



Marine Estate
Management Authority

HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION ASSESSMENT

Phase 2 Community Engagement Report on Suggested Management Initiatives

August 2017



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Phase 2 Community Engagement Report on Suggested Management Initiatives – Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment

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More information

NSW Marine Estate Management Authority

www.marine.nsw.gov.au

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- NSW Office of Environment & Heritage
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [Marine Estate Management Authority's](#) (the Authority) vision for the NSW marine estate is a *healthy coast and sea managed for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future*. The Authority is developing options to enhance marine biodiversity conservation within the [Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion](#), while achieving balanced outcomes that include opportunities for a wide range of recreational and commercial uses, including boating, fishing, shipping, and passive uses such as picnicking, swimming, diving, education and research.

The NSW Government's response to the [Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW](#) included a commitment to explore ways of enhancing marine biodiversity conservation in the key gaps identified by the audit, namely the Hawkesbury and Twofold Shelf marine bioregions. Consistent with this commitment, the Government has tasked the Authority with developing options to enhance marine biodiversity conservation in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion (the [Assessment](#)). In undertaking the Assessment, the Authority has piloted its new [5-step decision-making process](#) for marine estate management, outlined in the [2013 Principles Paper](#) and the [Marine Estate Management Act 2014](#).

This report provides an overview of the outcomes from the Phase 2 engagement (28 February – 8 May 2016), which was the consultation process undertaken following the public exhibition of the *Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion Assessment Discussion Paper - Suggested Management Initiatives* (discussion paper). The results of Phase 1 engagement (2015) are documented in MEMA's [Summary of Hawkesbury Shelf community and stakeholder engagement](#).

This report summarises the techniques used for engagement, stakeholder workshop outcomes, and a qualitative analysis of stakeholder and community submissions.

Public exhibition of the Discussion Paper was extended to 71 days, closing on 8 May, 2016.

Public submissions for the discussion paper were scheduled to be accepted from 28 February to 24 April 2016. However, the exhibition period was [extended to 8 May, 2016](#) by the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment, which resulted in a 71-day public exhibition period.

The stakeholder and community engagement approach included a mix of targeted and mass media notifications to publicise the submissions period and encourage feedback. Public feedback was sought through a well-publicised online submissions process, in addition to key stakeholder workshops, individual meetings with peak organisations, targeted engagement of Aboriginal communities, and direct emails to nearly 1,400 organisations and individuals.

Over 3,400 submissions and online entries were received during the public exhibition period.

There are multiple stakeholders and communities interested in this Assessment. The Authority has targeted some stakeholder groups – primarily those with cultural, social and economic interests and dependencies within the bioregion – with additional engagement activities to ensure their knowledge and insights can be carefully considered.

Three main themes emerged from the review of submissions:

1. widespread concern about the level of biodiversity protection, whether in relation to specific activities or about general conservation aims
2. high personal value for the range of services and uses the bioregion provides
3. individuals and organisations want to safeguard those services and uses.

Given the wide range of personal values and uses, the submissions ranged from full support to complete opposition of one or more initiatives.

Of all the initiatives suggested through the discussion paper, *Initiative 4 - Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use-sharing* - generated the largest amount of interest from stakeholders and the community. Submissions ranged from making the entire region a marine park with sanctuary zones to 'no lock outs' or limiting the number of protected zones within the bioregion, with the whole range of responses in between. Further, some submissions asserted a right to undertake a particular activity.

Balancing the wide range of views requires an evidence-based approach – not just representing the perspective of only one segment of the community.

Stakeholder and community feedback will be carefully considered to help inform the Authority's advice to the NSW Government on the final package of management initiatives for the bioregion.

Several of the final initiatives will involve further community and stakeholder engagement prior to, or during, their implementation.

1. BACKGROUND

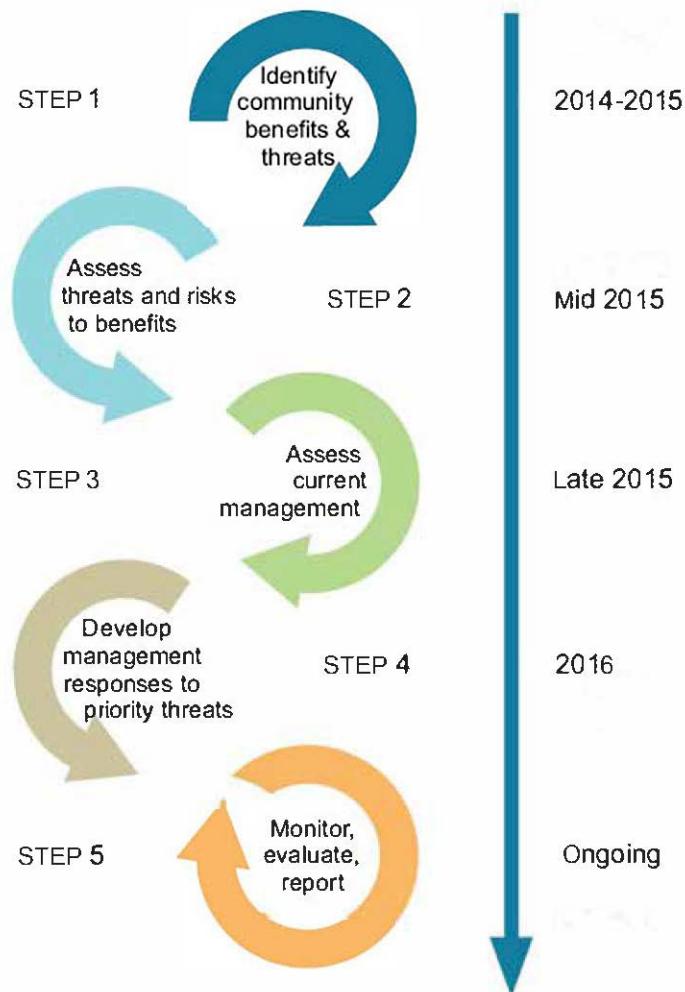
The Authority was established by the NSW Government in 2013, in response to the recommendations from the [Independent Scientific Audit of NSW Marine Parks](#). The NSW Government accepted all recommendations from the Audit, including the need to develop options for enhancing marine biodiversity within the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion, while achieving balanced outcomes that include opportunities for boating, fishing and other uses.

The [Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion](#) extends between Newcastle in the north to Wollongong in the south inclusive of Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay and the waters out to three nautical miles from the coast.

The [Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment](#) (the Assessment) follows the Authority's 5-step decision-making process for marine estate management in NSW (**Figure 1**). The Assessment aims to enhance marine biodiversity in the bioregion while achieving balanced community outcomes, including opportunities for a wide range of recreational and commercial uses, including boating, fishing, shipping, and passive uses such as picnicking, swimming, diving, education and research.

Assessing and developing options to improve management are steps 3 and 4 of the process, and have been informed by a bioregion-scale threat and risk assessment. Stakeholder and community inputs are being considered throughout the Assessment, including seeking comments on suggested management initiatives covered in this report.

Figure 1 – The Authority's 5-Step decision-making process (see p.8, [Discussion Paper](#))



The Assessment is being overseen by the Authority, which comprises an independent chair, the chair of the [Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel](#), and the heads of the four NSW state agencies involved in managing the NSW marine estate: [Department of Primary Industries](#); [Department of Planning and Environment](#); [Office of Environment and Heritage](#); and, [Transport for NSW](#). Input from the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel, other relevant experts, stakeholders and the community is informing the Assessment.

To date, the following reports have resulted from the Assessment:

- [Hawkesbury Shelf environmental background report](#)
- [Summary of Hawkesbury Shelf community and stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion threat and risk assessment report](#)
- [Review of 15 pre-identified sites](#)
- [Social and economic background information report on the NSW marine estate](#)
- [Sea countries of New South Wales: a benefits and threats analysis of Aboriginal people's connections with the marine estate](#)

PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION PAPER

The [discussion paper](#) formed part of step 4 of the Assessment and sought feedback on eight suggested management initiatives (**Table 1**) to address the priority threats. New evidence about threats and risks to inform the risk ratings of the threat and risk assessment (TARA) was also sought. Stakeholders and the community were also invited to provide comment on the Assessment process.

Community and stakeholder feedback on the eight suggested management initiatives has been considered in informing the final recommended management initiatives to government.

Table 1: Eight suggested management initiatives

Suggested management initiative	Objective
1. Improving water quality and reducing marine litter	Reduce water pollution from catchments and litter entering the bioregion
2. On-ground works for healthy coastal habitats and wildlife	Improve the health of coastal habitats and marine wildlife safety
3. Marine research to address shipping and fishing knowledge gaps	Address key knowledge gaps identified from the TARA that result in moderate and high risks in the bioregion
4. Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use sharing	Enhance the conservation of biodiversity and use sharing through spatial management measures
5. Improving boating infrastructure	Improve boating infrastructure for better access and to improve environmental outcomes
6. Reducing user conflicts in Pittwater	Reduce resource-use conflict between commercial fishers and other user groups in Pittwater
7. Improving accessibility	Identify and address opportunities to improve access availability in the bioregion.
8. Land use planning for coasts and waterways	Review foreshore land use planning to deliver a range of benefits, cut red tape and improve environmental outcomes

HAWKESBURY SHELF ASSESSMENT ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES TO INFORM THE 5-STEP PROCESS

Community and stakeholder input has been gathered throughout the Authority's [five step decision-making process](#) for marine estate management in NSW (Figure 1).

To date, there has been two phases of engagement for the Assessment:

- Phase 1 – which involved gathering community and expert views on the values, benefits, threats and opportunities for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion and to identify sites that are important to the community. This was part of Step 1 of the five step decision-making process. The outcomes of this phase are documented in [Summary of Hawkesbury Shelf community and stakeholder engagement](#) (MEMA 2015a)
- Phase 2 – which involved gathering community and stakeholder views on the publicly released discussion paper. The outcomes of this phase are the subject of this report and captures Steps 2 – 4 of the five step decision-making process.

The five step decision-making process for the Assessment has involved the following opportunities for engagement:

STEP 1

A range of engagement opportunities were provided in Step 1 of the Assessment starting in 2013 including:

- [The Marine Estate Community Survey](#) (July 2014) – a state-wide survey of more than 1,700 residents and visitors of NSW.
- An interactive web portal open from 25 June to 28 August 2015 where the community was asked to comment on: favourite or priority sites and how they used them or what benefits they gained from them; what threats they think affect their use or benefit at the sites; potential opportunities to reduce the threats; and the bioregion in general.
- A variety of peak community groups and state and local government agencies participated in workshops and meetings to further explore threats, benefits and opportunities in mid-2015.
- The authority engaged Cox Inall Ridgeway to facilitate engagement with Aboriginal communities in mid-2015. The engagement sought to enhance the Authority's understanding of: the benefits and values derived by Aboriginal people from the marine environment of the bioregion; the threats to these benefits and values; and management opportunities to mitigate threats and maximise community well-being.

The engagement along with individual submissions identified:

- benefits derived from the bioregion
- threats to these benefits that could be used in the threat and risk assessment process, and
- opportunities that were considered in developing suggested management initiatives.

STEP 2

The outcomes from community engagement at Step 1 fed into Step 2, which was an evidence-based TARA.

This step involved independent and agency expert workshops to determine a risk rating of high, moderate, low or minimal for threats to the environmental assets within the bioregion, such as its clean waters, threatened species, seagrasses, rocky reefs, and to the social and economic benefits the community derives from the bioregion.

STEP 3

The Authority has been evaluating the suggested management initiatives. The feedback from Steps 1 and 2 has been considered within this evaluation.

STEP 4

From February to May 2016, a range of engagement activities occurred including the release of the discussion paper on the eight suggested management initiatives, outcomes of the TARA and meetings and workshops with peak stakeholder groups (see [Section 2](#) for details).

Feedback on the discussion paper was requested via an online submission form, including a request for comments on the suggested management initiatives, a call for additional evidence for the TARA, suggestions for any additional initiatives, and comments on the process more broadly.

The Authority engaged Cox Inall Ridgeway to facilitate engagement with Aboriginal communities across the bioregion in early 2016. The Aboriginal engagement report ([Appendix 1](#)) will be considered alongside this report to help inform the Authority's advice to the NSW Government on the final package of management initiatives for the bioregion.

Several of the final initiatives will require further community and stakeholder engagement prior to, or during their implementation.

STEP 5

As part of implementation of the final management initiatives, a process to monitor, evaluate and report on the bioregion will be established.

2. ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Stakeholder and community engagement is an essential component of the Authority's approach to the management of the NSW marine estate.

The purpose of engagement during the Assessment was to:

- a) Capture stakeholder and community views at progressive steps in the process to ensure the management decisions for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion reflect community values and benefits
- b) Encourage stakeholder and community to help design and ultimately own the assessment outcomes.

Engagement has been undertaken in accordance with the overarching engagement principles identified in the Authority's [Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#), which includes:

- early involvement in the Assessment
- communication and accessibility by consistently providing clear, accurate and easy to understand material
- transparency by informing stakeholders and communities about how their views have been considered, and
- evaluation of each of the community engagement techniques implemented to allow improvements to be made for future engagement.

METHOD

The community identified a range of benefits associated with the bioregion and its uses. The discussion paper presented [eight suggested management initiatives](#) that are being considered to address priority threats to those benefits - the environmental assets and social and economic values and uses of the bioregion.

As part of Phase 2 community engagement, the community was invited to consider and comment on the suggested management initiatives and provide new evidence about threats to the bioregion.

Stakeholder and community feedback was sought through multiple avenues, including:

- a public awareness campaign to inform the community of the release of the discussion paper
- targeted engagement activities to capture inputs from individuals and groups with unique needs and/or uses, and
- a public submissions process on the discussion paper.

All of the engagement techniques used in Phase 2 of community and stakeholder engagement are qualitative collection techniques. The information was open to everyone, and responses could be made by individuals, groups or organisations. Responses were not necessarily representative of the whole community but related to those members of the community who made a submission, attended a workshop, and/or meeting.

Background information and answers to [frequently asked questions](#) were made publicly available to assist with the preparation of submissions. This included the [six background reports](#) that informed the Assessment.

3. ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Over 3,400 online entries and submissions were received during the public exhibition period. Online entries included responses via the online submissions webpage. This webpage allowed individuals to respond to one or more of the eight suggested management initiatives as a separate entry. Some individuals responded to all eight initiatives, while others responded to one or several initiatives. Online entries and submissions could be anonymous and there were no limits placed on the number of times an individual could make an entry or a submission. Submissions from peak organisations and individuals included formal reports, direct emails, letters, a petition, as well as correspondence directed to local Members of Parliament.

Submissions and entries were analysed to capture the feedback on the social, economic and environmental benefits, the costs of the suggested initiatives, changes to improve the initiatives and new initiatives. The feedback was used to inform the final package of management initiatives to be considered by the NSW Government.

Information about the risk ratings and new evidence about threats and risks were also sought and identified. Comments on the process more broadly were also collated for consideration in future marine estate projects.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The public exhibition of the discussion paper included a broad public awareness campaign to encourage public participation. The campaign included:

- local and regional [media releases](#). As a result, news items appeared on *ABC News*, *Fishing World*, *Illawarra Mercury*, Nature Conservation Council News, Professional Fishermen's Association and the *Newcastle Herald*.
- information on websites and social media distributed by Department of Primary Industries, Office of Environment and Heritage, and Transport for NSW including the marine estate website, the NSW Government's 'Have your Say' portal, Twitter and Facebook.
- direct email to nearly 1,400 organisations and individuals. Recipients were encouraged to distribute the email to their peers, stakeholders, friends and families.
- direct mail to over 40 local councils, including a letter requesting councils promote the discussion paper via their websites and in their newsletters.
- direct email via Multicultural NSW email link to approximately 5,000 multicultural contacts, including community organisations, individuals and multicultural media.
- hard copies of the discussion paper and submission form were also available at all NSW Fisheries Offices.

TARGETED ENGAGEMENT

A number of peak stakeholder groups were targeted, due to their particular interests, values, uses or actions within the bioregion, to obtain their detailed feedback on the suggested management initiatives.

PEAK STAKEHOLDER GROUP WORKSHOPS

Five workshops were held during March and April 2016 for peak stakeholder groups, local and state government agencies, and university representatives. Approximately **166 people attended** the workshops, which were held across the bioregion. Peak stakeholder groups who attended the workshops included fishing, diving and conservation groups. A list of stakeholders that attended the workshops can be found in **Table 2**.

Stakeholder workshops were carried out to:

- Update stakeholders on progress to date and provide an overview of the TARA outcomes and how to review those outcomes.

- Outline the suggested management initiatives and inform stakeholders of the submissions process.
- Gather stakeholder views and perspectives on the suggested management initiatives.
- Foster a sense of shared responsibility for management of the marine estate in the bioregion.

An independent facilitator conducted three of the workshops, producing a combined report outlining the feedback ([Appendix 2](#)). The Department of Primary Industries also conducted a workshop with commercial fishers and another for recreational fishers, with reports produced for each workshop ([Appendices 3 and 4](#)).

Table 2: List of stakeholder groups that attended workshops

National Parks Association of NSW, Southern Sydney	Environmental Defenders Office NSW	Newcastle City Council
National Parks Association of NSW	Dive Industry Association of Australia	Pittwater Council
Hawkesbury River Commercial Fishing Association Inc.	Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative Limited, Newcastle	Randwick City Council
Underwater Skindivers & Fisherman's Association (USFA)	NSW Fish Habitat Partnership	Shellharbour City Council
USFA/Central Coast Sealions	University of NSW	Sutherland Shire Council
Wild Caught Fishers Coalition	University of Newcastle	Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.
Professional Fishermen's Association	Centre for Marine Bio-Innovation UNSW	Warringah Council
Community Environment Network	Georges River Combined Councils Committee	Waverley Council
Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW	Gosford City Council	Wollongong City Council
Sea Life Trust	Hornsby Shire Council	Wyong Shire Council
Underwater Research Group of NSW	Hurstville City Council	Local Land Services
Australian Marine Sciences Association	Kogarah City Council	Sydney Water
Australian Marine Conservation Society	Lake Macquarie City Council	NSW Department of Industry
Sydney Fish Market	Manly Council	

ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PEAK STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETINGS

Agency staff representing the Authority attended a total of **16 meetings** for advisory committees and peak stakeholder groups. A list of these meetings and the key issues that arose can be found in [Appendix 5](#). The meeting objectives were:

- provide information on the key outcomes of the TARA and the suggested management initiatives
- clarify any issues, and
- encourage groups and individuals to make a submission.

A list of key stakeholder meetings can be found in **Table 3**.

Table 3: List of key stakeholder meetings

Aboriginal Fisheries Advisory Council	Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council	National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council	Primary Industries Ministerial Advisory Council
NSW Shellfish Committee	Port Authority	Nature Conservation Council	Sydney Water
Joint Expert Maritime Working Group	Australian Marine Conservation Society	National Parks Association and Environmental Defenders Office	Fish Habitat Partnership
Sydney Coastal Councils Group	Maritime Advisory Council	Sydney Institute of Marine Science	Commercial fishers from the Hunter catchment/region

BROAD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The wider community was encouraged to make submissions and provide feedback through a number of avenues. Targeted stakeholder groups were also encouraged to publicise the discussion paper and the engagement process. This resulted in a large number of submissions from stakeholder groups, as well as individuals from across the bioregion.

ONLINE SUBMISSIONS PORTAL

There were **over 1,060 entries** received through the online submissions' webpage.

The online submissions' webpage asked respondents to focus on the **six questions** included in the discussion paper. Most entries were received in response to suggested management initiative 4 – *Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use sharing*. The number of entries per management initiative have been listed in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Number of submissions received per initiative via online portal

Suggested management initiative	Number of entries	Percentage of online portal submissions
1. Improving water quality and reducing marine litter	137	13%
2. On-ground works for healthy coastal habitats and wildlife	82	8%
3. Marine research to address shipping and fishing knowledge gaps	59	5%
4. Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use sharing	609	57%
5. Improving boating infrastructure	33	3%
6. Reducing user conflicts in Pittwater	52	5%
7. Improving accessibility	28	3%
8. Land use planning for	32	3%

Suggested management initiative	Number of entries	Percentage of online portal submissions
coasts and waterways		
Not specified	26	2%
Blank entry	15	1%

EMAIL AND HARDCOPY SUBMISSIONS

In addition to the online submissions webpage, individuals could provide email or hard copy submissions, which have been categorised below. **Over 2,350 submissions** were received via email to contact.us@marine.nsw.gov.au. All hard copy submissions that were sent to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (Locked Bag 1, Nelson Bay NSW 2315) or forwarded to the Department via other means, such as through Ministerial correspondence, have been included in this category.

Extensive submissions

There were **almost 90 extensive submissions** received from peak stakeholder groups, local community and interest groups, and individuals, including students and interested persons.

Campaign correspondence

Over 2,000 campaign correspondence submissions were received. This was typically a submission in the form of a letter or email that clearly supported a campaign run by organisations and/or action groups to bring attention to a particular issue or view. These submissions have been reviewed and considered individually, where possible, to ensure the themes are included in this report.

Some form letters provided additional information about personal opinions and experiences about the bioregion, such as the length of time they have enjoyed fishing, spearfishing, swimming, snorkelling and/or diving and the importance individuals place on continuing to enjoy those activities.

There were a number of individual campaigns identified, which are listed below:

- **Over 1,400 form letters and emails** were received in support of a marine park in the bioregion. Campaigns originated from the Nature Conservation Council, the Australian Marine Conservation Society, and from 'Save Our Marine Life' which is an alliance of 20 conservation groups working to protect Australia's marine life.
- **Over 450 form letters and emails** were received in opposition to marine parks or any 'lock outs' for recreational fishing. Campaigns were undertaken by the Recreational Fishing Alliance and the 'Sydney loves fishing' website.
- **Over 120 form letters and emails** were received specifically addressing the risk rating of spearfishing and stating the practice is sustainable and selective.
- **Over 20 form letters and emails** were received about the need to plant and restore crayweed in the bioregion.

Ministerial correspondence

There were **over 250 letters** sent to local Members of Parliament and Ministers. These letters were forwarded to the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Office of Environment and Heritage for consideration as part of this report. The letters ranged widely in opinion. However, the majority appeared to be part of a campaign either for marine parks or for "no lock outs" for recreational fishing.

Petitions

There was **one petition** received in support of a marine park for Sydney that contained **177 signatures**.

FEEDBACK ON THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

There were **76 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing the Assessment process. Most of the comments focussed on the TARA, with many respondents questioning the validity of the analysis. Some respondents felt the discussion paper was too lengthy and difficult to understand.

It was felt the term “spatial management” was ambiguous and did not adequately reflect the intention of the suggested management initiative. Many respondents felt the term “closures” or “restrictions” is a more accurate reflection of the intention of the suggested management initiative. It was felt the language and jargon used in the community engagement questions did not reflect the potential outcomes that could arise from the suggested management initiative, or solicit a response from the particular segments that would be impacted including those with English as a second language.

Feedback included concerns that particular stakeholder groups would have “louder” voices, which could result in an unbalanced decision-making process. It was felt that all parts of the community should have a say in how the marine estate is managed and that one group should not dictate uses and activities.

Some stakeholder groups and individuals were unaware of the discussion paper until the last few weeks and days of the submissions period. It was felt the discussion paper could have been more widely publicised, which would have resulted in a greater number of submissions across a range of interest groups.

FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Stakeholder groups include special interest groups, conservation organisations, fishing groups and organisations, Aboriginal communities, local government and the broader NSW community. This section outlines the views of these groups, who were either targeted during the consultation or who were identified during the analysis of submissions.

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Authority acknowledges the need to have a deeper understanding of how the connections with Aboriginal communities can best be addressed in future planning and management of the marine estate.

Feedback from engagement workshops with Aboriginal communities undertaken by Cox Inall Ridgeway are summarised in the engagement report ([Appendix 1](#)). The engagement identified that overall, there was a strong desire from all Aboriginal communities engaged to be more involved in the management of the marine estate.

Aboriginal communities saw a range of potential benefits for their local community if implementation of the management options was undertaken in an innovative way - promoting strong partnership arrangements with Aboriginal communities across the bioregion. Cultural fishing was raised as a general issue of concern, noting there is a separate NSW Government reform process specifically considering this issue.

Submissions to the discussion paper were received from the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, NTS Corp (Native Title Service Provider for Aboriginal Traditional Owners in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory), Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, and from individuals who identified as having Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. Themes observed through these submissions reflected the same feedback as the targeted Aboriginal engagement.

The submissions also made reference to the principles espoused in the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity*, and other international agreements. The submissions indicated that these principles should be incorporated into the proposed management initiatives and related plans and strategies, including affirmation of the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples over biological resources and over the Traditional Ecological Knowledge associated with these resources.

It was further recommended in the submissions that ongoing engagement processes and activities should be designed to ensure the inclusion of Aboriginal communities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is important to note the NSW Government is currently undertaking [reforms to coastal management](#), which includes the introduction of the *Coastal Management Act 2016* to replace the current legislation, a new Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy to guide coastal land use planning, a new coastal management manual to support council decision-making, and a toolkit to identify and assess coastal hazards and risks.

Seven local councils, a combined councils' committee and a councils' group, listed in **Table 5**, provided submissions on the discussion paper. Many of those councils sought clarity around the relationship between the coastal management reforms and the marine estate reforms, which are running in parallel. Councils cited and/or provided their existing management plans and associated research as tools for reference during the preparation of the recommended management initiatives.

A number of councils expressed concern around the terms "over regulation" and "red tape" and suggested there were no examples provided to clarify why an initiative was needed to address these matters.

Most local government submissions included extensive information about localised research and programs that were in place to address specific environmental threats. It was widely suggested by councils that stormwater runoff was a complex issue that required more than gross pollutant traps if it was to be effectively managed.

Table 5: List of local government respondents. As the engagement occurred prior to the amalgamation of some NSW councils, some names have since changed.

Georges River Combined Councils' Committee Bankstown Council, Campbelltown Council, Fairfield Council, Hurstville Council, Kogarah Council, Liverpool Council, Rockdale Council, Sutherland Council, and Wollondilly Council	Sydney Coastal Councils Group Botany Bay Council, City of Sydney, Leichhardt Council, Manly Council, Mosman Council, North Sydney Council, Pittwater Council, Randwick Council, Rockdale Council, Sutherland Council, Warringah Council, Waverley Council, Willoughby Council, and Woollahra Council
Hawkesbury City Council	Lake Macquarie City Council
Manly Council	Pittwater Council
Randwick Council	Sutherland Shire Council
Warringah Council	

FISHING GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Commercial fishing industry

Commercial fishers within the bioregion raised concerns about the impacts of the anchorages off Newcastle and Port Kembla on marine habitats, the degradation of their fishing grounds from physical disturbance, litter and debris and restrictions on access to their trawl and trap and line fishing grounds within State and Commonwealth waters. Commercial fishers within Pittwater expressed concerns around the proposed removal of commercial fishing from the area and the associated impacts on their industry/livelihood and considered there were multiple user conflicts in the Pittwater that also warranted investigation.

Recreational fishers

Recreational fishers within the bioregion raised concerns about the high risk rating of recreational fishing in the bioregion. Many respondents called for more evidence to justify the rating. Recreational fishers considered that the existing restrictions, including size and bag limits,

were adequate and that increased enforcement would reduce the risk rating. It was felt the activity itself wasn't high risk, but the disregard for existing restrictions artificially raised the risk rating. Most submissions from individuals identifying as recreational fishers did not support 'lock outs' of recreational fishing from any areas. However some campaign emails were received from individuals identifying as recreational fishers supporting marine parks and sanctuary zones for the bioregion.

As a sub-group of recreational fishers, spearfishers in particular raised concerns about the perceived high risk rating of their activity. Although spearfishing was not rated as high risk in the TARA, submissions from spearfishers included concern that the risks around their activity, which they perceived to be sustainable and selective, were not assessed adequately.

Submissions from recreational fishers were varied, but the main themes to emerge included:

- **Risk rating.** There was widespread concern from recreational fishers that the high risk rating assigned to recreational fishing activities was not representative of perceived actual threats. There was a call for more research and the provision of data to confirm this rating.
- **Restrictions and enforcement.** Many submissions called for more restrictions to bag limits and size limits, including increased enforcement of those restrictions. It was felt these measures would be more effective and "just" than restrictions on fishing and boating activities within the bioregion.
- **Water pollution.** It was widely thought to be the most important issue to address, before other initiatives were put in place. Many submissions mentioned water pollution from stormwater, industry and sewage overflows and outfalls, and called for more information about how government would address those pollution sources and threats.
- **Transference of issues.** A common theme related to the perceived transference of biodiversity threats. It was felt that sanctuary zones, commonly referred to as "lock outs" by recreational fishers, would move problems from one area to another and not address the priority threats to biodiversity.
- **Social, health and economic impacts.** Multiple submissions were received from individuals who expressed concern about the possibility of being denied access to fishing and boating within the bioregion. There were mentions of a detrimental knock-on effect to local businesses and communities who provided services and products to these fishing groups. Many personal stories were shared about perceived threats to family and Australian traditions. It was felt there were multiple social, health and economic benefits provided through participation in fishing and boating activities within the bioregion, and the removal of access would have an adverse impact on individuals, business and society more broadly.
- **Increased signage and education.** Another common theme focussed on increased signage and education about existing restrictions and legislation. It was felt that improvements to biodiversity could be achieved when the public is alerted to the reasons why restrictions are in place, and most importantly, what those restrictions include and where they are applied.

SHIPPING AND BOATING STAKEHOLDERS AND ORGANISATIONS

Respondents were generally supportive of the boat storage strategy initiative. There were calls for more consolidated moorings (on-water, dry storage, trailered), with some respondents believing an audit could determine moorings that are being used as permanent storage for unused boats.

Some respondents called for more research into the impact of anchoring, underwater noise and sediment resuspension. It was suggested that further consultation was needed with the shipping industry prior to the development of proposals for marine parks, sanctuary zones or spatial closures.

It was felt that conservation planning should take into account the commercial shipping and port-related uses, including increased port-related activities associated with forecast trade growth.

Some respondents also argued that boating does not represent a high risk to marine habitat, and that urban, industrial and agricultural stormwater poses a far greater threat to marine habitat and water quality than boating activity/storage.

Respondents also supported ongoing education and rigorous attention to navigation aids and signage aimed to minimise the potential for interaction between boats and marine habitat. Further, it suggested that in order to better understand the actual impact of boats on vertebrates in the bioregion, improved data gathering and record keeping was required.

There were a number of individual boat owners and users who felt that fishing was important to their health and wellbeing. Many of those respondents were concerned their views were not as valued as those of other stakeholder groups. There was general concern around the TARA ratings, with many respondents citing personal experience within the bioregion, claiming there were minimal impacts from boating activities.

CONSERVATION STAKEHOLDERS AND ORGANISATIONS

This stakeholder group provided the largest proportion of responses to the discussion paper. Most of the responses were in the form of campaign emails and letters. However, a number of peak environmental conservation groups also provided extensive submissions.

Respondents strongly supported marine protected areas, particularly the creation of a marine park in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion. Submissions suggested that the design of marine protected areas for the bioregion should be science-based and include a comprehensive, adequate and representative network of marine sanctuaries. It was considered that a network of marine sanctuaries, including a large-scale, multi-use marine park would more effectively reduce the risks to the marine environment.

It was felt that reducing the use of micro-plastics in products, introducing bag bans and container deposit schemes, and providing on-ground habitat rehabilitation would address water quality and litter impacts.

There was some concern regarding rehabilitation of coastal wetlands that focus should be on rehabilitation from existing loss and preventing further loss, rather than offsetting for future development.

There was also agreement that the initiatives must be implemented as a package rather than as individual initiatives to work effectively. Also, in consideration of cost, both short-term and long-term costs should be investigated. Concerns were raised about confusing terminology such as “spatial management” and also misinformation and myths that need to be dispelled, with emphasis placed on clear communication of community and stakeholder education and engagement. Finally, there was support for expansion to the proposed research initiative – beyond fishing and boating – to ensure that there was effective evaluation of the initiatives through ongoing monitoring of biodiversity within the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion.

SCIENCE ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

The Authority also values the knowledge, expertise and evidence of science organisations and groups. These stakeholders were also targeted through workshops and meetings, and encouraged to promote the public exhibition to their membership.

Extensive submissions reports were provided, along with research papers and other data sources, which highlighted the value of the marine environment and the need for biodiversity and sustainability. This group included universities, science associations, environmental centres, and other government and non-government science-based organisations.

There was widespread support for marine protected areas and in particular sanctuary zones from these stakeholders. The submissions were varied, but the main themes to emerge included:

- **Biodiversity and sustainability.** Many submissions called for the introduction of a marine park with sanctuary zones as highly valued measures to safeguard biodiversity and ensure sustainability.

- **Existing research.** Many submissions included extensive bibliographies, referencing existing research and data that could be referenced by the Authority.
- **Internationally recognised conservation planning principles.** It was suggested that internationally recognised principles, such as CAR - comprehensive, adequate and representative – should be referenced in relation to spatial management initiatives.
- **Water quality.** Submissions mentioned the need to address priority threats, including clearing and dredging, agricultural runoff, and urban/diffuse discharges.
- **Climate change.** Submissions suggested the need to escalate climate change as a management initiative in its own right.
- **Marine debris.** There was a general call for marine debris, in particular micro plastics, to be recognised as a major threat, with appropriate preventative and management tools put in place.
- **Clarity around implementation.** There were suggestions that initiatives should include specifics around where, when, and how they could be implemented, particularly around funding and joint government approaches.
- **Fauna habitat protection.** Multiple species of fauna were referenced throughout the submissions, including migratory birds and fish and their specific needs.
- **Changes to planning controls.** It was widely felt that changes to planning controls should not weaken those already in place to safeguard the environment within the bioregion.

FEEDBACK ON RISK RATINGS

During Phase 1 engagement, the community and stakeholders were asked to provide new evidence about threats and risks that may change the associated risk ratings in the [TARA](#) for the bioregion, developed as part of Step 2 of the Assessment.

A premise of the TARA is that it is a point-in-time assessment based on the best available scientific evidence, and that the evidence may change over time. The TARA drew on a number of information sources including community engagement in 2014 (Marine Estate Community Survey) and on several stakeholder workshops conducted in 2015. The scientific method was underpinned by four technical background papers and a series of expert workshops. The TARA considered the trend information on threats over 5 to 50 year time frames and considered whether threats were local, bioregional or state-wide. Scientific evidence was graded as *adequate (strong)*, *limited* or *inferred*, and knowledge gaps were managed with precaution.

Through the Discussion Paper, stakeholder workshops and the on-line portal, Phase 2 engagement invited participants to provide any new information that may change the associated risk ratings of the TARA.

ANALYSIS

Phase 2 engagement attracted additional public comment on the TARA, both in workshops and through submissions to the discussion paper.

While the TARA was welcomed by many as an evidence-based (scientific) approach to managing the bioregional marine estate, some peak bodies and interest groups attending workshops stated that the TARA was difficult to understand. Some also commented that specific stressors were missing (e.g. seismic surveys or the PFAS contamination at Williamstown Airbase) and others felt that some stressors were over-stated (e.g. point-source discharge, aquaculture, recreational fishing).

The TARA method was also challenged because of its assumption that contemporary Aboriginal cultural practice is not considered to be an integral part of managing ecosystems.

While many responses supported the TARA conclusions, some entries and submissions questioned the TARA ratings – that they were either too high or too low. Most comments were based on anecdotal evidence, with individuals citing personal observations about the perceived risks and benefits of various activities. For example, many individuals who identified as recreational fishers did not perceive that activity to be high risk. In particular, spearfishers (whose activities were assessed as low risk) were concerned about perceptions that spearfishing is considered unsustainable due to it being perceived as part of the broader recreational fishing activity (assessed as high risk). Similarly, some pro-conservation respondents suggested that by prioritising issues such as *user conflict* and *improving boating infrastructure*, the TARA had lost sight of its objective of enhancing marine biodiversity.

There were a number of themes that arose:

- **Additional threats and risks.** Entries and submissions included suggestions for additional threats and risks to be considered, such as introduced or translocated species and/or pathogens, and for a greater emphasis on the cumulative impact of threats. Others were concerned about additional potential stressors (such as “over-population”) that the TARA did not expressly report.
- **Additional research and data.** There was a general call for further research and information to support the TARA.
- **Clearer information.** Some responses reported that the TARA report is difficult to read and understand. Other submissions requested better clarity, particularly around baselines and definitions of impacts. Some respondents felt that the risk analysis placed too much emphasis on maintaining a pristine environment base case scenario, which was impractical given the proximity of the bioregion to built-up areas. Some individuals suggested that the term “priority threat” conveys undue importance within some sectors. It was further suggested the risk ratings should not be mistaken as a mandate for change or for having passed a test for requiring a regulatory response.
- **Balance of risks and benefits.** There was concern the TARA may have overstated environmental risks associated with some activities where there was a lack of information and knowledge gaps, and underestimated the economic and social consequences of some potential threats to the viability of those activities. There was also concern that the TARA may have attributed risk to certain activities rather than to user behaviour.
- **Risk attribution too high or too low.** A number of submissions and stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the risk ratings attributed. There was a strong correlation between the perception of the rating and the sectoral interests of the contributor. For example, from opposite perspectives, recreational fishing and marine conservation interests both strongly questioned the TARA risk assessment of recreational fishing.
- Some responses questioning risk attribution also questioned the adequacy of the information informing the rating. For example, several recreational fisher groups suggested that the primary scientific data used in the expert process to assess fishing and boating should have been publically issued with the discussion paper.
- While questioning the risk ratings, no submissions offered new scientific evidence that contradicted or qualified the scientific evidence used in the TARA expert process.
- **Missing elements of framework.** It was suggested that a 'risk acceptance threshold' framework is a critical step in the TARA to determine what constitutes an acceptable or unacceptable level of risk. It was also suggested that the TARA did not sufficiently account for cumulative impact from multiple stressors.

All comments on the TARA received through the consultation were collated and reviewed by MEMA agencies to inform the state-wide TARA. Feedback on the TARA was also used to inform future community engagement processes on the state-wide TARA (to improve community accessibility and understanding) and an evaluation of the 5 step decision making process undertaken by MEMA and MEEKP in late 2016.

FEEDBACK ON SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

BACKGROUND

Eight suggested management initiatives were developed to help reduce or mitigate high and moderate priority threats to:

- the **environmental assets** of the bioregion—the natural attributes, components and living resources. This includes the living and non-living parts of the marine environment such as estuaries and marine waters, marine animals and plants and their habitats
- the **social and economic values and uses** that the NSW community derives from the bioregion—for example going to the beach, boating, diving, fishing and shipping

ANALYSIS

Each initiative has been analysed to identify themes arising from the workshop discussions and the online entries and submissions. A summary of the themes is provided in this section.

INITIATIVE 1 - IMPROVING WATER QUALITY AND REDUCING MARINE LITTER

There was overwhelming support for improved water quality. It was suggested this initiative be tackled first. There were **384 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative.

Many entries and submissions suggested the initiative be strengthened. Diffuse source discharges were seen as the greatest threat, which included wastewater and stormwater discharge. It is also useful to note that there was some confusion among the community and stakeholders about the categorisation of stormwater as diffuse source discharge/pollution, rather than point source discharge/pollution. There were concerns raised about run off and spills from commercial operations, and the subsequent need for better marine wildlife incident planning.

There was strong support for public education, which was seen to be needed in multiple languages.

1.1 Reducing litter and marine debris

The issue of marine debris and litter was frequently raised in the workshop discussions during March and April 2016 as well as in the submissions and online entries. There was overwhelming support for addressing marine litter in the bioregion for a range of environmental, social and economic reasons. It was also recognised there are several organisations in the bioregion undertaking successful programs and research, which the Authority should recognise and support.

Key issues raised by respondents included the need for:

- improving management of gross pollutant traps
- promoting new technologies such as biodegradable fishing line and sea bins
- greater involvement in marine clean-ups by recreational fishers
- increase in data collection to determine sources
- increasing education, compliance and enforcement
- the development of a bioregion-wide marine debris monitoring strategy based on the same principles as the Hunter marine debris monitoring program
- facilitating, encouraging and supporting strategic programs such as citizen science programs
- facilitating the development and implementation of marine debris source reduction programs, and
- broadening focus from microplastics to plastics in general including banning of plastic bags.

Targeted engagement with Aboriginal communities indicated good support for initiatives that would reduce marine litter and debris.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation, which is responsible for the Australian Marine Debris Initiative, raised concerns around the TARA, suggesting it did not appropriately recognise the impact of marine debris and litter on tourism. The Foundation argued that “floating litter and debris washed up on beaches and waterways has a significant visual impact that detracts from the appeal of natural spaces that are so attractive in the region for tourism”.

1.2 Reducing water pollution from catchment runoff

This initiative was strongly supported by stakeholders and the community. There was overwhelming support for improved water quality generally, with many respondents noting the need for the initiative to be strengthened and expanded.

Diffuse source discharges were seen as the greatest threat to water quality, which included wastewater and stormwater discharge into waterways. A number of stakeholders felt that this initiative should be tackled first, before starting on any other initiative. There was strong support for public education, which was seen to be needed in multiple languages.

Constructive and detailed feedback on this initiative was received from state and local government authorities and peak industry groups at the stakeholder workshops. Participants provided input on the pollutants that are affecting water quality and the habitats they would like to see protected. It was also felt that there was currently little uptake of water-sensitive urban design, due to lack of funds and incentives.

Responses on how to reduce the impact of pollution from runoff in land-based water pollution included:

- increasing compliance
- providing smarter planning
- utilising and incentivising smarter design, technology and systems
- improving management of water flows, and
- providing more incentives and funding.

Aboriginal communities across the bioregion also raised concern over water pollution, in particular from sewage, toxic runoff and oil spills. Aboriginal community members noted that this has led to a loss of biodiversity and has negatively impacted on cultural heritage practices.

INITIATIVE 2 - ON-GROUND WORKS FOR HEALTHY COASTAL HABITATS AND WILDLIFE

There were **311 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. Submissions for this initiative were mainly from councils and interest groups who focussed on coastal vegetation management. This initiative was largely supported, with submissions containing extensive commentary about local sites of importance, including the importance of mangroves, the impacts of mangroves encroaching on saltmarshes, and the impacts that dredging and erosion have on marine habitats.

2.1 Grant funding for water quality and rehabilitation works

Feedback indicated the program benefits and needs are well recognised and supported by all aspects of the community, with stakeholder feedback strongly supporting additional funding and effort being directed towards on-ground aquatic habitat rehabilitation activities, including the planning and development stages of these projects.

Many submissions noted the high cost of on-ground rehabilitation activities as a barrier to their implementation to date, and expressed doubt that adequate funding would be provided through this initiative to produce significant improvements. Rehabilitation activities were particularly recognised as important by the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, who noted this mechanism as a primary tool for improving the benefits they gain from the marine estate.

Outcomes from workshops with Aboriginal communities indicated strong support for rehabilitation works, with this initiative being the second most discussed after access issues. Workshop participants saw opportunities for wider Aboriginal community involvement in the program through employment opportunities around implementing on-ground works.

Very little community feedback about rehabilitation via biodiversity offsets was received. One response noted that recent studies have shown that individual wetlands have distinctive genetic compositions that are unlikely to be found elsewhere, making any offset activities complex at the genetic level. Rehabilitation of aquatic habitats was generally strongly supported.

2.2 Urban mangrove management policy

Submissions and workshop outcomes indicated there was no support for the development of a mangrove code of practice for trimming mangroves for private purposes, such as maintenance of views. This was seen to be due to the perception it would lead to significant impacts on mangrove wetlands. This was particularly raised by local government, which also raised concerns about the ongoing resourcing of compliance requirements. The easing of regulatory process requirements for public authorities to undertake maintenance works was more generally supported. Responses supported developing marine vegetation plans at an estuary-wide level, potentially as part of a broader coastal management program. There was also support for more consideration of the impacts of mangroves encroaching on saltmarsh communities.

2.3 Marine wildlife incident planning and guideline implementation

This initiative was supported across community and stakeholder groups, as were the marine wildlife components of the research initiative. Some stakeholders did, however, indicate that there should be more importance around investing in action rather than research.

The voluntary reporting of marine wildlife interactions was supported, and it was suggested that existing websites and mobile applications could be expanded to provide support. Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of community and key stakeholder education and the promotion of voluntary reporting.

There was little comment received on incident planning and implementation. Some stakeholders expressed related concerns about the impacts of shark netting, unacceptable wildlife interactions and vessel strike. Generally, though, the feedback indicated that there is little public understanding of the purpose of marine wildlife incident planning.

Some feedback indicated the need for compliance mechanisms for wildlife incidents broader than database reporting. There was support for improving cross-agency delegation and facilitating communication and information sharing between different agencies and also with non-government organisations or key stakeholder groups. Education on these compliance avenues or options was also emphasised.

Feedback from Aboriginal communities suggested there can be improvements in the way cultural needs are facilitated through the management of wildlife incidents. Workshop participants supported marine wildlife incident planning guidelines with better responses to incidents (such as entanglement) and also research on the effects of various bioregional activities on marine wildlife.

INITIATIVE 3 - MARINE RESEARCH TO ADDRESS SHIPPING AND FISHING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

There were **285 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. Overall, there was support for further research in the bioregion and respondents noted the importance of research in decision-making and the potential it has to maximise environmental, economic and social benefits.

However, some respondents suggested the proposed research agenda had too narrow a focus and should relate to the overarching vision of the marine estate program. Suggested areas of further research include spatial and temporal monitoring of biodiversity and biomass in the bioregion, better understanding of marine ecosystems, more detailed data on recreational

fishing, and research on the introduction of pests and exotic species to the bioregion from shipping.

It was further suggested that research activities should be done in close collaboration between research organisations to prevent duplication of effort. Several submissions provided extracts of research papers that could partly address knowledge gaps.

Aboriginal communities noted support for marine research projects focused on scientifically 'testing' aspects of the Aboriginal Communities' cultural knowledge and practices. Potential research projects were suggested, including the impact of shipping on marine wildlife and habitats.

There was a diverse range of issues raised relating to the proposed research into anchoring. Some respondents recognised there is a significant knowledge gap and agreed that further research was needed. However, some respondents felt that investigating the impacts of shipping was a waste of time because they could not perceive any impacts.

A number of submissions identified marine pests as a gap in the current initiatives and suggested it should be a priority area for research. This included risks associated with both large ships and recreational vessels. It was suggested this risk will increase over time due to climate change driven impacts on the natural process in ecosystems.

Although this initiative was not referred to directly in most instances, it was clear from the responses to Initiative 4 that respondents expressed support for more research on the risks identified in the TARA.

INITIATIVE 4 - SPATIAL MANAGEMENT FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND USE SHARING

There were **2,933 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. Most of the submissions received were specifically in response to this initiative and it received the largest campaign-style reaction. While the submissions and entries can be broadly categorised as either supporting or opposing the implementation of marine protected areas, the majority were supportive of Initiative 4. Of those that supported marine protected areas, there was overwhelming support for a marine park. Over 2,000 contacts, mostly individuals who did not identify as a member of a group or organisation, supported the introduction of a multi-use marine park in Sydney. This contrasted with the majority of responses from people identifying as recreational fishers who were firmly opposed to this initiative, associating spatial management with no take zones or fishing "lock-outs".

The submissions demonstrated the range of extensive and sometimes conflicting uses across the bioregion, and the diversity of views within the community about conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. Submissions included personal observations and anecdotal evidence of the harmful effects of other user groups. For example, anglers and spearfishers cited examples of large fish being pushed out of areas due to disturbances from high numbers of divers. Conversely, divers and snorkelers expressed concern over fishing activities, such as the taking of large fish and damage to sea beds and reefs caused by anchoring. However, one common point of view by those users was around the risks of commercial fishing, with many submissions calling for the removal of super trawlers from the bioregion (none of which currently operate within the marine waters of the bioregion but do occur in Commonwealth waters).

For those supporting a marine park, it was suggested that a science-based approach should be taken, which would include a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) network of marine protected areas. Submissions from scientists, diving groups and conservation groups asserted the need for marine protected areas to protect various species and habitats.

For those opposing marine protected areas, it was felt the risk ratings associated with recreational fishing were not science-based and did not represent the actual threats to the bioregion, as perceived by many (but not all) recreational fishers. The high risk rating of recreational fishing was almost universally questioned by people identifying as recreational fishers with concerns of its use as a justification for any new 'lock outs'. Many submissions from fishers suggested that marine estate management should focus on what they perceived as the much higher risks associated with pollution, runoff and sewage, rather than restricting recreational fishing which they considered would have minimal benefits for marine biodiversity.

Many submissions cited potential positive and negative impacts of increasing marine protected areas. Potential benefits included enhancing the value of local businesses (including for diving and fishing), major drawcard for national and international tourism, opportunities to build eco-tourism industries (e.g. diving industry, boat tours), new job opportunities and investment in infrastructure, improved marine biodiversity and ecosystem resilience and increases in fish abundance.

Potential costs included congestion and concentration of uses on the water and on land due to displacement, increased impacts on those remaining accessible sites (e.g. increased density of anchoring, fishing, rubbish etc.), loss of Aboriginal people's cultural rights, lack of access to locally-caught seafood, and need for compensation for commercial and recreational fishers for loss of access.

INITIATIVE 5 - IMPROVING BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE

There were **266 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. While there was broad support for initiative 5.1, respondents raised concerns around initiative 5.2, as it was thought that fast-tracking environmental assessments and approvals would result in less favourable environmental and social outcomes.

Submissions included requests for more consolidated moorings, with some submissions proposing that an audit be conducted to determine which moorings are being used as permanent storage for unused boats often referred to as 'mooring minders'. There were also submissions suggesting more seagrass-friendly moorings and courtesy moorings to minimise the impacts of anchoring and protect natural habitats.

5.1 Boat storage strategies

Respondents were generally supportive of the boat storage strategy initiative. There were calls for more consolidated moorings (on-water, dry storage, trailered), with some respondents believing an audit could determine moorings that are being used as permanent storage for unused boats.

5.2 Reducing red tape for low-risk boating infrastructure

While this initiative did not generate a significant number of submissions, respondents who specifically addressed this initiative indicated their scepticism. The suggestion there is unnecessary red tape for the development of boating infrastructure was challenged. For example, a number of submissions sought further details on the evidence base for the initiative from the TARA.

Some submissions included suggestions about developing a holistic approach to boating. It was felt a number of factors could be considered, including: better design for access and storage for the full range of users needing land-side water access; better environmental education for boat users; improved environmental outcomes through any new infrastructure; better maritime navigation to help protect habitats; and better enforcement of illegal boating activities.

INITIATIVE 6 - REDUCING USER CONFLICTS IN PITTWATER

There were **124 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. A localised campaign emerged in response to this initiative, with submissions from residents of Pittwater proposing the complete removal of commercial fishing from the area. There were also submissions from commercial fishers who outlined adverse impacts on their ability to make a living, should commercial fishing be removed from Pittwater.

There were specific concerns raised about perceived environmental impacts such as: bycatch; the spread of the pest species of algae, *Caulerpa taxifolia*; damage to seagrass; impacts on wildlife; sustainability; overfishing; and impacts on fish movements and breeding. There was a perception that recreational fishers take fewer fish and have less impact. However, it was felt that spearfishing and fish traps should also be removed from Pittwater.

In terms of social impacts, submissions included concerns around the visual impacts of discarded undersized or dead fish and boaters getting tangled in trap float lines. These impacts were believed to reduce the quality and enjoyment of recreational fishing, and references were made to other waterways where these impacts were reduced due to the removal of commercial fishing.

These concerns were countered by respondents who suggested that although recreational fishing had a greater environmental risk in the TARA, commercial activities were targeted unfairly for removal. Commercial fishers suggested there were extensive controls in place for commercial fishing and that more restrictions were required to minimise the impacts of recreational fishing. It was further suggested that recreational boat moorings create more damage to seagrass than commercial fishing activities.

Respondents also raised concern around the focus on Pittwater and asked why the area was being targeted. Submissions included views that commercial fishing generates employment benefits, sustain small businesses and contribute positively to communities.

Numerous stakeholders expressed support for commercial fishing in the stakeholder workshops and suggested that both sectors could successfully co-exist. It was felt that education, improved infrastructure, and use of zoning could balance the different needs.

Submissions from several recreational fishing groups did not support removing commercial fishing from Pittwater. There was a preference to map commercial fishing grounds and negotiate resolutions to conflicts, and carry out broader education initiatives.

Research was put forward that provided an update on findings of a study into the economic contribution of commercial fishing to NSW coastal communities. The study found that recreational and commercial fisheries were highly interdependent and offer complementary economic and social benefits for community wellbeing. These findings were attributable to Pittwater as well as other NSW coastal locations.

INITIATIVE 7 - IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

There were **51 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. The term “accessibility” was viewed in many different contexts. Submissions from Aboriginal communities welcomed improved accessibility to the marine environment, particularly around surety of access to culturally significant sites and places. However, there were also calls for restricted access to protect sand dunes and culturally significant sites, which would be determined in partnership with the community.

Submissions also included support for better dissemination of information about locations that support accessibility; and improved accessibility to beaches, protected swimming locations, boat ramps and wharfs for people with a disability and the elderly.

7.1 Assessment of existing public disabled access

There was general support for this suggested management initiative. However, it was felt that more consultation with key disability groups would address the general lack of information regarding public disabled access facilities available at popular locations. Iconic locations such as Palm Beach, Sydney Harbour islands and remote beaches were highlighted as potential locations for further assessment that would benefit the community.

7.2 Further engaging with Aboriginal communities on access for cultural purposes

The consultation undertaken for the Assessment by Cox Inall Ridgeway ([Appendix 1](#)) indicates strong support by Aboriginal communities for joint management partnerships and funded Aboriginal land care programs. This was also supported by the land council submissions received. Aboriginal communities also called for better quality engagement on a range of marine estate planning issues. Further engagement with Aboriginal communities will be vital to informing the final initiative.

INITIATIVE 8 - LAND USE PLANNING FOR COASTS AND WATERWAYS

There were **257 entries and submissions** that could be identified as directly addressing this initiative. A key theme emerging was that cutting red tape should not be at the cost of environmental or social outcomes. Submissions indicated this initiative should not result in less local input and influence.

Feedback from Aboriginal communities included suggestions that lessons could be learnt from past actions, particularly around the protection of culturally significant places.

Respondents were eager to ensure the maintenance of a strong regulatory environment and environmental protections and there was a suggestion the [Regional Environmental Plan \(Sydney Harbour Catchment\) 2005](#) could be reviewed.

Other key stakeholders felt that alignment and integration between policy reforms (e.g. coastal and biodiversity reforms) was required and better role delineation and clarity was needed between government agencies.

FEEDBACK SUGGESTING NEW INITIATIVES

The discussion paper attracted over 50 responses suggesting initiative ideas that were not expressly put forward in the initiatives. Some ideas were proposed as additions to existing initiatives, others were proposed as entirely new ideas including:

Fauna protection: such as migratory species protection and introducing biodegradable fishing gear

Flora protection: saltmarsh and dune vegetation maintenance, mangrove management opportunities developed to support Aboriginal cultural practices

Climate change: establish an initiative focused solely on climate change, establish protected areas for not only the conservation of biodiversity but also to capture and store carbon, stop beach erosion

Water quality: tertiary treatment of all sewage outfalls, investigate stormwater treatment options, ban disposable plastics and microplastic products. Other suggestions asked for remediation of specific areas (e.g. Botany Bay, Homebush Bay, Hunter Estuary) or of specific pollution sources (medical waste, car wash facilities).

Human activities: investigate off-road vehicle activity on sand dunes as a stand-alone threat, education on cigarette butts and ban smoking on beaches, investigate the risks around international trade and biosecurity

Management processes: Increase number of staff undertaking environmental management and compliance in the bioregion, consider opportunities for joint management responses with community and cultural groups, ensure conservation and restricted areas are easy to identify and clearly mapped

Mining and offshore exploration: consider a ban on oil and gas exploration and mining to prevent threat from becoming an actual event, address polluting impacts of current mining on catchments

MEMA agencies have considered all new ideas in the final recommended management initiatives to be presented to government.

4. NEXT STEPS

Feedback from stakeholders and communities will be carefully considered to help inform the Authority's advice to the NSW Government on the management of the bioregion.

Any new evidence that has been provided about threats that affect the use and enjoyment of the bioregion has been considered during the refinement of the bioregion TARA, which has now been incorporated into a draft state-wide TARA. The draft state-wide TARA has been released for community engagement.

Many priority threats and risks from the bioregion also occur state-wide and need to be managed at that scale. These threats and risks will be further considered as the Authority develops the 10-year [Marine Estate Management Strategy](#).

Some of the suggested management initiatives will involve further public or targeted engagement as they are implemented. For example, any proposals for spatial management or changes to [State Environmental Planning Policies](#) will require additional community engagement.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Cox Inall Ridgeway Report on Engagement with Aboriginal Communities

Appendix 2

Peak Stakeholder Group Workshops Report

Appendix 3

Department Of Primary Industries Workshop Report - Feedback from Commercial Fishers -
Workshop Notes 6 April 2016

Appendix 4

Department Of Primary Industries Workshop Report - Feedback from Recreational Fishers -
Workshop Notes 6 April 2016

Appendix 5

Hawkesbury Shelf Community Engagement Phase 2 Meetings - Record of Key Issues

APPENDIX 1: COX INALL RIDGEWAY REPORT ON ENGAGEMENT WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

(INT17/70434)

APPENDIX 2: PEAK STAKEHOLDER GROUP WORKSHOPS REPORT

APPENDIX 3: DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES WORKSHOP NOTES - FEEDBACK FROM COMMERCIAL FISHERS - WORKSHOP 6 APRIL 2016

GENERAL COMMENTS (UNEDITED TO CAPTURE A TRUE RECORD OF COMMENTS MADE)

Deep ocean outfalls (DOOs): has the most recent report from EPA which says the impacts from DOOs are unknown, been included in TARA?

Water quality is a priority for discussion.

Knowledge gap: Nature of oceanic current – freshwater pooled from outfalls as diffusers don't always work. Periodic events. This area is not suitable for marine park as the freshwater etc. changes the ecological community.

Bate Bay gets back eddies of freshwater.

Discussion Paper flawed as gap in recreational fishing information. This must be related to the threat decreasing over time.

The Discussion Paper is discriminating against commercial fishing which is unacceptable.

Pittwater full of sinkers and hooks.

No evidence of conflict in Pittwater:

- Poor media
- Commercial fishers haven't been contacted
- Documents stirring up hatred for commercial fishers (Discussion paper & recreational fishing document). Pittwater Life and Pittwater journal March Edition (?) delivered to letterboxes with an anti-commercial fishing article. Also RFA Facebook page.

Commercial fishing a minor activity in Pittwater compared with other activities.

Management Initiative "6" actually creates conflict.

Commercial fishers are stressed through various processes. In past the focus to reduce commercial fishers was about sustainability, now it is about conflict.

Pittwater initiative has set a precedence for recreational fishers to use this elsewhere.

No recognition that commercial fishing provides a service to the community.

Commercial fishers want a meeting with the heads of the Department.

TARA Mitch Sanders – fish trap.

- Trapper, hauler & fisher to meet with users with conflict → sit down & talk e.g. Malcolm Poole.
→ bigger floats on traps

Address ignorance issues/problems.

Only 3 estuaries in the bioregion worked by commercial fishers.

Will there be any closures in these 3 areas?

We haven't had conflict → false accusations → should come up with evidence. We have been told to invest and then this issue comes up.

Buoys for fish traps → Fisheries won't allow fishers to use subsurface buoys/sinking equipment, timers etc. These are permitted in Sydney Harbour because of ferries. This could also be allowed in Pittwater.

Mesh nets and hauling are already time limited in Pittwater.

Are Fisheries closing any areas for:

- lobster fishers,
- trap & line fishers,
- ocean haul fishers,
- purse seine fishers

Going through reform now →can't afford to lose more! If there is more closures, then there needs to be compensation.

Need community education for "perceived" conflicts

Digesting the TARA findings.... Does anything stand out to you or surprise you?

Re the priority threats to the environmental assets

- Lack of verified data supporting risk assessment.
- DPI does not leverage information already submitted by fishers over the past 20 + years.
- DPI continues to force commercial fishers to respond to program after program with written submissions on the same subject.
- Hunter River Region has permanently closed due to Federal Government agency poisoning of water table – this catastrophe is not included in the risk assessment. What bigger threat can there be to waterways ecology?
- Has oyster farming been considered?
- If DPI can create a database of all fisher submissions/responses against F.B.Number, this data can be re-used and referenced for all programs. This would relieve much of the disruption to small business operators by reducing need to make submissions each quarter.

Re the Priority threats to the environment assets

- Ocean Beach haul should be separated from Ocean Purse Seine because the threats are totally different.

Initiative 1 – Improving water quality and reducing marine litter

1.1 Reducing litter and marine debris

What should we do to reduce litter and microplastics in waterways?

- Need to collect plastic in the waterways
- GPTs – Tosser program – commend program
- Ban plastic bottles
- Banned plastic bags in Canberra
- User pays for collecting litter e.g. Fig 8 Pool Royal National Park
- Need bins in public spaces →Council collect.
- Collection on weekends – more bins.
- Rewards program for collecting litter e.g. commercial fishers pick up large objects such as missiles.

Successful programs

Do you know of any good programs/initiatives that reduce litter in waterways? What do those programs do? Why do you think they are good?

Think broadly here these might include good urban to reduce water impacts, right down to good litter bins and council services.

- Tosser program – more funding.
- Recycling campaigns.
- Oceanwatch – fishing lines project
- Extend Maritime's rubbish collection beyond Sydney Harbour.
- Pick up 3 for the Sea.

Key Stakeholders

Who are the important organisations or people to have involved in developing initiatives to tackle litter and microplastics in water environments?

Nil response

1.2 Reducing water pollution from catchment run-off

New ideas

What should we do to reduce the impact of pollution from runoff in waterways?

- GPTs
- Levy on waterfront properties to clean up waterfront

Key Stakeholders

Who are the important organisations or people to have involved in developing initiatives to tackle pollution in runoff to water environments?

- Council, Dept of Transport, Fisheries, Commercial Fishers.
- User groups, recreational fishers
- Recycling groups

Initiative 1 – Improving water quality and reducing marine litter

1.2 Reducing water pollution from catchment run-off

Locations

What land uses are resulting in the main types of pollution? How should pollution and runoff from agricultural land uses be managed?

- Fertilisers
- Natural debris only
- Minimize sediment → sediment control requirement by councils, building sites, land clearing areas.
- Sediment traps.

Key features

Which key features of the environment would you like to see protected and where?

- Mangroves, swamps, deep ocean areas – volume of freshwater injected
- Inshore environment quality optimised by above issues being addressed.

Sewage

Flawed document (Discussion Paper) doesn't directly address risks and suggestion of management initiatives, specifically Deep Ocean outfalls. Ones off Sydney worst. Also DOOs off Newcastle & Wollongong.

Twenty eight sewage outfalls in Hawkesbury River.

There needs to be an enquiry into Ocean outfalls.

All outfalls should be tertiary treated.

Amount of freshwater still pumping out through DOOs influences where marine park could be.

Comes onto coast & beaches.

1.4 billion m³ of freshwater, low Oz, low salinity & has chemical and organic contaminants

- endocrines & endocrine mimics → affect reproductive capability of fish
- 2.5 miles not enough. Should be 10 miles out to the current
- Bondi & Manly & Malabar all go 2.5 miles out.

- Why can't water be treated on land and reused → Need ozone to treat to quaternary treatment
- Tertiary treated sewage could be injected into a natural aquifer → biological activity then increases the quality e.g. residence time of 18 months.
- Can only use tertiary treated water for watering grass and timber. Not for human consumption e.g. watering food.
- Water injected at the bottom of the ocean via DOOs doesn't mix. It gets trapped under the thermocline.
- Diffusers don't work and so it allows a big fresh water bubble to form.
- The output should be released at the top of the water column so it can mix with air. For example it should go into coastal zone so wave action can aerate and mix the output.
- The sewage plume from the DOOs is consistent and concentrated as far as Montague Island.
- There needs to be research on this and made part of Sydney Water's licence.
- Commercial fishers get blamed for no snapper off Sydney. It is the DOOs causing the problem as the freshwater etc. destroys food source and habitat for snapper.

Initiative 4 – Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use sharing

Outcome

What outcome would you like to see from this initiative? In answering consider social, economic and environmental considerations.

- Need process to protect & grow the fishing industry e.g. farmers, building industry – codes, training, long service, super, trade based.
- Closures will decrease local bait supplies, replace with imported baits – disease issues?
- Recreational boating and lack of regulation of use in commercial fishing areas e.g. boat licence → handbook. Right of way/navigation refers to DPI fisheries
 - distances, throw anchors & drag.
 - wash & erosion
 - cruiser going between EPT vessels, nets out.
- Education, training of all users. Regulation first → no training → reverse so educate first, regulate if not effective.
- Equity in access – commercial fishers have less equity compared to recreational fishers who have all same waters as commercial fishers plus 30% estuaries (lake/river) as exclusive access. Hours of operation/days/seasons/gear.
- Protect existing use rights e.g. principle 6 of principles paper e.g. fishing in Pittwater long before urbanisation. Initiatives 4 and 6 contravene this. Lost lots of ground already.
- Design of wake board boats needs to be banned in estuaries → ballast → take on water to make greater wave, water quality of discharged water. Affects fishing areas primarily in holiday period. Testing of wakeboards
- Encourage succession planning for commercial fishers as part of commercial reforms before they leave industry – mentoring, training.

Social & Economic impacts

How could the spatial management initiative affect (positively/negatively) your group/organisations use at the 15 pre-identified and 44 additional sites?

- Cabbage Tree Bay → Ocean Haul for trevally → no socio-economic impact/business viability assessment when closed. Council-drive closure..
- Should be evidence-based closures only.
- Close Hawkesbury River would effectively get rid of EPT fishery decrease in prawns and squid. Impact on small towns of Patonga, Woy Woy, Brooklyn, Wisemans Ferry, Pittwater – loss of river keepers along the river by supporting a local fisher community.
 - development on flood plain is limited on what can do/National Parks limit as well. Pockets of communities so industries such as commercial fishing keeps local services – school, police, fuel, tourism, etc.
 - Brooklyn – tourism – people visit to eat seafood caught locally

- Oyster Industry impacted already – decreasing source of seafood.
- Sydney Harbour →hauling in past, tourism opportunity to show what industry does. Conflict between residents (minority) & tourism– majority of community interested.
- Region 5 →gone→supply to largest market →SFMarket decreasing local supply further, decreasing natural bait supply →replace with increasing plastics in marine environment/imported baits.
- Lake Macquarie closed – lost mullet bait, live prawns from Wisemans Ferry??
- Area closures → recognise existing commercial fishing closures. In areas open to commercial fishing there are already limitations e.g. rocks, debris, 4-5% of EPT is accessed.

What additional sites, species or habitats would you like to see specifically considered under this initiative?

- Catchment-management/runoff needs to be better understood before implemented. What is coming off the land already affecting biodiversity.
- Councils may have benchmark information on water quality on landuse – communicate to fishers.
- Webb Creek → Wisemans Ferry have on-site sewerage at recreational parks – caravan/cabin parks & local businesses, for example houseboats. Management of effluent from river bank properties needs to be factored in →cumulative impact?? Hundreds of cabins/caravans on flood prone land.

Data

Does your organisation manage any environmental, social or economic data layers that could help MEMA develop this initiative further?

- DPI Fisheries – set up database of all past submissions per licence no. to reuse/access for consultation.
- Local land services/CMA data should feed in.
- Sydney Water? Open with information?
- Gosford Council – Water Management data.
- Hornsby Council - Peter Coad – monitoring data for water quality.
- Logbook information →wrong forms? Access issues? Training for fishers to use Fish Online
AFMA →SMS certified, discrimination for those who couldn't attend.
- Share allocation → is it affecting business viability/fair trading.

Evaluation of current management

How adequate and effective do you think current spatial management is in the bioregion (e.g. aquatic reserves, intertidal protected areas) and how could these be improved?

- Not being managed →just closed to fishing!
- Focus on commercial fishing compliance, but don't see them dealing with recreational fishers in sensitive areas, undersize fish.
- No policing.

Public Participation

How would you like to see MEMA further engage with stakeholders and the public if spatial management is adopted by the NSW Government to enhance biodiversity?

- Go to every fisher according to licence database to ensure everyone gets it.
- Email and SMS
- Advertising television/radio to promote the work of MEMA e.g. Cronulla + other sites thrive on marine estate → all have an interest.
- Health & wellbeing/tourism industries.
- DPI Blue Book → bring it back! Regional Industry Conveners produced →wrote information for fishers

- Basic English.
- Discussion paper → convoluted/hard → on top of reforms – hard to understand properly.

Other Actions

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Homebush Bay – clean up? When? More poisonous than Tokyo, dangerous to swim.
- Creation of Chipping Norton lakes – Georges River →terrible on water quality →algae. Recreational fishers harvest prawns there – healthy?
- Lake Illawarra – Bankstown →ibis/poor water quality.
- Each estuary/river system should have water quality monitoring buoys to understand the water quality in their rivers & where problem areas/issues are occurring – real time monitoring.
- All documents that are made public need to go via legal advice. Address commercial fishing discrimination/history of reforms.
- Sustainability of industry, impacts on species/habitats from fishing are nowhere near a major flood. Should focus on sustainability of industry & availability of local product. Evidence →5-10 years of research on Hawkesbury fishing, flood event was more of a threat than any fishing activity →get threats into perspective – be more positive to commercial fishing reputation/product.
- Recreational fishing want to be identified as industry, then need comparable environmental assessment/management to commercial fishing industry.
- From 2004→documents released by DPI Fisheries that have repeatedly targeted commercial fishing industry for closures/sustainability to point where community believe that is the strategy even today for management of commercial fishing – discriminatory & unfair.

Initiative 6 – reducing user Conflicts in Pittwater

What do you think is the best way to reduce user conflict in Pittwater?

- What conflict? –
- Concern about precedent - in Tuggerah
- New representation in recreational Hawkesbury fishing
- Remove factions(?).
- Document times for mesh netting (6mths) no weekends, short set times
- Working nights
- Eroded confidence in process
- Political directions/influence.
- DPI culture shift – reductions/reforms on commercial fishing
- Promotion of commercial fishing by DPI
- Show the small area fished & limited impact
- Survey fishermen
- Transparency
- Ask community how commercial impacts can be reduced
- Recreational only areas in Pittwater?
- Oceanwatch education resources?
- Artificial reef?
- Partner with recreational sector
- Vulnerability of commercial fishing due to low numbers
- Water access only – social concern about aesthetics of old boats
- Visual misconception
- Discrimination against commercial fishing by public documents that make decisions for management outcomes and distribute to community
- Government continuing to discriminate against commercial fishing

Who should pay for this and why?

- Use of commercial fees for promotion/education
- Liaison officer in DPI
- Fill the gap with permits/council/moorings space etc.

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Sustainable seafood day
- Cast off festival
- Community day – stickers
- Support NSW Seafood – Support or import
- Positive impact
- DPI commercial fishing magazine
- AFMA defending Geelong Star
- Demonstrating gear in Parks etc.
- Pittwater council in Hawkesbury EMC (DPI not included?)
- Environmental role
- Recreational fishers need to learn how to fish?
- Fresh bait from Hawkesbury – major bait supply in bioregion.
- Discarded gear & soft plastics concern.

APPENDIX 4: DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES WORKSHOP NOTES - FEEDBACK FROM RECREATIONAL FISHERS - WORKSHOP 6 APRIL 2016

GENERAL COMMENTS (UNEDITED TO CAPTURE A TRUE RECORD OF COMMENTS MADE)

- Hardcopy submission form on web is difficult to use
- Consultation not targeting CALD groups.
- Concerns with Emma Johnson's involvement in TARA/expert input – science v activist.
- Not aware of seals being caught on lures in bioregion
- Pittwater focus is wrong – better management. of commercial fishing in Hawkesbury generally. Displaced effort from dioxin ban, mesh netting around charter areas.
- Summary table of TARA in Discussion Paper should have SCUBA listed as an activity.

Digesting the TARA findings... does anything stand out to you or surprise you?

Re the priority threats to the environmental assets

- Commercial fishing →Hawkesbury trawling?
- Marine habitat & assemblages
- Recreational fishing risk level
- Lack of information that has been impeded by DPI by lack of EIS for recreational fishing in NSW. Recreational anglers have been asking for this.
- Situation that “INFERRED” comments re: turtles/seals occur in bio-region is influencing negative comments to anglers in the bioregion.
- What is high risk – 1, 2 or 10?
- Weakness in TARA as “Inference”
- Biggest threat to recreational angling is “inference”
- Why is Scuba diving not listed “specifically” as an activity in summary! Especially in light of the fact they are a major user group
- Who are also pushing for recreational fish lockout?
- Concerned about high risk assessment in summary given limited high ratings overall (smoking gun for media?)
- Build purpose built fishing platforms “Jetties” for both disabled and non-disabled land-based fishers
- Turtles - stop hats – use pots – in certain areas.
- Circle hooks in shark areas.
- 1. Surprised that recreational fishing categorised overall as a high risk activity given that only one attribute (threatened & protected species) has been given a high risk rating.
- 2. Surprised and disappointed for the basis upon which the high risk rating has been given for recreational fishing interaction with threatened & protected species. Most of the data supporting the high risk rating has come from one government agency (National Parks) and is based on inferred evidence e.g. lures in seals and turtle entanglements.
- 3. The Likelihood of inferred data will be held up as sound evidence based in the future and could be used to drive poor decision making and prejudiced agendas
- 4. Recreational fishing is seen as the easy target to remedy the marine environment/habitat. Whereas the real (high) and serious threats such as stormwater discharge/pollution discharge agricultural runoff etc. continue unabated as there is NO political will or imperative to address these high risks

Re the priority threats to the social and economic benefits

- The high risk attributed to all categories could lead to the conclusion that they are unsustainable or at least questionable.
- Income to small seaside towns from travelling anglers, tackle shops, accommodation, fuel etc. at risk from inaccurate TARA

- Locked out of areas based on evidence which is not factual, or inaccurate. As stipulated in TARA.
- Information is vague and very generalised, data should be more specific.
- Activities listed in certain categories do not seem to correlate data years of recreational fishing area provided.
- Overview does not contain data to specifically show why an activity is listed as “High risk”. For “High Risk” activities more information on how it was categorised should have been provided.
- TARA Report flawed should be categorised into different species e.g. seals, turtles, sharks, into the risk assessment. And if reports from different bioregions are they relevant to the Hawkesbury bio-region.
- Risk assessment on recreational fishing is High – when the “individual charts on the assessment as displayed most risks low – medium but overall has the priority threats marked High. This paper basically saying to reader fishers are a high risk to the environment.
- Recreational boating and boating once again lobbed into high risk – yes, where does a city of 4 million go?
- We would like to know what “marine habitat & assemblages” really means.
- Regarding seals with a lure in its mouth is because it has been caught/hooked by a lure fisherman is not true. This would be caused by a seal eating a king fish or bonito etc. that has been caught by a lure and then the seal MIGHT get a lure in its mouth.
- Scuba diving in protected areas e.g. grey nurse shark zone should be no access to anyone. What research has been done regarding interaction with divers w/ camera flash or just divers alone?
- Why has scuba diving been enclosed & hidden within Tourism etc.
- Hawkesbury bioregion will see a huge risk to anglers if any more access is lost to able bodied or disabled anglers
- Increase conflict caused by spatial management changes = lockouts
- Any changes to access will see a reduction in anglers buying a licence = acknowledged by MEMA.
- Financially viability of TRUST FUND at risk.
- How do we measure or prepare for the following? Do we have a baseline?
 - Tackle sales downturn
 - Charter customer downturn
 - Boat ownership downturn

Initiative 1 – Improving water quality and reducing marine litter

1.1 Reducing Litter and marine debris

General

What should we do to reduce litter and microplastics in waterways?

- Incentive dollars for return of cans, bottles
- Catchment buffers nets to catch litter etc. and regularly service
- Eliminate using plastic bags, get government to introduce diver legislation
- Identify main locations from where litter rubbish is coming from
- Household, shipping

Successful programs

Do you know of any good programs/initiatives that reduce litter in waterways? What do those programs do? Why do you think they are good? Think broadly here – these might include good urban to reduce water impacts, right down to good litter bins and council services

- Cooks River – Community involved in cleaning foreshores on weekends supported by local councils
- Australian land based association – cleanup program
- Cleanup up Australia Day program
- Local Councils Program – nets on stormwater pipe and drainage.

Key Stakeholders

Who are the important organisations or people to have involved in developing initiatives to tackle litter and microplastics in water environments?

- Community or user groups
- State & local government
- Keep Australia Beautiful organisation
- Schools

1.2 Reducing water pollution from catchment run-off

New Ideas

What should we do to reduce the impact of pollution from runoff in waterways?

- Use buffer structures, incorporate in stormwater and runoff areas
- Local councils need to be vigilant in enforcing their conditions of developments approved
- Stop the plan to pump raw sewage into the Sydney Harbour

Key Stakeholders

Who are the important organisations or people to have involved in developing initiatives to tackle pollution in runoff water environments?

- State & local government
- User of resource i.e. fisher, swimmer, boater etc.
- Schools & universities
- Business and developers

Locations

What land uses are resulting in the main types of pollution? How should pollution and runoff from agricultural land uses be managed?

- Developments in or on or adjacent to waterways
- Clearing of vegetation adjacent to waterways
- Stop it before it goes in. Riparian zone protected. Take appropriate action to plant areas that have no riparian vegetation.

Key Features

Which key features of the environment would you like to see protected and where?

- Habitats, seagrasses – protection from both physical damage and chemicals i.e. petrol, oils, etc.
- Include large ships & container ships spills, bilge release
- Botany Bay, Sydney Harbour, all shipping ports, Newcastle etc.

Initiative 2 – On ground works for healthy coastal habitats and wildlife

2.1 Rehabilitation works

Should there be a grant scheme or direct State Government funding of onground works?

- Yes both
- Currently there are grants and funding programs which are totally inadequate
- Priorities need to be established and actioned
- Proper coordination between all agencies State & Federal (including Local) is required which does not exist at present.
- Focus on major projects – not lots of small projects that don't necessarily make a significant difference.

If a grants scheme, what is the best method to deliver an onground works grant program?

- Expertise to identify projects on a priority basis and make a value assessment of how to do
- Need measurement of likelihood of success and return on investment
- USA private businesses – consultants can be paid to do onground works. A standard is needed e.g. trout unlimited
- Tax-driven incentives/concessions for onground works for landowners e.g. blue carbon/ carbon credits to encourage rehabilitation/mitigation
- Best Practice methodology required

How should priorities for onground works be determined (locations and types of works)?

- Value for money – project must demonstrate pays for itself in economic/social benefits
- Expert panel to assess the best of projects
- Repeatability & Scale-ability
- High impact areas that affect downstream habitat
- Best bang for dollars

What would be a fair fund sharing arrangement for repair of legacy issues such as cleared riparian areas or drainage of wetlands?

- Funding mechanism (not necessarily grants) whereby funds can be sourced by the private/business sector where the investor has return on investment e.g. people pay to fish an area that has been rehabilitated/sale of commercial fishing entitlements where a dead fishery is generated.

2.2 Urban mangrove management policy

What could we do to prevent illegal urban mangrove clearing?

- Aerial photographing – google earth
- Educate foreshore dwellers on why mangroves need to be there!!
- Increase penalties and enforcement

Would you support a review of existing mangrove policy in urban environments to allow more flexibility and reduce red tape? Include the reasons for your answer or scope of the review

- Yes – but how would the management occur, by whom and what compliance would be used, who pays

2.3 Marine wildlife incident planning and guideline implementation

Reporting

What ideas do you have to encourage voluntary reporting of marine wildlife interactions? One of the actions proposed under this initiative is to improve voluntary reporting of interactions with marine animals by large and small commercial vessel operators, zoos, aquariums and wildlife rescue organisations.

- Better access to boaters and fisher responsibilities e.g. app – link to Recreational Fisheries APP
- Long Reef is a protected tidal zone – why do fisheries not patrol this area – it is under constant gathering of shellfish etc. from various ethnic groups sometimes unaware and poorly sign posted

Incident Action plans

Are there key areas where marine wildlife is at risk that you would like to see included? One of the actions proposed under this initiative is to develop incident action plans for unacceptable wildlife interactions with cetaceans in key areas of the bioregion

- Risk management of TEPs is a broad educational process
- Reporting & why

- Action and response – Regulations and Acts cannot hold a person responsible for something they have no control over

Initiative 3 – Marine Research to address shipping and fishing knowledge gaps

Citizen Science

How could the community be involved in citizen science for this initiative? Who are the important groups already involved in the bioregion and what specific skills do they bring?

- Citizens expect scientists to do this – not amateurs.
- Fishers, spearfishermen – eyes & ears in/around and on the water
- TV Advertising – awareness

Further Engagement

How best should we engage relevant stakeholders in the research?

- Online questionnaires
- Advertising in relevant publications (fishing magazines, forums, Internet)
- Go out and speak to them as they are fishing
- Engage tackle shops – especially multicultural shops

Other Actions

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Increased monitoring
- Better enforcement of current rules – “not more rules” “not lockouts”

Initiative 4 – Spatial management for biodiversity conservation and use sharing

Outcome

What outcome would you like to see from this initiative? In answering consider social economic and environment consideration?

- Acknowledge current fisheries management as adequate, changeable, constantly under review
- Sustainable impact on stocks as recreational anglers and heavily regulated
- Too small to have any benefit (Buxom) 10km x 10km.
- Due to population impractical to have large reserves.
- No loss of access for anglers
- Step 1 Baseline data needed:
 - More study on socio-economic impacts for anglers, tackle shops, charter industry
 - Impacts on jobs
 - Questions on benefit of protected areas.
 - Closure impacts on 15 spots and 44 spots
- More recreational fishing havens – Lake Illawarra, Sydney Harbour, Pittwater, Hawkesbury, Hunter River
- Exclusion zones around recreational fishing infrastructure. (offshore artificial reefs)
- Use of seasonal closures, gear restrictions.

Social and economic impacts

How could the spatial management initiative effect (+/-) your group/organisations use at the 15 pre-identified and 44 additional sites?

Negative impacts, loss of:

- Safe rock fishing spots (Long Reef), safe kayak spots, safe spearfishing spots.
- Income for charter, guide operators/tackle shops
- Decline on licence sales, threat to viability of TRUST FUND = loss of jobs for fisheries staff/research

- Scuba decreases abundance of fish/conflict
- Loss of safe all weather spots – North Manly, Clifton Gardens, Bare Island
- Loss of easy access for elderly, young, close to public transport
- Impact on health/wellbeing
- Increase stress/anxiety
- Unfairly target NESB anglers

Sites/species/habitats

What additional sites, species or habitats would you like to see specifically considered under this initiative?

- More recreational havens
- Mulloway recovery plan – commercial bycatch issues in bioregion
- Stock enhancement/stocking to continue

Data

Does your organisation manage any environmental, social or economic data layers that could help MEMA develop this initiative further?

- Tagging data – mulloway NEWTAG/ANSA NSW

Evaluation of current management

How adequate and effective do you think current spatial management is in the bioregion (e.g. aquatic reserves, intertidal protected areas) and how could these be improved?

- Better compliance in Intertidal Protected Areas
- Baseline data is lacking on these current zones

Public Participation

How would you like to see MEMA further engage with stakeholders and the public if spatial management is adopted by the NSW GOVT to enhance biodiversity?

- Re-engage the community with more consultation on considered spatial management options
- Simplified consultative process inclusive of NESB anglers.
- Simplified online process

Other Actions

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Adaptive management strategies rather than lockouts

Initiative 5 – Improving boating infrastructure

What type of issues need to be considered in planning for future boat storage requirements?

- Has to be cheap
- Convenient
- Accessible
- More marinas reduce recreational fishing access and lead to conflict. New Marinas need to be recreational fisho friendly
- Access for kayak owners to store onsite
- 24/7 operational
- Fish cleaning facilities a bonus

Do you have any comments on how the NSW Government can help shape the best mix of boat storage options on busy waterways in the Bioregion?

- Removal of the unfair targeting of boat/trailer parked on streets.
- Should be same rules as box trailers/caravans

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- More boat ramps to reduce conflicts
- Increase parking at existing ramps

Initiative 6 – Reducing user conflicts in Pittwater

What do you think is the best way to reduce user conflict in Pittwater?

- Recognised fishing grounds they can use to leverage compensation
- 3-4 things tied up in issue
- Artificial shallow water reef – off point, net free, line fish only due to concerns with moorings
- Recreational Fishing Havens/dioxins
- commercial fishing reforms
- Reasonable compensation and payout of families, moved out of Sydney Harbour and Pittwater.
 - remove total licence → otherwise move elsewhere
 - netting – main focus? Mud trapping etc. and other endorsements – all Estuary General (EG)
 - bream traps happy to work with people to address these issues
 - not trawling
 - netting key issue not trapping
- Fair and reasonable compensation – capital as well as licence value. So no latent effort → movement
- Pushing pros out all the time, change season → open and close season, modify management of EG
- Voluntary buy-out first: start leaving fishery – good offer
- 1% of local seafood stays in Pittwater area – no coop to get back into industry – dozen outlets from Woy Woy south supply seafood
- 13 licences, less than 6 do it in Pittwater?
- Remove netting or manage activity are 2 options → caulerpa management
- Caulerpa closure Part of problem → what is happening with it? Code of conduct – check + clean net
- Local only – Rob Stokes – not an issue for most at table – highly regulated/weather and seasonal conditions
- Commercial fishers banned
- Moorings congested
- Scotland Island – Tailors Pt not congested/wider high use
- Careel Bay – caulerpa

Who should pay for this and why?

- Recreational fishing trust – assist.
- \$16 M commercial fishing reforms
- Stewardship payment to stop location fishing per annum/over set period (e.g. years) to keep fishers there but avoid areas
Win – Win outcome
- Mesh Netting → non target
 - target bream, trevally, snapper, biddies, luderick, whiting, mullet (Ocean Haul/EG), mulloway, estuary perch, bycatch.
eastern Pittwater side near Palm Beach golf course, Mackerel Beach; on weekdays
 - West head, near port marker south of golf course (1km south of Barrenjoey Head).
 - Hungary beach, Hawkesbury – some bycatch on beach.
 - no conflict with ferry operations, some issues with sailors
- Lobsters traps

- black markers. No 10m section of shoreline that won't have a lobster pot – going to reefs offshore → getting caught in propellers
- not by catch, guys are good, selective → released alive.
- Mullet targeted and overfished by netters – take spawning and adults in one hit.

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Mooring people → boaters getting hung up on fish traps – need larger floats so boaters can navigate around traps
- Solve caulerpa problem/management of public angst:
 - live with it; manage spread via fishing → driving some of the net cleaning etc. – Mackerel beach – eastern and western – spread via boating/tidal movement.
 - treat and fix or take away damage.
 - trapping ok as doesn't affect caulerpa.
- Spatial Management – Long Reef → big issues:
 - commercial divers forcing professional fishers to move – cant interfere with commercial fishers gear.
 - If Recreational Trust money used for Long Reef there will be a hell of a stink!
- Spatial Management – Artificial Reefs: Scuba divers
 - now we can't use if for recreational fishing? Safety issues.
 - videoed & intimidated → no dive closure 500m around
 - only dive only area is HMAS Adelaide
- Greater Sydney survey benchmark → impact of recreational fishers pre-marine park (2005 assessment) – weren't fish there to catch, undersize or lack of skills to catch. Impact on Hawkesbury bioregion was minimal.
- Squid fishing – North Harbour Aquatic Reserve – hasn't been resolved
- Negotiation approach → how improve?
 - previous process was sound – involved all community.
 - not just recreational and commercial fishers, was a community based issue.

Initiative 7 – Improving accessibility

What are the priority sites for wheelchair access?

- Access to boats at all boat ramps
- Land based platforms in estuaries e.g. Botany bay, Port Hacking
- Davit facilities at pontoons for wheelchairs, risk management required.
- Clifton Gardens
- Anywhere there is suitable public infrastructure
- Pier 1, 2, 3, 4 Sydney Harbour
- Build a purpose built wharf in Sydney, Botany, Port Hacking for recreational anglers

What are other key issues that impact upon your access and how could these be mitigated?

- Boat preparation away from ramps to allow skippers to launch without waiting.
- Spearfishing mainly restricted to sub 25m depths on headlands and shallow reefs. Lockouts take away access and confine it to a smaller area. Also increase conflict.
- Closures of fishing platforms – i.e. Balls Rd Port Hacking, wharves, zoning and fishing restrictions from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- Pittwater "Bayview" boat ramp/parking area State Government owned \$30 a day parking – why other areas Sydney Harbour/Botany Bay free? This \$30 even if you are a ratepayer.

Initiative 8 – land use planning for coasts and waterways

What key issues should be examined as part of a review of the State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)?

- Prepare SEPP for commercial and recreational fishing access similar to oyster SEPP

- Compliant development environmental policies

Do you have any concerns about particular locations or activities in the upper catchments of estuaries?

- Jet skis
- Use of various watercraft, paddlecraft, power and sail
- Boat moorings: implement change on policy of mooring types – from Block & Chain to other
- Cumulative impact of any activity
- New developments on waterways (upstream)

How might the SEPPS best integrate with catchment management plans and strategies?

- Recognise and identify impacts on fishing activities
- Consultation with all user groups

Are there other actions/ideas which should also be included?

- SEPP – Recreational and Fishing

APPENDIX 5: HAWKESBURY SHELF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PHASE 2 MEETINGS - RECORD OF KEY ISSUES

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
<p>Aboriginal Fisheries Advisory Council (AFAC).</p> <p>1/03/2016; teleconference</p>	<p>i) There is a need to understand how the consultation and threat and risk assessment has taken account of Aboriginal engagement so far - how have Aboriginal rights and obligations been reflected in the framework and the Assessment? (see a response to this below) Also requested to review the state-wide Aboriginal engagement plan</p>	<p>ii) The TARA process does not appear to recognise Aboriginal people as part of the 'biodiversity' of the bioregion and its management, which is inconsistent with international best practice and a request was made for amendment for the state-wide TARA</p>	<p>iii) Concerns were raised as to how parties responsible for litter and marine debris are currently meeting their obligations (e.g. management of gross pollutant traps, Parramatta River clean up commitments) and a concern that MEMA should not only speak to councils about this issue. iv) How is the spatial management initiative likely to include Aboriginal cultural use; information/spatial layers? Suggestion for employment of Aboriginal people in marine parks</p>	<p>Follow up email sent on 3/3 with: offer to attend further meetings, a response to the (i) question and further information on the spatial management initiative, an invitation to the Worimi and Darkinjung meetings, provision of a list of invitees for Aboriginal engagement meetings for AFAC review and a commitment that Cox Inall Ridgeway would reshape engagement questions to take into account issues raised during the teleconference</p>
<p>National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council (NPWAC) - Priorities and Issues Committee.</p> <p>2/03/2016; Hurstville OEH office</p>		<p>The Council requested further information regarding offshore sewage outfalls and heavy metal pollution (loads and discharges) in the HS and about the TARA process (for use in State of the Parks)</p>	<p>i) Suggestion for special purpose zones for Aboriginal use in any spatial management decision. ii) Suggestion to see Hunter Wetlands Plan of Management for relevance to wetlands initiative</p>	<p>Follow up email sent on 9/3 with: further detail re water pollution and marinas and information regarding TARA process/methods</p>

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
NSW Shellfish Committee. 2/03/2016; Newington Food Authority Office	i) Suggest contacting NSW Oyster Farmers Committee for the state-wide process, and come back to NSW Shellfish Committee - input and review at early stages, not just during public consultation	i) Queried risk level of aquaculture and confidence ranking	i) Noted industry concern over pollution (resulting impacts to industry) e.g. impacts to Clyde River. ii) wanted it acknowledged that shellfish industry has positive environmental benefits including oysters presence in an estuary helping with water quality and aquaculture protecting seagrasses from boat disturbances (international papers on this)	Follow up email sent on 4/3 outlining further information on aquaculture
Nature Conservation Council. 3/03/2016; Sydney OEH office		i) Queried groupings of risks and how they're presented and priorities e.g. 4WDing and shark meshing should be separated from passive recreational activities like swimming and snorkelling. Suggested amending approach for state-wide, also disagree with static trend of shark meshing risk (should be increasing). ii) Queried/disagreed with evidence for decrease in recreational fishing trends. Iii) Queried how dealing with cumulative risks?	I) Supportive of the initiatives if a CAR based marine park is the core solution supported by the other initiatives. ii) concern noted re coastal reforms and planning controls being ineffective at preventing development/harm to environment	Follow up email sent when fishing report was released by DPI, and also to provide draft evaluation guidelines and flowchart. These reports and the draft guidelines and flowchart were provided.
Sydney Water. 4/03/2016; Sydney Water office	i) Sydney Water would like to be consulted during the development of management plans and management rules. ii) Recommended consulting with Hunter Water	Queried why point source discharge was high and concerned that there is a focus on one specific interaction.		OEH has had informal discussions with Hunter Water regarding the suggested initiatives and will further consult with the authority during the revision of the initiatives.

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
<p>National Parks Association and Environmental Defenders' Office.</p> <p>7/03/2016; Sydney OEH office</p>		<p>i) Queried why the threat of rec fishing is declining and why the economic data did not include the dive industry? ii) Queried groupings of risks and how they're presented and prioritised e.g. 4WDing and shark meshing should be separated from passive rec activities like swimming and snorkelling - suggest amending for state-wide</p>	<p>i) Noted that a marine park will address a number of the threats, following CAR principles and linked to the Marine Parks Audit findings. ii) Want to see all the initiatives implemented. iii) EDO noted specific concerns re precedent set if mangrove trimming is allowed on private land - could make problem bigger than current. iv) Micro plastics/litter initiative could be broadened to include degradable fishing line, fishers being involved in marine clean-ups, need compliance mechanisms for wildlife incidents broader than just database reporting, spatial management should not include fishing havens (confusing for stakeholders), reducing conflicts is broader than just Pittwater, marine park can also address threats identified in initiatives 5, 6, 7. v) Initiative 8 needs regulation. Amend national parks tenure to low tide level - would solve lots of issues, plus go further with marine extensions.</p>	

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
Fish Habitat Partnership. 9/03/2016; Fish markets	Comment was made that the Discussion Paper is a 'world class' example of an approach to marine estate management and that MEMA should be congratulated on the work undertaken to inform the assessment.	RFA raised concerns with consideration of extractive uses and seismic surveys in marine waters. Concerns were also raised with the consideration of Williamstown contamination in the consideration of the management initiatives.	There was general support from the Partnership for the approach and the initiatives outlined relating to water quality and habitat rehabilitation, but consensus was not possible on initiatives such as spatial management.	Nil
Port Authority. 11/03/2016; Walsh Bay		No significant issues raised	i) Opportunities identified for OEH to share its habitat mapping data so that sensitive habitats can be recognised by Ports Authority and ships could potentially avoid anchoring in these habitats. ii) Support for improving education of mariners regarding marine wildlife, avoiding incidents, and facilitating sharing of information	
Joint Expert Maritime Working Group (JEMWG). 14/03/2016; Chippendale	JEMWG did not indicate it would put it a submission. The BIA indicated they would put in a submission.		i) Noted industry concern over stressors related to anti-fouling and bio-accumulation identified in the background environmental report. ii) Comments about concurrent coastal reforms impacts on the Assessment. iii) Initiative 5 - DP&E engagement with JEMWG about SHREP review	Follow up email sent 22/3 provided the extract from the background environmental report regarding anti-fouling and other toxicants, and on 18/3 regarding the review of the SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005.

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
<p>Primary Industries Ministerial Advisory Council.</p> <p>16/03/2016; Parliament House</p>		<p>PIMAC flagged that they hoped robust evidence was used in the TARA process.</p>		
<p>Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS).</p> <p>16/3/2016; Sydney OEH office</p>		<p>i) Queried groupings of risks and how they're presented and prioritised e.g. 4WDing and shark meshing should be separated from passive rec activities like swimming and snorkelling - suggest amending for state-wide</p>	<p>i) Noted that Sydney Harbour is ideal for a marine park as there is already no commercial fishing and that marine parks lead to positives for fishers also (increases over time as fish abundance increases). ii) Noted opportunities for tourism - speaking to head of NSW tourism one week after this meeting. iii) Suggest trade-offs to keep fishers happy e.g. infrastructure, bins to dispose of fish guts, wharf designed for fishing or boat storage improvements in return for some protected areas. iv) Noted the disconnect between fishers themselves and rec fisher lobby. v) See citizen science proposal to connect fishing communities with MER programs (connecting rec fishers to science) see Yeppoon model. vi) Marine Parks should be established to build resilience, not to address threats directly</p>	<p>Follow up email sent when fishing report was released by DPI</p>

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council (MFAC). 18/03/2016; Port Macquarie and teleconference		Recognised the effort put into cultural issues in the TARA but also raised some higher level issues with the way Aboriginal fishing activities are dealt with and that they should be considered as part of ecosystem interactions.	Concerned about Pittwater initiative and whether the DPI Fisheries Resource Allocation Policy had been considered.	

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
<p>Sydney Coastal Council Group (SCCG). 19/03/2016; Leichhardt</p>	<p>It was pointed out that conflict between different sectors of the community is often driven by poor communication and lack of understanding. E.g. what is a marine park? Many people don't understand that a marine park has multi-use zones and is not solely a no-take area. Need to consider the resourcing of implementation of the proposed management Initiatives by local councils and how the geographic regions for activities or initiatives will be prioritized for investment.</p>		<p>Questions regarding the Urban Mangrove Management Policy and how it relates to the Fisheries Management Act objective to protect mangroves. There are concerns this has the potential to be the 10/50 of coastal vegetation. Caution was urged regarding giving property owners the right to trim or clear mangroves. There is also a need to consider future habitat growing now. Management Initiative "5.2 Reducing red tape for low-risk boating infrastructure" is not clearly defined in the Discussion Paper. What are the definitions of "red tape" and "low-risk boating infrastructure"? The SCCG expressed a strong recommendation that the existing IPAs and ARs are maintained.</p>	<p>No actions.</p>

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
<p>Commercial fishers from the Hunter catchment/region.</p> <p>22/3/2016; Newcastle Surf Life Saving Club</p>	<p>Group indicated by a show of hands that they found it difficult to understand the process and how the initiatives were developed. They felt that they did not have an adequate understanding to make a submission. Particularly concern about the 44 sites nominated - there is a lack of information provided on these sites and therefore difficult to comment on them. Also, there is likely to be a lack of fairness - if commercial fishers are being locked out then recreational fishers should too as the threat is similar.</p>	<p>A question was asked about how this assessment process is linked to the coastal reforms process.</p>	<p>Spatial management: lack of clarity around how the 44 sites were generated and what this means for commercial fishers, support spatial management for wetlands and swamps as these are important juvenile habitat, concerned about locking out and impact upon livelihood. Water quality: impact of mines on commercial fishing e.g. runoff from tailings dam in Hunter and opening of gates in flood events, dredging and oil spills due to coal industry. Coastal Habitat: rake machines used in Tuggerah Lakes killing seagrass and fish habitats, removal of snags in rivers. Pittwater Initiative: huge concern due to lack of scientific evidence supporting initiative and threat that this approach will be adopted in other areas of NSW. If for biodiversity reasons then both commercial and recreational fishers should be removed. Commercial fishing reforms may be dealing with this issue Other: lack of compliance with undersized whiting by recreational fishers yet commercial fishers get fined \$500.</p>	<p>DPI to provide a follow up email to attendees with links to key documents from the Hawkesbury assessment. Follow up email was sent on 5 April 2016.</p>

Meeting, date and location	PROCESS	TARA	INITIATIVES	Actions
<p>Maritime Advisory Council (MAC). 23/03/2016; Rozelle</p>	<p>MAC is requesting an explanation from MEMA of the basis of risk assessment thresholds – acceptable impacts & risk allocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the rationale MEMA uses to determine impacts on marine biodiversity (not environmental assets)? - What is the risk acceptance threshold framework that determines what is considered ‘acceptable’ or ‘unacceptable’ level of risk? Some MAC members noted the process was fantastic in terms of the comprehensive nature of the process. - MEMA needs to look at a risk acceptance threshold framework to reflect the balance stated in the objective, this is a missing step in the decision making process. 	<p>i) Questions regarding whether the environmental background report considered sewage treatment plants in the Hawkesbury and what the recent work has been in reducing STP impacts in the Hawkesbury River – review the risk attribution (higher risk).</p> <p>ii) Comments that high or moderate risk rating attribution due to a lack of information or knowledge gaps is inferred (i.e. a lack of knowledge does not automatically lead to a high risk). As a result, potential consequences may be over-stated or extrapolated, and may lead to unnecessary spatial management initiatives (including closures or restrictions). MEMA needs to develop a risk acceptance threshold framework that reflects the objective of the Assessment.</p>	<p>Data collection to determine the most significant sources of water pollution. Management initiatives need to be directed at the most significant sources of water pollution (land based catchment/ urban stormwater runoff compared to boat based pollution/ contamination).</p>	<p>Follow up email sent 24/3 responding to the two questions raised re the TARA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MAC meeting on the 18/04, MAC intends to put in a submission after discussion.
<p>Sydney Institute of Marine Science. 23/03/2016; Mosman</p>	<p>SIMs indicated that it would put in a submission</p>		<p>Questioned whether coastal reforms could impact upon the assessment.</p>	<p>No actions.</p>