

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

The EPBC Act provides for the protection of the environment at a landscape or regional scale. This protection includes mechanisms such as strategic assessments and bioregional planning.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENTS

The EPBC Act provides for strategic assessments as a mechanism for regulating and managing activities impacting on protected matters. Strategic assessments are a landscape scale assessment and unlike project-by-project assessments, which look at individual actions (such as a port or a mine), they can consider a much broader set of issues; for example, a large urban growth area that will be developed over many years or a fire management policy across a broad landscape. Examples of potential strategic assessments include:

- regional-scale development plans and policies;
- large-scale housing development and associated infrastructure;
- fire, vegetation/resource or pest management policies, plans or programs;
- infrastructure plans and policies; and
- industry sector policies.

A plan, policy or programme (Program) document for a strategic assessment must be endorsed and approved by the Minister. The approval of the taking of an 'action' or 'class of actions' in the Program is the legal step that allows the activities to proceed without need for further approval under the Act of individual proposals or developments.

Further information on strategic assessments under the EPBC Act can be found on the [Department's website](#).

FISHERIES STRATEGIC ASSESSMENTS

The Act specifically requires that management arrangements for fisheries managed by the Australian Government undergo a strategic assessment. Actions done in accordance with a strategic assessment do not require further approval for significant impacts on protected matters under the Act.

Strategic assessments of Commonwealth managed fisheries are undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries (2nd edition)*. These strategic assessments are directed at driving improvement in fisheries management by identifying necessary environmental protection measures and requiring fisheries management agencies to demonstrate improved environmental performance over time. Further information about Commonwealth managed fisheries are available on the [Department's website](#).

BIOREGIONAL PLANS

Under section 176 of the Act, the Minister may prepare a bioregional plan that is within a Commonwealth area. The Minister may also co-operate with a state or territory to prepare a bioregional plan for a bioregion that is not entirely within a Commonwealth area. The aim of a bioregional plan is to identify key conservation and heritage priorities (including current and emerging pressures) and the appropriate actions to manage biodiversity and other values within that bioregion. Bioregional plans have the capacity to address the cumulative impacts of activities.

Independent review of the **EPBC Act**

The Minister must have regard to a bioregional plan in making any decisions under the Act to which the plan is relevant. The Minister may decide that actions taken in accordance with a bioregional plan will not require a separate approval.

Bioregional plans have been prepared for four of Australia's marine regions where the Commonwealth is the sole jurisdiction in these areas. These plans can be found on the [Department's website](#).

The review 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.

Contact EPBC Act Review at: GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601 | Telephone 1800 803 772 | Web www.epbcactreview.environment.gov.au