

## Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee

### Meeting #4 Communique

25 November 2020, MS Teams

#### Attendees

Jacqui Doyle (Chair)  
Andrew Hoey  
Chrissy Warren  
Clive Wilkinson  
Col McKenzie (apology)  
Craig Stephen  
Doug Sanderson  
Larissa Hale  
Michelle Grady  
Russ Babcock  
Ryan Donnelly

#### Observers

Chris Cochrane (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority)  
Tina Alderson (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service)

#### Guest

Sally Weekes (Australian Fisheries Management Authority)

#### Committee Meeting Overview

The Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee Meeting #4 was held by videoconference on Wednesday 25 November 2020. The Committee advises the Director of National Parks on the implementation of the Coral Sea Marine Park Management Plan.

The Chair welcomed the meeting attendees (including new member Professor Andrew Hoey) and gave an acknowledgement of country. Observers from GBRMPA and QPWS attended. Parks Australia staff attendees were Martin Russell, Andy Warmbrunn, Stephanie Lemm and Narelle Southam.

A presentation on commercial fisheries in the Coral Sea Marine Park was provided by the AFMA representative.

The Coral Sea Marine Park six-month management summary report was provided:

#### Assessments and Authorisations Program

Since July 2018, 46 authorisations were issued: media (2), tourism (22), research and monitoring (17), structures and works (1), use of a drone (2), and actions by or under the direction of the Commonwealth and Commonwealth agencies (2).

#### Compliance Program

No compliance incidents were recorded in the Coral Sea Marine Park in the last quarter.

#### Marine Science Program

The Committee was updated on research and monitoring projects in the Coral Sea Marine Park.

Professor Andy Hoey (James Cook University) presented on the Coral Sea Coral Reef Health Project research. The three-year project commenced in 2018 and included detailed assessments of coral, fish and invertebrates and associated reef health in the Coral Sea Marine Park. A key finding of the research was that the reefs support unique coral and reef fish communities that are distinct from those of the adjacent Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and are similar to reefs in the Tasman Sea to the south, and countries to the east (New Caledonia, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands). The next phase will

include surveys of reefs in 2021 to assess the impact of the 2020 bleaching.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service assessed the health of six islands in the Coringa-Herald and Lihou reefs and cays Ramsar site in November-December 2019. A report is being finalised. Further assessments of the Ramsar site islands and Diamond Islets will be carried out in 2021.

A vegetation survey at South Islet (Willis Islets) was conducted in October 2020. A report is being prepared. The survey was carried out by experienced volunteer botanists utilising standard Queensland Herbarium methodology.

Schmidt Ocean Institute RV Falkor expedition 'Visioning the Coral Sea' in May 2020 provided live streaming of the underwater vision data, which provided a unique view of the deep depths of the reefs and seamounts near the to the Queensland Plateau.

<https://schmidtocean.org/technology/live-from-rv-falkor/rov-dives-visioning-coral-sea-marine-park/>.

Following the successful May 2020 voyage to the Queensland Plateau, the RV Falkor more recently explored the remote canyons, platform reefs and seamounts of the Coral Sea and Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks.

<https://schmidtocean.org/cruises/schmidt-ocean-institute-2020-expeditions/>

### Indigenous Engagement Program

The Indigenous engagement program manager is providing advice to support culturally informed and evidence-based decision making and management of the Australian Marine Parks.

### Parks Protection and Management Program

Staff from the Marine Parks Branch have participated in training in the use of the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS). AIIMS is the nationally recognised system of incident management for the nation's fire and emergency service agencies. Organisational principles and structure are used to

manage large emergencies utilising the all agencies approach.

Guidance for marine park users on anchoring in Australian Marine Parks has been developed and is found at:

<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/activities/approvals/anchoring/>

### Communication, Education and Awareness Program

In August, the biosecurity information sheet [Be Pest Free in the Coral Sea](#) was made available on the Australian Marine Parks website. Six Coral Sea Marine Park Facebook posts were produced.

### Tourism and Visitor Experience Program

Due to COVID-19 Parks Australia is not currently undertaking any face-to-face engagement with industry bodies or marine tourism operators. In the short-term, engagement with state agencies, commercial operators and regional tourism organisations will focus on planning and developing content to support improved visitor information.

### Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement framework for Australian Marine Parks

A draft National Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework for Australian Marine Parks was provided to the Committee for comment. This outlines the approach to monitoring the health of Australian Marine Parks and explains the process for evaluating the effectiveness of management actions in delivering the outcomes outlined in management plans. The Committee will be consulted further on MERI.

### Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting is proposed to occur in May 2021.

For more information about the Coral Sea Marine Park or the Committee:

Visit [parksaustralia.gov.au/coralsea](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/coralsea)

Email [marineparks@environment.gov.au](mailto:marineparks@environment.gov.au)