



Australian Government

# Outline for consultation: National Fisheries Plan



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# Introduction

[To be completed following consultation]

## Vision

The primary purpose of the National Fisheries Plan is to create a shared vision for the future that will align the strategic planning and prioritisation of Commonwealth, state and territory governments. The draft vision is:

Sustainable growth and development of Australia's fishing and seafood community for the benefit of all Australians.

Achieving this vision over the next decade will require commitment and action from governments and sectors.

## Scope

The National Fisheries Plan aims to support and empower all sectors of the fishing and seafood community. These sectors include commercial, Indigenous and recreational fishing (marine, lakes and rivers), aquaculture and post-harvest.

The National Fisheries Plan:

- addresses priority areas related to the growth and development of fishing sectors
- identifies initiatives for government and fishing sectors to implement.

The plan does not address broader oceans policy issues such as marine spatial planning and marine economy (ports, transport and offshore energy). However, the plan is consistent with and seeks to promote action against broader strategic initiatives, including those of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

# Priority areas

The National Fisheries Plan focuses on 8 priority areas to support delivery of its vision:

- 1) Governance – Streamlining governance and regulation across jurisdictions and sectors.
- 2) Sustainability – Managing the sustainable use of fisheries resources, while maximising productivity and minimising impacts on the marine environment.
- 3) Resource sharing and access security – Promoting equitable and secure access to fisheries resources.
- 4) Indigenous opportunity – Protecting cultural and customary values, supporting and enabling participation of the Indigenous fishing sector in fisheries management and fisheries-related business.
- 5) Adaptation – Supporting sectors to adapt to, and harness opportunities from, a changing environment.
- 6) Employment, participation and health – Increasing participation in, and improving the health and wellbeing of, the fishing and seafood community.
- 7) Community connection – Promoting trust and understanding between the seafood community and the public.
- 8) International engagement – Engaging internationally to promote sustainable fisheries management and market access.

## Governance

**Priority: Streamlining governance and regulation across jurisdictions and sectors**

**Outcome: A collaborative, secure, efficient and effective regulatory environment**

Harmonising fisheries management across Australia’s jurisdictions and sectors provides an opportunity to simplify regulation, reduce red tape and ensure efficient, consistent delivery of management outcomes. Creating a more consistent and efficient regulatory environment is expected to improve sustainability outcomes, while increasing the profitability of industry, opportunities for co-management of fisheries resources, market competitiveness and productivity.

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- Cross-jurisdictional fish stocks are managed consistently across their range.
- Data-sharing agreements are implemented across jurisdictions and with sectors (as appropriate).

**Table 1 Key initiatives to achieve harmonised governance and regulation**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
1.1 Streamlining arrangements for the management of cross-jurisdictional fish stocks, including reviewing Offshore Constitutional Settlement arrangements, to provide a consistent operating environment.	Jurisdictions

Key initiatives	Responsibility
1.2 Collaboration between jurisdictions for the collection and sharing of appropriate data from all sectors to enable accurate and timely fisheries management decisions (including on socio-economic measures).	Jurisdictions

## Sustainability

**Priority: Managing the sustainable use of fisheries resources, while maximising productivity and minimising impacts on aquatic ecosystems**

**Outcome: Sustainable and healthy fisheries and aquaculture resources**

Australia is a world leader in fisheries management, with ecologically sustainable development at the centre of decision-making. In order to maintain our sustainability credentials, Australia must continue to address changes in technology, community expectations and environmental conditions.

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- All jurisdictions manage key stocks under a harvest strategy (as appropriate).
- All fish stocks are managed sustainably using best practice, evidence-based management frameworks.
- Australia's marine and freshwater fisheries and habitats are healthy and productive.

**Table 2 Key initiatives to achieve sustainable and healthy fisheries resources**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
2.1 Managing key fish stocks under a harvest strategy (where appropriate) and promoting the application of harvest strategies consistent with the <a href="#">National guidelines for the development of fisheries harvest strategies</a> .	Jurisdictions
2.2 Ensuring that all fisheries are managed consistently with the principles of ecologically sustainable development with recovery of overfished stocks and no overfishing.	Jurisdictions
2.3 Supporting initiatives that protect, enhance and sustain healthy aquatic ecosystems, including through restoration projects, stocking and artificial reef programs, incorporating Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge and culturally significant species and sites, as appropriate.	Jurisdictions and sectors
2.4 Coordinating regular recreational fishing surveys to improve knowledge on national recreational catch, expenditure and values.	Jurisdictions and sectors
2.5 Implementing systems and building capacity to ensure that biosecurity threats are prevented, detected and managed effectively.	Jurisdictions and sectors
2.6 Promoting the development and deployment of more environmentally friendly fishing methods and practices to reduce bycatch and minimise impacts on the marine environment.	Sectors (supported by jurisdictions)

## Resource sharing and access security

**Priority: Promoting equitable and secure access to fisheries and aquaculture resources**

**Outcome: A transparent, consultative approach to resource sharing and increased security of access for all sectors**

With multiple user groups accessing Australia’s aquatic resources, sectors are seeking greater certainty and increased transparency about their ongoing resource access.

The Australian Government recognises that security of access can promote increased business certainty, innovation, investment and resource stewardship.

Coupled with cross-jurisdictional management, a more consistent, best-practice approach to resource sharing and access security provides an opportunity to improve outcomes for sectors and the Australian community.

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- National resource sharing guidelines are developed for use by jurisdictions.
- Sectors have increased certainty, security and transparency about access to aquatic resources.
- Rights-based management frameworks are implemented across jurisdictions.

**Table 3 Key initiatives to achieve a transparent, consultative approach to resource sharing**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
3.1 Developing national resource sharing guidelines that consider commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing interests to ensure that all sectors have fair, equitable access to fisheries resources.	Jurisdictions and sectors
3.2 Establishing guidance on data requirements to support evidence-based decision-making on resource sharing issues (including improving methods to value sectors).	Jurisdictions
3.3 Identifying options to improve access security for all sectors, including consideration of developing a national resource access rights framework and principles that consider existing and historical rights and access to fisheries resources.	Jurisdictions

## Indigenous opportunity

**Priority: Protecting cultural and customary values, supporting and enabling participation of the Indigenous fishing sector in fisheries management and fisheries-related business**

**Outcome: An empowered Indigenous fishing sector, actively involved in fisheries management**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first custodians of Australia’s marine and freshwater environments. They are the original fishers, traders and managers of Australia’s fisheries resources. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a deep and enduring cultural connection with country and understand the relationship between their communities and the wellbeing of the land and sea.

Governments recognise the cultural value of Indigenous traditional fishing practices and seek to support the participation of these communities in fisheries management and related businesses. Economic development opportunities, greater self-determination, partnerships and

participation in decision-making will help support thriving Indigenous fishing communities and contribute to priorities and goals under the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#).

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- The participation of Indigenous participation in fisheries management and monitoring has increased.
- Business and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the fishing and seafood industry has increased.
- Cultural fishing is more widely practiced and celebrated among Indigenous communities.

**Table 4 Key initiatives to achieve an empowered Indigenous fishing sector, actively involved in fisheries management**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
4.1 Building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to participate in decision-making in fisheries management.	Jurisdictions and sectors
4.2 Developing pathways for greater involvement of Indigenous communities in fishing and aquaculture, fishery monitoring and habitat restoration projects that protect fishing assets.	Jurisdictions and sectors
4.3 Integrating Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge into fisheries management approaches and habitat restoration projects.	Jurisdictions and sectors
4.4 Implementing systemic and structural transformation, as appropriate, to ensure fisheries management agencies and industry workforces are inclusive and promote cultural awareness and safety.	Jurisdictions and sectors
4.5 Developing more effective communication models to better engage with the Indigenous fishing sector.	Jurisdictions and sectors

## Adaptation

**Priority: Supporting sectors to adapt to, and harness opportunities from, a changing environment**

**Outcome: A thriving fisheries and aquaculture sector in a changing environment**

The authors of the [Stocktake of megatrends shaping Australian agriculture](#) (Hatfield-Dodds et al. 2021) predict that the seafood sector will face multiple interacting changes over the next decade. These include:

- changing markets, complex international trade and new trading partner requirements
- environmental and climatic variation
- changing consumer demand and public expectations.

Anticipating and preparing for these changes will help ensure that the fishing and seafood sector thrive over the next decade.

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- Fisheries and aquaculture resources and their supporting environments are resilient to the effects of future environmental changes and variability.
- Sectors anticipate and harness opportunities to increase their growth and viability.

- Commercial seafood production is valued at \$6 billion.
- Expenditure on recreational fishing exceeds \$3 billion and average satisfaction with experience is 'high'.
- The fishing and seafood community has the people, skills, systems, technology and connectivity to deliver an increase in productivity of 2.5% per year.

**Table 5 Key initiatives to achieve thriving fisheries and aquaculture**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
5.1 Encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in all sectors, including investing in research and development and fostering the adoption of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and electronic monitoring, to improve efficiency, profitability, data collection, traceability, flexibility, abundance and habitat condition.	Jurisdictions and sectors
5.2 Developing and implementing adaptable management frameworks that can respond to changing environmental conditions.	Jurisdictions and sectors
5.3 Collecting and sharing data on emerging climatic conditions that may impact fisheries productivity, enabling the fishing and seafood community to anticipate, and adapt to, significant environmental changes.	Jurisdictions and sectors
5.4 Research and development into new high-value products, value-adding initiatives, marketing opportunities.	Sectors
5.5 Supporting sectors to anticipate and respond to emerging consumer demands and trading partner requirements, including changing expectations regarding provenance, animal welfare, carbon footprint and sustainability.	Jurisdictions

## Employment, participation and health

**Priority: Increasing participation in, and improving the health and wellbeing of, the fishing and seafood community**

**Outcome: A prosperous workforce and healthy seafood community**

Workforce security and planning for future labour needs will support ongoing growth of the commercial, aquaculture and post-harvest sectors. An inclusive, safe, adaptable culture will help ensure the wellbeing of the broader fishing and seafood community.

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- The commercial sector has ready access to a skilled and engaged workforce.
- Participation in all sectors of the fishing and seafood community has increased.

**Table 6 Key initiatives to achieve a prosperous workforce and seafood community**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
6.1 Identifying barriers to participation and opportunities for young Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to be engaged in the fishing and seafood sector.	Jurisdictions and sectors
6.2 Supporting pathways to increase the number of direct and indirect jobs associated with the recreational fishing sector.	Sectors
6.3 Promoting diversity in career opportunities and investing in education and training to ensure career succession and participation in fishing and seafood fields.	Sectors
6.4 Creating effective pathways for individuals to be engaged and employed in the fishing and seafood sector including increasing the development of jobs and building up the industry.	Sectors

Key initiatives	Responsibility
6.5 Pursuing a culture promoting safety, diversity and wellbeing, including initiatives to improve mental health.	Sectors

## Community connection

**Priority: Promoting trust and understanding between the fishing and seafood community and the public**

**Outcomes: A celebrated fishing and seafood community**

Australia's fishing and seafood community is the lifeblood of many regional areas. A focus on connecting with the Australian community and highlighting successes and sustainable fishing practices will help foster public support for the fishing and seafood community.

### Targets to achieve by 2030

- Consumers trust, respect and celebrate the fishing and seafood community and the benefit they provide.
- Australian consumers support sustainably produced and local Australian seafood.

**Table 7 Key initiatives to achieve a celebrated and engaged fishing and seafood community**

Key initiatives	Responsibility
7.1 Promoting community awareness and understanding of fisheries and aquaculture management and the ecological status of Australia's fisheries resources and promoting Australian seafood as sustainable, safe and healthy.	Jurisdictions and sectors
7.2 Supporting the establishment of supply chains within Australia, including Indigenous supply chains, that create stronger linkages between the producer and consumer to foster greater community support for fisheries, including greater use of traceability technology.	Jurisdictions and sectors
7.3 Ensuring that all sectors have effective representative groups, with capacity to engage with government, members, other sectors and the public.	Sectors
7.4 Building and strengthening structures that empower fishers to share decision-making in fisheries management, including co-management arrangements.	Jurisdictions and sectors

## International engagement

**Priority: Engaging internationally to promote sustainable fisheries management and market access**

**Outcome: World-leading international engagement, diverse trade opportunities and greater market access**

Australia engages regionally and internationally to support our fishing industry and promote world's best practice fisheries management of shared fish stocks. Australia seeks to ensure sustainable fishing practices are adopted by other countries and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, especially for stocks important to our own domestic fishing industry.

Trade in international markets gives Australian seafood businesses access to larger markets, bringing significant benefits not only to the producers, but also to the Australian community through a stronger economy. There is potential to expand Australia's fisheries exports into new and growing markets to create a more diversified market base.

## Targets to achieve by 2030

- The export value of seafood products has increased by 2.5%.
- Australia's reputation as a producer of high-quality, sustainable seafood enables greater access to key international markets.

**Table 8 Key initiatives to achieve world-leading international engagement and diverse trade opportunities**

<b>Key initiatives</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
8.1 Engaging in international fisheries management through cooperation to protect Australia's access to shared stocks, promotion of sustainable fisheries management and ensuring a level regulatory playing field for Australian operators.	Australian Government
8.2 Maintaining strong monitoring, control and surveillance regimes and preserving close working relationships with internal and external stakeholders to protect our commercial interests, establish regional goodwill, and fulfil international obligations regarding illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.	Jurisdictions (led by the Australian Government)
8.3 Identifying and establishing new markets and maintaining and expanding existing markets.	Sectors and jurisdictions

# Implementation and reporting

Implementation of the National Fisheries Plan will be the shared responsibility of the jurisdictions, relevant sectors and research and development corporations, as outlined alongside each key initiative.

The Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF) will be the primary committee for reporting and evaluating the success of the National Fisheries Plan. AFMF comprises the heads of all Commonwealth, state and territory fisheries agencies, and observers such as the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will be responsible for coordinating jurisdictions' reports.

Five years after the National Fisheries Plan has commenced, the department will conduct a review in conjunction with AFMF and the National Fishing Advisory Council. The plan will be reviewed again after 2030.

# Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
AFMF	The Australian Fisheries Management Forum is an informal network for sharing information between Australian, state and territory government agencies involved in managing fisheries and aquaculture. It comprises the heads of Commonwealth and state/territory fishery management agencies, and observers from relevant bodies, including the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.
aquatic ecosystem	A water-based environment in which a community of organisms that are dependent on each other and on their environment live. The 2 main types of aquatic ecosystems are marine and freshwater.
ecosystem-based fisheries management	A management approach that considers the impact fishing has on all aspects of the aquatic ecosystem, including commercial species, non-commercial species, habitats and communities.
jurisdictions	For the purpose of the National Fisheries Plan, 'jurisdictions' refers to Australian, state and territory government agencies involved in managing fisheries and aquaculture in Australia.
sectors	For the purpose of the National Fisheries Plan, 'sectors' refers to individuals operating within the aquaculture, commercial, Indigenous, recreational and post-harvest areas.
stock assessment	A scientific analysis of a fish stock to estimate quantities of management or scientific interest such as fishing mortality and biomass.