



## Minutes

<b>Meeting</b>	Solitary Island Marine Park Advisory Committee (SIMPAC)		
<b>Meeting #</b>	2020.1	<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 22 April 2020
<b>Location</b>	Via VC and phone	<b>Time</b>	10:00 – 12:00pm
<b>Attendees</b>	<p><b>Solitary Island Marine Park Advisory Committee members</b></p> <p>Mr Aj Perkins - Aboriginal culture  Ms Tricia Beatty - Commercial fishing  Ms Sally Whitelaw - Local government  Dr Duan March - Marine conservation  Prof. Stephen Smith - Marine science  Mr Ian Shaw - Recreational boating  Mr Neil Manson - Recreational fishing  Mr Stephen Sawtell - Recreational water use  Mr Mike Davey – Tourism  Dr Michael Featherstone - Spear fishing</p> <p><b>Solitary Island Marine Park Advisory Committee alternate members</b></p> <p>Mrs Karen Dallas - Recreational water use  Ms Nicola Fraser - Marine conservation</p> <p><b>DPI Staff</b></p> <p>Sarah Fairfull - Director Aquatic Environment  Peter Gallagher -Program Leader Marine Operations  Rodney James - Program Leader Marine Planning  Nicole Strehling - Senior Manager Marine Planning,  Anthony Harding – Acting Solitary Island Marine Park Manager  Andrew Page - Marine Park Manager  Matt Dasey - Marine Park Planning</p>		
<b>Apologies</b>	Ms Elise Currey - Maritime industry		
<b>Prepared by</b>	DPI		

### Previous meeting

Action	Status
N/A	

### This meeting

<p><b>Agenda Item 1 – Welcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthony Harding, Acting Manager Solitary Island Marine Park (SIMP) welcomed members and alternate members to the newly appointed committee.</li> <li>Acknowledgement of Country provided by A/Manager SIMP.</li> </ul>
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**Agenda Item 2 - Meeting overview & agency participant introductions**

- A/Manager of SIMP gave the meeting overview and introduced DPI staff presenting and/or observing

**Agenda Item 3 - Member Introductions**

- All members and alternate members provided a brief self-introduction.

**Agenda Item 4 - Marine park overview & team**

- A/Manager SIMP provided a brief overview of the marine park including staffing, vehicle and vessel assets, and functional relationships to fisheries research and fisheries compliance.

**Agenda Item 5 - Overview of MPAC Handbook**

- The new committee was provided with an overview of the role and operation of marine park advisory committees from Peter Gallagher, Program Leader Marine Operations. More detailed information is available in the attached summary or in the Marine Park Advisory Committee (MPAC) Handbook at [https://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1154804/Marine-Park-Advisory-Committee-Handbook-August-2019.pdf](https://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1154804/Marine-Park-Advisory-Committee-Handbook-August-2019.pdf).
- The handbook was reviewed and updated in 2019 to support more effective operation of MPACs. The primary role of MPACs is to provide a voice for local communities in the management of the NSW marine estate and local marine parks.
- MPACs are non-statutory, advisory and voluntary. They are made up of members who provide advice based on their expertise, rather than representatives of constituents.
- MPAC members are eligible to claim certain meeting expenses as outlined in the handbook.
- MPACs are advisory and do not have decision making authority with respect to the exercise of authority by the relevant Ministers
- Alternate members have also been appointed and can act in the place of a standing member who is unable to attend a meeting.
- Members were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Handbook including the Code-of-Conduct and pay particular attention to the conflict of interest, public comment and confidentiality provisions.
- Committee membership details and more information can be viewed on the marine estate web site by following the links at <https://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/advisory-bodies/marine-park-advisory-committees>.

Further questions should be directed to the marine park manager in the first instance.

**Agenda Item 6 - Recommendation of Chair**

- No nomination for Chair was received.
- DPI had previously suggested that the MPAC may want to consider deferring recommending a Chair until a face-to-face meeting is held.
- The following options were considered and voted upon:

**Option 1 –**

- Defer the recommendation until a face-to-face meeting is held (noting there is no time frame for the resumption of face to face activities known at this stage due to social distancing and travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic).
- DPI would circulate the nomination prior to the face-to-face meeting
- SIMPAC makes a recommendation at the face-to-face meeting

**Option 2 –**

- DPI will circulate the nomination material with the Agenda before the next meeting
- SIMPAC to vote on a recommendation at the next meeting after considering the nomination(s)

The Committee moved to adopt Option 2.

**ACTION:**

**20.01** – A/Manager SIMP to circulate the nomination material before the next meeting and committee members to vote at the next meeting.

**Agenda Item 7 - Marine Estate Reform Overview**

Sarah Fairfull, Director Aquatic Environment (DAE) provided a summary of the background and current state of the NSW marine estate reforms:

- The reforms commenced in 2011 following an independent scientific audit of marine parks. The audit made two key recommendations – to bring the management of the entire marine estate under one legislative and administrative structure aligned with catchment management, and to ensure the science is overseen by an independent expert knowledge panel with social, ecological and economic expertise.
- The 2013 NSW Government response to the audit agreed that the marine estate should be managed as one continuous system, that there should be a greater focus on Aboriginal involvement, and that there should be a stronger focus on integrating social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes.
- The Marine Park Authority was abolished and replaced with a new Marine Estate Management Authority. An independent Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel was also established.
- The Marine Estate Management Act commenced in 2014 to implement these reforms.
- Two Ministers are tasked with responsibility for the reforms – currently the Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW (Adam Marshall) and the Minister for Energy and Environment (Matt Kean). The Marine Estate Management Authority has completed several key projects to implement the reforms. Three of the main projects relevant to marine park management reforms are:

**Marine Estate Community Survey 2014**

- Surveyed over 1,700 people state-wide to identify the values they derive from the marine estate, their perceived threats to those values and opportunities to address these threats and improve management.
- The survey found that the health of the marine estate – good water quality, diverse and healthy habitats and diverse and abundant marine life – are core values that underpin social, cultural and economic values we derive from the marine estate. It also found that the health of the marine estate is intrinsically linked to the cultural health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.
- Pollution and habitat degradation were found to be the greatest threats to these core values.

**Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment 2017 (TARA)**

- The TARA identified and prioritised the greatest threats to the community values of the marine estate. This reaffirmed that the greatest threats are pollution, clearing of habitats, estuary entrance modifications, changes to flows, climate change amongst others.

**Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028**

- The [Marine Estate Management Strategy](#) sets the over-arching strategy for the State government to coordinate the management of the marine estate and includes nine initiatives addressing water quality, coastal habitat management, climate change, threatened species recovery, Aboriginal involvement in Sea Country, sustainable fishing, aquaculture and boating, enhancing social, cultural and economic benefits and delivering effective governance.
- The NSW Government has committed \$45.7 M of funding for the first two years of implementation of the Strategy.
- Over 70% of the funding has been targeted to date at addressing water quality and coastal habitats state-wide. Eight Aboriginal staff are delivering positive projects to engage Aboriginal people in Sea Country management.

- More information is available at [www.marine.nsw.gov.au](http://www.marine.nsw.gov.au). Information that is particularly relevant to marine park planning will be provided in the document 'Marine Park Advisory Committee Background Material' that will be forwarded to the committee for their information.

#### **Agenda Item 8 - Introduction and update on marine park planning process to date**

Dr Rodney James, Program Leader Marine Planning provided the following overview of the marine park planning process to date:

- DPI has been asked to prepare a draft marine park management plan by around the middle of 2020, with Batemans and Port Stephens—Great Lakes marine parks being priorities.
- The draft management plan will guide management of the marine park over 10 years and will set out actions and programs at a broad level.
- Further detailed work will follow to implement any changes to marine park management rules, including spatial management or zones.
- The MPACs advice will be sought in both development of the draft management plan, and any changes to management rules or zones as a result of the management plan.
- The aim is to complete the management rules process by around the end of 2020.
- So far, developing draft management plans for NSW marine parks has included:
  - developing the management planning process with input from the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel
  - piloting the process at BMP, including:
    - a series of workshops on park values and threats in 2018 involving the former BMPAC, Aboriginal communities, State agencies and local councils
    - development of draft management objectives with the former BMPAC
    - a survey of the community and visitors in late 2019
- Building on the work at BMP to pilot a streamlined process at Port Stephens—Great Lakes Marine Park, including three workshops with outgoing marine park advisory committee members and new nominees, State agencies and local councils in October 2019.
- Four reports summarising this Batemans and Port Stephens-Great Lakes work will soon be published on the marine estate web site for the information of committee members.

#### **Agenda Item 9 - Marine park planning between now and June 30 – key tasks and time frames**

The committee received a briefing from Nicole Strehling, Senior Manager Marine Planning (SMMP) on the next steps on the marine park management planning process as summarised below:

- Development of new marine park management plans will use a new approach that focuses on conserving all marine park values – social, cultural, economic and environmental, and managing key threats to those values.
- To conserve all values and manage priority threats to those values, the process is broader than just zoning. All actions to address threats must be considered including research, education, permitting, on-ground rehabilitation, infrastructure, compliance, policy etc.
- Section 48 of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* sets out the process that must be followed to develop new marine park management plans:
  - state the environmental, economic and social values to be conserved by the marine park,
  - identify threats to those values,
  - state the management objectives of the marine park in relation to those values and threats,
  - specify actions to achieve those management objectives, based on a consideration of risks, and
  - set out the programs to be implemented for managing the marine park or aquatic reserve

- Work has already started on this process for Batemans and Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Parks. The task is now to build on that work and undertake the process for each marine park.
- COVID-19 restrictions will make the process more challenging, but DPI will aim to work through the process as efficiently as possible and have a draft management plan prepared by the middle of the year.
- This is a two-stage process. The management plan will map out recommended management actions to conserve values and manage threats. Some of those actions may include zoning, permit requirements or other regulation. Others may not involve regulation – for example research or education.
- The regulatory actions from the management plan will be applied in legislation through new management rules. The process that is starting now is the management plan, and the process to develop the detail of management rules will follow the planning process.
- The legislation requires a minimum of a two-month community consultation period for the draft management plan, and a two-month community consultation period for draft management rules. The MPACs advice will be sought in planning that consultation to ensure the community has the best opportunity to comment and provide input.
- The MPAC Handbook notes that more frequent meetings may be required when a draft management plan is being developed.
- Members agreed to meet in early May and June to progress work on the management planning process. Members agreed to receive information out of session for their review and further discussion at the May meeting
- The Batemans pilot workshops noted the need for consistency across NSW marine parks where appropriate. Some issues are unique to local areas and require a local solution, but there are others that may be common and may benefit from a consistent approach across all marine parks.
- Marine park planning discussions are progressing with all five mainland marine parks. It is hoped that it will be helpful to share and build on ideas from other parks as the process proceeds.
- Suggestions for improving the process are welcome. The committee agreed that issues with the process will be identified and solutions negotiated as they arise, particularly around any COVID-19 challenges.

**ACTION:**

**20.04** – A/Manager SIMP to distribute the values document along with a background document to SIMPAC

**Agenda Item 10 - Other business**

- Aboriginal cultural awareness training for all members will be provided once face to face meetings resume.
- The possibility of using Zoom for future meetings.

**Next meeting**

**Tuesday 12 May 2020. 2 pm – 4 pm**

Zoom video conference.