

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A marine park proposal for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion

The Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion discussion paper (Parts 1 and 2) describes how threats in the region would be managed via:

- Initiatives and actions in the **Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028**, and
- a new **marine park** in the bioregion.

WHY DO WE NEED A MARINE PARK IN THE HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION?

The new marine park will enhance the conservation of marine biodiversity in the bioregion. It will also help to maximise the environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits the NSW community derives from the marine estate in this region.

The Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion includes the estuaries, coastline and marine waters from Stockton near Newcastle south to Shellharbour near Wollongong.

This bioregion is renowned for its beauty above and below the water. Its beaches, bay and harbour are the 'blue backyard' for more than 6.3 million NSW residents. It is an iconic and valued part of the NSW marine estate.

It is important that the priority threats identified in this bioregion are managed to retain these values and the benefits they provide to the NSW community.

WHAT WILL THE PROPOSED MARINE PARK LOOK LIKE?

The marine park proposed for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion includes a network of 25 distinct sites across the bioregion that address site-based priority threats and risks, and enhance a range of community benefits.

This approach takes into consideration the large population and vast range of coastal activities in the bioregion, which includes Sydney Harbour: a highly valued area and centre for many marine activities.



WHAT SITES ARE INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED MARINE PARK?

The 25 sites in the proposed marine park are shown in Table 1.

These sites include the existing 10 aquatic reserves in the bioregion, the Bouddi National Park marine extension (changes are proposed at some of these sites) and an additional 14 sites, some of which currently have specific management arrangements in place.

Table 1: sites in the proposed marine park

Sites	
Bird Island	Norah Head
Tuggerah Bay	Forresters
Ex-HMAS Adelaide	Bouddi
Lion Island	Barrenjoey Head
Narrabeen Head	Long Reef
Cabbage Tree Bay	North Harbour
Chowder Bay	Camp Cove
Nielsen Park	Bronte-Coogee
Cape Banks	Towra Point
Boat Harbour	Shiprock
Cabbage Tree Creek	Offshore Artificial Reefs
Royal National Park	Five Islands
Intertidal Protected Areas	

HOW WILL THE PROPOSED MARINE PARK BE MANAGED?

Three types of zones are proposed across the 25 sites in the marine park (sanctuary zones, conservation zones and special purpose zones) to aid community awareness and compliance with management rules.

A management plan developed under the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* would be used to guide management of the marine park.

WHY IS THE PROPOSED MARINE PARK DIFFERENT TO OTHER NSW MARINE PARKS?

The six existing marine parks in NSW have four main types of zones within a single large marine park boundary, and include large areas of general use

and/or habitat protection zones.

The proposal for a marine park made up of a number of separate sites, although unique in the NSW marine estate, is not unique in protected area management in NSW. For example, in the national park estate, Sydney Harbour National Park consists of a number of non-contiguous sites to protect islands and foreshore areas around Sydney Harbour.

The proposed marine park reflects the social, cultural, economic and environmental characteristics of the bioregion, addresses some priority site-based threats and provides local benefits, is designed to work together with the Marine Estate Management Strategy and is intended to simplify regulations.

HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL RESPOND TO PRIORITY THREATS?

The NSW Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) ranked priority threats to the environmental assets (water quality, habitats, biodiversity) and the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits derived from the NSW marine estate.

The priority threats to marine biodiversity that can be managed by a marine park in the bioregion are:

- recreational boating and boating infrastructure (in estuaries)
- recreational fishing (shore-based and boat-based line and trap fishing)
- climate change (20 year outlook).

The priority threats to social, cultural and economic benefits that can be managed by a marine park in the bioregion are:

- overcrowding / congestion
- conflict over resource access and use
- habitat (physical) disturbance
- wildlife disturbance
- lack of community awareness of the marine estate, associated threats and benefits, regulations and opportunities for participation
- excessive or illegal extraction.

The discussion paper sets out the priority threats that are targeted to enhance benefits at each of the 25 sites in the proposed marine park.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSAL?

The main aim of the proposed marine park is to enhance the conservation of biodiversity in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion.

The objectives for each site in the proposed marine park are shown in the discussion paper. They include:

- enhancing the conservation of marine biodiversity
- promoting marine ecotourism
- maintaining and supporting Aboriginal cultural use
- enhancing bequest values for current and future generations
- providing enhanced recreational experiences for particular user groups
- providing scientific reference sites.

Each site in the proposed marine park would deliver several objectives, as set out in the discussion paper.

Depending on community feedback, the objectives and management rules proposed for individual sites may change in the final marine park.

HOW HAS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INFORMED THE PROPOSAL?

Community engagement from 2014 onwards has informed the proposal as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: community input that informed the proposal

Year	Community input
2014	Community responses to the Marine Estate Community Survey
2015	Community input through a web portal and stakeholder workshops identified threats, benefits, opportunities and key sites in the bioregion
2016	Submissions on suggested management initiatives in the bioregion
2017	Submissions on the draft Threat and Risk Assessment and draft Marine Estate Management Strategy

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE PROPOSAL?

The proposed marine park could result in a variety of benefits to the people of NSW including:

- reduced site-based threats and additional protection for some of the best examples of the bioregion's marine biodiversity and habitats
- conserving marine biodiversity for current and future generations

- benefiting local business owners by allowing them to promote the marine park as a tourism drawcard
- allowing for a range of activities and uses, depending on the management objectives for each site.

WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL?

The proposal may impact on some recreational fishers, boaters and commercial fishers in the bioregion.

The Authority will work with these affected groups to minimise impacts where possible and identify potential offsets and/or trade-offs that may be required.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO RECREATIONAL FISHING

The proposal may affect some recreational fishing activities, particularly shore and boat-based line and trap fishing and hand gathering.

These activities are already restricted at some sites through existing management restrictions, like aquatic reserves, which are included in the proposed marine park.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO BOATING

Impacts to boating are anticipated to be low across the bioregion, but will occur at sites that involve anchoring restrictions or boat speed limits. Boat-based line and trap fishing may not be permitted in some areas, which may displace some boating to surrounding areas.

IMPACTS ON COMMERCIAL FISHING

Potential impacts on commercial fishing in the bioregion are anticipated to be low. Commercial fishing is already prohibited in Lake Macquarie, Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay. Low-risk commercial fishing activities like lobster and abalone are proposed to continue in some zones under this proposal.

Offsets and compensation may be required for any imposed loss of access associated with the final proposal and will be negotiated with industry during the finalisation and implementation of the proposal.

HOW WAS THE MARINE PARK PROPOSAL DEVELOPED?

The Authority used an iterative spatial planning process to identify 25 potential sites. This process included:

- assessing current management of the 11 existing marine protected areas in the bioregion and more than 25 potential sites

- identified by the NSW community during community engagement in 2015 and 2016
- assessing the current management of the identified priority threats and stressors
- using Marxan spatial planning software and relevant data layers
- identifying current aquaculture, commercial and recreational fishing effort in the bioregion
- incorporating sites adjacent to existing nature reserves and national parks to ensure there is potential for adjoining harmonious public land management.

A set of criteria was developed and used to further inform the selection of sites and the specific management arrangements proposed for each site. The sites under consideration were repeatedly critiqued by agency experts and informed by analysing submissions from community feedback in 2015 and 2016, including consideration of more than 50 sites nominated by the NSW community for additional protection through these processes.

The end result of this iterative process saw the determination of site boundaries and finalisation of proposed management arrangements at each site.

HOW DOES THE MARINE PARK PROPOSAL LINK WITH THE MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

The marine park proposal is in addition to and complements the initiatives under the [Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028](#) (the Strategy). The Strategy addresses statewide priority and cumulative threats to the NSW marine estate identified in the [NSW Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment \(TARA\)](#) through nine interlinked management initiatives.

1. Improving water quality and reducing litter
2. Delivering healthy coastal habitats with sustainable use and development
3. Planning for climate change
4. Protecting Aboriginal cultural values of the marine estate
5. Reducing impacts on threatened and protected species)
6. Ensuring sustainable fishing and aquaculture
7. Enabling safe and sustainable boating
8. Enhancing social, cultural and economic benefits
9. Delivering effective governance.

The proposed marine park focuses on reducing risks at a local scale from some site-based threats. It is designed to complement the initiatives and management actions of the Strategy.

HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY?

The Authority would like to hear your views on the discussion paper, including the management changes proposed at each site.

You can have your say by completing the online submission form available at www.marine.nsw.gov.au

Alternatively you can post your submission 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



HOW WILL MY FEEDBACK BE USED TO FINALISE THE PROPOSAL?

Your views will be used to identify benefits and costs to the community and to assist in finalising the marine park proposal for further consideration by the NSW Government.

Existing management rules will remain in place, and none of the proposals in this discussion paper will be implemented, until the NSW Government announces the outcome.

MORE INFORMATION

More information is available at www.marine.nsw.gov.au