



Australian Government
Department of the Environment



Corporate Plan 2015–16

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(*Second row, left to right*) Juvenile Australian Sea Lion at Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island © Michael Snedic, Traverse train on its way to Law Dome in Antarctica, Alison McMorrow © Department of the Environment, Selection of Rainforest Fruits, Wet Tropics Management Authority Qld © Department of the Environment and Wet Tropics Management Authority Qld

(*Third row, left to right*) Sampling water at the mouth of the Endeavour River near Cooktown, Kerry Trapnell © Department of the Environment and Kerry Trapnell, Western pygmy possum amongst the eucalypts in the Birds Australia Gluepot Reserve north of Waikerie © Nick Rains

Back cover:

(*First row, left to right*) Aerial view of Big Lagoon (an inundated birrida) in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, Western Australia © Rory Chapple (CALM), Geikie Gorge National Park, John Baker © Department of the Environment, Feather Star in the Houtman Abrolhos Marine Area © Cathy Zwick

(*Second row, left to right*) Tasmanian devil © Leanne Chow, Indigenous rock art site near Yellow Water Lagoon, Kakadu National Park, Sarah Stuart-Smith © Department of the Environment, Captain Cooks Cottage, John Baker © Department of the Environment

(*Third row*) Willandra Lakes Region, John Houldsworth © Department of the Environment

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Message from the Secretary

I am pleased to release the first corporate plan for the Department of the Environment under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The plan sets out the direction for the Department over the coming four years.

The role of the Environment Department is to advise on and implement environment policy to support the Government in achieving a healthy environment, strong economy and thriving community now and for the future.

The Department is the principal adviser to the Government on environmental matters. Our advice is developed through active collaboration with the community, business, industry, governments and non-government organisations. We understand Australia's unique and diverse environment, the interrelationships between the environment and economy and society, and the long term implications of decisions. Our ability to place the environment in its broader context allows the Department to contribute more effectively to debates and decisions that shape Australia's future.

As a Department, we are good at managing risk. But more than that, we engage with risk to identify opportunities to innovate and deliver better environmental outcomes.

We have a firm commitment to engaging Indigenous people in our work—be it through recruitment and retention, supply of goods and services, or on ground delivery of programmes and projects. 2015–16 will see us continue to pursue actions that contribute to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage and celebrate the contribution of Indigenous people to natural resource management.

Over the next four years, the Department's priorities will fall under four purposes: environment and heritage, climate change, Antarctica and water. We will continue to focus on the implementation and monitoring of programmes encompassing the Green Army, Landcare and Twenty Million Trees, the Emissions Reduction Fund, water management, and Australia's operations in Antarctica and national parks. We will continue to provide the best advice we can. And the objective for staff will continue to be to maintain and improve our capacity to serve the Government and the public interest.

I am committed to ensuring the Department is fully effective and trusted in carrying out its role. This plan will help equip us to remain the Government's principal source of policy advice on the environment.

Dr Gordon de Brouwer

Secretary

Department of the Environment

The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

Introduction

The Department of the Environment's Corporate Plan 2015–16 meets the statutory requirements under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

This plan includes our purposes and activities for 2015–16 and what we want to achieve over the four year planning period, 2015–16 to 2018–19. The plan will be updated annually in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*.

The Department of the Environment designs and implements the Australian Government's policies and programmes, and administers national laws, to protect and conserve the environment and heritage, promote action on climate change, advance Australia's interests in the Antarctic, and improve our water use efficiency and the health of Australia's river systems.

The Department of the Environment is the lead agency for the Australian Government's Environment Portfolio which includes seven other entities. The portfolio provides separate corporate plans for the following:

Bureau of Meteorology	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Clean Energy Regulator	Murray-Darling Basin Authority
Climate Change Authority	Sydney Harbour Federation Trust
Director of National Parks	

Role

The role of the Department of the Environment is to advise on and implement environment policy to support the Government in achieving a healthy environment, strong economy and thriving community now and for the future.

Our people

The contribution, diversity and expertise of our people are highly valued. They:

- provide advice that is rigorous, evidence based and explores all the relevant options
- are resilient and embrace and adapt to change
- show sound judgment, common sense and the ability to think strategically
- display energy, enthusiasm and initiative
- have strong people skills and a team focussed approach
- demonstrate excellent presentation and communication skills
- reflect and embrace the diversity of the Australian community.

Operational context

Australia and its territories are rich in unique plants and animals. More than 90 per cent of our plants and 80 per cent of our mammals occur nowhere else on earth. These plants and animals live in diverse landscapes, from our ice-bound Antarctic territory to the central-Australian deserts and tropical rainforests in the north. Our environment is central to Australia's identity. Places, plants and animals are culturally significant to Indigenous peoples, important to the health of our environment and a strong contributor to our economy and sense of society. Managing these places, plants and animals is everyone's responsibility—it is shared across the three levels of government and with the community and business.

The Department supports the Government in ensuring the underlying environmental value of Australia's natural assets is preserved for current and future generations. The Department seeks to do this in a manner that maintains and enhances the economic and social values of our natural resources.

The Department plays an important role in sustaining a healthy environment. We are responsible for a complex and diverse range of issues.

We run significant operations such as the Commonwealth's national parks and reserve estate, and the Australian Antarctic programme.

We administer environmental regulations covering wildlife trade, pollution standards and the assessment of development proposals that affect matters of national environmental significance.

We advise on policies such as renewable energy and domestic climate change, the sustainable use and management of water resources, and relevant international treaties and associated obligations.

We inform communities through reporting on the state of the environment and the monitoring and categorising of endangered species and ecological communities.

And we implement the Government's on-the-ground programmes to protect and conserve the environment.

The Department's work over the coming years will be shaped by some important trends; for example, climate change, economic trends, new technologies and increasing devolution of government functions will shape the way the Department does its job.

Purposes

The Department delivers major Government initiatives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of Australia's natural resources. These initiatives deliver real outcomes for local people and local places across four purpose areas: *environment and heritage*, *climate change*, *Antarctica* and *water*.

Each of the Department's purposes is pursued through a set of significant activities. Measuring success against the objectives of these activities will demonstrate the Department's achievement of its purposes. The **Appendix A** includes the full scope of the Department's performance information to be reported on in the 2015–16 Annual Performance Statement.

The Department's purposes and activities structure

Role	To advise on and implement environment policy to support the Government in achieving a healthy environment, strong economy and thriving community now and for the future			
Purposes	Environment and heritage Conserve, protect and sustainably manage Australia's terrestrial and marine biodiversity, threatened species, ecosystems, environment and heritage	Climate change Develop and implement a national response to climate change	Antarctica Advance Australia's strategic, scientific and environmental interests in the Antarctic	Water Improve water use efficiency and the health of rivers and freshwater ecosystems
Activities	Sustainable management of natural resources Environment and heritage regulation	Reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation to climate change	Antarctic science and presence	Water reforms and environmental watering
Enabling activities	Environmental science and research			
	Corporate support			

Environment and heritage

Purpose	Conserve, protect and sustainably manage Australia's terrestrial and marine biodiversity, threatened species, ecosystems, environment and heritage	
Activities	Sustainable management of natural resources	Environment and heritage regulation

Sustainable management of natural resources

Australia is one of the world's most biologically diverse countries, with many species unique to Australia. Between 7 and 10 per cent of all species on earth occur in Australia. But a wide range of Australia's species and ecological communities are showing a decline in population sizes, geographic range and genetic diversity.

The Department encourages communities, business and governments to sustainably manage Australia's natural resources to: improve the extent, condition and connectivity of Australia's natural assets, mitigate key threats to threatened species and ecological communities, protect the Great Barrier Reef, and increase community engagement in environmental management.

Under this activity, the Department delivers a range of on-ground initiatives to address threats to our places, plants and animals. For example, the Threatened Species Commissioner is actively working to conserve Australia's threatened species by tackling threats such as predation by feral cats. National Landcare, 20 Million Trees and other programmes engage local people to rehabilitate degraded landscapes for the benefit of native plants and animals, and personal enjoyment and well being.

Australia's commitment to protect and conserve the Great Barrier Reef is a focus for the Department. The Reef is of great intrinsic value. A healthy Great Barrier Reef provides significant environmental benefits which also support local communities and increase economic dividends. It is estimated that the contribution of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area to the Australian economy in 2011–12 was \$5.68 billion, generating almost 69,000 full-time jobs.

The Department leads the protection and sustainable management of the Reef through implementing the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan and the Reef Trust. Over 2015–16, the Department will build on past successes by enabling practical actions to improve water quality, restore coastal ecosystem health and enhance species protection.

The Department promotes community awareness of the value and importance of Australia's environment by supporting community participation in local environmental management. Programmes like the Green Army help local communities to deliver national environmental outcomes and support Australia's national objectives and international environmental obligations.

We actively engage Indigenous people in these programmes to support them connect with their country, identity and culture. For example, we are working closely with Traditional Owners to restore habitat at a number of environmentally and culturally significant sites within the Girringun region. These sites are important wetland systems and coastal foreshores which connect with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. They are also used as corridors by endangered species such as the Southern Cassowary and the endemic Mahogany Glider.

Objectives	Measures of success																		
Improve the extent, condition and connectivity of Australia's natural resources to support sustainable use, provide habitat for national threatened species and protect natural assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in extent and connectivity of vegetation communities in project areas.¹• By June 2018, the number of natural resource management projects demonstrating maintenance or improvement in the condition of targeted threatened species habitat.• By June 2018, the increase in area of land on which farmers have adopted better management practices to improve their long term yield.• By June 2018, the increase in area of land managed to reduce threats to nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.²• Area of revegetation, restoration and management of invasive species undertaken through natural resource management projects.³																		
Mitigate key threats to nationally threatened species and ecological communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2020, reverse population decline in 20 mammal species.• Number of projects funded annually with focus on threatened species recovery.																		
Protect and conserve the Great Barrier Reef.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By June 2018, improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef from broad scale land use by reducing pollutant loads in priority areas, relative to 2008–09 baseline levels, by at least 50 per cent for anthropogenic dissolved inorganic nitrogen, 60 per cent for pesticides, and 20 per cent for anthropogenic sediment and particulate nitrogen.• EPBC Act approved offset delivered under the Reef Trust maintain or improve the condition of matters of national and state environmental significance.• The Reef maintains its diversity of species and ecological habitats with a stable to improving trend.																		
Encourage community participation in protecting and conserving Australia's nationally protected environment and heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in the level of participation, skill-development or employment of young people, and Indigenous Australians, through natural resource management projects.⁴ <table><tr><th>Financial year</th><th>2014–15</th><th>2015–16</th><th>2016–17</th><th>2017–18</th><th>2018–19</th></tr><tr><td>Green Army projects commenced</td><td>250</td><td>500</td><td>750</td><td>1000</td><td>1500</td></tr><tr><td>Green Army participants engaged</td><td>2500</td><td>5000</td><td>7500</td><td>10,000</td><td>15,000</td></tr></table>	Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	Green Army projects commenced	250	500	750	1000	1500	Green Army participants engaged	2500	5000	7500	10,000	15,000
Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19														
Green Army projects commenced	250	500	750	1000	1500														
Green Army participants engaged	2500	5000	7500	10,000	15,000														
Improve the extent, condition and connectivity of native vegetation to provide key habitat for nationally threatened species and ecological communities and sequester carbon. (Projects relating to PBS Programme 1.3: Land Sector Initiatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in extent of native vegetation in project areas.• By June 2018, the number of natural resource management projects demonstrating maintenance or improvement in the condition of targeted threatened species habitat.• By July 2018, the increase in area of land managed to reduce threats to nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.• Amount of carbon that has been sequestered through project investments.																		

¹ For projects reporting through the online Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Information Tool (MERIT).

² For projects reporting through MERIT.

³ For projects reporting through MERIT.

⁴ For projects reporting through MERIT.

Environment and heritage regulation

The Department administers regulations to maintain and improve outcomes for Australia's environment, heritage and human health while seeking to reduce red tape for business, individuals and community organisations. The Department plays a central role in managing the impacts of development on the environment through efficient and effective regulation.

Our regulatory responsibilities include national legislation covering environment and heritage protection, biodiversity conservation, product stewardship and hazardous substance management. In administering legislation, we work with communities, business and governments to achieve the best available outcome. Accreditation of *Mobile Muster* under the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* is an example of the community, business and government working together to deliver a voluntary initiative to keep mobile phones out of landfill.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the Commonwealth's central piece of environment legislation. The Act provides the legal framework for the Department to protect and manage Australia's threatened species and ecological communities, whales and dolphins, internationally traded wildlife, heritage places (World, National and Commonwealth), Commonwealth national parks and other protected terrestrial and marine areas.

Environmental regulation should not impose unnecessary costs on businesses, individuals or community organisations. We are working closely with the states and territories to implement the 'one-stop shop' reforms. Where implemented, these reforms have been successful in streamlining assessment and approval arrangements under the EPBC Act to ensure swifter decisions and more certainty for Australian communities and businesses.

These reforms continue to deliver the high environmental standards set by the EPBC Act. States and territories are increasingly aligning their legislation and processes with EPBC Act standards. For example, New South Wales' *Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects* requires 'like-for-like' offsets for species listed under the EPBC Act, and that 90 per cent of these offsets are 'direct' and deliver quantifiable, on-ground conservation benefits. Similarly, all states and territories with a draft approval agreement have committed to the principles of open access to information. This makes the information discoverable, accessible and reusable, and provides better information for decision-making and accountability.

We are improving regulatory mechanisms through the use of risk-based approaches. For example, in July 2014 the Department introduced the National Environmental Significance Threat and Risk Assessment tool. This tool allows us to focus our compliance monitoring on projects that pose the greatest risk to the environment. This has the effect of reducing red tape on projects that are low risk or on people who consistently do the right thing.

The Department's actions to protect and conserve the environment and heritage extend beyond Australia to our immediate region through important partnerships such as the Kokoda Initiative, the Coral Triangle Initiative and support for sustainable marine management by Pacific nations. By supporting protected area management, Australia ensures that exceptional natural, cultural and historic sites within our region are sustainably managed and conserved.

The Department controls the impact of wastes and hazardous substances to improve the quality of the environment and human health. Many of these substances have the potential to harm human health and the environment. We control their impact by administering legislation and meeting Australia's international obligations under relevant treaties.

Scientific research conducted under the enabling activity, *environmental science and research*, underpins our regulation. These activities provide the community with confidence that decisions are evidence based.

Objectives	Measures of success
Identify, conserve and protect nationally significant natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation published under the EPBC Act on significant natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places supports their protection and management. All Australian property included on the list of World Heritage is well managed. Australian support through the Kokoda Initiative enables the track to remain open and safe during the trekking season. Australia's objectives for engagement in international forums on heritage, wildlife, the marine environment and biodiversity are achieved.
Protect and conserve Australia's threatened species, ecological communities and migratory species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current and comprehensive lists of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and migratory species are maintained and supported by plans and other information to guide protection and recovery. Species and ecological communities assessed for inclusion, or removal from, national threatened lists within statutory deadlines. Guidance documents (including plans, conservation advices, information guides and Species Profile and Threats database profiles) published for listed species and ecological communities to support regulation and management. Public access and use of the Species Profile and Threats (SPRAT) database, as indicated by the average monthly number of unique page views of the SPRAT website, continues above 40,000 views.
Protect internationally traded flora and fauna consistent with national and international obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife trade (imports and exports) is regulated in accordance with the requirements of Part 13A of the EPBC Act, and commercial fisheries in accordance with Parts 10, 13 and 13A of the EPBC Act. Australia's objectives for engagement in international forums on heritage, wildlife, the marine environment and biodiversity are achieved.
Ensure sustainable development outcomes by regulating impacts on matters of national environmental significance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of hectares of habitat protected by offsets⁵ compared with the area impacted⁶ for approved projects. The number and area of strategic assessments completed has increased: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in 2015–16, the number of strategic assessments completed km² / ha already approved under strategic assessments. Estimated number of projects that did not require referral to the Department as these projects are able to be assessed under an approved Strategic Assessment.

⁵ Location data available is only for those offsets that have been secured, noting there is often a lag once an offset has been approved as a condition to the actual securing of the offset. This dataset will mature over time and is indicative only.

⁶ Location data from the referral documentation captures the maximum extent of the impact, and not the development footprint.

Objectives	Measures of success
Protect the Alligator Rivers Region from the impacts of uranium mining. (This also supports the Department's environmental science and research activity.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the concentration of uranium in surface water downstream of Ranger Mine remains less than six micrograms per litre. • Annual research and monitoring programmes are scientifically rigorous, appropriately targeted to key knowledge needs and independently endorsed by the Alligator Rivers Technical Committee.
Protect the environment through national approaches to appropriately manage wastes and hazardous substances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98 per cent of the population provided with access to television and computer recycling services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in 2015–16, 50 per cent of total television and computer waste is recycled nationally⁷ – 90 per cent of recycled materials are recovered for reuse. • In 2015, annual imports of ozone depleting substances do not exceed 28 Ozone Depleting Potential tonnes. • Collaboration with government, industry and the community through national approaches results in increased recycling and a reduction in waste and hazardous substances released into the environment. • 250 megalitres of used oil recovered for re-use annually over a three year average under <i>the Product Stewardship (Oil) Act 2000</i>.

⁷ The target has been updated to reflect a policy decision taken after the publication of the 2015–16 PBS.

Climate change

Purpose	Develop and implement a national response to climate change
Activity	Reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation to climate change

Reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation to climate change

Australia is a hot, dry continent with a naturally variable climate. Climate change could increase this variability. Leading scientists advise climate change has altered Australia's climate. Air and sea temperatures have increased. Rainfall patterns have shifted. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events is changing. Shifts in global weather are leading to ocean acidification and rising sea levels. Together, these changes will place Australia's biodiversity, agriculture, infrastructure, water security and coastal communities at risk. Responding to the impacts of climate change will be a challenge for all Australians.

The Department supports the Government to develop and implement a national response to climate change that is built on science and the need for a global effort to reduce emissions. This activity centres on three objectives: reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, contribute towards an effective global solution and adapt to climate change impacts. The Department takes a holistic approach to policy development and brings together environmental, economic and social information to deliver effective action on climate change.

This activity delivers the Government's centrepiece programme—the Emissions Reduction Fund. The Fund provides positive incentives to businesses and others across the economy to reduce emissions. Baselines will be set for large facilities to prevent unacceptable increases in emissions while accommodating economic growth. Projects established under the Fund build on the former Carbon Farming Initiative.

The Department's activity to reduce emissions and support adaptation to the impacts of climate change encourages business and communities to innovate and transform. It provides a long term framework for stable and sustainable climate change policy and will help meet Australia's target of reducing emissions by 5 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020.

The Department provides policy advice for, and supports implementation of, the Renewable Energy Target Scheme which is administered by the Clean Energy Regulator. The Renewable Energy Target, now set at 23.5 per cent by 2020, reduces the emissions-intensity of our electricity supply and contributes to Australia's emission reduction target.

Climate change is a significant international issue. The Department contributes to a global solution to climate change, and supports Australia's reporting and negotiation efforts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2014, the Department supported the Minister in hosting the Asia-Pacific Rainforest Summit. The Summit was one aspect of our engagement with Asia-Pacific countries on protecting rainforests, which are important for mitigating climate change impacts as they capture and store millions of tonnes of carbon.

The Department supports research and produces practical information and tools for business, governments and communities to help them identify climate change impacts and appropriate actions relevant to them. For example, we are working with the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility to develop a coastal climate risk management tool that will provide local governments and communities in the coastal zone with the skills, information and tools to support effective decision making. We publish methodologies that support Australian businesses and households to take practical, direct action to improve energy efficiency and save money on their electricity bills.

The Department's climate adaptation work links closely with the enabling activity *environmental science and research*. This work improves our understanding of climate change and promotes informed decision making.

Objectives	Measures of success
Meet Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia's annual emissions are consistent with meeting the Government's 2020 target to reduce emissions by 5 per cent based on 2000 levels. • Percentage of national emissions covered by Emissions Reduction Fund methods. • Increase in the number of Australian carbon credit units issued. • Compliance with Emissions Reduction Fund safeguard mechanism—covered facilities do not exceed safeguard mechanism baselines. • The uptake of additional renewable energy is encouraged and the Renewable Energy Target of 23.5 per cent by 2020 is achieved.
Contribute to the negotiation of an effective global solution to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key countries and civil society organisations from across the region commit to a collective plan to slow, halt and then reverse the loss of tropical rainforests across the Asia-Pacific region. • Increase in the number of countries using Global Forest Observations Initiative tools.
<p>Improve understanding of climate change impacts and inform decision making.</p> <p>(This also supports the Department's environmental science and research activity.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 30 June 2017, an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility programme will report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the number of end-users engaged in the design of a coastal risk management tool – the number of coastal communities using information and tools from the project to inform local policy and plans – the degree of awareness among relevant government agencies, coastal councils and business and industry groups of National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility Phase 2 outputs, and – the extent to which the risk management tool is aligned with state and territory government initiatives in climate change adaptation in the coastal zone. • Information on climate change projections and adaptation approaches is well targeted to the needs of regional natural resource management organisations and other decision-makers.

Antarctica

Purpose	Advance Australia's strategic, scientific and environmental interests in the Antarctic
Activity	Antarctic science and presence

Antarctic science and presence

With an average annual temperature well below zero and violent snowstorms lasting for days, Antarctica is one of the harshest environments on the planet. It is also one of the most beautiful and vulnerable.

Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean are key drivers of the planet's oceanic and atmospheric systems. With its frozen landscapes, the Antarctic environment provides a valuable benchmark for, and source of information on, weather and climate change.

The Department has four key objectives under this activity: conduct and facilitate scientific research, protect the Antarctic environment, preserve Australia's presence and sovereignty in the Australian Antarctic Territory, and contribute to Antarctica's freedom from strategic and political confrontation.

The Department is coordinating the Government's *20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategy*, to be released in 2015–16. The Strategy will provide guidance to protect and advance Australia's Antarctic interests over the next 20 years and lay the foundation for the Government's future role in Antarctica.

The Department is an active participant in the Antarctic Treaty system which incorporates the Antarctic Treaty, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, and the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. The Antarctic Treaty establishes Antarctica as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science. Australia was one of the 12 original signatories to the Treaty in 1959. By supporting and engaging in the Treaty system, the Department significantly contributes to the stability and environmental protection of the Antarctic and delivers a leading science programme.

The Department pursues relationships of mutual benefit with nations active in eastern Antarctica and other bilateral partners in the Antarctic in order to achieve policy, scientific and environmental goals. In 2014, Australia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Antarctic Cooperation with China to reaffirm a long tradition of collaboration in Antarctic diplomacy, science, logistics and operations.

The Department maintains a strong presence in the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Southern Ocean, and in the Southern Ocean sub-Antarctic regions including the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands and Macquarie Island and their adjacent waters. The main component of this is the Department's coordination and logistical management of Australia's Antarctic programme, including maintenance of permanent stations, field support, transport, communication and medical services. Australia's icebreaker, the *Aurora Australis*, is reaching the end of its service. We will be procuring a new icebreaker to maintain Australia's presence and scientific leadership in the Antarctic.

Australia has been conducting scientific research in Antarctica, the sub-Antarctic and the Southern Ocean for over 100 years. Today, our diverse research programme covers physical and life sciences in the atmospheric, terrestrial and marine domains, as well as human biology and medical research. It is responsible for long term observational activities including: a network of meteorological facilities; ionospheric activity monitoring; seismic, magnetic and GPS networks; and hydrographic and seafloor mapping.

Through research grants and logistical support, the Department continues to be a primary source of Australian Antarctic information. Antarctic scientists supported through this activity are leaders in climate trend research and modelling climate scenarios. Recently, the Department led an international exercise to drill a 300 metre ice core in remote Antarctica. The core will provide an annual climate record for the past 2000 years. This work paves the way for a future expedition to collect a one million year old ice core, which will help us further understand the influences on changing weather patterns and climate.

The Department's work in the Antarctic supports delivery of the Department's other purposes as reflected through the enabling activity *environmental science and research*.

Objectives	Measures of success
Conduct scientific research in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean that supports national policy and environmental management priorities. (This also supports the Department's environmental science and research activity.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific research conducted in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean is internationally recognised, as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of scientific papers published in peer reviewed journals and/or submitted to key international forums in the previous calendar year, and the number of international institutions collaborating in the Australian Antarctic programme during the financial year. Deliver high priority Australian Antarctic scientific research in accordance with the goals of the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan 2011–12 to 2020–21. 80 scientists active in Antarctica, the sub-Antarctic and the Southern Ocean annually over the forward estimates.
Preserving our presence in and sovereignty over the Australian Antarctic Territory and offshore areas. ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands, including the authorisation and management of Australian activities in accordance with relevant legislation and environmental protection measures. Finalise the evaluation of the request for tender for the replacement of Australian Antarctic programme icebreaker and submit for final approval. Coordinate the Government's 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan. Maintain three stations in the Australian Antarctic Territory (Casey, Davis and Mawson) and one station in the sub-Antarctic (Macquarie Island). 180 shipping days annually in support of Australia's Antarctic programme over the forward estimates. 400 expeditioners transported annually to Australia's Antarctic and sub-Antarctic stations (average round trips) over the forward estimates. 15 flights annually between Hobart and Antarctica over the forward estimates.
Protecting the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the Antarctic environment and undertake work of practical, economic and international significance including compliance with Australian Antarctic environmental legislation.
Contribute to maintaining Antarctica's freedom from strategic and/or political confrontation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise enhanced Australian influence in the Antarctic Treaty system, including through participation in its various forums, as measured by the extent to which Australia's objectives are achieved and the number of senior positions (for example, Chair or vice-Chair) held by Australia during the financial year.

⁸ This objective has been updated from the 2015–16 PBS.

Water

Purpose	Improve water use efficiency and the health of rivers and freshwater ecosystems
Activity	Water reforms and environmental watering

Water reforms and environmental watering

Australia faces major challenges to access water sustainably in the face of a drying climate and rising demand for water. Many ongoing impacts on Australia's inland water environments are legacies of historical land use, pest and weed introduction, and development of our water resources for social and economic activities. In most southern regions, inland water resources have changed substantially since European settlement, significantly affecting local environments and causing declines in many native species populations. We are working with communities, business and other governments to address these impacts by minimising unsustainable water use and returning water to the environment.

This activity focuses on four objectives: improve the health and protection of environmental assets in the Murray Darling Basin, ensure sustainable use of water resources, protect wetlands, and improve our understanding of the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining on water resources.

The Murray Darling Basin Plan is a map to protect local places, plants and animals, and restore the river system to health while ensuring long term productivity of the Basin's irrigation industries and communities. A whole of cycle approach to implementing the Basin Plan has been achieved by bringing together the water reform initiatives of the Department with environmental watering conducted by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

The success of this approach saw record numbers of a nationally endangered fish, the Murray Hardyhead, counted in February 2015. This and other native fish are essential for healthy Basin rivers. The Department has embarked on a five year study to examine the contribution of environmental watering to the environmental objectives of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Water reform in the Murray Darling Basin prioritises environmental water recovery through investment in irrigation infrastructure. Application of the 1500 gigalitre (average annual yield) cap on purchasing surface water and continued support for initiatives led by Basin states are also priorities. Ongoing implementation of the Basin Plan will see increased economic returns for local communities and benefits for local environments.

We assist communities, irrigators and businesses to use water resources sustainably across Australia through initiatives such as the second tranche of Tasmanian irrigation projects. These projects are expected to deliver around 40 gigalitres of water to landholders and communities in regional Tasmania.

The Department is working with state agencies to deliver phase four of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative programme. This will build on the past success of the programme which, to June 2013, saw 650 bores capped and more than 19,000 kilometres of open bore drains eliminated, saving around 200,000 megalitres of water each year.

The Department protects and conserves the health of wetlands and freshwater ecosystems by building community awareness of their importance, for example through the annual celebration of World Wetlands Day (2 February), and through targeted actions by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. This work ensures Australia meets its international and national obligations under the Ramsar Convention and the EPBC Act. It highlights the integrated nature of the Department's work, in this case the close links between the *water reforms and environmental watering* and *environment and heritage regulation* activities.

We are working with other Government agencies to address community concerns about the potential water related risks from coal seam gas and large coal mining developments. We are doing this by conducting Bioregional Assessments and targeted research to identify and address critical gaps in our knowledge base. The assessments cover six bioregions—Lake Eyre Basin, Northern Inland Catchments, Clarence-Moreton, Northern Sydney Basin, Sydney Basin, and Gippsland Basin—and will provide a single authoritative source for water related impacts of potential coal seam gas and coal mining developments. From late 2015, communities and industry will have open access to the Bioregional Assessments, and supporting data, through a new interactive portal. This work is supported by the enabling activity *environmental science and research*.

Objectives	Measures of success
Improve the environmental health of the Murray-Darling Basin consistent with national and international obligations by recovering water, including by prioritising water-saving infrastructure projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued water recovery towards bridging the gap from contracted infrastructure projects, water purchases and state activities, consistent with the Water Recovery Strategy and Government commitment to cap water purchase at 1500 gigalitres (average annual yield). By 30 June 2016, Basin governments agree a package of constraints measures, and agree on a notification to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority on the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism. On-farm irrigation infrastructure investments in the Murray-Darling Basin deliver water efficiency benefits to irrigated agriculture.
Help communities, irrigators and businesses to use water resources sustainably and efficiently, consistent with nationally agreed water reforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Artesian Basin jurisdictions agree on a new strategic management plan which guides the future management of the Great Artesian Basin resource. In 2015–16, achieve a domestic water saving of at least 100,000 megalitres through the effective implementation of national water efficiency labeling and standards which support households in choosing more water-efficient products.
Improve the knowledge of, and inform decision making on, the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining development on water resources. (This also supports the Department's environmental science and research activity.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2015–16, scientific products on the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining development on water resources and advice provided by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development are used by decision makers.
Protect and conserve the health of wetlands and freshwater ecosystems consistent with international obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Australia meets its obligations under the Ramsar Convention.
Protect and restore environmental assets in the Murray-Darling Basin through the management and use of Commonwealth environmental water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention monitoring demonstrates that Commonwealth environmental water has contributed to the environmental objectives of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan including for water quality, ecosystem resilience and function, species diversity and populations of water dependent vegetation, fish and waterbirds at selected monitoring sites. The extent to which local knowledge and solutions inform the implementation of environmental watering.

Enabling activities

Activities	Environmental science and research	Corporate support
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The Department's enabling activities, *environmental science and research* and *corporate support*, reflect the importance of evidence based policy and organisational efficiency to the delivery of the Department's purposes.

Strong policy capability is required to respond to the priorities of Government and for the Department to strengthen its role as the Government's primary advisor on the environment. Our capability is underpinned by a process that transparently uses rigorous and tested evidence in the design, implementation and refinement of policy.

In July 2014, the Department brought together its science, economics, policy implementation and corporate functions within the Office of Environmental Science and Economics under the leadership of a deputy secretary. The aims of this amalgamation were to improve the Department's policy and analytical capacity, create a flexible workplace and deliver world-class biodiversity, water and climate science.

Environmental science and research

The Department's *environmental science and research* contributes to the delivery of all four of the Department's purposes in the priority areas of environment and heritage, climate change, Antarctica and water, and ensures that decisions concerning Australia's environment are based on the best available information.

The Department's science functions are diverse and range from programmes that fund specialised external research collaboration to directly employing scientists. For example, the National Environmental Science Programme funds six research hubs to work on identified priority areas: clean air and urban landscapes, earth systems and climate change, marine biodiversity, northern Australia environmental resources, threatened species recovery and tropical water quality. This research informs decision makers, within and outside the Department.

Decision making under the *environment and heritage regulation* activity is directly supported by research into impacts on matters of national environmental significance. The Department works to protect the Alligator Rivers Region environment, including Kakadu National Park, from uranium mining related impacts, and advises on regulation of nuclear actions throughout Australia. We lead the Government's initiatives to strengthen the science underpinning regulatory decisions on the water-related impacts of coal seam gas and large coal mining developments.

Climate science is relevant to many aspects of the Department's work and is delivered through the *Antarctic science and presence* activity, the Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub within the National Environmental Science Programme, and independent scientists funded to improve understanding of climate change impacts.

Improved national data collection and use of alternative data sources are crucial for better decision making. The Department is addressing this by continuing to improve consistency in collection and management of environmental information. We are using this information to provide environmental and spatial information products, advice, analysis and tools. Our goal is to improve accessibility to, and use of, our information by communities, business and governments. The preparation of the 2016 State of the Environment Report is one example of our efforts to make environmental information more readily accessible.

Objectives	Measures of success
Improve understanding of Australia's environment and inform environmental decision making through collaborative research and enhanced discovery, access and use of environmental information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of environmental datasets which are openly accessible and available on the internet and follow guidance provided under the National Plan for Environmental Information initiative. • Qualitative assessment shows that Departmental staff, state governments, business, community groups and others are using research outputs from the National Environmental Science Programme to inform management and policy development. • Qualitative assessment shows that Departmental staff, state governments, business, community groups and others are using data on measures of key aspects of the environment to inform policy development and environmental decision making. • Qualitative assessment shows that Departmental staff, state governments, business, community groups and others are using the 2016 State of the Environment report to inform policy development and environmental decision making.
Protect the Alligator Rivers Region from the impacts of uranium mining. (Measures of success repeated due to support for environment and heritage regulation activity.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the concentration of uranium in surface water downstream of Ranger Mine remains less than six micrograms per litre. • Annual research and monitoring programmes are scientifically rigorous, appropriately targeted to key knowledge needs and independently endorsed by the Alligator Rivers Technical Committee.
Improve understanding of climate change impacts and inform decision making. (Measures of success repeated due to support for implement a national approach to climate change activity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 30 June 2017, an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility programme will report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the number of end-users engaged in the design of a coastal risk management tool – the number of coastal communities using the information and tools from the project to inform local policy and plans – the degree of awareness among relevant government agencies, coastal councils and business and industry groups of National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility Phase 2 outputs, and – the extent to which the risk management tool is aligned with state and territory government initiatives in climate change adaptation in the coastal zone. • Information on climate change projections and adaptation approaches is welltargeted to the needs of regional natural resource management organisations and other decision-makers.

Objectives	Measures of success
Conduct scientific research in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean that supports national policy and environmental management priorities. (Measures of success repeated due to support for Antarctic science and presence activity.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific research conducted in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean is internationally recognised, as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of scientific papers published in peer reviewed journals and /or submitted to key international forums in the previous calendar year, and the number of international institutions collaborating in the Australian Antarctic programme during the financial year. Deliver high priority Australian Antarctic scientific research in accordance with the goals of the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan 2011–12 to 2020–21. 80 scientists active in Antarctica, the sub-Antarctic and the Southern Ocean annually over the forward estimates.
Improve the knowledge of, and inform decision making on, the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining development on water resources. (Measures of success repeated due to support for water reforms and environmental watering activity.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2015–16, scientific products on the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining development on water resources and advice provided by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development are used by decision makers.

Corporate support

We aim to be regarded as a leading agency in financial, programme and regulation management. We do this by focusing on three objectives: improve the Department's capacity to serve the Government by strengthening our capabilities and serving the needs of the Department and Ministers; contribute to the Government's deregulation agenda; and contribute to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage. The inclusion of *corporate support* as one of the Department's core enabling activities reflects the importance of this function to achieving the Department's purposes, and its cross cutting nature which supports all elements of the Department's work.

The Department is committed to strengthening its capacity to serve the Government and has implemented measures to improve its policy, analytical and workforce capability. These include: enhancing scientific, economic and social input into policy analysis; improving community and business engagement in policy development and implementation; best practice policy implementation and risk management; and creating a flexible workplace which promotes learning and development.

Through the deregulation agenda, the Department is working to reduce unnecessary red tape placed on individuals, community groups and businesses. The Government's commitment to minimising red tape presents an opportunity to consider the use of alternative policy instruments to deliver environmental outcomes.

A diverse workforce supports better capability. As one element of encouraging diversity, the Department supports the recruitment, retention, capability and career development of Indigenous employees and addresses the need for a supportive and culturally inclusive work environment through its Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy. This Strategy is currently being updated to strengthen the Department's performance in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The Department's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2013–15* strengthens this approach by supporting staff cultural awareness, encouraging practical steps such as Indigenous procurement, and enhancing the accessibility of our programmes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Objectives	Measures of success
Improve the Department's capacity to serve the Government by strengthening capability and serving the needs of the Department and Ministers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in Comcare premiums arising from Department wide consistency in case management and engagement with Early Intervention Programme. Staff engagement with the Department as measured by proportion of staff who rate their experience working for the Department as 'good' or above in the APS Census. Number of Australian National Audit Office financial statements audit findings of the Department that are rated as A, B and C.⁹ Number of externally reportable financial breaches. Percentage of payments made within 30 days of receipt of goods / services on a correctly rendered invoice. Number of contracts entered into with small and medium enterprises. Proportion of ongoing staff from a non-English-speaking background by level and location. Gender balance for ongoing staff by level and location. Reduction in number and duration of Datacom and Macquarie Telecom system / user issues, to improve stability and performance of Information and Communication Technology systems in accordance with service agreements, from the levels recorded in 2014–15. Proportion of Datacom post access survey respondents who rate interaction with Datacom as 'good' or above to meet or exceed 80 per cent of respondents. Total (internal and external) legal spend for the Department. Total number of (direct and indirect) briefs to Counsel. Improvement in the proportion of departmental policy briefs achieving quality standards. Number and proportion of staff attending policy forums.
Contribute to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2018, progress towards the Department's commitment to achieving a target of 4.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Proportion of staff who have completed training in Indigenous cultural awareness during the previous three years. Number of contracts entered into with Indigenous enterprises.
Contribute to the Government's deregulation agenda by identifying opportunities for deregulation and considering better practice regulatory design across the Department's work, and broader portfolio.	<p>Regulator Performance Indicators:¹⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulators do not unnecessarily impede efficient operation of regulated entities. Communication with regulated entities is clear, targeted and effective. Actions undertaken by regulators are proportionate to the regulatory risk being managed. Compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated. Regulators are open and transparent in their dealings with regulated entities. Regulators actively contribute to the continuous improvement of regulatory frameworks.

⁹ The ANAO rates its audit findings according to a risk scale. Audit findings that pose a significant risk to the entity and that should be addressed as a matter of urgency, are rated as 'A'. Findings that pose a moderate risk are rated as 'B' and should be addressed by entities within the next 12 months. Findings that are procedural in nature, or reflect relatively minor administrative shortcomings, are rated as 'C'.

¹⁰ Performance against these indicators will be assessed in the Regulator Performance Framework.

Capability

A skilled, motivated and flexible workforce is required to achieve our purposes. We identify and address future gaps in capability through workforce planning, leadership development and capability development.

The overarching direction for the Department's workforce is set by a *Strategic Workforce Plan*. The plan is based on the best practice standard set out in the Australian Public Service Commission's *Workforce Planning Guide*. The *Strategic Workforce Plan*, together with our *Core Capability Framework*, supports the development of our people. Our values and behaviours have been developed to help drive and underpin all of the Department's work.

Our values

The Department is firmly committed to the *Australian Public Service Values, Employment Principles* and *Code of Conduct* in promoting a positive workplace culture. Our values align with those set out by the Australian Public Service Commission to be impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical. We:

- strive for excellence in everything we do. We look for ways to improve our business taking into consideration experience and lessons learned
- seek the contribution of others and are generous in our exchange of ideas and information
- celebrate effort and success
- support learning, coaching and mentoring, and
- value diversity and flexibility in our workplace and adhere to the standards expected of public servants by Government and the community.

The way we operate

The Australian Public Service work level standards underpin the Department's approach to the way we work and behave. We have an expectation staff will do their jobs in accordance with the APS work level standards. A review of staff responsibilities across the Department identified discrepancies between roles and work level standards. To address these, we have delegated decision making downwards, including revising financial delegation arrangements and increasing span of control for middle managers (EL1–SES Band 2). We will continue to review the application of the APS work level standards.

We support staff to build their capabilities. We encourage staff to work towards their career goals while ensuring we continue to support the Government now and into the future.

Leadership

Leadership works to motivate and inspire our people. We show judgement, provide advice and make decisions based on experience, evidence and expertise.

Expertise and capability

As the premier source of advice on environment policy and implementation, our advice is multi-disciplinary, centred on science, economics and law.

Consultation, communication and collaboration

The Department consults internally and externally to strengthen policy development, work practices and community engagement. The Department values open, multi-directional and regular communication. The Department works collaboratively across governments and with business, communities and non-government organisations.

Learning and development

The Department cultivates and nurtures a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Respect and trust

The Department is inclusive, transparent and accountable. The Department promotes a workplace of respect and trust.

Innovation

The Department is innovative in its approach to work practices and the development and implementation of environmental policies. We are good at managing risk, including grasping opportunities when we see them. We are not afraid to take risks, as long as we have first thought through and tested the consequences with others.

Support

Diversity

The Department has a proud history of supporting a diverse workforce. We actively promote an inclusive workforce, including gender, religion, race, sexuality and disability. We are delivering a significant programme of work in this space under the *Diversity Strategy 2013–17*. The strategy sets out our objectives and initiatives that will help further embed diversity values in our organisational culture and in our business operations.

- *Agency Multicultural Plan* focuses on creating a baseline of understanding of our multicultural clients and stakeholders, and developing our organisational capability to better meet their needs.
- *Disability Action Plan* extends beyond our workplace to the consideration of disability in policy development and stakeholder engagement.
- *Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy* strengthens the Department's performance in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. A key priority for the next iteration of the Strategy will focus on improving the impact and overall effectiveness of capability and career development, and workplace support of Indigenous employees.
- *Reconciliation Action Plan* supports staff cultural awareness, practical steps such as Indigenous procurement, and the accessibility of our programmes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Learning and development

The Department's commitment to building organisational effectiveness is set out in our *Professional Development Framework*. The framework encompasses a comprehensive suite of capability development and leadership programmes. These programmes support us to meet emerging business needs and priorities. They contribute to an organisational culture of strong leadership, collaboration, continuous learning and improvement so that we are an employer of choice.

Key activities help provide staff with career pathways and opportunities to develop their skills and professional capability:

- *Excellence in Leadership and Management Programme* provides practical assistance with performance management and increases the focus on management capability requirements. Those requirements include risk management and innovation, and managing change along with personal and team resilience and networking opportunities.
- *Policy Forums* further develop core policy skills and capability across the Department. The monthly programme presents a seminar, case study and master class on different policy topics presented by internal and external speakers.

Innovation

The Department is fostering a workplace where innovation is encouraged and celebrated. This includes implementing:

- *Secretary's Award for Innovation* to recognise achievement in implementing innovation
- *Innovative Environment programme* which is a suite of activities designed to support and develop innovation.

Regulatory Capability Development Programme

The Department's *Regulatory Capability Development Programme* supports our capacity as an efficient, effective and trusted regulator. This programme ensures that our regulatory delivery will be consistent with better practice principles and contribute to our purposes and activities. Instituting a more thorough strategic intelligence function is essential for informing our risk assessment treatments and processes.

ICT

The Department's *Information and Communication Technologies Strategic Plan* provides a foundation for ICT service delivery and a planning structure that guides technology investment. The plan considers external factors as well as key organisational priorities. External factors include the Government's shared services agenda, cloud first policy and digital transformation agenda.

The ICT Strategic Plan is designed to support increased maturity across our core, enabling and business support capabilities and is underpinned by a long term ICT investment plan. Prioritisation of ICT investments is undertaken by the ICT Committee and is reviewed during the annual capital allocation process.

Risk oversight and management

As part of its governance, the Department has systems, processes and policies to ensure effective and efficient delivery of programmes and internal functions. Committees and processes provide the guidance for all staff to operate in line with legislative requirements and comply with the APS code of conduct.

The Department regularly reviews its governance and takes steps to improve on its existing strong foundations.

Managing risk is an essential part of our governance and critical to developing and improving our business capabilities.

The Department's risk management framework aims to:

- increase awareness of risk management across the Department
- improve understanding of our role and responsibilities to effectively manage risk
- build capability in risk management, and
- shape positive attitudes towards risk management, including seeing risk as an opportunity to improve outcomes, that lead to long term and enduring cultural change.

The Executive Board and management give serious, regular and systematic consideration to the identification of risk, and significant effort and resources to managing risks.

We undertake diverse activities where the level of risk tolerated depends on the specific circumstances and objectives of the work being undertaken. We will only tolerate those risks which permit us to:

- achieve our stated strategic purposes and activities efficiently and cost-effectively
- comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and
- conduct our business in a safe and sound manner, with a particular focus on work health and safety.

While the responsibility for determining risk tolerance thresholds at an enterprise level for the Department lies with the Executive Board, management of risk is the responsibility of all officers in the course of their work.

The Portfolio Audit Committee reviews the Department's enterprise risk management framework. The framework includes internal controls for the effective identification and management of our business and financial risks, and fraud. The Committee ensures a sound approach has been followed in managing the Department's highest risks, including those associated with individual projects, programme implementation and supporting activities.

Appendix: Performance measures

The performance measures outlined in the following pages were included in the Department's 2015–16 Portfolio Budget Statements and will form the basis of the Annual Performance Statement, to be included in the 2015–16 Annual Report.¹¹

The Department reviews its performance information annually to ensure evaluation of long term outcomes is supported by evidence, including performance targets where relevant. We are refining our methodologies to develop stable and robust data sources that will deliver good performance information. The Department's future corporate plans will reflect this approach of continuous improvement, as forward looking measures of success are further refined for each of the Department's activities.

The Department's performance measures are subject to ongoing monitoring, in addition to annual reporting in the Annual Performance Statements, reflecting the Department's commitment to transparency and support for evidence based policy.

The Department's commitment to continuous improvement in performance measurement is reflected in its investment in methodologies such as the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Information Tool (MERIT). MERIT allows grant recipients to record and upload data about the progress of their projects on a continual basis and to submit reports online, increasing information sharing within the natural resource management community and the broader public. The improvement in performance reporting enabled by MERIT is reflected in the measures of success for the Department's activity *sustainable management of natural resources*.

The Department is committed to improving evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of policies, programmes and regulation in achieving their intended outcomes. Through active measures to support improved evaluation, including establishing a dedicated Evaluation Unit, the Department is promoting the consistent and transparent assessment of policies to inform decision making.

¹¹ The reporting period for the Department's performance measures commenced on 1 July 2015.

Environment and heritage

Purpose	Conserve, protect and sustainably manage Australia's terrestrial and marine biodiversity, threatened species, ecosystems, environment and heritage	
Activities	Sustainable management of natural resources	Environment and heritage regulation

Sustainable management of natural resources

Improve the extent, condition and connectivity of Australia's natural resources to support sustainable use, provide habitat for nationally threatened species and protect natural assets

Relates to Programme 1.1: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment

Key Performance Indicators

Increase in extent and connectivity of vegetation communities in project areas.¹²

By June 2018, the number of natural resource management projects demonstrating maintenance or improvement in the condition of targeted threatened species habitat.

By June 2018, the increase in area of land on which farmers have adopted better management practices to improve their long term yield.

By June 2018, the increase in area of land managed to reduce threats to nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.¹³

Deliverables

In 2015–16, deliver Green Army and 20 Million Trees programme rounds.

Number of trees established through 20 Million Trees Programme (target of 20 million trees by 2020).

By June 2016, projects in place for the establishment of two million trees.

By 31 December 2015, Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is updated.

56 Regional natural resource management organisations have delivered against National Landcare Programme objectives.

From July 2015, implement a Performance Review Framework for regional natural resource management organisations.

Existing natural resource management projects are progressed consistent with funding agreements.

Area of revegetation, restoration and management of invasive species undertaken through natural resource management projects.¹⁴

¹² For projects reporting through the online Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Information Tool (MERIT).

¹³ For projects reporting through MERIT.

¹⁴ For projects reporting through MERIT.

Mitigate key threats to nationally threatened species and ecological communities					
<i>Programme 1.1: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment</i>					
Key Performance Indicators					
Number of projects funded annually with focus on threatened species recovery.					
By 2020, reverse population decline in 20 mammal species.					
Deliverables					
In July 2015, deliver a threatened species summit to raise the national profile of threatened species and their conservation.					
By July 2015, develop and release the Threatened Species Strategy.					

Protect and conserve the Great Barrier Reef					
<i>Programme 1.1: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment</i>					
Key Performance Indicators					
By June 2018, improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef from broad scale land use by reducing pollutant loads in priority areas, relative to 2008–09 baseline levels, by at least: 50 per cent for anthropogenic dissolved inorganic nitrogen; 60 per cent for pesticides; and 20 per cent for anthropogenic sediment and particulate nitrogen.					
Any EPBC Act approved offset delivered under the Reef Trust maintains or improves the condition of matters of national and state environmental significance.					
The Reef maintains its diversity of species and ecological habitats with a stable to improving trend.					
Deliverables					
By 30 June 2016, develop and implement Phase 3 Reef Trust Investment Strategy.					
By August 2015, finalise and release the Reef Plan Report Card 2014–15.					
Implement the Reef 2050 Long term Sustainability Plan.					

Encourage community participation in protecting and conserving Australia's nationally protected environment and heritage					
<i>Programme 1.1: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment</i>					
Key Performance Indicators					
Increase in the level of participation, skill-development or employment of young people, and Indigenous Australians, through natural resource management projects. ¹⁵					
Deliverables					
Deliver Green Army and 20 Million Trees programme rounds in 2015–16.					
Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Green Army projects commenced	250	500	750	1000	1500
Green Army participants engaged	2500	5000	7500	10,000	15,000

¹⁵ For projects reporting through MERIT.

Improve the extent, condition and connectivity of native vegetation to provide key habitat for nationally threatened species and ecological communities and sequester carbon

Relates to Programme 1.3: Land Sector Initiatives

Key Performance Indicators

Increase in extent of native vegetation in project areas.¹⁶

By June 2018, number of natural resource management projects demonstrating maintenance or improvement in the condition of targeted threatened species habitat.

By July 2018, increase in area of land managed to reduce threats to nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.¹⁷

Amount of carbon that has been sequestered through project investments.

Deliverables

Existing projects are progressed consistent with funding agreements.

By 30 June 2016, regional natural resource management organisations submit updated regional natural resource management plans.

Area of revegetation, restoration and management of invasive species undertaken as part of Biodiversity Fund.

Proportion of projects that increase connectivity between native vegetation remnants.¹⁸

Environment and heritage regulation

Identify, conserve and protect nationally significant natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places

Relates to Programme 1.4: Conservation of Australia's Heritage and the Environment

Key Performance Indicators

Australia's objectives for engagement in international forums on heritage, wildlife, the marine environment and biodiversity are achieved.

Documentation published under the EPBC Act on significant natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places supports their protection and management.

All Australian property included on the list of World Heritage is well managed.

Australian support through the Kokoda Initiative enables the track to remain open and safe during the trekking season.

Deliverables

Assess nationally significant places for inclusion in the National Heritage List within statutory time frames.

Provide funding to support the protection and management of nationally significant natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places.

By 31 October 2015, lead national implementation of the Australian Heritage Strategy through development of an implementation plan.

International obligations under, and reporting to, the World Heritage Committee and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention on Biological Diversity, International Whaling Commission and the migratory birds agreements are met.

Engagement in international forums on heritage, wildlife, the marine environment and biodiversity to advance Australia's interests.

¹⁶ For projects reporting through MERIT.

¹⁷ For projects reporting through MERIT.

¹⁸ For projects identified as addressing connectivity MERIT.

Deliver aid programmes in the region to further Australia's environment and heritage objectives (Coral Triangle Initiative, Enhancing Pacific Ocean Governance, Kokoda Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association).

Support Australian Heritage Council and Threatened Species Scientific Committee to carry out their statutory functions.

Protect and conserve Australia's threatened species, ecological communities and migratory species

Programme 1.4: Conservation of Australia's Heritage and the Environment

Key Performance Indicators

Public access and use of the Species Profile and Threats (SPRAT) database, as indicated by the average monthly number of unique page views of the SPRAT website, continues above 40,000 views.

Deliverables

Current and comprehensive lists of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and migratory species are maintained and supported by plans and other information to guide protection and recovery.

Species and ecological communities assessed for inclusion, or removal from, national threatened lists within statutory deadlines.

Guidance documents (including plans, conservation advices, information guides and Species Profile and Threats database profiles) published for listed species and ecological communities to support regulation and management.

Agreements are in place with states and territories to use a common assessment method for threatened species and ecological communities and progress towards a single operational list of threatened species in each jurisdiction.

A revised threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats is published.

By 30 June 2017, implement the Whale and Dolphin Protection Plan and Dugong and Turtle Protection Plan.

Support Australian Heritage Council and Threatened Species Scientific Committee to carry out their statutory functions.

Protect internationally traded flora and fauna consistent with national and international obligations

Programme 1.4: Conservation of Australia's Heritage and the Environment

Key Performance Indicators

Australia's objectives for engagement in international forums on heritage, wildlife, the marine environment and biodiversity are achieved.

Deliverables

Wildlife trade (imports and exports) is regulated in accordance with the requirements of Part 13A of the EPBC Act, and commercial fisheries in accordance with Parts 10, 13 and 13A of the EPBC Act.

International obligations under, and reporting to, the World Heritage Committee and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention on Biological Diversity, International Whaling Commission and the migratory birds agreements are met.

Engagement in international forums on heritage, wildlife, the marine environment and biodiversity to advance Australia's interests.

Ensure sustainable development outcomes by regulating impacts on matters of national environmental significance

Relates to Programme 1.5: Environmental Regulation

Key Performance Indicators

The number of hectares of habitat protected by offsets¹⁹ compared with the area impacted²⁰ for approved projects.

The number and area of strategic assessments completed has increased:

- in 2015–16, the number of strategic assessments completed
- km² / ha already approved under strategic assessments.

Estimated number of projects that did not require referral to the Department as these projects are able to assessed under an approved Strategic Assessment.

Deliverables

Undertake risk based compliance and enforcement activities to support regulation under the EPBC Act and the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981*.

Streamline national environmental regulation, including through approval bilateral agreements negotiated and signed with all willing state and territory governments.

Deliver efficient environmental regulation by undertaking all individual and strategic environmental assessments and approvals under the EPBC Act and Sea Dumping Act within statutory timeframes.

At least 20 per cent of high-risk post approval projects, identified using the National Environmental Significance Threat and Risk Assessment model, are actively managed to ensure compliance with project conditions.

All allegations of non-compliance under the EPBC and Sea Dumping Acts are investigated.

Number of projects referred in 2015–16 that are being assessed under assessment bilateral agreements.

Number of projects referred in 2015–16 that have been approved with outcome-based conditions.

In 2015–16, number of already approved projects with revised streamlined conditions.

Protect the Alligator Rivers Region from the impacts of uranium mining

Programme 1.5: Environmental Regulation

Key Performance Indicators

Ensure the concentration of uranium in surface water downstream of Ranger Mine remains less than six micrograms per litre.

Annual research and monitoring programmes are scientifically rigorous, appropriately targeted to key knowledge needs and independently endorsed by the Alligator Rivers Technical Committee.

Deliverables

Oversee, and participate in, arrangements for the regulation of uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region to ensure regulation is adequate, effective and consistent with Commonwealth Environmental Requirements.

Undertake an annual scientific research programme into the environmental impacts of uranium mining to address key knowledge needs. Contribute to the development of scientifically rigorous environmental performance criteria for the operational, rehabilitation and closure phases of mining.

Undertake annual biological, chemical and radiological monitoring programmes to provide high-level assurance to stakeholders that the Alligator Rivers Region environment remains protected from uranium mining impacts consistent with statutory requirements.

¹⁹ Location data available is only for those offsets that have been secured, noting there is often a lag once an offset has been approved as a condition to the actual securing of the offset. This dataset will mature over time and is indicative only.

²⁰ Location data from the referral documentation captures the maximum extent of the impact, and not the development footprint.

Protect the environment through national approaches to appropriately manage wastes and hazardous substances

Relates to Programme 1.6: Management of Hazardous Wastes, Substances and Pollutants

Key Performance Indicators

98 per cent of the population provided with access to TV and computer recycling services:

- in 2015–16, 50 per cent of total TV and computer waste is recycled nationally¹⁹
- 90 per cent of recycled materials are recovered for re-use.

In 2015, annual imports of ozone depleting substances do not exceed 28 Ozone Depleting Potential tonnes.

Collaboration with government, industry and the community through national approaches results in increased recycling and a reduction in the amount of waste and hazardous substances being released into the environment.

Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Megalitres of used oil recovered for re-use over a 3 year average under the <i>Product Stewardship (Oil) Act 2000</i>	250	250	250	250	250

Deliverables

Meet statutory requirements under national legislation covering product stewardship, fuel quality standards, oil, hazardous waste, national environment protection measures, ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gas.

By June 2016, develop and implement a National Clean Air Agreement.

Ensure Australia meets obligations under international agreements on waste and hazardous substances.

Develop and implement standards to protect the environment from waste and hazardous substances.

By June 2016, complete a Regulation Impact Statement for the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and for new chemicals under the Stockholm Convention.

By December 2015, conduct a second open call for voluntary product stewardship.

By June 2016, publish the fourth Product List under the Product Stewardship Act.

By March 2016, deliver the third National Waste Report.

All licences, permits and notifications assessed within statutory timeframes to control the import and export of waste and hazardous substances.

All reports and notifications submitted within timeframes under Australia's international responsibilities on waste and hazardous substances.

Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Minimum number of site visits undertaken to test fuel samples under the <i>Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000</i>	450	450	450	450	450
Minimum number of site visits under the <i>Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gases Act 1989</i>	100	100	100	100	100
Minimum number of assessment of chemicals and genetically modified organisms	250	250	250	250	250

²¹ The target has been updated to reflect a policy decision taken after the publication of the 2015–16 PBS.

Climate change

Purpose	Develop and implement a national response to climate change
Activity	Reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation to climate change

Reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation to climate change

Meet Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets

Relates to Programme 2.1: Reducing Australia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Key Performance Indicators

Australia's annual emissions are consistent with meeting the Government's 2020 target to reduce emissions by 5 per cent based on 2000 levels.

Percentage of national emissions covered by Emissions Reduction Fund methods.

Increase in the number of Australian carbon credit units issued.

Compliance with Emissions Reduction Fund safeguard mechanism—covered facilities do not exceed safeguard mechanism baselines.

The uptake of additional renewable energy is encouraged and the Renewable Energy Target of 23.5 per cent by 2020 is achieved.

Deliverables

Robust and credible annual emission projections provided to the Government by agreed timeframes.

Implement the Government's amendments to the Renewable Energy Target scheme once settled.

Additional methods are made available under the Emissions Reduction Fund for identified priority abatement activities each year, as required.

Legislative rules for the Emissions Reduction Fund safeguard mechanism made by October 2015 and the safeguard mechanism established by 1 July 2016.

By December 2015, legislative rules for the Emissions Reduction Fund made.

Participation in the Carbon Neutral Programme is maintained or increased.

Contribute to the negotiation of an effective global solution to climate change
<i>Programme 2.1: Reducing Australia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions</i>
Key Performance Indicators
Key countries and civil society organisations from across the region commit to a collective plan to slow, halt and then reverse the loss of tropical rainforests across the Asia-Pacific region.
Deliverables
Annual national greenhouse gas inventory submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in accordance with internationally agreed timelines, and the UNFCCC determines the inventory to be consistent with its reporting obligations.
By 31 December 2015, biennial Report to the UNFCCC submitted.
Provide advice to support Australia's national interests for a post 2020 global climate change agreement.
Assist developing countries to build greenhouse gas measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) capacity.
Implement a regional collective commitment to slow, halt and reverse the loss of tropical rainforests across the Asia-Pacific region.
Increase in the number of countries using Global Forest Observations Initiative tools.

Improve understanding of climate change impacts and inform decision making
<i>Relates to programme 2.1: Adapting to Climate Change</i>
Key Performance Indicators
By 30 June 2017, an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility programme will report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of end-users engaged in the design of a coastal risk management tool the number of coastal communities using information and tools from the project to inform local policy and plans the degree of awareness among relevant government agencies, coastal councils and business and industry groups of National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility Phase 2 outputs the extent to which the risk management tool is aligned with state and territory government initiatives in climate change adaptation in the coastal zone.
Information on climate change projections and adaptation approaches is well-targeted to the needs of regional natural resource management organisations and other decision-makers.
Deliverables
By 30 June 2017, funding for the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility will deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an online coastal climate risk management tool synthesised climate adaptation information for policy and decision-makers, and four adaptation research networks.
Provide access to information and best practice guidance on adaptation to climate risks to policy and decision makers across governments, business and communities.
By 30 June 2016, assist regional natural resource management organisations to manage climate risk by delivering targeted information on climate impacts and adaptation for natural resource management planning.

Antarctica

Purpose	Advance Australia's strategic, scientific and environmental interests in the Antarctic
Activity	Antarctic science and presence

Antarctic science and presence

Conduct scientific research in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean that supports national policy and environmental management priorities

Relates to Programme 3.1: Antarctica: Science, Policy and Presence

Key Performance Indicators

Scientific research conducted in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean is internationally recognised, as indicated by:

- the number of scientific papers published in peer reviewed journals and / or submitted to key international forums in the previous calendar year, and
- the number of international institutions collaborating in the Australian Antarctic programme during the financial year.

Deliverables

Deliver high priority Australian Antarctic scientific research in accordance with the goals of the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan 2011–12 to 2020–21.

Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Number of scientists active in Antarctica, the sub-Antarctic and the Southern Ocean during the financial year	80	80	80	80	80

Preserving our presence in and sovereignty over the Australian Antarctic Territory and offshore areas²²*Programme 3.1: Antarctica: Science, Policy and Presence****Deliverables***

Administer the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands, including the authorisation and management of Australian activities in accordance with relevant legislation and environmental protection measures.

Maintain three stations in the Australian Antarctic Territory (Casey, Davis and Mawson) and one station in the sub-Antarctic (Macquarie Island).

Finalise the evaluation of the Request for Tender for the replacement of Australian Antarctic programme icebreaker and submit for final approval.

Coordinate the Government's 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategy.

Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Shipping days in support of Australia's Antarctic programme	180	180	180	180	180

Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Number of expeditioners transported to Australia's Antarctic and sub-Antarctic stations (average round trips)	400	400	400	400	400
Flights between Hobart and Antarctica (number of flights)	15	15	15	15	15

Protecting the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean environment*Programme 3.1: Antarctica: Science, Policy and Presence****Deliverables***

Protect the Antarctic environment and undertake work of practical, economic and international significance including compliance with Australian Antarctic environmental legislation.

Contribute to maintaining Antarctica's freedom from strategic and/or political confrontation*Programme 3.1: Antarctica: Science, Policy and Presence****Key Performance Indicators***

Exercise enhanced Australian influence in the Antarctic Treaty system, including through participation in its various forums, as measured by the extent to which Australia's objectives are achieved and the number of senior positions (for example, Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson) held by Australia during the financial year.

²² This objective has been updated from the 2015–16 PBS.

Water

Purpose	Improve water use efficiency and the health of rivers and freshwater ecosystems
Activity	Water reforms and environmental watering

Water reforms and environmental watering

Improve the environmental health of the Murray-Darling Basin consistent with national and international obligations by recovering water, including by prioritising water-saving infrastructure projects

Relates to Programme 4.1: Water Reform

Key Performance Indicators

Continued water recovery towards bridging the gap from contracted infrastructure projects, water purchases and state activities, consistent with the Water Recovery Strategy and Government commitment to cap water purchase at 1 500 gigalitres (average annual yield).

On-farm irrigation infrastructure investments in the Murray-Darling Basin deliver water efficiency benefits to irrigated agriculture.

By 30 June 2016, Basin governments agree a package of constraints measures, and agree on a notification to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority on the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism.

Deliverables

Support the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by recovering water towards bridging the gap and assisting irrigation communities and industry adapt to changes in water availability, including by improved water use efficiency.

Help communities, irrigators and businesses to use water resources sustainably and efficiently, consistent with nationally agreed water reforms

Programme 4.1: Water Reform

Key Performance Indicators

Great Artesian Basin jurisdictions agree on a new strategic management plan which guides the future management of the Great Artesian Basin resource.

In 2015–16, achieve a domestic water saving of at least 100,000 megalitres through the effective implementation of a national water efficiency labelling and standards which support households in choosing more water-efficient products.

<i>Deliverables</i>
Complete the condition assessment for the Lake Eyre Basin in partnership with Basin jurisdictions to inform a review of the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement.
Complete and publish a comprehensive update to the National Water Quality Management Strategy and water quality guidelines.
Implement the Government's response to the Review of the <i>Water Act 2007</i> .
Finalise development of a new Great Artesian Basin Strategic Management Plan.
By March 2016, negotiate the 2016–2019 Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Scheme Strategic Plan with states and territories.
Relevant jurisdictions and stakeholders are engaged and informed on implementation of nationally agreed water reforms and related programmes.
Complete on ground works in accordance with the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative phase 4 Project Agreement and bilateral schedules with states.
Negotiate a funding agreement with Tasmania for implementation of the Tranche 2 irrigation schemes.

Improve the knowledge of, and inform decision making on, the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining development on water resources

Programme 4.1: Water Reform

<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>
During 2015–16, scientific products on the impacts of coal seam gas and coal mining development on water resources and advice provided by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development are used by decision makers.
<i>Deliverables</i>
Advice provided by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development meets statutory requirements, is timely and publicly available.
By 30 June 2016, complete at least four research products for publication.
By 30 June 2016, complete the bioregional assessments for all 13 subregions.

Protect and conserve the health of wetlands and freshwater ecosystems consistent with international obligations

Programme 4.1: Water Reform

<i>Deliverables</i>
Ensure Australia meets its obligations under the Ramsar Convention.

Protect and restore environmental assets in the Murray-Darling Basin through the management and use of Commonwealth environmental water

Relates to Programme 4.2: Commonwealth Environmental Water

Key Performance Indicators

Intervention monitoring demonstrates that Commonwealth environmental water has contributed to the environmental objectives of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan including for water quality, ecosystem resilience and function, species diversity and populations of water dependent vegetation, fish and waterbirds at selected monitoring sites in the Murray-Darling Basin.

The extent to which local knowledge and solutions inform the implementation of environmental watering.

Deliverables

Develop and publish integrated plans for the use, carryover and trade of Commonwealth environmental water (integrated portfolio management plans) for 2016–17 to 2018–19.

Make Commonwealth environmental water available for delivery in response to seasonal watering conditions, consistent with the Basin Plan and Basin-wide environmental watering strategy as well as having regard to the Basin Annual Environmental Watering Priorities.

Manage the delivery of the Long Term Intervention Monitoring Project milestones set out in five year contracts (due for completion at the end of the 2019–20 financial year).

Engage local communities and stakeholders consistent with a Communication and Engagement Plan and use of regionally based Local Engagement Officers, to incorporate local experience and knowledge in Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder decisions.

Maintenance of accurate records of the Commonwealth environmental water holdings, use, carryover and trade and publication of monthly updates on the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office website.

Publication of Commonwealth environmental water Portfolio Management Updates and Trading Intentions on a quarterly basis.

Publication of the 2014–15 Commonwealth Environmental Water Annual Report and the 2014–15 Commonwealth Environmental Water Outcomes Report.

Volume of Commonwealth environmental water holdings, use, carryover and trade.

Water use decisions and delivery of environmental water by catchment and purpose.

Enabling activities

Activities	Environmental science and research	Corporate support
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Environmental science and research

<p>Improve understanding of Australia's environment and inform environmental decision-making through collaborative research and enhanced discovery, access and use of environmental information</p> <p><i>Relates to Programme 1.2: Environmental Information and Research</i> <i>Also supported by Programmes 1.5, 2.2, 3.1 and 4.1</i></p>
Key Performance Indicators
Increase in the number of environmental datasets which are openly accessible and available on the internet and follow guidance provided under the National Plan for Environmental Information initiative.
Qualitative assessment shows that Departmental staff, state governments, business, community groups and others are using research outputs from the National Environmental Science Programme to inform management and policy development.
Qualitative assessment shows that Departmental staff, state governments, business, community groups and others are using data on measures of key aspects of the environment to inform policy development and environmental decision making.
Qualitative assessment shows that Departmental staff, state governments, business, community groups and others are using the 2016 State of the Environment report to inform policy development and environmental decision making.
Deliverables
By December 2016, prepare a national State of the Environment report.
By 1 July 2015, commence applied environmental research under the National Environmental Science Programme.
In partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology, develop a collaborative approach with Australian Government data holders to improve discovery, access and reuse of datasets for priority environmental information.
By December 2015, deliver an initial set of measures of key aspects of the environment, with additional measures being established by December 2016.
By 30 June 2016, publish findings from research activity funded under the Australian Climate Change Science Programme.
Review of the Australian Climate Change Science Programme made publicly available by 30 June 2017.

Financial year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
Taxa revised or newly described under the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS)	200	200	200	200	200
Number of early career researchers trained in taxonomy and species discovery through Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS)	64	64	64	64	64

Corporate support

Improve the Department's capacity to serve the Government by strengthening capability and serving the needs of the Department and Ministers*Key Performance Indicators*

- Reduction in Comcare premiums arising from Department wide consistency in case management and engagement with Early Intervention Programme.
- Staff engagement with the Department as measured by proportion of staff who rate their experience working for the Department as 'good' or above in the APS Census.
- Number of Australian National Audit Office financial statements audit findings of the Department that are rated as A, B and C.²³
- Number of externally reportable financial breaches.
- Percentage of payments made within 30 days of receipt of goods / services on a correctly rendered invoice.
- Number of contracts entered into with small and medium enterprises.
- Proportion of ongoing staff from a non-English-speaking background) by level and location.
- Gender balance for ongoing staff by level and location.
- Reduction in number and duration of Datacom and Macquarie Telecom system / user issues, to improve stability and performance of ICT systems in accordance with service agreements from the levels recorded in 2014–15.
- Proportion of Datacom post access survey respondents who rate interaction with Datacom as 'good' or above to meet or exceed 80 per cent of respondents.
- Total (internal and external) legal spend for the Department.
- Total number of (direct and indirect) briefs to Counsel.
- Improvement in the proportion of departmental policy briefs achieving quality standards.
- Number and proportion of staff attending policy forums.

Deliverables

- Deliver a new streamlined Enterprise Agreement 2015–18.
- By December 2015, deliver a revised Departmental Strategic Workforce Plan.
- By 30 July 2015, deliver a comprehensive Work Health and Safety Management System, including due diligence framework.
- By 30 June 2016, implement Work Health and Safety Management System awareness raising training, monitoring and assurance to support the system.

²³ The ANAO rates its audit findings according to a risk scale. Audit findings that pose a significant risk to the entity and that should be addressed as a matter of urgency, are rated as 'A'. Findings that pose a moderate risk are rated as 'B' and should be addressed by entities within the next 12 months. Findings that are procedural in nature, or reflect relatively minor administrative shortcomings, are rated as 'C'.

Contribute to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage
<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>
By 2018, progress towards the Department's commitment to achieving a target of 4.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
Proportion of staff who have completed training in Indigenous cultural awareness during the previous three years.
Number of contracts entered into with Indigenous enterprises.
<i>Deliverables</i>
Deliver the Department's updated Reconciliation Action Plan.

Contribute to the Government's deregulation agenda by identifying deregulatory opportunities and considering better practice regulatory design across the Department's work, and broader portfolio
<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>
<i>Regulator Performance Indicators</i>
<i>Performance against these indicators will be assessed in the Regulator Performance Framework.</i>
Regulators do not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of regulated entities.
Communication with regulated entities is clear, targeted and effective.
Actions undertaken by regulators are proportionate to the regulatory risk being managed.
Compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and co-ordinated.
Regulators are open and transparent in their dealings with regulated entities.
Regulators actively contribute to the continuous improvement of regulatory frameworks.

