

The cover features a blue background with a wavy, rippling texture. A white curved band with a thin orange border runs across the middle. The title is centered in this band.

Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review **Report of the Expert Scientific Panel**

Associate Professor R. J. S. (Bob) Beeton AM

Professor Colin D. Buxton

Mr Peter Cochrane

Professor Sabine Dittmann

Dr Julian G. Pepperell

December 2015

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Authorship:

Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review Expert Scientific Panel:

- Associate Professor R. J. S. (Bob) Beeton AM (Chair)
- Professor Colin D. Buxton
- Mr Peter Cochrane
- Professor Sabine Dittmann
- Dr Julian G. Pepperell

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Dear Minister

I am pleased to provide you, as the Minister for the Environment, with the *Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review: Report of the Expert Scientific Panel*, prepared as part of the Australian Government's Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review. As Chair of the Expert Scientific Panel, I would like to thank the Panel members—Professor Colin Buxton, Mr Peter Cochrane, Professor Sabine Dittmann and Dr. Julian Pepperell—for their significant contributions to this report.

This expert scientific report has been produced in response to the terms of reference that you prepared for the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review. The report has been informed by an extensive literature review, evidence presented through Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review public submissions, and direct consultation with marine scientists from a range of organisations around Australia. This process was supported by the secretariat who I thank for their excellent work in supporting the review.

The review of the science and the associated findings and recommendations made in this report fall into three broad areas: the process used to design the reserve networks; the current state of knowledge about marine reserves and protection of marine biodiversity, with a particular focus on research undertaken since the reserves were proclaimed in 2012; and the requirements for future management of the Commonwealth marine reserves estate.

In parallel to our expert scientific review, the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review Bioregional Advisory Panels conducted a broad consultation process to ensure all affected stakeholders had the opportunity to put forward their views, and to advise on possible alternative reserve design within the outer boundaries and options for reserve management. In undertaking this task, the Bioregional Advisory Panels sought specific scientific advice from the Expert Scientific Panel on a range of matters. This advice is documented in our report.

I commend this Expert Scientific Panel Report to you for your consideration in the future management of Australia's Commonwealth marine reserves.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Beeton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Associate Professor Robert J. S. (Bob) Beeton AM D.Sc.(h.c.) FEIANZ
Chair
Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review Expert Scientific Panel
12 December 2015

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