

South-east Marine Parks Advisory Committee

Meeting # 14 Communiqué

05 May 2026

Committee Meeting Overview

The 14th meeting of the South-east Marine Parks Advisory Committee was held via Microsoft Teams video conference on Tuesday 5 May 2026.

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

The Chair welcomed Georgia Bisset as the newest member of the South-east Advisory Committee.

Meeting agenda items placed a strong emphasis on First Nations engagement and work in the south-east, alongside several presentations on the progress and outcomes of Our Marine Parks Grants program.

National context and welcome from the AMP Executive

Shaun Barclay provided an update on Australian Marine Park management. Highlights included:

- An overview of the review process for management plans outside the South-east Network.
- The completion of South-east Fishing Business Assistance Program.
- The passing of the High Seas Biodiversity Bill, enabling ratification of the UN High Seas Treaty.
- An expanded Ghost Nets and Marine Debris Initiative across northern Australia.

Member attendance

Russell Gueho (Chair)
Neville Barrett
Shannon Hurley
Tony Koslow
Marg O'Toole
Melanie Mackenzie
Jane Gallichan
Georgia Bisset
John Whittington

Observers

Department of Natural Resources and the Environment Tasmania – Fisheries and Enforcement
Parks Victoria
Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority
Tas Police

Parks Australia Science Prospectus

Nick Macgregor provided an update on the Parks Australia Science Prospectus.

Parks Australia's Science Strategy and Partnership Framework have been finalised, with a new Science Prospectus outlining 12 priority challenges across five key themes to guide future work.

The Prospectus, developed from prior strategy work, will be published in the coming months to inform science priorities from the next financial year, with a strong emphasis on collaboration and partnerships.

Working on Sea Country

The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation provided an overview of their work.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation's Sea Country team is building capacity to manage Sea Country, including training Sea Guardians and developing skills, partnerships, and a community-led Sea Country Plan.

The corporation is actively involved in research, policy advice, and consultation on pressures such as offshore energy and marine activities.

Key challenges include limited short-term funding while future priorities focus on expanding research and strengthening long-term capability and monitoring.

Understanding habitat use of the culturally significant *yula*

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre provided an update on their OMPG 4 project.

The project is improving understanding of *yula* foraging in Marine Parks while building Palawa research capacity and supporting community-led care. It is delivered in partnership with UTAS and the Tasmanian Government, with links to a proposed IPA and the development of a Sea Country Plan.

Community involvement, especially from young people, is strengthening cultural knowledge and connection. Early tracking shows mostly local foraging with some long-distance trips, with next steps focused on analysis, workshops, reporting, and further communication outputs.

Explore Sea Country

Saer Lackey, Department for Education, Children and Young People, provided an overview of the Explore Sea Country Project.

Explore Sea Country is a community-led, curriculum-aligned program that enables students to learn directly from Tasmanian Aboriginal people, linking ongoing cultural practices with classroom learning and on-Country experiences.

The *Here on Sea Country* book, written and illustrated by Palawa people, is a core resource used before, during and after excursions and is the first text rolled out statewide under the Tasmanian literacy strategy, while the program has also funded 20 schools to participate in Sea Country excursions with Aboriginal educators.

The use of the new Macquarie Island MP by seabirds and seals in a changing climate

Jaslyn Allnutt, University of Tasmania, provided an update on their OMPG 4 project.

The second year of data collection is complete, with tracking, dive, and diet data gathered for priority seabird and seal species across multiple sites and seasons.

The project analyses foraging behaviour, diet, and habitat use to identify key ecological areas, with over 200 tracking devices deployed and results showing most foraging occurs within the Marine Park.

Preliminary findings highlight significant multi-species foraging zones, particularly along the northern ridge line, with strong habitat preferences observed across species.

Marine Predators Tasman Fracture

Marry-Anne Lea and Chris Chapman from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies reported on the findings from their OMPG 3 project.

The project used innovative methods and partnerships (including Sea Country Rangers) to improve understanding of biodiversity, environmental values, and species use within the Marine Park.

Findings show the park is highly dynamic, influenced by major currents and rapid warming, with implications for species distribution and foraging behaviour. Combined survey approaches highlight the park as an important foraging and movement corridor for seabirds and marine mammals, with future work focusing on integrating oceanographic and biological data to better understand ecosystem change.

South-east Management Report

The chair provided an overview of the management report. Updates were provided on:

- South-east Marine Park signage upgrades.
- Development of an interactive map at TMAG to enhance interpretation and communication of the South-east Network as part of the *Islands to Ice* exhibition.
- Marine Park managers attendance at the Ocean Lovers Festival.

Next Meeting

The members were advised that at this stage the next Committee meeting is intended to be held in-person on the 9th and 10th November 2026.

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

Visit parksaustralia.gov.au/South-east

Email marineparks@dcceew.gov.au