


**SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP
COMMUNIQUÉ – MEETING No. 55
09 October 2012**

The following members were present at the Scientific Working Group (SWG) meeting held on 09 October 2012: Peter Fairweather (chair), Anthony Cheshire, Sean Connell, Milena Fernandes, Martine Kinloch and Scoresby Shepherd. Apologies were received from Hazel Vandeleur Luciano Beheregaray, Charlie Huveneers, Hugh Kirkman, Luciana Moller and Bronwyn Gillanders.

The SWG wishes to advise the Minister of the following key outcomes:

- The SWG noted the considerable progress achieved with analysing baseline data about subtidal reefs held by the Department and discussed the extension of this understanding into predictions about future status of different zones in the Marine Parks;
 - The SWG looked critically at the parts of the management plans with a view to making sections 2 and 3 specific to each park link better to the strategies in section 4 , and revised the wording of the strategies to strengthen the Marine Parks;
 - The SWG considered what the management plans say about permits for scientific research; and
 - The SWG discussed the draft regulations around activities permitted in different types of zones to understand their intent and to check if they correspond to current scientific understanding of impacts in marine environments. Some activities permitted in Habitat Protection Zones, such as bait digging, probably would always cause harm to habitats like mudflats or seagrass beds and the functioning of ecological processes. Activities such as the development of marinas will inevitably harm marine habitats and ecosystem functioning not only through direct effects of dredging and construction but also because they are well-known primary sites for the establishment of marine pests as has been adequately demonstrated at Wirrina and Port Vincent. It is doubtful whether constraints imposed through the development assessment process will be adequate to prevent these impacts.
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Fairweather', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Prof. Peter Fairweather
Chair, Scientific Working Group