

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 65

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Legislative tools to control fishing activities in Australia's oceans

Proof Hansard page: 32-33 (26-05-15)

Senator SINGH asked:

Senator SINGH: What legislative tools does the government have to control fishing activities in Australia's oceans, as has been requested numerous times by the minister for the environment, by Tasmanian environment groups and by the Tasmanian recreational fishing industry?

Dr Rayns: The Fisheries Management Act, which is the primary legislation that AFMA works under, has a number of tools available to it to manage this. I will mention most of those—I will perhaps not remember them all, because there are quite a few. We have a suite of measures called 'directions', which enable us to control fishing activity in terms of closed areas, open areas and open seasons et cetera. We have temporary orders, which are most often used for short-term events. They are for emergencies and similar issues as well. We use catch controls—we have a quota based management system where we limit the catches of fish from particular fisheries and for particular fish species. We also have what are known as statutory fishing rights conditions. They are conditions that we can place on the fishing concessions held by various operators in the fishery. They can cover a whole range of matters, including the types of gear that can be used, the requirement to have a Vessel Management Plan and the like.

Senator SINGH: You said that was not an exhaustive list, but—

Dr Rayns: No, there is also another group of controls called 'determinations'. We usually use those to set the TACs—the total allowable catches—for the main species in our commercial fisheries.

Senator SINGH: Could you take notice the full range of your legislative tools that you have just so that we do get the full breadth of what they are—obviously, other than those that you have just outlined to the committee.

Question: 65 (continued)

Answer:

Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) has a range of legislative powers to manage Commonwealth fisheries. In exercising these powers to perform its functions, AFMA must pursue the objectives set out in the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (the Act) and the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* including implementing efficient and cost effective fisheries, ensuring that the exploitation of fishery resources is consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development and maximising net economic returns to the Australian community. In addition, key Australian government fisheries policy such as the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines 2007* and *Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch 2000*, contain specific objectives and approaches for managing the impact of fishing on target species and the broader marine ecosystem including bycatch and protected species.

In pursuing its objectives AFMA can adopt input controls to limit fishing effort or output controls to limit catch. Input controls are specified by conditions on fishing concessions or in the specific rules prescribed in fishery management plans. The generic rules pertaining to all fishing concessions are prescribed in the *Fisheries Management Regulations 1992* (the Regulations). Output controls are applied by the allocation of quota and the setting of total allowable catch or effort (TAC, TAE) under the fishery management plans.

Access to Commonwealth fisheries requires an authorisation to be given by the granting of fishing concessions, either through fishing permits under s32 of the Act or through the allocation of statutory fishing rights (SFRs) under fishery management plans determined in accordance with s17 of the Act.

Fishery management plans and the Regulations define the area of a fishery, specify who can fish in that fishery, make provision for the allocation of statutory fishing rights and contain the specific rules or regulations pertaining to that particular fishery.

In pursuing its legislative objectives AFMA also has the power, through Directions, to close or partially close a fishery under s41A of the Act. A closure is not confined to a spatial closure but can be identified in any number of ways, such as by reference to fishing method, species, type of gear, etc.

In addition, in pursuing its legislative objectives, the use of Temporary Order provisions under s43 of the Act also enables AFMA to deal with emergencies or other circumstances where urgent action is required for purposes related to the management of a fishery.

Finally to ensure that Australia's fisheries remain well managed and that their net economic benefits are fully realised, AFMA has a suite of offence and penalty provisions within the Act and the Regulations which it enforces through a comprehensive risk based compliance program.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 66

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Geelong star

Proof Hansard page: 34 (26.5.2015)

Senator SINGH asked:

Senator SINGH: Let us just backtrack a little. What were the extra measures that were put in place for the first voyage?

Dr Rayns: I may have to take some of this on notice because the Vessel Management Plan is actually quite long document; it is about 50 pages all up.

Answer:

The vessel management plan originally contained the following management responses for marine mammal mortalities.

If fishing operations conducted result in the death of:

- a. one or more dolphins or
- b. one or more Australian sea lions or
- c. three or more seals

In any shot, the vessel master must:

- a. suspend fishing immediately
- b. check for damage to the net and excluder device and make repairs if necessary
- c. notify the AFMA observer (if on board) of the mortality event and with the assistance of the AFMA observer review the effectiveness of mitigation procedures used in fishing operations
- d. not recommence fishing until the immediate area around the vessel is visibly clear of marine mammals.

Question: 66 (continued)

Following completion of the first trip the following major changes were made to the vessel management plan:

1. Clarification that observer coverage was required for the first 12 months or first ten trips, whichever is longest.
2. New condition that deems any otariid pinniped (fur seals or sea lions) captured in an Australian sea lion management zone to be an Australian sea lion for the purpose of the trigger limits unless there is evidence to show otherwise.
3. Inclusion of the following management responses to dolphin mortalities.

Performance criteria	Response
Any dolphin bycatch With: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• any dolphin mortality	Cease fishing and move away <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cease fishing immediately.• Operator to notify the AFMA Observer and AFMA Bycatch Officer of the mortality event and with the assistance of the AFMA Observer and AFMA Bycatch Officer review the effectiveness of mitigation procedures used in fishing operations.• Complete a Marine Mammal Bycatch Evaluation Report and submit it to AFMA within 24 hours.• Check for damage to the net and excluder device and make repairs if necessary.• Move vessel on by at least ten nautical miles from the midpoint of the shot and not recommence fishing until the immediate area around the vessel is visibly clear of marine mammals.
Multiple dolphin bycatch With: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• three or more dolphin mortalities in a trip	Daylight fishing only <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All fishing (setting and hauling) in the management zone (or zones) in which the trip occurred must only be undertaken in daylight hours between the times of nautical twilight for a period of six months from the date of interaction.
Any additional dolphin bycatch <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the vessel has triggered the 'daylight fishing only' requirement and any additional dolphin mortality occurs in the zone(s) subject to daylight fishing only.	Return to port <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cease fishing immediately and return to port.• AFMA officers to inspect vessel and review bycatch factors before the operator can continue fishing. Once in port this will be on a fee-for-service basis.

<p>Failure to report</p> <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The boat operator does not report a threatened, endangered and protected species interaction. 	<p>Return to port</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cease fishing and return to port for a compliance investigation subject to relevant provisions of the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i> and the <i>Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>.
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Following completion of the second trip the following major changes were made to the vessel management plan.

1. Mandatory use of an electronic monitoring system.
2. The above dolphin management responses were removed and replaced with *Small Pelagic Fishery (Closures) Direction No.1 2015* which mandates daylight fishing only and implements six month zone closures for any additional dolphin mortalities.

As of 24 June 2015, no changes have been made to the vessel management plan following completion of the third trip.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 67

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: What tiers apply to the Small Pelagic Fishery

Proof Hansard page: 43 (26-05-15)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: Could you, on notice, give the committee details of how this is operating, the tiering and the zoning, just so we can get an idea of what is happening there.

Dr Rayns: Certainly. We will try and come up with a good graphic for you too, to assist.

Answer:

Tiers in the Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF)

The tiered approach is used to set harvest rates and total allowable catches (TACs). The Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) Harvest Strategy has four tier levels. Tier 1 is the highest and Tier 3 the lowest. As you move down the tiers the scientific information available to do the assessment gets older and/or is less reliable, so to ensure sustainability of the stocks the harvest rate and TACs are reduced as follows:

- Tier 1 - based on a Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) stock assessment within the last five years and an Annual Fishery Assessment, provides the greatest certainty and allows the highest potential harvest rate.
- Tier 2 - provides a medium level of assessment based on an Annual Fishery Assessment and allows a lower potential harvest rate.
- Tier 2(b) - Atlantis (SPF ecosystem modelling) provides a lower level of assessment where the maximum time at Tier 2 has been exceeded or a DEPM survey has never been done for the stock. This Tier relies on an Annual Fishery Assessment and Atlantis modelling.
- Tier 3 - is the lowest level of assessment and relies on an annual assessment of catch and effort data.

The tiered approach enables the level of investment in research and stock assessment to be varied in accordance with the benefits in harvesting the resource.

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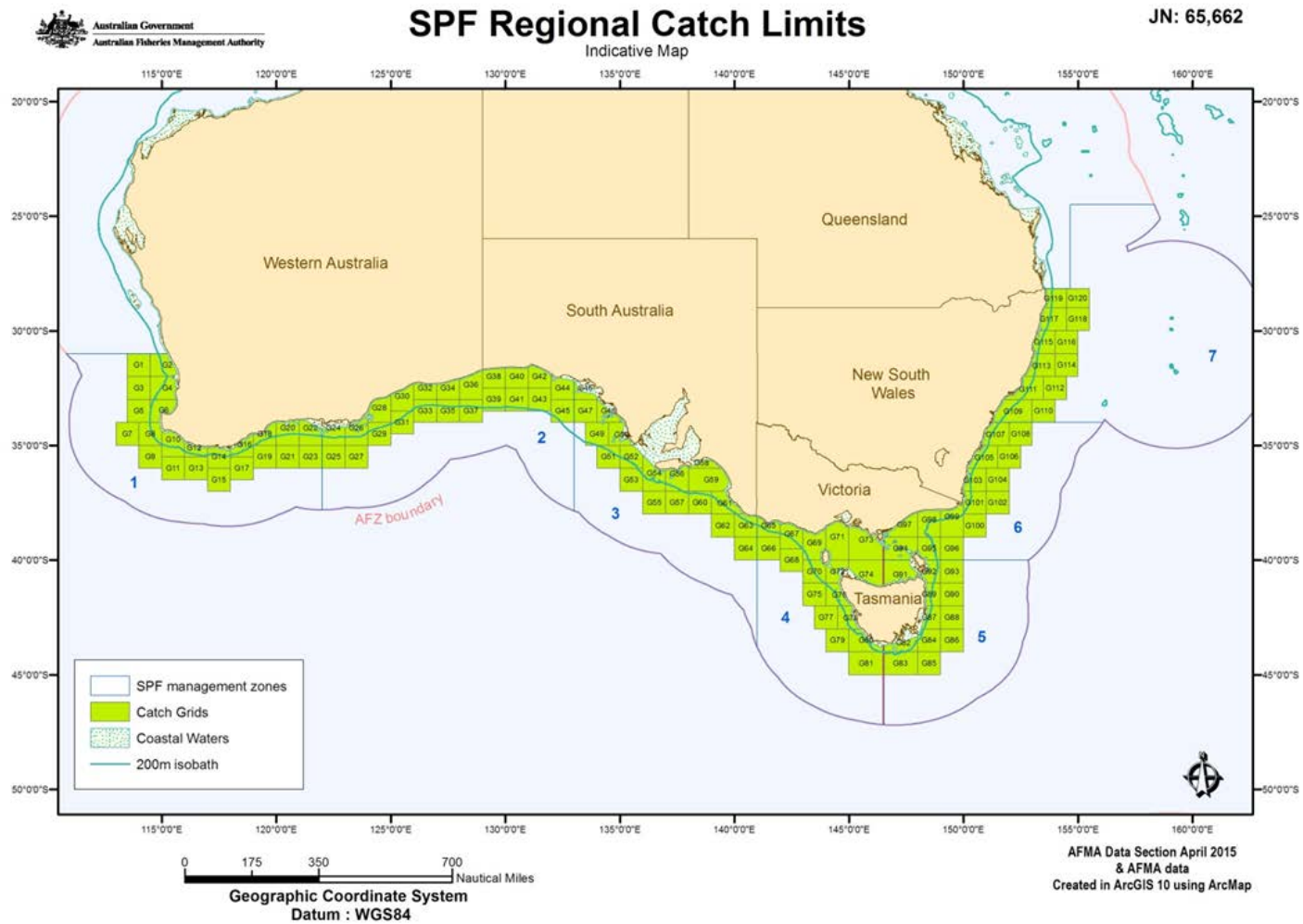
More information on Tiers can be found in the Small Pelagic Fishery Harvest Strategy on AFMA's website afma.gov.au.

Zoning

Regional catch limits have been applied to distribute effort across the SPF and collect data on target species. Regional catch limits may also reduce the potential risk of localised depletion occurring by restricting catches in specified zones of the fishery over time. Two layers of zones (Attachment A) have been implemented in the Geelong Star's Vessel Management Plan.

- Smaller grids numbered G1 to G120 which have a catch limit of 2000 tonnes over a 30 day period.
- Larger management zones (1 – 7) to apply regional catch limits of a maximum of 75 per cent of the concession holder's combined quota holdings (for all species) for that fishing season.

Attachment A: SPF management zones and catch grids



Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 68

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Expenditure on the Small Pelagic Fisheries research and scientific assessments and reports

Proof Hansard page: 43-44 (26.5.2015)

Senator CAMERON asked:

Senator CAMERON: Thanks for that. What has been the total expenditure on the small pelagic fisheries research and scientific assessments and reports over the last five years?

Dr Rayns: I would have to take that on notice. We have done a number of surveys and assessments over that period of time. I note that we do an annual assessment, by the way, of small pelagic fish stocks. That costs about \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year—that is where the resource assessment group gets all of the science and information together. But there have been a lot of research projects over that five-year period, so I would have to take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: Could you break that down on a year-by-year basis over the five years and could you also give me a breakdown of what the industry has contributed against the Commonwealth. Do states put anything in?

Dr Rayns: Yes, from time to time they do.

Senator CAMERON: Could you do it by industry, by state, by Commonwealth—

Dr Rayns: By jurisdiction?

Senator CAMERON: Yes, by various jurisdictions. That would be handy, thank you.

Answer:

Over the past five years a number of research projects in the Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) have been funded and managed through either the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) or the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC).

The total expenditure over this period has been \$1.97million noting that many of the FRDC projects have multiple beneficiaries, not just the SPF. The industry contribution to these SPF research projects over the corresponding period has been:

Question: 68 (continued)

- \$391 360 collected by AFMA in accordance with AFMA's Cost Recovery Impact Statement 2010 for AFMA funded projects; and
- \$3884 collected by AFMA on behalf of FRDC through industry voluntary levies (based on 0.25 per cent of the previous three year average GVP for the fishery). FRDC industry contributions are matched by the Government.

AFMA funded SPF research projects have not attracted a level of co-investment by State/Northern Territory jurisdictions as they are essential stock assessment related projects. FRDC approved projects over the five year period have been funded from Fisheries Research Advisory Body (FRAB) funding allocations or from public good funding managed by FRDC, and include significant in-kind contributions by State jurisdictions.

A summary of current and completed research projects in the SPF including costs during this period is provided as Attachment A.

In addition work commissioned by the Department of the Environment to support the Small Pelagic Fishery Expert Panel has also been undertaken however, that research and associated costs are not included in Attachment A.

Attachment A - Current and completed research projects in the Small Pelagic Fishery for years 2010-2015

Project	Funding source	Total costs	Financial Year in which funded	Status
Ward, T.M., Lyle, J. Keane, J. P., Begg, G., Hobsbawn, P., Ivey, A. R., Sakabe, R. and Steer, M.A (2011). Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery: Status Report 2010. Report to Australian Fisheries Management Authority. South Australian Research and Development Institute (Aquatic Sciences), Adelaide. SARDI Publication No. F2010/000270-2. SARDI Research Report Series No. 524. 84pp.	AFMA project; 80% of costs recovered from SPF Industry, 20% Government funded.	\$72 000	2010/2011	Completed
Ward, T.M., Lyle, J. Keane, J. P., Begg, G., Hobsbawn, P., Ivey, A. R., Sakabe, R. Steer, M.A (2012). Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery: Status Report 2011. Report to Australian Fisheries Management Authority. South Australian Research and Development Institute (Aquatic Sciences), Adelaide. SARDI Publication No. F2010/000270-3. SARDI Research Report Series No. 614. 98pp.	AFMA project; 80% of costs recovered from SPF Industry, 20% Government funded.	\$107 960	2011/2012	Completed
Ward, T.M., Ivey, A. and Gorman, D. (2013). Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery: Status Report 2012. Report to Australian Fisheries Management Authority. South Australian Research and Development Institute (Aquatic Sciences), Adelaide. SARDI Publication No. F2010/000270-4. SARDI Research Report Series No. 696. 100pp.	AFMA project; 80% of costs recovered from SPF Industry, 20% Government funded.	\$54 840	2012/2013	Completed
Ward, T.M. et.al. Surveying spawning stock in the Small Pelagic Fishery on the east coast (Sardines and Mackerel). South Australian Research and Development Institute (Aquatic Sciences), Adelaide.	FRDC Project 2013/053 – funded from ComFRAB’s 2013 funding allocation	\$400 000 *	2013/2014	Underway

Ward, T.M., Ivey, A. and Earl, J. (2014). Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery: Status Report 2013. Report to Australian Fisheries Management Authority. South Australian Research and Development Institute (Aquatic Sciences), Adelaide. SARDI Publication No. F2010/000270-5. SARDI Research Report Series No. 778. 105pp.	AFMA project; 80% of costs recovered from SPF Industry, 20% Government funded.	\$112 400	2013/2014	Completed
Benchmarking Australia's small pelagic fisheries against world's best practice. Workshop held in Adelaide in July 2014 over 5 days.	FRDC Project 2013/063 – funded from public good funding	\$75 000*	2013/2014	Completed
Smith, A., Ward T, Hurtado F, Klaer N, Fulton E, and Punt A. 2015. Review and update of harvest strategy settings for the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery - Single species and ecosystem considerations. Hobart.	FRDC Project 2013/028 – funded from ComFRAB's 2013 funding allocation	\$122 741*	2013/2014	Completed
Small Pelagics Research Co-ordination Program	FRDC Project 2013/064 – funded from public good funding	\$77 000*	2013/2014	Underway
Developing a rapid molecular identification technique to improve egg production based fish biomass assessments – currently focused on tropical species but could be extended to temperate species.	FRDC Project 2014/022 – funded from NT FRAB's 2014 allocation	\$180 000*	2014/2015	Underway
Looking at the robustness and precision of estimates of egg production and spawning biomass obtained using the daily egg production methodology (DEPM).	FRDC Project 2014/026 – public good funding	\$200 000*	2014/2015	Underway

Egg distribution, reproductive parameters and spawning biomass of Blue Mackerel, Australian Sardine and Tailor off the East Coast during late winter and early spring.	FRDC Project 2014/033 – funded from ComFRAB’s 2014 funding allocation; \$100,000 contribution by the Cwlth Department of Agriculture; \$25,000 contribution by the Qld Dept of Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry	\$422 000*	2014/2015	Underway
Monitoring and assessment of Small Pelagic Fishery quota species under the SPF Harvest Strategy (data from seasons 2013-14 to 2015-16).	AFMA project; 80% of costs recovered from SPF Industry, 20% Government funded.	\$70 000 \$72 000	2014/2015 2015/2016	Completed Underway
Total		\$1 965 941		

* This is the total cost to FRDC only as the project would include an applicant contribution as well as significant State in-kind contribution(s). While the states provide in-kind contribution(s) it is not possible to quantify by State.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 69

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Reduction in red tape

Proof Hansard page: 47 (26.05.2015)

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Senator EDWARDS: I will be very quick. I am going to put this one on notice for you, because I do want to move on. What has AFMA done to reduce red tape since we came to power—can you provide specific details—and what impact do you think this has had on fishing businesses? That is on notice for you, okay?

Dr Rayns: The list is long, Senator, so thank you for putting it on notice.

Answer:

Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) has reduced red tape to industry through revision of legislative instruments and changes to the online information, application, reporting and payment systems - GoFish.

AFMA is implementing its three year program aimed to reduce regulatory burden and improve productivity to industry, and improve efficiency of the agency.

AFMA has identified 30 red tape reduction initiatives of which 11 have already been implemented.

Refer to Attachment A for further detail and implementation status on the 30 initiatives.

Attachment A – AFMA’s red tape reduction initiatives

No.	Title	Description	Status
1	Providing for renewal of Fishing Permits online.	Fishers can now use AFMA’s online licensing portal to renew their permits. GoFish automatically assesses their applications and can grant the relevant concessions in real time.	Implemented April 2014 - Positive feedback has been received from industry members.
2	Single party registration of leases.	A lease can now be registered by the lessor without the need for the lessee to be involved in the process. Leases make up 75 per cent of all licensing transactions.	Implemented April 2014 – Positive feedback has been received from industry members.
3	Multi-season registration of leases.	Fishers can now register online for their lease to reoccur for multiple fishing seasons. This removes the need to re-submit lease applications at the start of each season.	Implemented April 2014 – Positive feedback has been received from industry members.
4	Suspending fees for online trading of licences.	Charges for AFMA online licensing transactions have been moved to the levybase removing the need to pay fees at the time of each transaction.	Implemented November 2014 – Positive feedback has been received from industry members.
5	Removal of direct Scientific Permit application fees.	Charges for scientific permit applications have been moved to the levybase removing the need to pay these fees at the time of the transaction.	Implemented November 2014 – Positive feedback has been received from industry members.
6	Simplified boat nominations.	This change will allow fishers to pool their quota allocations for use by all nominated boats in their company.	Partly Implemented – Part 1 implemented in fisheries with separate access rights. Part 2 to be implemented in quota only fisheries pending IT system changes. All regulatory and policy changes are complete.
7	Transitioning Quota Holding Permits to Statutory Fishing Rights.	To lower administration costs for AFMA and industry, AFMA proposes a one-off, one-for-one grant of Statutory Fishing Rights for holders of quota permits. Unlike permits, Statutory Fishing Rights do not expire and so do not need to be reapplied for.	Consultation - AFMA Commission has approved further consultation and drafting for this change.

No.	Title	Description	Status
8	Electronic delivery of correspondence.	AFMA has simplified and streamlined its correspondence and is now using its online licensing portal GoFish to deliver correspondence that is better tailored to individual's needs.	Implemented April 2015.
9	Automatic granting of fishing permits.	This change will allow AFMA to grant permits without persons having to reapply each year.	Consultation - Application form amended. On hold while further legal advice is sought.
10	Improving Levy and Fee for Service arrangements.	AFMA's Levy and Fee for Service invoicing and debt recovery arrangements can be made more efficient by replacing levy and fee for service invoices with a combined statement and spreading levy costs over the full year. This will also reduce the maintenance costs for AFMA's licensing and debt recovery systems and reduce AFMA's financial risks.	Consultation – The Commonwealth Fisheries Association does not support all aspects of the proposed change. Further consultation is required.
11	Providing for new permits to be applied for online.	This change will allow fishers to submit applications for new Scientific, Fish Receiver, Carrier Boat, Fishing and Quota Holding Permits using AFMA's online licensing portal.	Not yet started – Pending consultation and further development of requirements. The balance of costs versus benefits means this change will be deferred until other more productive changes are completed.
12	Providing for fishers to add and remove agents online.	This change will allow fishers to add or remove authorisation for agents online rather than via paper based applications to AFMA.	In progress – System changes are underway. However, implementation is subject to further legal advice.
13	Provide access to concession conditions online.	Persons can now search and access the conditions that apply to particular concessions or boats online.	Implemented November 2014 – Positive feedback has been received from industry members.

No.	Title	Description	Status
14	Simplifying licensing outputs.	AFMA is simplifying its licensing outputs to reduce the paperwork required to be carried on boats. This may include revising AFMA's register extracts to just display the boats nominated, the amount of Statutory Fishing Rights held and the quota remaining to be fished. The number of extracts may also be reduced by including all relevant fisheries on a single extract instead of a separate extract for each fishery.	In progress – System changes underway, expected implementation in July 2015.
15	Simplifying under catch provisions.	To receive under catch an operator must hold at least one Statutory Fishing Right of the species in the new season. If fishers forget to lease in quota they miss out on their under catch. This requirement is no longer necessary so AFMA proposes to remove it.	Consultation - AFMA Commission has approved further consultation and drafting for this change.
16	Reform of the Catch Disposal Records system.	Commonwealth operators in most fisheries are required to land their catch to an AFMA licensed Fish Receiver. The Fish Receiver verifies the weights of landed fish and posts completed Catch Disposal forms to AFMA. The completed forms are then manually entered into AFMA's database. The process is time-consuming for fishers, Fish Receivers and AFMA. The review will seek to use existing information technology infrastructure to reduce regulatory burden.	Consultation – Expected to commence shortly.
17	Removal of the requirement to carry concession documents on boats.	AFMA requires fishers to carry up to date paper copies of fishing concessions on their boats to be provided to Compliance officers from state and Commonwealth agencies when requested. Remote access to the internet and other technologies now means Compliance officers can access this information without the need for fishers to carry copies. The change can be implemented at no cost to AFMA or industry if done at the beginning of the fishing season for each fishery.	In progress – Implemented in the Southern Bluefin Tuna, Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark, and Small Pelagic fisheries. Other fisheries to follow at the start of their respective fishing seasons.

No.	Title	Description	Status
18	Providing for online payments of levies.	AFMA offers several payment options for concession holders to pay their annual levies, including BPAY, direct deposit, cheque and credit card payments over the phone. When paying by credit card over the phone an additional one per cent fee is charged to cover the administration costs of the transaction. AFMA's online licensing system GoFish already accepts credit card payments and can be modified with little cost to accept payments for annual levies. This modification will allow concession holders to pay their annual levies by credit card without incurring the one per cent fee.	Not yet started – Expected to commence in first quarter of 2016.
19	Standardising the structure of committee minutes.	Management advisory committees and resource assessment groups are AFMA's primary source of independent advice on fisheries matters. AFMA provides secretariat services for their meetings. Standardising the structure of minutes taken at the meetings ensures they are an effective record and meet the needs of all stakeholders.	Implemented December 2014.
20	Providing for the online management of AFMA committee documents.	Prior to management advisory committee and resource assessment group meetings AFMA distributes papers and organises travel and accommodation with each of the attendees. AFMA intends to develop a secure online collaboration area for members to review current and historic papers, discuss and comment on them and perform administrative tasks such as submitting expense claims and organising travel.	In progress – Implementation expected by the end of 2015. Management of travel and accommodation requirements likely to occur in a later phase.

No.	Title	Description	Status
21	Open Cascade Plateau to long line for blue-eye trevalla.	The Cascade Plateau closure was implemented to protect blue-eye trevalla populations prior to the introduction of quota management. Blue-eye trevalla is now a quota managed species in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery meaning the closure is no longer required and can be removed.	Implemented May 2015.
22	Review of closures in the Commonwealth Trawl Sector and the Gillnet Hook and Trap Sector.	The South East Trawl Deep Water Closure (also called the '700m line') was implemented in June 2007 to protect orange roughy stocks. Orange roughy are a quota species in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery and can only be targeted in those Commonwealth-managed fishing zones that are above the limit reference point set under a harvest strategy. AFMA proposes to amend the closure to maintain protection for orange roughy, deepwater sharks and gulper sharks in accordance with scientific advice while re-opening other areas to trawl fishing.	Partially complete – Some areas of the South East Trawl Deepwater Closure have been opened to fishing but further consultation is required before all proposed changes in this area can be completed.
23	Review Western Australian Offshore Constitutional Settlement arrangement.	The existing boundary of the Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery excludes Commonwealth permit holders from accessing fish stocks in some waters seaward of the 200 meter isobath, including prospective finfish trawling areas off Carnarvon and Perth. The existing boundary of the North West Slope Trawl Fishery allows access by Commonwealth permit holders to an area of waters significantly shallower than 200 metres where they interact with fish stocks being taken by trap in the state-managed Northern Demersal Scalefish Fishery.	In Progress - A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between state and Commonwealth agencies in May 2014. The Western Australian Minister for Fisheries and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture agreed to amend the Offshore Constitutional Settlement boundaries in December 2014 and documents are being drafted to bring the new arrangements into effect by July 2015.

No.	Title	Description	Status
24	Review monitoring arrangements for power handlines in northern Gillnet Hook and Trap waters.	AFMA's Upper Slope Dogfish Management Strategy prescribes interaction limits, move-on provisions and a requirement for 100 per cent monitoring when fishing in dogfish closures described in the strategy. Recent research conducted by the CSIRO suggests a high survival rate of dogfish when caught by power handlines using good handling techniques.	Implemented May 2015 - Interaction limits and move-on provisions for power handline operators have been removed and the 100 per cent monitoring requirement can now be met with the use of electronic monitoring.
25	Streamline carrier boat permit conditions in the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery.	AFMA issues carrier boat permits in the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery which allow operators to transfer caught fish into tow cages for transport to grow-out pens. Three conditions were identified in consultation with industry stakeholders as overly restrictive or no longer necessary. The proposed condition amendments would allow fish from more than one Statutory Fishing Right holder to be transported in the one tow cage, allow the placement of the tow cage identification number in a more practical position, and provide greater flexibility in reporting the transfer of tow cages between boats.	Implemented December 2014 – Positive feedback has been received from industry members.
26	Disband three Northern Joint Authorities.	The Commonwealth manages a number of fisheries with the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian governments. These fisheries are known as Joint Authority fisheries and are established by Offshore Constitutional Settlement. Transitioning these fisheries to management by a single jurisdiction will simplify management for governments and create a more stable operating environment for the fishing industry. In some areas this reform will also allow fishers to operate under a single licence.	In Progress – AFMA has developed a roadmap for the review of Northern Joint Authority fisheries that has been accepted by the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian Governments.

No.	Title	Description	Status
27	Simplification of Torres Strait Fisheries licensing arrangements.	The Queensland Government through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has carried out licensing and compliance functions for all Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority managed fisheries since at least 1984. A Review of the Torres Strait Fisheries administrative arrangements was undertaken by Richard Stevens in 2008-09 and considered whether changes to cost sharing and other administrative arrangements could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Torres Strait fisheries management.	In progress – On schedule for AFMA to take responsibility for licensing from 1 July 2015.
28	Removal of net length restrictions in the shark gillnet fishery.	The gillnet sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery limits catches by setting quotas. It also restricts the length of gillnet able to be used by fishers to 6000 metres; this seeks to control fishing effort. Some fishery stakeholders have questioned the need for net length restrictions given quota already limit the total catch permitted by each fisher. Other stakeholders are concerned that removing net length limitations may waste catch as longer nets remain in the water longer while they are hauled. There are also concerns that the longer nets may increase interactions with protected species and bycatch.	Consultation – Current net length restrictions (4200 metres in waters off the coast of South Australia and 6000 metres in Bass Strait) will be maintained for the 2015-16 fishing season but are likely to be removed subject to further consultation with the South East Management Advisory Committee and the establishment of electronic monitoring and individual accountability measures in the 2016-17 fishing season (season commences 1 May 2016). A draft report on the trial of extended net lengths in the Bass Strait is due for release by July 2015.

No.	Title	Description	Status
29	Provide digital maps of closures that can be imported into marine plotters.	To comply with Closure Directions, fishers must manually enter the coordinates of the closures into their Global Positioning System chart plotters or pay a third party to do so. This process of manually entering a long list of coordinates is time consuming and subject to human error. AFMA intends to create 'shape files' which include closure coordinates. These will be publicly available via the AFMA website for download in both a universal 'Garmin' Global Positioning System format and a format compatible with Google Earth. Fishers will be able to upload the files directly to their chart plotters, saving time, money, effort and reducing regulatory burden.	In Progress – Digital maps of closures have been developed by AFMA and are currently being tested on selected boats in Lakes Entrance.
30	Mergers of resource assessment groups.	Form a joint resource assessment group (South East Resource Assessment Group [SERAG]) for south-east fisheries by combining Slope Resource Assessment Group, Shelf Resource Assessment Group and Squid Resource Assessment Group.	Consultation – AFMA management has informed resource assessment group Chairs of the proposed changes and has consulted with the overarching Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Resource Assessment Group. AFMA intends to implement the changes in time for Resource Assessment Group meetings in September and October 2015.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2015

Agriculture

Question: 70

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Illegal fishing

Proof Hansard page: 47 (26.5.15)

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Mr Venslovas: Just for clarification, Senator: is your question in relation to illegal fishing by foreign nationals or by Australian licensed operators? The answers are different.

Senator EDWARDS: Illegal fishing is illegal fishing, and we will probably talk a little bit about that in my later questions, with Western Australia and things like that. My sensitivity obviously relates to the tuna industry and illegal fishing and who says who catches what. You can talk about the domestic illegal fishing if you want, and take that on notice too.

Answer:

See comprehensive response on page 47 of the Proof Committee Hansard, Senate, Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee, Estimates (Public) Tuesday 26 May 2015, Canberra.