



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



**CORPORATE
PLAN
2014-2017**



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APS Values

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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.

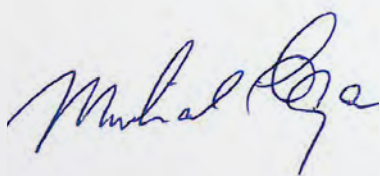
FOREWORD

Australia's fisheries production focuses on high value and export species such as lobsters, prawn, tuna, salmon and abalone. Australia's commercial fishing and aquaculture industry contributes over \$2 billion GVP annually and employs around 11,600 people (7,300 directly and 4,300 indirectly) (ABARES 2011). The challenge is to promote a profitable and competitive fishing industry while ensuring the sustainability of Australia's marine ecosystem.

This Corporate Plan sets out the AFMA's main goals for 2014-2017, the broad strategies we will pursue, main factors affecting our operations and the indicators we will use to measure our performance.

This Plan outlines how the AFMA Commission and agency will pursue our objectives to collaboratively deliver the Government's election commitments of competitive and sustainable fisheries, reducing regulation and boosting productivity, and improving stakeholder engagement.

This Corporate Plan highlights eight key goals and our strategies aimed at delivering on our legislated objectives and government policy commitments over the next three years. Key areas will continue to be delivering sustainable fisheries and preventing unacceptable impacts of Commonwealth fisheries on marine ecosystems and organisms.



The Hon Michael Egan AO FAICD
Chairman



Dr Nick Rayns
A/g Chief Executive Officer

ABOUT AFMA

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) was established under the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and is responsible for ensuring the sustainable and profitable use of Commonwealth fisheries resources. AFMA provides cost-effective management, domestic compliance, fisheries border protection and licensing services on a partial cost-recovery basis, enabled and governed by the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* and *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*, and is required to deliver certain services under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

AFMA also provides fisheries management services for the Protected Zone Joint Authority under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*. It contracts to some states for partial fisheries management services.

We have legislated functions and objectives to provide for the implementation of efficient and cost effective fisheries management consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary principle, and maximising the net economic returns for the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries. AFMA is to have regard to the impact of fishing on non-target species and the long-term sustainability of the marine environment.

In support of the objectives, AFMA's work concentrates on providing fisheries management arrangements, compliance programs, licensing services and developing operational policies and regulations based on understanding and monitoring Australian marine living resources affected by Commonwealth fisheries.

The nine-person AFMA Commission is responsible for exercising AFMA's domestic fisheries management functions and powers, including allocating fishing concessions, statutory rights and setting quotas. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for assisting the Commission, including giving effect to its decisions, and for exercising AFMA's foreign compliance functions and powers. The Chief Executive Officer is also a Commissioner.

Fishing Compliance

AFMA administers compliance programs directed towards domestic and foreign fishing vessels, covering licensed and illegal fishing activity. AFMA undertakes its foreign compliance functions through participation in the Australian Government's civil maritime surveillance and response program and outreach activities providing advice and training in neighbouring countries.

AFMA's role includes fisheries enforcement, planning, training and vessel disposal activities. The activities protect Commonwealth and state and territory-managed fisheries from illegal and foreign fishing and contribute to managing wider border security issues including biosecurity.

Fisheries management

AFMA places a high importance on, scientific and economic research to inform its decision making. It oversees research and policy, while administering fishing permits and scientific permits for Commonwealth fisheries, and recovers some costs through fisheries management levies and fees from domestic and foreign fishers. When developing and implementing fisheries management arrangements, AFMA follows government harvest, bycatch and discard policy.

Partnership arrangements are important as AFMA continues to pursue greater co-management of fisheries by encouraging AFMA's stakeholders to assume more responsibility for managing fisheries to ensure their ecological sustainability.

Cost recovery

In managing Commonwealth fisheries, AFMA applies the Australian Government cost recovery policy. The commercial fishing industry pays for costs directly attributed to and recoverable from the fishing industry, while the Government pays for foreign compliance and activities that benefit the broader community.

Review

Recently the government commissioned the Borthwick and Hawke reviews of fisheries management and regulators. While the government has yet to release its position on those reviews, together with the review of regulatory and cost recovery frameworks by the Productivity Commission and review of functions performed between commonwealth and state jurisdictions by the National Commission of Audit, the role and functions of AFMA during this corporate planning period may change.

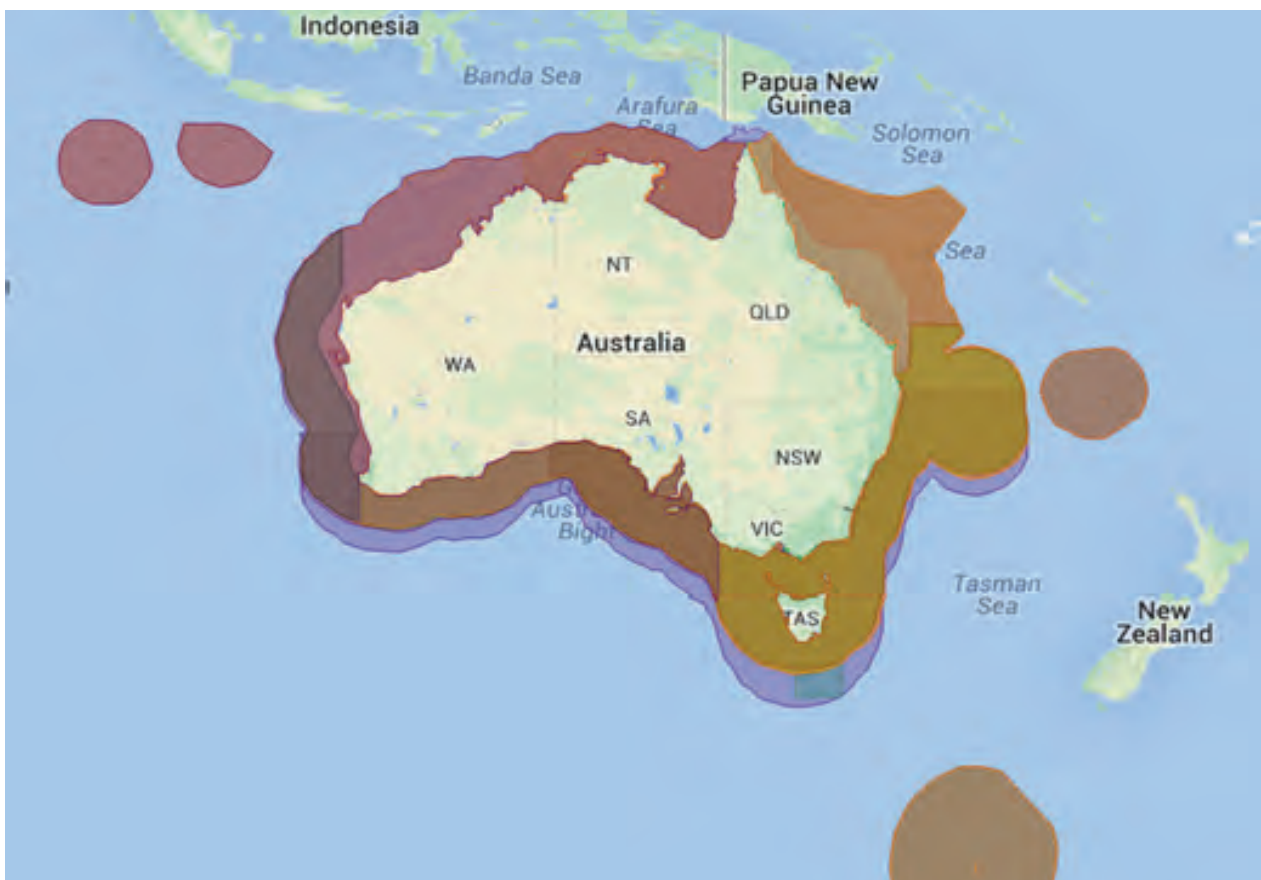
Governance Framework

The following diagram illustrates the relationship of Commission, CEO, committees and control frameworks in place or proposed by AFMA to manage risk, performance, compliance, and engagement and information management required under its fisheries legislation and the Public Governance and Performance Accountability Act commencing on 1 July 2014.



WHAT AFMA DOES

Generally, AFMA’s management of commercial fisheries is from three nautical miles offshore to the boundary of the Australian fishing zone, ensuring fishing does not take place in marine protected areas, in areas subject to closure/overfishing, or without permit. State and territory governments manage fisheries within their borders and inside three nautical miles from shore. It is common for fisheries to operate across the State and Commonwealth boundaries at 3 nautical miles and in most cases this has been resolved through offshore constitutional settlements (OCS) with authority for management of the fishery shifted to one of the jurisdictions. As a result, Australian seafood is managed under a range of different fisheries legislation, policies and approaches. In some cases AFMA has been contracted by state or territory governments to undertake certain commercial or recreational fishing management functions on their behalf. The diagram below illustrates the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) in context to its neighbours, depicting the areas within which AFMA provides surveillance along the northern borders and southern oceans in conjunction with other government agencies and the Navy, protecting Australia’s sovereign fish resources from foreign illegal fishing. AFMA also manages Australian commercial fisheries extending into the high seas.

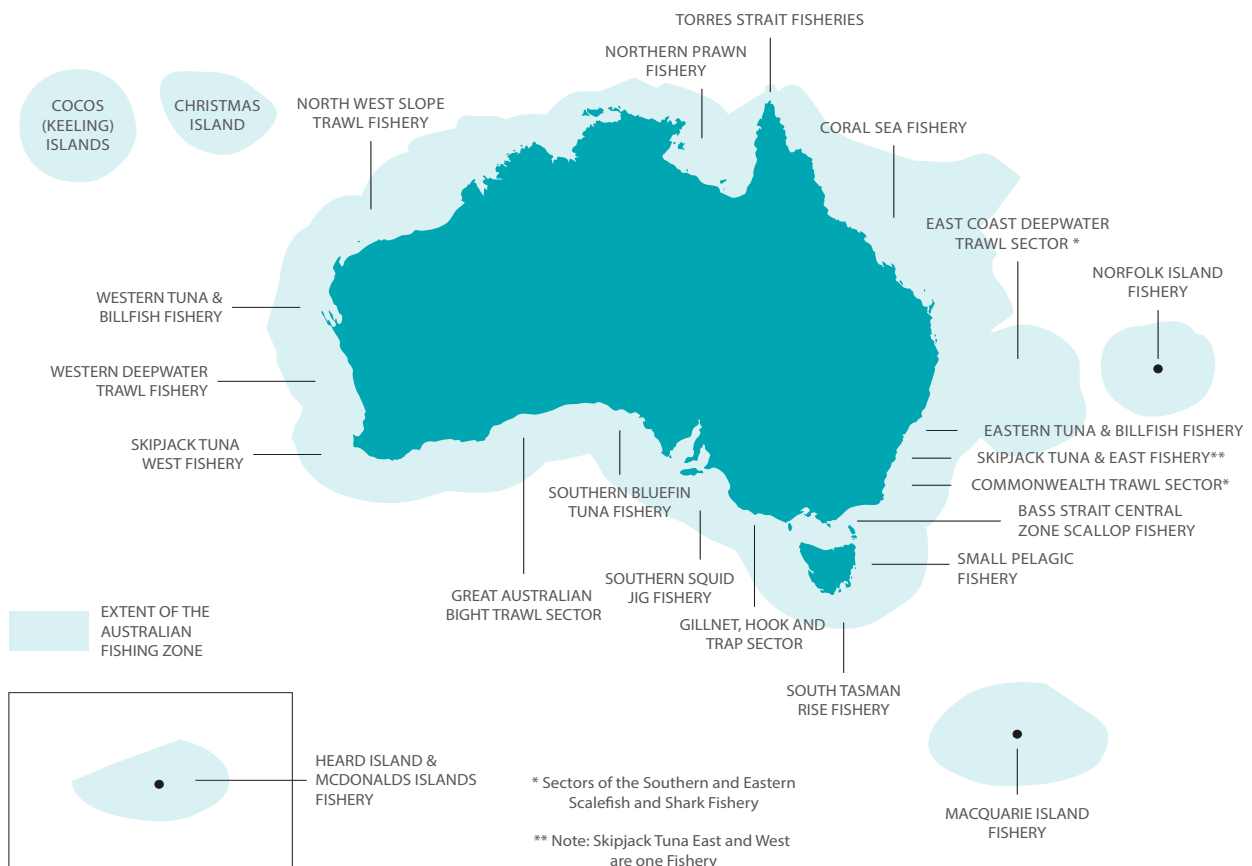


AFMA works with neighbouring flag states and other government agencies in the management and conservation of fisheries in the Pacific, Indian Ocean and Torres Strait, and the development of fisheries such as Timor Leste, to increase their independence and appropriate access to sustainable fish resources.

We seek to achieve a level of compliance at a domestic and international level, such that industry and the community can be confident that fishers are operating within the rules of each fishery management regime. Some of the measures undertaken by AFMA include ensuring licensed domestic and foreign boats comply with conditions for fishing within the AFZ, and the surveillance and apprehension of unlicensed foreign vessels fishing in the AFZ, which includes conducting deterrence and apprehension activities in tropical, temperate and cold water regions.

We work with the fishing industry to set catch limits that ensure [strong fish stocks](#) and to develop policies and fishery-specific management arrangements that minimise fishers' impact on the broader marine environment, including wildlife. AFMA works with Government harvest strategy ([Commonwealth Harvest Strategy](#)) objectives, setting out the management actions that are needed to achieve defined biological and economic objectives for a single fish stock or group of fish stocks, and through bycatch and discard controls, minimising impacts on other marine species.

The diagram below illustrates the commonwealth commercial fisheries managed by AFMA.



Commercial fishers are increasingly engaged in the development and implementation of policies and practices designed to pursue the sustainability elements of fisheries and environment legislation. This engagement takes many forms but includes:

- Participation in management committees and stock assessment exercises
- Development of settings for harvest strategies
- Development of policies and strategies for stock rebuilding, bycatch management and species-specific measures to address interactions with protected species
- Participation in the development and trial of bycatch mitigation devices
- Provision of funding for research
- Participation in data collection and fishing surveys.

In addition, AFMA co-manages some fisheries in an arrangement in which responsibilities and obligations for sustainable fisheries management are negotiated, shared and delegated between government, fishers, and other interest groups and stakeholders. This approach aims to allow industry to have the capacity and capability to play a greater role in fisheries management and administration.

Through this we ensure that our fisheries are sustainably managed, and that consumers can be confident their seafood comes from a sustainable and environmentally friendly source.

The *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* specifies AFMA's functions ([AFMA Legislation](#)).

OUR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The objectives AFMA must pursue in performing our functions are set out in the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and are detailed at [AFMA's Functions](#).



STAKEHOLDERS

When developing and implementing fisheries management arrangements, AFMA works in partnership with stakeholders, engaging with commercial fishing operators, indigenous people and communities, management advisory committees, the prescribed peak industry body and sectoral associations, recreational/charter fishing representatives, researchers, conservation organisations and others who have an interest in how Australia's Commonwealth fisheries are managed.

AFMA works closely with government agencies including: Agriculture, Environment, CSIRO, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and Australian Customs and Border Protection.

AFMA engages with stakeholder groups through management advisory committees, resource assessment groups, working groups, liaison meetings, port visits, electronic newsletters and direct mail to concession holders in Commonwealth fisheries. These partnership arrangements are especially important as AFMA continues to encourage its stakeholders to better understand the factors involved in achieving ecologically sustainable and economically efficient fisheries and to assume more responsibility for managing fisheries to ensure their sustainability. In accordance with legislation AFMA consults the public on the development of fishery management plans.

A new Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has been prepared to improve our communications and availability of information through our updated website and delivery using digital and social media tools. In line with government policy and Productivity Commission reports around regulator engagement with stakeholders, AFMA will arrange a number of forums to gauge industry views on the type and cost of red tape and regulatory burden.

Figure 1 illustrates the interrelationships with stakeholders involved in commonwealth fisheries management, noting AFMA's role is primarily one of 'regulator'.

FIGURE 1 SOURCE FISHERIES RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A diagram of market drivers and governance that influence sustainable seafood in Australia

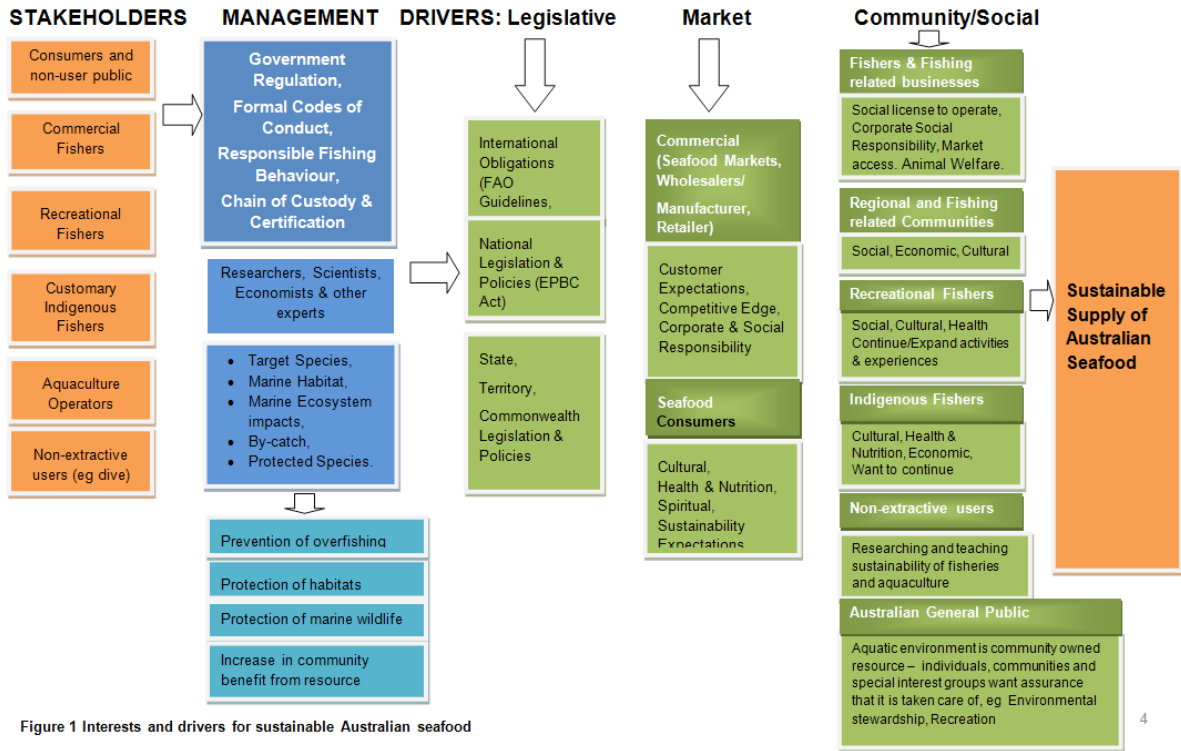


Figure 1 Interests and drivers for sustainable Australian seafood

The corporate plan has been prepared in consultation with the peak industry body (Commonwealth Fisheries association).

GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR 2014-2017

The principal goals and the strategies to be pursued in the period are outlined below. The goals are designed to improve the operations of the agency and sustainability of commonwealth fisheries, as well as progress government policy and new election commitments of *competitive and sustainable fisheries, reducing regulation and boosting productivity, and improving stakeholder engagement*.

	GOAL	STRATEGY
1	Manage key commercial species at levels that support maximum economic yield.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage fisheries in line with the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy¹ and AFMA harvest strategy framework. • Implement measures to recover remaining overfished stocks.
2	Improve the net economic returns of Commonwealth fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the development of underutilised fisheries resources. • Support the Department and fishery stakeholders in the revision of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy. • Develop and implement approaches to further reduce the amount of discarded fish.
3	Prevent unacceptable impacts of Commonwealth fisheries on marine ecosystems and organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review fishery risks and management measures under AFMA's Ecological Risk Management Framework. • Continue to manage fisheries in line with the commonwealth Policy on Bycatch (Bycatch Policy)².
4	Implement management arrangements and frameworks that are both cost effective and encourage compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make fisheries management arrangements more uniform, understandable and enforceable with appropriate penalties. • Continue to improve business processes, information flows and financial arrangements to reduce costs. • Continue to improve the effectiveness of quota management for Commonwealth Fisheries through the quota administration policy and related instruments. • Apply individual accountability in appropriate fisheries.
5	Effectively deter illegal fishing in Commonwealth fisheries, the Australian Fishing Zone and adjacent regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and enable compliance programs that target identified high risks. • Conduct capacity building programs with neighbouring countries to enhance fisheries management and governance frameworks and compliance programs. • Promote and advocate deterrence, prevention and cooperation at regional fisheries forums to deter illegal fishing.

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
6 Streamline regulations and approvals and reduce costs of compliance and fisheries management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further adapt business processes and technologies that match the core needs of AFMA and its stakeholders. • Continue to 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. • Explore opportunities to streamline fisheries assessments under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>.
7 Facilitate co-management ³ in Commonwealth fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fisheries under the Fisheries Management Act, apply lessons from co-management trials and assist the development of new arrangements.
8 Transparent and effective engagement with the community and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communications in a style usable by stakeholders through appropriate media channels. • Ensure the effective operation of Management Advisory Committees and Resource Assessment Groups, as the principal source of advice to the AFMA Commission. • Increase public accessibility and availability of scientific and other fishery management information. • Continue to work with the Department in servicing regional fisheries management organisations and other international fishery bodies



³ 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.

GOVERNMENT ELECTION COMMITMENTS

The Government announced a number of initiatives in 2013 that are expected to influence AFMA operations, relationships and management including the areas listed below. Some of these may be the subject of new policy proposals for funding, or be subject to delivery within existing resources, through shared services or by another agency:

Competitive and Sustainable Fishing Sector

- Reduce the regulatory burden on recreational and commercial fishers, and downstream processors
- Fight illegal foreign fishing and ensure the ACV Ocean Protector and/or its replacement is provided with sufficient funding
- Improve lines of communication between recreational fishers and government and improve engagement with indigenous communities
- Support science based approach to wild catch fishery management based on high quality research.

Reducing Regulations and Boosting Productivity

- Establishing a one-stop-shop for environmental approvals, including undertaking an audit of all environmental legislation and regulation at state and federal levels, to identify unworkable, contradictory and incompatible green tape
- Replace mandatory regulatory reporting requirements with independent and random audits that are backed by substantial penalties for businesses and organisations that fail to comply with set standards
- Develop efficiency performance standards against which government cost recovery agencies will be assessed
- Identify and describe the framework by which the performance of regulatory agencies will be audited
- Adoption of a risk based approach to enforcement by Commonwealth regulators as a means of ensuring that compliance burdens are the minimum necessary to achieve regulatory objectives.

National Commission of Audit

- Identify areas of unnecessary duplication between the activities of the Commonwealth and other levels of government
- Identify areas or programs where Commonwealth involvement is inappropriate, no longer needed, or blurs lines of accountability
- Continued direct involvement of government, or whether the activity could be undertaken more efficiently by the private sector, the not-for-profit sector, the States, or local government

The Minister expects AFMA, to continue to identify avenues to modernise fisheries regulation in keeping with the Australian Government Guide to Regulation (March 2014) ([PDF, 490kb](#)), and the government's commitment to review and streamline regulations in the fisheries sector utilising a risk based approach, regulating only to the extent required for each individual fishery.

The Productivity Commission (2014) has also drafted its framework for auditing the performance of regulators that may also shape changes to AFMA operations - Regulator Audit Framework (PDF - 761kb).

New Legislation Commitments

The *Public Governance and Performance Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA) comes into effect from 2014. With it comes new planning, reporting and accounting requirements, increased transparency and engagement, and

a revision of risk factors and mitigation. An analysis comparing the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* (FAA) to enable migration to the PGPA is expected. Amendments to the FAA may be required.

Stakeholder Engagement

AFMA engages with the industry through meetings and online forums including Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA), Australian Recreational Fishers Association (ARFF), fishery-based Management Advisory Committees (MAC), Resource Assessment Groups (RAG), environment NGO's, specific fishery association bodies and multi-jurisdictional groups including Australian Fisheries Managers Forum, as well as related government agencies. While AFMA activities broadly involve proactive engagement, on occasions fishing industry, environmental or other issues emerge that may divert resource effort from normal activities and require more intensive involvement with stakeholders.

The Minister supported the Productivity Commission (2013) report on regulator engagement with business including greater use of industry associations to disseminate information, ensuring regulatory information can be readily found on websites, and access to information via a multi-channel strategy. AFMA has prepared an Engagement Strategy proposing digital technologies and other tools to communicate and engage with stakeholders.

Fisheries management funding – Government, industry and community expectations regarding the standard of fisheries management arrangements are increasing and this increases the scope of tasks to be managed and researched within the context of the AFMA's budget. While the sustainability of Commonwealth fisheries is reasonably well assured through current and planned management practices, keeping management costs commensurate with beneficial outcomes to the fishing industry and the community is a constant challenge. AFMA takes a risk based approach to pursuing its objectives and government policies within the available funding.

However the 2013 MYEFO signalled a slowing economy and reduced government expenditure from 2014. Together with additional 'efficiency dividends' and its contribution to the \$1 billion red tape reduction target set by government, the departmental appropriation AFMA receives is expected to fall over 10% from 2013-14 levels.

Accordingly some of the strategies and actions outlined in the corporate plan may need adjustment though prioritisation, deferral or removal to accommodate funding shifts. Those adjustments will be reflected in the annual reviews of the corporate plan and PBS.

Cost Recovery Review

AFMA has worked with industry such as the Commonwealth Fisheries Association through its 'Cost Efficiency Working Group' and Management Advisory Committees, to monitor and review overheads and

practices to reduce costs to industry and government. AFMA has been keeping the amount to be cost recovered from industry below CPI increases year on year since 2005-06.

The Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS) is scheduled for review in accord with new government guidelines, from 2014-15. The type of activities capable of cost recovery or billable as fee for service, the attribution of overheads, and the mix of government appropriations, administered funds and cost recovered funds may alter as a result of the CRIS review.

Workforce planning

AFMA has drafted a plan examining the potential impacts of an ageing workforce, retention of critical skills, workplace health and safety, work/life family issues, and being competitive in the recruitment market. Around one-fifth of the workforce will be in the retirement age within five years, in addition to normal annual staff turnover (~5%). In addition, government initiatives to reduce the public service staffing may also accelerate the potential loss of specialist knowledge. Strategies will be deployed to mitigate those impacts, including transitioning retirements, staff development and graduate programs.

Amendments to the corporate plan emanating from these or other risk factors will be referred to the Commission and Minister.



RISK FACTORS THAT AFFECT AFMA'S OPERATIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Given the size and diversity of Australia's marine environment complete knowledge of the size and condition of fish stocks and the marine ecosystems that support them is limited. This requires a risk management approach to key aspects of AFMA's operations.

A key initiative driving the implementation of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) in Commonwealth-managed fisheries is the Ecological Risk Management (ERM) (see AFMA environmental management) framework.

The framework details a process for assessing and progressively addressing the impacts that fisheries' activities have on five aspects of the marine ecosystem:

- Target species
- Byproduct and discard species
- Threatened, endangered and protected (TEP) species
- Habitats
- Communities.

In addition, AFMA has identified the following major issues as likely to impact on fisheries management over the next five years. Our strategies are aimed at addressing these factors to the extent that our resources allow.

Economic and market factors

Australia is a relatively small player in the world seafood market and the profitability of many of our fishers is affected by the international price for fisheries products and the exchange rate. In addition the market price for some of the industry's key inputs, like fuel and refrigerants, has risen significantly in the past ten years. While these factors have impacted on the profitability of the fishing fleet and will continue to in the future, AFMA's role is to implement management arrangements that allow the industry to maximise profitability subject to these external factors.

Climate change

It is likely that Australia will experience changes in the distribution and abundance of some commercial species around its shores, particularly in the south-east and south-west of Australia and around subantarctic territories. AFMA is working closely with the Department of Agriculture and the Australian Fisheries Management Forum on the fisheries response to climate change. From this general response AFMA will apply individual fisheries actions where necessary. However, we anticipate any need to specifically respond to climate change in fishery management arrangements will be limited within the next five years particularly given AFMA's fishery boundaries are very broad.

Government Reviews of Fisheries Policy – The outcome from the Borthwick Review into Fisheries, the review of the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy, the Review of the Bycatch policy and a number of associated reviews of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* will impact on AFMA's operations and pursuit of our objectives. As a result priorities and pursuit of the defined goals and strategies in this plan may be affected.

The government has yet to announce its position and plans to progress the Borthwick Review ([AFMA Submission to Borthwick Review](#)).

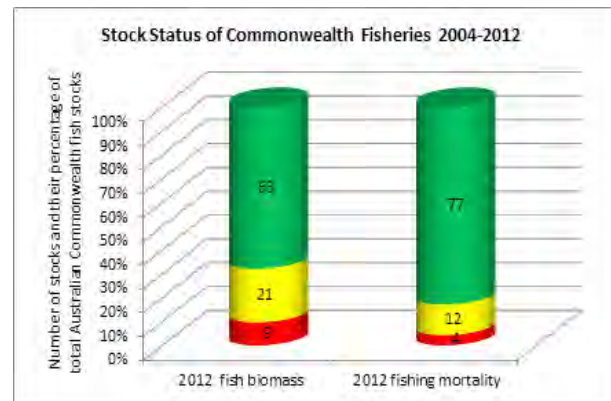
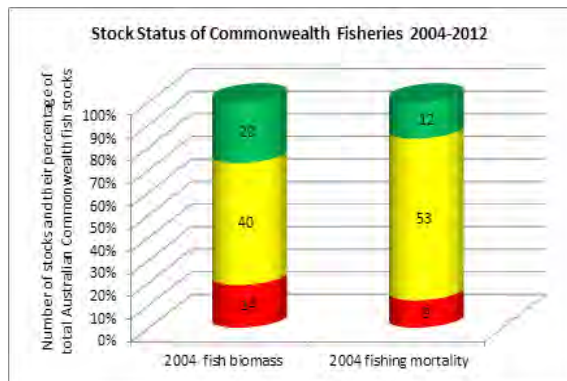
MEASURING SUCCESS

A suite of indicators will be revised and developed in conjunction with the government’s position on research, assessments and harmonisation of regulatory functions within government and between jurisdictions.

Key indicators are published by agencies external to AFMA, such as ABARES and FRDC, following stock assessments, ecosystem and TEC research. While some are published annually, trends are often normally indicative across a five year reporting period.

It is considered the relative health of fish stocks, the habitat that supports them, and the fisheries markets (based on reliable stocks being available to harvest), are the hallmarks of sustainable fisheries.

The graphics below are indicative of the improvement in fish stock health since 2005 suggesting the work of AFMA, industry and many others has been highly successful. The first bar (biomass) shows if there is enough fish in the ocean to optimise future catches. Green means that there are enough for this to happen, yellow means we’re not sure and red means there aren’t enough until the stock is rebuilt.



The second bar (mortality) shows whether the recent catch of a species is sustainable over the long-term. Green means it is, yellow means it’s unclear, and red means that it is not.

Source: <http://www.afma.gov.au/managing-our-fisheries/environment-and-sustainability/afma-managed-stocks-go-green/>

The annual operating plan lists indicators of performance against operational activities.

The Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and associated guidelines provide a framework to maintain key commercial stocks at ecologically sustainable levels and maximise net economic returns through fisheries management and applying a precautionary approach.

The following indicators are based on the latest understanding of the fish stock status, predicted future research and research needs for each fishery. For indicator 1, economically significant stocks, it shows an increase in the number of stock being on target, while (b) indicates strong science is supporting management decisions. Likewise a reduction in those not on target to meet their reference points (c) is a positive sign for these resources.

PROGRAM KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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
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	13	13	16	17	18
in (a) assessed as being on target.					-
c) For those stocks in (a)	6	6	4	3	2
that are assessed as not on target, improve the number that are heading towards their target reference point.					-
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 The top 32 fish stocks contributing to the gross value of production of Commonwealth fisheries.

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 30 Commonwealth managed fisheries and sub-fisheries have been completed covering 1184 species. All species identified as being at high risk are the subject of mitigation measures. Assessments scheduled during the reporting period will use more precautionary reference points and hence more species may be identified at high risk.

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:

Postal address Australian Fisheries Management Authority
PO Box 7051
Canberra Business Centre
Canberra ACT 2610

Phone 02 6225 5576 (direct)
02 6225 5555
1300 723 621 (AFMA Direct)

Email info@afma.gov.au

Website www.afma.gov.au



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority