

## North-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee Meeting #7 Communique 21 July 2022, Perth

### Committee Meeting Overview

The seventh meeting of the North-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee (NWMPAC) was held in person, in Boorloo (Perth), and online via Microsoft Teams (Teams) video conference on Thursday 21 July 2022. Due to sickness and a world-wide Teams outage, on this day, follow up meetings (Meeting 7b & c) with members who were unable to attend were held to capture all committee members input.

Mr Matthew McGuire, attended to welcome the Committee to Whudjuk Nyoongah Boodjah (Whudjuk Country).

Meeting 7 marked a critical inflection point in our North-west Marine Parks 10 year management plan from foundation phase (years 1-4) to consolidation phase (years 4-8); obtaining natural, social and economic baselines to assist in the prioritisation of activities to support management and conservation.

The Committee was briefed on the overall achievements from the first four years' *Foundation Implementation Plan 2018-2022*. A snapshot of selected work undertaken in each of the seven management programs provided the context and background to support members in providing advice and guidance in planning the next four years of management; Consolidation Implementation Plan 2022-2026.

### National highlights for Australian Marine Parks

#### Member attendance (Meeting 7)

Andrew Coleman (Chair)  
Kellie Pendoley  
Jim Stoddart  
Peter Coote (online)  
Tony Evans (online)  
Mat Vanderklift (online)

#### Observers

Brigit Vaughan (DBCA)

#### Member attendance (Meeting 7b)

Sean McNear  
Dean Mathews  
Keld Knudsen  
Michelle Howard

#### Apology

John Harrison (later resigned)  
DPIRD observer

Launched in December 2021, the **Ocean Discovery and Restoration (ODR)** program received \$15 million to enable businesses and the philanthropic community to create projects and partnerships with co-contributions around some of the major challenges in discovering and restoring our marine ecosystems.

Round three of the **Our Marine Parks Grants** program awarded 30 projects, from across the nation, a share in \$8.6 million of funding.

The **Indian Ocean Territories marine parks** around Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands were declared in March 2022. The new marine parks increase

Australia's marine park coverage from 37 to 45 per cent of our waters.

### North-west Marine Parks Foundation Implementation Plan highlights

Management activities and achievements in the North-west Marine Parks Network over the last four years of management, as they relate to each of the seven programs, were shared with the Committee. Key highlights include:

*Communications, Education and Awareness* – Development and implementation of the North-west Communications Plan. Cooperative agreements with Western Australian Government agencies for a range of activities including: the updating and installation of 43 signs along the Ningaloo Coast and updating the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Booklet; Rowley Shoals and Mermaid Reef Marine Park brochure all targeting general public and recreational users. Addition of Australian Marine Parks zoning and rules in the WA Explore Marine Parks App and Rechfishwest App.

*Tourism and Visitor Experience* – Engaged with local tourism operators annually at Ningaloo and the Kimberley Coast to raise awareness of Australian Marine Parks.

*Indigenous engagement* – Developed positive relationships with Indigenous groups and Traditional Owners while improving understanding of Traditional Owner aspirations for Sea Country in the marine parks. Supporting projects delivering on social, cultural and economic benefits to Traditional Owners who have connection to sea country in parks off the Kimberley Coast.

*Marine Science* – Twelve research expeditions were funded, or partially funded, in the North-west Network to significantly improve our understanding of values and pressures of the parks.

*Authorisations* – Established permits and licence portal and associated procedures to support assessment and issue of 99 authorisations in the North-west Network.

*Parks Protection and Management* – Infrastructure, such as moorings at Ashmore

Reef and Mermaid Reef Marine Parks were inspected and maintained annually. Parks Australia staff, lead by the NW team, undertook scenario based incident exercises to test and refresh incident response readiness.

*Compliance* – Increased awareness of our marine parks through targeted programs and industry engagement. In partnership with Australian Border Force, AFMA, WA DPIRD and WA DBCA we implemented a risk-based approach to focus compliance efforts. Activities included aerial and surface surveillance and monitoring.

### Consolidation Implementation Plan Development

The Committee reflected on priorities for the North-west Network for the next four years of management to provide advice and guidance on developing the Consolidation Implementation Plan.

When reflecting on the implementation activities across the seven management programs for Australian Marine Parks, members were asked to consider:

- What existing activities could be retained or improved in the future?
- What are the new types of activities or locations we need to focus on?

Members suggested a number of activities to support Parks Australia in managing marine parks as summarised below:

- enhance information management system and update website for reporting science outputs; authorisations and compliance
- incorporate traditional knowledge in management and increase capacity for Indigenous groups to manage and protect Sea Country
- streamline the online application and approvals process to improve user experience
- research and monitoring priorities inform science undertaken in marine parks
- increase awareness of marine parks and rules among commercial operators and the general public.

- increase understanding of emerging industries, including communications; potential impacts and management approaches.

Members' feedback and advice will contribute towards the development of the Consolidation Implementation Plan.

### Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held early December 2022. For more information about the North-west Marine Parks Network or the Committee:

Visit [parksaustralia.gov.au/north-west](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/north-west)

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

You can also help us protect the North-west Marine Parks Network by reporting any suspicious or illegal activity in Australian Marine Parks to **1800 852 975** or [marine.compliance@awe.gov.au](mailto:marine.compliance@awe.gov.au)