

CONTRIBUTION OF OUTPUTS

The Department's outputs will contribute to achieving the outcome of protecting and conserving the environment, especially aspects of national significance, by the following outputs and Sub-outputs.

Outcome 1 Environment - *The environment, especially those aspects that are matters of national environmental significance, is protected and conserved*

OUTPUT	CONTRIBUTION TO OUTCOME 1	SUB-OUTPUTS
1.1 Atmosphere	Contribution to the protection and sustainable management of the atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel and air quality standards, and ozone protection
1.2 Biodiversity	Contribution to the conservation of Australia's biological diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Wildlife protection and trade
1.3 Coasts	Contribution to the protection and sustainable use of Australia's coasts and oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coasts, oceans, estuaries and coastal wetlands
1.4 Environmental Assessment and Approvals	Statutory processes and statute related action regarding the referral of development proposals, their environmental impact assessment and their approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessment and approvals
1.5 Heritage	Contribution to the protection and conservation of Australia's natural and cultural heritage places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage conservation Australian Heritage Council
1.6 Human Settlements	Contribution to sustainable urban environments and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human settlements Environmental protection at uranium mines in the Alligator Rivers Region
1.7 Inland Waters	Contribution to the ecological management of Australia's inland waters including meeting Australia's commitments to the Ramsar Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers, groundwater and wetlands Tropical wetland ecology and conservation
1.8 Land Management	Contribution to the sustainable management of Australia's land resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land management
1.9 Parks and Reserves	Contribution to the effective management of Commonwealth national parks and reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National reserve system Protected areas

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR OUTCOME 1

The following Table 2.2.1 lists the performance information that the Department will use to assess the level of its achievement of Outcome 1 during 2004-05. It comprises two parts:

- (A) overall achievement - planned performance information for the outcome overall; and
- (B) qualitative and quantitative performance information for each administered item.

TABLE 2.2.1 – PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR OUTCOME 1

(A) Effectiveness – Overall Achievement of the Outcome

OUTPUT	EFFECTIVENESS – OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OUTCOME
1.1 Atmosphere	The atmosphere is protected.
1.2 Biodiversity	Australia’s biological resources are conserved and managed in an ecological sustainable way.
1.3 Coasts	Australia’s coasts and estuaries are protected and managed in an ecologically sustainable way.
1.4 Environmental Assessment and Approvals	Environmental assessments and approvals protect the Australian environment, especially those matters of national environmental significance, in an efficient, timely and effective manner.
1.5 Heritage	Australia’s national and cultural heritage is identified, protected and conserved.
1.6 Human Settlements	The sustainability of Australia’s human settlements is improved.
1.7 Inland Waters	Australia’s inland waterways are managed in an ecologically sustainable way and Australia’s commitments to the Ramsar Convention are met.
1.8 Land Management	Australia’s land resources are managed in an ecologically sustainable way.
1.9 Parks and Reserves	Ecologically significant areas are protected and conserved by effectively managing Commonwealth Reserves, and improving the comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness of the National Reserve System.

(B) Performance Information for Administered Items

Grants-in-Aid – National Trust	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which payments support National Trust heritage initiatives.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Nine agreements finalised by December 2004.
Commonwealth Contribution to the National Environment Protection Council (NEPC) Service Corporation	<i>Quality</i>	The Australian Government’s financial obligation to the NEPC Service Corporation is met.
	<i>Quantity</i>	The Australian Government’s contribution to the operating costs of the NEPC Service Corporation is paid on time.
Australian Biological Resources Study Participatory Grants Programme	<i>Quality</i>	The Australian Biological Resources Study is administered and managed according to best practice, and supports taxonomic investigations into species/ecosystems of national priority.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number and value of 2004-05 grants and contracts offered and funded by 30 June 2005.
National Cultural Heritage Account	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which the use of the Account achieves the Australian Government’s objective of preserving heritage objects by assisting their acquisition by Australian collecting institutions.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of objects acquired.
Regional Natural Heritage Programme (RNHP)	<i>Quality</i>	Implementation achieves the Australian Government’s RNHP objectives, and undertaken in accordance with Australian Government financial, project management and audit requirements
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number and value of RNHP projects established to approved funding targets and completed according to contractual requirements.
Development of Sewerage Schemes for Boat Harbour and Sisters Beach, Tasmania	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which the project will achieve Government objectives.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of milestones achieved compared with those specified in the contract.

(B) Performance Information for Administered Items (continued)

Great Barrier Reef – Representative Areas Programme	<i>Quality</i>	The Service Level Agreements with the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority and the Department of Transport and Regional Services achieve the Government’s objectives in providing assistance to stakeholders affected by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Representative Areas Programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Two Service Level Agreements are in place by early 2004-05.
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Account	<i>Quality</i>	The Australian Government’s obligations under the <i>Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989</i> are met, including effective administration of the Act, management of the Halon Bank and programmes to phase-out ozone depleting substances and minimise emissions of ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gas.
	<i>Quantity</i>	License and enforcement actions are undertaken within statutory timeframes, supplies of essential use halon are provided within the requested timeframe and the number of facility inspections meets local ordinance requirements, and a phase out and emission minimisation programme is commenced.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST

The Trust is established under the *Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997*. In 2002, the Government provided over \$1 billion to extend the Trust for a further five years from 2002-03 to 2006-07. The Government will provide \$300 million to extend the Trust for a further year to 2007-08, bringing the total commitment since 1996 to more than \$3 billion.

Within its primary legislative objective “to conserve, repair and replenish Australia’s natural capital infrastructure”, the Trust will continue to focus on specific objectives of Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, and Community Capacity Building and Institutional Change. The Trust focuses on long-term strategic outcomes; delivery of a substantial proportion of the funds through devolved regional planning; a greater emphasis on planning and scientific modelling; and an adaptive management approach requiring continuous review of objectives, strategies and timelines.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.1 ATMOSPHERE

SUB-OUTPUT: *Fuel and air quality standards, and ozone protection*

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

The atmosphere is protected.

DESCRIPTION

Australians consistently rank air pollution as one of the highest environmental issues of concern. The Australian Government has taken decisive action to ensure that the quality of air in our urban areas is improved and protected, and that Australia continues to contribute to the international effort to restore the ozone layer. A clean and protected atmosphere will contribute to an overall improvement in the health and well being of the community.

Air quality issues are being addressed through a comprehensive national framework of standards and package of programmes, all underpinned by scientific research.

The National Environment Protection Measures (NEPMs) for Ambient Air Quality, Air Toxics and Diesel Vehicle Emissions establish nationally consistent standards for air quality and diesel vehicle emissions. These standards are helping to ensure that air quality in Australian cities remains protected.

The Australian Government has also introduced the *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* to reduce emissions from Australia's motor vehicle fleet, the most significant contributor to urban air pollution in Australia. These standards, when combined with tighter new vehicle emission standards, are the single biggest measures in Australia's history to improve air quality. These reductions will provide significant health benefits to the community, delivering an estimated \$3.4 billion in avoided health costs over the period to 2020.

The Government also implements a number of programmes that are reducing other major sources of air pollution in the urban environment, including actions to reduce particles from diesel vehicles and (in smoke from) wood heaters, and to encourage sustainable transport actions. It also supports national research priorities to gain a better understanding of pollution sources, air pollution levels and trends, and the health impact of air pollution in Australia.

To ensure the recovery of the world's ozone layer, Australia continues to stay ahead of its international obligations in phasing out and managing ozone depleting substances. Over the past 8 years, Australia has destroyed more ozone depleting substances than any other country in the world. Australia has also assisted a number of countries in the region including India and Pacific Island nations, in developing their ozone protection programmes.

In 2003, the Australian Government extended its ability to protect the ozone layer through the amended *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*. This legislation allows for the management of ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases that are used to replace them, and establishes a consistent national system of end use regulations for Montreal Protocol industries, such as refrigeration and air-conditioning. This action ensures the protection of the ozone layer and will cut Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of nearly 6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.1 are to:

➤ **Advance national initiatives to improve urban air quality**

The National Environment Protection Measures (NEPMs) for Ambient Air Quality and Air Toxics provide a national framework for the management and protection of air quality across Australia, setting benchmarks against which our air quality can be compared.

The Australian Government will maintain its support for these Measures, and is committed to the ongoing standards development and review processes. This includes support for the current review of the Ambient Air Quality NEPM sulphur dioxide and ozone standards, the scoping of standards for a second tier of air toxics pollutants, and undertaking preparatory studies, such as the Children's Health Study, to underpin the full review of the Ambient Air Quality NEPM scheduled for 2005.

The Department also works in partnership with state and territory governments to implement a number of projects to reduce air pollution. Partnership projects include a common approach to monitoring air quality; research on air pollution and the impacts it has on health; and community education on air quality issues, primarily wood smoke.

➤ **Reduce pollutant emissions from the in-service vehicle fleet**

Emissions from the motor vehicle fleet make the biggest contribution to urban air pollution in Australia. Over the next ten years, the *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* will lead to significant reductions in noxious air pollutants such as benzene, oxides of nitrogen, hydrocarbons and particles. The first suite of standards, for petrol and diesel, took effect in 2002 and become progressively more stringent through to 2006. Standards for other transport fuels continue to be developed, with standards for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and biodiesel already in place, and work under way on standards for natural gas and ethanol.

To ensure that Australia continues to control air pollution from the motor vehicle fleet, as the number of motor vehicles on our roads and the distance travelled by these vehicles increases, the Department is reviewing fuel quality requirements beyond 2006. This process is being undertaken jointly with the Department of Transport and Regional Services, and state and territory transport and environment agencies. The Government's goal is to ensure that Australia's fuel quality standards keep pace with developments in international standards and importantly, support the introduction of new, lower emission motor vehicle technologies into Australia.

The Australian Government also supports other measures to reduce hazardous emissions from the in-service vehicle fleet. One such measure is the Diesel NEPM, which is designed to reduce exhaust emissions from diesel vehicles by facilitating compliance with in-service emission standards for diesel vehicles. To ensure that the Government's response to these issues is formulated on the best available information, work has commenced and will continue through 2004-05 on an update to the National In-Service Emissions Study (known as NISE II). This study will gather 'real life' emissions data on Australia's motor vehicle fleet for the purposes of emission modelling and to inform policy development for vehicle emissions management.

➤ **Contribute to the international effort to repair and protect the ozone layer**

Australia has an excellent international reputation for its contribution to the protection of the ozone layer, being a world leader in the management of ozone-depleting substances. Australia has met or exceeded all of its targets to reduce the consumption of ozone-depleting substances agreed through the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

In November 2003, the Government extended its ability to protect the atmosphere by amending the *Ozone Protection Act 1989* to become the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*. The amended legislation implements all of the Government's international obligations under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the more recent Beijing Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

The amended Act establishes a national approach to the control of ozone-depleting substances and their synthetic greenhouse gas replacements. The Government is now developing uniform Australia-wide regulations to control both the import and the end-use of these gases.

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

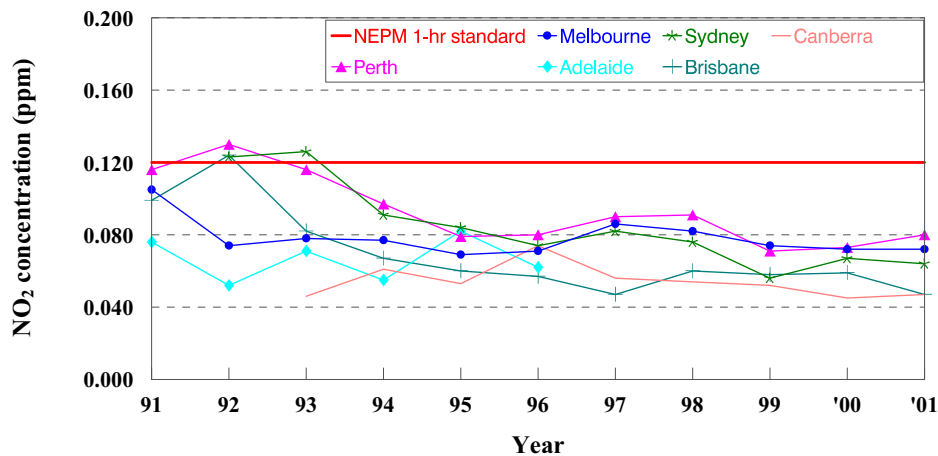
Fuel and air quality standards, and ozone protection

Effectiveness Indicator: *Ambient concentrations of urban air pollutants*

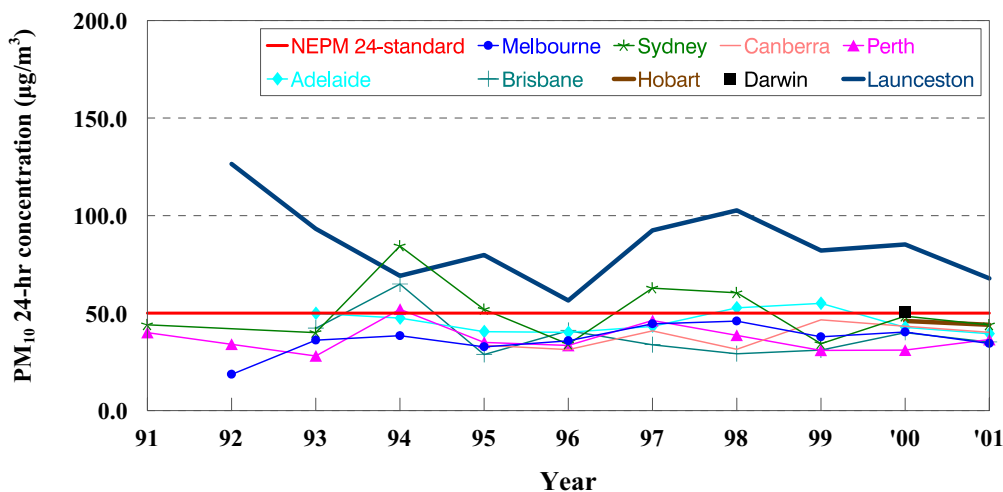
The states and territories, who have primary responsibility for managing urban air quality, have a range of air quality management programmes designed to reduce air pollution. The Australian Government works in partnership with the states and territories on national approaches to air quality through such forums as the Environment Protection and Heritage Council.

Air quality is measured by a number of air pollutants, with nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particles (as PM₁₀) just two indicators of the quality of our urban air. Graph 1.1.1 shows that the levels of NO₂ have decreased in the 10 years between 1991 and 2001 in all major capital cities, while Graph 1.1.2 shows that levels of PM₁₀ have generally remained constant. These indicators have been used here for the first time, and will be a useful measure of Australia’s air quality over time.

Graph 1.1.1 Highest second daily maximum 1-hour NO₂ concentrations in capital cities, 1991–2001

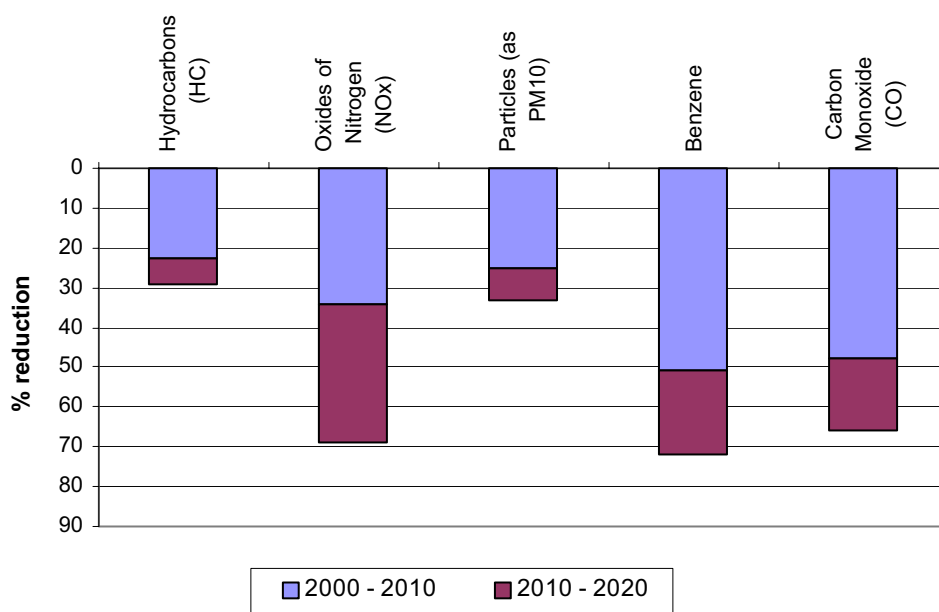


Graph 1.1.2 Sixth highest 24-hour average particle (measured as PM₁₀) concentrations in Australian capital cities and in Launceston (Tas), 1991–2001



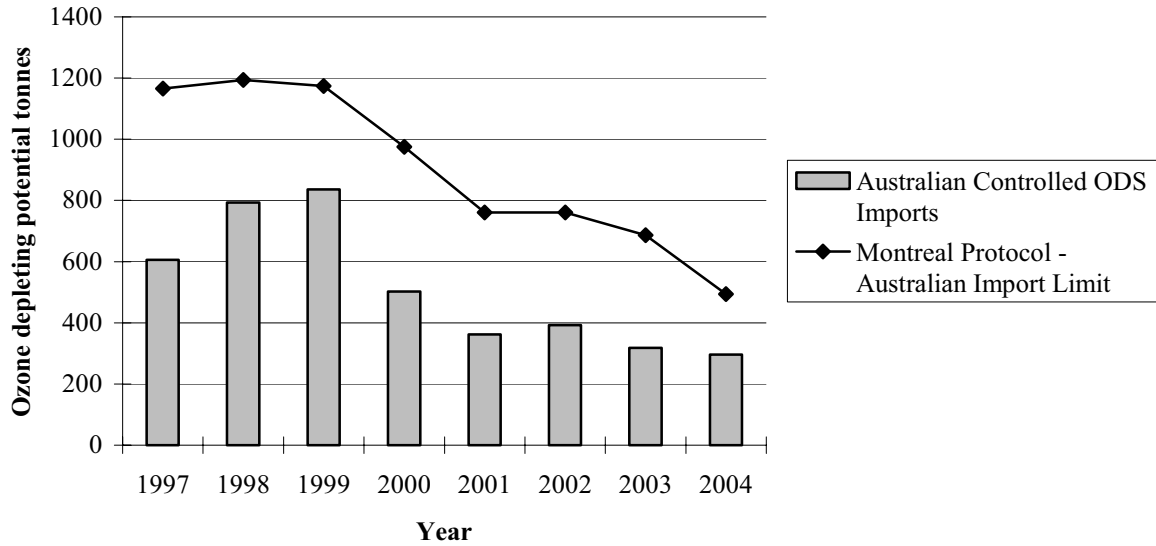
Working in tandem, the national fuel quality standards (legislated in 2000) and associated regulated emission controls will have an increasingly positive effect on the trend of future air quality emissions from mobile sources. Graph 1.1.3 shows the extent of emissions reductions from motor vehicles through to 2020, depicting the reductions in hydrocarbons (HC), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), particles (as PM₁₀), benzene and carbon monoxide (CO).

Graph 1.1.3 Estimated national reduction in emissions of major pollutants under the national fuel quality standards, for the period 2000 to 2020.



Effectiveness Indicator: *Imports of ozone-depleting substances*

Graph 1.1.4 Volume of controlled ozone depleting substances (ODS) imported into Australia compared to Montreal Protocol obligations



Graph 1.1.4 shows that Australia’s level of imports of ozone depleting substances has been consistently below its international obligations since 1997.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
	<i>Quality</i>	Degree to which projects, activities, agreements/plans contribute to the output.
Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of permits considered (granted and refused) under legislation.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which stakeholders meet legislative requirements.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Percentage of written pre-meeting objectives at international meetings achieved.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which Australia's strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
<i>Total Price Output 1.1</i>		<i>\$14.723m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.2 BIODIVERSITY

SUB-OUTPUT: *Biodiversity*
 Wildlife protection and trade

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Australia's biological resources are conserved and managed in an ecological sustainable way.

DESCRIPTION

The conservation of biological diversity provides significant cultural, economic, educational, environmental, scientific and social benefits for all Australians.

Key elements in the conservation of Australia's biodiversity are the conservation of broad vegetation communities, forests and other ecosystems, the protection of threatened wildlife, the conservation of other native species, and the management and prevention of invasive species where they may significantly impact on Australia's biodiversity or industry. The conservation of vegetation is integral to land management and is discussed under Output 1.8.

Australia's native wildlife is protected through an integrated approach under the EPBC Act. This includes the identification, recovery and conservation of nationally threatened species and ecological communities, and listed migratory and marine species. Regulation of wildlife trade ensures the ecologically sustainable management of Australian export industries, for example, the sustainable management of Australian fisheries is promoted through the strategic assessment of export fisheries. Internationally endangered wildlife is protected through the regulation of wildlife trade in accordance with Australia's international obligations.

Australia is a world leader in the protection and sustainable management of forests. The Australian Government has ensured the ecologically sustainable management of Australia's forest estate through the negotiation of Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs). These Agreements strike a balance between protection of a comprehensive, forest reserve system and the forest industry's need to create regional jobs.

The Australian Government has worked with scientists, conservationists, industry, community groups and state and local governments resulting in 10 RFAs covering 11 regions in four states. The implementation of these Agreements is subject to annual reporting and five yearly reviews. The Tasmanian RFA has been reviewed, with the report currently being considered by the Government.

The \$30 million Tasmanian Private Forest Reserve Programme under the Tasmanian RFA aims to secure priority forest areas for conservation. Of the \$20 million provided under the first phase of the Trust, \$11.9 million had been approved by early 2004 for over 39,826 hectares of forest.

Introduced species can have a major impact on Australia's environment. They can be aggressive and competitive; competing for food and natural resources, occupying and destroying habitat, preying on native species and spreading diseases. They can affect a range of native species, which is especially significant when a species is dependent on another or others for survival. This can lead to reducing species abundance and diversity and the displacement of native species.

Both national and regional approaches are required to address the impact of invasive species, and the Australian Government supports both of these. At the national level, approaches have been adopted to address:

- weeds, through the National Weeds Strategy, the list of Weeds of National Significance which aims to implement coordinated and integrated action against 20 priority weed species, and the National Environmental Alert List which identifies 28 species in the early stages of establishment and which have the potential to become a significant threat to biodiversity;
- a range of feral animals and diseases, through the adoption and implementation of Threat Abatement Plans; and
- introduced marine invasive species, through the development and implementation of the National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions.

At the regional level, actions to address invasive species are key elements of regional plans being developed under the Trust. These plans build on the national approaches to determine priorities and approaches appropriate for each region.

Awareness and understanding of biodiversity in the community are built through making information readily accessible on species, wildlife permits, and biodiversity strategies and conventions. The Australian Government, in collaboration with State and Territory Governments and the private sector, is making information on native flora readily available through Australia's Virtual Herbarium, which makes the resources underpinning the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS) available on-line in a readily accessible form.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.2 are to:

➤ **Recover Australia's threatened species**

The Australian, state and territory governments, together with regional bodies and the community are seeking to recover species and ecological communities listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. As a priority, the Government is committed to developing recovery plans for all species listed under the EPBC Act as critically endangered and endangered.

➤ **Protect Australia's biodiversity**

To protect and conserve Australia's animals and plants, the Department of the Environment and Heritage will:

- assess the national conservation status of species and ecological communities through the Threatened Species Scientific Committee using improved assessment processes developed in consultation with landholders, experts and non-government organisations. Efforts will be made through intergovernmental cooperation to better align the various threatened species and communities listing processes across all Australian jurisdictions;
- administer the wildlife trade provisions of the EPBC Act through streamlined administrative processes encouraging best practice sustainable management and animal welfare practices;
- conserve migratory waterbirds in Australia and elsewhere in the region under the bilateral migratory bird agreements with Japan and China, the obligations under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species and the proposed bilateral migratory bird agreement with the Republic of Korea; and
- continue to provide leadership in relation to international endangered species through the wildlife trade provisions of the EPBC Act and participation in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

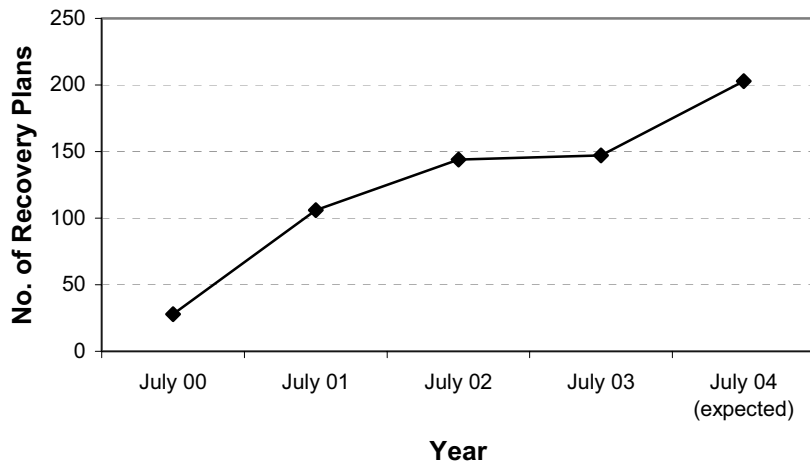
Biodiversity

Effectiveness Indicator: *Conservation of Australia’s biological diversity*

The Australian Government takes a lead role in recovering threatened species and ecological communities. To ensure that the most effective and efficient actions are taken to recover species, the Government develops or adopts recovery plans that outline the research required and actions needed to protect and recover listed species.

Graph 1.2.1 shows the number of recovery plans in force under the EPBC Act. In addition, a further 400 recovery plans are currently in preparation, many of which cover more than one species. As a result, almost 700 nationally threatened species and ecological communities now have recovery plans in place or in preparation.

Graph 1.2.1 Number of recovery plans for critically endangered and endangered species in force under the EPBC Act



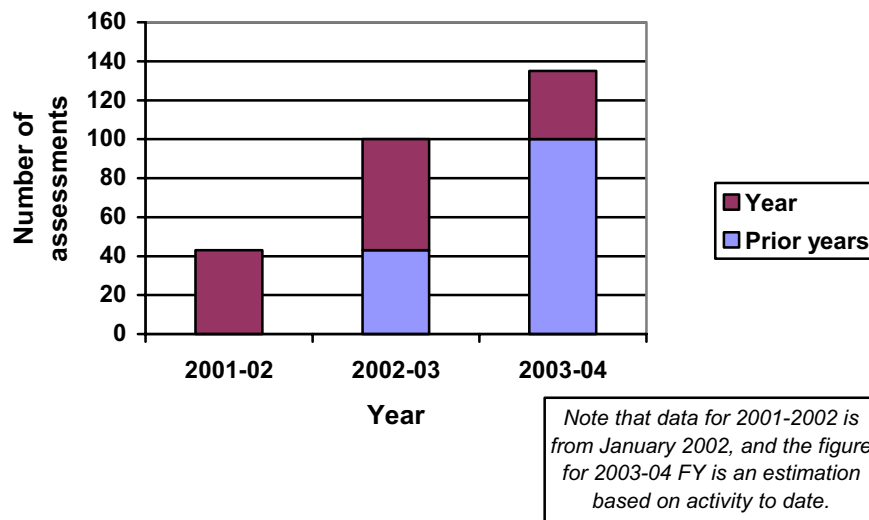
Wildlife protection and trade

Effectiveness Indicator: *Australia's wildlife is protected*

A key indicator for the protection of wildlife is the number of times listed species and communities are protected by the referral, assessment and approval processes under the EPBC Act. This performance indicator is included at Output 1.4.

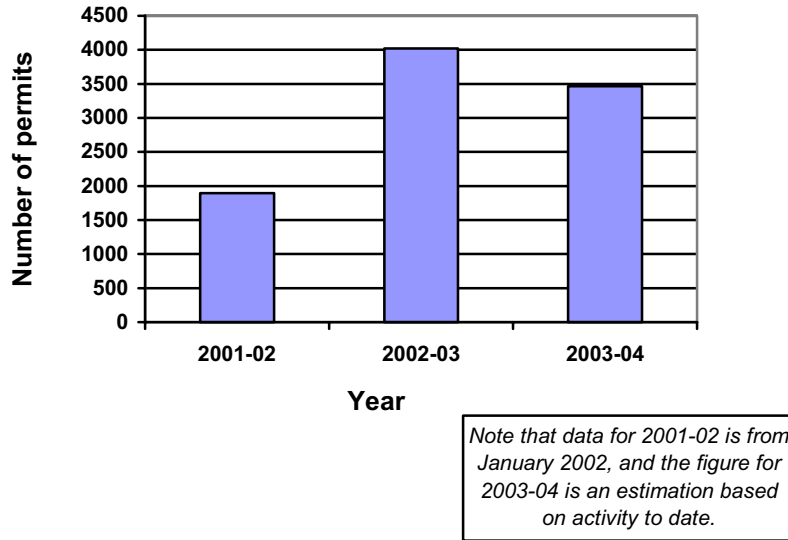
Australia's native wildlife is protected through the regulation of the exports. Wild harvests and artificial propagation programmes are assessed to ensure that wildlife industries are ecologically sustainable and are conducted humanely.

Graph 1.2.2 Total number of wild harvests and artificial propagation programmes assessed under the EPBC Act

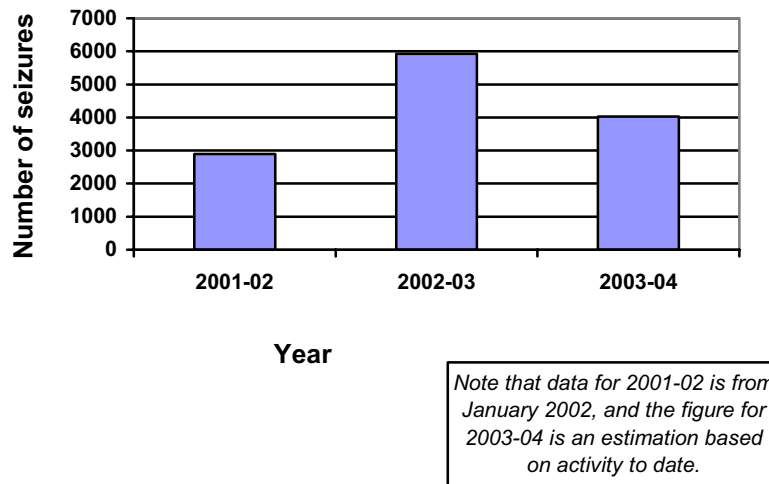


As a party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Australia is required to implement controls on the import and export of an agreed list of species that are endangered, or at risk of becoming endangered, due to trade in them or their products. These obligations are exercised through the EPBC Act. Graphs 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 provide information on the number of export/import permits issued since 2000–01 and the number of seizures of illegally import wildlife specimens.

Graph 1.2.3 Annual number of export/import permits issued since 2001–02 through the EPBC Act

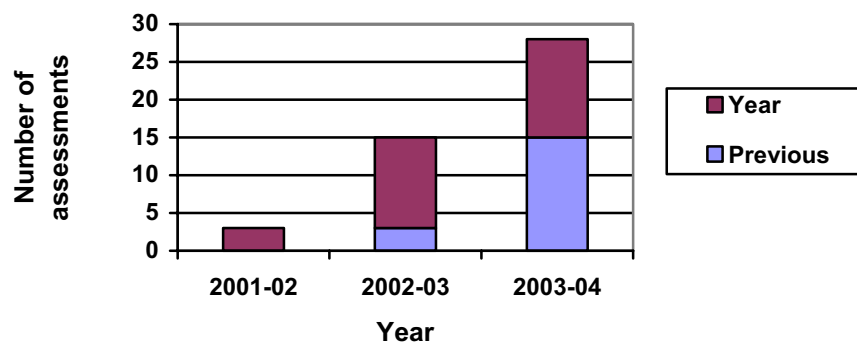


Graph 1.2.4 Annual number of seizures of illegally import wildlife specimens



The Australian marine native fish resources are being protected through the strategic environmental assessment of export fisheries under the EPBC Act. This assessment ensures that ecological sustainability is specifically recognised in managing Australian fisheries.

Graph 1.2.5 Total number of fisheries that have been the subject of strategic assessment under the EPBC Act



Note that data for 2001-02 is from January 2002, and the figure for 2003-04 is an estimation based on activity to date.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Sub-output Biodiversity

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/ activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of agreements, plans and management arrangements put in place.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
	<i>Quality</i>	Degree to which projects, activities, agreements/plans contribute to the output.
Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of permits considered (granted and refused) under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of referrals considered under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of plans/arrangements assessed under legislation.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which stakeholders meet legislative requirements.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Percentage of written pre-meeting objectives at international meetings achieved.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which Australia's strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS (continued)

Sub-output Biodiversity

Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
	Price - Biodiversity	\$10.640m

Sub-output Wildlife protection and trade

Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of permits considered (granted and refused) under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of plans/arrangements assessed under legislation.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which Australia's strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
	Price - Wildlife protection and trade	\$13.848m
	<i>Total Price Output 1.2</i>	<i>\$24.488m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.3 COASTS

SUB-OUTPUT: *Coasts, oceans, estuaries and coastal wetlands*

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Australia's coasts and estuaries are protected and managed in an ecologically sustainable way.

DESCRIPTION

Eighty-five percent of Australia's population lives in coastal areas highlighting the importance of managing the environment and resources of the coastal zone.

The Department of the Environment and Heritage works co-operatively with other Australian Government and state/territory agencies to protect and restore significant coastal and estuarine ecosystems.

The Department is working with state and territory governments under the Framework for the National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Management to improve water quality, conserve biodiversity and protect the economic base of the coastal zone. The framework addresses issues that are of national scale or scope, or where complementary arrangements between jurisdictions will benefit from a national approach.

There are six priority areas under the framework: improving integration across the coastal zone; land and marine based sources of pollution; managing climate change; pest plants and animals; planning for population change; and, capacity building.

The protection and improvement of the quality of coastal waters is a priority for Government actions in the coastal zone. The Coastal Catchments Initiative (CCI) supports development of Water Quality Improvement Plans, prepared consistent with the Australia Government's Framework for Marine and Estuarine Water Quality Protection.

A particular priority of the Australian Government is the protection of the Queensland coast adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef. The Australian and Queensland Governments, together with stakeholders, are implementing the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which aims to halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the Reef within ten years.

In a further demonstration of its commitment to the protection of the Queensland coast, the Australian Government is implementing the CCI and the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Wetlands Protection Programme.

The Department is also actively seeking to improve the environment of the coastal zone through the control of pest plants and animals. The development and implementation of the National System for the Prevention, Emergency Control and Ongoing Management of Invasive Marine Species will involve reducing marine pest translocation risks, including through the implementation of a coastal ballast water management regime.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.3 are to:

➤ **Implement Integrated Coastal Management**

The Framework for the National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Management and the proposed implementation strategy allow all levels of government to cooperatively implement integrated coastal management.

The proposed implementation plan includes 44 measures to support integrated coastal management. These measures are those that are of a national scale or scope, or where complementary arrangements between jurisdictions will benefit from a national approach. The implementation of these measures will move jurisdictions towards integrated coastal management.

➤ **Protect and improve the quality of coastal waters**

The CCI aims to address coastal and urban water quality 'hotspots' through the development and implementation of Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIPs).

WQIPs are being developed for the Derwent Estuary, Moreton Bay, Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary, Adelaide's Port Waterways and for the waterways in the Douglas Shire in north Queensland. These Plans will identify the most cost-effective and timely projects for investment by all parties to achieve target pollutant load reductions. While the Plans will be completed by 2006, significant improvements in water quality are not likely to be seen before 2010.

Priority projects are also under way in these catchments to address institutional or regulatory barriers to WQIP implementation, establish water quality monitoring programmes, water sensitive urban design, catchment water quality decision-support systems, or generate land use and water quality information required in the WQIP.

Once accredited, WQIPs will be incorporated into regional NRM plans and be accorded a priority for funding through associated NRM investment strategies.

The Government will expand the CCI during 2004-05 to address water quality in Port Phillip Bay. Under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, the Government will provide the CCI an additional \$9 million during 2004-06 to protect Great Barrier Reef water quality by developing WQIPs and implementing priority projects for catchments representing a high risk to Reef water quality.

➤ **Halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef**

The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia's most important natural ecosystems. The Australian Government is committed to improving the water quality of the Reef and in turn protecting the biodiversity, tourism and fishing values of the planet's largest World Heritage Area. The wetlands adjacent to the Reef play an important role in filtering the water entering the reef lagoon so that it is free of harmful sediments. Land use adjacent to the Reef is having an adverse impact on the quality of the water entering the reef lagoon.

In December 2003 the Australian and Queensland Governments agreed to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. The Plan has 65 actions that, together with actions by regional bodies under the Regional Plans, and the protection of coastal wetlands through the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Wetlands Protection Programme and the Trust's Queensland Wetlands Programme, are aimed at halting and reversing the decline in water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef.

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

Coast, oceans, estuaries and coastal wetlands

Effectiveness Indicator: *Improved water quality at coastal and urban hotpots*

Graph 1.3.1 Number of coastal and urban hotpots with improved water quality

New indicator, no data available.

Governments have identified coastal and urban water quality hotspots in each state and territory, and in the Great Barrier Reef. Approaches to addressing coastal and urban water quality have also been agreed by Governments.

A number of programmes, notably the Coastal Catchments Initiative and the NAP (where the catchments are coastal) and the Trust’s Regional Component, together with state, territory and local government and regional communities are working to address water quality in these priority areas. Monitoring programmes are included within the approach, enabling the assessment of water quality change.

Graph 1.3.2 Number of implementation measures for integrated coastal management completed

New indicator, no data available.

Governments have agreed to a framework for a cooperative approach to integrated coastal management. The 44 measures proposed to be implemented under the Framework seek to address a number of important issues in achieving integrated coastal management, for example, improved governance arrangements, incorporating population data into coastal zone planning, minimising the impact of marine debris on wildlife, and better understand the impact of climate change on the coastal zone.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/ activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of agreements, plans and management arrangements put in place.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
	<i>Quality</i>	Degree to which projects, activities, agreements/plans contribute to the output.
Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of referrals considered under legislation.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which stakeholders meet legislative requirements.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
<i>Total price Output 1.3</i>		<i>\$8.992m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND APPROVALS

SUB-OUTPUT: *Environmental assessment and approvals*

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Environmental assessments and approvals protect the Australian environment, especially those matters of national environmental significance, in an efficient, timely and effective manner.

DESCRIPTION

The environmental impact assessment and approval of actions with potentially significant impacts on the environment is a fundamental aspect of the Australian Government's framework to protect the environment. This is particularly so for those aspects of the Australian environment that are matters of national environmental significance.

The Australian Government plays an important leadership role in protecting matters of national environmental significance in a manner that promotes cooperation with the state and territory governments, provides certainty of process for stakeholders and reduces the potential for duplication and delay. Through its environmental assessment and approvals process, the Australian Government also ensures the environment is protected in relation to its own actions and actions involving its own land.

The matters of national environmental significance are:

- World Heritage Properties;
- National Heritage Places;
- Ramsar wetlands of international importance;
- Nationally threatened animal and plant species and ecological communities;
- Internationally protected migratory species;
- Commonwealth marine areas; and
- Nuclear actions.

*Output 1.4 – Environmental Assessment
and Approvals*

Matters of national environmental significance are protected from actions that may cause a significant impact through the environmental assessment and approval of actions under the provisions of the EPBC Act. A monitoring and compliance regime is maintained to ensure actions likely to have such an impact are subject to the appropriate assessment and approval processes, and post approval audit of compliance with approval conditions.

At the same time, industry is provided with certainty through a streamlined, transparent and efficient assessment and approvals process conducted within short, well defined timeframes. An integral part of decision-making on actions effecting matters of national environmental significance is the consideration of relevant social and economic matters.

The Australian Government environmental assessment and approvals processes are open and transparent to stakeholders and the public. A high priority is placed on fostering awareness and involvement. Information and advice on referral and assessment processes are publicly available through the Departmental website and other public notices. All assessments are subject to a period of public consultation and comment.

The respective roles of the Australian and state and territory governments are well defined and duplication in environment assessment processes is curtailed through accrediting state/territory assessment processes either through bilateral agreements or on a case-by-case basis.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government’s medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.4 are to:

➤ **Improve guidance to industry on EPBC Act matters**

As a result of experience with the administration of the EPBC Act and views provided by key stakeholders, work will be undertaken to provide improved guidance to industry on what actions need to be referred for assessment and approval under the EPBC Act. A particular focus of this work will be the production of industry sector guidelines that will provide targeted and practical information on industry actions that are likely to have a significant impact on the matters protected by the EPBC Act.

➤ **Assist landholders to protect and conserve biodiversity**

Landholders are the custodians for many of the matters protected by the EPBC Act. Advice and assistance will be provided to landholders, including through the use of conservation agreements under the EPBC Act. This assistance will enable these landholders to reduce their impact on matters protected and facilitate the conservation of biodiversity such as threatened species and ecological communities.

➤ **Monitor compliance of proponents**

The Department will continue the monitoring and auditing effort under the EPBC Act to ensure that proponents comply with the conditions set for approval, and that actions to be undertaken in a particular manner do not result in adverse impacts on matters protected by the EPBC Act.

➤ **Strengthen the EPBC Act’s enforcement and monitoring capabilities**

The Department will strengthen its enforcement and monitoring capability through appropriately skilled and equipped staff in order to increase compliance with the provisions of the EPBC Act.

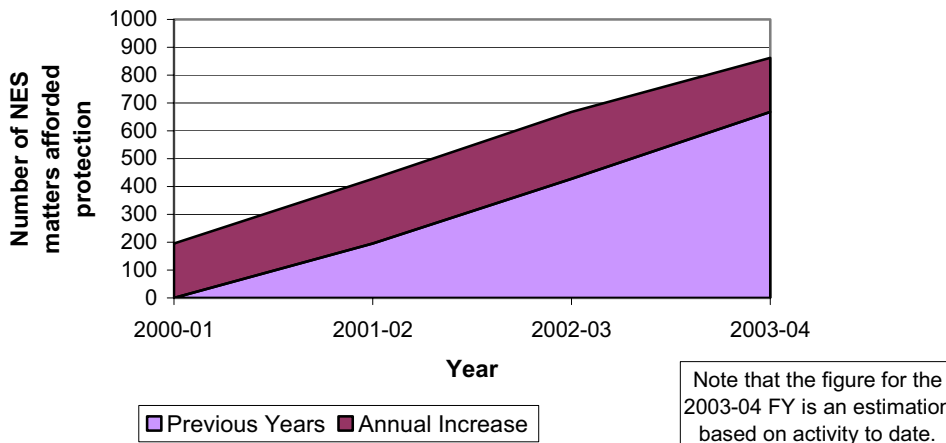
EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

Environmental assessment and approvals

Effectiveness Indicator: *Matters of National Environmental Significance are protected*

Matters of national environmental significance are protected by the Australian Government under the EPBC Act, primarily through their identification as controlling provisions for actions likely to have significant environmental impacts and therefore requiring assessment and approval under the EPBC Act. Provisions of the EPBC Act also require certain actions to be undertaken in a particular manner to avoid adverse impacts on matters of environmental significance. The number of identified controlling provisions and the number of matters of national environmental significance to which ‘particular manner’ decisions apply therefore indicates the number of occasions that matters of national environmental significance have been formally protected under the EPBC Act.

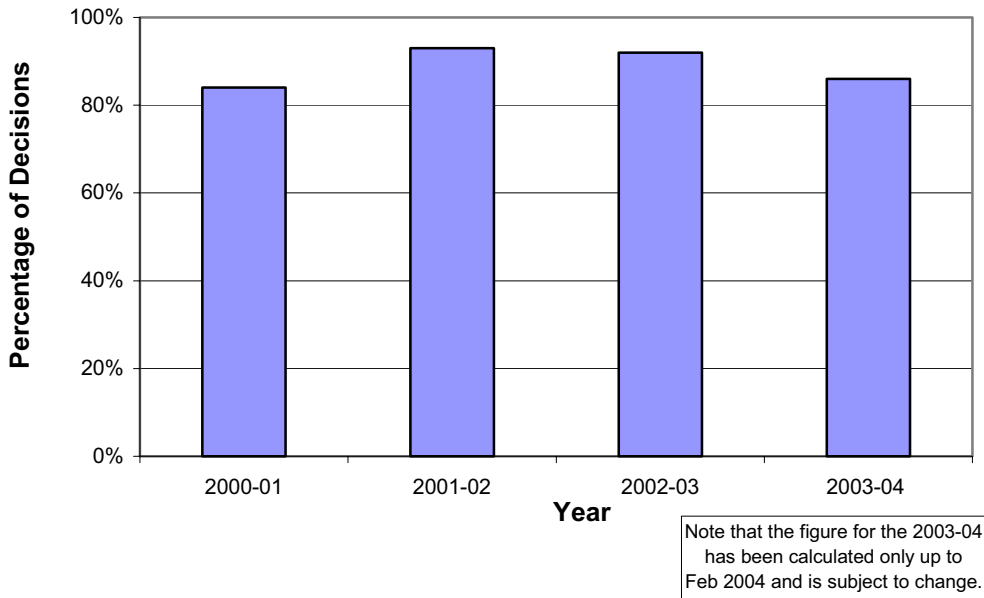
Graph 1.4.1 Total number of matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) that have been afforded protection by the EPBC Act since it commenced in July 2000



Effectiveness Indicator: *Environmental assessments and approvals are delivered in an efficient and timely manner*

The Australian Government delivers environmental outcomes in an efficient and timely manner that promotes certainty for stakeholders and minimises the potential for unnecessary delay. Time frames for all Australian Government decision-making are fully specified in the EPBC Act. The extent that these time frames are met indicates the extent that environmental assessment and approval processes are being delivered in an efficient and timely way.

Graph 1.4.2 The percentage of decisions that were made within statutory timeframes since the commencement of the EPBC Act in July 2000



PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Statutory administration	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department to assist his statutory decision-making.
	<i>Quality</i>	Stakeholders are satisfied that the administration of assessment and approvals under the EPBC Act is fair and in accordance with statutory provisions.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of times matters of national environmental significance have been protected.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
		<i>Total Price 1.4 \$12.405m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.5 HERITAGE

SUB-OUTPUTS: *Heritage conservation*
 Australian Heritage Council

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Australia's natural and cultural heritage is identified, protected and conserved.

DESCRIPTION

The Australian Government has national and international obligations to identify, protect and conserve our natural and cultural heritage.

Under recent heritage amendments to the EPBC Act places that Australians regard as part of their national identity will now be protected and conserved to the full extent provided under the Australian Constitution.

The Distinctively Australian programme underpins the new heritage system, and engages the community in identifying and protecting nationally significant heritage places. The new system establishes a Commonwealth Heritage List of places managed or owned by the Commonwealth, and a National Heritage List of Indigenous, natural and historic places of national significance.

A newly established independent expert advisory body, the Australian Heritage Council, is the principal adviser to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage on heritage matters. The Council assesses nominations in relation to the listing of places in the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List. It also promotes the identification, assessment and conservation of heritage, and compiles and maintains the Register of the National Estate.

Places that are already in the Register of the National Estate, or are added to it, will be protected under the EPBC Act. Places in the Register of the National Estate that are included in the Commonwealth Heritage List or the National Heritage List, will benefit from improved management and protection.

The Australian Government remains committed to the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of Australia's World Heritage. Australia's most recent World Heritage place addition, Purnululu National Park in Western Australia's Kimberly region, was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2003 for its extraordinary natural values. The Government has nominated the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens in Melbourne for World Heritage inscription in 2004.

The Government will continue to promote better management of Australia's World Heritage places in partnership with the states and territories, and will support activities that relate directly to discharging Australia's World Heritage responsibilities and priorities that reflect the national interest.

Conservation of biodiversity in the South-East Asia Pacific Region is a significant challenge for governments and communities. In cooperation with regional Governments and in partnership with non-Government organisations, community-based organisations and the private sector, the Australian Government will assist with the identification, protection and management of areas in the South-East Asia and the Pacific region recognised as global biodiversity hotspots and major wilderness areas.

The Government is committed to the protection of Australia's cultural heritage. It will continue to work in partnership with state and territory governments and the community to support heritage conservation projects through a range of financial assistance and grants programmes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.5 are to:

- **To better protect Australia's natural, indigenous and historic heritage of national and world significance**

Australia's new heritage system is implemented through the Distinctively Australian programme. The Australian Government has established a National Heritage List of Indigenous, natural and historic places of national significance and established a Commonwealth Heritage List of places managed or owned by the Commonwealth.

The Government implements an open and consultative process for the nomination and assessment of places for the National Heritage List. This nomination process allows any person to nominate places of potential national heritage significance for assessment by the Australian Heritage Council and possible inclusion in the National Heritage List by the Minister.

Under Distinctively Australian, the Government is committed to improving the way that National and Commonwealth heritage places are managed. Management plans for National Heritage places will be prepared in cooperation with state and territory governments. Heritage strategies and management plans for Commonwealth heritage places will be developed.

The Government will continue to support activities that relate directly to discharging Australia's World Heritage responsibilities and priorities that reflect the national interest. The Government will, in cooperation with the states and territories, assess places for possible future nomination for World Heritage listing. The Government will give priority to directing financial assistance to areas such as promotion, community engagement and the development of strategic partnerships in a way that is effective, predictable and equitable.

The Government is committed to ensuring the continued support of cultural heritage programmes and initiatives. The Government will continue programmes that support on-ground conservation of places of cultural significance and that promote the protection of Australia's movable cultural heritage, historic shipwrecks and national estate.

➤ **To support the Australian Heritage Council**

The establishment of an independent heritage advisory body to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, called the Australian Heritage Council, is an essential part of Australia's new heritage system which came into effect on 1 January 2004.

The Department of the Environment and Heritage will support the Australian Heritage Council in meeting its statutory responsibilities, including the assessment of the values of places nominated for inclusion on the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List, and the provision of advice on conserving and protecting listed values.

➤ **Provide leadership in conserving the biodiversity of the South East Asia/Pacific region**

Through the Regional Natural Heritage Programme, and in cooperation with regional governments, the Australian Government will assist the identification, protection and management of areas in South-East Asia and the Pacific region recognised as global diversity hotspots or major wilderness areas. This will be achieved by providing assistance to the effective delivery of sustainable conservation programmes through partnerships with non-government and community-based organisations, the private sector and governments and multilateral regional organisations.

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

Heritage conservation

Effectiveness Indicator: *Heritage sites are effectively managed and protected*

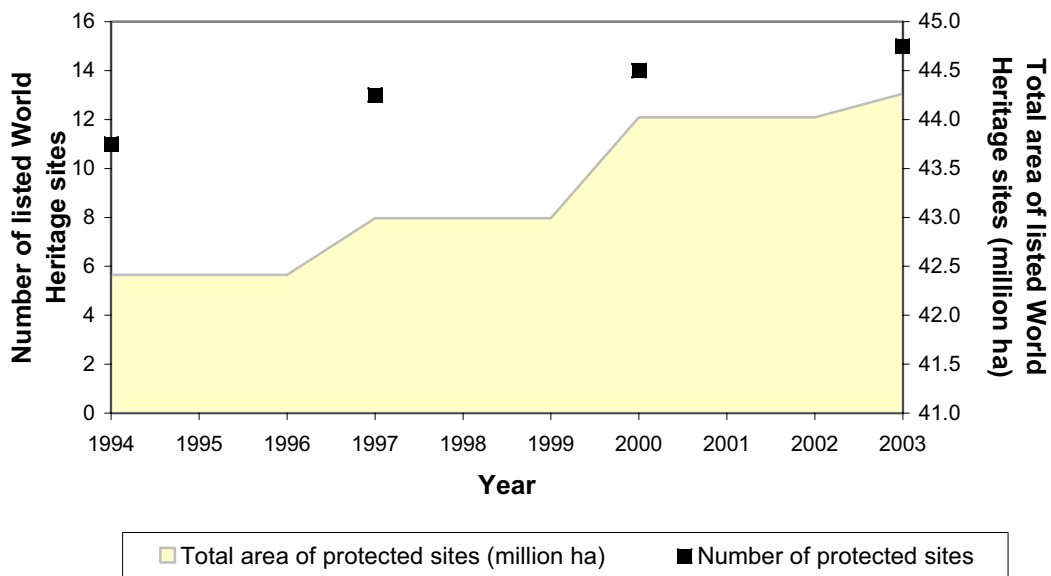
A key element of the new heritage system is a requirement for the Australian Government to use its best endeavours to ensure a management plan for a National Heritage place entirely within a state or territory is prepared. In addition, management plans and/or management strategies for National and Commonwealth listed places owned by the Australian Government must be prepared.

Graph 1.5.1 Number of heritage strategies and management plans prepared

New indicator, no data available. Heritage provisions of the EPBC Act commenced on 1 January 2004, and the first data set will be available for 2005-06.

Australia has 15 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. The first sites were inscribed in 1981 and the most recent site in 2003. The four sites inscribed since 1996 are Heard and McDonald Islands, Macquarie Island, the Greater Blue Mountains, and Purnululu National Park.

Graph 1.5.2 Number of World Heritage Listed sites and area protected.



The combined area of properties inscribed since 1996 is over 1,600,000 ha. Excluding the area of the Great Barrier Reef, which at 35 million ha is the world's largest World Heritage property, this addition represents an increase in the area protected in Australia by World Heritage listing of over 20 percent. The total area of Australia's World Heritage properties now totals over 44 million ha.

From 2000, Australia, along with other nations that already have sites on the World Heritage List, have agreed to limit to one the number of nominations it submits to the World Heritage Committee each year.

Australian Heritage Council

Effectiveness Indicator: *The Australian Heritage Council contributes to the protection of national heritage*

The Australian Heritage Council is a newly established advisory body to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. It will assess nominations of places to the National Heritage List and make recommendations to the Minister on the heritage significance of the places in accordance with its statutory obligations.

Graph 1.5.3 Number of heritage places assessed by the Council

New indicator, no data available. Heritage provisions of the EPBC Act commenced on 1 January 2004, and the first data set will be available for 2005-06.
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PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/ activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of agreements, plans and management arrangements put in place.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of referrals considered under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of plans/arrangements assessed under legislation.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which Australia's strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
	Heritage conservation	\$5.577
	Australian Heritage Council	\$17.678
	<i>Total Price Output 1.5</i>	<i>\$23.255m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.6 HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

SUB-OUTPUTS: *Human settlements*
 Environmental protection at uranium mines in the Alligator Rivers
 Region (ARR)

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

The sustainability of Australia's human settlements is improved.

DESCRIPTION

Human settlements, principally cities and towns but including mining and indigenous settlements, are where most Australians live, where 95% work and 90% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product is generated.

In recognition of this, the Australian Government has put in place a number of policies and programmes to ensure that our human settlements are on the path to sustainable development. While a number of relevant activities are outlined here, this output has significant cross-linkages with activities in other outputs, such as 1.1 Atmosphere, 1.2 Biodiversity and 1.4 Environmental Assessment and Approvals.

In 2004, the Year of the Built Environment, the Australian Government continues to demonstrate leadership in the development and implementation of initiatives that improve the sustainability of our major cities and towns. In the 2003-04 Budget, the Government announced the five year Sustainable Cities Programme. This programme funds a range of activities to ensure an understanding of, and action for, sustainable Australian cities into the future.

In 2004-05 under the Sustainable Cities Programme, the Government will continue the development of national standards and increased compliance and enforcement activities across a range of issues with an urban focus including air quality, the management and control of chemicals and industrial residues, and green building standards. The Government will also prepare a response to the current House of Representatives Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025.

By working with our state and territory government and industry partners, the Australian Government will continue to support strategies that are targeted at protecting the environment through the sustainable management of priority national wastes, such as plastic bags, used tyres and electrical and electronic scrap.

Addressing the generation, use and release of chemicals into the environment is a significant challenge for the future sustainability of human settlements. Of particular concern is household use of chemicals, as these are used widely but householders often have little information or knowledge about what chemicals are in the products they use, what risks to the environment they may pose or how they should be disposed of. The Government has in place a national framework to ensure that the environmental risks of agricultural, veterinary and industrial chemicals, other hazardous chemicals such as dioxins, genetically modified organisms and other biological agents are reduced.

Our work to reduce the impact of industrial activity on the environment extends to supervising the environmental management of uranium mining in the ARR of the Northern Territory, to ensure that the environment in this sensitive area remains protected.

The position of Supervising Scientist was established in 1978 under the *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978* to conduct research on the impact of uranium mining on the environment of the Alligator Rivers Region and to supervise the regulation of uranium mining in the region on behalf of the Australian Government.

To assist the Supervising Scientist perform his role, the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (ERISS) and the Office of the Supervising Scientist (OSS) were established.

The ERISS conducts research into the impact of uranium mining on the environment and people of the ARR, and on the protection and management of wetlands. The ERISS also conducts routine monitoring of uranium mining to provide independent assessment of environmental impact. OSS carries out audit and policy functions. OSS also works in conjunction with the Northern Territory Government, which is responsible for the regulation of mining operations in the ARR.

The Supervising Scientist also provides advice on mining and nuclear issues, and contributes to the development of national and international environmental policy on these and other environmental issues as requested.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.6 are to:

➤ **Improve the environmental sustainability of our human settlements**

Improving the sustainability of our human settlements requires collective participation of all levels of Government, the community and industry.

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council is developing national frameworks to develop and implement national environment and heritage protection policy solutions to a number of national issues impacting on sustainability. The Australian Government will continue through 2004-05 to work with the Council on urban air and water issues, developing safe and sustainable approaches to chemicals and their use, and tackling national priority wastes.

Initiatives to be progressed this year include implementing a water efficiency labelling scheme and associated minimum product standards, developing better management of chemicals to reduce their environmental impacts, and action on priority waste streams, such as plastic bags. Retailers have voluntarily agreed to reduce plastic bag usage by 25% (1.75 billion bags) by the end of 2004, with a further reduction of 50% by end 2005.

As industry has an important role in working towards sustainability, the Government continues to place a high importance on partnership approaches with this sector to protect and conserve the environment. Partnerships with industry include 12 current eco-efficiency agreements (with 33 industry associations), the Government's Environment Industry Action Agenda and the National Packaging Covenant, which aims to reduce packaging through the product supply chain. The Covenant, which was due to expire in July 2004, has been temporarily extended to allow for consultation and consideration of a successor arrangement.

➤ **Protect the environment from the adverse impacts of hazardous substances and organisms**

Hazardous chemicals can have a significant impact on our environment if their production, use and/or disposal are not managed appropriately. The Australian Government continues to take a full life cycle approach to their management, where appropriate in cooperation with states and territories, to ensure that the environmental impacts of these substances are reduced.

It does this by having effective systems that identify the potential risks of their exposure to the environment, providing governments, industry and the community with the right tools to reduce and manage those risks. Fulfilling this function, the Department of the Environment and Heritage provides to Government regulatory

agencies expert advice on the environmental impacts of agricultural, veterinary and industrial chemicals, and genetically modified organisms.

Australia will also ensure that its international obligations with respect to chemicals management are fully met. This includes continuing to enforce the *Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989*, which gives effect to the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their disposal. This Act ensures that the export, import and transit of hazardous waste are managed in an environmental sound manner.

The Government will also implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent for the International Trade in Hazardous Waste, both coming into force during 2004. The three conventions (Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel) together provide a significant international framework governing the environmentally sound management of hazardous chemicals.

➤ **Research the potential and actual effects of uranium mining on the environment and human health, and determine methods to protect the environment by minimising or avoiding those effects**

Research into the environmental impacts of uranium mining in the ARR is essential to ensure that the surrounding environment is fully protected and any impacts are minimised. To ensure that a robust and complete research programme is put in place, the Australian Government has established the Alligator Rivers Regions Technical Committee (ARRTC). The ARRTC has the responsibility of advising the Government on an appropriate research programme, and ERISS must consult with it in finalising its research priorities for the year.

Five major themes have been developed for 2004-05, namely:

- assess ecotoxicology and biophysical pathways, to develop and enhance site-specific water quality guidelines for relevant pollutants;
- monitor and investigate the transport of contaminants through groundwater pathways;
- monitor water quality in Alligator Rivers Region creeks in order to assess the effects of mining (at Ranger and Jabiluka) upon ecosystem and human health;
- monitor and investigate radiological risk arising from present-day uranium mining operations in the ARR, and to assist in planning for rehabilitation of former and present-day mine sites from a radiological perspective; and
- provide advice on the implementation of mine rehabilitation strategies and assessment of rehabilitation sustainability.

➤ **Develop, improve and monitor environmental systems and management mechanisms for the supervision and monitoring of uranium mines in the Alligator Rivers Region**

The priorities for this part of the OSS programme in the coming year are to:

- plan for the rehabilitation of the Ranger mine following closure, including identifying research needs. Rehabilitation is also one of the themes being developed by ERISS and is part of ARRTC’s key knowledge needs;
- maintain, develop and implement processes for auditing, inspecting and supervising uranium mines in the ARR to ensure the continued protection of the environment;
- assist in the development of a rehabilitation completion strategy for Nabarlek, in consultation with the Nabarlek Mine site Technical Committee (MTC) members and Aboriginal Traditional Owners; and
- develop a final closure plan for Nabarlek in conjunction with the Nabarlek MTC.

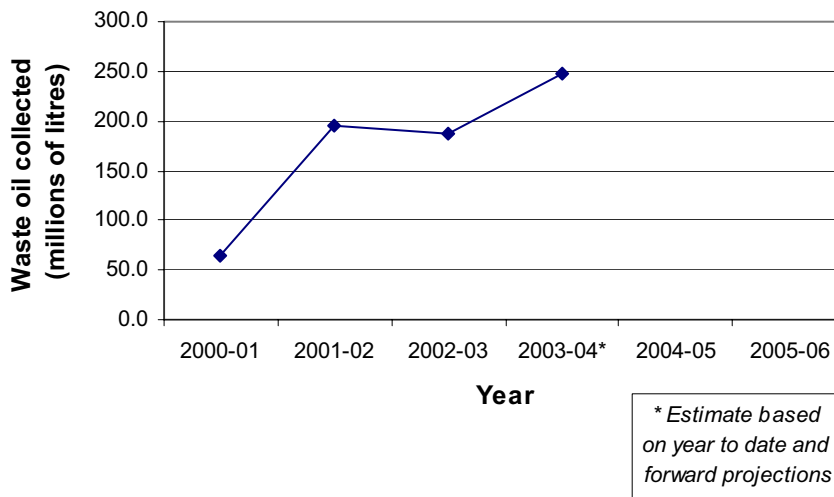
EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

Human settlements

Effectiveness Indicator: *The sustainability of Australia’s human settlements*

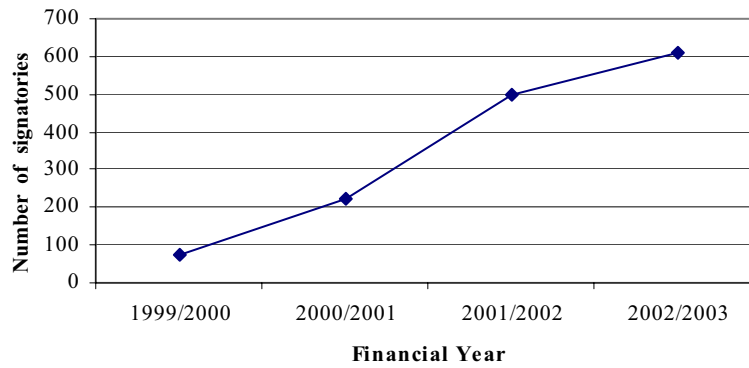
The sustainability of our human settlements as one entity is impossible to measure. As such, activities that are contributing to working towards sustainability of Australia’s human settlements are presented. For example, the waste oil programme aims to improve the sustainable use of oil products through recovery, recycling and reuse, and the number of environmental risk assessments of chemicals provides an indication as to the reduction in risk new and existing chemicals will have on the environment.

Graph 1.6.1 Volume of waste oil collected nationally under the Product Stewardship for Oil Programme each year.



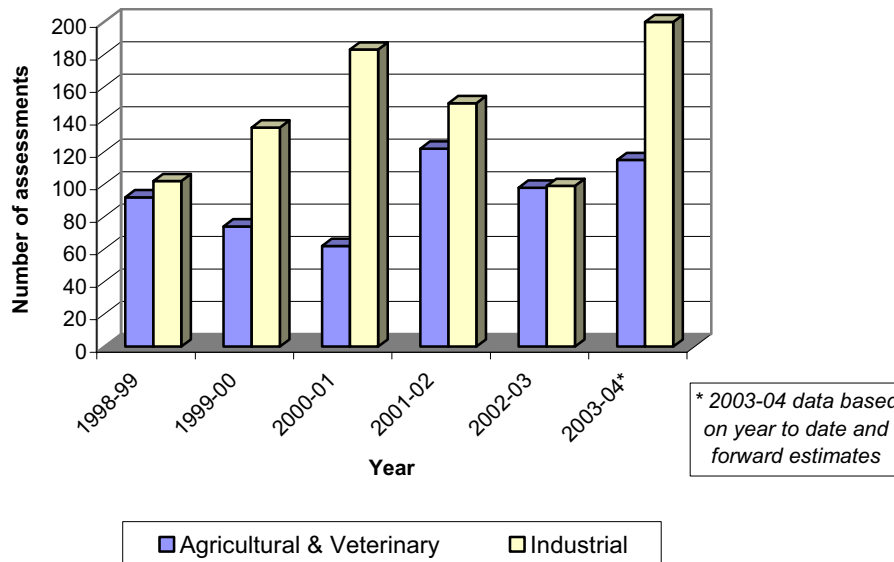
Graph 1.6.1 indicates the amount of oil collected under the Product Stewardship for Oil Programme. The data is provided by the Australian Taxation Office (who administers the Programme on behalf of the Department) and is based on when the benefit payments are made to recyclers of used oil. Industry estimates that only 150-165 million litres of used oil was being recycled prior to the implementation of the Programme (on 1 January 2001).

Graph 1.6.2 Total number of companies signatory to the National Packaging Covenant



The National Packaging Covenant is the leading instrument for managing packaging waste in Australia. It is designed to reduce waste from packaging going to landfill, minimising the environmental impacts of consumer packaging waste throughout the entire life cycle of the packaging product.

Graph 1.6.3 Number of environmental risk assessments of industrial and agricultural and veterinary chemicals undertaken each year



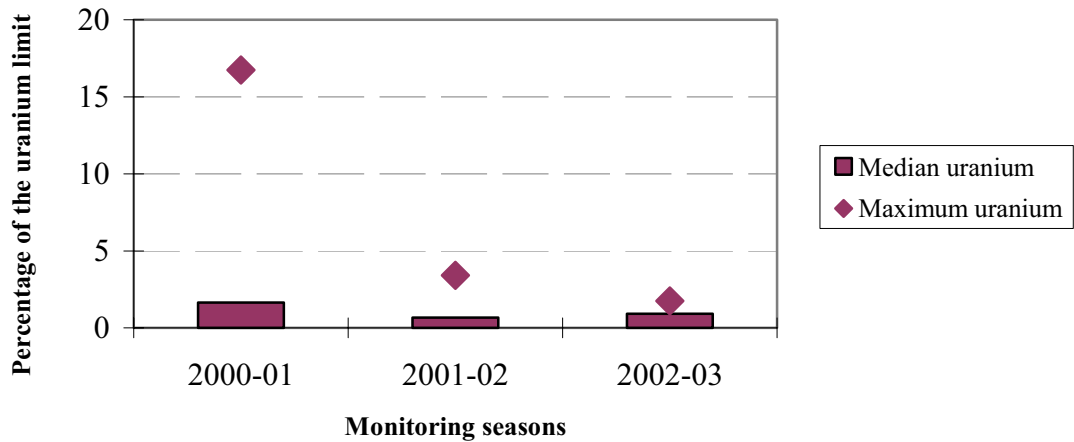
The Department undertakes environmental risk assessments of chemicals on behalf of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) and the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS). These assessments (Graph 1.6.3) ensure that potential adverse environmental impacts of new and existing agricultural, veterinary and industrial chemicals are reduced.

Environmental protection at uranium mines in the Alligator Rivers Region (ARR)

Effectiveness Indicator: *The ARR environment is protected from the impacts of uranium mining*

Graph 1.6.4 shows the median and maximum concentrations of uranium measured downstream of the Ranger mine during three years of monitoring by the Supervising Scientist. Co-operative management of water quality leaving the Ranger mine resulted in uranium concentrations in the downstream environment well below (less than 5 % on most occasions and less than 20% at the most) the ecotoxicological limit of 5.8 µg/L set by the Supervising Scientist. By meeting the limit, based on environmental protection criteria, the higher criteria for human protection (the drinking water guideline is 20 µg/L) is also met.

Graph 1.6.4 Ranger median and maximum annual uranium concentrations as a percentage of the limit (5.8µg/L) downstream of mine-site.



PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Sub-output Human settlements

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
	<i>Quality</i>	Degree to which projects, activities, agreements/plans contribute to the output.
Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of permits considered (granted and refused) under legislation.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which stakeholders meet legislative requirements.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Percentage of written pre-meeting objectives at international meetings achieved.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which Australia’s strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
Price – Human settlements		\$19.543m

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS (continued)

Sub-output Environmental protection at uranium mines in the Alligator Rivers Region

Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of permits/applications considered (granted and refused) under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of plans/arrangements assessed under legislation.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which stakeholders meet legislative requirements.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Percentage of written pre-meeting objectives at international meetings achieved.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
Price - Environmental protection at uranium mines in the Alligator Rivers Region		\$7.426m
<i>Total Price Output 1.6</i>		<i>\$26.969m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.7 INLAND WATERS

SUB-OUTPUTS: *Rivers, groundwater and wetlands*
 Tropical wetland ecology and conservation

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Australia's inland waterways are managed in an ecologically sustainable way and Australia's commitments to the Ramsar Convention are met.

DESCRIPTION

Australia is the driest permanently inhabited continent. The 2001 State of the Environment Report found that about 26% of Australia's surface water management areas are close to or have exceeded sustainable extraction limits. Many river systems in the Murray-Darling Basin and along the east coast of Australia are either overdeveloped or approaching full development status. This indicates that aquatic ecosystems in these river systems are under substantial pressure from water extraction, and the current level of extraction may not be sustainable over the long term.

Of particular focus in recent years has been the health of the Murray-Darling River. Rivers within the Murray-Darling Basin are amongst the most physically regulated in the world reflecting both the high variability in river flows and the considerable use of irrigation water within the Basin.

In contrast, the river systems and catchments of northern and western Australia have not been developed to the same extent, so the pressure on the aquatic ecosystems from water extraction in these areas is low. However, the river systems of northern and western Australia will likely be subjected to increased pressure as these untapped water resources are developed for agriculture.

There is increasing need to understand northern Australia's rivers with their high (but seasonal) flow so as to ensure that development and management of the river systems does not impact on their capacity to deliver both environmental and economic outcomes for Australia. For example the northern prawn fishery (one of Australia's largest fisheries) depends on reliable river flow to sustain prawn stocks.

The Australian Government is playing a leading role in ensuring the ecologically sustainable management of inland rivers through the National Water Initiative, the Living Murray Initiative, the NAP and the Trust’s Rivercare programme.

The Government is leading the implementation of the National Water Initiative (NWI) which aims to refresh the 1994 water reform agenda and so increase the productivity and efficiency of water use, sustain rural and urban communities, and ensure the health of river and groundwater systems. The NWI will:

- improve the security of water access entitlements, including by clear assignment of risks of reductions in future water availability and by returning over allocated systems to sustainable allocation levels;
- ensure ecosystem health by implementing regimes to protect environmental assets at a whole-of-basin, aquifer or catchment scale;
- ensure water is put to best use by encouraging the expansion of water markets and trading across and between districts and states (where water systems are physically shared), involving clear rules for trading, robust water accounting arrangements and pricing based on full cost recovery principles; and
- encourage water conservation in cities, including better use of storm water and recycled water.

The implementation of the Living Murray first step decision will initially focus on achieving significant environmental benefits for six ecological assets (the icon sites) on the River Murray: Barmah-Millewa Forest; Gunbower and Koondrook-Perricoota Forests; Hattah Lakes; Chowilla Floodplain (including Lindsay-Wallpolla); the Murray Mouth, Coorong and Lower Lakes; and the River Murray channel. This will require effective management of up to 500 gigalitres of water, likely to be recovered over five years. The first step decision is supported through the Australian Government providing \$200 million towards addressing water over allocation in the Murray Darling Basin.

The NAP and the Trust’s Regional Component are the major vehicles for communities to invest in improving water quality and the environmental condition of river systems and wetlands. Regional Plans and investment strategies have been or are currently being developed by community organisations established to guide natural resource management, and projects are under way to protect, restore and manage waterways and wetlands.

The conservation of wetlands, especially tropical wetlands, and tropical rivers is a significant area of activity for the Department. The Government is investing significant funding in ensuring that Australia’s Ramsar listed wetlands have management plans and arrangements that ensure the protection of the values for which they are known. The ERISS, cooperatively with other institutions, is heavily involved in advising on the management of the extensive wetlands in northern Australia.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.7 are to:

➤ **Advance water reform towards sustainable management of Australia's rivers**

The Australian, and state and territory governments are cooperatively pursuing the National Water Initiative. A Senior Officials Group chaired by the Department's Secretary is currently negotiating a proposed approach, with an Intergovernmental Agreement to be considered by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) at their first meeting in 2004.

A separate agreement between the Australian Government and the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory to set out arrangements for investing the \$500 million over five years to address water over-allocation in the Murray-Darling Basin is also being negotiated. Governments will commence investing in addressing over-allocation during the 2004-05 financial year.

➤ **Ensuring the Murray River is a healthy working river**

Following consideration of approaches to achieving a healthy working river in November 2003, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council agreed to an initial focus for the Living Murray Initiative on maximising environmental benefits for six significant ecological assets, with a 'learning by doing' approach to achieving these benefits. The Murray-Darling Basin Commission, together with the Australian and relevant State and Territory government agencies, will pursue actions to achieve specific ecological objectives and outcomes for each of the significant assets. It is anticipated that achieving these outcomes will require the effective management of approximately 500 GL of water, with the volume used each year depending on a range of factors such as drought and flood events.

➤ **Address priority river management issues across Australia**

Regional organisations are currently developing Plans and Investment Strategies to guide investment to improve water quality and the environmental condition of river systems and wetlands. Ensuring these plans identify and address the major environmental issues relating to water systems and address the major water related issues of salinity, water quality, environmental flows and the protection of the environmental values of river systems and related wetland areas, will be major items of work for the forthcoming year.

➤ **Conserve and protect Australia's wetlands**

Wetlands are under threat on a global scale from a range of natural processes and human activities. The 2001 State of the Environment Report states that, nationwide,

80 important wetlands are already affected by salinity and this is predicted to rise to 130 by the year 2050. Many riparian habitats (especially wetlands) can contain endemic species and communities at risk. Drainage of floodplain wetlands to allow for agricultural development, and more recently urban settlement, has caused much damage. The building of levees to protect inappropriate development from flooding has often isolated the rivers from their floodplains. Irrigation development, and water-regulating structures (dams and weirs) also contribute to changes in flow regimes and water character (temperature) affecting aquatic ecology.

The conservation of wetlands, especially tropical wetlands, and tropical rivers is carried out in collaboration with partners in the National Centre for Tropical Wetland Research. The ERISS provides advice, based on research and monitoring, to users, managers and owners of tropical wetlands, especially those in northern Australia.

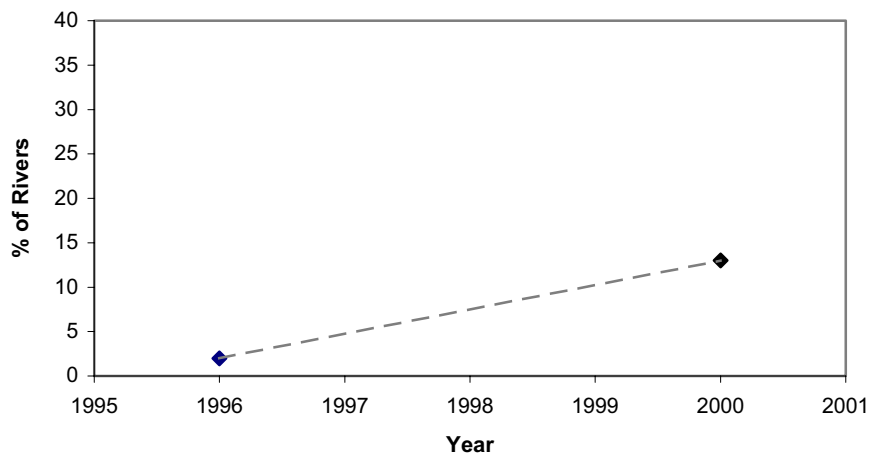
Research activities build on extensive community consultation and take into account national and international initiatives to ensure the conservation and wise use of wetlands. This means that the Australian Government provides information and advice to local people who have a vested interest in making wise use of their wetlands and also provide scientific leadership in national and international programmes.

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

Rivers, groundwater and wetlands

Effectiveness Indicator: *Australia’s water systems are protected and managed sustainably*

Graph 1.7.1 Percentage of Australian river systems with operational environmental flow allocations



While there has been increasing use of water, particularly for agriculture, there has simultaneously been an increasing level of management of water resources aimed at addressing the issues of over-allocation and ensuring ecosystem health by implementing regimes to protect environmental assets.

The 2001 State of the Environment Report notes that only 13% of Australian river systems had any operational environmental flow allocations in June 2000, but they will be established for most regulated rivers in the next five to ten years.

Tropical wetland ecology and conservation

Effectiveness Indicator: *Australia's tropical wetlands are protected and managed sustainably*

The Department of the Environment and Heritage, including the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist, provides advice on the protection and management of Australia's tropical wetlands through scientific publications, presentations and participation in scientific forums.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/ activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of agreements, plans and management arrangements put in place.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
	<i>Quality</i>	Degree to which projects, activities, agreements/plans contribute to the output.
Statutory administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Extent to which statutory timeframes are met under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of referrals considered under legislation.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of plans/arrangements assessed under legislation.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which stakeholders meet legislative requirements.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Percentage of written pre-meeting objectives at international meetings achieved.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which Australia’s strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS *(continued)*

Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
Price – Rivers, groundwater and wetlands		\$8.736m
Price - Tropical wetland ecology and conservation		\$4.457m
Price - <i>Total Price Output 1.7</i>		<i>\$13.193m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.8 LAND MANAGEMENT

SUB-OUTPUT: *Land management*

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Australia's land resources are managed in an ecologically sustainable way.

DESCRIPTION

Ecologically sustainable land management is critical to maintain the health of our environment, conserve our biodiversity, and remain a major agricultural producer and exporter.

The Department of the Environment and Heritage works co-operatively with other Australian Government and state/territory agencies to protect, manage and restore the natural and managed landscapes of agricultural and pastoral areas.

The rangelands, covering 75% of Australia, have special management needs. A sparse population, vast areas and a highly variable climate pose special challenges. Extensive areas of the rangelands have been altered by actions to support the pastoral industry. The Department is active in supporting the provision of artificial watering points in the rangelands to limit the drawdown of artesian and sub-artesian water systems including in the Great Artesian Basin.

A reduction in productivity may result from overstocking, high grazing pressure and inappropriate fire, water and soil management practises. Impacts include changes to grassland dynamics, erosion, dryland salinisation and loss of biodiversity including groundwater dependent mound spring ecosystems. These problems can be exacerbated by damage to soils and native grasses by increasing numbers of stock and feral animals, including camels, horses, donkeys and cattle, predation by foxes and cats, competition from rabbits, and growing problems with weeds.

The Department, together with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, is working with state and territory governments to implement the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement and the Strategic Management Plan of the Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council through actions including supporting sustainable management and conservation of grazing lands, supporting the collaborative and strategic management of weeds and the development of Regional Natural Resources Management Plans for the

regions. The Department has played a strong role in supporting the consultative arrangements under the agreements and supporting facilitators and coordinators that assist regional communities work towards sustainable management of the rangelands.

Australia's native vegetation is one of the richest and most fundamental elements of our natural heritage. Native vegetation binds and nourishes our ancient soils; shelters and sustains wildlife; protects streams, wetlands, estuaries, and coastlines; absorbs carbon dioxide and emits oxygen. Depletion and destruction of native vegetation is a primary driver of land degradation, salinity and declining water quality, and is the biggest cause of biodiversity loss. While broad scale land clearing for agriculture and urban development is a critical threat, the loss caused by clearing is compounded by the degradation of remnant bush through unsustainable grazing pressure, insect attack, disease, weeds, rising water tables, salinity, inappropriate fire management, unsustainable firewood gathering and neglect.

The Department, together with other Australian government agencies, implements the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation (2001) jointly with state and territory governments. The initiative outlines a coordinated national approach to native vegetation management.

The outcomes sought in the Native Vegetation Framework are:

- a reversal in the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation cover by conserving native vegetation and substantially reducing land clearing;
- conserving Australia's biodiversity;
- restoring, by means of substantially increasing revegetation, the environmental values and productive capacity of Australia's degraded land and water;
- conserving and, where appropriate, restoring native vegetation to maintain and enhance biodiversity, protect water quality and conserve soil resources, including on private land managed for agriculture, forestry and urban development;
- retaining and enhancing biodiversity and native vegetation at both regional and national levels; and
- improving the condition of existing native vegetation.

One of the greatest challenges facing Australia is how to manage our natural resources for a healthy future, when much of the landscape has critical salinity and water quality problems. These problems continue to affect everyone, across all State and Territory borders and local government areas. At least 2.5 million hectares (5% of Australia's cultivated land) is currently affected by dryland salinity, and this could rise to 12 million hectares (22%) at the current rate of increase.

To tackle these issues in some of Australia's worst affected areas, the Council of Australian Governments has endorsed the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, with the Australian Government investing \$700 million over eight years. To address salinity, particularly dryland salinity, the Plan will support decisive actions to ensure that our land and water management practices will sustain productive and profitable land and water uses as well as our natural environments.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government's medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.8 are to:

➤ **Sustainable management of Rangelands**

The rangelands have special management needs. A sparse population, vast areas and a highly variable climate pose special challenges. The low overall productivity means that it is not always feasible to invest money or effort on restoration. Rural communities have been responsive to efforts to improve the sustainability of management practices but need information and other support that is relevant to the purpose and scale of their decision-making.

The actions agreed under the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement and the Strategic Management Plan of the Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council provide direction for governments and allow for the cooperative management of two of the largest areas of rangeland in Australia. These strategies, together with the regional planning processes and actions supported through the NAP and the Trust, allow governments and the community of the rangelands to improve the management of these vital areas.

Government support for biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management in the rangelands has focused on:

- gathering and sharing natural resource information, for example through the Australian Collaborative Rangeland Information System (ACRIS);
- building community capacity through providing facilitators and coordinators, educational material, information centres, and supporting relevant conferences and workshops;
- fire management with projects in the indigenous lands of western Arnhem Land, pastoral lands in the Sturt Plateau and Victoria River District and south-west of Katherine, and in the Kimberleys and Cape York;
- grazing management; and
- identification and management of areas of high conservation, for example, mound springs surveys, establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas, and threatened species recovery actions.

The most extensive land use in the rangelands is pastoralism. Better property management planning can improve management by matching stocking rate regimes to land capability and protecting areas of high conservation value using strategic location of fencing and changes to watering points. The government is supporting many projects to develop and communicate improved grazing management practices in the rangelands, tailored to the needs of different regional communities.

➤ **Reversal in the long-term decline in native vegetation**

The National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia’s Native Vegetation aims to reverse the long-term decline in the quality and extent of Australia’s native vegetation cover.

The framework provides a vehicle through which the Australian, state and territory governments can implement this goal in a unified and consistent manner, against an agreed framework of best practice management and monitoring measures. The Australian Government in particular:

- produces national standards, guidelines, and policy documents for environmental values, for example the National Weeds Strategy;
- establishes and delivers programmes, for example the Trust – and in particular the Bushcare programme; and
- enters into bilateral environmental management agreements with the states and territories, for example the Bilateral Agreements under which the NAP and the Trust are being delivered jointly with the states and territories.

The provision of information and tools and case studies, especially on incentives for native vegetation management have proven particularly effective in assisting landholders, landcare groups, catchment management bodies and Governments to protect native vegetation.

➤ **Address the impacts of soil salinity**

Approximately 60% of Australia’s land area is used for agriculture or extensive area grazing. At least 2.5 million hectares (5% of Australia’s cultivated land) is currently affected by dryland salinity, with an additional 3.2 million hectares considered at risk.

The effect that salinity has on Australia’s biodiversity is significant. For example, increased salinity could cause the extinction of approximately 450 species of native flora and 250 species of invertebrate water fauna in the Western Australian wheat belt alone. The problems of soil salinity can also transfer to adversely impact on Australia’s streams, estuaries and coasts.

To address the impact that soil salinity is having in Australia, the Prime Minister announced the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality in October 2000. The NAP will tackle salinity and water quality in 22 priority regions and is a \$1.4 billion commitment between the Australian and the State and Territory Governments. The Australian Government's contribution of \$700 million over eight years builds on the successful work of the Trust and Landcare.

The NAP will work by helping people in the priority regions to develop regional plans to control salinity. These plans will vary from catchment to catchment, but will all include actions to manage regional water quality, salinity and bio-diversity appropriate for the local area and national objectives. Measures that may be included are:

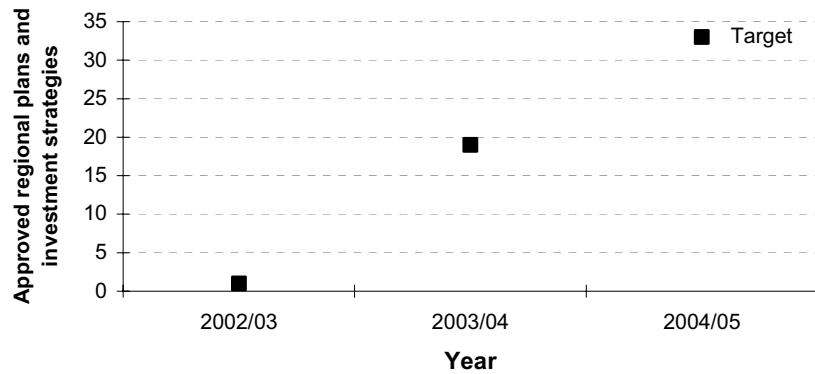
- engineered water quality improvements such as salt interception technologies and removal of some weirs and disused structures;
- salinity prevention measures and drainage improvements; and
- land use change or amalgamation of properties, where current operations are no longer viable.

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

Land management

Effectiveness Indicator: *Impacts of soil salinity are reduced*

Graph 1.8.1 Total number of accredited regional plans and investment strategies in place under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality



The NAP supports the development of a total of 33 regional plans and investment strategies that apply local solutions to salinity and water quality problems in the 22 priority regions.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/ activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of agreements, plans and management arrangements put in place.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely payment of monies.
	<i>Quality</i>	Degree to which projects, activities, agreements/plans contribute to the output.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
International	<i>Quantity</i>	Percentage of written pre-meeting objectives at international meetings achieved.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which Australia’s strategic objectives is achieved through international fora.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
Research, analysis and evaluation	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of research reports, articles and papers prepared and publicly released.
<i>Total Price Output 1.8</i>		<i>\$6.754m</i>

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.9 PARKS AND RESERVES

SUB-OUTPUT: *National Reserve System*
 *Protected areas**

- * The Protected areas Sub-output (which is the statutory responsibility of the Director of National Parks and includes the management of Commonwealth Reserves) is reported at Part C Director of National Parks.

EFFECTIVENESS STATEMENT

Ecologically significant areas are protected and conserved by effectively managing Commonwealth reserves, and improving the comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness of the National Reserve System.

DESCRIPTION

This output aims to assist in the conservation and appreciation of Australia's biological diversity and associated cultural heritage through leadership and cooperation in the management of the Australian Government's marine and terrestrial protected areas and through cooperative development of the National Reserve System.

The Director of National Parks is a statutory authority established under the EPBC Act to administer, manage and control Commonwealth reserves, including marine reserves.

Under delegations from the Minister and the Secretary, the Director is also responsible for administering programmes that complement his statutory role. This includes the development of the National Reserve System, which includes the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas, and the Australian Biological Resources Study (reported at Output 1.2 Biodiversity).

Parks Australia, a Division of the Department of the Environment and Heritage, provides support to the Director in the performance of his functions.

The Director and Parks Australia:

- conserve and manage Commonwealth reserves;
- actively contribute to the conservation of Australia’s indigenous cultural heritage;
- provide a framework for safe visitation and associated tourism businesses in Commonwealth reserves;
- develop and disseminate knowledge, information and practical methods to encourage a better understanding of protected areas and their associated values;
- provide the Minister with coordinated, objective policy advice, analysis and research on key biodiversity issues related to the establishment and management of protected areas; and
- coordinate and promote Australian participation in key environmental forums related to national parks and other protected areas and contribute to the development of protected areas nationally and internationally.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Australian Government’s medium term strategic priorities for Output 1.9 are:

➤ **Manage protected areas**

To contribute to the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity and cultural heritage by developing and implementing management plans and programmes to:

- protect and restore the natural and cultural heritage values of Parks and Reserves;
- ensure visitors are provided a safe, educational and enjoyable experience of associated natural and cultural heritage;
- increase traditional owner participation in, and benefits from, delivery of park management in jointly managed parks; and
- meet the requirements of the EPBC Act, relevant leases, and international obligations for Ramsar and World Heritage sites.

➤ **Enhance the National Reserve System**

To contribute to the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity and cultural heritage by developing and implementing programmes to:

- establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative terrestrial reserve system through strategic property purchases by third parties;
- build a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine reserve system through regional planning processes;

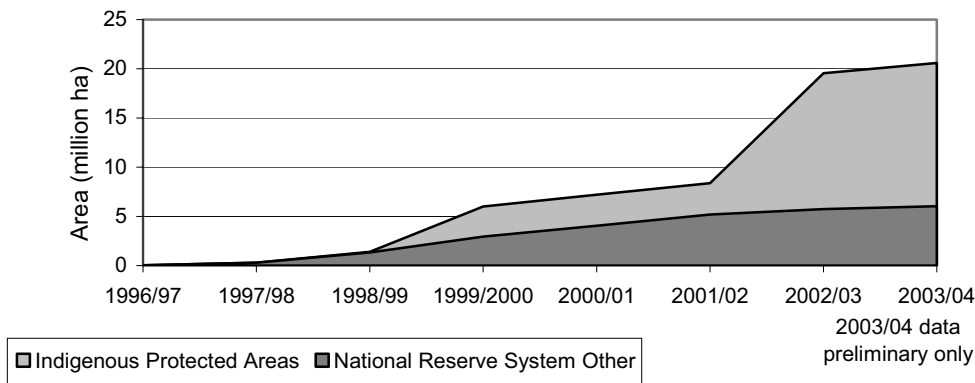
- establish agreements for joint/cooperative management arrangements with Aboriginal people and other government agencies;
- support the establishment and management of Indigenous Protected Areas; and
- support a network of Indigenous Land Management Facilitators to foster and promote Indigenous participation in land management policies and programmes.

EFFECTIVENESS IN DELIVERING THE OUTPUT

National Reserve System

Effectiveness Indicator: *Australia’s biodiversity and cultural heritage is protected*

Graph 1.9.1 Area of land protected and managed through the National Reserve System programme



At 30 June 2003, the total area approved for funding under the National Reserve System programme of the Natural Heritage Trust was 20.569 million hectares (the size of Victoria). This comprises 6.783 million hectares purchased or covenanted, and 13.785 million hectares declared as Indigenous Protected Areas. This area added to the National Reserve System represents 3% of mainland Australia’s landmass, and brings the total protected area estate in Australia to just over 10% of the country.

All properties approved through the National Reserve System programme contain ecosystems that are poorly represented or not represented at all in the National Reserve System. Many properties have rare or threatened species, communities and ecosystems listed under state or Commonwealth endangered species legislation. The programme also supports acquisitions that conserve species with specialised habitat requirements, wide-ranging or migratory species and species vulnerable to threatening processes, which may depend on reservation for their survival. Acquisitions are proposed by State agencies, local councils and non-government organisations that purchase and manage approved properties.

Protected areas

Reporting of effectiveness against Sub-output Protected areas (which is the statutory responsibility of the Director of National Parks and includes the management of Commonwealth Reserves) is presented at Part C Section 2 Director of National Parks.

PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERY OF DEPARTMENTAL OUTPUTS

Programme administration	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of projects/ activities approved under each programme.
	<i>Quantity</i>	Number of agreements, plans and management arrangements put in place.
	<i>Quality</i>	Extent to which (self-imposed, Ministerial or external) timeframes are met.
	<i>Quality</i>	Accurate and timely approval, payment and acquittal of grants in accordance with legislation and guidelines.
Policy advising, ministerial and parliamentary	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of briefs provided by the Department.
	<i>Quality</i>	Minister is satisfied with the timeliness and quality of draft ministerial correspondence by the Department.
Stakeholder awareness	<i>Quantity</i>	Information and education products distributed to stakeholders (measured by website hits, information material distributed, etc).
	Price – Protected areas*	\$38.765m
	Price – National Reserve System	\$0.360m
	<i>Total Price Output 1.9</i>	<i>\$39.125m</i>
<p>* Reporting of performance against Sub-output Protected Areas (which is the statutory responsibility of the Director of National Parks and includes the management of Commonwealth Reserves) is presented at Part C Section 2 Director of National Parks</p>		

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Achievement of planned performance will be reported in the Department of the Environment and Heritage's 2004-05 Annual Report.

Achievement of planned performance against output 1.9 Parks and reserves Sub-output Protected areas will be reported in the Director of National Park's 2004-05 Annual Report.

EVALUATIONS

An evaluation of the progress of the National Vegetation Framework, including recent reforms on land clearing is expected to be completed during 2004-05.

