

South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee

Meeting #5 Communique

22 June 2021 via videoconference

The South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee met via videoconference on Tuesday 22 June 2021. The meeting opened with an acknowledgement of Country by the Chair.

Observers at the meeting included representatives from the SA Department for Environment and Water (DEW), WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA).

Regional updates were provided by members and observers, including an update from WA DBCA on progress of the South West Native Title Settlement.

National highlights for Australian Marine Parks

The Australian Government announced in April 2021 a \$39.9 million investment in Australian Marine Park partnerships as part of a broader \$100 million **Ocean Leadership package**.

The funding will support additional rounds of the Our Marine Parks Grants program, with a focus on opportunities for community, Indigenous organisations and industry to further engage and connect with the management of marine parks. Also, funding will support ocean discovery research and restoration projects, and management of oceans around Australia's Indian Ocean Territories.

Member attendance

Bianca Priest (Chair)
Kirsty Alexander
Bronwyn Gillanders
Lee Johnson
Tim Langlois
Peter Owen
Terry Romaro OAM
Sophie Teede
Stephen van Leeuwen

Apologies

Clare Cane, David Collard,
Michael Heslewood, Melissa Nursey-Bray,
Gail Reynolds-Adamson

Other components of the \$100 million package include: support to expand Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) to incorporate Sea Country at a number of locations; blue carbon ecosystem restoration projects; and practical actions to protect iconic marine species and improve the sustainability of fisheries through reducing bycatch.

South-west Network highlights

An update was provided on key management activities. Highlights by program include:

Authorisations – eight authorisations were issued in the Network from November 2020 to May 2021 supporting research (seven) and commercial media (one).

Compliance – six compliance incidents occurred during this period. Quarterly compliance reports and information about compliance are available on [our website](#).

Science – With the current phase of the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) coming to an end a number of projects are wrapping up their final activities and reports including: national socio-economic study ([NESP D6](#)) on social and economic values associated with marine parks; and biodiversity surveys in South-west Corner Marine Park ([NESP D3](#)) which was guided by local Wardandi Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

We also ventured to Abrolhos Marine Park on a voyage of discovery to film and assess the biodiversity and habitats represented in two of the National Park Zones.

Indigenous Engagement – We are working to increase our understanding of Traditional Knowledge and connection to sea Country in Australian Marine Parks. Work has begun on projects funded under the [Our Marine Parks Grant Program Round 2](#). Projects include updating the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation Marine Protection Plan; and the creation of a People of the Sea Wardandi Sea Country Plan.

On WA's south coast Esperance Nyungar families are documenting through animations their Aboriginal connection to and knowledge of sea country to share and celebrate culture.

Parks Protection and Management – Marker buoys in Geographe Marine Park underwent annual inspections and maintenance to ensure that visitors to the park are alerted to boundaries of the National Park zone when out on the water.

An [Australian Marine Park Mooring Policy](#) has been finalised along with procedures to support Environmental Incident and Emergency Response activities..

Communications, Education and Awareness – In partnership with SA DEW, the [SA beach explorer's guide](#) has been updated and two [school curriculum resources](#) released which provide resources for primary and secondary school educators.

[Our Marine Parks Grant](#) funding has been allocated to outreach projects including Finding the 'Fab Five' project by the University of Adelaide that uses flagship marine species to engage users and stakeholders about Australian Marine Parks.

Tourism and Visitor Experience – A shark cage diving video entitled [Great White World](#) was produced in partnership with SA DEW, to increase understanding and appreciation of sharks and raise awareness of the tourism industry that surrounds them.

The Busselton Jetty will showcase the unique marine environment in Australian Marine Parks through a Marine Park Discovery Zone in a new underwater observatory. The marine park discovery zone is funded by the [Our Marine Parks Grant Program](#).

Network priorities

The priorities for the South-west Network were discussed in-depth with members giving advice at the network, park and program level, based on expertise and regional knowledge. Priorities will be reflected in the [Network Implementation Plan](#).

Tourism Strategy

The Committee were briefed on an Australian Marine Park Tourism Strategy to guide managing tourism and recreation in marine parks.

Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held in late 2021.

For more information about the South-west Marine Parks Network or the committee:

Visit parksaustralia.gov.au/south-west or

Email marineparks@awe.gov.au

To report suspicious or illegal activity in Australian Marine Parks contact

1800 852 975 or

marine.compliance@awe.gov.au