



## ABORIGINAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Proposed marine park

## FOR HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION

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The NSW Government is proposing a new marine park in the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong region to conserve marine biodiversity and enhance social, cultural and economic benefits to the community.

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The proposed marine park is described in a new discussion paper; *Enhancing Conservation of Marine Biodiversity: Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion*. The discussion paper describes how we propose to manage the priority threats that impact community benefits within Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion. The proposed marine park consists of a network of 25 sites comprising 10 existing aquatic reserves, 14 new sites and an increase to the Bouddi National Park marine extension.

### WHERE IS THE HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION?

The Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion extends from Stockton (Newcastle) to Shellharbour (near Wollongong), including Sydney Harbour. The bioregion includes the coastline, estuaries, coastal lakes and lagoons, beaches and ocean waters out to the edge of the continental shelf however NSW jurisdiction is limited to waters within three nautical miles from the coastline.

### WHICH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES HAVE A CONNECTION TO THIS BIOREGION?

The Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion includes the Sea Country of several Aboriginal nations, including the Awabakal, Kuring-gai, Darkinjung, Dharag, Eora, Tharawal, Worimi and Yuin nations. The bioregion includes 12 Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

### HOW WILL THE SITES BE MANAGED?

The 25 proposed marine park sites will be managed under a single management plan.

Three types of zones – sanctuary zones, conservation zones and special purpose zones – are proposed across the 25 sites. All of the proposed zones allow for Aboriginal cultural use. Draft management objectives for each of the 25 sites are outlined in the discussion paper. The zones, objectives and management rules at a site may change depending on community feedback and the outcome of the final marine park.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE?

None of the proposed management changes in the marine park proposal restrict access for Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal cultural fishing interim access policy will continue to apply across all zone types.

The Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion is recognised as a home to thousands of significant sites and places. Examples include a camp and fishing trap site at Norah Head; grinding grooves at the Bouddi National Park and Cabbage Tree Creek; art at the North Harbour, Chowder Bay, Camp Cove and Cape Banks; as well as shell middens at Barrenjoey Head, North Harbour, Nielson Park, Boat Harbour, Shiprock, Cabbage Tree Creek, and Royal National Park.

Recognising and respecting existing access rights and arrangements is an important principle for the management of the marine estate. Access restrictions can impact social, economic and cultural benefits derived by the community from the marine estate. Conflict over resource access and use, over-regulation and lack of access availability have been identified as high risks to the cultural heritage values of the marine estate for Aboriginal people.

## HOW WERE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING THE PROPOSED MARINE PARK IN THE HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION?

Development of the marine park proposal involved two previous phases of community engagement. A background report was also commissioned to identify the values and benefits of the NSW marine estate to Aboriginal people. Community engagement resulted in a better understanding of the threats to these values and benefits and ways to mitigate threats and enhance community wellbeing.

The background report, *Sea Countries of NSW: a benefits and threats analysis of Aboriginal people's connections with the marine estate*, prepared in 2015, describes the importance of cultural connections to the NSW marine estate and recommends greater involvement by Aboriginal people in the ongoing management of Sea Country. This recommendation is addressed under Initiative 4 (*Protecting the Aboriginal Cultural Values of the Marine Estate*) of the Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028. In 2017, Aboriginal people were asked to provide their feedback on this initiative in a series of workshops held along the NSW coast.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Your input to the discussion paper will inform the final marine park proposal that will be considered by the NSW Government later in 2018. Existing management rules will remain in place and no proposals will be implemented until the NSW Government announces the outcome of consultation on the proposed marine park.

## WHAT ELSE IS BEING DONE TO MANAGE THE MARINE ESTATE?

The Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 has been designed to deliver improved water quality, reduce marine litter, address threats to marine wildlife, prepare for climate change and protect the Aboriginal

cultural values of the NSW marine estate over the next 10 years. The marine park proposal will complement the Strategy.

Initiative 4 of the Strategy aims to increase Aboriginal participation in management decisions within the marine estate and establish a framework that will allow local communities to identify cultural values and undertake coastal management works to protect these values on Sea Country. The need for Aboriginal knowledge and expertise to be incorporated into the ongoing management of Sea Country is recognised in the Strategy

## HOW TO FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED

A range of material is available on the marine estate website <https://www.marine.nsw.gov.au> to help you understand the proposed new marine park and to assist you to provide feedback. This includes:

- The Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion **Discussion Paper**
  - Part 1 – Executive summary, context and approach
  - Part 2 – Site proposals
- An **interactive map** that shows where the sites are and activities that are permitted.

Information stands, to help the community understand the proposal and how to submit feedback, will be held in the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong region during the consultation period. See the marine estate website for more details.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

We are seeking your views about the 25 sites and the management changes proposed at each.

- You can provide feedback **online** at [www.marine.nsw.gov.au](http://www.marine.nsw.gov.au)
- Or via **post** to:  
Submission – Enhancing conservation of marine biodiversity in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion – Discussion paper  
NSW Marine Estate Management Authority  
Locked Bag 1  
Nelson Bay NSW 2315

If you have any queries, you can email [contact.us@marine.nsw.gov.au](mailto:contact.us@marine.nsw.gov.au)

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