



Commonwealth Fact Sheet



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (SEA DUMPING) ACT 1981

If your project involves the disposal of wastes or other matter into Australian waters, or from an Australian vessel in any part of the sea, or the creation of an artificial reef, you must obtain a permit in accordance with this Act.

1. What approvals do I need?

The *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* regulates the disposal of wastes at sea, and the creation of artificial reefs. The Act applies to all vessels, aircraft and platforms in Australian waters, and to all Australian vessels and aircraft in any part of the sea.

The disposal of waste and other matter at sea is prohibited, except for some controlled materials which require a permit. Permits are most commonly issued for:

- the disposal of dredge material
- the creation of artificial reefs
- the dumping of vessels, platforms or other man-made structures
- burials at sea.

The Act does not apply to operational discharges from ships, such as sewage and galley scraps. These are regulated under legislation administered by the [Australian Maritime Safety Authority](#).

If you are proposing to take an action that could have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, or other protected matter such as the Commonwealth marine environment, you will need to refer your proposed action to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

2. Who provides approvals?

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment administers the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981*.

The Act applies to Australian waters, which includes all water within Australia's exclusive economic zone and above the continental shelf. Activity within coastal waters (3 nautical miles) may also be regulated by the relevant State or Territory government and additional approvals may be required.

3. How do I get Commonwealth approval?

Guidelines and application forms are available on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [website](#).

4. More information

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For more information about sea dumping, visit the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [website](#).

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

If you would like assistance to identify the regulatory obligations for your project, please visit our [Online Tool](#) or contact us:

Phone: 02 6243 7121

Email: contact@mpaa.gov.au