



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Annual Operational Plan

2018 – 2019

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AFMA Values

In all our professional relationships, AFMA is:

- **Impartial** – we are apolitical and provide the government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence
- **Committed to service** – we are professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and we work collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the government
- **Accountable** – we are open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility
- **Respectful** – we respect all people, including their rights and their heritage
- **Ethical** – we demonstrate leadership, are trustworthy, and act with integrity, in all that we do.

2018-19 in focus

We are pleased to present the Australian Fisheries Management Authority's (AFMA) 2018-19 Annual Operational Plan (AOP). The plan sets out the actions AFMA will take to further deliver AFMA's goals in our Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

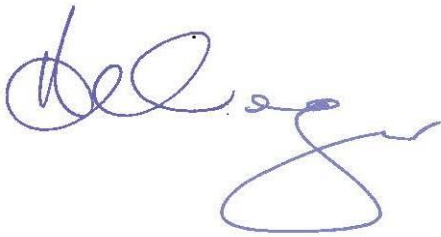
Major activities will include AFMA taking further steps in pursuing ecologically sustainable development (ESD). A key to this will be implementation of the recently revised policies and guidelines on Commonwealth Harvest Strategy and Fisheries Bycatch Strategy. AFMA will continue to manage Commonwealth fisheries on the basis that minimising the effects of fishing on the marine ecosystem and ensuring sustainable commercial harvesting leads to better economic and social outcomes.

Associated with this will be our broadened consideration of the interests of recreational, Indigenous and commercial fishers as we strive to deliver maximum net economic returns to the Australian community. The recently established AFMA Economic Working Group will add to AFMA's economic expertise and effectiveness in dealing with such major fishery and cross fishery issues as maximum economic yield targets and treating of quota and gear Statutory Fishing Rights.

Compliance remains an important element of our work to ensure that the rights of licensed operators are not diminished and that the community fully realises the benefits of a sustainable management regime. AFMA will continue to encourage voluntary compliance and will take enforcement action against conscious non-compliance. To counter pressures from illegal foreign fishing, AFMA will coordinate action with Australian and counterpart international agencies to address threats to the Australian Fishing Zone and actively participate in international forums to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. We will also continue to deliver international capacity building programs to enhance the capabilities of like-minded nations to combat IUU fishing and better manage their fisheries.

Minimising management cost imposts on commercial operators remains a key AFMA commitment to deliver cost effective management. Approaches to improve efficiencies include greater use of individual accountability for boat-level performance and encouraging the uptake of electronic reporting and monitoring.

We will take into account all sectors interests in our decision making to increase commercial fishing returns from established and potential Commonwealth fisheries. AFMA will also be looking to broaden stakeholder engagement and consultation particularly with recreational and Indigenous fishers. Expanding communications tools and greater public reporting of AFMA decision making will support this. AFMA's commitment to cost-effectiveness and stakeholder engagement and accountability remains, reflecting the importance of applying our resources to best effect.



Helen Kroger
Chairman, AFMA Commission



Dr James Findlay GAICD
Chief Executive Officer
Accountable Authority of AFMA



Apprehended Foreign Fishing Vessel Darwin Harbour – photo courtesy AFMA

AFMA’s Performance Framework

Each year AFMA is required to prepare three planning documents and a performance reporting document. In addition, AFMA undertakes an annual self-assessment of its regulatory operations and performance. This Annual Operational Plan (AOP) links with AFMA’s Corporate Plan 2018-21 (the Corporate Plan) and the Portfolio Budget Statement 2018-19 (PBS) for the Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio. The AOP details the actions that AFMA will undertake in 2018-19 to address the areas of focus in pursuing the corporate goals identified in the PBS and Corporate Plan.

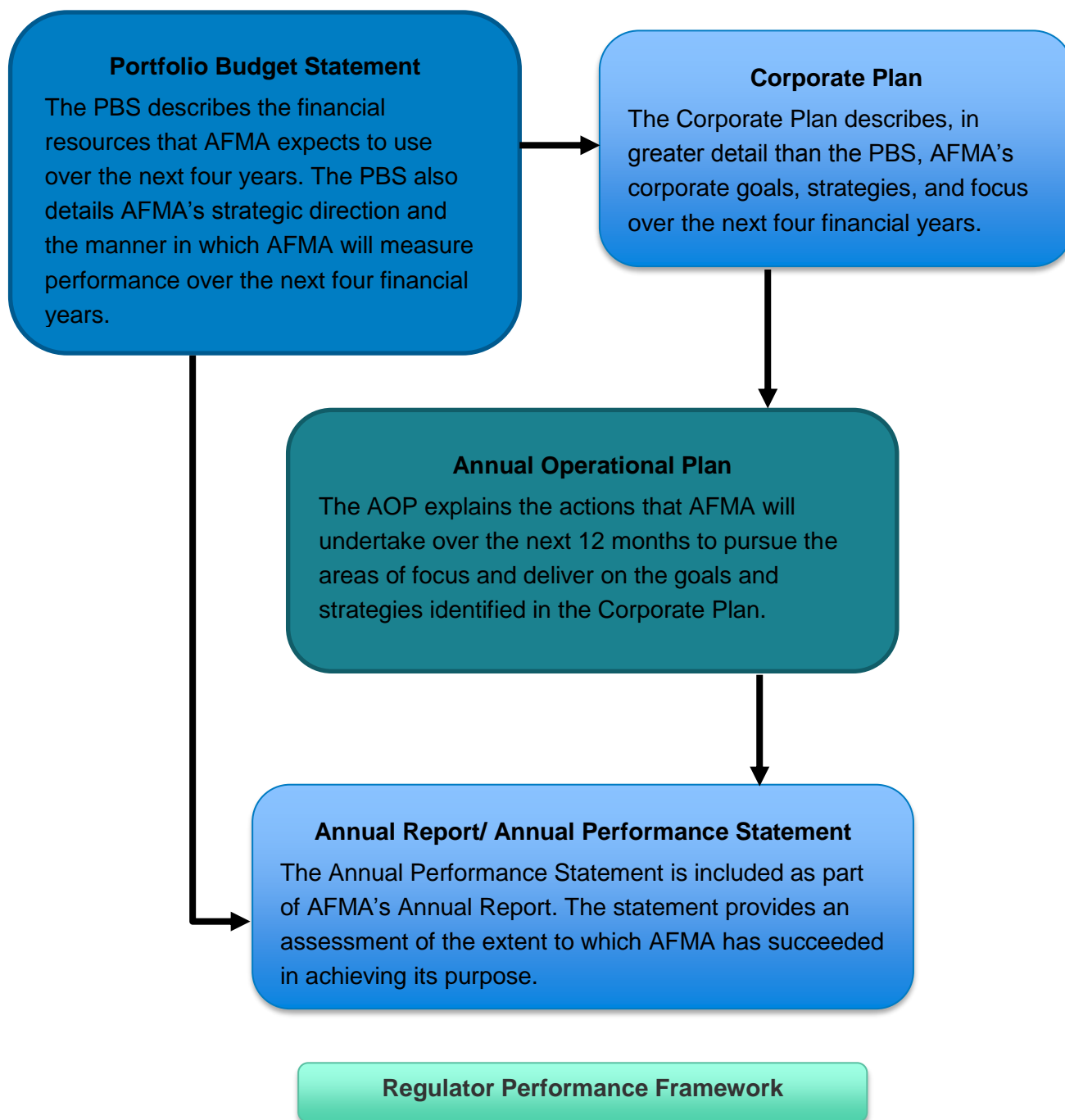


Figure 1 AFMA's performance framework

Resources and Performance Monitoring

Budget

In the delivery of these actions as well as undertaking more regular business in 2018-19, AFMA has budgeted for a total expenditure of \$46.230 million, comprising \$40.724 million in Departmental expenditure and \$5.506 million on Administered activities (for the caretaking and disposal of illegal foreign fishing vessels). Of the Departmental expenditure, approximately \$15.0 million (one third) is expected to be recovered from the fishing industry, under a levy or fee for service basis. Annual fishery budgets will be cost recovered budgets for AFMA's fisheries management and are discussed with industry.

Staff Resources

During 2018-19 we will operate within the Government's maximum average staffing level (ASL) of 177. This ASL will support operations and strategic activities outlined in this AOP. Of those 177 ASL, 121 are located in AFMA's central office in Canberra. ASL located outside Canberra includes those located in our Thursday Island office (7 ASL), the Darwin office (25 ASL), and the new Lakes Entrance office (8 ASL) as well as a number of at-sea observers located around the country to perform data collection on commercial fishing vessels.

Performance Monitoring

Monitoring of progress and accountability for delivering these outputs is a key responsibility for AFMA staff. Individual performance agreements and reviews of periodic reports 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 strategic actions contained in the AOP. In undertaking the actions listed in this AOP, we will continue to use Management Advisory Committees (MACs) and Resource Assessment Groups (RAGs), along with other sector-specific bodies, as key ways to consult with stakeholders and obtain scientific, economic and other expert advice to address Commonwealth fisheries issues.

Corporate Goal 1: Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with principles of ecologically sustainable development

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|---|---|--|
| 1.1 Development of management arrangements that enable fishers to harvest sustainably | 1.1.1 supporting the implementation of relevant government policies including Commonwealth Harvest Strategy and Fisheries Bycatch | Continue to work with the government to provide feedback and advice on relevant policies Assist CSIRO in developing methodology for cumulative fishery impacts |
| | 1.1.2 implementing AFMA's revised Ecological Risk Management Framework | Complete 5 Ecological Risk Assessments (ERA) and 5 Fishery Management Strategies ERA Steering Group meets twice to monitor implementation |
| | 1.1.3 developing strategies for managing the impacts of fishing on the broader marine environment | Develop Habitats and Communities Strategy Review existing bycatch management strategies in-line with revised Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy and guidelines Consider global best practice and future trends of the impact of fishing to the broader marine environment |
| | 1.1.4 avoiding overfishing and rebuilding stocks that are overfished | Commence review of Fishery Harvest Strategies in-line with revised Commonwealth Fishery Harvest Strategies Policy and guidelines Commission relevant fishery stock assessments to ensure biomass is at levels to avoid overfishing and/or rebuilding of stocks |

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|---|---|---|
| | 1.1.5 ensuring available recreational and Indigenous fishing information is used in decision making | <p>Interests of recreational and Indigenous fishing sectors where known are taken into account in AFMA decision process (eg MACs and RAGs processes and other forums)</p> <p>Complete appointment processes for recreational and Indigenous fishing members on identified MACs and RAGs</p> |
| 1.2 Investing in and applying science to decision making on fish stocks, sub stocks, species (target and non-target species) and the impact of fishing on the broader marine environment. | 1.2.1 implementing science standards to support the provision of high quality scientific advice on which to base fishery management decisions | <p>Finalise and implement the Science Quality Assurance Policy</p> <p>Review conduct of ARC-commissioned research</p> <p>Complete review of Scientific Permit and Research Catch Allowance Policies</p> |
| | 1.2.2 working with scientific organisations and other relevant groups to investigate the effects of climate change on Commonwealth fisheries and implementing responses as required | Hold Climate Change workshops to review fishery governance and consider outputs and actions identified for implementation |
| | 1.2.3 conducting research on the economic and social aspects of harvesting Commonwealth fisheries | <p>AFMA Economic Working Group propose priorities for Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funded research and consider results</p> <p>Implement relevant objectives from 5 year Strategic Research Plan 2017-2022</p> |

In addition to the actions and areas of focus identified in the table above, the table below highlights regular activities that AFMA undertakes which also pursue the corporate goal of ensuring ecologically sustainable development of Commonwealth fisheries:

| Regular activities for 2018-19 | Associated actions |
|---|---|
| Management of domestic commercial fisheries | Implementing bycatch programs, strategies and monitoring activities Educating fishing operators on fisheries management requirements Collaborating with science organisations in understanding fish stocks, bycatch and the marine environment better Appointing and administering MACs, RAGs and other sector specific bodies Assessing fisheries under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> including export approvals, developing Threatened, Endangered and Protected (TEP) species management strategies and Environmental Risk Management (ERM) Working in partnership with key stakeholders including commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers to deliver effective fisheries management regimes that include harvest strategies, setting total allowable catch and effort, efficient fishery plan administration, regular fishery performance reporting and reviewing statutory compliance Administering Economic Working Group and ERA Steering Group |
| Management of traditional, Indigenous and non-commercial fisheries activities | Consulting with Indigenous and recreational fishers and other stakeholders in the management of Commonwealth fisheries to ensure their interests are taken into account |
| Research management | Administering AFMA's research program and contracts including the AFMA Research Committee, developing/reviewing research plans and participating in the FRDC's Commonwealth Fisheries Research Advisory Committee (ComRAC) process by providing advice and priorities for potential funding Managing AFMA's research funds to achieve cost effective results |
| Communication | Communication of AFMA programs, strategies, consultations, research and activities, to inform industry, stakeholders and the public. |

Corporate Goal 2: Maximum net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries

| Strategy | Areas of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|--|--|--|
| 2.1 Reviewing management arrangements to take into account commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing interests when maximising net economic returns from the commercial sector | 2.1.1 reviewing relevant AFMA policies and fishery harvest strategies | Review ERM Framework to incorporate the interests of recreational and Indigenous sectors Establish framework for pursuing the social aspects of the ESD principles in decision making |
| | 2.1.2 collecting and utilising economic information including quota prices to pursue maximising net economic returns | Continue to collect, review and use economic information (such as quota prices) when making and reviewing fisheries management decisions Develop and utilise economic key performance indicators Obtain fisheries economic advice from AFMA's economic working group |
| | 2.1.3 reviewing relevant OCS arrangements and develop shared harvest strategies and negotiate agreed commercial catch shares | Develop AFMA Commercial Catch Sharing Policy and approach to common harvest strategies |
| 2.2 Increasing catch levels within sustainable Total Allowable Catches (TACs) | 2.2.1 conducting and considering implementation of research focussed on under caught TACs | Implement the outputs of research into declining indicators and under caught TACs in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) including through joint workshops to improve the SESSF harvest strategy |

| Strategy | Areas of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|--|--|---|
| 2.3 Managing exploratory fisheries (potentially underutilised fisheries) | 2.3.1 revising current policy to better facilitate access to underutilised Commonwealth fisheries resources | Finalise review of Fishery Management Policy (FMP) 5 – Exploratory Fishing Policy |
| 2.4 Understanding impacts of resource allocation between commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers | 2.4.1 working with Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to develop Commonwealth resource sharing policy | Support the activities of the Department |

In addition to the actions and areas of focus identified in the table above, the table below highlights regular activities that AFMA undertakes which also pursue the corporate goal of maximising economic returns:

| Regular activities for 2018-19 | Associated actions |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Data collection and management | Data collection and monitoring of fishing industry operations with the use of E-logs, log books and Catch Disposal Records (CDR) |
| | Managing data and analysis, providing data and reports to the public, the fishing industry, MACs or RAGs |
| | Implementing and administering e-monitoring across the Commonwealth commercial fishing fleet |
| | Administering the observer program |
| | Administering the vessel monitoring program across the Commonwealth commercial fishing industry and some State managed commercial fishing vessels |
| | Arranging independent fishery surveys to set a recommended biological catch and an annual TAC |

| Regular activities for 2018-19 | Associated actions |
|---|--|
| Management of traditional, Indigenous and non-commercial fisheries activities | Consulting with Indigenous and recreational fishers and other stakeholders in the management of Commonwealth fisheries to ensure their interests are taken into account |
| Input into defining international treaty standards and developing regulation activities | Engaging with international fisheries management organisations such as, but not limited to, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, the Western and Central Pacific Commission and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. This also includes implementing Australia's obligations to international agreements |
| Communication | Publication and communication of data. Promotion and public education of sustainability of Australian wild-caught seafood. |

Corporate Goal 3: Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|---|--|---|
| 3.1 Operating an effective domestic compliance regime using measures that are proportionate to the risks involved | 3.1.1 reviewing the risk assessment for the domestic compliance program and implementing measures to address key threat areas | <p>Commence reviewing the risk assessment in October 2018 and to develop the 2019-20 national compliance and enforcement program</p> <p>Operationalise the 2018-19 national compliance and enforcement program</p> <p>Assume lead responsibility and deliver the domestic compliance program in the Torres Strait</p> <p>Apply program logic and business maturity methodologies to assist in evaluating compliance program effectiveness</p> |
| | 3.1.2 reviewing the penalty provisions in legislation that AFMA administers and making fisheries management arrangements more uniform and understandable | Progress second phase of the review in consultation with key stakeholders and support consideration through parliamentary processes to enable finalisation of amendments |
| 3.2 Operating effective foreign fisheries compliance enforcement and capacity building | 3.2.1 implementing strategies to deter and eliminate IUU foreign fishing in Australian waters and on the high seas where Australia has an interest | <p>Work with other Australian government agencies under the civil maritime enforcement program to detect and deter IUU fishing in Australian waters and adjacent waters</p> <p>Engage with international bodies, including INTERPOL and Regional Fisheries Management Bodies on effective governance and deterrence strategies for IUU fishing</p> |

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|----------|--|--|
| | 3.2.2 participating in capacity building programs with neighbouring countries and supporting key regional and international fishing bodies | <p>Deliver a second public information campaign in Vietnam to reinforce messages to prevent illegal fishing in Australian waters and the Pacific</p> <p>Deliver the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded capacity building program focussing on the pacific</p> |

In addition to the actions and areas of focus identified in the table above, the table below highlights regular activities that AFMA undertakes which also pursue the corporate goal of compliance:

| Regular activities for 2018-19 | Associated actions |
|--|---|
| Domestic fisheries compliance enforcement activities | Undertaking compliance activities in accordance with AFMA's risk based approach, including boat and fish receiver premises inspections in port and at sea. These activities also include surveillance and investigations, data analysis, pre-season briefings, education sessions and related prosecutions |
| Foreign fisheries compliance enforcement and capacity building | <p>Combating illegal fishing in the Australian Fishing Zone and Torres Strait Protected Zone. This involves the planning of surveillance activities, the deployment of officers on patrol, the investigation of suspected breaches of Australian law and where appropriate, the prosecution of offenders. This also includes the caretaking and disposal of confiscated fishing vessels</p> <p>Participating in capacity building programs with neighbouring countries and supporting key regional and international fishing bodies</p> |
| Communication | Communication of AFMA compliance and public information campaign activities |

Corporate Goal 4: Deliver effective, cost efficient and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|--|---|---|
| 4.1 Pursuing ministerial directives and government initiatives to improve regulation and administration generally in the Federal government sector | 4.1.1 continuing to explore opportunities to streamline fisheries assessment processes under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> | Work with the Department of the Environment and Energy to pursue additional 10 year approvals for Commonwealth fisheries |
| | 4.1.2 implementing new fisheries policies for harvest strategies and bycatch with a focus on improving fishery management performance | Support consideration through parliamentary processes to enable finalisation of amendments to the Fisheries Management Regulations and associated regulations Streamline fishery management arrangements to simplify fishery management (One Fishery project) |
| 4.2 Reviewing business processes and systems, information flows and financial management arrangements | 4.2.1 expanding boat-level arrangements that encourage greater industry responsibility for fishing impacts | Seek opportunities to trial individual accountability of discards – and/or develop an AFMA discard strategy |
| | 4.2.2 assessing the value of using shared service arrangements for corporate services that reduce costs | Undertaking Shared and Common Services Benchmarking to provide AFMA with greater transparency on the actual cost of corporate services Reviewing the efficient allocation of corporately-managed costs to activities across the entity to deliver effective, cost efficient and transparent management and regulatory arrangements. |

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|----------|--|---|
| | 4.2.3 exploring opportunities to extend contract monitoring and compliance services to external agencies | <p>Continue to facilitate and expand VMS hosting services to State, Territory and Commonwealth agencies</p> <p>Continue to provide compliance monitoring services to NT Fisheries. Explore the feasibility of operating more closely with AMSA</p> |
| | 4.2.4 implementing AFMA's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy | <p>Commence the implementation of the artefacts from the ICT Strategy as per the endorsed program schedule;</p> <p>Design and develop a data strategy and architecture that meets AFMA's business data and information needs into the future;</p> <p>Design and develop a proof of concept model demonstrating the capability of the 'e-fish' concept</p> <p>Design and implement a common operating platform and a cloud solution for AFMA to make data consumption and sharing more streamlined</p> |
| | 4.2.5 continuing to improve access to AFMA fisheries information through data.gov.au, the AFMA website and other media | <p>Design and develop Application Programs Interfaces (APIs) to allow easier consumption of data</p> <p>Continue to expand and update the AFMA datasets published on data.gov.au</p> <p>Complete review of FMP12 – Information Disclosure Policy</p> <p>Post compliance program, associated reports and information items and advertise focal areas for compliance attention on a regular basis</p> |

| Strategy | Area of Focus | Actions 2018-19 |
|---|---|--|
| 4.3 Increase AFMA accountability and stakeholder engagement | 4.3.1 expanding membership and capability development for recreational and Indigenous members on relevant MACs and RAGs | Conduct MAC and RAG capability development workshop |
| | 4.3.2 improving surveys/feedback mechanisms | Undertake second stakeholder perception survey (third quarter) |

In addition to the actions and areas of focus identified in the table above, the table below highlights regular activities that AFMA undertakes which also pursue the corporate goal of effective, efficient and accountable management and regulatory arrangements:

| Regular activities for 2018-19 | Associated actions |
|---|--|
| Policy support | Providing and developing advice and policy in accordance with the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i> , the <i>Fisheries Administration Act 1991</i> , and other relevant legislation |
| | Advising Parliament and Ministers, providing and developing policy including technical and governance policies. This includes publishing corporate governance reports, public data, performance indicators such as the Regulatory Performance Framework (RPF) and compliance performance. It also includes liaison with state agencies and other organisations on broader marine resource policies and management. |
| Licensing / registration and revenue collection | Processing and administering licenses, licence administration, licensing system maintenance, issuing and reconciling levies and recovering levies |

| Regular activities for 2018-19 | Associated actions |
|--|---|
| | Developing and maintaining of the licensing system with a focus on increasing fee for service arrangements where it is cost-effective to do so |
| Other contributors to effective, cost efficient and transparent management and regulatory arrangements | <p>Supporting operational activities by delivering effective and cost efficient services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial management • human resource management • legal services • corporate governance support (including risk management services) • property and security • information and communications technology and support services • executive secretariat support • communications and • other related services. |
| | Identifying and implementing opportunities to reduce our regulatory burden on those we regulate and to improve internal operations |
| | Implementing the RPF to ensure that we are meeting government expectations |
| | Implementing an Electronic Document and Record Management System (EDRMS) to streamline and improve our information management processes |

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 species and the marine ecosystem as a whole.

During 2018-19, AFMA does not intend to determine or otherwise institute additional plans of management for fisheries solely managed by AFMA.

Jointly managed fisheries

AFMA develops management plans for fisheries on behalf of the Protected Zone Joint Authority under the [Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984](#).

In 2018-19, AFMA will continue to work towards implementing a plan of management for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery. The plan will support the objectives of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* through implementing a quota management system for the fishery.

Contact Us

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

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