



National Environmental  
Research Program

**MARINE BIODIVERSITY** *hub*

## Providing a marine context for offsets and social values

Offsets are defined as measures that compensate for the residual impacts of an action on the environment. The

Environmental Offsets Policy outlines when and how offsets may be used under the EPBC Act 1999. Experience with offsets in the marine environment is relatively undeveloped and their design and implementation in this context poses particular challenges.

This NERP Marine Biodiversity Hub project addresses the practical issue of how both the policy and calculator can be used in the marine environment.

A key component of the project involves researchers and SEWPaC personnel working together to trial marine offsetting. This process will include an evaluation of the extent to which alternative forms of offset and institutional arrangements for their management have 'social licence'.

The working groups will focus on two case studies: seagrass and migratory seabirds, and will deliver recommendations of direct operational and policy relevance. The collaborative case study approach will enable effective and speedy uptake of findings and foster two-way learning between researchers and managers.



Seagrass and migratory seabirds will be the focus of working groups set up by the Marine Biodiversity Hub to trial marine offsetting (Image: CSIRO).



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The NERP Marine Biodiversity Hub is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Environmental Research Program, administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC). Our goal is to support marine stakeholders in evidence-based decision making for marine biodiversity management. Stakeholders include DSEWPaC, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA) and the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS). (February 2013)