

National Marine NRM Expert Advisory Group - Terms of Reference

Background

OceanWatch Australia Ltd (OceanWatch) is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations. Since 1989, OceanWatch has been working to advance environmental, economic and social sustainability in the Australian fishing and aquaculture industry and promoted stewardship and on-ground action within other sectors of the community that use and value the marine environment.

In 2014 the Australian government recognised OceanWatch as the NRM organisation with responsibility for continuing to promote best practice seafood production, enhance fish habitat and improve water quality in estuaries and coastal marine environments. The resultant scope of OceanWatch NRM related activities is to address issues impacting the health and productivity of areas under tidal influence.

Although the delivery of Australian Government Marine NRM related programs imposes contractual responsibilities on OceanWatch, they are consistent with the long-standing activities and Vision of the organisation:

Australia's marine environment is healthy, productive, valued, and is used in a responsible way

In February 2015, the Marine NRM Programme commenced; informed through a multiyear contract and workplan negotiated between OceanWatch and the Australian government Department of Agriculture. Included within the work plan is the development of a National Marine NRM Plan during the period 2015/16.

A National Marine NRM Expert Advisory Group (NMEAG) will be formed to ensure appropriate consultation and input from key stakeholder groups is included within the development of the National Marine NRM Plan, and the strategic direction of marine NRM operations.

OceanWatch Key NRM Contracted Activities 2015-2018

- Development of the Marine NRM Plan
- Improving stewardship amongst marine based primary producers
- Enhancing the Marine NRM Network
- Improving engagement of community stakeholders in marine issues

NRM Contract Governance

The responsibility for governance oversight of the multiyear contract between OceanWatch and the Department of Agriculture, underpinning the delivery of contracted Marine NRM activities, rests with the Board of Directors of OceanWatch Australia.

Purpose of the NMEAG

The purpose of the NMEAG is to ensure OceanWatch can utilise strong working relationships with key stakeholders to enhance National Marine NRM Plan development and coastal marine NRM operational activities.

Scope of the NMEAG

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

Composition of the NMEAG

Membership of the NMEAG will be invited from individuals with knowledge and expertise in the following areas:

- commercial wild-catch fishing
- aquaculture
- recreational fishing
- Indigenous fishing
- marine science
- NRM practice
- social science
- catchment health
- coastal community
- ENGO

NMEAG meetings will be chaired by a member of the NMEAG.

Secretariat services for NMEAG will be provided by OceanWatch.

Term of Appointment

The function of the NMEAG will be reviewed annually.

Expenses

Membership of the NMEAG is voluntary. Member's travel and accommodation expenses to attend meetings of the NMEAG will be reimbursed.

Meeting Schedule

The NMEAG will initially meet twice per year.