



Julie Collins MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Mr Wez Norris
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Dear Mr Norris

I am writing to set out my expectations of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) in managing and regulating Commonwealth fisheries.

I recognise AFMA's important role in managing and monitoring commercial Commonwealth fishing to ensure Australian fish stocks are sustainable and our fishing industry is viable now and into the future. I provide my full support to AFMA in delivering the adaptive fisheries management practices required, including appropriate compliance activity.

This Ministerial Statement of Expectations reflects government policy for best practice as described in the Regulator Performance Resource Management Guide 128 (RMG 128). This statement is to be read in conjunction with the letter of 4 July 2025 from the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance, setting out the Cabinet's expectations for regulatory reform to contribute to bolstering productivity growth. I ask that you respond with a Statement of Intent providing advice on the approach your agency will take to deliver against these expectations.

Ministerial Statement of Expectations

I recognise AFMA's responsibility for the efficient management and sustainable use of Commonwealth fisheries resources for the Australian community. I expect AFMA to maintain Australia's high regulatory standards. In doing so I expect AFMA to adhere to the three principles of best practice described in RMG 128 – continuous improvement and building trust, risk-based and data-driven and collaboration and engagement. I also expect AFMA to respond to independent reviews and audits as part of a program of continual regulatory practice improvement.

As the responsible Minister, I will work with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to ensure policy and legislation governing AFMA and the broader fishing industry remain effective and fit for purpose. I expect AFMA to continue to provide timely advice to Government and DAFF regarding the legislative and policy framework, including scope for reform and improvement. I expect this advice to be informed by ongoing consultation and collaboration with industry and other stakeholders.

I recognise that fisheries regulation, including data collection, monitoring and assessment, is being challenged by a combination of shrinking fleets and spatial contraction resulting from a range of fisheries and non-fisheries activities. I expect AFMA to work directly with DAFF and my office to ensure that AFMA is appropriately resourced to undertake its regulatory responsibilities, including where there are opportunities for ongoing efficiencies.

With respect to its regulatory responsibilities, I expect AFMA to:

- Continue to strengthen its collaboration and engagement with stakeholders, including engagement with the Commonwealth Fisheries Association as the legislated peak body, on issues such as opportunity for regulatory reform to support productivity, climate change and competition for marine space.
- Strengthen collaboration and engagement with First Nations peoples to more effectively integrate Indigenous fishing interests in advisory and decision-making processes, with a focus on AFMA's regulatory responsibilities in the Torres Strait.
- Review cost recovery arrangements, including through the DAFF-led Portfolio Charging Review in 2025 to ensure they reflect the Australian Government Charging Framework and Department of Finance Cost Recovery Guidelines and optimise cost recovery charges through efficient implementation of cost recovered activities.

In the context of the above expectations, I ask that particular attention be given to:

- Reviewing AFMA's regulatory footprint to identify and propose substantial, material and measurable actions that AFMA can implement that will directly support productivity and increase industry's operational efficiency, focusing on removing unnecessary red tape and management rigidity.
- Continuing implementation of Commonwealth fisheries policy, in particular the Harvest Strategy Policy and Bycatch Policy. I also expect that AFMA will continue to participate proactively in the review and, if required, subsequent reform of these policies, with a view to delivering on the Government's productivity agenda.
- Ensuring the interests of commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers are considered.
- Increasing AFMA's accountability and stakeholder engagement through appropriate membership of management advisory committees and resource assessment groups.
- Providing fisheries risk-based and data-driven advice in respect of proposals for alternative uses of the marine estate.
- Integrating information, data and research on climate impacts into fisheries decision-making processes.
- Exploring how an expanded electronic monitoring program across all major Commonwealth fisheries can support greater flexibility in AFMA's regulatory settings that improves the operational efficiency of individual fishing businesses while ensuring AFMA's legislative responsibilities continue to be met.
- Lead efforts to combat illegal foreign fishing in accordance with the Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy, including through engagement with Maritime Border Command, the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions and relevant Indonesian government agencies.

- Work directly with DAFF, the States and the Northern Territory to pursue enhanced integration of fisheries management, monitoring and compliance activity, including seeking single jurisdiction management of stocks and fisheries wherever possible and appropriate.

Regulator Performance

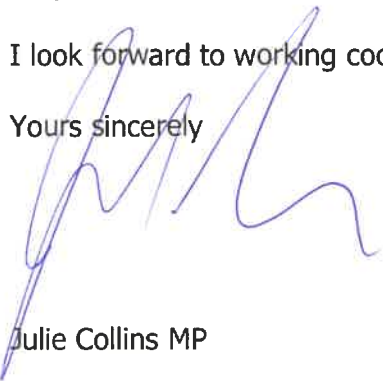
The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule) set out the Australian Government's governance and accountability arrangements for Commonwealth entities. RMG 128 recommends, as better practice, an entity's regulatory performance be incorporated into non-financial corporate reporting to provide transparency and accountability. I ask you to apply this for the 2025-26 to 2027-28 corporate planning and 2025-26 reporting cycle.

I look forward to regular meetings with the AFMA Commission Chair and CEO. These regular meetings will provide an opportunity for us to identify and discuss further areas where adjustments to policy and/or legislative settings could benefit AFMA in pursuing best practice regulation and boost productivity in the sector.

I ask that this Ministerial Statement of Expectations, the Treasurer's letter of 4 July and your Statement of Intent be available on afma.gov.au and transparency.gov.au and in the AFMA Corporate Plan and Annual Report.

I look forward to working cooperatively on these important priorities.

Yours sincerely



Julie Collins MP

2 / 9 / 2025