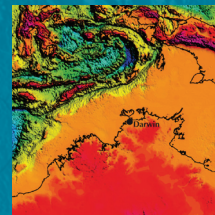


# Marine and Coastal Environment Geoscience Fact Sheet



## OBJECTIVE

Provide geoscientific information and advice to underpin management of Australia's oceans and coasts, and define Australia's offshore boundaries under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR AUSTRALIA

As an island continent, Australia has sovereign rights over a vast area of ocean exceeding 13 million square kilometres (including an exclusive economic zone of 10 million square kilometres). Geoscience Australia is responsible for defining Australia's maritime boundaries, a task that has strategic, economic and environmental implications.

Geoscientific knowledge is also an essential component for Regional Marine Planning under the Government's Oceans Policy, and assists in managing Australia's oceans and coastal zone. This knowledge is necessary to improve the value, wise management, and use of Australia's ocean and coastal resources.

## DEPARTMENTAL ROLE AND CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Geoscience Australia was responsible for preparing all the technical material contained within Australia's submission for the 10 areas of continental shelf that extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the territorial sea baselines – a total area of about 3.4 million square kilometres.

Following presentation of the submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in April 2005, a sub-commission was established to examine it. The positions of these and other maritime boundaries within Australia's marine jurisdiction will be included in the Australian Marine Spatial Information System (AMSIS).

Geoscience Australia provides advice and information to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to support regional marine planning and the selection of a national representative system of marine protected areas. Work includes mapping and characterising the seabed to understand the processes that affect the distribution of biodiversity, the nature of marine ecosystems and sea floor stability. Coastal habitat mapping and investigations of increased sedimentation and nutrient discharges are being conducted to understand and improve the management of Australia's estuaries.



## TARGETS FOR 2007-08

- Provide information and advice to Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to support Regional Marine Planning in eastern and north-western Australia
- Interact with the full Commission examining Australia's continental shelf submission
- Participate in the deliberations of the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS)
- Conduct reconnaissance seabed mapping surveys in the Capel and Faust basin region to collect marine geological information in support of the Energy Security Initiative
- Further develop AMSIS, national marine sediment and estuary databases.



**Australian Government**  
**Geoscience Australia**

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