

Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee

Meeting #2 Communique

27 November 2019, Townsville

Committee Meeting Overview

The Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee advises the Director of National Parks on the implementation of the Coral Sea Marine Park Management Plan.

Meeting #2 was held in Townsville on Wednesday 27 November 2019, and Wulgurukaba elder Ms Chris George welcomed the meeting attendees to country.

All Committee members attended, and there were no observers. The meeting was attended by Parks Australia staff members Martin Russell (Coral Sea Manager), Andy Warmbrunn, Stephanie Lemm and Narelle Southam (Marine Park Officers).

Managers Summary

An update on progress in each of seven management programs for the Coral Sea Marine Park was provided:

Communication, Education and Awareness Program

Coral Sea Marine Park story sheets were added to the Parks Australia website <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/management/resources/>.

A new Coral Sea Marine Park map that includes the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and New Caledonia Marine Park, Queensland fisheries boundaries and shipping management boundaries has been developed to be included on the PAD website.

Member attendance

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

Staff attended the Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) conference in July 2019.

The Committee was asked to provide advice on improving Parks Australia communications and develop new products.

Tourism and Visitor Experience Program

Parks Australia has developed a Tourism and Visitor Experience Strategy. The Committee will provide further advice on how best to communicate with marine park users.

Indigenous Engagement Program

Relationship building opportunities with Indigenous representatives are ongoing. All authorisations for use of Ashmore and Boot Reefs in Torres Strait require prior-contact with Mer Island Traditional Owners.

Marine Science Program

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

Two key projects are underway.

1. The Coral Reef Health Project conducted by JCU is investigating the health of corals and is in the final year of the three year Parks Australia funded project. The research is showing that Coral Sea reefs are extremely isolated and unique, with key differences to the adjacent Great Barrier Reef.

2. The Parks Australia joint project with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority investigating the health of islands started its pilot phase in November 2019 and included surveys at 6 islands within the Ramsar site.

The CSIRO vessel RV Investigator has undertaken voyages to survey deep ocean habitats and geomorphology, and Reef Life Survey is conducting surveys.

Assessments and Authorisations Program

Since July 2018, 16 authorisations were issued for media (2), tourism (5), and research (9) activities. Committee members will remind people in their networks to apply for authorisation if intending to conduct commercial activities or research in the CSMP. More authorisations are currently being assessed.

Parks Protection and Management Program

Priority issues include biosecurity risks, island health monitoring, visitation management and marine debris assessments and removal. Work is progressing on ensuring biosecurity risks associated with island visitation are minimised. This includes providing guidance to visitors on how to prevent introduction of pests to islands. Also, careful consideration is being given to managing visitor access to islands and cays to ensure these sensitive areas are maintained in as natural a state as possible.

The Committee provided advice on ensuring tourism operators meet a high standard of operation. Parks Australia is working with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to support management and field operations in the Coral Sea Marine Park.

Compliance Program

A compliance report on all Australian Marine Parks was provided for July to September 2019. No compliance incidents were recorded in the Coral Sea Marine Park in the last quarter. Parks Australia has established a hotline for reporting illegal activity: 1800 852 975

marine.compliance@environment.gov.au

A Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) system for Australian Marine Parks

A MERI system is being developed for Australian Marine Parks to evaluate the effectiveness of management.

The MERI system will comprise a national framework and monitoring plans that include outcomes and measurable indicators. MERI will inform annual reports and national *State of the Environment* reporting. Committee advice will be sought at several stages in the process of MERI, including providing information on values and pressures.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held in Cairns in May 2020. Discussions will include commercial tourism use management and future research and monitoring in the Coral Sea Marine Park. For more information about the Coral Sea Marine Park or the Committee Visit

parksaustralia.gov.au/coralsea, or email marineparks@environment.gov.au



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