

..... protecting **Coasts & Oceans**

Our Plan

Australia's coasts and oceans are of vital importance to our community and economy. Approximately 83% of Australians live within 50km of the coast and the number of people living on or near the coast continues to increase. With projected future regional sea level rises of up to one meter this century, significant impacts on the built and natural environments are expected.

Although the coastline of mainland Australia extends for almost 36,000 km, the overwhelming majority of human settlement is focused in a number of areas in the eastern, south-eastern, and south-western coastal zones. The concentration of settlement and economic activity in these areas has had an enormous impact on our environment.

Australia's naturally low nutrient runoff is conducive to tropical coral reef building, but also limits the productivity of ocean fisheries. Over 60% of Australia's fisheries are overfished and a significant number of marine and estuarine species are threatened with extinction.

Our understanding and basic mapping of oceans surrounding Australia is deficient. Australia's marine environment covers twice the area of Australia's terrestrial environment, but receives one tenth of the attention. An understanding of our ocean's past and present condition is critical in understanding future resource management issues including climate change

- Establish a **National Oceans Authority** and ensure the regional marine planning process has the force of law; all regional marine plans include target areas for marine protection, and; all fisheries management, shipping and mining is consistent with approved regional marine plans:
- Expand the **National Reserve System** to ensure Australia has a comprehensive, adequate and representative coast and marine protected area system
- Reduce effort levels in Australian **fisheries** to sustainable levels and ensure all effort and catch data is publicly available
- Expanded **no-take** (or green zones) in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Increase research into the conservation status of **marine and estuarine species**
- Increase the involvement of **Indigenous** communities in marine and coast management
- Reduce or eliminate **sewage, stormwater and industrial discharge** to marine and estuarine areas with strict environmental regulations for discharges, including those from shipping and aquaculture
- A national coordinated **mitigation plan** for coastal inundation due to sea level rise
- Increased funding for the systematic collection of **hydrographic and oceanographic data** from Australia's coastal and ocean waters
- In partnership with New Zealand, commit to the next round of the **International Ocean Drilling Program**
- Recurrent funding for the new **oceanographic research** vessel program
- A strict compliance and risk management review of **offshore oil and gas** exploration and production processes and facilities.