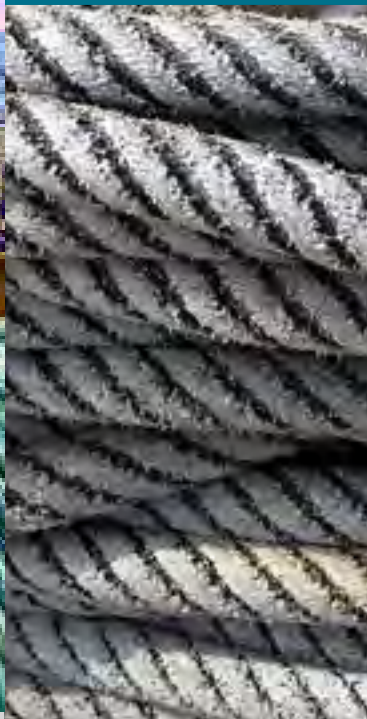




Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



ANNUAL
OPERATIONAL
PLAN
2014-2015





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APS Values

IMPARTIAL

The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

COMMITTED TO SERVICE

The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.

ACCOUNTABLE

The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.

RESPECTFUL

The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.

ETHICAL

The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

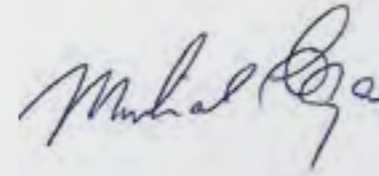
FOREWORD

The 2014-15 Annual Operational Plan sets out the actions we intend to take to give effect to or further the Australian Fisheries Management Authority's main goals as outlined in AFMA's Corporate Plan 2014-2017.

These actions include:

- Implementing fisheries management in pursuit of sustainable and profitable fisheries
- simplifying regulation
- managing ecological and compliance risks
- engaging with industry, other stakeholders and the community in the responsible management of fisheries resources

AFMA's focus in 2014-2015 continues to be the delivery of fisheries management to ensure sustainable and profitable fisheries that produce Australian seafood now and into the future.



The Hon Michael Egan AO FAICD
Chairman



Dr James Findlay GAICD
Chief Executive Officer

OUR PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

The AFMA Corporate Plan 2014-2017 sets out the main goals and strategies AFMA has adopted for the next three years in pursuit of the objectives of [AFMA's governing legislation](#).

This Annual Operational Plan sets out:

- actions AFMA intends to take in 2014-2015 to give effect to, or further, the goals set out in the corporate plan
- management plans AFMA intends to determine or otherwise implement
- performance indicators against which our performance can be assessed.

On occasions, new government directions may shift AFMA's resource effort from those intended actions during the year. Reasons for variance are listed in the Annual Report. From 2015/16, reasons for variance from budget will be listed in the financial statements.

The Annual Operational Plan complements and expands on AFMA's chapter in the 2014-15 Agriculture Portfolio Budget Statements, which sets out AFMA's program objectives, program deliverables and services and key performance indicators.

Together these three documents are the basis for reporting our performance each year in our annual report to Parliament and the community.

The diagram below illustrates the context of the Annual Operational Plan.



INTENDED ACTIONS IN 2014-2015 12

GOAL	STRATEGY	INTENDED ACTIONS IN 2014-2015
1. Manage key commercial species at levels that support maximum economic yield.		
	1.1. Manage fisheries in line with the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy ¹ and AFMA harvest strategy framework	1.1.1. Implement harvest strategies which have targets based on maximum economic yield or the best available proxy 1.1.2. Commission assessments and targeted research to underpin science based management decisions
	1.2. Implement measures to recover remaining overfished stocks	1.2.1. Set total allowable catch or total allowable effort at levels that will achieve limit and target reference points within agreed time frames 1.2.2. Implement stock rebuilding strategies for species assessed as being below agreed limit reference points
2. Improve the net economic returns of Commonwealth fisheries.		
	2.1. Facilitate the development of underutilised fisheries resources	2.1.1. Facilitate access to underutilised fisheries resources
	2.2. Support the Department and fishery stakeholders in the revision of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy ¹	2.2.1. Implement revised harvest strategy policy when available
	2.3. Develop and implement approaches to further reduce the amount of discarded fish	2.3.1. Support research and initiatives to reduce the amount of discarded fish
3. Prevent unacceptable impacts of Commonwealth fisheries on marine ecosystems and organisms		
	3.1. Regularly review fishery risks and management measures under AFMA's Ecological Risk Management Framework	3.1.1. Further development of ecological risk assessment and risk management framework to include habitats 3.1.2. Progress implementation of ecological risk management responses in key fisheries 3.1.3. Consider further application of catch thresholds (or their proxy) for interactions with Threatened, Endangered and Protected (TEP) species 3.1.4. Continue to partner with industry/service providers to educate fishing concession holders about responsible fishing practices and raise awareness of reporting and compliance obligations
	3.2. Continue to manage fisheries in line with the Commonwealth Policy on Bycatch (Bycatch Policy) ²	3.2.1. Implement new Bycatch Policy within available resources and priorities.

¹ Noting that the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy is currently under review by government and may be updated in the future.

² Noting that the Bycatch Policy is currently under review by government and may be updated in the future.

GOAL	STRATEGY	INTENDED ACTIONS IN 2014-2015
4. Implement management arrangements and frameworks that are both cost effective and encourage compliance.		
4.1.	Make fisheries management arrangements more uniform, understandable and enforceable with appropriate penalties	4.1.1. Continue to reform fishery management rules to reduce complexity
4.2.	Continue to improve business processes, information flows and financial arrangements to reduce costs	4.2.1. Continue to minimise cost burdens and support a vibrant and efficient industry 4.2.2. Further refine continuous improvement program and red tape process reductions in CRIS review
4.3.	Continue to improve the effectiveness of quota management for Commonwealth Fisheries through the quota administration policy and related instruments	4.3.1. Continue to implement a revised quota administration policy for all quota managed fisheries 4.3.2. Consider fishery amalgamations linked to Fisheries Management plans
4.4.	Apply individual accountability in appropriate fisheries	4.4.1. Continue to trial and expand the individual accountability approach in the Gillnet, Hook and Trap Fishery in accordance with priority areas established through risk assessments
5. Effectively deter illegal fishing in Commonwealth fisheries, the Australian Fishing Zone and adjacent regions.		
5.1.	Conduct and enable compliance programs that target identified high risks	5.1.1. Undertake compliance activities in accordance with priority areas established through risk assessments 5.1.2. Develop a compliance intelligence capacity that is fully effective 5.1.3. Review and develop options to amend the Fisheries Management Act structure for the domestic compliance regime, including powers, incentives, offences, and administrative and criminal penalties
5.2.	Conduct capacity building programs with neighbouring countries to enhance fisheries management and governance frameworks and compliance programs	5.2.1. Collaborate with relevant agencies on deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) activity and developing fisheries management arrangements and capacity building
5.3.	Promote and advocate deterrence, prevention and cooperation at regional fisheries forums to deter illegal fishing	5.3.1. Engage at international meetings to ensure agreed outcomes can be implemented by Australia

GOAL	STRATEGY	INTENDED ACTIONS IN 2014-2015
6. Streamline regulations and approvals and reduce costs of compliance and fisheries management		
6.1.	Continue to adapt business processes and technologies that match the core needs of AFMA and its stakeholders	6.1.1. Investigate further options to improve the cost effective fisheries management arrangements in Torres Strait fisheries on behalf of the Protected Zone Joint Authority, including development of management plans 6.1.2. Encourage key fishing industry associations to increase the uptake of E-logs & GOFish 6.1.3. Continue to improve cost effectiveness of independent monitoring and data collection programs
6.2.	Further reduce regulatory burden and cost to industry through reduction of red tape and unnecessary regulatory requirements, including establishment investment in electronic monitoring and data transfer technologies, and upgrading of fishery-management specific software	6.2.1. Consider regulatory reduction options emerging from stakeholder engagement and relevant government reviews 6.2.2. Continue changes to process and transactions to reduce red tape to industry 6.2.3. Commence roll out of electronic monitoring to GHAT and EBT fisheries 6.2.4. Continue to implement the Fee for Service program 6.2.5. Revise fisheries legislation against provisions of PGPA Act and Productivity Commission audit framework of regulators
6.3.	Explore opportunities to streamline fisheries assessments under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	6.3.1. Contribute to the implementation of the Australian Government's response to the review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
7. Facilitate co-management¹ in Commonwealth fisheries.		
7.1.	For fisheries under the Fisheries Management Act, apply lessons from co-management trials and assist the development of new arrangements	7.1.1. Utilise outcome from the co-management trials to maintain, and expand where appropriate, co-management arrangements with industry groups

¹ Fisheries co-management is an arrangement in which responsibilities and obligations for sustainable fisheries management are negotiated, shared and potentially delegated between government, fishers and other stakeholders where appropriate.

GOAL	STRATEGY	INTENDED ACTIONS IN 2014-2015
8. Transparent and effective engagement with the community and other stakeholders		
8.1.	Improve communications in a style useable by stakeholders through appropriate media channels	8.1.1. Explore stakeholder and broader community engagement through digital and social media 8.1.2. Continue formal engagement with recreational industry and environmental non-government organisations
8.2.	Ensure the effective operation of Management Advisory Committees and Resource Assessment Groups, as the principal sources of advice to the AFMA Commission	8.2.1. Appoint appropriate people to committees and provide regular training to committee members
8.3.	Increase public accessibility and availability of scientific and other fishery management information	8.3.1. Establish scientific review processes for all AFMA commissioned research 8.3.2. Develop and implement research standards to ensure clear flow of information and increase accessibility to data
8.4.	Continue to work with the Department in servicing regional fisheries management organisations and other international fishery bodies	8.4.1. Support key regional and other international fishery bodies prioritised by their impact on domestic fisheries

MANAGEMENT PLANS WE INTEND TO DETERMINE OR OTHERWISE INSTITUTE DURING 2014-2015

This Annual Operational Plan provides for the amendment of the following fishery management plans:

Northern Prawn Fishery Management Plan 1995

The amended management plan will implement revised management arrangements in line with decisions of the AFMA Commission.



BUDGETING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

AFMA has responsibility for one outcome and one program. This reporting framework is consistent with program based reporting.

Outcome 1

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.

Program 1.1 Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Program objective

To sustainably manage Commonwealth fisheries and deter illegal fishing.

In addition to the 2014-2015 actions, AFMA provides ongoing program deliverables and services as set out below.

Program Deliverables

AFMA aims to improve the long term sustainable catch of target species through:

- regularly assessing the status of target species:
 - applying Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy which defines targets for pursuing precautionary and economically efficient catch levels.

AFMA pursues ecological sustainability by:

- applying the Commonwealth Bycatch Policy which seeks to reduce or minimise interactions with non-target species
- conducting risk based compliance programs to deter illegal fishing in AFMA managed fisheries
- conducting ecological risk assessments and putting in place management responses for species considered at risk from fishing activity
- supporting the fishing industry to meet the requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

AFMA seeks to maximise the net economic returns to the Australian community from Commonwealth fisheries by:

- increasing the number of fisheries and/or species with specific targets for maximum economic yield, where it is cost-effective to do so.

AFMA aims to deter and prevent illegal foreign fishing in the Australian Fishing Zone and thereby minimise its impact on Australian fisheries resources by:

- providing the fisheries focus within the Australian Government Civil Maritime Surveillance and Response Program
- carrying out capacity building projects and cooperative enforcement operations to improve the sustainability of fish resources in neighbouring countries.

AFMA's projected deliverables for the coming period are detailed in the following table.

AFMA DELIVERABLES

	2014-15 REVISED BUDGET	2015-16 BUDGET	2016-17 FORWARD YEAR 1	2017-18 FORWARD YEAR 2	2018-19 FORWARD
DELIVERABLES					
Complete research projects including Torres Strait Fisheries ¹	Minimum of 10	Minimum of 10	Minimum of 10	Minimum of 5	Minimum of 5
Complete fishery independent surveys	10	10	10	5	5
Number of fisheries regulated under plans of management, including Torres Strait Fisheries	12	13	13	13	13
Number of harvest strategies applied to regulated fisheries	11	11	11	11	11
Complete licensing transactions:					
a) manual	400	200	200	200	200
b) automated	2500	2700	2700	2700	2700
Amount of levies collected	Greater than 99% of levies collected	Greater than 99% of levies collected	Greater than 99% of levies collected	Greater than 99% of levies collected	Greater than 99% of levies collected
Prosecute illegal foreign fishers	Note ²	Note ²	Note ²	Note ²	Note ²
Dispose of illegal foreign fishing vessels	Note ²	Note ²	Note ²	Note ²	Note ²
Capacity building programs in regional countries	4	4	4	4	4
Evidence of suspected illegal foreign fishing vessels forwarded to regional organisation and/or country	100% of cases	100% of cases	100% of cases	100% of cases	100% of cases
ADMINISTERED: ILLEGAL FOREIGN FISHING VESSEL CARETAKING AND DISPOSAL					
Forfeited vessels disposed of ³	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Review annual domestic compliance risk assessment	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹ Includes only research projects that AFMA contracts with the research provider. It does not include research projects administered by other agencies in which AFMA co-invests.

² Performance cannot be forecast reliably. Actual results will be included in the AFMA annual report.

³ Expressed as a proportion of forfeited vessels brought to AFMA commissioned caretaking and disposal facilities. The actual numbers depend on the number apprehended and brought to the disposal facilities through the Civil Maritime Surveillance and Response Program and cannot be forecast reliably.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Our success in pursuing our objectives in 2014-2015 and over the life of our 2014-2017 Corporate Plan will be indicated by:

- maximising the net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries
- ecological sustainability, including fishing impacts on the marine environment and biodiversity

The Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and associated guidelines provide a framework to maintain key commercial fishery stocks at ecologically sustainable levels and maximise net economic returns through fisheries management and applying a precautionary approach. It is anticipated the revision of that Policy may lead to modelled performance indicators.

It is also understood changes mooted by government to format and content for Portfolio Budget Statements from 2015, may refer performance statements and monitoring to operational plans and annual reports under the Public Governance and Performance Accountability Act framework.

In that context, AFMA intends to revise its performance management framework and client service charter to have regard to the Productivity Commission 'regulator audit framework' report and its performance metrics.

AFMA Key Performance Indicators are detailed in following Table.

The indicators are developed based on the latest understanding of the fish stock status, predicted future research and research needs for each fishery. Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) is a target that utilises the fish stocks at the most efficient harvest point and is a more precautionary target than a maximum sustainable yield (MSY) target. For indicator 1, economically significant stocks, it shows an increase in the number of stock being on target (b) this indicates strong science is supporting management decisions, likewise a reduction in the number of species not on target to meet their reference points (c) is a positive sign for these resources.

AFMA'S PROGRAM KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	2013-14 REVISED BUDGET	2014-15 BUDGET	2015-16 FORWARD YEAR 1	2016-17 FORWARD YEAR 2	2017-18 FORWARD YEAR 3
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS					
For economically significant stocks: ¹					
a) Maximise the number of key commercial stocks with harvest strategy targets based on maximum economic yield (MEY) or the best available proxy ²	19	19	20	20	20
b) Improve the number of stocks in (a) assessed as being on target	13	13	16	17	18
c) For those stocks in (a) that are assessed as not on target, improve the number that are heading towards their target reference point	6	6	4	3	2
Number of fish stocks subject to overfishing ³	0	0	0	0	0
Minimise the number of species assessed as remaining at high risk after mitigation ⁴	69	66	64	50	40
Maximise the disposal of apprehended foreign illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) vessels and suspected illegal entry vessels (SIEVs)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Treatments targets for all priority domestic compliance risks met	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

1 Please note that not all Commonwealth fish stocks can be managed by MEY, for example, those managed under international regional bodies.

2 Where higher and lower value species are caught together, different targets for the lower value species may maximise net economic returns over all.

3 In AFMA managed fisheries, not including jointly and internationally managed fisheries.

4 Ecological Risk Assessments for Commonwealth managed fisheries and sub-fisheries have been completed covering almost 1200 species. Species considered to be potentially at high risk are the subject of mitigation measures and further assessment. This may mean that projections of numbers of high risk species may vary from year to year.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

AFMA is funded by a combination of Government appropriations, industry levies and fee for service.

The majority of domestic fisheries management costs are recovered from the domestic fishing industry in accordance with AFMA's Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS). The CRIS will be reviewed from 2014-15 in accord with new government guidelines. AFMA has reviewed its budget for domestic fisheries management and set a target for levies in 2014-15 in line with the size of the industry and cost-effective management to meet AFMA's legislated responsibilities. Costs relating to foreign fishing compliance are fully funded by Government. AFMA retains sufficient cash reserves in its Special Account to fully meet its employee and supplier liabilities.

AFMA's budget

AFMA has budgeted for total expenditure in 2014-15 of \$45.04m comprising \$39.67m in Departmental expenditure and \$5.37m on Administered activities (for the caretaking and disposal of illegal foreign fishing vessels).

The 2014-15 Budget process has identified the following funding available to AFMA:

	2013-14 REVISED BUDGET	2014-15 BUDGET	2015-16 FORWARD YEAR 1	2016-17 FORWARD YEAR 2	2017-18 FORWARD YEAR 3
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
ANNUAL ADMINISTERED EXPENSES					
Ordinary Annual Services (Appropriation Bill No. 1)	4,075	5,309	5,408	5,392	5,499
ANNUAL DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES					
Departmental appropriation ¹	28,158	23,833	23,669	23,661	23,936
SPECIAL ACCOUNT EXPENSES					
AFMA Special Account	12,236	14,000	14,420	14,853	15,299
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year ²	1,810	1,895	1,895	1,929	1,929
TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENSES	46,279	45,037	45,392	45,835	46,663

¹ Departmental Appropriation combines 'Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No. 1)' and 'Revenue from independent source (s31)'.

² Expenses not requiring appropriation in the Budget year is made up of depreciation expense and amortisation expense for both Departmental and Administered items.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The following diagram illustrates the relationships and structures of AFMA, noting that some governance arrangements mandated by the Fisheries Administration Act, are likely to alter to accommodate the Public Governance and Performance Accountability Act.



OUR PEOPLE

During 2014-15, AFMA expects average staffing levels to be about 185 full time equivalents(FTE) to support operations and strategic activities outlined in this Plan, with the majority located in the Authority's central office in Canberra (134 full time equivalents). There are two regional offices in Australia. On Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, four staff are employed on fisheries management and two on foreign compliance functions. AFMA's Darwin office has 32 full time equivalents undertaking compliance functions in the field throughout Australia. AFMA employs approximately 20 staff residing around Australia (13 full time equivalents) to observe at sea fishing operations. Ongoing FTE is subject to government interim staffing arrangements, and operational requirements.

The AFMA Commission consists of nine expert and independent Commissioners who collectively make decisions about domestic fisheries management, including catch levels, fishing methods, the timing of fishing seasons, fishery closures and other fisheries management decisions.

In undertaking AFMA's day-to-day business affairs and overall fisheries management, the Chief Executive Officer is assisted by three senior executives, with the following responsibilities:

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BRANCH	FISHERIES OPERATIONS BRANCH	CORPORATE SERVICES BRANCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demersal & midwater fisheries • Tuna & international • Northern fisheries • Environment and research • Policy • Economics • Log book data • Co-management • E-business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic compliance policy • Foreign compliance policy • Intelligence planning data management • Compliance operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive secretariat and Communications • Finance • Human resources • Records, security and property • Legal • ICT Systems support • ICT systems development

This organisation structure and staffing provides for the delivery of AFMA's intended actions, deliverables and services, and the internal supporting services that contribute to them.

AFMA strives to be a flexible, learning organisation. AFMA employs appropriately skilled and motivated staff committed to ongoing improvement in managing the Commonwealth's fisheries resources and to achieving AFMA's objectives and goals. AFMA recognises that the performance and commitment of its staff is central to its success as an innovative fisheries management organisation and seeks to provide an environment in which staff can reach their full potential.

AFMA's performance management scheme focuses on providing fair and accurate performance feedback to staff, and remuneration and professional development are tied to annual performance reviews.

AFMA underpins its service, partnerships and accountability to stakeholders by adhering to the principles of public sector governance.

ACRONYMS

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AFZ	Australian Fishing Zone
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
AOP	Annual Operational Plan
CFA	Commonwealth Fisheries Association
IMFP	Informally Managed Fishing Permits
ITQ	individual transferable quota
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated

CONTACT US

For further information about our national, international and regional activities, functions and services, please visit AFMA's internet site - www.afma.gov.au or contact the Executive Secretariat via:

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