

Names and Limits of Oceans and Seas around Australia

This document sets out Australia's official interpretation of the names and limits of oceans and seas within Australia's area of charting responsibility. It supersedes the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) publication **S-23: Names and Limits of Oceans and Seas**, 3rd Edition (1953), for that area.

Australia's area of charting responsibility includes the oceans and seas adjacent to the Australian mainland, its external territories, and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

The names and limits defined in this document were endorsed by the Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping (ICSM) under Resolution R00/11/06, Limits of Oceans and Seas and Offshore Undersea Features (May 2001).

These names and limits are applied in the compilation of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs), Paper Nautical Charts (PNCs), and nautical publications. They are intended for hydrographic and cartographic purposes only and do not imply any legal or political position.

The IHO publication S-23 serves as a technical reference for national Hydrographic Offices in the production of navigational charts and related publications. However, the current published edition (3rd Edition, 1953) no longer reflects contemporary usage in many regions. Although a 4th Edition has been drafted, publication has been delayed due to unresolved international disagreements regarding the naming of certain sea areas outside Australia's region of interest.

As part of the IHO's transition to the S-100 Universal Hydrographic Data Model, the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) was tasked with developing an S-100-compliant successor to S-23.

At its 4th Plenary Session in 2026, the IHO Assembly:

- approved **S-130 Polygonal Demarcations of Global Sea Areas** as the principal global IHO dataset and authoritative reference for the demarcation of sea areas, maintained by the IHO Secretariat; and
- reaffirmed that the limits represented in the S-130 Global IHO Dataset are solely technical in nature, carry no political significance, and are intended as recommendations only.

The IHO's long-term intention is for **S-130 Polygonal Demarcations of Global Sea Areas** to supersede **S-23: Names and Limits of Oceans and Seas** as the authoritative technical reference for sea-area demarcations.

During the transition period, the two products are expected to remain aligned to the greatest extent practicable. As of the date of this publication, the IHO has not announced a date for the withdrawal or retirement of S-23.

