

Candice L Harwood (VFA)

From: DAVID JOHNSTONE [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 21 October 2025 10:32 AM
To: Candice L Harwood (VFA)
Subject: Submission for VMS for inshore commercial fishing

Dear Candice

I am writing to formally submit my concerns and recommendations regarding the implementation of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for all commercial fishing vessels operating under an Ocean Access Licence.

There are several key reasons why the use of VMS is critical for effective fisheries management and marine ecosystem protection:

1 Monitoring Fishing Activity and Compliance

The installation of Inmarsat systems on board these vessels is essential to monitor the movements and activities of all Ocean Access Licence holders. This data is vital for understanding fishing pressure in specific areas and ensuring vessels are not operating in restricted or sensitive zones. Our inshore waters, in particular, serve as important nursery grounds for juvenile species and must be protected from inappropriate fishing activity.

2 Lack of Bycatch and Mortality Data

To date, there has been no comprehensive study conducted on the levels of bycatch or the mortality rate of non-target and juvenile species that are caught and subsequently discarded. This presents a significant knowledge gap in understanding the true ecological impact of ocean access fishing operations. VMS, combined with observer programs or electronic monitoring, would support the collection of this crucial data.

3 Accountability and Consistency Across Sectors

Ocean Access Licence holders should be held to the same accountability standards as offshore fishing operations. Consistent monitoring across all sectors is necessary to manage fishing pressure effectively, ensure compliance with regulations, and protect areas where fishing is prohibited or restricted.

In conclusion, the integration of VMS on all vessels with Ocean Access Licences is an essential step towards sustainable fisheries management, protection of marine habitats, and the long-term viability of our fish stocks.

Thank you for considering this submission

Thanks David Johnstone

Sent from my iPhone