 **ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN**

**2013-2014**

# reword

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# Foreword

This Annual Operational Plan sets out the actions we intend to take in 2013-14 to give effect to or further the Australian Fisheries Management Authority’s main goals as outlined in AFMA’s Corporate Plan 2013-2018.

These actions include:

* Implementing fisheries management in pursuit of sustainable and profitable fisheries
* simplifying regulation
* managing ecological and compliance risks
* continually improving engagement of industry, other stakeholders and the community in the responsible management of fisheries resources

The plan communicates how the AFMA Commission and the agency intend to pursue our objectives in 2013-2014.

AFMA’s focus in 2013-2014 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 FAICD Dr James Findlay

Chairman Chief Executive Officer

# Our planning and reporting framework

The AFMA **Corporate Plan** **2013-2018** sets out the main goals and strategies AFMA has adopted for the next five years in pursuit of the objectives of AFMA’s governing legislation.

This **Annual Operational Plan** sets out:

* actions AFMA intends to take in 2013-2014 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.

It complements and expands on AFMA’s chapter in the 2013-14 Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry **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.

AFMA’s internal performance planning and reporting structure is directed towards achievement of AFMA’s goals through the delivery of actions and services in this Annual Operational Plan.

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# Intended actions in 2013-2014

| **DRAFT Corporate Plan 2013-2018 Goals and Strategies** | |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal** | **Strategy** | **Intended actions in 2013-2014** |
| Complete the implementation of the Australian Government’s policy preference for management by output controls in the form of Individual Transferable Quota[[1]](#footnote-1) | Improve the efficiency of quota management for Commonwealth Fisheries  In line with government policy decide whether Individual Transferable Quota management arrangements should be introduced in the Northern Prawn Fishery | * Implement a revised quota administration policy for all quota managed fisheries * Determine the amended Northern Prawn Fishery Management Plan implementing revised management arrangements * Consider fishery amalgamations linked to Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) |
| Deliver sustainable fisheries, including preventing overfishing and recovering overfished stocks and improving the net economic returns of Commonwealth fisheries | Manage all fisheries in-line with the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy[[2]](#footnote-2) | * Commission assessments and targeted research to underpin well informed management decisions * Implement harvest strategies which have targets based on maximum economic yield or the best available proxy * Set total allowable catch or total allowable effort at levels that will achieve targets and prevent overfishing * Implement stock rebuilding strategies for species assessed as being below agreed limit reference points * Provide support for management of regional and international fisheries * Implement new Harvest Strategy Policy within available resources and priorities. |
| Prevent unacceptable impacts of Commonwealth fisheries on marine ecosystems and organisms | Assess risks and apply management measures under AFMA’s Ecological Risk Management Framework | * Further development of ecological risk assessment and risk management framework including habitats and communities. * Progress implementation of ecological risk management responses * Determine the appropriateness of introducing output controls for bycatch and Threatened, Endangered and Protected (TEP) species * Continue to educate fishing concession holders to encourage responsible fishing practices and raise awareness of reporting obligations. |
|  | Manage all fisheries in line with the Commonwealth Policy on Bycatch (Bycatch Policy)[[3]](#footnote-3). | * Implement new Bycatch Policy within available resources and priorities. |
| Implement management arrangements and framework that are both cost effective and encourage compliance | Where feasible make fisheries management arrangements more uniform, understandable and enforceable | * Continue to reform fishery management rules to reduce complexity, minimise cost burdens and support a vibrant and efficient industry * Engage in international meetings to ensure agreed outcomes can be implemented by Australia |
| Effectively deter illegal fishing in Commonwealth fisheries and the Australian Fishing Zone | Conduct and enable compliance programs that target identified risks | * Undertake compliance activities in accordance with priority areas established through risk assessments * Develop a compliance intelligence capacity that is fully effective * Collaborate with like-minded agencies on deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) activity and developing fisheries management arrangements and capacity building * 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 |
| Continuously improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of fisheries administration | Adopt business processes and technologies that match the core needs of AFMA and its stakeholders | * 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 * Encourage key fishing industry associations to increase the uptake of E-logs, GOFish * Continue to improve cost effectiveness of independent monitoring and data collection programs * Continue to implement the Fee for Service program * Contribute to the implementation of the Australian Government’s response to the review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* * Review AFMA programmes in accordance with a schedule agreed by the CFA and AFMA |
| Facilitate co-management [[4]](#footnote-4)in Commonwealth fisheries | For fisheries under the Fisheries Management Act apply lessons from co-management trials | * Utilise outcome from the co-management trials to maintain, and expand where appropriate, co-management arrangements with industry groups |
| Continually improve consultative processes | Enhance industry and other stakeholder roles in the management of commercial fisheries and improve public accountability. | * Stakeholder and broader community engagement through various media * Formal engagement with recreational industry and environmental non-government organisations * Establish scientific review processes for all AFMA commissioned research * Develop and implement research standards |

# 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 intended actions in 2013-2014 to further our planned goals set out in the table above, 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 (Table 1).

Table 1. AFMA Deliverables

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Deliverables** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 |
|  | Revised | Budget | Forward | Forward | Forward |
| Deliverables | budget |  | year 1 | year 2 | year 3 |
| Completed research projects including Torres Strait Fisheries.1 | Minimum of 10 | Minimum of 10 | Minimum of 10 | Minimum of 10 | Minimum of 10 |
| Complete fishery independent surveys. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Number of fisheries regulated under plans of management, including Torres Strait Fisheries. | 12 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Number of harvest strategies applied to regulated fisheries. | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Complete licensing transactions |  |  |  |  |  |
| a) manual | 1,269 | 400 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| b) automated | 3,946 | 2,500 | 2,700 | 2,700 | 2,700 |
| 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. | Note2 | Note2 | Note2 | Note2 | Note2 |
| Dispose of illegal foreign fishing vessels. | Note2 | Note2 | Note2 | Note2 | Note2 |
| 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.

# Management Plans we intend to determine or otherwise institute during 2013-2014

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.

# Measuring success

Our success in pursuing our objectives in 2013-2014 and over the life of our 2013-2018 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.

AFMA Key Performance Indicators are detailed in following Table (Table 2).

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.

Table 2. AFMA’s Program Key Performance Indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Key Performance Indicators** | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 |
| Key Performance | Revised | Budget | Forward | Forward | Forward |
| Indicators | budget |  | year 1 | year 2 | year 3 |
| For economically significant stocks:1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| a) Maximise the number of key | 21 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 |
| commercial stocks with harvest strategy targets based on maximum economic yield or the best available proxy.2 |  |  |  |
| b) Improve the number of stocks | 12 | 13 | 13 | 16 | 17 |
| in (a) assessed as being on target. |  |  |  |  |  |
| c) For those stocks in (a) | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| that are assessed as not on target, improve the number that are heading towards their target reference point. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Minimise the 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 | 90 | 69 | 66 | 64 | 63 |
| Maximise the disposal of apprehended foreign illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) vessels and suspected illegal entry vessels (SIEVs). | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| % of 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). AFMA has reviewed its budget for domestic fisheries management and set a target for levies in 2013-14 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 2013-14 of $46.3m comprising $42.24m in Departmental expenditure and $4.075m on Administered activities (for the caretaking and disposal of illegal foreign fishing vessels).

The 2013-14 Budget process has identified the following funding available to AFMA:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016–17 |
|  |  | Estimated | Estimated | Forward | Forward | Forward |
|  |  | actual | expenses | estimate | estimate | estimate |
|  |  | expenses |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | $'000 | $'000 | $'000 | $'000 | $'000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Administered expenses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No. 1) | | 4,070 | 4,075 | 5,308 | 5,414 | 5,403 |
| Departmental expenses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Departmental appropriation 1 |  | 24,999 | 26,185 | 24,165 | 24,377 | 24,703 |
| Special accounts |  | 13,821 | 14,236 | 14,663 | 15,103 | 15,556 |
| Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year 2 | | 1,776 | 1,776 | 1,861 | 1,861 | 1,861 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total for Program 1.1** |  | **44,666** | **46,272** | **45,979** | **46,734** | **47,513** |

1Departmental 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.

# Our people

During 2013-14, AFMA expects average staffing levels to be about 189 full time equivalents in total, with the majority located in the Authority’s central office in Canberra (136 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 24 staff residing around Australia (15 full time equivalents) to observe at sea fishing operations.

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:

**Corporate Services Branch**

* Executive secretariat and Communications
* Finance
* HR/records management
* Legal
* Systems development
* Hardware/ infrastructure

**Fisheries Operations Branch**

* Domestic compliance policy
* Foreign compliance policy
* Intelligence planning data management
* Compliance operations

**Fisheries Management**

**Branch**

* Demersal & midwater fisheries
* Tuna & international
* Northern fisheries
* Environment and research
* Policy
* Economics
* Log book data
* Co-management
* E-business

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 changes are tied to annual performance reviews.

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

* **Accountability**
* **Transparency/openness**
* **Integrity**
* **Stewardship**
* **Leadership**
* **Efficiency**

# 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

1. Unless there is a strong case that can be made that this would not be cost effective or would be otherwise detrimental. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Noting that the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy is currently under review and may be updated in the future, and this may not apply to internationally managed fisheries. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Noting that the Bycatch Policy is currently under review and may be updated in the future, and that this may not apply to internationally managed fisheries. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)