



OUT21/7269

Dear Ministers Marshall and Kean

Re: Submission of the draft Management Plan for the NSW Mainland Marine Park Network (2021-2031) and associated draft Communications and Engagement Strategy to support the public consultation process

On behalf of the Marine Estate Management Authority (MEMA) I am very pleased to be able to submit to you the draft Management Plan for the NSW Mainland Marine Park Network (2021-2031) (draft network management plan – Attachment A) and associated draft Communications and Engagement Strategy (Attachment B) for Ministers' consideration. The draft management plan is relevant to the network of five mainland marine parks – including Cape Byron, Solitary Islands, Port Stephens-Great Lakes, Jervis Bay and Batemans marine parks. The delivery of the draft management plan by MEMA in June 2021 was flagged in my recent meetings with each of you earlier this year and noted in my letter dated 8 April 2021.

The draft management plan has been developed consistent with the objects of the *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* and requirements under sections 22, 47 and 48 of the Act relevant to the purposes and management planning requirements for marine parks. Under sections 19 and 49 of the Act the relevant Ministers are required to have regard to the relevant Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) and the Strategy in the preparation of a management plan. MEMA has ensured that the draft management plan has been developed with regard to the marine estate Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) (2017) (the relevant threat and risk assessment for the purpose of section 49 of the Act) and the Marine Estate Management Strategy (2018-2028) (for the purpose of section 19 of the Act).

Under section 49 of the Act the Ministers are to cause public notice to be given of the draft management plan and invite submissions for a minimum of two months after the date of the notice, and specify the address to which submissions are to be forwarded. The draft Communications and Engagement Strategy addresses these requirements.

As noted in my letter dated 8 April 2021, the network of marine protected areas, the TARA report of 2017 and the Marine Estate Management Strategy are complementary parts of marine estate management. Together they work to deliver the objects of the Act and MEMA's vision of *a healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community, now and into the future*.

MEMA has worked with the five mainland marine park advisory committees, all partner marine estate agencies (Commonwealth and state) and the independent Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel in preparing both draft plans for the network of five mainland marine parks to deliver on the Government's commitment to deliver a new approach to marine park management.

The draft management plan must satisfy legislative requirements under Part 5, Division 5 of the Act by:

- stating the environmental, economic and social values to be conserved by the parks
- identifying threats to those values
- stating the management objectives in relation to those values and threats

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c/- Marine Estate Secretariat

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- specifying actions to achieve the management objectives, based on a consideration of risks, and
- setting out the management programs to be implemented to manage the parks.

In developing the draft management plan, marine estate agencies have followed MEMA's five-step decision-making process as set out in our Principles Paper of 2013. The five-step process, which has underpinned the marine estate reforms to date, enables agencies to:

- effectively engage the community to identify and consider community values and threats
- identify management priorities informed by an assessment of threats and risks to values
- assess current management and deliver effective management responses to respond to priority threats affecting values
- transparently evaluate any trade-offs required (which will occur during the next stage in the assessment and review of management rules to implement the final network management plan).

The TARA and the Strategy are key considerations as part of this five-step process. Linkages to the Strategy and risk levels assigned in the TARA have been considered during the development of the draft management plan and supplemented by local evidence and community consultation.

MEMA is proposing to finalise the new approach to marine park planning in two stages. Stage One involves preparation of the draft management plan by June 2021 (now complete), statutory community consultation on the draft plan (July-Sep 2021), consideration of submissions and finalisation of the management plan by Oct 2021.

Stage Two involves reviewing marine park management rules to implement aspects of the final management plan, with a priority focus on Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Batemans marine parks. Draft management rules would be released for statutory community consultation following completion of the final management plan, scheduled for late 2021, in line with dates outlined in my letter dated 8 April 2021.

A separate management plan will be developed by MEMA for Lord Howe Island commencing in 2022, once the management plan and associated management rules are finalised for the network of five mainland marine parks.

MEMA member agencies are now working to finalise a public facing, graphic designed, plain English version of the draft management plan which will be submitted to Ministers later this month. Products for community engagement noted in the draft Communications and Engagement Strategy are also under development to inform the public consultation process. These include a summary of the social, cultural, economic and environmental/biological sciences of marine protected areas since 2010 (when the last Independent Scientific Audit of NSW Marine Parks was commissioned), public fact sheets and responses to frequently asked questions, media releases and social media posts and stakeholder specific information. These draft products will also be made available for Ministers' to review.

MEMA members and I would be pleased to brief you on the draft management plan and planned approach to engagement in more detail. The Marine Estate Secretariat will be in contact with your offices to arrange a suitable time.

Yours sincerely

Dr Russell Reichelt AO FTSE
Chair
Marine Estate Management Authority

10 June 2021

Enc.

Attachment A - Draft management plan for the NSW mainland marine park network

Attachment B - Draft communications and engagement strategy