

Marine Estate Management Authority

The NSW marine estate is one of our greatest natural assets. It includes:

all coastal waters from the Queensland border to the Victorian border and out to three nautical miles

- the coastline
- estuaries to their tidal limits
- coastal wetlands
- offshore islands.

IT'S YOUR MARINE ESTATE

Almost six million people live within 50 kilometres of the NSW coastline, including the people of eleven coastal Aboriginal nations who are closely connected to their land and Sea Country.

WHAT IS THE MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

The Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 (the Strategy) is the overarching framework to coordinate management of the NSW marine estate until 2028. The Strategy outlines the actions needed to manage priority threats to the benefits the community obtains from marine estate.

It is a first for NSW, and was developed by the [Marine Estate Management Authority](#) on behalf of the NSW Government.

The Strategy outlines the vision and principles for marine estate management and then sets out how to achieve this vision. Nine interlinked management initiatives are supported by 54 actions to help manage priority threats.

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

HOW WAS THE STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

The Strategy was developed by:

- Taking the findings of the NSW Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment ([Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment](#)), which identified the priority threats to:
 - the environmental assets in the marine estate (e.g. seagrass, rocky reef)
 - the social, economic and cultural benefits the community obtains from the marine estate (e.g. boating, fishing, tourism).
- Working with key stakeholders to develop draft management actions to manage the priority threats, maximise benefits and identify competing uses.
- Collating feedback from the broader community on the draft Strategy to develop the final Strategy.

More information on how the Strategy was developed and the Authority's decision-making process can be found in the [Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028](#).



WHY DO WE NEED THE STRATEGY?

The marine estate provides critical social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits to the community of NSW. There are threats to, and competing uses for these benefits. In addition, the benefits and the threats can have multiple interactions that complicate how to manage them. The Strategy provides a framework for the whole coast of NSW to ensure the range of benefits are maximised while achieving a balance of uses.

For example, poor water quality is a priority threat to the marine estate. It causes negative impacts on:

- recreational uses e.g. swimming, fishing and diving
- commercial uses, e.g. tourism, fisheries
- aquatic habitats such as wetlands, seagrass and rocky reef that are important to the State's fisheries production and support coastal biodiversity.

The Strategy outlines coordinated actions to improve water quality across the marine estate that will have multiple benefits to the community.

Another example of a priority threat, is damage to coastal habitats. By 2036 there will be an extra 2.15 million people living along the NSW coast. The Strategy identifies strategic ways to protect and enhance coastal habitat while allowing for community access to the marine estate.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY THREATS?

The [Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment](#) found that the greatest threats to the marine environment are:

- urban and rural water pollution or run-off
- climate change (over a 20-year outlook)
- disturbance to habitats and species from estuarine entrance modification, harbour maintenance, foreshore development, wetland drainage and other works.

The greatest threats to social, cultural and economic benefits are:

- associated with water pollution
- lack of social, cultural and economic information
- lack of compliance with regulations
- lack of access to the marine estate.

Cumulative threats were also assessed. The [Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment](#) identified five cumulative threats (in no priority order):

- multiple threats to estuarine water quality
- climate change (over a 20-year outlook)
- multiple threats to Aboriginal cultural heritage
- multiple threats to marine wildlife
- multiple threats to fish assemblages.

HOW WILL THE THREATS BE REDUCED?

The Strategy is guiding over 100 projects across the nine initiatives to manage the most severe threats to the marine estate and maximise the benefits. Projects are underway to:

- improve water quality
- reduce marine litter
- improve coastal habitats
- increase sustainable land use
- plan for climate change
- protect Aboriginal cultural values
- reduce impacts on threatened and protected species

- deliver sustainable boating and fishing
- enhance social, cultural and economic benefits
- deliver effective governance.

More information on each project is in the Strategy Implementation Plan on the [marine estate website](#).

An [infographic](#) and one-page [snapshot](#) show the regional benefits and key actions the Strategy will deliver.



HOW WILL WATER QUALITY BE IMPROVED AND LITTER REDUCED?

The long-term outcome is to improve [water quality and waterway health](#), and see a reduction in litter. This will be achieved by:

- reducing sediment, nutrients and chemicals entering waterways
- rehabilitating wetlands and riverbanks
- improving stormwater infrastructure
- restoring oyster reefs
- monitoring waterway health
- educating the community on marine litter
- applying strategies and frameworks with multiple partners to ensure water quality improvements are coordinated and effective.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW WILL COASTAL HABITATS BE IMPROVED?

The long-term outcome is to improve marine biodiversity and habitats, while balancing the social and economic benefits of the coast.

[Coastal habitats](#) will be improved and protected by:

- strategically planning and managing estuary foreshore development, and estuary entrance dredging and opening

- improving riverbank management
- improving marine vegetation management
- reconnecting fish habitats
- improving coastal floodplain management
- promoting environmentally friendly planning and infrastructure
- mapping important habitats and threats to those habitats.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW DO WE PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE?

The long-term outcome is to include adaption planning and strategies into decision making to allow for the future impacts of climate change.

[Planning for climate change](#) in the marine estate involves:

- understanding the impacts of climate change on marine habitats and species
- determining how to increase the ability of these habitats and species to adapt to climate change
- building knowledge of coastal managers and communities to manage changes to optimise community benefits
- adapting as new information becomes available.

Monitoring, modelling and citizen science will assist with these steps.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW WILL ABORIGINAL CULTURAL VALUES IN THE MARINE ESTATE BE PROTECTED?

The long-term outcomes are to improve Aboriginal satisfaction with Sea Country management, allow for economic benefits for Aboriginal people from the marine estate, and ensure the NSW community appreciates the significance of Sea Country for Aboriginal people.

Sea Country is important to the overall health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, their cultural practices and traditions, and has been for thousands of years.

Protecting [Aboriginal cultural values](#) in the marine estate will be achieved by:

- establishing a framework for Aboriginal participation and employing Aboriginal people in Sea Country management
- developing plans and agreements with Aboriginal communities
- reviving culture with Aboriginal communities
- sharing culture through education, tourism and cultural interpretations
- improving economic opportunities for Aboriginal people
- undertaking cultural research and monitoring.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW WILL NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON THREATENED AND PROTECTED SPECIES BE REDUCED?

The long-term outcome is to improve or maintain the conservation status and health of threatened and protected species.

Threats to [threatened and protected marine species](#) will be reduced by

- developing and implementing education and compliance campaigns to increase awareness
- strengthening partnerships for incident responses and reporting
- improving knowledge of threats to habitats and species.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW WILL THE STRATEGY HELP TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISHING AND AQUACULTURE?

The long-term outcome is to improve ecological sustainability, economic viability and community wellbeing for [commercial, recreational and Aboriginal cultural fisheries, and aquaculture](#). This involves:

- developing [harvest strategies](#)
- undertaking an environmental assessment of recreational fishing
- maximising aquaculture opportunities
- undertaking research
- undertaking fishing enhancements, including fish stocking
- building capacity in fishing sectors
- reducing the threat of marine pests and disease.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.



HOW WILL THE STRATEGY ENABLE SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE BOATING?

The long-term outcome for boating is to provide improved social and economic benefits for NSW communities while protecting the marine environment. [Safe and sustainable boating](#) can be achieved by:

- improving mooring access and environmental outcomes
- managing pollution from vessels
- improving management of end-of-life vessels
- increasing boater awareness of regulations
- funding maritime infrastructure to improve access
- addressing boater non-compliance.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW WILL SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS BE ENHANCED?

The long-term outcomes are to improve and share the benefits of the marine estate that contribute to the wellbeing of NSW communities, while protecting the marine environment.

[Social, cultural and economic benefits](#), such as boating, fishing and tourism, will be improved and shared by:

- enhancing marine estate education and community engagement
- reviewing maritime heritage
- documenting local ecological knowledge
- mapping the range of activities in the marine estate
- identifying sustainable activities that contribute to economic growth
- monitoring community wellbeing.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW WILL EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE BE DELIVERED?

The long-term outcomes are to improve coordination, make processes clearer, simpler and consistent and to include the community in decision making.

[Good governance](#) can be achieved by:

- seeking information and advice from the community
- identifying and understanding the needs of key stakeholders
- reviewing roles and responsibilities of government agencies in the marine estate
- reducing bureaucratic red tape
- coordinating compliance.

Visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au for more information on each project.

HOW DO WE KNOW THE STRATEGY IS EFFECTIVE?

Implementation of the Strategy is being monitored, and progress reported [quarterly](#) and in an [annual report](#). An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Strategy against short-term outcomes occurs after two years. This will determine if the Strategy is on track and allow for management to adapt, if required, to changing conditions and new information.

A five-year health check will review how initiatives are tracking against key performance indicators and whether the threat levels identified in 2017 have changed. The five-year health check will also consider research and monitoring outputs, new evidence and emerging threats.

The Marine Integrated Monitoring Program guides the monitoring and evaluation of the MEMS. For more information visit the [marine estate website](#).



WHAT IS THE MARINE INTEGRATED MONITORING PROGRAM AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE STRATEGY?

The [Marine Integrated Monitoring Program](#) (2018-2028) has three key purposes:

1. Monitor the condition of environmental assets and how the community benefits from the marine estate to inform a mid-term health-check.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategy in reducing priority threats.
3. Fill key knowledge gaps that were identified in the [Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment](#).

To accomplish these purposes, the program:

- **monitors** the delivery of the Strategy, progress towards achieving the outcomes, the condition and trend of environmental assets and community benefits, and how key knowledge gaps are being addressed;
- **evaluates** if the Strategy is achieving what it set out to achieve. This includes evaluation of:

- the process to implement management actions
- the extent to which outcomes are being achieved
- the economic value of the program.

There will be three formal evaluations to demonstrate performance over the life of the Strategy: baseline (2-year), mid-term (5-year), and summative (10-year);

- **reports** progress and information to the community, responsible agencies, and decision-makers.



The [integrated monitoring and evaluation framework](#) guides monitoring, evaluation, and reporting over the life of the Strategy.

The program ensures accountability of the Strategy and supports adaptive management which allows managers to make adjustments for changing conditions and new information, identify where efforts are achieving the best results and, ultimately, ensure success.

For more information visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au.

HOW DOES THE STRATEGY AND THE STATEWIDE THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT LINK WITH COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS?

Council Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) are strongly aligned with improving outcomes for the marine estate.

CMPs are required to support the objectives of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014*. The development and implementation of the Strategy and CMPs are bound by legislation and both rely on a risk-based approach. As councils develop their CMPs through their five stages, they should consider:

- the [Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment](#) is a key resource for considering priority threats on estuaries and coastal and marine areas during preparation of CMP Scoping Studies
- aligning CMP actions with the initiatives and actions in the Strategy
- outcomes and key learnings from projects piloted in early stages of the Strategy to help inform the design and implementation of local management actions (including those in CMPs)
- data collected to monitor and evaluate Strategy outcomes (for example water quality data) which can inform CMP delivery.

For more information see the Marine Estate Management Strategy [Frequently Asked Questions for Local Government](#).

MORE INFORMATION

The Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 is available at the marine estate website www.marine.nsw.gov.au.



officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.