

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

**Agriculture**

**Question: 22**

**Division/Agency:** Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Southern Bluefin Tuna quota

**Proof Hansard page:** 97-98 (29/05/2014)

**Senator FARRELL asked:**

**Senator FARRELL:** Have the quotas changed in respect of the southern bluefin tuna?

**Dr J Findlay:** Yes, they have. The quotas have recently increased.

**Senator FARRELL:** By how much?

**Dr J Findlay:** I would have to check—

**Dr Rayns:** They have increased. I cannot tell you off the top of my head exactly what the tonnage is, but it is quite significant. We can take that on notice if you wish.

**Answer:**

Yes. Australia's allocation of quota under the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna increased in 2013/2014.

In 2013/2014 Australia's National Catch allocation increased by 453 tonnes to 5151 tonnes (in 2012/13 Australia's National Catch Allocation was 4698 tonnes).

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**Agriculture**

**Question: 23**

**Division/Agency:** Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Letter from Minister Joyce to AFMA 2 April 2014 regarding regulation

**Proof Hansard page:** written

**Senator WHISH-WILSON asked:**

1. What 'deregulation' mechanisms will AFMA put in place to respond to the expectations of Minister Joyce communicated in his letter of April 2nd, 2014?
2. How will sustainable fisheries management continue at a high level with an increased efficiency dividend? What impact will these cuts have on frontline fisheries management?
3. How will these changes impact the Government implementing the recommendations of the Borthwick Review?
4. What progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Borthwick Review, and specifically an overarching fisheries framework that contains a third pillar, directly addressing ecosystem impacts in a fisheries context?
5. Does Minister Joyce's call for industry itself to take on more responsibility for monitoring and reporting against fishery regulations match the recommendations made by the Borthwick Review?

**Answer:**

1. Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) has established an internal red tape team and is working with the Department in the approach to regulatory reform including revision and repeal of legislative instruments.
2. AFMA's front line fisheries management has not been significantly affected by recent efficiency dividends as AFMA has, and continues to, implement a number of technology based solutions that offset these budget reductions. These initiatives include greater use of electronic logbooks to reduce manual processing and on-board cameras/sensors to reduce the use of human observers. AFMA has also recently upgraded its on-line transaction system, GoFish, to enable a greater range of transactions to be undertaken electronically.
3. Any future fisheries policy reform, whether drawing on the *Review of Commonwealth Fisheries: Legislation, Policy and Management* by David Borthwick AO PSM (the 'Fisheries Management Review') or otherwise, will be considered in the context of the Government's

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deregulation agenda. Some of the opportunities for regulatory reform noted in Minister Joyce's letter are consistent with recommendations made by the Fisheries Management Review.

4. The Department of Agriculture is examining approaches to overarching fisheries policy reform, which would seek to explicitly address ecosystems impacts of fishing. Such policy reform may draw on the recommendations of the Fisheries Management Review and other reviews.
5. Deregulation is a priority for this Government. Minister Joyce's letter to AFMA reflects this priority—it is not intended to reflect the recommendations of the Fisheries Management Review.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

**Agriculture**

**Question:** 24

**Division/Agency:** Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Scalefish Western Australian fishery

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator WHISH-WILSON asked:**

1. What is the licensing and regulatory framework for scalefish in WA specifically for adjacent Commonwealth Waters?
2. What are the responsibilities for Federal agencies in terms of the scalefish fishery off WA?
3. In terms of stock assessment is there a dataset of estimated stocks over time and / or estimated catch?
4. Is AFMA aware of any impacts, or alleged impacts, of seismic testing on WA scalefish stocks?

**Answer:**

1. The Offshore Constitutional Settlement agreements with Western Australia establish the fisheries management responsibilities between the Commonwealth and Western Australia. In line with these agreements, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is responsible for the management of:
  - the take of species by the method of trawl in waters deeper than 200 metres in the North West Slope, Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery and the Great Australian Bight sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery;
  - trawling for prawns east of Cape Londonderry;
  - fishing for tuna and tuna like species in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery; and Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery; and
  - fishing for small pelagic species in the Small Pelagic Fishery.

The Commonwealth also participates in the Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority (Joint Authority Northern Shark Fishery and the Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Managed Fishery), however the day-to-day management of these fisheries is undertaken by the Western Australian government.

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2. AFMA is responsible for managing the take of scalefish in the fisheries outlined above in line with the objectives under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* and *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1998* also establish responsibilities for AFMA and the Minister for the Environment and their Department.

3. Yes. The results of stock assessments, stock status and catch history for Commonwealth managed fisheries is outlined in the ABARES *Fishery Status Reports* and is available for download from [www.abares.gov.au](http://www.abares.gov.au)

With respect to Joint Authority fisheries, stock status and detailed catch and effort statistics are compiled annually and presented in the WA Department of Fisheries "State of the Fisheries" Reports (<http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/About-Us/Publications/Pages/State-of-the-Fisheries-report.aspx>).

4. Commonwealth fisheries stakeholders have from time to time expressed concern about the impact of seismic testing on fish stocks, however, AFMA is not aware of any established impacts on fish stocks.