

Stakeholder engagement regarding the south coast marine park proposal



Esperance focus group workshop – commercial fishing and aquaculture industry

12th March 2020

Summary Report

Background

The Western Australian State Government's Plan for Our Parks is an initiative to create five million hectares of new national parks, marine parks and conservation reserves by 2024. As part of this initiative a marine park on the south coast was identified as a key priority.

A series of focus group workshops were undertaken to help inform the development of the proposed south coast marine park planning process.

This focus group workshop was held with commercial fishers and the aquaculture industry to tap into their experience and expertise to gain:

- A clearer understanding of issues important to stakeholders (values)
- Clarity regarding stakeholder's key concerns that need to be addressed during the planning process
- Development of a study area boundary

Workshop outputs

What participants value about the south coast marine areas

Values
2016 Demersal Scalefish Report said excellent levels i.e. no threat to stocks.
Access to fishing grounds.
Area in good shape - not degraded.
Fresh seafood provision to tourism industry as an eco-experience, tourists value local products.
High-energy coast limits access.
Isolation limits access.
Livelihood depends on access.
Providing Australian seafood to Australians, currently 70% is imported.
All marine users work well together.
Bioregion works as it is.
Fisheries adequately managing things at the moment.
High level of protection of conservation values due to existing restrictions.
Large area.
Large area for fishing.
Remoteness - less competition for resources.
Fishing is their livelihood.
Reef is important for cray fishing and abalone fisheries.
Shark fishing fish all types of habitat under various scenarios and weather conditions.

Participant concerns

Concerns
All these tools for fisheries stock prevention.
Economic flow on benefits are not apparent for this area.
Economic benefits.
Fisheries has highest management tools in the world and managed on a variety of quotas - can be changed at any time to respond to fish stocks - only a % of biomass.
Green has a misconception about commercial fishing.
How will fishing effort be used - in other areas we were given the information and were locked out.
Inadequate compensation and untimely.
Need to protect fish stocks from commercial fishers is taken care of.
Purse seine currently described as underfished in SOFR.
Recreational fishing is unregulated fishing.
Recreational lobby has tried to resolve fisheries resource sharing issues.
Scallop trawling in the Fitzgerald.
Scallop trawling lost access in Commonwealth waters in the Fitzgerald Commonwealth Marine Park.
SPZ - CALM Act is inconsistent with NHP in regard to purpose of special purpose zones.
Top issue - restriction of fishing area and grounds unnecessarily.
Zones - if both commercial and recreational sectors are using the same method then zoning is inappropriate.
Zoning - don't wish to see zoning used as a resource sharing mechanism between commercial and recreational fishers.
ASL exclusion areas.
Don't want a marine park to create tension between users.
Can't commercially fish hard to diversify into other marine industry.
Inadequate compensation.
Industries operating on the edge due to remoteness.
Last nail in the coffin.
Leave the government out of it - place hasn't changed.
Loss of access for commercial fishers and general public.
Loss of access to beaches.
Loss of fishing ground.
Loss of value of licence and to fishery.
Mental health issues.
More red tape.
Outdated science.
Political decision more than a real scientific need.
Safety - protection.
State Member of Parliament joined to Commonwealth Member of Parliament is a concern.
Transparency of information.
Why 850 000 ha? and not consider what we want.

Concerns

Any restriction is not acceptable.

Concerns that the commonwealth consulted the commercial fishers to their areas of importance, however these are areas that they blocked out.

Existing industries have a track record, so should be given preference to new industries with blue sky projections.

Fisheries compensation needs to prompt. The perception that compensation should be paid out prior to MPA gazettal.

Fishers are already heavily controlled by DPIRD Fisheries - why do we need more controls?

Goldsworthy science on ASL exclusion areas has been shown to be a bit dubious; AFMA result.

Offshore intertidal islands to become sanction of concern.

Politicians making decisions that significantly affect people's livelihoods, but they don't come and talk to them first.

What is the objective of marine reserves in the south coast? Why create them in the first place.

Critical actions identified**Critical action**

Consider using an advisory committee.

Discuss with interest groups how best to engage moving forward.

Working groups?

Compensation to come before Member of Parliament created.

Do not use our data against us.

Economic feasibility study - effects to commercial fisher's vs benefits to tourism.

How much support is there from the community?