



ACS

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Caring for our Country Review team
Australian Government Land & Coasts Division
GPO Box 858
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RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY 2011

The Australian Coastal Society (ACS) welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Australian Government's 2011 Review of Caring for our Country: Australia's Natural Resource Management Investment Initiative.

ACS is 'a voice for the Australian coast – *dedicated to healthy ecosystems, vibrant communities, and sustainable use of coastal resources*'. The Society promotes knowledge and understanding of the environmental, social and economic value of the Australian coast, and encourages sustainable use of coastal resources and responsible stewardship of coastal assets.

The ACS submission is guided by the discussion points posed in the Caring for Our Country (CfoC) discussion paper, and addresses both strategic and on-ground issues.

COASTAL CONTEXT

Coastal Values

The coast is an icon of Australian culture and holds important social, cultural, environmental and economic values. The Australian Coastal Society believes the coast is important for all Australians now and into the future as a place where we work, live and play. Healthy coastal environments are vital to support use of coastal resources and the Australian way of life. As the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (2006) explains "the capacity to ensure ecologically sustainable use and development of the coastal zone is imperative for all Australians, both now and into the future."

Population and development pressures on the coast

More than 85% of Australians live on or near the coast. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) notes that the Australian coastline is under increasing pressure from urbanisation, with the coastal zone being one of Australia's fastest areas of population growth.

Coastal areas outside capital cities are experiencing significant pressure with almost six million people living on or near the coast, and a growth rate up to 60% higher than the national average. Coastal areas are also subject to high seasonal visitor populations and periods of peak demand. Rapid population growth and peak visitor populations apply pressure for economic growth and place strong demands on councils to meet infrastructure and services needs. Regional councils often lack the rate base, developer contributions and other resources to meet the multifaceted challenges associated with coastal growth.

Impacts

As the *Report for the National Seachange Taskforce* (Gurran et al, 2005) explains, “population growth is not always a positive phenomenon in coastal localities [as] the focus of... development on the narrow and particularly fragile coastal strip means that environmental impacts in these settings are very significant”.

Negative impacts from increasing human activities in the coastal zone can include: biodiversity loss and land clearance (loss of flora, fauna and habitat), fragmentation and isolation of coastal environments, loss of ecosystem services, changes to coastal processes, pollution and acid sulphate soil development.

Urbanisation impacts on the coast include erosion and blow-out formation from factors such as informal pedestrian traffic and recreational vehicle use, increased weed invasion, increased predation and disturbance of indigenous fauna.

Climate change and sea level rise brings a further suite of issues for the coast.

Climate change

In 2009, the Department of Climate Change released the report *Climate Change Risks to Australia's Coasts – a first pass national assessment*. The report states:

“Rising sea levels will bring significant change to Australia's coastal zone in coming decades. Many coastal environments such as beaches, estuaries, coral reefs, wetlands and low-lying islands are closely linked to sea level. There is a lack of knowledge in many cases as to how these environments will respond to sea-level rise, but the risk of beach loss, salinisation of wetlands and inundation of low-lying areas and reefs beyond their capacity to keep pace must be considered in regional decision-making.

“Extreme weather events are also likely to become more intense with climate change, with larger and more damaging storm surge and the possible extension of cyclones further south along both the east and west coasts.”

But probably of greater relevance to this review is the proposed response:

“Where possible, avoidance of future risk is the most cost-effective adaptation response, particularly where development has not yet occurred. While little analysis has been done to date, the application of planning and building regulations to constrain an increase in risk from climate change impacts will deliver considerable savings in damages avoided. In this context planning approaches need to build resilience of natural ecosystems as they also provide a buffer to communities from changes in sea level.”

“Engagement of all stakeholders – governments, individuals, and the private sector – is essential if we are to develop and implement a comprehensive, well considered and carefully staged national coastal adaptation agenda. Leadership from governments will be required in a national partnership to maintain the public good assets in the coastal zone for future generations. States, territories, local government, industry and communities will have a primary role in on-ground coastal adaptation action.”

The ACS supports this approach and would like to see it fully adopted through all levels of Government and where possible delivery enhanced through mechanisms such as Caring for our Country.

Australian Coastal Society Policy Statement

The Australian Coastal Society developed a policy statement on Coastal Planning and Infrastructure reform for the 2010 Federal election. The policy urges that progressive and cooperative reforms to address the pressures of a growing coastal population and the inevitable challenge of sea level rise. The ACS recommends the following three steps be introduced by the Australian Government as a matter of urgency if the Australian community is to successfully meet the challenge of sustainable use of natural and built assets around the country's coast:

- Formulate a National Coastal Policy supported by an Intergovernmental Agreement on Coasts
- Establish a National Coastal Information System
- Form a National Coastal Commission empowered under a federal Coastal Commission Act.

National priorities in Caring for our Country (Discussion Point 1)

- I. *What is an effective and appropriate focus for the Australian Government to achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected, well-managed, resilient and can provide essential ecosystem services in a changing climate?*
- II. *How could the Australian Government's role in regional natural resource management planning be improved while retaining measurable strategic outcomes at a national scale?*

National leadership in coastal NRM

The Australian Coastal Society strongly advocates for a national approach to coastal management. As the Resource Assessment Commission Coastal Zone Inquiry noted in 1993:

A national approach will ensure that government agencies have common objectives for coastal zone management, thus minimising duplication and conflict. It will ensure more effective use of financial and human resources, by pooling experience, resources and knowledge. It will also provide a framework for national leadership and financial support and for the mobilisation of community and industry involvement throughout the coastal zone.

An integrated, hierarchical approach to coastal zone management, working across tiers of government, but lead by the Australian Government is the best way forward for coastal zone management.

Coast to remain a national priority

It is imperative that the coast remains a national priority under Caring for our Country (and future NRM programs) given the challenges faced by the coastal zone and the environmental, social and economic importance of the coast to Australia.

As a coastal society, we need to build on the Coastcare model to engender a greater level of stewardship for these resources if we are to sustain them in the future.

Whilst dedicated funding under CfoC for Coastal Community Engagement has allowed for continued delivery of outcomes in the coastal zone, the lack of a dedicated National Coastcare Facilitator network has meant that in many cases this work is largely disconnected from national priorities and could be considered a step backwards from previous coastal engagement models and management efforts.

The ACS reinforces the importance of the House of Representatives Committee Report (2009) - "*Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate – the time to act is now*" and urges the Australian Government to incorporate, where possible, the report's recommendations in planning future NRM programs. Recommendations of particular relevance to future NRM programs are outlined in Appendix 1.

Setting annual priorities and ways of investing (Discussion point 2)

- I. *What mix of investment timeframes and approaches would be most beneficial?*
 - II. *In what ways could the Australian Government improve the way it prioritises investments, encourages partnerships and identifies national priorities?*
 - III. *How could the packaging of Australian Government natural resource management activities be improved to provide administrative efficiencies for all partners or enhance outcomes?*
- Natural resource management activities require longer term investment. There is a need to recognise the difficulty of fitting natural resource management activities and programs into annual investment cycles. Supporting multi-year investment as part of a longer term program is one way to alleviate this difficulty and allow some flexibility for delivery agents to deal with the obstacles that arise during project delivery, for example seasonal variability which affects timing of on-ground activities, etc.
 - Longer timeframes for project delivery (3-5 years) would also be of benefit to local government as this would enable Councils to build activities into the Council work plans and budget deliberations.
 - Investment time frames also need to consider community involvement in the context of seasonal time frames. Feedback from groups is that they are experiencing fatigue with administrative burdens and funding cycles out of sync with seasonal requirements (e.g. seed collection, plant ordering, planting times etc). Increasing communication with states and regions regarding timing of community grant processes could improve the timing for grant announcements/approvals and project timeframes.

Unrealistic timelines and over-excessive administrative processes can see groups disengaging with NRM processes.

- Given that CfoC is a national program and funded by the Australian Government, it is highly appropriate that funding should (at least in part) be directed to address national priorities. The process of selecting priorities however, seemed to be a little *ad hoc* and appeared, at least in some part, to be based on poor science or political will, for example investment in Tasmanian Devils and cane toads. Whilst there will always be a need to respond to emerging issues (or politically expedient issues), there is a need to ensure that future investment is based on the best science and includes a risk-based approach to investment. From an external perspective, funding appears to have been based on the previous State of the Environment (SoE) reporting. However, as the SoE was not previously fully resourced to provide a national picture and didn't include an ongoing monitoring program of our natural assets (more a snap shot of current investment), this process is flawed and hence may have directed investment away from key areas that may have been a higher priority.
- Baseline data and benchmarks to measure any environmental 'improvement' are lacking Australia wide, particularly in the coastal zone. This presents challenges for the government to determine the effectiveness of funds spent on any restoration, rehabilitation or management program, such as CfoC. In addition to this, the time frame for which environmental change / improvement occurs, is significantly longer than any funding cycle. More emphasis needs to be placed on the collection of suitable long term data sets to help measure environmental change.
- We applaud the Australian Government's announcement in May 2010 to establish a National Plan for Environmental Information as the first step toward a long-term commitment to reform Australia's environmental information base and build this critical infrastructure for the future. To enhance the CfoC program in the future, improvement of the target setting process to include more up to date scientific information would be beneficial. Future NRM programs need to demonstrate that they are both based on scientifically robust information and that processes for choosing national targets are transparent.
- One particularly concerning gap in the national priorities (which has in some States been addressed at least in part) is that of investment in marine ecosystems. Australia's ocean territory is the world's third largest, spanning three oceans and covering around 12 million square kilometres. Whilst it is agreed that investment upstream – for example through catchment management or through programs such as Reef Rescue, result in a downstream improvement in the condition of our coasts and oceans, this only goes part of the way to address the many threats to our coastal waters and marine ecosystems. Marine ecosystems deserve their own investment targets to address issues such as poor knowledge and understanding of marine biodiversity values, the myriad of threats to the marine environment as well as poor management practices.
- A more collaborative approach to priority setting which incorporates knowledge within states and regions to inform nation priority setting process, would ensure better outcomes for all stakeholders and the coast. This approach would allow for the utilisation and integration of relevant regional and state coastal data. Between 2003 and 2005, the previous Australian Government rolled out regional arrangements with a huge focus on the development of Regional NRM Plans that were informed and endorsed by not only the Australian and State Governments, but also by the community as a result of extensive public consultation. It is suggested that in phase 2 of CfoC, Regional NRM Plans be reinvigorated to not only meet national priorities, but to facilitate funding investment to again meet regional priorities (including foundational activities and research needs). This is many instances *the national playing field* by encouraging investment into programs that may lack capacity for funding from other sources whilst encouraging regional ownership and participation in programs.
- In addition to the Regional NRM Plans, which exist around the country, some stakeholders have taken further steps to collect information on their regional natural assets to further inform management actions. For example, in SA extensive work has been undertaken between the state government, regional NRM boards and the coastal community to assess coastal conservation values and threats and develop GIS based coastal action plans highlighting high priorities for coastal NRM action through a cooperative management approach. Despite this extensive information base, it has been difficult for state agencies, regional bodies and local groups to align these priorities with CfoC targets, particularly given the hot spot approach and strong emphasis on coastal volunteers. Whilst national priorities are important, we believe that many community groups have been unable to find a direction or niche under the new arrangements, and that regionally significant issues have been unable to meet the current funding arrangements under CfoC.

- A particular issue at the regional level was the CfoC focus on Coastal Hot Spots which limited funding for water quality improvement initiatives to specific areas. In many cases, this reduced momentum that had been built through previous initiatives and has led to a further decline in coastal water quality in areas outside hot spots. We believe the same could be said for other target areas.
- In the past, research organisations also found immense value in the linkages with NRM regional bodies through NHT2 funding. Through these relationships, research organisations were able to be a part of the planning processes for NRM outcomes and were far more involved as a stakeholder. This opportunity no longer exists with CfoC funding. This has been further exacerbated in coastal management by the loss of a dedicated National Coastcare Facilitator network. Having a local person to directly liaise with provided the opportunity for research providers to align their project ideas across a range of community groups within the regions and support other groups through the linkages provided by the NRM regional body.
- The Australian Government is to be applauded for a funding model that encourages greater collaboration and the development of long-term partnerships to deliver integrated management approaches for the delivery of national priorities. It is noted that previously competition between organisations encouraged multiple applications and competition between stakeholders, however there appears to have been a shift in this as the CfoC program has moved into subsequent years. There are now more productive working relationships and integrated programs. The model may, however require further leadership from the Australian Government into a more guided / hierarchical approach which delivers Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). This would define roles and responsibilities more clearly for all coastal stakeholders and reduce the variability in commitment and action across local and state government and regional bodies.

Community engagement and Landcare support (Discussion point 3)

- I. *In your experience, what is the current state of community capacity to deliver natural resource management?*
- II. *What are the best vehicles to deliver knowledge and capacity to program delivery agents?*
- III. *What should be the respective roles of regional, state and commonwealth government, industry and NGOs in building and maintaining capacity for natural resource management?*
 - CfoC has a very strong emphasis on community engagement and volunteer involvement. Community members contribute a huge amount of knowledge and good will in volunteering but they are experiencing burn out and disenfranchisement as a result of the continuing demands on their time and energy.
 - Such a large focus on volunteers to provide the on-ground components of NRM is not sustainable in the long term, and can lead to inefficiencies and the desired level of management and environmental improvement not being met in short and long term. Volunteers should not be relied on to drive NRM objectives and to undertake significant land management activities that should be the work of state agencies or local authorities.
 - Nationally the volunteer base is aging and younger generations are not engaging with volunteering in the same way. Future NRM programs will need to respond to the changing nature of volunteering. New, innovative approaches that engage younger generations will need to be investigated if younger generations are going to be attracted into NRM volunteering activities.
 - Community volunteers need to be more valued if volunteers are to remain a significant part of the NRM vision and delivery.
 - Mechanisms for sharing information amongst volunteer groups are also important. It would be valuable to capture the local knowledge that is held with groups and recognise/value this. There is considerable knowledge and innovation occurring at the grass root level. How this can be captured, stored and accessed is important to consider.
 - Again the importance of a dedicated National Coastcare Facilitator network should be noted. Having a local person to directly liaise with coastal community groups, NGO's, seafood and maritime industry, local, state and commonwealth governments to collate and disseminate knowledge, and

align project ideas to national, state and regional priorities was invaluable. This is a significant gap under the current CfoC delivery model.

Engaging Indigenous Australian (Discussion point 4)

- I. What are the challenges for Indigenous groups under the current Caring for our Country model?*
- II. In what ways could the Australian Government improve Indigenous Australian's participation in NRM?*
- III. Are the targets that are Indigenous-specific appropriate and do they effectively engage Indigenous Australians in NRM?*

The ACS supports the engagement of Indigenous Australians and the delivery of Caring for Country outcomes on land and sea country. The society recognises the cultural heritage values of sites such as middens and fish traps as well as fisheries resources such as fish, shell fish and turtles.

Challenges for Indigenous groups under current CfoC model include:

- The location of culturally significant sites. Many sites are located on non-Indigenous owned lands and may be located in freehold, public or even crown lands. For these sites arrangements for funding are complicated and it is difficult for Indigenous groups (or indeed non-Indigenous groups that support Indigenous Australians to work on culturally significant sites) to access funding to undertake works on non-Indigenous owned land.
- Capacity – whilst there are numerous training opportunities available to Indigenous Australians to help 'Close the Gap' there is still a considerable gap in capacity for Indigenous Australian to own and run their own successful businesses. There are some excellent examples – such as Girringun and Dhimurru, but there is still considerable work to be done to mentor, support and encourage similar groups throughout Australia. To build capacity, it is suggested that 'half-way' models that allow some flexibility on auspicing and working on non-Indigenous owned lands (where appropriate permission and permits have been granted) would allow a larger number of currently disconnected Indigenous Australian groups to Care for Country.
- Recording Traditional [Cultural] Knowledge (TK) and Ecological Knowledge (TEK). For many Indigenous groups access to information is becoming scarcer as knowledge holders pass away. Sharing this knowledge outside of family groups or with other land managers can be fraught with issues – particularly if there is deemed to be an intrinsic value to the knowledge. The development of guidelines by the Australian Government with respect to the access to, use and storage of knowledge may help alleviate this issue.

Working effectively with state and territory governments, engaging with local government (Discussion point 5)

- I. How can the Australian Government better engage with other levels of government on natural resource management outcomes?*
- II. How can overlaps or duplication of effort be avoided?*

- The loss of Australian Government Coastcare facilitators has had a big impact the level of communication, collaboration and engagement across the three levels of government. Local/regional Coastcare facilitators were able to communicate and share information more readily. It is much more difficult to achieve this when there is no dedicated leader with time and resources to encourage cross-regional collaboration, and communicate Australian Government initiatives.
- At the higher level, the loss of organisations such as the CRC for Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterway Management (Coastal CRC) and Marine and Coastal Community Network have severely impacted on the communication of coastal management outcomes and an increase in duplicated effort. Whilst organisations such as the Australian Coastal Society and National Coastal Alliance are attempting to fill this gap, this success is limited by funding for dedicated resources.
- The loss of the bilateral agreements between the Australian, state and territory governments has been an issue which has resulted in the disengagement of some states (for example Queensland and Tasmania) at a political level in the delivery of activities such as coastal and wetland management and the conservation of threatened species. Without the bilateral agreements and

Regional NRM Plans, the Australian (CfoC) and state / territory government funding priorities rarely align, adding funding pressure to an already stretched NRM delivery system.

- The arrangements between Regional Bodies and Local Government are far more complex with issues relating to Local Government's statutory responsibilities, capacity and limited funding (particularly in regional / rural areas) to address issues outside their day-to-day management responsibilities. Local government is integral to the delivery of coastal zone management and on-ground initiatives at the local level. Local governments should also be encouraged to build relationships with the coastal community and Coastcare groups. However, funding is required for further capacity building of local government particularly, with respect to issues such as coastal planning, sea level rise and climate change mitigation. With more capacity building, local government would be better equipped to prevent future issues in the coastal zone and engage in addressing existing problems through on-ground works.
- Where possible, it is suggested that Australian Government funding provided to state and territory governments through CfoC should be aligned with the *Framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management*:
 - integration across the catchment coast ocean continuum
 - land and marine based sources of pollution
 - climate change
 - pest plants and animals
 - planning for population change
 - capacity building.

Otherwise, there is a huge variation in adoption and approaches across states, territories and local government.

- Overlap and duplication is an ongoing issue and one that is, at least in part, addressed by the better continuity of staff and organisations such as Regional Groups. Better partnerships and collaboration have also been built through the CfoC process that through time will reduce overlaps and duplication of effort. Improved communication of results (through project close-out) is also a potential focus for improvement of delivery along with the adoption and use of reporting tools such as Enquire (currently only used in Queensland) at a national level.
- Communication should be seen as a core element of delivery for all organisations implementing NRM and should be resourced appropriately.

Regional base-level funding (Discussion point 6)

1. How could the regional natural resource management delivery model be improved?

The ACS supports the regional NRM delivery model and the continuation of regional base-level funding. The Society supports the certainty provided to Regional NRM Groups through a guaranteed base-level funding allocation over a 5-year period.

Like the National Landcare Facilitator Network, the ACS also supports the reinstatement of a National Coastcare Facilitator Network to be housed within Regional NRM Groups to provide the link between national NRM priorities and local action.



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Appendix 1:

Recommendations of relevance to future NRM initiatives, as outlined in the report “*Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate – the time to act is now*”

Rec no	Recommendation
26	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give consideration in future [Caring for our Country] funding rounds to projects that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Involve working with state/territory & local governments to improve coastal land use planning ○ Seek to address loss of coastal habitat as a result of coastal development and population pressures
27	<p>The Committee recommends that, in seeking to expand the area protected within Australia’s National Reserve System (NRS) under the Caring for our Country program, the Australian Government focus on high biodiversity coastal habitat, including more effective off-reserve coastal zone conservation and expanded coastal reserves that provide larger buffer zones. In undertaking this initiative, the Australian Government should continue to work with state/territory and local governments, Indigenous groups, conservation organisations, private landholders and other stakeholders to ensure that these protected areas are added to the NRS in a timely manner.</p>
28	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in considering its response to the Independent Review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), take into account concerns about the EPBC Act and coastal zone management raised as part of this inquiry—in particular, the need to address the cumulative impacts of coastal development. This could be achieved by numerous means, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A land clearing trigger • Defining coastal ecosystems as a matter of national environmental significance • Making more use of landscape-scale assessments through strategic assessments or bioregional plans
29	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working with the Queensland Government and local councils under the existing Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement to improve land use planning in the catchment • Commission analysis of the Great Barrier Reef as a case study for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in Australia.
31	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require that all Ramsar listed wetlands have effective and operational management plans and that resources are allocated by governments to monitor the implementation of these plans • Increase the number of coastal wetlands classified as Ramsar sites, particularly those classified as Nationally Important wetlands • Work with state and territory governments through the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, and in consultation with other stakeholders, to improve the management and monitoring of coastal wetlands, particularly Ramsar sites located in close proximity to development • Improve public awareness about what actions impacting on a Ramsar wetland should be referred to the Minister under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 • Ensure that the National Guidelines for Ramsar Wetlands also include modules on the process for nominating Ramsar wetlands • Develop a climate change action plan for coastal Ramsar wetlands and Nationally Important wetlands

Appendix 1 (continued):

Recommendations of relevance to future NRM initiatives, as outlined in the report “*Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate – the time to act is now*”

Rec no	Recommendation
32	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and in consultation with Birds Australia and other stakeholders to implement a National Shorebirds Protection Strategy. The strategy should focus on tightening restrictions on beach driving and access to bird breeding habitat, preserving habitat, identifying suitable buffer zones for migration of coastal bird habitat, managing pest animals and increased public education • Provide further funding to Birds Australia and other research groups to ensure continued monitoring and data collection with regard to migratory and resident shorebirds • Provide funding to strengthen partnerships between domestic and international shorebird conservation groups to increase awareness and conservation efforts in other countries • Commission a detailed climate change impact study on Australia’s migratory and resident shorebirds • In its consideration of amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 following the independent review, give consideration to the formal listing of coastal shorebird and sea bird communities as threatened species/ecological communities under the act
33	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and other stakeholders to develop an action plan to: • Ensure that coastal buffers, coastal habitat corridors and high ecological value areas are identified and included in Commonwealth, state and local government management processes • Ensure appropriate infrastructure planning and that land is made available to allow for the migration of coastal ecosystems • Promote cooperative ecosystem-based planning and management approaches across jurisdictions 28 • Implement a nationally consistent coastal and marine biodiversity monitoring and reporting framework • Develop a targeted strategy to address key gaps in knowledge of coastal and marine biodiversity and improve access and sharing of knowledge and data • Develop regional climate change adaptation policies and plans and integrate them into coastal and marine bioregional planning processes • Ensure that all future national coastal zone policy incorporates these priorities, as well as future revised national sustainability, biodiversity, climate change and environmental policy frameworks
34	<p>The Committee recommends that coastal based Natural Resource Management bodies seeking funding under the Caring for our Country program have coastal and marine priorities, as well as coastal zone management principles integrated in their management plans.</p>
40	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake an awareness campaign to alert coastal communities to the key challenges facing the coastal zone and the value of community engagement in addressing these challenges. The campaign should aim to build understanding and awareness of coastal management issues to encourage the continued membership and support of volunteer networks in the coastal zone.</p>
41	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government nominate 2012 as the Year of the Coast, to further build community awareness about the issues facing the coastal zone. The Australian Government should work with coastal stakeholders, volunteer groups and the general community in determining key activities as part of this initiative.</p>
42	<p>The Committee recommends that the National Coastal Zone Database be expanded over time to include information on environmental data and management and planning information relevant to the coastal zone.</p>

Appendix 1 (continued):

Recommendations of relevance to future NRM initiatives, as outlined in the report “*Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate – the time to act is now*”

Rec no	Recommendation
44	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in cooperation with state, territory and local governments, and in consultation with coastal stakeholders, develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments. The intergovernmental agreement should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government—federal, state and local—involved in coastal zone management • Include a formal mechanism for community consultation • Incorporate principles based on strategic regional coastal planning and landscape scale/ecosystem based coastal zone management • Include an effective implementation plan with resources allocated to ensure that objectives are realised • Be overseen by a new Coastal Zone Ministerial Council • Be made public
45	<p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone forms the basis for a National Coastal Zone Policy and Strategy, which should set out the principles, objectives and actions that must be undertaken to address the challenges of integrated coastal zone management for Australia • Establish a broad based National Catchment-Coast-Marine Management program to provide funding for initiatives relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable coastal communities • Climate change and biodiversity • Implementation of projects to progress integrated coastal zone management • Establish a National Coastal Zone Management Unit within the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to support the implementation of these national initiatives • Develop a Coastal Sustainability Charter based on the Victorian Government model
46	<p>The Committee recommends the Australian Government establish a National Coastal Advisory Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide independent advice to government • Advise the new coastal unit within the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts • Ensure community input into national coastal zone policy, planning and management
47	<p>The Committee recommends that proposals for a National Oceans and Coast Act and a statutory Coastal Council be the subject of ongoing consideration once the Intergovernmental Coastal Zone Agreement is determined.</p>