Australian Government

Parks Australia

Australian Marine Parks

Our Marine Park Grants Round Four Projects

Proponent	Project Title	Project Summary	Amount ($)
Aquenal Pty Ltd	Tracking coral diversity in Australian Marine Parks	This project will apply expertise in coral taxonomy to digitise Reef Life Survey's extensive underwater image collection and conduct a detailed investigation of coral species' distributions and trends in the North network, including assessment of drivers of change, and value-adding to prior analyses on habitat trends at coarse taxonomic resolution. Australian Marine Parks (AMP) will be assessed, providing an updated trend assessment which includes regions recently impacted by major cyclones and heatwaves. The project will report on critical ecological insights into the natural values and stressors of North AMPs across multiple platforms including scientific journals, reaching a wide audience.	$317,171
Australian National University	Bio-friendly collection of microplastic and small plastic debris	Marine debris degrades rapidly into small plastics due to the harsh environment (waves and sun). The Australian National University (ANU) is developing a world-first micro-plastic removal method based on thermophoresis (bio-friendly and uses a heat signature to differentiate between zooplankton and microplastic). The project will equip a commercial drone boat for meso-plastics removal with an innovative micro-plastic collection device.	$300,000

Cairns Aquarium and Reef Research Centre Pty Ltd	Training and employment of First Nations people in marine science-based industries to promote culturally focussed visitor information about Sea Country and Coral Sea biodiversity	This project involves the creation of two new living exhibits showcasing live corals from the Coral Sea Marine Park, the design and development of educational signage and displays about marine mammals of the Coral Sea Marine Park, employment and training of a First Nations staff, and development of culturally focussed interpretative signage about Sea Country in the Coral Sea Marine Park.	$300,000
Charles Darwin University	Developing marine megafauna monitoring and research capability for the Garngi Rangers in the Arafura Marine Park and adjacent Sea Country	This project will support the Garngi Traditional Owners' Ranger team to fulfil cultural obligations by integrating western and Indigenous techniques to look after culturally significant species. The key objective is identifying foraging areas and migratory routes of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and cetaceans within and around the Arafura Marine Park which has been identified as a priority to the Garngi people of Croker Island, to ensure adequate management (e.g. fishing regulation).	$391,044
Charles Darwin University	Fishing for Data - Connectivity of Tiwi Sea Country with the Oceanic Shoals Marine Park	This is a collaborative project facilitating data collection and an understanding of oceanic climate change and connectivity through 1) visiting the Oceanic Shoals Marine Park (OSMP) to go 'fishing for data' in Sea Country where temperature data is collected throughout the water column, 2) engaging in intergenerational and two-way knowledge exchange where cultural and biodiversity values and connections of Tiwi people to the OSMP and adjacent waters are documented, and 3) engaging commercial and recreational fishers as data collaborators.	$496,656

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	How vulnerable are the South-east Marine Parks to increasing pressures and are they working?	The waters off south-east Australia are one of a series of global ocean hotspots where the South-east Marine Parks Network (SE-MPN) lies. Many species have extended their distribution southward in response to climate change effects and extreme events, such as marine heatwaves, leading to additional impacts. This project aims to build an understanding of the role and effectiveness of marine parks in the region which will lead to improved management of the SE-MPN and protect marine ecosystems into the future.	$284,267
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Advancing conservation and management of Australian sharks and rays through species distribution modelling and the identification of important areas	The project will advance the conservation of Australian sharks and rays through a collaborative network of experts, available databases and novel modelling techniques to map the distribution of sharks and rays Australia-wide and identify key habitat areas within AMPs. This information will support marine park management, enhance biodiversity conservation and ecological resilience, offering valuable insights into culturally significant species for Traditional Owners. The project will create an open-access repository which will provide crucial scientific information for evidence-based management, ultimately safeguarding Australia's marine ecosystems and cultural heritage.	$304,500
Flinders University	Community-led research to support sustainable waste management and tourism in Norfolk Marine Park	This project is a collaboration among Norfolk Island Regional Council, the community and researchers. The project aims to develop and implement an adaptive management framework to address community concerns that reducing disposal of organic butchers' waste into Norfolk Marine Park will negatively impact the behaviour of tiger sharks affecting public safety and tourism. Project outcomes will lead to more effective solutions for the long-term health and economic viability of Norfolk Marine Park.	$229,633

Island Care Incorporated	Empowering community bird conservation	Island Care's project addresses critical conservation needs in the Christmas Island Marine Park by enhancing community capacity to rehabilitate and protect its endemic seabird population. Through expert training, website development and improved facilities, the project aims to foster a community of dedicated seabird advocates who will play a vital role in the preservation of these unique species for generations to come.	$47,958
James Cook University	Coral Sea Connections - ecological connectivity reef fish, sharks, seabirds and invertebrates across the Coral Sea	Connectivity, through the movement of animals and/or dispersal of larvae, is critical for the biodiversity, functioning and resilience of coral reefs, and recovery of populations and communities following disturbance. Understanding connectivity among reefs is key to identifying those areas that play a disproportionate role in the recovery of other connected reefs, especially for spatially isolated reef systems such as those in the Coral Sea Marine Park. Using a combination of visual and video surveys, animal tracking and advanced genetic analyses this project will investigate the connectivity of reef fish, sharks, invertebrates and seabirds across eastern Australia (Coral Sea Marine Park, Norfolk Marine Park, Lord Howe Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park) and New Caledonia. This work is critical to inform effective conservation and management of reef ecosystems.	$499,628

James Cook University	Status, vulnerability, and future research and monitoring priorities for marine turtles in the Coral Sea	The Coral Sea Marine Park supports a distinct breeding stock of green turtles and provides important habitat for four additional species of marine turtle. While general patterns of connectivity and sites of importance are known, data on migration routes, recaptures, site distribution and site vulnerability are either not available, or they are yet to be compiled and assessed. Research and monitoring priorities have also not yet been established. The proposed project will solve this by compiling and assessing all available information, expert elicitation and establishing a research and monitoring framework to guide future activities.	$99,236
James Cook University	Coral Sea conservation - mapping fish nurseries and biodiversity hotspots	This project will locate fish nursery grounds and identify fish biodiversity, density and life cycle habitat use in the reef lagoons in the Coral Sea Marine Park (CSMP). This project will build on research undertaken in the reef lagoons of the CSMP in December 2022, which identified and mapped benthic lagoon habitats and deployed Remote Underwater Video Stations (RUVS) which detected juvenile fish. This project will provide information that aligns with the national AMP science priorities (establish ecological baselines to support evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management) to assist with marine management plans and protection of marine park values and will help inform the 10-yearly statutory plan review. This information will be useful for the development of management solutions to help enhance the health, ecological resilience and sustainable economic use of the CSMP.	$498,618

Kimberley Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	Mayala cultural mapping of Brue Reef and its trade/travel routes by Traditional Owners	The project supports engagement of the Mayala people in the management and protection of their cultural sites in the Kimberley Marine Park. It will deliver audience-appropriate cultural maps and data about Brue Reef to partners.	$225,397
Murdoch University	Managing for sustainability – from the smallest plankton to the world's biggest fish (the endangered whale shark) in the Christmas Island Marine Park	This project will aid the development of sustainable whale shark ecotourism industry within the Christmas Island Marine Park (CIMP) and establish a whale shark citizen science monitoring program. It investigates the importance of CIMP as habitat for the endangered whale shark, and its reliance on productivity and zooplankton. The project actively engages members of the community in research and monitoring, skill sharing and builds capacity to enhance opportunities for local and cultural input in the management of the CIMP.	$458,134
Nyamba Buru Yawuru Ltd	Sustained investment in the Indigenous Salt Water Advisory Group to strengthen the network and bring to life Kimberley Indigenous saltwater projects	Continuity of the Indigenous Salt Water Advisory Group (ISWAG) network and forum that supports engagement with partners that invest in priority Sea Country projects. Strengthening traditional knowledge for improved management of the Kimberley Marine Park with Traditional Owners.	$300,000

Tangaroa Blue Foundation Ltd	Integrated program to prevent, monitor and document marine debris impacts on Cocos (Keeling) Islands, building on regional efforts on Christmas Island	This project encompasses comprehensive monitoring and debris removal within the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park, targeting potential threats to vulnerable migratory and endangered species. The data collected will guide strategic source reduction and local waste management initiatives.	$350,000
Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation	Modern tools to help protect an age-old relationship - understanding habitat use of the culturally significant yula (short-tailed shearwater) in South-east Marine Parks in Bass Strait	A Palawa led project to improve understanding of the natural and cultural values of the South-east Marine Parks Network by tracking yula (short-tailed shearwater, Ardenna tenuirostris) foraging during chick provisioning. The project will support the development of cultural values statements for AMPs, identify research and monitoring priorities for yula and develop community capacity to care for yula and engage in marine science partnerships.	$350,000
The University of Adelaide	Protecting the biological and cultural values of sea snakes under climate change in Dampier Marine Park	The Murujuga people of this region have special connections to sea snakes; the Barrimirndi is a Rainbow Sea Serpent, and petroglyphs represent traditional knowledge of interactions between fish, snakes and eagles. This project will build on previous research by working with the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation to generate population and habitat data in Dampier Marine Park (and elsewhere). It will also help to understand cultural connections to sea snakes and enhance capacity for Indigenous-led monitoring in Murujuga Sea Country.	$331,926

The University of Western Australia	Waatu Wardan Kaartdijin: communicating Sea Country health and actions	This project will create a collaboration of the six saltwater Bibbulmun Noongar and Yorga peoples of the south-west of Western Australia (represented by six Aboriginal Body Corporates) and the University of Western Australia (UWA), to co-create a framework and tool to understand and share knowledge, with cultural guidance, of Sea Country health and pressures across AMPs and adjacent waters. This project aims to produce cultural guided priorities for collaboration on Sea Country, facilitate cultural exchange and knowledge sharing between saltwater Bibbulmun Noongar and Yorga peoples and provide a platform for future collaborations with Parks Australia and other management agencies.	$478,248
The University of Western Australia	Mayala Iinalang (Islands and reefs) - Investigating connectivity between Mayala Sea Country and the Kimberley Marine Park	A collaboration between the Mayala Inninalang Aboriginal Corporation and UWA aims to grow capacity of the Mayala reef monitoring program. The project will explore connectivity between island and intertidal reef ecosystems in the Kimberley Marine Park and Mayala Sea Country. The partnership between Traditional Owners and researchers will facilitate two-way learning, allow Traditional Owners to apply their ecological knowledge to inform the design of monitoring protocols and collect valuable baseline data for culturally important taxa and ecosystems.	$184,977
University of New South Wales	Impacts, resilience and recovery of Norfolk coral reef habitat to synergistic local and global pressures	The distinctive biodiversity and socio-economic importance (tourism and cultural connections) of the Norfolk Island coral reef ecosystem faces imminent threats from an accumulation of local and global stressors, including extreme climatic events, increased rainfall, pollution and warming. The project will provide a multi-faceted, evidence-based assessment of global and local drivers of coral reef ecosystem change and potential for resilience and recovery within the Norfolk Marine Park. Results will provide long-term evidence to support targeted management of the Norfolk Island coral reef catchment and reef ecosystem, will bolster knowledge and facilitate knowledge sharing.	$498,778

University of Tasmania	Baseline surveys of fish and invertebrates in shelf waters of the Zeehan Marine Park	A quantitative baseline survey of the demersal fish and mobile invertebrate assemblages of mesophotic and rariphotic reefs in shelf waters of the Zeehan Marine Park. This work will provide a basis for future monitoring and inform park management responses to emerging pressures, including oil and gas exploration in and adjacent to this area. It will also engage Traditional Custodians with AMP science and train Indigenous rangers in standard survey techniques.	$271,000
University of Tasmania	Expanded horizons - the use of the newly expanded Macquarie Island Marine Park by seabirds and seals in a changing climate	The Southern Ocean helps regulate global climate and ocean circulation, making it one of the most important regions on the planet, yet it is experiencing significant changes due to climate change. In 2023, the Macquarie Island Marine Park was expanded to become the second largest MPA in Australia. There is a lack of oceanic habitat use data for most species, including globally important populations of king and royal penguins, and threatened albatross which is important for monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of the marine park expansion and climate change impacts. This project will provide tracking and dietary data for priority species to understand their at-sea distribution, prey resources and movement patterns to evaluate the conservation value of the marine park and inform actions to help ensure the continued sustainable use of the region by fisheries and tourism.	$324,098

University of Tasmania	Identification of handfish species in the Huon and Tasman Fracture Marine Parks	Handfish are amongst the rarest fishes globally, with 11 of the 14 described species occurring only in waters around Tasmania, and 4 of these species are on current endangered species lists. This project will deploy a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to collect high resolution imagery as well as eDNA techniques to identify the species present across the Huon and Tasman Fracture marine parks. Deployments and subsequent community outreach will involve sea rangers from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, providing Indigenous engagement in AMP monitoring and enhancing skills for ongoing employment. Anticipated outcomes are improved knowledge of biodiversity values in two marine parks in a climate change hotspot, providing critical information for ongoing monitoring and management.	$308,341
University of Tasmania	Assessing the effects of climate change and marine heatwaves on deep reef ecosystems across the Temperate East Marine Parks Network for improved management	The Temperate East Marine Parks Network (TE Network) is renowned for its unique deep reef biodiversity and cultural significance to the Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl People (Solitary Islands), Worimi People (Hunter) and Lord Howe Islanders. There is growing evidence that climate change and marine heatwaves are impacting these unique deep reef communities. This project will work with Traditional Owners, members of the community and researchers to collect representative baseline data for these deep reef ecosystems and investigate the impact of climate change and marine heatwaves. This project will directly address AMP research needs and will provide the information required for the statutory review of the TE Network Management Plan.	$489,465

Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation	Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar (Bremer Bay) ranger feasibility project	Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation (WKSN) will undertake strategic business planning for the establishment of a WKSN marine ranger team. This will lay the groundwork for WKSN to become an integral partner in marine research and management and provide long-term economic benefits for the WKSN peoples via jobs and economic opportunities.	$77,500
Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation	Nyangumarta Rangers - A pathway to building capacity and extending engagement into Kujungurru Warrarn (Sea Country) management	This project will actively support the engagement of Nyangumarta Traditional Owners in management of the marine environment. The project will build ranger capacity to engage with marine monitoring and research and will enable the rangers to maintain connection to Sea Country by extending their Sea Country management further into Commonwealth waters. This will assist in the development of a preliminary Nyangumarta Sea Management Plan.	$183,425