

Director of National Parks' response to the evaluations of the 2018 management plans

I welcome the findings presented in the independent evaluations of the Australian Marine Park management plans for the North-west, North, South-west, and Temperate East Marine Park Networks and the Coral Sea Marine Park.

This evaluation represents the first comprehensive review of management across 44 Australian Marine Parks since the commencement of the 2018 management plans. These plans marked a significant transition in the scale of management, moving from 26 to 58 marine parks, and introduced a consistent framework for implementation. Over this period, management has focused on establishing foundational systems, building partnerships, and progressing implementation across a large and diverse set of marine parks. Parks Australia has rolled out successive rounds of the Our Marine Parks Grants Program and built public-private partnerships through the novel Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program, and these initiatives have helped us to build momentum over time.

Management of the Australian Marine Parks is continuing to evolve, with approximately two years remaining in the management plan cycle. Work is ongoing to strengthen areas such as First Nations peoples' participation in management and to improve the evidence base supporting management decision-making.

Importantly, the findings of the evaluation inform the 10-year statutory review of management plans, now underway and will be complemented by further consultation, and the best available science, to help us deliver the next generation of management plans and achieve the 30% high level protection target set by the Australian Government for 2030.

I note that the evaluation found substantial progress in the implementation of management programs, particularly in areas such as authorisations, compliance, ecological data collection, and stakeholder engagement. I also acknowledge the effort made to build relationships with First Nations partners and other stakeholders across the Australian Marine Parks.

I recognise that the evaluation identifies areas where further improvement is required. Parks Australia will focus on enhancing communication and engagement, further strengthening monitoring and evaluation, reviewing advisory functions and refining management program design. We are also building on efforts to establish additional pathways for First Nations participation in management, with the objective of achieving co-management.

Overall, I consider that the evaluation provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on progress, identify areas for improvement, and support the ongoing evolution of Australian Marine Park management.

I thank those who participated in this evaluation and look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders in the development of the management plans.



Ricky Archer
Director of National Parks

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