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### [About This Plan](#)

This OceanWatch Australia Ltd Corporate Plan 2015 – 2020 describes the nature of OceanWatch Australia (OceanWatch), defines its vision, describes the enabling actions it employs to achieve its vision, provides a snapshot of its business environment, outlines its outcome and operational priorities for the period of this Plan, and details its governance. Details of how OceanWatch addresses its operational priorities including indicators against which achievements can be measured are contained in OceanWatch's companion National Marine Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan and other related plans that may be developed from time to time.

The Plan was adopted by OceanWatch Directors on 7/10/2015.

## Overview

OceanWatch Australia Ltd is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO).<sup>1</sup>

OceanWatch works to advance environmental, economic and social sustainability in the Australian fishing and aquaculture industry and promotes awareness and stewardship within other parts of the community that use and value the marine environment.

In 2014 the Australian Government recognised OceanWatch as the national organisation responsible for the delivery of its marine Natural Resource Management (NRM) related programs and, through funding agreements, assists it to achieve mutually agreed long term outcomes. Although the delivery of the Australian Government NRM related programs imposes contractual responsibilities on OceanWatch, they are consistent with the long standing activities and current Vision of the Company.

OceanWatch was originally established in 1989 by Peter Doyle AO, as it was then recognised that the NSW commercial wild-catch fishing sector's future was dependent upon a healthy marine environment and sustainable fishing practices.

The Company's initial role was to work with the NSW seafood industry and coastal communities to implement practical solutions to problems that affected the industry or coastal environments.



OceanWatch's foundation Members were, and remain:

NSW Fishermen's Co-Operatives Association Ltd

Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd

Master Fish Merchants Association of Australia

The Company's Constitution lists its Objects as:

- to seek the protection of aquatic habitats
- to seek an end to water pollution
- to ensure that industry groups are fully informed as to the nature of environmental problems and ways of dealing with them
- to seek the support of other sectors of society in promoting the conservation of aquatic habitats

OceanWatch is a small Sydney based company with a national influence that has developed its organisational structure to optimise its performance. OceanWatch is not a political lobby group and it does not take on the responsibilities of a peak industry body.

<sup>1</sup> Donations to the public funds of organisations on the REO are tax deductible

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## Stakeholders

OceanWatch's stakeholders include:

the Australian seafood industry

the community, including recreational and Indigenous customary fishers, that uses and values the marine environment.

Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments

Regional NRM organisations

other industry users of the marine environment where these users may affect, interact With or share common interests with fishing and aquaculture operations.

### *OceanWatch Vision*

**Australia's marine environment is healthy, productive, valued,  
and is used in a responsible way**



OceanWatch works towards this vision through the following interrelated enabling actions.

#### **At government level:**

ensuring adequate support including funding for OceanWatch and marine NRM taking a lead role in marine NRM planning for Australia's marine environments  
fostering the inclusion of key seafood industry and community stakeholders within marine NRM planning and delivery processes

#### **At stakeholder level:**

determining priority activities in consultation with Members and key stakeholders  
assisting key seafood industry and community stakeholders to access public and private funds to undertake sustainable practice and environmental protection and restoration activities  
fostering collaboration and partnerships with key seafood industry and community stakeholders throughout the planning and delivery phases of activities  
undertaking activities using evidence based knowledge  
ensuring OceanWatch performance meets professional standards and Member and stakeholder expectations

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## Funding

Since its inception in 1989 OceanWatch has received funding from its foundation Members through a 'box levy' on seafood sold through the Sydney Fish Market.

In addition to the funding that OceanWatch receives from its Members, and for its delivery of the Australian Government NRM related programs, it sources funding and in-kind support from other entities and individuals including:

### Seafood Industry

Sydney Fish Market  
Industry organisations and peak bodies  
Individual seafood producers

### Corporate and Community

Corporate sponsors  
Philanthropic sources  
Individual donors

### Government

Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments  
Organisations concerned with natural resource management, fisheries and aquaculture  
Research funders and providers



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# OceanWatch Business Environment

## Australia's marine environment

Australia's exclusive economic zone is the third largest in the World covering about one and a half times the size of Australia's land mass. Its diverse marine seascapes, stretching from the tropics to Antarctica, reflect unique biodiversity values and deliver a valuable flow of ecosystems goods and services. These values are under pressure everywhere but especially on the continental shelf where marine ecosystems face multiple pressures from human development (over 80 per cent of Australia's 23 million people live within 50 kilometres of the coast) and changing ocean climate.<sup>2</sup>

*For the purposes of this plan, the marine environment is defined as areas under tidal influence.*

Marine, estuarine and terrestrial ecosystems provide habitat for a diverse range of species – about 4,500 finfish species, and perhaps tens of thousands of invertebrate species. Australian marine and terrestrial waters are nutrient poor by global comparisons due to the dominance of the two southern polar flowing currents of warm tropical waters. Consequently Australia's marine fisheries rank 52nd in global tonnage terms (0.2 per cent of tonnage landed), but are relatively high in value (2 per cent of landed value).<sup>3</sup> The extensive length of Australia's continental coastline (36,000 kilometres, rank 7th) spanning 35 degrees of latitude creates great diversity in habitat, and species. Shorelines include coral reefs temperate rocky and sandy shores, more than 900 estuaries, 10,000 sandy beaches, and 8,000 diverse islands (National Marine Science Plan, 2014). This visible and bathymetric variability creates habitat for molluscs and crustaceans, where Australia is established as a significant producer of wild-catch species, including rock lobster, pearl oysters, abalone and prawns.<sup>4</sup>

## Challenges facing Australia's marine environment include:<sup>5</sup>

- land based pollution impacting on water quality
- alterations to physical habitats
- biosecurity
- marine based pollution, plastic debris, oil spills
- oil and gas exploration and extraction
- dredging, ocean dumping
- global climate change



2. Dittmann & Doherty, 2014 Nov cited in Sector Overview, Colquhoun, 2014

3. 2014 FRDC F&A Sector Overview, FRDC and Ridge Partners

4. ibid

5. Kearney, R & Farebrother, G. 2015. The comparative performance of the management of the individual threats to marine environments and fisheries resources (FRDC 2013/029).

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## The Australian seafood industry

The seafood industry comprises approximately 120 wild-catch fisheries from which over 600 finfish and shellfish are commercially harvested from marine and freshwater. There is also a large number of aquaculture species produced or in various stages of development; prawns, Southern Bluefin Tuna, salmonids, edible oysters and pearl oysters accounted for over 80 per cent of the value of aquaculture in 2012-13. In that year the industry produced 237,318 tonnes of seafood of which 34 per cent was farmed; and was valued at \$2.4 billion of which 43 per cent was derived from aquaculture. <sup>6</sup>

*For the purposes of this plan, the seafood industry is defined as any activity conducted in or from Australia concerned with the commercial taking, culturing, processing, preserving, storing, transporting, marketing or selling fish or fish products. It comprises the following three sectors:*

commercial wild-catch  
aquaculture  
post-harvest

Industry enterprises range from low technology single-owner-operators for whom the lifestyle is important, to large vertically integrated companies that operate largely for profit. In 2012-13 the industry employed 13,813 people in the wild-catch (5,050), aquaculture (3,558) and post-harvest sectors (5,205). <sup>7</sup> The industry's production is low in volume but high in value; and Australia's excellent international reputation for the quality and the environmental credentials of its exports of abalone, rock lobster, prawn, scallop, Southern Bluefin Tuna, tropical fish and pearls has maximised returns through exports. In 2012-13 49 per cent of Australia's production was exported and valued at \$1.65 billion. <sup>8</sup>



Demand for seafood remains strong across Australia with consumption in 2012-13 at 15 kilograms per person per year. A key driver is the awareness of seafood's prominent role in a healthy diet. Total domestic consumption has grown by three per cent over the last decade while production has fallen by one per cent. There remains some prospect for increasing Australian production through improvements in fisheries management, aquaculture and to a lesser extent better utilisation of low value wild-catch species and processing waste. However, Australia will continue to rely on imports, mainly from Thailand and China, to fill most of the seafood deficit which in 2012-13 was 66 per cent of total consumption. <sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup>. Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics, ABARES 2013

<sup>7</sup>. *ibid*

<sup>8</sup>. *ibid*

<sup>9</sup>. *ibid*

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With the growing seafood deficit combined with the strength of the Australian dollar over recent years, some businesses have been looking to re-orient their market portfolio towards increasing their share of the Australian market. Increasingly, businesses are seeking to improve their profitability and efficiency through focusing on the whole value chain through to consumers. This will see more companies becoming either vertically integrated or building partnerships to achieve similar results.

In some Asian markets consumption is also increasing with the growth of the middle class, especially in China and India. This will mean that Australia will be competing with these countries for imports that will consequently increase in price.



### Challenges facing the Australian seafood industry include:

#### Environmental

- addressing non-fishing impacts on the productivity of marine environment
- reaching and maintaining sustainable levels of fisheries production
- adopting fishing and aquaculture best practices to improve environmental performance
  - including reducing bycatch and interactions with Threatened Endangered and Protected species

#### Social

- ensuring evidence based decision making is the basis of marine environment policy and Management
- improving public perception of the industry
- developing people and organisations

#### Economic

- improving profitability for producers



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# The Australian Community

## Recreational and Indigenous Fishers

For the purposes of this plan, recreational and Indigenous fishers are regarded as community stakeholders. The inextricable link between these fishers and the seafood industry in terms of the publicly managed natural resources on which they all depend and compete for, gives justification for their being separately described from other community activities.

About 3.4 million Australians fish for recreational purposes and contribute about \$1.8 billion to the Australian economy. The sector supports about 90,000 jobs. <sup>10</sup>

Indigenous people fish according to custom – ceremony, exchange, trade and barter- or for recreational purposes. Many Indigenous fishers also participate in the commercial wild-catch and aquaculture sectors. The legal rights around Indigenous fishing are being refined over time and some aspects are now part of existing legislation and court decisions. <sup>11</sup>

*The recreational and Indigenous customary sector, together with the seafood industry, provide important economic and social benefits within coastal communities.*

## Consumers and Community

Consumers want access to a reliable and affordable array of seafood through retail and food service channels while also being concerned with the sustainability of wild-caught and farmed seafood both domestically and internationally. In some cases this has led to industry and governments demonstrating their commitment to best fishing and management practices through independent assessment and third-party certification.

In recent years, the Australian community in general has become increasingly aware of the need to protect, maintain and rehabilitate natural aquatic resources (ocean, estuary, river, wetland and other habitats) in order to maintain biological diversity and processes. The adverse impacts of land-based activities, frequently transferred to marine, estuary and coastal environments by run-off and rivers, are also of concern.

## Challenges facing the Australian community include:

- ensuring an appropriate balance between marine protection and sustainable resource use
- continuing access to Australian seafood for Australian consumers
- increasing awareness and respect for Indigenous customary fishing activities
- addressing fishing and non-fishing impacts on the health and productivity of the marine environment
- supporting sustainability through purchasing choices



<sup>10</sup>. Ibid

<sup>11</sup>. The National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey July 2003; FRDC Project No 99/158; Commonwealth of Australia 2003

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## Australian Governments

Governments, at the state and Commonwealth level, play a lead role in responding to the marine environment, seafood industry and community challenges identified above. They do this through developing and implementing policy and legislation, and establishing operational management arrangements based on political considerations, community expectations, and relevant international agreements.

Governments also fund specific activities of non-government organisations to deliver outcomes in areas for which they have neither the capacity nor the responsibility. Of most relevance to OceanWatch is the Australian Government's investment in Natural Resource Management (NRM) described below.



### International Agreements

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) attempts to regulate all aspects of the resources of the sea and uses of the ocean – it covers everything from navigational rights to the conservation and management of living marine resources. UNCLOS recognises the right of coastal states to jurisdiction (Economic Exclusion Zone - EEZ) over all resources, in the waters, ocean floor and subsoil of an area extending 200nm from its shore. Within its EEZ, Australia has sovereign rights to explore and exploit, conserve and manage the natural resources—both living (such as fisheries and genetic material) and non-living (such as oil, gas, minerals), as well as responsibility for the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

Australia is also a member of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO) Committee on Fisheries which is responsible for the long-term sustainable development and utilization of the world's fisheries and aquaculture.

The UNFAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) was initiated in 1991 by the Committee on Fisheries and unanimously adopted on 31 October 1995 by the over 170 member governments including Australia.

The Code provides principles and standards applicable to the conservation, management and development of all fisheries. It also covers the capture, processing and trade of fish and fishery products, fishing operations, aquaculture, fisheries research and integration of fisheries into coastal area management.

In February 2011 the first global guidelines for bycatch management and reduction of fishing discards were agreed upon by members of the Committee on Fisheries. The guidelines also cover bycatch management planning, improvement of fishing gear, fisheries closures, economic incentives to facilitate uptake of measures, monitoring, research and development, building the capacity of states to follow the guidelines and other relevant issues.

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## Legislation and Policy

At a National level, Australia's Oceans Policy <sup>12</sup> is an overarching policy, instigated by the Commonwealth, which has the objective of setting in place the framework for integrated and ecosystem based planning and management for all of Australia's marine jurisdictions. The policy has been implemented through the development of marine bioregional plans, which describe the marine environment and conservation values of each marine region, set out broad biodiversity objectives, identify regional priorities and outline strategies and actions to address these priorities. Marine bioregional plans have been developed for four of Australia's marine regions - South-west, North-west, North and Temperate East to improve the way decisions are made under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), particularly in relation to the protection of marine biodiversity and the sustainable use of our oceans and their resources by our marine-based industries. <sup>13</sup>

In addition to contributing to marine planning and management processes, Commonwealth state and territory governments are responsible for fisheries and aquaculture within their respective jurisdictions.

Except where agreement is reached to the contrary, Commonwealth Government jurisdiction extends from three nautical miles outside the baseline to the limit of the EEZ; state and Northern Territory (NT) jurisdiction is generally from the baseline to three nautical miles. Commonwealth fisheries are managed by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. Fisheries management within the NT and state jurisdictions is vested in the state and territory government departments responsible for fishing and aquaculture.

## Natural Resource Management

At a Commonwealth level, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Environment collaborate to develop and implement NRM policies that protect and conserve marine ecosystems and biodiversity while maintaining a profitable, competitive and sustainable fishing (seafood) industry. <sup>14</sup>

The strategic objectives of Australian Government investment in NRM <sup>15</sup> include the following:

Communities are managing landscapes to sustain long-term economic and social benefits from their environment.

Farmers and fishers are increasing their long term returns through better management of the natural resource base.

Communities are involved in caring for their environment.

Communities are protecting species and natural assets

Supporting sustainability through purchasing choices



<sup>12</sup>. Commonwealth of Australia, Australia's Oceans Policy (Canberra: Environment Australia, 1998)

<sup>13</sup>. <http://www.environment.gov.au/marine/marine-bioregional-plans>

<sup>14</sup>. <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/fisheries/environment>

<sup>15</sup>. <http://www.nrm.gov.au/national-landcare-programme>



## Operational Management Arrangements

### Fisheries

Fisheries management is based on a co-management arrangement involving the fishing industry, scientists, economists and other user groups, such as those that represent recreational and Indigenous fishing and environmental non-government organisations. <sup>16</sup> Various fisheries management acts and regulations govern the way fisheries are managed. In addition, fishery management plans identify objectives, describe fishing concessions (i.e., statutory fishing rights, quotas, fishing permits etc), allocation procedures and also specify the rules governing fishers in order to manage Australia's fisheries in a sustainable way.

The Status of key Australian fish stocks reports provide a comprehensive independent evaluation of the biological status of major Australian fisheries stocks. They are produced by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences in collaboration with Commonwealth, state and NT government fishery research agencies. The development of the 2014 Report involved 238 stock assessments, covering 68 key species or species complexes. The species included in the report represent around 85 per cent of the annual catch and 90 per cent of the value of Australian wild-capture fisheries in 2012–13. The report was able to classify 170 of the stocks assessed, with insufficient data for the remaining 68. The report classified eleven of the 170 classified stocks as overfished representing 4.9% of Australia's seafood catch.



### Aquaculture

While the Australian Government has a number of important functions in relation to aquaculture, including national programs for research, quarantine, aquatic animal health, food safety, environmental management, and market access and trade, most elements of the regulation of domestic aquaculture production rest with the states and territories.

Aquaculture operations, particularly those that operate in, or discharge into, public waters, are required to comply with stringent environmental controls monitored on an ongoing basis by state agencies.

Further protection for listed Threatened, Endangered and Protected species and habitats impacted by seafood production is provided for under the EPBC Act.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/fisheries>

## Marine reserves

Marine protected areas have been created adjacent to the Australian coast to protect representative samples of marine ecosystems, to protect marine biodiversity and provide for sustainable use. Varying zoning regimes within marine reserves range from highly protected no take areas to multi use areas allowing a wide range of activities including commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and shipping.

While marine reserves may incidentally contribute to reducing fishing pressure, the responsibility for managing fish stock sustainability and the impacts of fishing on the marine environment rests with fisheries managers in each jurisdiction.



## Challenges facing governments include:

- managing allocation of resources between user groups and conservation interests

- integrating management of activities in terrestrial focussed ecosystems that impact on marine areas.

- providing appropriate levels of response to the protection and restoration of Australia's marine environment

- improving stewardship of coastal and marine ecosystems

- improving access to and understanding of information regarding the status of Australia's marine environment and fisheries

- ensuring evidence based decision making is the basis of marine environment policy and management

- leading and driving excellence in objective decision-making using evidence based knowledge



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## Outcome and Operational Priorities

The outcomes and operational priorities detailed below reflect OceanWatch's strategic prioritisation of the above challenges that the Company has a role and some capacity to address on behalf of its Members during the period of this Plan. Operational priorities are expressed through the themes Seafood Industry and Community; reflecting the Company's primary method of achieving its outcome by working with people to influence behavioural change. Details of how OceanWatch addresses its operational priorities including indicators against which achievements can be measured are contained in the companion National Marine NRM Plan and other related plans that may be developed from time to time.

### *OceanWatch Outcome*

**The seafood industry and the community have accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the marine environment and work collaboratively towards ensuring its health and productivity.**



### Operational Priorities for the Seafood Industry

- I1.** Increase industry understanding and adoption of best environmental practice including the reduction of bycatch and interactions with Threatened Endangered and Protected species
- I2.** Promote the stewardship of the marine environment within the seafood industry
- I3.** Enhance seafood industry understanding of community expectations regarding stewardship of the marine environment
- I4.** Improve seafood industry access to, and understanding of, credible evidence based knowledge regarding the marine environment and fisheries
- I5.** Empower and support industry sectors to protect and restore priority areas within the marine environment

### Operational Priorities for the Community

- C1.** Increase community understanding and adoption of best environmental practice including the reduction of adverse impacts from land based activities
- C2.** Promote the stewardship of the marine environment within the community
- C3.** Enhance community understanding of seafood industry stewardship of the marine environment
- C4.** Improve community access to, and understanding of, credible evidence based knowledge regarding the marine environment and fisheries
- C5.** Empower and support community groups to protect and restore priority areas within the marine environment

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## Governance

### The Company

OceanWatch Australia Ltd, ACN 071 195 901 is a national not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with deductible gift recipient status (Australian Taxation Office), and is listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations. <sup>17</sup>

OceanWatch is also a registered charity and appears on the Register of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Details about OceanWatch, including Company Objects and constitution, financial reports and directors and public officers details are publicly available on the ACNC website. <sup>18</sup>

### The Members

Currently, OceanWatch has three Members:

New South Wales Fishermen's Co-Operatives Association Ltd

Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd

Master Fish Merchants Association of Australia

Members are equivalent to shareholders in a proprietary limited company.

Membership is open to organisations who contribute financially to OceanWatch and have a strategic capability to assist OceanWatch achieve its Vision.

Associate Membership is open to organisations that are not financial contributors to OceanWatch, but may contribute financially and in-kind to specific OceanWatch projects. Associate Members are not "Members" of the Company under the Corporations Act 2001.

Although OceanWatch derives funding from the Australian Government to deliver its NRM related programs, the Australian Government is not a Company Member.



<sup>18</sup>. <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/1fbfb20f-5749-4468-b008-feaf1804e969/files/register-environmental-organisations-2015.pdf>

<sup>19</sup>. <http://www.acnc.gov.au/RN52B75Q?ID=BB14BA4E-3C4C-4407-949F-C88A7DFCE29F&noleft=1>

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## The Board

OceanWatch is governed by a board of directors appointed annually by the Company Members at the annual general meeting. The directors are appointed on the basis of ensuring that the board has a wide range of skills, knowledge, networks and experience, both within and outside the seafood industry including:

- executive management/leadership in the seafood industry
- natural resource management policy and practice at regional and national scales
- environmental sciences, especially relating to fisheries and aquaculture
- communications, media relations and marketing
- public policy and management of government-industry relations
- fisheries research, development and extension
- natural resource economics and social sciences
- financial management and fundraising
- corporate governance

## Best practice governance

OceanWatch operates under a framework of best practice governance based on the Australian Institute of Company Directors' Good Governance Principles and Guidance for Not-For-Profit Organisations. Underpinning these principles is a library of organisational policies and procedures.