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Dear Professor Harvey

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 June 2022 to the Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, concerning establishing a national oceans and coasts coordination office. Minister Plibersek has asked me to thank you for your correspondence and to reply on her behalf. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Thank you for outlining the ongoing work of the Australian Coastal Society (ACS) supporting the development of healthy coastal ecosystems. You may be aware that the Government has established the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to deliver on the Government's climate change and energy agenda and protect Australia's environment. To support the Government's ocean agenda, an Ocean Office has been established within DCCEEW to coordinate ocean and coastal related funding initiatives and actions.

As highlighted in your letter I acknowledge the independent report; Sustainable Oceans and Coasts National Strategy 2021-2030. I can advise that DCCEEW is working on progressing recommendations proposed in this strategy. For example, we are implementing programs to support Indigenous leadership through expanding our sea country programs, our Indigenous Protected Areas network, and supporting growth of the Indigenous Rangers program. I can also advise that the Australian Government is committed to helping restore blue carbon ecosystems across Australia, including mangroves, seagrasses, and tidal marshes.

A key role of the Ocean Office is to lead the development of a National Sustainable Ocean Plan, addressing how we will achieve a healthy and resilient ocean environment and sustainable ocean economy for the future. We look forward to working with like-minded groups such as the ACS on the development of this Plan and welcome your ongoing support to find solutions to further protect our oceans and coastal ecosystems for future generations.

Thank you again for bringing this matter to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Jago  
Principal Director, Ocean Office