

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 34
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: Marine Bioregional Planning Process - Update
Hansard Page:
Question Date: 27 February 2017
Question Type: Written

Senator Roberts asked:

Can the government provide an update on the Marine Bioregional Planning Process (MBPP)?

Answer:

The Marine Bioregional Planning process commenced in 2006 following the successful completion of the marine reserve network in the South-east region (around Tasmania and Victoria). The process has two key outputs – a network of Commonwealth marine reserves and marine bioregional plans.

Marine Bioregional Plans

Four marine bioregional plans were published in 2012 for the South-west, North-west, North and Temperate East marine regions. The Plans aim to inform and streamline the operation of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to keep the marine environment healthy and resilient. The plans are used by government and industry to improve the way the marine environment is managed and protected. The plans are available online at www.environment.gov.au/marine/marine-bioregional-plans.

Commonwealth Marine Reserves

On 16 November 2012, the Governor-General signed a proclamation creating new Commonwealth marine reserves in the South-west, North-west, North and Temperate East marine regions and the Coral Sea. Under the EPBC Act, Commonwealth reserves must have a plan of management in place. The Director of National Parks has commenced the statutory process to develop management plans for all Commonwealth marine reserves, except for those in the South-east marine region, which has had a management plan since 1 July 2013. The first consultation period - on the Director's intent to develop new management plans - occurred between September and October 2016. Draft management plans are expected to be released for consultation later this year.