



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Commonwealth Ocean Declaration Adopted

Commonwealth countries adopted the Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration for One Resilient Common Future at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa in October.

The declaration calls on all 56 Commonwealth nations to protect and restore the ocean in the face of severe climate change, pollution and impacts related to over-exploitation, stated a CHOGM media release.

“The declaration paves the way for robust, ambitious, innovative and transformative action for a ‘Common Wealth’ of shared ocean prosperity, resilience and sustainability that builds on national and collective efforts to protect the ocean and use it sustainably,” it stated.

Key aspects of the declaration include:

- recognition of national maritime boundaries in the face of sea-level rise
- protection of at least 30% of the ocean and restoring at least 30% of degraded marine ecosystems by 2030
- urgent finalisation of the Global Plastics Treaty
- ratification of the high-seas biodiversity Agreement on Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (known as the BBNJ Agreement)
- development and implementation of coastal climate adaption plans and strategies, including vulnerability assessments and nature-based solutions, such as blue carbon
- stepped-up support for a sustainable blue economy with sustainable ocean plans, recognising the need for 100% management of national waters
- reduction of emissions from global maritime shipping
- enhanced marine renewable energy targets to meet the global climate goal of tripling renewable energy capacity, agreed as part of the UNFCCC Global Stocktake in Dubai last year



New Zealand's Science Media Centre invited comment on the declaration's adoption from a handful of experts.

Further information on the declaration can also be sourced here.

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