

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2012

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 33**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Seismic Testing of Scallops

**Proof Hansard page:** 68

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

**Senator COLBECK:** I will put the scallop stuff to one side for a moment, because I think that in particular is something that is pretty egregious, that the industry is having to pay for that. Sure, they asked to get the work done, but who else was going to do the work to try to find out what happened to those two large paddocks of scallops? They had been watching. They had been monitoring over time. There were three paddocks of scallops that they were going to harvest in that particular year. Two of them had seismic testing over them and one did not. The two that had seismic testing over them died and the one that did not have seismic testing did not. Nobody wants to know about them. There has been no contribution from anybody towards this. Surely at some point in time somebody will make a decision. I am not saying it has to be you, because you have parameters under your legislation. The government could quite easily say, 'We're going to assist the industry to deal with this', so that they do not end up with such a terrible slug on their fees.

**Dr Findlay:** Just to correct the record, there were two issues there. The government did put money in to assist that research to be undertaken. It was not completely collected from the industry.

**Senator COLBECK:** How much did the government put in?

**Dr Findlay:** We might be able to find that for you while we are here; otherwise I am happy to take it on notice.

**Answer:**

Research 2010

In 2010, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) commissioned a 'before-after-control-impact study investigating the effects of seismic surveys on scallops', coordinated by the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute. The direct costs of this study were recovered from industry through annual fishing levies. AFMA staff time to facilitate the research, process scientific permits, liaise with research providers, assist with vessel logistics and attend a stakeholder meeting in Melbourne, as well as AFMA observer coverage for the survey, was funded by a combination of levy and government appropriation funding at a total cost of approximately \$16 000. Industry was levied approximately \$10 500 of this amount.

In October 2010, AFMA arranged for diagnostic testing of Commercial Scallops samples to determine a possible cause for the reported decline in scallops. This work was conducted by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's (CSIRO's) Australian Animal Health Laboratory with direct project costs of approximately \$2300 paid under CSIRO's funding. In addition, the government contribution for AFMA staff time organising the study, arranging sampling and disseminating results is in the order of \$2000.

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Proposed research 2012

In late 2011 the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Board provisionally approved funding for the research project '*Assessing the impact of marine seismic surveys on southeast Australian fisheries*'. A full project proposal is currently being prepared. Funding from the FRDC and the oil and gas industry has been sought for this project.

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**Question:** 34

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fishery Permits

**Proof Hansard page:** 69-70

**Senator BOSWELL and COLBECK asked:**

**Senator BOSWELL:** The Southern Eastern Scale Fish and Shark Fishery—how many permits have been returned?

**Dr Findlay:** Normally each year we have a number of permits handed in. We are monitoring the number of surrenders this year. I will ask Dr Rayns to give you the current figures on the surrenders so far this year.

**Senator COLBECK:** While you are doing that, can you just talk about the arrangements that you are putting in place as part of that process, because it does go to this. I know there has been a change in the arrangements where people are being offered the opportunity to not pay their fees and hand their permits in. The previous arrangement was that they had to pay their fee, anyway, prior to being able to hand in the permit. I acknowledge that there is something happening there. Can you give us a descriptor of the arrangements that you are putting in place as part of this process? I think that is also an important part of what is being put in place to deal with this.

**Dr Findlay:** I will get Dr Rayns to talk about the numbers. I might come back to talk about the issue of whether or not we will pursue a debt.

**Dr Rayns:** So far this year we have had nine scale fish hook boat SFRs surrendered to AFMA.

**Senator BOSWELL:** What are the reasons?

**Senator COLBECK:** How does that compare with previous years?

**Dr Rayns:** For that particular fishery last year we had one.

**Senator BOSWELL:** What are the reasons they are giving for handing back the permits?

**Dr Rayns:** I would have to take that on notice. I understand, though, that cost is one consideration that a number of those surrendering have raised, but I could not say that it was that in all cases.

**Answer:**

Twenty five permits or Statutory Fishing Rights (SFR) have been surrendered in the Southern Eastern Scale Fish and Shark Fishery for 2012.

Permit and SFR holders are not required to provide reasons for surrounding those permits and SFRs.

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**Question: 35**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Mortalities in the Australian Sea Lion Management Zone

**Proof Hansard page:** 74

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

How many of the 11 dolphin mortalities in the Gillnet Hook and Trap Sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery since the dolphin closure was implemented on 23 September 2011 occurred in the Australian sea lion management zone?

**Answer:**

As at 27 February 2012, there have been 12 dolphin mortalities since the dolphin closure was implemented on 23 September 2011, 10 of which occurred in the Australian sea lion management zone. Of the 11 dolphin mortalities reported at Additional Estimates on 13 February 2012, nine were in the Australian sea lion management zone.

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**Question: 36**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** North West Slope Trawl Fishery

**Proof Hansard page:** 75

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

**Senator SIEWERT:** I am aware that we are short of time and I have a few more questions that I will put on notice on that particular issue. I wanted to go to North West Slope Trawl Fishery to find out where we are up to. Can you update us with ongoing discussions with the Western Australian government over that particular issue?

**Dr Rayns:** We are still in discussions with WA Fisheries—in fact, we are meeting with them again in April to continue those discussions—about how we resolve this issue. It would be fair to say that there is no clear solution at this stage, but we have not stepped back from wanting to resolve the issue and trying to find a solution. Our next round of discussions with WA is in April and we are hoping to find a way forward there.

**Senator BOSWELL:** What is the problem there?

**Dr Rayns:** An OCS boundary was incorrectly specified a number of years ago that we are trying to correct.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Last time I asked this you would not tell me, so now I will ask because it is a bit further on. What sort of activity and what amount has there been in that particular area?

**Dr Rayns:** We have had one vessel fish there during October last year. A trawl vessel fished there for a period of weeks. We had an observer on board and I am not sure on an exact amount but it caught tens of tonnes of fish out of that area.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Can you take on notice the amount?

**Dr Rayns:** I certainly can.

**Answer:**

In 2011, two vessels were active in the North West Slope Trawl Fishery. The total catch reported by fishing operators was in the order of 80 tonnes of a range of species. Australian Fisheries Management Authority's (AFMA) information disclosure policy provides that where information concerns the activities of individual operators that may have commercial value, AFMA will only release fishing data in an aggregated form.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 72**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic: Fishery Statutory Fishing Rights**

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. What specific activities does the boat SFR concession levy cover?
2. What percentage of the boat SFR concession levy is used to cover administrative activities and salaries?
3. Provide data for the number of concessions handed back since 2005. Please provide this information by concession type.
4. If concessions are handed back and there are fewer boats, how will AFMA then cover its costs with fewer concession holders? Could this lead to a further increase the boat SFR concession?

**Answer:**

1. The formula for levy attribution between different types of fishing concessions has been developed in consultation with each management advisory committee. Consequently, the specific activities and proportion of the total levy that each type of boat Statutory Fishing Rights (SFR) attracts vary between fisheries. Generally, a boat SFR levy covers costs associated with fisheries management (salaries and overheads, consultants and contractors, travel and meetings and environmental issues directly related to that fishing activity), research and fisheries assessments, management advisory committees, data collection and management, licensing and the depreciation of the licensing computer system as well as fishery observers.
2. Australian Fisheries Management Authority's (AFMA) Cost Recovery Impact Statement, available at [www.afma.gov.au](http://www.afma.gov.au), describes what costs incurred by AFMA are taxpayer funded and what costs are required to be recovered from the fishing industry.

Under the Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS), industry covers the costs associated with:

- management of domestic commercial fisheries
- data collection and management
- licensing/registration and revenue collection
- 80 per cent of research costs

Under the CRIS, taxpayers cover the costs associated with:

- management of traditional indigenous and non commercial fisheries
- input into defining international treaty standards and developing regulation

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- policy support
  - domestic fisheries compliance enforcement and outreach
  - 20 percent of research costs
3. **Attachment 1** shows the surrenders since 2005. The 2006 and 2007 figures include concessions surrendered through the Securing Our Fishing Future Initiative.
  4. Any levy amounts not recovered in the current financial year will need to be recovered from the fishing industry next financial year. Fishing concessions are levied not fishing vessels, therefore fewer fishing boats does not necessarily mean fewer fishing concession holders.

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Question: 72 (continued)

**Attachment 1**

<b>FISHERY</b>	<b>AUTHORITY TYPE</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2007<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery	Commercial Scallop Quota SFR		17500	59500					
	Doughboy Scallop Quota SFR		17500	59500					
	Scallop Boat SFR		5						
Coral Sea Fishery	Permit					3			
Eastern Skipjack Fishery	Permit			1	2				
Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery	Boat permit						1		
	Long Line Effort SFR						460		
	Longline Boat SFR							3	2
	Minorline Boat SFR							18	6
	Permit	3	105	9	1				
High Seas Fishery	Permit		2			1		2	
Informally Managed Fishery	Permit			1					
Northern Prawn Fishery	NPF B Class SFR	1	43						
	NPF Gear SFR		18365						
	Permit				1				
Not Specified - Australian Fishing Zone	Scientific Permit						1	1	
Small Pelagic Fishery	Permit		1						



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<b>FISHERY</b>	<b>AUTHORITY TYPE</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2007<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	
Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery	Autolongline Fishing Permit			1						
	Blue Eye Trevalla Quota SFR			1						
	Blue Warehou Quota SFR					7		1		
	East Coast Deepwater Trawl Sector Permit		5	3						
	GHQ Quota Holding Permit	2	5							
	Gillnet Boat SFR		26							
	Jackass Morwong Quota SFR		106064	8808			1			
	John Dory Quota SFR		30889							
	Ocean Perch Quota SFR		4							
	Oreos Quota ITQ								1	
	Redfish Quota SFR		112822							
	Royal Red Prawn Quota SFR		103296							
	Scalefish Hook Boat SFR		49	15					2	19
	SEQ Quota Holding Permit							1		
	Shark Hook Boat SFR		12	5						
	Silver Trevally			74912						
	South Australian and Tasmanian Coastal Waters Permit				1					
	South Australian Coastal Waters Gillnet and Hook Permit				1					2
	South Australian Coastal Waters Hook Fishing Permit							1		1
	South Australian Coastal Waters Sector Permit	3	5	7						
South East Trawl ITQ Permit	1	4								
Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery			3	1						

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<b>FISHERY</b>	<b>AUTHORITY TYPE</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2007<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (Continued)	TAS Coastal Waters Gillnet Fishing Permit								1
	Tasmanian and Victorian Coastal Waters Permit		1	2					
	Tasmanian Coastal Waters Sector Permit		17	14					
	Tasmanian Rock Lobster Sector Permit	1							
	Trap Fishing Permit		2	1					
	Trawl Boat SFR		56	3					
	Victorian Coastal Waters Permit		19	5					1
Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery	Southern Bluefin Tuna Carrier Permit				6	5	2		
Southern Squid Jig Fishery	Squid Gear SFR		700	900	400	100	100		100
Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery	Permit					1			
Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery	Bigeye Tuna Quota SFR						88300		
	Boat SFR						31		
	Broad Billed Swordfish Quota SFR						86009		
	Permit		7	7					
	Striped Marlin Quota SFR						27270		
	Yellowfin Tuna Quota SFR						80344		

*Note:*

<sup>a</sup> Includes concessions surrendered through the Securing Our Fishing Future Initiative.

<sup>b</sup> Includes concessions surrendered through the Securing Our Fishing Future Initiative.

<sup>c</sup> Includes concessions surrendered in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery through contract arrangements associated with the Securing Our Fishing Future Initiative.

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**Question: 73**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fisheries

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. The data tabled by AFMA at the 13 February 2012 Estimates hearing shows a number of fisheries where the amount to be levied is less than the cost recovered budget for 2011-12. What is the justification for this?
2. Similarly the data tabled by AFMA at the 13 February 2012 Estimates hearing shows a number of fisheries where the amount to be levied is more than the cost recovered budget for 2011-12. What is the justification for this?

**Answer:**

1. Some fisheries had refunds from the prior year (2010–11) to offset their budgeted costs and some pay a direct fee for some services and this reduces their amount to be paid by levy.
2. Some fisheries had deficits from the 2010–11 acquittal which need to be recovered as well as the cost recovered budget for 2011–12.

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**Question:** 74

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** International Benchmark of Management Fees

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. Is there an international benchmark that AFMA is aware of with regard to management fees as a percentage of the commercial value of the fishery (gross value of production)?
2. If so – what is it and how do AFMA's fees compare?

**Answer:**

1. Australian Fisheries Management Authority is not aware of any international benchmark regarding management fees as a percentage of the gross value of production of fisheries.
2. N/A.

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**Question: 75**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fishery Permits

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. The data tabled by AFMA at the 13 February 2012 Estimates hearing shows the average gross value of production for the period 2006 – 12 and the average levies for the same period. Please provide the gross value of production and levy figures for each of the years 2006 to 2012 and the levy as a percentage of the gross value of production for each year.
2. The data tabled by AFMA at the 13 February 2012 Estimates hearing also shows that the levy as a percentage of gross value of production for the Heard Island & McDonald Islands Fishery and the Macquarie Island Fishery is 1.8%. If these fisheries were removed from the calculation, what would the levy as percentage of the gross value of production be?

**Answer:**

1. See **Attachment 1**.
2. There is no reason for these two fisheries to be excluded from the calculation but if these two fisheries are excluded the 2011–12 levies would represent 5.1 per cent of the 2011–12 Gross Value of Production.

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Question: 75 (continued)

Attachment 1

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
<b>Levy</b>	6 221 881	8 357 605	8 397 269	11 859 968	12 189 926	13 428 527
<b>Subsidy</b>	7 000 000	5 000 400	2 999 999	0	0	0
<b>GVP</b>	278 092 400	272 018 300	249 161 200	291 469 000	295 146 000	294 975 000
<b>Levy as % GVP - Including subsidy</b>	4.8	4.9	4.6	4.1	4.1	4.6

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**Question: 76**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fishery Expenditure

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. What was the total overspend for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11?
2. What was the overspend by fishery for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11?
3. What is the anticipated overspend for this financial year by fishery?

**Answer:**

1. Australian Fisheries Management Authority has incurred the following overall results:  
 2008–09 — \$6.1m approved operating loss  
 2009–10 — \$3.2m approved operating loss  
 2010–11 — \$3.8m, approved operating loss of \$3.1m — overspend of \$0.7m

2. Actual Cost Recovered Expenditure less Budget Cost Recovered Expenditure By Fishery

<b>Fishery</b>	<b>2008-09 (Under)/Over</b>	<b>2009-10 (Under)/Over</b>	<b>2010-11 (Under)/Over</b>
Coral Sea	( 43,711)	( 49,192)	8,829
South East Trawl	( 155,899)	41,118	214,447
Gillnet Hook and Trap	( 193,530)	32,821	371,452
Great Australian Bight	( 74,999)	( 150,014)	(124,385)
East Coast Deepwater Trawl	4,432	( 1,236)	10,320
Victorian Inshore Trawl	1,459	( 988)	( 3,207)
Heard & Macdonald Islands	( 181,199)	362,376	91,033
Small Pelagics	( 16,251)	( 37,904)	(170,202)
Macquarie Island	61,492	69,783	(46,174)
Bass Strait Scallops	( 52,288)	( 52,523)	17,734
Western Deepwater Trawl	( 28,940)	( 15,038)	(24,080)
Northern Prawn	( 274,581)	( 116,461)	330,829
North West Shelf	4,039	( 3,458)	3,588
Southern Squid	( 18,876)	( 14,992)	18,980
Skipjack Tuna	( 57,861)	( 29,404)	1,115
Eastern Tuna & Billfish	( 60,895)	53,870	6,923
Southern Bluefin Tuna	17,438	( 7,249)	67,395
Western Tuna & Billfish	( 85,977)	( 63,747)	(4,738)
<b>Total for Cost Recovered areas</b>	<b>( 1,156,148)</b>	<b>17,761</b>	<b>769,858</b>

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3. There is no anticipated overspend for this financial year for any fishery, however this is dependent on the activity required in any fishery, such as observer coverage and research projects.



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**Question: 77**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fishery Boats

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. Please provide details of the number of boats per fishery for the years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11.
2. Please provide details of the average income per boat for each of the fisheries for the years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11.

**Answer:**

1. See **Attachment 1**, which shows the number of boats active in each fishery for each of the respective years.
2. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) conduct economic surveys of major Commonwealth fisheries to assess the economic performance of the industry. Surveys have been conducted in the Northern Prawn Fishery, Commonwealth Trawl and Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sectors of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery, Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery and Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery. Data for other Commonwealth fisheries is not available. The figures in the table below are boat cash income (average per boat) which is defined as the difference between total cash receipts and total cash costs.

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
Northern Prawn Fishery	\$206 410	\$292 203	n.a.
Commonwealth Trawl Sector	\$186 131	n.a.	n.a.
Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sector	\$107 181	n.a.	n.a.
Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery	\$14 329	n.a.	n.a.
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery	n.a.	\$8 866	\$731

**n.a.** survey data is not available

**Source:** ABARES - George, Vieira and New (2012) and Perks and Vieira (2010).

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Attachment 1 - Number of boats active in each fishery.

<b>Fishery</b>	<b>Number of boats</b>		
	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Commonwealth trawl	53	51	50
Coral Sea	5	2	4
East Coast Deep Water	0	1	0
Eastern Skipjack Fishery	1	0	0
Eastern Tuna and Billfish	65	61	57
Gillnet, Hook and Trap	80	80	92
Great Australian Bight	5	4	5
Heard and McDonald Islands	3	3	3
High Seas	6	3	3
Informally Managed	0	1	1
Macquarie Island	2	1	1
North West Slope	2	2	1
Northern Prawn	55	55	55
Scallop	19	26	18
Small Pelagic	5	5	5
Southern Bluefin Tuna	26	31	20
Squid Jig	8	7	13
Torres Strait	18	19	22
Torres Strait Prawn	36	28	25
Western Deep Water	1	3	2
Western Skipjack Fishery	2	0	0
Western Tuna and Billfish	4	4	5

Note:

1. The information is sourced from logbooks and catch records.
2. Boats that have been active in two or more fisheries within a financial year have been counted in each fishery they have worked in. Therefore these figures cannot be summed to calculate the total number of active boats. Information on the total number of boats currently allowed (as at February 2012) to operate in Commonwealth Fisheries is contained in the answer to question 85 SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management – Australian Fisheries Management Authority Topic: Fisheries from Additional Estimates hearings in February 2012.
3. Boats fishing in the Traditional sector of the Torres Strait have not been included.

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**Question: 78**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Northern Prawn Fishery

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. What is the rationale for moving the Northern Prawn Fishery from being managed by control of inputs to quotas?
2. We understand for the Northern Prawn Fishery that the per boat levy is approaching \$50K; total revenue through levies is around \$2.35 million from 52 boats. How is this money apportioned? What are the key cost centres and budget figures for the management of this fishery?

**Answer:**

1. In 2005 Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) was delivered a Ministerial Direction by the [then] Federal Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Senator Ian Macdonald, which stated AFMA must among other things; “manage Commonwealth fisheries using output controls, unless a strong case can be made on a fishery by fishery basis that this would be not cost effective or otherwise detrimental”.

In 2006, the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) participated in the wider structural adjustment package for Commonwealth-managed fisheries. The package led to a 45 per cent reduction in vessel Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) and a 34 per cent reduction in gear SFRs by the start of 2007. A condition of the fisheries participation was that the NPF would move to output controls focussing on an individual transferable quota (ITQ) system, which was in line with the Ministerial Direction given by Minister Macdonald. This was confirmed via written correspondence between the Northern Prawn Fishing Industry Organisation and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in March 2006. The NPF received \$68 million of \$149 million of public money as part of this agreement.

In August 2009 the AFMA Commission considered the results of a detailed Cost Benefit Analysis by the Sustainable Environment Group, comments from the Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee and industry submissions regarding the introduction of quota into the NPF. After careful consideration the AFMA Commission decided to implement quota in the NPF in the form of ITQs.

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The implementation of ITQs in the NPF is consistent with the policy position held by successive Federal Governments since 1989 for quota management of Commonwealth fisheries. In particular, ITQs enable self adjustment of fishing capacity, which in turn reduces the need for future structural adjustment and government intervention.

2. AFMA consults with the Northern Prawn Management Advisory Committee prior to finalising the management and research budget for the NPF. AFMA provided industry members with a detailed account of all expenditure in the 2010–11 financial year. In 2011–12, the management levy collectable was \$2 180 512. The amount to be recovered primarily increased due to a higher cost recovered budget in 2010–11 to account for increased data management costs, increased observer costs, additional research projects and the re-phasing of research milestones. Other management costs include licensing and general fisheries management. The taxpayer funds the compliance and enforcement costs and part of the research costs.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 79**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic: Dolphin Protection**

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

Question on Notice 160 from October 2011 requested details of industry's response to the closures. We were advised that 'the reaction has been mixed'. Please provide more specific detail of the range of issues raised.

**Answer:**

Some industry members recognised the need to provide protection to dolphins and supported the closure. Others raised concerns about the impact the closure might have on fishing, including through additional operating costs to fish outside the closure. In addition, some fishers questioned the need for dolphin conservation, citing a perceived abundance of dolphins in southern Australian waters.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 80**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fisheries

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

The latest report on the status of Australia's fish stocks shows 71 of the 96 stocks assessed were 'not subject to overfishing'. Given this result, how has AFMA responded?

1. Has there been a re-evaluation of the management strategies needed for fisheries that are doing well?
2. Is there a hierarchy of management strategies based on the risk profile of fisheries or is it a one size fits all approach?
3. Has AFMA ever had a fishery removed from their management because it is no longer at risk or requiring government surveillance?

**Answer:**

1. In accordance with its legislative objectives, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) ensures that all Commonwealth fisheries are managed in an efficient and cost effective manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development and the exercise of the precautionary principle. AFMA continually evaluates the level of management activity required in Commonwealth fisheries and directs resources to those fisheries that are overfished, subject to overfishing or have significant interactions with threatened, endangered or protected species.
2. As part of its approach to fisheries management, AFMA undertakes ecological risk assessments to prioritise the risks fishing poses to the marine environment. Prioritising the risks allows management measures to be targeted to those fishing activities that have the most impact on the ecosystem. Accordingly, fisheries where risks are considered higher are managed more intensively than fisheries that have less risk. For example, domestically managed stocks categorised by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences as overfished are subject to formal rebuilding strategies under the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy.
3. No, AFMA has a legislative requirement to manage all Commonwealth fisheries.

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 81**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Orange Roughy

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. With regard to Orange Roughy why is the rebuilding target for the Cascade Plateau stock 60% of the unfished biomass (B60) when the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy states that fish stocks should be managed to the maximum economic yield, a number that is almost always B48?
2. All stocks of orange roughy are managed under quotas and there is only targeting of one stock. The closure of the deepwater is probably the largest single fishery closure in Australia's history and means that stocks like deepwater shark and deepwater oreos now have uncaught quotas because the grounds in which these unrelated species live cannot be reached. Why then were all waters deeper than 700m closed to all forms of fishing? Will AFMA remove some of these closures to allow uncaught quota of other deepwater species to be caught?
3. The CSIRO recently completed an acoustic optical system (AOS) survey of the eastern roughy stock. The report stated that the best estimate for the eastern orange roughy stock was 48,000 tonnes. However, the current assessment states that the stock is in the order of 14,000 tonnes. A respected New Zealand stock assessment scientist, Dr Patrick Cordue, recently reviewed the Australian stock assessment for eastern orange roughy and concluded, "The existing assessment is not suitable for providing management advice" Why then has the current assessment not been modified?

**Answer:**

1. The population of Orange Roughy in Australian waters is known to be comprised of more than one stock, although the exact structure of these stocks is uncertain as is their relationship to one another.

The Orange Roughy Cascade Plateau stock reference point of 60 percent of unfished biomass was approved by then Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) Board in November 2006 as part of the Orange Roughy Conservation Program (ORCP) and subsequently endorsed by the then Minister for the Environment, Senator Ian Cambell as part of Minister Cambell's November 2006 decision to list Orange Roughy as conservation dependant under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). The ORCP was then implemented in early 2007. The ORCP allowed only the Cascade Plateau stock of

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**Question: 81 (continued)**

Orange Roughy to be commercially fished and required this stock to maintain its spawning biomass at or above 60 per cent unfished biomass. The 60 per cent reference point was adopted to allow recruitment levels similar to that of virgin biomass and therefore allow for any potential role that the Cascade Plateau may

play in the recovery of surrounding depleted populations. The Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy (HSP) was implemented in late 2007 after the ORCP management arrangements had been put in place therefore the default HSP reference points were not in place at the time of the introduction of the ORCP. The ORCP is currently due for review in 2012 and reference points for individual stocks will be re-assessed as required against any agreed revised HSP.

2. Orange Roughy was listed as Conservation Dependant under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) in November 2006. The listing required the implementation of the ORCP to implement additional measures that addressed specific objectives and requirements. The 700 metre closure was introduced in 2007 as part of the ORCP to limit fishing in waters where Orange Roughy are found.

In 2009, after industry consultation, the closure boundaries were amended to allow the industry access to deeper water and therefore other mid-shelf and deepwater species that were restricted under the original closure.

AFMA is currently in the process of seeking advice from its Resource Assessment Group on the risks and benefits of a South East Trawl Industry Association submission to further adjust the boundaries of the 700 metre closure to allow improved access to deepwater species.

3. Dr Patrick Cordue provided an independent review, dated 1 September 2011, of the draft eastern zone Orange Roughy base case assessment. The review was considered by the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Slope Resource Assessment Group (RAG) on 5-7 October 2011.

One of the issues raised by the Cordue review was that the acoustic optical system survey data, one of many data sets available, conflicted with known age data. The RAG proposed further work to examine the reasons for these conflicts before recommending any modification to the existing assessment. This work is ongoing. The eastern zone Orange Roughy assessment will be further reviewed in 2012.



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**Question: 83**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** AFMA Commission

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. With regard to AFMA Commissioners, is it correct that Commissioners are not permitted to hold or have held a concession in a Commonwealth fishery?
2. If this is true, how is the Commission adequately "skills based"?
3. How many Commission meetings have been held in the current financial year?
4. How many were held in the three previous financial years?
5. For this financial year what is the average length of Commission meetings?
6. What was the average length of Commission meetings for each of the three previous financial years?
7. How many meetings has the Commission had with industry members and other stakeholders this financial year?
8. How many meetings did the Commission had with industry members and other stakeholders in the three previous financial years?

**Answer:**

1. No. While commissioners are not permitted to hold a concession in a Commonwealth fishery, the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* does not preclude those people who have held a Commonwealth concession in the past.
2. The eligibility requirements detailed in Division 3 (a) of the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* (FAA) also include a high level of expertise in fisheries management, fishing industry operations, science or natural resource management. The current commissioners reflect these requirements and hold a wide range of skills relevant to their positions and requirements of the FAA. Appendix 6 of AFMA's 2010–11 Annual Report provides specific details of the Commissioners skills and qualifications.
3. The AFMA Commission has held three meetings this financial year to date.
4. 2010–11: Five meetings.  
2009–10: Five meetings.  
2008–09: Six meetings.

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**Question:** 83 (continued)

5. The average length of Commission meetings this financial year is one and a half days.
6. Over the past three financial years the average length of Commission meetings has remained constant at one and a half days.
7. One in October 2011 held in conjunction with the Seafood Directions conference, Australia's major seafood industry event. The Commission is required to hold a public meeting every year and has done so every year of its existence. In addition to the public meeting individual Commissioners meet with industry, management advisory committees and resource assessment groups throughout the year.
8. One in each of the financial years. The Commissioner also meets with Management Advisory Committees on an opportunistic basis at its regular Commission Meetings. In addition to the public meetings individual Commissioners met with industry, management advisory committees and resource assessment groups throughout the three years.

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**Question: 84**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic: Staffing**

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. What are the current FTE staffing levels of AFMA?
2. What was the FTE staffing level in 1996?

**Answer:**

1. At 31 January 2012, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) had 192 full time equivalent (FTE) staff.
2. AFMA did not report on an FTE staffing level basis in 1996.

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**Question: 85**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Boats

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. How many boats currently operate in AFMA controlled waters?
2. How many boats operated in AFMA controlled waters in 1996?

**Answer:**

1. In February 2012, 345 boats were able to operate in Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) controlled waters. The number of 345 will vary as fishing concession holders nominate their boats to quota statutory fishing rights. Note: this includes Torres Strait non-Indigenous operated fishing boats but excludes Torres Strait fishing boats operated by Traditional inhabitants.
2. In 1996, 1010 boats operated in AFMA controlled waters. This number includes 30 Japanese boats authorised to fish under joint venture arrangements.

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**Question: 87**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Dolphin Protection

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator COLBECK asked:**

1. In response to Question on Notice 160 from October 2011 the Minister advised that ‘There are no trigger limits for dolphin interactions in the fishery’. Does this equate to a zero tolerance?
  - a. How realistic is this and how do other countries deal with this situation?
  - b. How can a fisherman effectively manage his fishing activities with a zero tolerance for interactions with dolphins?
2. Question on Notice 160 from October 2011 requested details of any analysis that had been undertaken to determine the cause(s) of the increase in dolphin interactions. The response received related to the use of independent observers and electronic monitoring systems but did not address the cause of the increased interactions. Please provide details of any analysis undertaken regarding the cause of the increased interactions.

**Answer:**

1. Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) does not use trigger limits as a management measure for reducing dolphin interactions. Instead, AFMA has adopted spatial closures in areas with significant numbers of dolphin interactions. This approach does not equate to zero tolerance; there are areas within the Gillnet Hook and Trap fishery with reported dolphin interactions that have not been closed to fishing.
2. AFMA is not aware of any one reason that has caused an increase in reported dolphin interactions. AFMA is continuing to address the issue of dolphin interactions in the Gillnet Hook and Trap Fishery and is working to extend the scope of the Australian Sea Lion Working Group to include interactions with all marine mammals.

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**Question: 111**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Northern Prawn Management Plan

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator MACDONALD asked:**

1. Did AFMA meet with fishing groups and anglers as part of the consultation process?
2. How many submissions were received?
3. What was the general feedback?
4. Was there any feedback on how this may impact on the supply to the market?
5. When will a report be finalised?

**Answer:**

1. Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) met with the Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group, the Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee and the Northern Prawn Fishing Industry Pty Ltd in the formation of the draft *Northern Prawn Fishery Management Plan 2012* (draft Plan). Industry and environmental non-government organisations have representation through the Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group and the Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee. AFMA did not meet with individual fishing groups and anglers during the period that the draft Plan was out for public comment.
2. 18 submissions were received on the draft Plan.
3. Many of the submissions raised issues related to the policy decision to introduce Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) in the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF), the submissions focused on the current positive state of the fishery, concerns about an absence of short term benefits of moving to ITQs, increased costs and regulations. The submissions also raised concerns about the ability to accurately set Total Allowable Catches, particularly for white banana prawns.

In addition to issues raised regarding the move to ITQs, a small number of comments were received on the draft management plan.

AFMA has also placed a number of the submissions on its website: [www.afma.gov.au](http://www.afma.gov.au). Please note the list is not complete as AFMA has not received permission from all of those that made submissions to place them in the public domain.

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4. Yes.
5. A summary of the issues from the submissions coupled with an AFMA view and a NORMAC response can be found on the AFMA website: [www.afma.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/NORMAC-76-Chairs-summary.pdf](http://www.afma.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/NORMAC-76-Chairs-summary.pdf).

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**Question: 112**

**Division/Agency:** SRM/AFMA – Sustainable Resource Management/Australian Fisheries Management Authority

**Topic:** Fish Stocks

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator MACDONALD asked:**

Can the Department/AFMA give an update on fish stocks:

1. Indian ocean tuna
2. Sword fish
3. Yellow fin tuna

**Answer:**

1. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Scientific Committee at its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting 12-17 December 2011, determined the stock status of Indian Ocean tuna species as:  
Albacore Tuna – Not overfished and subject to overfishing  
Bigeye Tuna – Not overfished and overfishing not occurring  
Skipjack Tuna – Not overfished and overfishing not occurring  
Yellowfin Tuna – Not overfished and overfishing not occurring
2. The Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Scientific Committee at its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting 9–17 August 2011 determined the stock status of South Pacific Swordfish as not overfished and overfishing not occurring.  
Indian Ocean Swordfish – not overfished and overfishing not occurring  
Southwest Indian Ocean Swordfish – overfished but overfishing not occurring
3. WCPFC Scientific Committee at its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting 9–17 August 2011 determined the stock status of Yellowfin Tuna as not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.