



**Australian Government**

**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**

# Corporate Plan

## 2021-2022

[afma.gov.au](http://afma.gov.au)

 /AustralianFisheriesManagementAuthority



# Contents

<i>Introduction</i> .....	3
Statement of Preparation.....	3
<i>Purpose</i> .....	4
<i>Key Activities</i> .....	6
<i>Performance Measures</i> .....	7
<i>Operating Context</i> .....	8
Environment .....	8
Consultation with peak industry body.....	8
<i>Enabling Capability</i> .....	10
Governance .....	10
Relationship Management .....	11
Workforce Plan .....	11
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability .....	12
Financial capability .....	13
<i>Risk</i> .....	14
Risk Governance.....	14
<i>Performance</i> .....	15
1. Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with principles of ecological sustainable development.....	15
2. Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries .....	19
3. Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards .....	22
4. Deliver effective, cost efficient and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources ..	25
<i>List of Requirements</i> .....	29
<i>Contact Us</i> .....	29
<i>Glossary</i> .....	30

## Introduction

The AFMA Commission is pleased to present the Corporate Plan 2021-22 [the Plan] to Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam, the Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries.

This plan is AFMA's principal planning document and sets out our approach and priorities for the next four years (2021-22 to 2024-25), together with some of the challenges and known disruptions to our business services that we will face over the coming years, most notably COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has created significant disruption to all sectors of the Australian economy, including the Commonwealth fishing industry. Its impact, both on the Commonwealth fishing industry and AFMA business operations, will continue to be felt in 2021-22 and may impact us in delivering on some aspects of the Plan. The Plan also recognises our commitment to continue building capability and highlights our desire to engage positively and transparently in continuing to deliver ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries to the Australian community.

The Corporate Plan should be read in conjunction with AFMA's Portfolio Budget Statements (that describe our outcome, strategic directions and performance measures for 2021-22), and AFMA's Annual Operational Plan 2021-22 (which explains our actions to deliver on our areas of focus for that year). Both can be found on the [AFMA website](#).

This plan outlines the key capability investments we will make over the next four years. In addition, the Plan provides detail about our approach to risk management, which is critical to continuing to meet our responsibility to ensure the ecologically sustainable development of Commonwealth fisheries for the benefit of the Australian community.

## Statement of Preparation

I, Wez Norris, as the accountable authority of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, present the AFMA Corporate Plan 2021-22, which covers the periods of 2021-22 to 2024-25, as required under paragraph 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 paragraph 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 through regulating Commonwealth commercial fishing and deterring illegal foreign fishing. As part of our application of ESD, AFMA is also increasing consideration of 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 optimum utilisation and 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.

**Table 1** AFMA's legislated objectives

Act and section	Summary of objective <sup>1</sup>
<i>Fisheries Administration Act 1991</i> - section 6	Implement efficient and cost-effective fisheries management.
	Ensure the exploitation of fisheries and related activities is consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. <sup>2</sup>
	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.
	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>3</sup>
	Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i> - section 3	

	Ensure accountability to the fishing industry and the Australian community in the management of fisheries resources.
	Achieve government targets in relation to the recovery of AFMA's costs.
	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.
	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.

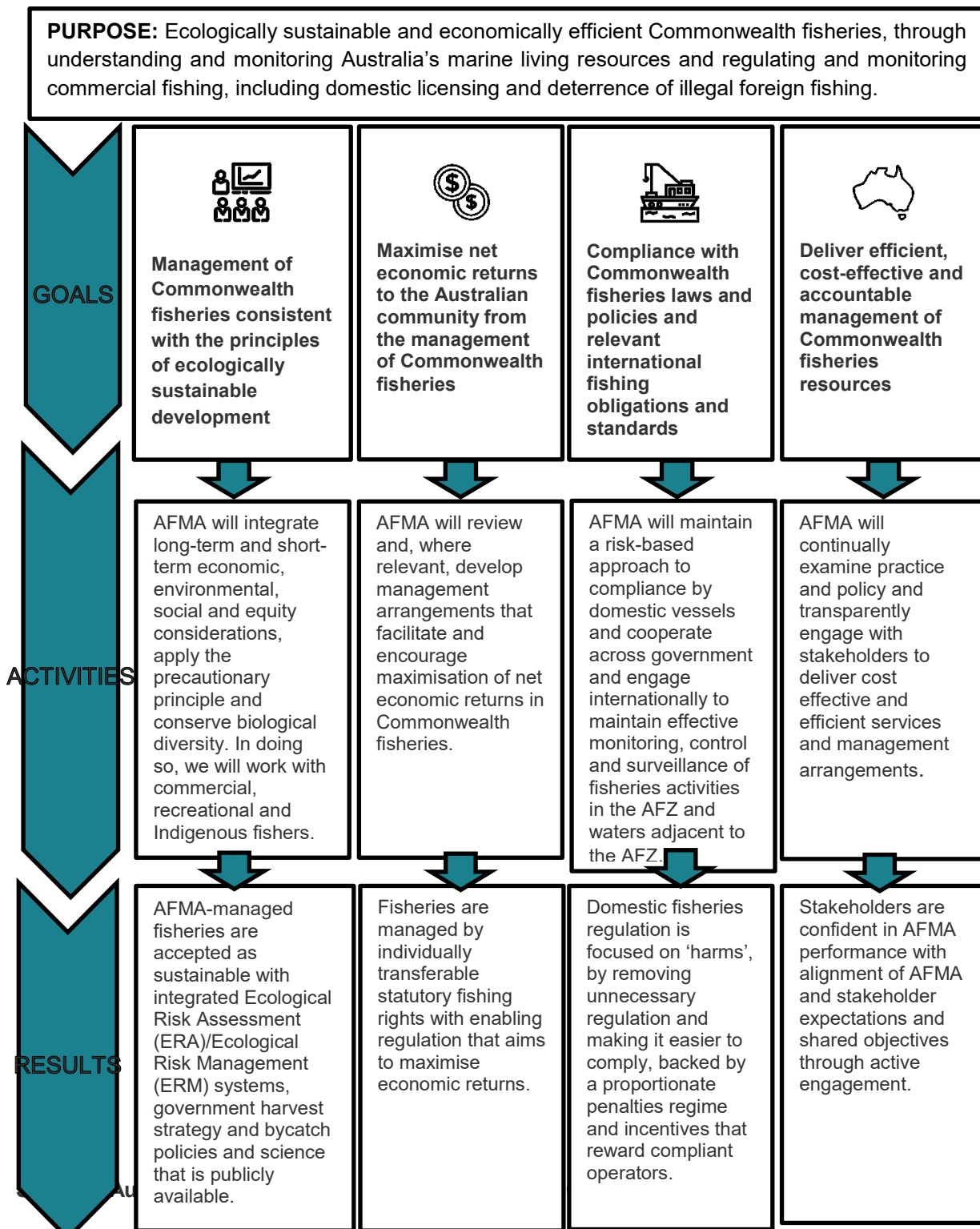
Note 1: Objectives that AFMA must pursue are shaded blue. Objectives that AFMA must have regard to are unshaded.

Note 2: The principles of ecologically sustainable development are defined in the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*.





Note 3: 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*.

# Key Activities

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) Fishery Status Reports 2020 reports that for the seventh 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), which is 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.



# Performance Measures

	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target:</b>
 <p><b>Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with principles of ecological sustainable development</b></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><b>Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries</b></p>	6. The number of stocks with target reference points based on 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 previous 3 years
 <p><b>Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards</b></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 10 year average
	10. Compliance rate with international obligations as assessed in Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (implemented by AFMA)	>90 per cent
 <p><b>Deliver effective, cost efficient and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources</b></p>	11. Cost recovery budget	≤ 2005-06 once adjusted for CPI
	12. Corporate overheads compared to total budget	<20 per cent
	13. Engagement with legislated peak body.	CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting

# 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 2019 evaluated 96 fish stocks across 22 fisheries, including both those managed 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 considering and 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.

We also provide compliance and monitoring services to some state/territory governments as well as fisheries management and other services to Joint Authorities of the Commonwealth and state governments, including the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) under the [Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984](#).

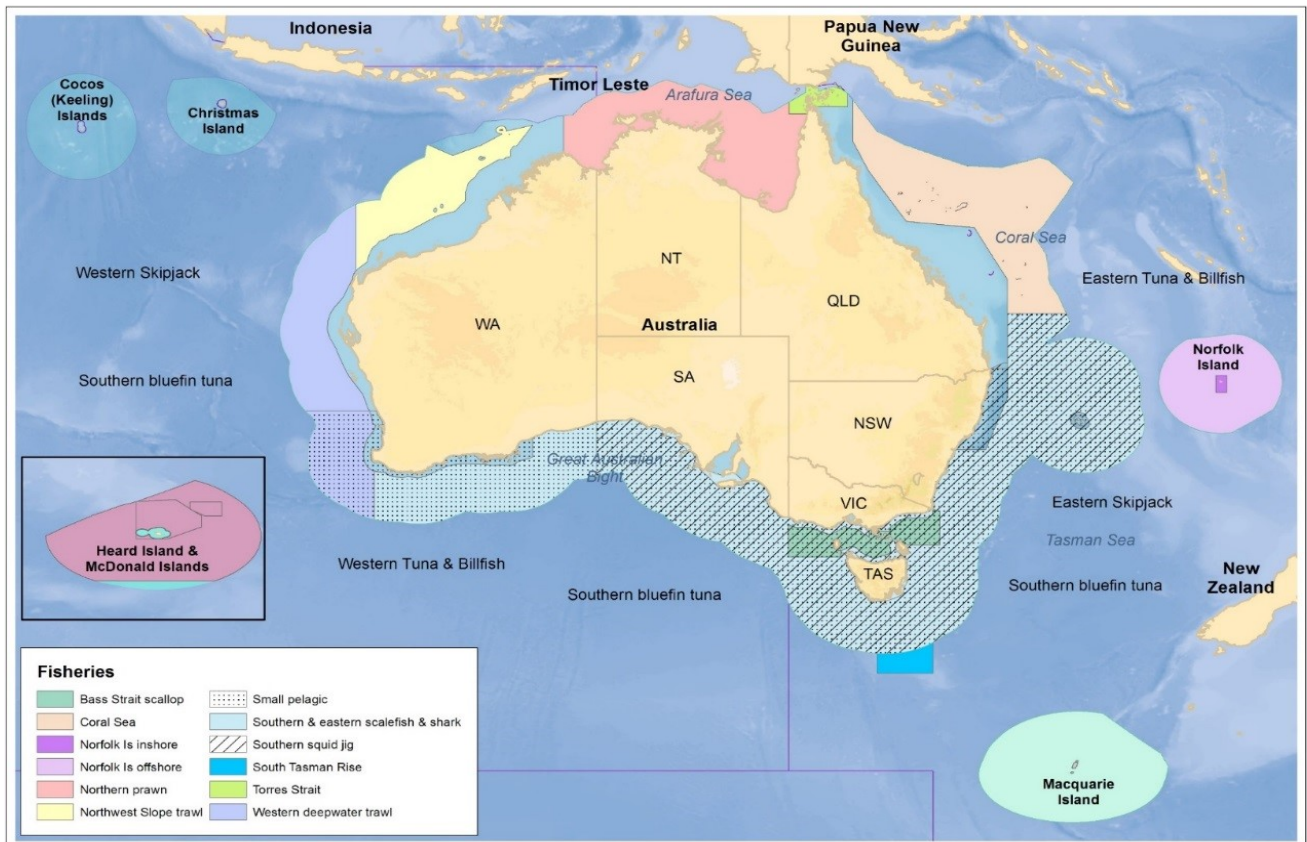
Environmental impacts to our operating domain, such as the increasing effects of climate change on Commonwealth-managed fisheries, particularly off south-eastern Australia, will be key challenges for AFMA over the next four years and beyond. Understanding these impacts, and responding accordingly, will necessitate AFMA's continued heavy reliance on research and data for our fishing industry to inform and guide our 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.

## Consultation with peak industry body

AFMA maintains regular contact with the Chair and Executive Officer 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 that make up the membership 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 will continue to work with the CFA through agreed mechanisms to ensure that industry input is incorporated into management and planning processes.





Map of AFMA managed Commonwealth fisheries

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has, and will continue to impact on AFMA's operating context in a number of ways.

From a fishery perspective, COVID 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 prices have reduced fishing profits in many fisheries.

The pandemic has also necessitated changes to AFMA operations on a range of fronts. The AFMA Commission has been prepared to set aside some norms and practices as dictated by the need to support industry and continue essential processes, sometimes in the absence of the usual level of information. Travel restrictions have also impacted on the field duties of enforcement officers, deployment of observers and participation in international fishery management processes. Workplace arrangements have also evolved (discussed below).

All of these conditions will continue to persist throughout the reporting period, and AFMA will maintain a flexible approach to dealing with COVID-related issues and needs as they arrive – within the confines of legislated objectives and duties.

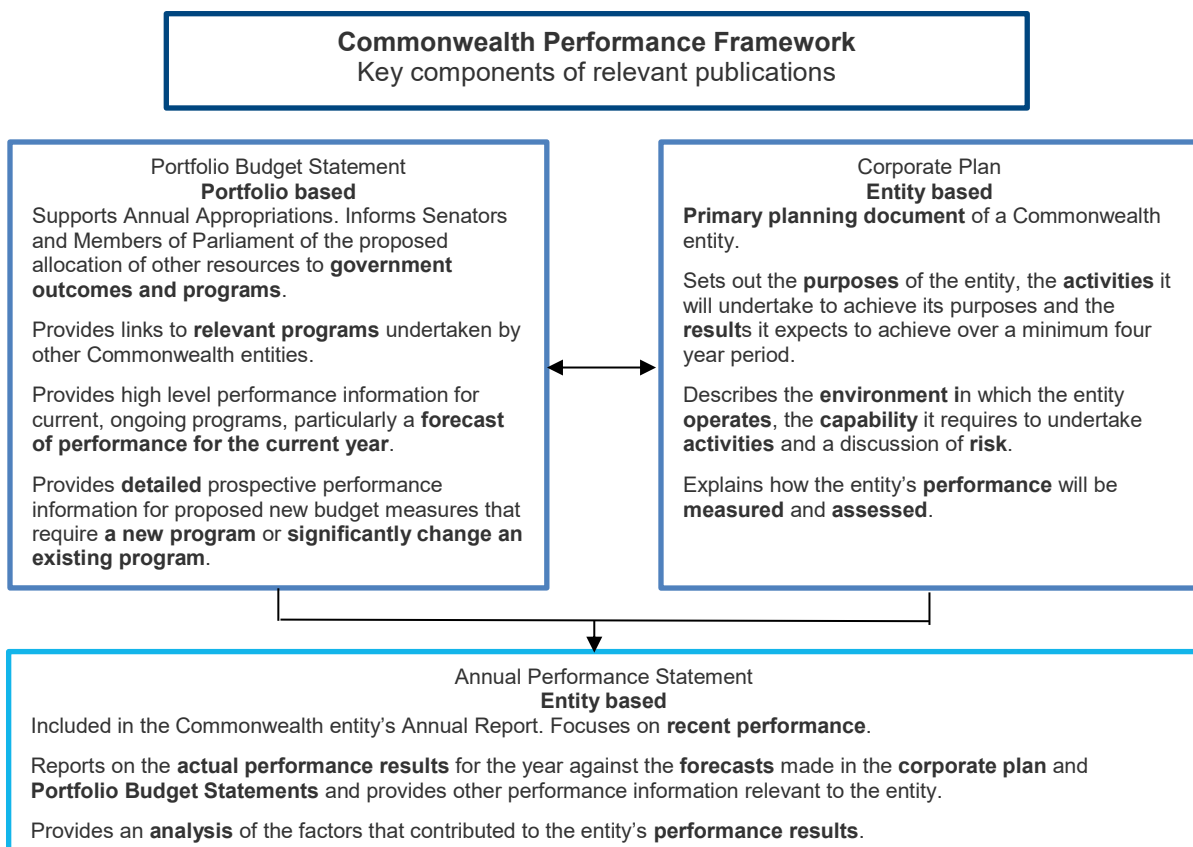
# Enabling Capability

## 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 comprises 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 as detailed below. We publish an annual report that includes AFMA's Annual Performance Statement. This provides performance results and an assessment and analysis 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.



## Relationship Management

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

Our vision is for our stakeholders to have the opportunity to engage with us across the range of our functions. To achieve this, we recognise that our stakeholders need to have trust that their input will be valued and, importantly, that the regulatory process can deliver outcomes that reflect stakeholders' needs and interests.

The AFMA Commission has approved AFMA's Stakeholder Engagement Framework and AFMA's Communication Plan 2020-22. In concert, these describe our core objectives in engaging with stakeholders including the general public and outline the specific tools we will seek to employ to achieve those objectives.

AFMA recognises the need to step-up engagement with the recreational and Indigenous fishing sectors. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) is delivering Capacity Building for Fisheries Representatives, focused on the recreational and Indigenous sector. AFMA will also use the Commonwealth Government Resource Sharing Framework as a basis for engagement with the recreational sector. AFMA, DAWE and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) have agreed to jointly fund development of an Indigenous Fishing Engagement Strategy in 2021-22.

## Workforce Plan

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, all AFMA offices have been closed at various times. Those experiences highlighted the maturity of AFMA's information technology systems in supporting remote working. The AFMA workforce has demonstrated that it can undertake effective work remotely and staff have expressed strong support for more flexible working arrangements. AFMA has built such flexibility into our corporate policy, with a general provision allowing staff to work outside of the office for two days per week.

More broadly, our operating environment continues to change and the context in which we deliver regulatory services is impacting our future workforce needs. AFMA's workforce must continue to evolve and adapt to meet both current and future demands. AFMA will develop, deploy and strengthen its workforce capabilities in line with our business needs.

In line with the *APS Workforce Strategy 2025*, AFMA will focus on the immediate and emerging challenges, identified in the strategy. This will include commitment to:

- attracting, building and retaining skills, expertise and talent
- embracing data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models
- strengthening integrity and purposeful leadership.

AFMA will also be refocussing its workforce capability and developing competencies in a number of key disciplines including data analytics, information technology, legal services, human

resources, and finance. We will continue to build on existing resources and seek new capacity in our direct fisheries skill areas.

Increasing complexity of fisheries management and digital transformation as well as an increasingly competitive labour market, and changing workforce profiles and employee expectations bring challenges which AFMA must plan for. The skills and capabilities that AFMA will need in the future are different from those we have today.

## Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Through our ICT Strategy, AFMA was able to continue to deliver high quality and efficient regulatory services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The ICT Strategy will continue to serve the agency well in the coming years as business models change to support a more online and mobile approach to communications and collaboration.

AFMA's capacity to undertake its key activities and achieve its purposes in an ever changing operational environment will rely heavily on cost efficient technology that supports a more mobile and agile agency.

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 maintain 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. Throughout the next 12 months, 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 capture, in turn supporting a stronger business intelligence environment.

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 a non-corporate Commonwealth entity, 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 provides and how they are implemented in managing Commonwealth fisheries. The CRIS is reviewed each year to reflect any changes to AFMA's cost recovery model and to provide updated revenue and financial estimates. For 2021-22, approximately 40 per cent of AFMA's budgeted revenue is expected to come from cost recovered regulatory and research activities.

AFMA aims to minimise 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.

## Risk

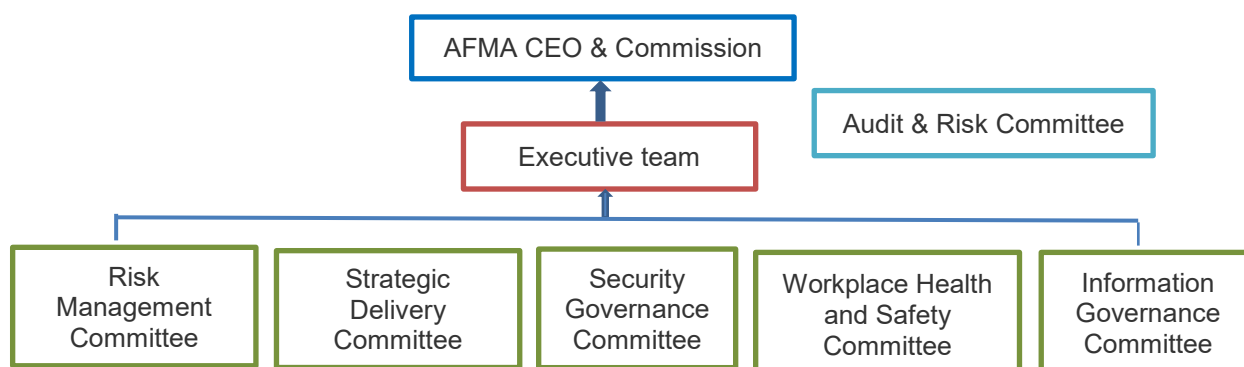
AFMA is committed to effective risk management and oversight. We continue to apply a strong corporate culture of risk management to identify opportunities that encourage business improvements and innovation in pursuit of our corporate goals. Our internal control measures, which are in place to identify, assess, monitor and manage material risks related to our business activities, remain a key focus to ensure that our risk posture is both appropriate and fit for purpose.

Our Risk Management Framework (RMF), based on ISO 31000, comprise 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 so as 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, to improve visibility of operational and shared risks across the agency.

## Risk Governance

As the Accountable Authority, AFMA's CEO 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. To support an accurate view of the agency's risk management, and the currency of risk information during 2021-22; 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. The diagram below provides an overview of the collaboration and communication channels supporting risk management within AFMA.



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 and assurance to the CEO on AFMA's risk management arrangements and systems of internal control.

# 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 harvesting leads to better economic and social outcomes from those fisheries for the Australian community. We will draw on sound science and close engagement with stakeholders in accordance with AFMA's Strategic Research Plan 2017-2022 as well as through our Management Advisory Committees (MACs), Resource Assessment Group (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 AFMA's Ecological Risk Management Framework to reflect improvements in supporting risk assessment processes and improve efficient application across fisheries

### 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 independent stock assessments for all key commercial species at least once every [3/5] years
- each stock assessment commissioned is reviewed by a RAG
- Continuing development of new cost effective methods and approaches to inform decision making.

**Measure 1:**

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

**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.

**Target**

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

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
No change or an increase in number	No change or an increase in number	No change or an increase in number	No change or an increase in number

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

**Measure 2:**

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

**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 mitigation measures. Tracking the number of high-risk species responds to several legislated objectives.

**Target**

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. This target aims for continual incremental improvement, but also notes that a very high baseline has already been achieved and that it may take time to address risks once they are identified.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
No change or a decrease in number	No change or a decrease in number	No change or a decrease in number	No change or a decrease in number

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.



**Measure 3:**

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

**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**

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. Fishing mortality is an indicator over which AFMA has relatively strong control over 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.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

**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.

**Rationale**

The jurisdictional arrangements stemming from the Constitution result in many cases where species are impacted by fisheries that are managed by AFMA and one or more jurisdiction. This may lead to imprecise information and substantial difficulty in management decision-making. AFMA will play a lead role in negotiations to address this issue. AFMA will continue to work towards more quantitative measures and targets to address this issue.

**Target**

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. AFMA will continue to work towards more quantitative measures and targets to address this issue.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Qualitative assessment	Qualitative assessment	Qualitative assessment	Qualitative assessment

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

## Measure 5:

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

### Rationale

Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) certification is an independent assessment of all Australian Government managed fisheries required under the EPBC Act. The assessments are conducted against guidelines that outline specific principles and objectives designed to ensure strategic and transparent evaluation of the ecological sustainability of fishery management arrangements. Approval of a WTO is made through an instrument signed by the Minister for the Environment or their delegate and published in the Gazette.

### Target

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. AFMA seeks best practice fisheries management that meets or exceeds the Guidelines.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
All WTOs are maintained	All WTOs are maintained	All WTOs are maintained	All WTOs are maintained

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

## 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 for key commercial stocks, which contribute to meeting maximum economic yield (MEY) for the fishery, as set out in the Harvest Strategy Policy. MEY for a stock is pursued by setting catch or effort levels that are sustainable and best enable net economic returns to be maximised. In some cases, alternative targets to 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. In these cases, AFMA aims to maximise economic yields within that context.

In seeking to maximise economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth commercial fisheries, AFMA will review management arrangements through broad consultative processes to take into consideration all fishing interests.

### 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 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) or Total Allowable Effort (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>1</sup> in its major fisheries<sup>2</sup> (those with Fisheries Management Plans).

---

<sup>1</sup> Key commercial stocks of a fishery as defined by the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## Strategy 2

Improve monitoring and reporting on AFMA's economic objective.

### Areas of Focus

- developing a fisheries management paper that sets out the legislative and policy background to AFMA's economic objective ('maximising the net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries') and 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.

#### Measure 6:

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

### Rationale

The target reference point specified in the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy is the stock biomass required to produce maximum economic yield from the fishery ( $B_{MEY}$ ). 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

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

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
No change or an increase	No change or an increase	No change or an increase	No change or an increase

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

**Measure 7:****Net Economic Return, as assessed in the ABARES Status of Fish Stocks Report.****Rationale**

The ABARES Fishery Status Reports provide an independent assessment of the Net Economic Return provided by several of AFMA's key 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 have to consider the effects of external factors which may also affect economic returns. This target aims for continual incremental improvement.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Positive trend over previous 3 year period	Positive trend over previous 3 year period	Positive trend over previous 3 year period	Positive trend over previous 3 year period

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

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

AFMA will continue to focus on approaches encouraging voluntary compliance<sup>3</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 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 and capabilities to combat 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
- 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.

#### Strategy 2

Detect and deter illegal foreign 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

---

<sup>3</sup> 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.

- increasing engagement with other Australian government and non-government agencies to build on maritime domain awareness picture to inform risk-based approaches to IUU fishing threats
- engaging with neighbouring countries and support key regional and international fisheries bodies.

## Measure 8:

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

### 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.

### Target

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. This target recognises that high compliance rates are expected to accrue from the activities, but 100 per cent compliance is rarely achievable in any industry.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
>90 percent of NCEP performance targets met	>90 percent of NCEP performance targets met	>90 percent of NCEP performance targets met	>90 percent of NCEP performance targets met

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

## Measure 9:

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

### 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 as part of the Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy.

### Target

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. This target recognises that incidence of illegal foreign fishing vessels (FFVs) is highly variable and driven by many external factors. AFMA/Australia's ability to detect and take action against such FFVs is also externally influenced.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Lower than the previous 10 year average	Lower than the previous 10 year average	Lower than the previous 10 year average	Lower than the previous 10 year average

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

## Measure 10:

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

### Rationale

AFMA is responsible for ensuring that international fisheries obligations are implemented via fisheries management arrangements. Non-compliance with international obligations is independently assessed by regional fisheries bodies and provides an objective measure as to Australia's compliance with international obligations.

### Target

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. This target 90 per cent 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.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
>90 percent	>90 percent	>90 percent	>90 percent

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.



## 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. Since making this undertaking, AFMA has out-performed the cumulative CPI increases by more than \$51.9 million (as at 2020-21).

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 \$10.6 million over four years, commencing 2021-22, to deliver a more cost-effective, simplified approach to vessel management and reporting through electronic monitoring will underpin AFMA's delivery against this performance measure.

AFMA will explore further co-management approaches with key stakeholders where such an approach is appropriate and desirable to enhance accountability and broaden stakeholder engagement and consultation particularly with recreational and Indigenous fishers. 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, as outlined in the Corporate Plan, to ensure AFMA's cost recovery framework is underpinned by the principles of: efficiency and effectiveness; transparency and accountability; and stakeholder engagement

## Strategy 2

Increase AFMA's performance, accountability and stakeholder engagement.

### Areas of Focus

- continuing to engage with consultative forums through both video conference facilities and face to face meetings, as necessary drawing on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic
- building the internal business intelligence capability to enhance evidence-based decisions and regulatory burden
- 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.

## 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.

**Measure 11:****Cost recovery budget.****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**

The targets detailed are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. This target reflects a long-standing commitment.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
At or below 2005-06 once adjusted for CPI	At or below 2005-06 once adjusted for CPI	At or below 2005-06 once adjusted for CPI	At or below 2005-06 once adjusted for CPI

Target completion dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

**Measure 12:****Corporate overheads compared to total budget.****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**

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

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<20 percent	<20 percent	<20 percent	<20 percent

Target dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

**Measure 13:****Engagement with legislated peak body****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**

The targets detailed below are realistic and achievable reflecting key functions of the agency that are directly relevant to our purpose. This target is qualitative and based on a joint assessment by CFA and AFMA.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting.	CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting	CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting	CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery and reporting

Target dates for all performance measures are 30 June unless otherwise stated.

# List of Requirements

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act
- 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 – Statement of preparation – the reporting period for which the plan is prepared – the reporting periods covered by the plan	3
Purposes	4
Key activities	6
Operating context – Environment – Enabling Capability – Risk	8 8 10 14
Performance	15
List of requirements	29
Contact Us	29
Glossary of terms	30

## 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 cameras to monitor and record information on fishing activity in a targeted way. Sensor data and video footage 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.