

# Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park Management Plan Committee

## Terms of Reference

### Background

Established in March 2022, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park is designed to help protect the unique marine environment of Australia's Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) and support positive social and economic outcomes for local communities and other marine users. This marine park will build on the work of Pulu Keeling National Park, which was established in 1995 to protect the island and shallow reef habitats of North Keeling Island.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* requires that a management plan for the new Cocos (Keeling) Island Marine Park be created 'as soon as practicable'. As with the process to establish the marine park, Parks Australia wants local community views and aspirations to be a key part of the process to create the management plan.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park Management Plan Committee is to provide advice and input on behalf of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands community and in areas of expertise relevant to preparation of the marine park management plan.

### Functions

The Committee's functions are to:

1. Provide advice and recommendations on:
  - The preparation of marine park management plans (noting the statutory process will also include two stages of broader public consultation)
  - Priorities for managing marine parks while management plans are prepared
  - Development of a ToR for a committee to advise on the management of marine parks following completion of the management plan
2. Facilitate two-way information flow between Parks Australia and the broader community of Cocos (Keeling) Islands about marine park projects and management.

### Term

Consistent with the Functions described above, the Committee's term will cease when the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park Management Plan has been approved by the Minister for the Environment and tabled in the Parliament, or at another time to be determined by the Director of National Parks.

### Membership and appointments

Members will be appointed by the Director of National Parks or their delegate and will comprise:

1. Parks Australia representatives, one of whom will also chair the committee
2. Up to three members of Cocos Marine Care to be selected by agreement of Cocos Marine Care
3. Up to two members of the Pulu Keeling National Park Community Management Committee
4. Marine scientist(s) with relevant IOT expertise
5. A Cocos (Keeling) Islands Tourism Association member, preferably with marine tourism experience
6. Up to three interested Cocos (Keeling) Islands community members to be selected through a locally advertised Expression of Interest process.



## **Member Conduct**

Members will:

- make reasonable efforts to prepare for and attend meetings
- be courteous and respectful towards other members and participants, and members of the community when discussing any matters relating to the marine park
- declare any real or perceived conflict of interest in relation to committee discussions.

## **Chair**

A Parks Australia member will chair the Committee. Chair duties include:

- Chair meetings of the committee
- Develop an agenda for each meeting in consultation with members
- Encourage broad and open participation from members
- Seek to establish a consensus view from the committee on matters under discussion
- Finalising meeting minutes in consultation with members
- Finalising reports to the Director of National Parks or their nominated delegate in consultation with members

The chair may nominate another Parks Australia officer to act as chair for the Committee where they are unable to fulfil their duties (for example, if on leave).

## **Invited participants / observers**

The Commonwealth Territories portfolio will receive a standing invitation for a representative to attend meetings of the Committee as an observer.

Subject to the agreement of the chair, other individuals/organisations may be invited to participate in or observe meetings from time to time at the suggestion of any Committee member.

## **Secretariat**

Parks Australia will provide secretariat support to the Committee.

## **Meetings**

Meetings will be scheduled as needed to support the Committee's purpose and functions. In general, it is expected that meetings will occur every three months and run for up to two hours.

## **Out of session items**

Occasionally, the Committee may be asked to consider a matter outside of a scheduled meeting. In such cases, the secretariat will circulate relevant information via email.

## **Fees and allowances**

These are volunteer positions, so members will not be paid for their time.

Where applicable, Parks Australia will arrange and pay for member travel and accommodation and provide a travel allowance (in line with Parks Australia's staff travel policy) to cover meals and incidental expenses.

## **Working groups**

The Committee may establish working groups from time to time to consider a particular matter or matters and report back to the Committee.

## **Conflict of interest**

Actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be declared by all Committee members following their appointment. A record of such interests will be maintained by the secretariat and Committee members must regularly consider and update their declaration via the secretariat. An opportunity to update information about conflicts will be provided at each meeting of the Committee.

