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# Newsletter no.3

## THE HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION ASSESSMENT IS PROGRESSING ON SCHEDULE.

The Marine Estate Management Authority (MEMA) is developing options to enhance marine biodiversity conservation within the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion, while achieving balanced outcomes for all users.

This newsletter provides an update on the assessment and information on engagement opportunities in 2016. We are up to Step 3.



**Step 1** information has been collected, evaluated, and made available for use in Steps 2 and 3.

**Step 2** threat and risk assessment has also been completed and the outcomes are being used to inform Step 3.

**Step 3** draft management options are being developed for community engagement.

**Step 4** final management options will be provided to Government after community engagement.

### STEP 1 – INFORMATION COLLECTION

#### Web portal update

Over 1500 entries received via the web portal have been assessed. There are a wide range of views and ideas in the community, so the assessment has focussed on capturing the diversity of views rather than the number of people expressing these views. The information collected has helped inform the threat and risk assessment and the development of management options.

The benefits and threats identified through the web portal for the bioregion were similar to those previously identified through the state-wide **Marine Estate Community Survey** and the Hawkesbury bioregion workshops in June 2015. The opportunities suggested for the bioregion were also similar between the web portal and the workshops. Comments provided by the community

about opportunities to reduce threats, improve their experience and enhance marine biodiversity conservation in the bioregion, related to the following themes:

- » Biodiversity conservation
- » Climate change
- » Cultural heritage
- » Education
- » Fisheries and aquaculture
- » Funding
- » Partnerships and/or whole of government approaches
- » Planning (ideas to consider in planning for the future use, enjoyment and protection of the marine estate).
- » Regulation and compliance
- » Research
- » Shipping and boating
- » Tourism
- » Water quality and litter

The information submitted by the community for pre-identified and additional sites was more specific and will be useful when developing site-based solutions to address some threats. Further assessment of pre-identified and additional site information is currently underway.

More detail on the feedback received via the web portal and stakeholder workshops will be made available in early 2016.

## STEP 2 – THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT (TARA)

The TARA for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion was completed in two parts. One part assessed threats to environmental assets including clean water, marine and estuarine habitats, and threatened or protected species; and one assessed threats to social and economic benefits, for example boating, fishing, shipping, tourism, and coastal development.

Threats were assessed considering their impacts over time and spatial extent (local, regional, state-wide). Cumulative impacts were considered, including how different activities or issues can modify or exacerbate each other.

Following an initial evaluation by MEMA agencies, risk levels for each threat (high, medium, low or minimal) were determined by panels of agency and independent experts overseen by an independent Risk Assessment Facilitator.

Forty five activities were identified as potentially threatening the environmental assets or social and economic benefits of the bioregion. The assessment was complex because many activities that are benefits can also be threats, and environmental assets underpin many social and economic benefits.

The TARA identified 20 priority threats – those that were assessed as posing a high or moderate risk to environmental assets, social and economic benefits, or both. Details of the TARA outcomes will be available in early 2016.

## STEP 3 – DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES – WE ARE HERE NOW!

Ways of addressing priority threats are being considered within the Hawkesbury bioregion or, for threats that operate or are managed at broad scales, through the state-wide marine estate management strategy.

Social and economic issues are especially important for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion because of the high concentration of people and activities in this section of the coast. Therefore any management initiatives suggested to reduce threats need to consider impacts on social and economic benefits.

A range of potential management initiatives is being considered to help address priority threats, including to:

- » influence voluntary behaviour through development of guidelines
- » improve awareness through provision of more and better targeted information
- » improve access or amenity by building new infrastructure
- » rectify past degradation by implementing rehabilitation programs
- » reduce resource use conflict by reviewing spatial management arrangements
- » improve risk management by better coordination, data collection or new research

Further assessment is underway for management initiatives relating to:

- » the 15 pre-identified sites
- » sites nominated via the web portal
- » places previously identified through a **broadscale biodiversity assessment** of the bioregion in 2005

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The next phase of community engagement will commence in early 2016. The community and key stakeholders will be encouraged to provide feedback on the TARA and draft management initiatives for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion. Further details will be posted on the marine estate website [www.marine.nsw.gov.au](http://www.marine.nsw.gov.au) in early 2016, including:

- » results of community engagement to date
- » a discussion paper
- » social, economic and environmental background reports
- » TARA report.