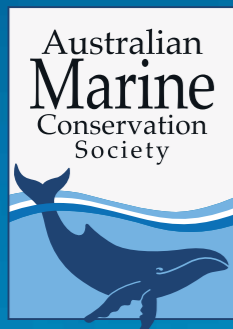




Our Plan for Healthy Oceans

Strategic Plan 2022-2025



Paying Respect

AMCS acknowledges and pays respect to Australia's First Nations people as the traditional owners and custodians of this country. We recognise that sovereignty over land and sea countries was never ceded. AMCS acknowledges Traditional Owners hold deep and complex knowledge of land and sea country and have cared for and actively stewarded this country for millennia.

AMCS aspires to be a positive actor for reconciliation, and we acknowledge we can do better. We consider building, nurturing and continuing relationships with Traditional Owners as part of our core business – now and beyond this Strategic Plan.

Introduction

Our oceans are critical to life on Earth. They are integral to the water cycle, they shape global weather patterns, absorb carbon dioxide, produce much of the world's oxygen, they are home to an amazing array of marine life, many yet to be discovered, provide food security and livelihoods to millions, and bring joy, inspiration and comfort to many.

But in Australia and around the globe, our oceans are in deep trouble. Loss of habitat, pollution, overfishing, development, invasive species and the very real and immediate impacts of climate change are devastating marine habitats, species, communities and economies across our blue planet.

Our oceans face more threats today than at any time in the past. As a country we have done better than some, but not nearly enough to reverse the decline we are now witnessing.

The health of Australia's oceans lies in our hands, in our actions and in our decisions.

It is a responsibility of global significance. Australia has an ocean jurisdiction twice the size of our land and the most biodiverse marine environment on the planet, with high levels of endemic species found nowhere else on earth. Our duty to our unique marine life and future generations demands that we achieve greater protection and more effective management of the impacts on our seas.

As a planet, we face many challenges in the coming years. We must rebuild in a more sustainable way in the midst and aftermath of a global pandemic and we will face significant political and economic hurdles as we do so.

The next decade is the most important for the future of our oceans in our lifetimes. We stand on the edge of a twin crisis – an extinction crisis eroding biodiversity and a climate emergency undermining the health of all ecosystems. Time is running out, but all is not lost. We must build resilience within our oceans to give our marine habitats and the species that live there a fighting chance against this twin crisis.

The oceans are our planet's life support. All of us have a role to play if we are to drive the actions that will lead us back from the edge.

“The ocean's power of regeneration is remarkable – if we just offer it the chance”

Sir David Attenborough

Our Strategic Plan

The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan sets out our future direction, strategies and goals. It is about working together to protect, restore and build resilience of our oceans.

It is our 'oceans manifesto', setting out what we will do in the five years ahead to play our part in securing healthy oceans and a stable climate.

Our Team

Since forming in 1965, the Australian Marine Conservation Society has worked boldly with communities across Australia to protect and sustainably manage our coasts and seas.

We are a leading and long standing national environmental organisation and an independent not-for-profit charity. AMCS has a long and deep history as the voice for Australia's oceans and their marine life.

AMCS is our people and our community. We have over 300,000 supporters across the nation and staff in most Australian States and Territories. Our committed team of professional and passionate scientists, educators and advocates has defended Australia's oceans for over 55 years, working alongside our Board and dedicated volunteers around the country to achieve our vision and mission.

Our Vision, Mission And Values

Our Vision: Thriving oceans for a healthy planet.

Our Mission: We are the guardians and voice for marine life. We connect people, science and action to protect Australia's extraordinary oceans.

Our Values: **Passion.** We demonstrate commitment to and care for our oceans in all we do.

Integrity. We are trusted, credible, independent and ethical in our actions.

Courage. We are brave, respectful and honest advocates for marine life.

Solidarity. We work together; embracing equity, diversity and inclusivity.

Effectiveness. We are driven, professional, agile and resilient, working to deliver the best outcomes for Australia's people and wildlife.

Innovation. We are creative, flexible, open and solutions focused.

Our Approach

AMCS achieves change by building widespread support from the Australian community for practical and science-based solutions to the big problems facing Australia's oceans.

By doing this, our governments, industries and ocean stakeholders will implement lasting changes to safeguard the future of our oceans, because they understand these are widely supported and necessary for the health of our environment, society and economy.

Our oceans' future depends on bringing people together to act on good science and to build resilience to overcome the mounting pressures they face.

Our Strategies

To achieve the outcomes in this plan we have four main strategies that underpin our mission and run throughout our work:

Harnessing science: We champion science-based solutions and best practices that have proven to be effective. We join with scientists and managers to implement innovative and scalable solutions to emerging challenges.

Building connections: We build connections with people, businesses, scientists, communities and governments across Australia to foster long and lasting change in policies, legislation and action.

Fostering action: We support and create opportunities for individual and collective action to protect Australia's ocean wildlife and demonstrate public support for science-based solutions to ocean threats.

Influencing decisions: We combine communities, action and best practice to build influence and create change locally, nationally and internationally that will better protect and restore our coasts and seas.

Our Focus and Outcomes

AMCS is focused on delivering real change for our oceans and the people and marine life that rely on them.

Over the next five years, we will focus on five key areas. Each focus area includes specific outcomes we are seeking for Australia's oceans and the wildlife and communities they support:



1. Defending ocean habitats and species

- Establish a world leading network of marine protected areas
- Protect our World Heritage
- Protect and recover threatened species



2. Climate action for our oceans

- Reduce emissions and support rapid transition to clean energy
- Increase the resilience of our oceans
- Protect and restore blue carbon ecosystems



3. Clean, thriving oceans

- Support sustainable low impact fisheries
- Tackle plastic pollution
- Promote sustainable management of our oceans



4. Communities creating change for our oceans

- Empower communities to create change for our oceans
- Support Traditional Owners to manage sea country
- Promote sea smart living



5. Strong, effective and respected leadership

- Build a powerful community of supporters
- Nurture and empower our team
- Ensure we are a well governed and sustainable organisation



Our Plan



1. Defending Ocean Habitats and Species

Australia's oceans are the most biodiverse on the planet, yet on land and at sea Australia is in the midst of a biodiversity crisis. We must act now to defend our marine life by protecting and restoring species and habitats that are struggling to survive.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are the backbone of ocean conservation efforts, protecting and recovering biodiversity while building resilience to climate and other impacts. Globally, we must create large science-based networks of fully protected areas, including the strengthening of Australia's nationwide network of MPAs, prioritising filling the gaps and working on areas that bring the greatest conservation benefits. We must ensure existing protected areas are well resourced and managed.

Our oceans are also host to some of the most important marine areas on the planet, including the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef and Ningaloo Coast. We have a global responsibility to safeguard the future of these iconic and special areas.

Industrialisation and development of our coasts and oceans continues apace. We must make sure our environmental laws, institutions and government funding are up to the job of protecting marine biodiversity and reversing the extinction crisis.

Outcomes	Objectives
Establish a world leading network of marine protected areas	<p>National Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure substantial progress towards the full protection of 30 percent of Australia's oceans by 2030, by expanding both total area and representativeness of the MPA network in state, territory, and Commonwealth waters. Ensure sufficient government resourcing for management, monitoring and enforcement of existing MPAs. <p>International</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Australia supports, and provides leadership on, international efforts to secure global ocean targets of '30 by 30' for fully protected marine areas, and the expansion of the MPA network in the Antarctic.

Outcomes	Objectives
Protect our World Heritage	<p>Great Barrier Reef</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure government action and policy is consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, a critical threshold for coral reefs health and survival. Secure improved action and resourcing to tackle pollution and poor water quality. Reform commercial trawl and gillnet fishing in the Reef to protect habitats and endangered wildlife, and to improve Reef resilience. Support Reef stakeholders to be strong and active advocates for Reef protection. Ensure Australia meets international obligations under the World Heritage Convention to protect the Outstanding Universal Values of the Reef. <p>Ningaloo Coast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent industrialisation of Exmouth Gulf. Work with Traditional Owners and key stakeholders to support protection of the Gulf. Secure and drive collaborative priority, science-based conservation measures to protect Exmouth Gulf's globally significant natural and cultural heritage.
Protect and recover threatened species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of endangered species caught in commercial fisheries, protecting dolphins, seabirds, turtles, sea lions and sawfish. Promote the conservation of unique sharks, skates and rays from the impact of commercial fishing. Make sure fisheries in the Great Barrier Reef are improved, and don't catch and kill endangered wildlife in gillnets and trawls. Ensure strong nature laws, government institutions and adequate funding at national and state level to protect and recover threatened marine species and habitats. Protect habitat critical to the survival of endangered sawfish and river sharks across tropical Australia. Support global efforts to end commercial whaling and ensure the Australian Government champions the protection of whales in the International Whaling Commission. Ensure Australia is active in supporting international efforts to protect threatened and migratory species, including those listed under international conventions.



2. Climate Action for Our Oceans

Our incredible marine life has evolved over millions of years to adapt to specific ocean conditions. Now our rapidly warming oceans, ocean acidification, rising sea levels and more extreme weather events are having devastating impacts on biodiversity, coastal and marine habitats, and coastal communities.

Yet there is a path forward. To secure a safe future for humans and nature we must reduce our emissions, build resilience into our natural systems, and provide additional protection for habitats that store and sequester carbon.

Reducing emissions is the number one priority for tackling climate change. We must also promote and protect coastal ecosystems, which rapidly draw down carbon from the atmosphere.

Outcomes	Objectives
Reduce emissions and support rapid transition to clean energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support strong global, national and state climate change mitigation targets with strategies to deliver them. Support nationwide efforts to ensure no new fossil fuel developments, including new offshore oil and gas exploration. Support a swift and just transition to a clean renewable energy future for all Australians.
Increase the resilience of our oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Australia's oceans are more healthy and resilient to the growing impacts of climate change through establishing marine parks, stopping destructive fishing and sustainably managing our use of the ocean. Support global biodiversity efforts to build resilience through international conservation and sustainable development conventions and agreements.
Protect and restore blue carbon ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect blue carbon ecosystems from development to provide habitat, improve water quality and store carbon to mitigate climate change. Identify and advocate for market-based mechanisms that restore important coastal ecosystems and mangrove, seagrass and saltmarsh priority habitats.



3. Clean, Thriving Oceans

Australia's oceans are some of the most species-rich on the planet. However, our oceans have long been treated both as a dumping ground for our waste and as a limitless supply of food and energy.

To reverse this trend, we must ensure that Australia's oceans are 100% sustainably managed and we must tackle the main threats to our oceans.

We must actively support sustainable low impact fisheries and fight against destructive fishing, tackle and reduce plastics at the source, and support sustainable marine industries and integrated oceans management.

Outcomes	Objectives
Support sustainable low impact fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the profile and effectiveness of our Sustainable Seafood Guide and GoodFish program to increase market demand for sustainable seafood. Promote sustainable fisheries to drive on-water reforms of unsustainable and damaging fisheries. Reduce the impacts of damaging trawling and gillnetting in sensitive marine habitats. Ensure the development of climate-smart sustainable quotas and management. Establish strong fisheries laws, enforcement and observer programs.
Tackle plastic pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with all levels of government to ban single-use plastics that are dangerous for ocean wildlife. Reform plastic packaging in Australia, making all plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable and securing binding targets for plastic reduction. Inspire Australia to take a leading role in establishing a Global Plastics Treaty to address the plastics crisis in our oceans. Support policy and innovation to improve plastic recovery rates and remove dangerous marine debris from Australia's oceans, including ghost nets and discarded fishing gear.
Promote sustainable management of our oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Australia finalises a Sustainable Oceans Plan by 2025. Support a sustainable blue economy future for Australia's oceans that is integrated, holistic, ecosystem and science based. Ensure no seabed mining occurs in Australian waters, in line with the existing ban on seabed mining in NT waters.



4. Communities Caring for Our Oceans

Building communities and partnerships across Australia that deliver solutions for the protection of our coasts and oceans is essential to building healthy oceans and healthy communities.

We will support and enable communities to be engaged and active in marine conservation efforts.

As an organisation, we will play an active role in reconciliation and actively support Traditional Owners' rights and aspirations to manage Sea Country.

Collectively and individually, we must all work to reduce our footprint on the earth and the ocean.

Outcomes	Objectives
Empower communities to create change for our oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and mobilise the Australian community to help influence policy and deliver vital solutions that improve the health of our oceans and their wildlife. Raise awareness of the big issues facing our oceans among the Australian public and provide opportunities for people to be active stewards of and ambassadors for our oceans. Build even strong relationships between science and research centres, stakeholders and decision makers to ensure that evidence-based solutions continue to be at the heart of our work.
Support Traditional Owners to manage sea country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure AMCS plays an active role in effecting reconciliation in Australia with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. Support Traditional Owners' rights and aspirations to own, manage and protect Sea Country. Support the expansion and resourcing of the Sea Country Indigenous Protected Areas network.
Promote sea smart living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness and uptake of sustainable seafood choices, enabling individual action to drive improvements in fisheries management. Raise awareness of the threat of plastics to ocean wildlife and inspire Australians to reduce use of plastics.. Promote action for individuals, communities, businesses and stakeholders to reduce their carbon footprint..



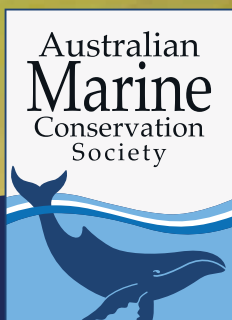
5. Strong, effective and respected leadership

To be a strong and powerful voice for our oceans for decades to come, AMCS must have strong foundations.

By nurturing a resilient and impactful workforce of staff and volunteers, maintaining strong financial foundations, and delivering sound planning and governance, AMCS will continue to grow its reach and impact.

Our community of supporters are AMCS. They underpin our work, our impact, our influence, success and our sustainability.

Outcomes	Objectives
Build a powerful community of supporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of AMCS and recognition of our work in the broader community. Grow the number and breadth of supporters taking action to help our oceans and wildlife, and deepen their engagement in our work. Deliver high impact communications that are inspiring, credible, evidence based, and motivate people to engage in ocean conservation issues.
Nurture and empower our team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support our staff to be the best they can through galvanising purpose and wellbeing and the training, tools and resources they need to do their work. Foster and grow an active and engaged volunteer base supporting all aspects of our work.
Be a well governed and sustainable organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver a clear strategic plan, supported by a strong, informed and engaged Board. Ensure sufficient and sustainable funding to deliver well targeted, well implemented campaigns to protect our oceans. Maintain an effective operational framework that supports the work we do and the growth of the organisation. Minimising our organisational environmental footprint, and seek to work with those that do the same.



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amcs.org.au