



In 2010/11 a combined total of 94 per cent of the major commercial fisheries in WA have breeding stock management that is considered satisfactory. Photo: Eloise Dortch

## OVERVIEW OF AGENCY

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# Profile of the Department of Fisheries

**Vision:** World-class management of fisheries and aquatic ecosystems.

**Mission:** To conserve, sustainably develop and share the use of the State's aquatic resources and their ecosystems for the benefit of present and future generations.

**Our message to the community:** Fish for the future.

The Department of Fisheries manages the marine and freshwater fisheries and ecosystems within the limits of the State. By agreement with the Commonwealth, the Department has unique management responsibilities within Australian waters out to 200 nautical miles from the Western Australian coast. This allows for management on a spatial scale that is appropriate to the sustainable management and protection of the State's fish resources and their environment.

The principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, as contained in the objects of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*, guide the Department in its operations. These objects involve managing human impacts on both target

and bycatch fish species and their habitats, and assessing and limiting any potential indirect impacts of fishing and aquaculture activities on the broader ecosystem. It also includes managing social and economic impacts of fishing and aquaculture activity.

The Department works in the present-day context of limited fish and environmental resources, and a growing human 'footprint' on the aquatic environment. Factors with increasing impact include a growing population, developing coastal infrastructure, industrial development, rapidly advancing 'fish-finding' technology and climate change.

As a result of the Department's activities, around 80 per cent of WA's marine waters are protected through fishing closures or controls on fishing methods that can impact directly on marine habitats (for example, trawling) and are totally closed to highly-destructive fishing methods (for example, dredging and explosives). The Department ensures compliance with fishing rules and controls through an active community education and enforcement program.

The Department's services are delivered in a context of increasing aquatic management accountability. This includes accountability to the Commonwealth government through reporting requirements established under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Department values consultation with stakeholders and works with partners to develop management practices able to stand up to domestic, national and international scrutiny.

In this report to the Parliament and the community, the Department presents its summary of operations and outcomes during the 2010/11 financial year, based around the State Government's Annual Reporting Framework.

### Legislation Administered

The Department assists the Minister for Fisheries in the administration of the following Acts:

- *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*
- *Pearling Act 1990*
- *Fisheries Adjustment Schemes Act 1987*
- *Fishing and Related Industries Compensation (Marine Reserves) Act 1997*
- *Fishing Industry Promotion Training and Management Levy Act 1994*

The Department is also responsible for the management of fishing (and related activities) in marine protected areas established under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, and

provides at-sea marine safety compliance services on behalf of the Department of Transport under the *Western Australian Marine Act 1982*.

By arrangement with the Commonwealth, the Department has management responsibilities for a number of fisheries undertaken in waters adjacent to the Western Australian coast out to 200 nautical miles.

The Department also provides fisheries management and education services in the territorial waters around both Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands, on behalf of the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, in accordance with a Service Delivery Arrangement made under the Commonwealth's *Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (WA) (Cocos Keeling Islands)* or the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (WA) (Christmas Island)*.

Fisheries in Western Australia that fall under State or joint State/Commonwealth jurisdiction under the Offshore Constitutional Settlement Agreement are listed below.

### Fisheries under Western Australia State Jurisdiction

Except where specifically noted, fisheries involving the following species are managed by the Department of Fisheries, in accordance with State law:

- All bony fish and shark (except to the extent they are managed under a Joint Authority or by the Commonwealth).

- All aquatic invertebrates.
- All marine algae.
- All seagrasses.

In effect this means all commercial fisheries listed in the 'Stock Status and Catch Ranges for Major Commercial Fisheries' table detailed later in this report.

In addition the Department manages recreational and customary fishing activities, pearling and aquaculture operations, the fish processing industry sector, the fishing charter boat and aquatic eco-tour industries, Fish Habitat Protection Areas and the Abrolhos Islands.

With the exception of pearling, the above activities are managed in accordance with the provisions of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*. The pearling industry is managed under the *Pearling Act 1990*.

Operators in commercial fisheries, the pearling industry, the charter boat and aquatic eco-tour industries and the fish processing sector are required to be licensed by the Department.

Recreational fishers are required to hold licences when fishing for western rock lobster, abalone, marron, inland freshwater species, when fishing from a powered boat or when fishing with a net.

Aboriginal people fishing in accordance with continuing Aboriginal tradition and custom are not required to hold a recreational fishing licence.

### Fisheries under Western Australia Joint Authority Jurisdiction

The following fisheries are controlled jointly by the Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority (a body comprising the State and the Commonwealth) and managed in accordance with the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*:

- the Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fishery; and
- the Joint Authority Northern Shark Fishery, east of Koolan Island.

The activities of fisheries managed through the Joint Authority are described separately in a report tabled in the Commonwealth and Western Australian Parliaments.

### Fisheries under Commonwealth Jurisdiction

The following list shows fisheries undertaken in waters adjacent to Western Australia that are controlled by the Commonwealth in accordance with Commonwealth legislation:

- Northern Prawn Fishery.
- Southern and Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery.
- Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery.
- North-West Slope Deepwater Trawl Fishery.
- Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery.
- Recreational fishing in the waters of any Commonwealth Marine Park.

## Stakeholders

All those that have a stake in Western Australia's aquatic environment have a role to play in ensuring that fish stocks and their habitats are protected, both now and in the future. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in fisheries management and



594,000 people in WA went recreational fishing at least once in the previous 12-month period. Photo: Ben Carlish

consultation, in particular via 'peak' representative bodies, such as the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council and Recfishwest, which is considered essential to balance the often-competing demands on the use of the State's fish resources and their habitats.

The Department of Fisheries identifies the following groups as its stakeholders with an interest in ensuring 'fish for the future':

- The community of Western Australia.
- Commercial fishers.
- Recreational fishers.
- Indigenous communities.
- Charter fishing and aquatic eco-tour operators.
- Fish processors and others involved in the commercial utilisation of Western Australia's aquatic resources.
- Pearlers.
- Aquaculturalists.
- The conservation sector.
- Fisheries volunteers.
- Environmental groups and passive users.
- Businesses and communities directly and indirectly dependent upon fishing and aquaculture activities.
- Other state, national and international government agencies and tertiary institutions.



# Operating Environment – Significant Issues Impacting the Agency

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Significant issues impacting on fisheries and fisheries management during 2010/11 and likely to be of influence in the future include:  
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- Record-low puerulus (young lobster) settlement within the boundaries of the West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery has led to intensive management action to cap the total catch in the fishery at around half the historical catch levels during the 2010/11 fishing season, with the aim of leaving more breeding stock in the water and increasing egg production. A decision has also been taken to introduce Individual Transferrable Quota into the fishery commencing in the 2013/14 fishing season.
- Recreational and commercial fishing are continuing to put pressure on the sustainability of iconic fish species such as dhufish, pink snapper, baldchin groper and blue swimmer crabs, warranting extended strong management intervention from the Department.



Baldchin groper above coral. Photo: Shannon Conway

- Obtaining the required knowledge and sound science to support decision-making and achieve ecologically sustainable fisheries management remains a challenge for the Department. This highlights the need for effective coordination of the State's marine research efforts to ensure that research activities are being prioritised and funded according to risk levels and community needs.
- Aquaculture industries have the potential to significantly increase fish production, as the demand for high-quality seafood grows while the harvest from most wild-capture fisheries worldwide is declining. The Department is working with the aquaculture sector to identify suitable sites and species for these industries.
- The level of risk of introduced marine and freshwater pest diseases, together with responsibilities under national biosecurity agreements, present a range of new tasks for the Department that require careful management.
- Difficult economic conditions, including increased costs of fuel and the high-value Australian dollar, are affecting export markets and having an impact on the profitability of fishing operations. The Department of Fisheries and the fishing industry are working on strategies to improve the economic sustainability of fishing operations.
- A growing Western Australian population is placing ever-increasing pressure on recreational fish species and the marine environment – and on the Department to deliver effective community education and compliance. This issue highlights the need for more cost-effective integrated management solutions for commercial and recreational fishing, recreational boating activities and the expanding marine park network.
- Commonwealth Government proposals to establish large-scale marine parks in Commonwealth waters (i.e. outside of three nautical miles) have the potential to create uncertainty for a number of the Department's stakeholders.

# Operational Structure

The Department of Fisheries' operating structure consists of a Corporate Executive comprising the Chief Executive Officer and the directors of the Department's four divisions – Aquatic Management, Fisheries Research, Regional Services and Corporate Services.

## Process Structure

The Department of Fisheries deals with a variety of complex issues that impact upon the sustainable management of the State's fish resources. To deal with these issues, the Department supports a number of integrated processes designed to facilitate planning, priority setting and project management across all divisions to our four key service areas – fisheries management, research and monitoring, compliance and education, and marine safety services.

The Department's staff and volunteers provide a conduit for public interaction and communication.



Fisheries ambassador Glen Jakovich demonstrating how to best fillet a fish. Photo: Matthew Terwey

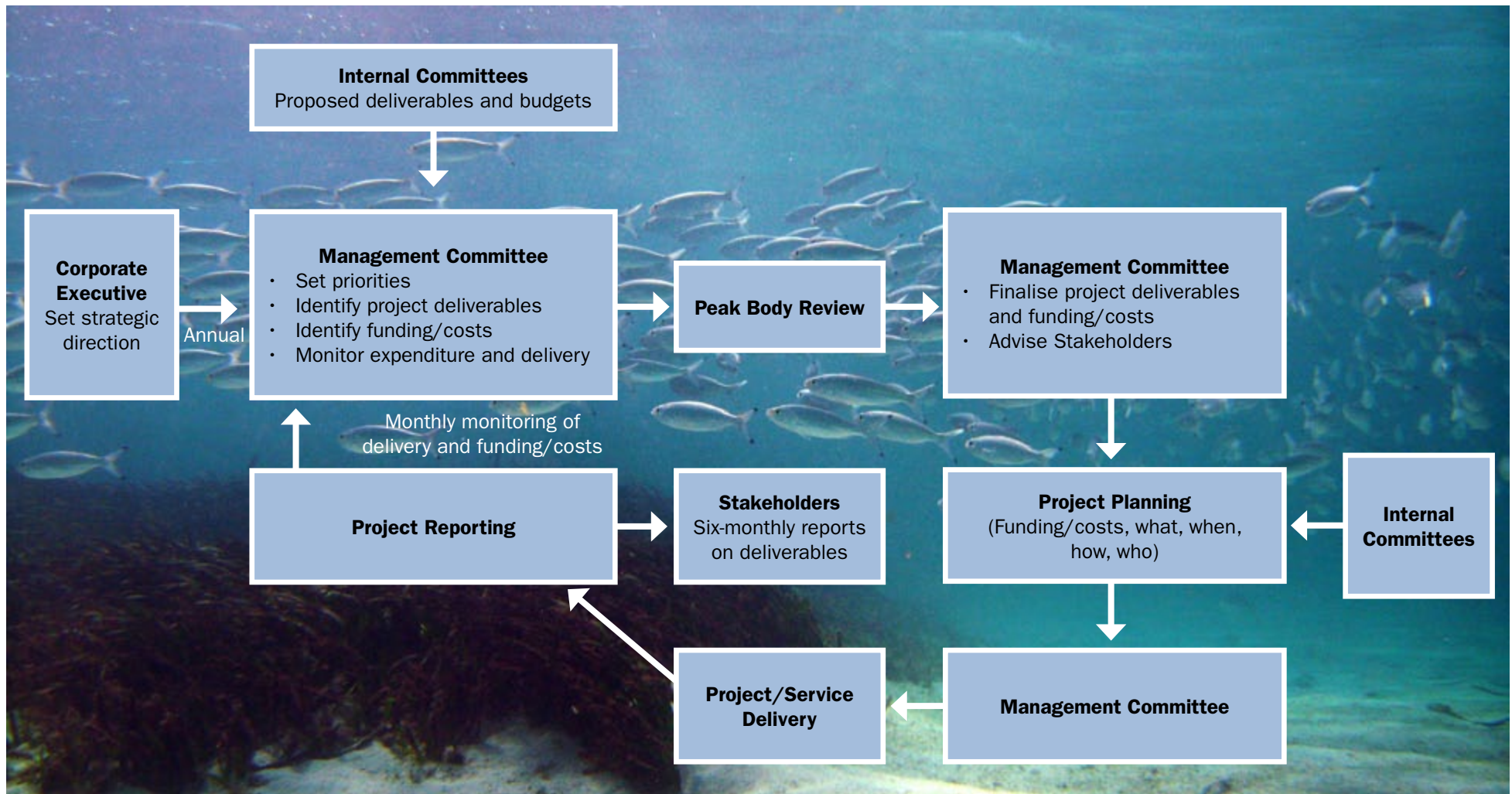


Figure 35. Process Structure within the Department

**Governing Factors**

Minister/Government Priority  
 Aquatic Advisory Committee  
 Risk Register  
 Stakeholder Priorities  
 Strategic Plan

*Fish for the future*



# Corporate Executive

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**The Corporate Executive is responsible for establishing the strategic directions of the Department. It gives consideration to a range of information in establishing strategic priorities, including risk information derived from the Department's Risk Register of ecological and organisational assets, stakeholder priorities and Government policy. This strategic direction is reflected in the Department's Strategic Plan.**

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## Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for setting the work program of the Department of Fisheries to ensure optimum delivery against identified aquatic management priorities within a five-year planning horizon. Its role includes taking a strategic and risk-based approach to establishing priorities; setting clear deliverables and associated budgets; coordinating departmental project planning, management, monitoring and reporting processes; and ensuring accountability for effective and efficient service delivery across the Department. The membership of the Management

Committee includes the Department's four directors, the general manager of the Aquatic Management division and two external members to provide independent governance and non-Western Australian based fisheries expertise.

## Internal Audit Committee

The Internal Audit Committee (IAC) maintains and manages the Department's internal audit function on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer. The committee assists the Chief Executive Officer to manage the process of identifying and quantifying risks that have the potential to impede the Department in achieving its goals, and to guide the development and implementation of risk mitigation strategies.

## Aquatic Advisory Committee

The Aquatic Advisory Committee provides strategic advice on issues relating to the management of fisheries and aquatic resources as requested by the Minister or the Department's Chief Executive Officer.

## Public consultation

The Department is committed to continuing consultation with fisheries stakeholders and to ensuring efficient and effective participatory decision-making processes are maintained. It supports the initiative of the State Government's *WA Citizenship Strategy 2004–2009* and utilises the guidelines in the *Consulting Citizens: Planning for Success* and *Consulting Citizens: Engaging with Aboriginal Western Australians* to plan specific consultation programs.

## The Department of Fisheries' Operations

The Department operates from its Head Office in the Perth central business district and in other metropolitan and regional areas as follows:

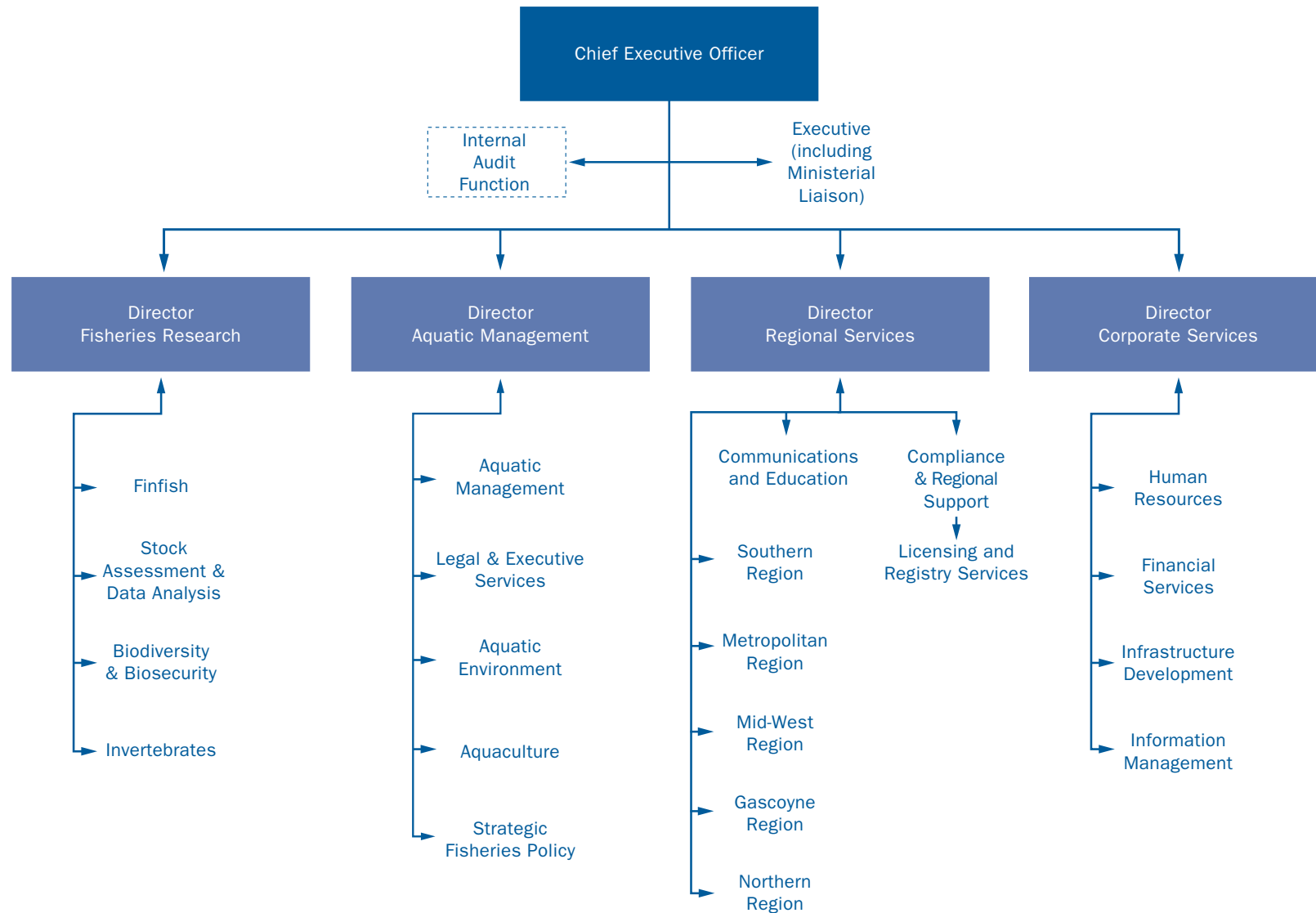
- The Fisheries Research Division operates from the Western Australian Fisheries and Marine Research Laboratories at Hillarys and the Pemberton Freshwater Research Centre. The Department's Naturaliste Marine Discovery Centre is located at Hillarys, as is the Department's Communications and Education Branch. The Regional Services Branch also maintains a compliance presence at Hillarys.
- The Marine Operations Centre and the Metropolitan Regional Office operate from premises in Capo D'Orlando Drive in Fremantle.



The Department of Fisheries' Marine Operations Centre and Metropolitan Regional office. Photo: Steve Ireland

- The Regional Services Division has five regional offices located at Broome, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Fremantle and Albany, and 12 district offices located throughout the State.

Figure 36. Department Functional Structure Chart as at 30 June 2011



## Corporate Executive



From left to right Michael Connolly (Director, Corporate Services), Stuart Smith (Chief Executive Officer), Heather Brayford (Director, Aquatic Management), Bruno Mezzatesta (Director, Regional Services) and Rick Fletcher (Director, Research). Photo: Stephen Emery

The Corporate Executive of the Department of Fisheries comprises the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Aquatic Management, the Director of Regional Services, the Director of Fisheries Research, and the Director of Corporate Services.

### Stuart Smith, BEc, Grad. Dip. Ec.

#### **Chief Executive Officer\***

Stuart Smith joined the Department as Chief Executive Officer on 3 November 2008. He previously held senior roles in the Department of Industry and Resources, including that of Deputy Director General, State Development and Deputy

Director General, Resources Group. He also acted as Director General of the Department of Industry and Resources.

Stuart brings over 20 years of wide-ranging experience in both the State and Federal public sector to the role of Chief Executive Officer. He holds a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Western Australia and a Graduate Diploma in Economics from the Australian National University.

\* Terms of Appointment: The Chief Executive Officer is appointed under Part 3 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* for five years.



**Heather Brayford BSc, MBA, GAICD*****Director, Aquatic Management***

Heather Brayford was appointed Director, Aquatic Management in 2009. This position includes responsibility for fisheries management programs, broader environmental management programs, aquaculture and the provision of legal, legislative drafting and governance services.

Heather has close to 25 years experience in fisheries management, having held a number of senior policy and management positions in the Department. She has also held the position of Executive Director of Fisheries in the Northern Territory.

**Dr Rick Fletcher, BSc (Hons), PhD*****Director, Fisheries Research***

Dr Rick Fletcher was appointed as Director, Fisheries Research in 2006. This position is responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the Department's research group, which provides the information that underpins the Department's successful natural resource management programs.

Rick has over 25 years experience conducting and managing research on fisheries and aquaculture-related issues across four jurisdictions in Australia and the South Pacific, including Director of Research of Fisheries in NSW. His recent research focus has been in the development of ecosystem-based management frameworks for marine and coastal systems, for which he is the leader of a number of state, national and international initiatives.

**Bruno Mezzatesta, BBus MBA FCPA*****Director, Regional Services***

Bruno Mezzatesta is responsible for the Department's Regional Services Division including community education and compliance, licensing and communications. Prior to this position, Bruno was the Director of the Department's Corporate Services Division. He has more than 25 years experience in the public sector, including periods with the Office of the Auditor General and the Department of Treasury and Finance.

**Michael Connolly, BSc, BBus ASA*****Director, Corporate Services***

Michael was appointed to the position of Director, Corporate Services in March 2011 and is responsible for the operations of the Corporate Services Division, comprising Financial Services and Infrastructure Development, Human Resources and Information Management branches. Michael is also the senior responsible officer for the development and delivery of a new entitlement management system which, when completed and implemented, will modernise the administration and management of fisheries in Western Australia.

Michael has 28 years experience in the public sector, including 20 years in various regulatory roles within the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor.

# Performance Management Framework

Western Australia's fisheries and aquatic ecosystems are an important natural resource managed by the Department of Fisheries on behalf of all Western Australians.

The services of the Department of Fisheries, as described in the 2010/11 Budget Papers, are aimed at achieving the Government goal of: Ensuring that economic activity is managed in a socially and environmentally responsible manner for the long-term benefit of the State.

## Contribution to Government Goals

The Department works towards the achievement of the Government goal and its department-level outcome of the *conservation and sustainable development of the State's fish resources* through the provision of four key services:

### Service 1 – Fisheries Management

The Department's Aquatic Management Division and Licensing and Registry Services Branch is responsible for management, policy development, licensing and legislation related to the State's

commercial and recreational fisheries, pearling, aquaculture, the charter boat industry, customary fishing and protection of aquatic ecosystems.

### Service 2 – Compliance and Education

The Department's Regional Services Division is responsible for state-wide fisheries compliance and community education, in accordance with the provisions of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* and the *Pearling Act 1990*.

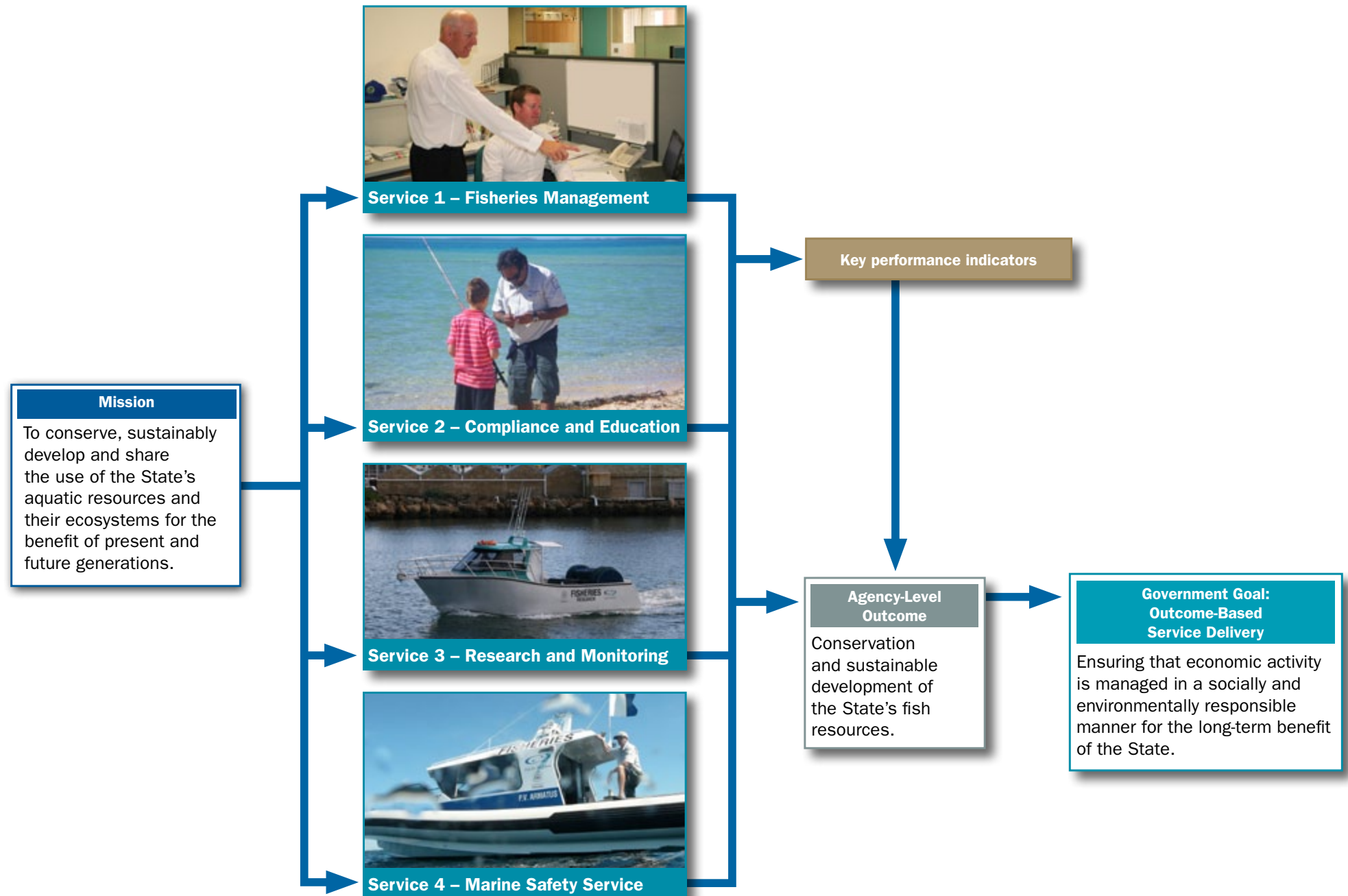
### Service 3 – Research and Monitoring

The Department's Research Division is responsible for the provision of timely, quality scientific knowledge and advice to support the conservation and sustainable use of the State's fish resources and aquatic ecosystems.

### Service 4 – Marine Safety Service

The Marine Operations Section of the Department of Fisheries' Regional Services Division coordinates the delivery of at-sea marine safety compliance services by the Department's Fisheries and Marine Officers under a service level agreement with the Department of Transport.

Figure 37. Performance Management Framework



## Measurement of Department-level Outcome and Services

The Department of Fisheries evaluates, measures and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of its service delivery in achieving its desired department-level outcome through Key Performance Indicators or 'KPIs'. KPIs comprise both Effectiveness and Efficiency Indicators.

Effectiveness Indicators show the extent to which the Department achieved its department-level outcome, while Efficiency Indicators show the relationship between the service delivered and the resources used in the delivery of that service. A summary of the Department's performance against budget targets is provided in Table 21 below.

**Table 21. Summary of Key Performance Indicators: Actual Performance Compared to Budget Targets**

	2010/11 Target	2010/11 Actual
<b>Outcome: Conservation and sustainable development of the State's fish resources.</b>		
<b>Key Effectiveness Indicators</b>		
The proportion of fish stocks identified as being at risk or vulnerable through exploitation.	17%	6%
The proportion of fisheries where acceptable catches (or effort levels) are achieved.	90%	94%
The percentage of fisheries or fished sectors where current catch shares are known and where catch share allocations are in process or in place.	65%	61%
The gross value of State fisheries production (million).	\$400m*	\$380m**
The participation rate in recreational fishing.	33%	32%
<b>Key Efficiency Indicators</b>		
<b>Service 1 – Fisheries Management</b>		
Average cost per hour for management (excluding grants and fisheries adjustments).	\$109	\$152
<b>Service 2 – Compliance and Education</b>		
Average cost per hour for compliance and education.	\$134	\$186
<b>Service 3 – Research and Monitoring</b>		
Average cost per hour for research and monitoring.	\$116	\$126
<b>Service 4 – Marine Safety Service</b>		
Average cost per hour for marine safety service.	\$116	\$134

Notes:

\* See Key Performance Indicator 2.1 (contribution to the State's gross value of output).

\*\* This is derived from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) figures for the year 2009/10.

Further information on the efficiency indicators can be found in the 'Statement of Performance Indicators' section of this Annual Report.

## Financial Performance

The table below describes the Department of Fisheries' performance against the targets that formed part of the 2009/10 State Budget papers and reflected in the resources agreement signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Fisheries, the Minister for Fisheries and the Treasurer.

**Table 22. Financial Targets: Actual Performance Compared to Budget Targets**

	2009/10 Target \$'000	2009/10 Actual \$'000	Variance \$'000
Total cost of services (expense limit) (sourced from Income Statement).	62,736	71,891	(9,155)
Net cost of services (sourced from Income Statement).	30,663	38,831	(8,168)
Total equity (sourced from Balance Sheet).	73,894	61,185	12,709
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held (sourced from Cash Flow Statement).	1,059	345	714
	No.	No.	No.
Approved full-time equivalent (FTE) staff level	409	416	(7)

## Contribution to Other Government Goals

The Department of Fisheries contributes to the achievement of the Government's other stated goals as follows.

### State Building – Major Projects

In 2010/11 the Department's work towards this goal included:

- A new Marine Operations Centre at Denham is under construction. This new centre will facilitate the delivery of the Department's services, including fisheries and marine protected area management, in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area. The centre will also accommodate staff from the Department of Environment and Conservation. In addition, the Shark Bay Volunteer Sea Rescue Group will be accommodated in the new Denham centre.

### Financial and Economic Responsibility

In 2010/11 the Department's work towards this goal included:

- Progressing the implementation of reviews of fisheries legislation, in particular those dealing with the Department's fee setting capacity and the regulatory requirements of the aquaculture sector.
- Facilitating and encouraging more efficient use of the Department's marine patrol vessels by other government agencies with research,



management and compliance responsibilities in the marine environment, such as the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment and Conservation.

- The appointment of a Chief Financial Officer to provide strategic oversight of the Department's financial operations.

### Outcomes-Based Service Delivery

In 2010/11 the Department's work towards this goal included:

- Collaborating with other government agencies and research and educational institutions that have management responsibilities or research programs at the Abrolhos Islands and other marine protected areas for the delivery of natural resource management outcomes in the marine environment.

### Stronger Focus on the Regions

In 2010/11 the Department's work towards this goal included:

- Most of the State's significant fisheries are regionally-based and contribute strongly to the economy, employment opportunities, lifestyle and culture of regional Western Australia. As a result, the Department of Fisheries has regional offices in the Kimberley, Gascoyne, Mid-West, Peel and Great Southern and also maintains district offices from Kununurra south to Esperance.
- About 45 per cent of the Department's staff are located in regional areas and about 75 per cent of the departmental expenditure relates to fisheries and aquatic management programs of importance to regional communities.



The Department of Fisheries works together with other government institutions that have responsibilities at the Abrolhos Islands.