Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

International Compliance and Engagement Program

2025–2027

Securing Australia's fishing future

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Abbreviations

Table 1 – Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ABF	Australian Border Force
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AFZ	Australian Fishing Zone
AIS	Automatic Identification System
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CMSS	*Civil Maritime Security Strategy*
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
FFV	Foreign Fishing Vessel
FMA	*Fisheries Management Act 1991* (Cth)
FMC	Fisheries Monitoring Centre
HSBI	High Seas Boarding and Inspection. [Equivalent to System of Inspection under CCAMLR]
ICMM	International Conservation and Management Measure, as defined by the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (Cth)

Abbreviation	Explanation
IFMO	International Fisheries Management Organisation, as defined by the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (Cth)
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated for the purpose of this document is specific to foreign fishing vessels
MBC	Maritime Border Command
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
NTSA	Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement
RFB	Regional Fisheries Body
RPOA-IUU	*Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Region [Southeast Asia]*
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
TSFA	*Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*
UNCLOS	*1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*
UNFSA	*1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement*
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WCPFC	Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

1. Executive summary

Australia's International Compliance and Engagement Program 2025–27 (ICEP) is a multifaceted program to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by foreign fishing vessels (FFVs) that threaten fisheries resources in the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) and on the high seas where Australia has an interest. In implementing the ICEP, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) must pursue the objective of ensuring that the exploitation of fish stocks in the AFZ and the high seas is consistent with Australia's obligations and objectives under international agreements and national legislation,[1] as well as its legislated functions.[2]

We work closely with partners in undertaking regional engagement activities aimed at enhancing capacity in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing. Regional engagement improves technical knowledge, promotes partnerships between countries and facilitates information exchanges and cooperative surveillance activity between Australia and its neighbours. As well as safeguarding fisheries resources within the region, improving the capacity of neighbouring countries ensures that the region has the tools and networks to collectively deter IUU fishing.

The ICEP draws on the principles of regulatory compliance and seeks to prioritise limited resources against key risk areas. It is designed to effectively deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing by sanctioning vessel masters and crew, and engaging States to disrupt or cut off resupply and market opportunities to IUU vessels.

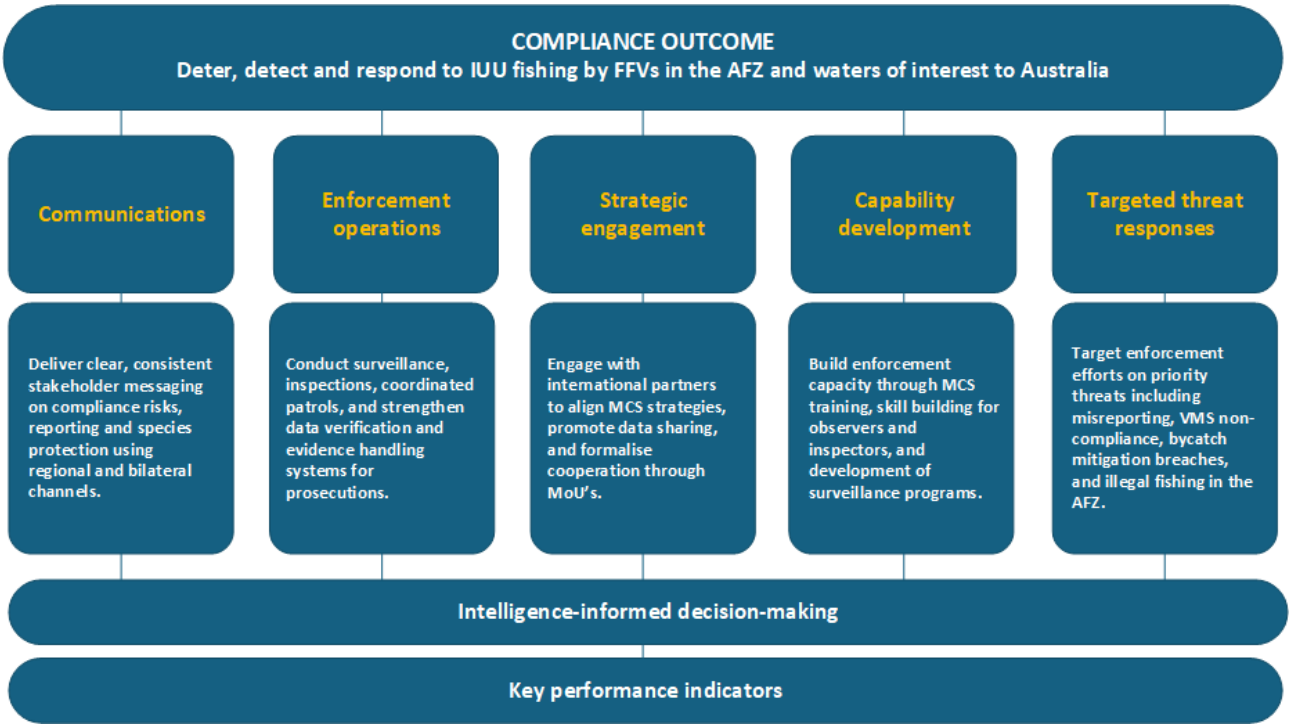
The ICEP is underpinned by an intelligence-informed, risk-based approach that is consistent with the *Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy* (CMSS), ensuring that enforcement efforts are proactive and strategically targeted to address the highest priority risks, including the high level of illegal fishing in northern waters.[3] It has five key activity components and includes periodic evaluation against key performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of these activities (see Figure 1).

[1] See *Fisheries Management Act 1991* Part 1.

[2] See *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* s7.

[3] Department of Home Affairs, 2022, *Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy*, available from https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/national-security/civil-maritime-security.

Figure 1 – AFMA's ICEP Framework



2. Introduction

2.1 Australia's multifaceted approach

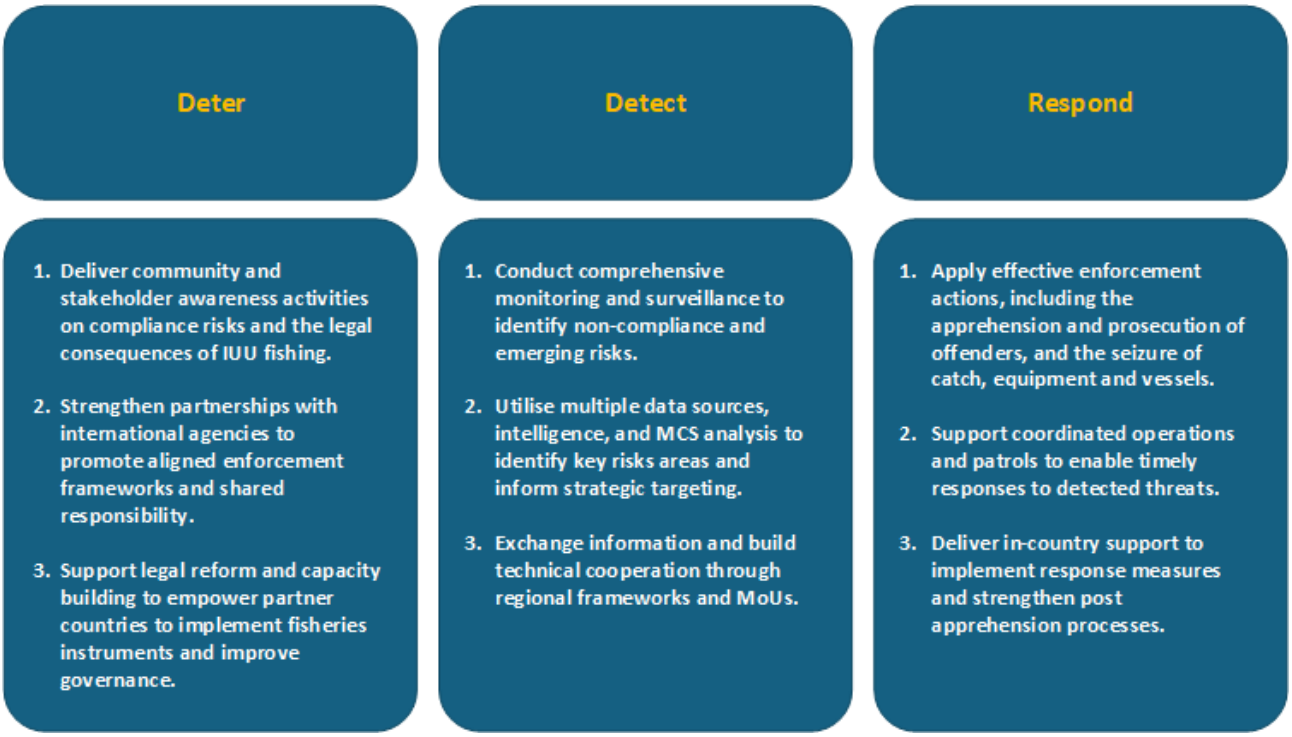
The Australian Government takes a strong stance on combatting IUU fishing. It is an ongoing threat and has long been recognised by regional fisheries bodies (RFBs) as undermining agreed approaches to conserve and manage fish stocks. States subsequently implement a range of measures either individually or as part of multilateral forums to address the challenge.

IUU fishing is dynamic and hard to quantify, and regulators must understand the assumptions and drivers that underpin IUU fishing operations. Australia has a long history of pursuing and promoting a range of measures to deter, detect and respond to these activities in the AFZ, regionally and internationally. Effective responses to IUU fishing require continuous effort and collaboration to understand the context and drivers behind it.

Australia's efforts have been successful in limiting IUU activities within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in waters where it has an interest. However, there is a need to remain proactive and to continually innovate as threats evolve.

Australia's multifaceted approach to international compliance and engagement is underpinned by the core principles of deterrence, detection and response. It integrates intelligence-informed decision-making and MCS analysis to ensure efforts are targeted, adaptive and effective (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Core principles of Australia's multifaceted approach



2.2 The importance of international compliance and engagement

Non-compliance with the rules and management measures adopted by International Fisheries Management Organisations (IFMOs) can have significant consequences on the ongoing environmental sustainability and economic viability of international fisheries. The depletion of highly migratory, shared and straddling fishing stocks is ecologically damaging and poses a risk to food and maritime security throughout the region. By ensuring the long-term sustainability and security of regional fisheries resources, the ICEP supports the economic returns of Australia's domestic fishing industry, safeguarding the viability, stability and prosperity of future fisheries operations.

Australia’s domestic management of Commonwealth fisheries relies on effective regional management of highly migratory, shared and straddling stocks in waters adjacent to Australia. Non-compliance with fisheries regulations across the broader region impacts and potentially undermines the value and sustainability of the Australian fishing industry.

IUU fishing threatens global fisheries’ sustainability and undermines regional stability. In 2024, it was estimated that between 11 and 26 million tonnes of fish are caught through IUU fishing each year, equivalent to approximately 13–31% of the total global catch[4] and translating to economic losses of up to US$23 billion annually. IUU fishing impacts efforts to manage fish stocks sustainably and contributes to widespread non-compliance, including unlicensed fishing, misreporting of catch, breaches of licence conditions, and illegal transhipping.[5]

[4] Minna Yu and Xinyu Liu, 2024, ‘A New Approach to Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing; Analysis of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies’, *Marine Development 2*(1) 1-13.

[5] Ibid

2.3 Strategic and operational coordination

The implementation of AFMA's ICEP is closely aligned with broader whole-of-government strategies and operational delivery mechanisms including the CMSS and *Australia's National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing* (NPOA-IUU).[6]

The CMSS identifies eight civil maritime security threats, of which AFMA is the lead agency responsible for coordinating activities to address the threat of illegal exploitation of natural resources (IENR). We work closely with the Australian Border Force (ABF) and Maritime Border Command (MBC) to address the threat of illegal exploitation of fish stocks and chair the Australian Government IENR Working Group.

The CMSS responds directly to the highest risk activity identified through the ICEP and aims to coordinate activities for deterring, detecting and responding to illegal fishing in the AFZ, particularly in northern Australia. It is a cross-agency strategy developed in partnership with the ABF, focusing on enhanced maritime domain awareness, operational coordination, and regional engagement. The strategy guides investment, capability planning and enforcement priorities across the Australian Government.

The NPOA-IUU is a national strategic framework for combatting IUU fishing, reflecting our domestic efforts across all jurisdictions and our work in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora to deter, detect and eliminate IUU fishing. It reflects the intent and actions promoted in the FAO's 2001 *International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing* (IPOA-IUU).

2.4 International legal framework

Management of highly migratory, shared and straddling stocks is guided by a range of multilateral and intergovernmental agreements. International treaties such as the *1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) and the *1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement* (UNFSA)[7] facilitate international cooperation regarding the management of international fisheries, fish stocks and their related environmental impacts.

For the purposes of the ICEP, the terms as defined by *the Fisheries Management Act 1991* [8] (FMA) and the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*[9] (TSFA) will be used throughout:

- 'International fisheries management organisation' (IFMO): a global, regional or subregional fisheries organisation or arrangement prescribed by the regulations.
- 'International conservation and management measure' (ICMM): a measure to conserve and manage one or more species of living marine resources that is

[6] Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2025, *Australia's National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing* (NPOA-IUU).

[7] Full title: *Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks*.

[8] See *Fisheries Management Act 1991* s4.

[9] See *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

adopted and applied, in accordance with the relevant rules of international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea:

i. by a global, regional or subregional fisheries organisation, or

ii. by treaty or other international agreement.

Australia is party to three IFMOs that create binding obligations for countries that share in the harvest of highly migratory species (as defined under Annex I UNCLOS):

- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)[10]
- Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)[11]
- Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).[12]

High Seas fisheries for non-highly migratory species are covered by equivalent organisations and binding agreements. Australia is party to the:

- South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)[13]
- Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)
- Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).[14]

In addition to these organisations, AFMA must cooperate and comply with other international organisations and RFBs, treaties and arrangements as part of its fisheries management responsibilities.

These include, but are not limited to the:

- Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)[15]
- Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region, and subsequent Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA)[16]
- Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Region [Southeast Asia] (RPOA-IUU)
- The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing.

[10] Established in accordance with the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

[11] Established in accordance with the Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna.

[12] Established in accordance with the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.

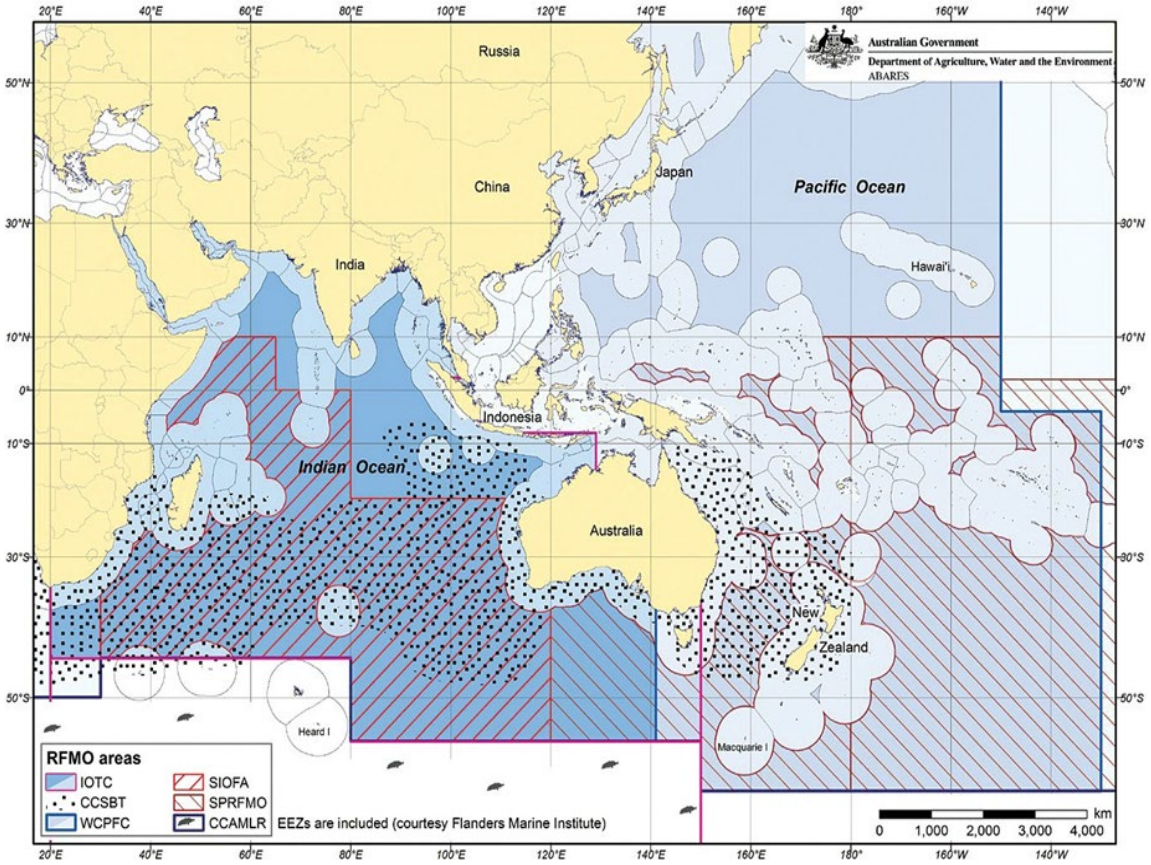
[13] Established in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean.

[14] Established in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

[15] Established by the *South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency Convention*.

[16] Full title: *Agreement on Strengthening Implementation of the Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region*.

Figure 3 – Areas of competence for international fisheries management organisations



Source: Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) using information supplied by the IFMOs included in the map. EEZ boundaries supplied by the Flanders Marine Institute, Belgium.

Australia is also party to several bilateral arrangements that provide for cooperation in fisheries, including the:

- Treaty between Australia and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea concerning Sovereignty and Maritime Boundaries in the area between the two Countries, including the area known as Torres Strait, and Related Matters
- Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Relating to Cooperation in Fisheries (1992 Fisheries Cooperation Agreement)
- Treaty Between Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Establishing Their Maritime Boundaries in the Timor Sea
- Treaty between the Government of Australia and the Government of the French Republic on cooperation in the maritime areas adjacent to the French Southern and Antarctic Territories (TAAF), Heard Island and the McDonald Islands

- Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement of Fisheries Laws between the Government of Australia and the Government of the French Republic in the Maritime Areas Adjacent to the French Southern and Antarctic Territories, Heard Island and the McDonald Islands
- Arrangement Between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Australia for the Conservation and Management of Orange Roughy on the South Tasman Rise.

2.5 AFMA's approach

AFMA must pursue the objective of ensuring that the exploitation of fish stocks in the AFZ and the high seas is carried out in a manner consistent with Australia's obligations under international agreements.[17] AFMA's foreign compliance functions are to:

- consult, exchange information and make its expertise available to foreign country entities that have similar functions
- collect and disclose information to foreign countries of possible breaches of laws of Australia or of a foreign country, and
- act in accordance with international law to deter the use of vessels on the high seas for activities that contravene or reduce the effectiveness of measures that are for the conservation and management of fish stocks.[18]

AFMA's ICEP articulates its strategies and responses to deter, detect and respond to IFF in Australian waters and on the high seas where Australia has an interest. It supports all three components of MCS to combat IUU fishing through a risk-based and partnership-driven approach that includes:

1. strengthening monitoring by supporting partner countries to adopt data reporting systems, logbooks, and vessel monitoring tools
2. building control capacity by assisting with legal frameworks, licensing systems and alignment with regional MCS standards, and
3. enhancing surveillance by facilitating joint patrols, observer and fisheries officer (including inspector) training, regional enforcement cooperation, use of maritime domain awareness tools, and targeted risk-based responses.

AFMA's ICEP is consistent with the objectives and framework of its *National Compliance and Enforcement Policy* and complements its *National Compliance and Enforcement Program,* which sets out activities undertaken by us in relation to Australian vessels.

[17] See *Fisheries Management Act 1991* Part 1.

[18] See *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* s7.

AFMA is continuing to deliver a risk-based ICEP in 2025–27 with five components:

1. Communication: Improving public understanding and awareness of AFMA's MCS activities and international engagement.
2. Enforcement Operations: Leading and supporting enforcement operations to support fisheries MCS activities of foreign vessels in the AFZ and high seas.
3. Strategic Engagement: Working closely with other Australian Government agencies in engaging with foreign States to develop and promote regional strategies to address IUU fishing.
4. Capability Development: Developing national and regional capacity to undertake risk responsive MCS operations to combat IUU fishing, delivered through the provision of theoretical training, on-the-job mentoring and participation in cooperative fisheries surveillance operations.
5. Targeted Threat Responses: Implementation of a risk-based compliance approach to facilitate the effective and efficient deployment of AFMA's limited resources to mitigate targeted risks.

2.6 Intelligence-informed decision-making

Intelligence-informed decision-making is a central pillar of AFMA's ICEP to enhance compliance and enforcement. By leveraging advanced data analytics, surveillance technology, and strategic partnerships, we ensure our resources are deployed where they are most needed. This approach enables proactive identification of high-risk activities, allowing for timely and targeted enforcement responses.

Framing intelligence not as a standalone tool but as a foundation for all compliance activities ensures that enforcement is both effective and adaptive. By embedding risk-based intelligence into operational planning and threat responses, AFMA maximises the impact of its efforts while remaining flexible in a rapidly evolving compliance landscape.

This proactive and adaptive approach supports the implementation of intelligence-informed operations in regional contexts and ensures that Australia remains a global leader in fisheries enforcement and resource management, ensuring marine resources are protected and the sustainability, security and stability of the fishing industry is maintained for future generations.

2.7 Stakeholder engagement

AFMA engages with regional partners to deliver effective fisheries MCS. These partners comprise domestic and international stakeholders, including:

- the Australian Government (for example, MBC, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and Defence)

- state and territory government agencies (such as police and fisheries regulators)
- global law enforcement agencies (for example, INTERPOL)
- intergovernmental fisheries agencies (for example, IFMOs, the FFA and the Pacific Community (SPC))
- foreign governments
- environmental non-government organisations.

3. Communication

3.1 Background

Through effective communication, AFMA aims to build transparency, promote Australia's enforcement leadership, and foster international and community support. Publicly sharing patrol outcomes, enforcement actions and collaborative efforts with partner countries helps reinforce the legitimacy of compliance activities and contributes to behavioural change. Communication also plays a critical role in building understanding of fisheries rules, supporting education and outreach campaigns in IUU fishing source countries, and enhancing the capacity of international partners to engage in and respond to MCS priorities.

3.2 Aims

AFMA's communication program has four aims:

1. Raise awareness of illegal fishing risks within the AFZ and high seas, including AFMA's responses to identified IUU threats.
2. Promote AFMA's role and international leadership in addressing IUU fishing through timely, targeted, and coordinated messaging across various platforms.
3. Demonstrate Australia's commitment to compliance by publicising enforcement outcomes, patrol activities, and regional partnerships that deter IUU fishing.
4. Support education and behavioural change in industry and community settings through public information campaigns and translated materials, helping to build regulatory awareness and improve capacity in source regions.

3.3 Methodology

AFMA uses strategically focused communication methods to promote and publicise its international MCS efforts.

3.3.1 Media releases

Media releases are prepared and distributed through AFMA's subscription lists and direct media contacts, targeting both domestic and regional outlets. These are used to highlight enforcement outcomes, such as apprehensions and prosecutions, vessel seizures, and coordinated patrol activities conducted in collaboration with international partners like the FFA and the Pacific Maritime Security Program.

3.3.2 Social media

Social media platforms are used to amplify these outcomes and reach broader regional audiences. Posts highlight key deterrence messaging, training delivery, joint patrols and regional workshops. This is highlighted in AFMA's enforcement updates on vessel apprehensions in the Torres Strait and Indonesian incursions in the Arafura Sea being widely shared through Pacific networks.

AFMA also works with Australia's regional Embassies and High Commissions to highlight key deterrence messaging, training delivery, joint patrols, and regional workshops using its social media channels.

3.3.3 Public information campaigns

AFMA supports the delivery of public information campaigns in high-risk regions, often in partnership with local agencies and regional bodies. These include 'in-country' workshops, translated educational materials, and school-based initiatives in IUU fishing source countries such as Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (PNG). These efforts help foster understanding of fisheries regulations, the consequences of illegal fishing, and the importance of legal, sustainable practices.

3.3.4 Inspections

Communication activities also support targeted education during at-sea boardings and port inspections, with fisheries officers sharing compliance materials directly with crews. These face-to-face interactions help reinforce awareness among vessel operators and provide culturally relevant messages to reduce reoffending.

3.3.5 AFMA website

The AFMA website serves as a central point for stakeholders seeking information about AFMA's compliance framework and activities. It contains key compliance information and is regularly updated to ensure content is timely and targeted. In addition to program updates, regular articles are published highlighting selected areas of activity for the international compliance teams.

4. Enforcement operations

4.1 Background

The enforcement operations component of the ICEP relates to MCS activities to address IUU fishing in:

- the AFZ – surveillance and enforcement actions to deter, detect, and respond to illegal foreign fishing in the AFZ, including Australian ports
- the High Seas – boarding, inspection and surveillance activities to deter, detect and respond to the use of FFVs on the high seas for activities that contravene or diminish the effectiveness of ICMMs, including investigation and sanctioning of Australian nationals onboard FFVs.

4.2 Aims

AFMA's enforcement operations program has three aims:

1. Enforce Australian fisheries laws by detecting, interdicting, and sanctioning illegal foreign fishing activity within the AFZ.
2. Deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing in the AFZ and areas of the high seas where Australia has an interest.
3. Conduct high-seas enforcement operations, including boarding, inspection and surveillance to ensure compliance with ICMMs and report on potential violations, further supporting the effectiveness of in-zone management.

4.3 Methodology

AFMA places fisheries officers on Australian and foreign surveillance and patrol platforms to target IUU fishing threats and meet Australia's international obligations. AFMA assesses FFV requests to access port in line with the FAO's *Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing*, and deploys fisheries officers to inspect FFVs to address risk and meet international obligations.

We maintain and review standard operating procedures (SOPs) for surveillance and enforcement activities to ensure consistency with evolving international best practices. Mechanisms also exist for their structured review and feedback, enabling continuous improvement and adaptation to emerging compliance risks.

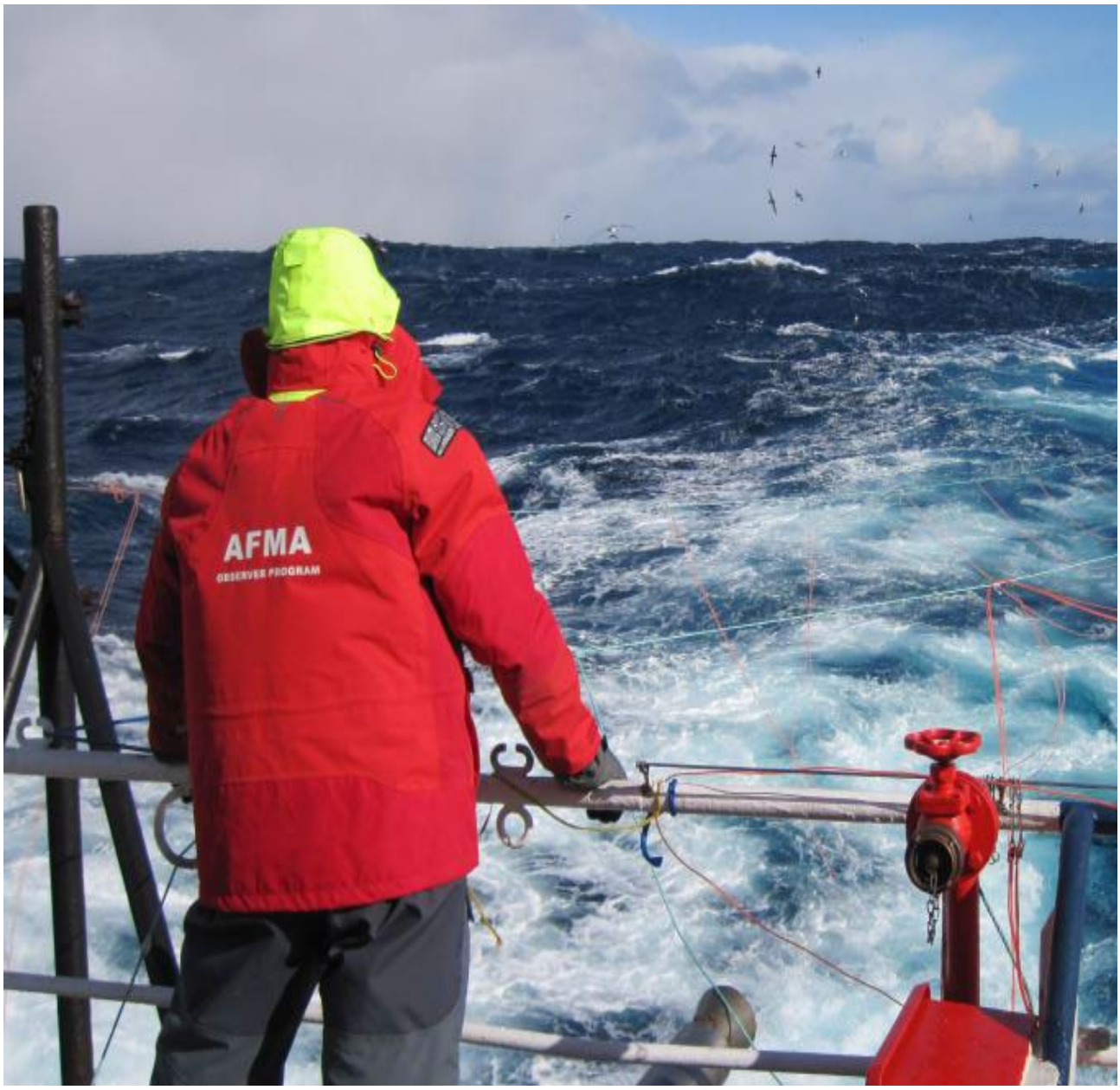


Image 1: AFMA observers play a vital role in communicating and sharing information on management measures to fishing crews. Photo copyright © AFMA

4.3.1 Deter and detect illegal foreign fishing in the AFZ

AFMA counters illegal fishing in the AFZ through active detection, interdiction and forfeiture of vessels, gear and catch as deterrents.

This program includes working with MBC in the risk-responsive tasking and deployment of surface and air assets to protect Australia's natural resources from illegal exploitation. AFMA fisheries officers regularly embark Australian patrol vessels to conduct patrols of high-risk regions and respond to sightings of suspected Illegal fishing activity. This program also includes working with partner agencies in relation to the risk profile of foreign fishing vessels seeking access to Australian ports.

AFMA, MBC and partner agencies continue to employ a range of approaches to increase deterrence and reduce the number of illegal incursions in accordance with Australia's holistic approach to combatting IUU fishing. These approaches include surge operations, increased bilateral engagement at a senior level such as through the Indonesia–Australia Fisheries Surveillance Forum, diplomatic representation, building the MCS capacity of Indonesian fisheries officers, and the development of targeted education and communication campaigns in collaboration with the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF).[19]

Close collaboration across Australian Government agencies and regional partners including Indonesia, Timor-Leste, PNG and France is essential to disrupting illegal fishing pathways and reducing recidivism.

Maritime boundary cooperation and intelligence sharing are maintained to support cross-border surveillance and risk assessments. We conduct joint patrols and exercises with Indonesia under the Maritime Cooperation Plan of Action, partnering with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), ABF, the Indonesian Navy[20], MMAF, and the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency.[21]

4.3.2 Deter and detect IUU fishing in the Torres Strait

Under the Torres Strait Treaty, AFMA supports joint operations and investigations with PNG to uphold traditional fishing rights and assist with prosecutions. Bilateral patrols are used to enforce licensing conditions and monitor compliance with catch limits, while intelligence sharing and communication across jurisdictions underpin efforts to monitor vessel activity and manage IUU fishing risks.

AFMA also chairs the RPOA-IUU Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) sub-regional MCS group that consists of Australia, Indonesia, Timor Leste and PNG, and this is an important avenue to cooperate with ATS regional partners on IUU fishing threats and for sharing information.

4.3.3 Deter and detect IUU fishing in the Southern Ocean

Australia is active in deterring IUU fishing in the Southern Ocean, particularly in its external territories of Heard Island and McDonald Islands, and Macquarie Island. AFMA works with a range of regulatory and surveillance authorities to monitor and enforce fishing regulations in the Southern Ocean, including working directly with the French Government on the cooperative surveillance of the French and Australian maritime areas in the Southern Ocean.

Australia has been a key player in the effective suppression of IUU fishing in this region through a combination of effective on-water enforcement, information sharing, port State measures, and regional cooperation involving port States, flag States, market States and States with nationals that benefit from IUU fishing activities. We continue to cooperate with partners to deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing in the Southern Ocean.

[19] Note: The Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries is the English translation for Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan.
[20] Note: The Indonesian Navy is the English Translation for Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Angkatan Laut.
[21] Note: The Indonesian Maritime Security Agency is the English translation for Badan Keamanan Laut Republik Indonesia – BAKAMLA.

4.3.4 Deter and detect IUU fishing on the High Seas

To address IUU fishing beyond the AFZ, AFMA works with IFMOs and participating members to monitor high-risk vessels and IUU listed vessels and support processes to ensure effective measures (ICMMs) are in place to control fishing activity on the high seas. Where non-compliance with ICMMs is detected, AFMA refers the cases to the flag State for investigation and to port states through port State measures Agreement provisions. Nominations to IFMO IUU lists is considered in cases where the flag State has not demonstrated effective flag State control or provided sufficient evidence of sanctions imposed.

Information on non-compliance is shared with IFMOs, INTERPOL, non-government organisations, international enforcement networks and States party to the RPOA-IUU.

Aerial and at-sea surveillance is conducted in partnership with the NSW Water Police, RAN and other international partners including Pacific Defence Quad (PQUAD) partners (France, New Zealand and the United States) and FFA members, to monitor remote and high-risk areas in the Pacific, Indian Ocean and Australia's external territories of Heard Island and McDonald Islands, and Macquarie Island.

AFMA undertakes high-seas boardings and inspections (HSBI) of fishing vessels to enforce IFMO obligations. Fishing and transhipment activities are verified for compliance and Australia actively participates on PQUAD and Niue Treaty operations to strengthen regional enforcement. AFMA also contributes to IFMO working groups and technical capacity building initiatives, supporting regional efforts to prevent and deter IUU fishing.

Image 2: AFMA fisheries officers coordinate and lead interagency patrols with NSW water police to deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing on the high seas, including Operation Nasse.
Photo copyright © AFMA

AFMA fisheries officers conduct HSBIs as authorised officers under both domestic and international law. When operating from an Australian patrol platform, AFMA fisheries officers act as the lead investigating officer, responsible for the recording and assessment of compliance with relevant ICMMs. Outcomes of the HSBIs are reported to the flag State of the fishing vessel for information and further action where appropriate. A copy of this report is also provided to the relevant IFMO secretariat and is reviewed annually by the respective IFMO compliance committees.

Coordinated activities are undertaken throughout the year, such as Operation Nasse, an annual multilateral maritime surveillance operation involving France, New Zealand, the United States of America, Australia and Pacific Island countries. Operation Nasse works to deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing vessels not complying with ICMMs on the high seas of the western and central Pacific Ocean.

5. Capability development

5.1 Background

Under the FMA, a function of AFMA is to provide technical expertise in fisheries management to partners, including other countries,[22] consistent with obligations relating to the international cooperation on the conservation and management of marine living resources.[23] We continue to invest in training and development, recognising that skilled personnel are central to achieving effective MCS outcomes.

AFMA has a long history of engagement and capability development activities with international partners and gives recognition to the special requirements of developing States. Capacity building activities are directed towards building national and regional capacity to undertake risk-responsive MCS operations to deter IUU fishing. AFMA fisheries officers provide theoretical training, on-the-job mentoring and participate in cooperative fisheries surveillance operations in support of broader Australian Government initiatives such as the Defence-led Pacific Maritime Security Program.

5.2 Aims

AFMA's capability development program has four aims:

1. Enhance international and regional cooperation to support interagency collaboration, knowledge exchange and coordinated compliance.
2. Build operational capacity of national fisheries authorities, regional organisations and enforcement personnel in the Pacific and Southeast Asia through targeted MCS training, mentoring and real-time operational support.

[22] See *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* s7(1)(g).

[23] See, for example, UNCLOS Art 118 and UNFSA Art 8.

3. Improve technical expertise of MCS officers through delivery of recognised training programs, in-country capacity building and practical surveillance support for effective compliance operations.
4. Promote consistent and effective MCS frameworks aligned with harmonised national standards, and regional and international frameworks, with a focus on the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

5.3 Methodology

AFMA works closely across Australian Government, regional and intergovernmental partners to plan cooperative capability development activities across a range of oceans and jurisdictions. Our priority areas are the Pacific and Southeast Asia, delivering international capability development and technical assistance through a structured approach that manages and assesses requests from regional partners to ensure alignment with agency priorities and operational capacity. AFMA works closely with its partners to assess these requests for MCS assistance and ensure that any support provided aligns with Australia's priorities and the operational capacity of AFMA.

Key training and capacity building activities delivered by AFMA fisheries officers include:

- Fisheries MCS in Southeast Asia Course delivered in partnership with Nha Trang University, Vietnam.
- Certificate IV in Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance delivered through the University of the South Pacific.
- Certificate IV in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Compliance, delivered through the University of the South Pacific in collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC).
- Responding to requests for technical assistance from FFA members, including via the NTSA, which includes training in HSBI procedures, VMS, MDA and fisheries intelligence analysis.
- Responding to requests for technical assistance from southeast Asian countries through the *Combating IUU Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia Program.* [24]

AFMA works to reinforce the theoretical training through participation in cooperative enforcement activities coordinated by the FFA Secretariat. Involvement in these operations includes embedding a fisheries officer in the FFA Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre in Honiara and embarking fisheries officers on FFA member patrol platforms. Under these arrangements, AFMA fisheries officers adopt a training and mentorship role, assisting boarding parties with fisheries inspections either at sea or in port.

[24] DAFF, 2023, 'Combating IUU Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia Program', DAFF website.

Under the *Combating IUU Fishing and Promoting Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia Program* managed by the DAFF, AFMA delivers a range of MCS capacity building initiatives to partner countries in Southeast Asia. This includes the implementation of regional fisheries MCS training courses and targeted MCS capacity building support to address IUU fishing.

AFMA works closely with Australian Government, regional and intergovernmental partners to plan cooperative capability development activities and maintains the ability to rapidly deploy fisheries officers internationally to support other countries in the investigation of high-priority issues.

Image 3: AFMA fisheries officers lead and participate in capacity building workshops with regional and international partners to deter IUU fishing and promote voluntary compliance.
Photo copyright © AFMA

6. Strategic engagement

6.1 Background

Stakeholder engagement is critical to promoting compliance and sustainable fisheries management. We work with other Australian Government agencies to develop and advance regional strategies that address IUU fishing. Engagement with IFMOs and other international bodies ensures Australia's fisheries are managed in line with global standards, supporting continuous improvement in enforcement actions across the AFZ and adjacent regions, especially for highly migratory, shared and straddling stocks.

AFMA continues to contribute to these international processes by working with relevant lead agencies for international fisheries engagement to ensure domestic arrangements are consistent with international obligations. We will target engagement to ensure the long-term sustainability of Australia's fish stocks and viability of the Australian fishing industry.

6.2 Aims

AFMA's strategic engagement program has five aims:

1. Support collaboration with Australian Government agencies and engagement in key international settings to deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing.
2. Strengthen fisheries management and ICMMs across key regional and international forums.
3. Advance collaborative approaches to deter IUU fishing in areas where Australia has an interest.
4. Strengthen partnerships with international government, and non-government stakeholders to address shared IUU threats.
5. Support the development of consistent and effective MCS standards compatible with existing arrangements.

6.3 Methodology

AFMA supports Australia's engagement at bilateral and multilateral international meetings to ensure the continued development and strengthening of measures to deter, detect and respond to IUU fishing. This support includes:

- sharing information on fisheries management and compliance approaches
- developing or commenting on new or revised proposals

- chairing and participating in working groups
- monitoring high-risk fishing vessels
- identifying emerging or potential IUU fishing threats.

We work closely with FFA members to coordinate joint negotiating positions in IFMOs.

AFMA contributes to Australia's annual reports to IFMOs and RFBs (including the FFA) on the implementation of ICMMs and international agreements. We continue to support IFMO working groups including electronic reporting (ER) and electronic monitoring (EM), HSBIs, VMS, and bycatch mitigation. AFMA also supports the strengthening and implementation of international treaties through information sharing and bilateral or multilateral coordination, collaboration and representation with other flag, coastal, or port States.

AFMA will periodically review and refine its stakeholder engagement strategies to strengthen partnerships and promote shared compliance through participation in the Indonesia–Australia Fisheries Surveillance Forum, FFA engagement mechanisms, and the RPOA-IUU and ATS Subcommittee.

7. Targeted threat responses

7.1 Background

Consistent with AFMA's National Compliance Risk Assessment Methodology, four IUU fishing activities have been assessed as high-risk and requiring targeted responses to mitigate their impacts:

1. Illegal Foreign Fishing in the AFZ.
2. Misreporting of catch and bycatch interactions.
3. Non-compliance with VMS requirements.
4. Non-compliance of vessels with bycatch mitigation conditions.

We recognise the evolving landscape of compliance threats and have integrated the use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and advanced satellite remote sensing to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of surveillance and enforcement activities. Australia also provides funding to the FFA for the use of remote sensing technologies used in routine regional surveillance.

AFMA's controls to mitigate the risks from each of the four targeted threats align closely with the compliance pillars of deter, detect and respond. Communication maps directly to deterrence by building awareness and conveying legal consequences. Enforcement operations and strategic engagement span both detection and response, supporting real-time interdiction as well as diplomatic coordination and follow-up actions. Capacity development enables all three pillars by ensuring frontline staff and partners are equipped with the skills, procedures, and resources to carry out effective deterrence, detection and response operations.

Image 4: The seizure and disposal of vessels at sea has proven to be an effective deterrent to IFF in the AFZ. Photo copyright © AFMA

7.2 Illegal foreign fishing in the AFZ

7.2.1 Background

Under international and domestic law, including the FMA and TSFA, FFVs are prohibited from operating in the Australian AFZ without valid licences. Some treaty arrangements allow traditional fishing in limited areas under specific conditions, but fishing without authorisation in the AFZ is illegal.

Illegal fishing in the AFZ poses serious financial, environmental, maritime security, stability and social risks. It threatens the sustainability of fish stocks, undermines Australian fishing industries, and can damage marine ecosystems, particularly where operators use harmful methods, retain protected species, or operate in sensitive areas. In some cases, illegal fishing vessels have also been linked to transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and human trafficking, which threaten maritime security and regional stability.

These illegal incursions into the AFZ violate Australia's sovereignty over its EEZ, territorial sea and internal waters, with critical impacts on marine resources, ecosystems and the Australian communities and industries that rely on them.

The updated ICEP risk assessment conducted in 2025 identified IFF as the highest threat with IFF activity in Australia's northern waters now at the highest level in 20 years. This increase is driven by a combination of economic hardship, ineffective flag State control, and high demand for targeted marine species, particularly sea cucumber.

AFMA and MBC closely monitor this trend and have implemented deterrent measures, including legislative forfeiture of fishing gear and catch, vessel destruction at sea where appropriate, and prosecution of offenders. From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, there were 44 apprehensions and 230 legislative forfeitures of catch and fishing equipment. These actions have also included 62 vessels seized and disposed of, either at sea or at a land-based facility.

AFMA, MBC and partner agencies continue to employ a broad range of other approaches to increase deterrence and reduce the number of illegal incursions in accordance with the CMSS to coordinate activities across government. These measures include surge operations, increased bilateral engagement at a senior level through the Indonesia–Australia Fisheries Surveillance Forum, diplomatic representation and the development of targeted education and communication campaigns in collaboration with MMAF and partner governments.

7.2.2 Aims

To effectively combat IFF in the AFZ, we will pursue four aims:

1. Enhance deterrence of IFF in the AFZ.
2. Strengthen risk-based identification of high-risk areas and vessel types involved in IFF.
3. Strengthen regional and bilateral partnerships to improve accountability for foreign nationals and vessels engaged in illegal fishing.
4. Support long term prevention of IFF by addressing underlying causes.

Image 5: An illegal catch of shark fin located by AFMA fisheries officers during a search of an IFF vessel in Australia's northern Australian Fishing Zone.
Photo copyright © AFMA

7.2.3 Methodology

AFMA and MBC are monitoring the increasing IUU fishing trend closely and are implementing approaches that seek to deter fishers from illegally operating in Australian waters as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 – AFMA's controls to mitigate the risks of IFF in the AFZ

Communication	Enforcement operations	Strategic engagement	Capability development
Maintain strong public messaging on VMS monitoring, patrol operations, and enforcement outcomes (for example: vessel seizures, prosecutions). Use regional communication campaigns (for example: local radio, social media) to promote awareness of Australia's maritime boundaries, patrol presence, and legal consequences. Deliver targeted education and deterrence messaging in northern Indonesia, focusing on risks of storms, vessel seizures, and legal penalties, as identified through community engagement and post-interdiction interviews. Reinforce consistent messaging across partner agencies and communication campaigns, including material in local languages.	Conduct targeted aerial and maritime surveillance using AFMA, MBC, and partner assets. Prioritise real-time interdiction of IUU vessels through joint patrols with Indonesian authorities and coordinated MCS operations. Deploy patrols in known transit and fishing zones based on risk profiling, seasonality and intelligence. Implement enforcement training for partner agencies on IUU protocols and interception procedures. Apply vessel forfeiture and destruction protocols under legislated authority, alongside forfeiture of catch and gear.	Expand bilateral and multilateral intelligence sharing with Indonesia and other affected States through updated MoUs and operational agreements. Flag State notification to take effective control of their IUU fishing vessels. Strengthen regional cooperation on detection and prosecution of repeat offenders, including Indonesian and Timor-Leste vessels. Support diplomatic initiatives that promote joint action against IUU fishing and reinforce maritime boundaries and jurisdictions. Promote joint exercises and coordination between Australian and regional agencies for IUU responses and evidence handling.	Provide targeted MCS training to Indonesian counterparts, with emphasis on Australian legislation, AFMA procedures and vessel interdiction. Build regional enforcement capacity through operational mentoring, post-patrol debriefs and practical training delivery. Continue support for Indigenous and coastal community surveillance programs in high-risk regions to act as force multipliers. Conduct post-interdiction interviews to understand drivers of incursions, informing deterrence strategy and messaging. Maintain joint exercises to test and strengthen patrol readiness and regional coordination.

7.3 Misreporting of catch and bycatch interactions

7.3.1 Background

Misreporting refers to the inaccurate recording of catch data on weights, quantities, species composition, landings or discards. This may occur accidentally due to misidentification or poor record-keeping, or deliberately to manipulate catch figures or interaction data.

It can involve the non-reporting of bycatch or endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species interactions (such as sharks and turtles), retention of prohibited species, or misreporting species composition. Unreported discards are of particular concern, as they hinder accurate assessment and scientific analysis while fishers may also discard small or low-value catch to avoid it being counted toward quotas or to reduce port fees, a practice known as ‘high grading’.

IFMOs require members to report a range of data to the respective secretariats, including catch and effort data (through logbooks, for example), monitoring data collected at sea (such as records of transshipment events), or in port (for example, landing data). These data are essential for scientific assessments and stock management decisions.

Flag States, IFMOs, RFBs and operators have also adopted various measures, including ICMMs, to improve the accuracy of catch reporting, however there are still issues with poor compliance and ineffective monitoring of high-seas fleets by flag States. IFMOs continue to seek to address the issue of misreporting of catch, such as through the introduction of methods like EM.

Image 6: Accurate reporting of bycatch interactions by fishing operators enables the effective management of fisheries and helps minimise the impact of fishing gear on non-target species like turtles.
Photo copyright © AFMA

7.3.2 Aims

AFMA will effectively combat the misreporting of catch and bycatch interactions in four ways:

1. Advocate for IFMOs to improve the accuracy of catch and bycatch reporting across all fishing operations.
2. Ensure consistent and reliable reporting practices are applied across fleets and jurisdictions.
3. Strengthen regional enforcement coordination to support compliance with reporting requirements.
4. Improve detection of misreporting risks to inform enforcement and compliance actions.

Image 7: Seabirds are susceptible to negative interactions with fishing gear and measures are implemented by IFMOs to mitigate impacts.
Photo copyright © Australian Antarctic Program

7.3.3 Methodology

AFMA works with relevant stakeholders to identify impediments relating to the identification and reporting of catch, bycatch and interactions, and to encourage flag States to ensure their operators have all the tools and resources necessary to accurately report all interactions.

Table 3 – AFMA's controls to mitigate the risks of misreporting catch and bycatch.

Communication	Enforcement operations	Strategic engagement	Capability development
Maintain proactive stakeholder communication on reporting obligations, discard protocols and ETP protections. Educate FFV operators and partners on identification, handling, and reporting ETP and non-target species.	Prioritise HSBI and patrol inspections of high-risk vessels with suspected ETP and quota species violations or logbook anomalies. Use observer, EM and port monitoring data to detect catch, confirm retention reporting and inconsistencies, and verify discard handling.	Advocate for regional alignment of ETP protection and bycatch reporting measures across IFMOs. Promote adoption of EM and ER in IFMOs to enhance accurate catch reporting.	Deliver MCS training for observers, crew, and fisheries officers on identification and proper handling of bycatch and ETP species. Develop and disseminate translated guidance materials on species identification, discard rules, and retention protocols.
Share data with relevant flag States and regional partners to support risk profiling and corrective action. Promote consistent terminology and clarity around retention rules, discard exemptions, and species classifications.	Apply photographic and DNA based sampling to confirm species identification and detect misreporting of ETP and quota species. Enforce export controls on prohibited species and verify species specific reporting requirements. Support chain of custody documentation and evidence-handling protocols for enforcement actions.	Coordinate with flag States to ensure enforcement of ICMMs for retained, discarded and ETP Species. Share regional intelligence on retention related offences and species-specific risks to improve compliance targeting.	Train fisheries officers in evidence collection, including DNA sampling, photographic validation, and logbook analysis. Liaise with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and other research bodies to integrate scientific tools into training (such as fish identification apps). Build internal and partner agency capacity to conduct integrated intelligence analysis of logbooks, VMS and port data.

7.4 Non-compliance with VMS requirements

7.4.1 Background

National and regional vessel monitoring systems (VMS) are a core component of fisheries MCS. Vessel monitoring supports verification of fishing effort, corroboration of catch and effort data, and tracking of vessel movement (including within maritime jurisdictions, closed areas or transshipment areas). Increasingly, VMS data is cross-referenced with other datasets to identify suspected IUU fishing. Non-compliance with VMS requirements is considered a key indicator of potential IUU activity and supports placing vessels on high-priority watchlists.

VMS provide near real-time satellite tracking of fishing vessels, reporting their positions to Fisheries Monitoring Centres (FMCs). These systems consist of on-board Mobile Transceiver Units (MTUs), Automatic Location Communicators (ALCs), GPS and communication satellites, and shore-based infrastructure that supports data transmission and monitoring.

VMS non-compliance can involve intentional tampering, such as blocking transmissions, using cloned units, or manipulating positional data. Fisheries officers assess compliance by inspecting VMS hardware, checking seals, cables and power supplies, and cross-referencing unit numbers and registration records. They also liaise with IFMO secretariats to verify the authenticity and reliability of reported data.
Authorities also monitor vessel polling frequencies, where vessels that regularly fail to report as expected are identified as high-risk and may be prioritised for further enforcement. Irregular polling or suspicious gaps in reporting can trigger investigations, focused inspections and an increased vessel risk rating.

The CCAMLR, FFA, WCPFC[25] and SPRFMO[26] all require member States to ensure vessels submit real-time VMS data to their respective secretariats when operating in Convention Areas, including the high seas. For example, vessels authorised by the FFA to undertake specific activities (such as bunkering or transhipment) must continuously report VMS data to the FFA Secretariat. IOTC member States must also provide VMS data, and the current arrangements mean this information is collected by the flag States and only shared externally when unauthorised fishing occurs in another State's coastal waters.

7.4.2 Aims

AFMA will effectively combat non-compliance with VMS reporting requirements in four ways:

1. Identify non-compliant vessels to enable prioritisation of risk-based enforcement.
2. Improve adherence to VMS obligations across flag States and regional partners.
3. Strengthen regional VMS capability in high-risk areas.

[25] In accordance with the WCPFC CMM 2014-02, *Commission Vessel Monitoring System*.

[26] In accordance with SPRFMO CMM 06-2018, *Establishment of the Vessel Monitoring System in the SPRFMO Convention Area*.

4. Support international compliance frameworks for VMS reporting and enforcement.

7.4.3 Methodology

Table 4 – AFMA's controls to mitigate the risks of non-compliance with VMS requirements.

Communication	Enforcement operations	Strategic engagement	Capability development
Maintain bilateral and multilateral dialogue with relevant flag States and operators to reinforce VMS obligations. Promote consistent and targeted messaging to priority States on the importance of real-time VMS for upholding coastal and flag State responsibilities. Publicise clear and timely notifications of closure periods and maritime jurisdictions using IFMO and VMS alerts. Report compliance outcomes to stakeholders to reinforce shared accountability and performance transparency.	Identify and target high-risk vessels based on compliance history, intelligence and other data sources. Conduct Australian boardings and multilateral operations at sea and in port to verify VMS usage and investigate suspected breaches. Use VMS and AIS overlays to monitor incursions into closed areas and periods. Use vessel inspections to detect signs of VMS tampering (such as signal interference). Strengthen enforcement of VMS reporting requirements. Undertake surveillance during high-risk closure periods and act on verified breaches using evidence-based enforcement.	Engage with flag States and IFMOs to strengthen regional implementation of VMS monitoring protocols and closure enforcement standards. Advocate for Indonesia's wider adoption of real-time VMS across both industrial and traditional fishing sectors. Promote regional data sharing on VMS compliance through IFMO forums, including real-time reporting frameworks. Coordinate closure communication and incident responses with other flag States and relevant partners. Support development and implementation of regionally consistent closure alert systems.	Conduct MCS training courses focused on VMS usage, tamper detection and incident reporting. Promote implementation of capacity building for VMS usage, particularly targeting traditional and eastern Indonesian fishers. Train fisheries officers on closure monitoring protocols, including satellite and AIS overlays, and reporting procedures. Standardise compliance protocols for patrol operations related to both VMS and closure breaches. Strengthen VMS technical assistance to States to improve coverage, reliability and responsiveness.

7.5 Non-compliance of vessels with bycatch mitigation conditions

7.5.1 Background

Commercial fishing vessels can negatively impact bycatch species, particularly sharks, sea turtles and seabirds[27] when appropriate mitigation measures are not in place. To address this issue, RFBs and IFMOs have established ICMMs designed to reduce bycatch. These include the use of bycatch reduction devices, handling and retention protocols, and National Plans of Action tailored to specific species.

Bycatch mitigation ICMMs were developed in response to growing concern over the impact of fishing on vulnerable species. Failure to comply with these measures increases the risk of overexploitation or extinction for affected species. Non-compliance with bycatch mitigation ICMMs poses a significant risk to the marine environment and may result in flag States being found non-compliant. In some cases, vessel operators may attempt to comply but fail to meet requirements, particularly when new or amended measures are introduced.

All interactions with sharks, sea turtles, and seabirds of concern, whether retained or discarded must be documented and reported to IFMOs. Fisheries officers review this data from HSBI reports, VMS, observer reports, catch and effort records and port inspections to identify anomalies and determine whether follow-up action is required.

During HSBIs, fisheries officers inspect fishing gear, freezers, storage holds and documentation to assess compliance. Within EEZs, AFMA fisheries officers collaborate with national authorities to verify compliance with domestic regulations and educate industry stakeholders on their obligations.

7.5.2 Aims

AFMA will effectively combat non-compliance of vessels with bycatch mitigation conditions in four ways:

1. Identify high-risk vessels involved in bycatch mitigation non-compliance.
2. Improve awareness of bycatch mitigation measures among flag States, industry, and regional bodies.
3. Enhance enforcement consistency in response to bycatch mitigation breaches.
4. Reduce non-compliance with seabird, turtle, shark and vulnerable species mitigation requirements.

[27] Shelley Clarke, Mayumi Sato, Cleo Small, Ben Sullivan, Yukiko Inoue and Daisuke Ochi, 2014, 'Bycatch in Longline Fisheries for Tuna and Tuna-like Species: A Global Review of Status and Mitigation Measures'. *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No 588*, URL: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4017e.pdf

7.5.3 Methodology

Table 5 – AFMA's controls to mitigate the risks of non-compliance with bycatch mitigation conditions.

Communication	Enforcement operations	Strategic engagement	Capability development
Maintain media and stakeholder communication that focus on compliance with bycatch mitigation conditions, including accurate reporting of interactions with sharks, seabirds and turtles. Communicate operational outcomes to promote awareness of enforcement and inspections activity. Continue education and awareness campaigns to promote correct handling, release and mitigation practices across vessel types and regions. Engage directly with industry to ensure understanding of obligations under ICMMs for reporting and mitigations.	Target inspections of high-risk vessels in port and at sea using compliance history and surveillance intelligence. Continue operational patrols, HSBI, and aerial surveillance focused on bycatch compliance. Use port inspections to verify correct use of bycatch mitigation equipment and release procedures. Improve observer and inspector training to detect non-compliance, including deliberate gear tampering. Build chain of custody and evidence collection skills among enforcement personnel to support prosecution of breaches.	Collaborate with IFMOs and regional partners to strengthen monitoring and enforcement of bycatch mitigation measures. Promote regional alignment of reporting requirements and mitigation measures across all gear types. Support initiatives to expand observer and EM coverage, with a focus on 100% monitoring in high-risk areas such as high seas tuna fisheries south of 25ºS. Use flag State channels to seek accountability and follow up on alleged bycatch non-compliance by foreign-flagged vessels.	Deliver targeted MCS training for fisheries officers, observers and port inspectors on shark, turtle and seabird bycatch mitigation conditions. Provide practical training on proper implementation of mitigation gear and release protocols at seas. Develop and distribute updated multilingual bycatch guides for industry use. Improve training for detecting tampered or non-compliant gear (such as improper hook types or missing bird-scaring lines). Promote implementation of observer and inspector programs to support consistent compliance verification.

8. Performance assessment

The effectiveness of the ICEP is assessed using outcome targets wherever possible, as well as input and output targets where a suitable 'outcome target' is not identified. The ICEP ensures that key performance indicators (KPIs) for each operational area are clearly defined, measurable, and reviewed regularly to assess ongoing effectiveness and relevance. An annual performance review cycle will assess each KPI against targets and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

Table 6 – Key performance indicators of ICEP effectiveness

Strategies	Description	Target
Communication	AFMA's ICEP endorsed by the CEO, reviewed every two years and available on the AFMA website.	100%
	Media releases for major activities and significant outcomes.	100%
Enforcement operations	Identification of priority national compliance risks and development of treatment programs for those priority risks.	100% of risks have treatment programs
	Disposal of apprehended foreign IUU vessels received by AFMA.	100%
	Investigation of IFF in Australian waters to support prosecution.	90% of briefs referred to DPP proceed to prosecution
	High-risk FFVs visiting Australian ports inspected.	100%
	HSBI reports submitted by Australian fisheries officers to flag States and IFMOs when required.	100%
Strategic engagement	AFMA priorities for meetings and bilateral engagement are considered in government briefings and negotiating frameworks.	100%
	Nominations of non-compliant vessels for IUU listing are made in accordance with IFMO requirements.	100%
	Australia maintains a high compliance rate with international obligations (implemented by AFMA) as assessed by IFMOs.[28]	>90%
Capability development	International programs to provide technical, policy and operational advice to build capacity are delivered.	5 per year
	Participation in FFA-led cooperative training activities and multilateral maritime surveillance activities as appropriate.	4 per year
Targeted IUU threats	Australian fisheries officers target IUU threats and engage flag States to implement remedial actions.	100% of identified suspected non-compliance acted upon

[28] AFMA is responsible for implementing a subset of Australia's IFMO obligations. Further, each IFMO has a different mandate, compliance scheme and governance framework, therefore making holistic compliance assessment difficult to calculate. The associated 'target' is set by AFMA and considers the limitations when comparing IFMO outcomes and is utilised in annual reporting processes.

Australian Government

Australian Fisheries
Management Authority