

SOUTH-EAST  
COMMONWEALTH MARINE RESERVES NETWORK

# Communication and Education Strategy

PARKS AUSTRALIA  
2016

## Table of Contents

1) AIM .....	3
2) BACKGROUND .....	3
3) outcomes.....	4
4) APPROACH.....	5
5) TARGET AUDIENCES.....	6
Reserve users.....	6
Other audiences .....	6
6) KEY MESSAGES .....	9
Awareness of South-east Network marine reserves .....	9
Understanding the importance of the South-east Network marine reserves.....	9
Understanding of allowable activities the South-east Network.....	9
Key messages for marine reserve users .....	10
Key messages for the general community.....	10
Key messages about the SE Forum .....	10
7) Communication and education tools .....	11
8) EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION .....	11

# SOUTH-EAST COMMONWEALTH MARINE RESERVES NETWORK

## Communication and Education Strategy 2013 – 2023

### 1) AIM

The aim of this Strategy is to outline the approach and provide guidance for communication and education activities related to the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network (the SE Network). These activities will be implemented by Parks Australia and partners to engage with Network users and wider audiences to improve understanding of management arrangements and promote the natural values of the SE Network.

This Strategy identifies:

- target audiences
- communication needs
- key messages for target audiences
- recommended methods of communication

### 2) BACKGROUND

Commonwealth marine reserves protect and maintain Australia's unique marine biodiversity for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. It is important that the adjacent coastal communities understand the purpose of the reserves in the SE Network and why they are important. It is also important for reserve managers to understand the views and needs of users and wider audiences regarding the SE Network.

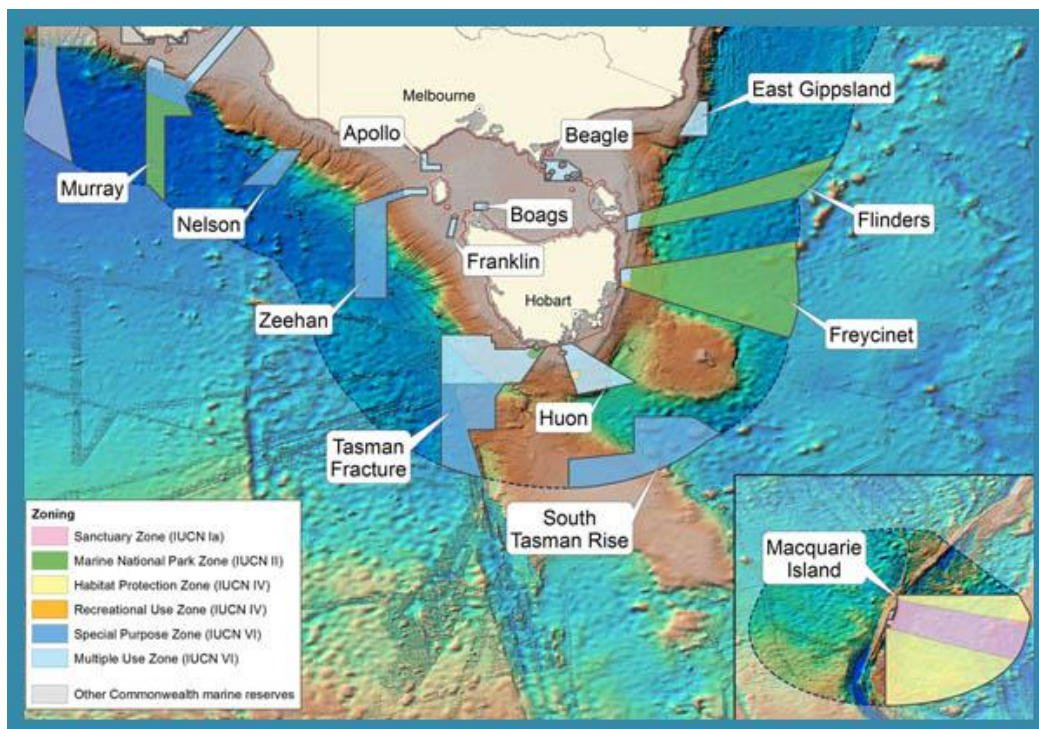


Figure 1. Map of the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network

The *South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network Management Plan 2013-23* (the SE Management Plan) came into effect on 1 July 2013. The management plan enables actions to be implemented to achieve objectives of the Plan. The SE Management Plan includes specific actions associated with communication and education: to establish a communication and education plan for the SE Network; to develop consultative mechanisms to engage stakeholders in the management of the SE Network; and to provide information for stakeholders to help them understand and comply with management arrangements.

This Strategy has been developed in consultation with the South-east Stakeholder Forum and is designed to deliver Action 23 in the SE Management Plan: *The Director will develop and implement a communication and education plan that increases community understanding of the importance of the marine reserve network and meets reserve-specific needs for communication about the values protected and management arrangements and requirements.*

Through its implementation, this Strategy will also deliver Action 16: *The Director will develop, maintain and disseminate appropriate information to assist users of the marine reserves network to comply with the provisions of this Plan.*

Actions in the SE Management Plan are scheduled and delivered through an Implementation Schedule for the SE Network. Communication and education actions in the Implementation Schedule are developed with stakeholders through the South-east Network Forum (SE Forum).

### 3) OUTCOMES

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This Strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes from the SE Management Plan :

- Stakeholders and the community understand the importance of the marine reserves network, the values it protects and its management arrangements.
- Activities within the marine reserves network are undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the management arrangements as specified in the South-east Network Management Plan.
- Marine reserves network users have a clear understanding of what is required to comply with the SE Management Plan.

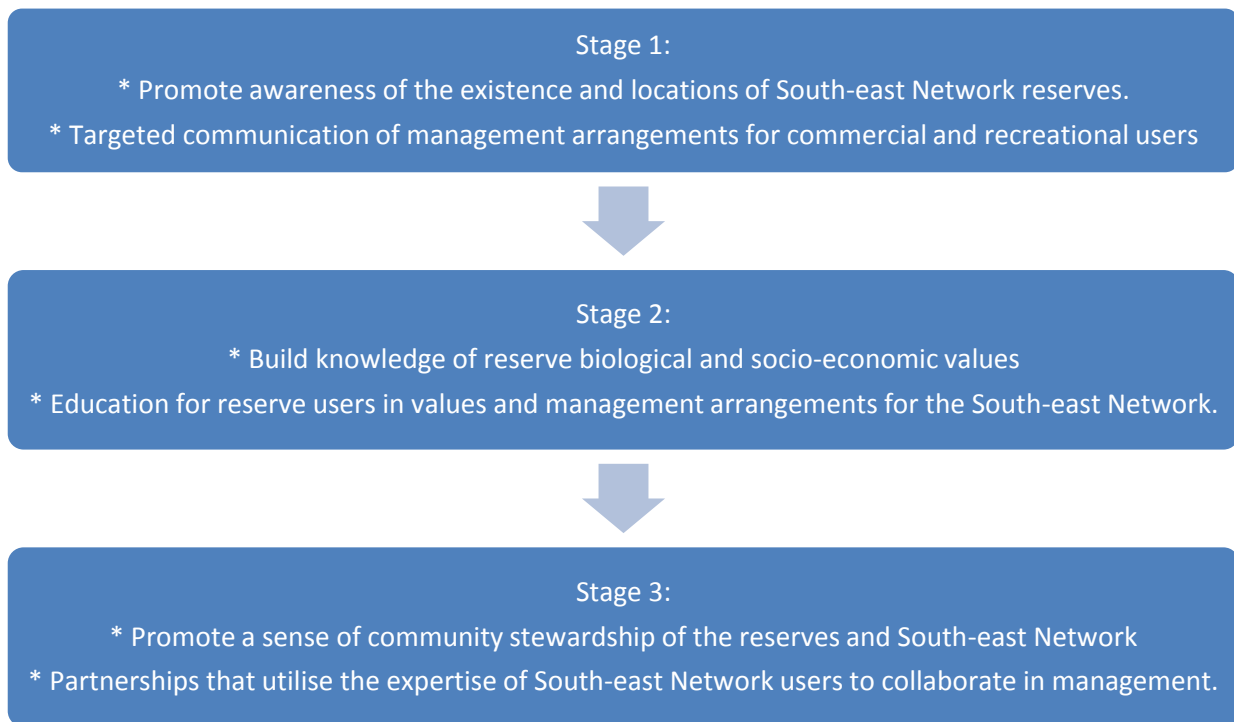
In addition, implementation of this Strategy will support the involvement of Indigenous people, consistent with outcomes in the SE Management Plan, specifically:

- Management activities within Commonwealth marine reserves acknowledge and respect existing Indigenous governance arrangements, activities and cultural needs.
- Indigenous customs, practices and knowledge inform relevant management planning and activities.

#### 4) APPROACH

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The approach to implementing this Strategy is based on developing the knowledge of stakeholders over time through a staged approach:



Wherever possible, stages will be implemented through partnerships, to utilise the expertise of regional interest groups and marine reserve users. This may include partnerships with industry associations, community groups, non-government organisations (NGOs) and other agencies (including state and Commonwealth governments). A partnership approach will enable communications activities to utilise local knowledge, to be tailored to target audiences and to be delivered most efficiently.

The Implementation Schedule to the SE Network Plan will include the actions necessary to implement this Strategy, including prioritisation, staging, implementation and reporting. The primary mechanism to establish and maintain partnership arrangements will be the SE Forum, which brings together key representatives from industry groups, NGOs, researchers and other key stakeholders to engage in and advise the management of the SE Network. The SE Forum is tasked to assist with the development and implementation of communications initiatives and encourage improved ways of communicating to stakeholders.

A challenge for partners in implementing this Strategy is that Commonwealth marine reserves are located in offshore environments, typically between three nautical miles off the coastline to the outer boundary of the Economic Exclusion Zone. Reserve values lie beneath the surface, not easily accessed or appreciated. This makes it difficult to engage audiences and impart the importance of reserve values. It follows that partnerships will need to consider and utilise innovative and targeted methods in their approach.

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## 5) TARGET AUDIENCES

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All audiences are also potential partners for implementation of this Strategy.

### **Reserve users**

In the SE Network the stakeholders who visit the reserves are:

- Commercial fishers, from both state and Commonwealth fisheries
- Commercial tourism operators (including charter fishing and nature watching tours)
- Recreational fishers
- Petroleum production and other sectors of the mining industry
- Recreational yachts and boats (non-fishing activities)
- Researchers, including marine scientists

### **Other audiences**

Other stakeholders who have an ongoing interest in the marine reserves are:

- Environmental or marine conservation NGOs
- Indigenous communities and representatives (noting that indigenous use of marine reserves may fall into some of the categories listed above)
- Local communities (adjacent to marine reserves)
- Ports and shipping industry
- Commonwealth and state government agencies (including the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and state fisheries)
- Australian communities (those not in proximity to, or directly impacted by Commonwealth marine reserves)

Table 1 below provides a stakeholder analysis of these audiences, including why they are important to communicate with, their knowledge of the SE Network reserves (at commencement of this Strategy), and communication taking place at commencement of this Strategy.

Awareness of different stakeholder activities within the SE Network and their understanding is a prerequisite for tailoring communications under this Strategy, and to ensure that communications are appropriate and specifically targeted.

**Table 1 – Stakeholder analysis of reserve users and other audiences**

Indigenous groups and stakeholders	Why they are important to communicate with	Knowledge base of the SE Network (on commencement of this Strategy)	Current communication method (on commencement of this Strategy)	Potential future communication methods
<b>Commercial fishers (Commonwealth fisheries)</b>	Primary group of marine reserve users. Activities have the potential for significant impact to reserve values.	Good knowledge of SE Network through management plan development and establishment of the SE Network. Kept informed through industry groups which participate on the SE Forum. Have access to CMR Alert (VMS).	SE Forum and Departmental website Industry bodies/associations (SETFIA, GABIA etc.). Other government agencies (such as AFMA).	Closer links to Industry associations (e.g. through formal and informal agreements) Sector-specific products (e.g. user guides, online training)
<b>Commercial fishers (State fisheries)</b>	Primary group of marine reserve users. Activities have the potential for significant impact to reserve values but are well understood.	Good knowledge of SE Network through management plan development and establishment of the SE Network. Kept informed through industry groups which participate on the SE Forum.	SE Forum and Departmental website Industry bodies (TSIC, Wildcatch Fisheries SA, Seafood Industry Victoria). State government agencies (such as PIRSA, Tasmania Police).	Closer links to Industry associations (e.g. through formal and informal agreements) Sector-specific products (e.g. user guides, online training)
<b>Commercial tourism operators</b>	As users who facilitate visitation of the SE Network by the general public, nature watching and charter fishing tour operators could be influential in communicating to visitors.	Knowledge base variable, some operators appear well informed about the SE Network but some are not. Most have a high level of knowledge of local values and attributes.	SE Forum and Departmental website Industry bodies (such as SCBOOT, Wildcatch Fisheries SA, TARFish, VRFish).	Closer links to Industry associations Sector-specific products (e.g. user guides, brochures)
<b>Recreational fishers</b>	Potentially the largest group of marine reserve users. Many will have a high level of understanding of local conditions and values.	Knowledge base highly variable. Most have a high level of knowledge of local values and attributes.	SE Forum and Departmental website Industry bodies (such as TARFish, VRFish).	Closer links to Industry associations (e.g. agreement with TARFish) Sector-specific products (e.g. user guides, brochures)
<b>Recreational yachting and boating</b>	Potentially a large group of marine reserve users. Many will have a high level of understanding of local conditions and values.	Knowledge base highly variable. Most have a high level of knowledge of local values and attributes.	SE Forum and Departmental website	

<b>Researchers</b>	Provide new and up to date information to contribute to management operations; and Knowledge provided by research underpins communications as it is broadly appealing to all stakeholders.	High knowledge base of biological values, purpose of reserves and of the SE Network	SE Forum and Departmental website Research Hubs (e.g. NERP, NESP)	
<b>Environmental Non-Government Organisations (eNGOs)</b>	Engaged in communication about the value of CMRs to the community, Broad reach to a large, potentially engaged audience,	Knowledge of values of CMRs and pressures on those values; and They directly engage communities.	SE Forum and Departmental website	Closer links with eNGOs General audience communications products
<b>Indigenous communities</b>	To maintain the connection and build our knowledge of the significance of sea country to indigenous communities and build understanding of indigenous cultural values	No baseline data on the current understanding of the SE Network, however it is expected that coastal indigenous communities will have a high level of knowledge of and connection to marine values. No current native title claims for the South-east however we recognize the significance of sea country to indigenous communities, and we recognise their connection to land and sea.	SE Forum and Departmental website	Meetings and workshops with Indigenous representatives
<b>Community</b>	Potential stewardship and champions of the sea. Connection to conservation values.	Little baseline data on general community understanding or knowledge of reserves in the SE Network.	Through third parties (such as eNGOs or industry groups).	Closer links with eNGOs General audience communications products
<b>State Government and local government</b>	Possible linkages and collaborations with general and local community engagement, marine reserve users' activities and communications activities.	Manage state marine parks and provide reserve management services for SE Network through partnership arrangements with Parks Australia.	Through ongoing partnership arrangements and MoUs between agencies.	Closer links to with relevant state agencies (e.g. officer level engagement)
<b>Other Australian Government Agencies</b>	Possible linkages and collaborations and alignment of messages with specific sector engagement, marine reserve user activities and communications activities.	Sector specific knowledge on reserves and Network	Targeted meetings, internal newsletters, Intranet	



## 6) KEY MESSAGES

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The key messages will be communicated to relevant audiences throughout the life of this Strategy, and will be adjusted to suit different stakeholder groups and for different purposes. These messages will also be adjusted over time as audience understanding progresses through the three stages of this Strategy's implementation. Key messages are categorised to align with the desired outcomes of this Strategy:

### **Awareness of South-east Network marine reserves**

- The South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network is located within Commonwealth waters, extending from three nautical miles off the coast to the outer limit of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nautical miles).
- The South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network spans waters from the far south of New South Wales, around Tasmania and as far west as Kangaroo Island in South Australia. It includes the Commonwealth waters of Bass Strait and those surrounding Macquarie Island in the Southern Ocean.
- The Network comprises 14 reserves, which cover an area of 388,464 km<sup>2</sup>, nearly six times larger than the land area of Tasmania.

### **Understanding the importance of the South-east Network marine reserves**

- The marine reserves of the South-east Network are important to maintain the long-term health and productivity of our oceans. They help protect and maintain unique conservation values.
- Conservation values include a vast range of ecosystems, habitats and biological communities and the diverse marine life associated with them. Examples of this marine life are new to science, and are unique to the South-east Region as they are found nowhere else in the world.
- Cultural values within the South-east Network include Indigenous and historic heritage. Indigenous heritage includes customs, laws, stories, totems and languages relating to Sea Country, as well as sacred and important sites, structures and tools.
- There are also three historic shipwrecks within the marine reserves network.
- The marine reserves in the South-east Network form a part of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA) that has been established through the agreement of Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory governments.
- The reserves in the South-east Network contribute to the NRSMPA by ensuring that all the different types of marine ecosystems and habitats found in the south east marine region are protected for future generations.

### **Understanding of allowable activities the South-east Network**

- The South-east Network provides for sustainable use by a variety of industries, including commercial fishing. While not designed as a fisheries management tool, the marine reserves in the South-east Network can enhance fisheries by ensuring places such as breeding grounds are protected.
- The South-east Network is also an important place for people to enjoy, including boating, nature watching, recreational and charter fishing. The reserves also provide opportunities for research.
- The reserves are divided into zones, which define what activities may occur.
- Some activities require a permit or approval from the Director of National Parks before they can be undertaken in the Network.
- Permits may be issued to a company or individual to conduct a specific activity where the activity requires case by case assessment of the impacts of the activity.

- Class approvals allow a particular type of activity to be undertaken in the Network where the activity has already been assessed as being acceptable, subject to conditions. For example there is currently a class approval in place for commercial fishing activities.
- The *South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network Management Plan 2013-23* sets out the zone types, the management arrangements, management strategies and the activities which are allowed in the Network.
- “*A guide for users of the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network*” summarises the management arrangements for different types of use, the zoning restrictions that apply, and maps of all of the reserves in the Network.
- Along with information on current class approvals and how to obtain a permit, the user guide can be obtained on our website at: [www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves](http://www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves)

#### **Key messages for marine reserve users**

- Marine reserve users can contribute to management and protection of the marine reserves in the South-east Network.
- It is important to familiarise yourself with the management arrangements and zoning restrictions that apply to your activity. “*A guide for users of the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network*” summarises the management arrangements for different types of use, the zoning restrictions that apply and authorisation requirements. Along with information on current class approvals and how to obtain a permit, the user guide can be obtained on our website at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/guide-users-south-east-commonwealth-marine-reserves-network>
- You can also get involved more actively, by sharing your knowledge and understanding of the marine environment to contribute to management decisions. You can do this through an industry association that is a member of the South-east Network Forum.
- [Contact your industry association directly to express your interest to be kept informed and to be involved](#) in the implementation of activities relating to the management of the marine reserves. This could involve assisting with research and monitoring, reporting non-compliant behaviour, communication or education activities.

#### **Key messages for the general community**

- Healthy oceans are essential to the wellbeing of our planet. Please help us manage and protect the marine reserves of the South-east Network so that our precious marine resources are protected for future generations.
- You can do this by taking every day actions to reduce your impact on the oceans, such as preventing litter entering storm water which ends up in the ocean and by reducing domestic greenhouse gas emissions.
- There are also opportunities to participate in community initiatives, which seek to raise awareness and support for marine reserves.

#### **Key messages about the SE Forum**

- The South-east Network Forum promotes the involvement, engagement and collaboration of marine reserve users, stakeholders and the community in management of the South-east Network.
- The Forum brings together representatives from regional industry associations, conservation, marine science agencies and community groups to discuss issues and provide advice relevant to the management of the South-east Network.
- As a representative of a group/agency which has interests in the conservation, management and sustainable use within the South-east marine region, members of the Forum contribute to the management and protection of marine reserves within the South-east Network.
- The diverse interests represented at the Forum provide Parks Australia an avenue to draw on the wealth of experience of representatives, covering all aspects of management of the South-east Network.

- A list of industry associations, community groups and other representatives which participate in the Forum can be found on our website: <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/south-east-commonwealth-marine-reserves-network-stakeholder-forum>
- For further information about the Forum, please contact [marinereserves@environment.gov.au](mailto:marinereserves@environment.gov.au)

## 7) COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION TOOLS

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The development of targeted communication products and appropriate education materials will be the primary mechanism to implement this Strategy.

There are various tools and products that Parks Australia may utilise to communicate and engage. These are documented within table 1 (includes stakeholder analysis). They include:

- Department Of Environment and Parks Australia web pages;
- Social media (e.g. Parks Australia Facebook site and blog);
- Videos, and infographics
- Smart device applications
- Education programs
- Meetings –SE Forum, region specific meetings and sector specific meetings
- Hardcopy communication products – maps, signage, brochures, event calendar, fact sheets, user guides, newsletters, newspaper and community advertising.

## 8) EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION

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To support effective and adaptive management, regular monitoring and evaluation of this Strategy will be undertaken. This will involve:

**1) Monitoring individual products and activities** - the effectiveness of Strategy communications products and activities will be evaluated during and after their implementation. This is important to ensure that key messages are appropriate; delivered in a timely manner; using an appropriate delivery method; and that activity are achieving their objectives. Individual activities will be reported on annually through Implementation Schedule yearly reports.

**2) Monitoring of performance indicators** that measure progress towards achieving Strategy outcomes (table 2). The performance indicators will be measured primarily through regular community and user surveys, to provide ongoing tracking of the impact of communications activities and achievement of Strategy outcomes. These surveys will be developed and implemented collaboratively with the SE Forum and other partner agencies (e.g. state marine parks agencies) and reported on through Implementation Schedule yearly reports.

**3) Periodic evaluation of this Strategy**, to consider appropriateness of target audiences and key messages, progress in achieving Strategy outcomes, and any modifications required to ensure relevancy. Periodic evaluation will coincide with the completion of new Implementation Schedules (years 4 and 8), and will utilise the above monitoring and reporting against Strategy products and activities and of performance indicators. Any modifications required will be subject to consideration by the SE Forum.

**Table 2:** Strategy outcomes and performance indicators

<b>Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicators</b>
Stakeholders and the community understand the importance of the marine reserves network, the values it protects and its management arrangements	Improved awareness and understanding of the SE Network and its conservation values.
Activities within the marine reserves network are undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the management arrangements as specified in the South-east Network Management Plan	Improved user awareness of marine reserve boundaries and allowed activities.
Management activities within Commonwealth marine reserves acknowledge respect and incorporate existing Indigenous governance arrangements, customs, practices, knowledge and cultural needs.	Improved understanding of Indigenous governance arrangements, customs, practices knowledge and cultural needs, relevant to CMR management by visitors to the SE Network.