



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Draft Marine Estate Management Strategy

FAQ #4 – SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL FISHING IN OUR MARINE ESTATE

The Marine Estate Management Authority (the Authority) has released a Draft Marine Estate Management Strategy (draft Strategy), setting out the proposed approach to manage the statewide priority threats to the marine estate.

This fact sheet outlines how the draft Strategy intends to support sustainable commercial fishing in our NSW marine estate. We welcome your feedback on this draft Strategy.

WHY IS THE DRAFT STRATEGY NEEDED?

The marine estate includes some of NSW's most valued assets – its coastline, estuaries and marine waters. It provides a range of environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits to the NSW community.

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

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

The draft Strategy proposes eight management initiatives to address priority and cumulative threats to

the marine estate over the next decade in order to deliver on the vision for the marine estate.

WHY IS COMMERCIAL FISHING IMPORTANT?

The community enjoys freshly caught local seafood and the health benefits of consuming seafood are well known. Wild harvest commercial fishing in NSW provides more than \$90 million of the Gross Value of Production to the NSW economy as well as direct and indirect employment and economic opportunities to the wider community. Most commercial fishers are based in regional coastal towns, and in some instances the seafood industry provides the main source of employment for the community.

WHY IS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE 6 – SUSTAINABLE FISHING AND AQUACULTURE NEEDED?

The statewide Threat and Risk Assessment (statewide TARA) identified statewide priority threats (i.e. deemed a moderate or high risk level across the three regions – northern, central and southern) to the environment associated with commercial fishing, as well as threats to the social, cultural and economic benefits fishers and the community obtain from commercial fishing.

The estuary general fishery and the ocean hauling fishery were identified as a moderate risk to fish

populations (from harvest and bycatch).

The ocean trap and line fishery was identified as a moderate risk to threatened and protected species listed under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* in central and southern regions of NSW, and high risk in the northern region.

Ocean prawn trawl was identified as a moderate risk to deep soft sediment habitats through physical disturbance which impacts on seafloor plants and animals.

The statewide TARA also identified threats to social, cultural and economic benefits impacting on commercial fishers' health and wellbeing, enjoyment and economic viability, both within estuaries and offshore. These threats included reductions in fish species abundance, loss of access, pests and disease and conflict over access and use.

HOW WILL THE DRAFT STRATEGY IMPROVE COMMERCIAL FISHING?

Management initiative 6 aims to *ensure fishing and aquaculture provides for sustainable use while providing for the health, heritage and social benefits of seafood consumption to the community*. In addition, management initiative 8 aims to *improve governance arrangements in the marine estate and to respond to knowledge gaps, resource-use conflict and loss of public access*.

Actions to address the priority environmental threats and to maximise the social and economic benefits derived from commercial fishing include:

- supporting the implementation of the Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program and integrating catch and effort data into the Marine Integrated Monitoring Program to monitor the environmental threats over time
- introducing harvest strategies and ecological risk strategies to address declines in fish populations, and developing performance indicators and management responses to guide sustainable harvest
- expanding the commercial fishing observer program to fill knowledge gaps across moderate and high risk commercial fisheries that will further reduce threats associated with bycatch and interactions with threatened and protected species

- considering possible spatial management options to address identified threats to environmental assets and social and economic benefits of commercial fishing
- undertaking research and monitoring to address knowledge gaps and to monitor the success of management actions over time
- investigating and implementing opportunities to promote sustainable commercial fishing and wild caught seafood to build social licence
- forming partnerships with industry to deliver information and training to fishers to reduce user conflict, improve self-compliance and develop economic opportunities
- integrating outcomes of social research into NSW marine pest and disease advisory programs
- building stakeholder capacity in marine estate management via advisory groups.



HAVE YOUR SAY

The Authority is seeking your feedback on the draft Strategy. You can submit your feedback via an electronic submission form on the marine estate reforms website www.marine.nsw.gov.au.

More information on consultation and opportunities to provide feedback can be found at www.marine.nsw.gov.au.

If you have any queries or would like to register for marine estate reform updates you can email us at contact.us@marine.nsw.gov.au.

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