December 2017

Fisheries and aquaculture

Australia’s wild capture fisheries and aquaculture industries contribute almost $3 billion a year to Australia’s economy. More than 14,000 people are directly employed by the commercial fishing and aquaculture sectors and many of these jobs are based in regional areas. Our Exclusive Economic Zone extends 200 nautical miles from the coast and is the world’s third-largest fishing zone (8.1 million square kilometres).

The Australian Government and state and territory governments manage fisheries in consultation with the commercial fishing industry, Indigenous and recreational fishers, scientists, economists and environmental non-government organisations.

To manage Australia’s fisheries in a sustainable way, fishing methods and catch levels are controlled and regulated. This prevents overfishing, minimises bycatch, protects threatened species and safeguards the marine environment for the benefit of current and future generations. No fish stocks solely managed by the Australian Government have been subject to overfishing in the past 4 years.

**Building a sustainable fisheries industry**

The Australian Government is driving a more profitable, resilient and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sector by:

- providing $23 million in 2017–18 for annual funding of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to plan and invest in fisheries research, development and extension activities in Australia
- developing international market access and trade relationships—10 free trade agreements are currently in force with China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, Chile, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (with New Zealand) and Malaysia
- providing annual funding to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority to sustainably manage fish resources in Commonwealth waters

**Key facts**

- Around 300 boats operate in Commonwealth fisheries.
- More than 3.5 million Australians are recreational fishers.
- Australia’s fisheries are a resource that is shared by commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers.
- Commonwealth fisheries share fish stocks with the states and the Northern Territory—catches are managed cooperatively to assure sustainability.
- On average, Australians eat 140 serves of seafood every year.
• meeting Australia’s treaty obligations in international fisheries under the Fisheries Resources Research Fund, valued at $2.3 million in 2017–18

• providing matching funds of $19.4 million in 2016–17, alongside the funding already invested by the sector through levies, for research and development (R&D) to advance the fisheries sector

• providing funding through the Rural R&D for Profit program for innovative projects that improve productivity and profitability, such as $3 million targeting the growth of the yellowtail kingfish industry by developing more cost effective feeds and feeding strategies

• providing $535,000 seed funding over 3 years for Seafood Industry Australia to develop a strong representative body for the wild-catch, aquaculture and post-harvest sectors

• providing $550,000 funding to the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation to improve communication between the recreational fishing sector and broader community, promote sustainable fishing practices through a national code of practice and increase the capacity of the sector to engage with government through national policy forums

• providing funding for a National Recreational Fishing Survey, to be conducted in 2018, which will collect social and economic information from recreational fishers

• managing the industry in a manner that is consistent with Australia’s international obligations, with an emphasis on cooperation in managing highly migratory and shared fish stocks

• developing policies, effective legislation and regulatory frameworks to ensure Australia’s fisheries remain sustainable and profitable into the future—for example, the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines, the Commonwealth Bycatch Policy and the Commonwealth Fisheries Policy Statement

• launching the National Aquaculture Strategy, which aims to almost double the current value of Australia’s aquaculture industry to $2 billion a year by 2027, and was developed in consultation with industry, state and Northern Territory governments.

**Direct support for fishers**

• **Rural Financial Counselling Service**
  The Rural Financial Counselling Service provides free financial counselling to fishers and small related businesses who are suffering financial hardship and have no alternative sources of impartial support.

• **Regional Investment Corporation**
  The Regional Investment Corporation will deliver $2 billion in Australian Government farm business concessional loans, including to aquaculture farmers in need.

• **Taxation measures (ATO)**
  The government provides several finance and tax measures specific to fisheries businesses, including help in natural disasters such as flooding. More information is available from the ATO website.

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**Gross value of production of fisheries managed solely or jointly by the Australian Government, 2005–06 to 2015–16**

![Graph showing gross value of production of major Commonwealth fisheries/sectors from 2005-06 to 2015-16](image)

**Figure 1.5 Value of production of major Commonwealth fisheries/sectors**

- Torres Strait fisheries
- Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery
- Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery
- Northern Prawn Fishery
- Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery

Note: GVP figures are subject to revision and consequently may differ in past and future publications.

Source: ABARES Fishery status reports 2017