

Credit: Cathy Zwick

Australian Marine Parks Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program

Partnership Call

Working together to sustainably
manage our oceans



Australian Government
Director of National Parks



Australian
Marine Parks



Contact Officer: any queries about this Program should be directed to Parks Australia, email ODR.partnerships@environment.gov.au

Please see the Partnering Guide, available at parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/ODRpartnerships for more details about submitting a Detailed Proposal in relation to the Australian Marine Parks Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program.

Important note: This Program will remain open until one of the following occurs:

- all available funding has been committed; or
- the DNP considers that the Program Outcomes have been met; or
- the Program is no longer required.

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Date	Description
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1 Introduction

The Director of National Parks (DNP) invites organisations that are interested in helping to sustainably manage Australia's oceans through practical actions that support oceans health, wealth, equity and knowledge to partner with us.

This 'Partnership Call' provides you with an opportunity to partner with the DNP on ocean discovery and restoration projects in our Australian Marine Parks, one of the world's largest and most sophisticated networks of marine protection. You have the opportunity to help protect some of the earth's most unique and wild island and ocean environments so they endure for generations to come.

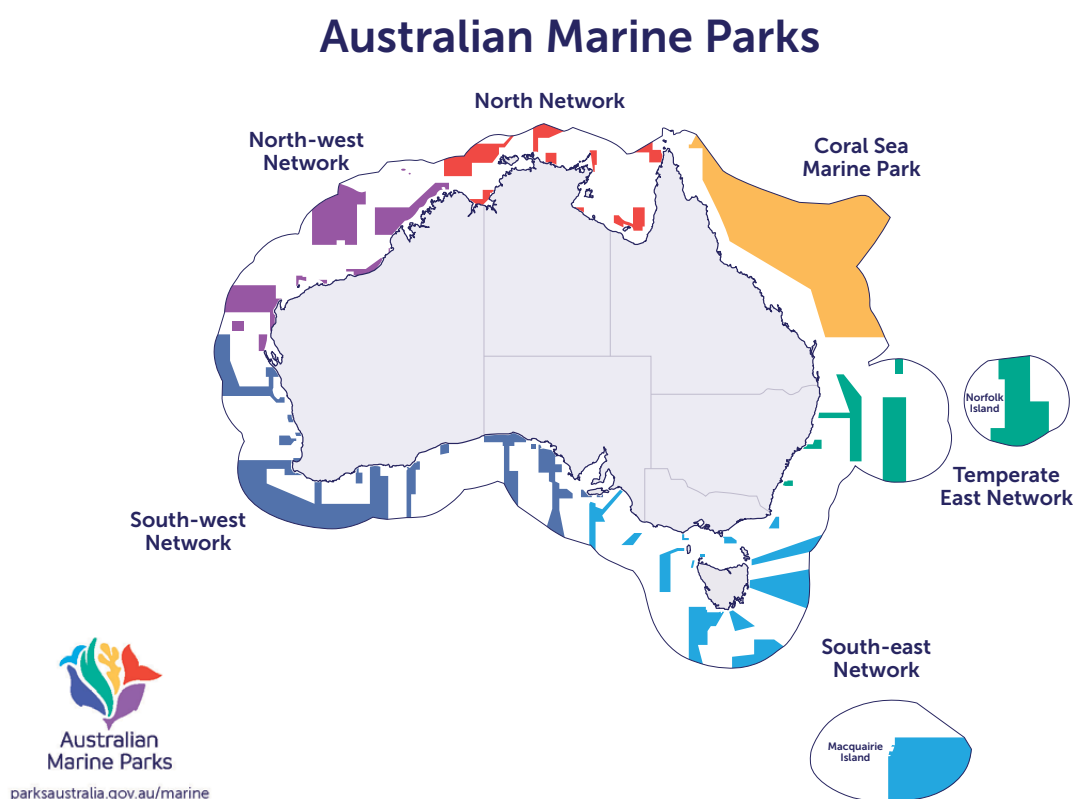
The DNP seeks to partner with interested organisations to deliver projects that kick-start nation-inspiring science discovery and restoration initiatives. Join us to unlock opportunities that help us to sustainably manage our Australian Marine Parks estate.



Credit: David Harasti

2 Australian Marine Parks

Our vision is *Australian Marine Parks that are healthy, resilient and well managed to enhance Australia's well-being.*



The Australian Government has established 58 Australian Marine Parks to protect representative examples of our marine environments, from tropical waters in the north, to temperate and southern sub-antarctic waters (see list at Schedule 2). Islands, often biodiversity hotspots, also comprise part of the marine parks estate.

In total, marine parks' cover 37% of Australia's oceans, with steps underway to increase coverage to 45% through new marine parks in the Indian Ocean Territories. The 58 Australian Marine Parks to which this Program relates cover 2.8 million square kilometres.

There is still much to discover about these vast and remote places, with around 75% of the Australian Marine Parks estate unexplored. Discovery and understanding is crucial to manage these places effectively for future generations.

More information on Australian Marine Parks, including the Australian Marine Park Management Plans, is available at: parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/

3 Value of Australia's marine estate

Over 80% of Australians live within 50 kms of the coast. Marine and coastal ecosystems play a valuable part in Australian society and the blue economy, with tourism and marine industries worth over \$68 billion per annum.¹

Australia's marine estate is home to some of the world's most iconic and diverse marine life.

Australian Marine Parks help to conserve marine habitats and biodiversity.

Australian Marine Parks also provide places for people to enjoy and connect with nature, whether it is wildlife watching (diving, snorkelling), boating or fishing.

Importantly, they also create and support jobs in industries like fishing, tourism, and energy.

¹ Australian Institute of Marine Science, www.aims.gov.au

4 Australian Marine Park Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program

The Australian Government has committed \$15 million over four (4) years from 2021–22 to 2024–25, concluding 30 June 2025, for partnerships in ocean discovery and restoration.

The DNP is implementing that funding commitment through this Program, and seeks to Co-contribute with interested organisations (including not-for-profit organisations, Indigenous organisations and communities, researchers, academic institutions, government entities, philanthropists and corporate sector entities) to improve understanding and sustainable management of Australian Marine Parks.

The DNP is uniquely placed to enable activities in some of our country's most important marine habitats. Partnerships are important to unlock the potential for groundbreaking conservation efforts through support for innovation, access to research vessels, expertise, and promotion and delivery of good ideas and on-ground outcomes.

The DNP's approach for this Program is collaborative – to find and enable those projects that are a priority for the DNP and Potential Partners, so together, we can achieve more.

Our Goal for this Program

The DNP co-contributes with partners to deliver discovery and restoration projects important to science, industry, park managers and the community to improve understanding and sustainable management of Australian Marine Parks.

5 Program roles and responsibilities

Minister for the Environment

The Australian Government Minister for the Environment (**Environment Minister**) has approved this Partnership Call and the associated Partnering Guide.

Pursuant to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (**EPBC Act**), it is also required that the Environment Minister approve the DNP entering into any contracts with Potential Partners which are valued at or above \$1 million (including GST).

Director of National Parks (DNP)

The DNP is a corporation sole established under the EPBC Act. The corporation is constituted by the person appointed to the statutory office (which is also called the Director of National Parks). The DNP has a range of powers and functions under the EPBC Act, with its key functions including to:

- administer, manage and control Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones;
- protect, conserve and manage biodiversity and heritage in Commonwealth reserves and conservation zones;
- carry out alone or in co-operation, with other institutions and persons, research and investigations relevant to the establishment and management of Commonwealth reserves;
- cooperate with other countries in relation to the establishment and management of national parks and nature reserves in those countries; and
- make recommendations to the Environment Minister in relation to the establishment and management of Commonwealth reserves.

The DNP is supported in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under the EPBC Act by the Parks Australia Division (**Parks Australia**) of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (**Department**).

Pursuant to the EPBC Act, it is also required that the Environment Minister approve the DNP entering into any contracts with Potential Partners which are valued above \$1 million (including GST).

More information about the DNP is available at www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/parks-australia/director-national-parks

National Parks Conservation Trust (Parks Trust)

The Parks Trust is a registered charity which supports new conservation initiatives in and around Commonwealth reserves, including Australian Marine Parks. In this Program, the Parks Trust is working with the DNP to assist in securing Co-investment towards Proposals and passing those Co-investments through to the DNP under funding agreements. This will allow Funding Partners to Co-invest through a registered charity. More information about the Parks Trust is available at parkstrust.org.au.

6 Program outcomes sought

1. Resources and expertise are pooled to deliver impactful projects in Australian Marine Parks, that support the health of our oceans.
2. Increased knowledge of species and habitats improves understanding and management of Australian Marine Parks.
3. Traditional Owners are meaningfully engaged in management of their land and Sea Country, with Indigenous Ecological Knowledge valued, and livelihood opportunities supported.
4. Innovative technologies and approaches create opportunities to solve management problems in Australian Marine Parks.
5. Tangible actions help to restore and increase the resilience of important habitats in our parks – like reefs, seagrass and islands – from current and emerging pressures.
6. Raised awareness, appreciation and support for Australian Marine Parks by delivering world leading and inspiring conservation outcomes for our marine environment.



Credit: Andy Heaney, DAWE

7 Challenges facing Australian Marine Parks

The Australian Marine Park estate is one of the largest representative marine park networks in the world. The 58 marine parks (listed in schedule 2) include areas of our oceans that are large, remote and deep. The largest park, in the Coral Sea, is almost 1 million km², while the deepest is up to 7km below sea level. There is still much to discover with around 75% of the Australian Marine Park estate unexplored.

Australian Marine Parks are subject to a range of key threats including:

- invasive species;
- climate change;
- pollution; and
- pressures from human use.

Investment is needed to address gaps in knowledge, establish baselines and implement robust long-term monitoring programs which:

- provide early warning signs when ecosystems become degraded;
- trigger management interventions at the first signs of stress; and
- avoid the huge costs associated with remediation after large scale degradation has occurred.

8 The difference we can make together

Partnerships can help overcome some of the above challenges by:

- facilitating innovation and access to complementary resources and expertise, and
- promoting cross disciplinary approaches to problem-solving.

The DNP's focus is to partner with organisations which have strengths and resources to develop impactful solutions to the issues facing Australian Marine Parks. In adopting a partnering approach, the DNP seeks to build long term relationships that tackle some of our most pressing marine environment challenges together.

There are a range of ways which Potential Partners can Co-contribute under this Program. For example, Potential Partners may wish to contribute the use of a vessel for a science discovery expedition, funding for field work or to cover the engagement of a research scientist or other expenses for a particular Project, or take responsibility for delivering activities in a Project.

The DNP is committed to upholding the five key principles of effective partnerships in this Program: diversity, equity, openness, mutual benefit and courage.²

² Partnership Brokers Association, 'Principles of Effective Partnerships', www.partnershipbrokers.org.

9 Partnering with the DNP or the Parks Trust – the benefits

The Australian Government has committed \$15 million for this Program. The DNP will use these funds to Co-invest (with its Funding Partners identified through this Program) in the performance of Approved Projects to achieve Program Outcomes.

The DNP can make a unique contribution to a Partnership through our park management role and experience and by providing connections to expertise across governments, industries and regions. The DNP offers partners the ability to make a direct and tangible impact to support the sustainable management of key parts of our oceans.

The Parks Trust's involvement allows private individuals, foundations, trusts and companies to Co-invest in a Proposal on a tax deductible basis. The arrangements between the Parks Trust and Funding Partners will be negotiated between the Parks Trust and relevant Funding Partner. Funds will be provided to the DNP under a separate funding arrangement between the Parks Trust and the DNP.

10 Principles for Indigenous engagement

Management of Sea Country and the knowledge, experiences, perspectives and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are integral to improving environmental outcomes and therefore the Program Outcomes.

The DNP has established Indigenous engagement principles and an Indigenous engagement program to manage Australian Marine Parks in collaboration with Traditional Owners. These principles will be used to guide Indigenous engagement by the DNP under this Program:

Principle 1 – Recognise that Indigenous people have been sustainably using and managing their Sea Country, including areas now included within Australian Marine Parks, for thousands of years in some cases since before rising sea levels created these marine environments.

Principle 2 – Management of Australian Marine Parks should be undertaken on the basis that native title exists in sea country within Commonwealth waters.

Principle 3 – Indigenous people should be engaged in planning and managing Australian Marine Parks on the basis of their nationally and internationally recognised rights and cultural interests, not as a ‘stakeholder’ group.

Principle 4 – Maximise opportunities for Indigenous people to enjoy the management and use of their sea country.

Principle 5 – Maximise opportunities for the development of Indigenous livelihoods, consistent with national ‘closing the gap’ commitments.

Principle 6 – Governance and management activities within Australian Marine Parks should respect and complement local Indigenous governance arrangements, plans, capacities and activities.

Principle 7 – Indigenous engagement in managing Australian Marine Parks should be undertaken through good faith negotiations, seeking to build on the common ground that exists between Indigenous people and the Australian Government to protect and sustainably use Australia’s sea country environments and resources.

Principle 8 – Third party investment in management activities in Australian Marine Parks (e.g. through environmental offset investments) should include support for Indigenous people’s interests, capacity-building and development of livelihoods, consistent with all other principles outlined above; such third party investments must not impact on native title compensation negotiations or on the right to compensation.

Partnerships will appropriately recognise Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), including by establishing a protocol to manage any ICIP collected, obtained or created in the course of a Project to provide for: identifying and recording the owners or custodians of the ICIP; and seeking and documenting the consent of those owners or custodians for the use of ICIP for the Project.

Potential Partners are encouraged to consider opportunities to engage Indigenous organisations as partners and/or to consider opportunities to deliver broader benefits for Indigenous communities as part of their Detailed Proposal.

11 Options for partnering

There are two key avenues for partnering under this Program: (1) partnering on a Parks Proposal; or (2) by partners identifying their own priority project for assessment. Details on these two avenues are outlined below.

Parks Proposal

The DNP has a number of initial priority projects for Co-contribution (**Parks Proposals**), either through the DNP or Parks Trust, which are included in Schedule 3. The DNP is committed to co-designing Parks Proposals with Traditional Owners of Sea Country in Commonwealth waters to support a joint delivery model. Where Traditional Owner groups are involved in a Parks Proposal, they are subject to confidentiality and probity requirements.

The DNP considers that each of these Parks Proposals meets the Project Criteria (section 13) and, once implemented, will help the DNP achieve the Program Outcomes.

The DNP is open to refining the details of these proposals to better align with the priorities and capabilities of a Potential Partner or to extend the potential benefits to be realised, provided that there is no material change to the scope or the ability of a Parks Proposal to meet the Project Criteria or help achieve the Program Outcomes.

The DNP may, from time to time, add to or amend the list of Parks Proposals, which will be available from parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/ODRpartnerships.

Organisations interested in Co-contributing to a Parks Proposal should refer to Schedule 1.

Partner Proposal

The DNP also invites organisations to bring forward their own priority projects that they identify as being consistent with the Project Criteria and the relevant Australian Marine Park Management Plan (**Partner Proposal**).

The DNP is interested in exploring partnering opportunities on topics such as:

- apply environmental DNA research to marine park management
- build coral reef resilience through practical management interventions, and
- managing and mitigating effects of infrastructure in parks.

The DNP is also interested in receiving Partner Proposals which relate to areas additional to those listed above, provided they are consistent with the Project Criteria.

Organisations that are interested in collaborating with the DNP for a Partner Proposal will need to submit a Detailed Proposal for consideration. Please see the Partnering Guide, available at parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/ODRpartnerships.

Important notes

No DNP funding will be committed for any Parks Proposal or a Partner Proposal until:

- in instances where the partner is partnering with the DNP directly, after a partnering agreement has been entered into between the Funding Partner and the DNP; or
- in instances where the partner is providing funding through the Parks Trust after that funding arrangement has been entered into between the Funding Partner and the Parks Trust, and a funding arrangement has been negotiated and entered into by the Parks Trust and the DNP.

The Funding Partner must be willing to enter into a partnering agreement directly with the DNP in relation to a Partner Proposal, with any DNP Co-contributions towards that Partner Proposal to only be made in accordance with the terms of that partnering agreement.

If the Partner wishes to contribute the financial component of its Partner Proposal through the Parks Trust, it can do so by negotiating a separate additional arrangement with the Parks Trust.

This Partnership Call will remain open until one of the following occurs:

- all available funding has been committed; or
- the DNP considers that the Program Outcomes have been met; or
- the Program is no longer required.

Detailed Proposals, [Requests for Information](#) and [EOI Responses](#) can be submitted at any time after this Partnership Call has been published until the Program has ended.

If a Detailed Proposal (for a Partner Proposal) or a EOI Response (for a Parks Proposal) is accepted and a partnering agreement entered into, the DNP will publish on its website a summary of the Approved Project and the funds committed by the DNP to that Approved Project. The total available funding from the DNP for remaining potential Projects will decrease by the value of each Approved Project.

Potential Partners should refer to parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/ODRpartnerships to view details of the current Parks Proposals, Approved Projects and the current available total funding.

Potential Partners (including those whose Detailed Proposals are successful) are welcome to submit as many more Detailed Proposals as they wish. Similarly if an interested organisation's Detailed Proposal is unsuccessful, they are welcome to submit a further Detailed Proposal/s (either for the same Project or a different Project).

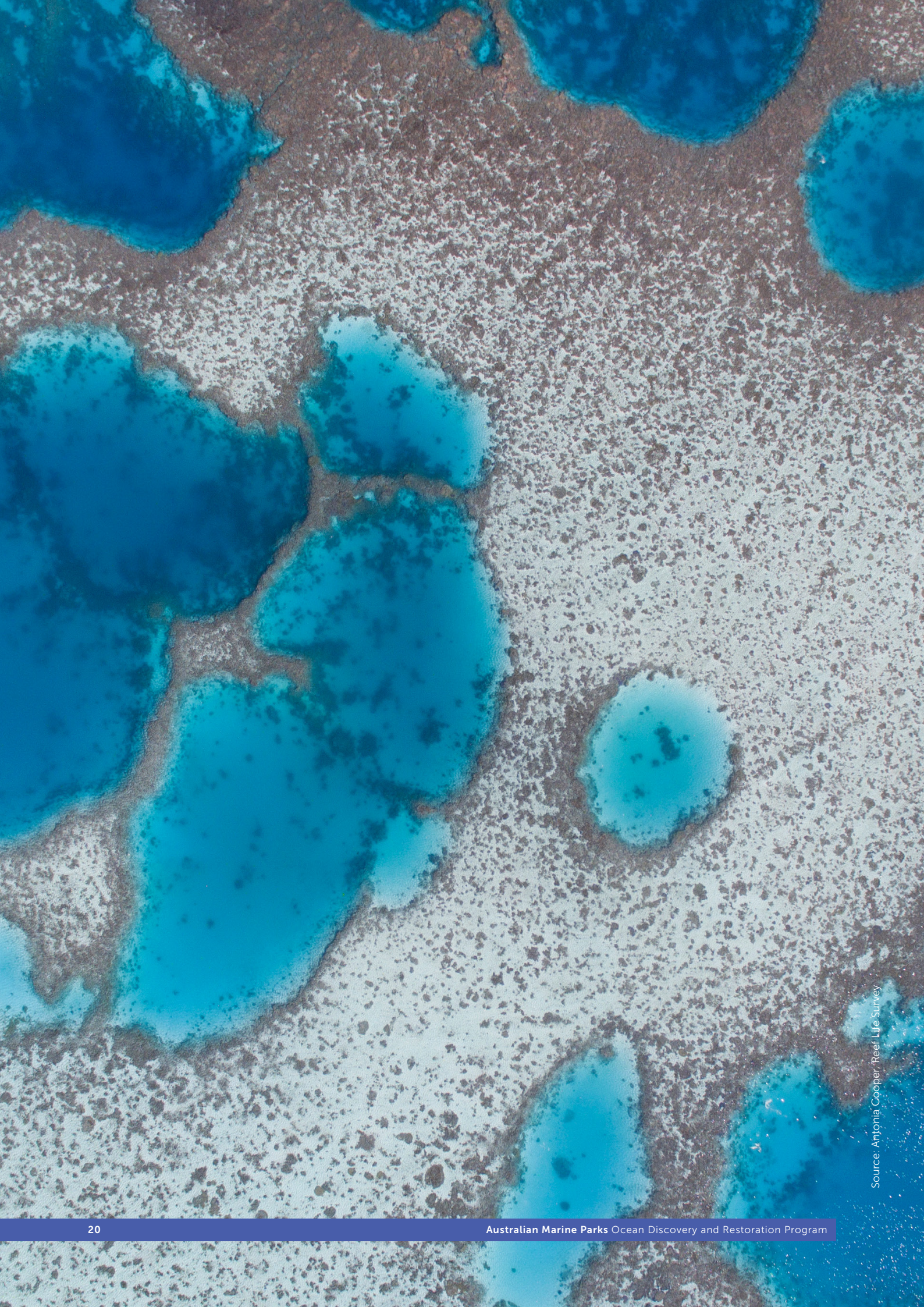
Further details, including eligibility requirements, are contained in Schedule 1 (for Parks Proposals) to this Partnership Call and in the Partnering Guide (for Partner Proposals), which can be accessed from parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/ODRpartnerships.

12 Eligibility criteria

Nature of the Potential Partner

To Co-contribute with us under this Program, a Potential Partner must be:

- a legal entity, for example:
 - an individual;
 - trustee of a trust;
 - a company;
 - a partnership where each of the partners are legal entities;
 - an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation, council or incorporated association;
 - a government related entity; or
 - an incorporated association or cooperative society; and
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for GST, if required to be registered by the Australian Tax Office.



Source: Antonia Cooper, Reef Life Survey

13 Project criteria

The Project criteria are:

- **Ambitious**, with transformation potential to improve marine park management and broader marine conservation;
- **Addresses key threats** to environmentally sensitive Australian Marine Park areas, including managing invasive species that threaten the health of habitats and survival of native species;
- **Benefits Indigenous Australians** by engaging Indigenous organisations as partners and/or creates opportunities to deliver broader benefits for Indigenous organisations and communities;
- **Impactful**, delivering benefits beyond the project site with results being of national and international significance; and/or
- **Leading science and technology** yields new species or habitats, with communication achieving wide coverage, allowing Australians to gain a greater appreciation of our unique marine environment.

The DNP considers that a Proposal that achieves one or more of the Project Criteria will help to contribute to the Program Outcomes (section 6).

As noted above, Parks Proposals have been determined to meet one or more of the Project Criteria. In order for the DNP to proceed with a Partner Proposal, it must meet one or more of the Project Criteria. A Partner Proposal that meets more than one of the Project Criteria will generally perform better in the assessment process than a Partner Proposal that meets only one Project Criterion.

Please note that additional requirements may need to be met before the DNP will be able to proceed with a Proposal. For example, a Potential Partner for a Partner Proposal must have (or have secured) and be willing to commit at least 50 percent of the total resources required to progress the Partner Proposal. Please see the Partnering Guide for more details.

There is no such minimum threshold for a Potential Partner to submit a EOI Response to a Parks Proposal.

14 Process to partner

Informal Partnering Discussions

While not mandatory, if you would like to explore partnering with us (for either a Parks Proposal or a Partner Proposal), it is encouraged that you engage in informal discussions with the DNP, via Parks Australia, as the first step.

Please contact us on:

Email: ODR.partnerships@environment.gov.au

Phone: (03) 6208 2990

These informal discussions are intended to provide the opportunity for:

- you to discuss the Program Outcomes;
- you to discuss (as applicable) the scope of a Parks Proposal or your Partner Proposal;
- you to discuss (if applicable) your ideas for potential refinements to a Parks Proposal; and
- us to understand your organisation and its priorities, and how those priorities might align with the DNP's priorities.

Please note, the DNP and the Parks Trust may contact existing partners or contacts in their networks for informal discussions about partnering in relation to this Program where they consider this will help promote the objectives of the Program.

For probity reasons, the DNP will keep a record of all enquiries and discussions with Potential Partners.

Information you provide to us in connection with any proposals (including any informal discussions) will be held in-confidence and only used for the purposes of the Program, subject to any obligations we have at law or under Commonwealth policy to disclose that information.

We will request that you also hold the information shared by us with you during the informal discussions (including written information) in-confidence. This is on the basis that we will share budget information for Parks Proposals that should not be disclosed more broadly or used for any other purpose. We may ask you or your key personnel to provide confidentiality assurances (by way of a confidentiality deed) before providing you with any DNP confidential information.

Submitting a Detailed Proposal – Partner Proposal

If you would like to suggest a Partner Proposal for consideration, we will require a Detailed Proposal from you, which will be assessed in accordance with the process described in the *Guide for Potential Partners when Completing a Detailed Proposal* (the Partnering Guide).

Submitting a Request for Information – Parks Proposal

If you would like to explore partnering with the DNP to deliver a Parks Proposal, we will need a Request for Information from you in the first instance, followed by an EOI Response. Please refer to Schedule 1 for more details on the path to partnering for a Parks Proposal.

When will the DNP review the Detailed Proposals and EOI Responses received?

The DNP will assess Detailed Proposals and EOI Responses in order of receipt, as determined by the DNP.

Who can you partner with?

Subject to final approval from the DNP, you can partner directly with the DNP to provide financial or in-kind Co-contributions for either Parks Proposals or Partner Proposals or with the Parks Trust to provide financial Co-investment for a Proposal.

You are responsible for making your own inquiries as to any legal, financial or taxation implications associated with partnering with either the DNP or with the Parks Trust.

Partnering agreement

If partnering with the DNP to provide financial or in-kind Co-contributions to a Parks Proposal or Partner Proposal, the terms of that arrangement will be documented in an agreement on terms and conditions approved by the DNP, having regard to its governance structure and financial management responsibilities. This agreement will be based on the DNP's template agreement. A copy of DNP's template agreement can be provided upon request.

For clarity, any agreement entered into in relation to an Approved Project will not create a legal partnership (notwithstanding it being described as a 'partnering' agreement).

If partnering with the Parks Trust to provide financial Co-investment to a Proposal, the terms of that arrangement will be negotiated between the Parks Trust and the Potential Partner. Separate arrangements will be documented between the Parks Trust and the DNP so those funds can be used to support the performance of the relevant Proposal.

In either case, any agreement entered into by a Funding Partner (whether with the DNP or Parks Trust) must:

- explain the objectives and the scope of the relevant Project;
- specify the roles and responsibilities of each party (including personnel and any subcontractors);
- outline the contribution made by each party;
- specify the duration, reporting expectations and other milestones;
- contain appropriate provisions regarding intellectual property, handling of confidential information and publicity on the Program;
- contain provisions around indemnities, insurance, work health and safety and risk management.

The DNP appreciates that the terms of any partnering agreement between it and a Funding Partner will need to be refined to reflect the Detailed Proposal (for Partner Proposals) or the EOI Response (for Parks Proposals). However, the DNP does not intend to negotiate substantively on the terms of its preferred form of agreement.

Once the terms of any partnering agreement are negotiated and agreed between the DNP and Potential Partner in principle, each party will seek the necessary formal approvals within their organisation to enter into the partnering agreement (note, the DNP's execution of any partnering agreement may be subject to the Environment Minister's approval as outlined in section 5). No legally binding obligations will arise on a party until a partnering agreement is executed by both parties.

During informal partnering discussions, Potential Partners may nominate their preference for entering into an agreement with the DNP directly (where they would like to provide financial and in-kind contributions or be involved in the performance of the relevant Project) or with the Parks Trust (where they would like to provide financial contributions only to a Parks Proposal or would like to utilise the Parks Trust to provide their financial contribution to a Partner Proposal).

Important note: The DNP or Parks Trust may discuss and enter into agreements with multiple Funding Partners in relation to the same Parks Proposal (whether for financial or in-kind contributions to that Parks Proposal), with the intent of maximising the outcomes of that Parks Proposal.

Procurement activity in connection with an established Approved Project

The DNP may procure, from third parties, any goods and/or services that it deems necessary in the performance of an Approved Project, including goods and/or service which it is responsible for delivering under a partnering agreement. These procurement processes are outside of the scope of this Partnership Call. All procurements conducted by the DNP will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the DNP's obligations under the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules* and applicable Commonwealth legislation (such as the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*) and policies.

Where the DNP procures goods and/or services in connection with a particular Approved Project, the supplier of those goods and/or services will be called a Delivery Partner.

The DNP will implement measures to ensure that a Funding Partner does not have an unfair advantage over other potential tenderers in any procurements of goods and/or services undertaken by the DNP in connection with an Approved Project. This may mean that, if DNP considers necessary to maintain fairness and equity:

- a Funding Partner may be precluded from tendering to be a Delivery Partner (in accordance with the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules*);
- a Funding Partner is one of a number of entities invited to participate in a procurement for a Delivery Partner.

15 Probity

The DNP, in all dealings, will endeavour to be fair and open, and demonstrate the highest levels of integrity consistent with the public interest. Probity principles require the conduct of open, fair, accountable and consistent processes relating to all DNP activities including all partnering arrangements. The probity principles will be applied through the partnership process and aim to assure all parties of the integrity of the decision making process. The probity principles include:

- honesty and impartiality;
- identification and management of conflicts of interest;
- appropriate security and confidentiality arrangements;
- consistency, fairness and due diligence;
- transparency;
- use of open and competitive processes, as required;
- maintaining an appropriate audit trail; and
- compliance with legal and policy framework.

The DNP may require a Potential Partner to agree to probity protocols before progressing with any informal discussions or partnering design discussions, if the DNP considers that it is necessary to ensure the probity of the Program.

Potential Partners must comply with all relevant laws and Australian Government policy in preparing and submitting a Detailed Proposal and an EOI Response, and participating in this Partnership Call.

Maddocks is the external Probity Adviser for this Program, assisting the DNP to meet these probity principles in the administration of the Program.

Any complaints or concerns about the probity of the Program should be directed to the Complaints Officer in the first instance, whose details appear in section 20.

16 Information management

Except as set out in this Partnership Call or the Partnering Guide, the DNP will treat as confidential all Detailed Proposals, Requests for Information and EOI Responses submitted by Potential Partners in connection with this Partnership Call.

DNP will not be taken to have breached any obligation to keep information provided by a Potential Partner confidential to the extent that the information:

- is disclosed by the DNP to its personnel solely in order to conduct the Program or to prepare and manage any resultant agreement;
- is disclosed to the DNP's internal management personnel, solely to enable effective management or auditing of the Program (including to manage any complaint or concern);
- is disclosed by the DNP to the Environment Minister;
- is disclosed by the DNP in response to a request by a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth;
- is shared by the DNP within its organisation, or with another Commonwealth department or agency, where this serves the DNP's legitimate interests;
- is authorised or required by law to be disclosed;
- is required to DNP's legal or other professional advisers where considered necessary for the proper management of this Program or an issue arising in connection with the Program;
- is in the public domain otherwise than due to a breach of the relevant obligations of confidentiality; or
- is disclosed with the written consent of the Potential Partner.

If a partnering agreement is entered into with a Funding Partner, the Funding Partner's Detailed Proposal or EOI Response will not necessarily be treated as confidential. Funding Partners should clearly identify in their Detailed Proposal or EOI Response the information that they consider should be protected as confidential information should an agreement be entered into with them. The DNP will only consider a request for confidentiality where:

- the information to be protected is identified in specific rather than global terms;
- the information is by its nature confidential; and
- disclosure would cause detriment to the parties concerned.

Disclosure of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act) gives members of the public rights of access to documents in the possession of Commonwealth departments and agencies. The FOI Act extends as far as possible the right of the Australian community to access information (generally documents) in the possession of those departments and agencies. This right is limited only by exceptions and exemptions necessary for the protection of essential public interests and protection of the private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom information is collected and held by those departments and agencies.

All sensitive business information or confidential data which a Potential Partner provides in its EOI Response or Detailed Proposal and considers should be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be clearly indicated in the EOI Response or Detailed Proposal.

Use of documents submitted by Potential Partners

All Detailed Proposals, Requests for Information and EOI Responses become the property of the DNP upon submission.

Despite the preceding paragraph and without prejudice to anything agreed in any resultant deed or contract, ownership of intellectual property in the information contained in a Detailed Proposal, Request for Information and EOI Response remains unchanged.

Each Potential Partner agrees that the DNP may use any material contained in any Detailed Proposal, Request for Information and EOI Response that it submits or otherwise provided for the purposes of the Program and the preparation and management of any resultant agreement.

17 Due diligence checks

The DNP may conduct due diligence checks on any Potential Partners to determine that there are no ethical or other issues that would prevent the DNP from entering into a partnering arrangement with the Potential Partner, including any conflict of interest that could not be reasonably managed.

18 The DNP's rights and responsibilities

In addition to (and without limiting) its rights and responsibilities noted elsewhere in this Partnership Call or the Partnering Guide, the DNP has the following rights and responsibilities.

The DNP reserves the right to not advance partnering discussion or to discontinue negotiations or discussions with a Potential Partners at any time for any reason.

The DNP also reserves the right to:

- change the number or nature of Parks Proposals;
- add or remove a Proposal from being a Parks Proposal;
- suggest the use of an alternative process for a Detailed Proposal, a Request for Information or an EOI Response;
- amend this Partnership Call at any time;
- vary the Partnering Guide at any time;
- accept an amended Detailed Proposal, Request for Information or an EOI Response from any Potential Partner after lodgement;
- seek additional information from any Potential Partner in relation to a Detailed Proposal, Request for Information or an EOI Response;
- not approve or recommend the approval of a Detailed Proposal if it replicates or overlaps with (a) another Project that has been approved but not yet published; or (b) a project that is being funded through another DNP program, procurement or process;
- issue a written invitation for Potential Partners to submit a Detailed Proposal or an EOI Response for either a specific partnering activity or program of activities, subject to conditions;
- exclude a Detailed Proposal, a Request for Information or an EOI Response from further consideration based on the outcomes of due diligence checks or if the Potential Partner does not provide all reasonable assistance required to enable the DNP to conduct relevant checks;
- exclude a Detailed Proposal, a Request for Information or an EOI Response from further consideration at any stage based on a consideration of affordability (including that DNP's appropriation allocation for the Program has been exhausted);
- suspend the consideration of Detailed Proposal, a Request for Information or an EOI Response at any time, for any length of time, and for any reason;

- engage with multiple Potential Partners in relation to the same Parks Proposal, at any time, including assessment of EOI Responses received from, and entering into agreements (whether for financial or in-kind contributions) with, multiple Funding Partners in relation to the same Parks Proposal;
- retain a record of information obtained from a Potential Partner (including either during informal discussions or in the form of Detailed Proposals, EOI Responses) in relation to the Program, noting that this material will be held in-confidence and only used for the purpose of the Program, subject to any obligations we have at law or under Commonwealth policy to disclose that information; and or
- cease, vary or suspend negotiations with any Potential Partner at any time, for any length of time and for any reason.

The DNP will publish details on its website of the following changes:

- changes to the number or nature of Parks Proposals;
- the additional or removal of a Proposal from being a Parks Proposal;
- changes to the Partnership Call or the Partnering Guide.

The DNP and Parks Australia are subject to the code of conduct of the Australian Public Service and are committed to the following for the purposes of this Program:

- integrity – acting honestly, ethically and lawfully;
- responsiveness – responding in a timely and considered way to Detailed Proposals, Requests for Information, EOI Responses; and
- responsibility – being accountable for actions.

In dealing with the DNP and Parks Australia, Potential Partners are expected to:

- provide sufficient and accurate information in a timely manner; and
- understand that the DNP is subject to particular legislative requirements and Australian Government policies.

The Partnering Guide contains additional information about the DNP's rights and responsibilities, including in relation to confidential information and its obligations to publish information.

19 No liability

- Nothing in this Partnership Call, the Partnering Guide or any other documentation published on the same webpage as this Partnership Call will be construed to create any binding agreement (express or implied) between the DNP or the Department and any Potential Partner until a written agreement, if any, is entered into between the DNP and that Potential Partner.
- All Potential Partners bear their own costs of engaging with the DNP or the Parks Trust in relation to this Partnership Call or any Project, including in developing a Detailed Proposal or a Request for Information, considering an Expression of Interest or preparing an EOI Response and in responding to any queries from the DNP when it assesses or considers a Detailed Proposal or an EOI Response. The DNP will not be responsible for any Losses incurred whatsoever by Potential Partners in entering into this process.
- Neither the DNP nor the Commonwealth will be liable for any Loss, damage, costs or expenses incurred by Potential Partners or any other person if, for any reason, a Potential Partner or any other material or communication relevant to this Partnership Call and the Partnering Guide, is not received, is corrupted or altered or otherwise not received as sent, cannot be read or decrypted, or has its security or integrity compromised.
- Potential Partners should obtain their own advice in relation to development of a Detailed Proposal, Request for Information, EOI Response and entry into any agreement with the DNP or the Parks Trust. A Potential Partner's participation in the Program is at their own risk.
- Notwithstanding this section 19, if a court finds there to be an agreement between the DNP and a Potential Partner (or other legal right for the Potential Partner against the DNP) regarding the conduct of this Partnership Call, the Potential Partner agrees that the DNP's general liability in connection with this Partnership Call (e.g. for negligence, breach of contract or statute or otherwise), and any breach of the terms of such agreement (or right) is limited to the Potential Partner's direct substantiated costs of participation in this Partnership Call process, excluding Consequential Loss.

20 Complaints

Any complaints or concerns arising in relation to the processes explained in this Partnership Call or the Program should be directed to the Complaints Officer via email.
Email: parksonlinefeedback@awe.gov.au

21 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Approved Project	means a Project which has been approved by the DNP and documented in a partnering agreement between the DNP and a Funding Partner.
Australian Marine Parks	means the 58 Commonwealth reserves declared, and administered, managed and controlled by the DNP, under the EPBC Act and listed in Schedule 2.
Co-contribution	means a contribution by a Funding Partner of funding and or in-kind contributions, and 'Co-contribute' as a corresponding meaning.
Co-invest	means a contribution by a Funding Partner of funding and 'co-investment' has a corresponding meaning.
Consequential Loss	means any liability, loss or claim suffered or incurred by any person, whether arising in contract, tort (including negligence), under statute or on any other basis in law for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. indirect or incidental Loss; ii. punitive or exemplary damaged of any kind; iii. loss of profit; iv. loss of revenue; v. loss of goodwill; or vi. loss of business opportunity.
Department	means the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.
Detailed Proposal	means the document submitted by a Potential Partner to the DNP in relation to a Partner Proposal
DNP	means the Director of National Parks ABN 13 051694 963.
Environment Minister	means the Australian Government Minister for the Environment.
EPBC Act	means the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).

Term	Definition
EOI Response	means a document of that name prepared by a Potential Partner outlining the basis on which it is prepared to Co-contribute for a Parks Proposal.
Expression of Interest	means a document of that name developed by the DNP or Parks Trust for a Parks Proposal in response to a Request for Information.
Funding Partner	means a Potential Partner that has entered into a partnering agreement with either DNP or the Parks Trust for this Program.
ICIP	means Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, being all aspects of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultural products, expressions, knowledge and heritage, whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. intangible, such as songs, dances, stories, ecological and cultural knowledge; ii. tangible, such as human remains, artworks and artefacts, whether or not such tangible or intangible products are recognised or capable of being recognised as property or the source of a right, action or claim under law.
Indigenous Ecological Knowledge	means the term that refers to the knowledge that Indigenous Australians have of the continent's plants, animals, and environmental systems which has been passed from generation to generation for thousands of years. It includes knowledge (know-how, practices, skills and innovations) and cultural expressions (tangible and in-tangible forms of knowledge and how this knowledge is expressed, communicated or manifested. Examples include languages, stories, music and customs). Indigenous Knowledge is constantly evolving and is dynamic not static.
Loss	means any liabilities, expenses, losses, damages and costs (including but not limited to legal costs on a full indemnity basis, whether incurred by or awarded against a party); and 'Losses' has a corresponding meaning.
Management Plan	means a plan of management made under section 344 of the EPBC Act.
Parks Australia	means the Division of the Department which supports the DNP in the performance of its functions and exercise of its powers under the EPBC Act.

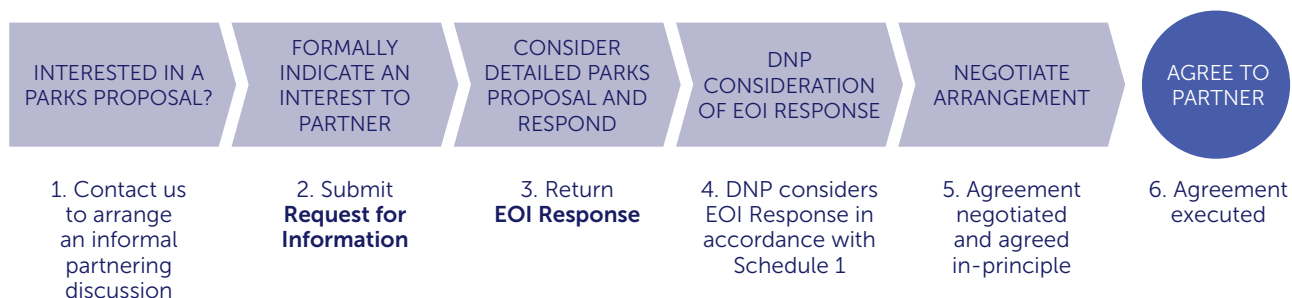
Term	Definition
Parks Proposal	has the meaning in section 11.
Parks Trust	means the National Parks Conservation Trust ABN 56 192 820 884.
Partner Proposal	has the meaning in section 11.
Partnership	means an ongoing collaboration where partnering organisations bring together their unique strengths and value to achieve shared outcomes and have a greater impact than each partner could by acting alone.
Partnering Guide	means the document entitled ' <i>Guide for Potential Partners when completing a Detailed Proposal</i> ' that is issued by the DNP in conjunction with this Partnership Call.
Partnership Call	means this partnership call undertaken by the DNP for the Program as outlined in this document and the associated Partnering Guide.
Potential Partners	means the person or organisation that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. enters into informal discussions with the DNP or the Parks Trust to explore co-contributing under this Program; ii. submits a Request for Information; iii. receives an Expression of Interest; or iv. submits a Detailed Proposal or an EOI Response.
Program	means the Australian Marine Park Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program.
Program Outcomes	means the outcomes specified in section 6.
Project	means either a Parks Proposal or a Partner Proposal.
Request for Information	means a request from a Potential Partner for more detailed information about a Parks Proposal to the DNP.
Sea Country	refers to the areas of the sea that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups are particularly affiliated with through their traditional lore and customs.
Traditional Owners	means a local descent group of Indigenous people who have common spiritual affiliations to an area of Sea Country and are entitled by Indigenous traditions to fish and hunt in an area of Sea Country.

SCHEDULE 1 – Detailed process for partnering – Parks Proposal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This schedule describes the detailed process for applying to partner for a Parks Proposal.
- 1.2 As noted in section 11 of the Partnership Call, each Parks Proposal has been determined to be capable of achieving one or more of the Program Outcomes and satisfying at least one Project Criteria.
- 1.3 Given this, the process for partnering for a Parks Proposal is different than for a Partner Proposal. However, the DNP must still be satisfied that proceeding with a Potential Partner and proceeding with a Parks Proposal will represent an effective, efficient, economical and ethical use of DNP resources.
- 1.4 As noted in section 14 of the Partnership Call, Potential Partners are encouraged, but not required to, enter into informal discussions about a Parks Proposal before submitting a Request for Information.

Process overview



2 Request for information

- 2.1 If a Potential Partner wishes to formally indicate an interest in partnering for a Parks Proposal, they should submit a Request for Information by email to ODR.partnerships@environment.gov.au
- 2.2 The Request for Information should contain:
 - a. the name and ABN of the Potential Partner;

- b. the name of the relevant Parks Proposal;
 - c. whether they have had informal discussions relating to the relevant Parks Proposal in accordance with this Partnership Call;
 - d. the amount and scope of the Co-contribution (including any financial or in-kind contribution) proposed by the Potential Partner (optional);
 - e. a contact point and contact details for the Potential Partner;
 - f. whether the Potential Partner prefers to enter into an agreement with the DNP directly (for financial and or in-kind Co-contributions) or with the Parks Trust (for financial contributions only); and
 - g. where the preference is to enter into an agreement with the Parks Trust, an authorisation for the DNP to share the Request for Information, and subsequent information that the Potential Partners provides to the DNP through this process, to the Parks Trust.
- 2.3 The DNP will promptly acknowledge receipt of the Request for Information.
- 2.4 Requests for Information submitted by any other means may not be considered or responded to by the DNP.

3 Expression of Interest

- 3.1 The DNP or the Parks Trust (if nominated by the Potential Partner and agreed by the DNP and the Parks Trust) will, after receiving a Request for Information, prepare an Expression of Interest for the Potential Partner's consideration.
- 3.2 The Expression of Interest will contain further details about the nominated Parks Proposal, including:
- a. the strategic basis and vision for the Parks Proposal;
 - b. the reason for the Parks Proposal;
 - c. details of the proposed approach and scope, which may be based on information gathered during the informal discussions with the Potential Partner;
 - d. funding required, including the requested Co-contribution;
 - e. anticipated benefits;
 - f. schedule, including key milestones;
 - g. governance arrangements;
 - h. risk identification;

- i. any information relevant to the collaborative structure (including insurance, intellectual property and work health and safety requirements); and
 - j. a timeframe for response (which must be reasonable).
- 3.3 As applicable, a copy of the DNP's template agreement will be provided at the same time as the Expression of Interest.
- 3.4 As applicable, the DNP may undertake further enquiries, including due diligence enquiries before issuing an Expression of Interest.

4 EOI Response

- 4.1 If the Potential Partner is willing to proceed with the partnering process, the Potential Partner should return (within the timeframe requested in the Expression of Interest) an EOI Response to ODR.partnerships@environment.gov.au
- 4.2 EOI Response submitted by any other means may not be considered or responded to by the DNP.
- 4.3 The EOI Response should contain:
- a. confirmed details of the name and ABN of the entity that is the Potential Partner;
 - b. confirmation of whether the Potential Partner agrees with the detail in the Expression of Interest or if it requires any changes;
 - c. confirmation of the Co-contribution the Potential Partner is willing to provide;
 - d. any deviations from the terms or conditions of the agreement which it wishes the DNP or Parks Trust to consider;
 - e. any contingencies contained within the EOI Response (for example, whether the proposed Co-contribution is contingent on any specific entity, including the Potential Partner, being invited to participate in a procurement process in relation to a particular Project or being the successful tenderer in a procurement process for a Delivery Partner).

***Note to Potential Partners:** The DNP has a number of legislative and policy obligations relevant to the conduct of its procurements and decisions to enter in agreements, contracts and deeds. As a general rule, the DNP will conduct competitive procurement processes to procure the goods and services it will be responsible for delivering in Parks Proposal. In addition, the DNP may be prevented from agreeing to enter into partnering agreement that are contingent on the award of other projects or procurements to a specific entity.*

If any element of your EOI Response, including your proposed Co-contribution is contingent or conditional on another event occurring, including a particular procurement approach for the goods and services to be delivered for the Parks Proposal, please include details of these contingencies in your EOI response, including the reasons for the contingency or condition. Please note that these contingencies may have an adverse impact on the consideration of your EOI Response.

- f. any risks in providing the proposed Co-contribution and intended mitigation strategies for those risks;
- g. how long its EOI Response will be open for acceptance (which should be at least two months after submission);
- h. the information that they consider should be protected as confidential information should an agreement be entered into with them; and
- i. any other documents or information requested to be provided in the Expression of Interest.

Submission requirements

- 4.4 The DNP will accept EOI Response files in Microsoft Word 2000 (or above) or PDF format.
- 4.5 An EOI Response sent to ODR.partnerships@environment.gov.au will be deemed to be duly authorised by the Potential Partner.
- 4.6 In submitting the Detailed Proposal electronically, Potential Partners warrant that they have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the files are free of viruses, or other disabling features which may affect the DNP's computing environment.

5 Consideration of EOI response

- 5.1 In relation to EOI Responses, the DNP will consider whether:
 - a. the EOI Response is complete and therefore able to be considered;
 - b. the Eligibility Criteria in section 12 have been met;
 - c. there remains sufficient uncommitted funds in the DNP Program budget to cover the DNP investment in the Project if it were approved;
 - d. any requested changes from the EOI pose a risk to the DNP or to the Project, including the extent that the Program Outcomes and the Project Criteria will be met;
 - e. the Co-contribution the Potential Partner is willing to provide is confirmed and consistent with the EOI, or considered to be of a sufficient value to proceed;

- f. additional Co-contributions for the relevant Parks Proposal would still be required for the Project (i.e. from other Funding Partners);
 - g. the extent to which the Co-contribution from the DNP to the Project is an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of DNP funding;
 - h. any claims for confidentiality;
 - i. the risks of entering into a partnering agreement with the Potential Partner are acceptable, including that the terms of that partnering agreement remain acceptable to the DNP, including any associated contingencies proposed by the Potential Partner.
- 5.2 The DNP may contact the Potential Partner to clarify aspects of its EOI Response, where it would be fair and equitable to do so.
- 5.3 If the DNP (and the Parks Trust, if applicable) wishes to proceed with the EOI Response, it will notify the Potential Partner and commence in principle negotiations to agree the terms of a partnering agreement.
- 5.4 If the DNP (and the Parks Trust, if applicable) does not wish to proceed with the EOI Response, it will notify the Potential Partner and provide reasons for the same.

6 Approval to execute agreement

Once the form of partnering agreement is negotiated and agreed in principle, each party will obtain the necessary formal approvals within their organisation to enter into the partnering agreement. Note, the DNP's execution of any partnering agreement may be subject to the Environment Minister's approval being provided in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act (see section 5 of the Partnership Call for further details)

If the Parks Trust is the partnering entity with the Potential Partner, the agreement will be negotiated between the Parks Trust and the Potential Partner; with a separate agreement entered into between the Parks Trust and DNP.

No obligations will be legally binding upon a party until an agreement has been entered by it and the other party.

SCHEDULE 2 – List of Australian Marine Parks

South-west Marine Parks Network

1. Southern Kangaroo Island Marine Park
2. Western Kangaroo Island Marine Park
3. Western Eyre Marine Park
4. Murat Marine Park
5. Great Australian Bight Marine Park
6. Twilight Marine Park
7. Eastern Recherche Marine Park
8. South-west Corner Marine Park
9. Bremer Marine Park
10. Geographe Marine Park
11. Perth Canyon Marine Park
12. Two Rocks Marine Park
13. Jurien Marine Park
14. Abrolhos Marine Park

North-west Marine Parks Network

15. Shark Bay Marine Park
16. Carnarvon Canyon Marine Park
17. Ningaloo Marine Park
18. Gascoyne Marine Park
19. Montebello Marine Park
20. Dampier Marine Park
21. Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park
22. Roebuck Marine Park

23. Mermaid Reef Marine Park
24. Argo-Rowley Terrace Marine Park
25. Kimberley Marine Park
26. Ashmore Reef Marine Park
27. Cartier Island Marine Park

North Marine Parks Network

28. Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Marine Park
29. Oceanic Shoals Marine Park
30. Arafura Marine Park
31. Arnhem Marine Park
32. Wessel Marine Park
33. Limmen Marine Park
34. Gulf of Carpentaria Marine Park
35. West Cape York Marine Park

Coral Sea Marine Park

36. Coral Sea Marine Park

Temperate East Marine Parks Network

37. Gifford Marine Park
38. Norfolk Marine Park
39. Lord Howe Marine Park
40. Central Eastern Marine Park
41. Solitary Islands Marine Park
42. Cod Grounds Marine Park
43. Hunter Marine Park
44. Jervis Marine Park

South-east Marine Parks Network

45. Apollo Marine Park
46. Beagle Marine Park
47. Boags Marine Park
48. East Gippsland Marine Park
49. Flinders Marine Park
50. Franklin Marine Park
51. Freycinet Marine Park
52. Huon Marine Park
53. Macquarie Island Marine Park
54. Murray Marine Park
55. Nelson Marine Park
56. South Tasman Rise Marine Park
57. Tasman Fracture Marine Park
58. Zeehan Marine Park

SCHEDULE 3 – Parks Proposals



Yudjari Cultural Camp. Credit: Andy Shephard

Partnerships in Ocean Discovery and Restoration

Parks P1: Restoring island ecosystems at Ashmore Reef Marine Park

Ashmore Reef – a biodiversity hotspot under threat

Ashmore Reef Marine Park is an internationally significant biodiversity hotspot in the remote Indian Ocean, 650 km north of Broome, WA. The coral reef and islands provide habitat that supports a remarkable 64 internationally and nationally threatened species, including green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles, and shore and seabirds such as brown boobies and lesser frigatebirds, and is recognised under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention).

At the very edge of Australia’s continental shelf, Ashmore is the only emergent reef in the region with vegetated islands able to support terrestrial animals and plants.

The Park’s important wildlife and island habitats are threatened by introduced insect, vertebrate and plant species. If left unchecked, Ashmore’s fragile ecosystems and species like nesting seabirds and their habitat, may continue to suffer. Through innovation and strategic partnerships, this project will seek to eradicate invasive species to restore Ashmore’s islands and ecosystems and protect vital populations of seabirds, turtles and other native species at Australia’s longest standing and highly protected marine and island environment.

Total Est Budget - \$3m

Time - 5 years

Resource requirements:
suitable vessel, funding and scientists to undertake the research.

Threats

The islands of Ashmore Reef Marine Park are subject to pressures from introduced species such as the Tropical Fire Ant (TFA) (*Solenopsis geminata*), the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) and *Cenchrus* species (e.g. *Cenchrus ciliaris*/buffel grass). All three are notoriously invasive and damaging to native environments.

The need to effectively manage TFA at Ashmore is recognised with previous reports recommending a control or eradication program. However, to ensure stability and resilience for the terrestrial ecosystems of this Park, broader threats like mice and invasive grasses also need to be addressed. Deciding which introduced species to manage first and what methods is critical for determining long term management success.

Introduced plant species are a key threat at Ashmore. Surveys in 2019 found that trees and large shrubs are dying, with 72% of remaining individuals sick or dead. Shrub recruitment failure due to seed predation or competition from non-native species is one possible cause.

A large bale of more than 50 sea turtles at Ashmore Reef. Credit: Tommaso Jucker
The last tree on Ashmore’s east island now deceased. Credit: Parks Australia



Partnerships in Ocean Discovery and Restoration

Parks P1: Restoring island ecosystems at Ashmore Reef Marine Park

Conservation management approach

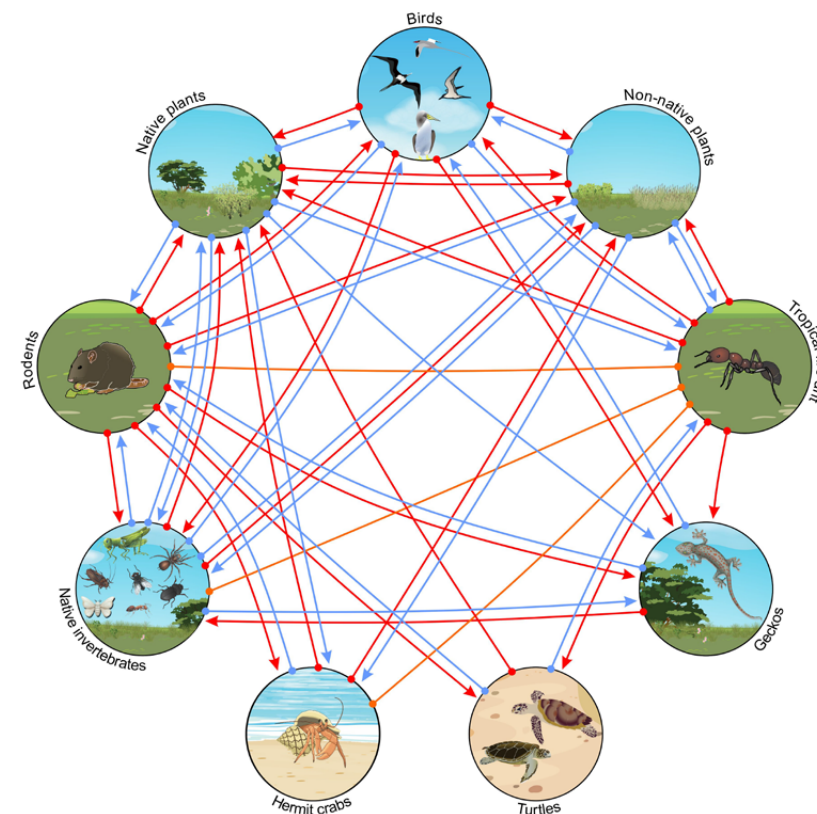
Stage	Action
Stage 1. Island Communities' Characterisation and Ecosystem Restoration plan (2021–2022)	Establish an ecosystem level understanding of Ashmore's terrestrial communities and the interactions between species that both threaten and build ecosystem resilience. An ecosystem based introduced species and island restoration plan will then be developed so park managers can tackle these issues in the field.
Stage 2. Innovation – exploratory research to develop a new 'genetic based' (RNAi) bait for TFA (2021–2023)	Identify the genetic coding of the TFA on Ashmore Reef for inclusion in the US Defense/University of California, and CSIRO ant genetic bait project. The US Defense-funded project aims to create a new genetic-based bait to target five invasive ant species and is most likely to eradicate TFA from Ashmore Reef without also impacting unintended species as would potentially be the case with all current ant baits.
Stage 3. Interim control of introduced species and restoration activities (2022–2024)	Until a new bait is available for eradication of TFA, reduce the population of TFA, high priority invasive plants and other introduced species as identified in the Stage 1 ecosystem restoration plan for Ashmore Reef.
Stage 4. Apply innovation to eradicate invasive species from Ashmore Reef (2023–2025)	The activities, time and cost involved in this implementation stage will be dependent on Stages 1 and 2 and may involve further management of introduced plant species, control of introduced invertebrates and vertebrates, and the active restoration of native vegetation (e.g. the declining shrub layer).

Outcomes

The threats to native biodiversity from introduced species are mitigated and Ashmore's island ecosystems are restored, protecting seabirds, turtles and other native species of this internationally significant biodiversity hotspot. The innovation and knowledge applied to managing the impacts of introduced invasive species and restoring island ecosystems at Ashmore is exported domestically and globally, extending the benefits to our natural world more broadly.



Tropical fire ants are aggressive predators and are found on all of Ashmore's islands. Credit: CSIRO



Theoretical species interaction network for the islands of Ashmore Reef Marine Park. Credit: CSIRO

Parks P2: Managing marine debris to protect seabirds on Coral Sea islands, cays and oceanic reefs

Coral Sea Marine Park – strategic approach needed to reduce marine debris impacts on threatened species

The impacts on biodiversity from marine debris such as single-use plastics, lost and disposed fishing equipment and other rubbish have been well documented. Seabirds are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of marine debris through entanglement or ingestion of plastics, causing suffocation, starvation and drowning. Global studies suggest as many as one million seabirds die each year from plastics.

The volume of marine debris in the Coral Sea is increasing. This poses a threat to the globally significant populations of seabirds that rely on the Coral Sea – including its islands, cays and reefs – for breeding habitat. Knowledge about the source of and impacts of marine debris on bird and turtle populations in the Coral Sea is limited. Filling these knowledge gaps will help support targeted actions to improve the outcomes for these groups.

Projected impact

Through innovation and strategic partnerships, this project will protect internationally important seabird populations in the Coral Sea by removing and reducing marine debris from their breeding habitat. Iconic species including the red-tailed tropic bird, masked booby and greater frigatebird stand to benefit from the removal of existing marine debris and the reduced flow of marine debris to their Coral Sea habitat over time.

The resilience of threatened seabird populations on remote Coral Sea islands, cays and oceanic reefs is increased through the removal and reduction of marine debris.

Novel technologies for marine debris removal are trialled, paving the way for increased efficiency of debris removal in the Coral Sea and beyond.

Coral Sea – a place of cays and currents

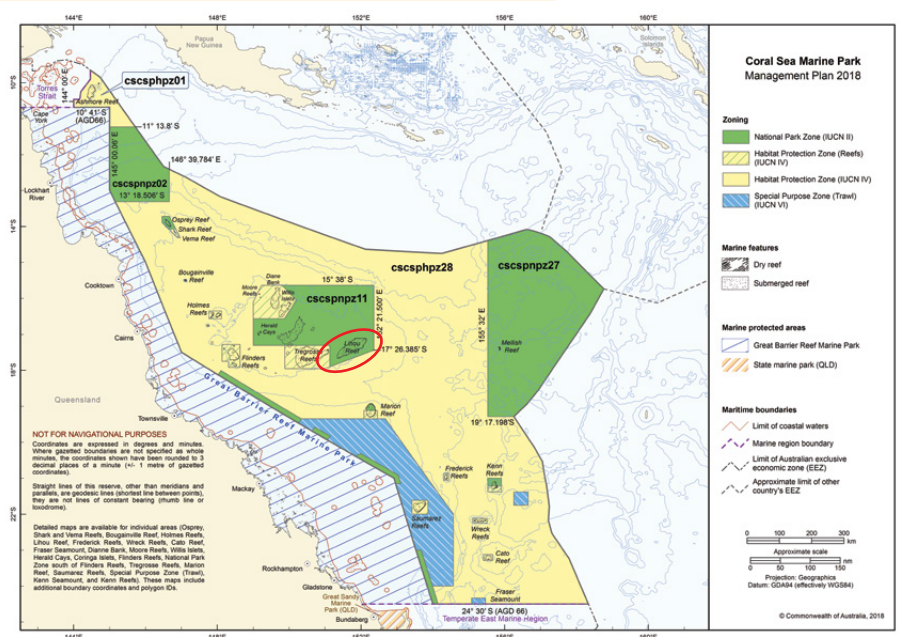
The Coral Sea Marine Park lies off the coast of Queensland and is one of the largest marine parks in the world. It includes over 50 cays and islets together with vast reef systems. The Coral Sea Marine Park is influenced by a complex system of ocean currents including the east-west flowing South Equatorial Current, the north flowing Hiri Current and the south flowing East Australian Current. These currents likely contribute to the increasing volumes of marine debris observed in the Coral Sea.

In the central Coral Sea, the Coringa-Herald and Lihou Reef System is recognised as a Wetland of International Importance. Each year, around 100,000 birds breed on the islands, and many migratory shorebirds stop over to rest and feed during their migration along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Total Est Budget - \$1m

Time - 5 years

Resource requirements:
suitable vessel, funding, scientists, rangers, tools to collect marine debris, communications expertise.



Parks P2: Managing marine debris to protect seabirds on Coral Sea islands, cays and oceanic reefs

Conservation management approach

The activity will be staged through three project-specific Coral Sea expeditions in Years 1, 3 and 5 and will target 67 reefs and associated islands in the central and southern regions of the Coral Sea Marine Park.

The project will—

- Undertake seabird health assessments to understand the current status of rookeries and establish a long-term monitoring program to inform marine park management
- Trial novel collection methods to determine the most efficient ways to remove marine debris from islands and cays as well as free-floating plastic materials from the surrounding waters
- Remove marine debris
- Reduce marine debris by analysing marine debris retrieved to determine point of origin and then engaging with and educating source communities and the broader Australian community

Partnerships will be integral to successful outcomes through:

- Resourcing – for example, contributions to vessel charter costs for expeditions and logistical support and modelling sources and flows of marine debris.
- Media assets – to demonstrate the power of partnerships and realise the potential of outreach to raise the profile of this important issue and practical contributions that can be made in some of our most remote ocean parks
- Novel technologies for testing – this project presents an opportunity to trial novel technology alongside tested methods, to assess efficacy.
- Opportunities for regional collaborations given adjacent nations and protected areas.

Images taken on a 2021 expedition that removed almost 2 tonnes of marine debris from 25 islands and cays across the Lihou Reef Ramsar site and Diamond Islets.



Partnerships in Ocean Discovery and Restoration

Parks P3: Connecting cultural and natural values of Australia’s southern ancient coastline

Australia’s Ancient Southern Coastline – investment needed to address knowledge gaps

The ocean along Australia’s southern coast consists of some of the most biologically diverse temperate marine habitats in the world. These ecosystems support an extraordinarily diverse range of species, among them a high number of species found nowhere else in the world. However, due to the remoteness of the region there has been limited coordinated investment in research in this area, with large knowledge gaps and no baseline established on cultural and natural values – needed to support effective park management decisions.

Total Est Budget - \$2.4m

Time - 3 years

Resource requirements:
to deliver this project we need a suitable vessel funding, cultural specialists, scientists, rangers, venues and facilitator.

Projected impact

This project would be co-designed with the Indigenous Wudjari and Far West People. It will involve collaboration to implement shared Healthy Country Plans and Australian Marine Park Management Plan priorities. This will be achieved through on-country workshops and voyages to some of the most remote regions of the South-west Marine Parks Network (South-west Corner, Eastern Recherche, Twilight, Great Australian Bight, Murat and Western Eyre Marine Parks).

Voyages of discovery, designed and supported by Traditional Owners would explore the ancient coastline within largely unmapped marine parks in the South-west Network, connecting with the cultural values and documenting the unique diverse species and communities across the various habitats. This project would fill large knowledge gaps about known species and their habitats and would also inform understanding of cultural values in the region.

This research would be directly applied to decision making and on-ground action. These include decisions on how to undertake integrated inventory and monitoring successfully and cost-effectively within the AMP network, and once surveys are undertaken, how to best manage the cultural and biological values discovered.



Surveys by Far West Indigenous Rangers Credit: FWCAC

Partnerships in Ocean Discovery and Restoration

Parks P3: Connecting cultural and natural values of Australia's southern ancient coastline

Australia's Ancient Southern Coastline

The Great Southern Reef System spans the rocky reef networks around the rugged southern coast of Australia, reaching as far north as Kalbarri in Western Australia and up into northern New South Wales in the east. The south-west regions of this reef are known to be a globally significant biodiversity hotspot and they are the focus of this proposal.

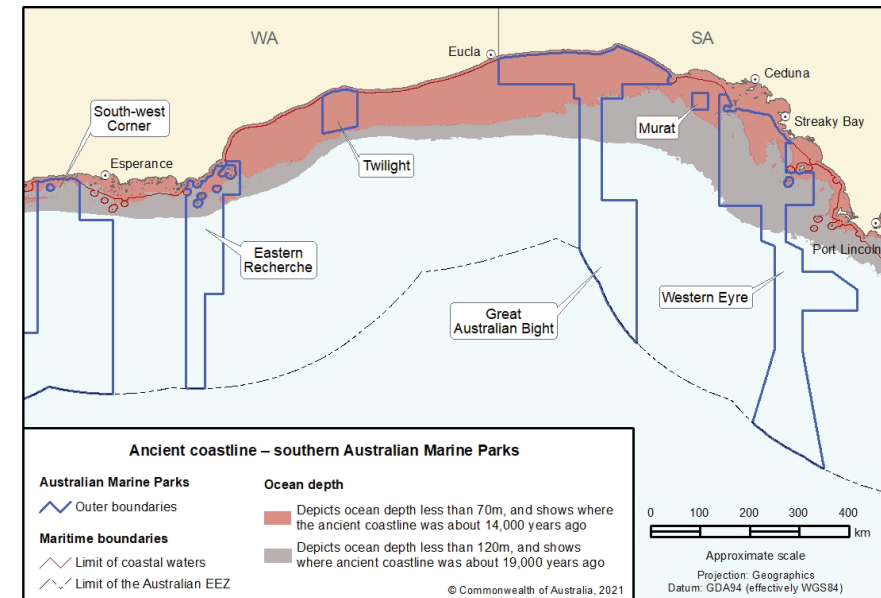
These ecosystems support an extraordinarily diverse range of species, including a high number of species found nowhere else in the world. An estimated 77% of the 565 species of red seaweed found across the entirety of the Great Southern Reef are endemic to the area. These characteristics make the Great Southern Reef appealing both scientifically and aesthetically.

Conservation management approach

Stage	Action
Stage 1.	Establish the integrated project team with the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) and Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation (FWCAC), researchers and DNP to facilitate right way discovery science with Wudjari and Far West Traditional Owners
Stage 2.	Undertake high-resolution multi-beam sonar bathymetry mapping voyages to assess the submerged archaeological and geo-heritage to predict location of sites of cultural significance and natural biodiversity including mesophotic reef features and habitats
Stage 3.	Develop integrated survey plans by combining Indigenous perspectives with mapping data for AMPs along the ancient coastline and undertake skills capability training with rangers and cultural competency for researchers to support discovery surveys
Stage 4.	Characterise ecosystems and communities by undertaking data analysis and integrating traditional knowledge and mapping to best inform management of the ancient coastline
Stage 5.	Celebrate cultural and natural values of Australia's southern ancient coastline by profiling the discoveries made and use of technology to integrate the understanding of cultural and natural values along the ancient coastline



Tjaltjraak Esperance Nyungar Cultural Camp. Credit: Andy McGregor



Ancient coastline – southern Australian Marine Parks.

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