



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy



AUSTRALIA'S RAMSAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2016-2018

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR FIRST TRIENNIUM OF
THE RAMSAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2024**

Goals and Targets from Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 - 2024	Specific Actions <i>(current or committed by end 2018)</i>	Potential measures	Priority
Goal 1: Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation		<i>(consistent with Ramsar indicators, National Report Q and SDGs where possible)</i>	
Target 1: Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate wetland conservation and wise use into national policy/planning processes where possible, including the review of Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, and other national policies. Integrate wetland conservation and wise use into Basin Plan implementation, including through environmental watering and maintenance of appropriate hydrological regimes. <p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to assess referrals under <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act</i> relating to actions that may affect the ecological character of Ramsar wetland. Undertake assessments where required. Continue to support the Independent Expert Scientific Committee to provide scientific advice to decision makers on the impact that coal seam gas and large coal mining development may have on Australia’s water resources, including wetlands. 	<p>Changes in wetland extent (where available)</p> <p>Proportion of Ramsar sites for which ecosystem services assessed (ie ECDs prepared)</p> <p>Number of development proposals where measures have been taken to protect Ramsar values</p>	High

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote broader recognition of the role that wetlands can play in carbon storage, including blue carbon. <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where opportunities exist, continue to integrate wetland conservation and wise use of Ramsar and other wetlands into state and local policies, strategies and plans that relate to the use and management of natural resources. Implement state/territory based wetlands policies where they exist Support the development of national Ramsar guidance by collaboration at the Wetlands and Aquatic Ecosystems Sub Committee (WAESC) and sharing case studies where appropriate <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional NRM groups, local governments, landcare groups and other community groups continue to play key role in managing Ramsar sites, and contributing to development of best practice resource use policy Community groups continue to participate in assessments to highlight values and management of Ramsar and other wetlands 		
<p>Target 2: Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale <i>inter alia</i> at the basin level or along a coastal zone.</p>	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver environmental water to Ramsar and other significant wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin and report on outcomes at catchment and Basin scale WAESC meetings to be held 6 monthly to coordinate approaches to wetland policy, planning and management, including through the development of National Guidance <p>Australian Government</p>	<p>Number of Water Plans developed in Murray-Darling Basin</p> <p>Number of Ramsar sites to which environmental water is delivered</p>	<p>High</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support catchment based action to reduce adverse impacts on GBR • Implement projects to change farmer practices (cane, grazing, grains, dairy and horticulture) to improve water quality in reef catchments • Support research on wetlands to inform development of northern Australia’s water resources • Report on evaluation findings on delivery of Commonwealth environmental water at the asset and Basin scales as part of the Long Term Intervention Monitoring Project. <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where opportunities exist, develop Water Plans at appropriate scales • Deliver environmental water to Ramsar wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) • Integrate wetland functions and services into NRM and catchment planning and reporting <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide advice on appropriate environmental water allocations and input to review of the Basin Plan • Participate in recovery projects for wetlands, including management of water allocations and flows. 	Reef Water Quality Protection Plan indicators	
<p>Target 3: The public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund research and development projects through relevant funding or grants programs, such as the National Environmental Science Program, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, CSIRO, Reef Trust and other programs which identify good practice in wetland management 	Number of projects and level of investment in key wetland programs	Med

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support an annual wetland forum for stakeholders • Provide support to wetland managers on private land through NRM programs such as National Landcare Program. <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the preparation of case studies of wetland management and wise use by public and private sectors • Make wetland information, including best management practice guidelines, available on websites and share through networks <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with governments and the private sector to deliver wetland projects 		
<p>Target 4: Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain border biosecurity to prevent new invasive alien species entering Australia • Promote protection of wetland habitats through the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee, in their work to identify priorities for weed and pest research and identify pests and weeds of national significance • Develop National Carp Control Plan to investigate and plan for the potential release of a carp-specific virus as a biological control agent for European Carp. • Implement recommendations of the review into national marine pest biosecurity • Undertake research on invasive species affecting wetlands <p>State and Territory</p> <p>Where opportunities exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate and implement strategies in Ramsar site and other wetland management plans to manage threats from priority invasive species 	<p>Publication of documentation on relevant invasive species and control strategies</p>	<p>Med</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority wetland invasive species and provide information to support their control Manage priority wetland invasive species through relevant state and local government grant programs. <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake planning and projects to control wetland invasive species under National Landcare Program and other funding mechanisms 		
Goal 2: Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network			
Target 5: The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or restored, through effective planning and integrated management.	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WAESC to assist in the completion and promote the implementation of the Aquatic Ecosystems Toolkit to assist with wetland management and monitoring. <p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with site managers to ensure Ramsar documentation is up to date (ECDs, RISs, management plans) for Australia’s 65 Ramsar sites – increase the number of Ramsar sites with ECDs from 85% to 90% (55 to 59) Undertake a regular review of the status of Australia’s Ramsar sites to enable adaptive management, and to identify priorities for local and national action. Provide appropriate national guidance on wetland policy and Ramsar process issues and re-assess current requirements. <p>State and Territory</p> <p>Where opportunities exist, continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Ramsar site documentation (ECDs, RISs, management plans) 	<p>Number of ECDs and updated RISs for Ramsar sites</p> <p>Number of Ramsar Management Plans developed and reviewed</p>	High

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development, updating and implementation of Ramsar management plans or arrangements for sites, and assess effectiveness of management • Support site managers to implement management plans for Ramsar sites, consistent with Ramsar management principles • Identify threats to Ramsar sites and monitor ecological character. <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in collaborative management of Ramsar sites, including through preparation of site documentation, planning, active site management, research and monitoring. 		
<p>Target 6: There is a significant increase in area, numbers and ecological connectivity in the Ramsar Site network, in particular under-represented types of wetlands including in under-represented ecoregions and Transboundary Sites.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise discussion paper on a systematic approach to Ramsar nominations • Continue to develop and implement Aquatic Ecosystems Toolkit <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of national policy, through WAESC, to guide future Ramsar site nominations <p>National NGO/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in identifying and documenting proposed Ramsar site nominations • Undertake projects to improve connectivity between wetlands 	<p>Number and area of new sites designated (including specific types of wetlands) Changes in area of existing sites (boundary extensions) Changes in IUCN status of areas within Ramsar sites (eg area of new reserves declared)</p>	Med
<p>Target 7: Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed.</p>	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop best practice, national standards and guidance for addressing changes in ecological character at Ramsar sites, on Article 3.2 notifications and response strategies, and removal 	<p>Number of Article 3.2 notifications, formal assessments, response strategies,</p>	High

	<p>of sites from the Article 3.2 list, by preparing case studies and through collaboration at WAESC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake preliminary and formal assessments of Ramsar sites where potential change in ecological character is detected; advise the Secretariat where change has occurred; take action to mitigate threats where required; and monitor effectiveness. • Aquatic Ecosystems Toolkit (as for Target 5) <p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate approaches to assessing and handling change in character due to climate change. • Provide funding to address threats through programs such as National Landcare Program and Reef Trust <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report on the ecological character status of Ramsar sites <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to collaborative and active Ramsar site management to address threats and restore ecological character 	<p>and sites removed from Article 3.2 list</p>	
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Goal 3: Wisely using all wetlands			
<p>Target 8: National wetland inventories have been initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussion by jurisdictions on a future approach to a national wetland inventory • Improve understanding of the extent of seagrass, saltmarshes and mangroves in Australia • Investigate incorporating information on Ramsar wetlands into the National Environmental Information Infrastructure (NEII) program. <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement and update state/territory based wetland mapping and inventories, aligning where possible with the Australian National Aquatic Ecosystems (ANAE) classification system. • Make mapping and mapping products available to managers, scientists and decision-makers, including Indigenous land managers, NGOs and community groups involved in site management <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to local data and knowledge 	<p>Progress with wetland classification, mapping and assessment</p> <p>Results of state-based or ecosystem-based assessments of extent.</p>	<p>Med</p>
<p>Target 9: The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, <i>inter alia</i>, within a river basin or along a coastal zone.</p>	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement sustainable wetland management through Basin Plan and Reef Plan. • Support catchment/NRM bodies through the National Landcare program <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make information available to managers on regional/catchment basis 	<p>See Target 2</p>	<p>High</p>

	<p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to strategic assessments, regional NRM planning and wetland management 		
<p>Target 10: The traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention, with a full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities at all relevant levels</p>	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider through WAESC how cultural services are included in Australian Ecological Character Descriptions and Ramsar management planning <p>Australian Government/States/Territories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Indigenous organisations, NGOs, communities and committees in progressing wetland research, management and monitoring projects. <p>NGO/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities celebrate the cultural services delivered by their local wetlands Engage with local Indigenous communities and incorporate traditional knowledge in planning Indigenous and local community citizen scientists engage with research at significant wetlands and Flyway sites 	<p>Number of wetland related research projects that engage Indigenous people</p>	<p>Med</p>
<p>Target 11: Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated.</p>	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote documentation and consideration of wetland environmental, socio-economic and cultural services. <p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake economic valuation study of services provided by Australian wetlands Monitor and evaluate the contribution of Commonwealth environmental water to MDB wetlands through the Long Term Intervention Monitoring Project. Analyse and report results. 	<p>See Target 5</p> <p>Reporting of wetland research/monitoring outcomes</p>	<p>High</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the science available to support environmental water management to MDB wetlands through the Environmental Water Knowledge and Research Project. • Participate in the International Partnership for Blue Carbon which promotes the carbon sequestration potential of coastal and marine areas. • Promote the research outcomes of relevant NESP and National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) projects <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop conceptual models to summarise the science of wetland services • Be actively involved in wetland research projects with tertiary institutions and other research organisations, and integrate this science into management <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in preparing documentation on Ramsar sites, and promoting their values 		
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<p>Target 12: Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<p>Joint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Basin Plan and deliver environmental water to Ramsar sites within the MDB • Deliver projects to restore and repair priority wetlands along GBR catchments and coast • Promote appropriate use of work on the Aquatic Ecosystems Toolkit • Support research that improves understanding of suitable and effective wetland restoration techniques to inform management interventions. <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify priorities for wetland restoration using a range of assessment tools • Implement management actions aimed at addressing threats to ecological character at Ramsar sites and reversing adverse changes in ecological character <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver projects to restore and repair wetlands, including the GBR, Ramsar and Flyway sites 	<p>Number of wetland restoration and rehabilitation programs/ projects</p>	<p>High</p>
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<p>Target 13: Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply environmental assessments to actions that may affect Ramsar sites and other Matters of National Environmental Significance • Implement Offsets Policy under EPBC Act where wetland impacts cannot be avoided or mitigated. • Continue to support the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (as for Target 1) • Contribute information on wetlands to national State of Environment reporting <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate reporting on the Ramsar estate into state based State of the Environment Reporting • Investigate use of offsets provisions to compensate for unavoidable loss of wetlands <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide community and stakeholder submissions on development proposals referred under the EPBC Act and state/territory legislation 	<p>See Target 1</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Goal 4: Enhancing Implementation</p>			
<p>Target 14: Scientific guidance and technical methodologies at global and regional levels are developed on relevant topics and are available to policy makers and practitioners in an appropriate format and language.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund research and development projects through National Environmental Science Program, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, CSIRO, Reef Trust and other programs which identify good practice in wetland management (see Target 3) • Identify opportunities through NESP to develop research that will inform management of Australia’s Ramsar sites 	<p>Number of wetland research and development projects</p>	<p>Med</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all relevant information, data sets and reports from bioregional assessment are accessible to wetland decision-makers, managers, NGOs and the community. • Promote Ramsar assessment tools for use by governments and community groups <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all relevant information, data sets and reports are accessible to third parties in line with open data policy via the internet • Make wetland information, including best management practice guidelines, available on websites and share through networks (as for Target 3) • Facilitate citizen science based monitoring at wetland sites <p>National NGO/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake science-based monitoring at wetland sites • Establish and continue to participate in Technical Advisory Groups to guide collaborative planning and management at Ramsar sites 		
<p>Target 15: Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on and support development of a Ramsar Regional Initiative for Oceania • Continue to provide support for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and implement jurisdictional initiatives that support the EAAFP and the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and support development of a Regional Initiative for the Oceania Region 	<p>Progress on development of Oceania Regional Initiative</p> <p>Level of support for EAAFP</p>	<p>Med</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to partner with governments to implement the Flyway Partnership, including through the Shorebirds Working Group 		
<p>Target 16: Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See actions within proposed CEPA National Action Plan <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement actions in CEPA National Action Plan Maintain and promote websites and other educational initiatives and networks Undertake targeted stakeholder engagement and training <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an NGO CEPA National Focal Point to support Ramsar implementation in Australia Develop local CEPA plans to support management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands Participate in wetland CEPA activities, including World Wetland Day celebrations 	See CEPA Plan	High
<p>Target 17: Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Ramsar financial contribution, support attendance of Oceania technical representative at STRP and attend relevant Ramsar meetings (including Standing Committee and other meetings) Support Regional Oceania meeting. Provide funding, research and technical support for wetland conservation and wise use Partner with NGOs to deliver wetland conservation programs <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide funding for wetland conservation and wise use within state programs 	<p>Financial resources provided by Australian Government to support international activities under Ramsar Convention</p> <p>See Targets 3, 12 and 14</p>	Med

	<p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver programs to engage the community in wetland protection and restoration. 		
<p>Target 18: International cooperation is strengthened at all levels.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role as Vice-Chair of Ramsar Standing Committee • Participate in bilateral and multilateral arrangements relating to migratory birds • EAAFP as per Target 15 • Blue Carbon as per Target 11 • Continue collaboration between Australian National Focal Points for biodiversity-related Multilateral Environment Agreements • Ensure jurisdictional representatives are aware of relevant meetings, and incorporate their input into briefings <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and information on relevant issues and activities relevant to bilateral/multilateral cooperation on wetland conservation/wise use • Promote and implement jurisdictional initiatives that support the EAAFP and the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (see Target 15) <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in initiatives with global benefits such as Shorebird 2020 and management of EAAFP Flyway sites. 	<p>Regional initiatives and Support for EAAFP (see Target 15))</p>	<p>Med</p>
<p>Target 19: Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and the 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.</p>	<p>Australian Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how best to coordinate and provide access to existing on-line resources 	<p>See CEPA Plan</p>	<p>Med</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve networking with and between wetland education centres (building on data gathered through Ramsar Survey of Centres) • Establish and maintain relationships with conservation groups, environmental water managers and other wetland stakeholders and with other agencies who work with farmers, irrigators, tourism operators, recreational fishing organisations, etc <p>State and Territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage with and support Ramsar site managers and other wetland stakeholders. <p>National NGOs/community/interest groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued delivery of wetland training through universities, research organisations and wetland centres. • Continue to network and Implement CEPA programs. 		
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