



National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

**(And the approved format for National Reports to be
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Introduction

This report has been prepared by Environment Australia (Commonwealth Department for the Environment and Heritage) incorporating information provided by other Commonwealth Departments, each of the State and Territory governments and from non-government organisations with an interest in wetlands.

It is useful to keep in mind when reading Australia's National Report that the Commonwealth of Australia is a federation of six self-governing States - New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, and two self-governing Territories - the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

Under the Australian system there are three levels of government – Federal (Commonwealth), State/Territory, and local – each with their own responsibilities regarding the environment. The Commonwealth is responsible for managing natural resources on Commonwealth owned and managed land, such as Shoalwater and Corio Bays Ramsar site and Pulu Keeling National Park. The Commonwealth is also responsible for facilitating co-operative implementation of Australia's international environmental responsibilities and the development of national environmental policies, standards and guidelines. In addition, the Commonwealth works to ensure that the policies and practices of the States and Territories do not adversely impact on areas outside their jurisdictions.

The States and Territories are responsible for participating in the development of national policies, standards and guidelines and have primary responsibility for the management of natural resources within their respective jurisdictions. They are also responsible for the development and implementation of their own State or Territory environmental policies and legislation.

Local governments are responsible for the development and implementation of local environmental policies in co-operation with other levels of Government and their local communities.

In practice, the three levels of government frequently co-operate in the area of environmental management and Australia has consultative councils in place to facilitate inter-jurisdictional cooperation. The primary inter-governmental councils for the development, coordination and implementation of environmental policy are the Council of Australian Governments and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council.

Executive Summary

Australia has made substantial progress towards fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) in the last triennium. Key achievements include:

Wise Use of Wetlands (covering legislation, policies and institutions)

- introduction of statutory protection for Ramsar wetlands and habitat of listed migratory waterbirds under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) along with new standards for managing Ramsar wetlands;
- Wetland policy completed in the NT and draft policies for ACT, SA and Tas are in final stages of completion (likely to be completed by CoP8). Wetland policies are being implemented in all other jurisdictions;
- Substantial progress on the water reform agenda, with all States and Territories passing new water management legislation designed to provide water for the environment including wetland ecosystems;
- Investment of Natural Heritage Trust funding for a variety of wetland rehabilitation and conservation projects around Australia, largely being implemented "on-ground" by community groups (eg National Wetlands Program invested approx AUS \$10 million);
- New directions for wetland site management involving community, indigenous and private sector groups in site monitoring;
- Emerging partnerships between corporate/private sector and non-government conservation organisations to deliver wetland conservation and rehabilitation projects (eg *Revive our Wetlands* partnership between BHP-Billiton and Conservation Volunteers Australia);
- Innovative new programs to address integrated natural resource management and specific threats to the environment through the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the second phase of the Natural Heritage Trust;

Raising Awareness of Wetlands

- Launch of the Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) National Action Plan: 2001-2005;
- Establishment of the Australian Wetland Information Network, consisting of key wetland non-government and government organisation representatives, to oversee the implementation of the CEPA Action Plan;

Progress towards Universal Membership

- Active promotion of the Convention within the Oceania region through Wetlands International - Oceania. Three countries well advanced towards accession (Fiji, Vanuatu and Palau) and ten candidate Ramsar sites documented in seven countries. Facilitation and support for development of Memorandum of Cooperation and Joint Workplan between the Ramsar Bureau and South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP);

Building institutional capacity for Wise Use

- Establishment of the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program - twelve courses delivered in the region to date;

Conservation of Ramsar sites

- Management Plans completed for seven Ramsar sites and two draft management plans in final stages and likely to be completed by CoP. Management Plans being prepared for eight additional sites. Management plans being reviewed for a further 17 sites.
- Initiated a national project to develop improved descriptions of ecological character for eight pilot Ramsar sites (one in each jurisdiction) to assist to determine change in ecological character and establish baseline data for monitoring;

Designation of New Ramsar sites

- Update of *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia* with the addition of 150 new nationally important sites. Detailed site information was made available electronically via the Internet;
- Four new Ramsar sites have been designated and five existing Ramsar sites have been extended since CoP7. A number of the nominations/extensions have arisen from cooperative efforts between governments and non-government organisations to promote site designations. Two of the new Ramsar sites did not previously enjoy special conservation status;
- Systematic assessment of candidate Ramsar sites in Western Australia (WA) using the WA chapter of *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia* and resulting in the identification of 38 candidate sites, three of which have already been designated;
- 1993 population estimates for migratory shorebirds in the East Asian -Australasian Flyway updated;

International Cooperation

- Australian leadership to develop and implement the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001-2005 and its associated Action Plan for shorebirds;
- Expansion of the East Asian – Australasian Shorebird Site Network with two new sites in Australia and an additional six sites in the region. A further four sites are anticipated for inclusion before CoP8; and
- Development assistance has been provided for multilateral and regional wetland related activities totalling approx AUS\$10 million since 1999 and an additional AUS\$16.8 million for bilateral wetland related activities.

Whilst significant advances have been made in wetland management and conservation, Australia is still faced with ongoing challenges and there are areas where improvements can be made. Areas of particular challenge that will require attention in the next triennium include better management of Ramsar sites to minimise changes in ecological character taking place.

A pilot ecological character project will work towards better descriptions and understanding of the ecological character of Ramsar sites to assist Australia to meet its reporting and monitoring requirements under the Convention.

Other areas for attention include adopting more strategic approaches to future Ramsar site designations, taking account of geographical representation and under-represented wetland types in Australia, particularly coral reefs, sea grass beds, and karst and arid wetlands.

Australia also needs to further explore the use of incentives to assist wetland conservation and to continually improve wetland and waterbird inventory to support wetland decision making at catchment and site levels.

Note – Not all actions from the Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 are included here, as some apply only to the Bureau or Conferences of the Contracting Parties. As a result, the numbering system that follows contains some gaps corresponding to those actions that have been omitted.

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Australia's Ramsar sites and Jurisdictions

Australia's jurisdictional boundaries, the six States - New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, and two Territories - the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, are indicated below. In addition, Australia has two external territories with Ramsar sites – Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island, both in the Indian Ocean, which are illustrated in the inset. As at April 2002 Australia has 57 Ramsar sites, which are marked below.



Australia's Ramsar sites

1. Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal Land and Wildlife Sanctuary
2. Kakadu National Park (Stage 1) including wetland components of Stage III
3. Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve
4. Logan Lagoon Conservation Area
5. Lavinia Nature Reserve
6. Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon
7. Apsley Marshes
8. East Coast Cape
9. Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River
10. Jocks Lagoon
11. Interlaken Lakeside Reserve
12. Little Waterhouse Lake
13. Corner Inlet
14. Barmah Forest
15. Gunbower Forest
16. Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes
17. Kerang Wetlands
18. Port Phillip Bay and Bellarine Peninsula
19. Western Port
20. Western District Lakes
21. Gippsland Lakes
22. Lake Albacutya
23. Towra Point Nature Reserve
24. Kooragang Nature Reserve
25. Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert
26. Bool and Hacks Lagoons
27. Coongie Lakes
28. The Macquarie Marshes
29. "Riverland"
30. Kakadu National Park (Stage II)
31. Ord River Floodplain
32. Lakes Argyle and Kununurra
33. Roebuck Bay
34. Eighty-mile Beach
35. Forrestdale and Thomsons Lakes
36. Peel-Yalgorup System
37. Lake Toolibin
38. Vasse-Wonnerup System
39. Lake Warden System
40. Hosnie's Springs, Christmas Is.
41. Moreton Bay
42. Bowling Green Bay
43. Currawinya Lakes (Currawinya NP)
44. Shoalwater and Corio Bays
45. Ginini Flats Wetland Complex
46. Pulu Keeling National Park, Cocos Is.
47. Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve
48. Blue Lake
49. Lake Pinaroo (Fort Grey Basin)
50. Gwydir Wetlands
51. Great Sandy Strait
52. Myall Lakes
53. Narran Lake Nature Reserve
54. Becher Point Wetlands
55. Lake Gore
56. Muir-Byenup System
57. Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands

GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1 – TO PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION

Operational Objective 1.1: To endeavour to secure at least 150 Contracting Parties to the Convention by 2002

<p>Actions – Global Targets</p> <p>1.1.1 Recruit new Contracting Parties, especially in the less well represented regions and among states with significant and/or transboundary wetland resources (including shared species), [CPs, SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gaps remain in Africa, central Asia, the Middle East and the Small Island Developing States. Refer to Recommendation 7.2 relating to Small Island Developing States. • Global Target - 150 CPs by COP8 • These are the countries which at present are not CPs of the Convention: Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Cook Islands, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zimbabwe.
<p>Is your country a neighbour of, or does it have regular dealings or diplomatic-level dialogue with, one or more of the non-Contracting Parties listed above? (This list was correct as of January 2000. However, accessions to the Convention occur on a regular basis and you may wish to check with the Ramsar Bureau for the latest list of non-CPs.)</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>If No, go to Action 1.1.2.</p>
<p>If Yes, have actions been taken to encourage these non-CPs to join the Convention?</p> <p>Australia has made significant efforts, at both the senior political level and through on-ground actions, to encourage neighbouring non-CPs to join the Convention.</p> <p>At the senior political level, efforts have been made in Pacific Island Countries to increase the understanding and appreciation of the benefits associated with Ramsar membership. For example, Australia is facilitating and supporting the development of a Memorandum of Cooperation and Joint Workplan between the Ramsar Convention and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The aim of the Memorandum is to gain SPREP’s active support in wetland conservation and also to encourage accession by its members.</p>

In addition, the Commonwealth has provided funding (1996-2001) to Wetlands International-Oceania to employ a Pacific Islands Ramsar Liaison Officer. The Project Officer's role was to promote and support wetland conservation and the Ramsar Convention among Pacific Island countries.

If **Yes**, have these actions been successful?

Yes, actions taken by the Liaison Officer have been very successful. It is intended that the Memorandum of Cooperation with the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) will among other things encourage Australia's neighbouring non-CPs to join the Convention.

The *Pacific Islands Ramsar Liaison Officer* has developed and supported activities including training of wetland managers, facilitation of demonstration projects and the provision of technical support. Through these on-ground activities the Liaison Officer has established wetland conservation programs, identified areas of severe wetland degradation, documented potential Ramsar sites and promoted the principles of, and accession to, the Ramsar Convention.

The project has successfully engaged 14 countries in wetland conservation and Ramsar related activities. Nomination documents for ten candidate sites in seven countries (Palau, Micronesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji) have been prepared. Accession is advanced in Palau (ready to sign) and Fiji, and serious interest in accession has been generated in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. The documentation of potential Ramsar sites in four Melanesian countries is currently under-way.

The project has identified land tenure issues, a lack of resources and a lack of technical and/or management expertise as factors that are limiting accession to the Convention by Pacific Island countries. Accession will be considerably enhanced if 'top-down' interactions at the senior political level are addressed in collaboration with 'bottom-up' on-ground activities, particularly working with customary owners.

If **No**, what has prevented such action being taken?

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia

1.1.2 Promote membership of Ramsar through regional meetings and activities, and through partners' regional offices. [SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]

- **These efforts are to continue and to focus on the above priority regions and the Small Island Developing States.**
- **The current member and permanent observer States of the Standing Committee are Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Costa Rica, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uganda**

Is your country a member of the Standing Committee?

Yes
If No , go to Action 2.1.1.
If Yes , have actions been taken to encourage the non-CPs from your region or subregion to join the Convention?
Yes (refer to 1.1.1.)
If Yes , have these actions been successful?
Yes (refer to 1.1.1.)
If No , what has prevented such action being taken?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2 – TO ACHIEVE THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS BY IMPLEMENTING AND FURTHER DEVELOPING THE RAMSAR WISE USE GUIDELINES

Operational Objective 2.1: To review and, if necessary, amend national or supra-national (e.g., European Community) legislation, institutions and practices in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Wise Use Guidelines are applied.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>2.1.1 Carry out a review of legislation and practices, and indicate in National Reports to the COP how the Wise Use Guidelines are applied. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This remains a high priority for the next triennium. The <i>Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions</i> (Resolution VII.7) will assist these efforts. Global Target – For at least 100 CPs to have comprehensively reviewed their laws and institutions relating to wetlands by COP8.
<p>Has your country completed a review of its laws and institutions relating to wetlands?</p> <p>Yes, a review of water resource management in Australia was undertaken by the Council of Australia Governments (COAG)*, resulting in the development of a framework that has been adopted nation-wide and subsequent legislative reform by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. In addition, the Commonwealth and several of the States/Territories have completed, or are currently undertaking, review and reform of relevant environment and wetland legislation in their jurisdictions.</p>

In 1994 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to the COAG Water Reform Framework. This framework was established to improve the economic efficiency of the water industry and arrest the widespread degradation of Australia's natural resources, particularly the unsustainable use of freshwater resources. The Framework sought to achieve an efficient and sustainable water industry by establishing integrated and consistent approaches to water resource management throughout Australia. Specifically, the Framework requires States to recognise the environment as a legitimate "user" of water. Other critical water issues identified in the Framework include strategies to reduce water extractions in over-allocated systems, support for integrated catchment management approaches and the need for ecologically sustainable water resource developments.

The Framework and subsequent agreements have resulted in legislative reform by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to improve the efficiency of the water industry and the ecological outcomes of water management, and to support the requirement for appropriate ecological assessment of proposed developments.

In addition to the COAG Water Reform process, towards the end of 1997 the Commonwealth commenced a comprehensive review of all Commonwealth environment legislation, the first of such reviews to be undertaken since the mid-1970's. The review process is described in the Australia's National Report to CoP7 (1999).

Several of the States and Territories have already (WA and SA, see Australia's National Report to CoP7), or are currently (NSW and ACT) in the process of reviewing and reforming wetland related legislation in their jurisdiction to ensure the conservation and wise-use of wetlands.

*the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) consists of the Prime Minister of Australia, State/Territory Premiers, Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done?

If a review is **planned**, what is the expected timeframe for this being done?

Reviews are currently underway in New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), with outcomes expected for NSW in 2002. No timeframe has been set for completion of the ACT's review.

In 1996, NSW established the NSW Wetlands Management Policy, 1996. The State Wetlands Advisory Committee (SWAC) was formed to assist with and encourage implementation of the policy throughout NSW. The SWAC reports directly to the Minister for Land and Water Conservation and government agencies, non-government organisations, the community, research organisations, and industry groups are represented on the Committee. As the Policy has been in place for a significant period of time, and recent moves have been made to a broader legislative base for managing the State's water ecosystems, the SWAC is currently undertaking a review of wetland related legislation and policy. The outcomes of the review are expected by mid-2002.

In the ACT there is no legislation in place specifically relating to wetlands. However,

wetland issues are largely covered by the *Nature Conservation Act, 1980*. This legislation is currently under review and wetlands have been identified as a topic to be addressed in the revision of the Act.

If the review has been **completed**, did the review result in amendments to laws or institutional arrangements to support implementation of the Ramsar Convention?

Yes, changes to laws relating to wetland conservation and sustainable use have occurred at both State and Commonwealth levels as a result of the review processes described above.

If **No**, what are the impediments to these amendments being completed?

If **Yes**, and changes to laws and institutional arrangements were made, please describe these briefly.

As a result of the COAG Water Reform process, all States and Territories have been reviewing and reforming their water resource legislation. The following table displays the primary relevant legislation resulting from the COAG water reform process in each jurisdiction:

Jurisdiction	Primary Water Resource Legislation
South Australia	<i>Water Resources Act, 1997</i>
Western Australia	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Amendment Act, 2000</i>
Northern Territory	Amendments to <i>Water Act, 1992</i> , commenced 2000
Queensland	<i>Water Act, 2000</i>
New South Wales	<i>Water Management Act, 2000</i>
Australian Capital Territory	<i>Water Resources Act, 1998</i>
Victoria	Amendments to <i>Water Act, 1989</i> , commenced 1997
Tasmania	<i>Water Management Act, 1999</i>

The legislative reforms that have taken place in each of the States and Territories have been consistent with the principles outlined in the COAG Water Reform Framework. Namely, the legislation recognises the concept of “environmental water” and includes strategies to reduce water extractions in systems that are over-allocated, supports integrated catchment management approaches that delivers environmental flows to wetlands, and the need for ecologically sustainable water resource developments.

The comprehensive review of Commonwealth environment legislation lead to the development of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*(EPBC Act). The EPBC Act came into force on 16 July 2000 and provides protection to matters of national environmental significance, including for the first time in Australia, Ramsar wetlands. The Act requires proposed actions that have, will have, or are likely to have, a significant impact on the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland to undergo a process involving referral, assessment and approval stages. Details of this process are presented in 2.5.2 – 2.6.1. The Act establishes a process for the statutory gazettal of new designated Ramsar wetlands, and requires that management plans be prepared for each Ramsar site. Such plans must be consistent with the Australian Ramsar Management Principles established as regulations under the Act. The Management Principles are designed to promote nationally consistent standards of management of Australia’s Ramsar

wetlands in a manner consistent with the Convention on Wetlands. The Act also requires that actions taken by the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Agencies must be consistent with the Ramsar Convention, the Australian Ramsar Management Principles and any management plans prepared for Ramsar sites in accordance with the Act.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

The Commonwealth, through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and State/Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibilities.

2.1.2 Promote much greater efforts to develop national wetland policies, either separately or as a clearly identifiable component of other national conservation planning initiatives, such as National Environment Action Plans, National Biodiversity Strategies, or National Conservation Strategies. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **The development and implementation of National Wetland Policies continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Convention, as does the integration of wetland conservation and wise use into broader national environment and water policies. *The Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies (Resolution VII.6) will assist these efforts.***
- **Global Target - By COP8, at least 100 CPs with National Wetland Policies or, where appropriate, a recognised document that harmonises all wetland-related policies/strategies and plans, and all CPs to have wetlands considered in national environmental and water policies and plans. *The Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management (Resolution VII.18) will assist these efforts.***

Does your country have **in place** a National Wetland Policy (or similar instrument) which is a comprehensive statement of the Government's intention to implement the provisions of the Ramsar Convention?

Yes, Australia has in place a Commonwealth Wetlands Policy and a national framework of wetland policies in each jurisdiction. A Commonwealth Wetlands Policy has been in place since 1997. Western Australia (1997), the Northern Territory (2000), Queensland (1999), New South Wales (1996), and Victoria (1997), have released wetland policies, while the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and South Australia are currently developing their policies.

The goal of the Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia, 1997 is to conserve, repair and manage wetlands wisely. This goal complements, and is in accordance with, the conservation and wise use principles of the Ramsar Convention. The Commonwealth Wetlands Policy specifically considers the implementation of the Ramsar Convention within Australia, and provides strategies to identify and manage wetlands of international importance on Commonwealth owned or managed land. The Implementation Plan for the Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia was released in 1999 to ensure that actions identified in the Commonwealth Wetlands Policy are appropriately addressed.

The objectives of the Wetlands Conservation Policy for Western Australia, 1997 include the prevention of further loss and degradation of valuable wetlands and wetland types and promotion of the conservation, creation and restoration of wetlands. The implementation actions listed in the policy address the responsibilities of the Western Australian Government under the Ramsar Convention.

One of the eleven guiding principles of A Strategy for Conservation of the Biological Diversity of Wetlands in the Northern Territory of Australia, 2000 adopts the wise use principles of the Ramsar Convention as a basis for the development of wetland management practices. The Strategy also seeks to fulfil Australia's obligations under the Ramsar Convention.

The Strategy for the Conservation and Management of Queensland Wetlands, 1999 recognises the environmental, social and economic value of wetlands. As a result, the objectives of the policy are to implement the principles of conservation and ecologically sustainable development ("wise-use") of wetlands within Queensland. The Ramsar Convention is recognised in the policy

The goal of the NSW Wetlands Management Policy 1996 is "the ecologically sustainable use, management and conservation of wetlands in NSW for the benefit of present and future generations". To achieve this goal, a set of nine management principles covering the wise use and management of wetlands in NSW are listed. One principle in particular relates to the conservation of significant wetlands. Actions listed in the policy to be undertaken by the NSW Government include continuing the process of identifying suitable significant sites and preparing their Ramsar nomination.

Victoria's Biodiversity: Directions in Management, 1997 incorporates the State's Wetlands Policy. The policy promotes the conservation and wise use of wetlands, highlights Victoria's responsibilities under the Ramsar Convention and specifically aims to maintain the ecological character of Victoria's Ramsar listed wetlands.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being put in place?

If the development of such a Policy is **planned**, what is the expected timeframe for this being done?

The Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and South Australia and are currently drafting wetland policies/strategies. These have been released for public comment and are expected to be complete by the end of 2002. These policies will address each State's obligations under the Ramsar Convention.

Has your country taken its obligations with respect to the Ramsar Convention into consideration in related policy instruments such as National Biodiversity Strategies, National Environmental Action Plans, Water Policies, river basin management plans, or similar instruments?

Yes

If **No**, what are the impediments to doing so?

If **Yes**, please provide brief details.

The COAG Water Reform process, and the resulting Framework (described in 2.1.1) address the country's obligations under the Ramsar Convention. In addition the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation, 2001-2005 takes into consideration Australia's obligations with respect to the Ramsar Convention.

In June 2001, the Commonwealth Government and five of the eight State and Territory governments launched the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation, 2001-2005. This document sets objectives and targets for ten priority outcomes. The priority objectives to be pursued include: the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, marine and estuarine ecosystems and native vegetation; control of invasive species; mitigation of dryland salinity; promotion of ecologically sustainable grazing; minimising impacts of climate change on biodiversity; maintaining and recording Indigenous peoples' ethnobotanical knowledge; improving scientific knowledge and access to information; and the introduction of institutional reform. All of these objectives impact upon wetland conservation and wise use in Australia, and contain explicit targets directly relevant to obligations under the Ramsar Convention, that will ensure the following objectives are achieved:

- By 2001, all jurisdictions have identified wetlands of national and international significance;
- By 2003, management plans for 85% of internationally significant wetlands listed under the Convention on Wetlands are prepared and implemented consistent with the Australian Ramsar Management Principles (Regulation 10.02 – *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*);
- By 2005, all jurisdictions have effective legislation and management plans in place to protect wetlands of national significance;
- By 2001, all jurisdictions have identified important areas of habitat for migratory waterbirds;
- By 2003, all jurisdictions have programs in place, both on and off reserve, to protect significant habitats for migratory waterbirds;
- By 2005, the number of Australian sites that have been included in the East Asian – Australasian Shorebird Site Network has increased from 11 in 2001 to 36;
- Objective 3 is to protect and restore marine and estuarine ecosystems, including intertidal wetlands. Targets to be achieved under this objective include the long-term ecological viability of marine and estuarine systems, maintenance of marine ecological processes and systems, protection of Australia's marine biological diversity at all levels, protection of migratory and resident waterbirds, prevention and control of marine and estuarine pest introductions and reduction of marine and estuarine pollution.

Further information on the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity can be found at: <http://chm.environment.gov.au>

Has your government reviewed and modified, as appropriate, its policies that adversely affect intertidal wetlands (COP7 Resolution VII.21)?

Reviews have taken place in some jurisdictions, see below for details.

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

A review of policies that impact on coastal environments has been completed in Victoria and is currently under way in Victoria and South Australia. Reviews of policies relating to

coastal areas, including intertidal wetlands, are planned in Tasmania, NSW and Commonwealth land. Western Australia and the Northern Territory have not yet undertaken a formal review of policies that impact upon intertidal wetlands.

Intertidal wetlands located on Commonwealth owned or managed land are currently protected under the conservation and wise-use principles of the Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia. This policy was developed in 1997 in accordance with the Ramsar Convention, and a review of its content and implementation has not yet taken place but is planned for the next triennium.

In addition to the protection afforded intertidal wetlands under the Commonwealth Wetlands Policy, the Commonwealth Government has recently committed to the development of a new national coastal policy. While full details of the policy are yet to be developed, it is expected to focus on key threats to coastal ecosystems, including intertidal wetlands, and enhancing the conservation, planning and management of these areas.

South Australia is currently undertaking several reviews that will affect the conservation of intertidal wetlands. The South Australian Coast Protection Board is currently reviewing all State policy and legislation affecting coastal regions, including intertidal wetlands. In addition, since completing mapping of the State's intertidal wetlands the SA Department for the Environment and Heritage is currently investigating the States reserve system to ensure that intertidal wetlands are adequately protected within its boundaries. Development of the South Australian Wetlands Policy is also under way and will include intertidal wetlands within its Framework.

In NSW, policies currently in place that aim to protect coastal and intertidal wetlands include the NSW Coastal Policy, the NSW Wetlands Management Policy, the Estuary Management Manual, and the State Environmental Planning Policy No 14 – Coastal Wetlands (SEPP 14). SEPP 14 is reviewed annually to improve the accuracy of coastal wetland mapping and to implement policy changes as required. The NSW Wetlands Management Policy is being reviewed by the NSW State Wetland Advisory Committee (see 2.1.1.).

If **Yes**, what were the conclusions of this review? and what actions have been taken subsequently?

Queensland and Victoria have completed a review of their policies that affect intertidal wetlands. Relevant Queensland policies impacting upon coastal ecosystems, including intertidal wetlands, were reviewed in the development of the Queensland State Coastal Management Plan. The State Plan came into force in February 2002 and includes intertidal wetlands under its framework. The Plan aims to ensure that government, traditional land owners (indigenous), industry and community work together to understand coastal ecosystems, protect and rehabilitate important areas and ensure that activities and settlements are developed in a sustainable manner. The Plan also contains a provision that a review must take place every seven years in order to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the Plan.

Victoria reviewed its coastal strategy in 2001 and has released the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 following public consultation. The strategy includes several objectives and

actions to protect and improve estuarine, intertidal and marine biodiversity. In particular, one objective is to protect and improve intertidal habitat, flora and fauna.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

Operational Objective 2.2: To integrate conservation and wise use of wetlands in all Contracting Parties into national, provincial and local planning and decision-making on land use, groundwater management, catchment/river basin and coastal zone planning, and all other environmental planning and management.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>2.2.2 Promote the inclusion of wetlands in national, provincial and local land use planning documents and activities, and in all relevant sectoral and budgetary provisions. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to managing wetlands within the broader landscape and within river basin/coastal zone plans is another of the Convention's highest priorities in the next triennium. Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to be promoting, and actively implementing, the management of wetlands as integrated elements of river basins and coastal zones, and to provide detailed information on the outcomes of these actions in the National Reports for COP8.
Is your country implementing integrated river basin and coastal zone management approaches?
Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this being done?

If integrated management approaches are being applied in part of the country, indicate the approximate percentage of the country's surface area where this is occurring and to which river basins and coastal areas this applies.

Approximately **35%** of Australia's land area is managed using integrated river basin and coastal zone management (or integrated catchment management) approaches. However, this figure is potentially an underestimate as data was unavailable for the Northern Territory, which represents greater than 15% of Australia's surface area.

The area of land covered under integrated management approaches varies between the States and Territories. All of NSW, the ACT, Victoria and greater than 95% of South Australia implement integrated catchment management of natural resources within their jurisdictions.

Approximately 30% of Western Australia (WA) is managed using integrated catchment management (ICM) approaches. Areas in WA where ICM is applied include 570 000 kms² (\approx 20%) covering the Gascoyne Murchison Strategy Area and the Lower Gascoyne Management Strategy Area. In addition, the WA State Salinity Strategy was released in April 2000 to guide management of salinity problems in the south-west agricultural area of the State, which covers approximately 210 000 km² (\approx 10%) of WA and is made up of five regions that are managed on an ICM basis. One of the five goals of the Strategy is to protect and restore high value wetlands and natural vegetation, and maintain natural (biological and physical) diversity.

The Queensland Government's Integrated Catchment Management Program, covering the whole state, commenced in 1990. Subsequently, 38 Catchment Management Committees have been formed to oversee the development of integrated catchment strategies. Two of these strategies have been developed and are being implemented, twenty seven strategies have been endorsed and await implementation, six strategies are in draft and three have yet to be developed.

Approximately 20% of Tasmania is covered by Natural Resource Management plans. These Plans cover 18 individual catchments and regions. Although no current framework exists to link these Plans in a coordinated manner, a draft Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Framework has been released for public comment and is expected to be finalised in 2002. This framework will provide a strategic and integrated approach to the management of Tasmanian natural resources, including river basins and coastal zones.

In addition to intra-jurisdictional arrangements for integrated river basin and coastal zone management, there are several major cross-border river systems within Australia that are subject to inter-governmental agreements to achieve integrated catchment management of these extensive river and groundwater basins.

The Murray-Darling Basin covers 14% of Australia's total land area and is estimated to include more than 30,000 wetlands. It spans five States/Territories (QLD, NSW, ACT, VIC and SA) and comprises 19 catchment management regions. All of these catchments are managed using an ICM approach, developed as part of the Murray-Darling Basin Initiative (described below).

The Lake Eyre Basin (LEB) covers an area of 1.2 million km², almost one sixth of Australia, and spans four jurisdictions (QLD, SA, NSW and the NT). The LEB includes the Coongie Lakes Ramsar site, located on the floodplain of the Cooper Creek. In October 2000, an agreement was reached between the Commonwealth, Queensland and South Australian governments to ensure protection of the ecological, social and economic values of the Basin using an integrated catchment management approach.

The Great Artesian Basin (GAB) is the largest artesian basin on earth, and underlies 22% of Australia's land mass. In September 2000, the 15 year Great Artesian Basin Strategic Management Plan was launched. The GAB Consultative Council, which has Commonwealth, NT, Qld, SA and NSW government representatives as well as private sector and state advisory body representatives, developed this Plan with the assistance of all major stakeholder groups. The Plan provides an agreed framework for ensuring the sustainable management of the Basin's natural resources, where integrated catchment management is essential to its success.

Australia's coast is about 37,000 km in length and approximately 85% of Australia's population live in coastal cities or regions. Many of Australia's significant wetlands are located in coastal regions. A nation-wide, Intergovernmental Coastal Reference Group (ICRG) was formed in 1998, comprising representatives from the Commonwealth (Environment Australia), each State/Territory government and the Australian Local Government Association. The Group discusses approaches to integrated coastal management, incorporating coastal catchments, estuaries, intertidal wetlands, mangroves and seagrass beds. Its goal is to provide an opportunity for all governments to exchange information on coastal management practices and to articulate priorities and development of possible future national approaches to coastal management. The new national coastal policy (described in 2.1.2.) will promote an integrated catchment management approach.

The Great Barrier Reef, although not included in Australia's land area, comprises many wetlands and is managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). A whole-of-system approach has been adopted by the Authority to protect the integrity of the entire Great Barrier Reef ecosystem, including coral reef and seagrass wetlands. GBRMPA also supports and promotes ICM in the land-based catchments surrounding the Reef.

At the level of local government, urban based local authorities have begun to place a strong emphasis on the management of storm water in an effort to redress inappropriate volume and quality of storm water run-off, with the support of Natural Heritage Trust funding. In many cases, this has involved a program of retro-fitting artificial wetlands, modifying highly engineered drainage structures with improved environmental outcomes both downstream and on-site.

If **Yes**, are wetlands being given special consideration in such integrated management approaches?

Yes, in Australia wetlands are given special consideration in integrated catchment management (ICM) approaches. For example, the Australian Ramsar Management Principles, outlined in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*, require that management plans for Ramsar wetlands should, among other things, be based on an integrated catchment management approach. In addition, the *Murray-Darling*

Basin Initiative gives special consideration to wetlands.

The Murray-Darling Basin Initiative is a cooperative arrangement between the Commonwealth and five State/Territory governments and the community. It is the largest ICM initiative in the world and covers an area of over one million square kilometres. The Basin encompasses 30,000 wetlands; 11 of these wetlands have been listed under the Ramsar Convention, with further nominations expected. The main focus of the Initiative has been management of the shared water resources of the Basin using a whole-of-catchment approach, taking into account the relationships between natural systems, including land, water and other environmental resources.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC), in 1998, developed the Floodplain Wetlands Management Strategy For The Murray-Darling Basin. The Strategy recognises the important role of wetlands in maintaining the health of the total riverine environment, and aims to maintain and where possible, enhance floodplain wetland ecosystems in the Murray-Darling Basin for present and future generations.

In 2001, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission released a strategy to achieve ICM in the Basin: Integrated Catchment Management in the Murray-Darling Basin 2001 – 2010. The strategy recognises that ICM needs to be carried out at the catchment level for effective outcomes since:

- The health of the Basin depends on the aggregate health of its catchments;
- Catchments are an appropriate scale for many management actions; and
- Catchment communities are more likely to act if they make their own resource management decisions.

The outcomes sought through ICM in the Basin will differ from catchment to catchment, however all aim to protect assets at risk from continuing degradation, including environmental assets (eg. wetlands, fish, birds and native vegetation). The document states that during the next ten years, 2001-2010, targets will be set across the Basin to ensure the health of each catchment, and the health of the Basin as a whole, for:

- Water quality,
- Water sharing,
- Riverine ecosystem health; and
- Terrestrial biodiversity.

Two of the areas identified for target setting, namely water sharing and riverine ecosystem health, give special consideration to wetlands. The target to achieve water sharing aims to establish flow regimes that provide an appropriate balance between consumptive and in-stream, wetland, floodplain, riparian and estuarine water requirements (consumptive use includes irrigation, stock and domestic use, and urban water supplies). The target set to achieve riverine ecosystem health seeks to maintain/re-establish viable populations of native species and the integrity of ecological communities throughout their range within floodplain, wetland, riparian, in-stream and estuarine ecosystems. The document also states that targets for catchments can be set in specific locations in order to protect valuable assets, such as significant wetlands.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done?

Has your country undertaken any specific pilot projects to implement the *Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management* (COP7 Resolution VII.18).?

Although there are no specific pilot projects to implement the Guidelines of COP7 Resolution VII.18, there are a number of programs currently being undertaken in Australia to implement integrated catchment management approaches in river basins. These programs, including the Murray-Darling 2001 Program, National Rivercare Program and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, aim to integrate all ecosystems, including wetlands, in river basin management.

If **Yes**, please describe them briefly.

The Murray Darling 2001 Program (MD2001), of the Natural Heritage Trust, seeks to promote sustainable management of the land, water and other environmental resources of the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) for the national benefit of present and future generations. The MD2001 Program aims to reduce, or where possible reverse, the underlying rates of natural resource degradation in the Murray-Darling Basin through an integrated catchment management approach. It is primarily concerned with addressing priority issues that affect the health of the Basins riverine environments. Commonwealth and State government funding is provided to projects throughout the Basin to implement the aims of the Program. Under the MD2001 Program, funding was provided to develop, implement and coordinate Local Action Plans (LAP) for priority regions within the Basin. For example, a LAP was developed for the Coorong District in South Australia. The Coorong District covers an area of 883,500 ha and includes the lower River Murray, the Murray mouth (where the river meets the ocean) and the Coorong, Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert Ramsar site.

The LAP for the Coorong District was developed by a committee that was composed of representatives from a range of stakeholder groups. The LAP integrated a range of natural resource management plans already in place for the district, including the Ramsar Management Plan for the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert. The LAP also identified and quantified the major environmental issues for the area and developed and implemented management strategies to address these issues. A framework was designed to allow the investment of funding into the issues of highest priority. One of the priority issues identified by the Plan was the degradation of wetlands in the district. As a result, extensive on-ground rehabilitation works were conducted within the Ramsar site and other wetlands. The committee is now working with surrounding catchment management groups to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to natural resource management in the area.

Other such programs in place throughout Australia include:

- The National Rivercare Program, of the Natural Heritage Trust. This program provides funding for several projects either directly or indirectly contributing to wetland conservation and wise use in Australia (more details are provided in response 2.7.1.). Although the focus of the program is on rivers, wetland conservation and rehabilitation measures are desired outcomes of many Rivercare projects.
- The National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP). The Commonwealth and State/Territory governments have invested a combined Aus\$1.4 billion to address

salinity and water quality issues in priority catchments in Australia through the NAP. Investments will be targeted to priorities identified through the development of integrated natural resource plans by the community, working in partnership with government. The protection and management of Ramsar listed wetlands will be incorporated in the development of these plans. For example, the NAP project in the upper south-east of South Australia covers the Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert and the Bool & Hacks Lagoon Ramsar sites.

The Natural Heritage Trust has recently been extended for a further five years to 2006-07.

- Rivercare will be one of the four programs under the extension of the Trust. The purpose of Rivercare will be to improve water quality and environmental flows in river systems and wetlands. This will ensure that rivers and wetlands will be dealt with as an integrated resource for the purposes of Commonwealth investment.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

Operational Objective 2.3: To expand the Guidelines and Additional Guidance on Wise Use to provide advice to Contracting Parties on specific issues not hitherto covered, and examples of best current practice.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.3.1 Expand the Additional Guidance on Wise Use to address specific issues such as oil spill prevention and clean-up, agricultural runoff, and urban/industrial discharges in cooperation with other bodies. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - Following COP7, the Bureau, with other appropriate collaborators, will produce a series of Wise Use handbooks, based on the outcomes of Technical Sessions at COP7.**
- **(added by the Ramsar Bureau pursuant to Resolution VII.14 *Invasive Species and wetlands*) CPs are requested “to provide the Ramsar Bureau with information on databases which exist for invasive species, information on invasive species which pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, and information on the control and eradication of invasive wetland species.”**

Does your country **have** resource information on the management of wetlands in relation to the following which could be useful in assisting the Convention to develop further guidance to assist other CPs :

Yes, examples are provided under each heading.

- **oil spill prevention and clean-up**

Australia’s National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances is accessible on the Australian Maritime Safety Authority’s Web Site

[<http://www.amsa.gov.au/me/natplan1.htm>]. This National Plan has been developed with the cooperation of State/Northern Territory governments including their port corporations and authorities, the shipping, oil, exploration and chemical industries and the emergency services. The National Plan provides a framework for the effective response to oil and chemical pollution incidents in the Australian marine environment. The National Marine Oil Spill Contingency Plan is a component of the National Plan and it outlines the national arrangements for responding to oil spills in the marine environment, with the aim of protecting marine areas from oil pollution or, where this is not possible, to minimise such effects. The geographical area covered by the Contingency Plan includes all Australian Territorial Seas, Exclusive Economic Zones and the High Seas where an oil spill has the potential to impact on Australia's interests. This area is inclusive of the entire Australian coastline including wetland areas such as mangroves, intertidal wetlands, coral reefs and seagrass beds. The Contingency Plan states that in the event of an oil spill in the marine environment the following measures should be employed according to the circumstances of the spill and conditions prevailing:

- If possible prevent, control or stop outflow of oil from the source;
- If coastal and marine resources are threatened, activate response operations to protect sensitive resources, and
- If, due to weather and sea conditions, response by sea is not feasible or protection of sensitive areas is not feasible, or these have already been affected, determine appropriate clean-up priorities and other response measures.

The Contingency Plan also states that the protection priorities to be employed during a response, in order of descending priority are:

- Human safety and health;
- Habitat and cultural resources;
- Rare and/or endangered flora and fauna;
- Commercial resources, and
- Amenities.

As outlined in the Contingency Plan, during a major oil spill incident, the response team will generally consist of key personnel, including an Environmental and Scientific Coordinator (ESC). The ESC provides the team with an up-to-date and balanced assessment of the likely environmental effects and advises on environmental priorities and preferred response options taking into account the significance, sensitivity and possible recovery of the resources likely to be affected. The Contingency Plan also allows for specialist technical advice to be available to response managers from a variety of sources, including representatives from the Marine and Environment Protection Services, Environment Australia – Marine Section and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

In addition to, and cooperation with, the National Plan each State and the Northern Territory has their own management, response and contingency plans and committees for dealing with oil spill prevention and clean up. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA) REEFPLAN and REEFREP and the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment's Western Port (Western Shores) Shoreline Oil Spill Response Manual may be of particular interest to other Contracting Parties.

In 1990, REEFPLAN: Oil Spill Contingency Plan for the Great Barrier Reef was published to guide the GBRMPA in the event of an oil spill. If a major incident occurs, the Authority prioritises habitats in most need of protection from pollution. In most cases, mangrove

communities would be awarded the highest priority, followed by seagrass beds and coral reefs. REEFPLAN presents guidelines developed for each of these specific habitats, to be observed if an oil spill may have an impact. As most major oil spills in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) are caused by shipping accidents (eg. collisions or groundings) that result in damage to oil tanks, the best spill prevention measures relate to safety of navigation. In a world first, Australia sought and obtained formal International Maritime Organisation adoption of a mandatory ship reporting system (REEFREP) for the inner shipping route of the GBR, which took effect in January 1997. Under REEFREP, all ships greater than 50 metres in length transiting the inner passage of the Reef are required to report via radio their position and course at designated report locations, situated at approximately 160 km intervals along the coast, and upon entering all ports. Through REEFREP vessels can receive regular updates on the concentration of fishing vessels and other ships, weather reports and information to assist them in navigating through the Reef passages. This system aims to prevent oil spills from occurring.

The Western Port (Western Shores) Shoreline Oil Spill Response Manual was released in 1999 by Victoria's Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. It is an oil spill response manual designed specifically for users of Western Port, which is a listed Ramsar site. The Manual consists of a response handbook, a key for assessment methods and response guidelines, and assessment forms, work-order forms and log sheets to record relevant information. The Manual has identified the western shoreline wetland area within Western Port as the site most at risk of impact from oil spills that may occur in the Bay, and has developed guidelines for response at this site.

- **agricultural runoff**

Rural Land Uses and Water Quality – A Community Resource Document, 2000 produced by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia (AFFA), was developed to assist rural land managers in minimising the adverse impacts of their operations on water quality. The document provides background information on the principal issues affecting the quality of freshwater, coastal waters and groundwater in rural environments. It discusses the source of water degradation in rural areas and how these impact upon water quality. It identifies agricultural runoff as playing a major role in the reduction of water quality in the Australian rural environment through the transportation of soils, nutrients, heavy metals and various chemicals to water bodies. Best Management Practises (BMPs) that aim to minimise and/or prevent degradation resulting from runoff are identified. These include creating and maintaining vegetated and ungrazed buffer zones around cultivated areas and along watercourses, reducing run-off in irrigation areas by encouraging efficient water use systems and techniques, and adopting seeding techniques that retain stubble on the soil surface.

In 2001, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) released the Great Barrier Reef Catchment Water Quality Action Plan. The Plan was developed in response to the declining water quality of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA). While coral reef systems can grow in a variety of conditions in shallow-water tropical habitats, well-developed reef systems only occur where waters have typically low concentrations of suspended particulate and dissolved nutrients. The ecosystem of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) has a complex inter-dependent relationship with adjacent river catchments. These surrounding catchments are relatively sparsely populated, however there

has been extensive land modification with more than 80% of GBRWHA catchments supporting some form of intensive agricultural activity, with considerable expansion of these activities since 1990. Agricultural run-off containing sediment, fertiliser and chemical residues is one of the primary impacts on water quality in the GBRWHA. In particular, rapid growth of areas cultivated for sugar cane and banana has caused the usage of nitrogenous-fertilisers (most dangerous to marine ecosystems) in some catchments to increase by between 200%-400%. Reduction in nutrient and sediment loads from coastal catchments is seen as the most important water quality issue facing the GBRWHA. The Great Barrier Reef Catchment Water Quality Plan has prioritised its 26 drainage basins according to the ecological risk each poses to the GBRWHA (in terms of water quality). To halt the decline of water quality entering the GBRWHA, the Plan has also set minimum targets for reduction in pollutant loads, indicated by levels of suspended sediments, nitrogen, phosphorus and chlorophyll, that each catchment is to achieve over a ten year period. The Plan also identified targets for chlorophyll levels in inshore waters of the GBRWHA and heavy metals and pesticide residues in sediments. The Plan is available on the GBRMPA web site at:

http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/water_quality/action_plan/index.html

- **Urban/industrial discharges**

A large volume of resource information, primarily literature, exists in Australia covering this topic. A few examples are presented below:

The Australian Guidelines for Urban Stormwater Management, 2000 were developed by the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand (ARMCAMZ) in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC). In many Australian cities urban drainage systems have often been developed to minimise the risk of flooding, without due consideration of other important values such as resource conservation, environmental quality, public safety and amenity. It was clear that a new approach to stormwater management was needed that recognised the link between land and water management – an approach that addressed issues of stormwater quality and quantity and aquatic ecosystem health. These guidelines aim to provide a nationally consistent approach for managing urban stormwater in an ecologically sustainable manner. The approaches outlined in this document represent current best practice in stormwater planning and management in Australia. In particular, these guidelines will help managers to identify objectives for stormwater management and to integrate management activities at the catchment, waterway and local development level. The Guidelines outline why stormwater management is required, the challenges, how to involve the community, management tools available, and how to prepare, implement and monitor Stormwater Management Plans.

A series of Effluent Management Guidelines for six Australian industries, including wineries, intensive piggeries, dairy sheds, dairy processing plants, aqueous wool scouring and carbonising and tanning/related industries, were also developed by ARMCANZ and ANZECC. For example, the Effluent Management Guidelines for Australian Wineries and Distilleries (1998) established important principles for environmental management and provides guidance on acceptable waste management practices which can be applied consistently across Australia. The document provides information on the general characteristics of winery and distillery waste. It also provides guidelines on siting treatment

facilities, designing management systems, treatment (including treatment options, capacity evaluation and performance assessment options), re-cycling and disposal, and methods for monitoring quality and quantity of effluent.

Between 1994 and 2000, ARMCANZ and ANZECC released a series of Guidelines For Sewerage Systems for Australia. The first in the series provided guidelines for the Acceptance of Trade Waste (Industrial Waste), the second on Effluent Management (in addition to those mentioned above) and lastly the Use of Re-claimed Water. For example, Guidelines for Sewerage Systems - Acceptance of Trade Waste (Industrial Waste), as with those above, aimed to improve trade waste management throughout Australia by presenting a set of guidelines that provide a consistent approach for trade waste authorities. These guidelines encourage management of trade waste that will minimise the cost to the community, ensure environmental protection and encourage waste minimisation.

In addition to these national guidelines, each State and Territory has resource materials containing guidelines and management plans for dealing with urban and industrial discharges in their jurisdictions.

- **invasive species**

Several examples of resource information available on the management of invasive species affecting wetlands are shown below, at the national, regional and local levels, respectively:

Carp

Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is an invasive fish species that was introduced to Australia in the 1850s. In the late 1960s, the species underwent a population explosion, increasing significantly in both distribution and abundance. Carp are now widespread throughout rivers and wetlands in Australia, and are continuing to spread. In some areas of the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB), Carp account for approximately 90% of fish biomass. In 1997, the Carp Control Coordination Group (CCCG) was formed, responsible for providing national leadership and coordination in the development and implementation of management and control initiatives. In 2000, the CCCG released the National Management Strategy for Carp Control 2000-2005. The Strategy is available in hardcopy, or on the Murray-Darling Basin Commission web site at:

http://www.mdbc.gov.au/education/publications/pdf/national_management_strategy.pdf.

The goals of the Strategy are to:

- prevent the spread of Carp;
- reduce the impacts of Carp to acceptable levels;
- promote environmentally and socially acceptable application of Carp eradication and control programs;
- improve community understanding of the impacts of Carp and the management strategies to counteract those impacts; and
- promote the cost efficient use of public resources in Carp eradication and control programs.

The Strategy takes a holistic approach to Carp management, recognising that carp control is just one of a suite of actions required in the rehabilitation of the Murray Darling Basin and other riverine environments throughout Australia. This is evident in the Strategy's approach to the carp problem as one of vertebrate pest management rather than simply fisheries management. The Strategy sets actions required to achieve their goals and the

measures necessary to implement these actions. The Strategy also has two supporting documents, Future Directions for Research into Carp and Ranking Areas for Action - A Guide for Carp Management Groups, both accessible on the Internet at <http://www.mdbc.gov.au/education/publications/publications.htm>.

Woody Weeds and Exotic Trees

The South Australian Environment Protection Agency (EPA), in conjunction with various other groups, produced a series of Water Wise fact sheets covering various water management topics. These Fact Sheets are available on the South Australian EPA web site at <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/epa/pub.html>. Included in this series are fact sheets titled Exotic Trees Along Watercourses and Woody Weed Control Along Watercourses. Exotic Trees Along Watercourses concentrates on three exotic species, the Willow (*Salix sp.*), Ash (*Fraxinus sp.*) and Poplar (*Populus sp.*) trees, all common in riverine environments throughout South Australia. The fact sheet explains how these trees have a negative impact on river and wetland ecosystems, advises on options for removal, problems associated with removal, techniques for revegetation with native species and provides contacts where further information can be sought. Woody Weed Control Along Watercourses covers invasive woody weed species common to watercourses (rivers and wetlands) throughout South Australia, including Gorse, Blackberry and Briar rose. The fact sheet explains why these invasive species are a problem, and outlines details of critical components, timing and cost for four potential control strategies. It also provides information on minimising herbicide use and lists other relevant publications and contacts for further information.

Exotic Marine Organisms

Codium fragile ssp tomentosoides is an introduced marine alga that closely resembles two native Australian subspecies of *Codium fragile*. It is regarded as one of the most invasive algal species in the world. It exhibits rapid growth, asexual reproduction, high dispersal, and tolerance to a broad range of environmental conditions. In March 1998, this exotic marine organism was discovered in the Western Port Ramsar wetland in Victoria. Further inspections took place to determine the extent of the infestation. Populations were found to be well established in several locations, and to be growing in direct competition with one of the vulnerable native macroalgae. The Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) initiated management actions to ameliorate the potential impact of *Codium fragile ssp tomentosoides* for the following reasons:

- the exotic population was the first recorded in Western Port;
- the exotic population was deemed to be recent and localised;
- the exotic population was occupying sites of high conservation value; and
- the exercise would serve as a useful assessment of physical hand removal to control invasive macroalgae.

An Operational Response Plan was developed and implemented and the populations of *Codium fragile ssp tomentosoides* were removed by hand. Other areas within Western Port that were identified as suitable habitat for the alga were also surveyed for establishment of the exotic. The alga were not detected at any of the surveyed sites. However, these sites were mapped by DNRE and now act as monitoring sites to track the potential spread of the alga. On-going monitoring to November 1998 indicated that the original intertidal populations had been suppressed. Several other actions were undertaken by DNRE in conjunction with various organisations to ensure the long-term management of this exotic

species in Western Port. All of these actions were documented in a case study that is available on the following Internet site: <http://www.nre.vic.gov.au> under the Coasts & Marine link.

Caulerpa taxifolia is a marine alga found throughout tropical regions in the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Accidental introduction to the Mediterranean revealed in 1984 its invasive potential. The recent discovery of populations in coastal embayments of NSW on the eastern coast of Australia has resulted in action to contain potential threats to biodiversity.

In 2000 *Caulerpa* was declared a noxious species under the provisions of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, and an advisory brochure circulated to aquarium stores, coastal councils, fishing and aquatic organisations, as well as boating and fishing outlets. Signage and buoys were positioned to mark the location of infestations, enabling individuals to minimise disturbance and possible spread; and a control program has been initiated with different methods being trialed to remove infestations.

NSW Fisheries has been working with government agencies and the community to minimise the spread of *Caulerpa* and continues to research control techniques. Regular Updates provide a summary of works undertaken, with more technical papers detailing structured research undertaken to combat infestations.

For more information visit the NSW Fisheries website
<http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/conservation/pests/caulerpa.htm>

- **other relevant aspects such as highway designs, aquaculture, etc.**

Each State/Territory has various resource information relating to management of highway designs and aquaculture that affects wetland conservation and wise use.

For example, the South Australian government has released a fact sheet, as part of the Water Wise Series mentioned above, titled Watercourses and Earthworks (No 6). This fact sheet is available on the Internet (<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/epa/pub.html>) and considers the impacts of urbanisation (eg. settlement) on watercourses and their floodplains, and suggests ways to improve these impacts.

Aquaculture related operations above a certain capacity in the area adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park require an approval/permit under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* or the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Aquaculture) Regulations, 2000*. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has recently developed a set of draft guidelines to assist persons proposing to undertake aquaculture activities in a catchment surrounding the GBR. These guidelines explain for proponents, how the two pieces of legislation interact and the proponent's subsequent obligations under the two pieces of legislation. The Guidelines, titled *DRAFT Guidelines on the Application of the EPBC Act, 1999 and the GBRMP (Aquaculture) Regulations, 2000 for Aquaculture Related Operations in the Area Adjacent to the GBRMP*, are available on the GBRMPA web site: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/permits/applications/aquaculture/index.html

In each case, if the answer was **Yes**, has this information been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre (see 2.3.2 below)?

No

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

2.3.2. Publicise examples of effective application of existing Guidelines and Additional Guidance on Wise Use. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Promoting and improving the availability of such resource materials is a priority under the *Convention's Outreach Programme (Resolution VII.9)***
- **Global Target - By COP8, to have included in the Wise Use Resource Centre 500 appropriate references and publications as provided to the Bureau by CPs and other organisations.**

Further to 2.3.1 above, has your country, as urged by the Outreach Programme of the Convention adopted at COP7 (Resolution VII. 9), **reviewed** its resource materials relating to wetland management policies and practices?

No

If **No**, what has prevented this being done?

A national Communications Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Task Force* was formed in 2000 to facilitate implementation of the Outreach Programme in Australia. Shortly after formation, the Task Force commenced a National Survey to gather information on wetland-related activities and resources, including wetland management policies and practices, available throughout Australia. A wide range of organisations and individuals were targeted to take part in the survey, including government environment departments, non-government organisations, research scientists, educational institutions, landowners and Indigenous groups. Although the survey identified many organisations within Australia that possess, and are taking part in, wetland-related resources and activities, it was unable to provide a comprehensive list of all available activities and resources.

On 2 February 2001 Australia's national Wetlands Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Action Plan 2001-2005, The First Step was released. One of the aims of the Plan is to establish effective communication networks among existing wetland-related organisations to promote exchange of their knowledge, resources and expertise. An Australia-wide review of current wetland resources, including management policies and practices, has been planned by the Task Force to build on the National Survey undertaken in 2000. The Task Force is yet to decide the scope of the review. However, the Task Force has agreed that the review will include an evaluation of strategies and mechanisms for exchange and delivery of information. Information gathered in the review will be utilised to improve national access to available resources such as wetland management policies and practices.

*In November 2001, the CEPA Task Force changed its name to the Australian Wetlands Information Network (AWIN). Members of the Task Force felt that the new name was more user-friendly and better reflected the role of the group.

<p>If Yes, have copies of this information been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau?</p> <p>A copy of the Wetlands CEPA Action Plan 2001-2005, The First Step has been forwarded to the Bureau and is also available on the Internet: http://www.ea.gov.au/water/publications/index.html#wetlands</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this being done?</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action: Australian Wetlands Information Network</p>

Operational Objective 2.4: To provide economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands for environmental planning purposes.

<p>Actions - Global and National Targets</p> <p>2.4.1 Promote the development, wide dissemination, and application of documents and methodologies which give economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the guidelines available for this activity (see below: <i>Economic Valuation of Wetlands handbook</i>), this will be an area of higher priority in the next triennium. • Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to be incorporating economic valuation of wetland services, functions and benefits into impact assessment and decision-making processes related to wetlands.
<p>Does your government require that economic valuations of the full range of services, benefits and functions of wetlands be prepared as part of impact assessments and to support planning decisions that may impact on wetlands?</p> <p>No, neither Commonwealth nor State/Territory governments require an economic valuation of wetland values in impact assessment processes.</p> <p>However, an environmental impact assessment (EIA) can be required under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999</i> (EPBC Act) for any development actions that may have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance. Protection will be afforded to a wetland under the EPBC Act if it meets any one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed Ramsar site; • Listed World heritage area; • Supports listed threatened species or communities; • Supports migratory species protected under international agreements; or • Commonwealth marine environment. <p>Economic evaluation of environmental values and functions is not a formal component of</p>

the EIA process under the EPBC Act. However, in deciding whether or not a development proposal will be approved, or if any conditions should be attached to that approval, economic and social matters must be considered by the Commonwealth Environment Minister.

Individual States and Territories also have legislation that can require environmental impact assessment for proposed developments potentially impacting upon wetlands. However, in Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, economic evaluation of wetland values and functions is not currently required in the EIA process. The lack of an accepted framework or methodology for such evaluations is inhibiting adoption of such requirements into processes and legislation. In New South Wales, environmental impact assessments do not currently involve economic evaluation, however, an Environmental Economic Unit has been established to develop methodologies and tools to assist with this style of assessment. In the Australian Capital Territory, socio-economic effects are considered in the assessment of development proposals as set out in the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act, 1999*.

In addition, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission in its publication Floodplain Wetlands Management Strategy recognises the important economic role played by wetlands of the Basin. However, no mechanism has been developed to determine the actual dollar value of this function. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to improve the understanding of social, cultural, economic and environmental values of wetlands. A greater understanding of the economic value of wetlands is particularly required in the trade-off processes associated with water-sharing policies and decision-making about water allocations.

If this applies in some, but not all cases, what is the expected timeframe for this to be required in all cases?

If **Yes**, has the inclusion of economic valuation into impact assessment resulted in wetlands being given special consideration or protection.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibilities.

Operational Objective 2.5: To carry out environmental impact assessments (EIAs) at wetlands, particularly of proposed developments or changes in land/water use which have potential to affect them, notably at Ramsar sites, whose ecological character “is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference” (Article 3.2 of the Convention).

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.5.2 Ensure that, at Ramsar sites where change in ecological character is likely as a result of proposed developments or changes in land/water use which have potential to

affect them, EIAs are carried out (with due consideration of economic valuations of wetland benefits and functions), and that the resulting conclusions are communicated to the Ramsar Bureau and fully taken into account by the authorities concerned. [CPs]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, CPs will ensure that EIAs are applied to any such situation and keep the Bureau advised of the issues and the outcomes of these EIAs.**

Has an EIA been carried out in **all** cases where a change in the ecological character of a Ramsar site within your country was likely (or possible) as a result of proposed developments or changes in land/water use?

No

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

Prior to July 2000, there was no specific national EIA process for Ramsar wetlands. In July 2000, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* (EPBC Act) came into force. Ramsar wetlands are afforded special protection under the EPBC Act as a matter of national environmental significance (see 2.4.1.). Under the EPBC Act, actions that have, will have, or are likely to have, a significant impact on the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland require approval by the Commonwealth Environment Minister after it has undergone an environmental assessment. Significance criteria have been developed to assist to determine significant impact. These criteria include:

- Areas of the wetland being destroyed or substantially modified;
- a substantial and measurable change in the hydrological regime of the wetland – for example, a substantial change to the volume, timing, duration and frequency of ground and surface water flows to and within the wetland;
- the habitat or lifecycle of native species dependant upon the wetland being seriously affected;
- a substantial and measurable change in the physico-chemical status of the wetland – for example, a substantial change in the level of salinity, pollutants or nutrients in the wetland, or water temperature which may adversely impact on biodiversity, ecological integrity, social amenity or human health; or
- an invasive species that is harmful to the ecological character of the wetland being established in the wetland.

An ‘action’ includes a project, development, undertaking or any activity or series of activities. Actions that are taken in contravention to the EPBC Act may attract a civil penalty of up to AUD \$5.5 million, or a criminal penalty of up to \$46,200 or, in extreme cases, up to seven years imprisonment.

Environmental assessments performed under the EPBC Act may take the form of Assessment on Preliminary Documentation, Public Environment Report (PER), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Public Inquiry or an accredited process (ie accreditation on a project by project basis).

After assessment, the Minister decides whether to approve an action, and if so, what conditions to impose to ensure the protection of the Ramsar wetland.

If **Yes**, has this EIA, or have these EIAs, given due consideration to the full range of environmental, social and economic values of the wetland? (See also 2.4.1 above)

See above for environmental values and response in 2.4.1 for social and economic.

AND: Have the results of the EIA been transmitted to the Ramsar Bureau?

No.

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

Information on environmental assessments under the EPBC Act (including opportunities to comment and outcomes of assessments) are publicly available on the Environment Australia web site (<http://www.ea.gov.au/epbc/publicnotices/index.html>).

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia

2.5.3 Carry out EIAs at other important sites, particularly where adverse impact on wetland resources is likely, due to a development proposal or change in land/water use. [CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to require EIAs under legislation for any actions which can potentially impact on wetlands and to provide detailed reports on advances in this area in their National Reports for COP8.**

Are EIAs required in your country for **all** cases where a wetland area (whether a Ramsar site or not) may be adversely impacted due to a development proposal or change in land/water use?

No

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

Although the Commonwealth EPBC Act does not cover all wetlands, the Act does afford protection to non-Ramsar wetlands if they relate to a matter of national environmental significance (eg World Heritage areas, listed threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species protected under international agreements, Commonwealth marine environment or Commonwealth land). The assessment process described in 2.5.2 would generally apply to these wetlands, however the significance criteria will vary depending on the matter of national environmental significance concerned.

In all State and Territory jurisdictions, there is legislation that may require an EIA for certain types of development, landuse change or in relation to particular ecosystems of conservation concern. For example, in New South Wales the State Environmental Planning Policy No 14 – Coastal Wetlands (SEPP 14) aims to ensure that coastal wetlands are preserved and protected in the environmental and economic interest of the State. An EIs is required under SEPP 14 for developments that involve clearing, filling, draining or construction of levees in or near coastal wetlands. In addition, the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* contains EIA provisions for a range of activities that will affect or are likely to affect the environment. Wetlands are not specifically cited under the Act, however when certain development proposals are likely to have an environmental impact, adverse impacts on flora

and fauna habitat, including wetlands, are considered.
If Yes , are such EIAs required to give due consideration to the full range of environmental, social and economic values of the wetland? (See COP7 Resolution VII.16, also 2.4.1 & 2.5.2 above.)
Refer to Section 2.4.1.
Are EIAs “undertaken in a transparent and participatory manner which includes local stakeholders” (COP7 Resolution VII.16)?
All assessments that take place under the EPBC Act encourage public participation at key stages of the assessment process, including when a project is first reported, when a decision is taken on assessment approach and when the assessment documentation has been prepared. The Act requires the proponent (the individual/group proposing the action) to make the assessment documentation publicly accessible. An advertisement must be taken out in a State daily newspaper (in the State where the action is proposed) describing the details of the proposed action, where the documentation can be viewed and inviting comments.
All State and Territory processes include a public comment phase during the assessment process.
If No , what are the impediments to this occurring?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

2.5.4 Take account of Integrated Environmental Management and Strategic Environmental Assessment (at local, provincial and catchment/river basin or coastal zone levels) when assessing impacts of development proposals or changes in land/water use. [CPs]

(Refer to 2.5.3 above) In addition to the assessment of the potential impact of specific projects on wetlands, has your country **undertaken** a review of all government plans, programmes and policies which may impact negatively on wetlands?

No.

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

Reviews have occurred in relation to many government plans, programmes and policies for which may impact negatively on wetlands but these reviews have been limited to certain matters such as water resource management. For example, all Australian jurisdictions, through the Council of Australian Governments’ 1994 National Water Reform Framework (discussed in 2.1.1), have reviewed existing water allocation and management plans and policies. New planning and decision making frameworks have recently been introduced that are designed to take account of adverse impacts on wetlands and address water requirements for wetlands.

As described in 2.1.1, the NSW State Wetland Advisory Committee is undertaking a State-level review of wetland-related legislation and policy, which will be completed by mid 2002. The review process will:

- consolidate current information available on wetland conservation, management and use;
- identify gaps in the application of wetland policies and legislation;
- identify potential links between existing frameworks, for example between the *Water Management Act, 2000* and wetland management; and
- Make recommendations about possible reforms to NSW wetland-related plans, policies and legislation.

If **Yes**, has this review been undertaken as part of preparing a National Wetland Policy or similar instrument? (refer 2.12 above)

No

Or as part of other national policy or planning activities?

No

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

Operational Objective 2.6: To identify wetlands in need of restoration and rehabilitation, and to implement the necessary measures.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.6.1 Use regional or national scientific inventories of wetlands (Recommendation 4.6), or monitoring processes, to identify wetlands in need of restoration or rehabilitation. [CPs, Partners]

- **The completion of such inventories is a continuing area of priority for the Convention.**
- **Global Target - Restoration/rehabilitation inventories to be completed by at least 50 CPs by COP8.**

Has your country **completed** an assessment to identify its priority wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation? (COP7 Resolution VII.17)

No - not at the national level.

If **No**, what has prevented this from being done?

Australia does not have a comprehensive inventory of all wetlands to assist the national identification of priority wetlands for rehabilitation. Inventories are currently being

assembled in some jurisdictions to determine wetland extent, types and condition. A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia documents wetland values, conditions and threats for 860 nationally important wetlands (See 6.1.1).

Where suitable wetland data and inventories exist, these are used to guide the assessment of proposals for wetland rehabilitation (see below).

If this has been done for only part of the country, please indicate for which areas or river basins.

River Murray Floodplain (Murray Darling Basin)

The NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group (MWWG), a collaboration between government agencies and community groups, identifies wetland management priorities along the River Murray floodplain in NSW, and facilitates improved management for these wetlands.

In a survey conducted in 1986, over 3,500 wetlands were identified along the River Murray floodplain in NSW. Based on information from the survey, along with regional knowledge collated by the MWWG, these wetlands were assessed to objectively establish rehabilitation priorities. The criteria used by the MWWG for this assessment are based on those outlined in the Floodplain Wetlands Management Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin (1998):

- Environmental value: for example, if a wetland under consideration is relatively pristine, is unique/rare, with diverse flora and fauna and is highly productive, it should be given high priority
- Urgency of action: determines the rate at which the wetland is degrading, where wetlands that are relatively stable, or are not actively degrading should receive lower priority for action
- Existing degree of degradation: for example, a highly degraded wetland will require significant works to be taken in order to restore/rehabilitate it, and would therefore be given a lower priority than a less degraded wetland (linked with Value for Money, below)
- Ease of management: for example, wetlands within state forests or on other public land are rated as “easier to manage” as there will be few directly affected parties. Wetlands rated as “easy to manage” should be a higher priority for rehabilitation actions
- Degree of public support: wetlands that have significant community support for restoration/rehabilitation should be given higher priority
- Degree of public opposition: it is assumed that it would be easier to achieve results where public opposition is minimal
- Management constraints: many wetlands have existing uses that may not be compatible with proposed management for environmental values

- Demonstration and education value: those wetlands with high possibilities for demonstration or education purposes should be given higher priority
- Value for money: concerns the likely cost of achieving the objectives for management of any specific wetland, compared to others. Wetlands with high value for money should be given priority.

The process of identifying priority wetlands for rehabilitation used by the MWWG considers the expected technical feasibility and potential impediments to rehabilitation. Technical difficulties are weighed against the potential benefits. In this way, the process identifies wetlands for which effective and feasible rehabilitation strategies can be developed. Once wetlands have been selected for rehabilitation, a thorough process of ecological, hydrologic and engineering investigations, consultation and planning is used by the MWWG to identify the most appropriate and effective rehabilitation strategies.

The detailed investigations outlined above identify the most appropriate and cost effective rehabilitation strategies for each wetland. Assessment of the success and net benefits of implementing these strategies requires some value judgements in estimating the environmental and ecological benefits of rehabilitation of the wetland. For example, a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) was undertaken for the rehabilitation of Moira Lake wetland, at Millewa Forest, NSW (one of the wetlands rehabilitated by the MWWG). The CBA indicated that completion of the project, at a financial cost of approximately AUS\$1M, could provide a Net Present Value (that is, an overall benefit to society) of between AUS\$1.8M and AUS\$3.1M, depending on how it was managed. This overall benefit was identified without valuing or considering the ecological benefits of the project

There are a number of Commonwealth, State and Territory data collection projects and planning processes that can facilitate assessment of wetland rehabilitation priorities, including:

Commonwealth Assessments

The National Land and Water Resources Audit is a collaboration project between the Commonwealth and all States and Territories to document the condition of Australia's natural resources (using 354 sub-regions). The Biodiversity Assessment Theme (BAT) component assesses wetland occurrence, condition, trend, special values and threatening processes the sub-regions. To date, there is general agreement amongst jurisdictions that there is a lack of inventory and monitoring data to make quantitative and accurate assessments. However, the qualitative judgements that are delivered on wetland condition and trend may allow some identification of priority wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation.

A Directory of Wetlands Owned and Managed by the Commonwealth of Australia (accessible via the Internet at <http://www.ea.gov.au/water/wetlands/database/index.html>) provides a framework for future rehabilitation action by Commonwealth site managers. The Directory documents values, condition and threats for 75 Commonwealth sites, and work is underway to document a further 15 sites.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) adopts a whole of system

approach to best protect the biodiversity of the entire GBR ecosystem, including wetlands such as coral reefs and seagrass beds. Prioritising areas for restoration or rehabilitation implies a focus only on damaged habitats. Through its Representative Areas Program, GBRMPA is developing a management regime that prioritises the protection of representative examples of coral reefs, seagrass beds and other habitats, from extractive activities. The existing network of no-take areas will be enhanced in the Marine Park. GBRMPA has funded extensive mapping surveys of seagrass beds on the inshore areas of the Marine Park. A significant proportion of seagrass areas in the southern GBR are now located within a system of Dugong Protection Areas (DPAs). One of the DPAs is included within the Shoalwater and Corio Bay Ramsar site and another is adjacent to the Bowling Green Bay Ramsar site. GBRMPA's Wetland Status Report is currently being prepared and will identify the present status of wetlands in the GBRWHA catchments including estimates of what has been lost based on previous assessments. The report will be used to define remaining wetland areas and inform their future protection.

The Commonwealth Department of Defence prepares Environmental Management Plans (EMP) to document and prioritise environmental issues for Defence managed lands, including management of erosion, waste, feral animals and weeds and water quality. Strategies are developed in the EMP process to prioritise required management actions including site rehabilitation.

State/Territory Assessments

As part of Western Australia's State Salinity Strategy (see 2.2.2.) to combat dryland salinity in the South West of the State, a biological survey is being conducted. Information from this survey will be used to identify areas, including wetlands, which are a priority for conservation, restoration and rehabilitation in south-west WA. During the process of prioritising a site, a risk assessment will be carried out along with consideration of rehabilitation potential. Specific high conservation value wetlands, such as the Ramsar listed Toolibin Lake, have been identified for priority rehabilitation through this process.

In Queensland, a series of Natural Resource Management Strategies are being prepared to provide direction to natural resource management and planning efforts throughout the State. For this purpose, Queensland has been divided into thirteen regions, and preparation of Strategies for each of these regions is currently in progress. Regional bodies, comprised of representatives from all stakeholder groups in a region, are responsible for developing the strategies. Wetlands are considered within each region when determining priorities for management and rehabilitation actions. In Queensland, wetlands are also assessed for rehabilitation and restoration requirements under the State Coastal Management Plan and the Regional Coastal Management Plans that are currently being prepared.

Wetlands in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) can be divided into two broad categories, upland and lowland wetlands. Wetlands in the upland regions of the ACT, including the Ginini Flats Ramsar site, are contained within the Namadgi National Park. Wetlands within the Park have been mapped and assessed, and subsequently determined to be in good condition. An assessment is still required for the lowland wetlands, to determine priorities for restoration/rehabilitation. However, ACT rivers and streams have been assessed and prioritised according to rehabilitation requirements. Subsequent actions currently being undertaken in priority areas identified include providing environmental

flows, construction of fish passages and the restoration of fish habitat. Such actions will benefit wetlands associated with these river systems.

In Victoria, wetland rehabilitation priorities are assessed according to wetland significance and associated statutory requirements. Ramsar wetlands, wetlands listed in A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia and wetlands reserved for conservation purposes are given priority for management actions, including restoration and rehabilitation. Specific actions to be taken at each wetland are considered and prioritised in Management Plans prepared for individual sites.

In South Australia, development of the State Wetland Strategy is nearing completion. Through implementation of guidelines contained in the Strategy, wetland inventories that have been prepared for various regions throughout the State will be used to assess priority wetlands for restoration and rehabilitation.

If **Yes** (that is, an assessment has been **completed**), have actions been taken to undertake the restoration or rehabilitation of these priority sites?

Yes. As a result of programs like those described above, in addition to the many other projects being undertaken, many actions have progressed around Australia to rehabilitate and restore wetlands.

If **No**, what has prevented this from being done?

If **Yes**, please provide details.

River Murray Floodplain (Murray Darling Basin)

For example, as a result of the assessment conducted by the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group five wetlands along the River Murray floodplain were identified as priorities for rehabilitation. Rehabilitation requirements for each of the five wetlands were identified, assessed and implemented. For example, the MWWG has been working with the NSW State Forests over several years to rehabilitate Moira Lake. Moira Lake is a natural freshwater wetland fed by the River Murray in southern NSW, the largest open water wetland in the Barmah-Millewa Forest. Prior to regulation, the wetland was known as an important native fish nursery, and the importance of the wetland as a bird breeding area has also been established. The ecology of the wetland evolved with regular cycles of inundation in winter and spring and desiccation in summer and autumn. Following completion of the Hume Dam (1936) upstream of the Moira Lake, the cycles of wetting and drying in the wetland were replaced with permanent inundation. A rehabilitation plan was completed in 1993-94 for Moira Lake, identifying the following goals:

- Completely dry the wetland for approximately three months, starting in late summer in the majority (60-70%) of years;
- Flood the system and provide high and reasonably stable water levels during breeding periods;
- Provide gradually receding water levels in later stages of the breeding period
- Provide unrestricted passage for fish between the river and lake during spawning and juvenile development periods; and
- Minimise disruption to the water supply of the Moira Private Irrigation District and to

other users.

In order to achieve these goals, regulators were constructed to control flows between the River Murray and Moira Lake. The regulators are used to prevent water inflows from the River over summer to allow drying (via evaporation). The wetland underwent a three-month drying period in 1998 for the first time in 60 years, and again in 1999, resulting in noticeable ecological improvements. Various other actions have been taken as part of the rehabilitation program, including construction of fences to prohibit cattle grazing, harvesting of Carp (invasive fish species) and use of fire to manage riparian vegetation.

State/Territory Assessments

In Victoria, wetlands of international and national significance are given priority for management and rehabilitation actions. For example, significant actions have been taken to rehabilitate the Western District Lakes Ramsar site. The site is composed of a group of nine lakes that have highly variable water regimes, varying both seasonally and annually, so at any time the lakes range from freshwater to hypersaline. The Lakes support large numbers of waterbirds and are particularly important during periods of widespread drought, and as moulting sites for some species. Threatening processes identified for this site include activities and processes occurring in the surrounding wetland catchments which contribute to increased salinity and high nutrient inputs, livestock grazing, waste water inflow and hydrological modification. Rehabilitation actions taken at the Western District Lakes Ramsar site include:

- major habitat restoration works to protect and rehabilitate 60 kms of Ramsar wetland riparian zone through fencing, revegetation with indigenous species, and the implementation of appropriate livestock grazing regimes;
- conservation actions are currently being taken to protect the endangered Corangamite Water Skink and the nationally threatened Spiny Peppergrass plant, both of these species occur in the Western District Lakes Ramsar site;
- a control program to manage pest plants and animals, such as Boxthorn and rabbit, is ongoing, with areas around Lakes Cundare, Corangamite and Gnarpurt being targeted;
- a program has been completed to control erosion and to reduce harbour for rabbits at Lake Colongulac; and
- The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority launched a ten-year \$3.8 million plan to implement the Draft Corangamite Waterway Health Strategy. Key actions to be taken include re-establishing appropriate flow regimes to significant wetlands, including those in the Ramsar site.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

2.6.2 Provide and implement methodologies for restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]

- **There is considerable information resource on this subject, although it is not as readily accessed as desirable.**

- **Global Target - The addition of appropriate case studies and information on methodologies, etc., to the Convention's Wise Use Resource Centre (refer to 2.3.2 above also) will be a priority in the next triennium.**

Refer to 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. Does your country **have** resource information on the restoration or rehabilitation of wetlands?

Yes. There is a large amount of resource information available in Australia on wetland restoration and rehabilitation. The information exists in various formats, including web sites, manuals, management plans and fact sheets. Web sites provide details of case studies (eg. <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/kooragang/>), scientific research (eg. <http://www.eng.newcastle.edu.au/~philip/research/chughes/Thesis.htm>) and general information (eg. <http://www.rosneath.com.au/ipc6/cho2/henderson/index.html>).

Manuals produced include A Manual of Wetlands Management released in 1996 by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Victoria. This manual provides information on wetland restoration, including the causes of wetland degradation, restoration principles, the ecology of wetland vegetation, planning restoration projects and techniques for restoring wetland habitats. Restoration and rehabilitation plans for individual wetland sites are covered by the specific management plans for those wetlands, eg, the Western District Lakes Ramsar Site Draft Strategic Management Plan, 2001 (refer to 2.6.1). Fact sheets such as the Water Wise Series, discussed in 2.3.1, provide information on specific components of aquatic habitat rehabilitation and restoration (eg. removal of invasive species, protecting riparian zones and earthworks around aquatic environments).

Land and Water Australia (LWA) has produced three publications relevant to rehabilitation of wetlands. These are:

Are there plants in your wetlands? – Revegetating Wetlands

Does your wetland flood and dry? – Water Regime and Wetland Plants

Are there Seeds in Your Wetland? – Assessing Wetland Vegetation

and are available for download from the LWA website www.lwa.gov.au

If **Yes**, has this been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre and for consideration by the STRP Expert Working Group on Restoration?

Several case studies detailing wetland rehabilitation techniques being applied in the Lower Murray region have been forwarded to the STRP Expert Working Group on Restoration.

If this material has not been forwarded to the Bureau, what has prevented this from occurring?

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

2.6.3 Establish wetland restoration / rehabilitation programmes at destroyed or degraded wetlands, especially in association with major river systems or areas of high nature conservation value (Recommendation 4.1). [CPs]

- **The Convention will continue to promote the restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands, particularly in situations where such actions will help promote or retain the ‘health’ and productivity of waterways and coastal environments.**
- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to have identified their priority sites for restoration or rehabilitation and for projects to be under way in at least 100 CPs.**

Refer to 2.6.1 above.

Operational Objective 2.7: To encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including Indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.7.1 Implement Recommendation 6.3 on involving local and Indigenous people in the management of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, the implementation of the Guidelines on local communities’ and Indigenous people’s participation (COP7 Resolution VII.8) is to be one of the Convention’s highest priorities. By COP8, all CPs to be promoting local stakeholder management of wetlands.**

Is your government **actively** promoting the involvement of local communities and Indigenous people in the management of wetlands?

Yes.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

If **Yes**, describe what special actions have been taken (See also 2.7.2, 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below) (COP7 Resolution VII.8).

There are various policies and programs are in place throughout Australia that are attempting to encourage the involvement of both local communities, and specifically Indigenous people, in wetland management activities.

However, even taking account of these initiatives, significant challenges lie ahead to ensure that Indigenous people and groups play active roles in wetland management. Indigenous people are largely used in advisory roles only not in key management capacities which would give them greater access and control and achieve more effective active and informed participation. The numbers of Indigenous rangers and education officers in the various authorities dealing with the wetland management needs to be increased to fully realise this objective.

Some of the policies and programs designed to encourage involvement of local communities and Indigenous people in the management of wetlands are described below.

The Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia, 1997 recognises that

to achieve its goal of conserving, repairing and managing wetlands wisely, it is reliant upon the development of a cooperative partnership approach. This is demonstrated in several of the guiding principles outlined in the Policy, for example, that a coordinated and cooperative approach to wetland conservation and management is important and must involve all spheres of government, the community, local and indigenous groups and the private sector. The other relevant guiding principle in the Policy is in recognising the importance of the knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous people in relation to wetlands and the contribution that these can provide, the Commonwealth will promote a cooperative approach to wetland management and conservation with Indigenous Australians. Similar objectives and principles have been adopted by State/Territory jurisdictions in their wetland policies.

The implementation of integrated catchment and coastal zone management throughout Australia (see 2.2.2.) also promotes the involvement of local communities and Indigenous groups in wetland management activities. For example, the Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) approach taken by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, promotes extensive consultation with, and participation of, all members of the basin community as partners in ICM. As part of the Murray-Darling Basin Initiative, the *People as an Integral Part of the Initiative: A Human Dimension Strategy* was released in 1999. One of the objectives of this strategy was to build policy directions and implementation processes that support effective, on-going partnerships within and between Basin communities including Indigenous participants and governments. The desired outcome of this strategy is that policies, structures and processes will better support Murray-Darling Basin Community-Government partnerships in natural resource management, including the management of wetlands.

There are several programs being undertaken to implement policies, such as those mentioned above, that encourage and promote local community and Indigenous involvement in wetland management.

The Natural Heritage Trust

Since 1996 the Commonwealth Government has committed Aus \$1.5 billion to establish the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and a further Aus \$1.5 billion was committed in 2001 to extend the NHT for an additional five years, to 2007. The NHT operates under the catchphrase 'helping communities helping Australia'. A central objective of the NHT is to provide a framework for cooperative partnerships between communities, industry and all levels of government.

The success of the NHT lies largely in its support and promotion of community involvement. A large proportion of funding is invested in locally-based, practical, on-ground projects involving members of the community.

The National Wetlands Program (NWP), one of the NHT's 21 environmental and natural resource management programs, was established in response to the growing concern for wetland conservation in Australia and in recognition of the need to act more strategically in implementing Australia's obligations under the Convention on Wetlands. The NWP has provided Aus \$17 million to promote the conservation, repair and wise use of Australia's wetlands and waterbirds, with funding directed to almost 200 community-based projects for:

- the preparation of Ramsar site management plans;
- on-ground rehabilitation, protection and conservation of Ramsar and nationally important wetlands;
- the development of interpretive and educational materials for Ramsar sites;
- monitoring and assessing values of Ramsar and nationally important wetlands; increasing the awareness and involvement of others within the community; and
- research.

Waterwatch Australia Program, of the NHT, is a national community based water quality monitoring program that enables Australians to become involved in the management and monitoring of their local waterways and wetlands. Water quality monitoring is used as a tool to raise awareness and engage the community in environmental management. There are currently over 50,000 volunteers across Australia involved in the Waterwatch Australia initiative. Approximately AUS\$13 million in NHT funding has been used to establish a network of State-based Waterwatch Facilitators whose role is to foster the establishment of a regional network of Waterwatch Coordinators. Regional Coordinators are appointed to train the community to become involved in Waterwatch and to interpret their monitoring results so they can design projects that tackle the problems they detect.

The Coastcare Program of the NHT supports community involvement in the management of coastal and marine areas, including wetlands. Its focus is on practical actions and on-ground works to tackle the causes of environmental degradation. Coastcare supports a national network of regionally based Coastcare Facilitators in every State and Territory in Australia, and there are almost 60,000 volunteers involved in on-ground projects and educational activities. Activities undertaken through the Coastcare Program include revegetating dunes and coastal wetlands, controlling weeds and erosion, protecting and rehabilitating sensitive coastal, marine and estuarine areas; developing and implementing components of local integrated coastal management plans; and monitoring of coastal and marine fauna, coastal, estuarine and marine habitats and water quality.

Several initiatives are being taken to ensure involvement of Indigenous groups in wetland management activities throughout Australia. At the Commonwealth level, the EPBC Act promotes the involvement of Indigenous people in wetland management through the Indigenous Advisory Committee. The Committee advises the Minister for the Environment and Heritage on the operation of the EPBC Act, taking into account the significance of Indigenous peoples' knowledge in natural resource management, and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The EPBC Act also encourages participation of Indigenous representatives on the Biological Diversity Advisory Committee (BDAC), responsible for advising the Minister on matters relating to the conservation and ecologically sustainable development of biological diversity. It is a requirement under the Act that one of the members of the BDAC must represent Indigenous peoples. These roles allow the viewpoints and knowledge of traditional landowners to be incorporated into decisions made regarding Ramsar wetlands, and other issues arising under the implementation of the EPBC Act.

Various programs are in place to encourage the involvement of Indigenous groups in wetland management. For example, Kakadu National Park, which is largely Ramsar listed, is managed by the Kakadu Board of Management, established in 1989 to ensure the full

participation of Aboriginal people in planning and management issues for the park. The Board of Management has fifteen members, ten of whom are Aboriginal people nominated by the Park's traditional owners (see 2.7.3. for further detail on the Board of Management).

Other programs operating in Australia to encourage involvement of Indigenous groups in wetland management include:

Indigenous Land Management Facilitators Project

Environment Australia together with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry-Australia fund a network of Indigenous Land Management Facilitators (ILMF) across Australia. The Facilitators provide a link between Indigenous land managers and other individuals and organisations involved in promoting sustainable land management and nature conservation. The Facilitators work with Indigenous communities to enable them to access the range of natural resource management funds, facilities and programs available in Australia. Wetland areas are often of great significance to Indigenous communities, and many of the projects developed through the network have a wetland focus. In the past year, the ILMF project has led to an increase in participation by Indigenous communities in programs under the Natural Heritage Trust, securing projects worth AUS\$5.9 million in 99/00 with an increase to AUS\$9.3million in 00/01.

Indigenous Protected Areas Program

The National Reserve System (NRS) Program, under the Natural Heritage Trust, was established to create a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of terrestrial protected areas within Australia. The Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) Program is one component of the NRS Program, which aims to support Indigenous landowners to manage their lands for the protection of natural and cultural features, in accordance with internationally recognised standards and guidelines. To date fifteen IPAs, covering approximately 3.6 million hectares, have been declared on Aboriginal land, including significant areas of wetland. For example, 430,000 hectares in Paruku, Western Australia, was recently declared an IPA. The Paruku area, also known as Lake Gregory, is considered one of Australia's most important inland wetlands and it provides a major drought refuge for waterfowl. Aboriginal traditional owners are now considering nomination of the site under the Ramsar Convention as an additional step in protecting the natural and cultural values of the wetland (see 2.7.4).

The Caring for Country Unit

Almost half of the Northern Territory (NT) is held under Aboriginal stewardship. Consequently, indigenous participation in wetland management is of special importance in the Territory. The Northern Land Council established the Caring for Country Unit to represent the interests of Aboriginal landowners in the 'Top End' of the NT. The Unit develops formal land management programs that enable traditional Aboriginal landholders and communities to effectively manage their land, particularly wetland areas. Objectives of the Caring for Country Unit include the re-establishment of traditional fire management regimes to restore vegetation communities, and the management of pest animal (eg. Pigs and Buffalo) and invasive plant species (eg. *Mimosa* sp. and *Salvinia* sp.) that are having a dramatic impact on wetland ecosystems. The Unit encourages the use of traditional knowledge, combined with contemporary scientific research, to combat the environmental problems faced to ensure that Aboriginal communities are able to manage their lands in the most effective manner possible.

The Community Ranger Scheme

The Community Ranger Scheme provides access to training and education - in practical natural resource management - for people living in Aboriginal communities. This has enabled all planning, decision-making and implementation responsibilities to be taken on by traditional landholders. Community Rangers from a number of areas provide on-ground management activities, with over 20 community-based natural resource management programs currently operating across the Top End of the Northern Territory. These programs also investigate potential enterprise activities based on 'wise use' of natural resources, to generate income that can be used for management activities. Community Rangers encourage communication between traditional owners and land managers, to ensure that traditional viewpoints form a key component in management decisions.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

2.7.2 Encourage site managers and local communities to work in partnership at all levels to monitor the ecological character of wetlands, thus providing a better understanding of management needs and human impacts. [CPs]

- ***The Convention's Outreach Programme (COP7 Resolution VII.9) seeks to give such community participation higher priority as an education and empowerment tool of the Convention.***

Does your government **actively encourage or support** site managers and local communities in monitoring the condition (ecological character) of Ramsar sites and other wetlands? (Also refer to Operational Objective 5.1.)

Yes. The Commonwealth and State/Territory governments, through the National Wetlands, Waterwatch and Coastcare Programs under the Natural Heritage Trust, encourage the involvement of local communities and stakeholders in the monitoring of waterways and wetlands (described in 2.7.1).

If **No**, what prevents this from occurring?

If **Yes**, does this include both site managers and local communities, where they are not the same people?

Yes, site managers and local communities are both encouraged to undertake monitoring activities. Approximately one third of Australia's Ramsar sites or their catchments are currently being monitored through the Waterwatch Australia Program. Examples of this can be found at the two Ramsar sites, Port Phillip Bay and Moreton Bay and other wetland sites in Adelaide and the Gove Peninsular.

At Swan Bay, within the Port Phillip Bay Ramsar site, Victoria, the site manager (Parks Victoria), scientists and the local community are conducting monitoring projects. The local community monitoring project has been organised through the Waterwatch Program (refer

to 2.7.1). Local community members, including approximately 100 children from nearby schools, monitor ten sites within the Swan Bay catchment.

A community monitoring project, Wetlands Resource Investigation: Boondall and Tinchí Tamba Wetlands, was undertaken at the Boondall and Tinchí Tamba wetlands, located within the Moreton Bay Ramsar site, Queensland. The project is run by the community group Keep Sandgate Beautiful Association, and supported financially by the Coastcare Program and Brisbane City Council. The project involved the training of sixty-five volunteers who subsequently monitored the wetlands over a twelve-month period. Presence-absence and other ecological data were collected on crustaceans, frogs and other amphibians, plants, nocturnal animals, reptiles and raptors.

One example of monitoring projects that incorporate Waterwatch throughout Australia at non-Ramsar wetlands is the project in Adelaide, South Australia. Waterwatch have been involved in organising the rehabilitation and monitoring of Apex Park Wetland in the suburbs of Adelaide. Prior to rehabilitation, a local community group, Bush Anew, conducted a botanical survey of the site. The survey identified a rare plant species that was previously believed to be extinct in the local area. The survey also provided information used in the revegetation component of the project. Many groups were involved in the rehabilitation of the site, including local government agencies, research scientists, local community groups, schools and local residents. Three thousand native plants, propagated from locally collected seeds, were planted by volunteers including school groups, service clubs and members of the community. In addition to revegetation, other actions were taken to rehabilitate the wetland. A monitoring program was subsequently developed and the local primary school now conduct regular water quality and biological monitoring at the wetland.

In the Gove Peninsula (East Arnhem Land), the Northern Territory, the Waterwatch Program has collaborated with the local Aboriginal community, to establish a monitoring project for the surrounding waterways and wetlands. The local Aboriginal people named their group Gapuwu Mel'gnu Mala which can be translated to mean Water for Surveillance People. The emphasis of Waterwatch is normally on people as the watchers of water. Offering quite a different perspective, the emphasis of Gapuwu Mel'gnu Mala is on "water for people to watch". The Gapuwu Mel'gnu Mala program has involved the mining company Nabalco, who allowed sites on their leased property to be included in the monitoring program. Nabalco, along with the local business community, also provided funds that enabled the group to purchase water quality monitoring equipment for their project. A wide range of people and groups have been involved in the monitoring project, including local children, families, Aboriginal Rangers and Managers, National Park Rangers, a group of mothers, local tradesmen, government officers, farmers and a staff member from the Nabalco laboratory. Approximately 16 sites in waterways and wetlands within the region have been monitored by Gapuwu Mel'gnu Mala. Apart from one or two potential problem sites, the monitoring program has demonstrated that the sites included in the program are all in excellent condition.

AND, where such monitoring occurs, are the findings being used to guide management practices?

Yes. For example, results from the monitoring project conducted at Boondall and Tinchí Tamba wetlands are used by the respective site management committees to guide management decisions for the wetlands.

If No , what prevents this from happening?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

<p>2.7.3 Involve local communities in the management of wetlands by establishing wetland management committees, especially at Ramsar sites, on which local stakeholders, landowners, managers, developers and community interest groups, in particular women's groups, are represented. [CPs, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - Ramsar site management committees operating in at least 100 CPs, and including non-government stakeholder representation.
Are there wetland site management committees in place in your country?
Yes, predominantly at Ramsar sites.
<p>If No, what are the impediments to such being established?</p> <p>A lack of resources and remoteness of location can impede the establishment of a wetland site management committee in some areas. For example many Indigenous communities are keen to manage wetlands. A community in Weipa is currently a joint manager of a large tract of wetlands in their area. They have arranged this on their own initiative partly as a sign of self-determination and concern for that culturally rich and significant environment.</p> <p>However the lack of necessary funds is often a major stumbling block to effective Indigenous involvement including support to bring forward the case for protection and listing under the Convention. Increased assistance is required by Indigenous groups and meaningful advice provided about any prospects for funding their cases for listing new areas and management of existing Ramsar sites where Indigenous interests are evident.</p>
If Yes , for how many sites are such committees in place?
The number of management committees in place for all wetlands in Australia is not known.

AND: How many of these are Ramsar sites?

Wetland Management Committees in place for Ramsar sites in each State/Territory

Jurisdiction	No. [Ramsar sites]	No. [Wetland Management Committees*]
Western Australia	12	7
Northern Territory	3	2
Queensland	5	3
New South Wales	9	9
Australian Capital Territory	1	1
Victoria	11	1
Tasmania	10	4
South Australia	4	4
External Territories	2	2

* A Wetland Management Committee is considered one that is actively responsible for management decisions at a Ramsar site. This includes committees that have been established for the management of national parks, nature reserves and catchments/regions/districts that incorporate a Ramsar site.

AND: Of these committees, how many include representatives of local stakeholders?

Representatives of local stakeholders are present on all of the above Ramsar site management committees. For example:

The Towra Point Ramsar Site Steering Committee includes representatives from:

- Site manager – NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service;
- Local council – Botany Bay Planning & Protection Council and Sutherland Shire Council;
- Local conservation groups – Friends of Towra Point Nature Reserve;
- Non-government organisations – Coast and Wetlands Society and the National Parks Association;
- Commonwealth government agencies – Environment Australia;
- State government agencies – Waterways Authority and the Department of Transport, NSW Fisheries; and
- Research organisations – University of NSW.

The Kakadu National Park Ramsar sites are managed by the Board of Management together with the Commonwealth Director of National Parks. The Kakadu Board of Management currently has fifteen members, ten of whom are Aboriginal people nominated by the local traditional owners. The other five members of the Board are the Director of Parks Australia North (PAN) (Environment Australia), the Assistant Secretary of PAN, a representative of nature conservation groups/individuals, a representative of the tourism industry in the NT and a representative of the Northern Territory government.

The Macquarie Marshes Ramsar Site Management Group co-ordinates the management of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar site, which is located on both public and private land. The Group is composed of the landholder signatories and a representative from Environment Australia (Commonwealth Government Agency), National Parks and Wildlife Service and

the non-government organisations, World Wide Fund for Nature–Australia and National Parks Association NSW.

The Commonwealth Government is responsible for the management of two Ramsar sites within external territories, Hosnie’s Spring Ramsar site on Christmas Island, and Pulu Keeling National Park Ramsar site on the Cocos Islands. Both of these territories have diverse communities and the relevant management committees aim to reflect this diversity. For example the Christmas Island National Park Advisory Committee, responsible for managing the National Park including the Hosnie’s Spring Ramsar site, includes the Director of Parks Australia North, and eight Christmas Island residents. The residents represent a cross-section of the Chinese, Christmas Island Malay and the European communities. A Pulu Keeling National Park Community Management Committee, responsible for providing assistance to the Director of the National Park, has been established. The Committee consists of ten people including the Government Conservator, six Cocos Malay people and three other members of the local community nominated by the Director, representing tourism, education and general interest groups.

AND: Of these, how many have women’s groups represented?

Although wetland management committees in Australia do not specifically include representatives of women’s groups, women are included in committees as representatives of other stakeholder groups. For example, more women than men sit on the Kakadu Board of Management as Traditional Owner representatives.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

2.7.4 Recognise and apply traditional knowledge and management practice of Indigenous people and local communities in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]

- **Refer to 2.7.1 above.**
- **Global Target - This will be addressed in the next triennium, possibly in partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention to Combat Desertification, which have already initiated work in this area.**

Has your government **made any special efforts** to recognise and see applied traditional knowledge and management practices?

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

If **Yes**, please provide details of how this traditional knowledge was recognised and then put into practice.

Within Australia, there is an increased recognition of traditional knowledge in land

management. In recent years a number of steps have been taken to establish and improve links between Indigenous groups and land management frameworks to encourage the application of this knowledge. For example an Indigenous Advisory Committee and a Biological Diversity Advisory Committee have been established under the EPBC Act (refer to 2.7.1).

In addition to such legislative initiatives, the Commonwealth Government has also commenced several programs including the Indigenous Land Management Facilitators Program and the Indigenous Protected Areas Program (refer to 2.7.1) to recognise and see applied traditional knowledge.

The Indigenous Land Management Facilitators network fosters links between the Indigenous community and other stakeholders involved in natural resource management. These links are assisting in the transfer of traditional knowledge and improving the acceptance of Indigenous values and management practices. The Indigenous Protected Areas Program provides support for the Indigenous landholders to develop cooperative management arrangements with their respective State/Territory based conservation agencies. The application of traditional knowledge and management practices are central to these arrangements.

The Paruku Indigenous Protected Area covering approximately 435,000 hectares, including the nationally significant wetland Lake Gregory, was the first Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) to be declared in Western Australia. Paruku IPA is owned and managed by the Tjurabalan native title holders who have maintained a connection with the land for thousands of years. The land and waters within the IPA are governed by the Traditional Owners under Jurapalan Tingarri Law. Paruku is the name used by the Traditional Owners to describe the system of lakes that terminate in Lake Gregory. Paruku is a site of both cultural and ecological significance. It is a site of enormous spiritual significance to the Traditional Owners of the country and supports at least 73 species of waterbirds, 21 of which are listed under international treaties to conserve waterbirds. Bush food gathered regularly in and around Paruku provides an important component of the diet of Aboriginal people living on the IPA. There are two pastoral stations within the IPA that have been grazed at various intensities since 1920. Hence, the Traditional Owners of Paruku have divided the IPA into two management zones: Zone 1 is managed primarily for the culturally important wetland system and waterbird habitat that it contains, and Zone 2 is managed primarily for ecologically sustainable grazing. The declaration of the Paruku IPA has allowed the Aboriginal Traditional Owners to protect their places of cultural significance, to develop an ecologically sustainable pastoral enterprise, and to conserve the Paruku wetlands by applying their traditional beliefs and knowledge.

The Cultural Heritage Management Section (operating under Parks Australia North, Environment Australia) in Kakadu National Park is responsible for, among other things, collecting and storing traditional knowledge. They are currently creating a database that will contain all the cultural knowledge that has been, and will be, collected in the Park. Several studies have also been undertaken into wetlands management practices in the Park. The project entitled Aboriginal Fire Management of the Woolwonga Wetlands has documented Aboriginal people's understanding of ecological processes occurring in Kakadu wetlands and the effect of different fire management regimes on these processes. Wherever possible, the study has identified differences in contemporary and traditional approaches to fire

management by Aboriginal people and documents their understanding and perceptions of “good” and “bad” approaches to the use of fire in the management of Kakadu wetlands. The final report produced by the study is based, in the main, on video interviews conducted with three generations of Aboriginal people resident in the northern lowlands of the Park. Another study titled Traditional Resources of the South Alligator Floodplain: Utilisation and Management, provides an account of what resources exist in the floodplain and how Aboriginal people utilise those resources. It concerns traditional Bininj (Aboriginal) utilisation and management of fresh-water floodplains and Bininj people’s perceptions of major environmental changes that have occurred in these areas. The report was developed primarily as a resource document and presents and summarises the information that was provided by a large number of mostly older Aboriginal people. The Caring for Country Unit, described in 2.7.1, has also been established in the Northern Territory to aid in applying traditional knowledge to land management practices.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has made a number of efforts to recognise and put into practice traditional knowledge and management practices. Such efforts include establishing an Indigenous Liaison Unit to communicate management issues and concerns between Indigenous people and the Authority, and to ensure appropriate people are involved in consultations and negotiations. Indigenous community members have also been included on boards and committees that are involved in managing the Reef. GBRMPA have also supported the Hope Vale Aboriginal community in developing a Turtle and Dugong Hunting Management Plan that aims to ensure that hunting takes place in accordance with tradition and custom and is ecologically sustainable.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Ramsar site managers according to jurisdictional responsibility or ownership.

Operational Objective 2.8: To encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.8.1. Encourage the private sector to give increased recognition to wetland attributes, functions and values when carrying out projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, the efforts to work in partnership with the private sector will be further increased and the Bureau will seek to document and make available case studies on some of the more effective and innovative approaches. By COP8, the target is to have private sector support for wetlands conservation in more than 100 CPs.**

Have **special efforts been made** to increase the recognition of wetland attributes, functions and values among the private sector in your country?

Yes, special efforts have been made with the private sector, including corporate businesses in metropolitan areas and landholders in rural areas.

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

If **Yes**, describe these special efforts.

A number of policies are in place in Australia that aim to increase private sector knowledge of wetland attributes, functions and values. The Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia seeks to conserve, repair and manage wetlands wisely. One of the strategies outlined in the Policy aims to involve the Australian people in wetlands management by promoting awareness and understanding of the wetland resource in Australia and actively encouraging participation of the community, including private landholders and the business sector, in achieving the goal of this policy. Specifically, Strategy 3.3 states that a range of economic, voluntary, educational and other measures will be documented and promoted to encourage wetland conservation activities by the private sector. In addition, the Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Action Plan (refer to 2.3.2) was developed in accordance with the Ramsar Outreach Programme 1999-2002 which aims 'to increase the knowledge and understanding of wetland values and benefits and so develop action towards the conservation and sustainable management of wetland resources'. The CEPA Action Plan is also consistent with the goal and strategies of the Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia, also targeting private landholders to improve private sector knowledge on wetland attributes, functions and values.

Several government departments are encouraging the improvement of private sector knowledge of wetland values through programs under their jurisdictions. For example, the National Landcare Program (NLP) implemented by AFFA (Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry - Australia) was established in 1992. The NLP has supported collective action by communities, including the private sector, to sustainably manage the environment and natural resources in partnership with government agencies. The NLP established Landcare Australia Limited (LAL), a not-for-profit company that has two main purposes. Firstly to raise awareness of, and participation in, landcare and landcare issues within rural and urban communities. Secondly, LAL raises funds and resources for landcare projects. To date, most of the projects conducted by LAL are sponsored by the corporate sector. For example, Landcare Australia Limited have developed a relationship with the Banrock Station Winery in South Australia. The winery now includes a royalty fee on each bottle of wine that it sells, and funds generated through the royalty provide an ongoing income to LAL. In 2001, Banrock Station Winery donated approximately AUS\$150 000 to LAL which will be used to fund wetland restoration projects.

The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Program is a Commonwealth Government funding initiative to boost the competitiveness of industry, including the private sector, and capture the benefits of research for Australians. The CRC Program brings together researchers from universities, research organisations, government agencies and industry for strategic research. The collaboration between academia and industry ensures that research being undertaken is relevant to industry requirements, and that research findings are communicated to, and utilised by, industry. The Commonwealth Government contributes approximately AUS\$145 million per annum to the CRC Program, with industry committing more than \$1.4 billion to date, or approximately 25 cents out of every dollar provided by government. Over 250 companies are involved in the CRC Program including several

leading international companies. The CRC Program currently supports 64 Cooperative Research Centres operating throughout Australia in a diverse range of disciplines including manufacturing technology, information and communication technology, mining and energy, agriculture rural base manufacturing, medical science and technology and environment. Environmental CRC's conducting research into wetland related issues include the CRC for Catchment Hydrology, the CRC for Coastal Zone, Estuary & Waterway Management, the CRC for Freshwater Ecology (CRCFE) and the CRC for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The CRCFE, for example, aims to improve the health of inland waters through improving the sustainable management of land and water resources. The application of the Centre's research to support sustainable management is a fundamental measure of the centre's success. To this end, the Centre affords a high priority to knowledge exchange. Consequently, a Knowledge Exchange strategy and team have been established by the Centre to create and improve links between the CRCFE and industry. Information on the CRC Program and Centres can be accessed on the Internet at: <http://www.irs.gov.au/crc/index.html>.

The Murray-Darling Basin, covering 1 million km², incorporates 75% of Australia's irrigation areas and provides just over 41% of Australia's gross value of agricultural production. Therefore, rural landowners must be considered an important stakeholder in the management of the Basin's resources. The Floodplain Wetlands Management Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin recognises that floodplain wetlands of the Basin provide economic, social and cultural benefits, including grazing, forestry, fishing and agricultural activities and many recreational, educational and scientific pursuits. The goal of the Strategy is 'to maintain and, where possible, enhance floodplain wetland ecosystems in the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) for the benefit of present and future generations'. This will be achieved through actions in three main areas: policy development, on-ground works and knowledge generation. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to increase public awareness of wetland values and wetland management issues. This includes improving the knowledge of all stakeholders with an interest in the Basin, including landholders and rural communities. A desired outcome of the Strategy is 'improved management and rehabilitation of wetlands by community groups and management agencies', which is measured by a number of indicators including 'the number of farms implementing best practice in property management plans.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC), in conjunction with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), have commenced a program in the MDB entitled the Heartlands Initiative. The MDBC have recognised that traditional broad-acre agricultural systems are largely unsustainable in many areas of Basin, resulting in degraded natural ecosystems including the riverine environment and its associated wetlands. The deterioration of natural resource condition is threatening the viability of farming enterprises and the survival of the related rural communities. As a consequence, large-scale land use change is required. However, many farming enterprises do not have sufficient cash surplus to invest in new production systems and for many areas, sustainable production systems have yet to be identified. The Heartlands Initiative began in mid-2001, and will communicate extensively with farm owners and managers to enable the design of efficient strategies for landscape rehabilitation through targeted revegetation and re-designed agricultural systems. Heartlands will support implementation strategies, and verify their effectiveness. Since it has commenced, the Initiative has formulated a project framework, a detailed 5-year plan, and has begun the implementation of some on-ground

works, monitoring and research.

Significant efforts have also been made by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) within Australia to promote the importance of wetlands in the private sector. As a result, several alliances have recently been formed between NGOs and the private sector to support wetland conservation, notably Revive our Wetlands, an alliance between BHP and Australian Conservation Volunteers, as well as Wetland Care Australia and BRL Hardy's Banrock Station project.

AND: Have these efforts been successful?

Yes

If **No**, why not?

If **Yes**, how do you judge this success? Financial support for management or monitoring? Active involvement in management or monitoring? (Refer to 2.8.3 below) Application of Ramsar's Wise Use principles by private sector interests? (Refer to 2.8.2 below)? Other criteria?

The programs detailed above have resulted in a number of significant success stories. Success has been judged by improvement in ecological condition, provision of financial support by the private sector for rehabilitation works, active involvement of the community and private sector in monitoring and management, and the application of wise-use principles by private sector interests. The successful Banrock Station and Revive projects are described below.

The Banrock Station Winery Project

Banrock Station Winery, owned by BRL Hardy Pty. Ltd. is located on a 1,700 ha property in South Australia, on the floodplain of the River Murray. 250 ha of the property are devoted to vineyards while the remaining 1,450 ha is being rehabilitated, including 12 kilometres of river frontage and more than 400 ha of wetland and floodplain area. Banrock Station employ 'state of the art' sustainable land management practices on their vineyards. The Station uses advanced trellising and soil conservation techniques, minimal chemical spraying programs and environmentally-friendly irrigation systems. Banrock Station have also formed an alliance with the non-government organisation Wetland Care Australia to rehabilitate the wetlands on the property. Together, the groups have undertaken an extensive revegetation program, restored the natural hydrological cycle to the wetlands on the property, and taken measures to reduce the number of invasive fish species present in the wetlands. In 1999, Banrock Station opened the Wine and Wetland Centre, overlooking one of the wetlands on the property. The Centre provides educational information on wetlands, viewing platforms and wine tastings for visitors to the property. A boardwalk has also been constructed to allow visitors to the centre to observe the wetlands with minimal disruption to the ecosystem. In addition to the environmental work occurring on the property and the Visitors Centre, the Winery also donated proceeds from a royalty on sales of Banrock Station wines to provide ongoing income to the environmental groups Landcare Australia Limited and Wetland Care Australia, for conservation projects in Australia.

Revive our Wetlands Project

The non-government organisation Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) together with the private mining and petroleum company BHP-Billiton, joined forces and established the Revive our Wetlands Project in 2001. Revive is the largest business-community partnership in Australia addressing the issue of wetland rehabilitation, and the project aims to restore 100 wetlands throughout Australia over the next three years. The Revive project forms part of BHP-Billiton's strategy to ensure that communities in which the company operates directly benefit from its success. BHP-Billiton aim to contribute the equivalent of one per cent of the company's pre-tax profit to community development programs and partnerships, and through the Revive project, more than \$2.5 million will be provided to improve Australia's wetlands. In the first year of the Revive partnership, 83 wetlands have been selected for rehabilitation in consultation with CVA, wetland consultants and local land management organisations. A wide range of wetland-types have been selected for rehabilitation, including inter-tidal wetlands, salt marshes, mangroves, desert lakes, floodplain and riverine wetlands, upland lakes, alpine bogs, and even significant constructed wetlands. Approximately 65% of the 83 wetlands selected to date are of international or national significance.

During the three year program, CVA will also train seven wetland environment officers and engage communities in locally based wetlands activities. Project teams will undertake a wide range of practical activities addressing wetland rehabilitation and protection, such as weed removal, access control, revegetation, seed collection, plant propagation, simple flora and fauna surveys and installation of interpretive signage. As of October 2001, volunteers involved in the Revive project have planted over 40,000 stems, collected 49 kg of seed, removed 120 ha of weeds, conducted 30 flora and fauna surveys and built and maintained 22 km of walking tracks.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

2.8.2 Encourage the private sector to apply the Wise Use Guidelines when executing development projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium the application of this tool for promoting Wise Use will be a priority under the Convention. By COP8, the target is to have more than 50 CPs which have completed reviews of their incentive measures.**

Refer to 2.8.1 above. Has your government **completed** a review of its "existing, or evolving, policy, legal and institutional frameworks to identify and promote those measures which encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands and to identify and remove measures which discourage conservation and wise use" (COP7 Resolution VII.15)?

No. A review is currently in progress but has not yet been completed.

If **No**, what has been the impediment to this being done?

The Commonwealth Government has funded a two-stage review of incentive measures for wetland managers. The first stage of the review, a project entitled Private and Social Values of Wetlands, has been completed. The second stage of the review, Incentive Measures – Freshwater Ecosystems and Private Landholders, is currently taking place.

The Private and Social Values of Wetlands Project, was funded under the Commonwealth's National Wetlands Research and Development Program between 1998 and 2001. In recognising that a large number of Australia's wetlands are located on private property, the focus of the project was on the management of privately owned wetlands. The project assessed the values derived from wetlands by private landowners and the broader community, investigated current wetland management strategies being employed by landholders, evaluated whether these management strategies were meeting the requirements of society as a whole, and provided recommendations for encouraging better wetland management by private landholders.

The results of the study indicated that wetlands have a wide range of values, both to the private landholder and the broader community. Wetlands are valued as sites for grazing, firewood and timber production, water supply, drainage storage basins, tourism, recreation, hunting and fishing, and they provide flora, fauna and aesthetic values, flood mitigation, water quality benefits, groundwater recharge and other ecosystem values. Using surveys, various modelling techniques and cost-benefit analyses, it was concluded that while the broader community would be the primary recipient of the benefits arising from improved wetland management strategies, the costs of adopting these strategies are predominantly borne by the private wetland owners. Consequently, current incentives for improved wetland management were reviewed. Surveys indicated that currently, only between 21 – 33% of wetland owners receive incentives to undertake wetland management. These incentives may be in the form of tax incentives, free materials (eg. fencing) or free management advice from government agencies. The survey also indicated that the major incentives desired by land owners to help manage their wetlands were:

- Financial assistance (including enhanced tax breaks);
- Fencing assistance;
- Free or low cost water for wetlands;
- Wetland and property management training/assistance; and
- Revegetation assistance.

The project recommended possible changes to institutional frameworks that would provide incentive for private wetland owners to improve their current wetland management practices at local, State and Commonwealth government levels. These recommendations include providing exemptions or rate rebates on areas that were nominated by landowners as "conservation land" (land primarily managed for conservation purposes), the promotion of tourism in appropriate areas including development of infrastructure and training for wetland owners, and provision of tax incentives. It was also recommended that disincentives, such as minimum land size requirements for nomination of "conservation land", be removed.

The second stage of the review Incentive Measures – Freshwater Ecosystems and Private Landholders [where freshwater ecosystems are taken to mean wetlands] was funded under the Commonwealth National River Health Program in 2001. The project will review and assess current incentive measures for the conservation and wise use of privately-owned wetlands in Australia. Incentive measures employed in other countries will be reviewed and their potential application in Australia will be investigated. As a result of the reviews undertaken, the project will:

- Recommend a set of incentive measures to promote the ecologically sustainable use of freshwater wetland resources in Australia;
- Make available, in user-friendly format, information and guidance about current incentive measures for wetland conservation to natural resource managers and private wetland owners in Australia;
- Identify additional incentive measures that could be introduced in Australia to further increase the range of incentives available for promoting wetland conservation and wise use; and
- Identify opportunities within the COAG Water Reform framework (refer to 2.1.1.) to expand and develop the range of incentives available for freshwater wetland conservation and wise use on private land from within Australia.

If **Yes**, what actions have been taken to introduce “incentive measures designed to encourage the wise use of wetlands, and to identify and remove perverse incentives where they exist” (COP7 Resolution VII.15).

AND: Have these actions been effective?

If **No**, why not?

If **Yes**, please describe how.

AND if **Yes**, COP7 Resolution VII.15 requested Parties to share these “experiences and lessons learned with respect to incentive measures and perverse incentives relating to wetlands, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources generally, by providing these to the Ramsar Bureau for appropriate distribution and to be made available through the Wise Use Resource Centre of the Convention’s Web site”. Has this been done?

The report from the first stage of the review has been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau. Results from the second stage of the review will be forwarded upon completion of the project.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia

2.8.3 Encourage the private sector to work in partnership with site managers to monitor the ecological character of wetlands. [CPs]

- **This action will be promoted further in the next triennium.**

Refer to 2.7.2 above. In addition, have **any special efforts** been made to encourage the private sector involvement in monitoring?

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

If **Yes**, describe these special efforts.

Special efforts taken to encourage the involvement of the private sector in monitoring include establishment of the Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program at the Moreton Bay Ramsar site, Queensland, and the establishment of the Lake Bonney Management Committee and projects under the Waterwatch Program (refer to 2.7.2).

The Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program (EHMP) at the Moreton Bay Ramsar site evolved from the South-East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Water Quality Management Strategy, 1994. This Strategy, developed through a collaboration between the Commonwealth, State and local governments, community and the private sector, aimed to coordinate actions that would improve management of coastal waterways in south-east Queensland, including Moreton Bay. The EHMP was initiated to independently evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken under the Strategy to restore and protect the ecosystem health of Moreton Bay and its rivers and estuaries. A total of 150 bay and estuarine sites are monitored each year during the program. All of the major organisations that discharge nitrogen into Moreton Bay and its river estuaries are involved in the EHMP, including eight local councils and four privately owned companies. Funding contributions required of each of the industrial companies to the monitoring program are proportional to their respective nitrogen discharge loads into Moreton Bay, therefore encouraging the improvement of wastewater treatment and recycling by the companies. Information on the EHMP is available on the Internet at: <http://www.coastal.crc.org.au/ehmp/>.

Kimberly-Clark Pty Ltd's paper manufacturing plant in South Australia produces pulp and paper effluent that is discharged into Lake Bonney. The company's waste disposal practices in the past, along with a number of other impacts, have resulted in significant decline in the condition of the Lake. As a result, the South Australian Environment Protection Agency established the Lake Bonney Management Committee, including a representative from Kimberly-Clark, to oversee management issues arising at Lake Bonney. The Committee commenced a water quality monitoring program for the Lake, with Kimberly-Clark contributing significantly to the program. As a result of the monitoring program, the company has considerably improved both the quality and quantity of the effluent discharged into the Lake.

AND: How successful has this been?

Since the EHMP at Moreton Bay began, all of the companies involved have agreed to move towards best practice environmental management through waste prevention, cleaner production and wastewater reuse. For example, the abattoir AMH Pty Ltd has spent \$2 million improving the wastewater discharge from its factory, and aims to achieve a reduction in total nitrogen load of its effluent to 150 kg/d by 2002. The fertilizer manufacturer Incitec Ltd has reduced their total nitrogen load in effluent by 70%, from 1300 kg/d to 400 kg/d and aim to eliminate all effluent discharge into the Brisbane River (one of the five major estuaries of Moreton Bay) within five years. AMH and Incitec are well advanced in achieving these aims through the installation of wastewater treatment and recycling systems.

Results from the monitoring program at Lake Bonney encouraged Kimberly-Clark to improve the quality and reduce the quantity of manufacturing effluent discharged into the Lake. The company has invested AUS\$200 million on a new pulp mill, allowing the recovery and recycling of all chemicals used in the pulping process. In addition, the

company replaced chlorine bleaching with the more environmentally-friendly hydrogen peroxide bleaching process. Removal of solids from effluent was improved by installing another settling pond in the manufacturing plant, and a further \$10 million was spent on improving total effluent quality by installing three aerated lagoons that filter the effluent prior to its discharge into Lake Bonney. Consequently, the water quality in Lake Bonney has improved significantly.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

2.8.4 Involve the private sector in the management of wetlands through participation in wetland management committees. [CPs]

- **Global Target - As indicated under 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 above, the establishment of cross-sectoral and stakeholder management committees for wetlands, and especially Ramsar sites, will be a priority in the next triennium.**

Refer to 2.7.3 above

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 3 – TO RAISE AWARENESS OF WETLAND VALUES AND FUNCTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND AT ALL LEVELS

Operational Objective 3.1: To support and assist in implementing, in cooperation with partners and other institutions, an international programme of Education and Public Awareness (EPA) on wetlands, their functions and values, designed to promote national EPA programmes.

Actions - Global Targets

3.1.1 Assist in identifying and establishing coordinating mechanisms and structures for the development and implementation of a concerted global programme of EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to Operational Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 below

3.1.2 Participate in the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for resource development. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Has your country **taken any action** to help with the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for information/education resource development?

Yes, but only for wetland managers.

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

If **Yes**, please provide details, and as appropriate, provide samples to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre's clearing house for Wetland Communications, Public Awareness, and Education (CEPA) (COP7 Resolution VII.9).

Under the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program (APWMTP), the Northern Territory University, funded by the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage Trust, has undertaken a Review of Training Opportunities and Needs for Wetland Managers in the Asia Pacific Region.

This review identified the need for the following:

- Regional courses for policy makers to increase awareness and facilitate regional communication and cooperation;
- In-service training for field managers/rangers to raise awareness of the values of, and threats to wetlands, provide information and teach practical skills in all countries. These courses are most effective when they are part of an on-going association with the group, held in-country, practical and include some local instructors; and
- Greater access to both technical information/expertise and training opportunities/scholarships.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia and the Northern Territory University in collaboration with several partners.

3.1.3 Assist in the development of international resource materials in support of national EPA programmes [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 3.1.2 above also. Has your country **taken any action** to assist with the development of international wetland CEPA resource materials?

Yes

If **Yes**, please provide details, and as appropriate, provide samples to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre's clearing house for Wetland CEPA (COP7 Resolution VII.9).

The Centre for Tropical Wetlands (NTU) maintains the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program website (<http://www.ntu.edu.au/ctwm/training.html#top>). This will be further developed to include course materials and information on the course modules. The Centre has produced information on completed courses, including a video on the Djelk Rangers in Arnhem land, titled Wetland Management Training: The People are the Resource.

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

3.1.4 Support international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills between wetland education centres and educators (e.g., Wetland International's EPA Working Group, Global Rivers Environment Education Network (GREEN), Wetland Link International). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 3.2.4 also. Does your country support any international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills among wetland education centres and educators?

Yes

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

If **Yes**, please provide details.

Australia's Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Action Plan guides Australia's participation in the Wetlands Link International (WLI) Initiative through the domestic network. The Wetlands Centre, Australia, is currently contracted under the National Wetlands Program of the Natural Heritage Trust to coordinate Wetland Link International Australia (WLI Australia). This involves generating a list of National Wetlands Centres, establishing links with WLI in other countries, coordinating the development of a communication strategy for WLI Australia, and coordinating the design and delivery of a Network Forum for Wetland Centres.

The Australian Shorebird Education Program, also coordinated by The Wetlands Centre on behalf of the Commonwealth Government under contract, involves generating a list of national and international (Japan, Hong Kong and Alaska) education contacts, developing a strategy for maintaining communication with coordinators and schools, and collaborating with Wetland Education Centres and schools in the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Flyway. The aim of this activity is to share information and develop awareness-raising materials and links.

The Education Unit of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority also encourages the transfer of information, knowledge and skills between educators via their video conferencing facilities and programs. In 2001 they shared information with the United Kingdom, United States of America, South America, South Africa, Hawaii and Japan. The Education Unit has also been heavily involved in supporting the on-line conference organised by the Sustainable Seas Expedition titled "Conservation and the Coral Reef World". This on-line conference was aimed at educators, explorer's, scientists and teachers.

Is your country specifically supporting the Wetlands Link International initiative (COP7 Resolution VII.9)?

Yes

If **No**, what is preventing this from happening?

If **Yes**, please provide details.

Australia was well-represented in the core group of wetland centres that formed the original Wetlands Link International (WLI). Australian foundation members of WLI were the Wetlands Centre Australia (formerly Shortland Wetlands Centre), Serendip Wildlife Sanctuary and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Recently funding has been provided to The Wetlands Centre Australia to develop an Australian WLI network among wetland centres and other centres which support wetland education. (see previous responses)

The Wetlands Centre Australia has contributed significantly to the recent organisational review of WLI. Other Australian non-government wetland organisations have also contributed to recent surveys on the WLI Initiative.

AND indicate which Wetland Centres (refer 3.2.3 below), museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and educational environment education centres (refer 3.2.4) are now participating as part of Wetlands Link International.

The Wetlands Centre Australia is the only centre that is actively participating at this time, however as the Australian Wetlands Centre Network (Wetland Link International Australia) is developed other centres will become involved.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

The AWIN and Wetlands Centre Australia

Operational Objective 3.2: To develop and encourage national programmes of EPA on wetlands, targeted at a wide range of people, including key decision-makers, people living in and around wetlands, other wetland users and the public at large.

Actions - Global and National Targets

3.2.1 Encourage partnerships between governments, non-governmental organisations and other organisations capable of developing national EPA programmes on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8 to see the global network of proposed CP and non-government focal points for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) in place and functioning effectively in the promotion and execution of the national Outreach Programmes in all CPs. To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.**

Did your Government **inform** the Ramsar Bureau by 31 December 1999 of the identity of its Government and Non-Government Focal Points for wetland CEPA (COP7 Resolution VII.9)?

The Bureau has been informed that the Australian Government Focal Point for CEPA is the Wetlands Section, Environment Australia and the non-government Focal Point is The Wetlands Centre, Australia.

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

Has your country **established** an “appropriately constituted Task Forces, where no mechanism exists for this purpose (e.g., National Ramsar Committees), to undertake a review of national needs, capacities and opportunities in the field of wetland CEPA and, based on this, to formulate its National Wetland CEPA Action Plans for priority activities which consider the international, regional, national and local needs” (COP7 Resolution VII.9).

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

If **Yes**, please provide details of the organizations, ministries, etc., represented on this Task Force.

The current representation on the CEPA Task Force, recently renamed Australian Wetlands Information Network (AWIN), are:

- Australian Wetlands Alliance (NGO)
- Wetland Care Australia (NGO)
- the World Wide Fund for Nature- Australia (NGO)
- Wetlands International-Oceania (NGO)
- the Murray-Darling Basin Commission (Commonwealth Government)
- The Wetlands Centre, Australia (NGO)
- Environment Australia (Commonwealth Government)
- State and Territory government agencies

The Task Force will seek representation from other key interest groups, including Indigenous groups, and private landholders during 2002.

AND: Has a National Wetland CEPA Action Plan been finalized by 31 December 2000?

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring?

If **Yes**, is the Action Plan being implemented effectively?

Yes, within resource constraints

If **No**, what is preventing this from occurring?

The major activities under AWIN and the National Wetlands CEPA Action Plan, successfully completed to date include:

- The development of Terms of Reference for the National CEPA Task Force including role and responsibilities;
- The development, distribution and collation of a survey to identify the range of resources, strategies and tools in use, identify gaps in resources and identify needs of wetlands groups;
- A National Wetlands Conference, titled Repairing Our Wetlands: Learning by Doing, was held on the 14-16 November 2001;
- World Wetlands Day, 2002. Government agencies, non-governmental organisations and community groups organised activities including a national announcement, seminars and workshops, wetland walks, bird counts and exhibition of wetland rehabilitation

projects;

- Regional workshops and forums were convened during February/March 2002 in each State, the NT and the Murray-Darling Basin to build local conservation networks and provide a vehicle for informing regional and local groups of recent progress in wetlands conservation throughout Australia;
- A national web page is currently being trialed to link all relevant communication, education and public awareness web sites. The aim of the web site is to encourage two-way communication between all CEPA deliverers;
- A reference list of contacts has been generated;
- A National Wetlands Newsletter, Wetlands Australia: National Wetlands Update 2002, detailing Wetlands Australia was distributed prior to World Wetlands Day, 2002; and
- CEPA activities have targeted a range of groups including school and university students, irrigators and other landholders, and the general public through a range of measures including media articles, newsletters, demonstration sites, field days, liaison with stakeholder and community groups and maintaining web sites.

The following projects are proposed to deliver components of the CEPA Action Plan:

- Development of a questionnaire based on the CEPA Action Plan's Guiding Principles to allow CEPA deliverers to evaluate their actions against the CEPA Plan. The questionnaire will also be provided to local groups to review their own CEPA activities;
- Generation of a list of National Wetlands Centres, establishing links with WLI in other countries, coordinating the development of a communication strategy for WLI Australia, and coordinating the design/delivery of a Network Forum for Wetland Centres; and
- Generation of a list of national and international (Japan, Hong Kong and Alaska) education contacts, developing a strategy for maintaining communication with coordinators and schools, and collaborating with Wetland Education Centres and schools in the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Flyway. The aim of this activity is to share information and develop awareness-raising materials and links.

If **Yes**, what are the priority target groups of the Action Plan and the major activities being undertaken?

See above.

AND: Has a copy of this plan been provided to the Ramsar Bureau?

Yes

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia and the Australian Wetlands Information Network (AWIN).

3.2.2 On the basis of identified needs and target groups, support national programmes and campaigns to generate a positive vision of wetlands and create awareness at all levels of their values and functions. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - see 3.2.1 above.**

3.2.3 Encourage the development of educational centres at wetland sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - The Convention will aim to have more than 150 active education centres (and similar venues - see 3.2.4 below) promoting the principles of the Convention by COP8 and to ensure that all CPs have at least one such centre.**

Has your country **encouraged** the establishment of educational centres at wetland sites?

Yes

If **No**, what has been the impediment to such action being taken?

If **Yes**, how successful has this been?

Australia has a significant number of wetland centres established, with the earliest centres dating back to the early 1980's. In addition there are a large number of related centres that feature wetland programs or resources. Wetland related and education centres are now located in every State and Territory.

The range of management and ownership of wetland centres in Australia is varied with a number of wetland centres being supported by local Government and some being supported by the private sector, such as Banrock Station, SA. The Wetlands Centre Australia, located in NSW, is wholly owned and managed by the local community and is supported by the NSW Education Department.

AND: How many such centres are in place? and at what sites?

There are ten centres clearly identified as Wetland centres. These are in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. The Wetlands Centre Australia is in the process of collating information on centres which focus on or feature wetland interpretation to provide a comprehensive picture. Table 3.2, below, reflects the current situation.

Table 3.2. The Location of wetland education centres throughout Australia, and their association with Ramsar sites.

Wetlands Education Centres	State	Ramsar Site
The Wetlands Centre	NSW	No, but services Kooragang
Boondall Wetlands Centre	QLD	Yes, Moreton Bay
Maroochydore Wetlands Centre	QLD	No
Lake Bindegolly Wetland Education Centre	QLD	No
Window on the Wetlands Visitor Centre	NT	No
Cockburn Wetland Education Centre	WA	No
Capel Wetland Centre	WA	Yes
Edithvale-Seaford Wetland Centre	VIC	Yes, Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands
Serendip Sanctuary	VIC	No
Coolart Wetlands Centre	VIC	No
Tamar Island Visitors Centre	Tas	No

City of Salisbury Wetlands Visitor Centre	SA	No
Education Centres which feature wetlands		
Bicentennial Park Field Studies Centre	NSW	No
Long Neck Lagoon Environmental Education Centre	NSW	No
Awabakal Environmental Education Centre	NSW	No
Bournda Environmental Education Centre	NSW	No
Royal Botanic Gardens	NSW	No
Botany Bay Environmental Education Centre	NSW	No
Aquatic Environment Education Centre	NSW	No
Coastal Environment Centre, Narrabeen	NSW	No
Wonga Wetlands and Interpretive Centre	NSW	No
Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre	NSW	No
Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre	NSW	No
Manly Environment Centre	NSW	No
Melbourne Zoo Education Centre	Vic	No
Phillip Island Nature Park	Vic	yes, Western Port
Dharnya Education Centre	Vic	Yes, Barmah Forest
Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park	Vic	Yes, Gippsland Lakes
Cornler Inlet Marine National Park	Vic	Yes, Corner Inlet
Mt Field Visitor centre	Tas	No
Hastings Caves National Parks Office	Tas	No
Bruny Island National Parks Office	Tas	No
Swansea National Parks Office	Tas	No
Freycinet National Parks Office	Tas	No
Urrbrae Wetland Interpretive Site	SA	No
Signal Point Interpretive Site	SA	No
St Kilda Mangroves Interpretive Site	SA	No
The Watervalley Wetlands Centre	SA	No
Byron Environment Centre	SA	No
Banrock Station Education Centre	SA	No
Mt Compass Educational Site	SA	No
The Environment Centre of the Northern Territory	NT	No
The Territory Wildlife Park	NT	No
The Alice Springs Desert Park	NT	No
Bowali Visitor Centre	NT	Yes, Kakadu
Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre	WA	No
Broome Bird Observatory	WA	Yes, Roebuck Bay
Milyering Visitors Centre	WA	
Naragebup Rockingham Regional Environment Centre Inc	WA	No

Ningaloo Reef Retreat	WA	No
The Clancy's Lagoon Interpretive Centre (Mareeba Wetland Education Foundation)	QLD	No
Jacob's Well Environmental Education Centre	QLD	No
Nudgee Beach Environmental Education Centre	QLD	Yes, Moreton Bay
Lake Bindegolly National Park	QLD	No
The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Reef HQ	QLD	No, but GBRMP includes 2 Ramsar sites – Bowling Green Bay, and Shoalwater and Corio Bays
Mon Repos National Parks Office	QLD	No
Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre	QLD	No
Walkabout Cree Freshwater Study Centre	QLD	No
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Education Centre	ACT	No
Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre	ACT	Yes, includes Ginini Flats
Christmas Island National Park Visitors Centre	ET*	No
Cocos Island National Park Visitors Centre	ET	No

*ET – External Australian Territory. Australia has seven external territories, which are administered by the Commonwealth.

How many centres are being established? and at what sites?
Of the sites in place, how many are participating as part of Wetlands Link International (Refer 3.1.4 above)? and at which sites are they?
Three centres have participated in Wetlands Link International, the Wetlands Centre, Serendip Sanctuary and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia, AWIN, The Wetlands Centre Australia

3.2.4 Work with museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and environment education centres to encourage the development of exhibits and programmes that support non-formal EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - see 3.2.3 above**

Do **all** museums, zoos, botanical gardens and similar facilities in your country **have exhibits** and/or programmes that support non-formal wetland CEPA?

Most centres refer to wetlands when they are a feature of the surrounding landscape.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

If such exhibits or programmes are in place for some facilities, how many and what types of facilities are they?

Many facilities in Australia have exhibits that feature wetlands (see table 3.2). These exhibits and programs vary between institutions and the exact number is not known.

One example of an exhibit is Ocean Planet. The Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) brought Ocean Planet, a travelling exhibition developed by the Smithsonian Institute to present an international view of environmental issues that affect the health of our oceans, to Australia in 1999. At that time ANMM worked with the CSIRO to develop an Australian segment for the exhibition. With the aid of a grant from Environment Australia, ANMM also produced an education kit that focussed particularly on wetlands and estuaries.

If **Yes**, how many facilities does this apply to and how many of these are participating as part of Wetlands Link International (Refer 3.1.4 above)? and which facilities are they?

None currently, but interested facilities will be invited to participate in the WLI network in 2002.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia, AWIN, The Wetlands Centre Australia.

3.2.5 Encourage the inclusion of modules related to wetlands in the curricula at all levels of education, including tertiary courses and specialised training courses. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to see wetland issues incorporated into curricula in over 100 CPs.**

In your country are there modules related to wetlands in the curricula at all levels of education, including tertiary courses and specialised training courses?

Yes

If **No**, what is preventing this from occurring?

If this is the case for some levels of education, or some parts of the country, please provide details.

Education curriculum is determined at a State level, and data has not been collected on the inclusion of specific wetland units in the curriculum of schools and other education facilities. However, wetland issues are included in the general science modules that form part of the national primary and secondary school education. In addition, environmental management courses, covering wetland ecology and related issues, are offered at a number of tertiary institutions. The need to document specific curriculum activities Australia-wide has been identified in the CEPA Action Plan as a priority action (see section 2.3.2).

If **Yes**, have samples of this curriculum material been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre?

No
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action: The Australian Wetland Information Network

Operational Objective 3.3: To improve the Ramsar Bureau's communications activities and to develop a Convention Communications Strategy, capable of further promoting the Convention and its wider application, and of raising awareness of wetland values and functions.

Actions - Global and National Targets
3.3.1 Review the Bureau's communications activities, especially those related to the creation and functioning of regional and national communication networks; develop new material and use of technology, and improve existing material. [Bureau]
Refer to 3.2.1 "To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.". Has your government provided any voluntary contributions to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme?
No
If Yes , please provide details.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action: Environment Australia

3.3.4 Seek the support of an electronic communications carrier to provide and maintain an electronic mail network and electronic bulletin board/ mailing lists linking the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee members, the STRP, the Bureau, and partner organisations. [All]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8, to gain a sponsor(s) for the Convention's Web site, to ensure that all CPs have Internet access, to increase the use of French and Spanish in the Ramsar Web site, and to see over 300 Ramsar site managers also communicating with the Bureau, and each other, via the Internet.
The Standing Committee and Bureau will consider the issue of a sponsor for the Convention's Web site, and increased presence of French and Spanish materials on the Web site.
With respect to Ramsar site managers, has your government taken steps to provide for Internet links for these people?
Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this action being taken?

<p>If Yes, how many Ramsar site managers have Internet access?</p> <p>All Ramsar site managers in WA (12), Tasmania (10), SA (4), Vic (11), Qld (5), ACT (1), Commonwealth (4) and 8 of the 9 site managers in NSW have Internet access.</p>
<p>AND: Which Ramsar sites have this facility?</p> <p>As above. One of the site managers of the Gwydir Ramsar site, NSW, does not have this facility.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:</p> <p>Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.</p>

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 4 – TO REINFORCE THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS IN EACH CONTRACTING PARTY TO ACHIEVE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Operational Objective 4.1: To develop the capacity of institutions in Contracting Parties, particularly in developing countries, to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

<p>Actions - Global and National Targets</p>
<p>4.1.1 Review existing national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]</p>
<p>Has your country reviewed the national institutions responsible for wetland conservation and wise use and the “designated national Administrative Authority for the Convention to ensure [that] these have the necessary resources to support the increasing demands being placed upon them by the growing expectations of the Convention” (COP7 Resolution VII.27)?</p> <p>No</p>
<p>If No, what is the impediment to this being done?</p> <p>In Australia, primary responsibility for nature conservation, land and water management, including the management of wetlands and associated flora and fauna, is vested with the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Environment Australia (Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage) is the Administrative Authority for the Convention on Wetlands in Australia.</p> <p>In Victoria, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of Ramsar obligations within the State. The NRE reviews resources required to meet its obligations under the Convention on an annual basis to ensure</p>

adequate resources are being provided. The ACT Government has not undertaken a formal review of the resources required to meet its Ramsar obligations, but is adequately meeting these requirements through its normal work program. A review of this kind is planned in Tasmania in the near future. The South Australian Government has not undertaken a review of this kind, as current funding levels will not allow it. In WA, the State's Wetlands Coordinating Committee proposes to review the resources needed to implement the actions of the Western Australian Wetlands Policy including those relating to the Ramsar Convention. Resources required will also be considered on an issue by issue basis. In NSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for facilitating the designation of wetlands under the Ramsar Convention. The NSW Government has not undertaken a formal review of the resources required to meet its obligations under the Ramsar Convention. However, the State Wetlands Advisory Committee may be commissioned to undertake such a review in the future.

At a national level, the Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC) provided a forum for the discussion and formulation of coordinated environmental policy and programs throughout the two countries, prior to June 2001. The Council consisted of Commonwealth and State/Territory ministers who were supported by two Standing Committees of senior officials. Working Groups, Task Forces and Networks were responsible for providing specialised advice to the two Standing Committees, on Environment Protection (SCEP) and Conservation (SCC). The Wetlands and Migratory Shorebirds Taskforce, composed of officers from Australian and New Zealand Administrative Authorities and Australian State and Territory governments, were responsible for advising the SCC on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Australia.

In 2001, the Standing Committee on Conservation reviewed the items on the ANZECC agenda. As a result of the review, the SCC proposed to the Council that the status of wetland and migratory waterbird conservation and management issues be elevated, by adding them as a standing item to the Council's agenda. At the last ANZECC meeting in June 2001, the Ministers accepted the SCC proposal, and agreed to add this item to the agenda.

A decision was taken by the Council of Australian Governments to amalgamate ANZECC and the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand to form the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMCC). The new Council will consider broad natural resource management issues in Australia and New Zealand. At the first meeting of the NRMCC in August 2001, it was agreed that wetland and migratory waterbird conservation and management issues would be adopted as a standing item on the new Council's agenda. As a result of the elevated status of wetland issues within the NRMCC, and hence Australia, it is expected that adequate attention will be given by Australian governments at the national level for the implementation of Australia's obligations under the Ramsar Convention.

If **Yes**, what were the conclusions and outcomes of the review? (Refer to 4.1.2 also).

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibilities.

4.1.2 On the basis of such a review, identify and implement measures to:

- **increase cooperation and synergy between institutions;**
- **promote the continued operation of these institutions;**
- **provide appropriately trained staff, in adequate numbers, for these institutions. [CPs]**
- **Global Target - By COP8, to see coordinating mechanisms in place in all CPs, and more particularly to see National Ramsar Committees including government and non-government stakeholder representatives, in place in more than 100 CPs. In addition, by COP8, all CPs that have reported the existence of NRCs at COP7 to have evaluated their effectiveness (COP7 Resolution VII.27).**

Refer also to 8.1.9. Does your country have a National Ramsar Committee or similar body?

Yes, the Wetlands and Migratory Shorebirds Taskforce provides specialist advice to the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) on Australia's obligations under the Ramsar Convention (see below).

If **No**, what has prevented the establishment of such a committee?

If **Yes**, is the committee cross-sectoral, including representatives of appropriate government ministries and non-government expert and stakeholder groups?

No, only the Administrative Authority and State/Territory natural resource management and conservation agencies are represented on this committee (see below).

What is the composition of this Committee?

The Wetlands and Migratory Shorebirds Taskforce comprises officers from New Zealand and Australian Commonwealth and State/Territory conservation agencies. As this body is convened under a Ministerial Council structure it does not include representatives from non-government organisations or other stakeholder groups. However, representatives from partner organisations to the Convention (WWF and Wetlands International – Oceania) are often invited to attend Taskforce meetings as observers.

Has there been an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Committee?

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

If **Yes**, did the review show the Committee was proving to be effective?

Yes, at its meeting in March 2001, the Taskforce undertook a review of its effectiveness to determine whether it should continue to operate. The group's Terms of Reference and its Work Plan were critically examined as part of the review. Many of the tasks outlined in the work plan had been achieved and a number of additional significant tasks requiring input/coordination by the group were identified for the next five years. Members agreed that the Taskforce performs an important role, had achieved significant outcomes, had a significant body of work to contribute in the next five years and as such should continue to operate. The Work Plan and Terms of Reference were amended to reflect the newly identified priorities for the Taskforce. The NRMMC and Standing Committee for Conservation (SCC) also recognised the importance of the Taskforce and agreed that it should continue to provide expert technical advice to the SCC on wetland and migratory

shorebird issues, including the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Australia.
If No , why not?
Refer also to 7.2.1 with reference to coordinating the implementation of international conventions.
Proposed national actions and targets: National actions and targets, as identified by the Wetlands and Migratory Shorebirds Taskforce, are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare for CoP8, including preparation of the National Report and the Oceania Regional meeting in May, 2002; • To prepare the JAMBA/CAMBA National report and host the meeting in Melbourne, Victoria, February 2002; • To provide input to, and comment on, resolutions and guidelines distributed by the Ramsar Bureau in the lead up to CoP8; • To ensure a coordinated approach to wetland conservation across Australia; • To implement the Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Action Plan; • To increase the knowledge base on wetlands within Australia, by evaluating and improving monitoring programs, producing estimates of wetland loss and degradation, and expanding A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia; • To develop and implement integrated catchment and coastal zone management throughout Australia; • To have management plans which meet the Australian Ramsar Management Principles for 75% of Ramsar sites by the end of 2002; • List 75 sites, including 10 in under-represented types, across a wide geographic spread by 2005; • Increase the aggregate area of Ramsar sites by 30% by 2005; • List 25 Australian sites in the East Asian – Australasian Shorebird Site Network by 2005; and • To improve the protection and management of Ramsar sites through the Commonwealth's EPBC Act.
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia, as Chair of the Taskforce, with assistance from Taskforce members.

Operational Objective 4.2: To identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries, and to implement follow-up actions.

Actions - Global and National Targets
4.2.1 Identify at national, provincial and local level the needs and target audiences for training in implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8, to have training needs analyses completed in more than 75 CPs.
Has a training needs analysis been completed?

Yes, a broad training needs analysis has occurred at the national level, focusing on wetland managers through the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program. For information on this review of training opportunities and needs for wetland managers in the Asia Pacific region, please refer to 3.1.2. Training needs analyses have not taken place at the commonwealth and state level.

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

In Queensland, no training needs analysis has occurred to date. However, this is one of the objectives identified in the draft Shorebird Management Plan for the Moreton Bay Ramsar site. A Training needs analysis for wetland management in relation to shorebirds is also one of the objectives of the Public Contact Strategy for Moreton Bay Marine Park currently being developed. In NSW, training is currently occurring where a need is identified. To date there has not been a coordinated State-wide approach to training in this area. The ACT Government has not undertaken a training needs analysis due the small size of the ACT and limited wetland coverage. Tasmania has not been able to complete a training needs analysis due to a lack of resources. In Victoria, more general training in aspects of natural resource management is provided to wetland managers employed by government agencies as required. No analysis specific to training in implementation of the Ramsar wise use guidelines is planned.

If **Yes**, have the results of this analysis been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future?

Yes

If **No**, why not?

If **Yes**, how has this been done?

The results of the review of training opportunities and needs for wetland managers in the Asia Pacific region were used to guide training priorities and course development for the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program. In the review, a gap was identified in wetland management training targeted at the needs of Indigenous people, both in Australia and the rest of the Asia Pacific. See 3.1.2

A suite of courses has been developed under the Program according to the training needs identified for the region (see list below of courses targeted at Indigenous managers held in Australia). The Program promotes the wise use of wetlands by equipping wetland managers within the Asia Pacific region with the skills necessary to manage their wetlands in an ecologically sustainable way. The NTU, contracted by the Commonwealth under the National Wetlands Program, began delivery of courses in December 1999. Courses combine a mixture of classroom and field based training in both Australia and selected locations in the Asia Pacific region.

A number of courses deliver hands-on training in practical aspects of wetland management, such as weed control and strategic weed management, in the recipient countries. Others provide introductory education on wetland management issues, while others target senior level managers and policy makers with training in planning, process and topics such as international treaties. Most courses are adapted from year to year according to feedback from previous participant course evaluations and identified needs of target audiences.

Upcoming Courses in Australia 2001-2002

1. Introduction to Environmental Management of Aquaculture for Indigenous Land Managers, Darwin, Australia, 2002.
2. Introduction to Marine Protected Areas for Indigenous Land Managers, Darwin, Australia, 2002.
3. Successfully Integrating Wetlands into Multiple Land Use Planning Frameworks, Darwin, Australia, June 2002.

Completed Courses in Australia 1999-2001

1. Assessing and Managing Tropical Wetlands Darwin, Australia, 18 - 26th March, 2000. This was the first course run in Australia under the wetlands training program and was aimed at middle level wetland managers. The course focussed on applying an understanding of the ecology of tropical wetlands to wetland management issues, including management planning and monitoring.
2. Indigenous Training in Wetland Resource Management, Maningrida NT, April & June, 2000. This course was developed as two modules to train Indigenous land managers of the Maningrida region in the development of resource management plans for wetlands.
3. Environmental Management of Aquaculture in Tropical Wetlands: An Introduction for Indigenous Land Managers, Darwin, Australia, April 10-11 2001. This course was designed to provide Indigenous land managers and their representative bodies with sufficient information to make informed decisions about aquaculture ventures with particular regard to sustainable management. The course was aimed primarily at Indigenous managers in northern Australia but was also open to Indigenous land managers within the Asia Pacific region. This course was run in collaboration with the Marine and Coastal Community Network.
4. Successfully Integrating Wetlands into Multiple Land use Planning Frameworks, Darwin, June 3-10, 2001. This was a follow up course to "Assessing and Managing Tropical Wetlands" run in Darwin in March 2000. The course was modified following evaluation of the previous course and was aimed at wetland policy makers throughout the Asia Pacific region, whether government or non-government.
5. Marine Protected Areas: An Introduction for Indigenous Land Managers, Darwin, 24th - 25th July, 2001. This training was aimed largely at Indigenous land managers and their representative bodies and covers the concept of a Marine Protected Area, how it is declared and managed, and what the environmental, economic and cultural benefits might be. This course was open to all interested persons throughout the Asia Pacific region and was run in collaboration with the Marine and Coastal Community Network.
6. Indigenous Management of Wetland Resources Study Tour, Top End, NT. This tour of Indigenous Land Managers from Northern Queensland and Western Australia enabled participants to observe and experience a range of management practices.

AND: What impact has this had on the national training effort?
The Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program has resulted in increased capacity for wetland managers in the Asia Pacific region, particularly Indigenous managers.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibilities.

4.2.2 Identify current training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8, to have reviews of training opportunities completed in more than 75 CPs.
Has your country completed a review of the training opportunities which exist therein?
Yes, training opportunities in disciplines essential to wetland conservation and wise-use have been broadly reviewed at the national level, through the APWMTP, however no such review has taken place at Commonwealth, State or local levels. Refer to 3.1.2 and 4.2.1.
If No , what are the impediments to this being done?
A review is currently considered a low priority due to limited resources. However, the survey of wetlands education resources which is to be conducted as part of the CEPA Action Plan is likely to identify a significant portion of existing wetlands training opportunities.
If Yes , have the results of this review been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future?
Yes – at a national level through the APWMTP.
If No , why not?
If Yes , how has this been done?
Refer to 4.2.1.
AND: What impact has this had on the national training effort?
Refer to 4.2.1.
Has this information on training opportunities been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities? (Refer to 4.2.3 below also)
No, however information on the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program is available on the Northern Territory University website: http://www.ntu.edu.au/ctwm/training.html
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia and NTU.

4.2.3 Develop new training activities and general training modules, for application in all regions, concerning implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines, with specialised modules covering [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - To launch a major wetland manager training initiative under the Convention, possibly in partnership with one or more of the Convention's International Organisation Partners, which can promote and take advantage of these new training tools. Refer also to 4.2.4 below regarding the *Wetlands for the Future Initiative*.**

Following its review of training needs and opportunities, has your country developed any new training activities, or training modules?

Yes

If Yes, please provide details.

Australia has funded over the last triennia the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program, a major initiative designed to provide Australian and Asia Pacific managers with the skills necessary to achieve wise use of their wetlands. Refer to 3.1.2 and 4.2.1.

AND: Has information on these training activities and modules been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities and the Wise Use Resource Centre? (Refer to 4.2.2 above also)

No

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia

4.2.4 Provide opportunities for manager training by: personnel exchanges for on-the-job training; holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites; siting wetland manager training facilities at Ramsar sites; obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers around the world. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - Refer to 4.2.3 above. Also to seek the resources from donors or interested CPs to establish *Wetlands for the Future Initiatives* for the Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, and African regions.**

Refer to 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3 above. Has training been provided for wetland managers:

- personnel exchanges for on-the-job training?

Yes, personnel exchanges for on-the-job training have occurred both nationally and internationally. Within Australia, on-the-job training occurs for wetland managers to broaden their practical skills and technical knowledge. For example, in NSW the National Parks and Wildlife Service encourages its Rangers to serve in various locations around the State.

At the international level, the District Ranger of the Coorong and Lower Lakes Ramsar Site

in South Australia participated in a Ranger Exchange with the Ranger In Charge of a small coastal park managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service of Washington State (United States of America) in 1997. The exchange included wetland site visits and first hand observation of wildfowl management, visitor management and environmental law enforcement.

The Senior Ranger of the Lower South East District of South Australia participated in a Ranger Exchange with the Senior Ranger of the North Slob Game Reserve, Republic of Ireland in 2000/01. This facilitated an exchange of knowledge and experience in waterbird and wetland management.

- Holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites?,

Yes, for example in NSW, field days have been conducted at a number of Ramsar sites where wetland managers are encouraged to share management strategies.

- Siting wetland manager training facilities at Ramsar sites?,

No, this has not yet occurred in Australia.

- Obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers?

Yes, within the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service all officers, including wetland managers, prepare staff development plans, this allows the targeting of officers for training opportunities. To date, no formal training for wetland managers has occurred in the ACT. However, ACT Government officers regularly participate in inter-governmental forums, such as the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, and attend seminars and conferences related to natural resource management and research. In some specific instances, information has been provided to site managers in WA.

Other training opportunities for wetland managers in Australia has included:

A manager's training workshop for managers of Ramsar sites in the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network, conducted by Environment Australia in Victoria, 2001. The workshop was attended by representatives from the 11 Australian and two New Zealand Network sites. Site managers shared information on Network sites and participated in sessions on shorebird biology, site management, the Shorebird Action Plan and new Australian legislation for migratory shorebirds. Topics covered included life histories of migratory shorebirds, flyway routes, protection of the birds and their habitat and threats to survival. Resourcing and raising public awareness were issues common to many sites.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) staff have attended Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG) training programs in the identification of shorebirds (Moreton Bay). Some QPWS staff have undertaken awareness training about the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* to gain a better understanding of how it relates to the management of Ramsar wetlands. A Scientific Forum focussing on the management of a changed landscape open to landholders, academics and agency staff, was held at Currawinya National Park, Queensland on 19th May 2001. Park staff and other Departmental personnel responsible for the management of the Currawinya Lakes Ramsar Site attended the Paroo River Scientific Workshop in Hungerford, Queensland from 7-9 July 1997.

The World Wide Fund for Nature –Australia (WWF) has been working with landholders in

a number of areas in Australia with the goal of improving awareness and the implementation of sustainable management of wetlands on privately owned pastoral properties. This advocacy has resulted in the Ramsar listing of the first privately owned wetlands in Australia (the Gwydir) in 1999, and the current project team is building on this work in other regions of Australia (refer to 2.8.1) as part of the Outback Wetlands Project. A field trip to the Gwydir Wetlands Ramsar site was undertaken by corporate sector pastoral managers from the 'Channel Country' of south-west Queensland as part of the Outback Wetlands Project (funded through the Natural Heritage Trust). This visit enabled property owners and managers from the Channel Country and the Gwydir Wetlands to discuss the potential sustainability benefits of Ramsar listing pastoral country and provided an opportunity to exchange information and experience.

The Gwydir visit, and a later workshop, has resulted in a greater awareness of wetland issues by the corporate sector, including the economic benefits derived from conservation and management of wetlands. To achieve viable and accountable wetlands management within the pastoral sector, the development of recognised benchmarks is required so that wetlands management can be integrated into the environmental management systems of pastoralists. The Corporate sector also supported the development of a 'pastoral stewardship council' that explicitly acknowledges accountable management of pastoral resources.

Tri-National Wetlands Conservation Program

The Tri-National Wetlands Conservation Program, funded by Environment Australia and coordinated by WWF, was launched at the 1996 Ramsar CoP in Brisbane. The project aims to facilitate cooperation and integrate wetlands management in three protected areas; Wasur National Park in Indonesia, Tonda Wildlife Management Area in Papua New Guinea, and Kakadu National Park in Australia. The areas share similar ecosystems and species, as well as similar threats, and are all designated Ramsar sites. The three countries are sharing technical and management expertise through training workshops, collaborative research projects and a series of exchange visits for Traditional Owners, reserve managers and rangers.

One of the aims of the Tri-National Wetland Program is to help transfer lessons about community based wetlands management from one area to another. Activities include research and information exchanges, personnel exchanges between the reserves, and training programs. The signing of an intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding between the three countries, and a Cross Border Conservation Area agreement for Wasur and Tonda will ensure a long term commitment to the collaborative management of the three wetlands.

During the first phase of project activity two documents were produced: Tri-National Wetlands Conservation Program Part A – Cooperative Management Strategy, and Tri-National Wetlands Conservation Program Part B – Training Strategy. These two documents contained recommendations for how governments and communities involved with the three wetlands might cooperate in terms of wetland management, research and community development activities, as well as identifying training activities necessary for regional capacity building, in order to achieve cooperative management.

The second and final phases of project activity completed a variety of tasks including intensive training and capacity building, a series of cross-visits of staff from Wasur, Tonda

and Kakadu, development of an environmental management plan for Tonda Wildlife Management Area, as well as the drawing up of a Memorandum of Understanding between the three governments.
Has your country provided resources to support the establishment of <i>Wetlands for the Future</i> style programmes in any part of the world? (COP7 Recommendation 7.4)
Yes, the Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program (Aus\$0.8 million over the last triennia).
If Yes , please provide details.
Refer to 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

4.2.6 Exchange information, technical assistance and advice, and expertise about the conservation and wise use of wetlands, also with regard to South-South cooperation. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
Refer to 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.2.1-4 above. Has your country specifically undertaken activities as indicated here which could be deemed to be South-South cooperation?
Not applicable
If No , what has prevented this from happening?
If Yes , please provide details.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 5 – TO ENSURE THE CONSERVATION OF ALL SITES INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE (RAMSAR LIST)

Operational Objective 5.1: To maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

Actions - Global and National Targets
5.1.1 Define and apply the precise measures required to maintain the ecological character of each listed site, in the light of the working definitions of ecological character

adopted at the 6th COP (1996) and amended by Resolution VII.10 of COP7. [CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, each CP will seek to ensure that the measures required to maintain the ecological character of at least half of the Ramsar sites have been documented.**

Have the measures required to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites in your country been documented?

In some instances. Appropriate measures have been documented for the nine Ramsar sites in NSW, four of the five Ramsar sites in Qld, the Ramsar site in the ACT, one of the four sites in SA, three of the 12 sites in Western Australia and for three of the four sites under Commonwealth jurisdiction.

If **No**, what has prevented this being done?

Some Ramsar sites do not have suitable management arrangements in place or monitoring programs to detect changes in ecological character (refer also 5.2.3).

Tasmania has not documented the appropriate measures for maintaining the ecological character of its ten Ramsar sites although management planning has been initiated at five sites.

If **Yes**, has this documentation been developed as part of management planning and associated action at the sites?

Management plans are in place and being implemented at the four Ramsar sites in Queensland. The management plans for the Currawinya Lakes and Bowling Green Bay National Parks specifically address the management of the Ramsar wetlands within these national parks. The Great Sandy Strait is managed according to the Great Sandy Region Management Plan which is currently being revised. The revised management will specifically address the management of the Ramsar wetlands. Moreton Bay is managed as part of the Moreton Bay Marine Park. A management plan for shorebirds and a public contact strategy for shorebirds are being developed. Artificial roost sites are being constructed where development has alienated or disturbed natural sites. Shorebird roost sites have protection signs.

A management plan is in place for the Ginini Flats Ramsar (ACT) site which specifically addresses the protection of the Ramsar values of the site.

The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar Management Plan specifically addresses the protection of the Ramsar values of the South Australian site.

The revised Plan of Management for the Christmas Island National Park (Australian External Territory managed by the Commonwealth Government) is in the final stages of preparation. It recognises Hosnie's Spring as a Ramsar site and that the wetland will be managed to ensure that its wetland values are maintained.

Pulu Keeling National Park (Australian External Territory managed by the Commonwealth Government) has a Management Plan and a Visitor Access Strategy which provide for limited access to the site and detail strategies to maintain the values of the site.

Kakadu National Park (NT, managed by Commonwealth Government) was established to conserve its natural and cultural values and to provide for appropriate visitor use, whilst the rights of Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and managers of the land are recognised. The Plan of Management has taken into account the need to protect the park against damage; protect, conserve and manage wildlife within the park; preserve the park in its natural condition and protect its special features; and encourage and regulate appropriate use, appreciation and enjoyment of the park.

AND: Has a copy been provided to the Ramsar Bureau?

Australia has submitted management plans for the Towra Point Nature Reserve (NSW) and the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar site (SA) to the Ramsar Bureau as examples of good Ramsar management plans.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Refer to 5.2.3.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and private landholders according to jurisdictional responsibility.

5.1.2 Conduct regular internal reviews to identify potential changes in ecological character, with input from local communities and other stakeholders; take remedial action and/or nominate the site for the Montreux Record. [CPs]

- **Refer to 2.5.2 - In the COP7 National Reports, 35 CPs reported Ramsar sites where some change in ecological character had occurred or was likely to occur in the near future. This was true for 115 sites in 33 CPs, and two other CPs stated that changes had occurred to all or some of their sites. In COP7 Resolution VII.12, these CPs were urged to consider nominating these sites to the Montreux Record.**
- **Global Target – In the period up to COP8, promote the application and benefits of the Montreux Record as a tool of the Convention through disseminating reports and publications on the positive outcomes achieved by a number of countries which have now removed sites from the Record.**

Refer to 2.7.2 and 2.8.3 also. Are regular internal reviews undertaken to identify factors potentially altering the ecological character of Ramsar sites?

Regular reviews are undertaken to identify factors potentially altering the ecological character of some Australian Ramsar sites. Refer to Table 5.1 below.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

Whilst Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands have adopted definitions of “ecological character” and “change in ecological character”, guidance on how to document the ecological character of Ramsar sites and how to determine a change in ecological character has not yet been provided. Australia is currently undertaking a pilot project to develop descriptions of ecological character for eight Ramsar sites and to attempt to define the degree of acceptable change for these sites. A more robust description/understanding of the ecological character of Ramsar sites should assist to determine when a change has occurred, or is likely to occur, to the ecological character of these sites. The pilot will also

assist to develop an approach that can be consistently applied at all Australian Ramsar sites.

Victoria has not yet implemented a comprehensive integrated monitoring program to detect changes in ecological character at its 11 Ramsar sites. This is identified as an objective in the draft Strategic Direction Statement and priority will be given to implementing this objective at each site when Ramsar management plans are in place. However, there are a significant number of existing monitoring programs in Ramsar sites and their catchments to address a range of objectives. The aim will be to review these programs and tailor a specific program to monitor ecological character in a comprehensive way at each site. In addition to existing monitoring programs, Victoria has conducted several detailed studies to assess threats to values in Ramsar sites and to recommend options for future management.

Uniform monitoring programs have not been implemented at South Australian Ramsar sites to monitor and maintain the ecological character of the sites. Each site is subject to some form of management planning and wetland management committee. The planning process and feedback from wetland management committees assist with the coordination of monitoring and operational activities. This allows wetland managers to maintain an overview of environmental conditions and, if required, implement wetland rehabilitation programs.

If **Yes**, have these reviews detected situations where changes in ecological character have occurred or may occur?

Refer to Table 5.1 below.

If **Yes**, for how many sites was this case, which sites were they, and what actions were taken to address these threats?

Refer to Table 5.1 below.

As outlined in the National Report prepared for the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, most of Victoria's Ramsar sites have been subject to long-term changes in ecological character related to the changes in land and water use that have occurred since European settlement, particularly during the twentieth century. Since the sites were listed in 1982, there has been little or no further decline at Corner Inlet, Barmah Forest, Gunbower Forest, Hattah Kulkyne Lakes, the Kerang Wetlands (with the exception of Lakes Tutchewop, William, Kelly and Little Kelly), Western Port, Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula and the Western District Lakes (with the exception of Lake Corangamite). However, many of the long-standing threats at these wetlands require ongoing management and, in many cases, significant initiatives to restore ecological processes.

AND: Were these sites where change in ecological character was detected, or may occur, added to the Montreux Record?

No

If **No**, why not?

Australia has not added any of its Ramsar sites to the Montreux Record as the Commonwealth Government would prefer to work in cooperation with the relevant State/Territory Government to address, and where necessary, reverse the threats to the site.

Most State/Territory governments are addressing the threats to their Ramsar sites through appropriate management planning or institutional arrangements.

Proposed national actions and targets:

All Australian Ramsar sites are managed to prevent adverse changes to and impacts on their ecological character.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and private landholders according to jurisdictional responsibility.

5.1.3 Review and regularly update the Montreux Record (Resolutions 5.4, 5.5, and VI.1). [CPs, STRP, Bureau]

- **Global Target - CPs with Ramsar sites in the Montreux Record, and for which Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs) have been completed prior to COP7, are expected to have taken the actions necessary to warrant their removal from the Record before COP8.**

For those CPs with a site, or sites, included in the Montreux Record, and for which RAMs (previously Management Guidance Procedures, MGPs) have been completed, have all actions recommended by the RAM been undertaken for each site?

Australia does not have any sites included in the Montreux Record.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

If **Yes**, have these actions resulted in a restoration of the ecological character?

AND: If **Yes**, has the site been removed from the Montreux Record following the completion of the necessary questionnaire (COP6 Resolution VI.1)?

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Operational Objective 5.2: To develop and implement management plans for all Ramsar sites, consistent with the Convention's Guidelines on Management Planning and emphasising involvement of local communities and other stakeholders.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.2.3 Ensure that, by the 8th COP (2002), management plans or other mechanisms are in preparation, or in place, for at least half of the Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party, beginning with pilot programmes at selected sites with input from local communities and other stakeholders. [CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, management plans will be in preparation, or in place, for at least three-quarters of the Ramsar sites in each CP and all CPs will seek to ensure that these are being implemented in full.**

Do all the Ramsar sites in your country have management plans **in place**?

No

If **No**, how many sites **do not** have management plans in place and which sites are they?

Nineteen of Australia's 57 Ramsar sites do not have management plans in place. Refer to Table 5.1 below.

If plans are being prepared for some sites, please indicate which sites these are.

Management plans are being prepared for eight of the 19 Ramsar sites without plans. Refer to Table 5.1 below.

Victoria is currently undertaking a comprehensive management planning program for its ten Ramsar sites (refer to 5.2.3). Victoria is using the wetland risk assessment methodology formalised at the 7th Conference of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands and is developing an integrated framework of management plans, with individual site plans linked to an overarching statewide strategy. The management objectives for managing Victoria's Ramsar wetlands as set out in the 'Management of Victoria's Ramsar Wetlands Draft Strategic Directions Statement' are as follows:

1. Maintain or seek to restore appropriate water regimes
2. Address adverse processes and activities
3. Manage within an integrated catchment management framework
4. Manage resource utilisation on a sustainable basis
5. Protect, and where appropriate, enhance ecosystem processes, habitats and species
6. Encourage strong partnerships between relevant agencies
7. Promote community awareness and understanding, and provide opportunities for involvement in management
8. Ensure recreational use is consistent with the protection of natural and cultural values
9. Increase the scientific understanding of wetland ecosystems and their management requirements
10. Develop ongoing consistent programs to monitor ecological character

Strategic Management Plans for each individual Ramsar site will translate these objectives to the site level. Reference committees have been convened at each Ramsar site to assist with the development of the management plans. Key stakeholders from Government and the community are represented on these committees.

In addition, Ramsar sites and their values are recognised in a range of strategies and plans currently being implemented. These include catchment strategies, coastal action plans, water bulk entitlement processes, the Victorian Planning Provisions and local Government planning schemes and management plans for parks, conservation reserves and State forests within Ramsar sites. The new Ramsar management plans will support positive actions already taking place under other planning frameworks.

For those sites where management plans are in place, how many of these are being implemented fully, and which sites are they?

Refer to Table 5.1 below.

Where plans are not in place, or not being fully implemented, what has prevented this from being done?

Most State/Territory government agencies with management responsibility for Ramsar sites consider that insufficient resources are allocated for this purpose.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Management plans for Tasmania's ten Ramsar sites completed by 2003.
Ramsar management plans will be in place at Victoria's 11 Ramsar sites by mid 2002.
Management plans for an additional four of Western Australian's Ramsar sites will be in place by 2005.
A management plan or framework in place for the Gwydir wetlands by late 2002.

At a national scale:

- 75% of sites have plans which meet the Australian Ramsar Management Principles (regulations under the EPBC Act) by end 2001; and
- new Ramsar sites have a management plan which meets the Australian Ramsar Management Principles prepared within 3 years of designation, or March 2004.

Also refer 2.1.2

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and private landholders according to jurisdictional responsibility.

5.2.4 Promote the establishment and implementation of zoning measures related to larger Ramsar sites, wetland reserves and other wetlands (Kushiro Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

For those sites where it is warranted, are zoning measures being used to regulate the activities allowed in different parts of the wetlands?

Yes.

If **No**, what is preventing these from being implemented?

Most of Australia's Ramsar sites are part of the publicly owned conservation estate which therefore determines the levels of access and the activities that are allowed to take place within them.

Tasmania is proposing zoning measures in most of its draft Ramsar site management plans.

Victoria does not currently use formal zoning in Ramsar sites. However, use and development on public land in Victoria's Ramsar sites and wetland reserves is controlled by virtue of the reservation status of the land within them and the Statutory responsibilities related to the management of that land. Areas reserved for conservation purposes provide

stricter protection than areas reserved, for example, for forestry or water supply purposes which are subject to wise use.

Private land occupies a small proportion of land in Victoria's Ramsar sites. On private land within Ramsar sites, land use planning controls have been applied to some extent and efforts to upgrade these are ongoing.

If **Yes**, for which sites are these in place?

Refer to table 5.1.

Zoning is used within the Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar site (WA) to restrict water skiing to a designated area of the Peel-Harvey estuary.

The Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve (where hunting of waterfowl is permitted during Tasmania's open season) includes an area of the reserve, "The Sanctuary", that has been allocated as a refuge for waterfowl during the hunting season.

The Currawinya Lakes National Park (Qld) has four zones – Remote Natural Zone, Natural Zone, Natural Recreation Zone and Recreation Zone. The Remote Natural Zone provides the greatest protection and can only be accessed by Departmental staff and authorised personnel. Natural processes are allowed to operate with minimal human interference.

The Bowling Green Bay Ramsar site (Qld) also has the same zoning measures as Currawinya Lakes National Park. The Special Conservation Zone has been established to specifically provide protection to the wetland values including important waterbird habitat.

Kakadu National Park has two zones in its wetland areas. Zone 1 provides for intensive human use and major infrastructure development and covers those areas of the wetlands where interpretative guided tours are provided. Areas in this zone can be accessed by tourist coaches as well as other vehicles. Zone 2 provides for moderate levels of human use and infrastructure development.

Pulu Keeling National Park (North Keeling Island) has three zones - Pulu Keeling National Park is a declared Wilderness Zone (IUCN Category II) and the surrounding waters to 1.5km are a declared Marine Zone (IUCN Category II). There is also a protection zone surrounding the SMS Emden shipwreck (IUCN Category IA).

The Shoalwater and Corio Bays Ramsar site is managed by the Commonwealth and Queensland governments under several management regimes. The Commonwealth Department of Defence manages the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (also refer below). Marine and most intertidal areas are within a State Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and are jointly managed by the Queensland government and GBRMPA using zoning plans (also refer below). The Queensland Government also manages some areas within Corio Bay gazetted as Fish Habitat Reserve.

The Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve is covered by two recreation zones (which also allow for the protection of natural and cultural values).

The Moreton Bay Ramsar site, Queensland is within the Moreton Bay Marine Park which is managed through a zoning plan. Each zone defines activities that are allowed, those that

require permits and those that are prohibited. The zones are:

- General Use Zone - provides for reasonable use and enjoyment while allowing activities such as shipping operations;
- Habitat zone - provides for reasonable use and enjoyment while maintaining productivity of the natural communities by excluding activities such as shipping operations and mining;
- Conservation Zone - conserve the natural condition to the greatest extent possible and provide for recreational activities free from commercial trawling;
- Protection zone - 'look but don't take' areas of high conservation value with all forms of fishing and extracting prohibited;
- Buffer zone - similar to a protection zone but allows trolling for pelagic fish; and
- Designated area - protect ocean beaches, allow shipping operations, or conserve turtle and dugong populations. Designated areas include turtle and dugong areas and commercial bloodworm gathering areas.

While most of the Marine Park is classified as general use zone, the Ramsar site is mainly habitat zone or conservation zone.

A relatively small proportion (approx. 3%) of the Coongie Lakes Ramsar site, SA has been designated as the Coongie Lakes Control Zone to limit oil and gas production and exploration in the most sensitive areas of the Ramsar site. The extent and the controlling provisions of the zone are currently being reviewed.

A number of important wetlands occur on lands managed by the Commonwealth Department of Defence. Environmental Management Plans for Defence properties recognise all highly sensitive environmental attributes including wetlands. For example, the Department of Defence zones and takes protection measures to sustain wetlands occurring in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA). Most of the coastline of this training area is a designated Ramsar wetland (Shoalwater and Corio Bays). All of the Ramsar area (excluding access tracks from the beach) is designated a "No Go" area for military activity. Conditions imposed include prohibition on the use of vehicles apart from on existing tracks. SWBTA maps are marked accordingly and are provided to all users of the training area. For specific exercises, the Exercise Instruction enforces the restrictions on access to Ramsar areas.

Zoning is used as the fundamental management tool to manage activities within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Established in much the same manner as town planning schemes, zoning plans seek to provide opportunities for use, separate conflicting uses and to prohibit specific activities if required. For example, zoning is used to specifically establish large areas, usually in the vicinity of reefs or shoals, where trawl fishing cannot occur. Similarly, zoning is used to establish some areas of the Marine Park free from extractive use (akin to a terrestrial National Park and equivalent to IUCN Category II) and other areas free from any human intervention where access is prohibited (equivalent to IUCN Category I).

AND: Are they proving a successful management tool?

At Shoalwater and Corio Bays Area in Queensland, these restrictions are partly successful, although permanent and more extensive restrictions would be more successful.

GBRMPA will be revising its zoning to ensure that representative areas of all known habitats (bioregions) are protected through appropriate zoning. Given the size and diversity of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, it is difficult to empirically measure the specific value of zoning as a management tool. However, as part of a broad suite of management strategies used in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, zoning is accepted by the community as an effective and efficient mechanism to ensure long-term ecological sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem.

At the Moreton Bay Ramsar site, it is not yet clear whether or not the implementation of the zoning plan has been successful in conserving the values of the Ramsar site. The zoning plan has not been in force for a sufficient length of time to be able to detect measurable changes in the ecosystems of the Bay.

At the Currawinya Lakes Ramsar site, the zoning scheme is a useful planning tool but it is due to the promotion of certain areas within the Park rather than the zoning scheme itself. The zoning scheme influences staff and visitor activities.

The zoning in the Moulting Lagoon Ramsar site provides a refuge area for birds during the hunting season.

The zoning measures used in the Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve are proving to be a useful management tool within the Reserve.

Have you provided the Ramsar Bureau with information regarding such cases of zoning for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre?

No

Proposed national actions and targets:

Zoning is used as a management tool at Ramsar sites where appropriate.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

5.2.5 Promote the establishment and implementation of strict protection measures for certain Ramsar sites and other wetlands of small size and/or particular sensitivity (Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

- **This aspect of Ramsar site management was not considered in the COP7 National Reports and will have to be reviewed in time for COP8.**
- **Global Target - Provide for consideration at COP8 detailed information on the implementation of strict protection measures at small and/or sensitive sites.**

For those sites where it is warranted, are strict protection measures being used to regulate the activities allowed in different parts of the wetlands?

In Australia there are nine separate protected area systems, one in each of the six States and two self-governing Territories, and a Commonwealth system. These jurisdictions are working together to improve the development and management of Australia's protected area systems.

One difficulty in documenting and tracking the establishment and management of protected areas in Australia has been the many different reserve types gazetted throughout Australia; at present there are at least 40 different reserve “types” vested in the nine jurisdictions that manage them. To assist in making comparisons across jurisdictions it was agreed in 1994 by the States/Territories and the Commonwealth to adopt the IUCN (the World Conservation Union) 1994 definition of a protected area and to use the IUCN six level system of categories describing management intent as the common basis for documenting the many different types of protected areas.

For the purpose of this report, IUCN categories Ia (Strict Nature Reserve: protected area managed mainly for science), Ib (Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection), IV (Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention) and VI (Managed Resource Protected Areas: protected areas managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural resources) were considered to provide “strict protection measures”.

Strict protection measures are in place at certain Ramsar sites in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australian, South Australia, Queensland and Commonwealth managed sites (refer to Table 5.1).

In Victoria, strict protection measures apply to land in Ramsar sites reserved for conservation purposes or, in the case of State forest, in special protection zones. Victoria has almost 400 wetland conservation reserves covering approximately 160,000 hectares, some of which are in Ramsar sites.

South Australia uses statutory protection measures pursuant to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972*. However, there are no areas where access is totally restricted within the State’s Ramsar areas.

In the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park zoning is used to separate conflicting uses and to minimise impacts of a range of extractive activities. Zones specify activities that are either “as of right” or for which written permission is required. Zone types include zones that prohibit all extractive activity and zones that prohibit access other than permitted scientific research.

Pulu Keeling National Park is listed as an IUCN Category Ib Protected Area. The Plan of Management has also prohibited access to the Park without a permit.

If **No**, what is preventing these from being implemented?

If **Yes**, for which sites are these in place?

Refer to Table 5.1.

AND: Is this proving to be a successful management tool?

Strict protection measures are a successful tool in controlling use, development and activity in protected areas and in undertaking localised measures to protect ecological value. They are less successful in controlling catchment or water allocation processes that threaten

values within a wetland or in controlling pest plant and animal control where control measures depend on integrated regional control programs.

At Moreton Bay Ramsar site, jurisdictional boundaries, tenure and conflict of use are restrictions on further regulation being implemented.

The zoning in the Moulting Lagoon Ramsar site provides a refuge area for birds during the hunting season.

Have you provided the Ramsar Bureau with information regarding such cases for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre?

No

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments according to jurisdictional responsibility.

Operational Objective 5.3: To obtain regularly updated information on wetlands of international importance, in accordance with the approved standard format.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.3.1 Ensure that the maps and descriptions of Ramsar sites submitted to the Ramsar Database by the Contracting Parties at the time of designation are complete, in the approved standard format of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, and provide sufficient detail to be used for management planning and monitoring of ecological character. [CPs, Bureau, Wetlands International]

5.3.2 Ensure that missing or incomplete data sheets and/or maps of listed sites are submitted as a matter of priority and in the shortest possible time, as a means to enhance the relevance and use of the Ramsar Database. [CPs]

- **Global Target – By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites for which appropriate sites descriptions and maps are still required.**

If yours is one of the CPs referred to in COP7 Resolution VII.12 as not having provided a Ramsar (Site) Information Sheet in the approved format, with a suitable map, in one of three working languages of the Convention, has this now be rectified?

Not applicable to Australia.

If **No**, what is preventing this from being done?

5.3.3 Ensure that data sheets on Ramsar Sites are regularly updated, at least for every second meeting of the COP, so that they can be used for reviewing the achievements of the Convention, for future strategic planning, for promotional purposes, and for site, regional

and thematic analysis (Resolution VI.13). [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International]

- **Global Target - By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites designated before 31 December 1990 for which updated site descriptions are still required.**

If yours is one of the CPs referred to in COP7 Resolution VII.12 as not having provided an updated Ramsar (Site) Information Sheet for sites designated before 31 December 1990, has this now be rectified?

Not applicable to Australia.

If **No**, what is preventing this from being done?

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ramsar Information Sheets are regularly updated and provided to the Ramsar Convention Bureau.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia

Operational Objective 5.4: To keep under review the content and structure, as well as the hardware and software, of the Ramsar Database, in order to ensure that it retains its relevance in light of evolving information and communication technology.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.4.1 Assess data currently available in the database and identify any gaps in the data provided by Contracting Parties. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International]

Refer to 5.2.2, 5.2.3, and 5.2.4 above.

5.4.4 Support the establishment of national wetland databases compatible with the Ramsar Database and develop a common protocol to facilitate exchange and interaction. [CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to have national wetland databases in over 50 CPs which are accessible globally.**

Refer also to 6.1.1 and 6.1.2. Does your country have a national wetland database?

Yes. The database contains site descriptions for Australia's nationally important wetlands identified in *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, Third Edition* (Environment Australia, 2001)

If **No**, what is preventing such a database being established?

If **Yes**, is this database generally available for reference and application by all ministries and stakeholders?

Yes. It is a collaborative effort between the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments. A hard copy edition was published in 2001. An online version (searchable)

is also available on the Internet (see below).
If No , why not?
AND: Is it available through the Internet? (COP7 Resolution VII.20)
Yes
If Yes , please provide details.
The Directory database is available at: http://www.ea.gov.au/water/wetlands/database/index.html (publication) http://www.ea.gov.au/cgi-bin/wetlands/search.pl (searchable database)
If No , why not?
AND: Is it available on CD-Rom? (COP7 Resolution VII.20)
No
If Yes , please provide details.
If No , why not?
It is publicly available on the Internet, including a download facility for obtaining individual wetland site information for nationally and internationally important wetlands. This provides for wider accessibility than a CD-Rom, and allows it to be updated regularly.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ensure that adequate resources are available to maintain and regularly update the database.
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia

Table 5.1. Management and monitoring of Australia's Ramsar sites.

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
1. Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal Land and Wildlife Sanctuary	NT	Information not provided by site management authority	Information not provided by site management authority		Yes	Review	Information not provided by site management authority	Information not provided by site management authority	Information not provided by site management authority
2. Kakadu National Park (Stage 1 and components of Stage 3)	Commonwealth	Yes, in part: Water quality; aquatic flora and fauna; flooding regimes; invasive spp	Yes. Impacts to wetland areas from invasive flora and fauna spp; visitor impacts	Rehabilitation of floodplains where appropriate; minimise human impacts through control of activities; feral weed and animal control	Yes		Yes	Yes	No
3. Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve	Tasmania	Yes, in part: Fauna	No		No	Preparation		Yes	Yes
4. Logan Lagoon Conservation Area	Tasmania	Yes, in part: Fauna	No		No	Preparation		No	Yes
5. Lavinia Nature Reserve	Tasmania	Yes, in part: Fauna	No		No	Preparation		No	Yes
6. Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon	Tasmania	Yes	Yes	Tidal flushing to prevent algal blooms	No	Preparation		No	Yes
7. Apsley Marshes	Tasmania	No	No		No			No	No
8. East Coast Cape Barren Island Lagoons	Tasmania	No	No		No			No	No
9. Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River	Tasmania	No	Potential threat from increased water abstraction and consequent nutrient runoff		No			No	No

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
10. Jocks Lagoon	Tasmania	No	No		No			No	No
11. Interlaken Lakeside Reserve (Lake Crescent)	Tasmania	Yes	Yes. Threat from presence of European Carp	A management program was put in place to deal with the European Carp problem	No			No	No
12. Little Waterhouse Lake	Tasmania	No	Yes. Threat from spread of invasive plant spp	Removal of invasive weed species	No	Preparation		No	No
13. Corner Inlet	Victoria	Yes in part: water quality. Others planned	No		Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (90% of site)
14. Barmah Forest	Victoria	Planned	No	#	Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (30% of site)
15. Gunbower Forest	Victoria	Planned	No	#	Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (5% of site)
16. Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes	Victoria	Yes in part: invasive fish. Others planned	No		Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (100% of site)
17. Kerang Wetlands	Victoria	Planned	Yes. Increasing salinity in four lakes in this wetland complex	Planned reduction of salinity levels in lakes through commercial salt harvesting; securing environmental water	Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (55% of site)

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
				allocations; habitat restoration					
18. Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline and Bellarine Peninsula)	Victoria	Yes in part: shorebirds. Others planned	No		Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (50% of site)
19. Western Port	Victoria	Yes in part: sediment and nutrient loads; saltmarsh and mangrove monitoring; seagrass mapping. Others planned	No		Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	No
20. Western District Lakes	Victoria	Planned	Yes. At Lake Corangamite – rising salinity levels and high nutrient levels	Nutrient runoff control; habitat restoration; threatened sp. protection; invasive spp control; erosion control. Actions proposed but not yet implemented include: increasing maximum water level of lake, improving water regimes, and implementing the Corangamite Region Nutrient Management Plan and Corangamite	Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (100% of site)

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
				Waterway Health Strategy.					
21. Gippsland Lakes	Victoria	Planned	An environmental audit (1998) indicated the wetland system, particularly Lake Wellington, was approaching a level of severe environmental damage that may be difficult to reverse. Decline attributed to excessive nutrient levels, increasing volume of salt water entering the lake (since artificial entrance to sea constructed in 1899) and reduced water volumes entering Lake Wellington from Thomson, Macalister and Latrobe Rivers, limiting flushing of system.	The Gippsland Lakes Environmental Study Water Quality Modelling Project was completed in 2001. The Gippsland Lakes Taskforce was established to provide a high level and integrated approach to the management of the Gippsland Lakes and their catchments in response to the findings of the study. Actions already commenced to address threats include: implementation of a Nutrient Reduction Plan for the Macalister Irrigation District, increased environmental flows from inflowing rivers, creation of artificial wetlands to improve water quality (additional wastewater treatment), seagrass mapping, waterway	Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (40% of site)

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
				management works including riparian vegetation protection and revegetation, willow removal and erosion control.					
22. Lake Albacutya	Victoria	Planned	Yes. Over-commitment of environmental flows in the Wimmera River has reduced frequency and extent of natural flooding; severe dieback of River Red Gum and Black Box communities (increasing saline groundwater, rising groundwater levels, and reduced occurrence of floodwater); loss of breeding habitat for threatened parrot spp; Lakebed herbfields being replaced by annual weeds	Investigate options for securing further environmental water flows.	Yes	A Ramsar site management plan is currently being prepared	Yes	No	Yes (100% of site)
23. Towra Point Nature Reserve	New South Wales	Yes, in part: water quality; shoreline extent	Yes. Changes to shoreline and thus extent of wetland, leading to salt water intrusion to freshwater lagoon.	Restoration of protection to lagoon; regeneration of freshwater habitat and possibly beach nourishment in future	Yes		Yes	No	Yes
24. Kooragang Nature Reserve	New South Wales	Yes, in part: water quality;	No		Yes		Yes	No	Yes

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
		vegetation; fauna (including waterbirds); hydrology; soils							
25. Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert	South Australia	Yes: water quality; fauna (waterbirds, fish); vegetation (freshwater soaks)	Yes. Siltation around the mouth of the Murray River and northern channels; declining bird numbers; possible salinity and water level changes	Ramsar Implementation Taskforce and various government bodies continue to monitor the environment and provide feedback to management authorities on their operational activities #	Yes		Yes		No
26. Bool and Hacks Lagoon	South Australia	Yes: hydrology (wetting and drying regimes)	Yes. Wetlands undergoing drying trend	Being addressed in regional catchment water management plan	Yes				Yes
27. Coongie Lakes	South Australia	Yes: flow regimes	Predicted changes to flow regimes	Cooperation between South Australia (management authority) and Queensland (State where threat originated) to ensure the actions would not significantly impact on the downstream wetlands	Yes	Review		Yes	No
28. The	New South	Yes, in part:	No		Yes		Yes	No	Yes

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
Macquarie Marshes	Wales	water quality; waterbirds; waterbird responses to water flows							
29. "Riverland"	South Australia	Yes: water quality; floodplain ecology; waterbirds	Yes. Increasing salinity levels; inadequate wetting and drying regimes on floodplains	Appropriately manage loch systems #	Yes	Review			Yes
30. Kakadu National Park (Stage 2)	Commonwealth	Yes (see 2 above)	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	No
31. Ord River Floodplain	Western Australia	No			No	Planned (by 2004)		No	Yes
32. Lakes Argyle and Kununurra	Western Australia	No			No	No	No	No	No
33. Roebuck Bay	Western Australia	Yes: benthos; waterbirds	No		No	No	No	No	No
34. Eighty-mile Beach	Western Australia	Yes: benthos; waterbirds	No		No	No		No	No
35. Forrestdale and Thomsons Lakes	Western Australia	No			Yes	Yes (by 2004)	Yes	No	Yes
36. Peel-Yalgorup System	Western Australia	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
37. Lake Toolibin	Western Australia	Yes: vegetation; water levels; salinity	Yes. Water table has risen; decline in vegetation	Saline surface water has been diverted around the lake; rising ground water has been pumped down stream and revegetation work has been undertaken	Yes		Yes	No	Yes

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
				across the catchment					
38. Vasse-Wonnerup System	Western Australia	Yes: fish			No	Planned (likely to be commenced by 2004)		No	Yes
39. Lake Warden System	Western Australia	Yes: water levels; salinity; vegetation		Integrated catchment management plan developed and implementation has commenced; planning for engineering works adjacent to lake has commenced	Yes		Yes	No	Yes
40. Hosnie's Springs (Christmas Island)	Commonwealth	Yes: fauna; flora	Yes. Invasive spp impacting on native flora and fauna	Research into and control of the Crazy ant problem	Yes	Review	Yes	No	Yes
41. Moreton Bay	Queensland	Yes: water quality; sedimentation; fauna; flora; phytoplankton bioassays	Yes. Urban encroachment; declining water quality	Stormwater controls; riparian revegetation; catchment management; sewage treatment upgrades	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
42. Bowling Green Bay	Queensland	Yes	Yes, possible changes to hydrology and groundwater regime	Water Resource Plan for the Burdekin and Haughton River Basins is being prepared	Yes		Yes	Yes	No
43. Currawinya Lakes	Queensland	Yes	Yes. Invasive spp impacting on native flora and fauna; visitor impacts on native flora and fauna; increasing sedimentation in lakes	A range of management actions designed to minimise/reduce impacts identified in recently released (2001) management	Yes		Yes	Yes	No

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
				plan					
44. Shoalwater and Corio Bays	Commonwealth/ Queensland	Yes	No		Yes		Yes	Yes	No
45. Ginini Flats Wetland Complex	Australian Capital Territory	Planned	No		Yes		Yes	No	No
46. Pulu Keeling National Park (North Keeling Island)	Commonwealth	Yes: fauna; flora	No		Yes	Review	Yes	Yes	Yes
47. Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve	New South Wales	Yes, in part: waterbirds. Water quality and fauna surveys planned for future	No		Yes			Yes	Yes
48. Blue Lake	New South Wales	Yes, in part: ice levels, oxygenation of lake; aquatic fauna	No		Yes	review	Yes	No	No
49. Lake Pinaroo (Fort Grey Basin)	New South Wales	No	No		Yes			No	No
50. Gwydir Wetlands	New South Wales	Yes, in part: flora; fauna; invasive spp (water hyacinth). Fish surveys and monitoring of pesticides and grazing	No		No	Preparation		No	No

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
		planned for the future							
51. Great Sandy Strait	Queensland	Yes: fish movement (in mangrove areas); seagrass mapping; shorebird surveys	No		Yes	review		No	No
52. Myall Lakes	New South Wales	Proposed: visitor impacts; catchment characteristics; ground and lake water quality; fauna; nutrient dynamics; invasive spp	No		Yes	review		proposed	No
53. Narran Lake Nature Reserve	New South Wales	Yes, in part: waterbirds	Predicted impacts due to upstream water extraction	Ongoing negotiations with Queensland Government to ensure adequate flows are maintained to the wetlands	Yes			No	Yes
54. Becher Point Wetlands	Western Australia	No			No	Preparation		No	Yes
55. Lake Gore	Western Australia	No			No			No	Yes
56. Muir-Byenup System	Western Australia	Yes: water quality; salinity; water levels;	Yes. Impacts to vegetation from inundation; rising groundwater	Integrated catchment management plan developed	No	Preparation (likely to be completed by 2005)		No	Yes

Ramsar Site	Jurisdiction	Is ecological character being monitored?	Have changes or potential changes in ecological character been detected/predicted?	Actions taken to address these threats	Management Plan in place?	Management plan in preparation or under review?	Management plan being implemented?	Are there zoning measures in place?	Are there strict protection measures in place?
		vegetation							
57. Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands	Victoria	Some aspects	No		Yes			No	No

Expert opinion is that the ecological condition of the River Murray is significantly impaired, principally through the over-allocation of water for irrigation. As a result of managing water for irrigation, the flow regime and riverine environment (including a number of Ramsar wetlands) of the River Murray has been changed. The Murray-Darling Basin Commission is currently developing options for providing environmental flows for the River Murray, with the vision of “a healthy River Murray System, sustaining communities and preserving unique values” which include wetlands of national and international importance.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE 6 – TO DESIGNATE FOR THE RAMSAR LIST THOSE WETLANDS WHICH MEET THE CONVENTION’S CRITERIA, ESPECIALLY WETLAND TYPES STILL UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE LIST AND TRANSFRONTIER WETLANDS

Operational Objective 6.1: To identify those wetlands that meet the Ramsar criteria, and to give due consideration to their designation for the List.

Actions - Global and National Targets
6.1.1 Develop, regularly update -- especially in the case of Africa -- and disseminate regional wetland directories, which identify potential Ramsar sites. [CPs, Partners]
Refer to 6.1.2 and 6.2.1. Does there exist for your country a directory or similar listing of sites which are potential Ramsar sites?
Yes, A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia lists nationally important wetlands and could be used as a basis for investigating the eligibility of sites.
If No , what are the impediments to such a list of sites being prepared?
If Yes , when was it prepared and was it prepared taking into consideration the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.11)?
The first edition of the Directory was published in 1993. Information was updated in the second edition in 1996 and again in the third edition in 2001. It is now essentially an online database which is publicly accessible via the internet, and is added to and updated as information becomes available. Nine sites have been added since publication of the third edition in February 2001.
AND: How many potential Ramsar sites are identified within the important sites directory for your country?
A significant number of sites in A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia are potential Ramsar sites but the exact number has not been determined. For a wetland to be included in the Directory, it must meet at least one of the following six criteria (the nearest equivalent Ramsar criterion is indicated in brackets):
1. It is a good example of a wetland type occurring within a biogeographic region in Australia. (Ramsar criterion 1)
2. It is a wetland which plays an important ecological or hydrological role in the natural functioning of a major wetland system/complex.
3. It is a wetland which is important as the habitat for animal taxa at a vulnerable stage in their life cycles, or provides a refuge when adverse conditions such as drought prevail. (Ramsar criterion 4)
4. The wetland supports 1% or more of the national populations of any native plant or

animal taxa. (Ramsar criterion 6)

5. The wetland supports native plant or animal taxa or communities which are considered endangered or vulnerable at the national level. (Ramsar criterion 2)
6. The wetland is of outstanding historical or cultural significance.

Over 80% of the sites in the Directory meet more than one of the six criteria, and almost 60% represent multiple wetland habitat types. The wetland habitat classification system used by the Directory was revised in 1994 and is very closely related to the system then used to classify Wetlands of International Importance. The Ramsar criteria have been altered since that time and the Directory criteria will be reassessed to reflect these changes.

As well as the direct application of the relevant Directory criteria to identify potential Ramsar sites there is other information included in the Directory, such as wetland site descriptions and waterbird counts, that can assist in the identification of future Ramsar nominations.

Proposed national actions and targets:

To maintain the currency of information in the Directory and to use that information to identify more Ramsar sites.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia, in cooperation with all States and Territories.

6.1.2 Establish, update and disseminate national scientific inventories of wetlands which identify potential Ramsar sites and wetlands of provincial or local importance in the territory of each Contracting Party. [CPs, Partners]

Global Target - By COP8, to have national wetland inventories completed by over 50 CPs and the information housed in databases (Refer to 5.4.4) which are accessible globally

Does there exist a comprehensive national inventory (as opposed to a directory of important sites; see 6.1.1 above) for your country?

No, a comprehensive national inventory has not yet been compiled for Australia.

If No, what are the impediments to such an inventory being prepared?

The major impediments to a systematic national inventory are the level of resources and time required to complete such a project on a continental scale. There are also significant technical challenges in such a task. For example, the most commonly represented wetland types in Australia are ephemeral wetlands, so the timing of surveys can be particularly important.

While a systematic national inventory is not being prepared, comprehensive State/Territory wetland inventories have been and are currently being undertaken and these may eventually be amalgamated into a national wetland inventory. A comprehensive national inventory remains a long-term goal.

A particular challenge is how a future national inventory might encompass important data derived from traditional ecological knowledge and understanding about the nature and state

of the wetland and good management principles. The challenge is to ensure that Indigenous people with long association with wetlands over countless generations are included in the inventory process. A further challenge is that traditional knowledge of wetlands must be regarded as intellectual property requiring acknowledgment and protection particularly if its use in a wetland inventory then leads to the development of the biological resources for commercial gain or extinguishment of traditional and customary use rights to wetland resources.

If only some parts of the country have had inventories completed, please indicate which parts these are.

Eighty bioregions have been recognised in Australia. Data gathering and surveys for the Directory are generally based on this scale.

Information is being collated from all States and Territories on wetlands that are significant at a sub-regional level, ie at a finer scale than that used in the Directory (ie bioregions), as part of the National Land and Water Resources Audit. The methodology for this assessment is allied to that used for the Directory and will aid in building a national wetland inventory and further identify data and information gaps.

Some States are currently undertaking a comprehensive assessment of wetland types and coverage and will be producing digital data sets that could add to a national wetland inventory. Work is ongoing in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and the arid zone of the Northern Territory to assess wetlands in under-represented regions.

In Queensland, wetland inventories exist in varying stages of completion for South Eastern Queensland, the western section of Cape York, the Gulf Plains, Brigalow Belt North, and the Desert Uplands bioregions. This work is in addition to that already done for the Directory, which identified 181 sites of national importance.

The ACT has completed an inventory of upland wetlands, largely contained in Namadgi National Park, and conducted a remotely sensed survey of lowland wetlands with ground-truthing of the wetland characteristics as resources permit. The ACT has identified a small number of lowland wetlands (less than 30) which require further ground investigation of their extent, importance and Territory significance.

South Australia (SA) has assessed wetlands on a regional scale. SA can be divided into 17 regions, based on the Interim Biogeographical Regionalisation for Australia. In five of these regions, more than 50% of the wetlands have sufficient data collected for inclusion in an inventory. In eleven regions less than 50% of wetlands have been surveyed and in one region no data has been collected. Wetland surveys are currently under way on Kangaroo Island, in the Northern Agricultural Districts, Mt Lofty Ranges and the Eyre Peninsula.

Victoria has prepared a geospatial layer at 1:100 000 of their 159 wetlands of national significance. Victoria has also mapped wetlands across the whole State as they occurred at the time of European settlement (predicted) and again in 1994. This information is maintained as wetland layers in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment geospatial data library. A geospatial layer showing boundaries of Victoria's Ramsar sites is also maintained.

<p>In Tasmania, the north and east coasts and the major off shore islands have been surveyed and included in an inventory.</p> <p>In NSW coastal wetlands have been mapped as part of SEPP 14, and more recently the Sydney Catchment Authority has conducted an inventory of all the wetlands within its jurisdiction.</p> <p>The Northern Territory (NT) Government, supported by Wetlands International – Oceania, has undertaken wetland inventories in the arid south of the NT and in the Sturt Plateau bio-region. The NT inventory projects have amassed substantial data and imagery from which potential Ramsar Sites could be identified.</p> <p>All wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin have been mapped. Areas of the Murray-Darling Basin that have been surveyed for wetlands include the length of the Murray River between Lake Hume and the river mouth, the Edward and Wakool Rivers. More than 7,000 wetlands were surveyed in these areas. The Namoi and Gwydir catchments, the Lower Darling and the NSW portion of the Paroo River have also been surveyed for wetlands. Other studies in the basin are currently underway.</p> <p>An inventory of important wetlands on Commonwealth owned and managed areas has also been undertaken. This study examined existing information on the wetland values at 75 sites around Australia. This resulted in the addition of 20 wetlands to A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, three in the External Territories and 17 in the Defence Estate on mainland Australia. Further work has been commissioned to examine 15 sites where there was insufficient information to adequately assess the values for possible inclusion in the Directory. This new study will also include site visits and an assessment of wetland values against Ramsar criteria.</p>
<p>AND: What is the likely timeframe for completing the national inventory?</p> <p>No timeframe has been established for completion of a national inventory.</p>
<p>If a national inventory has already been completed, when was it finalised?</p>
<p>AND: Is the information housed where it is accessible to stakeholders and the international community? (COP7 Resolution VII.20)</p> <p>Existing information on nationally important wetlands, ie those in A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, is accessible via the Internet. Discussions on the storage, access and availability of State and Territory inventory information, when compiled, have not yet been initiated through the Wetlands and Migratory Shorebirds Taskforce, but it is possible that similar arrangements could be made.</p>
<p>If No, what are the impediments to this occurring?</p>
<p>Has national/subnational inventory information been provided to the Ramsar Bureau (if it is not accessible through the Internet)?</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p>

<p>The allocation of adequate resources for compiling available site information and undertaking investigations of unrepresented regions to build a national inventory.</p>
<p>To increase the level of consultation with Indigenous people in the preparation of inventory data and to ensure traditional knowledge relating to wetlands is recognised.</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:</p>
<p>Environment Australia in cooperation with all States and Territories.</p>

<p>6.1.4 Support the work of Wetlands International and IUCN in updating information on population sizes of waterfowl and other taxa, and utilise these data in identification of potential Ramsar sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p>
<p>Does your country regularly gather waterbird population data?</p> <p>Yes, waterbird population monitoring has been a priority for a number of groups at national, regional and local levels within Australia. Many of these groups are affiliated or collaborate with Birds Australia, the leading bird conservation non-government organisation (NGO). This allows a coordinated, nationwide study of bird populations.</p> <p>Birds Australia is coordinating an estimated 9,500 volunteers to collect data on the presence and habitat relationships of birds across the continent. This information on the distribution and relative abundance of all birds throughout Australia will be used in the compilation of the second Atlas of Australian Birds. Four survey methods are being used: the Area search within 500m (~ 40% of all surveys); the 2ha search (~ 35%); the Area search within 5km (~ 11%); and Incidental surveys (~ 9%). The consistency of methods used will allow comparison between the new data set and that compiled for the first Atlas, which was undertaken between 1977-81. As of April 2001, 97% of the 885 1° blocks dividing the country had been visited. A special component of the Atlas is monitoring wetlands and waterbirds. Sophisticated analyses and modelling of the data will be included in the final reporting for the project, which will be formally finished in March 2002, although it has been set up so that data collection can continue beyond the life of the project. A final Atlas of Australian Birds will be produced in book and CD-Rom form.</p> <p>The Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) monitors wader populations through a program of counting and banding to collect data on changes at a local, national and international scale. The group studies migrations using banding, colour flagging and collection of biometric data. The AWSG is currently monitoring wader populations under the Population Monitoring Project (PMP). This project consists of biannual population counts at wetland sites over Australia. This project has generated valuable data sets and AWSG is proposing to conduct regular counts over the next 5 years and has sought external funding to develop a database to compile this information. The AWSG also conducts regular shorebird surveys in remote locations within Australia, such as the survey that takes place every two years on the remote north-west coast of Western Australia. State-based Wader Study Groups are involved in regular counts, banding and leg-flagging studies. At a regional level, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service coordinates an annual aerial survey of waterbirds along the eastern coast of Australia. This survey commenced in 1983 and has been conducted every October since that time. The surveys provide information on up to 50 waterbird species, including some on the national Threatened Species List.</p>

Wetlands International – Oceania, together with other specialists, conducted waterbird surveys in the “Channel Country” (inland rivers that arise in Queensland and terminate in the salt lakes of South Australia) and in the Barkly Lakes of the Northern Territory in 2000-2001. The aerial and ground surveys were conducted following heavy rainfall that inundated vast areas. Waterbird population estimates were extended, with numbers in excess of 100,000 birds counted for a number of wetland systems. New locations for breeding colonies were also identified during the surveys. Wetlands International – Oceania has since developed a proposal to establish regular monitoring, especially during floods, to prepare estimates of species’ populations in Australia.

At a local level, waterbird population data is gathered at many sites in Australia by community, government and non-government organisations. One example of community monitoring of waterbirds takes place at Lake Woolumboola by the Lake Woolumboola Support Group. Lake Woolumboola is a significant habitat for waterbirds including migratory shorebirds using the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Flyway. The Group is composed of local residents who have contributed to monthly bird counts at Lake Woolumboola since 1991.

An example of the collection of local data by government and research organisations is the waterbird monitoring undertaken in Kakadu National Park. The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission undertakes Magpie geese surveys and provides Commonwealth park management with the data. Research groups also undertake monitoring in the Park. This has included research (June to August, 2000) on the distributional ecology and conservation of tropical wetland birds in the Park, and research to investigate and compare the selection of habitats by wading birds at Yellow Water between June and August, 2001.

At the international level, Environment Australia is supporting Wetlands International – Oceania to update population estimates of shorebirds in the East Asian–Australasian Shorebird Flyway.

If **No**, what prevents this from happening?

If **Yes**, is this information provided to Wetlands International?

Yes, waterbird population monitoring data are provided to Wetlands International.

If **No**, why not?

Proposed national actions and targets:

To continue ongoing population monitoring work to increase knowledge of the population dynamics and habitat use of a range of waterbird species at local, regional, national and international levels.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Birds Australia and its affiliates, in the non-government sector, have taken the lead on monitoring and conservation of waterbirds and work closely with Wetlands International

and government conservation agencies from all jurisdictions.

Operational Objective 6.2: *To increase the area of wetland designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, particularly for wetland types that are under-represented either at global or national level.*

Actions – Global and National Targets

6.2.1 Promote the designation for the Ramsar List of an increased area of wetland, through listing by new Contracting Parties, and through further designations by current Contracting Parties, in particular developing countries, in order to ensure the listing of a representative range of wetland types in the territory of each Contracting Party and in each Ramsar region. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - As proposed in the Strategic Framework, the short-term target of the Ramsar List should be to achieve the designation of 2000 sites, in accordance with the systematic approach advocated therein, by the time of COP9 in the year 2005. In addition, by COP8 the target is to have at least 20 CPs that are applying a systematic approach to site selection nationally.**

Refer also to 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.2.3. Has your country taken a systematic approach to identifying its future Ramsar sites (as promoted in the *Strategic Framework for the List – COP7 Resolution VII.11*)?

Yes. Site information contained in A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia database can be used to identify potential new Ramsar sites in Australia. Wetlands International-Oceania undertook a strategic and systematic assessment of nationally important Western Australian wetlands (identified in the Directory) against Ramsar criteria to identify potential sites for nomination under the Ramsar Convention. Thirty-eight wetlands or wetland systems that were not already Ramsar sites were found to meet at least one of the Ramsar criteria. As a result of this study, three new Ramsar sites in Western Australia - Becher Point Wetlands, Lake Gore and Muir-Byenup - were added to the Ramsar list, and four existing sites were extended. A suite of other sites have been identified as potential Ramsar sites for future consideration. It is anticipated that a similar approach may be taken in some other States and Territories in Australia in the near future.

The Commonwealth Government has taken a strategic approach to identify future Ramsar sites in Australia and the Pacific. Wetlands within the Commonwealth Government's jurisdiction have been examined and documentation has been prepared for the nomination of two sites, and a further site is being considered. The Commonwealth Government has also funded the World Wide Fund for Nature - Australia to promote the Ramsar Convention and possible new listings to landholders in remote regions of Australia. Australia has also promoted the designation of new Ramsar sites in the Oceania region by funding a project to encourage the accession of Pacific Island countries to the Convention, and providing technical assistance through Wetlands International - Oceania to document candidate Ramsar sites in the region (Refer 1.1.1)..

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done?

<p>If Yes, has this included considerations to ensure the designation of a representative range of wetland types?</p> <p>Yes, the systematic examination of potential sites has included active consideration of wetland types with a view to increasing the range of types represented within Australia. In particular, the Commonwealth is considering sites with wetland types that are currently under-represented in the Ramsar list eg karst systems, coral reefs and peatlands.</p>
<p>If No, why not?</p>
<p>If Yes, has this resulted in the designation of a representative range of wetland types?</p> <p>Future potential nominations will increase the range of wetland types represented in Australia.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p> <p>Future examination of potential Ramsar sites will continue to be conducted in a systematic and strategic manner, and will include particular consideration of wetland types that are currently under-represented in the Ramsar list.</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:</p> <p>Commonwealth, State and Territory government agencies according to jurisdictional responsibility.</p> <p>Environment Australia, on behalf of the Australian Government, will also play a lead role in promoting these aspects of the Convention in the Oceania region.</p>

<p>6.2.3 Give priority attention to the designation of new sites from wetland types currently under-represented on the Ramsar List, and in particular, when appropriate, coral reefs, mangroves, sea-grass beds and peatlands. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Targets – The long-term targets are set by the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.11). Based on this, short-term targets for each wetland type will be derived [by the STRP].
<p>Further to 6.2.1 above: If your territory includes under-represented wetland types, has special attention been given to identifying suitable sites for designation?</p> <p>Yes, attention has been given to identifying under-represented sites for designation. Table 6.2 below lists Ramsar sites with under-represented wetland types. Other sites containing these wetland types, will be considered as part of the systematic approach to the identification of potential Ramsar sites (refer to 6.2.2).</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this from occurring?</p>
<p>If Yes, has this included designations of wetlands including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coral reefs? Yes

- mangroves? Yes
- seagrass beds? Yes
- peatlands? Yes
- intertidal wetlands? (COP7 Resolution VII.21) Yes

Table 6.2 below lists the sites where these wetland types are represented.

Proposed national actions and targets:

List 10 new Ramsar sites in under-represented types and across wide geographic spread by 2005.

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia, in cooperation with all States and Territories.

Table 6.2 – Designation of under-represented wetland types

Type	Site Name	Date of designation
Coral reefs	Cobourg Peninsula, Northern Territory	08/05/74
	Moreton Bay, Queensland	22/10/93
	Pulu Keeling National Park (North Keeling Island)	17/03/96
	Great Sandy Strait (including Great Sandy Strait, Tin Can Bay and Tin Can Inlet), Queensland	14/06/99
Mangroves	Cobourg Peninsula, Northern Territory	08/05/74
	Kakadu National Park (Stage 1), Northern Territory	12/06/80
	Corner Inlet, Victoria	15/12/82
	Western Port, Victoria	15/12/82
	Port Phillip Bay and Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria	15/12/82
	Kooragang Nature Reserve, New South Wales	21/02/84
	Kakadu National Park (Stage 2), Northern Territory	15/09/89
	Ord River Floodplain, Western Australia	07/06/90
	Moreton Bay, Queensland	22/10/93
	Bowling Green Bay, Queensland	22/10/93
	Shoalwater and Corio Bays Area (Shoalwater Bay Training Area, in part - Corio Bay), Queensland	11/03/96
	Great Sandy Strait (including Great Sandy Strait, Tin Can Bay and Tin Can Inlet), Queensland	14/06/99
	Myall Lakes, New South Wales	14/06/99
Seagrass beds	Kakadu National Park (Stage 1), Northern Territory	12/06/80
	Western Port, Victoria	15/12/82
	Port Phillip Bay and Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria	15/12/82
	Gippsland Lakes, Victoria	15/12/82
	Corner Inlet, Victoria	15/12/82
	Kakadu National Park (Stage 2), Northern Territory	15/09/89
	Moreton Bay, Queensland	22/10/93

	Shoalwater and Corio Bays Area (Shoalwater Bay Training Area, in part - Corio Bay), Queensland	11/03/96
	Pulu Keeling National Park (North Keeling Island)	17/03/96
	Great Sandy Strait (including Great Sandy Strait, Tin Can Bay and Tin Can Inlet), Queensland	14/06/99
Peatlands	Kakadu National Park (Stage 1), Northern Territory	12/06/80
	Kakadu National Park (Stage 2), Northern Territory	15/09/89
	Moreton Bay, Queensland	22/10/93
	Ginini Flats Wetland Complex, Australian Capital Territory	11/03/96
	Great Sandy Strait (including Great Sandy Strait, Tin Can Bay and Tin Can Inlet), Queensland.	14/06/99
	Muir-Byenup System, Western Australia	05/01/01
Intertidal wetlands	Cobourg Peninsula	08/05/74
	Kakadu National Park (Stage 1)	12/06/80
	Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve, Tasmania	16/11/82
	Lavinia Nature Reserve, Tasmania	16/11/82
	Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon, Tasmania	16/11/82
	Corner Inlet, Victoria	15/12/82
	Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria	15/12/82
	Western Port, Victoria	15/12/82
	Towra Point Nature Reserve, New South Wales	21/02/84
	Kooragang Nature Reserve, New South Wales	21/02/84
	Kakadu National Park (Stage 2), Northern Territory	15/09/89
	Ord River Floodplain, Western Australia	07/06/90
	Roebuck Bay, Western Australia	07/06/90
	Eighty-mile Beach, Western Australia	07/06/90
	Moreton Bay, Queensland	22/10/93
	Bowling Green Bay, Queensland	
	Shoalwater and Corio Bays Area (Shoalwater Bay Training Area, in part - Corio Bay), Queensland	11/03/96
	Great Sandy Strait (including Great Sandy Strait, Tin Can Bay and Tin Can Inlet), Queensland	14/06/99
	Myall Lakes, New South Wales	14/06/99

6.2.4 Pay particular attention to the designation of new sites currently enjoying no special conservation status at national level, as a first step towards developing measures

<p>for their conservation and wise use. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This question was not considered in the National Reports for COP7. It will be included for consideration in the NRs for COP8. • Global Target - All CPs to consider this approach to ensuring the long-term conservation and wise use of wetlands that are subject to intense human use.
<p>Has your country designated wetland sites for the Ramsar List which previously had no special conservation status?</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this from happening?</p>
<p>If Yes, please provide details.</p> <p>Two sites in north-western New South Wales, the Gwydir Wetlands Ramsar site and the Wilgara Wetlands of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar site did not have conservation protection prior to their designation. The Gwydir Wetlands Ramsar site was designated on 14/06/99, and is composed of a mixture of freehold and perpetual leasehold lands that previously had no special conservation status. The site is now managed by the private landholders under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Commonwealth and State governments and conservation groups. Two of the most important conservation measures outlined in the MoU are the establishment of a Management Group, and the development of individual property action plans.</p> <p>The Macquarie Marshes also located in NSW, are on the lower reaches of the Macquarie River. The Macquarie Marshes Ramsar Site now represents approximately 10% of the total area of the Marshes and is composed of both publicly and privately owned land. In 1986, the Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve was designated under the Ramsar Convention. The boundary of the Ramsar site was expanded in 2000 to include Wilgara Wetland (583 ha), situated entirely within the privately owned ‘Wilgara’ property, an area with no previous conservation status. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, in conjunction with the Wilgara property owners, are responsible for managing the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar site. An Individual Property Management Plan has been developed for the Wilgara Wetlands using the principles of “wise-use” and ecologically sustainable development.</p> <p>In addition the following wetlands include significant proportions of land that also had no special conservation status prior to their designation as Ramsar sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Port, Victoria • Port Phillip Bay & Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria • Gippsland Lakes, Victoria • Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, Victoria • Jocks Lagoon, Tasmania • Apsley Marshes, Tasmania • Lower Ringarooma River Floodplain, Tasmania • Roebuck Bay, Western Australia • Eighty-mile Beach, Western Australia
<p>AND: Are there plans for further such designations?</p>

Yes
If No , why not?
<p>If Yes, please elaborate.</p> <p>The World Wide Fund for Nature – Australia (WWF), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the National Parks Association NSW are currently undertaking a project entitled Designation and Management of Additional Ramsar Wetlands in NSW. This project has been funded by the Commonwealth Government and is actively pursuing the nomination and designation of wetlands in NSW across all tenures, including wetlands that currently have no special conservation status.</p> <p>WWF are also involved in managing three other programs in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, that are part of the Commonwealth funded Cooperative Wetland Management Agreements in Outback Australia project. These projects have selected wetlands across the three States/Territories that are of national significance and in need of conservation and protection and where WWF believes its assistance will be beneficial to the Ramsar nomination process. The wetlands identified by the project include those on Indigenous, corporate and privately owned land. The aim of the project is to improve the conservation of wetlands on these properties, and to promote the potential for protection of the wetlands through designation under the Ramsar Convention.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p> <p>To designate additional wetland sites to the Ramsar list which currently have no special conservation status.</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:</p> <p>Environment Australia, in cooperation with all States and Territories and WWF.</p>

<p>6.2.5 Consider as a matter of priority the designation of transfrontier wetland sites. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of transfrontier or shared wetlands is addressed in the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention (COP7 Resolution VII.19)</i> and the <i>Guidelines for integrating wetlands into river basin management (COP7 Resolution VII.18)</i>. Global Target - By COP8, for there to be over 50 transfrontier wetland sites designated under the Convention.
<p>For those CPs which ‘share’ wetlands with other CPs, have all suitable sites been designated under the Convention?</p> <p>Australia does not share any wetlands with any other Contracting Parties.</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this action being taken?</p>
<p>If Yes, are there arrangements in place between the CPs sharing the wetland for the cooperative management of the site?</p>

If No , what has prevented such arrangements from being introduced?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 7 – TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MOBILIZE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION AND WISE USE IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS AND AGENCIES, BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL

Operational Objective 7.1: To identify international and/or regional needs for managing shared wetlands and shared catchments, and develop and implement common approaches.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>7.1.1 Identify transfrontier wetlands of international importance (including those within shared catchment/river basins), and encourage preparation and implementation of joint plans for such sites, using a “catchment approach” (Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]</p> <p>Refer to 6.2.5 above.</p>
<p>7.1.2 Encourage twinning of transfrontier wetlands, and of other wetlands with similar characteristics, and use successful cases for illustrating the benefits of international cooperation. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention (COP7 Resolution VII.19)</i> and the <i>Convention’s Outreach Programme (COP7 Resolution VII.9)</i> promote site twinning as a mechanism for accelerating the flow of knowledge and assistance and promoting training opportunities. Global Target - By COP8 to have in place over 100 Ramsar site twinning arrangements. The Bureau will keep a record of which sites are twinned and make this available through the Convention’s Web site.
Does your country have Ramsar sites twinned with those in other CPs?
Yes but these wetlands occur on different continents and are therefore not linked hydrologically.
If No , what has prevented this from happening?
If Yes , please note how many such twinning arrangements are in place and indicate which sites are involved.
There are two Ramsar wetlands in Australia that are twinned with sites in Japan:

<p>The Boondall Wetlands, which form part of the Moreton Bay Ramsar site in Queensland, is twinned with Yatsu Tideland Ramsar site in Japan.</p>
<p>The Kooragang Wetlands Ramsar site (and associated wetlands) are affiliated with the Kushiro-shitsugen, Akkeshi-ko and Bekanbeushi-shitsugen and Kiritappu-shitsugen wetlands.</p>
<p>AND: Do these arrangements involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing of information resources? Yes • transfer of financial resources? No • exchanges of personnel? Yes. Staff and volunteers from Japan visited the Moreton Bay Ramsar site in 1999 and 2001 and three delegations from Moreton Bay have attended the Yatsu Higata Festival. <p>The sister affiliation between the Kooragang Ramsar site and Kushiro-shitsugen/ Akkeshi-ko and Bekanbeushi-shitsugen/Kiritappu-shitsugen has involved exchange activities among City Managers, teachers and students and technicians. Major visits from Japan occurred in 1996 and 1998. The most recent visit from Australia occurred in 2001 and another is planned for 2002 involving City Managers. In particular there has been an on-going exchange between Callaghan College (formerly Jesmond High School) in Newcastle and Kushiro High School in Japan. In 2001 the Director of Kushiro International Wetlands Centre visited the Wetlands Centre Australia at Shortland, touring the wetlands of the Lower Hunter and meeting with local conservation groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other activities? Yes. Exchange of correspondence.
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p> <p>To explore further opportunities for site twinning.</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:</p> <p>Individual site managers</p>

Operational Objective 7.2: To strengthen and formalise linkages between Ramsar and other international and/or regional environmental conventions and agencies, so as to advance the achievement of shared goals and objectives relating to wetland species or issues.

Actions - Global and National Targets
7.2.1 Participate in, or initiate, consultations with related conventions to foster information exchange and cooperation, and develop an agenda for potential joint actions. [SC, Bureau]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
Refer also to 4.2.1. Does there exist a mechanism (such as an inter-ministry committee) at the national level with the charter of coordinating/integrating the implementation of international/regional conventions/treaties to which your country is a signatory?
Yes
If No , what are the impediments to such a mechanism being introduced?
If Yes , describe the mechanism and the conventions/treaties it is expected to consider.
<p>Australia's involvement in the key related Multilateral Environment Conventions is handled through Environment Australia (the Ramsar Administrative Authority). Consequently there is a high degree of coordination of Australia's engagement with conventions such as CMS, CBD and CITES.</p> <p>An Inter-Departmental Committee on Wetlands (IDC) was established to allow Commonwealth departments and agencies to discuss the conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds in Australia. Many departments/agencies have responsibility for, or a vested interest in, these issues and as such, membership is broad ranging. The IDC meets when required to discuss and provide input into issues related to the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands in Australia and the Japan-Australia and China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreements (JAMBA/CAMBA).</p> <p>In addition, the Parliament, through the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, scrutinises all new treaty proposals and makes recommendations on signature and ratification, and is also able to initiate inquiries into existing international instruments.</p>
AND: Has the mechanism proven to be effective?
Yes
If No , why not?
If Yes , please elaborate.
<p>Member agencies of the IDC provide input to the Ramsar and JAMBA/CAMBA national reports. The IDC also assists with the development of recommendations to be put forward by Australia at Conferences of Parties to the Convention on Wetlands and with the development of whole of Government positions on issues to be discussed at both national and international meetings.</p>
Proposed national actions and targets:

To continue to convene IDC meetings to discuss wetland and waterbird conservation issues.
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
The IDC is Chaired by Environment Australia.

7.2.2 Prepare project proposals together with other conventions and partner organisations, and submit them jointly to potential funding agencies. [CPs, SC, Bureau, Partners]
For eligible countries, have there been project proposals prepared and submitted to funding agencies which were intended to assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention?
Yes
If No , what has prevented this from happening?
If Yes , were such proposals successful in gaining funds?
<p>Wetlands International – Oceania is a Partner Organisation of the Convention. The Commonwealth Government of Australia acts as host to the organisation’s head office and has provided funding support for Wetlands International - Oceania projects within the region. Wetlands International - Oceania has also been successful in securing funding from other funding agencies. Specific successful projects in the last 2-3 years include:</p> <p>* training on wetland inventory in PNG funded by the Evian Foundation (via Ramsar Bureau).</p> <p>* wetland inventory, monitoring and/or community-based management of coastal wetlands (especially coral reefs) in PNG. In addition to focussing international attention on priority wetland types for the Convention, these projects have increased local and government capacity in wetland management and raised awareness of the Convention (funding from several organisations eg MacArthur Foundation, Oak Foundation, Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund, New England Biolabs Foundation, WWF South Pacific).</p> <p>* The ongoing program of work for migratory waterbird conservation in the Asia-Pacific region (coordinated by Wetlands International – Oceania with core support from the Governments of Australia and Japan). A Global Environment Facility proposal is being developed to seek the support of other key regional Ramsar Contracting Parties and endorsements from the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species, for its implementation.</p>
Proposed national actions and targets:
Continue to collaborate with Ramsar partner organisations to secure wetland funding in the region
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia

<p>7.2.3 Strengthen cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular as regards inclusion of wetland concerns in national biodiversity strategies, and planning and execution of projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - To see the Joint Work Plan implemented in full and resulting in cooperative implementation of both Conventions at the international, national and local levels.
<p>Further to 7.2.1 above: Has there been a review completed of the Joint Work Plan between Ramsar and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to establish the areas of priority for cooperative implementation of these Conventions?</p> <p>No</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented such a review being done?</p> <p>Implementation of Australia's National Biodiversity Strategy was reviewed in 2001 and included consideration of broader biodiversity issues including wetland conservation. As a result, new National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 have been established which specifically address the conservation of Ramsar and other wetlands and migratory waterbirds (also refer to 2.1.2).</p> <p>Further actions are being identified through the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality but are as yet unspecified.</p>
<p>If Yes, what are the areas established as priorities for national cooperation between Ramsar and CBD implementing agencies/focal points?</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p> <p>Wetland conservation continues to be considered through broader national biodiversity conservation strategies</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:</p> <p>Environment Australia</p>

<p>7.2.4 Develop cooperation with the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), especially as regards wetlands designated as World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and/or Ramsar sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with the Man and the Biosphere Programme, leading to Joint Work Plans with the MAB Programme and with the World Heritage Convention which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local, levels.
<p>Refer to 7.2.1 above.</p>
<p>7.2.5 Enhance Ramsar's contribution to international cooperation on shared wetland species, notably through cooperative arrangements with the Convention on Migratory Species, flyway agreements, networks and other mechanisms dealing with migratory species (Recommendation 6.4). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> propose an increase in the joint efforts between Ramsar and CMS (COP7 Resolution VII.19) • Global Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, regional and national and local levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
<p>7.2.6 Develop Ramsar's contribution to wildlife trade issues affecting wetlands, through increased interaction with CITES. [Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> propose an increase in the joint efforts between Ramsar and CITES (COP7 Resolution VII.19) • Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with CITES, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above
<p>7.2.7 Initiate links with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in view of the potential impacts on wetlands of climate change. [CP, Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with UNFCCC, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
<p>7.2.8 Extend cooperation with conventions and agencies concerned with conservation and wise use of wetlands at regional level, and in particular: with the European Community, as regards application of its Habitats Directive to wetlands, and adoption and application of measures like the Habitats Directive for wetlands outside the states of the European Union; with the Council of Europe (Bern) Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats as regards the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy; with the Barcelona Convention and Mediterranean Action Plan in relation to the MedWet initiative; with the Western Hemisphere Convention; with UNEP programmes, in particular the Regional Seas Conventions; and with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). [CPs, Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - With the European Commission and SPREP, develop and sign a Memorandum of Cooperation and prepare and implement a Joint Work Plan. For Medwet, secure the long-term funding base for this important initiative and continue to develop new programmes of regional action. For the others referred to, and others which are appropriate, develop an appropriate working relationship.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
<p>7.2.9 Develop relationships with other specialised agencies that deal with wetland-related issues, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the World Water Council (COP7 Resolution VI.23). [Bureau]</p>

- **Global Target - To progress to closer working relations with these and other relevant initiatives, as appropriate.**

Refer to 7.2.1 above.

A representative from Environment Australia attended the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Coordination and Planning Committee Meeting, Noumea 25-26 May 2000 to present a report (in conjunction with the Ramsar Convention Bureau) entitled *The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) - Framework for the protection, conservation and wise use of coral reefs - Australia's experience.*

A poster presentation, *Why List Coral Reefs under the Ramsar Convention?* by Wetlands International - Oceania was made at the International Coral Reef Symposium, held in Bali, Indonesia, October 2000.

Operational Objective 7.3: To ensure that the development assistance community, and multinational corporations, follow improved wetland practices such as the Wise Use Guidelines in developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.3.2 Work with multilateral and bilateral development agencies and multinational corporations towards a full recognition of wetland values and functions (Recommendation 4.13), and assist them to improve their practices in favour of wetland conservation and wise use taking account of the *Guidelines for Aid Agencies for Improved Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Wetlands*, published by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (Recommendation 6.16). [Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - At the Bureau level, to consider ways and means to increase its ability to work more systematically in this area, so as to increase the level of donor agency support for wetland conservation and wise use activities, and to see an increasing number of multinational corporations adopting voluntary codes of conduct for protecting wetlands.**

While this action is directed at the Bureau principally, CPs also have a role to play in this area; refer to 7.4.2 below with respect to bilateral development agencies. For the multilateral donors: Is your government represented on the governing bodies or scientific advisory bodies of the multilateral donors, or the GEF?

Yes, Australia is represented in the Global Environment Facility (of the World Bank) Council as part of the Australia/New Zealand/Republic of Korea Constituency.

If **Yes**, has this person/agency/ministry been briefed on the obligations of your country under the Ramsar Convention, and the relevant expectations raised of each CP by the Strategic Plan and COP decisions?

The GEF focal point is broadly aware of the Ramsar Convention and related issues and has

regular contact with the agency responsible for ensuring Australia meets its Convention obligations (Environment Australia).

7.3.3 Interact with multilateral development agencies and through bilateral development programmes, to assist developing countries in meeting their Ramsar obligations, and report on actions taken and results achieved (Recommendation 5.5). [CPs]

Refer to 7.4.2 to 7.4.6 below.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Operational Objective 7.4: To obtain funds to fulfil obligations contracted under the Convention, notably for developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.4.1 Allocate funds for conservation and wise use of wetlands in the budget of each Contracting Party. [CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to see allocations for wetlands made by all CPs and also for specific wetland programmes in more than 40 CPs.**

Does your government allocate funds for wetland conservation and wise use activities?

Yes. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments allocate funds to wetland conservation and wise use.

If **No**, what are the impediments to this happening?

If **Yes**, is this:

- As a separate allocation to a Wetlands Programme (or similar)?
At the Commonwealth level, money is allocated to the National Wetlands Program. NSW and SA also have specific wetland programs. These programs form part of a broader allocation for the environment.
- As part of a broader allocation for the environment?
Funds allocated to wetland conservation and wise use in Queensland, ACT, Victoria and Western Australia are part of a broader allocation of funding for the environment. Also see above
- As part of the programmes maintained by a range of Ministries?
Wetland conservation and wise use is not restricted to a single agency (at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels), however the primary responsibility for implementing the Convention on Wetlands has been allocated to a lead agency in each jurisdiction.

AND: What mechanisms are in place for determining priorities and coordinating the expenditure of these funds?

Priorities for the allocation of Commonwealth funding are guided by the Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia and Australia's obligations as a Contracting Party to the Convention on Wetlands. Since 1997, the Commonwealth Government has provided funding to all States and Territories through the Natural Heritage Trust.

Applications submitted through this process are assessed by technical, regional, State and Commonwealth assessment panels to determine their eligibility for funding and to allocate a priority ranking. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Heritage takes these recommendations into consideration when allocating funding each year.

In Qld, the Strategy for the Conservation and Management of Queensland Wetlands provides objectives and initiatives for wetland conservation and management. Each agency with responsibilities for wetlands decides its priorities for funding within its own programs.

The NSW State Government receives funding to manage public lands which includes eight of the nine Ramsar sites and various other important wetlands across NSW. The NSW State Wetlands Advisory Committee coordinates the Wetlands Action Program. Funding priorities are drawn from the priority actions set in the current Action Plan for this program.

Wetland funding in South Australia is allocated as part of various wetland management programs across a range of Ministries. Funding allocations are generally based upon the outcomes of catchment management planning, biodiversity planning, national park management planning or other natural resource management planning.

There is no specific budget line for wetlands in the ACT. However funding is provided for wetland conservation and wise use through the budget allocations for nature conservation and management in national parks and reserves, as well as through the normal planning and approvals process for development applications.

Victoria allocates funds for wetlands as part of the programs maintained by a number of government agencies, primarily the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Parks Victoria, but also through local government and government-owned corporations such as Melbourne Water. Priorities are determined in accordance with Victoria's Biodiversity Strategy which includes a statement on wetlands policy.

In some instances, priorities for funding in Western Australia are determined by the Wetlands Coordinating Committee. Funding is generally allocated to wetland management through the internal mechanisms of relevant agencies, which are also linked to the Western Australian Wetlands Conservation Policy.

Is it linked to a National Wetland Policy, Biodiversity Plan, Catchment Plan or something similar?

Yes (see above). Funding allocations are linked to wetland/biodiversity policies in SA, Vic, Qld, WA, NSW and at the Commonwealth level.

SA, ACT and Tasmania do not as yet have wetland strategies in place to guide funding priorities.

Proposed national actions and targets:
Adequate funding is allocated to wetland conservation and management in all jurisdictions.
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

<p>7.4.2 Include projects for conservation and wise use of wetlands in development plans funded by development assistance agencies, and ensure the latter consult the Ramsar administrative authority in each Contracting Party. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - To see this trend continue such that all eligible CPs are receiving donor support for a range of major wetland-related projects by the time of COP8. In particular, to see this support being provided, as appropriate, for the priority areas of policy development, legal and institutional reviews, inventory and assessments, the designation and management of Ramsar sites, training and communications.
<p>If your country has a bilateral development assistance programme, does it allocate funds for wetland-related projects on a regular basis?</p> <p>Yes. The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) allocates funding to wetland-related activities identified as a development priority by the partner government during annual High Level Consultations. Activities must be consistent with the objective of the Australian overseas aid program – to advance Australia’s national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Proposals that can demonstrate relevance to poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods are most likely to receive funding. AusAID does not set targets for bilateral environmental expenditure other than through individual country programs.</p> <p>To complement its bilateral assistance, Australia funds several regional and global organisations that have wetlands as an important part of their mandate, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), and the South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC).</p> <p>In 2000-01, total expenditure on bilateral wetland-related activities through Australia’s aid program was Aus\$7.3 million. Expenditure on regional and global programs totalled Aus\$10.5 million.</p>
<p>If No, what are the impediments to this occurring?</p>
<p>If Yes, are these projects subjected to rigorous impact assessment procedures, which take account of the full environmental, social and economic values of wetlands?</p> <p>Yes. AusAID is subject to the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act), which entered into effect on 16 July 2000, replacing five other Acts, including the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974. Wetlands are one of six ‘Matters of National Environmental Significance’ given special emphasis under the Act.</p>

<p>The EPBC Act requires AusAID to consider advice from the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Heritage before entering into a contract or agreement for the implementation of any activity that is likely to have a significant impact on the environment anywhere in the world. The Commonwealth Environment Minister can also require AusAID to refer any proposal that may have a significant impact on the environment. AusAID must report back on action taken in response to the Minister's advice.</p> <p>In order to comply with the Act, AusAID environmentally assesses and manages all aid activities to minimise negative impacts and maximise beneficial impacts on the environment. AusAID recently reviewed the effectiveness of these systems and is in the process of revising them to reflect donor best practice, the requirements of the new Act, and the ISO 14001 standard for environmental management systems.</p>
<p>If No, why not?</p>
<p>If Yes, is the Ramsar Administrative Authority consulted during the screening and assessment phases of the projects?</p> <p>No</p>
<p>If No, why not?</p> <p>AusAID's environmental assessment guidelines currently do not explicitly require consultation with the Ramsar Administrative Authority (Environment Australia) on activities affecting Ramsar wetlands. Consideration will be given to making this a requirement of the new guidelines.</p> <p>All current AusAID activities related to wetlands are aimed at the conservation and better management of wetlands. Government agencies with a relevant mandate have been involved in the design and implementation of these activities from the outset. For example, the China Wetlands Resource Management Project being co-financed with the UNDP/GEF, is working with the national Wetlands Coordinating Committee involving 17 Ministries and other government agencies. The Indonesia Coral Reef Management and Rehabilitation Project, co-financed with the World Bank, the Asia Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency and the GEF, is being implemented through the Indonesia Institute of Science (LIPI) as part of Indonesia's national coral reef strategy.</p>
<p>AND: Is there a formal consultative process in place (such as a National Ramsar Committee) which ensures that the development assistance agency is fully aware of the Ramsar Convention obligations of the country with respect to international cooperation?</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>If No, why not?</p>
<p>If Yes, please elaborate.</p> <p>Either through a formal Ramsar committee as described, or through AusAID's standard practice of convening a multi-agency project coordinating committee involving the local environment agency, where relevant.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets:</p> <p>To continue to provide bilateral funding assistance for wetland conservation</p>

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

7.4.4 Mobilise direct funding support from multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies to assist developing countries and countries whose economy is in transition, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and in implementation of the present Strategic Plan. [CPs. Bureau]

- **Global Target - By COP8 for all the bilateral donors from appropriate CPs to have funds earmarked for wetland projects, and for all of these CPs to have in place mechanisms for consultation between the development assistance agency and their Ramsar Administrative Authority.**

Refer to 7.4.2 above

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 8 – TO PROVIDE THE CONVENTION WITH THE REQUIRED INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND RESOURCES

Operational Objective 8.1: To maximise achievement of Ramsar’s mission and objectives by evaluating and, if necessary, modifying the Convention’s institutions and management structures.

Actions - Global and National Targets
8.1.9 Promote the establishment of National Ramsar Committees to provide the opportunity for input from, and representation of, governmental and non-governmental organisations, key stakeholders, Indigenous people, the private sector and interest groups, and land use planning and management authorities (Recommendation 5.13). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
Refer to 4.1.2.
8.1.10 Review the designated national focal point in each Contracting Party, with a view to increasing involvement in the work of the Convention from all agencies concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]
Refer to 4.1.1

Operational Objective 8.2: To provide the financial resources required to carry out Ramsar activities.

Actions - Global and National Targets
8.2.1 Pay invoiced contributions to the Convention's core budget in full, and promptly at the beginning of each calendar year. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - During this triennium to achieve full and timely payment of all dues by all CPs. The SC to prepare a proposal on sanctions for non-payment for consideration at COP8 (COP7 Resolution VII.28).
Is your country completely up to date with its annual contributions to the core budget of the Convention?
Yes
If No , what is the impediment to this being done?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Australia's annual membership contribution paid as required
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:
Environment Australia

8.2.4 Give priority to funding for training programmes, education and public awareness work, development of the Ramsar Database, and the Convention's Communications Strategy. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - To secure the resources needed to establish regional training initiatives (like <i>Wetlands for the Future</i>) in other regions, to allow the Bureau to progress the implementation of the Outreach Programme, and to support the proposed developments for the Ramsar Sites Database into a fully online and Web-based promotional and planning tool of the Convention.
Refer to 3.3.1 (Convention Outreach Programme), 4.2.4 (Wetlands for the Future).

Operational Objective 8.3: To maximise the benefits of working with partner organisations.

Actions - Global and National Targets
8.3.1 Strengthen cooperative planning mechanisms with the partners and improve communications and information exchange, including exchange of staff. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
Refer to 3.2.1 and 4.1.2. Does your country include representatives of the Convention's official International Organisation Partners (BirdLife International, IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International) on its National Ramsar Committees or similar bodies, where they exist?
No
If No , what prevents this from occurring?

Refer to 4.1.2
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Operational Objective 8.4: To secure at least one million US dollars per annum for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use (Resolutions 5.8 and VI.6) and to allocate these funds effectively.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>8.4.1 Develop a strategy for securing at least one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, to be approved by the first full meeting of the Standing Committee after the 6th COP (1996) and proceed immediately to its implementation. [Bureau, SC, CPs, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - To establish a mechanism to ensure one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (COP7 Resolution VII.28).
Refer also to 8.2.4. For developed countries, do you provide additional voluntary contributions to support the Small Grants Fund?
No
If No , what prevents this from happening?
<p>Australia provides significant financial support (to both Contracting Parties and non-contracting parties) in the Oceania Region through a number of initiatives. The Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program has been operating since 1999/2000 to provide training to wetland managers in a number of countries in the region (refer 4.2.1 and 4.2.3). Funding has also been provided to Wetlands International – Oceania for a Pacific Islands Liaison Officer to promote the principles of the Convention on Wetlands, including accession to the Convention (at the ground level), and providing technical support in the Oceania region (refer 1.1.1). Since October 2001, Australia has been assisting to advance accession of countries in the region by seeking high level Government support and assisting to develop a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and a joint work program.</p> <p>Australia will also be financing the second Oceania Regional Ramsar Meeting, Samoa, May 2002. The three Contracting Parties in the region (Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea) and several countries considering acceding to the Convention will be represented. The meeting will focus on wetland conservation in the Pacific and will explore how Ramsar can assist Pacific Island countries to achieve wetland conservation outcomes.</p>
If Yes , is an irregular or regular voluntary contribution?

Proposed national actions and targets:

Continue to provide support within the Oceania region to further wetland conservation and management

Ministry, agency/department, or organisation responsible for leading on this action:

Environment Australia

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Appendix One: List of Acronyms

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADB	Asia Development Bank
AFFA	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia (Commonwealth department)
ANCA	Australian Nature Conservation Agency, now Environment Australia
ANMM	Australian National Maritime Museum
ANZECC	Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council
APWMTP	Asia Pacific Wetland Managers Training Program
ARMCANZ	Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWA	Australian Wetlands Alliance
AWIN	Australian Wetlands Information Network
AWSG	Australasian Wader Studies Group
BAT	Biodiversity Assessment Theme
BDAC	Biological Diversity Advisory Committee
BMP	Best Management Practice
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia
CAMBA	China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCCG	Carp Control Coordination Group
CEPA	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of flora and fauna
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CoP	Conference of Parties
CP	Contracting Party
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CRCFE	Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CTWM	Centre for Tropical Wetlands Management
CVA	Conservation Volunteers Australia
DEH	Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australia
DLWC	Department of Land and Water Conservation, NSW
DNR	Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland
DNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria
DoD	Department of Defence
EA	Environmental assessment
EHMP	Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement

EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EO	Environment Officer
EPA	Education and Public Awareness
EPA(NSW)	Environment Protection Authority
EPA (QLD)	Environment Protection Agency
EPA (SA)	Environment Protection Agency
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999 (Commonwealth)
ESC	Environmental and Scientific Coordinator
ET	External Territory
GAB	Great Artesian Basin
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
GBRMP	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GBRWHA	Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
Govt.	Government
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICM	Integrated Catchment Management
ICRG	Intergovernmental Coastal Reference Group
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
IDC	Inter-Departmental Committee on Wetlands
ILMF	Indigenous Land Management Facilitators
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
ISO 14001	International Standards: Environmental Management Systems – specification with guidance for use
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JAMBA	Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KNP	Kakadu National Park
LAL	Landcare Australia Limited
LAP	Local Action Plan
LEB	Lake Eyre Basin
LIPI	Indonesian Institute of Science
MD	Murray-Darling
MDB	Murray-Darling Basin
MDBC	Murray-Darling Basin Commission
MD2001	Murray-Darling 2001 Program (of the Natural Heritage Trust)
MMCC	Macquarie Marshes Catchment Committee
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MWWG	Murray Wetlands Working Group
NAP	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
NCP	National Competition Policy
NCTWR	National Centre for Tropical Wetland Research
NES	National environmental significance
NGO	Non-government organisation
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust

NLP	National Landcare Program
NPA	National Parks Association
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW)
NRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria
NRMMC	Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council
NRS	National Reserve System (of the Natural Heritage Trust)
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTU	Northern Territory University
NWP	National Wetlands Program (of the Natural Heritage Trust)
PAN	Parks Australia North, Environment Australia
PER	Public Environment Report
PILO	Pacific Islands Liaison Officer
PMP	Population Monitoring Project
PNG	Papua New Guinea
QLD	Queensland
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
QWSG	Queensland Wader Studies Group
SA	South Australia
SCC	Standing Committee on Conservation
SCEP	Standing Committee on Environmental Protection
SEPP (Vic)	State Environment Protection Policy
SEPP (NSW)	State Environment Planning Policy
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Program
SWAC	State Wetlands Advisory Committee (NSW)
SWBTA	Shoalwater Bay Training Area
TAS	Tasmania
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WLI	Wetland Link International
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia