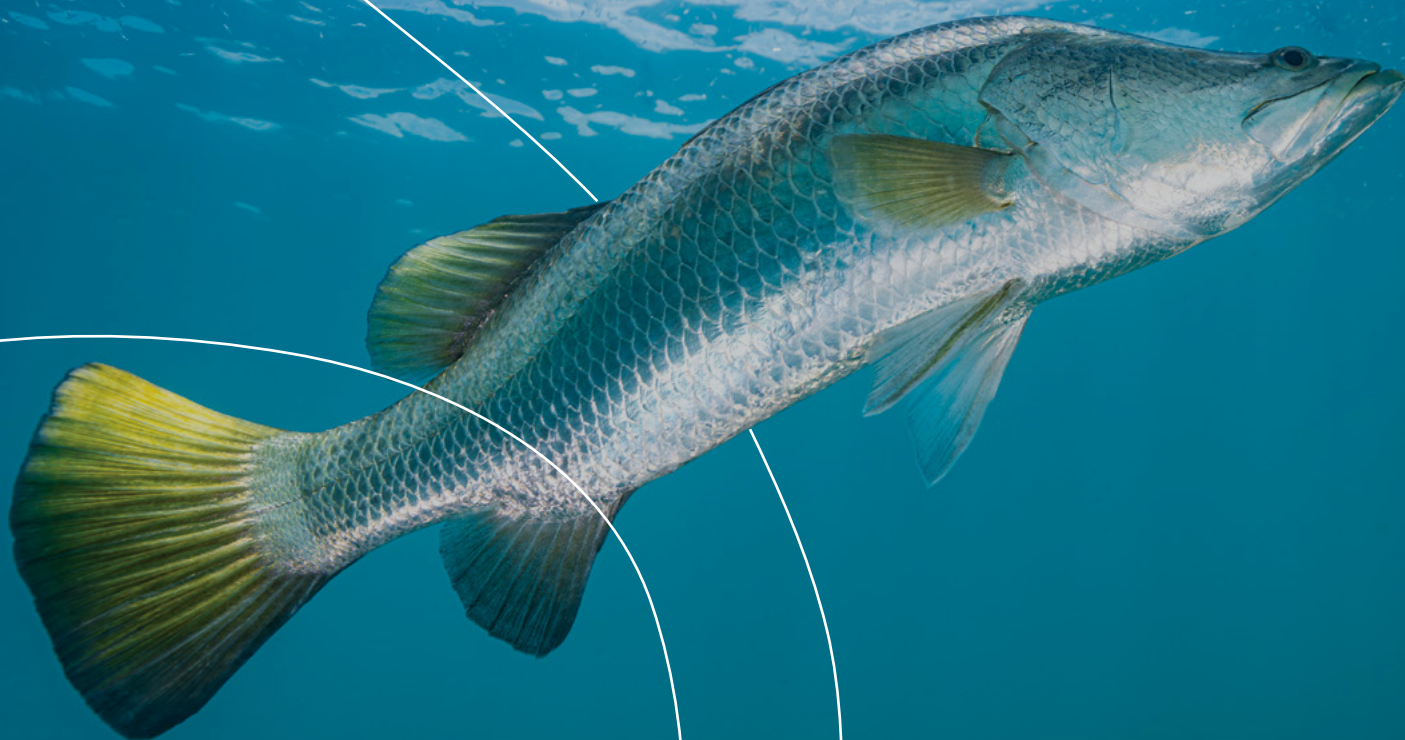


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# FRDC RD&E Plan 2025-30

Delivering impact  
through collaboration



Fisheries  
Research and  
Development  
Corporation



**FRDC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of land, sea and sky, recognising their deep, enduring connection to these places. We pay our respects to Elders past and present who hold the knowledge, culture and spiritual connections to land, sky and waters and whose guidance continues to shape their sustainable, ethical and responsible care.**





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# Designing a Plan for the Future

Australians have a strong connection to our aquatic world and enjoy some of the best seafood and most exciting recreational fishing in the world.

Our aquatic resources are recognised globally for their diversity and quality. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) has an important role in providing robust research and innovation to support the needs of our fishing and aquaculture sectors and benefit the community.

Australia's fishing and aquaculture sectors operate within a complex and rapidly evolving environment. A changing climate, fierce competition for access, extreme market volatility, increasing demand for social license, the need for data, proof of sustainability credentials, biosecurity threats, and an ageing workforce demand attention. Opportunities include the growing global demand for seafood, the requirement for healthy, nutritious food, reducing carbon footprint, lowering fuel costs and achieving premium prices for niche products. Best practice sustainability, participation in circular

supply chains, research adoption through targeted extension, Indigenous economic opportunities, increased recreational participation and the emergence of artificial intelligence and digitalisation, will position us for the future.

The FRDC Research, Development and Extension Plan (RD&E Plan 2025-30) addresses this complex and changing environment and demonstrates how FRDC will deliver quality research to underpin evidence-based decision making. The Plan resulted from extensive consultation with fishing and aquaculture, government and research stakeholders. We heard the need for continuity of stakeholder driven themes from the previous FRDC R&D Plan 2020-25, to deliver decadal-scale impact by addressing trends and drivers aligned to key '2030 visioned' frameworks such as the National Fisheries Plan.



The RD&E Plan 2025-30 is underpinned by our core values (Sustainability, People, Knowledge, Trust) and our intention to create value by:

- Maintaining existing and developing new collaborative partnerships, including cross-sectoral and enduring programs.
- Understanding desired end states for complex issues and designing the steps needed to achieve those goals.
- Implementing innovative investment models to amplify impact by scaling early-stage ventures, and to build commercialisation pathways.
- Measuring progress to understand impactful change and ensure accountability.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this Plan – Indigenous, commercial wild catch and recreational fishers, aquaculturists, researchers, managers, people working in supply chains, government, non-governmental organisations and staff who shared their time and knowledge to develop the RD&E Plan 2025-30.

*Elizabeth Woods*

Dr Elizabeth (Beth) Woods OAM  
FRDC Chair



# RD&E Plan at a glance



## Delivering impact through collaboration



### Purpose

FRDC invests in people and innovation to ensure healthy aquatic environments for thriving fishing and aquaculture.

### Values

Sustainability	People	Knowledge	Trust
Demonstrating a commitment towards healthy aquatic environments that are cared for, understood and used wisely for the benefit of all, now and in the future.	Recognising our network of people as our greatest asset. Empowering them to be their best, be brave, and contribute their unique strengths.	Dedication to growing knowledge through providing high-quality, objective scientific research, innovation, and data.	Operating with a high degree of integrity and accountability, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources and maintaining the trust placed on us.

### Strategic context

Growing global demand for Australian aquatic products and experiences is generating opportunities to attract talent, develop markets, enhance experiences, enrich culture and increase value. With these opportunities comes increased recognition of our responsibilities to work and play in ways that sustain and enhance the environment, respects people and culture and contributes to a thriving economy. Challenges include changing social preferences, increased spatial and regulatory pressures, climate change, market volatility, rising operation costs and biosecurity threats. Fishing and aquaculture need skills and tools to collaborate for innovation and excellence, which are critical to deliver opportunities, meet challenges and enable our sectors to thrive into the future.

### Our RD&E Plan at a Glance

Theme	Growing, resilient and innovative	Best practices and production systems	Capable and diverse people	Secure access and resource allocation	Community trust, acceptance and value
	Enduring growth and resilience to challenges through innovation	Diverse economic, ecological and social benefits through best practice aquatic resource use	Promoting diversity, growing participation, and developing skilled, adaptable people	Fair and integrated management of aquatic resources, providing certainty and confidence	People share, use and feel positive about fishing and aquaculture's products, services and experiences
Delivering the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Co-management of RD&amp;E for better outcomes</li><li>Collaborative partnerships for scale and impact</li><li>Data and analytics for evidence-based decision making</li><li>Innovative investment models to accelerate change and impact</li><li>Facilitate adoption from co-design to delivery</li><li>Monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate impact and ensure accountability</li></ul>				
Success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ten new economic opportunities explored</li><li>Six best practice tools for better decision making</li><li>A capable and diverse fisheries and aquaculture, with access to five capability and capacity building programs</li><li>Four improved pathways for managing key risks</li><li>Products are enjoyed, and sectors are supported and trusted by the community</li></ul>				

FRDC does not directly engage in politics, advocacy, or fisheries resource management

### Shaping the Plan

The FRDC RD&E Plan 2025-30 'Delivering impact through collaboration' was shaped through formal consultation with FRDC representative organisations Seafood Industry Australia, Commonwealth Fisheries Association Inc, Australian Recreational and Sport Fishing Industry Confederation Inc. (trading as Recfish Australia) as well as the Indigenous Reference Group and the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation. Extensive consultation was also undertaken with fishing representatives from Indigenous communities, research organisations, government, commercial and recreational fishing sectors, aquaculture and supply chains. More than three hundred individuals contributed through stakeholder workshops, focus groups and interviews offering valuable insights into trends, drivers, key themes and the current state of the sectors. Additional perspectives were gathered through ongoing engagement, including the annual FRDC Stakeholder Survey, the National Social and Economic Survey of Recreational Fishers and the Community Trust in Rural Industries Surveys.

An independent review highlighted positive changes implemented during the FRDC R&D Plan 2020-25, including new business units for capacity, extension and adoption and novel investment approaches to address complex national challenges. Improvements in collaboration, transparency and corporate intelligence were also recognised, with several opportunities identified for continuous improvement. In this Plan, one such improvement is the inclusion of performance indicators for continuous monitoring and evaluation.

The result is a Plan that ensures continuity of stakeholder driven themes and aims to achieve decadal-scale impact by addressing key trends and drivers.





# What we heard — Trends and Drivers

Indigenous recognition and participation	Opportunity	Indigenous communities hold the longest continual knowledge of Australian aquatic ecosystems, uses, management and cultural significance. Ensuring this knowledge is embedded widely in fishing and aquaculture practices, research and management will improve community experiences and outcomes. New commercial opportunities for Indigenous business and products are needed to strengthen connections to lands, waters and culture for the benefit of Indigenous communities and the broader community.
Recreational fishing participation	Opportunity	One in five Australians fish recreationally, contributing substantially to employment, the economy and wellbeing. Social license is emerging as a key consideration for younger recreational fishers and must be understood to maintain high participation and associated economic and social benefits.
Spatial squeeze	Threat	Access to aquatic resources is increasingly contested. This spatial squeeze is driven by increasing aquatic users, the emergence of ocean energy and increased international pressure for large no-take reserve areas.
Profitability	Threat	Increasing input costs including fuel, wages, maintenance, insurances and data collection are negatively impacting the viability of the commercial sector – aquaculture, wild catch and post-harvest, as well as tourism and hospitality.
Food	Opportunity	Global fish consumption is projected to grow 14.8% by 2030, influenced by population growth and increasing affluence of Australia's Asian trading partners. Strong clean green credentials and acknowledged health, safety and nutrition benefits of aquatic food and nutraceuticals, position Australian fishing and aquaculture to capture this opportunity. These same opportunities exist in supplying the domestic market. There are opportunities to increase seafood production and yield from our resources to provide Australians with the nutritional benefits seafood provides, in a sustainable environment we can control.
Social license	Opportunity and threat	Fishing and aquaculture have enjoyed high, stable community trust. However, there is rising appetite for products and experiences that are environmentally responsible, well-regulated and use best practice animal welfare. An emerging trust and acceptance driver is demonstrated commitment to innovation for improved sustainability in food production, even if not all innovations are successful.

Market volatility	Threat	Market forces, changing consumer preferences, pest and disease outbreaks, geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions impact market access and trade. Product and market diversification is required to mitigate volatility.
Biosecurity	Threat	The threats of new pest and disease incursions continue to rise in response to rapidly warming ocean temperatures and increasing aquatic users. Support for incursion prevention, monitoring, management and response is required. Preparedness and responsiveness will provide greater security across sectors.
Sustainable and ethical	Opportunity and threat	All sectors are responsible for ensuring activities, products and services meet sustainability requirements. For aquaculture and commercial wild catch fishing, demonstrating credentials is increasingly a minimum market access requirement rather than a premium price pathway. Fit for purpose, cost effective innovations and best practice are needed to support increased efficiencies and profitability across diverse sectors, fish stocks and activities.
Circular supply chains	Opportunity	There is an emerging market to use waste to improve yield, increase profits and improve ecological systems within and across sectors. Interest is growing for bioproducts to replace plastics and petroleum-based energy, as well as for the development of novel proteins, feeds, nutraceuticals and other products. Regenerative production and blue economy markets are introducing opportunities to generate profit, build fish stocks and ecosystem resilience.
Regulatory demand and coordination	Opportunity and threat	International and domestic regulation is impacting resource access, reducing profit margins and limiting market access. Support for an appropriate, evidence-based, coordinated regulatory environment is needed to ensure fair and secure access to aquatic resources.
Climate change and resilience	Opportunity and threat	Rapidly warming ocean temperatures are straining biological tolerances and impacting species ranges, causing stock migration across regulatory jurisdictions, decreasing biodiversity, threatening stock viability and increasing biosecurity risks. Decarbonisation measures are recognised as a shared responsibility and are a critical requirement for social and regulatory license to operate, and an opportunity to generate new revenue streams.
Competition for people	Opportunity and threat	There is a shortage of capable, experienced and qualified people in fishing and aquaculture, research, fisheries management, policy and administration. Workplace expectations are rapidly evolving, especially among young people. Demands for new skills, capability and capacity are emerging. Safe, innovative, diverse and evolving opportunities and skill development are needed to attract and retain talent.
Digitalisation and new technologies	Opportunity	New technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data driven decision making will enable fishing and aquaculture to finetune operations, reduce costs, maximise benefits, address environmental and social impacts, demonstrate best practice, respond to consumer needs and better manage fish stocks and ecosystems.



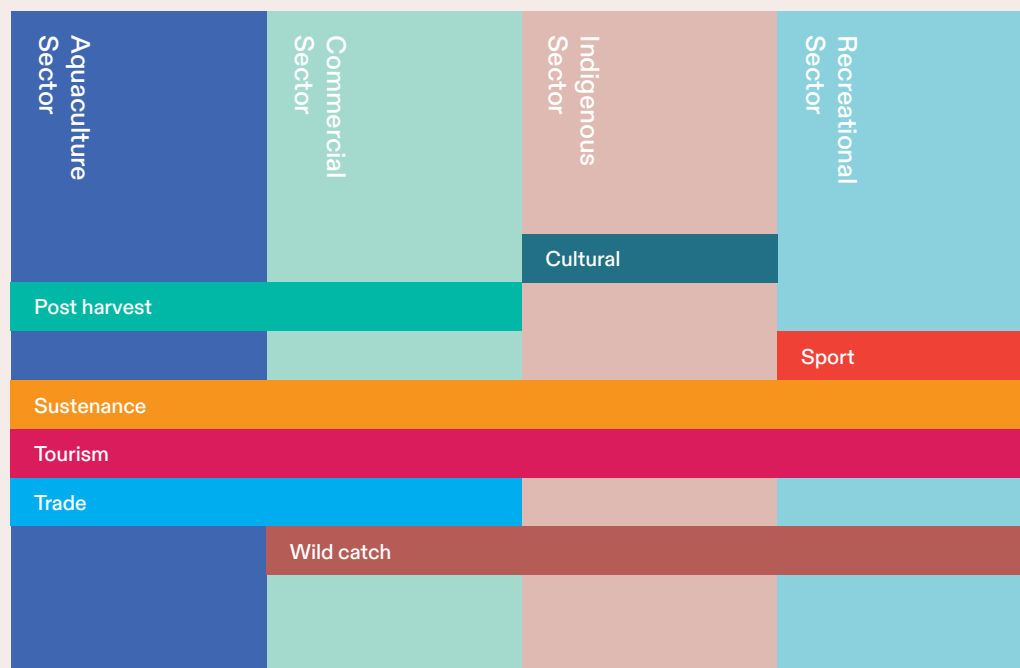


# Our Stakeholders

Fishing and aquaculture includes any sector or activity conducted in or from Australia concerned with harvesting, culturing, processing, preserving, storing, transporting, marketing, regulating, researching or selling aquatic animal and plant products.

Fishing and aquaculture are the most diverse agricultural sectors in Australia. Traditional Indigenous fishing includes a wide variety of fish, other aquatic animals and seaweeds. Commercial and recreational fishing include over 155 species in more than 500 different stocks. Aquaculture grows familiar Australian foods, such as Atlantic Salmon, while recreational fishers seek iconic species such as Barramundi, Murray cod, Snapper, Marlins and Tunas. A variety of seaweeds and microalgae are also produced.

The value of fishing and aquaculture is as diverse as the species within it. For all sectors, aquatic plants and animals are an important food for health and nutrition that can be enjoyed locally and traded internationally. Uses and products include cosmetics, jewellery, biomedical and nutraceuticals, soil conditioners, biofuels, bioplastics, carbon capture and ornamental trade. Experiences such as seafood trails, cultural sharing and charter fishing, attract a significant tourist trade. Understanding our sectors helps identify common interests and opportunities for collaboration. Understanding our stakeholders and their aspirations is at the centre of everything we do.



**FIGURE 1: Components of the fishing Industry**

Fishing and aquaculture sectors are complex, our stakeholder sectors can be distinct but can also overlap between each other and with associated activities, for example, the Indigenous sector can also include recreational fishing, cultural fishing, aquaculture and can also engage in/with post-harvest and tourism activities. Many commercial fishers can also be recreational fishers or involved in post-harvest activities, to value-add to their catch.







# Indigenous sector

*The Indigenous* sector includes individuals and enterprises associated with fisheries resources where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples derive products and who are connected to land, sky and waters.

Traditional knowledge held by Indigenous peoples embodies holistic comprehension of Land and Sea Country, and is the cornerstone of life, identity and cultural values. For Indigenous communities, integration of traditional knowledge into research and adaptive management plans offers a pathway for economic self-determination, preserving cultural ties to land and waters while generating income.

Indigenous communities have diverse interests in fishing and aquaculture. It is important to nurture culture, secure broader societal recognition of Indigenous people's custodianship of aquatic resources and build economic opportunities. Sharing knowledge and building capability and capacity are critical to realising these aspirations.







# Commercial wild catch

*Commercial wild catch fishing* includes individuals and enterprises associated with wild catch resources and the transformation of those resources into products for sale. It also includes non-food items such as pearls among its products.

Commercial wild catch fishing is diverse, operating in estuaries and bays, across the continental shelf to oceanic waters and the high seas. A wide range of seafood is caught, including scallops, prawns and squid, coastal fish such as whiting and flathead, reef fish such as Coral Trout, and oceanic tuna and billfish. Australian fisheries supply fresh seafood for local and domestic markets, as well as exporting high-value products.

Commercial wild catch fishing underpins Australian and international demand for premium seafood and aquatic products. Ensuring that the sector can build and maintain profitable livelihoods requires secure access, innovation to realise economic growth, healthy fish stocks and environments, and resilient supply chains.







# Aquaculture

**Aquaculture** is the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants. It includes rearing processes to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding and protection from predators.

Aquaculture includes the propagation and husbandry of aquatic plants, animals and other organisms for commercial, recreational and scientific purposes. Aquaculture is undertaken in all Australian States and Territories. The Australian aquaculture sector comprises individuals and enterprises associated with aquaculture resources and the transformation of those resources into products for sale, including non-food items such as pearls and shells.

Australian aquaculture operations produce more than forty species – with salmonids, prawns, Barramundi, abalone, tuna, kingfish, oysters and pearls accounting for the bulk of the total production value. Murray cod and seaweed aquaculture are also developing rapidly in Australia.

Aquaculture is essential for meeting growing consumer demand for fresh, high-quality seafood, both domestically and internationally. Maximising the sector's potential requires secure access to the land and water resources that underpin production. Maintaining and enhancing effective biosecurity and disease-management policies and practices, developing and adopting innovative technologies, attracting and advancing staff and developing resilient supply chains, are also essential.



Image credit: Sea Forest







# Recreational fishers

*Recreational sector* includes participants that interact with aquatic resources for the non-commercial purpose of recreation, sport or sustenance. The recreational sector is supported by commercial enterprises such as tackle and boat retailers and charter operators.

One in five Australians fish recreationally, seeking relaxation, challenge, sport or food. Recreational sector enterprises provide equipment, services and experiences to local and visiting fishers. Recreational fishing in Australia occurs from inland waters to estuaries and oceans, and uses gear types including rods, reels, pots and traps, and spearfishing gear.

Recreational fishers seek quality fishing experiences, secure access to vibrant aquatic environments and sustainable fish stocks. Participation in co-management and active environmental stewardship activities are important to recreational fishers, as are increased participation and fisher diversity. Leadership development and creating career pathways in recreational fishing are needed to realise these priorities.







# Post-Harvest

*Post-harvest* includes individuals and enterprises associated with the processing, storing, transporting, marketing and selling of seafood.

Building a resilient, adaptable supply chain and workforce in a time of rapid environmental change and geopolitical instability is a key aim for this sector. Other opportunities include market diversification, value-adding, responding to consumer sustainability expectations and supply of nutritious, healthy seafood.



# Research Development & Extension Partners

*Research partners* can be defined as; those entities contracted to enable the FRDC to deliver RD&E.

FRDC works with diverse and geographically dispersed research partners who share a connection and interest in fishing and aquaculture and Australia's aquatic environments.

These include:

- People working in Indigenous, recreational and commercial wild catch fishing and aquaculture
- Fishing and aquaculture associations, councils, consortia and companies across all sectors
- Post-harvest and the seafood supply chain
- Fishing gear and technology developers across all sectors
- Federal, State and Territory Governments and agencies, including fisheries and natural resource managers
- Universities, other higher education institutions and vocational trainers
- Science agencies
- International research organisations
- Innovation and technology companies and start-ups
- Private-sector research providers







# Themes

To deliver the RD&E Plan 2025-30, FRDC will leverage collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, government and research partners, employ innovative investment models and measure progress to ensure transparency and accountability.

Growing, resilient and innovative



Best practices and production systems



Capable and diverse people



Secure access and resource allocation



Community trust, acceptance and value



# 1

## Growing, resilient and innovative



This theme aligns with the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Enduring growth and resilience to challenges through innovation

Australian aquatic resources provide a rich diversity of value to the community. The fishing and aquaculture sectors provides food and nutrition security, creates products and markets, preserves and enriches culture, and creates recreational experiences and services. Global and domestic demand for aquatic foods, nature-based carbon capture solutions, cultural and recreational experiences, and novel products are projected to grow rapidly.

To support growth and resilience, people need skills, innovations and partnerships to diversify and optimise value from aquatic resources. This can include innovating or refining how we grow or catch, transforming waste into assets, diversifying experiences and products, and ensuring aquatic systems can support optimal production and ecosystem function, including regenerative practices. Thriving sectors and sustainable practices are mutually beneficial, highlighting the importance of progressive approaches to aquatic resource use, and the role of collaboration in interconnected systems.

Ecological, social and economic instability require innovative solutions to build resilience. For all sectors, threats and opportunities such as climate change impacts, market volatility, shifts in social attitudes and the rise of advanced artificial intelligence (AI) must be met with tools and skills to build resilience and flexibility.

Across sectors, the impact of new, innovative solutions will be closely tied to economic realities. Solutions can be adopted if they are economically feasible and viable. New markets can be opened if products and services are desirable. Supporting economic prosperity facilitates greater collective resilience.

To facilitate growing, resilient and innovative fishing and aquaculture sectors, FRDC will explore opportunities to invest and collaborate on RD&E to:

- Support economic opportunities for Indigenous people
- Optimise resource benefits to grow commercial opportunities, meet global consumption demands and gain recognition as a market leader
- Support a sustainable and efficient increase in production, value and price
- Grow positive recreational fishing experiences
- Develop new, innovative products and services that respond to current and future challenges



## 2

This theme aligns with the following United Nations SDGs



## Best practices and production systems



Diverse economic, ecological and social benefits through best practice aquatic resource use

Responsible practices and evidence-based decision-making are essential to ensure continued access to aquatic resources, enterprise profitability and ecosystem health. Collective success can be achieved when fishing and aquaculture sectors align on shared values of viability, adaptability, equity, ethics and sustainability.

The health and wellbeing of stocks and ecosystems is foundational, and fishing and aquaculture is well positioned to lead stewardship and monitoring efforts. Effective biosecurity, healthy ecosystem function, and preparation for climate change are crucial. Best practice management arrangements and regenerative practices will sustain and grow resources for future generations.

From a commercial standpoint, it is critical that changes in practice are economically viable and contribute to overall prosperity. Good business practices and governance are fundamental to fostering a thriving economy.

Culturally, there is immense potential to learn from the traditional knowledge of Indigenous communities. Inclusive knowledge sharing offers valuable insights into improving practices while fostering deeper connections to culture and Country.

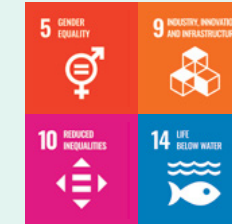
Businesses and recreational groups are increasingly required to demonstrate sustainability credentials in response to growing social concern over the safety and ethics of the products and experiences they provide. Understanding and anticipating social and governance requirements will enable Australian fishing and aquaculture to maintain and showcase their leadership and reporting using best practices.

To support economic, ecological and social benefits from best practice aquatic resource use, FRDC will explore opportunities to invest and collaborate on RD&E to:

- Meet environmental, social and governance requirements and expectations
- Respond to change, manage and reduce risks including climate change and biosecurity
- Promote learning and sharing among sectors and incorporate Indigenous knowledge

## 3

This theme aligns with the following United Nations SDGs



## Capable and diverse people



Promoting diversity, growing participation, and developing skilled and adaptable people

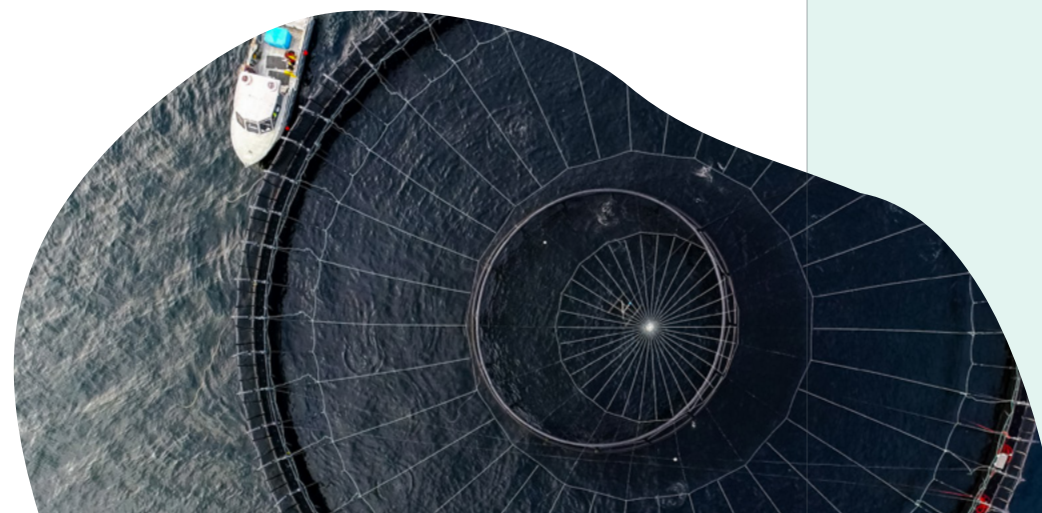
Skilled and adaptable people in production, supply chains, recreation, research and management are essential to the growth and resilience of fishing and aquaculture in Australia, especially in the face of constant change. Rising demand for products, services and experiences requires increased capacity. With ageing workforces and recreational groups, and rapid change in social expectations for work and recreational culture, there is increasing competition to attract new entrants.

Attracting and retaining people of all ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities is key to driving innovation, flexibility, creativity and adaptability. Understanding and addressing factors that impact positive cultural change, and ensuring that work and recreation is physically and mentally safe, will attract talent and diversity.

Offering opportunities for learning, leadership and connection is essential to building the capability needed to expand capacity and manage change.

To promote diversity, grow participation, and develop skilled and adaptable people for fishing and aquaculture, FRDC will explore opportunities to invest and collaborate on RD&E to:

- Understand and address factors impacting positive cultural and behavioural change
- Enjoy physical and mental safety and wellbeing
- Attract and include a diversity of people
- Grow skills, creativity, collaboration and entrepreneurship





# 4

This theme aligns with the following United Nations SDGs



## Secure access and resource allocation



Fair and integrated management of aquatic resources, providing certainty and confidence

Access to aquatic resources, guided by good management and science, is fundamental for the continued delivery of economic and social benefits such as food and nutrition, income, employment, recreation and cultural identity for all Australians. The need for coordinated, adaptive management has been undermined by climate change, as aquatic species and habitats shift their ranges, often crossing jurisdictional borders.

Growing populations and a changing climate have intensified competition for resource allocation. Planning, management decisions and uncertainty have profound impacts on people, culture, the environment and the economy. To maximise benefits for the Australian community, planning and management decisions should be informed by evidence-based science and research.

Clear evidence of the economic, environmental and workforce contributions of fishing and aquaculture and the demonstration of environmental, social and governance contexts is essential. It is equally important to showcase the broader benefits that fishing and aquaculture offer the community, including cultural identity, mental and physical wellbeing, nutritious food and attractive commercial products and experiences.

To ensure fair and integrated management of aquatic resources, FRDC will explore opportunities to invest and collaborate on RD&E to:

- Support integrated and effective management of, and access to, aquatic resources underpinned by evidence-based decisions
- Share and obtain data easily and securely
- Enable operations in shared multi-use spaces
- Support future-fit management in emerging fisheries and aquaculture



# 5

This theme aligns with the following United Nations SDGs



## Community trust, acceptance and value



People share, use and feel positive about fishing and aquaculture's products, services and experiences

Community support is essential for the maintenance and growth of Australia's fishing and aquaculture sectors. As social values and consumer demands rapidly evolve, they increasingly influence planning, practices, markets and decision-making. Demonstrating alignment with community values and delivering mutual benefits is key to maintaining social license to operate, and building increased value and use of products, services and experiences offered by the fishing and aquaculture sectors.

Understanding perceptions of commercial and recreational fishing impacts is crucial for community support and acceptance. Similarly, knowing the drivers of trust helps identify where meaningful changes can be made, and how to communicate. Trust in Australian fishing and aquaculture is closely linked to environmental responsibility, animal welfare, innovation and fair distribution of benefits. However, these drivers shift over time, requiring ongoing monitoring and adaptation.

Indigenous, recreational and commercial wild catch fishers and aquaculturalists need tools and skills to respond effectively to community signals while minimising disruption. Clear communication of positive actions is equally important to ensure understanding and impact. Building trust and acceptance allows communities to embrace and celebrate the products, services and experiences offered by Australian fishing and aquaculture.

To ensure that people share, use and feel positive about fishing and aquaculture's products, services and experiences, FRDC will explore opportunities to invest and collaborate on RD&E to:

- Build and maintain trust, acceptance and value
- Understand the drivers of community and consumer perception
- Develop tools to build trust, value and acceptance



# Delivering the Plan

FRDC's investments are informed by stakeholders and underpinned by innovation and collaboration. FRDC is focused on driving extension for impact through informed evidence-based practices.

## Co-management of RD&E for better outcomes

FRDC drives impactful change through continuous engagement and collaboration with stakeholders from design of activities through delivery. FRDC facilitates change by actively listening and integrating insights to map necessary steps and resources required to achieve impact, fostering transparency and accountability.

## Collaborative partnerships for scale and impact

FRDC values collaboration and partnerships, working closely with fishing and aquaculture and advisory structures such as jurisdictional Research Advisory Committees (RACs), sectoral Industry Partnership Agreements (IPAs) and thematic Coordinating Programs (CPs) for areas of national significance and to address threats and opportunities. FRDC also invests in services associated with food safety, trade and market access, naming standards, stock status reporting, capability and capacity programs and innovative funding partnerships.

## Data and analytics for evidence-based decision making

Leveraging data-driven insights is paramount to success. By harnessing the power of analytics, FRDC will optimise investment decisions to inform evidence-based decision making and drive sustainable growth. FRDC will create a robust and accessible data ecosystem that empowers stakeholders to make informed decisions and foster collaboration. This data-centric approach will position FRDC as a thought leader, driving innovation and supporting fishing and aquaculture for the future.

## Innovative investment models accelerate growth

Innovation is the invention and implementation of new or significant improvements in products, processes, or methods that create value for the sector and the community. FRDC continues to support innovation through traditional RD&E investments and has developed 'Innovation Fund', which is a fund that invests in a portfolio of higher risk opportunities where innovators commercialise products and services that solve fishing and aquaculture's challenges.

The 'Innovation Fund' will accelerate the growth of Australia's aquatic innovation ecosystem by co-investing in early-stage ventures to drive the commercialisation of novel solutions. At the core of the 'Innovation Funds' approach is a commitment to foster innovation throughout the entire value chain. It will address the most pressing challenges while delivering environmental, social and economic benefits.

## Facilitate adoption from co-design to delivery

R&D delivers benefits to fishing and aquaculture when results are shared and used. FRDC is committed to improving adoption and impact of its investments to meet stakeholders needs, using extension planning and delivery in all investments. FRDC has engaged a network of Extension Officers to facilitate and promote behaviour change, moving beyond transferring knowledge to adoption.

## Enabling people

FRDC values and invests in people. Developing capability and capacity is essential for navigating uncertainty and addressing complex challenges and opportunities. FRDC is committed to building knowledge, skills, competencies and experience (capabilities) to strengthen and expand capacity to enable change. This includes supporting established successful RD&E initiatives while exploring new approaches to learning, attracting and retaining people, fostering diversity and inclusivity, managing change and monitoring progress. FRDC enables personal and career growth by investing in leadership programs, development bursaries, and resources to inform and drive long-term capability and capacity building.



Delivering the Plan

Measurement to demonstrate impact and ensure accountability

Measuring RD&E Plan 2025-30 performance is essential to ensure alignment with strategic goals, identify areas for improvement and demonstrate accountability. By regularly tracking progress and analysing key performance indicators (KPIs), FRDC will gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of investments. This data-driven approach enables timely adjustments, ensuring resources are allocated efficiently and outcomes are aligned with expectations. Measuring performance fosters a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and driving the organisation towards long-term success.

FRDC performance reporting includes requirements from legislation (e.g. *Primary Industries Research and Development Act 1989*, *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*), agreements and general practice of good governance and the Rural Research & Development Corporations Accountability Framework.

The 2025-30 FRDC Performance Framework outlines the approach to monitoring and evaluating performance against this accountability framework.

Metrics for evaluating progress and impact of investment

FRDC's Performance Framework metrics relating to the RD&E Plan:

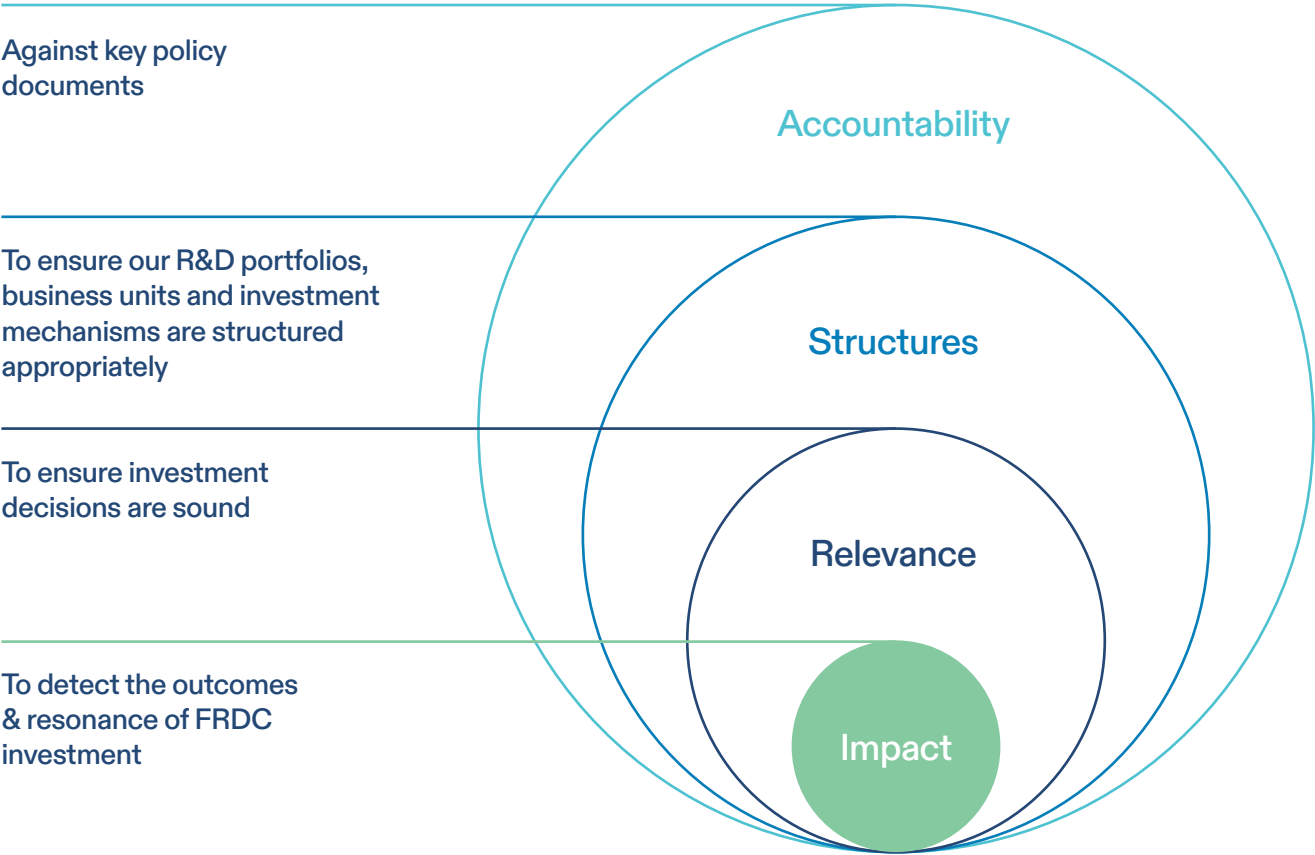
- FRDC's leverage of jurisdictional contributions returns an average of \$3:1
- More than 80% of research priorities developed have RD&E to address within 12 months
- Investment is balanced across short, medium and long term, high and low-risk, and strategic and adaptive research needs including consideration of regional variations and needs
- 50% of FRDC's stakeholders have adopted new knowledge
- FRDC's Benefit Cost Assessment Program returns an average of \$3:1

RD&E Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Gross Value of Production is sustained beyond \$3B through supporting:

- Ten new economic opportunities explored
- Six best practice tools for better decision making
- A capable and diverse fisheries and aquaculture, with access to five capability and capacity building programs
- Four improved pathways for managing key risks
- Products are enjoyed, and sectors are supported and trusted by the community

FIGURE 2. FRDC's 2025-2030 Performance Framework





# Strategic alignment with priorities



FRDC operates in a complex planning landscape. The RD&E Plan 2025-30 is purposefully aligned with sectoral, jurisdictional, national and global strategies to support growth and resilience for fishing and aquaculture. This alignment drives innovation, fosters collaboration and addresses diverse challenges and opportunities.

## 2025-30

Within FRDC, plans are developed and priorities identified at multiple levels. State, Territories and Commonwealth jurisdictions identify priorities within RACs whilst IPAs do so for specific aquaculture and commercial wild catch sectors. Coordination Programs assist FRDC to prioritise needs in focus areas such as aquatic animal health and biosecurity or for the Indigenous and recreational sectors at a national level.

FRDC works in partnership with Coordination Programs, RACs and IPAs to ensure effective collaboration to invest in shared, cross-sectoral priorities, maximise value for money, reduce the potential for duplication and effectively target investment expenditure.

FRDC considers and aligns with priorities outlined in other plans including:

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development
- Food and Agriculture Organisation Strategic Framework 2022-31
- International Coalition of Fisheries Association priorities
- National Science and Research Priorities
- National Agricultural Innovation Agenda
- National Fisheries Plan
- National Aquaculture Strategy
- Sustainable Ocean Plan
- National Marine Science Committee priorities
- Statement of Strategic Intent: Growing Australia Together
- Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations priorities
- FRDC Representative Organisation plans and strategies
- Australian Fisheries Management Forum priorities
- Industry Partnership Agreements (IPAs) plans and strategies
- The Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Provider Network priorities



# Governance and budget



FRDC is committed to best practice and recognises the value of corporate governance principles.

The governing body of FRDC, the Board, provides oversight within the following legislation:

- *Primary Industries Research and Development Act 1989 (PIRD Act)*,
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)*.

The Board’s objectives are to add value by ensuring that appropriate governance is in place by:

1. setting the strategic direction of FRDC,
2. developing policy to help implement this direction,
3. monitoring and supervising systems that deliver the results of FRDC,
4. ensuring accountability (including engaging with, and reporting to, stakeholders),
5. ensuring legal compliance.

## Enabling legislation

FRDC’s enabling legislation is the *PIRD Act*. The objects of FRDC, deriving from section 3 of the *PIRD Act*, are to:

- a. make provision for the funding and administration of research and development relating to primary industries with a view to:
  - i. increasing the economic, environmental and social benefits to members of primary industries and to the community in general by improving the production, processing, storage, transport or marketing of the products of primary industries, and

- ii. achieving the sustainable use and sustainable management of natural resources, and
- iii. making more effective use of the resources and skills of the community in general and the scientific community in particular, and
- iv. supporting the development of scientific and technical capacity, and
- v. developing the adoptive capacity of primary producers, and
- vi. improving accountability for expenditure on research and development activities in relation to primary industries

## Planned outcome

Increased economic, social and environmental benefits for Australian fishing and aquaculture, and the wider community, by investing in knowledge, innovation and marketing.

\*Marketing activities can only be undertaken where 100% of the funds are provided via a marketing contribution from stakeholders.

## Revenue

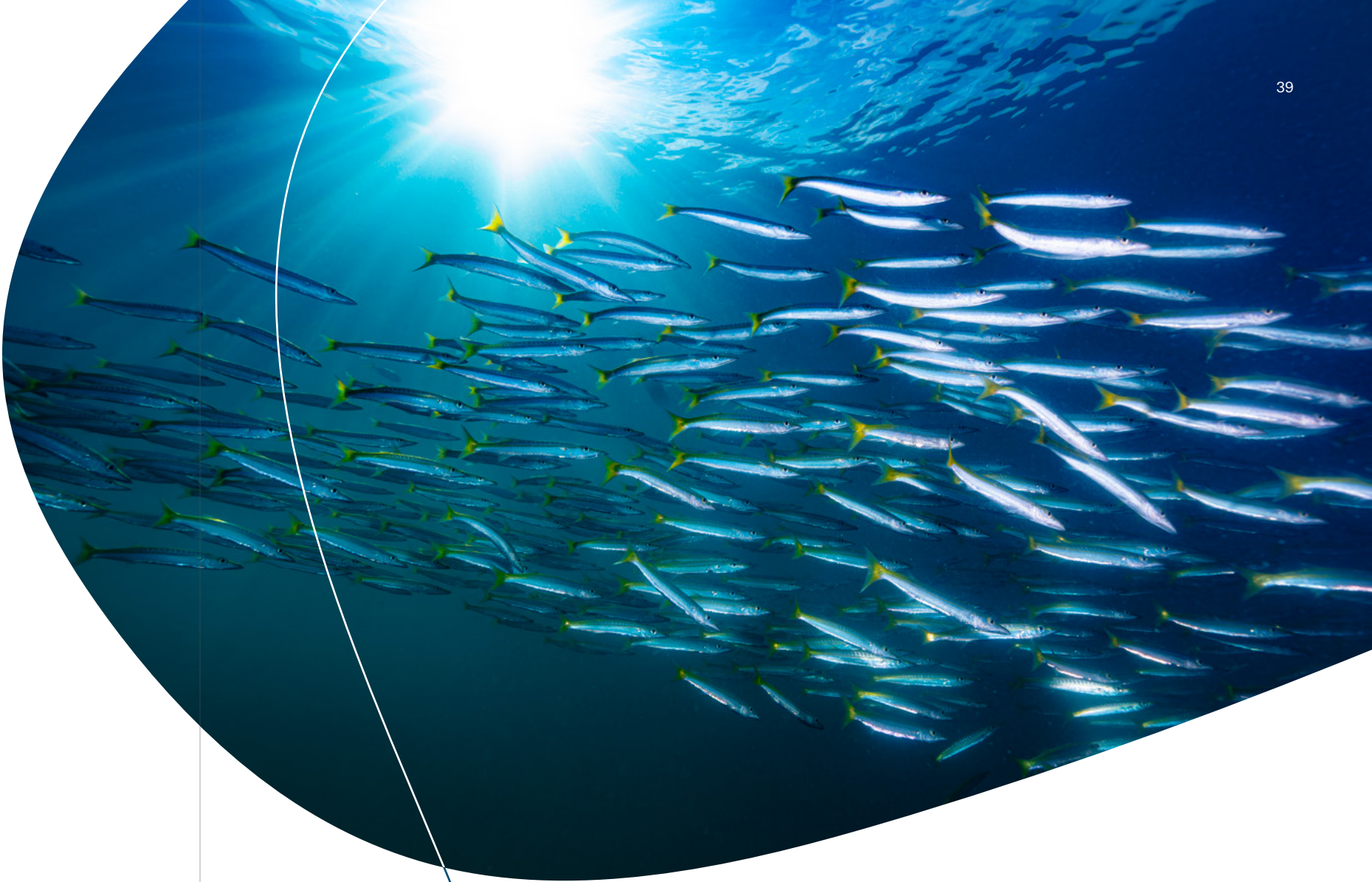
FRDC Revenue forecast 2025-26 to 2029-30 (\$'000)

	2025-26 (PBS budget) \$000	2026-27 Forward estimate) \$000	2026-27 Forward estimate) \$000	2026-27 Forward estimate) \$000	2026-27 Forward estimate) \$000
Revenue from the Australian Government	27,878	29,690	30,947	31,826	32,731
Contributions	12,547	13,288	13,877	14,349	14,836
Other	14,900	8,700	3,700	3,700	3,700
Total Revenue	55,325	51,677	48,524	49,874	51,267

### Adjustments to Revenue Forecasts.

Under the *Primary Industries Research and Development Act 1989*, *Primary Industries Levies and Charges Disbursement Act 2024*, and associated *Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Regulations 1991*, the Australian Government is required to determine the gross value of production (GVP) of the Australian fishing industry annually. This determination is used to calculate the amounts provided for fisheries research for the current financial year. As a result of the annual determination, FRDC’s Revenue forecast is reviewed and adjusted accordingly each year. As such, figures in the revenue table may change from year to year.





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**FRDC**

Delivering impact for  
fishing & aquaculture