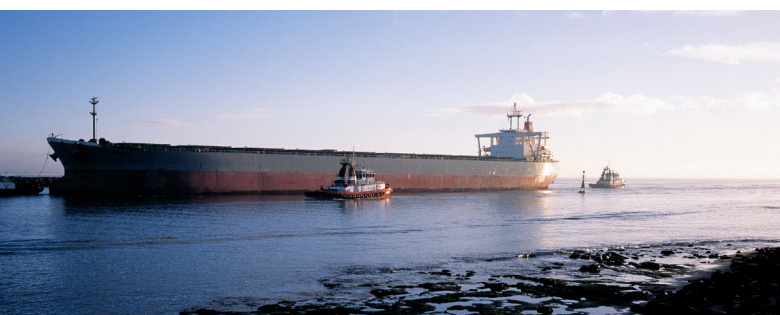
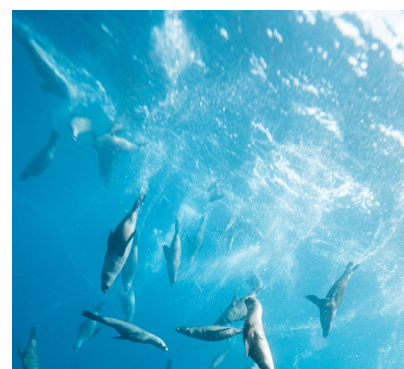
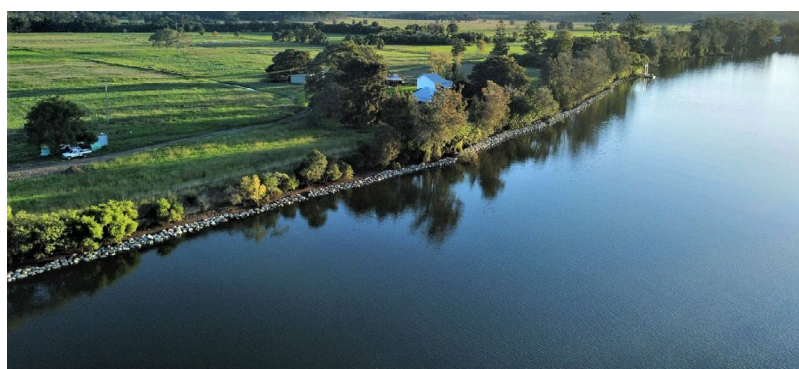


# Marine Integrated Monitoring Program

Guides monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities over the life of the Marine Estate Management Strategy





## Our vision:

a healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community, now and into the future.

### Marine estate

The marine estate is one of NSW's most significant natural assets. It extends from the Queensland border to the Victorian border and includes the ocean (out to 3 nautical miles), estuaries (to the tidal limit), coastline, coastal wetlands, lakes and lagoons, and offshore islands.

The marine estate is highly valued for its natural beauty and environmental assets. Its diverse habitats and abundant marine life benefit the community by sustaining healthy estuaries, shorelines and oceans. They also provide social, cultural and economic benefits.

Preserving these assets and benefits requires understanding and management of threats to the marine environment.

### Community survey

A community survey and several engagement workshops identified values and attitudes of the community towards the marine estate. This research identified the key environmental, social, cultural and economic values, benefits and threats as well as identified opportunities for improved management.

### Threat assessment

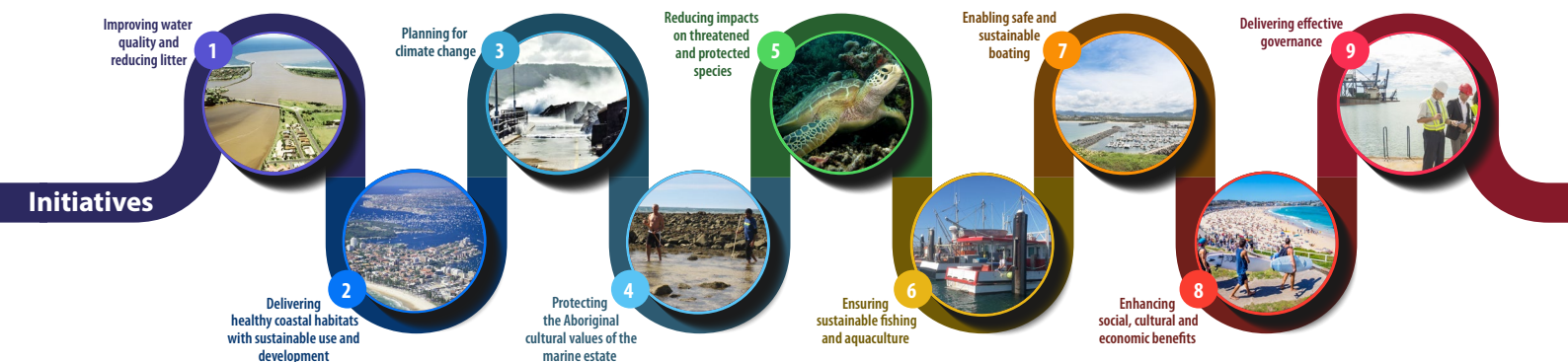
A statewide threat and risk assessment (TARA) undertaken in 2017 identified how various activities could impact the environmental assets or social, cultural or economic benefits derived from the marine estate. This assessment enabled management and research efforts to focus on important issues and priority threats. In 2023 a mid-term review of the TARA was completed to identify emerging threats, new knowledge, and management changes. A full assessment will be conducted in 2027.

### The Strategy

The Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 (the Strategy) is the NSW government's response to address the priority threats and risks identified in the TARA. It outlines how we will take action to reduce the greatest threats to environmental assets and protect the social, cultural, and economic benefits the community derives from the marine estate. The Strategy includes nine interlinked management initiatives to address priority threats and outlines responsibilities for government agencies managing the marine estate.



[www.marine.nsw.gov.au/marine-estate-programs/marine-estate-management-strategy](http://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/marine-estate-programs/marine-estate-management-strategy)



# The Monitoring Program

Guides monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities over the life of the Marine Estate Management Strategy

## Key purposes

The Marine Integrated Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) has three key purposes:

1. **monitor** the condition and trend of environmental assets and community benefits derived from the NSW marine estate
2. **evaluate** the effectiveness of the management initiatives and actions that aim to reduce priority threats and risks
3. **fill knowledge** gaps (social, cultural, economic, and environmental) identified in the statewide Threat and Risk Assessment.

The Monitoring Program provides the tools and processes to evaluate whether the Strategy is achieving its environmental, social, cultural, and economic goals.

It enables the collation and integration of data from a network of organisations including agencies, research providers, universities, local government, and the community.

This information is fed into the adaptive management framework and used to improve future threat and risk assessments, evaluations, research projects, and management strategies.



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To accomplish the three key purposes, the Monitoring Program:



**Monitors** the condition and trend of environmental assets and community benefits, progress towards the achievement of outcomes, and how knowledge gaps are being addressed



**Evaluates** if the Strategy is achieving what it set out to achieve



**Reports** progress and information



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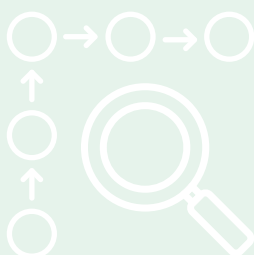
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## Why do we need the Monitoring Program?

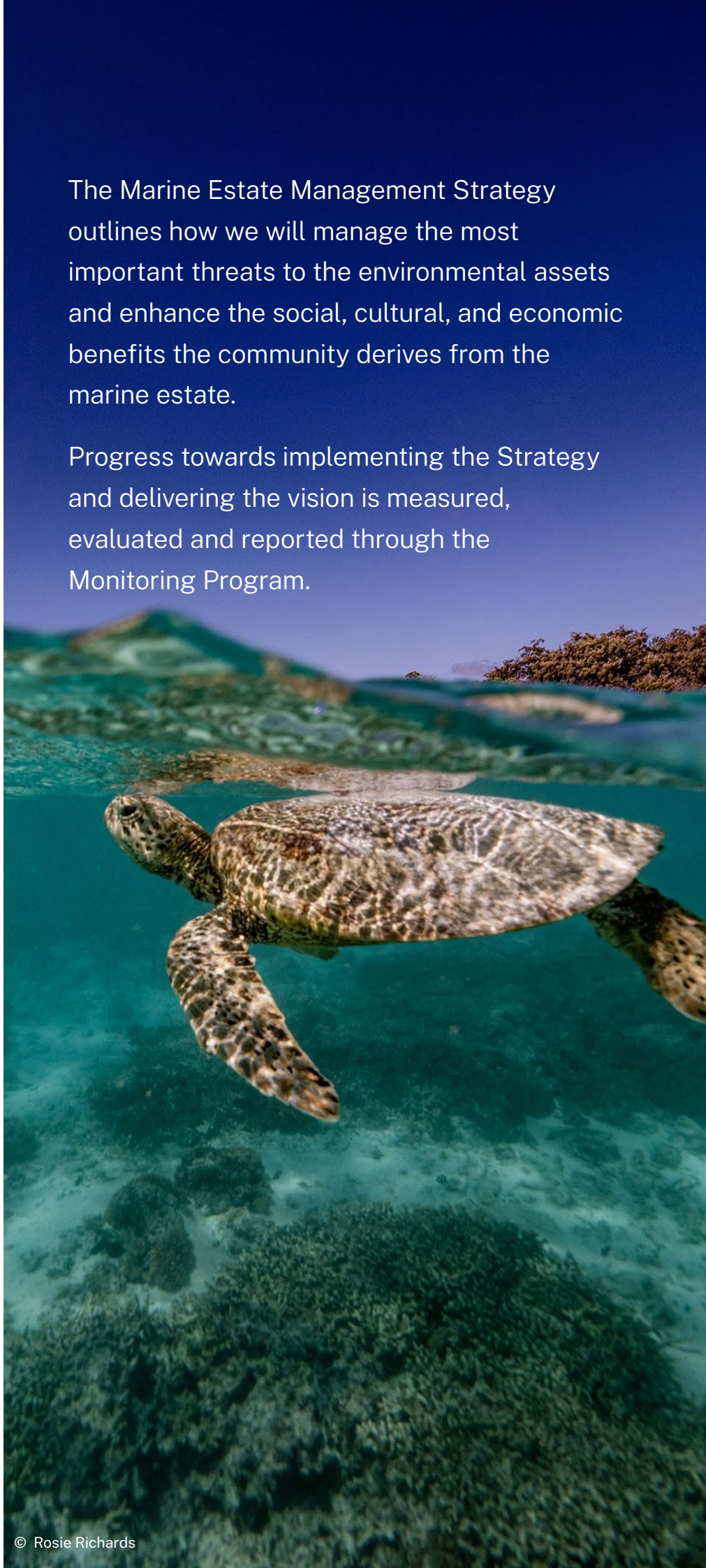
The Monitoring Program is valuable in that it:

- coordinates and reports environmental, social, cultural, and economic information for the NSW marine estate.
- gathers comprehensive data from various organisations, including government agencies, research providers, universities, local government, and the community through citizen science programs.
- contributes to broader monitoring, evaluation, and reporting efforts within the Marine Estate Management Authority (Authority) and with external partners.
- prioritises research and monitoring resources to address urgent management actions, improving community confidence.
- supports accountability and adaptive management, allowing for adjustments based on changing conditions and new information.
- enables reporting on the progress of the Strategy in achieving defined outcomes.



The Marine Estate Management Strategy outlines how we will manage the most important threats to the environmental assets and enhance the social, cultural, and economic benefits the community derives from the marine estate.

Progress towards implementing the Strategy and delivering the vision is measured, evaluated and reported through the Monitoring Program.





## Monitoring

### Delivering on key purpose 1 (condition and trend) and key purpose 3 (fill knowledge gaps)

**Approach:** Community Wellbeing Framework, and Environmental Condition Framework



Two key documents outline the way we monitor the condition and trend of environmental assets and community benefits (purpose 1) and monitor known (and emerging) knowledge gaps (purpose 3).

**The NSW Community Wellbeing Framework** provides a consistent and robust approach to monitoring the community benefits of the marine estate, assess threats to these benefits, and address social, cultural, and economic knowledge gaps identified in the statewide Threat and Risk Assessment. It addresses the lack of systematic monitoring of the human dimensions of the marine estate, and the resulting lack of social data, which are considered key threats. The Community Wellbeing Framework allows us to expand beyond the traditional focus on environmental aspects of the marine estate.

**The Environmental Condition Framework** outlines how the environmental goals of the Strategy will be progressed and evaluated. Monitoring focuses on condition or stressors of the main environmental assets under threat or delivering monitoring projects to specifically address key knowledge gaps identified in the statewide Threat and Risk Assessment or other relevant sources. Thirty-three core projects that collect data on environmental assets (e.g. estuary systems to threatened species) have been selected to best address purposes 1 and 3 of the Monitoring Program.

Both frameworks outline the indicators to be monitored, priorities, methods and timeframes, as well as information for public communication about marine estate monitoring projects.

### Delivering on key purpose 2 (management effectiveness)

**Approach:** Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (and evaluations at 2, 5 and 10-years)



Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Marine Integrated Monitoring Program

A Life Framework prepared for NSW Department of Primary Industries and Environment 10 October 2022

A I T H E R

The second purpose of the Monitoring Program is to evaluate the effectiveness of management initiatives in reducing priority threats and risks to the marine estate. This is often referred to as outcome monitoring or management effectiveness assessment.

**The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (M&E Framework)** was developed to guide the monitoring and assessment of our progress in delivering the Strategy (key purpose 2). This framework establishes a formal process for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting activities throughout the Strategy's duration. It facilitates the integration of environmental, social, cultural, and economic elements, as well as information on threats and stressors.

The M&E Framework provides the approach for assessing progress against outcomes that management actions are expected to collectively achieve. This allows for adjustments as needed, fitting within the context of adaptive management.





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## Evaluation

### Assessing achievement of outcomes and overall success

Evaluation is the systematic collection of data or information to understand and demonstrate the value and sustainability of a program and how well it's achieving its goals.

Evaluation also involves looking at risks, lessons learned, and recommendations for future planning.

#### A longitudinal approach

Evaluation is undertaken at 2, 5 and 10 years to assess if the Strategy and its initiatives are suitable, efficient, effective, and sustainable. Evaluation also provides insights for continuous improvement.

#### Three aspects of evaluation

The M&E Framework specifies three types of evaluation:

- **process evaluation** focuses on the delivery of management actions.
- **outcome evaluation** assesses the extent to which outcomes are achieved or are on track to be achieved.
- **economic evaluation** considers the value and efficiency of the program.

Each type of evaluation also includes a brief review of the rationale for the Strategy or management initiative. This helps to identify changes in the understanding of issues or management that may affect program delivery.



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## Reporting

### Sharing progress, insights, and information

Every year, the Marine Estate Management Authority (Authority) reports on key programs and the progress of over 100 projects in the Strategy.

The Monitoring Program will share information through report cards with contributions from partner agencies. These are currently in development. The main drivers for producing a report card are to:

- provide accountability and transparency
- share progress, insights, and information and build knowledge
- secure social and political licence
- create behavioural change
- celebrate achievements

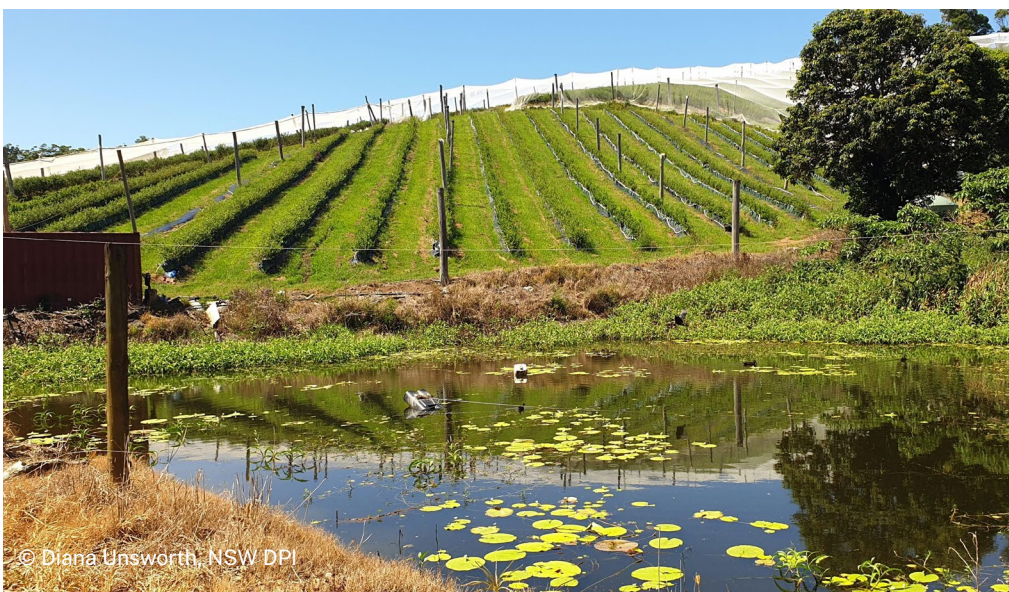
Report cards will draw on content from annual reporting on the Strategy as well as monitoring and evaluation findings. They will show how we are progressing at filling knowledge gaps and achieving outcomes, as well as trends in environmental assets and community benefits.



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## Background

The Marine Estate Management Authority, established in 2013, combines the heads of four NSW government agencies tasked with managing the marine estate and advising the NSW Government. All four agencies (NSW Department of Primary Industries, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and Transport for NSW) are part of this Authority.

The Authority offers guidance to the NSW Government on marine estate policies, priorities, and management direction. In 2018, the Authority published its Strategy.

**Acknowledgment of Country:** The Department of Regional New South Wales acknowledges that it stands on Country which always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work.

**Photo credits, cover page:** Paul Foley, Local Lands Services NSW, Justin Gilligan NSW DPI, Melinda Anderson, Rosie Richards.

## Further information

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## Get in touch

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