



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Draft Marine Estate Management Strategy

FAQ #1

WHAT IS THE NSW MARINE ESTATE?

The NSW marine estate extends from the highest astronomical tide out to three nautical miles offshore, from the Queensland border in the north to the Victorian border in the south. It includes the shoreline, submerged lands, tidal rivers, creeks, coastal lakes and estuaries. For the purpose of the draft Marine Estate Management Strategy (draft Strategy), the marine estate has been divided into three regions: the northern region, which extends from the Queensland border down to Stockton Beach (north of Newcastle); the central region, which extends from Newcastle to Shellharbour; and the southern region, which extends from Shellharbour to the Victorian border. The central region is also known as the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion.

HOW IS THE MARINE ESTATE MANAGED IN NSW?

The NSW Government is managing the marine estate as a single continuous system for the greatest wellbeing of the community. To ensure coordinated, consistent and evidenced-based management of the marine estate, the NSW Government established two advisory bodies:

- the Marine Estate Management Authority (the Authority), who oversees the management of the NSW marine estate, including the current system of marine parks and aquatic reserves

- the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel, which provides the Authority with expert advice in the fields of social, economic and natural sciences.

The Authority has an independent Chair and includes representatives of four agencies involved in managing the NSW marine estate and provides advice to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment. The four agencies include the NSW Department of Industry, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and Transport for NSW.

WHAT IS THE DRAFT MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

The Strategy is a requirement of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*. It must set out the vision and priorities for management of the marine estate.

The vision for the marine estate is a healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community, now and into the future.

The draft Strategy proposes eight management initiatives to address priority and cumulative threats to the marine estate over the next decade in order to maximise community wellbeing.

The marine estate includes some of NSW’s most valued assets – its coastline, estuaries and marine waters.

It provides a wide range of environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits to the State, which contributes to community wellbeing.

HOW WAS THE DRAFT STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

The Authority has applied its five-step decision-making process:

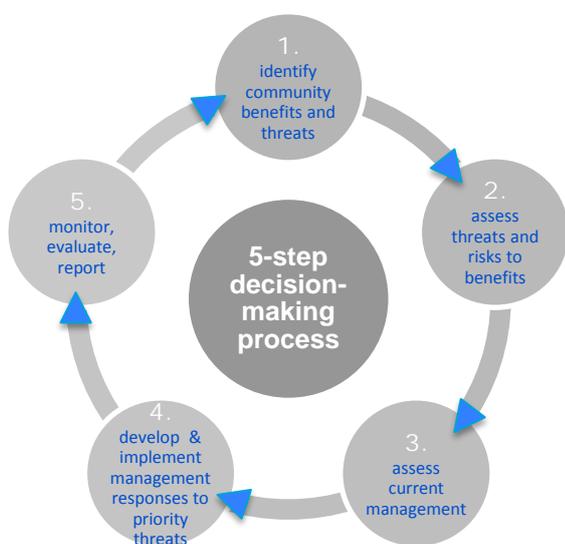


Figure 1. Five-step decision-making process.

Step 1 commenced in 2014, when the Authority asked 1,700 NSW residents about their values and attitudes in relation to the marine estate and benefits they derive.



In 2015-17, the Authority completed Step 2 by undertaking an evidence-based [statewide threat and risk assessment](#) (referred to as the statewide TARA) to identify the threats and risks to community benefits identified - to the environmental assets, as well as to the social, cultural and economic benefits.

Consultation on the draft statewide TARA occurred from January to April 2017 and the final TARA was used to inform the development of the draft Strategy. The [Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report – Draft Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment for the NSW Marine Estate](#) details how comments and evidence provided were used to finalise the statewide TARA. The report on the [NSW Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment – Background Environmental Information](#), which reviews the scientific literature for threats to the environmental assets and benefits of the NSW marine estate, was also updated during this process and now includes over 1000 evidence-based publications.

Steps 3 and 4 have involved assessing current management to see where action is needed to reduce priority threats and to enhance community benefits, then develop management options that will reduce priority threats and risks that are cost-effective.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES PROPOSED FOR THE HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION?

In early 2016, the Authority released a discussion paper on eight suggested management initiatives to address the priority threats identified for the bioregion. The broader initiatives, which respond to threats operating at both the bioregion and state scale, have been incorporated into the draft Strategy. These initiatives address water quality, the restoration of aquatic habitats, litter and marine debris, research priorities, wildlife interactions, improving boating infrastructure and land use planning outcomes.

Several initiatives that address bioregion-specific priorities are progressing this year. These include reducing resource-use conflict in Pittwater and regional boating strategies for Lake Macquarie and Pittwater. These projects will be headed by the Department of Primary Industries and Transport for NSW respectively.

A summary report detailing the community engagement findings on the suggested management initiatives for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion is now available on the [marine estate website](#).

HOW DOES THE DRAFT STRATEGY LINK WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT REFORMS?

The draft Strategy supports a number of related NSW Government reform processes, such as the coastal reforms, Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms, cultural fishing reforms and Crown land reforms, as well as the Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program.

The new *Coastal Management Act 2016* provides for the strategic management of our coastal areas into the future. It supports the objects of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* as the coastal zone forms part of the marine estate. Importantly, coastal management programs are intended to deliver some of the actions identified in the draft Strategy.

The NSW Government is committed to creating new, stand-alone, Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation, which respects and protects Aboriginal cultural heritage while providing for economic and social development. One of the management initiatives of this Strategy, protecting the cultural values of the marine estate, considers and builds on linkages with the Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms in its actions.

The NSW *Fisheries Management Act 1994* was amended in 2009 to recognise, protect and promote, Aboriginal cultural fishing. The NSW Department of Primary Industries is currently considering management options, in consultation with the Aboriginal Fisheries Advisory Council, to protect and promote Aboriginal cultural fishing. Two proposed management initiatives; protecting the cultural values of the marine estate and sustainable fishing and aquaculture are intended to support and complement cultural fishing.



The *Crown Lands Management Act 2016* and the *Crown Lands Legislation Amendment Act 2017* underpins the management of the State's Crown estate. This reform program will examine the use and management of coastal Crown land to improve public benefits for current and future users, which links to the sustainable coastal use and development for healthy habitats management initiative.

The Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program was developed in response to the 2012 Independent Report into NSW Commercial Fisheries Policy, Management and Administration. The sustainable fishing and aquaculture management initiative of this draft Strategy aims to deliver several key actions relevant to the commercial fishing reforms.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY THREATS?

A threat is a broad activity, event or process that could put environmental assets and/or social, cultural and economic benefits of the marine estate at risk. Threats are recognised as a statewide priority (priority threats) if they were assigned a risk level of moderate or high in all three regions through the statewide TARA.

The statewide TARA found that the greatest threats to the environmental assets of the marine estate were:

- urban and rural water pollution or run-off
- climate change (over a 20 year outlook)
- disturbance to habitat and species from estuarine entrance modification, harbour maintenance, foreshore development, wetland drainage and other works.

The greatest threats to social, cultural and economic benefits were primarily associated with water pollution and a general lack of social, cultural and economic information, lack of compliance with regulations and lack of access to the marine estate.

A cumulative threat is the threat from the combined (or cumulative) effect of other threats and stressors. The statewide TARA identified five cumulative threats (in no order of significance):

- multiple threats to estuarine water quality
- climate change (over a 20 year outlook)
- multiple threats to Aboriginal cultural heritage
- multiple threats to marine wildlife
- multiple threats to fish assemblages.

HOW DOES THE DRAFT STRATEGY ADDRESS THE PRIORITY THREATS?

Eight management initiatives are proposed to address the priority and cumulative threats. These initiatives summarise management objectives, benefits, threats, stressors and proposed management actions. Importantly, actions in one initiative may be linked to actions in another, and so the initiatives operate collectively and not in isolation.

The management initiatives and their aims are:

Improving water quality and reducing litter – the statewide TARA identified water pollution as the number one threat to environmental assets and the social, cultural and economic benefits of the marine estate. This initiative aims to address this by: reducing the impacts of urban and agricultural diffuse-source water pollution; providing improved guidance and coordination of land use activities affecting water pollution; proposing on-ground works to directly reduce the diffuse sources of water pollution; and filling knowledge gaps through research and monitoring programs.

Sustainable coastal use and development for healthy habitats – aims to protect coastal habitats and enhance the health of estuarine and coastal waterways by improving the design, quality and ongoing management of foreshore development, use and waterway infrastructure.

Planning for a changing climate – aims to use the best available information, methods and technology to strengthen the NSW Government’s understanding of how the marine estate will respond to a changing climate. It also aims to use successful frameworks and processes to mitigate, adapt and monitor the impacts of climate change on the NSW marine estate.

Protecting the cultural values of the marine estate – aims to involve Aboriginal people in the use, conservation and management of the NSW marine estate.

Reducing impacts on wildlife – aims to understand and mitigate threats to marine life in NSW.

Sustainable fishing and aquaculture – aims to ensure fishing and aquaculture activities continue to be undertaken in a sustainable manner while providing for the health, heritage and social benefits of seafood consumption to the community.

Enabling safe and sustainable boating – aims to balance the protection of coastal and marine habitats and species, with public access and safe and sustainable boating.

Improving governance and enhancing social and economic benefits – aims to improve governance arrangements in the marine estate and respond to knowledge gaps, resource-use conflict and loss of public access.

WILL THERE BE A NEW MARINE PARK IN THE HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION?

The Authority has released a new Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement which outlines the role and purpose of marine protected areas in the NSW marine estate. The policy statement, along with the statewide TARA and the final Strategy, will be used to inform any possible spatial management options within the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion and development of new management plans for existing marine parks. Any proposed spatial management options for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion will be undertaken separately to the draft Strategy and involve extensive consultation.



HOW WILL THE STRATEGY BE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED?

The Authority will guide the implementation of the Strategy over the next 10 years. An implementation plan will accompany the final Strategy. It will describe how the management actions will be carried out including timeframes, lead agencies and key performance indicators.

A monitoring program will evaluate the success of the management actions by tracking the progress of the Strategy against its key performance indicators. This program will guide adaptive management and monitor progress. It will include short, medium and longer term monitoring components and a citizen science component. The program will be reviewed after five years as part of a five-year marine estate health check, which will: assess if risk levels have changed; fill knowledge gaps; and address new or emerging threats not previously identified by the statewide TARA.

HOW WILL COMMUNITY COMMENTS BE TAKEN ON BOARD WHEN FINALISING THE STRATEGY?

Your feedback on management initiatives and management actions will help to identify any unintended consequences or impacts of the draft Strategy and the most effective ways to implement management actions. The feedback will help to refine and finalise the Strategy. The Strategy is intended to be completed in early 2018.



HOW DO I PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT STRATEGY?

The draft Strategy and associated documents are on the marine estate website at www.marine.nsw.gov.au. After reading the draft Strategy you can provide a submission online at this web address by clicking on the 'have your say' link. You can provide general comments or you can focus on a particular initiative(s). A series of targeted and general workshops are being held during the consultation period to provide more information on the draft Strategy and to encourage feedback.

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