



1 June 2022

The Hon. Tanya Plibersek
Minister for the Environment and Water
Australian Government
tanya.plibersek.mp@aph.gov.au

Re: Need for Federal Government action on the Australian Coast

On behalf of the Australian Coastal Society Ltd (ACS), congratulations on your recent appointment as the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water.

The ACS is a national 'not for profit' organisation dedicated to healthy coastal ecosystems, vibrant coastal communities and sustainable use of coastal resources. The ACS runs successful biennial national coastal conferences which have previously been attended by federal Environment Ministers from both sides of politics (eg Robert Hill, Tony Burke).

Given there are no environmental boundaries between oceans and coasts, the ACS believes there should be a national coordinating office for both oceans and coasts. There is a precedent for this when in the 1990s the former Department of Environment, Sport and Territories contained an effective Coasts and Marine Branch. A national oceans and coasts coordinating office could be delivered as:

- a program within the Department of Environment and Water, or
- an independent Executive Agency or statutory authority
- supported by a National Coastal Council with appropriate representation of interests and expertise

Much of the rationale for this is contained in the independent report [Sustainable Oceans and Coasts National Strategy 2021-2030](#), produced by Future Earth Australia and published by the Australian Academy of Science. The most recent ACS national conference (26-29/7/21) of around ~300 delegates passed the following motion unanimously;

'Delegates to the 2021 Australian Coastal Society 'Coast to Coast' Conference endorse the Sustainable Oceans and Coasts National Strategy 2021-2030 and urge the Australian Government to adopt and implement its recommendations.'

With a national oceans and coasts coordination office, the Commonwealth could demonstrate a valuable contribution by:

- actively supporting Indigenous involvement and leadership in coastal stewardship
- increasing technological capability, including streamlining and digitising data collection, collation and sharing
- advancing policy and program coordination on sustainable oceans and coasts, including the harmonisation of state programs
- actively supporting research and understanding of significant coastal financial and climate risk considerations.

Local and state governments have interplay into these issues that also cut across Commonwealth interests. Examples such as the degradation of Ramsar sites, sediment transport, coastal management and governance, and fisheries and shipping industries, are all opportunities for the Commonwealth to provide structure and support through national coordination and leadership.

The ACS looks forward to your positive response.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'N. Harvey'.

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