



Australian Marine Parks Management Planning Comments

Department of the Environment and Energy

Reply Paid 787

Canberra ACT 2601

To Whom it May Concern,

**Re: Draft South-West Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network Management Plan**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed South-West Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network Management Plan. The Busselton Jetty is operated by a non-profit organisation known as Busselton Jetty Incorporated (BJ Inc.) and whilst we are strictly located in waters of State jurisdiction we have an interest in the conservation and maintenance of the South-West marine environment and particularly the wider environs of Geographe Bay. Our comments on the strategies of the plan are provided in the same order as the strategies are presented in the draft plan with the relevant section underlined before our comments.

Chapter 1: Introduction

We agree that the best outcomes for the marine environment are reached when a collaborative and balanced approach is taken. This will provide a basis for adaptive, innovative outcomes based management which of a world class standard. On a local level, the implementation of a Network Advisory Committee will be extremely beneficial and will assist in the implementation of the South West Region Marine Park as well as in public education and prioritising management actions.

The values and the pressures of the South-west Marine Network have been adequately described, are accurate for the region and creates a solid context for the rest of the Management Plan. The management programs and actions as described and identified by the Director seem adequate and sufficient as a starting point for the implementation of the South-west Marine Network zone management plan.

Chapter 2: Management and Prescriptions

*Part 3 Zoning and Part 4 Managing Activities*

A thorough logic of the rules for zoning and description of the allowable activities within each zoning type has been provided in this section. We believe these attributes will make for a management plan which is functional in its operation.

## *Schedule 2.2 Geographe Marine Park*

Through the consultation process of the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review, we recognise that significant improvements in zoning protections have been made to the Geographe zone. The implementation of an Oil and Gas Exclusion zone and two Habitat Protection Zones are welcomed protections to conserve the seabed habitat, which consist of important seagrass meadows and low limestone reefs, attracting significant and often understudied biodiversity. We are pleased to see that the draft zoning and management plans reflect and address many of the issues which were raised during the consultation phase.

However we do note that the Geographe Region is one of only 2 in the South-west Marine Network which does not have any provision for Marine National Park (Sanctuary) zones. From our knowledge of the local marine environment and our understanding of your directive to produce a network of Marine Parks which balance the values and pressures in the South-west Network, we would like you to consider increasing the protection to the eastern-most zone bounded by the points (115° 22.828'E 33° 31.305'S), (115°24.600'E, 33°32.750'S), (115°22.933'E, 33°34.441'S), (115°21.270'E, 33°33.084'S) from Habitat Protection (IV) to National Park zone (II) and leave the western-most zone as is. This will create provision for all levels of protection within the Geographe zone, whilst also enabling the conservation of a site which represents many of the biodiversity values of this region. Having a Marine National Park Zone within the Geographe Marine Park will provide opportunities for scientific monitoring research, with the added surety that some of the human based influences and variables are removed from this location. It will also provide opportunities for marine tourism, as parts of the above zone are visited by a local scuba tour operator and we recognise that the changed dimensions of this location from those originally proposed in 2013 provides a more suitable area whilst still representing the values of the Geographe Region.

-----

It is well known that on land, the South-West of Australia is one of a few biodiversity hotspots. We are yet to discover many of the endemic species which reside in this globally isolated marine environment that is the South West of Australia and many recognized species are still yet to be given names and their biology understood. The creation of the Commonwealth Network of Marine Reserves has given the opportunity to provide protection to those organisms and their environments yet to be discovered and those that are already threatened, whilst providing the opportunities within the region for it's people to develop and grow their blue economy.

Many thanks in considering this submission,

Sophie Teede

Operations Supervisor (Marine)

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017