

A new approach to managing the NSW marine estate

FAQs 2 – Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel

March 2013

A **Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel** (Expert Knowledge Panel) will be established in response to **Principal Recommendation B** of the *Report of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW*.

What is the Expert Knowledge Panel's role?

The Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel will provide independent expert advice spanning ecological, economic, social sciences and coastal land use planning to the Marine Estate Management Authority to address key knowledge gaps and support evidence based decision making.

Who will be on the Expert Knowledge Panel?

The Expert Knowledge Panel will report directly to the Marine Estate Management Authority and will include a chairperson and four core members with expertise in an economic, social, marine or coastal science, or coastal land use planning related discipline and with relevant business, management or policy experience.

The Expert Knowledge Panel will have the flexibility to utilise other experts in addition to the core membership as required to complete specific tasks.

The Expert Knowledge Panel chairperson will also be a member of the Marine Estate Management Authority as recommended by the Audit. This will ensure that the Authority has a direct connection with independent scientific advice and the application of science, including social science and economics. The government has already selected the Expert Knowledge Panel chairperson and is calling for expressions of interest regarding member positions, for news and updates please visit www.marine.nsw.gov.au.

The small secretariat within the Department of Primary Industries that supports operation of the Marine Estate Management Authority will also support the operation of the Expert Knowledge Panel.

What will the Expert Knowledge Panel do?

The core task of the Expert Knowledge Panel is to provide the Authority with independent scientific expertise to assist with the formulation of the strategic direction and priorities for the NSW marine estate.

The Expert Knowledge Panel will operate under task specific terms of reference set by the Marine Estate Management Authority, in consultation with the Expert Knowledge Panel chairperson.

The Expert Knowledge Panel will contribute to the key initiatives – the threat and risk assessment framework, Marine Estate Management Strategy and development and implementation of marine park management reforms.

The Expert Knowledge Panel will provide advice including recommendations on the modification and adoption of draft research strategies, and annual research business plans relating to the NSW marine estate.

The Expert Knowledge Panel will also oversee specific projects including a six month assessment of recreational fishing access to ocean beaches and headlands in marine park zones commencing early 2013, using threat and risk assessment.

The work undertaken by the Expert Knowledge Panel will be task and time bound. The Panel will convene meetings and workshops involving external and departmental scientists, managers and stakeholders and

invite input as required. It may also undertake peer reviews of departmental science and policy documents, or engage specialist expertise where necessary and within the scope of its terms of reference. All Expert Knowledge Panel advice will be made publicly available.

How will the Expert Knowledge Panel work with existing agencies?

Research and monitoring knowledge acquisition programs will continue to be delivered by agencies including the Department of Primary Industries and the Office of Environment and Heritage. Senior agency scientists will liaise with the Expert Knowledge Panel, provide information and data, and attend meetings and workshops as required to enable the Panel to fulfil its tasks. The advice of the Expert Knowledge Panel will in turn influence the future direction and priorities of marine estate research and monitoring programs.

How have public submissions influenced our response?

A large number of submissions explicitly supported the establishment of an independent scientific committee and support holistic management of the marine estate based on the best available science. In response, the government's approach is to implement the intent of the Audit's recommendations, through the appointment of the Expert Knowledge Panel, and the appointment of the Panel chairperson to the Marine Estate Management Authority.

Some concern was expressed over the cost, establishment and ongoing role of an independent scientific committee and of local committees. In response, the government's approach is to establish an Expert Knowledge Panel that can draw on additional task specific expertise. Flexibility in the potential to access a wider pool of experts and undertake tasks concurrently are key advantages of this approach over a more static independent scientific committee and separate local committees.

More information

More information is available at www.marine.nsw.gov.au

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