



Annual Report 2017

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



Annual Report 2017 – Marine Estate Management Authority

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The Annual Report reports on the work of the Marine Estate Management Authority (Authority) and the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel (the Panel) as set out in the [marine estate Schedule of Works](#). The Annual Report outlines compliance with their establishment under the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*, including their functions, membership and meetings. The report also summarises key achievements, strategic priorities and future directions for the Authority.

This report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2017.

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More information

www.marine.nsw.gov.au

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the author or the user's independent adviser.

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE



As an independent, statutory body the Authority is committed to fulfilling the NSW Government's reforms for the NSW marine estate and has been working with key stakeholders and the broader community to implement a new approach to marine estate management. The Authority's vision for the NSW marine estate is a **healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community, now and into the future.**

2017 has been a terrific year, with NSW leading other states in innovative science and policy development. The Authority has an ambitious reform agenda and has achieved a number of significant milestones during the year, including delivering on key projects, the release of a draft Marine Estate Management Strategy and complex assessments. These are highlighted in further detail in this report. Our notable achievements this year include:

- the release of a 10-year Draft Marine Estate Management Strategy for community and stakeholder consultation addressing priority threats to the NSW marine estate.
- completion of the first ever, evidence-based statewide threat and risk assessment for the NSW marine estate
- the release of a new Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement outlining the role and purpose of marine protected areas in NSW
- releasing a community engagement report on proposed management initiatives to enhance marine biodiversity conservation, while maximising community benefits in the Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion
- finalising the marine estate management regulation review
- producing a technical guideline for assessing management options for the NSW marine estate.

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.

The Authority's achievements outlined in this report would not have been possible without the good will, leadership and cooperation of the people involved: The Hon. Niall Blair MLC, the Hon Gabrielle Upton MP, Authority members, the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel, agency staff and those in the community, who in one way or another, have contributed and enabled us to move to a point where we are developing recommendations for the future management of the NSW marine estate that will make a real difference. I am grateful to them and look forward to continuing to work on delivering the reform program in 2018.



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 coordination 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 wellbeing 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 judgement will still be required
5. the wellbeing 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.

OUR 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)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2017



Draft Marine Estate Management Strategy

Finalised a draft 10-year Marine Estate Management Strategy to address priority threats to the NSW marine estate.



Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment

Completed an evidence-based statewide Threat and Risk Assessment to identify the threats and risks to community benefits derived from the NSW marine estate.



Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement

Release of a new Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement outlining the role and purpose of marine protected areas.



Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment

Release of report detailing the community engagement findings on the suggested management initiatives for the bioregion.



Marine estate management regulation review

Review, update and remake of the marine estate management regulation completed.



Guidelines for Assessing Management Options for the NSW marine estate

Technical guidelines published to provide guidance on the Authority's 5-step decision-making process.

HIGHLIGHTS

The NSW marine estate (estuaries, beaches, coastline, ports and ocean waters) is a natural infrastructure asset that underpins the State's coastal-based lifestyle and generates billions of dollars of investment annually to NSW, particularly in regional areas, via tourism, recreation and commercial industries such as fishing and aquaculture.

The marine estate is integral to the State's coastal-based lifestyle.

	6.3 million people live along NSW coastline	82% of the State's population, 6.3 million people, live within 50 km of the coastline, including NSW's three biggest centres: Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle. The health and beauty of the marine estate underpin peoples' choice to live, work and recreate near the coast - as reflected in the associated high value of coastal real estate prices.
	11 coastal Aboriginal nations	Sea Country is vital to Aboriginal cultural wellbeing in NSW supporting spiritual and cultural connection to Country and sustenance via locally caught seafood.
	\$6.5 billion trade & tourism	\$6.5 billion is contributed annually to the NSW economy from the major ports via trade and tourism.
	6,013 vessel visits to NSW ports annually	NSW is the largest cruise vessel destination in Australia, at an estimated industry value of \$2.9 billion for the NSW economy. Sydney Harbour is an international iconic destination for cruise ships. Last year the industry grew 11% over the previous year and 26% over the previous five years.
	1,750 km coastline 826 beaches 185 estuaries	The State's beaches and coastal waterways are the focus of international, national and regional tourism, via coastal-focused events, accommodation, restaurants, retail outlets etc.
	1.8 million recreational boating	An estimated 1.8 million people go recreational boating in the NSW marine estate each year. There are approximately 232,000 registered vessels in NSW and more than 489,000 people hold a boat or personal water craft driving licence, the majority of which are used on the coast.
	850,000 licensed recreational fishers	There are 850,000 licensed recreational fishers in NSW, the majority of whom fish in the marine estate, generating an economic benefit of \$2.56 billion per year and revenue to the State of approximately \$15 million per annum via recreational fishing licence sales.
	\$90 million wild caught commercial fisheries	NSW is well known as a safe source of locally caught seafood, with millions generated each year via international and national tourism focused on seafood consumption via the Sydney Fish Markets and regional fisheries co-operatives and retail outlets. The estimated total value of wild caught commercial fisheries in NSW is nearly \$90 million annually and \$70 million for marine and estuarine aquaculture (with likely direct and indirect outputs of between \$436-501 million added value each year), supporting around 3,500 full-time jobs across NSW.

KEY INITIATIVES

Our key programs and projects

Following is a summary of key marine estate reform projects under way during 2017.

Creating change for the marine estate

STATEWIDE THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

The Authority completed an evidence-based [statewide Threat and Risk Assessment \(TARA\)](#) to identify the threats and risks to the environmental assets - including water quality, habitats and biodiversity - as well as to the social, cultural and economic benefits.

The purpose of the statewide TARA, as set out in the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* 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.

The [Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report on the draft statewide TARA](#) was also released in 2017. It details how comments and evidence provided were used to finalise the statewide TARA report.

The report entitled the [NSW Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment – Background Environmental Information](#), which reviews the scientific literature for threats to the environmental assets of the NSW marine estate, was also updated during this process and now includes over 1,000 references of supporting evidence underpinning the final report. These documents are available on the marine estate website.

This evidence-based assessment sets a new national 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 \(2014\)](#).

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Authority released a [draft Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028](#) for public consultation from 30 October to 8 December 2017.

**The draft Strategy is a first for NSW
and is a key element of the marine estate reforms that
coordinates many aspects of marine estate management under
the one framework and sets the strategic direction for marine
estate management over the next decade.**

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 *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*, is to set the overarching framework for the NSW Government to coordinate the management of the marine estate into the future. It outlines how we respond to the priority threats to estuarine and marine biodiversity across the State, as well as threats to the social, cultural and economic benefits the community derive from the marine estate. It is supported by an extensive, evidence-based threat and risk assessment.

The draft Strategy is a major deliverable under the NSW Government's marine estate reforms program.

**The marine estate is to be managed as a single continuous
system for the greatest wellbeing of the community.**

Workshops were conducted across the NSW coast in late 2017 with marine estate stakeholders, Marine Park Advisory Committees, local government and State agencies as well as with coastal Aboriginal community representatives. Over 2,100 submissions were received during this period. The Authority member agencies have assessed submissions and stakeholder feedback to inform the finalisation of the Marine Estate Management Strategy, due for release in 2018.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE NSW MARINE ESTATE

In May 2017, the Authority published [Guidelines for assessing management options for the NSW marine estate](#). These technical guidelines provide guidance on the application of Steps 3 and 4 in Authority's 5-step decision-making process. They assist Authority agencies to systematically review current management and develop management responses to the priority threats and opportunities identified for the marine estate. They provide the foundation for developing a rigorous and defensible business case to support the Authority's recommendations to the NSW Government on the future management of the marine estate.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

An Implementation Plan will be developed with key stakeholder input following the release of the final Strategy by the Authority's member agencies. The Plan will articulate in detail the management actions that will address priority threats, as well as the key performance indicators, timeframes and agency and stakeholder responsibilities. A key focus of the plan is to coordinate functions and responsibilities within and across government, including local government, as well as partnerships with industry and the community.

MARINE INTEGRATED MONITORING PROGRAM

A Monitoring Plan will also be developed linking the Strategy's key performance indicators (included in the Implementation Plan) and will inform evaluation and reporting on the performance of the Strategy in preparation for a five year health check. It will also monitor the condition and trend of environmental assets and community benefits and fill key knowledge gaps identified in the statewide TARA.

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT REGULATION REVIEW

Community and stakeholder engagement occurred on the proposed Marine Estate Management Regulation 2017 and Regulatory Impact Statement from 12 June and 9 July 2017. A total of 16 submissions were received from stakeholder groups and community members, and were reviewed and considered to finalise the proposed Regulation.

Four amendments were included in the final Regulation to improve the practical operation of marine parks and aquatic reserves. The changes included extending some powers that are currently available for managing marine parks, such as the ability to remove illegally placed property and improving the way applications for permits in marine parks are considered.

The Regulation was assessed and was the preferred option as it generated the greatest net benefits to the community, environment, businesses and government. It commenced on 1 September 2017.

Updated regulations improving marine estate management

HAWKESBURY SHELF MARINE BIOREGION ASSESSMENT

In 2016 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 advice to the NSW Government on these management initiatives.

During 2017 a summary report was released outlining the [findings of community engagement](#) outlined above on the suggested management initiatives for the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion.

In 2017 the Government also tasked the Authority with bringing forward the Marine Estate Management Strategy (see above) and incorporating the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment's broader initiatives into the statewide Strategy.

MARINE PARK PILOTS

With the remake of the [Marine Estate Management Regulation 2017](#) and the release of the final statewide Threat and Risk Assessment, the Authority is now able to commence work on the marine park management pilot project.

The aim of the project is to pilot the development of new management plans and management rules for marine parks using an evidence-based approach, commencing at Batemans and then Solitary Islands marine parks.

This work builds on the Marine Estate Community Survey (2014) and the statewide Threat and Risk Assessment (2017). It will be guided by requirements of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* and the overarching Marine Estate Management Strategy (draft 2017).

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS POLICY STATEMENT

The Authority developed a [Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement](#) which reaffirms the NSW Government's commitment to maintaining the existing comprehensive network of marine protected areas in NSW and improving their management, within holistic management arrangements for the entire marine estate.

The statement notes the importance of marine protected areas as a management tool to address priority threats, identified via a robust evidence-based threat and risk assessment, to marine and estuarine habitats and biodiversity and to the social and economic benefits derived from the NSW marine estate.

**The statement clarifies the future role and purpose
of marine protected areas in marine estate management.**

This policy statement supersedes the former NSW Government policy paper, *Developing a representative system of marine protected areas in NSW – an overview* (November 2001) and builds on the *NSW Government Response to the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW* (March 2013) and the Authority's *Managing the NSW Marine Estate: Purpose, Underpinning Principles and Priority Settings* (November 2013).

The [NSW Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement](#) is available on the marine estate website.

WATER QUALITY WORKING GROUP

The Authority held a successful Water Quality Forum for Chief Executives from key water management organisations in NSW in 2017.

Following the forum the Water Quality Working Group was established, comprised of agency senior officers, to assist the Authority with progressing water quality outcomes and contribute to the development of the Marine Estate Management Strategy. The Water Quality Working Group intends to map water management responsibilities across NSW and provide further advice to the Authority to improve catchment-based water quality outcomes during the implementation of the Marine Estate Management Strategy.

OCEAN BEACHES AND HEADLANDS

The NSW Government tasked the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel to undertake an [assessment of recreational line fishing from ocean beaches and headlands](#) within sanctuary zones. The NSW Government introduced an amnesty on recreational line fishing from ocean beaches and headlands within sanctuary zones while the independent Knowledge Panel undertook this comprehensive risk assessment process.

The Knowledge Panel used a threat and risk assessment based approach to assess a range of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors relating to the impact of recreational line fishing at 30 sites on ocean beaches and headlands.

The Knowledge Panel's assessment, plus the advice of the Authority, informed the NSW Government's interim decision on the amnesty in December 2014 when it proposed that 10 of the 30 sites change from sanctuary zones to habitat protection zones to allow for the continuation of shore-based recreational line fishing. Rezoning these 10 sites required an amendment to the management rules for four marine parks.

The NSW Government invited submissions on the draft management rules in late 2015, with more than 6,600 submissions received. Authority member agencies have considered the submissions and anticipate an outcome to be announced on the zoning of these 10 sites during 2018.

ENGAGEMENT

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.

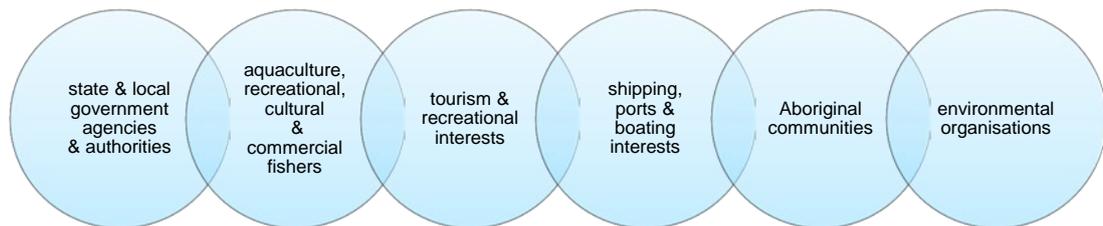
Community and stakeholder engagement continues to be a priority for the Authority and the Knowledge Panel.

The *Marine Estate Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy* details the rationale and approach the Authority and the Knowledge Panel take towards stakeholder engagement, Aboriginal and community participation and communication activities. The engagement strategy outlines seven overarching 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 2017 (Figure 1 and Appendix 2). Authority Chair, Dr Wendy Craik, also held meetings with Members of Parliament, Ministers and the Premier's Office to progress marine estate reforms and priorities.

Figure 1. Key groups the Authority has engaged with during 2017



LINKS TO OTHER GOVERNMENT REFORMS

This Authority supports related NSW Government reform processes. It integrates processes and outputs where relevant to meet the NSW Government's directive to set an overarching framework that will coordinate the management of the marine estate now and into the future.

During the year the Authority worked with government agencies on multiple reform agendas across the marine estate, including (but not limited to):

- coastal reforms and newly established NSW Coastal Council – links have been established between the Authority and the Council, with two members of the Knowledge Panel also members of the NSW Coastal Council
- Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms
- Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program
- Aboriginal cultural fishing reforms
- Climate Change Policy Framework
- biosecurity reforms
- land management and biodiversity conservation reforms
- Crown land reforms
- Regional Ports Strategy
- NSW draft Freight and Ports Plan
- NSW Boating Now Program
- Moorings review
- Draft Marine Waters Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy
- Australian Marine Parks 10 year draft management plans

A healthy coast and sea,
managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Table 1. The Authority's key achievements

2017	Draft Marine Estate Management Strategy	Finalised and seek feedback on a draft 10-year Marine Estate Management Strategy to address the priority threats to the NSW marine estate.
2017	Marine Estate Management Regulation	Review, update and remake of the regulation completed leading to better management and protection of marine parks and aquatic reserves, and a regulation that is easier to understand and implement.
2017	Statewide Threat & Risk Assessment	Completed an evidence-based statewide Threat and Risk Assessment to identify the threats and risks to environmental assets and community benefits derived from the NSW marine estate.
2017	Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement	Release of a new Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement outlining the role and purpose of marine protected areas.
2016	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment	Completed a comprehensive assessment of the Hawkesbury Shelf (Greater Sydney) marine bioregion. Discussion paper released for community and stakeholder engagement.
2015	Threat & Risk Assessment Framework	Release of new guidelines on assessing the threats and risk to our marine environment.
2014	Recreational fishing assessment	Assessment of recreational line fishing from ocean beaches and headlands in marine park sanctuary zones and progressing consultation on the proposed rezoning of 10 sites.
2014	<i>Marine Estate Management Act</i>	Landmark Bill passes NSW Parliament heralds a new era in the management of the marine estate in NSW.
2014	Community Survey	Survey indicating the importance and value the community and coastal visitors place on the NSW marine estate. Over 1,700 people across NSW surveyed.
2013	Ocean beaches and headlands	Advice provided to Government on an assessment of recreational fishing access on ocean beaches and headlands in NSW marine park sanctuary zones by the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel.

Map 1. NSW marine estate



GOVERNANCE

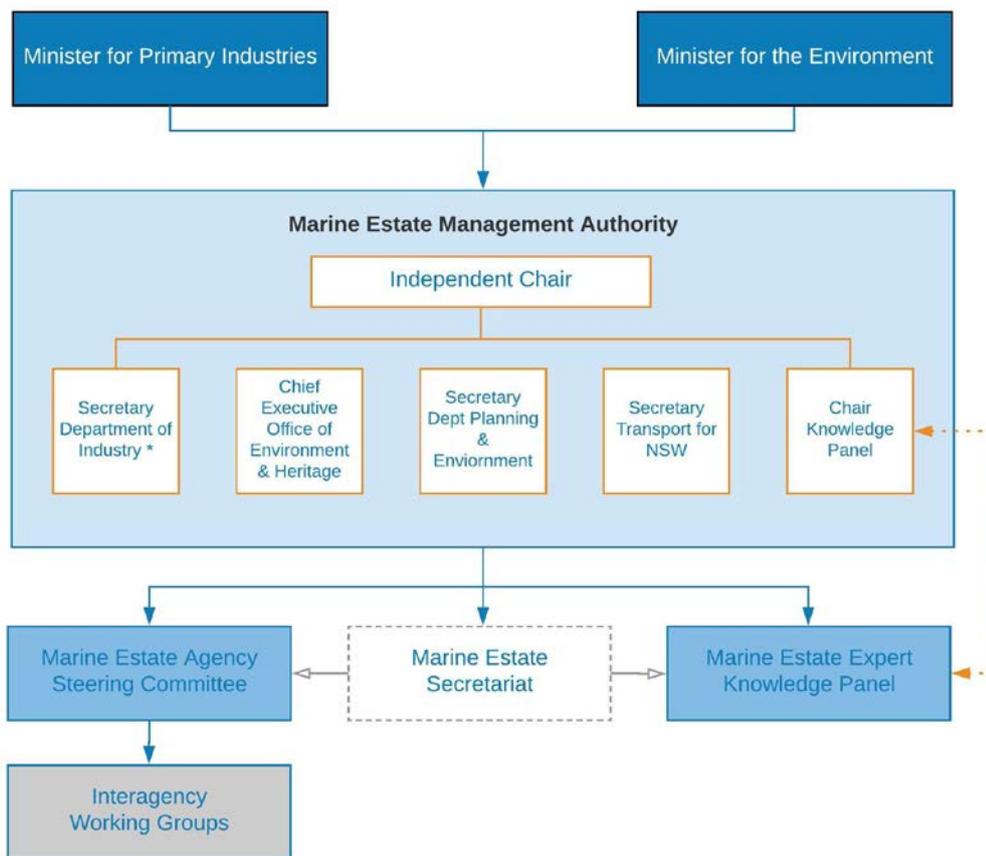
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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 and the NSW Coastal Council 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 2. Marine estate organisational structure



* delegated to Director General, Department of Primary Industries

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
- Chair, Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel
- 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).

FUNCTIONS

Statutory functions of the Authority under the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* 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 coordination 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 2017 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 the Authority's [Protocol Manual](#).

ATTENDANCE

Four Authority meetings were held during 2017, with a quorum achieved at all meetings. Meeting summaries are available on the [marine estate website](#).

Table 2. Authority meeting attendance 2017

Member	Number of meetings attended/held
Dr Wendy Craik AM (MEMA Chair)	4/4
Prof Quentin Grafton (Knowledge Panel Chair)	3/4
Department of Primary Industries *	4/4
Office of Environment & Heritage	4/4
Department of Planning & Environment	4/4
Department of Transport	4/4

* 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 *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*.

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 annual report.

MEMBERSHIP

Knowledge Panel comprises a Chair and five members who are appointed for a period up to four years.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

Five Knowledge Panel members terms of appointment expired in January 2017. An expression of interest process was undertaken late in 2016 seeking nominations to fill these positions. Two existing members stood for re-election and were successful in re-appointment. Three new members joined the Knowledge Panel in 2017. New members appointed 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*.

Two members of the Knowledge Panel, Dr Kate Brooks and Associate Professor William Glamore, have also been appointed to the newly formed NSW Coastal Council. Dr Kate Brooks has been tasked with providing the key linkage point between the two committees.

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 2017 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

Due to machinery of government changes only two Knowledge Panel meetings were able to held during 2017, with a quorum achieved at both meetings.

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

Table 3. Knowledge Panel meeting attendance 2017

Member	Number of meetings attended/held
Prof Quentin Grafton (Chair)	2/2
Dr Kate Brooks	2/2
Mr Peter McGinnity	1/2
Associate Professor Kate Barclay	2/2
Associate Professor William Glamore	2/2
Professor Peter Steinberg	2/2
Dr Wendy Craik AM (Authority observer)	2/2

MARINE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Marine Park Advisory Committees have been established to provide a voice for local communities contributing to the management of marine parks.

As part of the marine estate reforms, the NSW Government and the Authority is committed to revitalising these committees to give local communities a better say in decision making.

All six marine park advisory committees have been appointed and are functioning. Vacancies arising from time to time will be filled in accordance with established processes.

Details of the membership of these committees are available on the [marine estate website](#).

APPENDIX 1 – SCHEDULE OF WORKS

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

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

Table 4. Priority of current marine estate projects

Indicative timing of completion	Priority project	Status Dec 2017
2018	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment - explore mechanisms to enhance conservation of marine biodiversity in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion (Newcastle - Sydney - Wollongong).	In progress
2018	<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
2018	Marine Estate Management Strategy developed.	In progress
2019	Marine Integrated Monitoring Program developed.	In progress
2018 Following review of Regulations	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 and coastal reforms.	Ongoing

Table 5. Future marine estate projects

Indicative timing of completion	Future project	Status
Ongoing	Implement Marine Estate Management Strategy, including Marine Integrated Monitoring 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 statewide Threat and Risk Assessment.	Pending
Five years after Strategy comes into effect	Health check of Marine Estate Management Strategy.	Pending

APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During 2017 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

Date	Stakeholders	
January 2017	Sydney Water Corporation on Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment.	Kevin Young, CEO
January – April 2017	Draft Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) – 6 key marine estate stakeholder and 10 Aboriginal workshops were held along the NSW coast. More than 70 individuals and organisations submitted feedback through the TARA tool, 55 submissions were received directly and 2 email campaign submissions which generated 1,500 support emails	
February 2017	Environment Protection Authority on Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment.	Barry Buffier, Executive Officer
February – May 2017	Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion assessment - community engagement included an online submissions process, independently facilitated stakeholder workshops and agency led meetings with peak organisations.	
June – July 2017	Marine Estate Regulation review – community and stakeholder engagement over a 4 week period	
July 2017	Water Chief Executives – water quality forum.	
August 2017	Greater Sydney Commission on marine estate reforms and water quality.	Roderick Simpson
August 2017	National Parks Australia on Commonwealth Draft Marine Park plans.	Sally Barnes
October 2017	Marine estate reforms – newsletter distributed to over 3,000 community and marine estate stakeholders.	
October – December 2017	Draft marine estate management strategy - 18 workshops were conducted across the coast with marine estate stakeholders, local government and State agencies. 6 of the workshops were held with coastal Aboriginal community representatives. Marine Park Advisory Committees were also briefed during this period. Over 2,100 submissions were received during this period.	
November 2017	NSW Coastal Conference – MEMA Chair presentation.	
December 2017	Nature Conservation Council and Australian Marine Conservation Society	Sharnie Connell Daisy Barham