

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2010  
**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** SRM/AFMA 01

**Division/Agency:** Sustainable Resource Management Division

**Topic:** Fisheries staff turnover rate

**Proof Hansard Page:** 78 (20/10/2010)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Senator COLBECK**—What has the staff turnover rate been in that division over the last 12 months?

**Mr Veitch**—We have had people move from the branch and people come back into the branch, so in broad terms we are probably in a situation now where we consider it reasonably stable. There have been people taking up other positions elsewhere, just the normal process of career advancement moving on to other things.

**Senator COLBECK**—Yes, but what would be the turnover rate?

**Mr Thompson**—We would have to take that on notice. We do not have a calculation ready to hand on what the turnover rate is, and as Simon Veitch just said, there have been some people who left the division to broaden their experience in one year, and then having had that experience elsewhere, have come back 12 months later. Some go to the Fisheries R&D Corporation, some to AFMA, some to other departments, and then they return to Fisheries, so we can take that on notice.

**Answer:**

15 per cent.

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 02

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

**Topic:** Catches in the Coral Sea

**Proof Hansard Page:** 87-88 (20/10/2010)

**Senator MACDONALD asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Can you also on notice just update the licences, boats and the tonnages caught in that section of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery that relates to the Coral Sea? Is that you or AFMA?

**Dr Findlay**—That is us—we are AFMA.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—You are AFMA?

**Dr Findlay**—We are happy to do that. We have provided that in the past and we are happy to do that again.

**Answer:**

There are currently 108 longline permits and 150 minor line Statutory Fishing Rights in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery, all of which give access to the Coral Sea. The number of boats and catches recorded from the Coral Sea are recorded in the table below. Data from 2005 are included for comparison. For the purpose of this data the Coral Sea is defined as all areas of the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery north of 24°30'S, which is the same as the Coral Sea Conservation Zone that was declared in May 2009.

Year	Coral Sea	
	Number of boats	Catch (t)
2005	63	923
2006	48	2,781
2007	39	1,558
2008	30	1,133
2009	35	1,794

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 03

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

**Topic:** Boat Numbers

**Proof Hansard Page:** 89 (20/10/2010)

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

**Senator COLBECK**—Senator Boswell is right; there has been a significant reduction in the number of fishers. There are 150 to 180 operators' licences left at the moment.

**Dr Findlay**—We are looking at about 360 boats.

**Senator BOSWELL**—Down from what?

**Dr Findlay**—We can get you those details.

**Answer:**

The total number of boats that have landed catch in Commonwealth Fisheries by year is provided in the table below for 2005 to 2009.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of boats</b>
2005	580
2006	494
2007	381
2008	333
2009	337

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 04

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

**Topic:** Data provision to external agencies

**Proof Hansard Page:** 92 (20/10/2010)

**Senator BOSWELL asked:**

**Senator BOSWELL**—Dr Findlay revealed something that I think. Dr Findlay, the costs of monitoring this fishing—I have another one here; I could table this one too if you like. I will just read this one out, too. This one is also from the fact sheet, *Marine bioregional planning—the process*. I have not read this so I will just read it out: The network of new marine reserves will be designed to provide for a balance between multiple use and highly protected areas. It is exactly the same as the one I read. I am just getting it from a different source, so the source is the same. Let us get back to Dr Findlay. Dr Findlay, I am concerned that some environmental people that want information from your department are inflicting a higher cost on the fishing industry so they can get their information. You have said Pew have asked for information. Have any other environmental groups asked for information that has incurred a cost?

**Dr Findlay**—We provide information on request to any number of groups.

**Senator BOSWELL**—I am very glad you do and I think that is your role as public servants and in fish management, but what I am asking is what groups have asked, which has incurred a cost to the fishing industry?

**Dr Findlay**—I would probably need to come back to you in terms of which groups have asked and, as I said, we get any number of requests each year, but I do not have those—

**Senator BOSWELL**—I would appreciate that being taken on notice.

**Dr Findlay**—Yes. Happy to take it on notice.

**Answer:**

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority has provided data to the following external groups between 1 January and 1 November 2010:

- ABARE
- Australian Antarctic Division
- Australian Maritime Museum - Sydney
- Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association
- Bankwest
- Bureau of Rural Sciences

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 04 (continued)

- Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
- Commonwealth Bank
- CSIRO
- Department of Primary Industry Water and Environment Tasmania
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts
- Fisheries Victoria
- Fishwell Pty Ltd
- Geoscience Australia
- MRAG Asia Pacific
- Northern Prawn Fishery Industry Association
- Pew Foundation
- Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd
- Queensland Department of Primary Industry
- Rural Bank
- South Australian Research and Development Institute
- South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association
- South Pacific Commission
- Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd
- Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute
- Universidad Andrés Bello
- University of Tasmania
- URS
- Veda Advantage
- WW fisheries

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 05

**Division/Agency:** AFMA

**Topic:** Coral Sea Fishery Monitoring

**Proof Hansard Page:** (20/10/2011)

**Senator BOSWELL asked:**

**Senator BOSWELL**—Doctor, you told the committee that you had to take a special look at the Coral Sea.

They might not have been your exact words. Is that correct?

**Dr Findlay**—We have seen more activity in terms of management practices in the last few years, yes.

**Senator BOSWELL**—When did you start to apply the new activity? When did you start to monitor the Coral Sea?

**Dr Findlay**—We have always been monitoring the Coral Sea. What I have said is that we have seen an increase in the level of monitoring going on in that fishery in the last few years. That is varied by fishery. I would have to get you details on the exact—

**Senator BOSWELL**—When did the increased monitoring take place?

**Dr Findlay**—I would have to take that on notice in terms of which activities

**Answer:**

Monitoring activities in the Coral Sea Fishery are as follows:

- The AFMA observer program started monitoring the Coral Sea Fishery in 2006. Since 2007 observer costs have been included in the fishery's budget and coverage levels have fluctuated as has effort levels in the fishery;
- Vessel Monitoring Systems became compulsory in all Commonwealth boats on 1 July 2007. The upkeep of this system requires dedicated maintenance and daily administration; and,
- Logbook reporting and the associated data collection have continually been improved as with other Commonwealth fisheries.

Cost-recovered management activities to meet legislative and policy requirements in the Coral Sea Fishery are as follows:

- Harvest strategies have been developed for each sector in the Coral Sea Fishery in accordance with the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy. These were implemented on 1 July 2008;
- A strategic assessment of the Coral Sea Fishery was submitted in November 2004, with revised versions submitted in August 2007 and September 2010 in order to meet requirements of all Commonwealth fisheries under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This strategic assessment is also required for the fishery to gain an approval to allow for export of Coral Sea Fishery species, in particular for the aquarium sector; and,

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- Work is under way to systematically identify any risks that fishing in the Coral Sea presents to various marine species.

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 06

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

**Topic:** Recreational Fishing Roundtable

**Proof Hansard Page:** 97-98 (20/10/10)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Senator COLBECK**—I want to ask about the recreational fishing ministerial roundtable. Your predecessor, Minister, agreed to the establishment of the recreational fishing roundtable. There was a meeting organised for 19 July, but, unfortunately, Minister Burke and Minister Garrett found themselves unavoidably detained on that day and did not turn up. Is it your intention to continue with the recreational fishing ministerial roundtable, and is Mr Burke, in his new guise, prepared to involve himself in that too?

**Senator Ludwig**—I am not sure I have turned my mind to it at this point in time, but I will get back to you on it.

**Senator COLBECK**—Well, I am only too pleased to help.

**Senator Ludwig**—I will take it on notice and get back to you. The recreational fishers do play an important part in the fishing industry. More broadly, I have spoken to a range of groups—the Fishing Industry Alliance, if I have their name correct, and in the West I spoke to fishing industry persons. I want to take it on notice because Mike Kelly is responsible for fisheries; I want to ensure what his intentions are in respect of this— rather than commit him to something.

**Answer:**

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is considering arrangements for the roundtable. Your question concerning Minister Burke needs to be directed through the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.



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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 07

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

**Topic:** Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy

**Proof Hansard Page:** 100 (20/10/2010)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Senator COLBECK** I want to go on to the Sea Lion Management plan that is proposed in South Australia. Can you give us some update on the current status of that?

**Dr Findlay**—The Sea Lion Management Strategy was implemented on 30 June. We had a number of actions underneath that strategy including: significant increases in observer coverage; 6,700 square kilometres of area closures in areas of high risk of interaction with sea lions; and the implementation of a number of gear trials to look at ways to reduce the likelihood of interactions between seals and the gear. We have been reasonably encouraged by progress to date. We have had only one sea lion mortality reported. We have exceeded our observer coverage target of 11 per cent. We actually delivered 15 per cent observer coverage over this first quarter. The fishery people, while not happy about the implementation of the strategy, understand the need for it and are moving along with us in a cooperative way.

**Senator COLBECK**—My understanding is that it has displaced about 30 per cent of the fishing effort. Is that correct?

**Dr Findlay**—The closures did have a significant impact on where fishers used to fish. They have moved their fishing effort outside those areas, so it is not that that fishing effort is gone. It has now moved away from areas immediately adjacent to sea lion colonies.

**Senator COLBECK**—Was there any socioeconomic modelling or cost impacts done on the proposal?

**Dr Findlay**—We did look at the amount of catch taken in the areas proposed to be closed. I cannot remember that figure off the top of my head, but that was essentially the limit of the socioeconomic impact assessment.

**Senator COLBECK**—Which would be, effectively, the displaced fishing effort?

**Dr Findlay**—That is right.

**Senator COLBECK**—The figure I have is 30 per cent.

**Dr Findlay**—I cannot remember it off the top of my head, from the analysis. I can certainly take it on notice.

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 07 (continued)

**Answer:**

The Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy was implemented on 30 June 2010.

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority conducted an analysis of catch and effort from the areas to be included in the fixed area closures implemented under the Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy. In 2009, approximately 52 tonne of Gummy Shark and 10 tonne of School Shark was taken in the area of the fixed closures. This is approximately 10 per cent of the catch taken in the shark gillnet sector off South Australia.

During the first quarter (July, August, September 2010), gillnet fishing effort in South Australia was 2.4 percent lower than the same period in 2009. The figure of 30 per cent relates to the amount of effort that industry estimated would leave the fishery in South Australia over time as a result of the implementation of the Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy.

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority continues to monitor the impact of the closures on fishing patterns and effort, as well as on sea lions. It is anticipated that some industry members will move their fishing to other areas in South Australia or will move to areas outside of South Australia. It is still too early, however, to determine the effect of the closures on fishing patterns.

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 08

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

**Topic:** Torres Strait Prawn Fishery license costs

**Proof Hansard Page:** 101 (20/10/2010)

**Senator Boswell asked:**

**Senator BOSWELL**—I am told that the number of Torres Strait licences has gone down and the cost is now being passed onto the few remaining people that are there and the cost has gone up.

**Mr Perrott**—Could we take that on notice, because that was prepared under a different regulation?

**Senator BOSWELL**—We will put it on notice. I thought this was a comprehensive list that was given to us. Now I have asked one question and I am told that it is not included in this list. How many other fisheries that have gone up are not included on this list?

**Mr Perrott**—The Torres Strait prawn fishery is the only fishery missing from that list.

**Senator BOSWELL**—Have you got the figures there?

**Dr Findlay**—Just a correction: none of the Torres Strait fisheries appear on that list.

**Mr Perrott**—That is right. Torres Strait prawn fishery is the only fishery where the costs are accounted for.

**Senator BOSWELL**—How much has that gone up?

**Mr Perrott**—In the 2009-10 financial year the cost actually went down by 23 per cent.

**Senator BOSWELL**—That is good news. So the cost of those licences has been reduced by 23 per cent.

**Dr Findlay**—That is the total levy collection from the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery has gone down by 23 per cent. We have agreed to take on notice the impact on individual holdings, because as you say some fishers may have left the fishery and so some may have seen an increase. But the total—it is down 23 per cent.

**Senator BOSWELL**—It is down because there is no-one up there fishing—or very few people up there fishing.

**Dr Findlay**—If it is down in the fishery there certainly has been a reduction in the monitoring costs.

**Senator BOSWELL**—The effort is down in the fishery. But what I am asking is how much have the individual licences increased?

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 08 (continued)

**Dr Findlay**—We have said we will take that on notice and come back to you. We have not got that information with us.

**Answer:**

The Torres Strait Prawn Fishery is managed by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) on behalf of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority. The costs recovered for the fishery comprise costs incurred by AFMA and the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation. The total amount levied for the fishery in 2009-10 reduced by 23 per cent when compared with 2008-09. Details of the total amount levied are provided in the table below:

	2008-09	2009-10	Variance	
	\$	\$	\$	%
AFMA cost recovered budget	387,839	315,571	(72,268)	(19%)
QLD DEEDI	173,736	186,470	12,734	7%
<b>Total cost recovered budget</b>	<b>561,575</b>	<b>502,041</b>	<b>(59,534)</b>	<b>(11%)</b>
Prior year under/(over) recovery	16,339	(57,089)	(73,428)	
<b>Amount levied</b>	<b>577,914</b>	<b>444,952</b>	<b>(132,962)</b>	<b>(23%)</b>

The cost of Torres Strait Prawn licenses in 2008-09 was \$5833.39 plus \$32.35 per allocated unit. This cost reduced to \$4229.06 plus \$27.23 per allocated unit in the 2009-10 financial year.

There has been no reduction in the number of licence holders in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery. The number of licence holders in the Fishery remained at 61 for the 2010 season, as in past seasons.

The reduction in the fees for 2009-10 was mainly a result of the reduced effort in the fishery for the past season. This is reducing the amount of monitoring that is required in the fishery and thus reducing costs that must be recovered.

Below is an example of levy costs for 2009-2010 for a licence holder holding 1 licence and 100 units.

Year	Licence fee	Unit fee	Cost for 1 licence with 100 units
<b>2008-09</b>	\$5833.39	\$32.35	\$9068.39
<b>2009-10</b>	\$4229.06	\$27.23	\$6952.06

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**Question:** SRM/AFMA 09

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

**Topic:** Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

1. I have received serious representations from the fishing sector about the AFMA's sealion management plan. Can you advise on the current status of this plan?
2. I am advised the plan from June 2010 would result in a displaced fishing effort of up to 30%. Is this correct?
3. Has DAFF/AFMA conducted any socio-economic impact analysis?
4. Will any assistance be given to displaced businesses or their employees?

**Answer:**

1. See response to question SRM-AFMA 07.
2. See response to question SRM-AFMA 07.
3. See response to question SRM-AFMA 07.
4. No.