

## South-east Marine Parks Advisory Committee

### Meeting #4 Communique

#### 5 and 18 November 2020

#### Committee Meeting Overview

The fourth meeting of the South-east Marine Parks Advisory Committee (SEMPAC) was held via videoconference across two sessions on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

The Chair provided an Acknowledgment of Country, paying respect to the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held.

Key agenda items included:

- The South-east Network Management Report
- The South-east Network Implementation Report (years 5 – 8)
- Presentations on research outcomes
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework – South-east pilot update.

#### South-east Network Management Report

An update was provided on activities since May 2020. Highlights included:

##### Science

- Parks Australia continues to develop its Australian Marine Park Science Strategy to prioritise and encourage research and monitoring of park values, benefits and pressures. The strategy will support engagement with scientific partners, science communication and knowledge for managers.

#### Member attendance

Hilary Schofield (Chair)  
Emma Woodcock  
Johnathon Davey (Session 2)  
Marg O’Toole  
Michael Burgess (Session 1)  
Shannon Hurley (Session 1)  
Tony Koslow  
Neville Barrett  
John Sansom

#### Observers

Parks Victoria  
Tasmania Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

- The RV Investigator completed mapping of the Huon Marine Park in November 2020.
- The Seamounts Corals Survey voyage final report and presentation were completed by CSIRO in July 2020.

#### Communications, Education and Awareness

- Parks Australia worked with the Victorian National Parks Association to publish an article describing the South-east Marine Park Network and the role of the SEMPAC in their quarterly newsletter.
- A summary of the Seamounts Coral Survey final report was published in the Australian Marine Park science atlas.
- The South-east Marine Park Network brochure has been published online and is also available in hard copy.

## **Parks Protection and Management**

Parks Australia has continued to build incident response capability via scenario-based workshops focussing on park values, situational awareness and providing advice internally to external operational agencies during potential incidents.

## **Tourism and Visitor Experience**

A Marine Tourism in Australian Marine Parks Webinar was held to examine emerging changes in Australia's visitor economy due to COVID-19 impacts. This will inform the completion of a Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Experience Strategy.

## **South-east Implementation Reporting Year 8 update**

The draft South-east Marine Park Network Implementation Report for years 5-8 was provided to the Committee for review.

The Committee discussed Parks Australia's self-assessment on progress to date. Members found it a useful opportunity to step back and reflect on what had been achieved over the life of the Management Plan. Members noted that important foundational work was well progressed, particularly in the areas of incident management and the Marine Science program.

## **A Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) system for Australian Marine Parks**

The development of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) system has produced a list of monitoring priorities for the South-east network which is representative of ecosystem and marine park zones.

The MERI system will provide an indication of the overall health of values in the parks, the benefits they provide and the effectiveness of our management. The system will include indicators that help to measure success and identify opportunities to improve management actions. Monitoring will be prioritised to address the most pressing management issues and questions. A list of monitoring priorities was presented to the Committee for comment.

## **Seismic Testing**

The Committee discussed potential impacts and cumulatively effects of seismic testing on fisheries and the marine environment generally. The Committee highlighted testing planned in the Zeehan Marine Park and noted a strong interest in understanding this pressure.

## **Next Meeting**

The next Committee meeting will be held in Hobart in May 2021.

For more information about the South-east Marine Parks Network or the Committee:

Visit [parksaustralia.gov.au/South-east](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/South-east)

Email [marineparks@environment.gov.au](mailto:marineparks@environment.gov.au)