



Member's report on activities to ICRI

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Reporting period **2005 - 2006**

Summary of Activities

1. Australia continues to work towards a national system of marine protected areas. The Australian Government has brought its program of regional marine planning under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (the EPBC Act). Under this approach, regional marine plans will be established, acting as a key document to guide the Minister, sectoral managers and industry about the key conservation issues and priorities in each marine region. The initiative will see Marine Bioregional Plans, including a system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), established over Australia's 14 million square kilometre ocean jurisdiction. These new bioregional plans will also provide the platform for developing a [National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas](#) (NRSMPA) in Commonwealth waters around Australia. Existing, well established MPA's such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) and Ningaloo Marine Park will be key components of this system. For more information visit: <http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/mbp/>

Summary of pertinent points

2. Recent significant activity within the GBRMP includes:
 - Implementation of the revised Zoning Plan for the GBRMP. This zoning plan, brought into effect in July 2004 offers enhanced protection to the Great Barrier Reef by specifically setting aside representative examples of over 70 separate bioregions as no-take reserves. This outcome has resulted in 33% of the GBRMP being protected as no-take.
 - Continuing engagement with coastal communities, agricultural organisations, Federal, State and Local government agencies, farmers and NGO's to implement an extensive and intensive program of water quality management in the catchment of the GBRMP under the joint Commonwealth and State of Queensland Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.
 - Building on past initiatives with the GBRMP tourism industry to promote ecologically sustainable reef tourism practices including the establishment of a program of eco-certification based on demonstrated "best practice".
 - Establishing a dedicated program of activity centred on providing for environmental resilience to the GBRMP.

3. Recent Activity on the national front
 - In 2005 the Australian Government brought its programme of regional marine planning directly under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

¹ For more detail on GBRMPA and its activities, please visit: www.gbrmpa.gov.au

² For more detail on DEH and its activities, please visit: www.deh.gov.au

1999 (EPBC Act) – one of the most comprehensive pieces of environmental legislation in operation anywhere in the world.

- The plans will be known as Marine Bioregional Plans to reflect the part of the EPBC Act under which they will be established.
- The process includes the identification and establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Commonwealth managed waters around Australia (which excludes the coastal waters managed by the States and Northern Territory).
- Marine Bioregional Plans will be developed in each of Australia's five marine regions. The first stage of the planning process involves developing a Regional Profile of each marine region.
- There will be no Marine Bioregional Plan in the area covered by the GBRMP as it is already zoned and managed. However, a Marine Bioregional Plan will be developed for the Central East Marine Region that includes the Coral Sea, east of the Reef.
- The South-east Regional Marine Plan was released in May 2004. In 2006, a network of MPAs was announced for the Marine Region as part of this Plan (see map below).
- Marine Bioregional Planning and the resultant plans will be progressively completed between 2006 and 2012.

