

Stakeholder engagement regarding the south coast marine park proposal



Esperance focus group workshop – recreational fishing, environment and tourism

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 recreational fishers, environment and tourism groups 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
Can still bring a 4wd and camp on the beach in UCL in Esperance.
Local knowledge is important.
Research an important zone for the future.
Salisbury an important area for conservation.
Access is important.
Community buy-in.
Community support.
Estuaries.
Fishing.
Generally enjoying the environment.
Local custodians.
Local stewardship.
Local stewardship e.g. enforce own size limits.
Longevity of industry.
Marine wildlife e.g. sea lions, fur seals, bird life.
Nature appreciation.
Longevity.
Peer pressure to do the right thing is common.
Value the environment - but want to be able to use it.
Wilderness experience.
Marine environment health.
Recreational fishing opportunities.
Shark industry.
The future of community connection with the marine area.
The future of Esperance.

Participant concerns

Concerns
Leafy sea dragon colonies have disappeared.
Area access is poor, so SZ are not required.
Area around Esperance has high biodiversity.
Commercial fishers need to move to other species as target species are reduced.
Commonwealth process design.
Cowries are disappearing.
Don't have baseline research that is required.
Fisheries have to go further out at the moment that mgt might assist with.
Impact of humans at Salisbury.
Marine parks can reduce incremental stock changes.
Need social responsibility.
Sealions are decreasing.
SZs must have scientific reasoning.
Two charter operators only go about 30km out.
Up to 20 commercial boats in Esperance.
Why go around Esperance as higher fishing pressure?
Can values be conserved in a different way that isn't within sanctuary zones.
Don't impact on potential economic opportunity.
Don't want to lose ability to diversify.
Loss of access.
Needs to be balance between user groups.
Red tape - can also be a positive e.g. extra level of regulation for oil and gas exploration.
Red tape - levels of bureaucracy.
Safety.
Uncertainty.
What is being protected?
Zoning scheme - and how this may change over time.
Beach driving - want this ability to remain.
Community safety (rock fishing, angel rings, artificial reefs provide safety).
Consider artificial reef additions.
Economic impacts.
If a marine park happens, we need good media representation.
Justifying restrictions.
Maintaining livelihoods of existing commercial fishermen.
Misunderstanding of marine park areas.
Must justify why sanctuary zone restriction are to be put in place.
Safety is a significant reason for adding artificial reefs.
Scientific research should be undertaken.
Weather is key influencer.

Critical actions identified

Critical action
Areas east of Recherche a transition and need research.
Bremer to Stokes is a lower impact site and with high usage that should be considered.
Environment in its entirety should be protected.
Extend across from Recherche to Twilight Cove.
Larger the marine park, more chance of creating sanctuary zones.
Link State and Commonwealth waters.
Needs to be more research on the south coast-including baseline.
Protect whale calving areas towards Twilight.
Recherche and Stokes should be included.
Salisbury needs some type of management framework to manage human impacts.
Salisbury would tie in with the Commonwealth marine park.
State government should have more say in Commonwealth waters.
State should have a higher say in Commonwealth arrangements.
Co-management with the community.
Explain the justification behind the proposal.
Identify key values.
Ongoing community consultation.
Ongoing consultation.
Education of community with what a marine park is, why zoning is needed.
Positive media.
Research.