

Community Reference Committee for the proposed South Coast Marine Park

Meeting One Communique

15-16 December 2021, Esperance Civic Centre

The Community Reference Committee for the proposed South Coast Marine Park (CRC) held their inaugural meeting on 15-16 December in Esperance. The meeting was attended by Traditional Owner joint management partners (Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation), Sector Advisory Group (SAG) Chairs, and staff from the Departments of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DCBA) and Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). The CRC is chaired by Hon Francis Logan.

Welcome to country was conducted by Doc Reynolds and Donna Beach who spoke to a desire to see a marine park across the Recherche and shared an inspiring video of their ranger operations in the marine area around Esperance.

Mark Webb, Director General DBCA, Heather Brayford, Deputy Director General DPIRD and John Keesing, Conservation and Parks Commissioner each addressed the CRC, thanking the Committee for their nomination and reiterating government's commitment to creating a south coast marine park. They also emphasised the transparent community consultation process that Government has committed to.

DCBA and DPIRD officers explained the roles of agencies under their respective legislation (*Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* and *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*), emphasising the collaborative approach to the planning process between the two agencies that also includes the traditional owners as proposed joint management partners.

The focus of discussion in the first meeting included:

- CRC member familiarisation with each other and their respective experiences and backgrounds;
- background to the proposal and key biological, cultural and sustainable use criteria to be applied in making decisions about the marine park boundary;
- familiarisation with the marine park planning process;
- background information on key industries and activities including recreational fishing and commercial fishing.

The CRC also heard from Sector Advisory Group (SAG) chairs about the nature and value of their industry or sector. This included marine transport, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, tourism, conservation organisations, marine science/research, and local environmental and climate action forum.

The study area for the proposed marine park extends from Bremer Bay to the SA/WA border. A key challenge for the committee has been to reach a position to recommend a proposed marine park boundary. Early confirmation of a boundary is a prerequisite for more detailed planning. While no recommendation was made, discussion ensued about the pros and cons of the DBCA proposed boundary. Members requested additional information and felt the need to hold further discussions within their respective communities. The CRC will confirm their recommendation on the proposed boundary in the second meeting which is scheduled for March 2022.

Hon Fran Logan, Chair