



# Oceans Action Bulletin

**An Update from the National Oceans Office**

**21 January 2005**

This Bulletin keeps you up to date on recent progress in implementing *Australia's Oceans Policy* and regional marine planning. For further information or to unsubscribe from this Bulletin, please email [rani.milne@oceans.gov.au](mailto:rani.milne@oceans.gov.au)

## **New organisational arrangements for National Oceans Office**

The New Year heralds new organisational arrangements at the National Oceans Office, following implementation of the Prime Minister's 2004 administrative changes.

Formerly an executive agency, the National Oceans Office will become a branch of the new Marine Division within the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH). This move is part of broader institutional changes within the Australian Government that will reduce the number of agencies and streamline the reporting structure.

In addition to the National Oceans Office, the new Marine Division will comprise DEH's Marine Environment Policy Branch (which includes the Marine Protected Area Task Force), the Marine and Migratory Species Section and Marine Debris and Introduced Marine Pests functions. Later in the year the Sustainable Fisheries Section will also join the DEH.

Although some details of the changes are yet to be finalised, the Division will be headed by former National Oceans Office Director Max Kitchell.

"The Office will retain a whole-of-government function within the Environment Department," Mr Kitchell said.

The National Oceans Office will remain in Hobart and its main focus will continue to be the delivery of regional marine planning under *Australia's Oceans Policy*.

Under the new arrangements, an Assistant Secretary will be appointed to directly oversee the work of the National Oceans Office. This senior executive level position has been created to advise the Division Head, Secretary and Ministers.

## **Marine Plan Atlas gives regional close-ups**

A new atlas offering a close-up view of all of Australia's marine regions has been released by the Australian Government.

The *Non-Fisheries Uses Marine Plan Atlas* CD-ROM, which is also downloadable from the National Oceans Office website, brings together a unique collection of maps and provides accessible information for anyone interested in marine planning or marine activities. It is a useful resource for students, researchers, historians, public servants and members of the general public.

Based on the National Atlas released by the National Oceans Office last year, the CD contains over 400 maps and allows an in-depth look at each marine region (such as the South-west or Northern Australia).

Maps can be viewed by theme, such as cultural heritage, defence, national heritage, ocean disposal, petroleum/mining, research, shipping and tourism.

National Oceans Office:

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Metadata – or the information about each map – is also provided on the CD. This allows easy access to identify the sources of information that have contributed to each map.

The CD was compiled with the assistance of Melbourne company Spatial Vision. It is the final product of a year-long project on *Mapping the Non-fisheries Uses in Australia's Marine Jurisdiction* by the National Oceans Office. To complete the project, 100 datasets were collected from around Australia from all three tiers of government, as well as private organisations.

The CD will be available for oceans stakeholders through limited release. To request a copy send an email to [office@oceans.gov.au](mailto:office@oceans.gov.au) with 'Atlas CD request' in the subject line and your full mailing details in the body. The information can also be downloaded from the National Oceans Office website, [www.oceans.gov.au](http://www.oceans.gov.au)

## **Seastar 2004 Team receives \$5000 Minister's Award**



Present at the ceremony were (from left):  
**Rob Timmers** (a lead diver of Seastar Team),  
**Dave Sutton** (President, Inverloch Resident's Association),  
**Lex Thorbeck** (local and team lead diver),  
**Jill McCulloch** (Inverloch resident and seastar eradicator),  
**Brett Green** (State Emergency Service, Boat Captain)  
**Russell Broadbent MP**, Member for McMillan (award presenter)

There was a sea of smiles at the presentation of the Minister's Award for Coastal Custodians to the Seastar 2004 Team at Inverloch on Victoria's Gippsland coast.

## **New information pages on National Oceans Office website**

The National Oceans Office has added new information pages to its internet site. All new additions can be found through our homepage, at [www.oceans.gov.au](http://www.oceans.gov.au)

New **Torres Strait** pages provide a brief geographical description of Torres Strait and the key institutional arrangements established through the Torres Strait Treaty. Regional Marine Planning in Torres Strait is designed to complement the NHT-funded regional natural resource management planning process by focusing on areas where marine planning and the National Oceans Office have particular strengths.

The **Northern Marine Atlas**, also available in hard copy and CD form, contains 70 pages of new maps providing information on shipping routes, offshore petroleum and gas leases, shipwrecks and Indigenous communities. The maps take in an area covering the Torres Strait, Gulf of Carpentaria and eastern Arafura Sea. This new atlas of marine activity in Northern Australia provides fresh information about the rich resources and diverse uses of our tropical waters.

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