# OceanWatch Australia

Marine Natural Resource Management

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Updated: February 2017

# Contents

For the purposes of this Marine NRM - Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, the following definitions apply:

**Engagement -** *a* generic, inclusive term to explain a number of approaches, including; one way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and, empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships.

**Stakeholder -** people who can be directly affected by the Marine NRM organisation's objectives, policies and actions,

**Stakeholder engagement** - a planned process with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest or affiliation, to address issues affecting the marine environment.

**Saltwater community** - identifies the 80% of Australians who live within 50km of the coast[1]. Recreational and Indigenous fishers and seafood consumers are identified as saltwater community stakeholders.

**Seafood industry** - people involved in activities conducted in or from Australia concerned with the commercial taking, culturing, processing, preserving, storing, transporting, marketing or selling fish or fish products. It comprises the following three sectors: commercial wild-catch, aquaculture and post-harvest.

---

[1] http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/1301.0Feature%20Article32004

# About OceanWatch

OceanWatch Australia (OceanWatch) is a not-for profit company limited by guarantee, listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations.[2]

Since its inception in 1989, OceanWatch has received funding from its Members (Sydney Fish Markets, the NSW Fishermen's Cooperatives Association, and the Master Fish Merchants Association of Australia) through a box levy on seafood sold through the Sydney Fish Market.

OceanWatch has managed and administered a broad range of successful industry and community projects to improve environmental practices, protect threatened marine species, reduce by-catch, introduce sustainable technologies, change behaviours and restore important marine habitats throughout Australia. This successful track record is reflected in state, national and international awards, including UN Association of Australia World Environment Day Awards for Excellence in Marine and Coastal Management, a Banksia Award and WWF Smart Gear International Competition.

In 2014 the Australian Government recognised OceanWatch as the national organisation responsible for the delivery of its marine Natural Resource Management (NRM) related programs.

# Marine NRM deliverables

OceanWatch has been contracted, through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program Regional Delivery stream, to link seafood stakeholders (professional, recreational, Indigenous and aquaculture sectors) to the saltwater and natural resource management community, to encourage better management of water and fish habitat.

Contracted marine NRM deliverables are:

Conduct seafood industry specific sustainable development projects.

Engage the saltwater community in activities aligned to marine threat abatement plans.

Engage the saltwater community in national and international terrestrial and marine obligations to improve water quality and conserve biodiversity.

Consolidate the common goals of the coastal NRM regions into a single national marine NRM plan which will be used to leverage other local, state and national initiatives and facilitate improvements for productive and sustainable seafood industries.

Participate and encourage involvement in estuary and marine community networks and partnerships, including with Indigenous fishing sector.

---

[2] Further information regarding OceanWatch is available at:http://www.oceanwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Corporate-Plan-Publication.pdf
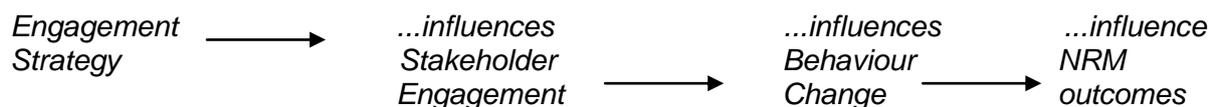
# Purpose of the Strategy

In order to achieve the contracted deliverables identified above, OceanWatch will need to engage a large number and diverse range of stakeholders who manage, impact or interact with marine natural resources. All engagement activities will be guided by this Marine NRM - Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) which describes our engagement mandate and principles, identifies our key stakeholders, provides information on segmentation and prioritisation and details actions required to implement the Strategy.

# Engagement mandate

OceanWatch is recognised by the Australian Government as the national Marine NRM organisation, providing an engagement mandate with the seafood industry, the saltwater community and other marine NRM stakeholders.

# Engagement principles

This Strategy will influence the type and nature of the engagement undertaken, and thus determine the nature and quality of stakeholder relations. The quality of OceanWatch's stakeholder relations determines the depth and breadth of stakeholder trust and the ability to influence stakeholders. (illustrated below).

*Engagement Strategy* ⟶ *...influences Stakeholder Engagement* ⟶ *...influences Behaviour Change* ⟶ *...influence NRM outcomes*

OceanWatch has adopted the following five engagement principles.

## 1. Stakeholder engagement is embedded in all that we do as the national Marine NRM

OceanWatch will:

> Recognise the value of building relationships and partnerships.

> Ensure that OceanWatch's commitment and approach to engagement is included in key strategies including the national Marine NRM Plan.

## 2. Staff are actively supported to engage stakeholders, and empowered to build partnerships

OceanWatch will;

> Recognise that engagement requires significant time and investment;

> Provide specialist support or training where possible to the OceanWatch team to build skills and confidence;

> Provide regular feedback to staff on stakeholder engagement activities; and Acknowledge and share success.

### 3. Stakeholder engagement is well planned, tailored, targeted, and evaluated

OceanWatch will:

Ensure that engagement and consultation occurs as early as possible;

Prioritise  engagement with stakeholders, or their representatives, most impacted by

OceanWatch strategies and actions

Demonstrate stakeholder understanding, by tailoring  engagement to suit diverse groups;

Evaluate engagement activities to understand their effectiveness and efficiency; and

Foster innovation and continuous improvement in everyday practice.

### 4. Provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to marine NRM strategies and activities

OceanWatch will;

Provide channels and forums to regularly communicate on marine NRM strategies and activities;

Provide appropriate notice periods and timelines when there are opportunities to get involved;

Design engagement methods to target or support the involvement of particular stakeholder groups; and

Ensure a diversity of views are included in forums.

### 5. Work transparently and respectfully with our stakeholders and establish clear roles and expectations

OceanWatch will:

Listen to and learn from stakeholders, acknowledging that the saltwater community, in particular Aboriginal people, and the seafood industry have vast experience and unique knowledge of the marine environment;

Support stakeholders to hear and understand a diversity of views;

Provide feedback to stakeholders on the impact of their input;

Celebrate and communicate achievements, while acknowledging stakeholders for their input to those achievements.

## Marine NRM stakeholders

OceanWatch has determined that marine NRM stakeholders include:

- o the seafood industry
- o the saltwater community, including recreational and Indigenous customary fishers and seafood consumers
- o landholders and industries impacting marine health and productivity
- o Australian, state and NT governments and their agencies
- o regional NRM organisations in coastal areas
- o local government in coastal areas
- o marine science community

To assist in prioritising the level of engagement, marine NRM stakeholders have been segmented as primary or secondary.


## Primary stakeholders


## The seafood industry

Seafood industry[3] enterprises range from low technology single-owner-operators for whom the lifestyle is important, to large vertically integrated companies that operate largely for profit. In 2012-13 the industry employed 13,813 people in the wild-catch (5,050), aquaculture (3,558) and post-harvest sectors (5,205).[4]

The seafood industry accesses approximately 120 wild-catch fisheries from which over 600 finfish and shellfish are commercially harvested from marine and freshwater. There are also a large number of aquaculture species produced or in various stages of development; prawns, Southern Bluefin Tuna, salmonoids, edible oysters and pearl oysters accounted for over 80 per cent of the value of aquaculture in 2012-13. In that year the industry produced 237,318 tonnes of seafood of which 34 per cent was farmed; and was valued at $2.4 billion of which 43 per cent was derived from aquaculture.[5]

The industry's production is low in volume but high in value; and Australia's excellent international reputation for the quality and the environmental credentials of its exports of abalone, rock lobster, prawn, scallop, Southern Bluefin Tuna, tropical fish and pearls has maximised returns. In 2012-13 49 per cent of Australia's production was exported and valued at $1.65 billion.[6]

---

[3] Defined on page 3.

[4] Ibid

[5] Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics, ABARES 2013

[6] Ibid

7

## The saltwater community

The saltwater community[7] includes the 80 per cent of Australians who live within 50 kilometres of the coast[8].

In recent years, the Australian community in general has become increasingly aware of the need to rehabilitate, restore and enhance natural aquatic resources (marine, estuary, river, wetland and other habitats) in order to maintain and promote biological diversity and processes.

Within the saltwater community there is a direct relationship between recreational and Indigenous fishers and seafood consumers to Australia's publicly managed renewable marine resources giving justification for these groups being separately described. These groups also generate important socio economic and cultural value within coastal communities.

### *Indigenous customary fishers*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have developed a close, interdependent relationship with the land, water and living resources of Australia through customary fishing practices over tens of thousands of years. That relationship includes rights and responsibilities of particular Indigenous groups to areas of land and water. Aboriginal people's stories and dance tell of times when there was abundant sea life, and their knowledge of marine natural resource management is many thousands of years old. In many places around Australia, this knowledge is shared with those who manage marine environments.

Aboriginal people utilise marine resources according to custom – ceremony, exchange, trade and barter- or for recreational purposes. Many Indigenous fishers also participate in the commercial wild-catch and aquaculture sectors. The legal rights around Indigenous fishing are being refined over time and some aspects are now part of existing legislation and court decisions.[9]

### *Recreational fishers*

About 3.4 million Australians of all ages and backgrounds participate in recreational fishing and enjoy the benefits of a healthy marine environment. Australians fishing for recreational purposes contributes about $1.8 billion to the Australian economy, and supports about 90,000 jobs.[10]

Approx.80 per cent of the recreational catch is from salt water – in estuaries, off beaches and from the ocean[11].

---

[7] Defined on page 3.
[8] http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/1301.0Feature%20Article32004
[9] The Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey July 2003; FRDC Project No 99/158
[10] Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics, ABARES 2013
[11] ibid

*Australian seafood consumers*

Seafood consumers desire access to a reliable and affordable array of seafood through retail and food service channels while also being concerned with the sustainability of wild-caught and farmed seafood both domestically and internationally. In some cases this has led to industry and governments demonstrating their commitment to best production and management practices through independent assessment and third-party certification.

Seafood demand in Australia has steadily increased over the last decade. In 2012–13 Australians each consumed an average of 15 kilograms (processed weight) of seafood, compared with 13 kilograms in 2000-01.[12]

As direct beneficiaries of marine productivity and potential key influencers of sustainable development through purchasing choices, consumers can play a key indirect role in the stewardship of marine resources.

## Landholders and industries impacting marine health and productivity

Landholders and industries impacting on receiving waters are a core driver of change in the marine environment. Some of these stakeholders are also a major focus of the other 55 regional NRM organisations.

## Secondary stakeholders

## Australian, state and NT governments and their agencies

Australian, state and NT governments play a lead role in responding to marine environment, seafood industry and saltwater community NRM challenges. They do this through development and implementation of policy and legislation, and establishing operational management arrangements. Governments also fund specific activities of non-government organisations to deliver outcomes in areas for which they have neither the capacity nor the responsibility. Of most relevance to marine NRM is the Australian Government's investment in Natural Resource Management (NRM).

## Coastal regional NRM organisations

Regional natural resource management (NRM) is about the planning and delivery of programs that support healthy and productive country, viable communities and sustainable industries. Regional NRM organisations work from the paddock to the regional scale to address issues that require a landscape perspective.[13] 56 regional NRM organisations act as delivery agents under the regional stream of the National Landcare Programme[14].

---

[12] Stephan, M & Hobsbawn, P 2014, Australian fisheries and aquaculture statistics 2013, ABARES
[13] http://nrmregionsaustralia.com.au/
[14] http://www.nrm.gov.au/regional/regional-nrm-organisations

### Local government in coastal areas

Local government is responsible for undertaking, managing, supporting and regulating, a wide range of activities that may impact upon marine NRM. This includes the development and implementation of land use planning schemes, managing public land, and regulating private activities. Local government also has a key role to play in translating the NRM policies of Commonwealth and State governments for local and on ground projects.[15]

Local government also has a range of functions, powers and responsibilities at its disposal to influence NRM on both private and public land. This includes both statutory and non statutory responsibilities.

### Marine science community

Australia has only explored approximately 25 per cent its marine environment[16] and the future could include innovative technologies and products which are marine environment related/dependent. Marine scientists are key influencers in the marine NRM community and often drive policy addressing challenges affecting marine health and community wellbeing. The inter connectedness of science disciplines requires biological, chemical, physical, engineering and social sciences to be included within this community if they are to influence downstream marine health.

## Resourcing

With a national scope for marine NRM activities, and stakeholders dispersed throughout coastal Australia, OceanWatch has significant engagement challenges. Planned engagement activities within the Strategy are highly targeted and will be implemented by OceanWatch at a scale relevant to available funding.

## Implementation

Through the implementation of this Strategy, the seafood industry and saltwater community will have a sense of ownership of the Marine NRM Plan and its priorities, leading to voluntary and enthusiastic participation in marine NRM activities.

---

[15] http://www.lgnsw.org.au/files/imce-uploads/39/Wha_%20are_LGs_responsibilities_re_NRM.pdf
[16] National Marine Science Plan 2015-2025, National Marine Science Committee2015

The following table describes the priority engagement actions.

| Priority Actions | Objectives | Methodology | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| Review of OceanWatch Vision | Alignment of OceanWatch vision to Marine NRM role | OceanWatch Board direction/decision<br>National Fishing & Aquaculture Forum and Marine NRM Survey to gauge support | Short |
| Review of OceanWatch Corporate Strategy | Alignment of OceanWatch Corporate Strategy to Marine NRM role | OceanWatch Board direction on decision | Short-Medium |
| Contract deliverables - Industry engagement | As Contracted;<br>100+ OceanWatch Master Fishermen will be trained and recognised as having skills and knowledge in sustainable practice.<br>100+ fishers/farmers will have adopted practices that improve the quality of the natural resource base.<br>1,000,000+ha will have working fishers/farmers with improved practices | Co-op open days<br>Seafood festivals<br>Loaves and fishes events<br>Training workshops<br>Wharf/shed talks<br>On-ground trials and demonstrations<br>Presentations at industry meetings/AGMs<br>Conference talks/presentations<br>Branding/provenance actions | Medium-Long |
| Contract deliverables - community engagement | As Contracted;<br>2,200 community members will have been engaged and participated in sustainable natural resources.<br>60 Indigenous participants will have engaged with the project and contributed knowledge. | Community events<br>Field day activity<br>Conference/seminar presentation<br>Workshops<br>Planning sessions<br>Meetings<br>Working bee<br>Education stall<br>Network Meetings | Medium-Long |
| Create NMEAG | Ensure appropriate consultation and input from key stakeholder groups is the development of the Marine NRM Plan and marine NRM operations. Ensure OceanWatch can utilise strong working relationships with key stakeholders to enhance National Marine NRM Plan development and coastal marine NRM operational activities. | The initial scope of the NMEAG will be to provide expert advice on the; strategic objectives of the National Marine NRM Programme, development of the National Marine NRM Plan including stakeholder consultation and prioritisation of issues, strategic direction of Marine NRM operational activities, enhancement of networks to engage stakeholders with relevant Marine NRM information, review of progress against National Marine NRM programme objectives | Short |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marine NRM planning framework | Guide NRM Plan development<br>Identify steps | Gather knowledge<br>Consolidate the Marine NRM vision and outcome<br><br>Consider scope of Marine NRM<br>Develop the Planning Framework<br>Develop Stakeholder Engagement Strategy<br>Develop Marine NRM principles<br>Draft Marine NRM Plan<br>Develop Marine NRM prospectus | Medium |
| Communication Strategy | Guide NRM contract communications<br>Deliver NRM stewardship messaging/engagement actions | Identify stakeholder messaging<br>Channels of communication<br>Timeframes<br>resourcing | Short-Medium |
| National Forum | Set direction for plan development<br>Baseline knowledge for NRM organisation | Workshop to consult primary stakeholder reps on values and perceptions | Short-Medium |
| National Survey | Establish baseline statistics on NRM understanding, values and vision from across the nation<br>Inform on the Marine NRM role<br>Inform the NRM planning framework | Qualitative & quantitative surveys with public on stakeholder values and threats perceptions to the marine environment<br>Gather feedback on vision and values. | Short – Medium |
| Network development | Develop support for NRM<br>Informed cohesive Marine NRM stakeholder | Workshop<br>Presentation<br>Meetings | Medium-Long |

# Evaluation

Effective evaluation of stakeholder engagement outcomes is a key element of the Strategy, and it a core focus of NRM operations.  Through the Australian Government's MERIT portal, the Strategy will be monitored, and the following table identifies the key evaluation question to be used to measure the outcome, and the method of evaluation to be used.

| Outcome | Key Evaluation Questions | Evaluation methodology |
|---|---|---|
| IMPACT of engagement on stakeholders | To what extent has OceanWatch Australia's projects contributed to an increase in the knowledge and skills of fishermen/farmers and the area in which they work? | Formal assessment tasks aligned to the national seafood industry training package are included within the training workshops to evaluate the knowledge and skill level of participants. The area within each fishery will be calculated, then divided by the number of endorsement holders within the fishery, to estimate the average area worked by an individual fisher. That value will then multiplied by the number of recognised OceanWatch Master Fishermen (OW MF) within the fishery to estimate the area that increases in knowledge and skills will be applied across. (This will be a volume metric taking into account average depth multiplied by meters to provide an estimate ) |
| EFFECTIVENESS of stakeholder engagement | Was the use of the Master Fishermen program the best tool to engage the industry sector in best practice? | The project engages with a number of industry partners, including fisher's representative organisations, fishery regulator, training council and supply chain. A measure of effectiveness is the continued engagement of partners and formal feedback within each report. |
| EFFICIENCY of engagement methodology used | To what extent has the OceanWatch program increased engagement and participation of the fishing/farming sector in sustainable natural resources? | The project uses non cash incentives to engage fishers and influence change. The offer of free training was a key factor in workshop attendances as the participating fishers see themselves as contributing in kind to a public benefit through attending the workshop when they could be going fishing and generating income.  In the case of the OW MF project, however, the principle incentive used to influence change is something less tangible.

The ability to display the sustainability credentials of local seafood in the public space has been a significant driver for many fishers who feel under pressure from conservation and recreational fishing groups for continued |

|  |  | access to fishing grounds. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 14 |  | Key efficiency measures include the ongoing use of each participants QR code or course recognition linked to product will be monitored every 6 months via website hits and any adoption up the supply chain. |
|  |  | Any changes to a fishers day-to-day practices such as the adoption of a fish chute would also be measured via a sample number of conversations with individual participants 6 months following the courses. |
|  |  | Key efficiency measures will include: number of license holders per fishery targeted and number of fishers attending (% of fishers engaging). |
|  |  | Internal reflection: Is the attitude of fishers towards the topics taught changing via this more formal participation method?. Are more people addressing the topics discussed as part of a group then would have previously been reached individually? |
| APPROPRIATENESS of engagement | To what extent has OceanWatch Australia's engagement with the seafood industry via the master fishermen program contributed to practice change? | Appropriateness measures can be recorded through participants post workshop feedback. Participants feedback - formal/informal recorded. Review of the program with the Oceanwatch board and project partners. |
| IMPACT on stakeholders | Did the coastal community activities undertaken increase community participation in caring for the marine environment? | Numbers of projects recorded by the National Landcare Program as having relevance to the marine and coastal environment being submitted for funding.<br><br>Areas over which these projects intend to work recorded. Number of responses to NRM survey. |
| EFFECTIVENESS | To what extent has the development and delivery of the national marine NRM survey increased stewardship of the marine environment? | Survey information informing NRM plan. Survey information evaluated on a state by state basis made available to coastal NRM groups. |
|  |  |  |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| EFFICIENCY of engagement strategy | Have the activities proved an efficient means to reach the coastal audience to increase engagement in sustainable NRM? | The most efficient method of engagement is through digital means. Number of groups receiving information. Listing involvement in projects across the country where cross boundary collaboration is now occurring. |
| APPROPRIATENESS of engagement | How appropriate was the range of delivery mechanisms in reaching the community to care for their marine environment? | The most appropriate delivery mechanisms include more focused interactions/engagement that will not be possible with the level of resourcing. Seek and review feedback from the newsletter and online survey. |