



**Julie Collins MP**

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

Ref: MS25-900067

Mr Wez Norris  
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Dear Mr Norris

I am writing to acknowledge the important work of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) 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 adaptive fisheries management practices, including appropriate compliance activity.

As outlined in the *Regulator Performance Resource Management Guide 128* (RMG 128)<sup>1</sup> AFMA is accountable to Parliament, including through Senate Estimates and the Australian National Audit Office scrutiny on its regulatory operations. Clear expectations from Government to regulators help drive better regulator performance through best practice. 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.

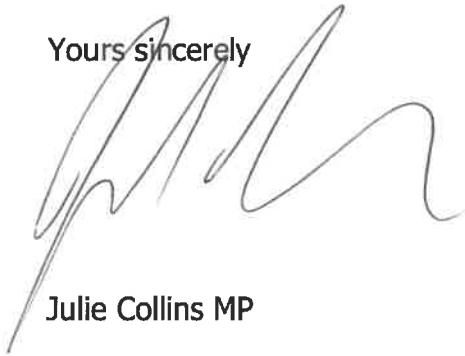
Consistent with RMG 128, I have enclosed the Ministerial Statement of Expectations (SOE) which outlines the principles I expect AFMA to demonstrate through its regulatory operations. I would appreciate your response to this letter, as soon as practicable in 2026, in the form of a Statement of Intent (SOI) outlining how these expectations will be delivered by AFMA.

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<sup>1</sup> Available on the Department of Finance's [website](#), Regulator Performance (RMG 128)

To ensure transparency and accountability, the SOE and SOI should be made publicly available on your website. The statements should also be integrated into your performance processes as required under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* as part of your corporate planning process and annual reporting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Collins', written over the typed name.

Julie Collins MP

22 / 12 / 2025

Enc. Ministerial Statement of Expectations

## **Australian Fisheries Management Authority Ministerial Statement of Expectations**

Improving Australia's productivity performance is a key priority for the Australian Government. In an increasingly complex and interconnected environment, regulation and regulators play a critical role in supporting Australia's productivity through the effective management of risk, enabling innovation, and ensuring protections for Australians.

This Statement of Expectations (SOE) reflects the government's commitment to best practice regulation, as outlined in *Regulator Performance Resource Management Guide 128* (RMG 128), and the policy objective for Commonwealth regulators to strengthen productivity in Australia by better balancing risk mitigation with efficiency, growth and dynamism.

AFMA is expected to enhance regulatory efficiency to reduce red tape, ease the regulatory burden for business and encourage investment across the Australian fishery sector.

This SOE is informed by the *Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework*<sup>2</sup>, the Australian Public Service (APS) Reform Agenda, and the outcomes of the Economic Reform Roundtable (August 2025). It complements AFMA's obligations under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and aligns with the government's broader regulatory reform and productivity agenda.

### **Regulatory responsibilities**

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 6 principles of the Department of Finance's *Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework*. I also expect AFMA to respond to independent reviews and audits as part of a program of continual regulatory practice improvement.

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 the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and my office to ensure that AFMA is appropriately resourced to undertake its regulatory responsibilities, including where there are opportunities for ongoing efficiencies.

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<sup>2</sup> Available on the Department of Finance's [website](#), Whole-of-government Regulatory, Policy, Practice & Performance Framework

AFMA is expected to continually monitor and engage with other regulators including international regulatory bodies (as appropriate) to ensure its regulatory approaches keep pace with best practice, technology advances, global standards, industry practices and community expectations.

### **Regulatory reform and productivity agenda**

The government's regulatory reform agenda is central to boosting Australia's productivity reducing unnecessary or duplicative regulatory costs by ensuring regulation is fit for purpose, proportionate and adaptive.

AFMA is expected to actively contribute to the government's regulatory reform and productivity agenda by:

- adjusting regulatory posture and risk appetite where appropriate to create a regulatory environment that supports economic growth and productivity by better balancing risk mitigation with efficiency growth and dynamism
- identifying priority areas against which to progress reforms that reduce regulatory burden and improve efficiency, including through appropriate opportunities to improve and streamline regulatory processes
- supporting cross-government initiatives to modernise regulation, including through digital transformation and AI-enabled systems
- strengthening its collaboration and engagement with stakeholders, including engagement with the Commonwealth Fisheries Association as the legislated peak body, to progress regulatory reform to support productivity, climate change and competition for marine space
- strengthening 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
- reviewing 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.

In doing so, AFMA should address the regulatory reform ideas it proposed in its response (01 August 2025) to the joint letter from the Treasurer and Minister for Finance (4 July 2025) and outline how progress will be tracked and reported.

### **Regulatory performance and reporting**

AFMA will take an evidence-based approach to measuring its regulatory performance, the impact of its regulatory activities, and to support continuous improvement.

This includes:

- clearly defining regulatory roles and responsibilities, understanding and addressing regulatory risks proportionately and having regulatory performance measurement and reporting frameworks in place
- incorporating regulator performance reporting into AFMA's corporate planning process and annual reporting as required by RMG 128 and under the PGPA Act and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, to support greater transparency and accountability of regulator performance
- working through the usual budget processes to implement and report on any reform proposals, to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden that may require legislative reform or have funding implications.

## **Relationship with the Minister and portfolio**

As the responsible Minister, I will work with DAFF to ensure policy and legislation governing AFMA and the broader fishing industry remain effective and fit for purpose. I expect the 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.

As an independent statutory authority, I expect the AFMA to work closely with DAFF, as well as the remaining portfolio regulators to ensure a joined-up approach, while advancing and sharing best practice regulation.

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.

The AFMA's regulatory responsibilities are central to facilitating a productive and sustainable fishing industry and protecting Australia's marine resources from illegal fishing. I look forward to working cooperatively on these important priorities.