



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency



STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PLAN

OSBORNE SUBMARINE CONSTRUCTION YARD
STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT
OSBORNE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

18 December 2025





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| Project name | Osborne Submarine Construction Yard Strategic Assessment, Osborne, South Australia |
| Document title | Strategic Assessment Plan |

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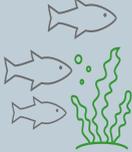
The Strategic Assessment Plan for the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard

This Strategic Assessment Plan ('The Plan') sets out the plan for the sustainable development of the conventionally-armed nuclear powered Submarine Construction Yard to be built and operated at Osborne in South Australia.

The agreement between the Australian Submarine Agency and the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water to assess the plan for the Submarine Construction Yard under Part 10 of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* provides for transparency along with enduring environmental stewardship for protected matters, including threatened species, migratory species, and the environment.

The Plan sets out nine Environmental Outcomes that define the desired state for Protected Matters relevant to this strategic assessment for the long-term. The Approval Holder will make sure that measures to avoid or minimise potential impacts are implemented, so that this critical Pillar of the Optimal Pathway for the Australia – United Kingdom – United States trilateral partnership is effectively delivered in an ecologically sustainable manner for the duration of construction and operations in the Submarine Construction Yard.

Environmental Outcomes of The Plan

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Outcome 1</p> <p>The protection and long-term conservation of southern right whales within Gulf St Vincent is supported by ensuring vessel activities are managed to prevent injury or mortality of southern right whales.</p>  | <p>Outcome 2</p> <p>The breeding and nesting of the Australian fairy tern and eastern hooded plover are not impacted by noise generated by dredging.</p>  | <p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Outside of the dredge footprint, the long-term extent of seagrass meadows within Port Adelaide River and Gulf St Vincent is maintained or improved by managing dredging.</p>  |
| <p>Outcome 4</p> <p>Water quality within Port Adelaide River and Gulf St Vincent is protected by preventing or minimising the release or mobilisation of pollutants, chemicals, and toxic substances into the marine environment, in accordance with regulatory guidelines.</p>  | <p>Outcome 5</p> <p>The persistence of the dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary and syngnathids within Port Adelaide River and Gulf St Vincent is ensured by managing impacts to water quality from dredging, in accordance with regulatory guidelines.</p>  | <p>Outcome 6</p> <p>The protection and long-term conservation of the dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary is supported by ensuring dredging, marine piling, and vessel activities are managed to prevent injury or mortality of individuals of the dolphin population.</p>  |
| <p>Outcome 7</p> <p>Hydrological and geomorphological changes to Port Adelaide River resulting from changes to the riverbank will be avoided or minimised.</p>  | <p>Outcome 8</p> <p>The introduction or spread of biosecurity risks is prevented by managing dredging in accordance with regulatory guidelines.</p>  | <p>Outcome 9</p> <p>Impacts to people and communities will be minimised, as far as reasonably possible, to manage traffic, and access to local amenities.</p>  |

Acronyms and abbreviations

| Acronym / abbreviation | Definition |
|------------------------|---|
| AUKUS | Australia, United Kingdom, United States |
| EPBC Act | <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Commonwealth) |
| MERI | Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework |
| SA | South Australia |
| SIAR | Strategic Impact Assessment Report |
| SSN | Submersible Ship Nuclear |

Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|--|--|
| Action, or Actions | The Actions described in section 3 of The Report, under the Construction and Operation Classes of Actions proposed to be approved for the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard Strategic Assessment. |
| Agreed version | A version of a plan, report, or other document required to be developed and published by commitments within the Plan, that is agreed on in writing between the Environment Department and the Approval Holder. |
| Class of Actions approval | An approval under Section 146B of the EPBC Act related to the construction and operation of the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard. |
| Endorsement Criteria | Considerations set out in Attachment 2 of the Agreement that the Minister for the Environment may have regard to in their decision to endorse the draft Plan. |
| Environment Department | The Australian Government Agency responsible for the environment that administers the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> . |
| Environmental Outcome | The objectives to be achieved for the conservation of Protected Matters assessed in The Report to have potential for a significant impact in the absence of mitigation measures. |
| EPBC Act | The <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). |
| Minister for the Environment | The Australian Government Minister with responsibility for administering the EPBC Act, including any delegate thereof. |
| Program of works | The schedule of Actions undertaken for each phase of construction and operation of the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard, as well as information including the timing, location, relevant Environmental Outcomes, and appropriate assurance activities for the Actions proposed. |
| Protected Matter | Means a matter protected by a provision of Part 3 of the EPBC Act. The specific matters protected by each provision are set out in section 34 of the EPBC Act. |
| Protected Matters relevant to Environmental Outcomes | The Protected Matters included in Table 2.1. These are the Protected Matters for which a significant impact was assessed to be likely in the absence of mitigation measures within The Report. |
| Reference conditions | Baseline conditions, guideline values, or best practice measures established for specific aspects of the environment, that are appropriate to monitor and evaluate change against to determine the achievement of relevant Environmental Outcomes of the Plan. |
| Strategic Assessment Agreement, or, the Agreement | The Part 10 Strategic Assessment Section 146 Agreement – Agreement to undertake a Strategic Assessment of the impacts of a Plan for actions to be taken in the Strategic Assessment Area on matters protected by Part 3 of the EPBC Act” between the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and the Australian Submarine Agency. The Agreement is varied by Variation Agreement (No.1). |
| Strategic Assessment Area | Refers to the areas shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. |
| Strategic Impact Assessment Report (SIAR), or The Report | The impact assessment report for the Strategic Assessment that describes and assesses the potential impacts of the Actions and Classes of Actions of The Plan on relevant Protected Matters. Referred to in the document as ‘The Report’. |

| Term | Definition |
|---|--|
| The Plan, or, Osborne Strategic Assessment Plan | The Strategic Assessment Plan, (this document), which constitutes a 'policy, plan or program' pursuant to section 146 of the EPBC Act. |
| Variation Agreement | An alteration to the Strategic Assessment Agreement pursuant to clause 14. 'Variation Agreement (No.1) to the Strategic Assessment Agreement – Osborne Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard', sets out the changes to the Strategic Assessment in Item 3, and as such, the Agreement and the Variation Agreement are to be read in conjunction with each other. The documents are provided in Appendix A. |

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1. Context

1.1 Overview

Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States announced the AUKUS trilateral security partnership in 2021. The AUKUS partners agreed to support Australia to construct conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines (known as 'submersible ship nuclear', or SSN) in South Australia. The conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines built under AUKUS (SSN-AUKUS) will meet Australia's defence requirements in future decades.

The approach for Australia to develop a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability, was jointly announced in March 2023. The Optimal Pathway is to be executed over several decades to make sure that Australia can grow the capability and capacity in a safe and secure way that sets the highest nuclear non-proliferation standard. Under AUKUS it is planned to build conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines in Australia. Australian built SSN-AUKUS submarines will be constructed progressively from the early 2040s at a purpose-built Submarine Construction Yard to be sited at Osborne on the Lefevre Peninsula, approximately 19 km north of Adelaide in South Australia.

1.2 Strategic Assessment

1.2.1 Strategic Assessment Agreement

A Section 146 Strategic Assessment Agreement ('the Agreement') under Part 10 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) was made between the Australian Submarine Agency and the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water ('the Commonwealth Minister') on 24 November 2023. A variation to the Agreement, ('Variation Agreement [No.1]'), was agreed in December 2024. A further variation to the Agreement, ('Variation Agreement [No. 2]'), was agreed in December 2025. The Plan has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Agreement, Variation Agreement (No. 1), and Variation Agreement (No.2).

In accordance with the Agreement, two key documents have been prepared to support the strategic assessment, including:

- A Strategic Impact Assessment Report ('The Report'), to assess the likelihood of any activities associated with constructing and operating the Osborne submarine construction yard having a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance.
- A Strategic Assessment Plan ('The Plan', this document), to demonstrate how significant impacts to matters of national environmental significance will be avoided and mitigated, where possible, for the life of any class of action approvals.

1.2.2 The Report

The Report communicates the environmental context, an understanding of the activities that will be undertaken to construct and operate the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard, and an assessment of their potential impacts on matters of national environmental significance protected by a provision of Part 3 of the EPBC Act. This includes an assessment of potential impacts on the environment, as per the definition of 'the environment' under section 528 the EPBC Act. Protected Matters for which a significant impact could occur in the absence of mitigation measures were identified from the assessments conducted and documented in The Report.

The Report also identified relevant avoidance and mitigation measures that would be implemented to ensure significant impacts to protected matters were avoided and mitigated, as far as possible. It was assessed in The Report that if these measures were implemented, that The Plan would not be likely to have a significant residual impact on a Protected Matter. The Protected Matters (Section 2.7) for which a significant impact was assessed in the unmitigated scenario are the focus of the Environmental Outcomes of The Plan.

1.2.3 The Plan

The Plan defines Environmental Outcomes that establish the desired state for Protected Matters and sets out commitments to manage potential significant impacts to an acceptable level. It incorporates a robust assurance framework, supported by governance arrangements, monitoring, evaluation, review, reporting and clear communication processes. The implementation of The Plan will provide for the sustainable development of the Submarine Construction Yard and achievement of the Environmental Outcomes.

The Approval Holder will undertake the Actions in accordance with the conditions of a Class of Actions approval and The Plan. This includes the achievement of the Environmental Outcomes detailed in Section 3 and the Assurance Plan that will be submitted for Ministerial approval as outlined in Section 4.

1.3 Other legislative requirements

1.3.1 Overview

South Australian Government and other Commonwealth legislation (see Chapter 4 of The Report) apply to the Actions of The Plan (in addition to the EPBC Act). Approvals, permits and licensing for certain construction and operational activities (that are part of an Action) will be obtained as required by the legislative processes in force at the time of the undertaking of the Action.

As relevant, actions excluded from the scope of the Strategic Assessment (Section 2.5) will be subject to assessment with respect to the legislation in force at the time of assessment. Some of these actions may be referred to the Commonwealth for assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

1.3.2 State processes

State Government conditions of approval for the Submarine Construction Yard will apply to the Actions of the Plan, as well as permit requirements for management of aspects of construction and operational Actions that are State Government regulated activities, such as capital dredging. This means that a specific development application and assessment process will apply for regulated activities, such as actions that involve dredging in Port Adelaide River.

In addition to permits for regulated activities, mandatory enforceable standards under South Australian legislation apply to noise, waste and water.

Compliance with State requirements will involve data collection, monitoring, evaluation and compliance-based reporting. It is recognised that such information will also be able to provide support to understanding the environmental conditions as they relate to certain Environmental Outcomes. To achieve regulatory efficiency, and avoid duplicative processes, known contemporary requirements of State approval conditions, policies, plans, and programs will be incorporated into the Assurance Plan.

1.3.3 Other Commonwealth requirements

Environmental, safety, and security aspects of some of the Actions of The Plan require compliance with permitting, licensing, and approval requirements of Commonwealth Legislation that relates to Naval Nuclear Power. Similarly to the State process, the Assurance Plan will aim to align requirements with licencing requirements where they relate to the Environmental Outcomes.

2. Scope

2.1 Approval Holder

For the purposes of The Plan and a Class of Actions approval, the Approval Holder is the Australian Submarine Agency, except in the case that the Class of Actions approval for the taking of Actions in accordance with this Plan, is transferred to another party with Minister consent.

2.2 Classes of Actions

The scope of The Plan includes all activities associated with the construction and operation of the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard. Specific activities assessed and relevant to the scope of The Plan are detailed at Chapter 3 of the Report. The Classes of Actions for the strategic assessment are the construction of the Submarine Construction Yard, and the operation of the Submarine Construction Yard.

2.3 The Strategic Assessment Area

The Strategic Assessment Area is defined by two extents:

Strategic Assessment Area Extent 1: Extent 1 boundary is represented by Figure 1 and is located in Osborne, South Australia, and includes a terrestrial (onshore) area on the northern end of the Lefevre Peninsula, and a marine area within the Port Adelaide River.

Strategic Assessment Area Extent 2: Extent 2 is represented by Figure 2 that shows the extent of areas where placement of dredged material may occur within Gulf St Vincent, South Australia for material dredged from within Extent 1. This includes the boundary for dredge material placement areas and dredge material vessel routes. Section 3.2.4 of the Report provides detail on the selection of dredge material placement areas.

2.4 The timeframe of The Plan

The Plan will remain in effect for the duration of any EPBC Act Class of Actions approval pertaining to the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard, for so long as such an approval remains valid.

2.5 Exclusions

Actions that are not considered within the scope of the strategic assessment include:

- Actions within the Strategic Assessment Area that have existing approval under the EPBC Act, at the time of a Class of Actions approval pertaining to the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard. For the purpose of The Plan, an approval includes a decision made under section 75 or section 133 of the EPBC Act.
- Actions that relate to the manufacture, delivery and subsequent operation of the reactor power module (not including assembly into the submarine).
- The disposal pathway for all radioactive waste generated by Australia's nuclear powered submarine program.
- The areas and activities within 'Existing Naval Shipyard Buildings – 6 ha' in Figure 1. These activities include:
 - Alterations and additions to the Existing Naval Shipyard Buildings
 - Industrial buildings to manufacture componentry, and
 - Any related ancillary development.



Figure 1 Extent 1 of Strategic Assessment

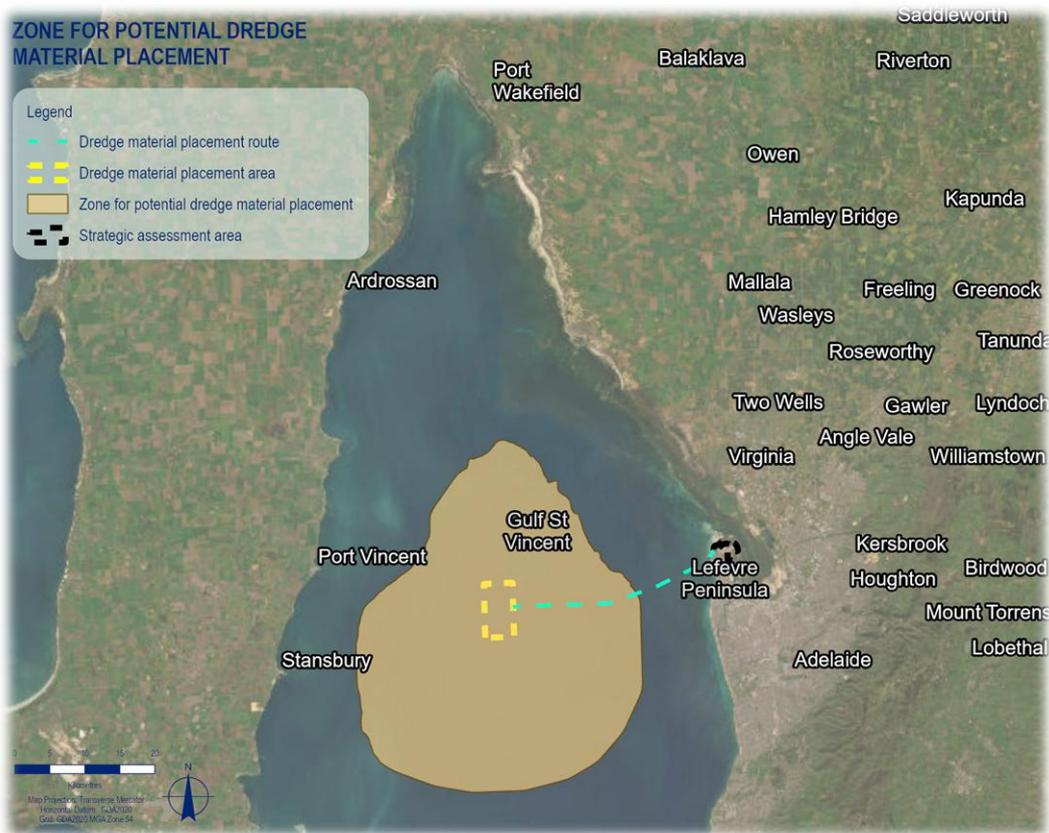


Figure 2 Extent 2 of Strategic Assessment

2.6 Relevant Controlling Provisions

The assessment of likely significant impacts on matters of national environmental significance in the Report identified that activities would be likely to have a significant impact upon the following controlling provisions:

- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A).
- Listed migratory species (sections 20 and 20A).
- Commonwealth Actions (section 28).

2.7 Protected Matters relevant to Environmental Outcomes

The listed threatened species, listed migratory species and parts of the environment that have been identified as likely to be significantly impacted as a result of undertaking the Actions within the scope of The Plan in the absence of mitigation measures are listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Protected Matters relevant to Environmental Outcomes

| Controlling Provision | Species group / aspect of environment | Common name / aspect of environment | Species name |
|---|---|--|--|
| Listed threatened species and ecological communities | Marine mammal | Southern right whale (endangered) | <i>Eubalaena australis</i> |
| | Bird | Australian fairy tern (vulnerable) | <i>Sternula nereis nereis</i> |
| | Bird | Eastern hooded plover (vulnerable) | <i>Thinornis cucullatus cucullatus</i> |
| Listed Migratory Species | Marine mammal | Southern right whale | <i>Eubalaena australis</i> |
| Protection of the environment from Commonwealth Actions | Plants | Seagrass meadows | Various species |
| | Animals | Dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary | Various species |
| | | Animals within the family Syngnathidae | Various species |
| | Landscapes and soils | Hydrological and geomorphological changes | - |
| | Coastal landscapes and processes | Hydrological and geomorphological changes | - |
| | Ocean forms, ocean processes and ocean life | Southern right whale | <i>Eubalaena australis</i> |
| | | Seagrass meadows | Various species |
| | | Dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary | Various species |
| | | Animals within the family Syngnathidae | Various species |
| | Pollutants, chemicals and toxic substances | Water quality | - |
| People and communities | Traffic, open space, biosecurity risks. | - | |

3. Strategic Assessment Outcomes

3.1 Avoiding and mitigating impacts

3.1.1 Mitigation hierarchy

The mitigation hierarchy is a framework that aims to reduce the scale and intensity of the potential significant impacts of an action on matters protected under the EPBC Act to an acceptable level. The hierarchy sequence from highest to lowest preference is:

- Avoid – identify ways to prevent impacts.
- Minimise – measures that will reduce potential for an impact to occur.
- Offset – compensatory measures for actions that have a residual significant impact on matters of National Environmental Significance.

The mitigation hierarchy will be applied to address potential impacts from the Actions undertaken in accordance with The Plan, with the objective to successfully achieve the Environmental Outcomes detailed at Section 3. The identification and implementation of avoidance and mitigation measures will be guided by the regulatory frameworks established under the South Australian government approval conditions, incorporating required approvals, permits, licences, and the application of relevant State and Commonwealth policies and standards, including that Actions have regard to Conservation Advices and are not inconsistent with EPBC Act approved Recovery Plans and Threat Abatement Plans.

Offsets are only required where adverse impacts on protected matters cannot be adequately avoided or mitigated. Based on the assessment of potential significant impacts in the Report, the application of appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, together with the achievement of the Environmental Outcomes, will sufficiently mitigate the identified environmental risks. Therefore, environmental offsets are not required.

3.1.2 Evaluating effectiveness of mitigation measures

Establishment of reference conditions and guideline values

For the Environmental Outcomes of The Plan, reference conditions (a 'baseline') or thresholds and guideline values appropriate to the Protected Matter and desired state will be documented in an Assurance Plan, as required by section 4.1 of this Plan, as the basis to measure and evaluate change and the contribution of the Actions of The Plan to such change, and demonstrate achievement of the Environmental Outcomes

Ongoing review of relevant parameters

Assurance activities will be conducted with respect to each Environmental Outcome, as included in the Assurance Plan, to understand the effectiveness of mitigation measures. As outlined in the Assurance Framework, such activities will include monitoring of water quality parameters that relate to impact pathways, testing of soil and sediments as required by guidelines, and post dredge monitoring and documentation of the extent of seagrass meadows.

Evidence-informed adaptive response

Where scientifically robust trends in data suggest that existing mitigation measures are not performing as proficiently as anticipated, the Approval Holder will commit to adapting mitigation measures, or alternate or additional measures employed as relevant (including improved or new approaches) in the Assurance Plan.

3.2 Environmental Outcomes

The Environmental Outcomes for The Plan are included in Table 3.1. Each of the Environmental Outcomes responds to the potential for impact to a specific Protected Matter and communicates the objective for the end state that is sought to be achieved over the life of the Class of Actions approval.

As relevant to the Actions, the application of the mitigation hierarchy will be used as the basis to identify measures that will be implemented to avoid or minimise impacts and support the achievement of the Environmental Outcomes.

Superscript numbers against bolded words or phrases in Table 3.1 are defined or clarified in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1 Environmental Outcomes of The Plan

| All Actions undertaken in accordance with this endorsed Plan must achieve the following Environmental Outcomes for the life of a Class of Actions approval: | |
|---|---|
| Outcome 1 | The protection and long-term conservation of southern right whales ⁽¹⁾ within Gulf St Vincent ⁽²⁾ is supported by ensuring vessel activities ⁽³⁾ are managed to prevent injury or mortality of southern right whales ⁽¹⁾ . |
| Outcome 2 | The breeding and nesting ⁽⁴⁾ of the Australian fairy tern ⁽⁵⁾ and eastern hooded plover ⁽⁶⁾ are not impacted by noise generated by dredging ⁽⁷⁾ . |
| Outcome 3 | Outside of the dredge footprint ⁽⁸⁾ , the long-term ⁽⁹⁾ extent of seagrass meadows ⁽¹⁰⁾ within Port Adelaide River ⁽¹¹⁾ and Gulf St Vincent ⁽²⁾ is maintained or improved by managing dredging ⁽⁷⁾ . |
| Outcome 4 | Water quality ⁽¹²⁾ within Port Adelaide River ⁽¹¹⁾ and Gulf St Vincent ⁽²⁾ is protected by preventing or minimising the release or mobilisation of pollutants, chemicals, and toxic substances into the marine environment, in accordance with regulatory guidelines ⁽¹³⁾ . |
| Outcome 5 | The persistence of the dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary ⁽¹⁴⁾ and Syngnathids within Port Adelaide River ⁽¹¹⁾ and Gulf St Vincent ⁽²⁾ is ensured by managing impacts to water quality ⁽¹²⁾ from dredging ⁽⁷⁾ , in accordance with regulatory guidelines ⁽¹³⁾ . |
| Outcome 6 | The protection and long-term conservation of the dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary ⁽¹⁴⁾ is supported by ensuring dredging ⁽⁷⁾ , marine piling ⁽¹⁵⁾ , and vessel activities ⁽³⁾ are managed to prevent injury or mortality of individuals of the dolphin population ⁽¹⁶⁾ . |
| Outcome 7 | Hydrological and geomorphological changes to Port Adelaide River ⁽¹¹⁾ resulting from changes to the riverbank will be avoided or minimised. |
| Outcome 8 | The introduction or spread of biosecurity risks ⁽¹⁷⁾ is prevented by managing dredging ⁽⁷⁾ in accordance with regulatory guidelines ⁽¹³⁾ . |
| Outcome 9 | Impacts to people and communities ⁽¹⁸⁾ will be minimised, as far as reasonably possible, to manage traffic, and access to local amenities ⁽¹⁹⁾ . |

Table 3.2 Terminology definitions for the Environmental Outcomes

| # | Term | Definition |
|------|-----------------------|---|
| (1) | Southern right whales | <i>Eubalaena australis</i> – eastern population of the species, individuals or groups of which occur on an occasional basis within Gulf St Vincent. |
| (2) | Gulf St Vincent | The body of water that adjoins Port Adelaide River at its western extent. The regions of Gulf St Vincent relevant to The Plan are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Areas to be traversed by vessels associated with dredging. – Areas approved for dredge material placement. – Areas in which modelling of a predicted dredge plume extends beyond Port Adelaide River into Gulf St Vincent. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas within the extent hydrodynamic modelling of a dredge plume for a dredge footprint is predicted to be in a Zone of High Impact or Zone of Low to Moderate Impact. • Within the extent of impact in the immediate area of the dredge footprint identified from surveys conducted following a dredge campaign. This area is broadly in the eastern extent of Gulf St Vincent between Port Adelaide River and areas approved for dredge placement. |
| (3) | Vessel activities | Navigation or transit of a ship, boat, or watercraft which are undertaking Actions under the Plan. For dredging, vessel activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Positioning and relocation of vessels within a work area. – Transit of vessels between dredge or pile locations within the work area. – Support vessel movement, such as barges, tugs or supply boats. |
| (4) | Breeding and nesting | Behaviours or activities that relate to reproduction of the Australian fairy tern ⁽⁵⁾ and eastern hooded plover ⁽⁶⁾ including courting, mating, nest building, egg laying, incubating eggs, chick rearing, chicks foraging, and chicks fledging. |
| (5) | Australian fairy tern | <i>Sternula nereis nereis</i> |
| (6) | Eastern hooded plover | <i>Thinornis cucullatus cucullatus</i> |
| (7) | Dredging | Removing solid matter from the bed of any marine waters or inland waters by any digging or suction apparatus. |
| (8) | Dredge footprint | The extent of an area to be dredged. |
| (9) | Long-term | A period of time that extends beyond the duration of The Plan. |
| (10) | Seagrass meadow | A vegetation community of underwater flowering plants on the river bed or ocean floor that is comprised of one or more different seagrass species. |
| (11) | Port Adelaide River | The areas of Port Adelaide River that relate to dredging Actions within the Strategic Assessment Area. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Areas within the extent hydrodynamic modelling of a dredge plume for a dredge footprint is predicted to be in a Zone of High Impact or Zone of Low to Moderate Impact. – Within the extent of impact in the immediate area of the dredge footprint identified from surveys conducted following a dredge campaign. Based upon previous modelling, this area is likely to broadly include the dredge footprint within the Strategic Area, as well as upstream and downstream areas of Port Adelaide River to approximately 3 km from the dredge footprint. |
| (12) | Water quality | The physical, chemical and biological characteristics of water and the measure of its condition relative to default or established guideline values. |

| # | Term | Definition |
|------|--|--|
| (13) | Regulatory guidelines | Requirements that arise from legislation and regulations of the South Australian State Government, the Australian Commonwealth Government or other relevant authority enabled via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Approval, permit, or licence conditions. – Statutory instruments, including South Australian Environmental Protection Policies. – Mandatory enforceable standards under South Australian legislation. – Codes of practice, guidelines and technical specifications as referenced in legislation or policy. |
| (14) | The dolphin population of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary | The Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary is the area defined in Schedule 1 of the <i>Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005 (SA)</i> . This includes the Port Adelaide River estuary and Barker Inlet, including waters, rivers, creeks, inlets and drains to medium high water mark, and land areas as defined. The objective of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary is to protect the dolphin population of the Port Adelaide River estuary and Barker Inlet and the natural habitat of that population. The dolphin population includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resident Indian-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins (<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>). – Indian-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>), Common Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>), and Short-beaked Common Dolphin (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>) that occupy the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary on a transient basis. |
| (15) | Marine piling | The process of installing structural elements into the riverbed or seabed. |
| (16) | Dolphin population | Refer to (14). |
| (17) | Biosecurity risks | Pests, diseases and other biosecurity matters prescribed by South Australian State regulations. Such risks may cause a threat to terrestrial and aquatic environments and may adversely affect public amenities, community activities and infrastructure. |
| (18) | People and communities | Residents and people that live, work, or access local amenities within the northern Lefevre Peninsula. |
| (19) | Local amenities | Facilities and services available that contribute to community life and enhance convenience, comfort, and quality of living. |

4. Assurance Plan requirements

4.1 Commitment to prepare an Assurance Plan

To implement, measure, report and review the effectiveness of The Plan, the Approval Holder will prepare and submit an Assurance Plan for approval by the Minister for the Environment. The Assurance Plan will incorporate the requirements described throughout section 4 of The Plan, as well as requirements of relevant conditions attached to a Class of Actions approval.

Assurance activities in the Assurance Plan will provide a means to check the effectiveness of management processes and revise and improve where the need is identified.

For regulatory efficiency, assurance requirements will be aligned, as far as possible, with monitoring and reporting obligations for other regulatory approvals to minimise duplication for shared environmental objectives and avoid conflicting requirements.

The Assurance Plan will:

- Outline the program of works that will be undertaken within the relevant version of the Assurance Plan. This will include:
 - Actions that will be undertaken within each phase of the program of works.
 - Timing and location of the program of works.
 - The Environmental Outcomes that are relevant to each phase of the program of works (as per information contained in The Report).
 - Assurance activities that are required prior to each phase of the program of works commencing that will effectively monitor or evaluate with respect to the relevant Environmental Outcomes.
- Specify the reporting, review, monitoring, and verification processes that will be undertaken.
- Identify the responsible parties for implementing the assurance requirements, commitments in The Plan and obligations of a Class of Actions approval.
- Set out how compliance with The Plan, a Class of Actions approval and any relevant policies will be demonstrated.
- Track the implementation of The Plan against its commitments and Environmental Outcomes.
- Outline how risks will be monitored, evaluated, reported and managed through assurance processes.

The Assurance Plan will be prepared and submitted within three (3) months of Strategic Assessment approval being granted.

4.2 Commitment to monitor, evaluate, review and report

The 'monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and improvement' (MERI) approach will provide for the Approval Holder to adaptively manage and proactively respond where there is the opportunity to avoid or minimise potential impacts, and / or improve the potential for an Environmental Outcome or Environmental Outcomes of The Plan to be achieved.

The Assurance Plan will include, as relevant:

- Details of management plans or measures implemented to achieve Environmental Outcomes.
- Reference conditions from which to monitor and evaluate change against for relevant Environmental Outcomes of the Plan (see Section 3). This may include establishment of guideline values, baseline conditions, or best practice measures, as relevant, and establishment of a periodic monitoring regime to assess the aspect measured. These are to be established prior to a relevant Action commencing.

The Approval Holder will undertake an internal evaluation of each Environmental Outcome of the Plan for relevant Actions on a periodic basis against an established reference condition, as detailed in the Assurance Plan. This evaluation will:

- Review aspects such as monitoring or documented observations of change.
- Review and document the relative importance of exceedances of guideline values, or adverse trends.
- Identify if further investigation or modification to a monitoring or management approach, or other intervention is warranted.
- Inform reporting (Section 4.4).

4.3 Assurance Plan review and revision

The Assurance Plan will be reviewed and revised as follows:

- On a six-yearly basis in line with the recommendations of six-yearly independent audit reports, in accordance with section 4.4.2 of this Plan.
- Where reference conditions need to be updated so that the achievement of Environmental Outcomes is appropriately measured and monitored prior to each phase of the program of works commencing, in accordance section 4.2.

The Assurance Plan will be revised and submitted to the Minister for the Environment for approval. Revised versions of the Assurance Plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved Assurance Plan.

The Approval Holder may choose to make administrative revisions to an approved Assurance Plan required to be implemented in accordance with this Plan without submitting it for approval to the Minister, if the revision would be:

- consistent with the endorsed Plan and Class of Actions approval.
- consistent with the conditions attached to the Class of Actions approval.
- would not be likely to have a new or increased impact on a matter of national environmental significance.

The Approval Holder will notify the department in writing that it has prepared a revised version of the approved Assurance Plan, and submit an electronic copy of the revised plan with track changes to show the revisions and the date from which the revised Assurance Plan will be implemented.

Agreed versions of any approved Assurance Plan and subsequently revised Assurance Plan will be published on the Approval Holder's website within 30 days of the date an Assurance Plan is approved or revised.

4.4 Reporting

4.4.1 Biennial Report

The Approval Holder will submit a biennial report to the Environment Department, that is, on a two-yearly basis from the date of a Class of Actions approval. The report will detail:

- Actions that have been undertaken in accordance with The Plan and the progress of those activities.
- A summary of any non-compliances or material environmental incidents and corrective actions.
- Parties that have been verified in accordance with The Plan.
- A summary of revisions to The Plan.

Timing for the submission of the Biennial Report will be included in the Assurance Plan.

An agreed version of each Biennial Report will be published on the Approval Holder's website, as detailed in the Assurance Plan.

4.4.2 Independent audit – six-yearly review reporting

To reflect the frequency of compliance reporting, the Assurance Plan will include a process for an independent audit of The Plan and Assurance Plan on a six-yearly basis. The independent audit will report on:

- The achievement of, or progress towards the achievement of, Environmental Outcomes.
- The effectiveness of the Assurance Plan in administering the commitments of the Plan, including on monitoring and evaluation against Environmental Outcomes.
- The effectiveness of governance arrangements, including the verification process, in achieving compliance with the Plan and any conditions of a Class of Actions approval.
- Any recommendations for the improvement of processes reported on through the independent audit.

An agreed version of each independent audit will be published on the Approval Holder's website, as detailed in the Assurance Plan.

Further detail on the parameters for the conduct of this independent audit will be established in the Assurance Plan.

4.4.3 Corrective actions resulting from audits

The process and timing for corrective actions, including revisions to the Assurance Plan, to respond to the findings of an independent audit as agreed between the Approval Holder and the Environment Department will be defined in the Assurance Plan.

4.4.4 Non-compliance reporting

The Approval Holder will report non-compliance with The Plan, the approved Assurance Plan or conditions of a Class of Actions approval to the Environment Department within a timeframe agreed to in the Assurance Plan.

The Approval Holder will implement corrective actions for non-compliances and submit a non-compliance report to the Environment Department on the incident and corrective action implemented or to be undertaken, within three months of the non-compliance incident occurring.

4.4.5 Material environmental incident reporting

The Approval Holder will report on any material environmental incident, and include details in the Assurance Plan on:

- The definition of a material environmental incident.
- The purpose of reporting a material environmental incident.
- Timing of reporting a material environmental incident to the Environment Department.
- Corrective actions undertaken in response to the incident.

4.5 Governance

4.5.1 Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities of the following parties will be detailed:

- The Approval Holder.
- The Environment Department.
- Verified third-parties operating under a Class of Actions approval in accordance with The Plan.

4.5.2 Engagement and communications

The Approval Holder will provide information in the Assurance Plan on interested stakeholders for the purpose of implementation of the endorsed Plan, including key State government agencies, community reference groups, directly affected stakeholders, and relevant Traditional Owner groups.

The Assurance Plan will commit to undertaking stakeholder engagement and identify engagement and communications planned between the Approval Holder, the Environment Department, third parties and other stakeholders. This will include details of the:

- Purpose.
- Approach.
- Timing / frequency (where known).

A summary of external engagement with respect to Actions of The Plan (for example, with residents and businesses) as set out in a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (or equivalent) will be outlined within the Assurance Plan.

The Approval Holder will also make publicly available, on the Approval Holder's website, the endorsed Plan, Class of Actions approval, and agreed versions of the approved Assurance Plan, including agreed versions of any variations to the Approved Assurance Plan over the life of the approval.

4.5.3 Verification process for administration of the use of the Part 10 approval

The Approval Holder will provide details of the verification process that will be designed to inform persons undertaking an action in accordance with the Plan, of their obligations. This process will be evidenced by the Approval Holder and provided to the Environment Department, as required.

The Approval Holder will take all reasonable steps to make sure that the Actions are undertaken in a manner that complies with The Plan and any conditions of a Class of Actions approval.

The process for verification will be set out in the Assurance Plan and include the following:

- Define the parties that may take an Action under a Class of Actions approval and The Plan for example third parties and contractors.
- Describe how a party will be informed of their obligations under a Class of Actions approval and The Plan, including how they will be informed with respect to revisions to The Plan, Assurance Plan or variations to the conditions of approval.
- Detail the reporting requirements for compliance with The Plan, Assurance Plan, and conditions of approval, including reporting of incidents and non-compliance.
- Define how the Approval Holder will document this evidence of information sharing.

4.5.4 Data management and sharing

The Assurance Plan will outline a process for data management (for example, collection, storage, availability in accessible formats). Sharing of data will be subject to licencing arrangements and other arrangements for handling sensitive and classified information and security classification.

Sharing of data between the State Government, relevant Third Parties, and their contractors will support the Approval Holder to monitor and evaluate progress towards achievement of Environmental Outcomes.

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