



# FRDC STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING

## September 2020

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## COVID-19 - CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

The FRDC continues to monitor COVID-19 and its impacts. We will provide any updates on the [COVID-19 page on the FRDC website](#).

The starting point for FRDC is the welfare and safety of the staff and our stakeholders.

*Safety First - The FRDC is strongly committed to a policy that facilitates work activities being carried out safely, and that enables all possible measures to remove (or at least reduce) risks to the health, safety and welfare of all stakeholders and staff.*

### **COVID-19 Message in a bottle**

The FRDC's communications team started sending out a weekly e-newsletter as the pandemic hit. The newsletter was started as a way of keeping stakeholders informed of opportunities and assistance available to them during these difficult times and it is now evolving to span a wider range of topics. You can subscribe at <https://www.frdc.com.au/subscribe>

### **Historic New Company to drive collaboration across all RDCs**

At its August meeting, the FRDC board agreed to FRDC becoming a founding member of the proposed 'Agriculture Innovation Investment Company' entity. The FRDC will join with fifteen other Rural Research and Development Corporations to establish the company.

Innovation in the broad agriculture sector (including fisheries and forestry as well as pre and post farm gate value chains) and the role of RDCs have been the subject of numerous reviews for more than a decade. The most recent of which was the government commissioned "Agricultural Innovation — [A National Approach to Grow Australia's Future](#)" report conducted by Ernst and Young and delivered in 2019.

The majority of reviews have highlighted the difficulties in addressing cross-sectoral issues, the need for a balance of incremental and transformational innovation and the benefits associated with closer links between private and public sector efforts. These factors have been recognised by the Minister for Agriculture who has written to the Chair of the Council of Rural RDCs making it clear that a joint effort is required to:

- increase investment into research and development (R&D) that targets transformational productivity gains, cross-sectoral and public good challenges,
- accelerate the uptake and adoption of R&D outcomes, including commercialisation of R&D where appropriate
- improve collaboration and partnerships across the agricultural innovation system,
- increase the flow of private sector and international investment into our agricultural innovation system, and
- maximise the opportunities presented by Agtech.

The objects of the new Company are to promote the research into and development of Australia's national Agricultural Resources and increase the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the agricultural value chain by:

- identifying nationally significant cross-sectoral opportunities;
- developing strategies that facilitate a collaborative approach to investing in research and development, and the adoption of new knowledge and innovation required to realise those opportunities; and
- raising and acquiring funding and resources from Members, government and third parties and managing that funding and those resources to implement Company strategies.

The company working with the RDCs set a goal of making Australia number one for rural agriculture, fisheries and forestry innovation and achieving the National Farmer Federation \$100 billion target by 2030.

## The FRDC's new Research and Development Plan 2020-2025

The FRDC's Research & Development (R&D) Plan was approved by Minister Littleproud on 18 June 2020. After more than a year of consultation and development, the R&D Plan is ready for use.

The R&D Plan sets the organisation on a more flexible, consultative path to achieve outcomes for Australia's diverse fishing and aquaculture stakeholders. To find out more on how the plan was developed, below are some short clips of the journey.

- [Short teaser](#)
- [Summary of the process](#)
- [Summary of insights from participants](#)

## Time for action

The Plan establishes the focus for the organisation's activities for the next five years and outlines strategies to get there. Importantly, it will be adaptable and respond to further input from our stakeholders.

At the core of the R&D Plan and investment are five R&D outcomes and five enabling strategies that will help us achieve those outcomes.

### Five R&D outcomes

1. Growth for enduring prosperity;
2. Best practices in production systems;
3. A culture that is inclusive and forward thinking;
4. Fair and secure access to aquatic resources; and
5. Community trust, respect and value.

### Five enabling strategies

- i. Drive digitisation and advanced analytics.
- ii. Strengthen the adoption of transformative change.
- iii. Promote innovation and entrepreneurship.
- iv. Build capability and capacity.
- v. Provide foundational information and support services.

These 10 areas guide where we are going and why. We are now working with stakeholders to develop more detailed roadmaps for achieving each of the five outcomes.

### HAVE YOUR SAY

#### Calling all fishing and aquaculture stakeholders

Roadmapping workshops will be held online, enabling stakeholders to collaborate from wherever they are to identify how to achieve each outcome.

The first online roadmapping workshop will focus on R&D outcome 1: Growth for enduring prosperity. This workshop will be run in collaboration with Food Innovation Australia Ltd, which is undertaking a similar process focused on growing the market share of Australia's food globally. Fishing and aquaculture stakeholders are invited to participate in online roadmapping workshops on the following dates:

- Outcome 1 (Growth for enduring prosperity) – Thursday 15 October

- Outcome 2 (Best practices and production systems) – Friday 16 October
- Outcome 3 (A culture that is inclusive and forward thinking) – Wednesday 21 October
- Outcome 4 (Fair and secure access to aquatic resource) – Friday 23 October
- Outcome 5 (Community trust, respect and value) – Tuesday 27 October

These dates are tentative. Final dates for workshops and other FRDC meetings will be posted on our website (<http://frdc.com.au/stakeholders/meetings> ).

>>> [REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE](#) <<<

Not able to attend the meetings? You can still have a say visit - [Roadmapping Feedback](#).

## Structures to help drive the plan

**Research Advisory Committees (RACs)** Each jurisdiction will engage in planning and funding via its RAC. However, the way RACs operate is changing. These committees will focus on identifying the important issues and needs for fishing and aquaculture stakeholders in their jurisdiction. RACs will also focus on defining the end users and possible key pathways for adoption and extension. RAC engagement will be broader than it was previously, and include open online workshops and meetings during which stakeholders can describe their issues or needs as they relate to the five outcomes of the FRDC R&D Plan. Priority setting and refinement will follow. This will enable the best solutions to develop and fund to be identified. The goal is to make stakeholder input part of priority setting and updating – as one priority is addressed, another emerges for consideration. We will appoint a limited number of RAC chairs, who will work across the various bodies to encourage idea and information sharing. R&D plans for each jurisdiction will not be required; rather, the priority setting outlined above will align each jurisdiction’s priorities with our R&D Plan outcome areas.

**Industry Partnership Agreements (IPAs)** will continue largely as before, with a specific agreement, budget allocation based on their contribution to the FRDC and an administration fee. IPAs can still choose to maintain their own R&D plan, and will be encouraged to align their planning with our R&D Plan 2020– 2025 and roadmaps. The IPAs will continue to canvass relevant sectors for their needs and priorities but also look more broadly at how they can partner and leverage investment with other groups or organisations who have similar priorities – this could include other IPAs, RACS or new investors.

**FRDC Research Subprograms** will continue, but will form part of the competitive funding allocation to ensure a focus on collaboration and delivering the R&D Plan’s outcomes. These structures will be required to collate priorities for their respective areas and stakeholders, and to explore overlap and synergies with the priorities RACs and IPAs nominate.

**Ongoing services** Long-term projects that provide industry services such as Safefish, Fish Names and the Status of Australian Fish Stocks (SAFS) will continue for their current lives. These services will be reviewed against the needs identified in the roadmapping processes being undertaken. Decisions to continue or to vary each service will be based on how they align with roadmaps and R&D Plan outcomes.

## Open for Business – Call for Applications

As the FRDC develops the structures and processes to implement its new R&D Plan, it is important that urgent and necessary research is not delayed. In late October we will publish a call for applications against existing R&D priorities in line with the Plan.

This call will be made on our website and through an email alert to FRDC update subscribers. To subscribe visit [www.frdc.com.au/subscribe](http://www.frdc.com.au/subscribe).

We will use a variety of approaches to call for research that will address the Plan's priorities, including competitive calls, select and direct tenders, and investment in start-ups and technologies.

## **Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) Partnership**

Through the Indigenous Fishing Subprogram, the FRDC has recently been developing a relationship with the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (<https://www.ilsc.gov.au/>) and their national funding program (<https://www.ilsc.gov.au/home/partner-with-us/our-country-our-future/>). There are some overlaps and linkages between what the FRDC, Indigenous Fishing Subprogram and the ILSC are seeking to do. We have now developed and signed a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations which will see us undertake regular formal catch ups and allow for confidential sharing of information relevant to projects/programs we are undertaking which could help both organisations achieve their goals.

## **Have your say on the draft Commonwealth fisheries resource sharing framework**

Fishing is an important cultural, recreational and commercial activity for many Australians. Sharing fisheries resources can be a complex issue affecting commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers.

The draft Commonwealth fisheries resource sharing framework is now available for comment. To have your say on the draft framework and how we can share our Commonwealth fisheries resources fairly, go to [haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/sharing-fisheries-resources](http://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/sharing-fisheries-resources).

## **Evaluation of Country of Origin Labelling for Food: discussion paper**

Reforms of Australia's Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) regulations for food were passed in 2016 and came into full-effect in July 2018. The Australian Government committed to evaluate the 2016 CoOL reforms in 2020-21, two years after the regulations came into effect.

The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources is now conducting an impact evaluation of the CoOL reforms. The evaluation seeks to answer the overarching question: Have the CoOL reforms for food:

- improved consumer access to information about the origin of food
- clarified the origin claims businesses can make about their products
- avoided imposing excessive costs on the impacted businesses

Find out more on the evaluation at <https://consult.industry.gov.au/cool-taskforce/evaluation-of-country-of-origin-labelling-for-food/>

## **Valuing Victoria's Wild-catch fisheries and aquaculture industries**

A recently completed FRDC funded study has found that the Victorian Seafood industry injects \$323 million into regions across Victoria, provides more than 3000 jobs in production and processing and produces 18,000 tonnes of seafood or put another way, more than 2.5 million seafood meals on tables.

The *Valuing Victoria's Wild-catch fisheries and aquaculture industries* report provides the first comprehensive information demonstrating the contribution made by Victoria's seafood sector towards community wellbeing.

Key findings include:

- Nine out of 10 people surveyed say it's important to produce seafood in Victoria, reducing imports – the professional fishing and aquaculture sectors are important suppliers to metropolitan and regional markets
- Fresh local seafood is an important underpinning of regional tourism – eight out of 10 people consider fresh local seafood an important eating experience during coastal holidays; tourism operators say local seafood production is good for business

- International visitors, particularly Asian tourists, are attracted to cultural delicacies, such as abalone and rock lobster, and the clean environment from which local seafood is caught/farmed
- The seafood industry collaborates in projects to improve environmental health – 82 per cent of assessed Victorian fish stocks are classified as “sustainable” or “recovering”
- Fishing and aquaculture are important to cultural heritage and community identity, as well as the character and appeal of coastal towns
- Most people (85%) in fishing and aquaculture towns believe seafood industries are important for economic diversity and resilience in their towns.

The Report also developed a range of specific fact sheets on each of the regions. The final report and factsheets can be downloaded from the FRDC website at <https://www.frdc.com.au/project/2017-092>

## Status of Australian Fish Stocks (SAFS) 2020

Work is underway on development of the 2020 SAFS reports, with author teams from all participating jurisdictions now actively involved in drafting their chapters. The SAFS 2020 reports will mark the fifth round of SAFS reporting, and will cover approximately 150 species, including 30 species new to SAFS, and ~475 stocks. Some change in these numbers is likely as author teams undertake detailed evaluations of stock structure.

SAFS 2020 will see both continuity and change for the reports. The SAFS Classification Framework used to produce the 2018 reports remains unchanged, with stock status categories of sustainable, depleting, recovering, depleted, undefined, and negligible. Behind the scenes though, authors are using a new online reporting tool that uses dropdown menus and a direct link to the SAFS database to streamline reporting. Additionally, the FRDC will make stock names and their associated statuses available on the Australian Government’s data sharing portal ([data.gov.au](http://data.gov.au)) to increase SAFS’ public discoverability.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, SAFS 2020 was scheduled for delivery at the World Fisheries Congress in October 2020. Subsequent delays have meant that reports will not be delivered in October, and the FRDC and the SAFS Advisory Group are currently working to identify a new release date.

## 2021 State of the Environment Report

Work has started on the State of the Environment (SoE) Report 2021 to be tabled in the Australian Parliament by 31 December 2021. The SoE Report <https://soe.environment.gov.au/> provides a comprehensive and independent national assessment of the state, trends, and management of Australia’s environment. The report is one of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment flagship publications that compiles a synthesis of environmental information to shape policy and action for improved environmental outcomes; to engage with users to influence behaviour; and assist with assessing interventions that protect and improve the condition of and outlook for the Australian environment.

On the 13th August 2020 Environment Minister Sussan Ley announced the chief authors for SoE 2021 (<https://minister.awe.gov.au/ley/media-releases/state-environment-report-co-chiefs-appointed>).

Lead authors for each Theme (chapter) of the report are appointed as independent experts by the Australian Government Department of the Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE). Dr Rowan Trebilco is the lead author for the ‘Marine Theme’. Dr Graeme Clark is the lead author for the ‘Coasts Theme’. For the first time, the report will incorporate indigenous knowledge and perspectives on the state of the environment, with indigenous co-authors appointed for each theme.

The report will be based on the digital platform developed for SoE 2016 and will be accompanied by short targeted products for various sectors.

User research on the last report identified several areas for improvement that are being adopted for SoE 2021. These include alignment with the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and with relevant SDG Targets, and a stronger alignment with user needs.

Draft scoping papers for each theme are currently in preparation: Air quality; Antarctica; Biodiversity; Climate; Coasts; Extreme events; Heritage; Indigenous; Inland water; Land; Marine; and Urban Environment. The draft papers will be available for stakeholder feedback in early October, with more limited consultation on draft content of the report likely in late February or early March 2021.

### **FRDC board meeting dates and locations**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
25-26 November 2020	Via teams teleconference