



## **Australian Fisheries Management Forum**

### **National Statement of Intent on Fisheries and Aquaculture**

The Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF) is an informal network for sharing information between the state and federal government agencies involved in managing fisheries and aquaculture in Australia. AFMF is comprised of the heads of Commonwealth and state/territory fishery management agencies, with observers from relevant bodies including the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

AFMF is not a decision making body and its roles include:

- facilitating communication and cooperation on fisheries matters between jurisdictions
- developing and promoting best practice policy principles for fisheries management
- promoting implementation and adoption of best practice fisheries management; and
- strategically addressing the range and complexity of cross jurisdictional fisheries responsibilities and issues through improved communication and collaboration.

AFMF has developed a national statement of intent to provide the commercial fishing industry with an understanding of management and policy directions that fishery agencies will work towards over the next few years. The statement is structured to provide industry with an indication of high level outcomes and trends in fisheries management in Australia, noting that fisheries agencies each operate within their own legislative framework, Government policies and priorities and resourcing constraints.

The goals set out below have been identified as important towards meeting our primary outcome that “The Australian community derives optimal economic, environmental and social benefits from its fishery and aquaculture resources” (National Fisheries and Aquaculture RD&E Strategy 2011).

**Goal 1: Australia's fisheries and aquaculture industries are managed, and acknowledged, to be ecologically sustainable.**

Issue

- There is a lack of broad community recognition of both the status of Australia's fish stocks and the management structures in place for Australian fisheries and aquaculture. This is despite significant advances that have been made to management practices and environmental reporting across Australia's fisheries and aquaculture industries.

Key focus areas

- Improving fisheries management and governance
- Improved fisheries reporting
- Promoting awareness of management standards and the ecological status of Australia's fish resources
- Improved knowledge and transparency

Key outcomes

- ✓ National Fishery Harvest Strategy Guidelines
- ✓ National Fisheries Status Report
- ✓ National Plan of Action for Sharks
- ✓ Accreditation of fisheries under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)
- ✓ 3<sup>rd</sup> party accreditation of many fisheries and aquaculture operations (Marine Stewardship Council, Coles/Woolworths)
- ✓ Investigation of national fisheries management standard
- ✓ Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management approaches
- ✓ Capacity building and accountability of representative organisations

**Goal 2: Secure access to fisheries and aquaculture resources**

Issue

- Stakeholder dissatisfaction with resource allocation processes and/or outcomes that they may not see as "fair and equitable" nor providing 'optimal' benefit to the community. This may include unclear fishery objectives, need for greater transparency in decision making processes, or a view that decisions do not reflect community views.

Key focus areas

- Development of transparent allocation principles and processes
- Defining clear management objectives for each fishery (*secure 'rights' to promote certainty and investment confidence, impacts of other activities / sectors*)
- Incorporation of broader social and economic information where appropriate to inform decision making

#### Key outcomes

- ✓ FRDC project on Fisheries Resource and Access and Allocation – development of key principles and approaches
- ✓ Formal resource sharing frameworks and processes
- ✓ Rights based management frameworks/legislation
- ✓ Establishment of Social Science and Indigenous Programs by FRDC to improve information for decision making
- ✓ FRDC project on developing social objectives for fisheries management

### **Goal 3: Profitable and viable fisheries and aquaculture industries**

#### Issue

- Increasing costs are impacting on the profitability and viability of fisheries and aquaculture industries. There is scope to streamline administrative processes, reduce red tape and provide a more efficient delivery of management outcomes.

#### Key focus areas:

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of regulation to create development opportunities
- Use of technology in reporting/monitoring
- Development of risk based, effective and consistent compliance approaches
- Identification/development of aquaculture zones/precincts

#### Key outcomes

- ✓ National fisheries compliance strategy
- ✓ Risk based compliance planning
- ✓ Co-management policies and approaches
- ✓ Red tape reduction programs
- ✓ Regulatory review and reform
- ✓ Aquaculture development planning
- ✓ Enhanced consultative frameworks
- ✓ Cost recovery policies/fee reforms
- ✓ Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) analyses and bio-economic modelling approaches to fisheries management
- ✓ National Fisheries and Aquaculture Research, Development and Extension Strategy
- ✓ E-systems for reporting and licensing

**Goal 4: Supporting the health of habitats upon which fisheries and aquaculture rely**

Issue

- It is important that the impacts of fishing and aquaculture are minimized while at the same time recognizing broader impacts of development, pollution, habitat destruction and changing climatic conditions on the health of our fisheries.

Key focus areas:

- Climate change: develop knowledge, systems and processes to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and variability
- Ensure negative impacts of fishing and aquaculture are minimised
- Aquatic biosecurity
- Native inland fish management and habitat programs in the Murray-Darling Basin

Key outcomes:

- ✓ Climate change research program implemented across South-east, West and Northern Australia
- ✓ Research on gear selectivity and programs to minimise Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species interactions
- ✓ Aquatic biosecurity programs
- ✓ Noxious fish management
- ✓ Adaptive environmental management of aquaculture
- ✓ Cross jurisdictional programs to improve native fish outcomes across the Murray Darling Basin.
- ✓ New approach to management of marine estate, including marine parks, to be evidence based considering economic, social and ecological risks.