



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Authorisation of transhipping activities in Commonwealth fisheries

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Version Control

Table 1. Policy version control

Version	Status	Date	Change Description	Author
1.0	Draft	29 January 2018	Internal	James Van Meurs
1.1	Draft	8 May 2018	Consultation draft Commission draft	Latif Siddique
1.2	Draft	1 August 2018	Post consultation	Natalie Rivero
1.0	Final	15 October 2018	Post Commission consideration	Latif Siddique/Natalie Rivero

1 Introduction

1.1 What is transhipping?

As defined in Table 2, for the purposes of this policy, transhipping is the transfer of catch derived from fishing in the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ), from one boat to another while at sea. There are a number of reasons why transhipping activity may be beneficial for an operator, including maintaining product quality for fisheries that operate long distances from port and reducing the time between the catching and processing of fish. Transhipping has also shown benefits where there is a lack of adequate onshore processing facilities, improving the efficiency of fishing operations as it can reduce travel time and fuel costs. It may also create additional business and job opportunities in the supply chain.

Transhipping activity has occurred in Commonwealth fisheries over many years. It continues to occur in AFMA managed fisheries, however, with the exception of the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) which has a general authorisation in the NPF Management Plan, the activity is not permitted unless specifically authorised by AFMA. This is to allow for any proposed transhipping activity by a boat nominated to a Commonwealth fishing concession to undergo an assessment by AFMA on a case-by-case basis.

1.2 Purpose

AFMA's *Authorisation of transhipping in Commonwealth fisheries policy* (Transhipping Policy) sets out the key principles for AFMA when examining whether or not to authorise a transhipping activity in a Commonwealth managed fishery. The Transhipping Policy aims to provide greater certainty to industry with a consistent approach to fisheries management in relation to such activities.

The Guidelines for authorising transhipping activities in Commonwealth Fisheries (Transhipping Guidelines), outline considerations for authorising transhipping and key requirements that will need to be met by proponents prior to the authorisation of a transhipping activity in the AFZ. The requirements that will be applied to transhipping authorisations may vary depending on the fishery and the specifics of the proposed transhipping activity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other Commonwealth policies relating to fisheries, relevant legislation and Australia’s international obligations.

2 Policy

2.1 Policy, scope and limitations

This policy applies to transshipping activities undertaken by boats nominated to Commonwealth fishing concessions, within the AFZ where fish are landed to an Australian port.

The AFZ generally excludes waters inside 3 nm except where an Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) arrangement between the Commonwealth and the relevant State/Territory exists. Should AFMA receive an application that proposes to tranship inside 3 nm, as part of its consideration of whether to approve the activity or not, AFMA will consult with the relevant State/Territory prior to making a decision.

While the policy only applies to activities in the AFZ, any authorisation involving internationally managed species must be consistent with Australia’s obligations under Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and similar international arrangements.

Boats on the high seas are regulated under the requirements for the relevant international fisheries and are not within the scope of this policy.

This policy does not cover commercial or traditional fisheries as managed by the Protected Zone Joint Authority under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* and fisheries managed by State/Territory governments.

2.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, Table 2 outlines the definitions that apply.

Table 2. Relevant definitions

Term	Definition
Australian Fishing Zone or AFZ	Has the same meaning as in the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i> (s4)
Transshipping	The transfer of catch derived from fishing in the AFZ from one boat to another while at sea.
Carrier boat	The boat which receives and carries fish taken by another boat. Processing requires a separate authorisation from AFMA.
Catcher boat or Fishing boat	The boat which catches the fish and unloads to the carrier boat.
Australian boat	Has the same meaning as in the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i> (s4)
Fishing	Has the same meaning as in the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i> (s4)

2.3 Review

This policy and the Transshipping Guidelines will be reviewed after one year from commencement and thereafter every five years, or on an as needs basis.

3 Key Principles

Effectively monitored and regulated transshipping activities within the AFZ can support the pursuit of AFMA's legislative objectives to:

- implement efficient and cost-effective fisheries management
- ensure that the exploitation of fisheries resources and related activities are conducted in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- maximise the net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries.

In particular, transshipping operations can remove impediments to economic efficiency and help maximise net economic returns from Australian fisheries. Transshipping operations may reduce fuel, travel and emissions costs, facilitate an increase in product quality and add value through a reduction in time between catching and processing. Transshipping can save the loss of revenue from spoilage where a fishing boat or its refrigeration breaks down at sea.

Transshipping cannot occur without prior authorisation. Where fishery-wide authorisation for transshipping arrangements in the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) does not exist, authorisation of transshipping activities are considered on a case-by-case basis. AFMA may refuse any transshipping application that is not consistent with the pursuit of its objectives, and legislative requirements.

To best pursue AFMA's objectives, comply with legislative requirements and promote a consistent approach across fisheries, AFMA has developed the following key principles which outline AFMA's policy position on transshipping activities.

Principle 1: Transshipping activities must maintain the integrity of the catch record system for target and non-target species

In fisheries with target species managed by quota, the integrity of the catch record system must be maintained and continue to support the integrity of the quota system.

In effort controlled fisheries, such as, the Southern Squid Jig Fishery and the Northern Prawn Fishery, the catch record system must be maintained and continue to support harvest strategies and management responses in those fisheries.

For non-target species, the catch record system must be maintained so that it continues to support the pursuit of ecologically sustainable development and minimise the impact of fishing on the marine environment.

If necessary, AFMA may introduce additional requirements specific to transshipping activities to facilitate such things as traceability and to support the required management arrangements for a particular fishery.

Principle 2: Transshipping activities must be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Transshipping must be consistent with the pursuit of ecologically sustainable development (ESD), including the precautionary principle, intergenerational equity, conservation of biological diversity and promoting improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.

Requirements may vary between fisheries and boats depending on need and the proposed transshipping activities.

Principle 3: Transshipping activities must maintain the integrity of scientific and economic data.

So that Commonwealth fishery stocks remain sustainable and well managed, robust scientific and economic data collection and monitoring will be required to be maintained when authorising transshipping operations. Transshipping activities will be required to have Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and where appropriate, Electronic Monitoring (EM) systems and/or observer on-board. If required, AFMA may introduce specific data collection and monitoring requirements for transshipping activities so that the data needs required for management are met.

Principle 4: Where appropriate and possible, regulation of transshipping activities should be consistent across fisheries.

To improve equity among fisheries and provide certainty to industry, where appropriate and possible, authorisation of transshipping activities will be consistent across Commonwealth fisheries.

Principle 5: Transshipping activities must be consistent with applicable arrangements with State/Territory (OCS or without OCS) and Australia's international obligations.

With respect to State/Territory's involvement

AFMA's Transshipping Policy and Guidelines apply only to Commonwealth licenced operators fishing in the AFZ which generally excludes waters inside 3 nm. However, transshipping may be allowed in instances where there is an existing OCS arrangement between the Commonwealth and the relevant State/Territory. Where this is the case, AFMA will consult with the relevant State/Territory prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the application.

In situations where there is no existing OCS arrangement in place, applications for transshipping will require specific consideration by AFMA in consultation with the relevant State/Territory. In these cases, decisions will be on a case-by-case basis.

With respect to Australia's international obligations

Authorised transshipping activities involving catch from internationally managed fish stocks (such as those managed under an RFMO or similar arrangement) must be consistent with

Australia’s international rights and obligations in the conservation and management of fishery resources of the AFZ.
