

## North Marine Parks Advisory Committee

### Meeting #4 Communique

#### 2 December 2020 - Videoconference

#### Attendance:

##### Members

Jacqui Doyle (Chair)  
Ricky Archer  
Rachel Baird  
David Ciaravolo  
Carol Conacher  
Jason Fowler  
John Glaister  
Jackie Gould  
Ian Knuckey  
Christine Lamont  
Jade Ritchie  
Peter Cox (apology)  
Robert Fish (apology)  
Robert Pender (apology)

##### Observers

Melinda McClean (apology)  
Jonathan Vea

#### Meeting #4 Focus

A key focus of the meeting was a discussion about the new \$14.8 million program to tackle ghost nets in northern Australia. The program is addressing the threat that abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear has on the marine environment. The Gulf of Carpentaria is a key area of interest, as local currents make it a marine debris 'hot spot'.

Committee members provided valuable input based on their knowledge and expertise about the region and fishing gear, with insights into local ranger groups and the assistance they may be able to provide as the project rolls out in the coming years.

Invited Observer, Jonathan Vea, from the Northern Territory Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security gave an update on relevant activities of the NT Government, including the [Limmen Bight Marine Park Plan of Management](#).

#### About the Committee and Meeting #4

The North Marine Parks Advisory Committee advises the Director of National Parks on the implementation of the [North Marine Parks Network Management Plan](#).

Meeting 4 was held via a videoconference on Wednesday 2 December 2020. The Chair welcomed new members Jade Ritchie and Ricky Archer to the Committee. The resignations of Andrew Maclean and Matt Salmon were noted, along with acknowledgement of the valuable contribution they had made to the Committee.

An update was also provided on progress with management actions in the North Marine Parks Network over the last six months, with highlights listed below.

#### Communication, Education and Awareness Program

A Communications, Education & Awareness Strategy 2020 - 2023 is currently under review. An updated version incorporating feedback from AMPAC members will be circulated at the next AMPAC meeting and published on the Australian Marine Parks website.

## Science

The Committee was updated on research and monitoring projects in the North Marine Parks Network. A highlight included showcasing the mapping that took place in Arafura Marine Park by the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and Geoscience Australia during November 2020. Researchers focused on Money Shoals and Pillar Bank. Fascinating fine scale maps revealed seafloor environments with diverse coral and fish communities.

## Indigenous Engagement

Parks Australia is partnering with scientists at the AIMS to train an Indigenous ranger group in scientific research techniques. The Thamurrurr Rangers are establishing a monitoring program that addresses Traditional Owner concerns about threats and changes to their sea country, while also informing future management of the Joseph Bonaparte Marine Park.

Work continues at a steady pace on a project with the Yirralka, Dhimurru and Marthakal ranger groups to look at cultural values with Traditional Owners for the sea country in Wessel Marine park.

Good progress is being made on the Healthy Country Plan being developed by the Marra people, with the Northern Territory Government and Conservation Managers, including sea country in and around Limmen Bight. While this work is underway, we are focusing on science research projects that will support and inform future collaborations with the Traditional Owners in the Limmen Marine Park.

## Tourism and Visitor Experience

Due to COVID-19 Parks Australia is not currently undertaking any face-to-face engagement with industry bodies or marine tourism operators. In the short-term, engagement with state agencies, commercial operators and regional tourism organisations will focus on planning and developing content to support improved visitor information.

## Authorisations and Assessments

Sixteen authorisations have been issued since July 2018, these include activities involving research and monitoring (10), commercial research (1), structures and works (2); and commercial tourism (3).

## Park Protection and Management

Parks Australia continues to work cooperatively with AFMA on the recovery of ghost nets from Australian Marine Parks under an MoU.

The Marine Parks Branch is building its incident response capability by establishing an incident management team and undertaking training exercises with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Guidance on anchoring in Australian Marine Parks has been developed and published at: [parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/activities/approvals/anchoring](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/activities/approvals/anchoring)

## Compliance

Five compliance incidents occurred in the North Network for the July to September 2020 quarter.

The compliance team have a hotline for reporting illegal activities: 1800 852 975 or [marine.compliance@environment.gov.au](mailto:marine.compliance@environment.gov.au)

## Next meeting

The next Committee meeting is planned to be held in Darwin in May 2021.

For more information about the North Marine Parks Network or the Committee:

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

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