



THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

On 11 May 2010 the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts announced a new initiative to address the environmental information needs of the nation. The National Plan for Environmental Information is the first step toward a long-term commitment to reform Australia's environmental information base and build this critical infrastructure for the future.

About the National Plan for Environmental Information

The natural environment is vital to our wellbeing and that of future generations. Our landscapes, oceans, water, atmosphere and biodiversity play an important role in the economy—from agriculture and mining to energy production and tourism—and are fundamental to our Australian identity and way of life.

To manage this natural capital responsibly, governments, industry and the community need comprehensive, trusted and timely environmental information. Good information is essential for us to make sound decisions, individually and collectively, about the major issues affecting our natural assets.

Improving the quality and coverage of Australia's environmental information is being led by the Australian Government through the National Plan for Environmental Information. This initiative brings together all our efforts in national environmental information, building and maintaining this critical information infrastructure for the future.



What is included in the National Plan for Environmental Information?

The plan will coordinate and prioritise the way the Australian Government collects, manages and uses environmental information. It represents a long-term approach to building and improving our environmental information base. In the first four years, the initiative will:

- establish the Bureau of Meteorology as the Australian Government authority for environmental information
- formalise arrangements to coordinate priorities and activities across government
- review existing information resources, and environmental information activity
- begin building priority national environmental datasets and the infrastructure to deliver them.

How will the plan be delivered?

The plan is a whole-of-government initiative implemented jointly by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the Bureau of Meteorology.

The department will:

- introduce legislation which governs environmental information and provides the Bureau of Meteorology with an enduring mandate
- review Australian Government activity in environmental information to identify opportunities for cooperation, consolidation, improvement or efficiencies
- establish, jointly with the bureau, a high-level advisory group to provide whole-of-government direction and prioritise environmental information activities
- further develop the national plan, including identifying opportunities to work collaboratively with state, territory and local governments.

The bureau will:

- become the Australian Government authority for environmental information, building on their existing role for weather, climate and water information
- establish, jointly with DEWHA, a high-level advisory group to provide whole-of-government direction and prioritise environmental information activities
- conduct a review of existing environmental data to meet national environmental information priorities, to identify potential gaps in our existing capabilities
- establish expert technical panels and partnerships with key Australian Government agencies to develop and deliver specific products
- develop and deliver the first stage of an integrated Environmental Information System to collate, manage and provide public access to national environmental datasets
- develop and issue national environmental information standards
- commence development of a framework to deliver national environmental accounts.

More information

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