



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Corporate Plan 2025–2028

**Including Annual
Operational Plan 2025**

Securing Australia's fishing future
www.afma.gov.au

Contents

Introduction	3
Statement of preparation by the Chief Executive Officer	3
1 Purposes	4
1.1 Our outcome	4
1.2 Our values	4
1.3 Roles and responsibilities	4
1.4 Corporate structure	5
1.5 Our objectives	6
2 Key activities	7
3 Operating context	8
3.1 Operating environment	8
3.2 Regulatory landscape	9
3.3 Competition for marine space – ‘spatial squeeze’	10
3.4 Climate change	10
3.5 Global and national economy	12
3.6 Assessment and monitoring	12
3.7 Labour market trends	12
3.8 Technology: innovating while managing risk	14
4 Capability	14
4.1 Workforce	14
4.2 Infrastructure	17
4.3 ICT capability	17
5 Risk oversight and management	17
6 Cooperation	19
7 Performance	22
8 Annual Operational Plan	26
9 Appendix A: List of requirements	27

Introduction

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority's (AFMA) Corporate Plan 2025–28 updates the previous Corporate Plan and outlines how we intend to deliver against our purpose over the next four years (2025–26 to 2028–29).

The Corporate Plan is AFMA's primary planning document. It outlines our purpose, the environment in which we operate, our priorities and activities, and the performance measures by which we will be held to account by the Australian community.

The key activities (described in section 2) and performance information (described in section 7) apply generally across the life of the Corporate Plan. These activities are not expected to change significantly in the next four years but will be reviewed, continuously improved, and updated annually. Greater specificity of actions to be taken in 2025–26 to deliver against the Corporate Plan are included through the incorporation of the AFMA Annual Operational Plan for 2025 (see section 8).

Statement of preparation by the Chief Executive Officer

I, Wez Norris, as the accountable authority of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, present the AFMA Corporate Plan for the periods of 2025–26 to 2028–29, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (PGPA Act) and Division 7 of the [Fisheries Administration Act 1991](#) (the Act). In accordance with section 72(1) of the Act, I consulted with the peak industry body, the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA), prior to preparation of this Corporate Plan.



Helen Kroger

Chairman, AFMA Commission



Wez Norris

Chief Executive
Officer, Accountable
Authority of AFMA

1 Purposes

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is established under the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* (the FAA) to manage Australia's Commonwealth fisheries on behalf of the Australian community in accordance with the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (the FMA). Our purpose is to pursue the ecologically sustainable development (ESD) of Commonwealth fisheries for the benefit of the Australian community.

1.1 Our outcome

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 fishing. We deter and prevent illegal foreign fishing in the Australian Fishing Zone by carrying out education programs, cooperative enforcement operations, prosecution of offenders, destruction of confiscated boats, and capacity building projects.

1.2 Our values

In all our relationships, we uphold the Australian Public Service values. These are:

- Impartial – we are apolitical and provide advice that is frank, honest, timely, and based on the best available evidence.
- Committed to service – we are professional, objective, innovative and efficient.
- Accountable – we are open and accountable to our stakeholders across the Australian community.
- Respectful – we respect all people, including their rights and their heritage.
- Ethical – we demonstrate leadership, are trustworthy, and act with integrity.

These values support our collaborative efforts with commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers and other stakeholders across the Australian community.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities

As a regulatory authority and non-corporate Commonwealth entity, AFMA comprises the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Commission, and AFMA staff.

The Commission is responsible for performing and exercising the domestic fisheries management functions and powers of the Authority. The AFMA Commission oversees AFMA's domestic fisheries management functions including the determination of total allowable catches (TACs) and total allowable (fishing) effort (TAEs), and domestic compliance and monitoring programs. The Commission comprises of six independent Commissioners and the CEO. Commissioners have expertise in public sector administration, natural resource management, economics, legal and governance matters, research, and fishing industry operations.

Our CEO is responsible for performing and exercising AFMA's foreign compliance functions and powers.

Our staff are responsible for supporting the CEO to meet the CEO's responsibilities under the FAA and the FMA, as well as AFMA's accountable authority under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the agency head for the purposes of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

AFMA also provides fisheries management and compliance services to the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) in respect of Torres Strait commercial fisheries. While these activities fall outside the purview of the AFMA Commission, they are undertaken under the budget, governance arrangements and performance measures in this Corporate Plan.

1.4 Corporate structure

AFMA is organised into four functional areas, with the following roles:

- Fisheries management teams: Deliver innovative, transparent, and flexible regulatory arrangements that ensure sustainability of fish stocks and the broader marine environment, while ensuring that barriers to commercial activity are appropriately mitigated.
- Fisheries operations teams: Deliver data-led, risk-based monitoring, control and surveillance and enforcement activities to support the integrity of regulatory measures.
- Fisheries information teams: Develop new and manage existing information products to inform regulatory practice in fisheries management and fisheries operations teams while administering industry-focussed client management.
- Corporate teams: Enable and expedite the work of technical fisheries branches through proactive delivery of supporting services and advice.

The AFMA Executive team, comprising the CEO, Deputy CEO, General Manager Fisheries Operations, and the Chief Operating Officer (COO), empowers the functional teams above through strategic leadership and relationship building within government and across industry, other fishing sectors and broader marine environment stakeholders.

1.5 Our objectives

We fulfill our purpose by actively pursuing, and having regard to, our objectives.

Act and section	Summary of objective ¹
<i>Fisheries Administration Act 1991 – section 6</i>	Implement efficient and cost-effective fisheries management.
	Ensure the utilisation of fisheries and related activities is consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. ²
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Where Australia has obligations under international agreements, ensure the utilisation of fish stocks and related activities in the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) and the high seas are carried out consistently with those obligations.
	To the extent that Australia has obligations under international law or agreements, ensure that fishing activities by Australian flagged vessels on the high seas are conducted consistently with those obligations. ³
	Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries.
	Ensure accountability to the fishing industry and the Australian community in the management of fisheries resources.
	Achieve government targets in relation to the recovery of AFMA's costs.
	Ensure that the interests of commercial, recreational, and Indigenous fishers are considered.
<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991 – section 3</i>	Ensure, through proper conservation and management measures, that the living resources of the AFZ are not endangered by over-exploitation.
	Achieve optimum utilisation of the living resources of the Australian fishing zone.

Note 1: Objectives that AFMA 'must pursue' are shaded grey. AFMA must 'have regard to' the unshaded objectives.

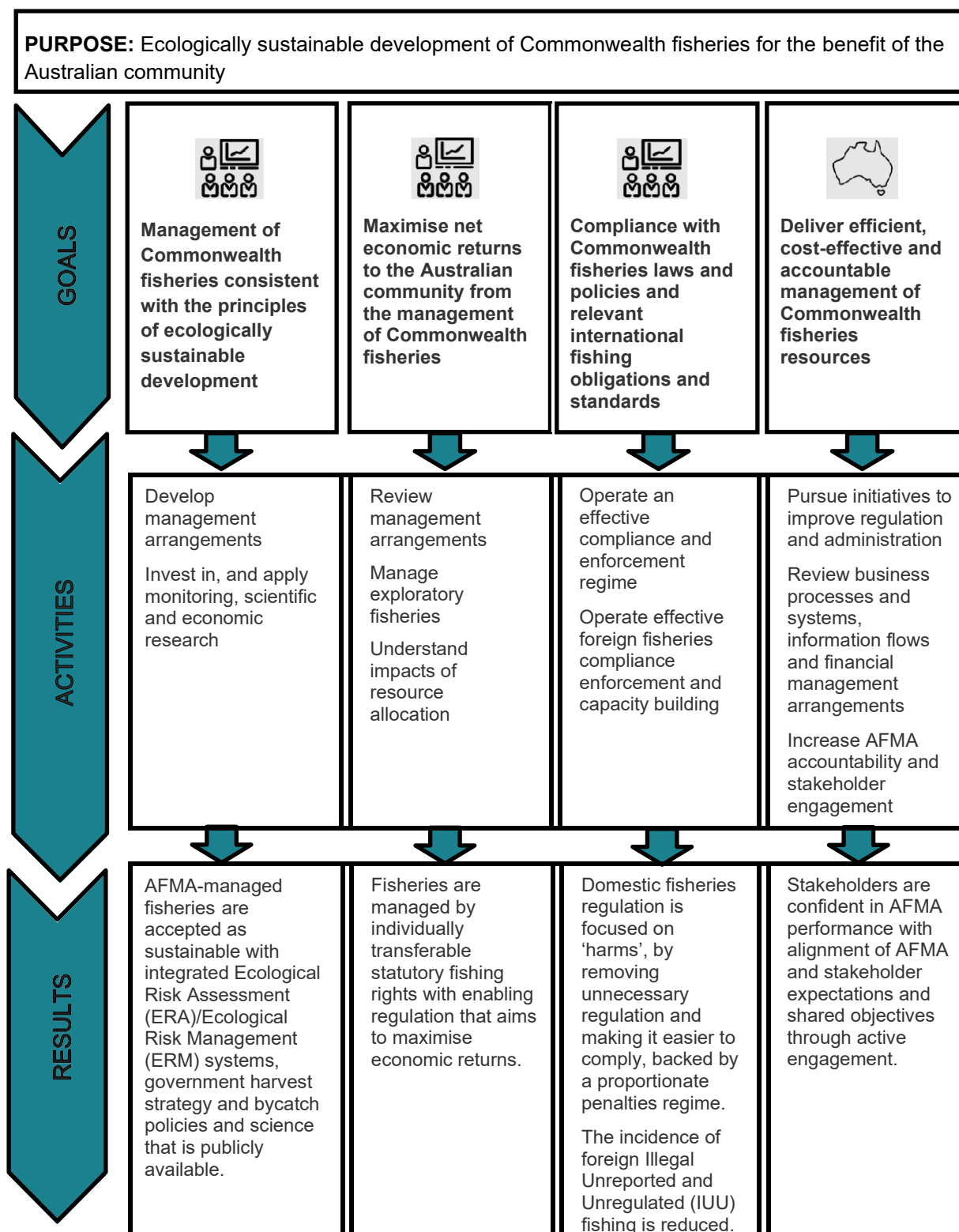
Note 2: The principles of ecologically sustainable development are detailed in section 6A of the FAA.

Note 3: This objective is listed as one that AFMA must pursue in the FAA and as one that AFMA is to have regard to in the FMA.

In pursuing our objectives, we must ensure, as far as practicable, that measures adopted must not be inconsistent with the preservation, conservation, and protection of whales.

2 Key activities

We undertake key activities to achieve our purpose.



3 Operating context

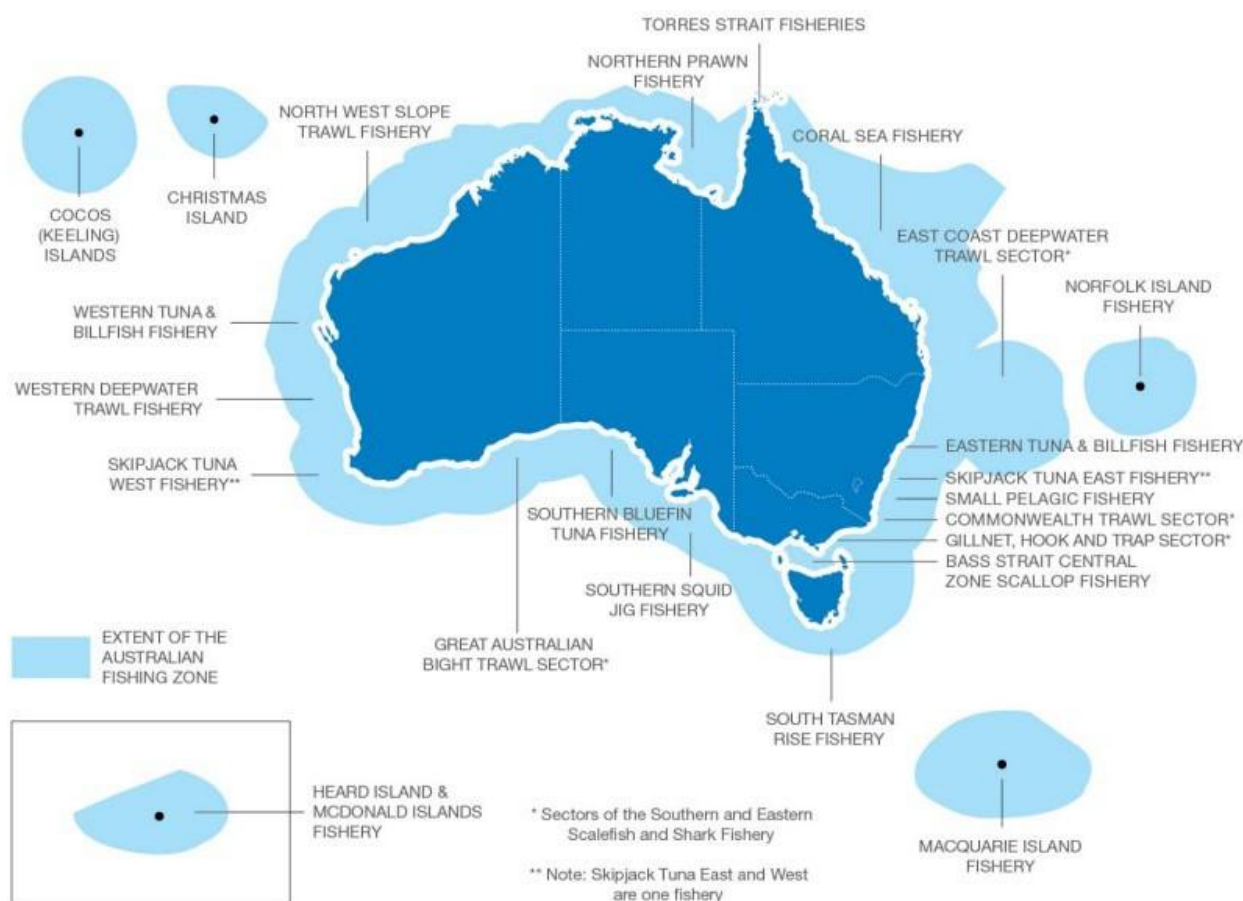
This section sets out the nature of AFMA's operating context over the four-year period of this corporate plan. It outlines how factors and changes in the operating environment may affect and influence AFMA's achievement of its purpose.

3.1 Operating environment

We operate in fisheries from the northern-most waters of Australia to Antarctica. We manage the majority of commercial fisheries from three nautical miles from shore to the extent of the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ). This includes commercial fisheries that form part of international regional fisheries management arrangements (for example tuna). The States and the Northern Territory manage recreational, traditional indigenous, coastal commercial fisheries, as well as inland fishing and aquaculture. Responsibility for management of fisheries is set out within the Offshore Constitutional Settlement arrangements between the Commonwealth and each State or Territory.

Through our foreign compliance functions, we work together with other Australian Government agencies and our international counterparts to deter illegal fishing in the AFZ.

Map of AFMA managed Commonwealth fisheries



Our regulatory activities are undertaken in an increasingly complex geostrategic environment in the Indo-Pacific. International competition for maritime supremacy increases activities to secure energy supply, sea lines of trade and communication and naval vessel access, which can compete with regulatory and regular fishing activities.

3.2 Regulatory landscape

To achieve our regulatory outcomes, we must maintain a contemporary understanding of the public sector and regulator performance. We are actively committed to minimising the regulatory burden of management and compliance, while continuing to ensure that our legislative requirements are met. We implement practical initiatives and reforms that advance deregulation efforts, including incorporating the principles of the Regulator Performance Framework (RPF) that took effect from 1 July 2021. We ensure appropriate cost recovery of all regulatory functions.

Our regulatory context is informed by the principles of regulatory best practice. This Corporate Plan and Annual Operating Plan, including the performance measures described below, responds to the requirements in Resource Management Guide 128 about Regulator Performance. AFMA will work with the relevant Minister to develop a Statement of Expectations (SOE) and a responding Statement of Intent, both of which will be built into our regular performance management and reported on in our Annual Report. AFMA's current Statement of Expectations and corresponding Statement of Intent is available at <https://www.afma.gov.au/corporate-and-reports>. AFMA has incorporated the current SOE expectations into its activities and this corporate plan.

We are funded by a combination of government appropriations, cost-recovered levies, fee-for-service charges, revenue for the delivery of services to other government agencies, research and development grants and other administered revenue.

The AFMA Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) outlines the cost of activities that we undertake, the attribution of those costs and how they are recovered. We review the CRIS annually to reflect any changes to AFMA's cost recovery model and to provide updated revenue and financial estimates. For 2025–26, approximately 36 per cent of our budgeted revenue is expected to come from cost recovered regulatory and research activities.

We seek to optimise cost recovery charges, consistent with the *Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines*, through the efficient implementation of cost recovered activities. Our cost recovery framework is underpinned by the application of the following three principles across all stages of the cost recovery process:

- efficiency and effectiveness
- transparency and accountability, and
- stakeholder engagement.

We seek to take a stewardship approach to managing fisheries regulation in line with the Government's commitment to stewardship in the Australian Public Service, and as part of the Government's regulatory reform agenda.

3.3 Competition for marine space – ‘spatial squeeze’

Commercial fisheries face significant pressure on retaining and securing access to productive fishing grounds across Australia’s marine estate. For the Commonwealth fishing industry, the main sources of pressure come from the offshore renewable energy sector (wind farm proposals), petroleum acreage release and seismic surveys, and new, expanded or rezoned Marine Protected Areas.

The Commonwealth fishing industry is concerned about the constant loss of productive fishing grounds at the same time as pressure mounts on its ability to adapt to future changes brought about by climate change (see 3.4 below).

Competing non-fishing marine activities and marine protected area management that result in the exclusion of established commercial fishing activities have the potential to devalue Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) that are the financial basis for most AFMA fisheries.

We continue to actively engage with proponents and regulators of non-fishing activities and government agencies responsible for Marine Protected Areas to ensure greater understanding of the prospective impacts of their proposed activities and decisions on the existing fishing industry and promote consistency in approach between all marine users to ensure we can continue to pursue our legislated objectives.

3.4 Climate change

Climate change is affecting Australia’s marine life from individual species to entire ecosystems. Southeast Australian waters are a ‘hotspot’ for climate-driven ecosystem changes. Valuable species that are sensitive to climate change are found in all AFMA fisheries and there is increasing evidence that climate change has already affected several commercially important fish stocks. We recognise the risks that climate change poses to Australia’s Commonwealth fisheries and we will continue ensuring our management activities respond to these risks.

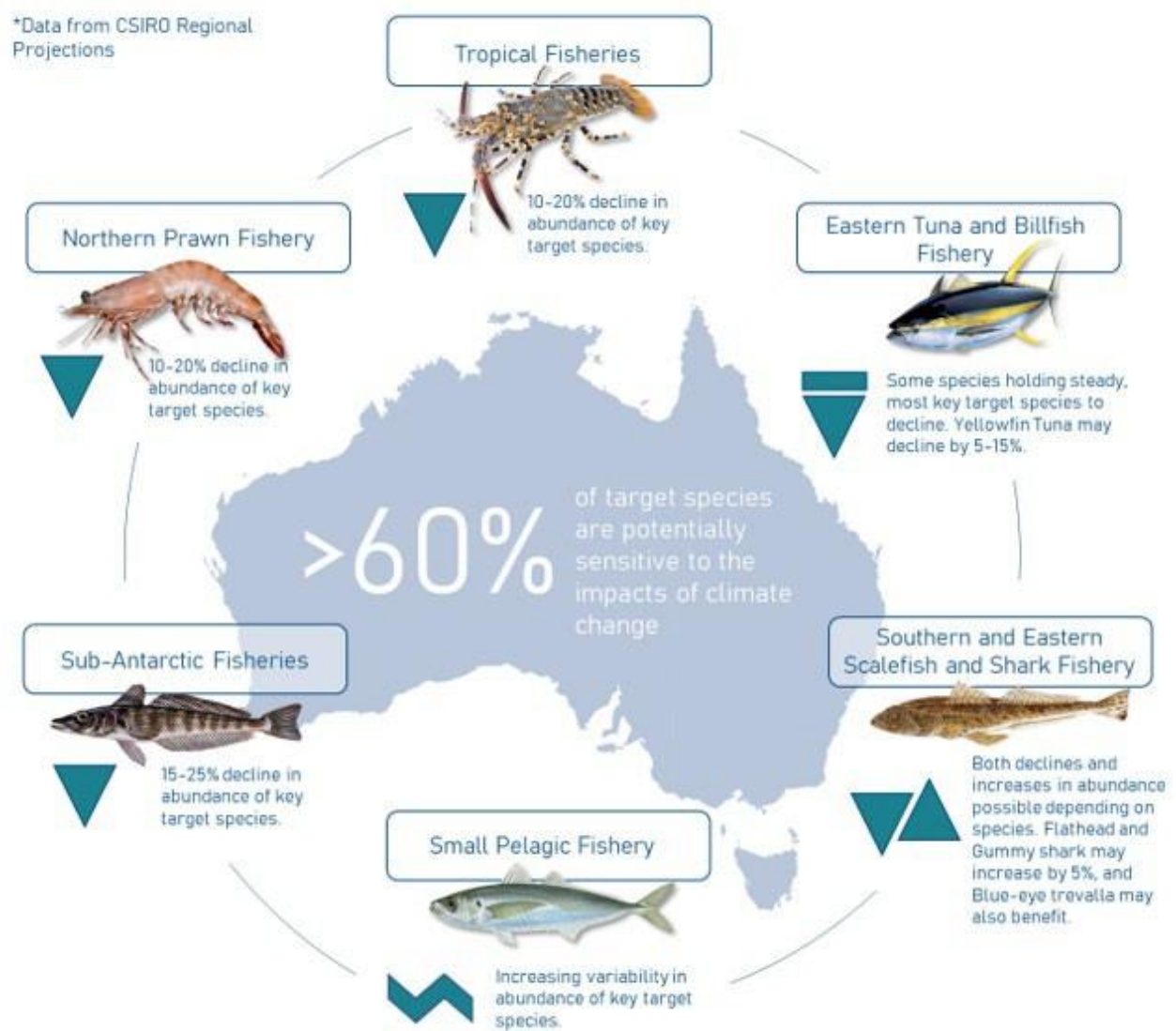
At the same time, we are mindful that fisheries management decision making alone cannot mitigate changes to the marine ecosystem where they are driven by external environmental change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projections indicate that fish production will be further affected within the coming decade to the point where management advice could be rendered invalid. We are engaging in policy discussions across government to pursue a regulatory environment that is sensitive to non-fisheries changes to species and ecosystems to ensure that our objectives remain achievable.

In 2021, AFMA and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation teamed up to develop the *Adaptation of fisheries management to climate change handbook*. This handbook is designed to help fisheries managers and operators identify effective responses to climate change by working through an evidence-based process. We are using this handbook to develop and implement operational and management adaptation options for our fisheries, in close consultation with the fishing industry and other fishery stakeholders.

Our Climate Adaptation Program aims to ensure information on climate impacts is being incorporated into fisheries management across AFMA fisheries, and that operational and management adaptation options are being developed and implemented. We are continuing to build climate considerations into our decision-making processes, including into our Commission meetings, and our management advisory committees and resource assessment groups. We will continue to use our Climate Risk Framework to inform decision-makers and advisory committees of climate sensitivities and necessary adaption to AFMA management arrangements.

Other items being routinely implemented through the Climate Adaptation Program include climate and ecosystem status reports and updates, incorporating climate sensitivity and species projections into management discussions, and collecting climate research relevant to our fisheries. Figure 2 presents generalised projections for some fisheries over the period 2020 to 2040. The Climate Adaptation Program will ensure that AFMA is positioned to detect and respond to changes as they arise.

Projected climate change footprint in Commonwealth Fisheries 2020–40



3.5 Global and national economy

Our ability to maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Australian fisheries partly depends on the success of our fishing industry. Rising protectionism, trade restrictions and economic fragmentation overseas impacts some markets for Australian seafood. Overseas economic pressures also increase the incidence of illegal fishing in Australian waters, which threatens the viability of our fishing industry. The Government provided additional \$2 million funding in 2025–26 to increase AFMA’s presence in compliance operations, support prosecution of apprehended fishers and undertake cooperative activities with the Indonesian Government. This is part of a larger program to address border and biosecurity threats from illegal fishing activities in Australia’s northern waters including increasing the presence of the Australian Border Force and supporting prosecutions by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.¹

In Australia fisheries margins continue to be affected by high costs of fuel, crew payments and availability, bait, freight, and marketing expenses. Some of these costs correlate with total seafood catch as crew may be paid as a proportion of catch, and freight and marketing expenses are related to the volume of catch.

Australia’s economic performance impacts AFMA’s two funding sources—the Australian Government contribution and the fishing industry through cost recovery levies. Increased pressure on industry-related costs results in an expectation on AFMA to limit increases in these fees and levies. The Australian Government budget is also subject to continual review against national priorities. It is likely the pressure on AFMA’s budget will continue.

3.6 Assessment and monitoring

Spatial squeeze, climate change, affordability, and global trends all impact our ability to undertake routine monitoring and assessment of fisheries. Fishery dependent data (that is, catch and effort information reported by fishers) is becoming less useful for assessment as it is less comparable due to changing management arrangements (such as closures in areas where fishing used to occur). We continue to seek more independent and cost-effective ways to provide assurance of fishery sustainability. This is a multifaceted effort, including substantial investment into trialling Electronic Monitoring systems in additional fisheries, collection of broader environmental data, routine implementation of new methods such as genetic stock assessment tools and use of ecosystem models, rather than single species assessment models.

AFMA will focus on building relationships across marine use sectors to identify opportunities for collaborative data collection, assessment and information sharing.

3.7 Labour market trends

The rise of the contingent workforce and increasing demand pressures across government sectors and industries has created a patchwork labour market that is increasingly difficult for employers, including AFMA, to navigate. The demand for digital, data, and cyber skills is cutting across the economy with consequent impacts on labour affordability and scarcity. This demand is in part

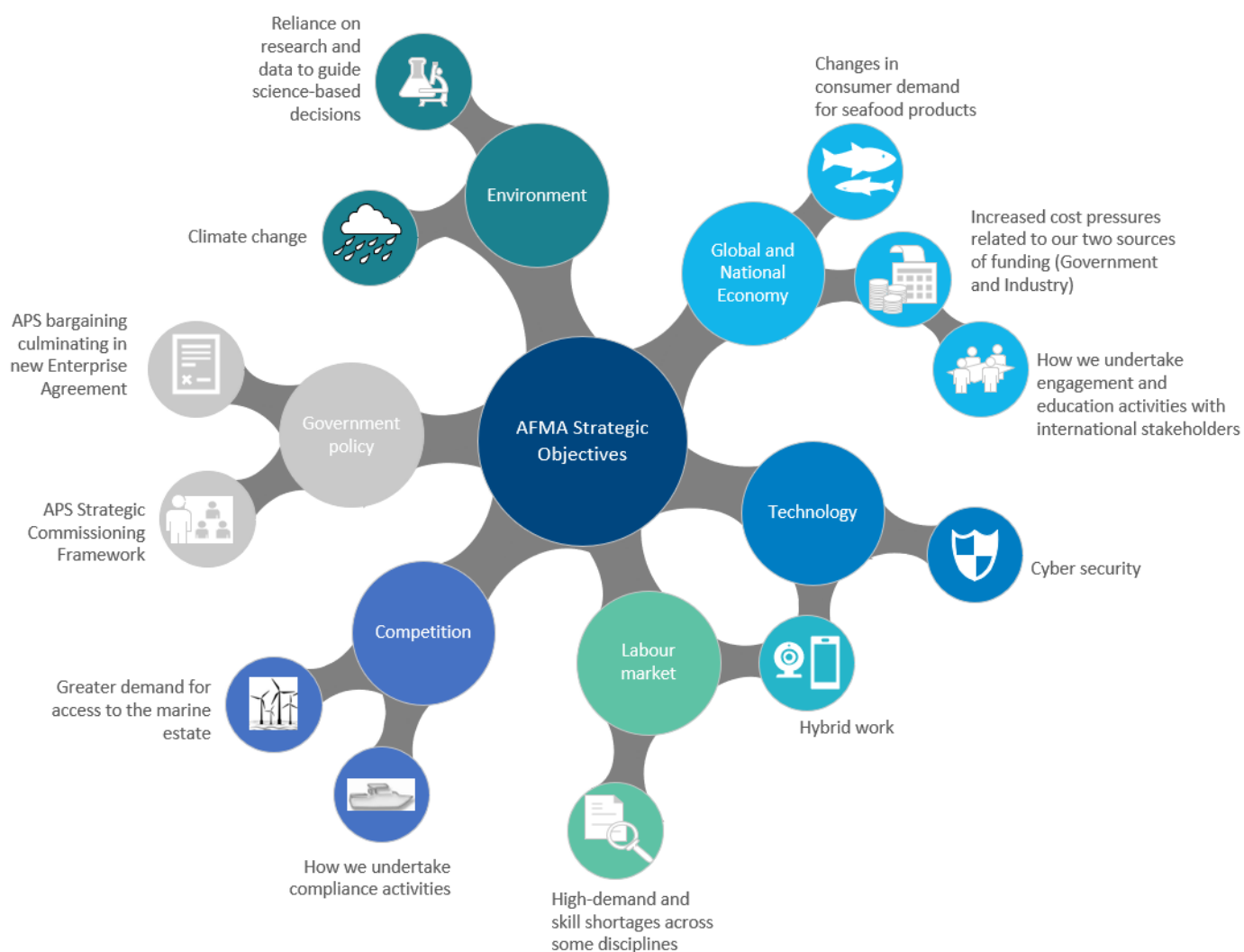
¹ Refer Budget Paper No. 2, *Budget Measures 2025–26*, page 60.
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driven by the whole of government digital and data agenda with multiple agencies competing for the same pool of talent. This challenge is amplified for small agencies, such as AFMA to effectively compete with larger agencies and industries. Our default position is to engage Australian Public Service (APS) employees wherever possible, and almost all our core roles are filled in that way.

However, contractors and labour hire companies are used in limited circumstances where APS employees are not available or suitable, such as in time-bound capability needs and/or specialised skills that cannot be attracted and hired by government due to less competitive pay rates in the APS. Almost all contractors in AFMA are in the ICT and Procurement Job Families. In 2025–26, AFMA will reduce outsourcing of core work in these Job Families in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework.

The modern career is also evolving, with much higher levels of job mobility and non-linear careers in the market, including people switching not only jobs but occupations. Australian workplaces are also seeing profound shifts in the way a ‘working life’ is understood and positioned.

External drivers impacting AFMA’s workforce



3.8 Technology: innovating while managing risk

The development and deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is accelerating across the economy and in government. The benefits of adopting AI include more efficient and accurate operations, better data analysis and evidence-based decisions, and improved service delivery for people and business. We currently use AI to enhance our workplace productivity and to support corporate and enabling functions. We are also investigating the use of AI as part of our Data Transformation and Electronic Monitoring Program.

Consistent with expectations of government to be an exemplar of safe and responsible adoption and use of AI technologies, we published our first Artificial Intelligence Transparency Statement in 2025. We will continue to review this annually or when we make a significant change to our approach to AI, or when any new factor impacts this statement.

Alongside positive change, cyber-attacks are growing in number, speed, and sophistication. Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2023–2030 sets out the action needed across the Australian economy to create a more secure online world for Australians, their businesses, and the essential services on which they all depend. AFMA continues to implement a range of strategies to ensure the protection of our systems, industry data, and information.

4 Capability

Our people are our greatest asset. We will build on our ongoing development of our capability ensuring that we can continue to achieve our purpose and proactively contribute to whole of government priorities. Investments in capability support us in upholding public sector principles and values, while building a workforce that is equipped to meet future priorities and demands.

4.1 Workforce

Over this reporting period, to address the priority areas for focus to support the capability of our workforce and people, we will:

- Understand the requirements, opportunities, risks, and barriers related to evolving the current hybrid workplace and evolving flexibility and mobility practices and innovative ways of working.
- Identify where processes and procedures can be documented to support business continuity and knowledge transfer.
- Mature our program of strategic workforce analysis and reporting that captures and reports on workforce data that is relevant to business delivery.
- Progress our recruitment plan which outlines our strategic approach to attraction and hiring activities.
- Embed our employee value proposition which clearly articulates why someone would want to work with AFMA.
- Refresh our employee onboarding approach including development of learning content activities for new starters.

- Develop a succession planning model which identifies and develops employees for critical and leadership roles within AFMA.

Our annual Corporate Training program delivers contemporary learning solutions to support our people's development. Our essentials mandatory training suite and induction ensure our people understand their responsibilities and obligations as APS employees. All our training encompasses the principles of safety and integrity.

We have an ongoing need to maintain and leverage the traditional skills relied on for compliance and regulation, corporate operations and policy work.

There is also an emerging need to develop and grow core technical and soft skills capabilities in stock assessments, digital and analytics, leadership engagement and partnership, ICT, project management, and strategic human resources.

This will be achieved by implementing workforce approaches that:

- ensure AFMA is bringing in and building the skills the agency requires through strategic recruitment and employee development activities, and
- re-think the traditional role profiles of the agency and ensures AFMA's workforce composition reflects the right balance and mix of skills.

Skills we need to maintain and build

AFMA will have an ongoing requirement to maintain and leverage existing skills related to:

Compliance and regulation

Intelligence, investigation, inspection, enforcement and supporting the judicial process.

Policy

Policy design and development, policy analysis, governance, provision of policy advice.

Science

Natural resource management, marine biology, and environmental science.

Corporate operations

Accounting and finance, administration, human resources, legal, IT, and corporate governance.

Leadership and management

Managing teams, strategic leadership, influencing, representation, and fostering productive working relationships.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder management and engagement, collaboration, facilitation, and education.

Administration

Reporting, contract management, information management, editing and proof-reading, minute taking, and scheduling.

Along with the existing skills there is a need to grow:

Data analytics

Structured Query Language (SQL), statistical programming, machine learning, data visualisation, data management, and data mining.

Business intelligence

Research, analytics, evaluation of information and data, and problem solving. As well as the use of Business Intelligence technology i.e., ESRI, and PowerBI.

Engagement and partnership

Interpersonal skills, communication, negotiation and influential communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence.

International capacity

Cross-cultural sensitivity and communication, understanding and application of legislation, geopolitical understanding, risk analysis, collaboration, networking, adaptive thinking, resilience.

Information and communications technology (ICT)

Strategy and architecture, change and transformation, development and implementation, and delivery and operation.

Project management

Planning, resource management, reporting, and risk management.

Strategic human resources

Human Resource data analytics, strategic recruitment, employee development, future ways of working, and workforce planning.

Social sciences and economics

Logical reasoning and critical evaluation, analytical and research skills, economic modelling, understanding the relationships between variables (such as policy, social impact and economic factors).

4.2 Infrastructure

We have offices in Canberra, Darwin, Waiben (Thursday) Island, and Lakes Entrance. Continual evolution of remote working arrangements will necessitate a review of office footprints in most locations. Over the next four years, we will continue to maintain owned residential and commercial property on Waiben Island to support regional staff in achieving their objectives. Significant upgrades to these properties will be undertaken using capital expenditure to extend the life of these assets and maintain a suitable work and living standard for staff. Office fit out projects will also be undertaken for regional AFMA offices utilising capital funds to modernise and consolidate workspaces.

4.3 ICT capability

Our ICT infrastructure must remain modern, functional, and secure, to enable our staff to effectively engage, communicate, and interact with a broad and diverse range of internal and external individuals, groups, organisations, and government departments.

To support modernisation and address several key ICT support, performance, and operational issues we are finalising replacement and upgrade of most of our core ICT infrastructure and networking equipment across AFMA, its data centres, and its regional offices. This includes substantial investment in moving to cloud-based systems and infrastructure.

We have interrelated ICT projects that are replacing aging and legacy technology, equipment and hardware with modern contemporary and supportable ICT systems and services. This is a multi-year technology uplift program of work, with phase one to be completed by June 2025.

The broader digital transformation within AFMA (which includes technology uplift, and our Data Transformation and Electronic Monitoring projects) will deliver improvements, enhancements, and tangible benefits to functionality and performance to support the way we operate and deliver our legislative, regulatory, research services and obligations to industry, academia, and government.

5 Risk oversight and management

To ensure we can achieve our objectives and support our purpose over the life of this plan, we are committed to effective risk management and oversight. Our internal control measures identify, assess, monitor and manage material risks related to our business activities, and help ensure that our risk posture is both appropriate and fit for purpose.

In 2025–26 our key enterprise risks, and the primary way, but not only way, that they are being managed are:

- Climate change adaptation and impact: The Commission has adopted a climate risk framework to better ensure these impacts are incorporated in fisheries decision making.
- Illegal foreign fishing: AFMA participates in the whole of government civil maritime security strategy and engages in operational response in collaboration with Maritime Border Command

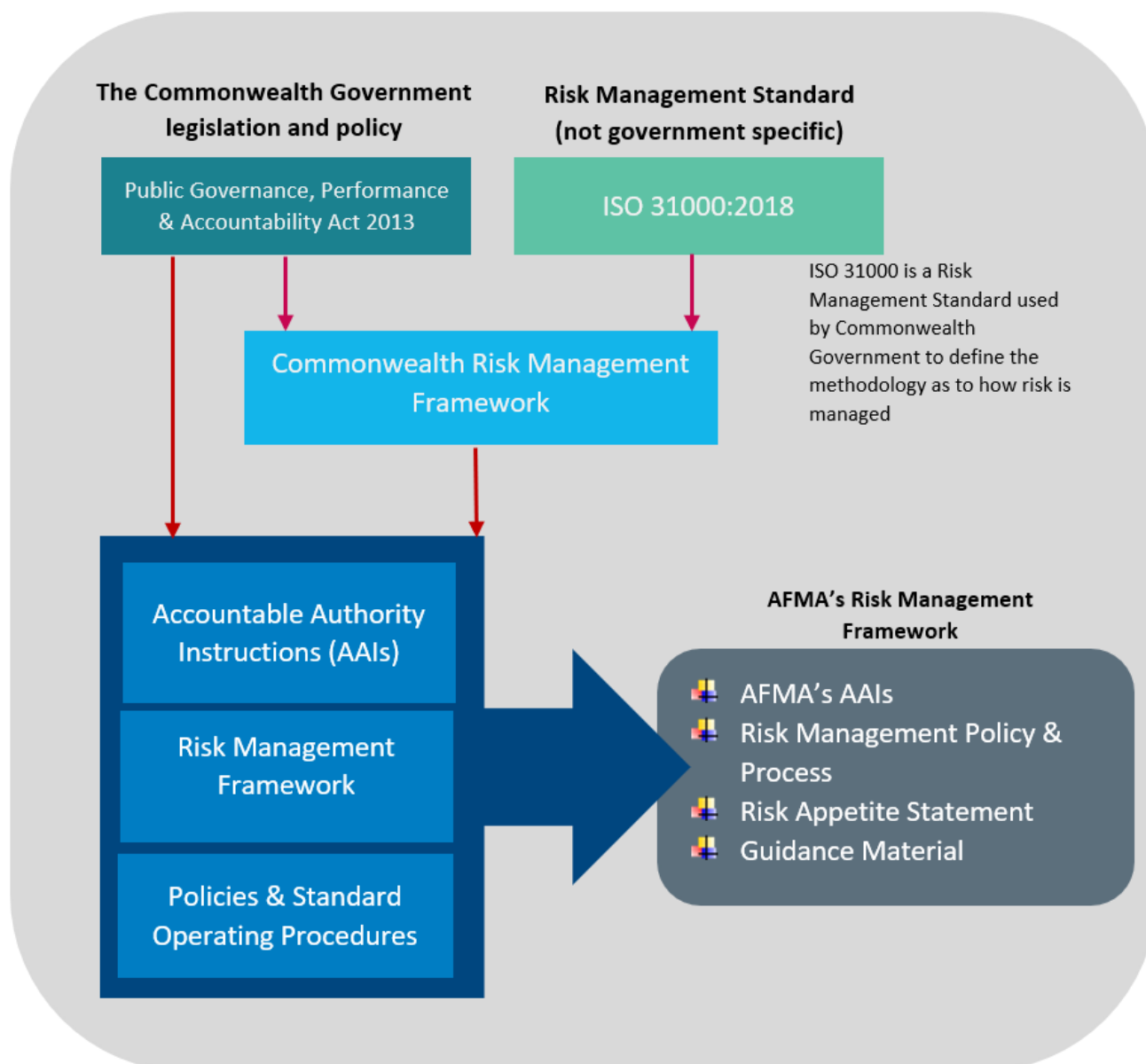
and Australian Border Force. New one-off resources have been secured to increase these efforts in 2025–26.

- Decreasing quantity and quality of fishery dependent data for stock assessment: AFMA is investigating new monitoring tools, such as ecosystem models and genetic methods, while also seeking to increase independent data collection, through systems like electronic monitoring.
- Cyber security resilience: A comprehensive cyber security review of ICT infrastructure services was completed in August 2024 to ensure compliance with the essential eight model and we are currently responding to recommendations.
- IT cost sustainment due to accrued technology debt: Strengthening digital and data governance focuses on reducing technical debt and providing a modernised basis for AFMA systems. Ongoing sustainment costs are specifically considered in solution design.
- Declining economic viability of commercial fishing fleet with associated risk to capacity to pay levies. AFMA continually reviews its regulatory approach to minimise undue barriers to viability.
- Insufficient funding to maintain essential services and meet long term strategic objectives: AFMA seeks additional external funding and explores opportunities for cost sharing with other organisations.

We manage these and other risks through the AFMA Risk Management Framework. Our internal risk appetite is addressed in this framework. Our Risk Governance Forum meets to discuss enterprise risks, including fraud risks and business continuity plans. These measures are consistent with the Commonwealth Risk Management Framework.

AFMA's Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice to our CEO on our risk management arrangements and systems of internal control. We respond to internal and independent reviews and audits as part of our continual regulatory practice improvement.

AFMA's Risk Management Framework



To help us manage categories of risk, we have developed risk appetite and tolerance statements. We recognise it is not possible, or necessarily desirable, to eliminate all the risks inherent in our work. Accepting some degree of risk in our business practices promotes efficiency and innovation. We are willing to accept higher levels of risk when the potential benefits outweigh the negative consequences of risks. At all times, we strive to demonstrate that we make informed, evidence-based decisions considering risk.

6 Cooperation

To ensure a sustainable, productive and profitable fishing industry, we engage with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), including on scope for reform and improvement and the ongoing DAFF-led reviews of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and the

Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy. This cooperation ensures our regulation is consistent with government policy and that our Minister is informed about our activities and performance in the portfolio. It also ensures that Australia's policy positions on international fisheries are informed by AFMA, and that our implementation of international measures is best practice.

AFMA also works closely with State and Northern Territory fisheries regulators to ensure that shared stocks are appropriately managed and to seek management efficiency where possible.

We work closely within Maritime Border Command, a multi-agency taskforce led by Australian Border Force, and supported by relevant agencies, to coordinate the surveillance of, and responses to, civil maritime threats including illegal foreign fishing. We work directly with neighbouring governments to improve their ability to monitor and control fishing activities in their own waters. We also collaborate with international partners to implement and strengthen regional fisheries frameworks and exchange information to address illegal fishing on a larger scale.

We engage with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to ensure Commonwealth fisheries data and impacts inform the department's policy and regulatory decision making, as well as on matters relating to environmental accreditation, such as Wildlife Trade Operation requirements.

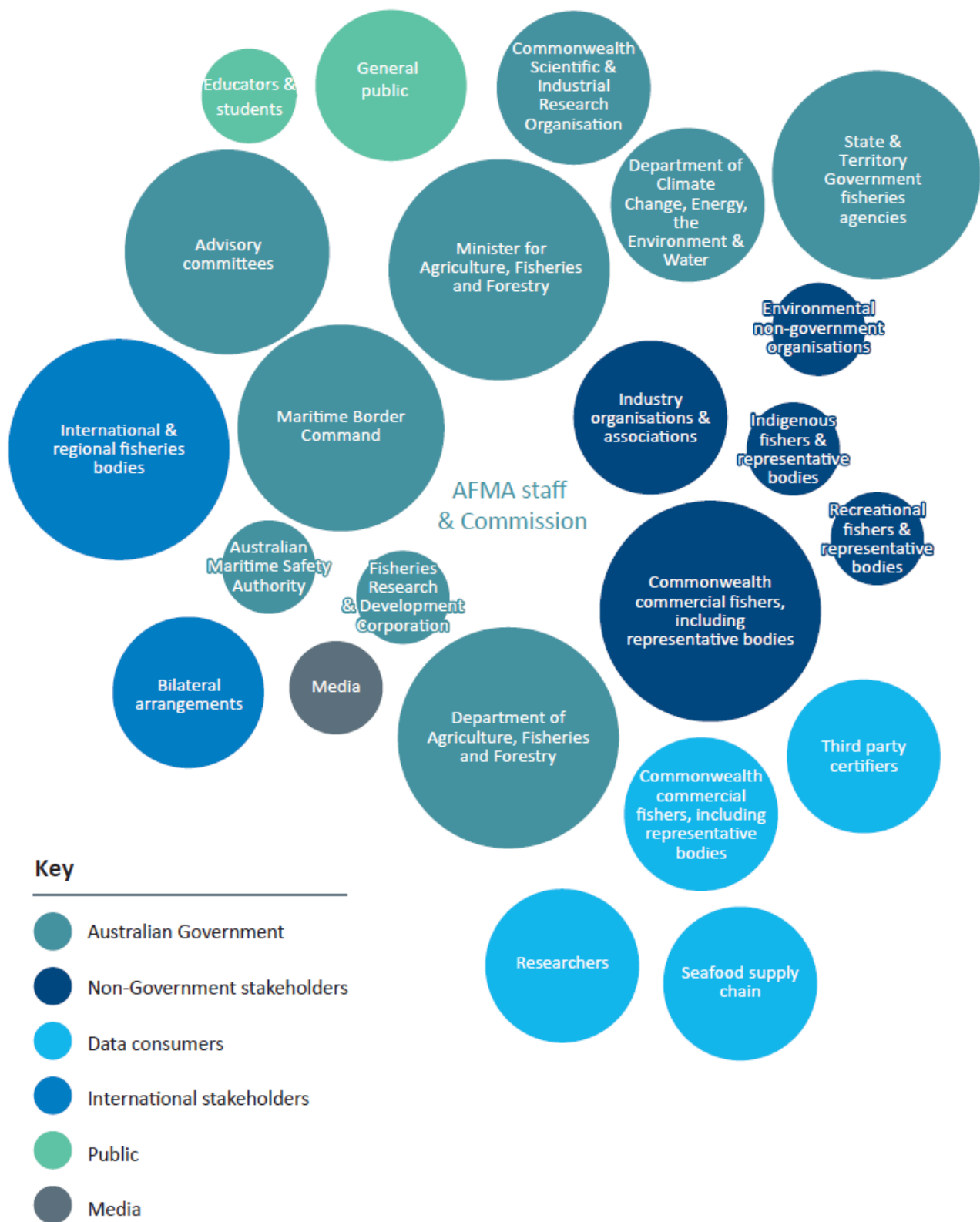
We provide fisheries management, licensing and domestic compliance services for the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*. Decisions under this legislation are made by the PZJA, which includes the Commonwealth Fisheries Minister (Chair), the Queensland Fisheries Minister and the Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA).

We maintain regular contact with the Chair and Board of the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) as the peak body prescribed under the FAA. We also regularly interact with the fishery-specific members of the CFA both on an informal basis and through formal consultative structures such as Management Advisory Committees (MACs).

We engage with stakeholder groups and harness opportunities for First Nations communities through MACs, Resource Assessment Groups (RAGs), scientific panels, working groups, commercial fishing representatives, Indigenous communities, recreational and charter fishing representatives, researchers, environment/conservation organisations using contemporary digital, web, and social media communication channels.

Consistent with section 88 of the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*, we have entered co-management arrangements where responsibilities and obligations for sustainable fisheries management are negotiated and shared between AFMA and a primary stakeholder. Such arrangements are in the Northern Prawn Fishery, the Gillnet Hook and Trap Fishery, South East Trawl, Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery and Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery.

Our stakeholders



Key




- Australian Government
- Non-Government stakeholders
- Data consumers
- International stakeholders
- Public
- Media


The larger the circle the more interest or influence the stakeholder has.


7 Performance

Our performance measures for 2025–26 are presented below. Our targets are the same for each of the reporting periods covered by this Corporate Plan. We plan to continue our incremental improvements of these measures and targets over the next four years, including to reflect and implement a new SOE and SOI following the 2025 federal election.

In 2024–25, we reported our plan to review performance measures for which we depend on timely third-party information (3, 6, 10 and 11) or for which we expected policy changes (5).


Principles of regulator best practice	
	<p>Continuous improvement and building trust</p> <p>AFMA activities: Fisheries outcomes are independently assessed and published annually, creating transparency, accountability, and a basis for improvement.</p>
	<p>Risk based and data driven</p> <p>AFMA activities: Decisions and regulatory implementation are underpinned by best available science and operational information and analysis of risk and uncertainty.</p>
	<p>Collaboration and engagement</p> <p>AFMA activities: Decisions are supported by expertise and stakeholder-based collaboration through formal and informal processes.</p>

Key activity: Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with principles of ecological sustainable development			
	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	1. Percentage of TAC determinations, or comparable measures, that are based on scientific assessments by resource assessment groups/ management advisory committees.	Greater than or equal to 95 per cent.	Greater than or equal to 95 per cent.
<p>Methodology: Analyse the total number of TAC determinations which are based on RAG/MAC scientific assessments and subsequently approved by the AFMA Commission.</p>			

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	2. The number of regulated fisheries assessed in accordance with AFMA's published ERA schedule.	As per published assessment schedule.	As per published assessment schedule.


Methodology:

Analyse the number of regulated fisheries expected to be assessed, as published in the ERA schedule available at <https://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-management/management-tools/ecological-risk-management-strategies>, and the number of actual fisheries assessments.

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	3. The number of stocks identified as overfished that have specific rebuilding actions in place.	100 per cent of stocks identified as overfished have a specific rebuilding action in place.	100 per cent of stocks identified as overfished have a specific rebuilding action in place.

Methodology:


Analyse the number of 'AFMA-only' fish stocks that ABARES reports (in the Fishery Status Reports) are overfished, and the number of stocks with a specific rebuilding action in place.

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	4. Fisheries that maintain accreditation through compliance with legislative requirements.	100 per cent of fisheries maintain accreditation.	100 per cent of fisheries maintain accreditation.

Methodology:


Analyse compliance of WTO-accredited Commonwealth fisheries with relevant legislative requirements.

Key activity: Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	5. The number of stocks with target reference points based on MEY, an agreed proxy thereof, or a multi-stock harvest strategy.	No change or increase.	No change or increase.

Methodology:


Analyse basis for target reference points for Commonwealth fish stocks.

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	6. Net Economic Return as assessed in the ABARES Fishery Status Reports.	Positive trend over rolling three-year average.	Positive trend over rolling three-year average.

Methodology:



Analyse Net Economic Return data and commentary from published annual ABARES Fishery Status Report.

Key activity: Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	7. Identification of priority national compliance risks and development of treatment programs for those priority risks.	100% of published national compliance risks have treatment programs in place.	100% of published national compliance risks have treatment programs in place.


**Methodology:**

Analyse activities to treat national compliance risks that are identified as priorities in the National Compliance and Enforcement Program 2026–28 that will be published on our website in July 2025.

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
 	8. Investigation of illegal foreign fishing in Australian waters to support prosecutions.	90 percent of briefs referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) for illegal foreign fishing offences proceed to prosecution.	90 percent of briefs referred to the CDPP for illegal foreign fishing offences proceed to prosecution.

Methodology:


Analyse the number of prosecutions undertaken by CDPP compared to total number of AFMA briefings.


	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	9. Compliance rate with Australia's international fisheries obligations that AFMA implements as assessed by IFMOs.	Greater than 90 per cent.	Greater than 90 per cent.

Methodology:


Analyse compliance rate with international fisheries obligations.

Key activity: Deliver efficient, cost- effective and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	10. Cost recovery budget.	At or below 2005–06 once adjusted for Consumer Price Index (CPI).	At or below 2005–06 once adjusted for CPI.
	Methodology: Analyse latest year total CRIS amount and CPI adjusted baseline.		

	What will be measured?	2024–25 target	2025–26 target
	11. Engagement with legislated peak body.	Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery, and reporting.	CFA is satisfied that meaningful opportunity is given to contribute to planning, delivery, and reporting.
	Methodology: Analyse CFA views and opinions on elements of AFMA’s engagement.		

8 Annual Operational Plan

 Australian Government Australian Fisheries Management Authority		Annual Operational Plan 2025-26			
Regulator Performance Guide principles	Continuous improvement, building trust	AFMA activities to meet Regulator Performance Guide principles	Fisheries outcomes are independently assessed and published annually, creating transparency, accountability, and a basis for improvement.		
	Risk based and data driven		Decisions and regulatory implementation are underpinned by best available science and operational information and analysis of risk and uncertainty.		
	Collaboration and engagement		Decisions are supported by expertise and stakeholder-based collaboration through formal and informal processes.		
Deliver regulatory services according to applicable fisheries legislation	Goals	Key Activities		Priorities	Area
	Management of Commonwealth fisheries consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development	Developing management arrangements that: - Support the implementation of Commonwealth fisheries policies including the Harvest Strategy and Bycatch Policies - Implement AFMA's Ecological Risk Management Framework - Recover overfished stocks and prevent overfishing - Ensure commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing information is used to the extent possible in decision making. Investing in and applying monitoring, scientific and economic research to decision making on fish stocks, sub-stocks, species (target and non-target species) and the impact of fishing on the marine environment.		- Invest in different science. - Integrate research efforts and findings. - Continue to implement a Climate Risk Framework across Commonwealth fisheries. - Implement a new multi-species harvest strategy for key south-eastern fisheries. - Address key constraints and outdated settings in the current policy throughout the DAFF-led review of the Harvest Strategy Policy and Bycatch Policy.	FMB FMB FMB FMB, Exec
	Maximise net economic returns to the Australian community from the management of Commonwealth fisheries	Reviewing management arrangements to take into account commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing interests when maximising net economic returns from the commercial sector. Increasing catch levels within sustainable total allowable catches (TACs) by conducting and considering implementation of research focussed on under caught TACs. Managing developmental fisheries (potentially underutilised fisheries). Understanding impacts of resource allocation between commercial, recreational, and Indigenous fishers.		- Increase fisheries profile in broader marine discussions. - Continually review domestic regulatory footprint.	Exec, FMB, FISB
	Compliance with Commonwealth fisheries laws and policies and relevant international fishing obligations and standards	Operating an effective compliance and enforcement regime encompassing: - Measures to maximise voluntary compliance. - Risk-based, intelligence driven, and targeted domestic operations. - Building and maintaining strategic links and relationships with relevant law enforcement agencies. Operating effective foreign fisheries compliance enforcement and capacity building by: - Implementing strategies to deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) foreign fishing in Australian waters and on the high seas where Australia has an interest. - Delivering capacity building programs internationally and providing technical input to support key regional and international fishing bodies.		- Increase detection and actions; decrease prevalence of illegal foreign fishing vessels; mitigate risk. - Re-task administrative funding. - Whole of government national security priorities in close collaboration with Australian Border Force, in deterring illegal foreign fishing.	FOB FOB, CSB FOB
	Deliver efficient, cost-effective and accountable management of Commonwealth fisheries resources	Pursuing initiatives to improve regulation and administration generally in the Australian Government sector including: - Exploring opportunities to streamline fisheries assessment and management processes. - Implementing revised fisheries policies for harvest strategies and bycatch. Reviewing business processes and systems, information flows and financial management arrangements through - Assessing and mitigating high financial and operating risks. - Trialling new and cost-effective methods of collecting essential data. Increasing AFMA accountability and stakeholder engagement through: - Expanded membership of management advisory committees (MACs) and resource assessment groups (RAGs). - Capability development for recreational and Indigenous stakeholders.		- Technology repair and sustainment, to enable data transformation and electronic monitoring program. - Implement Workforce Plan and Enterprise Agreement to ensure staff recruitment and retention. - Pursue efficiencies in AFMA business processes and physical footprint. - Continued implementation of recommendations from the Advisory Committee review. - COMRAC research priorities for Indigenous and recreational interests. - Recalibrate management regime in some fisheries. - Technological uplift and rollout of the expanded Electronic-Monitoring program	CSB CSB CSB, All FISB, CSB FOB, CSB FMB FMB CSB
Consistent with section 77 of the <i>Fisheries Administration Act 1991</i> , this Annual Operational Plan relates to the reporting period commencing on 1 July 2025. It sets out the particulars of the action that we intend to take in order to give effect to, or further, the goals in the Corporate Plan relating to this period. We do not intend to determine, or otherwise institute, a plan of management during 2025-26.					

9 Appendix A – List of requirements

AFMA's Corporate Plan 2025–28 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act 2013, and
- subsection 16E(2) of the PGPA Rule 2014.

The table details the requirements that need to be met by AFMA's corporate plan and the page reference in the corporate plan that corresponds with each requirement.

Requirements	Page(s)
Introduction	3
– Statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Act	3
– The reporting period for which the plan is prepared	3
– The reporting periods covered by the plan	3
Purposes	4
Key activities	7
Operating context	8
– Environment	8-14
– Capability	14-17
– Risk oversight and management, and the key risks and how those risks will be managed	17-19
– Cooperation	19-21
– Subsidiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Performance	22
– Performance measures (for each reporting period covered, with basis for assessment of performance over time)	22-25
– Targets for each performance measures (if reasonably practicable to set a target)	22-25