

## SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

### DRAFT COMMUNIQUÉ TO THE MARINE PARKS COUNCIL July 2009

Members of the Scientific Working Group have been provided copies of the Marine Park Working Group proposals for the Far West Coast, Nuyts Archipelago, Sir Joseph Banks Group, Upper and Lower South East Marine Parks and can provide the following information to the Marine Parks Council of South Australia.

#### Information general to the process:

- 1) The working group process has produced a number of benefits for the marine parks process. As well as providing members with a greater understanding of the issues and concerns of each sector, the working groups have provided some insight into zoning strategies and opportunities available within each of the regions and enabled members to explore a zoning process that will support the objects of the marine parks.
- 2) The SWG notes that positive progress was made in a number of areas and believes that further work that applies the fourteen design principles, as well as the additional zoning design principle of "buffering", may assist the groups to reach a consensus outcome
- 3) To ensure that the objectives of the Marine Parks Act 2007 (the Act) are met, the SWG recommends that in any further deliberations by the working groups, consideration be given to:
  - a. a broad-based, multiple-use approach to zoning that includes general managed use as a credible and appropriate component of marine park design.
  - b. application of the precautionary approach to marine park design when considering the "adequacy" principle.
  - c. Providing the working groups with adequate time, an appropriate level of technical advice and support to ensure that they are able to effectively apply the 14 design principles and the additional zoning principle of "buffering"

#### Information specific to the West Coast Working Group:

- 1) It appears that there is broad agreement on the outer boundaries for the area;
- 2) The proposal the potential to be equally well balanced in most areas to the proclaimed marine parks;
- 3) The proposal enhances connectivity inshore between the Fowlers Bay area eastwards to the Nuyts Archipelago area;
- 4) However, the proposal contracts from South Australia's seaward boundary, creating a potential disconnect with Commonwealth marine protected areas and potentially reduces good opportunity to connectivity with offshore shelf waters;
- 5) However, by retaining all of South Australia's waters around Hart Island and Nuyts Reef, the new proposal goes some way to ensuring connectivity is maintained.
- 6) Importantly, the validity of the negotiation here stands in the light that the boundary consideration has occurred at a bioregional scale and that the size of the boundary generally meets the design principles and remains large enough to promote flexibility given that no zoning agreements could be reached.
- 7) On the basis of our assessment, the SWG has advised the Minister to consider the merits of adopting the new boundary proposal for the Far West Coast and Nuyts Archipelago Marine Parks.

#### Information specific to the Sir Joseph Banks Working Group:

- 1) It appears that there is no broad agreement on the outer boundaries for the area;
- 2) Neither the industry-led nor the conservation sector's proposal improves on the currently proclaimed boundaries

- 3) Whilst the conservation sector-based design includes some features that the original marine park did not include (specifically mixed beach and rocky shores), those features are well represented elsewhere in the region and in doing so the design has sacrificed a significant proportion of deepwater habitat for the Spencer Gulf Bioregion, which is not represented elsewhere in the network
- 4) Whilst the commercial and recreational fishing and local government sector-based design nominates a single sanctuary of merit and is designed with the need to compliment existing protected areas in mind, the design including saltmarsh and mangrove habitats, coarse sandy beaches and mixed beaches. The proposed design also excludes any deeper water environment in the Spencer Gulf Bioregion and fragments the original proposal into three separate parts removing any ability to protect known movement pathways of Australian sea lions between Dangerous Reef and the Sir Joseph Banks Group of islands.
- 5) On the basis of our assessment, the SWG has advised the Minister to consider retaining the original boundary of the Sir Joseph Banks Marine Park. However, the SWG is also cognisant of the uncertainty boundaries with no zones creates and respects the importance of delivering extra policy commitments to users in the area.

**Information specific to the South East Working Group:**

- 1) The SWG is currently considering an alternative proposal put forward by the industry-led sector and an alternative design put forward by DEH with the intent of adopting significant changes to meet the needs of that sector whilst retaining the technical validity of the network. The SWG is yet to meet to finalise advice on those proposals.

From the original proposals, the SWG can provide the following summary of its advice:

- 1) It appears that there is no broad agreement on the outer boundaries for the area;
- 2) Neither the original industry-led nor the conservation sector's proposal improves on the currently proclaimed boundaries
- 3) Some excellent progress has been made on zoning proposals, including:
  - a. Agreement to two Sanctuary Zones buffered by Habitat Protection Zones that represent parts of the Coorong Coast to the north of Kingston; and
  - b. Nomination of Habitat Protection Zone by the industry-led sector that will link to the Commonwealth Government's existing marine protected area.
- 4) The original industry sector proposal defers responsibility to represent a range of features in the Otway Bioregion to the Victorian network as a part of the National System of Marine Protected Areas. However, the two districts are characterised by a different range of species and it is unlikely that the Victorian network would represent the features in question and certainly not to a level regarded as adequate given Victoria's network represents less than 1 percent of the Otway Bioregion.
- 5) Unless a suitable alternative is determined from current negotiations, and on the basis of our assessment of the original proposal, the SWG has advised the Minister to consider retaining the original boundaries in the south east.

While I have provided this advice as a matter of urgency to facilitate more informed discussion at the Marine Parks Council table, I note that I have provided you a draft yet to be fully proofed by all members of the SWG. If members seek modification of this communiqué I will provide the Council with an updated version as soon as it is available.

Prof Anthony Cheshire  
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