



Marine Estate
Management Authority

Annual Report 2016

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



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Annual Report 2016 – Marine Estate Management Authority

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More information

www.marine.nsw.gov.au

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE



The Marine Estate Management Authority (the Authority) had another productive year in 2016 as we worked towards the Authority's vision for a **healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest well-being of the community** for the NSW marine estate. Our approach to implementing the ambitious marine estate reform Schedule of Works is outlined in the Authority's Principles Paper, *Managing the Marine Estate: Purpose, Underpinning Principles and Priority Setting* (2013).

Notable achievements this year include:

- the assessment of management initiatives to enhance marine biodiversity conservation in the Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion while maximising community benefits, including community engagement on proposed management initiatives in early 2016
- undertaking the first ever statewide threat and risk assessment for the NSW marine estate
- commencing the review of the *Marine Estate Management Regulations 2009*
- evaluating the role and functions of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel; and
- being awarded the 2016 Annual NSW Coastal Management Public Good Award at the NSW Coastal Conference in Coffs Harbour in November.

I congratulate the Authority's member agency staff on these achievements and I am pleased the Department of Primary Industries, Office of Environment & Heritage, Department of Transport, Department of Planning & Environment, as well as the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel have been recognised for their work, dedication and collaboration in contributing to the NSW Government's vision for the future management of the NSW marine estate.

I also wish to acknowledge the support of the Secretariat and the Marine Estate Agency Steering Committee in progressing these initiatives.

I am again impressed with the level of engagement from stakeholders in response to our requests for feedback, and their willingness to assist us in the development of management initiatives that will improve the health of the marine estate and the wellbeing of those who benefit from it.

As we move forward into 2017 we will continue to build upon our engagement with the community, seeking feedback on a draft statewide threat and risk assessment for the NSW marine estate and the development of management responses to address priority threats identified in the assessment via a draft Marine Estate Management Strategy. This work will continue to be progressed in a collaborative manner by the Authority and I look forward to another productive year.

Finally I would like to express my particular thanks to those members of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel who will be completing their formal engagement with the marine estate reforms. Your wise advice has led to significant improvements in the Authority's approach to marine estate management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Craik'.

Dr Wendy Craik, AM

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ABOUT US

The Marine Estate Management Authority (Authority) advises the NSW Government on the management of the marine estate consistent with the objects of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*. Key functions include undertaking threat and risk assessments, development of management strategies, promoting collaboration and co-ordination between public authorities in their exercise of functions, and fostering consultation with the community in relation to the management of the marine estate.

The Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel (Knowledge Panel) provides independent expert advice to the Authority on matters referred to it by the Authority including environmental, social and economic considerations.

OUR VISION

- ➔ A healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future.

OUR ROLE

- ➔ Ensure that policies and programs address priority issues, are well-coordinated, efficient, evidence based and result in positive outcomes.

OUR PRINCIPLES¹

1. Effective community engagement to identify and prioritise benefits and threats
2. Identification of priority actions will be based on threat and risk assessment
3. Values will be assigned to enable trade-off decisions between alternative uses of the marine estate
4. Best available information will be used in trade-off decisions, but judgment will still be required
5. The well-being of future generations will be considered
6. Existing access arrangements will be respected
7. The precautionary principle will be applied
8. Efficient and cost-effective management to achieve community outcomes
9. Management decisions will be transparent and adjust in response to new information
10. Management performance will be measured, monitored and reported and information pursued to fill critical knowledge gaps.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS

The marine estate [Schedule of Works](#) (Appendix 1) identifies priority areas of work for the Authority and the Knowledge Panel. The schedule is updated periodically as the marine estate reform program progresses and is publicly available on the marine estate website at www.marine.nsw.gov.au.

¹ Source: *Managing the Marine Estate: Purpose, Underpinning Principles and Priority Setting* (2013)

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2016

✓	NSW Annual Coastal Conference – awarded the ‘Public Good Award’
✓	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment – release of discussion paper and community engagement on suggested management initiatives. Recommendations provided to Government which are being considered.
✓	Statewide threat and risk assessment for the NSW marine estate – development of a draft statewide threat and risk assessment report for public consultation and supporting material
✓	Marine estate website – development of an online tool to enable efficient interrogation of the statewide threats and risks identified in the draft statewide threat and risk assessment as well as the ability to provide a targeted submission.
✓	Review of the Marine Estate Management Regulations
✓	Knowledge Panel - evaluation of functions and effectiveness

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

PUBLIC GOOD AWARD

At the 25th annual NSW Coastal Conference, the Authority received the 2016 prestigious Public Good Award, which was presented by Professor Bruce Thom AM, Chair of the NSW Coastal Panel.

The award is presented to organisations whose actions have demonstrated profound public benefits within the NSW coastal zone over the past few years. Professor Thom highlighted the ambitious program of work that the Authority has led to deliver on the marine estate reform program, which will provide major benefits to the NSW community. In particular he noted how the Authority has effectively engaged with communities across the state at each stage and has adopted a robust evidence and risk-based approach to inform management responses which is supported by the advice of an independent panel of experts. Professor Thom also commended the Authority on their effective multi-agency collaborative approach to marine management, working in partnership to achieve long term sustainable community wellbeing. Key examples of evidence-based work cited include the Marine Estate Community Survey (2014), the Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion Threat and Risk Assessment (2015) and suggested management initiatives outlined in a Discussion Paper (2016). Finally Professor Thom noted that the Authority’s approach is a sound basis for decision-making for the NSW marine estate.

Creating change for the marine estate

ENGAGEMENT

Community and stakeholder engagement continues to be a priority for Authority and the Knowledge Panel.

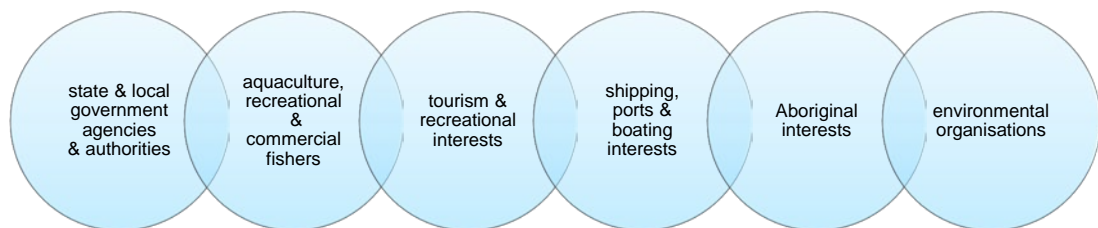
Being open and transparent is important to the Authority and the Knowledge Panel. All key marine estate documents and information are made available on the marine estate website at www.marine.nsw.gov.au.

The *Marine Estate Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy* details the rationale and approach the Authority and the Knowledge Panel take towards stakeholder engagement, community participation and communication activities. The engagement strategy outlines seven over-arching principles for engagement and recognises that consultation, as a process, comprises a number of steps with a range of different engagement techniques. Various communication tools that can be used, along with key interest groups, are listed in the engagement strategy.

Proactively working with our stakeholders

Engagement with a wide variety of marine estate stakeholders and the community was undertaken during 2016. See Appendix 2 for further details.

Figure 1. Key groups the Authority has engaged with during 2016.



PROJECTS

Following is a summary of various marine estate reform projects underway during 2016.

HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION ASSESSMENT

The Authority undertook a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of the entire Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion, from Newcastle to Shellharbour south of Wollongong including Sydney Harbour.

For the first time, threats to the environmental assets and social and economic benefits of the bioregion were identified and prioritised through community engagement, expert input and an evidence-based threat and risk assessment.

The results of the threat and risk assessment, together with a [Discussion Paper](#) outlining suggested management initiatives were exhibited for community and stakeholder engagement between February and May 2016. Over 3,400 submissions were received. The Authority has assessed feedback on the strengths, weaknesses and potential changes to the suggested initiatives, ideas for new initiatives, new evidence and ways to improve the assessment process itself. Feedback from the public consultation has informed the Authority's final advice to the NSW Government.

STATEWIDE THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Development of the draft statewide threat and risk assessment report for the NSW marine estate was completed in late 2016. The assessment was undertaken consistent with the threat and risk

assessment framework finalised in 2015. The process of developing the draft report was rigorous, evidence-based and critiqued at multiple steps in the process by independent experts and the Knowledge Panel. Authority member agency staff invested significant effort during 2016 into the development of the report.

The purpose of the statewide threat and risk assessment for the NSW marine estate, as set out in the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* (Act) is to:

- identify threats to the environmental, economic and social values (benefits) of the marine estate
- assess the risks associated with those identified threats
- inform marine estate management decisions by prioritising threats and risks according to the level of impact on the values derived from the marine estate.

This evidence-based assessment sets a new benchmark by identifying and prioritising threats and risk to the environmental assets as well as to social and economic benefits derived from the marine estate. These benefits are the same benefits the community helped us identify through the [Marine Estate Community Survey](#) (2014).

The NSW marine estate has multiple uses and associated benefits that contribute to community wellbeing including swimming, fishing, shipping, tourism and living on the coast. The draft statewide threat and risk assessment assesses the priority threats to the environmental assets and social and economic benefits derived from the marine estate and their associated risk level using a consequence and likelihood approach.

The draft threat and risk assessment report and associated material is due for release for community and stakeholder feedback in early 2017.

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In 2016 the Authority and Knowledge Panel continued preliminary work on developing a 10-year Marine Estate Management Strategy. The Strategy will respond to the outcomes and findings of the statewide threat and risk assessment.

The NSW Government aims to balance economic growth, use, enjoyment and conservation of the marine estate by setting policy directions, and identifying management priorities and opportunities in the Strategy. The purpose of the Marine Estate Management Strategy as detailed in the Act is to set the over-arching strategy for the NSW Government to coordinate the management of the marine estate, with a focus on ecologically sustainable management that promotes a biologically diverse, healthy and productive marine estate.

The Knowledge Panel has assisted in reviewing the project plans and the proposed Strategy outline. Guidelines for assessing management options for the NSW marine estate have been drafted with input from the Knowledge Panel, and detail a staged approach to the development of management options. Upon finalisation of the statewide threat and risk assessment in 2017, work will commence on the development of management options for inclusion in the draft Strategy and further community engagement.

MARINE ESTATE REGULATION REVIEW

The review of the Marine Estate Management Regulation 2009 was completed and noted by the Authority. Minor amendments to the Regulation are proposed and will be available for community consultation in 2017. The remake of this Regulation is to be completed by 1 September 2017.

MARINE PARK PILOTS

The Authority has also commenced preparatory work to inform the marine park pilots, with the Authority endorsing draft project pilot and engagement plans. Progress of the marine park pilots is dependent on the outcomes of the statewide threat and risk assessment in 2017. Priority threats identified in the process will form the basis for consideration during the pilots.

The aim of the project is to develop new management plans and management rules for marine parks using an evidence-based approach, to ensure:

- marine parks are meeting their primary purpose of conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem integrity and ecosystem function of the bioregions in the marine estate whilst balancing secondary purposes as appropriate
- statutory provisions (s44 of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014 (MEM Act 2014)*) on the review of management rules are met
- environmental, economic and social values and the threats to those values, are identified
- management objectives and actions are identified to manage threats in order to enhance those values where appropriate
- any new research is considered in the context of the statewide Social, Economic and Environmental Monitoring Program (SEEMP) to ensure the marine park management settings remain appropriate for meeting the objects of the *MEM Act 2014* of establishing a comprehensive system of marine parks.

Community engagement will occur when regulations to support the new *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* have been reviewed and the statewide threat and risk assessment is finalised.

The new approach to marine park management and zoning will be piloted at Batemans and Solitary Islands marine parks.

KNOWLEDGE PANEL

EVALUATION

The Knowledge Panel was established in 2013 to provide independent expert advice on matters referred to it by the Authority. The Knowledge Panel has a role in identifying key knowledge gaps and supporting evidence-based decision making for the management of the marine estate. In 2016 the Knowledge Panel and Authority member agencies contributed to an independently facilitated evaluation of the Knowledge Panel's process and functions. Outcomes from the evaluation included a revised [Knowledge Panel Terms of Reference](#). Recommendations from the evaluation are detailed in Appendix 3.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

The current appointment of five Knowledge Panel members expired in January 2017. An expression of interest process was undertaken late in 2016 seeking nominations to fill these positions. New members appointed will have a cross-section of expertise in ecological, economic or social sciences and natural resource management as required under the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*. The appointments are being finalised in 2017.

LINKS TO OTHER GOVERNMENT REFORMS

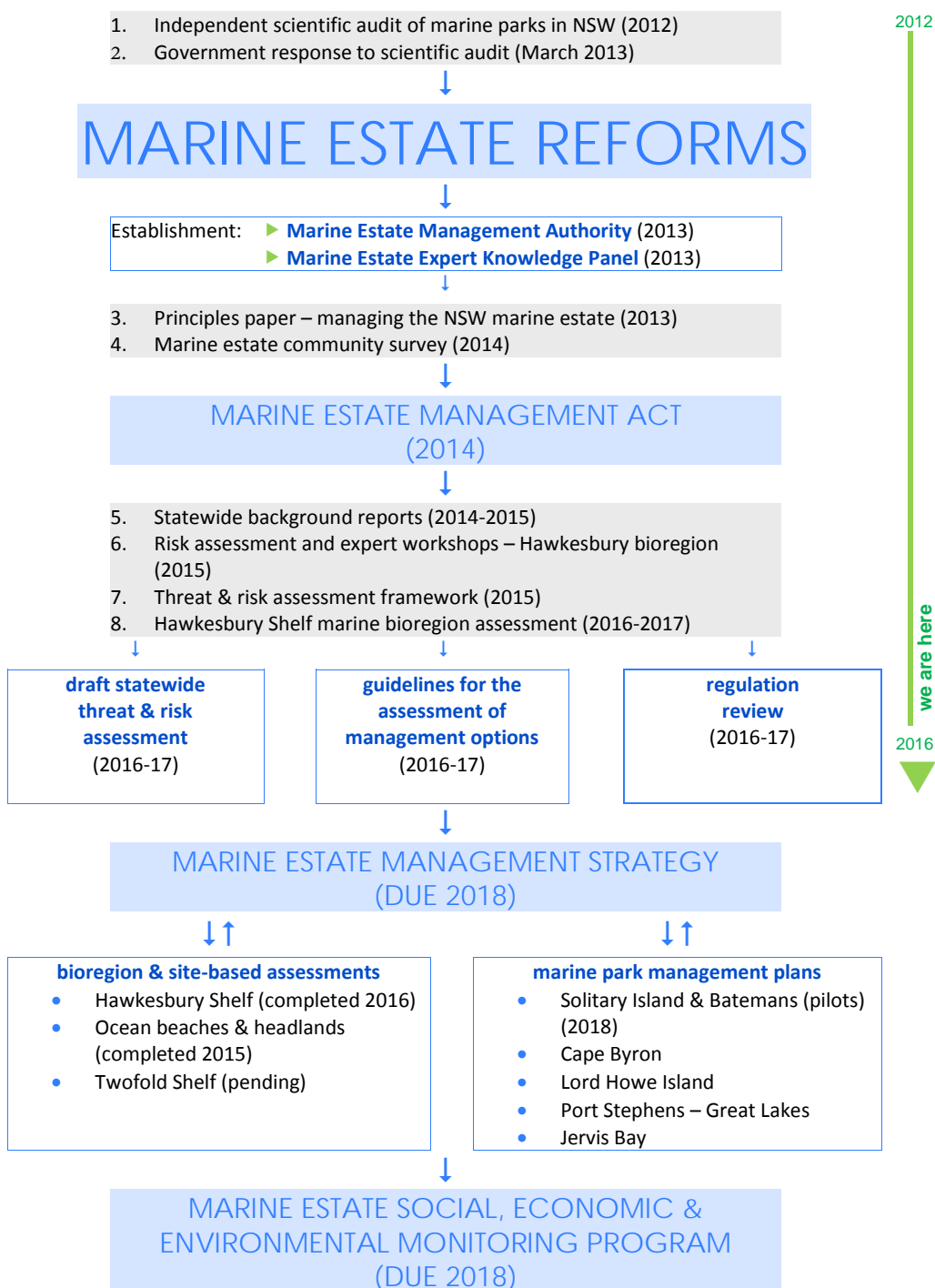
During the year the Authority worked with government agencies on multiple reform agendas across the marine estate. These included:

- Development of a new [NSW coastal management framework](#) and State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP)
- Commonwealth [Marine Reserves Review](#)
- Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications – review of [current and future impacts of climate change on marine fisheries and biodiversity](#).

A healthy coast and sea,
managed for the greatest well-being of the community

OUR PROGRESS

Figure 2. Marine Estate Management Authority’s progress to date – includes key pieces of work completed from the Authority’s schedule of works.



GOVERNANCE

NSW MARINE ESTATE

The NSW marine estate covers the coastline, estuaries and marine waters in NSW out to three nautical miles off the coast (map 1). It stretches approximately 1,250 kilometres along the eastern coast of Australia. It includes coastal lakes, lagoons and over 750 beaches. The NSW marine estate is home to an extensive variety of marine life, ecosystems and natural resources. It is a valuable asset that supports the social, economic and environmental well-being of NSW (Figure 3).

Map 1. NSW marine estate



Figure 3. NSW marine estate fast facts.



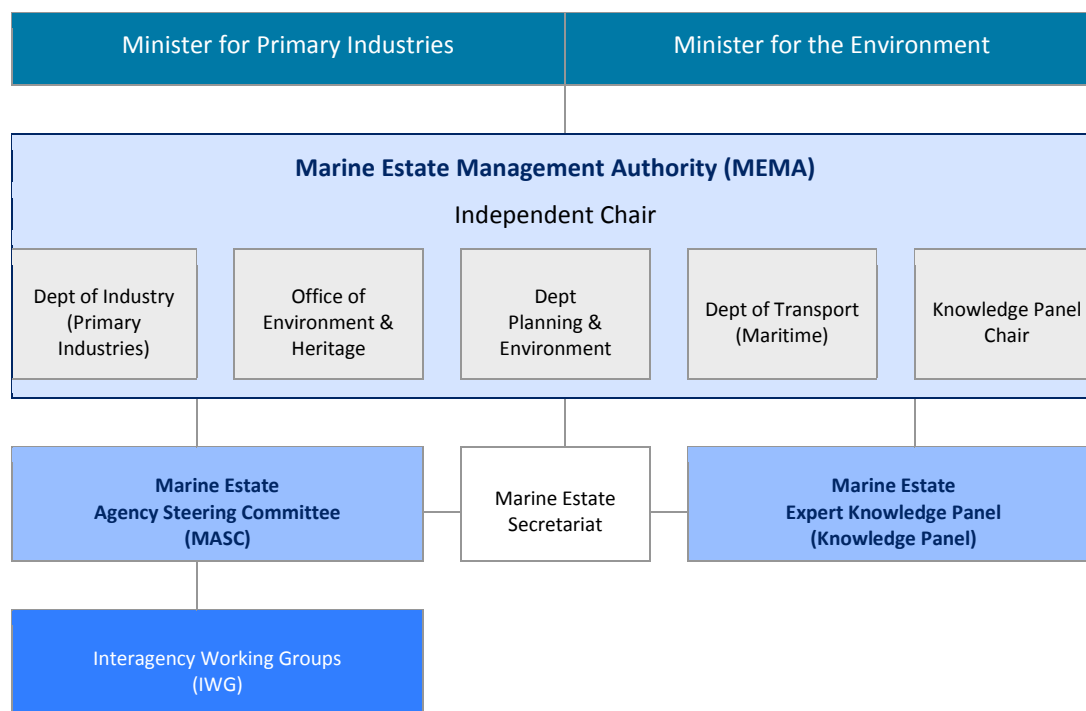
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Authority provides advice to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment. The Authority brings together the heads of the four government agencies with key marine responsibilities to provide advice to the NSW Government on strategic, evidence-based management of the marine estate.

The Authority is supported by the independent Knowledge Panel which provides independent expert advice spanning ecological, economic and social sciences and an Agency Steering Committee of senior executives, who in turn receive technical support from project specific interagency working groups.

The marine estate governance structure (Figure 3) fosters interagency collaboration. Improved linkages between NSW Government agencies is intended to lead to better outcomes for the community, industry and the environment by ensuring integrated management that focuses on addressing priority threats and opportunities to achieve the vision for the marine estate.

Figure 4. Marine estate organisational structure



MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

ESTABLISHMENT

The Authority is established under section 7 of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* (Act), which commenced on 19 December 2014.

MEMBERSHIP

The Authority comprises the following members:

- Independent Chair
- Secretary, NSW Department of Industry (delegated to Director General, Department of Primary Industries)
- Chief Executive, Office of Environment and Heritage
- Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment (delegated to Deputy Secretary, Policy & Strategy)
- Secretary, Transport for NSW (delegated to Executive Director, Centres for Road Safety & Maritime Safety)
- Chair, Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel.

FUNCTIONS

Statutory functions of the Authority under the Act are to:

- advise the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment (Ministers) on management of the marine estate in line with the principles of ecologically sustainable management
- undertake assessments of threats and risks to the marine estate

- prepare a draft Marine Estate Management Strategy for submission to Ministers and advise Ministers of its implementation by public authorities
- promote collaboration and co-ordination between public authorities in the management of the marine estate
- foster consultation with the community in management of the marine estate.

The Authority and Knowledge Panel do not have any statutory decision-making powers or direct regulatory functions.

Schedule 1 of the Act sets out the constitution and procedures of the Authority.

During 2016 the Authority and Knowledge Panel operated in accordance with schedule 1 of the Act, Department Premier and Cabinet's [Guidelines for NSW Boards and Committees](#) and a [Protocol Manual](#).

ATTENDANCE

Six Authority meetings were held during 2016, with a quorum achieved at all meetings. Meeting summaries are available on the [marine estate website](#).

Table 1. Authority meeting attendance 2016

Member	Number of meetings attended/held
Dr Wendy Craik AM (MEMA Chair)	6/6
Department of Primary Industries*	6/6
Office of Environment & Heritage	6/6
Department of Planning & Environment	6/6
Department of Transport	6/6
Quentin Grafton (Knowledge Panel Chair)	6/6

* Delegate of Secretary NSW Department of Industry.

FUNDING

The Authority has no annual budget allocation. All costs associated with the establishment and ongoing operations of the Authority and the Knowledge Panel are funded by the Department of Primary Industries within the NSW Department of Industry cluster and other agencies by agreement.

STAFFING

The Authority does not employ staff, but drives reforms by drawing on existing resources of agencies. The Department of Primary Industries, under the NSW Department of Industry cluster, provides assistance to the Authority and the Knowledge Panel through the marine estate secretariat, including administrative support.

MARINE ESTATE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE PANEL

ESTABLISHMENT

The Knowledge Panel is established under section 9 of the MEM Act.

The Knowledge Panel is tasked by and reports directly to the Authority. Knowledge Panel effectiveness and performance is monitored by the Authority and is also reported in this progress report.

MEMBERSHIP

Knowledge Panel members are appointed for a period up to four years. The Chair is Prof R. Quentin Grafton, Professor of Economics, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, who has extensive experience in natural resources, including marine fisheries. The appointment of the five members of the Knowledge Panel will be finalised in 2017 and may include current or new members.

FUNCTIONS

The role of the Knowledge Panel is to provide independent expert advice on matters referred to it by the Authority. The Knowledge Panel has a role in identifying key knowledge gaps and supporting evidence-based decision making as the NSW Government implements the new approach to managing the marine estate.

During 2016 the Knowledge Panel operated according to its [terms of reference](#). This progress report fulfils the requirement for the Authority to undertake an annual review of Knowledge Panel effectiveness and performance.

Knowledge Panel members have been successful in collaborating as individual experts to provide consolidated advice that takes into account ecological, economic and social considerations. The Knowledge Panel have contributed significantly to the marine estate reform program both in terms of strategic and technical advice.

ATTENDANCE

Five Knowledge Panel meetings were held during 2016, with a quorum achieved at all meetings.

Significantly, pre-meetings enable the Knowledge Panel to collectively discuss preliminary views relating to each agenda item, negotiate a consolidated position and provide an opportunity to identify and discuss strategic and governance issues.

During 2016 Knowledge Panel members also participated in out-of-session expert panel workshops on specific marine reform projects, held discussions with agency staff and consultants, were involved in the drafting of project plans, engagement plans, communications material, reports and various publications.

Table 2. Knowledge Panel meeting attendance 2016

Member	Number of meetings attended/held
Prof Quentin Grafton (Chair)	5/5
Dr Kate Brooks	4/5
Dr Neil Byron	4/5
Dr Rick Fletcher	5/5
Prof Emma Johnston	4/5
Mr Peter McGinnity	4/5
Dr Wendy Craik AM (Authority observer)	3/5

APPENDIX 1 – SCHEDULE OF WORKS - 2016

The marine estate Schedule of Works outlined below identifies priority areas of work as part of the strategic, holistic, evidence based approach to managing the NSW marine estate – marine waters, the coast and estuaries, including our marine parks.

In forming advice for the Minister for Primary Industries and Minister for the Environment, the Marine Estate Management Authority (Authority) has direct access to independent expertise across economic, social and ecological sciences through the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel. The Authority is helping the NSW Government focus their programs on priority issues and will oversee implementation of appropriate, innovative, cost-effective management responses to the biggest threats and risks.

Table 3. Priority marine estate projects

Indicative timing of completion	Priority project	Status at July 2016
By the end of June each year	Marine Estate Management Authority's annual progress report published.	2016 report pending
2015-17	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment - explore mechanisms to enhance conservation of marine biodiversity in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion (Newcastle - Sydney - Wollongong).	In progress Submissions received 29 Feb - 8 May 2016
2015-16	<i>Marine Estate Management (Management Rules) Regulation 1999</i> amended to implement final decision regarding 10 ocean beach and headland sanctuary zone sites in four marine parks in relation to shore-based recreational line fishing.	In progress Submissions received 1 Sept - 13 November 2015
2015-16	State-wide threats and risks to the marine estate assessed.	In progress
2016-17	Regulations to complement the <i>Marine Estate Management Act 2014</i> reviewed. This is to include reviewing zone types, objectives and guidelines for use.	In progress
2016-18	Marine Estate Management Strategy developed.	In progress
2016-18	Develop marine and estuarine monitoring, evaluation and reporting program.	In progress
2016	Evaluation of Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel processes and role in delivering the new approach to NSW marine estate management.	In progress
Following review of Regulations, 2017-18	New approach to marine park management and zoning at Batemans Marine Park and Solitary Islands Marine Park developed and piloted.	In progress
Ongoing	Input relating to the marine estate provided to NSW planning system reforms.	On-going

Table 4. Future marine estate projects

Indicative timing of completion	Future project	Status at July 2016
On-going	Implement Marine Estate Management Strategy, including marine and estuarine monitoring, evaluation and reporting program.	Pending
Following completion & evaluation of Hawkesbury assessment	Explore mechanisms to enhance conservation of marine biodiversity in the Twofold Shelf marine bioregion (Far South Coast).	Pending
Following completion & evaluation of pilots	Timetable for reviewing management and zoning in other marine parks.	Pending
Five years after assessment is finalised	Health check of state-wide threat and risk assessment five years after it is finalised.	Pending
Five years after Strategy comes into effect	Health check of Marine Estate Management Strategy five years after it is finalised.	Pending

Table 5. Completed marine estate projects

Completed Projects	Note
Moratorium provisions in <i>Marine Parks Act 1997</i> amended to allow for changes to zoning including alteration of sanctuary zones.	Passed Parliament August 2013
The Authority's vision and principles determined, to guide management of the marine estate.	Principles paper published November 2013
Marine Estate Management Authority's annual progress report published.	2013, 2014, 2015 annual reports complete
Social research, through a state-wide survey to capture NSW community views on the marine estate.	July 2014
Recreational fishing access on mainland ocean beaches and headlands in marine park sanctuary zones assessed, using a draft threat and risk assessment framework.	Announced December 2014
<i>Marine Estate Management Act 2014</i> finalised.	Commenced December 2014
Vacant positions on marine park advisory committees filled.	2015
Threat and risk assessment framework developed.	Published June 2015

APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During 2016 engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders and the community was undertaken on marine estate reforms. In addition to the summary of engagement below, targeted, multifaceted engagement was undertaken by government agencies on a number of projects.

Table 6. Summary of community engagement undertaken during 2016

Date	Stakeholders	
October 2016	Presentation to the Sydney Coastal Councils Group on NSW marine estate reforms	
August 2016	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion newsletter #5. Distributed to over 3,000 community and marine estate stakeholders	
August 2016	Glades Bay Project Management Services	Mitch Geddes
Feb – May 2016	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion community and stakeholder engagement on the threat and risk assessment and suggested management initiatives, including stakeholder workshops, targeted consultation with NSW Government agencies, local government, Aboriginal, peak stakeholder groups	
April 2016	Presentation to the NSW Coastal Panel	Prof Bruce Thom
April 2016	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion newsletter #4. Distributed to over 3,000 community and marine estate stakeholders	
March 2016	Nature Conservation Council	Daisy Barham

APPENDIX 3 – KNOWLEDGE PANEL EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were put forward for consideration by the Authority as part of the evaluation for optimisation or improvement of the Knowledge Panel:

ROLE AND OPERATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE PANEL

1. The new terms of reference (ToR) for the Knowledge Panel which sets out its role, responsibilities and functions is considered adequate and does not need to be further refined.
2. The Knowledge Panel's focus should be more strategic, with key focus areas to be outlined in a 12 month work plan that is developed by Knowledge Panel in close consultation with key Agency staff (likely through the MEMA Agency Steering Committee [MASC]).
3. Following engagement with MASC, the Knowledge Panel should present its initial recommendations to the Authority about the work plan as part of a devoted session in December 2016 about the evaluation report and future work plan.
4. Based on the feedback obtained as part of the evaluation, key matters for consideration of the Knowledge Panel as part of its future work plan are recommended to include (in no order of priority):
 - a. The continuing need to articulate and reinforce the objectives of the marine estate reforms in order to maintain momentum (e.g. what are we trying to achieve with the reforms? What success has been achieved?);
 - b. Resolving confusion about the roles of risk assessment, risk evaluation, risk tolerance and risk management in the context of framing management options and strategies;
 - c. Further work and resolution of outstanding issues with respect to the Authority's Draft Guidelines for Assessing Management Options noting this document is a critical component of Step 3 of the 5-Step Process;
 - d. Resolving how marine parks fit within the marine estate reforms;
 - e. Opportunities to streamline future threat and risk assessment processes (both in terms of time and resources) and to focus the assessment on the key issues including application of the process to smaller spatial scales;
 - f. Specific to the threat and risk assessment, making sure the assessment processes recognises and understands key system wide drivers including cumulative impacts, legacy issues and other issues that will affect the flow of benefits derived from the marine estate; and
 - g. Evaluating steps and outputs against the key MEMA objectives and drivers identified by Knowledge Panel (e.g. moving beyond status quo, maximising social and economic benefits, etc.).
5. Future Knowledge Panel agendas should seek to minimise items for noting, with more meeting time devoted to addressing the strategic work plan. In this context, provision of clear, actionable advice and recommendations during the meetings will help to minimise uncertainty about Knowledge Panel policy positions and improve clarity of advice and efficiency of operations.

5-STEP PROCESS

6. While there is general support for the 5-Step decision-making process and associated documentation (Principles Paper and Threat and Risk Assessment Framework paper), it is recommended that the process would be better depicted as a more circular and adaptive model rather than the current linear diagram. It should also note that there are opportunities for evaluation, refinement and feedback at each Step in the process.

7. The 5-Step Process (both in the context of the program diagram and practical implementation) should be seen through a lens of stakeholder engagement noting the need to 'close the loop' on how benefits are being considered and maximised as part of the Marine Estate Management Strategy and implementation including trade-offs and why these were deemed both reasonable and acceptable in the context of managing the broader marine estate.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDING

8. It is the Knowledge Panel's view that the Panel needs to have adequate depth and diversity to fulfil its role and terms of reference. This is best delivered by a Chair with five panel members while seeking to be as cost effective as possible in its work.
9. Greater local (NSW) expertise is desirable for the Panel but noting the ability to work together collaboratively and collegiately (as per the current Panel) is recognised as critical to future success.
10. Both Knowledge Panel members and the Agencies note the imperative of resourcing in order to be able to service Knowledge Panel's operation and to potentially supply the Knowledge Panel with additional resources and/or budget to undertake more substantive activities under the 12 month work plan.

LINKS WITH COASTAL REFORMS

11. It is proposed one of the Knowledge Panel members be nominated to attend and contribute to the Coastal Council established under the *Coastal Management Act 2016* and to report back to Knowledge Panel and MEMA on relevant issues.
12. As identified in the submissions on the Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion Assessment Discussion Paper, there is a recognised need for greater understanding and integration between the marine estate and coastal reform initiatives (particularly in the context of estuaries). This is a key matter that should be addressed as part of Knowledge Panel's role in the NSW Coastal Council.