business processing and administration systems associated with Commonwealth licensing arrangements, with a focus on fee for service arrangements where it is cost-effective to do so
- Enhance issuing and reconciling levies and recovering levies

## Other contributors to effective, cost efficient and transparent management and regulatory arrangements (Goal 4)

- Support AFMA's operational activities by delivering effective and cost-efficient services including financial management, human resource management, legal services, corporate governance support (including security and risk management services), property and facility management
- Identify and implement opportunities to reduce regulatory burden and to improve internal business operations
- Develop new Regulatory Performance Measures consistent with the Commonwealth's revised Regulatory Performance Guidelines
- Develop an enterprise-wide Information Management Framework
- Monitor systems and implementing initiatives to further strengthen the Cyber Resilience of the AFMA network in line with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's Information Security Manual and *Essential 8* recommendations
- Review and update appropriate Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) documentation as required.

## Plans of Management

### AFMA managed fisheries

Management plans for fisheries are established under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*. They provide the rules which often include how quotas are determined, what fishing gear can be used and where you can fish. The rules aim to maintain the sustainability of fish stocks and minimise impacts on the marine ecosystem as a whole, while maximising net economic returns from the management of Commonwealth fisheries.

During 2022–23, AFMA does not intend to determine or otherwise institute additional plans of management for fisheries solely managed by AFMA, although some actions may result in amendments to existing plans.

### Jointly managed fisheries

AFMA develops management plans for fisheries on behalf of the Protected Zone Joint Authority under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

# CONTACT US

For further information about our activities, functions and services, please:

Visit the AFMA website

Email: [info@afma.gov.au](mailto:info@afma.gov.au)

Phone AFMA direct on 1300 723 621

# GLOSSARY

## Australian Fishing Zone

Under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*, the Australian fishing zone means:

- a) the waters adjacent to Australia within the outer limits of the exclusive economic zone adjacent to the coast of Australia; and
- b) the waters adjacent to each external territory within the outer limits of the exclusive economic zone adjacent to the coast of the external Territory;

but does not include:

- coastal waters of, or waters within the limits of, a State or internal Territory; or
- waters that are excepted waters.

## Biomass

Total weight of a stock or a component of stock.

## Biomass limit reference point

The point beyond which the risk to the stock is regarded as unacceptably high.

## Bycatch

Species taken incidentally in a fishery where other species are the target, and which are usually discarded.

## Effort

A measure of the resources used to harvest a fishery's stocks. The measure of effort appropriate for a fishery depends on the methods used and the management arrangements. Common measures include the number of vessels, the number of hooks set or the number of fishing days.

## Electronic monitoring

Electronic monitoring uses sensors and data recorders, such as cameras to monitor and record information on fishing activity in a targeted way. Electronic monitoring data is analysed retrospectively to provide information and verify logbooks according to the needs identified for that fishery.

### **Fisheries Management Act 1991**

One of the two main pieces of legislation (along with the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*) that detail AFMA's responsibilities and powers.

### **Harvest strategy**

Strategy outlining how the catch in a fishery will be adjusted from year to year depending on the size of stock, the economic or social conditions of the fishery, conditions of other interdependent stocks or species, and uncertainty of biological knowledge. Well-managed fisheries have an unambiguous (explicit and quantitative) harvest strategy that is robust to the unpredictable biological fluctuations to which the stock may be subject.

### **Key commercial species/stock**

A species that is, or has been, specifically targeted and is, or has been, a significant component of a fishery.

### **Logbook**

Official record of catch-and-effort data completed by fishers. In many fisheries, a licence condition makes the return of logbooks mandatory.

### **Maximum economic yield**

The sustainable catch or effort level for a commercial fishery that allows net economic returns to be maximised. Note that for most practical discount rates and fishing costs maximum economic yield will imply that the equilibrium stock of fish is larger than that associated with maximum sustainable yield. In this sense maximum economic yield is more environmentally conservative than maximum sustainable yield and should also help protect the fishery from environmental impacts, external to fishery impacts that may diminish the fish population.

### **Maximum sustainable yield**

The maximum average annual catch that can be removed from a stock over an indefinite period under prevailing environmental conditions.

### **Nautical mile**

A unit of distance derived from the angular measurement of one minute of arc of latitude, but standardised by international agreement as 1852 metres.

### **Net economic returns**

A fishery net economic returns over a particular period are equal to fishing revenue less fishing costs.

### **Non target species**

Species that are unintentionally taken by a fisher or not routinely assessed for fisheries management. See also Bycatch.

### Offshore Constitutional Settlement

An agreement between one or more states and the Australian Government giving individual or joint jurisdiction for a particular fishery that is in both coastal waters and the Australian Fishing Zone.

When no Offshore Constitutional Settlement agreement has been reached, the fishery remains under the jurisdiction of the state out to three nautical miles, and of the Australian Government from three nautical miles to 200 nautical miles.

### Overfished

A fish stock with a biomass below the biomass limit reference point. 'Not overfished' implies that the stock is not below the threshold, and is now used in place of the status classification of 'fully fished' or 'underfished'.

### Overfishing

A stock that is experiencing too much fishing. The rate of removals from a stock is likely to result in the stock becoming overfished. For a stock that is overfished, overfishing is a rate of removals that will prevent stock recovery in accordance with its rebuilding strategy.

### Precautionary principle

A principle asserting that a degree of scientific uncertainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation in situations where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage.

### Quota

Amount of catch allocated to a fishery as a whole (total allowable catch) or to an individual fisher or company (individual transferable quota).

### Statutory Fishing Rights

Rights granted under Section 21 of the Fisheries Management Act 1991. The nature of Statutory Fishing Rights in a fishery is detailed in the plan of management that creates those rights. A Statutory Fishing Right may be a right to use a boat, a unit of fishing gear or a quantity of catch, or other rights as identified in the management plan.

### Species

Members of a species of fish that can breed with one another and produce fertile (capable of reproducing) offspring. In this way, a species maintains its 'separateness' from other species; for example, the yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna are two distinct tuna species whereas the general term 'tuna' includes all tuna species.

### Stock

A functionally discrete population of a species that is largely distinct from other populations of the same species. Such a population may be regarded as a separate entity for management or assessment purposes. Some species form a single stock (e.g. southern bluefin tuna) while others form several stocks (e.g. albacore tuna in the Pacific Ocean are divided up into separate Northern Pacific and Southern Pacific stocks).

### **Targeting**

Fishing selectively for particular species or sizes of fish.

### **Target species**

The species being actively sought by fishers.

### **Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority**

An authority comprising the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources (Chairperson), the Queensland Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority. The authority is responsible for monitoring the condition of the jointly managed fisheries in the Torres Strait and the formulation of policies and plans for their management.

### **Torres Strait Treaty**

The treaty between Australia and Papua New Guinea concerned with sovereignty, management and maritime boundaries in the area between the two countries and the protection of the way of life and livelihood of traditional inhabitants and the marine environment.

### **Total allowable catch**

The amount of fish of a particular species that can be taken from a fishery in a prescribed period. Total allowable catches are set for fish species managed either through individual transferable quotas or through competitive total allowable catches.

### **Undercatch and overcatch**

Undercatch and overcatch provide for 'carry over' or 'carry under' of an amount of end of season quota between fishing seasons thereby allowing fishers the flexibility to catch a certain amount of fish over or under their quota, and debit or credit this to or from the following season's quota.

### **Vessel monitoring system**

Electronic device that transmits the identity and location of a vessel.









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