

Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee

Meeting #13 Communiqué

12 November 2025, Microsoft Teams

Committee Meeting Overview

The Coral Sea Marine Park (CSMP) Advisory Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 12 November 2024. The Chair opened the meeting and provided an Acknowledgment of Country.

Key agenda items included an update on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) risk and monitoring activities, and the review of the 2018 [Coral Sea Marine Park Management Plan](#).

Updates on issues, relevant information and research were provided by Members. Observers from Fisheries Queensland, Torres Strait Regional Authority and managers of the Coral Sea Natural Park, New Caledonia also provided updates.

National update with Executive

Shaun Barclay, Head of the Marine and Island Parks Branch, provided an update on the new management plans for the South-East Network and Indian Ocean Territories.

He also discussed the Management Plan reviews for the marine park networks and Coral Sea in relation to the 30 by 30 targets and that there is ministerial commitment to 30% highly protected waters by 2030.

He noted that there is a new national First Nations Reference group with expansion to include Coral Sea perspectives.

Member attendance

Russell Gueho (Chair), Clive Wilkinson, Fiona Maxwell, Samantha Tol, Maxine Newlands, Doug Sanderson

Staff

Martin Russell, Fiona Hagger, Roberta Johnson, Tammy Hunter, Shaun Barclay, Tristan Verhoeff

Guest Presenters

Bianca Priest (DCCEEW), Wilmie Schoots (DCCEEW), Mel Varty (DCCEEW), Isabella Frances (ORIMA Research), Penny Moylan (ORIMA Research)

Observers

Warren Egling (Fisheries Qld), Imogen Zethoven (Blue Ocean Advocacy), Renae Baker (The Bureau), Alice Graham (AMSA), Daniel Beard (TSRA), Maële Brisset (SPNMCP), Carly Greig (DETSI), Cr. Bob Kaigey (TSIRC)

Apology

Hoey, Gareth Phillips, Craig Stephen, Robert Pender, Billie Roberts (Observer - TSRA), Fred Nucifora (Observer - GBRMPA), John Kung (Observer - Queensland Fisheries), Daniel Atkins (Observer - AMSA), Daniel Connolly (Observer - The Bureau)

Australian Marine Parks Review Update

Members were given a presentation from the Branch's Marine Planning Section on the current review process for the management plans, including the contracting of an independent evaluator, and statutory public consultation of the proposal to prepare new plans and of the draft management plans. The review will

include a zoning analysis and involve stakeholder engagement, which includes with members of the advisory committee.

The independent evaluators from ORIMA Research presented on their planned process which included establishing an agreed evaluation framework, conducting a comprehensive desktop review and facilitating approximately 60 interviews and 9 workshops. They emphasised the inclusion of First Nations perspectives and indicated that members and observers would be contacted as key stakeholders during the evaluation.

Observer Reports

- The **Coral Sea Natural Park, New Caledonia** presented on upcoming scientific projects including a Megafauna scientific project and an Ecological restoration project for Walpole Island
- **Fisheries Queensland** discussed the developmental trawl fishery in the Coral Sea. This permit ceases in December 2025 and any request to renew the permit will be open for public comment
- **Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)** discussed Crown of Thorns control underway in the Torres Strait and their annual monitoring of green sea turtles in Ramble Bay. TSRA are also conducting seabird monitoring and invasive pest management.
- **Blue Ocean Advocacy** will soon be releasing a written report about the AFMA managed Coral Sea Fishery that makes several recommendations.

Management Report

- **Authorisations** - 19 permits issued since October 2024 (research, commercial tourism, drone use, and structures/works).
- **Compliance** – there were 5 compliance issues reported between

September 2024 and September 2025.

- **Science & Monitoring** - JCU & CSIRO are examining the role of ocean circulation in supporting reef resilience, in larval dispersal and ecosystem connectivity. The RV Investigator undertook a voyage in October and November surveying deep-sea habitats and assessing fish and seabed biodiversity. Preliminary reports for the voyage are expected in mid-2026.
- **Parks Protection and Management** - Ecological restoration projects are underway on South Islet and Bird Islet aimed at removing invasive weeds that threatened seabird habitat.
- **Visitor Experience** - The Island Access Guideline has been updated and a flyer produced to be released shortly.
- **Grants** – There are four ongoing Parks grants. There are with James Cook University, and one is with the Cairns Aquarium and Reef Research Centre Pty Ltd.
- **HPAI** – Sampling for HPAI was conducted in June and October in the CSMP. AeroGlobe is conducting flyover and AI surveillance of birds in the Park.

Next Meeting

The members were advised that the next Committee meeting is planned for April 2026.

For more information about the Coral Sea Marine Park or the Committee:

Visit:

parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/parks/coral-sea

Email: marineparks@dcceew.gov.au