

Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee

Meeting #1 Communique

4 June 2019, Cairns

About the Committee

The inaugural meeting of the Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee was held in Cairns on Tuesday 4 June 2019.

This meeting marked the beginning of a two year term for the 11 newly appointed members. Individual members were selected from a large number of applicants who responded to a public expression of interest process open to all Australians last year.

Appointment of the Committee represents an important step in implementing the Coral Sea Marine Park Management Plan that came into effect 1 July 2018.

The role of the Committee is advisory, not regulatory, and will guide Parks Australia and the Director of National Parks on key aspects of marine park management.

Welcoming the new members

Brian Singleton (representing the Yirrganydji people) and Gudjugudju (representing the Yidinji people) welcomed attendees to country.

Parks Australia welcomed the new members who bring a wealth of experience on marine park management issues including tourism, fishing, sea country, science, conservation, governance and communications.

Invited observers were Simon Banks (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority), Damien Head (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service), Sian Breen (Fisheries

Member attendance

Martin Russell (Acting Chair)
Chrissy Warren
Col McKenzie
Clive Wilkinson
Russ Babcock
Ryan Donnelly
Craig Stephen
Michelle Grady
Doug Sanderson
Morgan Pratchett
Jacqui Doyle (apology)
Judy Lynne (apology)
Larissa Hale (apology)

Queensland) and Miya Isherwood (Torres Strait Regional Authority).

Members were introduced to Australian Marine Parks, the Coral Sea Marine Park, and Parks Australia's management vision and objectives.

Members discussed how Parks Australia can best deliver management arrangements under an Implementation Plan.

Implementation Plan – Foundation

The key focus of the first meeting was to discuss a foundation phase Implementation Plan for management actions across the first four years of management (2018-2022).

An overview of each of seven management programs was provided to the Committee and advice from members was sought on:

- subject or location specific management needs and opportunities;
- relevant work and programs recently completed, underway or planned that can inform park management; and

- marine park user/stakeholder information needs and engagement opportunities.

Communication, Education and Awareness Program

Suggestions focused around actions to improve awareness, understanding and support for park management, such as developing relationships with schools.

Tourism and Visitor Experience Program

Discussions included the need to work closely with tourism organisations such as Tourism Australia, and develop an online resource suitable for regional tourism operators to share with visitors.

There is a focus on ensuring marine park users are informed and compliant with marine park rules; and how to manage the level of tourism and recreational use in site specific management.

Indigenous Engagement Program

Discussions were focused on cultural awareness; the need to ensure engagement with traditional owners including facilitating traditional owners on Coral Sea tourism, research and monitoring voyages. Parks Australia will seek to engage with traditional owners via existing forums where relevant and appropriate.

Marine Science Program

The Committee was briefed on current research and monitoring of corals, fish, hydrography, geomorphology, islands and vegetation, with the current focus being on islands and reefs.

The Coral Reef Health Project currently being undertaken by James Cook University scientists is looking at the health and status of corals and fish on reefs, and studying the similarities and differences between the Marine Park and the GBRMP.

The use of Apps was discussed as a tool for recreational users to get information about the marine park and its management and also provide information back to Parks

Australia. The GBRMPA's Eye-on-the-Reef Program is a good example.

Assessments and Authorisations Program

Parks Australia's approach to authorising activities in marine parks was outlined, including options to raise awareness of the requirements for undertaking activities, such as tourism or research, in Australian Marine Parks. Information about Parks Australia's authorisations – permits, class approvals, and activity licences and leases is available at: onlineservices.environment.gov.au/parks/australian-marine-parks

Parks Protection and Management Program

Discussions focussed on incident response, infrastructure and natural resource management activities.

Key focus areas include biosecurity, islands monitoring, marine debris assessments and removal.

Compliance Program

Discussions focused around actions that support voluntary compliance by marine parks users, including where communication may be improved. Parks Australia applies a risk based approach to compliance in partnership with state, territory and Commonwealth agencies to conduct compliance activities in the Marine Park.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held in Townsville in October or November 2019. For more information about the Coral Sea Marine Park or the Committee:

Visit parksaustralia.gov.au/coralsea

Email marineparks@environment.gov.au