

INTRODUCTION

The *South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network Management Plan 2013-23* (the Plan) came into effect on 1 July 2013. The Plan is the primary tool for the conservation and management of the South-east Network. It sets out the approach to, and direction of, management actions for the life of the Plan (10 years), and outlines the management strategies for research and monitoring, assessment and permitting, compliance, community participation, Indigenous involvement and environmental management. These strategies and associated actions provide the framework for achieving the Plan's objectives and outcomes.

The *South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network Implementation Schedule 2013/14 – 2016/17* sets out priority activities for years 1-4 of the operation of the Plan. It refines the desired outcomes to achieve in these foundation years. The Schedule reflects how foundation year outcomes will build towards achieving intermediate and long-term outcomes over the 10 year life of the Plan. It aims to deliver certainty and transparency for users on how Parks Australia intends to achieve the outcomes under the Plan and meet the dual objectives: to protect and conserve biodiversity and other natural and cultural values; and to provide for ecologically sustainable use of the natural resources within the South-east Network, consistent with the first objective.

This is the third report¹ of progress against activities under the Schedule. Annual reports summarise key achievements for each year, provide progress updates against each activity and next steps. They also provide a commentary of what we have done, what difference it has made and an avenue to communicate what happens next and any necessary re-prioritising Parks Australia may need to do over the life of the Schedule to adapt activities to respond to emerging issues and take on board lessons learnt along the way. Reporting on the Schedule aligns with and complements Parks Australia corporate reporting responsibilities.

These annual progress reports are provided to the South-east CMR Network Forum, the consultative committee established under Strategy 5 (Action 25) of the Plan. The South-east Forum is established to facilitate stakeholder involvement in the management of the Network and to draw on the expertise of marine reserve users and interested community or Indigenous groups to improve management of the Network. The Forum includes representatives from the commercial fishing industry, recreational fishing, tourism industry, oil and

¹ The inaugural report for Year 1 and subsequent report for Year 2 are available on the Parks Australia website, together with a copy of the Schedule, at: www.environment.gov.au/topics/marine/marine-reserves/south-east/management-general-information).

gas industry, marine science and environmental sectors as well as Indigenous representatives. The annual progress reports are presented to the SE Forum for their consideration and to facilitate their input into the development of proposed activities for the next year.

Notable issues/events for 2015/16

- The extension of timelines and resourcing requirements for the independent Review of Commonwealth Marine Reserves resulted in some impacts on activities in the South-east Network. The expectation of the conclusion of the Review resulted in delays to some planned activities, including the meeting of the SE Forum scheduled for August 2015. The Review provided an opportunity to gather the views of Forum members on structure and function of consultative arrangements. A number of planned activities were not undertaken and may continue to be delayed into the future. Activities that will be delayed into Year 4 included the development of an audit framework and a web-based tool for reporting non-compliance and the establishment of a performance monitoring program.
- The Federal election in the beginning of July 2016 also impacted on activities in the SE Network, with some activities being delayed due to the potential for interactions with caretaker conventions. For example, the community survey planned for May – June 2016 will be delayed until later in 2016.

Summary of Activities for 2015/16

- Activities planned– 34 activities
- Activities completed– 18 activities (includes ongoing activities such as issuing authorisations, compliance/enforcement activities, also activities completed in 2015/16 that were rolled over from 2014/15)
- Activities commenced– 10 activities (includes activities commenced and completed, and also activities commenced that will be completed in Year 4)

Key achievements for 2015/16

- The South-east Forum met once during 2015/16, continuing important collaboration across a range of issues under the Schedule. The second meeting for the year was scheduled to take place in April, but was then delayed and then postponed due to limited availability of attendees. The November 2015 meeting was productive, progressing important issues, such as the revised draft of the Communication and Education Strategy, and welcoming the attendance of Indigenous representation for the first time.
- Parks Australia concluded development of new collaborative agreements with state agencies in South Australia, replacing an existing tripartite MOU with separate bilateral MOUs with Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) for the provision of reserve management and compliance services in Commonwealth marine reserves. The new MOUs provide broader scope for future collaboration and partnerships on marine reserve management issues and activities.
- In partnership with commercial fishing industry and other government agencies progress was made in improving marine reserve awareness, with on-going monitoring and support of the CMR Alert Service and delivery of an online training course for commercial fishers in the SECMRN.
- A preliminary draft of a Research and Monitoring Strategy for the Network was prepared for discussion and will be progressed with input from the Forum members in 2016-17.

- Research partnerships continued with a range of organisations primarily through close collaboration with the National Environmental Science Programme (NESP) Marine Biodiversity Hub and associated institutions. The Marine Biodiversity Hub completed a major project in the South-east to enhance our understanding of the conservation values of the Tasman Fracture CMR. A second project (Autonomous Underwater Vehicle and Baited Underwater Video Surveys) is scheduled for second half of 2016.

Strategy 1: improve knowledge and understanding of the conservation values of the marine reserves network and the pressures on those values.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
<p>Knowledge gaps identified and a scientific research and monitoring strategy developed that includes priority research areas. [Reference 1.1: A1, A4]</p>	<p>A draft Research and Monitoring Strategy for the South-east Network was prepared that outlines research and monitoring objectives and priorities. The draft strategy will take into account comments from the SE Forum on the Implementation Schedule and the Forum will have an opportunity to provide input and comment during the 2016-17 year.</p>	<p>Parks Australia intends to present a draft strategy to Forum meetings in 2016 with a view to finalising the strategy in 2017.</p>
<p>South-east monitoring program developed and priority monitoring areas identified. [Reference 1.2: A1, A2, A3, A4]</p>	<p>The Marine Hub of the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) Marine Biodiversity Hub continues to provide advice to Parks Australia to support the development of a comprehensive monitoring program for the SECMRN. Researchers from the Hub have been involved in a number of workshops held in 2015/16 to progress thinking on research and monitoring priorities and key performance indicators for ongoing monitoring.</p>	<p>Parks Australia will continue to work with members of the Biodiversity Hub to build on their accumulated knowledge of the SE values and pressures to inform and progress the development of the SE Network Research and Monitoring strategy.</p>
<p>Partnerships are identified and in place to actively support and deliver identified South-east research and monitoring priorities. [Reference 1.3: A4, A3]</p>	<p>Existing collaboration with the Marine Biodiversity Hub of the NESP has continued to deliver outcomes in the South-east to improve our understanding of what information is available in relation to the conservation values and pressures, and how we might use this information in developing and implementing a monitoring framework.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

STRATEGY 2: MINIMISE IMPACTS OF ACTIVITIES THROUGH EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS, DECISION-MAKING AND MANAGEMENT OF RESERVE-SPECIFIC ISSUES.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
<p>Individual activities assessed consistent with the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation</i> (EPBC) Act Regulations, in line with the Management Plan and the CMR national estate policy and decision making framework. [Reference 2.1: A5, A6, A7, A8]</p>	<p>Two authorisations for scientific research purposes were issued or are under consideration in the South-east Network.</p> <p>Institutes issued with permits to undertake research in the South-east included CSIRO (including NERP projects) and University of Tasmania. Reserves included Tasman Fracture, Freycinet, Flinders, and Huon CMRs.</p> <p>Individual advice was provided on 43 public vessel status requests. These requests relate to international vessels that wish to undertake marine scientific research in Australian waters.</p>	<p>Individual activities will continue to be assessed as required under the EPBC Act.</p> <p>Opportunities for streamlining administrative processes are ongoing and will be considered in parallel with initiatives to establish procedures for estate-wide assessment and authorisation of activities at the estate level.</p>
<p>Activities subject to class approvals are managed consistent with the management plan and the CMR national estate policy and decision making framework, including consultation with affected stakeholders. [Reference 2.2: A5, A8]</p>	<p>No requests for revisions to the class approvals were received in 2015-16.</p>	<p>Class approvals will be reviewed over time, and in response to stakeholder issues, to improve effectiveness and minimise regulatory burden on users.</p>
<p>A class approval for charter fishing for tourism purposes will be investigated by Parks Australia in accordance with the management plan. [Reference 2.3: A9]</p>	<p>A class approval arrangement for commercial tourism (charter fishing operations) remains under consideration by Parks Australia, but a preliminary assessment undertaken in 2014/15 suggested that the level of interest within the industry did not justify significant resourcing. Currently, CTO operators in the SE network have long term</p>	<p>Parks Australia will consider class approval policies in 2016-18. Primary focus is ensuring that operators are aware of CMRs and permit requirements, and that operators provide reports on their activities so that Parks Australia can better understand their needs and identify opportunities to enhance use of the Network.</p>

	permits.	
Internal activity audit program [Reference 2.4: A10]	No action	Parks Australia aims to develop an internal compliance audit framework over the next 4 years, as an estate level project.
Conditions placed on assessments will be adapted/modified to address changes in environmental risks/threats and changing marine use circumstances. [Reference 2.5: A10]	No modified conditions placed on assessments during the 2015/16 year.	Activities will be implemented as required.

STRATEGY 3: PROTECT THE CONSERVATION VALUES OF THE MARINE RESERVES NETWORK THROUGH MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENTS.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
Hazard identification, hazard/risk assessment and control of hazards/risks evaluation. [Reference 3.1: A11, A14, links to A18]	This activity was progressed in 2015/16 and a draft of the Hazard and risk assessment plan for the Network was presented to the SE Forum for discussion at the November 2016 meeting. This draft has been revised based on comments provided by the SE Forum but still needs to be discussed with primary response agencies prior to completion.	This project aims to be finalised in 2016. The plan will then be placed on the Parks Australia website for information to users.
Marine debris programmes supported for identified priorities. [Reference 3.2: A14]	Parks Australia undertook a preliminary assessment of opportunities to support marine debris programmes, but was unable to identify projects that aligned with the resourcing available	Parks will continue to seek opportunities to support relevant marine debris initiatives where resourcing is available

Standard operating procedures for incident response updated and maintained. [Reference 3.3: A11, A12, A13]	Standard Operating Procedures for incident response are being updated and will align with outcomes of 3.1 above.	This activity will be finalised in 2016 and includes key links to activity 3.1 above.
Environmental advice is provided for incidents that may threaten conservation values. [Reference 3.4: A14]	Parks Australia provides advice on the likelihood and consequence of incidents that may occur in or adjacent to CMRs that may threaten the values of those reserves as required/requested under Standard Operating Procedures with key environmental incident response partners (AMSA and State government agencies in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia). No incidents occurred in 2015-16.	Ongoing as required.

STRATEGY 4: FACILITATE COMPLIANCE WITH THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN THROUGH EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
Compliance monitoring using aerial and vessel surveillance is implemented based on annual risk-based planning. [Reference 4.1: A15, A18, A20, A22]	Parks Australia completed its 2015/16 Compliance Plan and a tactical plan for South-east operations (links to all other compliance-related activities) continuing on from 2014/15 (Year 2) Plan and building on outcomes and lessons learnt from the South-east industry risk assessment workshops held in March 2014 and taking into account outcomes from the South-east compliance risk workshop held on 20 March 2014. The program included work to standardise the risk methodology and delivered chartered aerial surveillance and surface surveillance activities in collaboration with the Tasmanian Police.	Parks Australia will review the outcomes of the 2015/16 compliance operational plan, in preparation for development of 2016/17 plan. Outcomes and current context will be considered, including future resource availability from Maritime Border Command and other agencies.
Vessel Monitoring System Alert operational in South-east Network [Reference 4.2: A15, A16]	The CMR Alert Service forms part of the vessel monitoring schedule to the Memorandum of Understanding with the	Successful operation of the CMR Alert Service will continue in future years with updates/maintenance as required.

	Australian Fisheries Management Authority and was maintained for SE Network operators over the year. The CMR Alert service is expected to raise the level of voluntary compliance by the fishing industry within the South-east CMR Network.	
VMS Alert Evaluated. [Reference 4.3: A15, A16]	The VMS Alert Service was refined as required to optimise support for industry.	Data generated by the CMR Alert service is currently being analysed with results to be delivered during year 4.
Maps and data are available on our website and accessible to CMR marine users and commercial charting companies are aware of our products. [Reference 4.4: A16]	South-east Network shape files have been made available for individuals to download, or for commercial use via individual licensing agreement. A survey to assess needs for future mapping products (e.g. different formats) to take place in late 2014.	Shape files continue to be maintained on website. If additional preferred formats are identified we will have new versions of shape files added to website accordingly.
Vessel surveys to verify CMR marine user charting needs. [Reference 4.5: A16]	Parks Australia developed an agreement with the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) to investigate the needs of the Tasmanian rock lobster fishing industry for electronic maps and best ways to meet these needs.	Recommendations and outputs from this project are planned to be delivered in 2016/17
Industry understanding of compliance is progressed and cooperative compliance arrangements promoted. [Reference 4.6: A16, A17, A18, A22]	Industry understanding of compliance will be progressed through the development of an online training platform (see below) and through meetings with industry representatives to seek input on processes for assessing compliance risks in the Network.	An industry compliance workshop is scheduled for 2016/17 (Year 4). User guide for South-east Network released in July 2013 to provide user-specific information from management plan, titled "A Guide for users of the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network" will be reviewed in 2016/17 to ensure content is up to date (Year 4).
Industry education package developed, promoted and	Parks Australia has worked in collaboration with South	Parks Australia will continue to work with SETFIA to

<p>supported by boat owners/concession holders and modules achieved by operators. [Reference 4.7: A16, A17, A22]</p>	<p>east Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) to progress an online training program for commercial fishing industry in the SE Network. The training course was launched online in 2016 and has now been completed by about 50 commercial fishers. This online training program consists of three modules to provide commercial fishers with a general overview about marine reserves, an introduction to the South-east CMR Network, and details about the rules for use of the Network that are specific to fishing activities. The training course aims to reinforce the information in the management plan and class approval, to ensure that commercial fishers are provided with relevant information and tools that they need to continue to operate responsibly in the Network.</p>	<p>promote the online training course and encourage fishers to enrol. The online training course will be evaluated at the end of Year 4 to assess the effectiveness of this approach and potential for expansion to other uses or Networks.</p>
<p>Website tool initiated and promoted for the public reporting of suspected non-compliant activity. [Reference 4.8: A19, A21]</p>	<p>This activity was unable to be progressed in Year 3 due to resourcing constraints</p>	<p>This activity will be progressed in Year 4</p>
<p>Compliance activity and enforcement data is appropriately collected, securely managed, and utilised for planning and reporting purposes and effectively supports investigations. [Reference 4.9: A15, A19]</p>	<p>Parks Australia continued use of its Compliance Enforcement Management System (CEMS). This system documents compliance information related to the South-east Network. It is an appropriate and secure tool to store and analyse compliance data.</p> <p>Parks Australia internal procedures and methodology continues to be reviewed and refined for compliance risk based planning, to ensure these activities are undertaken consistently, efficiently, and effectively.</p>	<p>The Compliance Enforcement Management System will continue to be the primary tool for the storage and analysis of compliance data for the South-east Network.</p>

<p>Effective and efficient working partnerships and agreements with regional marine compliance agencies. [Reference 4.10: A15, A18, A20]</p>	<p>Contractual arrangements continued in 2015-16 with the Tasmanian Police and PIRSA (Primary Industries and Regions South Australia) for the delivery of surface surveillance patrols in the South-east Network. The arrangements align with the Annual Compliance Operational Plan, and ensured a strong compliance presence across the Network.</p> <p>Parks Australia developed a new Memorandum of Understanding with PIRSA to better support ongoing compliance and reserve management services. One notable addition to this MoU is that it now provides a mechanism for sharing of VMS data between agencies.</p>	<p>Annual agreements with relevant agencies are reviewed annually, to assess outputs from the previous 12 months and consider emerging risks and priorities.</p>
	<p>Parks Australia worked through initiatives agreed between agencies at the South-east Marine Region Compliance Risk Assessment Workshop held on 20 March 2014 in Adelaide. The discussions from the workshop were used to inform annual risk planning for the South-east Network for 2015/16.</p>	<p>Compliance risk assessment workshops are scheduled to be held with compliance agencies in March 2017 to update risk ratings and progress the development of the compliance operational plan</p>
<p>Regional enforcement partners are trained to achieve a thorough understanding of their powers and are confident in executing their warden powers under the EPBC Act. [Reference 4.11: A20]</p>	<p>Warden training for Tasmanian Police was undertaken in Year 3 (2015/16) across two days in Hobart to bring all available patrol officers up to date on powers under the EPBC Act and current procedures. .</p>	<p>The online warden toolbox will be maintained to provide guidelines and templates to assist wardens to undertake their duties on behalf of Parks Australia.</p>
<p>Illegal activity enforced to achieve individual and general deterrence to reduce non-compliance incidences. [Reference 4.12: A21]</p>	<p>A range of enforcement actions were taken in response to incidents of non compliance in the South-east Network. Information related to enforcement actions is presented in</p>	<p>Enforcement action will continue to be taken as required and appropriate in response to incidents of non compliance.</p>

	the Parks Australia annual report.	
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STRATEGY 5: PROMOTE COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF, AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN, THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MARINE RESERVES NETWORK.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
South-east Network communication and education plan. [Reference 5.1: A23]	A revised draft of the Communication and Education Strategy was discussed by the Forum at the November 2015 meeting. This draft was further revised based on the comments provided and a final version of the document will be circulated to members for final comment out of session.	The final version of the Communication and Education Strategy will be made available on the website once final comments for the Forum have been included (by end of 2016).
Signage audit conducted and priority signage projects delivered. [Reference 5.2: A23]	A report on the Freycinet signage project was presented at the SE Forum meeting in November 2015. Final signs for the original project in partnership with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife were installed at Maria Island in June 2016. Extension of the signage project includes development of signage for Deal Island (within the Beagle CMR) to be installed by end of 2016.	The scope of the SE Network signage program will be extended in year 4 and will investigate other locations around Tasmania and possibly Wilsons Promontory in Victoria.
User group meetings facilitated for the exchange of knowledge, understanding and participation in the management of marine reserves (such as for the commercial fishing industry and commercial tourism charter fishing industry). [Reference 5.3: A24]	No additional for stakeholder meetings were identified in Year 3	Will continue to investigate opportunities to engage with relevant sectoral groups.

Community initiatives. [Reference 5.4: A23]	<p>Potential community initiatives were discussed at the November 2015 SE Forum meeting.</p> <p>One idea that emerged from this resulted in Parks Australia forming an agreement with TARFish to work towards production of a revised version of the Recreational Fishing Code of Practice to support better understanding of responsible fishing and awareness of marine reserves.</p>	Progress on this project will be reported to the SE Forum meetings in Year 4.
Key CMR users are effectively consulted and advise on the implementation of the management plan in the interim before formal consultative structures are put in place. [Reference 5.5: A24]	South-east Forum meetings in Year 3 were delayed by a number of factors as mentioned in the introduction. The meeting planned for August was held over until November and the meeting planned for April 2016 was delayed to June and then re-scheduled for August.	The Forum will continue in 2016/17 until future consultative structures are formalised consistent with other Networks in accordance with recommendations from the independent Review of CMRs (see below).
Future consultative mechanism. [Reference 5.6: A25]	<p>During 2015 the SE Forum members had an opportunity to talk directly with Mr Peter Cochrane (Co-chair, CMR Review Bioregional Advisory Panel) and provide views on the operation of the SE Forum, appropriate future consultative mechanisms and other associated issues. These comments were welcomed by the Review Chairs and have subsequently shaped the recommendations of the Review.</p>	The CMR Review reports are being considered by the Australian Government and is expected that these reports will be released in the second half of 2016. Implications of recommendations for the SE Forum will be considered and advised in due course

STRATEGY 6: SUPPORT INVOLVEMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN MANAGEMNT OF COMMONWEALTH MARINE RESERVES.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
Indigenous representation on SE Forum. [Reference 6.1:	Indigenous representatives are currently invited to attend	Parks will continue to support the involvement of

A27, A28, links to A23-25]	and participate in SE Forums. In Year 3 we welcomed the addition of representatives from the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations and the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance.	Indigenous representatives in the SE Forum and the management of the Network.
Indigenous cultural values within the South-east region are updated and, where appropriate, are communicated to the wider public. [Reference 6.2: A27, A27]	A desktop review of available information on Indigenous cultural values in the SE Network was progressed, with the aim to inform opportunities to improve communication of cultural values of CMRs.	Further work to improve understanding of cultural heritage values will be informed by development of an estate-wide approach
Management plan administered in compliance with the requirements of the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> . [Reference 6.3: A29]	Under the Management Plan, Parks Australia is required to comply with the requirements of the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> . Section 8 of the EBPC Act provides that the Act does not affect the operation of the Native Title Act. Specifically, that management of the South-east Network does not affect the operation of section 211 of the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> that provides that holders of native title rights covering certain activities do not need authorisation required by other laws to engage in those activities.	Ongoing.

STRATEGY 7: EVALUATE AND REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN THROUGH MONITORING AND REVIEW.

ACTIVITY OUTPUT AND DESCRIPTION	YEAR 3 PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
Performance measures developed and monitoring commenced (management effectiveness). [Reference 7.1:	SE Network Management continues to be involved in broader discussions around development of performance measures for marine reserves. The drafting of a research	Alignment of Parks Australia performance and management effectiveness measures with South-east Network is scheduled for 2016/17. Performance indicators

A30]	and monitoring strategy to be discussed by the Forum in August will be the first step in establishing monitoring priorities that will form part of the performance assessment process.	will be developed with SE Forum member input.
Implementation schedule agreed and yearly progress reports prepared on how we are performing. [Reference 7.2: A31, A32]	<p>Implementation Schedule 2013/14 – 2016/17 and Year 1 Progress Report (2013/14) were accepted by SE Forum at the 27 August 2014 meeting.</p> <p>Year 2 progress report was presented to SE Forum meeting in November 2015.</p>	The Year 3 Progress Report will be finalised and presented for acceptance at the first SE Forum in August 2016. Based on the outcomes of the Year 3 Progress Report (once accepted by the SE Forum), Parks Australia will incorporate lessons learnt, adaptive management responses and other recommendations into activities scheduled for 2016/17.
South-east information to the Department of the Environment and Parks Australia annual reports coordinated. [Reference 7.3: A31]	The Parks Australia Annual Report for 2013/14 made particular mention of the South-east Network Management Plan, the Freycinet CMR signage project, and the CMR Alert service. A copy is available on our website at: www.environment.gov.au/about-us/accountability-reporting/annual-reports	The Department of the Environment and Parks Australia annual reports for 2015/16 will be made available on our website.