

National Environmental Science Programme – Marine and Coastal Hub

The Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program (NESP) is a long-term commitment to support environmental and climate science research. The key objective of the NESP is to improve our understanding of Australia's environment through practical and applied research that informs decision making and on-ground action that will yield measurable improvements to the environment.

The first phase of NESP funding invested \$145 million over six years from 2015 to 2021 supported six themed research hubs, along with projects to address emerging environmental research needs. The RRRRC managed the NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub (\$31.98 million) which provided innovative research for practical solutions to maintain and improve tropical water quality from catchment to coast along the Great Barrier Reef and other coastal tropical waters.

The second phase of NESP is investing \$149 million from 2021 until 2027 into 4 new research hubs.

On 25 May 2021, the Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) entered into a six-year funding agreement with the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) under which \$23.5 million of funds from the National Environmental Science Program 2 (NESP2) would be provided to RRRRC to establish the Marine and Coastal Hub (NESP MAC Hub) in conjunction with the University of Tasmania as a joint manager for the NESP MAC Hub, although funded separately.

The Marine and Coastal (MAC) Hub's research will inform management of Australia's marine and coastal environments, including estuaries, coast, reefs, shelf and deep-water.

RRRC has entered into the Commonwealth Agreement to provide services related to administration and knowledge brokering and communications of the NESP2 MAC Hub.

The NESP2 MAC Hub will focus on research that supports the management and understanding of Australia's marine and coastal environments.

A key component of the NESP2 MAC Hub is the implementation of research projects designed to deliver outcomes.

The MAC Hub will deliver:

- applied research to support the management of Australia's marine and coastal environments including estuaries, coast, reefs, shelf and deep-water
- targeted biodiversity and taxonomy products to support efficient system monitoring
- environmental monitoring systems and decision-support tools.
- The hub will also drive coordinated research across all 4 new hubs under NESP's 'protected place management' cross-cutting mission. This research will support the management of Australia's protected places and heritage, including the national park estate and Ramsar sites in both marine and terrestrial environments.

The Hubs connect scientists, policymakers, industry, Indigenous people and communities.