



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Ref: FRDC 2024

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Dear Dr Woods

I am writing following the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation's (FRDC) annual performance meeting with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) held on 17 September 2024. The meeting provides an opportunity for FRDC to demonstrate its achievements and performance against the five key performance principles over the year.

For the 2023-24 period, I am pleased to advise that the department considers that FRDC has performed to a high standard and met its obligations under the Statutory Funding Agreement.

During the assessment cycle, the department routinely obtains feedback from FRDC's representative organisations. The feedback received has again highlighted FRDC's collaborative style, strong commitment to the sector and leadership on engagement with First Nations stakeholders. FRDC's key strengths include its skilled and helpful staff, openness to new initiatives and innovation and the cooperative approach of finding fit for purpose outcomes for stakeholders.

Recognising the feedback received and FRDC's commitment to continuous improvement, I am suggesting the following focus areas for further consideration by FRDC:

- In terms of industry growth, development and resilience, maintaining an appropriate focus on investing in food production and commercial fisheries priorities and discussing the approach to managing a balanced investment portfolio with representative organisations.
- Communicating project governance to stakeholders: sharing approaches to priority setting, criteria, evaluation and ensuring FRDC's website is updated with outcomes.
- Research investment value and outcomes: further enhancing of project reporting to include value, productivity and effectiveness metrics and highlighting the outcomes and impact of research investments.
- Extension Officer network: clarifying its role and broadening support to specific sectors with a focus on struggling sectors. Also publicising its progress, achievements and outcomes so stakeholders better understand its impact and value both overall and by sector.
- Broadening strategic engagement: consider structured engagement with various sectors beyond project-level and facilitating broader strategic discussions about emerging issues, trends and challenges with a view to the longer term 10-20 years.

I'm also pleased to note that an independent review of FRDC's performance was completed in July 2024 which noted that FRDC is performing to a very high standard in a complex and challenging environment. The report highlighted the FRDC's efforts in terms of collaboration, striving for innovation and improvements and in delivering benefits to levy payers, government and investors.

Thank you for your leadership of FRDC to date and I look forward to working together as the FRDC continues its important work delivering research, development and extension outcomes for stakeholders.

As discussed during the performance meeting, we welcome feedback on any further support the department can provide to FRDC as it takes forward its significant work program.

Yours sincerely

Sarah-Jane McCormack
First Assistant Secretary
Agvet Chemicals, Fisheries and Forestry Division

11 / 12 / 2024