Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

COST RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT:

Fisheries Management

2026–27

Charging for regulatory activity involves government entities charging individuals or organisations in the non-government sector some or all the minimum efficient costs of a specific government activity. The Australian Government Cost Recovery Policy (Cost Recovery Policy) along with the Australian Government Charging Framework (the Charging Framework) sets out the policy under which government entities design, implement and review charging for regulatory activities. The Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) is the public document to ensure the transparency and accountability for the level of the charging and to demonstrate that the purpose for charging, as decided by Government, is being achieved.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the CRIS

This Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) explains how the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) implements cost recovery for the regulation of Commonwealth fisheries, in accordance with the Cost Recovery Policy.

The CRIS outlines the cost recoverable activities AFMA delivers, reports financial and non-financial performance information, and provides financial forecasts for 2026–27.

AFMA will review and maintain the CRIS each financial year to reflect changes to its cost recovery model, update revenue and financial estimates as necessary in a timely manner.

1.2. AFMA's role and activities

As the Australian Government regulator tasked with managing Australia's Commonwealth fisheries, AFMA's purpose is to pursue the ecologically sustainable development of Commonwealth fisheries for the benefit of the Australian community.

AFMA aims to deliver 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.

The *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* establish AFMA's legislative objectives which govern the activities undertaken by AFMA.

The main activities AFMA undertakes to pursue its purpose and legislative objectives include:

- **Fisheries management** and administration of Commonwealth fisheries.
- **Compliance and enforcement** within the Australian Fishing Zone, the Torres Strait and on the high seas, covering fishing concession holders as well as illegal fishers (foreign and domestic).
- **Monitoring** of fishing vessels for the purpose of monitoring catch and fishing activity.
- **Policy, planning and reporting** delivered to industry to support understanding and compliance with regulatory requirements, and policy development related to broader government objectives.
- **Research** to inform fisheries management and undertaking of externally funded research projects.
- **Stakeholder engagement and education** with the regulated community, government, and other government entities.
- **Approvals and extracts** – granting, renewal, variation, cancellation or suspension of licences or permits for boats, fishing or science.

More information is provided on AFMA's activities in Section 3.

1.3. AFMA's regulated entities and appropriateness of cost recovery

In line with the government's cost recovery policy, AFMA recovers a portion of their activity costs directly attributable to the Commonwealth commercial fishing industry, these participants include:

- Domestic commercial fishers
- Torres Strait prawn fishery commercial fishers

Cost recovery is applicable because commercial fishing operations in Commonwealth fisheries create a risk to the long-term sustainability of Commonwealth fisheries, which warrants regulation to manage these risks. Commercial fishers incur varying fees and levies based on the regulatory costs their activities generate.

Fees for services are applicable for:

- Licences
- Nomination of boats
- Permits
- Quotas
- Registration
- Documentation (includes validation of catch documentation)
- Placement of Observers

All commercial fishers pay a Commonwealth fishing concession. Levy amounts for concession holders vary and are based on several factors such as the amount being fished, species, equipment used, and the Commonwealth fishery being fished in. These metrics are used to calculate the Statutory Fishing Rights (SFR) and levy amount the commercial fisher is eventually charged and is liable for.

In some instances, where both industry and the broader community derive benefits or drive activities, costs are shared proportionally between the commercial fishing industry and the Australian Government. This approach ensures costs are recovered from those who create the need for, and usually benefit from, the regulatory activities while recognising broader public interests where they exist.

2. POLICY AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CHARGE (COST RECOVER)

2.1. Government policy approval to cost recover the regulatory activities

AFMA's management of Commonwealth fisheries covers a range of activities that are driven by legislative obligations and functions.

AFMA aims to recover all appropriate costs from the commercial fishing industry in accordance with the *Australian Government Charging Framework* and *Australian Government Cost Recovery Policy* in support of the legislative responsibilities of Commonwealth entities, as detailed in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). Where specific demand for a government activity is created by identifiable individuals or groups, they will be charged for it unless the Government has decided to fund that activity.

AFMA is required under paragraph 6(1)(e) *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* to "pursue achieving government targets in relation to the recovery of the costs of the Authority".

2.2. Statutory authority to charge

The *Fisheries Management Act 1991* is the primary legislation for Commonwealth fisheries; the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* is the primary legislation for the Torres Strait fisheries. Levies and charges for regulatory activities are recovered under separate charging legislation which provide the authority to cost recover regulatory activities.

Authority to charge regulated entities comes from the below legislation:

- Sections 5 and 6 of the *Fishing Levy Act 1991*, which provides that regulations may prescribe the levy amount per fishing concession.
- Sections 5 and 6 of the *Fisheries Levy Act 1984*, which provides that regulations may prescribe a levy amount for certain fisheries' licences and certain units of capacity.
- Sections 4 and 5 of the *Foreign Fishing Licences Levy Act 1991*¸ which provides that regulations may prescribe a levy amount for the grant of certain foreign fishing licences.
- Section 5 of the *Statutory Fishing Rights Charge Act 1991,* which provides that regulations may prescribe the amount of charge for the grant of a statutory fishing right.

Fees

Fees are prescribed in specific regulations:

- Schedule 6 of the *Fisheries Management Regulations 2019* which prescribes the fees that may be charged for specified activities.

Levies

Levies are prescribed in specific regulations:

- Part 2 of the *Fishing Levy Regulations 2018*, which prescribes the amount of levy for specific fishing concessions.
- Part 8 of the *Fisheries Levy (Torres Strait Prawn Fishery) Regulation 2016,* which prescribes the amount of levy for specific fishing licences and units of capacity.

3. COST RECOVERY MODEL

AFMA participated in a Portfolio Charging Review (PCR) administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The PCR highlighted several areas where AFMA's cost recovery process had not evolved in line with the progression of overarching arrangements of Commonwealth Cost Recovery. As a result of the PCR findings, AFMA has undertaken an exercise to implement a revised cost recovery model and activity structure.

AFMA has reclassified the way the activities conducted by AFMA are described, including updating the naming and definition of activities. The new AFMA activities and definitions can be viewed in Tables 2 to 8. These changes were necessary for:

- **Clear alignment to legislation** – documenting and linking to the legislative reference to provide clarity on the legal authority to undertake the activity.
- **Supporting compliance and review** – through alignment with the Charging Framework.
- **Improving cost transparency** – enhancing visibility of the resources required to deliver activities and how these relate to charges.

AFMA has undertaken the updates to activity structure to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its cost recovery arrangements and improve alignment of costs and resources to the services and activities being cost recovered.

3.1. Outputs of the activities

To deliver ecologically sustainable and economically efficient Commonwealth fisheries, AFMA carries out various regulatory and supporting activities. In line with the Cost Recovery Policy, AFMA organises its activities according to their regulatory outputs. Table 1 below explains the breakdown of an activity into its sub-activities and outputs.

Table 1 – Activity, sub-activity and outputs concept

Activity	Sub-Activity	Outputs
Activities are a roll up of sub-activities into logical groupings.	Sub-activities are made up of outputs, which together form regulatory and supporting activities to control or influence behaviour, manage risk and protect the community and the environment.	An output is the aggregated total of its associated business processes, with its characteristics used to determine which cost recovery charges to apply.

See the breakdown of AFMA's activities into sub-activities, outputs and charging method / funding source in Tables 2 to 8 below.

AFMA funds the costs of our activities according to the primary users of those activities.

- Where activities can be directly attributed to an individual concession holder or commercial fishing enterprise, costs are recovered on a fee-for-service basis.

- Where the need for an activity is primarily caused by Commonwealth fishing concession owners and holders, commercial fishers, their representatives and the broader commercial fishing industry, costs are generally recovered through levies.
- Where activities primarily benefit the broader Australian community, support government policy and administration, relate to non-commercial fisheries, or where no identifiable primary beneficiary can be charged, costs are generally government funded.

Table 2 – Approvals and extracts*

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
The granting, renewal, variation, cancellation or suspension of licences or permits for boats, fishing or science	Documentation	• Validate a catch export document • Process an application for an Electronic Dissostichus catch document • Validate a European Community catch certificate • Processing and actioning other applications • Provide extracts or process requests to inspect registers	Fee for service
	Licences	• Grant or renew carrier boat licences • Process fishery entries for Torres Strait • Grant and endorse foreign fishing licences • Grant foreign master fishing licences • Grant commercial fishing and fish receiver licences • Register transfers of Torres Strait licences • Granting of a treaty licence • Variations, suspensions, cancellations and revocations of licences and permits	Fee for service
	Nomination of boats	• Process applications for a foreign boat to be recognised as an Australian boat • Register nominations of boats to fishing concessions	Fee for service
	Permits	• Grant and renew permits for fish receiver, fishing, and high seas fishing • Grant port permits to foreign fishing boats • Grant scientific permits • Register transfers of fishing permits and high seas permits • Process variations, suspensions and cancellations of fish receiver, port, and scientific permits	Levy Fee for service
	Quotas	• Issue SFR holders with a statement of their current quota holdings • Issue statement of transaction for the sale or lease of SFR quotas • Register quota transfers between fishers	Fee for service
	Registrations	• Register transfer or lease of SFRs	Fee for service

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
		• Register the withdrawal of a claim to an interest in an SFR • Register dealings of SFRs between SFR holders • Register a claim to an interest in an SFR by a claimant	

*Fee for service and levy activities may have a government funded component

Table 3 – Compliance and enforcement

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
Compliance and enforcement within the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) and the Torres Strait, covering fishing concession holders as well as illegal fishers (foreign and domestic)	Domestic compliance enforcement in the Australian Fishing Zone	• Cancelling and suspending fishing concessions in response to non-compliance • Compliance activities including conducting vessel and fish receiver inspections and auditing fish receiver records • Enforcement activities under the Fisheries Management Act • Briefings, advice and preparing evidence for prosecutions • Obtaining and executing search warrants • Managing and executing seizures of property • Officer training on lawful enforcement of fisheries regulation • Engage with fishing community to provide education on compliance standards	Government funded
	Domestic compliance enforcement in the Torres Strait (TS)	• Enforcement activities • Briefings, advice and preparing evidence for prosecutions • Obtaining and executing search warrants • Managing and executing seizures of property • Officer training on lawful enforcement of fisheries regulation	Government funded
	Foreign fisheries compliance enforcement	• Detention of illegal foreign fishers • Enforcement to combat illegal foreign fishing • Information sharing with Maritime Boarder Command and other domestic and international bodies • Facilitate inspections of landings in foreign ports • Investigate cases of illegal foreign fishing	Government funded

Table 4 – Fisheries management*

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
Management and administration of Commonwealth fisheries, for commercial and non-commercial purposes.	Co-management arrangements	• Manage the development and implementation of co-management arrangements	Levy
	Administration of commissioners	• Appointing commissioners • Governance activities • Maintaining terms of reference • Administration	Government funded
	Data collection	• Compilation of logbook and Catch Disposal Record (CDR) statistics • Data management for industry • Develop and implement fishery data plans	Levy Government funded
	Fisheries agreements	• Granting of foreign fishing licences to foreign fishers • Process licence for traditional inhabitants	Government funded
	Fishery management	• Assessment of fisheries under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) • Develop fishery management plans/arrangements for commercial fisheries • Economic analysis • Ecological risk assessment • Conduct investigations into viability of commercial fishing • Non-commercial fishery management	Levy Government funded
	Joint authorities	• Management and administration of joint authorities • Administer and engage the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) • Annual reporting for joint authorities and PZJA	Government funded
	Management Advisory Committees (MACs) and Resource Assessment Groups (RAGs)	• Administration of MACs for domestic commercial fisheries, traditional indigenous groups undertaking commercial fishing • Administration of RAGs for domestic commercial fisheries, traditional indigenous groups undertaking commercial fishing	Levy Government funded
	Register management	• Maintain register for fishing permit holders, and seas permit holders • Maintain SFR register	Levy

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
		• Maintain register for Torres Strait licence holders	
	Statutory Fishing Rights (SFR) management	• Administration of SFRs • Gazette decisions relating to decisions and granting of SFRs	Levy

*Levy activities may have a government funded component

Table 5 – Monitoring*

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
Vessel monitoring activities, including electronic monitoring of fishing activity and the management and administration of the Observer program	E-monitoring	• Implementation of electronic monitoring of concession holders • Administrative tasks supporting electronic monitoring of concession holders • Expansion of electronic monitoring program	Levy Government funded
	Vessel monitoring	• Conduct monitoring of vessel positions using installed vessel monitoring systems • Management of the observer program • Implementation of the observer program • Observers' placement on vessels	Levy Fee for service Government funded

*Fee for service and levy activities may have a government funded component

Table 6 – Policy, planning and reporting*

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
Policy development, advice and reporting delivered to industry to support understanding and compliance with regulatory requirements, and relating to the administration or achievement of broader government objectives	International relations	• Conduct and administer international capacity building programs with neighbouring countries • Meet Australia's international obligations by engaging with international bodies, other state authorities, participate in international bilateral treaty meetings and support regional and international fishery management bodies	Government funded
	Ministerial support	• Coordination of responses to ministerial requests and correspondence	Government funded
	Organisational reporting	• Prepare and publish AFMA's annual operational plan • Develop and provide reports to industry on AFMA's regulatory performance	Government Funded
	Policy advice	• Provide technical advice on compliance policy	Government funded
	Policy development	• Development of bycatch policies for fisheries • Policy development to support the Climate Adaption Program • Develop compliance policy • Develop and implement ecological risk management strategies • Develop specific policies for AFMA managed fisheries	Levy Government funded

*Levy activities may have a government funded component

Table 7 – Research*

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
Development of fishery research plans and fishery-specific monitoring, and data collection to inform fisheries management. Administration and undertaking of externally funded research projects	Research administration	• Commission externally funded research projects • Administer research projects • Publish research and data collected through fisheries to the public and industry	Government funded Levy
	Research plans	• Undertake specific fishery monitoring and data collection • Develop annual and five-year fishery research plans	Government funded Levy
	Research projects	• Management of externally funded research projects • Administer research for public benefit	Government funded Levy

*Levy activities may have a government funded component

Table 8 – Stakeholder engagement and education*

Activity	Sub-activity	Outputs	Charging method / funding source
Engagement, consultation and compliance education with the regulated community. Engagement and consultation with government for the provision of expert regulatory policy advice and scientific advice	Compliance education	• Conduct education activities through media campaigns to promote understanding of regulatory requirements	Government funded
	Government consultation	• Inter/intra government engagement on expert regulatory policy advice in relation to commercial and recreational fishing	Government funded Levy
	Industry consultation	• Engagement with industry bodies to promote equitable and sustainable commercial and recreational fishing practices	Government funded Levy
	Scientific consultation	• Engagement with science agencies and organisations to promote equitable and sustainable commercial and recreational fishing practices	Government funded
	Traditional inhabitants' engagement	• Engagement with the PZJA • Engagement with Torres Strait groups	Government funded

*Levy activities may have a government funded component

3.2. Costs of the regulatory activity

AFMA has implemented a revised cost recovery model in 2026-27, the new model was implemented to:

- Create a clear understanding of costs of all activities delivered by AFMA.
- Create a robust and transparent evidence base where costs can be traced from input financials through to activity, outputs, and charges.
- Understand the drivers of costs, with dynamic outputs of the cost recovery model allowing dissection to understand the cost drivers and resources contributing to activities and programs (fisheries).

Cost base

The cost base covers the total estimated costs of AFMA to efficiently and effectively deliver its regulatory and support activities. Each activity has been reviewed, and its associated cost adjusted based on operational requirements, the price of goods and services received, and estimates of achievable cost savings.

An analysis of the activities undertaken, and services provided by AFMA has been carried out to identify which activities should be cost recovered from industry and which activities should be government funded. A breakdown of AFMA's total cost base can be viewed in Table 9, including the estimated amount to be cost recovered from industry and the estimated amount to be government funded.

Table 9 – AFMA estimated cost base with activity and funding source breakdown, 2026-27 ($)

Activity	Cost recovered expense	Government funded expense	Total
Approvals and extracts	880,549	153,424	1,033,973
Compliance and enforcement	-	11,191,188	11,191,188
Fisheries management	8,060,020	4,715,591	12,775,611
Monitoring	6,060,312	3,693,305	9,753,617
Policy, planning and reporting	314,920	7,944,904	8,259,824
Research	2,438,094	1,337,722	3,775,815
Stakeholder engagement and education	585,489	1,071,033	1,656,522
Total	**18,339,383**	**30,107,167**	**48,446,550**

Direct and indirect costs

As part of the revised cost recovery model, AFMA has also simplified the categorisation of its expenditure from Direct, Indirect, and Overheads in 2025-26, to Direct and Indirect only for 2026-27. Direct expenditure for 2026-27 predominantly captures Direct and Indirect expenditure from 2025-26, and Indirect expenditure for 2026-27 predominantly captures Overheads expenditure in 2025-26.

AFMA's costs are categorised as either direct or indirect costs:

- **Direct costs** – can be directly attributed to the provision of an activity. For example, direct costs for approvals and extracts comprise:
    a. Staff salaries, training, leave, superannuation, and supplier costs such as travel for licensing team staff working directly on this activity.

   b. The directly attributable cost of running the IT systems needed to maintain the activity, such as database licensing costs and staff time spent maintaining the systems.

- **Indirect costs** – support the effective and necessary provision of AFMA direct cost activities. They include corporate employee salaries, overhead such as information technology, finance, human resources, legal services, property and maintenance, and some executive management team costs.

Table 10 provides AFMA's estimated cost recovered expenses for 2026-27, with a breakdown by activity of the direct and indirect costs.

Table 10 – AFMA estimated costs with activity and direct vs indirect breakdown, 2026-27 ($)

Activity	Direct	Indirect	Total
Approvals and extracts	684,781	195,768	880,549
Compliance and enforcement	-	-	-
Fisheries management	5,565,599	2,494,421	8,060,020
Monitoring	4,646,383	1,413,929	6,060,312
Policy, planning and reporting	203,983	110,937	314,920
Research	2,315,267	122,827	2,438,094
Stakeholder engagement and education	370,767	214,722	585,489
Total cost recovered expense	**13,786,780**	**4,552,604**	**18,339,383**
Total government funded expense	**20,819,067**	**9,288,100**	**30,107,167**
Total expense	**34,605,847**	**13,840,704**	**48,446,550**

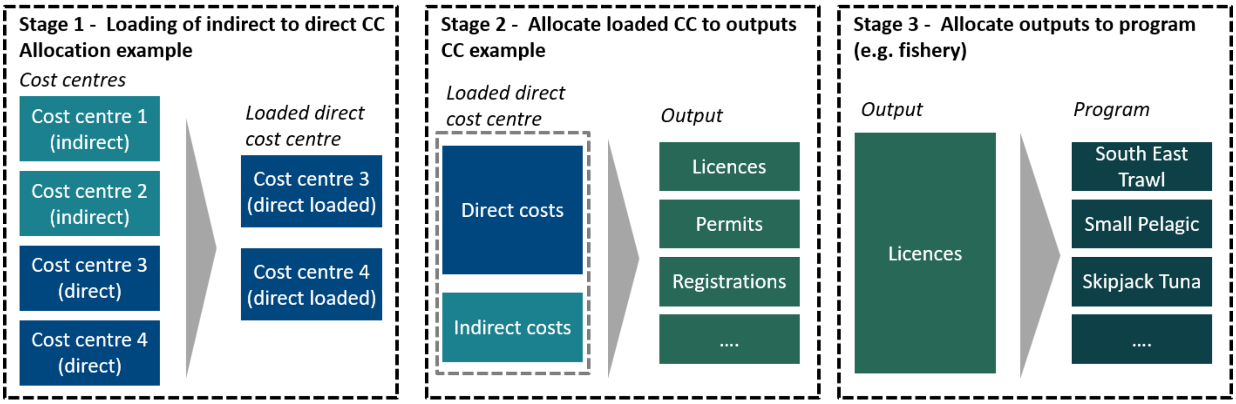
Cost drivers

AFMA uses an activity-based costing (ABC) methodology to determine the cost of activities and outputs against programs (e.g. fisheries). The allocations methodology reflects effort incurred in delivering activities.

The cost allocation process categorises costs into direct and indirect costs and allocates these to outputs and then to programs. The ABC methodology allocates costs in a three-stage approach:

1. Allocation of indirect costs centres to direct cost centres to create a loaded cost centre view. Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) is predominantly used to allocate costs from indirect cost centres to direct cost centres. For example, if a direct cost centre houses 10% of AFMA's FTE, it will attract 10% of each indirect cost centre. This step creates a "loaded cost centre" for each direct cost centre.
2. Allocation of loaded cost centres to outputs (as defined in Tables 2 to 8). Business area surveys capturing effort and resources expended against outputs are used to allocate costs from loaded cost centres to outputs.
3. Allocation of outputs to programs (i.e. fisheries). Business metrics, commercial fisher metrics, and tracking of historical and current costs by fisheries are used to allocate output costs to programs (i.e. fisheries). **Appendix C** provides a breakdown of percentage split of cost drivers across each program. This final step creates each fishery budget.

Figure 1 – Cost allocation methodology stages (illustrative)



At each stage of the cost allocations, cost allocation drivers have been reviewed to ensure they are still relevant for use.

Once costs have been allocated to outputs and programs (i.e. fisheries), AFMA is able to review and determine which costs are recoverable from the commercial fishing industry and what costs should be government funded. This review is done based on which outputs and programs are used and/or benefit which stakeholders (i.e. individual concession holders, commercial fishing industry, or the broader Australian community).

Table 11 – AFMA estimated costs by fishery with direct vs indirect breakdown, 2026-27 ($)

Activity	Direct	Indirect	Total
Total cost recovered expense	**13,786,780**	**4,552,604**	**18,339,383**
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop	361,676	161,501	523,177
Coral Sea	137,924	62,368	200,293
Eastern Tuna and Billfish	1,298,753	504,112	1,802,865
Gillnet Hook and Trap	2,100,494	785,315	2,885,809
Great Australian Bight Trawl	421,536	163,468	585,004
Heard and McDonald Islands	1,373,222	476,661	1,849,883
Macquarie Island	442,476	162,785	605,261
North West Slope	79,172	35,491	114,663
Northern Prawn	1,678,109	496,730	2,174,838
Skipjack Tuna	45,932	20,251	66,183
Small Pelagic	881,747	219,015	1,100,762
South East Trawl	2,837,808	935,725	3,773,534
Southern Bluefin Tuna	1,510,222	255,874	1,766,096
Southern Squid Jig	107,257	52,384	159,640
Torres Strait Prawn	234,395	98,310	332,706
Western Deepwater Trawl	71,925	35,229	107,154

Activity	Direct	Indirect	Total
Western Tuna and Billfish	204,132	87,383	291,515
Government funded expense	**20,819,067**	**9,288,100**	**30,107,167**
All government funded	12,476,553	3,898,758	16,375,311
International obligations of Government	4,565,255	2,587,959	7,153,214
Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	1,778,819	1,849,799	3,628,617
Traditional, Indigenous and Non-commercial	1,998,441	951,585	2,950,025
Total expense	**34,605,847**	**13,840,704**	**48,446,550**

3.3. Design of the regulatory charge

AFMA's regulatory costs will be recovered appropriately through a combination of fees for service for user-initiated and transaction-based activities provided to users and levies for ongoing regulatory activities.

Fees - Where it is practical and cost effective to do so, costs will be recovered as a fee-for-service where the activity and its costs can be linked to a specific individual or organisation. This applies to activities such as licensing transactions and costs associated with the deployment of observers as there is a direct link between the costs of the activity and the beneficiary of those activities. Fees are based on estimated efficient unit costs, such as the daily costs of placing an observer on a fishing boat.

Levies – The majority of AFMA's cost recovered revenue is collected in the form of a levy. This is due to the different sectors that operate in AFMA's fisheries. Individual fishing concession owners are levied an amount proportional to their SFR in a fishery. This is facilitated through regulations made under applicable legislation.

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry approves the levy rates per leviable concession type which are set out in the form of annual levy regulations. Those regulations are made law by the Governor-General and are subject to disallowance by Parliament.

2026-27 fees and levy rates are being developed. Once the rates are finalised these will be published through the relevant regulations and on AFMA's website.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

AFMA completes a Charging Risk Assessment (CRA) as part of establishing the CRIS. The CRA's overall rating was medium for all activities.

AFMA examined other risks in relation to the changing regulatory environment and its CRIS. The table below lists those risks and AFMA management response.

Table 12 – Risks identified and mitigation measures in relation to AFMA's cost recovery arrangements

Identified risk	Mitigation measure(s)
Variability of costs year to year can increase costs significantly for concession owners.	AFMA informs the fishing industry of variances through the annual CRIS process and provides opportunity for consultation and feedback from peak industry body/ies on the draft CRIS. Updating this CRIS provides information on prior year performance, the current year's expected budget, and forecast budget over the forward years. Through levy regulations, AFMA implements a three instalment payment plan for industry.
AFMA liquidity if levies are not collected.	AFMA currently uses government appropriation to supplement cash flow while levy regulations are being made, invoiced and then receipted in the latter half of the financial year. AFMA's cash flow requirements are supported though government appropriation until cost recovery levies are invoiced and collected later in the financial year. AFMA will review its processes in future years to reduce the period between budget finalisation and receipting of payments to reduce the risk of adverse impact on its cash flow.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As part of its annual development of the cost recovered budget and review of the CRIS, AFMA engages with relevant stakeholders such as the CFA, as well as other representative bodies prior to finalisation. Following any consultation rounds AFMA consider the feedback received and make any necessary changes to address issues or suggestions made for improvement.

Table 13 lists the stakeholder engagement that was undertaken as part of the development of this CRIS.

Table 13 – Stakeholder engagement

Date	Who	What
August 2026	Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA)	Draft 2026-27 cost recovered budget released.
August 2026	CFA	Draft 2026-27 CRIS released.
August 2026	CFA	Meeting held with CFA to discuss draft 2026-27 CRIS and budget.
September 2026	CFA	Final 2026-27 CRIS and budget released.

6. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

6.1. Financial estimates

Table 14 provides a summary of AFMA's cost recovered budget estimates for 2026-27 budget and forward years.

Table 14 – AFMA cost recovered budget estimates, 2026-27 to 2029-30

Budget item	2026-27 Budget ($'000)	2027-28 Forward estimate ($'000)	2028-29 Forward estimate ($'000)	2029-30 Forward estimate ($'000)
Cost recovered expense	18,339	18,899	19,154	19,416
Cost recovered revenue	18,339	18,899	19,154	19,416
Balance = revenue - expense	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

6.2. Financial outcomes

Table 15 provides a summary of AFMA's levy results for 2022-23 through to 2025-26.

Table 15 – AFMA's historical financial performance

Financial item	2022-23 ($'000)	2023-24 ($'000)	2024-25 ($'000)	2025-26 ($'000)
Budgeted levy expense	13,043	13,892	16,630	17,212
Actual levy expense	14,529	14,935	15,912	15,838
Balance = actual - budget	**(1,486)**	**(1,043)**	**718**	**1,374**

AFMA applies any underspend / overspend to the following year cost recovered revenue.

7. NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

AFMA recovers costs for most of its regulatory activity from the fishing industry. It is therefore appropriate for AFMA to utilise reporting from the Regulator Performance Framework under the Government's red tape reduction initiative. Measuring and publicly reporting performance will give the fishing industry, the community and individuals confidence that AFMA is effectively and flexibly managing risk.

AFMA's Annual reports provides comprehensive information on performance measures and performance results. It is not intended to duplicate this information in this document but rather to draw attention to the key objectives relevant to export cost recovery arrangements. Non-financial performance measures are given as high-level objectives and are not reported at a level specific to each cost recovery arrangement.

Please visit AFMA's corporate plans and annual reporting to review the relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and information.

8. KEY FORWARD DATES AND EVENTS

AFMA conduct stakeholder engagement and regular reviews of financial performance through the annual review cycle. Key forward dates are documented in Table 16.

Table 16 – AFMA's key forward dates and events

Date*	Event
August 2026	Draft 2026-27 CRIS and cost recovered budget released
September 2026	Final 2026-27 cost recovered budget and CRIS released, and 2026-27 CRIS published on AFMA website
November 2026	Ministerial approval of levy regulations
November 2026	Levy regulations made and published on the Federal Register of Legislation
November 2026	Levy notices issued for Torres Strait Prawn Fishery concession holders
January 2027	First instalment levy invoices issued for 2026-27 for Commonwealth fishing concession holders

*Indicative dates only

9. CRIS APPROVAL AND CHANGE REGISTER

The CRIS Approval and Change Register in Table 17 provides a record of updates to this CRIS.

Table 17 – CRIS approval and change register

Date of change	CRIS change	Approver	Basis for change
August 2025	2025-26 CRIS	Minister Collins	CRIS 2025-26 finalised
August 2026	Draft budget	Wez Norris	Draft 2026-27 cost recovered budget released for consultation
September 2026	2026-27 CRIS	Minister Collins	CRIS 2026-27 finalised

Appendix A – 2025-26 CRIS budget expenses compared to 2026-27 CRIS budget expenses

Program/fishery	2025-26 CRIS Budget ($)	2026-27 CRIS Budget ($)	Total change ($)	Percentage change (%)	Variance commentary (main drivers of variance)
Cost recovered expense	**18,209,773**	**18,339,383**	**129,610**	**0.7%**	
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop	513,550	523,177	9,627	1.9%	Observer costs have been removed (~$7k), corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$15k.
Coral Sea	201,842	200,293	-1,549	-0.8%	Observer costs have reduced by ~$9k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$6k.
Eastern Tuna and Billfish	2,002,994	1,802,865	-200,129	-10.0%	Research costs have decreased by ~$188k, electronic monitoring has decreased by ~$70k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$64k.
Gillnet Hook and Trap	2,840,433	2,885,809	45,376	1.6%	Research costs have decreased by ~$21k, electronic monitoring has decreased by ~$23k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$105k.
Great Australian Bight Trawl	619,293	585,004	-34,289	-5.5%	Research costs have decreased by ~$53k, Observer costs have been removed (~$19k), corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$15k, closure of MAC & RAG reduced cost of $20k.
Heard and McDonald Islands	1,779,195	1,849,883	70,688	4.0%	Research costs have decreased by ~$3k, Observer costs have decreased by ~$3k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$88k.
Macquarie Island	646,032	605,261	-40,771	-6.3%	Research costs have decreased by ~$58k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$23k.
North West Slope	121,655	114,663	-6,992	-5.7%	Electronic monitoring has decreased by ~$10k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$3k.
Northern Prawn	2,382,869	2,174,838	-208,031	-8.7%	Research costs have decreased by ~$177k, Observer costs have been removed (~$246k), electronic monitoring has been added (~$125k), corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$48k.
Skipjack Tuna	65,167	66,183	1,016	1.6%	Corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$2k.
Small Pelagic	971,183	1,100,762	129,579	13.3%	One off data collection project for 2026-27 of ~$192k, Research costs have decreased by ~$120k, Observer costs have increased by ~$38k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$24k.

Program/fishery	2025-26 CRIS Budget ($)	2026-27 CRIS Budget ($)	Total change ($)	Percentage change (%)	Variance commentary (main drivers of variance)
South East Trawl	3,468,713	3,773,534	304,821	8.8%	Co-management cost increase of ~$241k, Research costs have decreased by ~$75k, Observer costs have decreased by ~$276k, electronic monitoring costs have been added (~$199k), corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$127k.
Southern Bluefin Tuna	1,696,217	1,766,096	69,879	4.1%	Research costs have increased by ~$12k, Observer costs have increased by ~$50k, electronic monitoring costs have decreased by ~$16k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$33k.
Southern Squid Jig	152,123	159,640	7,517	4.9%	Observer costs have increased by ~$1k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$7k.
Torres Strait Prawn	315,876	332,706	16,830	5.3%	Observer costs have decreased by ~$2k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$14k.
Western Deepwater Trawl	113,099	107,154	-5,945	-5.3%	Electronic monitoring costs have decreased by ~$12k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$3k.
Western Tuna and Billfish	319,531	291,515	-28,016	-8.8%	Research costs have decreased by ~$33k, electronic monitoring costs have increased by ~$2k, corporate and executive costs have increased by ~$9k.
Government funded expense	**33,209,327**	**30,107,167**	**-3,102,160**	**-9.3%**	
All Government Funded	33,209,327	16,375,311	-3,102,160	-9.3%	
International Obligations of Government		7,153,214			
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing		3,628,617			
Traditional, Indigenous and Non-Commercial		2,950,025			
Total expense	**51,419,100**	**48,446,550**	**-2,972,550**	**-5.8%**	

*Includes Fee for Service expenses

Appendix B – 2026-27 budget expenses by activity and program ($)

	Activity							
Program/fishery	Fisheries management	Compliance and enforcement	Monitoring	Policy, planning and reporting	Research	Stakeholder engagement and education	Approvals and extracts	Total
Cost recovered expense	**8,060,020**	**-**	**6,060,312**	**314,920**	**2,438,094**	**585,489**	**880,549**	**18,339,383**
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop	338,173	-	10,703	14,229	100,052	41,031	18,989	523,177
Coral Sea	109,594	-	39,665	7,534	-	33,895	9,605	200,293
Eastern Tuna and Billfish	902,233	-	656,540	36,132	65,905	54,267	87,788	1,802,865
Gillnet Hook and Trap	1,419,987	-	889,322	52,246	207,583	91,214	225,457	2,885,809
Great Australian Bight Trawl	355,315	-	62,339	15,271	81,240	31,122	39,717	585,004
Heard and McDonald Islands	281,479	-	1,511,556	12,184	-	24,401	20,263	1,849,883
Macquarie Island	176,667	-	312,130	7,220	84,022	14,641	10,581	605,261
North West Slope	81,008	-	18,395	4,598	-	1,767	8,896	114,663
Northern Prawn	912,767	-	355,704	27,580	827,644	10,693	40,451	2,174,838
Skipjack Tuna	44,867	-	-	2,524	-	970	17,822	66,183
Small Pelagic	574,087	-	171,674	17,686	223,322	49,177	64,816	1,100,762
South East Trawl	1,866,955	-	876,894	77,114	582,767	148,900	220,904	3,773,534
Southern Bluefin Tuna	450,076	-	979,903	19,989	253,972	42,900	19,257	1,766,096
Southern Squid Jig	117,063	-	28,310	3,009	-	1,161	10,097	159,640
Torres Strait Prawn	175,267	-	99,621	5,162	-	22,599	30,057	332,706
Western Deepwater Trawl	88,216	-	3,430	4,425	-	1,701	9,381	107,154
Western Tuna and Billfish	166,266	-	44,127	8,018	11,588	15,048	46,467	291,515
Government funded expense	**4,715,591**	**11,191,188**	**3,693,305**	**7,944,904**	**1,337,722**	**1,071,033**	**153,424**	**30,107,167**
All Government Funded	3,074,618	7,343,246	3,642,929	647,256	831,227	682,611	153,424	16,375,311
International Obligations of Government	-	-	-	7,153,214	-	-	-	7,153,214
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	-	3,628,617	-	-	-	-	-	3,628,617
Traditional, Indigenous and Non-Commercial	1,640,973	219,325	50,376	144,434	506,495	388,422	-	2,950,025
Total expense	**12,775,611**	**11,191,188**	**9,753,617**	**8,259,824**	**3,775,815**	**1,656,522**	**1,033,973**	**48,446,550**

Appendix C – Summary of key cost drivers

	Cost Driver Description[1]							
Program/fishery	% of Licensing System	Licensing - prior year actuals	Observer Days	Number of VMS Devices on Boats	E-Monitoring Service Costs	% of Research Costs	% of Fishery Budget[2]	% of MAC & RAG Costs[3]
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop	2.00%	1.31%	-	1.05%	-	4.13%	4.64%	6.9%
Coral Sea	1.00%	0.56%	0.91%	0.70%	-	-	2.35%	-
Eastern Tuna and Billfish	9.20%	6.90%	-	12.63%	27.32%	2.72%	11.54%	9.46%
Gillnet Hook and Trap	23.50%	19.67%	0.58%	19.30%	32.93%	8.56%	16.95%	16.5%
Great Australian Bight Trawl	4.10%	0.90%	-	1.40%	2.32%	3.32%	4.56%	5.9%
Heard and McDonald Islands	2.00%	2.47%	41.13%	1.40%	-	-	3.67%	6.21%
Macquarie Island	1.00%	1.19%	8.10%	0.35%	-	3.40%	2.03%	6.21%
North West Slope	1.00%	0.06%	-	-	1.00%	-	1.56%	-
Northern Prawn	4.10%	0.85%	-	15.44%	8.93%	33.68%	8.00%	16.7%
Skipjack Tuna	2.00%	0.01%	-	-	-	-	0.85%	-
Small Pelagic	7.10%	0.89%	4.07%	1.75%	0.70%	9.24%	5.78%	6.3%
South East Trawl	22.40%	19.90%	12.97%	11.93%	14.22%	23.90%	23.59%	22%
Southern Bluefin Tuna	2.00%	4.30%	5.81%	3.51%	10.80%	10.59%	6.96%	0.04%
Southern Squid Jig	1.00%	1.78%	0.29%	1.75%	-	-	0.95%	1.86%
Torres Strait Prawn	2.00%	2.79%	1.96%	2.81%	-	-	2.45%	-
Western Deepwater Trawl	1.00%	1.10%	-	0.35%	-	-	1.49%	-
Western Tuna and Billfish	5.10%	0.73%	-	1.05%	1.78%	0.48%	2.63%	1.35%
All Government Funded	9.50%	34.59%	22.75%	24.56%	-	-	-	-
International Obligations of Government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Traditional, Indigenous and Non-Commercial	-	-	1.42%	-	-	-	-	-
Total[4]	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

1. Key cost drivers are applied at the output level where costs are not directly attributable to specific Programs/Fisheries.
2. Fishery Budget includes expenses (e.g. Employee effort, travel, supplier costs) which are attributable only to that fishery. % of fishery budget is applied to activities where the cost to the fishery is the best representative of effort. This driver accounts for less than 3% of all cost recovery in 2026/27.
3. *In the new methodology MACS & RAGS are attributed directly to the fisheries they support. % of MAC and RAG budget is used where cost of MAC & RAGs is the best representative of effort, such as some policy activities, this driver accounts for less than 1% of all cost recovery in 2026/27.
4. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding