

Report on findings from the independent evaluation of the implementation of the South- west Marine Parks Network Management Plan

Director of National Parks

**Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the
Environment and Water**

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ORIMA pays respect to First Nations peoples past and present, their cultures and traditions and acknowledges their continuing connection to Land, Sea and Community.



The ORIMA Research team would like to acknowledge and thank all the participants from across Australia who were involved in the research. Their willingness to share their experiences, engage in open and honest discussions, and reflect on strategies for improvement was critical to informing the research findings presented in this report.



ORIMA Research is privileged to have had our First Nations Community Interviewer artwork completed by **Tristan Pwerl Duggie**. The artwork depicts ORIMA Research's core values of conducting work in an ethical manner with honesty, integrity, respect, and humility. The painting represents ORIMA's First Nations Community Interviewers humbly visiting the country and Community of other First Nations Peoples, sitting courteously with, listening with integrity, and respectfully sharing the views and thoughts of First Nations Peoples.

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Australian and state and territory governments **designate ‘Marine Protected Areas’ (MPAs)** – regions of the ocean where human activity is restricted and regulated to protect marine life and ecosystems. MPAs include **marine parks managed by state and territory governments** and **Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) managed by the Australian Government**.

For Commonwealth managed marine parks, the ‘*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*’ (EPBC Act) mandates the preparation of ‘**management plans**’ to guide the **governance and regulation** of each AMP/ AMP network. These plans contain **seven ‘management programs’**, each of which cover a number of priority areas listing planned outcomes and specific actions to be undertaken.

ORIMA Research was commissioned to conduct an **independent evaluation of the implementation of the management plan for the South-west Marine Parks Network** (herein referred to as the South-west Network) which is set to expire mid-2028. The methodology for this evaluation adopted a multi-phased approach, as depicted in Figure 1 (below).

Figure 1: Overview of Evaluation Methodology



The evaluation framework identified two core evidence sources:

- **Documentary evidence** – sourced through administrative data provided by Parks Australia and a desktop review conducted by ORIMA researchers.
- **Stakeholder and First Nations peoples engagement** – undertaken by ORIMA researchers. A total of n=70 stakeholders and First Nations peoples participated in the evaluation of the South-west Network, speaking from either a perspective specific to the South-west Network, or from a national perspective with relevance to the Network.

FINDINGS RELATING TO OVERALL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The **South-west Network demonstrated positive progress** in implementing the actions and achieving the intended outcomes across its management programs. It achieved consistently positive results across the evaluated programs outlined in the management plan, indicating an effective and efficient allocation of effort across all key areas of marine park management.

Overall, the evaluation identified a range of **strengths and achievements** in relation to the implementation of the South-west Network Management Plan, including:

- **Development of robust and structured frameworks, strategies and policies** – such as the *‘Communication, Education and Awareness Strategy’* and the *‘Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy’*.
- **Significant progress in ecological baseline data collection** – as well as reasonable development of social and economic baseline datasets.
- **Effective use of innovative technologies** – which were found to be effective in collecting high-quality ecological data and advancing marine science capabilities.
- **Development of some high-quality visitor experiences** – which contributed to raising awareness of marine park values in the South-west Network.
- **Effective assessments, authorisations and compliance activities** – supported by the timely implementation of a range of policies, procedures and partnerships to support achievement of the relevant management activities.

However, a number of **limitations** were also identified through the evaluation, including:

- **Remote and offshore nature of the parks** – the isolated and deep-sea nature of many of the marine parks in the South-west Network made implementation challenging, particularly for tourism, communication monitoring, and compliance. Limited accessibility as well as resource constraints further hindered management of these parks.
- **Gaps in data for some programs areas** – limited data on progress of some actions and outcomes within the management plan was identified as a barrier to assessing the effectiveness of the management plan’s implementation and making evidence-based management decisions.
- **Engagement with Traditional Owners, First Nations partners, organisations and users was not fully effective** – while a range of efforts were identified to meaningfully engage First Nations peoples, a few First Nations partners reported that actions were not inclusive of all relevant First Nations partners or Traditional Owners with the necessary Cultural and Sea Country Knowledge, or did not effectively enable co-management approaches.
- **Appropriately balancing protection of ecological, social and economic values** – the evaluation found that balancing competing stakeholder interests in the South-west Network will be an ongoing challenge, with a range of diverse views identified in relation to the balance of protection of ecological and other values.
- **Limited effectiveness of the South-west Marine Park Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) process** – both SWMPAC members and Parks Australia staff raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current advisory committee model. However, the need for ongoing and in-depth engagement of a range of stakeholders was acknowledged, suggesting that a more inclusive and collaborative approach could better capture diverse stakeholder perspectives for consideration in decision-making.
- **Limited communication and engagement with the broader community** – many stakeholders highlighted the need for increased public awareness and education about marine parks, including their purpose, management, and benefits. It was felt that this would help foster a greater understanding of marine park values, build support for management decisions, and encourage community participation in conservation efforts.

FINDINGS RELATING TO SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OF THE SOUTH-WEST NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The **specific program grades indicated positive progress overall**. One program was assessed as 'good', and the remaining six were assessed as 'good with some concerns'. Specific findings for each program are outlined overleaf.

Communication, Education and Awareness Program



Good with some concerns

The Communication, Education and Awareness Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcome of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the eight planned actions, four were assessed as 'completed', while the remaining four were assessed as 'partially completed'.

While several actions were only partially completed, the evidence demonstrates that significant efforts were made across this program. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to advancing communication and engagement, despite challenges such as resource constraints. However, the evaluation identified further opportunities to strengthen the program's effectiveness, particularly in expanding awareness, understanding, and support for marine park values and management among the broader population.

Tourism and Visitor Experience Program



Good with some concerns

The Tourism and Visitor Experience Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcomes of the management program rated as 'partially met' or 'unknown'. Of the ten planned actions, two were assessed as 'completed', five were assessed as 'partially completed' and three were assessed as 'not commenced'.

Although some actions were only partially completed or not commenced, the evidence suggests that progress had been made on most actions and that efforts were reasonable given the more remote and offshore nature of many of the marine parks in the South-west Network, which reduced likely tourism activities and hence the relevance of the program area to the South-west Network.

Indigenous Engagement Program



Good with some concerns

The Indigenous engagement program was assessed as 'good with some concerns' with the overall outcomes of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the eight planned actions, two were assessed as 'completed', five as 'partially completed or implemented' and one as 'not commenced'.

The evaluation identified targeted progress in collaborating with First Nations partners and Ranger groups to enhance Traditional Knowledge sharing and Cultural Value mapping through Our Marine Park Grants (OMPGs) and Sea Country management activities. However, these efforts were not consistently implemented across the South-west Network or equitably with all relevant Traditional

Owners. Parks Australia acknowledged that resource constraints had limited the scope and reach of their initiatives under this program.

Marine Science Program



Good with some concerns

The Marine Science Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcomes of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the eleven planned actions, five were assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing', five were assessed as 'partially completed' and one was assessed as 'not commenced'

The evaluation identified significant progress in the establishment of baseline ecological datasets in the South-west Network and collaboration with the science community and other agencies to increase understanding of marine park values and pressures. The use of innovative technology in the South-west Network was also noted as a strength. However, the need for increased long-term monitoring and communication of the data collected was also identified through the evaluation.

Assessments and Authorisations Program



Good

Overall, the grade for the actions in the Assessments and Authorisations Program was assessed as 'good'. The outcome of the management program was determined to be 'fully met', with six out of seven planned actions assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing'. One action was assessed as 'not commenced'.

While A40 (*develop an effective and efficient process to assess new technologies and gear types to allow for the use of new equipment during the life of this plan if appropriate*) was assessed as 'not commenced', this was not considered a significant gap. Evidence indicated that new technologies and gear types were adopted where appropriate, suggesting the action may not have been required during the plan's implementation. As a result, its non-completion did not impede the overall aims of the management program.

Parks Protection and Management Program



Good with some concerns

The Parks Protection and Management Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcome of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the nine planned actions, five were assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing', while the remaining four were assessed as 'partially complete'.

The development of and adherence to tangible processes and strategies that support the protection and management of marine parks were strong. However, areas for improvement were identified, particularly in relation to actions involving collaborations.

Compliance Program



Overall, the grade for the actions in the Compliance Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns'.

The outcomes of the management program were assessed to be 'partially met', 'fully met' or 'substantially met'.

Of the six planned actions, four were assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing' and two were assessed as 'partially completed'. Positive stakeholder feedback was also provided.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Based on the evaluation findings, it is recommended that the following be considered when developing the next plan for the South-west Network:

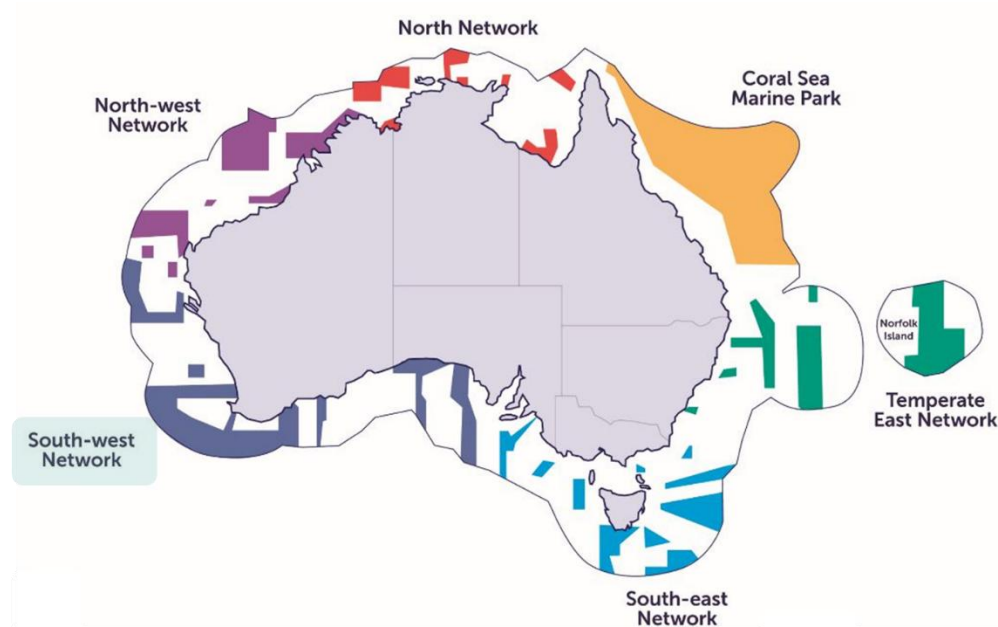
- **Demonstrating how robust evidence has been used, particularly for zoning decisions** – it was expected that any future management plans would clearly draw from the evidence and data now available. Such an approach should be transparent and well-communicated to ensure clarity and explain why decisions had been made.
- **Ensuring comprehensive and effective engagement with key stakeholder groups** – by incorporating early, wide-reaching and ongoing engagement with key groups.
- **Embedding cultural perspectives and prioritising First Nations perspectives in the management of Sea Country through:**
 - Adopting co-management approaches that embed early engagement with First Nations communities and opportunities for First Nations partners to shape the priorities.
 - Avoiding “blanket approaches” to cultural engagement, by tailoring strategies to reflect the diverse ways First Nations groups care for Sea Country.
 - Providing more informal avenues for engagement with First Nations community members – to ensure inclusive engagement.
- **Improving monitoring and evaluation capabilities** – by incorporating key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets to make measuring and evaluating action and outcome performance easier.
- **Enhancing communication about the South-west Network and management plan among relevant stakeholders, including the broader community** – so as to raise awareness of marine parks, foster a greater understanding of marine park values, build support for management decisions, and encourage community participation in conservation efforts.
- **Acknowledging the importance of long-term monitoring efforts** – including via repeated data-collection activities to enable observation of trends overtime, and ensuring a balanced approach to ecological, social and economic data collection.
- **Responding to the '30 by 30' commitment** – including considering implications of potential changes to zoning arrangements. In doing so, it will be important to clearly communicate the evidence-based need and benefits of commitment to '30 by 30' in an Australian context.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The oceans surrounding Australia are foundational to our way of life – offering important places for recreation, supporting industries and jobs and contributing to our food and energy security. To safeguard the health of these waters, and the variety of ocean life that inhabits them, the Australian and state and territory governments designate ‘Marine Protected Areas’ (MPAs) – regions of the ocean where human activity is restricted and regulated to protect marine life and ecosystems. MPAs include marine parks managed by state and territory governments and Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) managed by the Australian Government. AMPs are organised into marine park networks, with the exception of the Coral Sea, and include the South-west Marine Parks Network (herein referred to as the South-west Network). Figure 2 (below) shows the six AMPs/ AMP networks, with the South-west Network highlighted in dark blue.

Figure 2: Australian Marine Parks



The Director of National Parks (the Director) is a statutory office and Commonwealth corporate entity and is supported by Parks Australia. Parks Australia is a division within the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). One of the Director’s roles is to manage AMPs (and all other Commonwealth reserves) in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The EPBC Act mandates the preparation of ‘management plans’ to guide the governance and regulation of each AMP/ AMP network, to be renewed every ten years. These plans contain a range of ‘management programs’, each of which covers a number of priority areas listing planned outcomes and specific actions to be undertaken in the pursuit of these outcomes. The seven management programs are: Communication, Education and Awareness; Tourism and Visitor Experience; Indigenous Engagement; Marine Science; Assessments and Authorisations; Parks Protection and Management; and Compliance.

The management plan for the South-west Network is the first to have been developed since the Network was established. This management plan is set to expire in 2028, requiring the completion of two processes beforehand:

1. **An independent evaluation of the implementation of the current South-west Network Management Plan** – providing a retrospective look at how the plan has been implemented in practice since 2018.
2. The **preparation of a new South-west Network Management Plan for the next 10-year cycle** (2028-2038).

ORIMA Research was commissioned to conduct the independent evaluation of the implementation of the current management plan. The evaluation drew on a range of evidence sources, including a review of collated documentary evidence provided by Parks Australia and engagement with a range of stakeholders as well as First Nations peoples. The outcomes of this evaluation, alongside a range of other consultations and activities, will contribute to the second process – the development of a new management plan for the next 10-year cycle.

1.2. Project objectives

The overarching aim of the project was to **conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation of five expiring management plans** (with this report focusing on the evaluation of the implementation of the South-west Network Management Plan). More specifically, the evaluation sought to:



Facilitate the generation of a collectively agreed evaluation framework, and methods for evaluating the management plan's program implementation.



Engage with stakeholders and First Nations peoples to understand and define their metrics of satisfaction with the implementation of the plan.



Address a range of key evaluation questions, with a key focus on assessing the performance of planned actions listed in each management program and progress towards the intended outcomes to assign completion status, trend and effectiveness ratings.



Provide recommendations to inform the preparation of the next management plan (including, but not limited to, recommendations for goals, desired outcomes and actions).

This evaluation forms just one part of the review of the expiring management plans and development of new plans. Key directions for the review were outlined prior to the evaluation (including ensuring 30% of Australia's ocean is highly protected and limiting intensive activities). Subsequent statutory review processes are also planned.¹

¹ Review of the 2018 Australian Marine Park management plans:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/consultations-reviews/review-2018-australian-marine-park-management-plans/>

1.3. Methodology

The methodology for this project adopted a multi-phased approach as depicted in Figure 3 (below), incorporating sequential stages to ensure a comprehensive and systematic evaluation process.

Figure 3: Methodology overview



1.3.1. Development of evaluation framework

The evaluation framework was developed through an iterative, structured process of drafting, consultation and refinement. Initial development was led by ORIMA, whereby a draft framework was developed based on the South-west Network Management Plan and program logic. This was followed by a series of targeted workshops with Parks Australia, the Australian Marine Parks First Nations Reference Group and Australian Marine Parks Advisory Committee (AMPAC) members. Written feedback from AMPAC members was also provided and incorporated where relevant. This process ensured the framework was methodologically robust, contextually appropriate and aligned with stakeholder expectations.

The evaluation framework identified two core evidence sources:

- **Documentary evidence** – sourced through administrative data provided by Parks Australia and a desktop review conducted by ORIMA Research.
- **Stakeholder and First Nations peoples engagement** – undertaken by ORIMA Research.

More detail about the evaluation framework is provided in section 1.5.

1.3.2. Desktop review

During the desktop review process, key documents and data sources were collected as evidence to assess the implementation of the South-west Network Management Plan actions and outcomes. Some documents and data sources were supplied by the Parks Australia project team, while others were sourced via desktop searches of publicly available information.

Documentary evidence that directly demonstrated the fulfilment of actions and outcomes was prioritised in the desktop review (e.g. policy documentation, official reports or media activities). Where direct evidence was absent or insufficient, indirect evidence was also used (that is, references to activity conducted to fulfil actions and outcomes without clear evidence of the activity itself, such as AMPAC meeting communiqués noting discussion of activities conducted to fulfil actions and outcomes; or self-reported evidence in self-assessment documents). Key findings and evidence points were recorded against the evaluation framework and reviewed to build an initial evidence base for the evaluation of actions and outcomes. For actions and outcomes where insufficient evidence was provided, requests for data were compiled and submitted to Parks Australia.

ETHICS ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

Prior to the commencement of the external stakeholder engagement, the project was submitted for review by the ORIMA Research's National Mental Health and Research Committee (NMHRC) approved Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to ensure the evaluation was conducted in an ethical, safe and culturally responsive manner. Ethics approval was granted on 4 February 2026: HREC Reference Number 0012026.

1.3.3. Stakeholder and First Nations peoples engagement

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for the engagement was stakeholders and First Nations peoples with experience or expertise relevant to either South-west Network specifically, or marine parks nationally.

The following stakeholder groups were targeted for engagement:

- Parks Australia staff
- Government agencies (both federal and state/ territory agencies)
- Industry and community groups, such as:
 - Commercial fishing industry representatives
 - Recreational fishing and boating groups
 - Tourism operators
 - Conservation/ environmental organisations
 - Industry representatives (including from shipping, offshore energy and space/ technology industries),
 - Researchers and data custodians
 - AMPAC members and members of the Australian Marine Parks First Nations Reference Group.²

In addition, engagement was conducted with First Nations peoples and partners, including appropriate Traditional Owner groups and stakeholders who were able to speak about Sea Country as relevant to the evaluation.

SAMPLE DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Comprehensive stakeholder mapping was undertaken based on the findings from the desk research on relevant individuals and organisations, and consultation with Parks Australia staff, AMPAC members and members of the Australian Marine Parks First Nations Reference Group.

Stakeholder engagement was conducted between 26 February and 14 May 2026. A total of **n=195** stakeholders and First Nations peoples participated in the evaluation of the five expiring marine park management plans, via **82 in-depth interviews** of up to one hour³ and **15 workshops** of up to two hours in duration.⁴

² AMPAC and First Nations Refence Group members were also consulted during the project establishment and evaluation framework development stages as advisory groups for the project.

³ In a small number of cases, stakeholders elected to complete their interview by providing feedback in writing.

⁴ Workshop (WS), n=up to 10 people; In-depth interview (IDI), n=up to 4 participants)

Of the **n=195** total participants, **n=43** individuals spoke from a perspective specific to the South-west Network, and a further **n=27** spoke from a national perspective with relevance to the Network. Each of these participants fell into one or more of the key stakeholder groups identified during the stakeholder mapping phase, with some contributing from multiple key perspectives. The numbers of participants who contributed from each stakeholder perspective are outlined in the table below.

	Key perspective	Number of participants who spoke from key perspective
South-west Marine Parks Network	Parks Australia staff	<i>n=4</i>
	State government agencies	<i>n=8</i>
	First Nations peoples/ organisations	<i>n=17</i>
	Researchers/ data custodians	<i>n=10</i>
	Industry and community groups: Commercial and recreational fishing representatives	<i>n=4</i>
	Industry and community groups: Tourism operators	<i>n=2</i>
	Industry and community groups: Conservation/ environmental organisations	<i>n=3</i>
	AMPAC members	<i>n=14</i>
Across all Parks/ Park Networks	Parks Australia staff	<i>n=9</i>
	Federal government agencies/ departments	<i>n=7</i>
	Industry and community groups: Commercial and recreational fishing representatives	<i>n=6</i>
	Industry and community groups: Tourism operators	<i>n=1</i>
	Industry and community groups: Conservation/ environmental organisations	<i>n=4</i>

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

To support the discussions, ORIMA developed a comprehensive discussion guide aligned with the evaluation objectives. A flexible and adaptive approach was applied during discussions to ensure the collection of meaningful data and insights, while also allowing stakeholders the opportunity to share their views and perspectives. It was important to establish which evaluation questions were most applicable to each participant. To assist with this, participants were invited to complete a short questionnaire ahead of their interview or workshop to nominate the scope and areas of their involvement in marine parks, as well as to provide initial feedback in relation to relevant management program areas.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In conducting this evaluation, a range of assumptions were made, and several potential research limitations were identified. While action has been taken to ensure the robustness of any assumptions and minimise the impact of potential limitations on the evaluation, these should nonetheless be considered when interpreting the findings.

More specifically, the **following assumptions** were identified:

- **Accuracy of documentary evidence** – the evaluation assumes that administrative data and documentation provided by Parks Australia accurately reflect the timing, scope and completion of reported outputs.
- **Representativeness of consulted stakeholders** – based on the stakeholder mapping conducted, it is assumed that the engaged stakeholders reasonably reflect the diversity of perspectives across user groups, jurisdictions and regions within the network.

The following **potential research limitations** were identified:

- **Some limitations in the coverage of stakeholder participation** – the stakeholder engagement process faced challenges in ensuring comprehensive representation, with certain individuals or organisations unable to participate due to factors such as availability to attend sessions, being on leave during the research period, or not responding to participation requests. Broadly, however, good coverage of all key target cohorts was achieved for the South-west Network.
- **Reliance on stakeholder perceptions due to data gaps** – in the absence of consistent, outcome-level monitoring data across program areas, some parts of the evaluation relied more heavily on stakeholder perceptions and qualitative evidence to assess implementation effectiveness and outcomes.
- **Variability in data availability across networks** – the availability and quality of documentary evidence varied between program areas, limiting the ability to assess implementation consistently.

1.4. Understanding this report

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

This evaluation is split across two broad categories:

1. **Findings relating to overall evaluation questions** – this section addresses the broader evaluation questions, focusing on the design of the plan, its assessment and monitoring processes, responsiveness and adaptability, and key considerations for the development of future plans.
2. **Findings relating to program implementation** – in this section, the implementation of each management program is assessed. This involves evaluating the implementation of individual actions, assessing the achievement of intended outcomes, and providing an overall assessment of program implementation. Key strengths, achievements, barriers and limitations are also highlighted.

Based on these findings, the final section of this report (Chapter 11), provides a list of conclusions and a set of key learnings and recommendations for developing the next South-west Network Management Plan.

NOTES ON INTERPRETATION

- All acronyms used in this report have been specified the first time they are used in each chapter.
- When the term ‘stakeholders’ is used, it refers to all types of stakeholders consulted in the project. When findings pertain to a specific group of stakeholders only, this has been specified (e.g. AMPAC members, Parks Australia staff, First Nations peoples and partners).
- The terms ‘none’, ‘a few’, ‘many’, ‘most’ and ‘all’ have been used to refer to the proportion of stakeholders consulted who expressed a certain opinion or perspective. These terms are defined in the ‘Stakeholder engagement metrics’ section of Appendix A.

1.5. Understanding the evaluation framework

There are three components to the evaluation framework, outlined in the sections overleaf. To see the full framework, please refer to Appendix B.

OVERALL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

A set of overarching evaluation questions was developed to guide assessment at the whole-of-plan level. These questions were initially drafted by ORIMA and refined through consultation with Parks Australia, the Australian Marine Parks First Nations Reference Group, and AMPAC members.

The key evaluation questions were:

1. **Were the management programs in this management plan implemented effectively?**
(Including the extent to which management plan actions and outcomes were achieved according to the performance information matrix, see section below).
2. **To what extent do stakeholders perceive the activities occurring in zones to be consistent with zone objectives**, at an overall level?
3. Based on stakeholder perceptions, **how well aligned was the implementation of the plan with external regulatory settings and management activities?**
4. **To what extent do stakeholders perceive that there was an effective and efficient balance between the use of grants and other implementation mechanisms** in addressing management plan objectives?
5. **What lessons can we learn for future management plans?**

Together, they provide a structure for synthesising findings across programs and plans.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION MATRIX

The Performance Information Matrix (PIM) is the core analytical tool used in the evaluation to systematically assess program implementation.

For each action and outcome in the management programs, the PIM defines a consistent set of measurement components to guide assessment:

- **Outputs** – the tangible deliverables linked to each action (not applicable to outcomes).
- **Measures of success** – the criteria used to determine whether an action or outcome has been achieved.
- **Indicators** – the observable evidence used to assess performance against each measure of success.
- **Data sources** – the data used to assess each indicator (e.g. documentary evidence, stakeholder feedback).

This structure provides a clear connection between planned activities, evidence and evaluative judgement. It ensures consistent and transparent assessment across programs. The full PIM for the South-west Network is provided in Appendix B.

RATING APPROACH AND MEASUREMENT METHODS

A set of standardised rating approaches were developed to assess performance across actions, outcomes and programs. These approaches were designed to align with Parks Australia's reporting

requirements and the nature of the management plan. Specifically, the evaluation assigned the following:

- **Action completion status** – drawing on documentary evidence and stakeholder feedback, each action was assessed as ‘completed’, ‘ongoing’, ‘implemented with modifications’, ‘partially completed or implemented’ or ‘not commenced’.
- **Program implementation effectiveness ratings** – the achievement of actions and outcomes at the management program level was assessed as ‘good’, ‘good with some concerns’, having ‘significant concerns’, ‘critical’ or ‘unknown’.
- **Outcome achievement rating** – outcome effectiveness was assessed as ‘fully met’, ‘substantially met’, ‘partially met’ or ‘not met’. Trend ratings were also assigned for each outcome (i.e. indicating a positive, negative or stable trend).

Further detail about each rating approach is provided at Appendix A.

Quality and Compliance Statement

This project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252, the international information security standard ISO 27001, as well as the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). ORIMA Research also adheres to the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021 administered by the Australian Data and Insights Association (ADIA).

2. South-west Marine Parks Network context

*This chapter presents **background information about the South-west Marine Parks Network** to support understanding of its contextual environment when interpreting evaluation findings.*

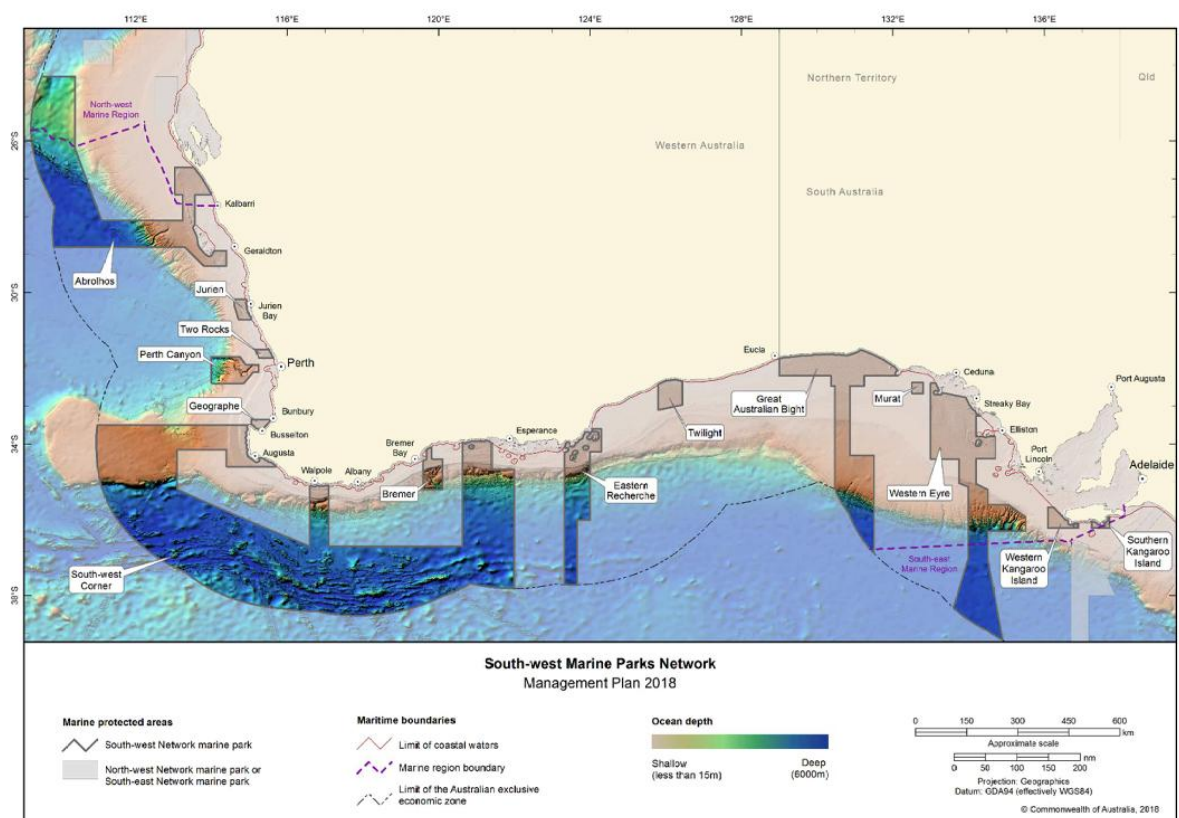
2.1. About the South-west Marine Parks Network

The South-west Marine Region extends from the eastern end of Kangaroo Island in South Australia to the waters off Shark Bay in Western Australia, covering approximately 1.3 million km² of temperate and subtropical waters of the Great Australian Bight and Indian Ocean. Within this region, the South-west Network covers 508,371 km² and comprises the following marine parks:

- Southern Kangaroo Island Marine Park
- Western Kangaroo Island Marine Park
- Western Eyre Marine Park
- Murat Marine Park
- Great Australian Bight Marine Park
- Twilight Marine Park
- Eastern Recherche Marine Park
- South-west Corner Marine Park
- Bremer Marine Park
- Geographe Marine Park
- Perth Canyon Marine Park
- Two Rocks Marine Park
- Jurien Marine Park, and
- Abrolhos Marine Park

The South-west Network is characterised by ecosystems associated with the continental shelf, slope and rise, and the abyssal plain/ deep ocean floor. The area contains Australia's largest underwater canyon (the Perth Canyon), deepest temperate water marginal plateau (the Naturaliste Plateau) and largest underwater mountain chain (the Diamantina Fracture Zone). The region is strongly influenced by the shallow, warm Leeuwin Current, which interacts with its diverse seafloor features, the low level of run-off from the land and the relatively stable geological history to generate high species diversity in the area. The flora and fauna of the region are a blend of tropical, subtropical and temperate species, with several protected species of whales, sharks, seabirds and sea lions known to occur in the region. Particular hotspots for biodiversity include the waters off the Houtman Abrolhos Islands, the Recherche Archipelago, and the world's richest known temperate soft sediment communities in the Great Australian Bight.

Figure 4: South-west Marine Parks Network⁵



2.2. South-west Network values

The Australian Marine Park (AMP) values are the guiding principles for marine park management and decision-making. The South-west Network values include:

- **Natural values** – key ecological features such as canyons, shelf breaks, upwellings, plateaus, demersal slopes, fracture zones, ancient coastlines and Commonwealth marine environments, and a range of protected species including the endangered southern right whale, white sharks, blue whales, humpback whales, the western rock lobster, many species of seabird and Australia's only endemic pinniped, the Australian sea lion.
- **Cultural values** – there is continued sustainable management and use of Sea Country by First Nations peoples of South and Western Australia. Sea Country is valued for First Nations Cultural identity, health and wellbeing. It is recognised that spiritual corridors extend from terrestrial areas into nearshore and offshore waters, that several marine animals are Totems for First Nations peoples, and that songlines pass through marine parks.
- **Heritage values** – historic shipwrecks in the region include Batavia (1629), Zuytdorp (1712), Twilight (1877), HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran (1941). The South-west Network is also adjacent to Shark Bay, a property inscribed on the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee in 1991 on the basis of its outstanding universal value.

⁵ Director of National Parks. (2018). South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan 2018. Australian Marine Parks. <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/5797254b49ade6c0ea62ff8785ca9958/amp-document-south-west-management-plan-2018.pdf>

- **Socio-economic values** – shipping, port-related activities and commercial fishing are industries of national economic significance, and local ocean produce is a drawcard for food tourism in the South-west Network. The network also provides some opportunity for offshore mining operations. Marine tourism and recreational activities such as charter fishing, snorkelling, diving and wildlife watching are also important commercial activities that offer unique visitor experiences in places like Geographe and Bremer Bay.

2.3. South-west Network pressures

The South-west Network faces a range of identified pressures including:

- **Climate change** impacts such as changes in temperature, sea level, acidification, ocean currents, increased storm frequency and intensity, species range extensions or local extinctions. Examples of habitats, key ecological features and species vulnerable to the effects of climate change include the Cape Mentelle upwelling, mesoscale eddies and western rock lobster, the Australian sea lion and species of seabird.
- **Changes in hydrology**, with rivers, estuaries and other waterways potentially discharging increased sediment loads and pollutants into the marine environment, resulting in increased turbidity and siltation and impacting on species that inhabit or spawn in coastal, estuary and offshore waters. Examples of habitats and species vulnerable to changes in hydrology include seagrass habitats and species of dolphin.
- **Extraction of living resources** due to unlawful/ unsustainable fishing practices, and the subsequent disturbance to key ecological features and species vulnerable to such impacts. Examples of habitats, key ecological features and species vulnerable to such impacts include the Commonwealth marine environment surrounding the Houtman Abrolhos Islands and Recherche Archipelago, the Perth Canyon and adjacent shelf break, the Australian sea lion and species of fish (e.g. southern bluefin tuna, shark), whale and marine turtle.
- **Habitat modification** can occur directly through physical disturbance or indirectly through the presence of infrastructure. Examples of habitats and species vulnerable to habitat modification pressures include the Commonwealth marine environment within and adjacent to Geographe Bay, the western rock lobster and benthic invertebrate communities of the eastern Great Australian Bight, as well as species of whale, shark and seabird.
- **Human presence** via activities such as boating, camping, diving and snorkelling has the potential to impact marine park values directly through contact from collision or indirectly through changes in behaviour (e.g. nesting, breeding, feeding or resting) from disturbance. Examples of species vulnerable to human disturbance include the Australian sea lion and species of shark.
- **Invasive species** introduced via key sources including vessel ballast and bilge water discharge, biofouling, accidental or deliberate species transport, and land-based activities, with impacts including predation, habitat damage and competition with native species. Examples of habitats and key ecological features vulnerable to these impacts include the Commonwealth marine environment within and adjacent to the west-coast inshore lagoons and Geographe Bay, and the Commonwealth marine environment surrounding the Recherche Archipelago.
- **Marine pollution** including the emission of noise or light, marine debris (for example, plastics and lost fishing gear), and discharge of oil, chemicals or waste. Pollution can be detrimental to marine life, leading to contamination of ecosystems, entanglement, or ingestion by marine species. Examples of habitats, key ecological features, and species vulnerable to marine pollution include the Commonwealth marine environment within and adjacent to the west-coast inshore lagoons, Geographe Bay and the Recherche Archipelago, the Australian sea lion and New Zealand fur seal, and species of whale, marine turtle, shark and seabird.

2.4. Management of the South-west Network

The South-west Network is managed by Parks Australia staff within the Marine and Island Parks Branch, on behalf of the Director of National Parks (the Director). This is done in collaboration with:

- **Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples**
- **Government agencies** (both Commonwealth and State), and
- The **South-west Marine Parks Network Advisory Committee (SWMPAC)** – an expert advisory committee representing a range of perspectives relevant to marine park management in the South-west Marine Parks Network. The Committee provides strategic advice to Parks Australia on marine park management issues at a regional level.

3. Findings relating to overall evaluation questions

*This chapter presents the findings **relating to the broader evaluation questions** in relation to plan design, assessment and monitoring, responsiveness and adaptability and considerations for future plans.*

3.1. Overall findings

Overall, the South-west Network demonstrated positive progress in implementing the actions and achieving the intended outcomes across its management programs. This is reflected in the program grades, with six assessed as ‘good with some concerns’, one assessed as ‘good’ and none assessed as having ‘significant concerns’ or being deemed ‘critical’. The South-west Network achieved the most consistently positive results across the range of programs, suggesting effective and efficient investment of effort across key areas of marine park management.

The evaluation identified **a range of strengths and achievements** in relation to the overall implementation of the South-west Management Plan, including:

- **Development of robust and structured frameworks, strategies and policies** – such as the ‘Communication, Education and Awareness Strategy’ and the ‘Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy’, both of which provided clear guidance for implementing effective actions throughout the duration of the plan.
 - However, the ‘First Nations Engagement and Cultural Heritage Strategy’ was noted as not having been completed, and the ‘Australian Marine Parks Science Strategy’ was partially completed, with stakeholder feedback suggesting that clearer strategies could assist with overcoming shortcomings in these program areas.
- **Significant progress in ecological baseline data collection** – which has greatly enhanced the understanding of ecological values and marine park conditions in the South-west Network. In addition, the evaluation found that there had been reasonable development of social and economic baseline datasets, particularly when compared with the other Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) in scope for this evaluation.
- **Effective use of innovative technologies** – including Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs), Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems (BRUVs), and drop cameras, which were found to be effective in collecting high-quality ecological data and advancing marine science capabilities.
- **Development of some high-quality visitor experiences** – particularly the exhibition at the Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty (supported by Our Marine Parks Grant (OMPG) funding), which was cited as a key initiative for raising awareness of marine park values in the South-west Network.
- **Effective assessments, authorisations and compliance activities** – supported by the timely implementation of a range of policies, procedures and partnerships to support achievement of the relevant management activities. For example, the introduction of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and targeted enforcement operations and collaborations were found to have enhanced effective compliance.

However, a number of **limitations** were also identified through the evaluation, including:

- **Remote and offshore nature of the parks** – the isolated and deep-sea nature of many parks in the South-west Network made implementation challenging, particularly for tourism, monitoring, compliance, communication and stakeholder engagement. Limited accessibility and resource constraints further hindered consistent management and utilisation of these parks.

- **Engagement with Traditional Owners, First Nations partners, organisations and users was inconsistent** – while some successful collaborations and partnerships were identified with Traditional Owners, First Nations partners and Ranger groups, efforts were found to be inconsistent. Engagement was not always perceived as inclusive of all relevant Traditional Owners and First Nations communities. This led some to feel excluded from key management decisions related to their Sea Country, resulting in a sense of disconnection from their heritage, Totems, and cultural responsibilities.
- **Gaps in data for some program areas** – limited data on the progress of some actions and outcomes within the management plan was identified as a barrier to assessing the effectiveness of the management plan's implementation. In addition, the limited collection of specific data, such as socio-economic data and marine park awareness and perceptions data hindered a comprehensive understanding of progress and/ or the ability to assess the broader impacts of marine park management (while also reducing the ability to make informed decisions that balanced environmental, social and economic outcomes). Addressing these data gaps will be important to ensure accurate measures can be obtained of the plan's implementation.
- **Appropriately balancing protection of ecological, social and economic values** – the evaluation found that balancing competing stakeholder interests in the South-west Network will be an ongoing challenge, with a range of diverse views identified in relation to the balance of protection for ecological and other values. For example, some stakeholders felt that additional work was required to effectively protect ecological values (e.g. to support greater protection of biodiversity). However, others felt that the management plan and associated zoning restrictions were overly restrictive (e.g. requiring challenging authorisation's processes for simple and non-invasive scientific activities, such as water sampling or restricting fishing activities in areas where these activities were not felt to compromise marine park values). While balancing competing stakeholder perspectives will be an ongoing challenge, clearly communicating the evidence-based rationale for management decisions should go some way to addressing these concerns.
- **Limited effectiveness of the South-west Marine Park Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) process** – both SWMPAC members and Parks Australia staff raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current advisory committee model, with stakeholder feedback suggesting the committees may not be achieving their intended role in contributing to marine park management. However, the need for ongoing and in-depth engagement with a range of stakeholders was acknowledged, suggesting that a more inclusive and collaborative approach could better capture diverse stakeholder perspectives for consideration in decision-making processes.
- **Limited communication and engagement with the broader community** – while efforts to engage specific stakeholder groups were noted, the evaluation found that broader community engagement remained an important gap. Many stakeholders highlighted the need for increased public awareness and education about marine parks, including their purpose, management, and benefits. It was felt that improved outreach and communication strategies targeting broader park users and the general public could help foster a greater understanding of marine park values, build support for management decisions, and encourage community participation in conservation efforts.

3.2. Specific findings about the management plan design: Level of detail provided, plan flexibility, and efficacy of monitoring and review mechanisms

Overall, stakeholders acknowledged the challenges associated with striking a balance between providing adequate detail to support implementation, while also maintaining the required flexibility for a 10-year plan covering a range of marine parks in the South-west Network. Positively, some stakeholders felt that the South-west Network Management Plan provided an appropriate level of

detail, describing it as their “source of truth”. Stakeholders found elements such as zoning maps and overarching rules and regulations particularly valuable for supporting compliance activities.

However, some other stakeholders viewed the plan as “overly generic”, which reduced its relevance and applicability and limited place-based actions. Stakeholders reported that actions and outcomes were not always suitable for standardisation across networks, with the approach at times felt to complicate implementation and evaluation.

Mixed feedback was received in relation to the adaptability of the plan. Some stakeholders felt that the plan had not effectively adapted to emerging risks, priorities, and contextual changes, particularly throughout later stages of the plan. This was generally found to be due to the prescriptive nature of some management plan actions and outcomes, or the lack of “future proofing” of the plan to address changes in the ecological or policy environment over time. Specifically, stakeholders cited examples such as climate change threats and emergence of new industries (e.g. offshore energy) as key threats. Additionally, some stakeholders, particularly First Nations partners, felt the plan did not adequately respond to evolving community priorities.

Some of the specific actions and outcomes in the South-west Network Management Plan were felt to be challenging to achieve or implement, particularly given the acknowledgement by stakeholders of the resource and budget constraints Parks Australia faced when implementing management activities. Examples included A34 (*‘monitor the condition of important habitats and their vulnerability to climate change’*) from the Marine Science Program and O11 (*‘impact of pressures on marine park values are minimised as far as reasonably practicable’*) from the Parks Protection and Management Program, as well as some of the actions and outcomes in the Communication, Education and Awareness and Tourism and Visitor Experience programs.

Feedback from Parks Australia staff suggested that, while the overall structure of the management plan was effective (i.e. with different actions and outcomes listed under specific management program areas), some actions had not been placed in the most appropriate programs. For example, A57 (*‘work with marine park users to promote understanding of the rules for activities and how to comply’*) was felt to be the responsibility of those communicating with stakeholders and park users in the South-west and hence could be better suited to the Communication, Education and Awareness Program.

Finally, the evaluation also identified several limitations with monitoring and review mechanisms, with stakeholders reporting that some actions and outcomes were “vague”, ambiguous or lacked clear timeframes for completion. This was felt to make effective assessment difficult. It was suggested that outcomes include focus on productivity and reporting quality where possible. Conversely, some actions and outcomes were found to be overly prescriptive, such as those relating to identifying the government agencies and other partners to be engaged in implementation. This was particularly evident in the Compliance and Assessments and Authorisations programs, where Parks Australia staff felt that prescribed partner lists did not always align with the practical realities of a risk-based approach to implementation and enforcement. In some cases, partners were identified in the plan whom staff felt were not well placed to address the relevant risks.

3.3. Implications for future plan development

Based on the evaluation findings, it is recommended that the following be considered when developing the next plan for the South-west Network:

- **Demonstrating how robust evidence has been used, particularly for zoning decisions** – stakeholders reported an expectation that any future management plans would clearly draw from the evidence and data accrued since 2018 to ensure management and zoning decisions were based on ecological, socio-economic and cultural information available.

They expected such an approach to be transparent and well-communicated to ensure clarity and explain why decisions had been made, which would help enhance trust in the process of plan development and implementation. In addition, communicating evidence of the effectiveness of zoning and management in protecting and strengthening marine park values – both at the start of and throughout the duration of the plan – would help foster greater understanding and support for marine park management and may promote greater collaboration within the science.

- **Ensuring comprehensive and effective engagement with key stakeholder groups** – by incorporating early, wide-reaching and ongoing engagement with key user groups. While some stakeholders felt they had been appropriately engaged, others did not feel that consultation ahead of the plan development, or throughout its duration, had been sufficient or effective. Better communication with stakeholders about management activities and their rationale, as well as management plan progress was also found to be important to support buy-in.
- **Embedding cultural perspectives and prioritising First Nations input in the management of their Sea Country through:**
 - Adopting co-management approaches that embed early and culturally responsive engagement with First Nations communities, enabling opportunities for First Nations partners to shape the priorities based on the place-based needs and requirements of relevant Sea Country.
 - Avoiding “blanket approaches” to cultural engagement, by tailoring strategies to reflect the diverse ways First Nations groups care for Sea Country, and the unique strengths and resources available to each community (i.e. taking a place-based and community-centric approach tailored to each Traditional Owner group or community).
 - Ensuring information and engagement is based upon up-to-date and impartial mapping of all relevant Traditional Owners, First Nations peoples and organisations who have cultural governance and ownership of marine parks, to ensure all relevant partners are invited to engage in marine park management decisions.
 - Additionally, providing more informal avenues for engagement with First Nations community members, to ensure the inclusion of individuals who may not be officially recognised as Traditional Owners (e.g. within State Government Registers) but seek to maintain connection and practise Culture. This may include both formal engagement with Parks Australia (e.g. through advisory or reference groups) or via invitations to be involved in Sea Country management activities and initiatives.
- **Improving monitoring and evaluation capabilities** – by incorporating key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets to make measuring and evaluating action and outcome performance easier.
- **Enhancing communication about the South-west Network and management plan among relevant stakeholders, including the broader community** – so as to raise awareness of marine parks, foster a greater understanding of marine park values, build support for management decisions, and encourage community participation in conservation efforts. Raising awareness of the South-west Network Management Plan factsheet has also been identified as a way to enhance its usability and accessibility for stakeholders.
- **Acknowledging the importance of long-term monitoring efforts** – including via repeated data-collection activities to enable observation of trends overtime, and ensuring a balanced approach to ecological, social and economic data collection.
- **Considering Australia’s ‘30 by 30’ commitment** – including implications of potential changes to zoning arrangements. In doing so, it will be important to clearly communicate the evidence-based need and benefits of commitment to ‘30 by 30’ in an Australian context.

4. Findings: Communication, Education and Awareness Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Communication, Education and Awareness Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

4.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade



Good with some concerns

The Communication, Education and Awareness Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcome of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the eight planned actions, four were assessed as 'completed', while the remaining four were assessed as 'partially completed'.

While several actions were only partially completed, the evidence demonstrates that significant efforts were made across this program. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to advancing communication and engagement, despite challenges such as resource constraints. However, the evaluation identified further opportunities to strengthen the program's effectiveness, particularly in expanding awareness, understanding and support for marine park values and management among the broader population.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation identified several strengths in the implementation of the program within the South-west Network. While there is still room for improvement, the evaluation highlighted significant achievements in engaging both marine park users and the broader public. In particular, the Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty was raised as a positive example of communication efforts that reached a range of audiences. The Our Marine Parks Grants (OMPGs) were found to be instrumental in facilitating these initiatives.

Further, digital offerings, particularly through mobile apps, were also found to be practical and effective ways to communicate with marine park users. One example provided by stakeholders was the Recfishwest app.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

A range of challenges were noted when implementing this program, including:

- The difficulty of engaging audiences about marine parks that were often located far offshore, where limited visibility and interaction reduced awareness and connection, particularly among the broader community.
- Limited resources within Parks Australia, with small teams needing to manage various programs and tending to have a stronger focus on terrestrial parks. While Parks Australia undertook initiatives to engage the public, such as developing online resources, stakeholder feedback indicated that these activities tended to lack broad reach and visibility.
- Challenges achieving effective reach and engagement, with only some more highly engaged stakeholders aware of the range of communication activities undertaken by Parks Australia. The

evaluation suggests that further efforts are needed to enhance broader reach and engagement, including among South-west Marine Parks Network Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) members. A lack of regular communication from Parks Australia was found to contribute to more negative perceptions of marine park management, particularly among recreational fishers and First Nations groups.

4.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O1. Increased awareness, understanding and support for marine parks	 Partially met	 Trend getting better
Evidence This outcome was assessed as partially met. While survey-based metrics were not yet available, many stakeholders felt awareness, understanding and support for marine parks had increased at least moderately over the life of the plan. Evidence from desktop review: The National Environmental Science Program (NESP), in partnership with the University of Western Australia (UWA), conducted surveys at boat ramps across Australia in 2021 to establish social and economic benchmarks for Australian Marine Parks (AMPs). These surveys collected data on awareness, understanding and support for AMPs. While a subsequent round of research is due to be completed and released in 2026, it was not available at the time of this evaluation. As such, it is not currently possible to make a robust assessment of whether awareness, understanding and support have increased over the life of the plan.⁶ Evidence from engagement: Many stakeholders believed that awareness, understanding and support for marine parks had increased at least moderately over the life of the plan. However, this sentiment was stronger among those directly engaged by Parks Australia, who had greater familiarity with the communication activities undertaken during the management plan – suggesting that the reach and impact of these efforts may have been more limited among less engaged stakeholders. The actions below provide more specific detail of the range of activities undertaken by Parks Australia to support awareness, understanding and support for marine parks in the South-west Network. In addition, the establishment of baseline datasets (as discussed in Chapter 7) was also acknowledged by stakeholders as increasing understanding amongst the science community and marine park managers. However, some commercial and recreational fisher stakeholders felt that Parks Australia had missed an opportunity to positively promote marine parks by highlighting the sustainable use of		

⁶ NESP Social and Economic Benchmarks of the Australian Marine Parks Report: https://api.research-repository.uwa.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/363774544/Navarro_et_al_D6_M12_M13_M17_Social_and_Economic_benchmarks_of_the_AMPs_FINAL.pdf

AMPs by commercial and recreational fishers. They believed this approach could have helped enhance the reputation of the seafood and fishing industry more broadly.

In addition, the evaluation identified instances of confusion or gaps in understanding amongst stakeholders that could further reduce support for marine parks and marine park management. For example, some stakeholders mistakenly believed that the demersal fishing ban was implemented by Parks Australia rather than state authorities. This misunderstanding, coupled with perceived poor communication about the ban, negatively impacted perceptions of marine park management overall, including at the Commonwealth level.

4.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the Communication, Education and Awareness Program.

Action	Completion status
A1. Develop a marketing and communication strategy for Australian Marine Parks to raise awareness and understanding of marine park values and the contribution marine parks make to enhancing Australia's wellbeing	 Completed
Evidence	
This action was assessed as completed, with the marketing and communication strategy delivered in a timely manner. However, it was noted by some stakeholders that the strategy to date had limited effectiveness in increasing awareness and understanding of marine parks and their values among key audiences. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified the '<i>Communication, Education and Awareness Strategy (2021-26)</i>' as the guiding document for relevant activities across marine parks/ marine park networks, including the South-west Network. This document was found to have been produced in a timely manner (i.e. within the first four years of the management plan).⁷ Evidence of communication activities and initiatives that were developed or implemented in accordance with this strategy are noted against the relevant actions below. Evidence from engagement: While Parks Australia staff acknowledged challenges engaging audiences through communication, particularly given the more remote nature of some parks in the South-west Network, they noted a number of activities undertaken in line with the Communication, Education and Awareness Strategy. This included attendance at conferences, development of online resources and a range of OMPG funded projects (as discussed in more detail below). However, when considering the effectiveness of Parks Australia's activities in raising awareness and understanding of the South-west Network's values and contribution to Australia more generally, external stakeholders provided mixed assessments:	

⁷ A *Communication, Education and Awareness Strategy (2021-26)*: Internal document

- Some stakeholders, particularly those who had direct engagement with Parks Australia, tended to provide positive views of the communication activities they were familiar with.
- However, other stakeholders who had less engagement with Parks Australia were found to be less positive about the effectiveness of broader communication and marketing activities, which they felt lacked visibility, reach and impact. These stakeholders also felt that awareness of the South-west Network remained low among park users and the broader public.

When considering communication about zoning regulations specifically, a few stakeholders reported that, while zoning rules had been communicated to relevant park users (e.g. commercial fishers), the rationale or evidence base for these rules had not been effectively conveyed. As a result, they felt that people lacked a clear understanding of 'why' certain areas were off-limits to fishing.

Action	Completion status
A2. Develop online information resources to facilitate awareness of marine park values, management arrangements and visitor opportunities	 Completed
Evidence	
This action was assessed as completed, as the desktop review identified considerable evidence of online information resources being developed in a timely manner. The evaluation found that stakeholders held mixed perceptions in relation to the effectiveness of these online resources in facilitating awareness of values, management arrangements and visitor opportunities. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified a range of evidence of online information resources being developed, with delivery of these outputs commencing from the initial years of the management plan (i.e. between 2018–2020) which indicated the timely completion of this action. More specifically, the desktop review identified the following online resources designed to facilitate awareness of marine park values: • The values chapter in the South-west Network Management Plan itself, published in 2018.⁸ • The South-west Network values webpage.⁹ • The 'Five that thrive in our marine parks' website produced by the Fab Five research team¹⁰ at the University of Adelaide (UoA) (2022), (discussed further in A3 below).	

⁸ The South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan Chapter 2.3:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/5797254b49ade6c0ea62ff8785ca9958/amp-document-south-west-management-plan-2018.pdf>

⁹ South-west Network values webpage: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/values/values-south-west-marine-parks-network/>

¹⁰ The 'Five that thrive in our marine parks' website:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/61ca6f9be4354e808146e47e0a59a7d0?item=1>

The desktop review also identified the following online resources designed to facilitate awareness of marine park management arrangements:

- The South-west Network Management Plan itself, published in 2018.¹¹
- A management plan zoning and rules factsheet.¹²
- Apps containing information about AMP boundaries and zoning, including the Recfishwest app¹³ and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions of Western Australia (DBCA) Explore Marine Parks Apps.¹⁴

The desktop review also identified the following online resources designed to facilitate awareness of visitor opportunities:

- Visitor experiences being promoted on the Parks Australia website under the 'Explore' section of each corresponding marine park.¹⁵
- Parks Australia collaborated with the Department for Environment and Water South Australia (SA DEW) to produce several visitor information brochures about South-Australian Marine Parks.¹⁶

Evidence from engagement:

Among the stakeholders who were aware of online resources produced by Parks Australia – particularly researchers, commercial fishers, SWMPAC members and key groups who are engaged with Parks Australia through OMPG funded projects – perceptions were mixed. Positive perceptions were identified in relation to:

- The Recfishwest app
- The 'Fab 5' communication initiatives
- Communication published on the DBCA website concerning whale entanglement in Geopraphe Bay, and
- A digital newsletter from Parks Australia.

These resources were considered useful and engaging for users. However, less positive feedback was received regarding the information presented on the Parks Australia website and the SeemapAus tool, with stakeholders citing a poor user experience, an "outdated" look and feel, and limited functionality. Specifically, one stakeholder highlighted the previous eAtlas tool on the Australian Marine Parks website, which they felt was more user-friendly than the SeemapAus tool due to its layout and the ability to display multiple types of information within a single interface. One stakeholder suggested an increased use of social media could be an effective way to improve the reach of online information resources. Parks Australia staff acknowledged their strategic focus

¹¹ The South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/parks/south-west-marine-parks-network/south-west-network-management-plan/>

¹² The South-west Marine Parks Network zoning and rules factsheet: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/8b6971a7bd97ef028a59634e94b579cc/amp-document-factsheet-south-west-management-plan.pdf>

¹³ Recfishwest app: <https://recfishwest.org.au/recfishwest-fishing-rules-app/>

¹⁴ IOS app: <https://archive.gaiareources.com.au/marine-parks-wa-app-gets-uplift/index.html#:~:text=With%20the%20support%20and%20collaboration,the%20Marine%20Parks%20WA%20app>

¹⁵ South-west Marine Parks Network website: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/parks/south-west-marine-parks-network/>

¹⁶ Photographic evidence of displays provided by Parks Australia: Internal document

was on compliance-focused communication over “hearts and minds” communication, largely due to resource constraints.

Action	Completion status
A3. Maximise the use of new technologies and partnerships (including with schools, universities, museums and non-government organisations) to inspire people of all ages to become involved in marine park management and protection	 Completed
Evidence This action was assessed as completed. Clear documentary evidence demonstrated a variety of partnerships established to communicate marine park values and management. These activities utilised multiple channels and were designed to engage audiences across different age groups. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review provided evidence of a range of partnerships, including with schools, universities and non-government organisations, two of which utilised modern technology: • The development and release of school curriculum-aligned educational resources focused on marine parks, alongside updates to the ‘SA Beach Explorer’s Guide’ to support student learning and teacher delivery.¹⁷ • An OMPG2 funded project titled ‘Finding the Fab Five’ which produced educational materials on iconic marine species. Undertaken by the UoA, online story map resources were launched and delivered through school engagement workshops with over 1,000 students across South Australia, using science and First Nations Traditional Knowledge to raise awareness of, and engagement with, Australian Marine Parks and marine park values. The interactive nature of this website was an example of the use of modern technology in communication.^{18 19 20 21 22} • An OMPG funded project which measured and communicated the ecological benefits of regional biodiversity and seafloor habitats in the eastern Great Australian Bight Marine Park, undertaken by the UoA (2023).²³	

¹⁷ SA Beach Explorer’s Guide: <https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/marineparks/docs/beach-explorers-guide.pdf>

¹⁸ Finding the Fab Five: <https://able.adelaide.edu.au/socialsciences/research/finding-the-fab-five>

¹⁹ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 2 (2020): <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2b7aff986015d07009d5d04fd9b13d48/our-marine-park-grants-round-two-projects.pdf>

²⁰ The University of Adelaide ‘Fab Five’ factsheets and detailed information sheets – Australian sea lions, Giant Australian Cuttlefish, South right whale, Great white shark, White-bellied Sea Eagle: Internal document

²¹ The University of Adelaide ‘Fab Five’ story map website: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/61ca6f9be4354e808146e47e0a59a7d0>

²² SW Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

²³ Ecological benefits of marine parks in Australia: <https://set.adelaide.edu.au/news/list/2023/05/10/ecological-benefits-of-marine-parks-in-australia>

- A communication catalogue for biodiversity assets in Australia's southern Marine Parks undertaken by University of Tasmania (UTAS).²⁴
- An OMPG funded initiative to develop the Marine Parks Discovery Zone at Busselton Jetty — an interactive educational experience utilising modern technology to explain marine environments and marine parks, included to groups of school students.²⁵
- An OMPG funded project in partnership with Undalup Association Inc. — *'People of the Sea: Wadandi Sea Country education package'*.²⁶
- Educational content and a marine park interpretation incorporated into the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre rebuild.²⁷

While no specific partnerships with museums were identified, exhibits about the South-west Network were established via other organisations, including the tourist visitor centres.

Evidence from engagement:

Stakeholders who were aware of communication efforts made by Parks Australia tended to report that these efforts had been effective in establishing partnerships to grow awareness of marine park management and protection. In particular, the following were noted:

- The *'Fab Five'* project – a few SWMPAC stakeholders felt this initiative was effective in raising awareness of marine park values, cultural values and Sea Country, helping to make offshore marine parks more relevant to young people.
- Busselton Jetty – some stakeholders highlighted this initiative as being particularly effective, featuring digitalised exhibits of the South-west Corner and Perth Canyon Marine Parks, including 'fly-through' footage of the canyon itself. These exhibits were seen as valuable for educating the general public and engaging key groups who may hold negative perceptions of offshore parks, particularly those impacted by environmental measures such as the demersal fishing ban. Additionally, the exhibits provided an opportunity to educate international tourists about the concept of marine parks within an Australian context. This opportunity was considered particularly important due to the offshore nature of the South-west Network and the critical role of onshore experiences in raising awareness and building understanding.
- The Recfishwest app (developed with support of Parks Australia funding)— this was reported to be a valuable resource for park users to have direct access to the most current fishing rules in Western Australia. Further, Parks Australia staff felt the application was an effective way to communicate compliance rules and zoning information for marine parks.

²⁴ Communication catalogue for biodiversity assets in Australia's southern Marine Parks:

<https://discover.utas.edu.au/Justin.Hulls/grants>

²⁵ Busselton Jetty Marine Discovery Centre:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2b7aff986015d07009d5d04fd9b13d48/our-marine-park-grants-round-two-projects.pdf>

²⁶ Sea Country education package:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2b7aff986015d07009d5d04fd9b13d48/our-marine-park-grants-round-two-projects.pdf>

²⁷ Flinders Chase Visitors Centre: <https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/flinders-chase-vc-interp>

Action	Completion status
A4. Establish network advisory committees to ensure users and interested stakeholders have on-going input into the management of Australian Marine Parks A8. Establish a South-west Network Advisory Committee to support and collaborate with the Director in management.	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence These actions were assessed as partially completed. While the desktop review provided evidence of an advisory committee being established in a timely manner, stakeholder feedback indicated that the committee may not have had the intended input into marine park management. Evidence from the desktop review: The SWMPAC has been convened twice annually since 2019, with communiqués published after each meeting (until 2023).²⁸ In May 2025, a Joint Australian Marine Parks Advisory Committee (AMPAC) meeting was held in Brisbane to facilitate knowledge sharing, networking and cross-network guidance for the upcoming review phase actions.²⁹ Evidence from engagement: SWMPAC members expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to engage with Parks Australia and receive information about management of the South-west Network via the advisory committee. In particular, members felt that the opportunity to meet a diverse range of stakeholders and share perspectives towards park management was beneficial. However, feedback from both SWMPAC members and Parks Australia staff highlighted concerns regarding the effectiveness of the current operational model. Specifically: - SWMPAC members felt that their expertise and input shared via the committee had not always had a meaningful impact on marine park management. While members felt that there was some evidence of advice from the committee impacting management decisions (such as in relation to compliance activities in Two Rocks Marine Park), SWMPAC members felt that information sharing was generally “one-way” from Parks Australia. Members reported that they did not have as much opportunity to provide direct input as desired and noted that when advice was provided it was unclear to what extent this feedback was used by Parks Australia (i.e. there were not feedback mechanisms to “close the loop” in relation to matters discussed in previous meetings). - Some SWMPAC members felt that the committee was not representative of the diversity of interests in the network, specifically noting that commercial fishers were underrepresented. Similarly, Traditional Owner participants indicated that not all relevant First Nations communities were represented on the SWMPAC.	

²⁸ South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/advisory-committees/south-west-marine-parks-advisory-committee/>

²⁹ South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/advisory-committees/south-west-marine-parks-advisory-committee/>

- Some Parks Australia staff felt that meetings tended to feel more like Parks Australia presenting information rather than a workshop or an opportunity to receive meaningful input, echoed by most SWMPAC members.

Further information in relation to the operation of AMPAC committees (including the SWMPAC) over the course of the management plan and key learnings for the future are reported in the *'Overall findings Across Marine Parks report'*.

Action	Completion status
A5. Develop a customer focussed approach to tracking the aspirations and concerns of stakeholders in relation to marine parks	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence	
This action was assessed as partially completed. While a formal approach to seeking feedback was developed via the SWMPAC, this was not found to be applicable to the breadth of relevant stakeholders, and only some felt that there were adequate mechanisms in place to track their aspirations and concerns in relation to the South-west Network. Evidence from desktop review: As discussed in relation to A4 and A8 above, the SWMPAC was established in 2019 as the key formal mechanism for tracking the aspirations and concerns of stakeholders in relation to marine parks in the South-west Network.³⁰ While no other formal mechanisms/ approaches were identified, internal documentation provided by Parks Australia noted the informal establishment of relationships with particular stakeholder groups, including relevant state government departments, Traditional Owner groups, key research institutions and other interest groups identified by the SWMPAC. However, documentation supplied by Parks Australia also noted a 'significant lack of resourcing' to undertake regular, ongoing engagement with all relevant stakeholders.³¹ Evidence from engagement: Of the few stakeholders who were able to provide feedback in relation to this action, only a few felt that Parks Australia had been highly responsive to their aspirations and concerns over the course of the management plan. Amongst other participants, particularly First Nations partners as well as fishing industry stakeholders, there was a clear desire for greater responsiveness to questions and communication, a more proactive approach to anticipating concerns and the establishment of clearer feedback mechanisms to record and act on input. Additionally, stakeholders emphasised the importance of providing information back to "close the loop" where relevant.	

³⁰South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/advisory-committees/south-west-marine-parks-advisory-committee/>

³¹ Parks Australia South-west self-assessment: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A6. Develop information on marine parks to encourage increased awareness and understanding of values and management arrangements (to be evaluated together with A1 and A2 above)	 Completed
Evidence This action was assessed as completed, with the required outputs delivered in a timely manner. However, many stakeholders felt that there was insufficient information available or that the information provided was not disseminated widely enough to effectively increase awareness and understanding of the values and management of the South-west Network. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified a range of information resources to encourage increased awareness of marine park values, management activities and management arrangements, as outlined in response to A2 and A3 (above). Evidence from engagement: In addition to the findings presented in relation to A2 and A3 above, one stakeholder noted that attendance by Parks Australia at conferences and community events, supported by social media posts to share these activities, also enhanced awareness and understanding of values and management activities in the South-west Network. Overall, Parks Australia staff felt that satisfactory efforts had been made to increase understanding and awareness of management arrangements, despite constraints related to partnerships, funding and resources. However, they acknowledged having adopted an outcomes-based approach that prioritised compliance-focused communication over efforts to raise awareness of marine park benefits and values.	

Action	Completion status
A7. Provide infrastructure in and adjacent to the Network, such as signs and marker buoys, to increase understanding of marine park values and rules, particularly at sites that are regularly visited	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed, given the desktop review identified some evidence of infrastructure being installed in and adjacent to some marine parks in the South-west Network. However, most stakeholders felt infrastructure had limited success in increasing understanding of marine park values and rules, particularly given the offshore and deep-sea nature of many of the marine parks in the South-west Network.	

Evidence from desktop review:

The desktop review found evidence of signage being installed in and around the South-west Network, specifically:

- The installation of an interpretive sign at Surfers Beach (City of Albany, WA) in 2020 to educate whale-watchers about local humpback, southern right and blue whales, and several dolphin species.³²
- Three updated signs for the Great Australian Bight Marine Park developed in partnership with SA DEW and the Mirning peoples through the Nullarbor Joint Management Committee. These signs were designed for installation at key cliff-top lookouts accessible to travellers crossing the Nullarbor.³³
- Tourism signs to be installed at Nullarbor Roadhouse and Border Village.³⁴
- 35 interpretive signs relating to Geopraphe and South-west Corner Marine Parks.³⁵
- One interpretive sign on southern right whales at Fowlers Bay on the Great Australian Bight.³⁶
- Five interpretive signs at the Admirals Arch Walk at Cape du Couedic on Western Kangaroo Island.^{37 38}
- Seal Bay Kangaroo Island interpretive signage.³⁹

Evidence from engagement:

A few stakeholders spoke positively about the improvement of signage, particularly in reference to boat ramp signage and joint signage efforts in the Great Australian Bight through collaboration with DEW. However, most stakeholders felt that signage in the South-west Network remained limited. Stakeholders specifically expressed a desire for additional signage near coastal highways/roads where marine parks were situated offshore, as well as signage that highlights marine park values and provides compliance-related information. It was acknowledged, however, that the remote and offshore nature of marine parks in this network posed significant challenges for the installation of signage infrastructure.

During the engagement, Parks Australia staff noted that partnerships and collaboration with state-based agencies (e.g. Department of Transport, Western Australia) had been successful in supporting the installation of additional signage at more regularly visited sites.

³² Parks Australia South-west self-assessment: Internal document

³³ Nullarbor lookout Signage: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/b137fc75d38cc3f217029221611464de/amp-document-swmpac-communique-6-2021.pdf>

³⁴ Sign installed at Nullarbor Roadhouse and Border Village locations: Internal document

³⁵ Photographic evidence of Geopraphe and South-west Corner Marine Parks interpretative signs 1-35: Internal documents

³⁶ Image of southern right whale signage at Fowlers Bay on the Great Australian Bight: Internal document

³⁷ Cape du Couedic project proposal "Opportunity for partnership on joint state/commonwealth marine parks interpretation experiences at Cape du Couedic, Flinders Chase NP, Kangaroo Island": Internal document

³⁸ Cape du Couedic interpretative signs 1-5: Internal documents

³⁹ Photographic evidence of displays provided by Parks Australia: Internal document

5. Findings: Tourism and Visitor Experience Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Tourism and Visitor Experience Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

5.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade



The Tourism and Visitor Experience Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcomes of the management program rated as 'partially met' or 'unknown'. Of the ten planned actions, two were assessed as 'completed', five were assessed as 'partially completed' and three were assessed as 'not commenced'.

Although some actions were only partially completed or not commenced, the evidence suggests that progress had been made on most actions and that efforts were reasonable given the more remote and offshore nature of many of the marine parks in the South-west Network, which reduced likely tourism activities and hence the relevance of the program area to the South-west Network.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation identified some strengths in Parks Australia's approach to supporting the development and implementation of ecotourism initiatives and promotion of high-quality visitor experiences. In particular, the exhibition at the Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty and the information installation at Flinders Chase Visitor Centre on Kangaroo Island (see A12) were noted as positive initiatives to support 'onshore' visitor engagement with marine parks (i.e. for those unable to visit marine parks in the South-west Network directly). In addition, involvement of tourism operators in developing and sharing the '*Finding the Fab Five*' initiative (see A12 and A16) was also identified as an opportunity to promote interest in marine parks and their values.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

Some barriers, challenges and limiting factors were identified through the evaluation. These included the remote and offshore nature of many marine parks within the South-west Network, which contributed to low interest in tourism and a limited number of tourism activities. Additionally, tourism activities were further constrained by COVID-19 travel restrictions, which negatively impacted visitation and engagement opportunities for a period of the plan.

Parks Australia acknowledged that the Tourism and Visitor Experience Program was broadly deprioritised during the implementation of the management plan, with efforts primarily focused on key visitor sites such as Kangaroo Island, Seal Bay and Busselton Jetty. Most stakeholders similarly noted that this program was less relevant or valuable within the South-west Network than other programs due to the identified challenges. Specific weaknesses were highlighted in the following two areas (and outlined in more detail in the actions below):

- Communication, engagement and collaboration with tourism operators – which was limited in the South-west Network.

- Support for First Nations culturally led-tourism experiences – the evaluation identified limited activities to support Traditional Owners in delivering cultural tourism experiences, suggesting future efforts should seek to strengthen collaboration with Traditional Owners to enable the delivery of these activities.

5.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O2. High-quality visitor experiences that are appealing, engaging and raise awareness of the natural and cultural values of marine parks	 Partially met	 Trend getting better
Evidence This outcome was assessed as partially met. While desktop review evidence to support this assessment was limited, and there were few stakeholders who could comment on this outcome, most stakeholders who could comment provided positive feedback. Evidence from desktop review: The evaluation identified some visitor satisfaction data from overall tourism activities across Western Australia, including data about experiences of visitors to natural attractions such as national parks. While this data indicated overall high-quality experiences and high satisfaction with tourism activities, this was not specific to tourism in marine parks.⁴⁰ Further, the ocean accounting pilot project undertaken in Geographe Marine Park by Parks Australia and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) indicated that many people enjoyed recreational activities in Geographe Bay.⁴¹ Evidence from engagement: Of the few stakeholders who could comment on the success of this outcome, most felt there were high-quality visitor experiences that were appealing, engaging and raised awareness of the natural and cultural values of marine parks in the South-west Network. One example raised was the OMPG funded development of the Busselton Jetty Marine Discovery Centre (refer to A16 for further details), which was recognised for raising awareness about Perth Canyon, Bremer Bay, South-west Corner and Geographe Bay.		

⁴⁰ Tourism WA – Visitor Experience and Expectations Research 2024-2025 Report: Internal document.

⁴¹ Ocean accounting pilot for Geographe Marine Park: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/gmp-ocean-accounts-synthesis-report.pdf>

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O3. Increased visitation to marine parks	Unknown	Unknown
Evidence This outcome was assessed as unknown, as no data on visitation trends was found in the desktop review. Stakeholders were unable to confidently speak to trends in visitation, other than to report that visitation tended to be low.		

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O4. Social and economic benefits from the contribution of marine parks to Australia's visitor economy	 Partially met	 Trend stable
Evidence This outcome was assessed as partially met. While the desktop review identified some evidence to support this outcome, it was limited to a single marine park. Furthermore, some stakeholders expressed more negative views regarding the success of this outcome. Evidence from desktop review: Limited documentary evidence was identified measuring the social and economic impact of marine parks in the South-west Network on Australia's visitor economy. Only a few examples were noted, including an ocean accounting pilot project conducted in Geographe Marine Park by Parks Australia and DAWE.⁴² This pilot project identified the following activities which had economic benefits: • Whale watching in Geographe Marine Park, which contributed \$254,000 to the local economy in 2019. • Recreational fishers taking more than 12,000 fishing trips in 2018, valued at over \$2.2 million. Evidence from engagement: One tourism operator stakeholder reported that marine parks made a positive contribution to tourism and its associated social and economic benefits. However, the majority of other stakeholders expressed less positive views, citing limited availability of visitor experiences and limited economic opportunities due to the offshore location of the South-west Network.		

⁴² Ocean accounting pilot for Geographe Marine Park: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/gmp-ocean-accounts-synthesis-report.pdf>

5.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the Tourism and Visitor Experience Program.

Action	Completion status
A9. Develop a sustainable tourism and visitor experience strategy for Australian Marine Parks	 Completed
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as completed in a timely manner, with the desktop review identifying evidence of the timely development of the 'Australian Marine Parks Tourism Strategy 2021-26'. ⁴³	

Action	Completion status
A10. Work with national, state and local tourism authorities and operators to maximise the value of sustainable eco-tourism opportunities associated with marine parks	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed , with some evidence of partnership arrangements and collaboration initiatives identified. However, these efforts were largely limited to local tourism authorities, and stakeholder perspectives on the success of this action were mixed.	
Evidence from the desktop review:	
The desktop review found strong evidence of partnerships with local and state tourism authorities, but less evidence of partnerships with national authorities or operators. The following outputs were delivered between 2021 and 2024, highlighting their timelines:	
• Involvement of tourism operators in developing and sharing 'Finding the Fab Five' marine species factsheets (for more information about this initiative, see A3 above). • An onshore exhibit at the Busselton Jetty Marine Discovery Zone dedicated to marine parks in the South-west Network (funded by Our Marine Parks Grant [OMPG] 2).⁴⁴ This educational exhibit included multiple visual and interactive displays of Australian Marine Parks,	

⁴³ Australian Marine Parks Tourism Strategy 2021-26 (published 2021): Internal document

⁴⁴ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 2 (2020):

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2b7aff986015d07009d5d04fd9b13d48/our-marine-park-grants-round-two-projects.pdf>

showcasing the diversity of ecosystems and habitats.⁴⁵ Evidence of its promotion was also identified in an article published on the ‘Perth is OK!’ website in 2024.⁴⁶

- Promotion of an eco-tourism tour under the ‘Explore’ section of the Eastern Recherche Marine Park website.⁴⁷
- The Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) tourism operator’s handbook, which includes the requirements and information to undertake tourism activities in Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) off state waters. This is updated as required in partnership with DBCA.⁴⁸

Evidence from engagement:

The few external stakeholders who were familiar with activities undertaken by Parks Australia to promote sustainable tourism provided positive feedback about these initiatives, such as the Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty.

However, stakeholders broadly felt that Parks Australia had not prioritised investment in tourism and visitor experience opportunities across the South-west Network. While many considered this appropriate due to the remote nature of many marine parks in the network, a few South-west Marine Park Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) members suggested that more could be done to maximise the value of eco-tourism opportunities, including:

- Increased investment in understanding Cultural Values – to enable Traditional Owners to capitalise on eco-tourism opportunities.
- Leveraging existing opportunities – such as recreational fishing competitions and established tourism activities (e.g. whale watching charters) to promote marine parks and their values.

Action	Completion status
A11. Develop a commercial tourism authorisation system to encourage best-practice and eco-accredited businesses operating in Australian Marine Parks	 Completed
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as completed , with the desktop review identifying evidence of an online permit and licensing application system that enabled authorisation for commercial tourism and other activities. ⁴⁹	

⁴⁵ Photographic evidence of Marine Discovery Centre – AMP interactive display, AMP map display, Deep close-up display, Ocean trenches display and seagrass meadows display: Internal document

⁴⁶ Article on Perth is OK!: <https://perthisok.com/news/busselton-foreshores-new-marine-discovery-centre-opening-this-july/>

⁴⁷ Eastern Recherche Marine Park: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/parks/south-west-marine-parks-network/eastern-recherche-marine-park/>

⁴⁸ SW Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

⁴⁹ Australian Marine Parks - Permit and licence applications (publication date unknown): <https://onlineservices.environment.gov.au/parks/australian-marine-parks>

Action	Completion status
A12. Work with Tourism Australia and state and regional tourism authorities and the fishing industry to market and promote Australian Marine Parks, including opportunities to promote locally and sustainably caught seafood	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed, with evidence of promotional materials and activities identified through both the desktop review and stakeholder engagement. However, there was limited evidence of collaboration with tourism authorities to promote locally and sustainably caught seafood, and stakeholders felt that more could be done in this area. Evidence from the desktop review: The desktop review identified the following evidence of promotion of the South-west Network: • Visitor experiences being promoted on the Parks Australia website under the 'Explore' section of each corresponding marine park.⁵⁰ • Interpretive display for Flinders Chase Visitor Centre funded by Parks Australia via a Collaboration Deed (2021-2028) with South Australian Department for Environment and Water (SA DEW) as part of the centre rebuild after bushfires.^{51 52} • Visitor brochures relating to Geopraphe and South-west Corner Marine Parks.⁵³ • 35 interpretive signs relating to Geopraphe and South-west Corner Marine Parks.⁵⁴ • OMPG2 funded 'Finding the Fab Five' project (see A3 above).⁵⁵ • The Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty's onshore exhibit dedicated to educating visitors about Australian Marine Parks and the importance in preserving the unique marine environment.⁵⁶ The following evidence of tourism and information products developed with SA DEW were identified: • Multiple visitor information products developed with National Parks and Wildlife Service under a 2018-19 contract.^{57 58 59 60}	

⁵⁰ South-west Marine Parks Network website: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/parks/south-west-marine-parks-network/>

⁵¹ Flinders Chase Visitor Centre marine display: Internal document

⁵² Flinders Chase Visitor Centre Report Appendix – Flinders Chase Visitor Centre Interpretation: Internal document

⁵³ Visitor brochure – "Marine Parks around the Capes": Internal document

⁵⁴ Photographic evidence of Geopraphe and South-west Corner Marine Parks interpretative signs 1-35: Internal documents

⁵⁵ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 2 (2020):

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2b7aff986015d07009d5d04fd9b13d48/our-marine-park-grants-round-two-projects.pdf>

⁵⁶ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 2 (2020):

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2b7aff986015d07009d5d04fd9b13d48/our-marine-park-grants-round-two-projects.pdf>

⁵⁷ South Australia's Marine Parks introduction brochure: Internal document

⁵⁸ SA Marine Parks Sanctuary Zone Maps booklet: Internal document

⁵⁹ A beach explorers guide to plants and animals in South Australia: Internal document

⁶⁰ An underwater guide to plants and animals in South Australia: Internal document

- Two interpretative signs at Seal Bay Visitor Centre lookout on South Kangaroo Island.^{61 62}
- One interpretive sign on southern right whales at Fowlers Bay on the Great Australian Bight.⁶³
- Five interpretive signs at the Admirals Arch Walk at Cape du Couedic on Western Kangaroo Island.^{64 65}
- Tourism signs installed at Nullarbor Roadhouse and Border Village.⁶⁶
- Three interpretative signs installed at key 'over-the-horizon' vantage points on the Great Australian Bight.^{67 68}

While there was limited evidence of the delivery of marketing or promotional assets for locally and sustainably caught seafood, there was evidence of efforts to work with fisheries to support sustainable fishing practices and promote undervalued and underutilised species in the Great Australian Bight:

- OMGP1 funded project to support the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) to achieve their sustainability certification of tuna fishing with the Marine Stewardship Council. ETBF is one of Australia's largest tuna fisheries extending across multiple marine parks/ networks, including the South-west Marine Parks Network.⁶⁹
- OMPG1 funded project conducted by the Great Australian Bight Industry Association that promoted five currently caught species that were considered either undervalued or underutilised. The project involved working with stakeholders along the entire supply chain to help industry better understand the current market, identify consumer needs and expectations, find new market opportunities and develop product quality standards.^{70 71}
- OMPG3 funded project that supported the Great Australian Bight Industry Association to obtain Marine Stewardship Certification for the Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery, promoting sustainable fishing practices.^{72 73}

No evidence of collaboration with Tourism Australia was identified.⁷⁴

Evidence from engagement:

The few external stakeholders familiar with promotion activities undertaken by Parks Australia largely provided positive feedback (see A10 for further evidence).

⁶¹ Seal Bay lookout sign information: Internal document

⁶² Image of Seal Bay Visitor Centre lookout interpretive signage 1 (with video) and signage 2: Internal document

⁶³ Image of southern right whale signage at Fowlers Bay on the Great Australian Bight: Internal document

⁶⁴ Cape du Couedic project proposal "Opportunity for partnership on joint state/commonwealth marine parks interpretation experiences at Cape du Couedic, Flinders Chase NP, Kangaroo Island": Internal document

⁶⁵ Cape du Couedic interpretative signs 1-5: Internal documents

⁶⁶ Sign installed at Nullarbor Roadhouse and Border Village locations: Internal document

⁶⁷ Photo of Great Australian Bight lookout sign "Protecting Wanna Munda (Sea Country)": Internal document

⁶⁸ Great Australian Bight lookout sign "Home of the Australian sea lion (Bal:gada)": Internal document

⁶⁹ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 1 (2018):

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/952ab41977e4ddd5bf09098cec6dc858/round-1-project-details-and-descriptions.pdf>

⁷⁰ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 1 (2018): [Our Marine Park Grants Round One](#)

⁷¹ Great Australian Bight Wild Fish Market Development Handbook (2021): Internal document

⁷² Great Australian Bight Fishery achieves MSC certification: [Great Australian Bight Fishery achieves MSC certification | Marine Stewardship Council](#)

⁷³ Our Marine Parks Grant program – Round 3 (2022): [our-marine-park-grants-round-three-projects-v2.pdf](#)

⁷⁴ SW Network Internal Self-Assessment: Internal document

However, there was limited awareness of activities undertaken by Parks Australia to promote locally and sustainably caught seafood in the South-west Network. One stakeholder cited a video released by Parks Australia to promote sustainably caught seafood. Other stakeholders cited examples that were not driven by Parks Australia, including:

- A statewide seafood promotion campaign, and
- A visitor display dedicated to the promotion of local seafood at Busselton Jetty.

Further, a couple of fishing industry stakeholders reported feeling “let down” due to a perceived lack of action by Parks Australia in this space. These stakeholders reported that, during the establishment phase of the marine parks, promoting sustainable seafood had been presented as a key benefit for the industry, particularly as the parks were expected to enhance the reputation and value of seafood caught in the region and thus the fishing industry. The stakeholders described Parks Australia’s limited perceived action in this area as disappointing, and felt it was reflective of limited understanding or appreciation of the fishing industry more broadly.

Action	Completion status
A13. Monitor visitor trends and levels of satisfaction with marine park experiences and products	 Not commenced
Evidence	
This action was assessed as not commenced, with desktop evidence indicating no implementation or monitoring of visitor trends or levels of satisfaction with marine park experiences and products. However, the evaluation identified that this may be due to the remoteness of particular marine parks in the South-west Network and the limited number of licensed tourism operators and opportunities. Evidence from the desktop review: A self-assessment conducted by Parks Australia confirmed limited progress in relation to this action. The self-assessment noted that, while commercial tourism operators were required to provide quarterly logs of their activities, including the number of visitors, these logs did not capture details regarding visitor satisfaction. Additionally, the referenced quarterly logs were not provided by Parks Australia for this desktop review. It was noted by Parks Australia that this action was perceived as less relevant for marine parks, where visitation was less of a focus compared to terrestrial parks.⁷⁵	

⁷⁵ South-west Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A14. Promote culturally sensitive tourism by encouraging tourism operators to liaise with Traditional Owners	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed, as few activities were identified through either the desktop review or engagement. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review found that the main mechanism for encouraging tourism operators to liaise with Traditional Owners was a prompt that appeared on the webpage when submitting an application via the assessments and authorisations process.⁷⁶ However, self-reported feedback in internal documentation provided by Parks Australia suggested limited additional activities had been undertaken to support this action.⁷⁷ Further, in an internal self-assessment, Parks Australia reported receiving feedback from Traditional Owners who had advised caution when implementing this action. This feedback highlighted that it would be most appropriate to communicate Traditional Knowledge via First Nations owned and operated tourism experiences (rather than through non-First Nations operators, even in consultation with Traditional Owners).⁷⁸ Evidence from engagement: Only a few stakeholders and First Nations partners provided feedback in relation to this action. While one tourism operator noted that consultation had occurred with First Nations partners during the development of the Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty, Parks Australia was not perceived to have played a role in supporting or facilitating this collaboration.	

Action	Completion status
A15. Work with tourism operators and First Nations peoples to recognise and promote cultural values and cultural tourism opportunities	 Not commenced
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as not commenced, with no evidence identified of collaboration with tourism operators and First Nations peoples to recognise and promote Cultural Values and	

⁷⁶ Screenshots of questions prompting engagement and consideration of impact on First Nations communities through application process provided by email to ORIMA Research

⁷⁷ SW Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

⁷⁸ SW Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

tourism activities in the South-west network. No First Nations partners or tourism operators were able to comment on this action.

Evidence from the desktop review:

Self-reported feedback via internal documentation provided by Parks Australia suggested limited additional activities had been undertaken to support this action.⁷⁹

Action	Completion status
A16. Promote visitor experiences that foster curiosity and appreciation of natural and heritage values in the Network	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. The desktop review identified a range of materials and projects that foster curiosity and appreciation of natural values in the South-west – however, there was less emphasis on heritage values. Stakeholders had mixed perspectives on the success of this action. Evidence from the desktop review: Evidence of visitor experience promotion is outlined in A12, including various examples of promoting the South-west Network and the development of tourism and information products. Evidence of email engagement with various commercial tour boat charter companies was also identified. These emails informed operators about management in offshore waters and encouraged the promotion of visitor experiences.⁸⁰ Within these activities, there was limited evidence of the promotion of heritage values. Evidence from engagement: Only a few stakeholders were able to comment on the success of this action, with mixed views identified. Those who were aware of, or had been engaged with, Parks Australia in promoting Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) expressed largely positive perceptions. Specifically, they highlighted the success of the exhibition at the Marine Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty and the educational impact of the OMPG funded ‘Finding the Fab Five’ project. However, some stakeholders, including tourism operators and First Nations partners who were unaware of these initiatives, felt that more could be done to promote AMPs and their values.	

⁷⁹ SW Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

⁸⁰ Emails to tour boat charter companies about Industry training for 2020: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A17. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, and the tourism industry to support tourism initiatives, events and attractions that promote visitor experiences in marine parks	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. Although some evidence was identified in the desktop review, both internal documentation from Parks Australia and feedback from external stakeholders noted challenges and scope for improvement in relation to this action. Evidence from the desktop review: Relevant collaborations with state government and tourism industry bodies to support this action are outlined in A10, A12 and A16 (above). An internal self-assessment conducted by Parks Australia indicated that limited progress had been made in relation to this action, but noted land-based opportunities to promote marine parks have been invested in where possible, including: • Support to SA DEW for an educational installation at the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre via Collaborative Deed. • Installation of signage at Seal Bay Conservation Park on Kangaroo Island. No collaboration was identified at a federal level. Evidence from engagement: Overall, stakeholders – particularly those with limited awareness of the actions achieved under this program – felt that there had been insufficient promotion of visitor experiences in the South-west Network. Consequently, a few tourism operators called for more on-the-ground efforts from Parks Australia to ‘bridge the gap’ by making offshore marine parks more relevant to the general population, thereby building greater interest in visitation. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of clearer communication about the initiatives already underway.	

Action	Completion status
A18. Facilitate partnerships between First Nations peoples and tourism operators	 Not commenced
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as not commenced, as self-reported evidence from Parks Australia identified that no known partnerships between First Nations peoples and tourism operators existed in the South-west Network.⁸¹	

⁸¹ SW Network Internal Self Assessment: Internal document

6. Findings: Indigenous Engagement Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Indigenous Engagement Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

6.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade



Good with some concerns

The Indigenous Engagement Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns' with the overall outcomes of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the eight planned actions, two were assessed as 'completed', five as 'partially completed or implemented' and one as 'not commenced'.

The evaluation identified targeted progress in collaborating with First Nations partners and Ranger groups to enhance Traditional Knowledge sharing and Cultural Value mapping through Our Marine Parks Grants (OMPGs) and Sea Country management activities. However, these efforts were not consistently implemented across the South-west Network or equitably with all relevant Traditional Owners. Parks Australia acknowledged that resource constraints had limited the scope and reach of their initiatives under this program.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation identified several strengths of the Indigenous Engagement Program, particularly in its efforts to partner with and involve Traditional Owners and First Nations groups in marine park management. Key achievements included initiatives to support Traditional Knowledge sharing, Cultural Value mapping, and Sea Country management activities, which were facilitated through programs such as the OMPG. Examples of successful initiatives included participatory mapping of cultural landscapes, the Waatu Wardan Kaartdijin project, and partnerships with Traditional Owner groups to improve understanding of Sea Country values in priority marine parks. These activities were seen as valuable steps towards recognising and incorporating First Nations Cultural Heritage and Knowledge into marine park management.

Stakeholders who had engaged with Parks Australia highlighted the culturally responsive and respectful approach of staff as a significant strength of the program. Parks Australia staff were commended for their proactive and collaborative engagement, including meeting with Traditional Owners on Country and fostering strong working relationships. First Nations partners who participated in activities such as marine monitoring training and Cultural Value mapping expressed positive feedback. These efforts were seen as important in building trust and supporting First Nations communities to maintain connections to Sea Country.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

While the evaluation identified strengths in collaboration with some Traditional Owner groups, it found these efforts were inconsistent across First Nations communities in the region. Engagement was not always perceived as inclusive of all relevant First Nations partners or appropriate Traditional Owners with the necessary Cultural and Sea Country Knowledge. This left some feeling excluded from key management decisions related to their Sea Country, resulting in a sense of disconnection.

from their heritage, Totems, and cultural responsibilities. Consequently, some First Nations peoples felt that their contributions and involvement in the South-west Network were not adequately recognised or valued by Parks Australia.

The evaluation identified the need for greater integration of First Nations perspectives in marine park management through more established co-management approaches to Sea Country. The findings highlight the importance of structured and consistent engagement, including the formal recognition of governance structures and appropriate Traditional Owners, as well as the establishment of formalised partnerships. Furthermore, the evaluation identified the importance of creating opportunities for First Nations peoples who may not be recognised as Traditional Owners to participate in marine park activities, enabling them to maintain connections to Sea Country and practise their Culture.

6.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O5. Marine Park management contributes to social, cultural and economic benefits for Traditional Owners	 Partially met	 Trend getting better
Evidence Overall, this outcome was assessed as partially met, with evidence from the desktop review and stakeholder engagement indicating some social and cultural benefits for Traditional Owners resulting from the management plan. However, no economic benefits were identified. Evidence from desktop review: See A3, A21, A22, A23 and A24 for evidence of partnership and collaboration efforts between Parks Australia and First Nations groups in the South-west Network. Evidence from engagement: While a few First Nations partners acknowledged the benefits of opportunities to upskill for marine park management activities and participate in Cultural Value mapping in the South-west Network, many felt that economic benefits from marine park management in the region had not been realised. Another First Nations partner observed that, although progress had been made in Traditional Knowledge sharing, insufficient resources had been invested in the South-west Corner to fully identify Cultural Values. They felt that this presented a missed opportunity to enable First Nations communities to leverage these values for sustainable economic ventures.		

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O6. Increase understanding of traditional knowledge, map cultural values and manage significant sites	 Partially met	 Trend getting better
Evidence Overall, this outcome was assessed as partially met, with documentary evidence to support the implementation of initiatives to increase Traditional Knowledge and map Cultural Values. However, evidence related to the management of significant sites was limited. Evidence from desktop review: A range of evidence was identified, including two projects funded by Parks Australia through OMPGs: the Australian Government's transparency portal annual report, and the South-west foundational implementation plan review.^{82 83 84} This evidence highlighted actions such as workshops on Cultural Values, coastline and Dreaming story mapping, Cultural Value mapping, the development of Healthy Country Plans and research to support the management of significant sites, as outlined in A21, A22, and A23 (below). Additionally, the desktop review identified the following evidence of action to increase understanding: • Participatory mapping and documenting of cultural landscapes of Wadandi Boodja including of Totems, Songlines and cultural features.⁸⁵ • Partnerships developed with Traditional Owner groups (Yued, Whadjuk, Wagyl Kaip, Karri Karrak, Gnaala Karla Booja and Ngadju) to improve understanding of Traditional Knowledge and Sea Country values in priority marine parks (specifically in relation to Jurien, Two Rocks, South-west Corner, Bremer, and Twilight Marine Parks).⁸⁶ • Waatu Wardan Kaartdijin project communicating Sea Country health and actions.⁸⁷ • An OMPG 2 funded project undertaken in partnership with Undalup Association (2020–2021) to develop a Wadandi Sea Country Cultural Plan, build on existing maps of cultural values and knowledge systems and improve understanding of Wadandi Culture as mentioned in Chapter 6.^{88 89}		

⁸² Our Marine Parks Grants: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/>

⁸³ South-west Foundation Implementation Plan: Internal document

⁸⁴ Performance Criterion 2: Opportunities and threats to natural and cultural values are effectively managed for all Australians – results: <https://www.transparency.gov.au/publications/agriculture-water-and-the-environment/director-of-national-parks/director-of-national-parks-annual-report-2023-24/chapter-4---annual-performance-statement/performance-criterion-2%3A-opportunities-and-threats-to-natural-and-cultural-values-are-effectively-managed-for-all-australians-%E2%80%93-results>

⁸⁵ The Cultural Seascape of Wadandi Boodja Report: https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Davies_Langlois-et-al_D3_The-Cultural-Seascape-of-Wadandi-Country_Sep2022_Report.pdf

⁸⁶ Snapshot survey responses received in June 2021 about the Indigenous Education Program: Internal document

⁸⁷ South-west internal self-assessment: internal document

⁸⁸ Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement: Internal document

⁸⁹ NESP news release – 'Hobart conference celebrates collaboration in marine research': <https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/story/hobart-conference-celebrates-collaboration-in-marine-research/>

Evidence from engagement:

First Nations partners and other stakeholders with direct experience of Cultural Value mapping or Traditional Knowledge sharing activities expressed positive views about Parks Australia's efforts to facilitate these opportunities. However, those without direct involvement reported low visibility of such activities. Additionally, for those who had not been engaged by Parks Australia, a clear appetite for further opportunities was expressed, with these partners noting their capacity and capability to do so.

Parks Australia staff noted their "deeper, not wider" approach to engagement with Traditional Owners and First Nations partners in the South-west Network due to resource constraints, which they felt had some benefits for maintaining strong relationships with those engaged, but also identified the limitations to this approach.

6.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the Indigenous engagement program.

Action	Completion status
A19. Develop an Australian Marine parks First Nations engagement and cultural heritage strategy, to improve understanding of cultural heritage, link management with Sea Country plans and maximise employment and enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners	 Not commenced
Evidence	
This action was assessed as not commenced as an 'Indigenous Engagement and Cultural Heritage Strategy' had not been established. Some Parks Australia staff indicated that this strategy had not been developed due to the diverse and specific requirements of each First Nations Culture and Community. However, feedback from external stakeholders in relation to the appropriateness of this decision was mixed. For First Nations partners directly involved with Parks Australia in Cultural Heritage and Sea Country management activities, the presence of tangible activities was considered more important than the existence of a formal strategy. However, other First Nations partners felt that developing a strategy could have improved First Nations engagement in marine park management by providing clearer guidance and structure, while also ensuring that all relevant Traditional Owner groups had opportunities to participate in co-management activities for their Sea Country. More specifically, these First Nations partners recommended that the strategy include a requirement for clear and comprehensive mapping of Traditional Owners for each marine park, potentially through documentation of existing Commonwealth Native Title Determinations, to ensure the adequate inclusion and engagement of relevant peoples. They also emphasised the importance of maintaining a contemporary understanding of Traditional Ownership, given that Native Title claims may evolve over the course of the management plan. Additionally, participants suggested that the strategy should mandate the involvement of relevant Traditional Owner groups from the early stages of projects and provide a framework to better implement co-management practices, including active involvement in decision-making processes.	

Beyond engaging with Traditional Owners, First Nations partners also felt that it would be important to provide more informal avenues for engagement with First Nations community members who may not be officially recognised as Traditional Owners, but who sought to maintain connections to Sea Country and practise Culture.

Action	Completion status
A20. Develop agreements to support First Nations Ranger programs to deliver management in marine parks	 Completed
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as completed in a timely manner, with evidence of established agreements between Parks Australia and several Indigenous Ranger programs identified throughout the life of the plan. Among the few representatives from First Nations Ranger groups who provided feedback, most felt that these agreements had effectively supported their programs. Evidence from desktop review: The OMPGs facilitated agreements to support First Nations peoples to deliver management in marine parks, including support for First Nations Ranger programs. This included the Round 2 Ranger feasibility project in Bremer Bay (2020), which involved business planning for a marine Ranger team to partner in marine research and park management.⁹⁰ Additionally, the review identified: • Evidence of a collaboration deed established with Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) in 2019.⁹¹ • Direct service contracts established in 2024 and 2025 with Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation (YSRC) to support rangers to undertake rock lobster and Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems (BRUVS) surveys in the Abrolhos Marine Park.⁹² Evidence from engagement: Overall, there was strong support for First Nations Ranger programs, which were recognised as valuable for involving First Nations peoples in Caring for Sea Country and providing opportunities for upskilling where needed. First Nations partners who had participated in these programs provided positive feedback, particularly regarding marine monitoring training sessions and the Esperance and Wardandi Ranger programs. However, there was a clear desire for greater representation and involvement of First Nations Rangers in management activities, especially among Ranger and Traditional Owner groups who felt they had not been given sufficient opportunities to engage in Caring for Sea Country activities throughout the life of the plan.	

⁹⁰ Our Marine Park Grants: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/>

⁹¹ Project Schedules 1, 2, 3 under collaboration deed for activities supporting the management of Eastern Recherche and South-west Corner Marine Parks in partnership with the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation: Internal document

⁹² Commonwealth Contract – Services Reference ID: DNP-MPA-2425-032: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A21. Provide information to First Nations peoples about marine park management	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed. Evidence of information sharing was identified in the desktop review and stakeholder engagement, however feedback from First Nations partners and stakeholders was mixed, with indications these efforts may have had limited reach. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified a number of ways in which information about marine park management had been provided to First Nations peoples, including via formal training, forums, workshops and school curriculum. The commencement of these activities in the initial years of the plan (i.e. from 2018 and 2019) shows that they occurred in a timely manner. More specifically, the desktop review found the following examples of information provided to First Nations peoples via formal training: • An OMPG3 funded project with the Bundi Yamatji Aboriginal Corporation (BYAC) to train First Nations Rangers in on-water skills including biodiversity surveys to deliver culturally appropriate science and increase capacity for marine park science (2021).⁹³ • An OMPG3 funded project with ETNTAC in partnership with the University of Western Australia (UWA) to train First Nations Rangers in biodiversity and socio-economic surveys to deliver culturally appropriate science and increase capacity for marine park science as part of the 'Sea Discovery Project' (2021).⁹⁴ The desktop review identified the following examples of forums and workshops that provided information to First Nations peoples and others about marine park management: • The South-west Aboriginal Forum, which was conducted from 2017–2022 with support and guidance from the South-west Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC). This forum was established to discuss matters related to waterways and the marine environment and included representatives from BYAC, SWALSC, ETNTAC and the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation (FWCAC). It led to six-monthly updates being provided to interested groups.⁹⁵ • The South Australia Sea Country Marine Parks Forum (2025), which was led by Parks Australia with support from the South Australia Native Title Services. The purpose of this forum was to discuss First Nations engagement in Australian Marine Parks (AMPs).^{96 97}	

⁹³ Our Marine Park Grants: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/>

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ South-west Internal self-assessment: Internal document

⁹⁶ Aboriginal Way podcast: <https://www.nativetitlesa.org/sa-sea-country-commonwealth-marine-parks-forum/>

⁹⁷ Commonwealth contract – services Reference ID: DNP-MPA-2425-030: Internal document

- A project documenting Whale Dreaming connections with the Billiaum Organisation. This project included mapping and sharing of Whale Dreaming stories to raise public awareness of Cultural Heritage of Whale Dreaming in AMPs off the coast of Southern Australia.⁹⁸

The desktop review also identified evidence of educational resources being developed in 2020 for Years 5–9 students to support the South Australian curriculum. These resources emphasised the cultural significance of Sea Country.^{99 100} These resources were designed for all South Australian students, including First Nations students.

Evidence from engagement:

Some stakeholders and First Nations partners spoke positively about Parks Australia and their efforts to provide information to First Nations peoples about marine park management, particularly those who had direct engagement through OMPG funded projects or ongoing relationships. The 'Whale Dreaming' project the Billiaum Organisation was mentioned as a positive example of information sharing.

However, a few First Nations partners, particularly those that did not have a pre-existing relationship with Parks Australia, felt there had been little communication with Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples in relation to marine park management. This suggests that efforts may currently not be achieving reach amongst the breadth of interested First Nations communities across the South-west Network.

Action	Completion status
A22. Collaborate with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups and relevant partners to undertake marine park management such as surveillance, monitoring and threat mitigation including marine debris removal, and implement actions identified in Sea Country plans where applicable	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. Evidence was identified of collaboration with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups to undertake management activities. However, feedback from relevant stakeholders was mixed. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified the following evidence of collaboration with Traditional Owners and Ranger groups in relation to marine park management: • Parks Australia participated in workshops on Wudjari Country, bringing together Elders, Rangers, scientists and representatives from the Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO) to collaborate on offshore mapping across Wudjari Sea Country, resulting in mapping activities involving the Wudjari Community for Cultural Heritage assessment, guidance opportunities	

⁹⁸ OMPG3 webpage: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/34e05cdfb4b82c5919f6d4d7779b57b0/our-marine-park-grants-round-three-projects-v2.pdf>

⁹⁹ Understanding more about marine parks in South Australian waters: <https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/docs/SA-Gov-2022-Secondary-WWW-221010.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ South-west marine parks network slides: Internal document

for Ranger capacity building, and leveraging resources to support existing Healthy Country activities.¹⁰¹

- Delivery of a workshop on Country to identify Saltwater Values and to support the management of Eastern Recherche and South-west Corner marine parks, as evidenced by the establishment of a collaboration deed with ETNTAC in 2019.¹⁰²
- A project with the FWCAC and the Yalata community to broaden the Healthy Country Plan.¹⁰³ An OMPG2 project grant was also awarded to FWCAC to align their Healthy Country Plan to the marine environment within the Great Australian Bight, Western Eyre and Murat Marine Parks (2020).¹⁰⁴
- A project with Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation to implement a survey of the Abrolhos Marine Park to test the effectiveness of management arrangements.^{105 106}
- Development of three interpretive signs highlighting biodiversity in marine parks along South Australia's Nullarbor Coast. These signs were created in collaboration with SA DEW and with guidance from the Mirning peoples.¹⁰⁷

Evidence from engagement:

Feedback from First Nations partners in relation to this action was mixed. Where Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples had been engaged by Parks Australia in marine park management activities, feedback tended to be positive. In particular, these First Nations partners called out successes in Traditional Knowledge mapping activities and investment in First Nations Ranger groups via OMPGs.

Other Traditional Owner and Ranger groups reported less positive experiences, which included:

- Limited opportunities for upskilling First Nations Rangers to partake in Sea Country management – while members of a First Nations Ranger group spoke positively of one upskilling opportunity facilitated by Parks Australia, they noted that this opportunity had been a “one off” and expressed a desire for more ongoing collaborations.
- Limited engagement or collaborative management with certain Traditional Owners – members of the Mirning Council of Elders reported that, despite being Traditional Owners of Sea Country in the South-west Network with a Native Title claim more recently recognised by the Federal Court, and contacting Parks Australia to request involvement in relevant committees and marine park management activities, they had not received a response or invitation to participate. Although Parks Australia staff noted that AMPs did not affect the operation of the Native Title Act (1993) (and hence did not preclude access to Sea Country for cultural non-commercial fishing or food-gathering activities), these participants felt that they had been excluded from marine park management in the area. They felt this lack of engagement had hindered their ability to fulfil their Caring for Country obligations as

¹⁰¹ South-west internal self-assessment: Internal document

¹⁰² Under collaboration deed for activities supporting the management of Eastern Recherche and South-west Corner Marine Parks in partnership with the Esperance Tjaltjiraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation: Internal document

¹⁰³ Commonwealth standard agreement – Version 2 – December 2018: Internal document

¹⁰⁴ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Two: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-two/>

¹⁰⁵ Commonwealth contract – services Reference ID: DNP-MPA-2324-032

¹⁰⁶ Commonwealth contract – services Reference ID: DNP-MPA-2425-032

¹⁰⁷ South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee Meeting #6 Communique:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/b137fc75d38cc3f217029221611464de/amp-document-swmpac-communique-6-2021.pdf>

Traditional Custodians of Sea Country in the Network. Consequently, they reported that marine park management had negatively impacted their connection to their Sea Country.

Action	Completion status
A23. Identify opportunities and mechanisms to engage Traditional Owners and Indigenous Rangers in the management of marine parks	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed, as there was some evidence of the formal identification of partnership opportunities and mechanisms for engagement of Traditional Owners and First Nations Rangers in marine park management identified. However, this was inconsistent across the South-west Network. Evidence from desktop review: In addition to the activities outlined above in relation to A20, A21 and A22, the desktop review identified evidence of the following opportunities and mechanisms for engaging First Nations peoples: • Parks Australia supported a South-west WA Aboriginal Forum in facilitating the exchange of insights among Traditional Owners from various groups across the South-west of Western Australia. Between 2018 and 2022, five South-west Aboriginal Forums were convened and supported engagement prior to the establishment of the Noongar Regional Corporations.¹⁰⁸ • The ‘<i>Waatu Warden Kaartdijin: Communicating Sea Country Health and Actions</i>’ project, which was established with funding from OMPG4. The project was a collaboration between the Saltwater Bibbulmun Noongar and Yorga peoples of South-western Australia and UWA to develop culturally guided priorities for collaboration on Sea Country, facilitate Cultural exchange and Knowledge sharing, and provide a foundation for future partnerships with Parks Australia and other management agencies.¹⁰⁹ • The ‘<i>Wudjari Sea Country Discovery</i>’ project undertaken by Traditional Owners from the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) and researchers from the University of Western Australia (UWA). The project was funded by OMPG 3 and produced a Sea Country discovery report for the Eastern Recherche Marine Park and South-west Corner Marine Park.¹¹⁰	

¹⁰⁸ South-west implementation plan review: Internal document

¹⁰⁹ Our Marine Park Grants round four projects:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/e1332c53cb5a0ea7099e14e8d6a616f0/amp-round-4-grant-recipients.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Our Marine Park grants round three projects:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/34e05cdfb4b82c5919f6d4d7779b57b0/our-marine-park-grants-round-three-projects-v2.pdf>

- The ‘*Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program*’ project ‘*Wudjari Ancient Coastlines*’, which commenced in early 2024 and facilitated First Nations engagement in marine parks management.¹¹¹
- While relevant for all networks, ‘*Indigenous Engagement Principles*’ were developed in collaboration with First Nations representatives to support engagement of Traditional Owners in the management of AMPs.¹¹²
- Parks Australia sponsored the ‘*Australian Sea Country Conference*’ conducted 24–26 September 2024 on Larrakia Country. The conference enabled connection and knowledge sharing between Traditional Owners, Parks Australia and DCCEEW about marine park management.¹¹³
- The Australian Marine Science Association (AMSA) held a conference on Yugambah Country on the Gold Coast from 2–7 July 2023. The conference focused on the theme of ‘Science in Sea Country’. Parks Australia staff collaborated with Traditional Owners to present at the conference, highlighting the value of co-design and place-based management approaches with First Nations peoples. The conference provided a platform for building connections, sharing knowledge, fostering inspiration, and encouraging collaboration between First Nations peoples and western scientists.
- Consultation with First Nations representative bodies regarding a draft science strategy for AMPs. Additionally, an outline for a work program to develop a ‘*Sea Country Management Framework*’, along with associated guidelines and policies, was identified.¹¹⁴
- Parks Australia’s participation and presentation at a two-day workshop led by the University of Technology Sydney (2023), which explored options to enhance First Nations engagement in Commonwealth fisheries. Supported by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), and funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, the workshop focused on national engagement strategies and key principles to guide them.¹¹⁵
- Through the desktop review, a self-assessment of action progress included self-reported ongoing but slow progress underway to develop strong relationships with First Nations people and build capacity in the Ranger groups, with a self-reported priority placed on this activity.¹¹⁶

Evidence from engagement:

Similar to the feedback provided for A20 and A22 (above), mixed feedback was received from First Nations partners. While some were positive about the opportunities and mechanisms to engage, these opportunities were reported to be inconsistent. The evaluation identified scope for

¹¹¹ Performance Criterion 2: Opportunities and threats to natural and cultural values are effectively managed for all Australians – analysis of performance: <https://www.transparency.gov.au/publications/agriculture-water-and-the-environment/director-of-national-parks/director-of-national-parks-annual-report-2023-24/chapter-4---annual-performance-statement/performance-criterion-2%3A-opportunities-and-threats-to-natural-and-cultural-values-are-effectively-managed-for-all-australians-%E2%80%93-results>

¹¹² Indigenous engagement principles: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/programs/indigenous-engagement-program/indigenous-engagement-principles/>

¹¹³ TEMPAC Meeting 11 paper: Internal document

¹¹⁴ Coral Sea Marine Park Advisory Committee Meeting #7 Communique:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Faustralianmarineparks.gov.au%2Fstatic%2Fae41da669c3c2665bb8167380f318471%2Famp-document-Communique-7.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

¹¹⁵ Six-month management report: Internal document

¹¹⁶ South-west self-assessment review: Internal document.

improvement to ensure the inclusion of the full breadth of relevant Traditional Owners and First Nations community members in marine park management.

Action	Completion status
A24. Partnerships with Traditional Owners and First Nations groups to manage Sea Country in marine parks	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. Although the desktop review identified evidence of partnerships, feedback from First Nations partners highlighted varying experiences. Evidence from desktop review: In addition to those listed in A20, A22 and A23 above, the desktop review identified the following partnership with Traditional Owners and First Nations groups: - Developed partnerships with Traditional Owner groups (Yued, Whadjuk, Wagyl Kaip, Karri Karrak, Gnaala Karla Booja and Ngadju) to improve understanding of Traditional Knowledge and Sea Country values in priority AMPs (specifically in relation to Jurien, Two Rocks, South-west Corner, Bremer and Twilight Marine Parks).¹¹⁷ - Additional key partnerships were developed with community groups (including Bundi Yamatji, Wadandi, Wagyl Kaip and Wudjari Peoples) in relation to Abrolhos, Geographe, South-west Corner, Bremer and Eastern Recherche Marine Parks respectively.¹¹⁸ Evidence from engagement: Similar to the feedback presented in relation to A20 and A22, mixed feedback was received from First Nations partners. Some highlighted the need for improvements to ensure a broader representation of relevant Traditional Owners and First Nations community members in marine park management. In particular, they emphasised the importance of involving relevant First Nations partners and Traditional Owners in co-management approaches across the network.	

¹¹⁷ Snapshot survey responses received in June 2021 about the Indigenous Education Program: Internal document

¹¹⁸ South-west internal self-assessment: internal document

Action	Completion status
A25. Implement cultural awareness training for Parks Australia staff in association with Traditional Owners	 Completed
Evidence This action was assessed as completed, based on documentary evidence confirming that cultural awareness training has taken place, and positive feedback was noted by First Nations partners who were more engaged with Parks Australia. Evidence from the desktop review: All Parks Australia staff are required to complete cultural awareness training in accordance with annual requirements set by the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).¹¹⁹ In addition, Parks Australia staff based in Hobart completed cultural awareness training on Country at Risdon Cove with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation.¹²⁰ Evidence from engagement: First Nations partners who spoke to this action were not able to provide any feedback in relation to Parks Australia's cultural awareness training or the extent to which this had been delivered in collaboration with Traditional Owners (likely due to limited awareness of and involvement in these activities). However, feedback from First Nations partners who had engaged with Parks Australia staff in the delivery of management activities provided positive feedback about the quality of the engagement, suggesting that staff had adequate cultural awareness. More specifically, of the First Nations partners who had directly engaged with Parks Australia staff, most felt that staff had been culturally responsive and had effectively built working relationships with First Nations peoples and Ranger groups. As an example of effective and responsive engagement, a few stakeholders noted that Parks Australia staff had come out on Country to meet with Traditional Owners face-to-face, recognising the importance of in-person and on Country engagement.	

¹¹⁹ Progress reports Years 1 & 2: Internal document

¹²⁰ Foundational Phase Review Report: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A26. Establish protocols for researchers working with Parks Australia to guide engagement with Traditional Owners	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed, with the desktop review providing examples of some protocols being developed, without clear evidence of how they have been applied or used by researchers working with Parks Australia to guide their engagement with Traditional Owners. Evidence from desktop review: The review identified evidence supporting the establishment of a range of protocols which may guide engagement with Traditional Owners. • Parks Australia collaborated with the Biodiversity and Conservation Division and the Heritage, Reef and Ocean Division at the DCCEEW, as well as Terri Janke and Company to develop a principle-based Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocol, toolkits, templates and training for staff.¹²¹ • A Land and Sea Country Mapping Tool was developed to support consultations with Sea Country Managers. This tool collates data layers, relating to land and sea management, Native Title, Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Ranger groups, Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), Land Councils and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.¹²² • Parks Australia attended and presented at a Sydney-led workshop supported by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the AFMA in November 2023. This workshop focused on options to advance Indigenous engagement in Commonwealth fisheries. Parks Australia presented their approach to partnering with First Nations peoples across the marine parks.¹²³ However, it was unclear whether these protocols had specifically guided researchers working with Parks Australia staff or were more broadly applied to Parks Australia staff engaging with First Nations peoples or groups, such as Traditional Owners. Evidence from engagement: First Nations partners emphasised the importance of established protocols, clear communication, and adherence to these to ensure researchers funded by Parks Australia engage appropriately and meaningfully. While some organisations demonstrated strong capacity for consultation and genuine engagement, others were perceived to approach engagement as a “tick-box” exercise to meet grant requirements, rather than fostering true collaboration.	

¹²¹ TEMPAC Meeting 7 report (2021) – date ICIP protocols were developed are unknown. Internal document

¹²² TEMPAC Meeting 7 report (2021) – date ICIP protocols were developed are unknown. Internal document

¹²³ TEMPAC Meeting 10 report (2023): Internal document

7. Findings: Marine Science Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Marine Science Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

7.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade



Good with some concerns

The Marine Science Program was assessed as ‘good with some concerns’, with the overall outcomes of the management program rated as ‘partially met’. Of the eleven planned actions, five were assessed as ‘completed’ or ‘ongoing’, five were assessed as ‘partially completed’ and one was assessed as ‘not commenced’.

The evaluation identified significant progress in the establishment of baseline ecological datasets in the South-west network and collaboration with the science community and other agencies to increase understanding of marine park values and pressures. The use of innovative technology in the South-west Network was also noted as a strength. The need for increased long-term monitoring and communication of the data collected was also identified through the evaluation.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation identified several key strengths of the Marine Science program. One of the most significant achievements was the progress made in establishing ecological baseline datasets across the network, which was noted to have greatly enhanced understanding of ecological values and marine park conditions. Collaboration with the science community, as well as with government departments and agencies, was highlighted as a critical factor in improving knowledge of marine park values and pressures within the South-west Network.

The program’s use of innovative technologies was also recognised as a major strength. Tools such as Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs), Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems (BRUVS), and drop cameras were particularly effective in collecting high-quality ecological data, supporting evidence-based decision-making and advancing marine science capabilities. Furthermore, the evaluation suggested that the South-west Network had undertaken greater efforts to develop social and economic baselines compared to other networks in scope, demonstrating a more comprehensive approach to understanding the broader impacts and values of marine parks.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

The evaluation identified several barriers and challenges within the Marine Science Program. A key issue was the need to increase long-term monitoring activities, as stakeholders felt the South-west Network remained in the ‘discovery phase’ due to limited repeated monitoring in marine parks. Resourcing constraints were acknowledged as a contributing factor to this gap.

Additionally, stakeholders highlighted limited communication and transparency regarding data collected and issues with data interoperability across projects, which was felt to hinder evidence-based decision-making and the effective use of data. A few stakeholders, including recreational and

commercial fishers, also reported feeling “overlooked” in marine science activities and expressed a strong desire to be more involved.

7.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
07. Increase understanding of marine park values, pressures and adequacy of responses	 Partially met	 Trend getting better
Evidence The evaluation determined that this outcome was partially met. This assessment was based on the development of baseline data, identified through the desktop review. However, stakeholder feedback in relation to this outcome was mixed, with many uncertain about the extent to which understanding had improved. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified multiple efforts to increase understanding of marine park values, detailed below in the evidence for A27. Additional desktop review evidence of understanding marine park values pressures was identified, which included: • South-west Corner Marine Park Survey Report which included survey of values and pressures, as well as survey of seafloor, habitats and species (including threatened species) ¹²⁴ • Communique evidence of collaboration with a University of Tasmania (UTAS) masters student to undertake a desktop review of cruise ship operations and management strategies in response to concerns and potential impacts on the values in Geographe Marine Park and other marine parks where tourism and cruise ship activities have increased after the global pandemic. ¹²⁵ Overall, efforts related to this outcome were largely restricted to the establishment of baseline datasets. Without longitudinal data relating to marine park values over the course of the plan, a robust assessment of the adequacy of management responses was not possible. Furthermore, the translation of these efforts into increased understanding of marine park values, pressures and the adequacy of responses amongst marine park users and interest groups has not been robustly surveyed. Evidence from engagement: Some stakeholders felt that marine science activities over the course of the plan had supported an increase in the understanding of ecological marine park values, particularly through the development of ecological baseline datasets. For example, one stakeholder highlighted that		

¹²⁴ NESP South-west Corner Marine Park Survey Report: <https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/publication/south-west-corner-marine-park-survey-report/>

¹²⁵ SWMPAC committee meeting #8 communique:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/908c0b72cc7e9a2e104afeac8daae3e4/sw-ampac-communique-meeting-8-20221206.pdf>

ecological data collection efforts revealed there was 220% more reef on the continental shelf in the South-west Network than previously understood.

However, while progress had been made in supporting an understanding of social and economic marine park values, stakeholders felt this had been less of a focus, as had efforts to enhance understanding of marine park pressures and the adequacy of responses. In particular, stakeholders highlighted gaps in long-term monitoring efforts.

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O8. Improve understanding of the effectiveness of marine park management in protecting park values	 Partially met	 Trend stable
Evidence		
This outcome was assessed as partially met. While there was no desktop evidence identified pertaining to this outcome, some stakeholders who participated in the research reported an improved understanding of the effectiveness of marine park management in protecting park values. Evidence from engagement: Stakeholders provided mixed feedback in relation to this outcome. Some stakeholders assumed that there had been an increase in understanding of the effectiveness of marine park management within the South-west Network, due to the amount of marine science data collection over the course of the management plan. However, some other stakeholders, particularly South-west Marine Park Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) members and commercial and recreational fishers, noted an absence of data specifically measuring effectiveness of marine park management in protecting park values.		

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O9. Informed decision-making and improved evidence-based decisions	 Partially met	 Trend getting better
Evidence		
Overall, this outcome was assessed as partially met. At the overall level, stakeholders felt there was little visibility of how ecological, social and economic data was being utilised in decision making and adaptive management of marine parks in the South-west Network. Evidence from engagement: Stakeholders who provided feedback acknowledged that Parks Australia had made efforts to invest in scientific data to support informed decision-making. However, stakeholders also highlighted issues with transparency of data collection, a lack of interoperability across projects and data types and limited communication in relation to how data was used to drive management decisions.		

Additionally, Parks Australia staff emphasised that their ability to make evidence-based decisions was constrained by limited and short-term budget cycles, which restricted their capacity for longer-term planning and implementation.

7.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the marine science program.

Action	Completion status
A27. Establish ecological, social and economic baselines to support evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management	 Ongoing
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as ongoing. Substantial documentary evidence of ecological baselines being established was identified and it appeared that the South-west Network had a considerable focus on the delivery of social and economic baseline data, particularly compared with other Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) in scope for this evaluation. Stakeholder feedback identified some areas for future improvement. Evidence from the desktop review: The desktop review identified considerable progress in the establishment of ecological baselines for nine of 14 marine parks in the South-west Network. These datasets were delivered in a timely manner, with most being delivered within the first four years of the management plan. More specifically, the following evidence was identified to demonstrate the establishment of ecological baseline data sets: • A Reef Life Survey (RLS) of marine biodiversity in Geopraphe Marine Park (2020).¹²⁶ • A project that identified near-shore habitats of juvenile white sharks in the Great Australian Bight, Murat and Western Eyre Marine Parks funded by the National Environmental Science Program (NESP), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Parks Australia and the South Australia Department for Environment and Water (SA DEW) (2020).¹²⁷ • A Round 2 Our Marine Parks Grant (OMPG2) awarded to Adelaide University (UoA) that investigated the condition of habitats inside and outside the Great Australian Bight and Western Eyre Marine Parks and provided baseline data for Murat Marine Park (2020).¹²⁸	

¹²⁶ RLS assessment of Marine Biodiversity in Geopraphe Marine Park:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/ab91bfab7447e9442847ee783a1f092a/amp-document-reef-life-survey-assessment-of-marine-biodiversity-in-geopraphe-bay.pdf>

¹²⁷ NESP Identification of near-shore habitats of juvenile white sharks in South-western Australia:

https://www.nespmarine.edu.au/system/files/Bradford_2020_A14_Final%20Report_Report.pdf

¹²⁸ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Two: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-two/>

- A NESP project that surveyed significant seafloor features, benthic habitat extents and fish assemblages within the Capes region of the South-west Corner Marine Park (2020–2021).¹²⁹
- A biodiversity benchmark survey of Abrolhos Marine Park undertaken by the University of Western Australia (UWA) funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of Australia (DAFF) (2021).¹³⁰
- An OMPG3 funded project that explored deep-sea habitat in the South-west Corner and Perth Canyon Marine Parks, undertaken by UWA (2022).¹³¹
- A survey of fish assemblages and benthic habitats in the Western Kangaroo Island Marine Park undertaken by SA DEW, Parks Australia and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) (2022).¹³²
- A project that mapped the extent and composition of benthic habitats for seabed habitat predictions in nine of the 14 marine parks in the South-west Network, undertaken by NESP in collaboration with other partners (2024).¹³³
- An OMPG2 funded project which documented fishers' local ecological knowledge of the marine environments in Western Australia undertaken by UWA (2024).¹³⁴

The following evidence was identified to demonstrate the establishment of social and economic baseline data sets:

- The 2020 NESP project, the '*Social and Economic benchmarks of the Australian Marine Parks*'.¹³⁵
- A NESP project that mapped the 'Cultural Seascape' of Wadandi Boodja and identified the Cultural Values of marine parks in the South-west Network which revealed unexpected and detailed information about Songlines and provided valuable insights into cultural Totem areas. This was conducted in collaboration with the Undalup Association, Wadandi Knowledge Custodians, UWA and Parks Australia (2022).¹³⁶
- An OMPG3 funded project that produced a Sea Country discovery report for the Eastern Recherche Marine Park and South-west Corner Marine Park, undertaken by Traditional

¹²⁹ NESP South-west Corner Marine Park Survey: https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Project-1.4-Final-Report_3.pdf

¹³⁰ UWA Abrolhos Marine Park Biodiversity Benchmark Survey: <https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/projects/abrolhos-marine-park-biodiversity-benchmark-survey/>

¹³¹ South-west Corner and Perth Canyon Marine Park Surveys Bathymetry Acquisition: <https://ecat.ga.gov.au/geonetwork/srv/api/records/34dec3ff-0fd8-4299-8774-1859fecab73a>

¹³² Western-Kangaroo-Island-Collaborative-Monitoring-Expedition: <https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/Western-Kangaroo-Island-Collaborative-Monitoring-Expedition.pdf>

¹³³ Improving seabed habitat predictions for southern Australia: https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Project-2.1_final-report.pdf

¹³⁴ Fishing for knowledge: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/206d0a6e133a6aee337d1d73952b62b9/fishing-for-knowledge-university-of-western-australia.pdf>

¹³⁵ NESP Social and Economic Benchmarks of the Australian Marine Parks: https://api.research-repository.uwa.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/363774544/Navarro_et_al_D6_M12_M13_M17_Social_and_Economic_benchmarks_of_the_AMPs_FINAL.pdf

¹³⁶ The Cultural Seascape of Wadandi Boodja: https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Davies_Langlois-et-al_D3_The-Cultural-Seascape-of-Wadandi-Country_Sep2022_Report.pdf

Owners from the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC) in partnership with UWA (2022).¹³⁷

- *'The Ocean accounting pilot for Geographe Marine Park'* undertaken by Parks Australia and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) (2020).¹³⁸

Evidence from engagement:

Overall, stakeholder perspectives were mixed. Stakeholders with direct involvement in baseline data collection or more awareness of these activities tended to have more positive perceptions of progress. However, stakeholders who had lower awareness of baseline data collection activities, including recreational and commercial fishers, tended to have more negative perceptions, and felt progress was “patchy” across the network, despite some acknowledging challenges facing data collection efforts due to finite resources and the large size of the South-west Network. These groups emphasised the potential benefits of increasing citizen science opportunities. They particularly highlighted the opportunity to collaborate with fishers, who it was noted could be valuable on-the-ground partners, to strengthen data collection efforts.

In addition, many stakeholders felt that more could be done to support the establishment of social and economic baselines, which they felt were highly important. However, it was noted that a second iteration of the *'Social and Economic benchmarks of the Australian Marine Parks'* was underway and due for publication in 2026, which would enhance achievement of this action. Parks Australia also cited a project exploring social values in Australian Marine Parks including the South-west Network, that is undergoing development at the time of reporting this evaluation.

Most stakeholders were uncertain about the extent to which baseline data had been used to inform evidence-based decision-making, with some expressing concerns that political considerations could sometimes “override” scientific evidence in marine park management decisions. Data interoperability was highlighted as essential for effective decision-making, as it enables data from different sources to be shared and integrated more effectively. *'The Ocean Accounting Pilot for Geographe Marine Park'* was referenced as a positive example of how interoperable data systems can support decision-making, and was recommended for broader adoption across networks. Many stakeholders also expressed a desire for greater transparency regarding when and how data is used to inform decisions.

¹³⁷ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Three: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-three/>

¹³⁸ Ocean accounting pilot for Geographe Marine Park: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/gmp-ocean-accounts-synthesis-report.pdf>

Action	Completion status
A28. Develop an Australian Marine Parks science strategy to prioritise and encourage research and monitoring of park values, pressures and management effectiveness, and foster science communication and knowledge uptake	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed. While an Australian Marine Parks science strategy was not developed, the <i>'Parks Australia Science Strategy'</i> was published. Due to the delivery of the <i>'Parks Australia Science Strategy'</i> in December 2025 (i.e. during the conduct of this evaluation), evidence could not be obtained to illustrate the extent to which activities had been undertaken in accordance with the strategy and hence the extent to which the strategy had prioritised and encouraged research and monitoring of park values, pressures and management effectiveness, and fostered science communication and knowledge uptake. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review provided the following evidence of the development of the <i>'Parks Australia Science Strategy'</i> in place of the <i>'Australian Marine Parks Science Strategy'</i>: - Internal documents pertaining to the <i>'Parks Australia Marine Science Strategy'</i> project initiation (2024).¹³⁹ - Publication of the <i>'Parks Australia Science Strategy'</i> (2025).¹⁴⁰ This output was not found to meet the criteria of delivery in a timely manner, as its publication occurred in the seventh year of the management plan, which limited potential for the strategy to be implemented over the course of the plan. Evidence from engagement: Overall, consultation gave context as to why the AMP science strategy was not implemented as originally intended but also suggested limited satisfaction with this modified approach. Specifically, the following views were expressed: - Consultation with Parks Australia staff highlighted challenges associated with the development of a unified science strategy that adequately covered all marine parks while reflecting the nuances of each network. This, along with resourcing constraints, was cited as the rationale for opting to develop the broader <i>'Parks Australia Science Strategy'</i> instead. - Other stakeholders, however, were less satisfied with the adoption of a broader strategy that encompassed both marine and terrestrial parks, as they felt this approach did not adequately capture the specific issues, challenges and priorities of the South-west Network. As such, stakeholders expressed concern about the potential for the strategy to adequately guide scientific activities aligned with the values and pressures unique to this network.	

¹³⁹ Parks Australia Project initiative document: Internal document

¹⁴⁰ Parks Australia Science Strategy 2025: <https://www.dceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/parks-australia-science-strategy.pdf>

Action	Completion status
A29. Encourage and facilitate knowledge brokering to support collaboration and partnerships with the science community, private enterprise, citizen science organisations and other Commonwealth, state and territory agencies	 Ongoing
Evidence This action was assessed as ongoing. The desktop review identified a range of evidence of partnerships and collaboration with the science community, Commonwealth and state organisations, and one citizen science organisation. Many stakeholders who commented on the success of this action highlighted the effectiveness of partnership and collaboration activities, while also noting some areas for improvement. Evidence from the desktop review: The desktop review identified bi-annual meetings of the SWMPAC (2019–2023) ¹⁴¹ as evidence of ongoing collaborative knowledge brokering activities. As per A27 and A31, the desktop review also identified partnerships with a range of organisations to support consistent knowledge brokering with the science community, the private sector and government agencies over the course of the management plan. More specifically, this included partnerships with NESP, CSIRO, UoA, UWA, DAFF, SA DEW, PIRSA, the Undalup Association, Wandandi Knowledge Custodians, ETNTAC, DAWE, the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC), the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS), the Ocean Discovery and Restoration Program, the Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO), and Seamap Australia. In addition, activities undertaken via the RLS provided an example of knowledge brokering with a citizen science organisation. The joint Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) and New Zealand Marine Sciences Society (NZMSS) Conference was also identified as a knowledge brokering activity, which showcased The Wudjari Ancient Coastlines project, undertaken by ETNTAC, UWA and Parks Australia (2024).¹⁴² Evidence from engagement: Overall, many stakeholders who commented on this action felt it had achieved success through collaboration with the science community, First Nations partners, universities and research institutions, often facilitated by OMPG funded projects. One stakeholder specifically highlighted partnerships between Parks Australia and the NESP as particularly effective. However, areas for improvement were also identified. In particular, commercial and recreational fishing stakeholders felt that their industry could be better engaged in knowledge brokering activities. Many of these stakeholders reported feeling inadequately consulted or engaged in marine science activities within the network, which they viewed as a missed opportunity given their on-the-ground presence and potential to assist. Additionally, they expressed a desire for more information about these activities, believing it would enhance their confidence in marine	

¹⁴¹ South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/advisory-committees/south-west-marine-parks-advisory-committee/>

¹⁴² NESP article 2024: <https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/story/hobart-conference-celebrates-collaboration-in-marine-research/>

park management. SWMPAC members also highlighted the need for clearer communication about marine park management activities and their effectiveness.

Action	Completion status
A30. Establish an authorisation system for scientific research and monitoring by third parties and encourage data to be made publicly available through appropriate information portals such as the Australian Ocean Data Network (AODN)	 Completed
Evidence This action was assessed as completed. The evaluation found that an authorisation system for scientific research and monitoring by third parties was developed and was operationalised in a timely manner. Data sharing arrangements were also established via the publicly accessible Australian Ocean Data Network (AODN). Evidence from the desktop review: The desktop review identified the following examples of an authorisation system and data being made publicly available: • The Australian Marine Parks Online Permit Portal Application Launched in 2018.¹⁴³ This included a condition to enable data to be publicly available on portals such as the AODN portal. • Publication of South-west marine science projects on the Australian Marine Parks website.¹⁴⁴ • Publication of data across all 14 Marine Parks made publicly available on the 'Seamap Australia' website.¹⁴⁵	

Action	Completion status
A31. Collaborate with the science community (including through the National Marine Science Plan Committee and National Environmental Science Program) and other marine park users to assist in improving the understanding of marine park values, pressures and management effectiveness	 Ongoing
Evidence This action was assessed as completed. There was ample evidence of collaboration with the NMSP, NESP and other science community partners. Evidence from the desktop review: The desktop review provided the following evidence of strategic collaboration with the science community:	

¹⁴³ Australia Marine park permits: <https://onlineservices.environment.gov.au/parks/australian-marine-parks/permits>

¹⁴⁴ Australian Marine Parks Scientific Publications: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/science/scientific-publications/>

¹⁴⁵ Seamap Australia South-west Network: <https://seamapaustralia.org/region-reports/south-west/>

- Parks Australia membership to the NMSC.¹⁴⁶
- Collaboration with the NESP.¹⁴⁷ In addition to the projects outlined in A27 (above), the desktop review also identified the following examples of collaboration with the NESP:
 - The NESP 2.3 project developed a data product quality assurance framework purposed to improve data synthesis to support decision-making and adaptive management in marine parks (2024).¹⁴⁸
 - The delivery of an eco-narrative of Perth Canyon Marine Park.¹⁴⁹
 - The delivery of an eco-narrative of Geographe Marine Park.¹⁵⁰
- Collaboration with the Australian Ocean Data Network (AODN) and the IMOS.¹⁵¹

The desktop review also provided the following evidence of collaboration with the science community through marine science initiatives and research collaborations:

- A range of marine science initiatives to support the collection of baseline data, as outlined in A27 above.
- An ongoing partnership with the RLS which included a direct service contract for shallow reef monitoring in Geographe Marine Park (2020).^{152 153}
- A collaboration with the AHO in the delivery of the HydroScheme Industry Partnership Program (HIPP) to prioritise mapping in Australian Marine Parks to inform future research and monitoring efforts.¹⁵⁴
- A collaboration with Seamap Australia which contains publicly available surveyed bathymetry within the Australian Marine Parks.¹⁵⁵
- A collaboration between Parks Australia and the Minderoo Foundation to combine artificial intelligence with environmental DNA (eDNA) to enable the collection and analysis of over 6,000 samples from remote and hard-to-reach marine parks, made available through the OceanOmics eDNA Dashboard.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁶ National Marine Science Committee – About page: <https://www.marinescience.net.au/aboutnmsc/>

¹⁴⁷ Parks Australia science partnerships page – National Environmental Science Program:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/science/science-marine-parks/national-environmental-science-program-nesp/>

¹⁴⁸ Improving knowledge transfer to support Australian Marine Park decision making and management effectiveness evaluation: <https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/publication/improving-knowledge-transfer-to-support-australian-marine-park-decision-making-and-management-effectiveness-evaluation/>

¹⁴⁹ An eco-narrative of Perth Canyon Marine Park: <https://www.nespmarine.edu.au/document/eco-narrative-perth-canyon-marine-park-south-west-marine-region.html>

¹⁵⁰ An eco-narrative of Geographe Marine Park: <https://www.nespmarine.edu.au/document/eco-narrative-geographe-marine-park-south-west-marine-region.html>

¹⁵¹ Parks Australia website science partnerships page – Integrated Marine Observing System:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/science/science-marine-parks/integrated-marine-observing-system-imos/>

¹⁵² Reef Life Survey Foundation: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/science/science-marine-parks/reef-life-survey/>

¹⁵³ RLS Assessment of Marine Biodiversity in Geographe Marine Park:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/ab91bfab7447e9442847ee783a1f092a/amp-document-reef-life-survey-assessment-of-marine-biodiversity-in-geographe-bay.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ HydroScheme Industry Partnership Program: <https://www.hydro.gov.au/NHP/hipp.htm>

¹⁵⁵ Bathymetry of Australian Marine Parks:

<https://metadata.imas.utas.edu.au/geonetwork/srv/eng/catalog.search#/metadata/fb451be4-9de1-4bc2-8fd6-0f285f90916f>

¹⁵⁶ eDNA article on the Parks Australia website: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/news/new-environmental-dna-edna-data-game-changer-understanding-life-our-oceans/>

Evidence from engagement:

Feedback on the quality of collaborations was broadly positive, with some areas for improvement – similar to what was discussed in relation to A29 (above).

Action	Completion status
A32. Collaborate with the science community and other government agencies to increase the use of innovative and effective technology and systems including sensor technology	 Completed
Evidence This action was assessed as completed. The evaluation found substantial evidence of collaborations to support the increased use of innovative and effective technology, and most stakeholders provided positive feedback. Evidence from the desktop review: The desktop review identified the following examples of collaboration which utilised innovative technologies: • A project that identified near-shore habitats of juvenile white sharks in the upper reaches of the Great Australian Bight (which included Murat and Western Eyre Marine Parks) which utilised Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) surveys. This project was jointly funded by NESP, CSIRO, Parks Australia and SA DEW (2020).¹⁵⁷ • A project that deployed stereo Baited Remote Underwater Videos (BRUVS), drop cameras and Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) to survey significant seafloor features, benthic habitat extents and fish assemblages within the Capes region of the South-west Corner Marine Park, undertaken by NESP and coastal hub partners (2020–2021).¹⁵⁸ • An OMPG2 grant awarded to UoA to investigate the condition of habitats inside and outside the Great Australian Bight and Western Eyre Marine Parks and provided baseline data for Murat Marine Park utilising AUVs and towed camera systems (2020).¹⁵⁹ • A project that deployed BRUVS, stereo BRUVS and pelagic mono BRUVS to survey fish assemblages and benthic habitats in the Western Kangaroo Island Marine Park undertaken by DEW, Parks Australia and PIRSA (2022).¹⁶⁰	

¹⁵⁷ NESP Identification of near-shore habitats of juvenile white sharks in south western Australia Final Report: https://www.nespmarine.edu.au/system/files/Bradford_2020_A14_Final%20Report_Report.pdf

¹⁵⁸ NESP South-west Corner Marine Park Survey Report: https://www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Project-1.4-Final-Report_3.pdf

¹⁵⁹ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Two: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-two/>

¹⁶⁰ Fish assemblages and benthic habitats in the Western Kangaroo Island state and Commonwealth Marine Parks recorded using BRUVS: <https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/Western-Kangaroo-Island-Collaborative-Monitoring-Expedition.pdf>

- A deep-sea habitat exploration project in the South-west Corner and Perth Canyon Marine Parks that utilised multi beam echo sounders and deep-sea baited landers, undertaken by UWA (funded by OMPG3) (2022).¹⁶¹
- The use of BRUVS in a survey of fish assemblages and benthic habitats in the Western Kangaroo Island Marine Park, undertaken by DEW, Parks Australia and PIRSA (2022).¹⁶²
- A collaborative monitoring and research expedition in South Australia which deployed the use of BRUVS to measure fish abundance; swath and inventory mapping to determine the location, type and proportion of each habitat in the marine parks; acoustic receivers to monitor movement of sharks and other tagged species; and AUVs to assess sea floor habitats in Western Eyre Marine Park (2018).¹⁶³
- An investigation into the condition of habitats inside and outside the Great Australian Bight and Western Eyre Marine Parks which deployed AUVs and towed camera systems and provided baseline data for Murat Marine Park, undertaken by the University of Adelaide (2020).¹⁶⁴
- A collaboration between Parks Australia and the Minderoo Foundation to develop the OceanOmics eDNA Dashboard which combines artificial intelligence with eDNA to enable the collection and analysis of over 6,000 samples from remote and hard-to-reach marine parks.¹⁶⁵

Evidence from engagement:

Overall, most stakeholders felt positively about the use of innovative technologies in the South-west Network, particularly the use of AUV and BRUVS, as well as drone technology to a lesser extent. The development of a new drop camera system was also referenced as a valuable development in cost-effective, broad scale habitat mapping, highlighted as more useful for management purposes than traditional fine-scale mapping approaches. Stakeholders also cited the effective use of 'bluebottles' for compliance purposes (see A56 for further detail).

Further, stakeholders felt that the South-west Network had been particularly successful in the use of innovative and effective technologies to support marine science (when compared with other Networks), and felt these similar methods and technologies should be standardised and used across all AMPs.

¹⁶¹ South-west Corner and Perth Canyon Marine Park Surveys Bathymetry Acquisition:

<https://ecat.ga.gov.au/geonetwork/srv/api/records/34dec3ff-0fd8-4299-8774-1859fecab73a>

¹⁶² Fish assemblages and benthic habitats in the Western Kangaroo Island state and Commonwealth Marine Parks recorded using BRUVS: <https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/Western-Kangaroo-Island-Collaborative-Monitoring-Expedition.pdf>

¹⁶³ South Australia Collaborative Monitoring and Research Expedition 2018 Report:

<https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/MP%20Pearson%20Island%20Collaborative%20Research%20Expedition%20Document.pdf>

¹⁶⁴ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Two: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-two/>

¹⁶⁵ eDNA article on the Parks Australia website: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/news/new-environmental-dna-edna-data-game-changer-understanding-life-our-oceans/>

Action	Completion status
A33. Monitor social and economic uses and their benefits and impacts on marine parks in the Network	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence The action was assessed as partially completed. Initial baseline social and economic monitoring has been conducted, with a second round of monitoring scheduled for completion and publication in 2026. Evidence from the desktop review: The evaluation found that monitoring efforts across the South-west Marine Park have predominantly focused on ecological aspects, with less of an emphasis on social and economic uses. While the desktop evidence identified a number of activities to establish social and economic baselines (see A27, above), at the time of the evaluation no repeats of these activities or ongoing monitoring initiatives were identified. However, it was noted that a repeat of the <i>'Social and Economic benchmarks of the Australian Marine Parks'</i> survey is underway, with publication projected for 2026.	

Action	Completion status
A34. Monitor the condition of important habitats and their vulnerability to climate change	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed. Although the evaluation identified some evidence of monitoring of habitat conditions and their vulnerability to climate change, many stakeholders felt that long-term monitoring activities, particularly in relation to climate change, were lacking in the South-west Network. Evidence from the desktop review: In addition to activities noted in A27 (above), the desktop review identified further evidence of this action being met through an OMPG2 grant awarded to the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to understand and communicate drivers of change affecting coral reefs across Australian Marine Parks (2020).¹⁶⁶ Evidence from the engagement:	

¹⁶⁶ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Two: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-two/>

While stakeholder feedback was not a key indicator for this action, as noted in A36, stakeholders demonstrated limited familiarity with long-term monitoring activities in the South-west Network, including specific monitoring of habitat conditions and their vulnerability to climate change. However, one stakeholder highlighted significant emerging investment from Parks Australia to assess climate impacts on Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) and develop climate-resilient strategies, indicating efforts are underway to progress this action.

Parks Australia staff acknowledged that insufficient baseline knowledge and resourcing had hindered the effective implementation of monitoring across the South-west Network. It was noted that any available opportunities for monitoring activities were undertaken where possible.

Action	Completion status
A35. Monitor the impact of invasive species on marine park values and the effectiveness of management	 Not commenced
Evidence This action was assessed as not commenced, as the desktop review identified no evidence of invasive species monitoring in the South-west Network. However, evidence to suggest that invasive species monitoring was less relevant for the South-west Network was also identified. Evidence from the desktop review: Internal documentation from a self-assessment conducted by Parks Australia identified that there was insufficient resourcing to enable effective monitoring across every marine park.¹⁶⁷ However, it was also noted that no outbreaks of marine pests had been indicated. Evidence from engagement: External stakeholders reported limited awareness of efforts to monitor invasive species in the South-west Network. However, Parks Australia staff noted that invasive species typically inhabit shallow marine environments rather than deep and offshore areas, making this action less relevant due to the deep-sea nature of most parks within the South-west Network.	

¹⁶⁷ South-west internal self-assessment: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A36. Collaborate with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, marine park users and the science sector to support long-term monitoring. For example, monitoring of coral reefs, protected species and the effects of fishing on marine parks	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed. While there was evidence of partnerships and programs to support long-term monitoring activities in some marine parks in the South-west Network, stakeholders expressed some concerns about the efficacy of this action. Evidence from the desktop review: • UWA long-term monitoring of fish, seagrass and algal assemblages across the Geographe Australian Marine Park.¹⁶⁸ • OMPG3 grant awarded to the Great Australian Bight Fishing Industry Association Incorporated to examine fishery capacity to ensure protection and sustainability of long-term fishing within the South-west Network.¹⁶⁹ • Direct service contracts established in 2024 and 2025 with Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation (YSRC) to support rangers to undertake rock lobster and Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems (BRUVS) surveys in the Abrolhos Marine Park (as discussed in A22).¹⁷⁰ Evidence from engagement: Stakeholders had limited familiarity with long-term monitoring activities in the South-west Network. However, one stakeholder highlighted significant emerging investment from Parks Australia to assess climate impacts on AMPs and develop climate-resilient strategies. Overall, many stakeholders felt that ecological data collection efforts during the life cycle of the plan had largely been in a 'discovery phase' – focused on establishing foundational knowledge of the South-west Network. Specifically, stakeholders noted that, at the time of the evaluation, several Marine Parks had only been visited for data collection on one occasion, which limited the ability to conduct longer-term monitoring. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of long-term monitoring data for informed decision-making and adaptive management. They suggested that, with baseline knowledge now more established, prioritising long-term monitoring would be critical moving forward. As discussed in A27 (above), a few stakeholders from the fishing industry highlighted a lack of collaboration with fishers as a missed opportunity, given their regular presence in or around marine parks, which could support monitoring and data collection activities.	

¹⁶⁸ Optimal scientific long-term monitoring of fish, seagrass and algal assemblages across the Geographe Australian Marine Park: <https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/projects/optimal-scientific-longterm-monitoring-of-fish-seagrass-and-al/>

¹⁶⁹ Our Marine Parks Grants Round Three: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/our-marine-parks-grants/grants-round-three/>

¹⁷⁰ Commonwealth Contract – Services Reference ID: DNP-MPA-2425-032: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A37. Investigate opportunities to extend citizen science programs	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed. There was little specific documentary evidence identified in the desktop review demonstrating the investigation of new citizen science programs during the life cycle of the plan, however an ongoing citizen science program was extended. Evidence from the desktop review: The RLS program has been active within Geographe Marine Park since the commencement of the management plan,¹⁷¹ with further sites added in 2025 in the Great Australian Bight and South-west Corner (eastern arm) Marine Parks. Evidence from engagement: While stakeholder feedback was not a key indicator for this action, Parks Australia staff noted limited opportunities to undertake citizen science activities in the South-west Network due to the remote nature of many marine parks. However, recreational fishers identified untapped opportunities for citizen science through game fishing competitions in the South-west Network and expressed a strong interest in greater engagement with Parks Australia via citizen science activities. Similarly, commercial fishers also expressed an appetite for increased involvement in such initiatives.	

¹⁷¹ Surveying Geographe Marine Park - March 2021: <https://reeflifesurvey.com/surveying-geographe-marine-park-march-2021/>

8. Findings: Assessments and Authorisations Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Assessments and Authorisations Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

8.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade



Overall, the grade for the actions in the Assessments and Authorisations Program was assessed as 'good'. The outcome of the management program was determined to be 'fully met', with six out of seven planned actions assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing'. One action was assessed as 'not commenced'.

While A40 (*develop an effective and efficient process to assess new technologies and gear types to allow for the use of new equipment during the life of this plan if appropriate*) was assessed as 'not commenced', this was not considered a significant gap. Evidence indicated that new technologies and gear types were adopted where appropriate, suggesting the action may not have been required during the plan's implementation. As a result, its non-completion did not impede the overall aims of the management program.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation found a range of strengths and achievements in relation to the management program, including the:

- **Development of a range of policies, processes and procedures followed** – to support the implementation of the planned actions and achievement of the outcome (as discussed in section 8.3 below).
- **Introduction and use of the online portal for submitting applications** – which was felt to improve the ease of the application process for park users over the course of the plan and assist in providing timely assessments.
- **Responsive engagement and knowledge-sharing efforts from Parks Australia** – these efforts were considered particularly valuable by the few stakeholders involved in advising on marine park regulations for emerging industries.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

A key challenge for the Assessments and Authorisations Program was limited awareness of assessment and authorisation activities amongst stakeholders. South-west Marine Park Advisory Committee (SWMPAC) members in particular expressed a desire for increased visibility of permit applications to support their understanding of marine park management decisions and activities. Additionally, some stakeholders identified areas for improvement in the application process (see A43 for further detail).

8.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O10. Assessments and authorisations ensure ongoing protection of marine park values through the management of activities in marine parks	 Fully met	 Trend getting better
Evidence		
Overall, this outcome was assessed as fully met, with a positive trend identified over the course of the plan. Evidence from engagement: While there was limited feedback from stakeholders in relation to the effectiveness of assessments and authorisations in protecting marine park values, most who spoke to this outcome felt it had been effectively achieved (see A43 for more detail). Similarly, Parks Australia staff indicated that they felt that assessments and authorisations had been effective in supporting the protection of marine park values, specifically citing: • The use of tailored approaches to individual applications where required to ensure any adverse impacts were mitigated so far as possible, and • Efforts to be consistent in the application of these processes.		

8.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the assessments and authorisations program.

Action	Completion status
A38. Develop and apply best-practice approaches to regulation and decision-making in the authorisation of activities within marine parks. This includes developing policy to ensure assessment and authorisation requirements are clearly articulated and that decision making is robust, consistently applied, and transparent to all marine park users	 Completed
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as completed. Considerable documentary evidence of the timely development and application of best practice approaches was identified, and while some stakeholders felt that the transparency of decision making could be improved, moderate to positive ratings were given in relation to this action overall. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified a number of activities undertaken over the course of the management plan to achieve this action. Firstly, the desktop review identified the following evidence of best practice approaches to regulation and decision-making being developed:	

- Compilation of the *'Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy'* (2021), which outlines the approach to assessment and authorisation of allowable activities among all marine parks in accordance with the management plans.¹⁷²
- An assertion within the *'Guiding Actions'* within this policy that highlighted how decision-making would align with best practice approaches.

Additional documentary evidence was also identified to suggest that authorisation decisions were robust, consistently applied and transparent, specifically:

- The robust nature of authorisation decisions was evidenced by the following documents which outlined clear decision-making criteria and processes:
 - An internal checklist outlining the decision-making criteria for authorisation of activities within marine parks.¹⁷³
 - A Peer Review Permit checklist outlining the steps taken in the peer review process for authorisations.¹⁷⁴
 - A data quality check register which documents the data quality checks undertaken on application and authorisation data to ensure their accuracy.¹⁷⁵ This also included information about the staff responsible for conducting these checks from 2020–2022.
- Consistency in the application of decision-making criteria was evidenced by:
 - Parks Australia's *'Assessments and Authorisations - Standard Operating Procedure'*, which documented the assessment process and how to move through each step when doing the assessment process as an administrative officer.¹⁷⁶
 - A flowchart demonstrating the assessment process for internal use by Parks Australia staff.¹⁷⁷
 - A guide to assessing commercial tourism operations for internal use by Parks Australia staff.¹⁷⁸
- Transparency in authorisation decisions was evidenced by:
 - Development of the *'Australian Marine Parks Authorisation Consultation Guide'*.¹⁷⁹
 - The standard operating procedures for Australian Marine Park (AMP) assessments and authorisations.¹⁸⁰
 - The public record of permits and activity licences issued by the Director of National Parks since 2018.¹⁸¹

¹⁷² *Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy.*

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/6f5d83193c7046f4d03dff87df2dcefd/amp-document-dnp-policy-authorisations-and-assessments.pdf>

¹⁷³ 24 - 0.1 - Checklist: Internal document

¹⁷⁴ 25 - 0.5 - Peer Review Permit review checklist: Internal document

¹⁷⁵ 19 - 0.4 MP Assessments and Authorisations - CRM Procedure 02 - Data Quality Checks: Internal document

¹⁷⁶ *Assessments and Authorisations - Standard Operating Procedure: Internal document*

¹⁷⁷ *Assessment process - flowchart: Internal document*

¹⁷⁸ *Guide to assessing commercial tourism operations: Internal document*

¹⁷⁹ *Australian Marine Parks Authorisation Consultation Guideline: Internal document*

¹⁸⁰ *Assessments and Authorisations - Standard Operating Procedure: Internal document*

¹⁸¹ *Authorisations webpage*

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/access-use/authorisations/>

- The publicly available outline of the Assessments and Authorisations program.¹⁸²

The delivery of activities was found to start within the first few years of the management program, suggesting the timely completion of this activity.

Evidence from engagement:

Stakeholders with experience applying for and obtaining authorisations were broadly positive about assessments and authorisations processes, although areas for improvement were identified (see A43). One governmental stakeholder also noted that, while they perceived the process to be transparent and supported by clear frameworks, some applicants may not agree with specific outcomes of assessments.

Parks Australia staff also felt that authorisation approaches had worked well over the course of the plan, noting that they employed a risk-based process that was tailored to the circumstances of individual applicants/ marine parks and which had the flexibility to be updated in collaboration with other agencies as required.

Action	Completion status
A39. Collaborate with industry to investigate innovative technologies and systems (including vessel monitoring systems) that can assist businesses and individuals to comply with regulatory requirements	 Ongoing
Evidence	
This action was assessed as ongoing. Significant documentary evidence was identified regarding the investigation and implementation of innovative technologies, alongside some evidence of collaboration with industry. However, mixed stakeholder feedback was also noted. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified the investigation and implementation of the mandatory Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) as the key innovative compliance technology introduced over the course of the plan, which was supported by collaboration with industry (such as fisheries management agencies). More specifically, the desktop review found that: • The Electronic and VMS Assistance Program was first introduced, which provided \$5.5 million in grant funding through relevant states and territory fisheries management agencies to support initiatives to increase the uptake of electronic and vessel monitoring systems by commercial fishers.¹⁸³ • VMS installation became mandatory in 2024 for all commercial vessels operating in or transiting through AMPs.¹⁸⁴ This includes an automatic alert service that will alert non-	

¹⁸² Assessments and Authorisations program: web page
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/programs/authorisations-assessments-program/>

¹⁸³ Electronic & vessel monitoring systems assistance program webpage:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/about/fisheries-assistance/electronic-vessel-monitoring-systems-assistance-program/>

¹⁸⁴ Mandatory Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for commercial fishers in Australian Marine Parks webpage:

compliant vessels that enter an AMP (i.e. if a vessel enters an AMP with primary gear that is non-compliant in the AMP).¹⁸⁵

Evidence from engagement:

Parks Australia staff reported that a range of technologies had been implemented over the course of the plan to assist with compliance, including VMS monitoring systems, sound traps and 'Bluebottle' vessels.

Of the few external stakeholders who provided feedback in relation to this action, sentiment was mixed. Positively, one commercial fisher stakeholder provided favourable reflections in relation to the financial support provided for implementing VMS technology on vessels.

However, a few stakeholders noted that when the VMS was introduced, collaboration with industry had been inconsistent (i.e. not all groups/ stakeholders had been consulted or involved in trials) and there had been limited supporting communication. While Parks Australia staff noted that Parks Australia was only responsible for the policy requiring the use of VMS, and that implementation was the responsibility of state/ territory fisheries authorities, the evaluation found that this delineation was not well understood by stakeholders. As such, stakeholders' concerns in relation the introduction of the VMS were found to negatively impact perceptions of this action, as well as overall trust and buy-in to the management plan.

Action	Completion status
A40. Develop an effective and efficient process to assess new technologies and gear types to allow for the use of new equipment during the life of this plan if appropriate	 Not commenced
Evidence	
This action was assessed as not commenced. Based on Parks Australia's self-assessment of the South-west Marine Park Management Plan, this action was deemed unnecessary given the existence of effective processes for assessing the impacts and suitability of new technologies and gear types. Parks Australia staff clarified that the assessment of new fishing gear types was outside the scope of the management plan, as these assessments are the responsibility of other Commonwealth or state/ territory regulators, such as fishery departments, before being considered by Parks Australia.	

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/access-use/commercial-approvals/commercial-fishing/mandatory-vessel-monitoring-systems-vms-commercial-fishers-australian-marine-parks/>

¹⁸⁵ Australian Marine Parks Compliance Report, Q1 2023:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/e3c8ac92cec8e2c57dec4ea1cd44c048/amp-compliance-qtr-report-1-julsep-2023.pdf>

Action	Completion status
A41. Develop a guarantee of service for the regulated community that includes a commitment to work with key marine park users and interest groups whose interests are likely to be affected by regulatory decisions	 Completed
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as completed, with documentary evidence of a timely guarantee of service identified. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review found that a guarantee of service had been developed, as referenced in: - Sections 5.1 and 7.5 of the ‘<i>Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy</i>’ (2021) – which included a commitment to work with marine park users in relation to new class approvals.¹⁸⁶ ‘<i>The Director of National Parks Corporate Plan</i>’ 2024—2025.¹⁸⁷ - The Australian Marine Parks Indigenous Engagement Program, which outlines how Parks Australia will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake marine park management, such as monitoring and threat mitigation activities and surveillance.¹⁸⁸ The Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy was delivered within the first four years of the management program, suggesting the timely completion of this activity. Evidence from engagement: Parks Australia staff reported engaging with park users and other government agencies in relation to assessments and authorisations. This included working with other regulators to align authorisation and assessment processes where possible, as well as working with applicants to reduce regulatory burden where appropriate.	

¹⁸⁶ *Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy*
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/6f5d83193c7046f4d03dff87df2dcefd/amp-document-dnp-policy-authorisations-and-assessments.pdf>

¹⁸⁷ *Director of National Parks Corporate Plan 2024-2025*
<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/dnp-corporate-plan-2024-25.pdf>

¹⁸⁸ *Australian Marine Parks Indigenous Engagement Program webpage:*
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/programs/indigenous-engagement-program/>

Action	Completion status
A42. Develop a customer focused online authorisation system for marine park users that includes publishing authorisations issued by Parks Australia on its website	 Completed
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as completed. The desktop review identified documentary evidence of an online portal for permit and licence applications for marine park users¹⁸⁹ and the publication of authorisations granted since 2018 online.¹⁹⁰	

Action	Completion status
A43. Issue authorisations—a permit, class approval, activity licence or lease—for activities in the marine park assessed as acceptable either by the Director or another government or industry policy, plan or program accepted by the Director	 Ongoing
Evidence Overall, this action was ongoing as there was clear documentary evidence of authorisations being assessed and issued in a timely manner. However, of the few stakeholders who provided feedback in relation to this action, perspectives on the authorisations process were mixed. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified evidence of a number of authorisations being issued by the Director for the South-west Network since 2018.¹⁹¹ Documentary evidence of the policies and processes in place to ensure appropriate and timely assessments was also identified, including via: • The assessments and authorisations standard operating procedure document, which outlines the assessment process for licences and permits.¹⁹² • A flowchart outlining the process of assessment of approvals, permits or licenses¹⁹³. • The ‘<i>Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy</i>’.¹⁹⁴ In particular, this document highlights how the Director will endeavour to conclude assessments and make decisions within 40 business days of receiving an application.	

¹⁸⁹ *Australian Marine Parks - Permit and license applications*, online portal
<https://onlineservices.environment.gov.au/parks/australian-marine-parks>

¹⁹⁰ *Authorisations webpage*

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/access-use/authorisations/>

¹⁹¹ *Authorisations webpage: https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/access-use/authorisations/*

¹⁹² 17 - 0.2 MP Assessments and Authorisations - Standard Operating Procedure: Internal document

¹⁹³ 21 - Authorisations Manual - flowchart for assessment of approval, permit or licence: Internal document

¹⁹⁴ *Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisations Policy*

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/6f5d83193c7046f4d03dff87df2dcefd/amp-document-dnp-policy-authorisations-and-assessments.pdf>

- An internal guidance document in relation to petroleum activities in AMPs, which outlines the process for consulting with the Director on authorisations for the energy sector.¹⁹⁵

Evidence from engagement:

Of the few stakeholders who were able to comment on the authorisations process, perspectives were mixed. A few stakeholders reported positive perceptions, including in relation to the application process for commercial fishers (which only had to be completed once and could be retained throughout the management plan).

However, some less positive elements were also identified by stakeholders, such as:

- Transparency of applications – some stakeholders, particularly commercial fishers and SWMPAC members, felt that there was not adequate transparency in relation to authorisation applications for major activities in the South-west Network.
- The Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) application process – one recreational fisher stakeholder felt that the requirement to re-apply for a permit to reinstate a FAD if it had come loose (e.g. 'broken away' from its original location) was overly complicated. This stakeholder compared the process to state-based agencies, where FADs could reportedly be redeployed without requiring a new permit, provided permission had already been granted for their installation. This simpler state-based approach was felt to be more appropriate. However, Parks Australia staff noted that this experience was atypical, and circumstances such as these would usually be resolved via conversation, not requiring the completion of a new authorisation application.
- Limitations for activities with minimal risk – one research participant shared the example of not being able to collect eDNA in marine parks due to permit limitations, despite only a single water sample being required.

Action	Completion status
A44. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies to improve experiences and consistency of approaches for people seeking authorisations	 Ongoing
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as ongoing, with clear documentary evidence demonstrating activities aimed at supporting the experience and consistency of approaches for those seeking authorisations. However, some stakeholders expressed a desire for further improvements in the future.	

¹⁹⁵ 03 - Guidance note - Petroleum Activities and Australian Marine Parks: Internal document. Refer to p. 8 "Consulting with the Director of National Parks"

Evidence from desktop review:

The desktop review identified several collaborative activities with Commonwealth and state/territory government agencies to support the experience and consistency of approaches for authorisations, including:

- A joint public statement with the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) about the legislative regime for petroleum activities in and around all marine parks (including the South-west).¹⁹⁶ This document was intended to assist petrol titleholders nationally to understand their regulation and authorisation obligations.
- An internal email chain outlining communication between Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in relation to streamlining a permit process for the HydroScheme 2026 surveys AMPs.¹⁹⁷

Evidence from engagement:

Feedback was mixed among the few stakeholders who were able to provide feedback in relation to this action. While some reported a relatively seamless process, others reported instances where they had been required to obtain multiple permits from different agencies for the same activity. This duplication created confusion and added administrative burden, leading to less positive experiences with the process. These stakeholders believed that better inter-agency collaboration and more streamlined processes would contribute to improved user experiences moving forward.

¹⁹⁶ *Petroleum activities and Australian Marine Parks: Internal document*

¹⁹⁷ *Internal email chain provided to ORIMA Research*

9. Findings: Parks Protection and Management Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Parks Protection and Management Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

9.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade	
 Good with some concerns	The Parks Protection and Management Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns', with the overall outcome of the management program rated as 'partially met'. Of the nine planned actions, five were assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing', while the remaining four were assessed as 'partially complete'. The development of and adherence to tangible processes and strategies that support the protection and management of marine parks were strong. However, areas for improvement were identified, particularly in relation to actions involving collaborations.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation highlighted key strengths in the implementation of this program, particularly through the development of and adherence to tangible processes and strategies that supported the protection and management of marine parks.

This was evidenced by the implementation of initiatives such as the critical incident and mooring strategies, as detailed in A46 and A47.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

Overall, most stakeholders reported limited knowledge and awareness of the activities delivered under the program, which they felt may have constrained their ability to effectively leverage or support the initiatives. This lack of awareness also reduced their capacity to provide informed feedback on the program's actions for this evaluation. These findings point to a broader communication gap in the program's implementation, and in relation to engagement with stakeholders.

Another limitation identified was the insufficient tailoring of program actions to the specific context of the South-west Network. Stakeholders noted that certain actions, such as ghost net removal, were less relevant to the South-west marine park due to its geographic and ecological characteristics, making the implementation of these actions a lower priority. Additionally, the evaluation identified scope to further strengthen collaborations in support of protection and management activities.

9.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O11. Impact of pressures on marine park values are minimised as far as reasonably practicable	 Partially met	 Trend stable
Evidence		
This action was assessed as partially met. While actions to support park protection were identified (as evidenced in the below actions), longitudinal, robust data to measure the impact of pressures on marine park values was not identified. Evidence from desktop review: Limited documentary evidence was available to evaluate this outcome, beyond the desktop and stakeholder evidence outlined in Actions 27, 31, 34, 48, 50, 51 and 52. The self-assessment review conducted by Parks Australia emphasised the challenges of addressing significant drivers of pressure on marine parks through management actions alone. Many of these pressures, such as climate change, were noted to be beyond the scope of management interventions. However, the review identified zoning regulations as an effective mechanism for managing activities that may result in localised adverse impacts on marine park values.¹⁹⁸ Evidence from engagement: Of the few stakeholders who reported on the effectiveness of this outcome, perceptions were mixed. It was also felt that the minimisation of the impact of pressures on marine park values was a difficult outcome to measure, particularly over the relatively short 10-year lifespan of the plan.		

9.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the Parks Protection and Management Program.

Action	Completion status
A45. Apply a risk-based assessment process to prioritise park protection and management actions	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. The risk-based assessment process was developed within the expected timeframe; however, the desktop review identified minimal evidence to demonstrate its implementation.	

¹⁹⁸ Parks Australia South-west self-assessment: Internal document

Evidence from desktop review:

- A Network-wide Risk Management Matrix which was included in the 'Australian Marine Parks Assessment and Authorisation Policy' (2021).¹⁹⁹
- The inclusion of an objective in the 'Network-wide National Environmental Science Program' project to analyse risks posed by pressures to the values of marine parks.²⁰⁰

However, documentary evidence of the application of a risk-based assessment process was not identified. In comparison, evidence of application was identified for two of the five networks in scope for this evaluation.

Action	Completion status
A46. Develop an Australian Marine Parks critical incident strategy in collaboration with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and other responsible agencies to respond to critical incidents	 Completed
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as completed , with the output being delivered in a timely manner.	
Evidence from the desktop review:	
• The 'Network-wide AMP Environmental Incident and Emergency Response Strategy' was developed in 2018 and updated in 2021 in collaboration with AMSA and relevant agencies.²⁰¹ This strategy outlines the responsibilities, involvement and collaboration of Commonwealth agencies when responding to critical incidents. • Implementation and collaboration was evident through incident response exercise training conducted jointly between Parks Australia and a number of state/ territory and Australian Government agencies and departments.²⁰²	

Action	Completion status
A47. Develop a mooring and anchoring strategy to protect marine park values and improve visitor experience	 Completed

¹⁹⁹ Australian Marine Parks Authorisation and Assessments Policy:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/6f5d83193c7046f4d03dff87df2dcefd/amp-document-dnp-policy-authorisations-and-assessments.pdf>

²⁰⁰ National Environmental Science Programme Project SS2 Interpreting pressure profiles summary:
<https://www.nespmarine.edu.au/project/project-ss2-%e2%80%93-interpreting-pressure-profiles.html>

²⁰¹ Australian Marine Parks -Strategy Environmental Incident and Emergency Response Strategy:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/4d3102f2098731e86292992d9f15b739/amp-document-mpa-environmental-incident-and-emergency-response-strategy.pdf>

²⁰² AMP Incident and Exercise Register: Internal document.

Evidence

This action was assessed as **completed** in a timely manner, as evidenced through the desktop review.

Evidence from the desktop review:

The 'Australian Marine Parks Mooring Policy' was developed and finalised in 2021.²⁰³

Action

A48. Support the removal of marine debris and ghost nets from marine parks through partnerships with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies and other organisations involved in the management of marine debris

Completion status



Completed

Evidence

This action was assessed as **partially completed**. While the desktop review identified evidence of AMP-wide activities aimed at removing ghost nets and marine debris, stakeholder feedback indicated that these efforts may have been limited within the South-west Network.

Evidence from the desktop review:

The following documentary evidence of AMP-wide activities were identified in support of this action.

- The Ghost Nets Initiative was deployed, which involved collaboration across Commonwealth and state agencies (including the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), Maritime Border Command under the Australian Border Force, other organisations and First Nations Ranger Groups). A grant program to support research into innovative solutions to detect, collect and dispose of ghost nets was also supported.²⁰⁴
- The 'Australian Marine Park Marine Debris Strategy' was developed, which outlined Commonwealth level collaborations and partnerships to respond to marine debris.²⁰⁵

Evidence from engagement:

Most stakeholders who provided feedback on this action were unaware of Parks Australia's efforts to address marine debris and ghost net removal in the South-west Network. As such, a few felt that more needed to be done to support the removal of debris from marine parks. However, a few stakeholders noted that ghost nets are primarily an issue in northern marine parks. In contrast, the South-west Network was felt to be less affected by this issue due to its geographic and ecological characteristics. These stakeholders suggested that the focus on ghost nets in this action was not necessary or relevant for the South-west Network.

Additionally, one commercial fishing stakeholder emphasised the need for clearer communication to ensure that, when implementing this action, it was accurately conveyed that local commercial

²⁰³ Australian Marine Parks Mooring Policy:

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/179c407a2f3aedc78a01ad6ca7b8835e/amp-document-amp-mooring-policy.pdf>

²⁰⁴ Ghost Nets and Marine Debris Initiative: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/partnerships/ghost-nets-and-marine-debris-initiative/>

²⁰⁵ Australian Marine Park Marine Debris Strategy: Internal document

fishers were not responsible for the majority of marine debris, as this group was perceived to be unfairly blamed for the issue which negatively impacted the reputation of the industry.

Action	Completion status
A49. Contribute to actions, where appropriate, that support Australia's obligations under international agreements and national environmental law (e.g., World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, recovery plans, wildlife conservation plans and threat abatement plans)	 Ongoing
Evidence This action was assessed as ongoing. Limited documentary evidence was identified through the desktop review to demonstrate progress on this action. However, it is noted that the South-west Network does not contain any World Heritage or Ramsar sites, which reduces the scope and complexity of this obligation. The evaluation also acknowledges that the South-west Network Management Plan was developed to ensure compliance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. Evidence from engagement: Limited stakeholder feedback was provided in relation to this action. A few stakeholders, particularly SWMPAC members, expressed a desire for more visibility of how the international agreements and environmental laws were being upheld in the South-west network. Parks Australia stakeholders indicated that responsibility for this action primarily sat with colleagues at the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), who were perceived as successfully managing the fulfilment of these obligations.	
Action	Completion status
A50. Enable infrastructure such as moorings to protect coral reefs and enhance visitor safety	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence This action was assessed as partially completed. While some evidence of infrastructure delivery was identified in the desktop review, this was only found to have taken place in one marine park within the South-west Network. Stakeholder feedback on the delivery of this action was mixed.	

Evidence from desktop review:

The desktop review identified evidence of the delivery of infrastructure at Geographe Marine Park, as noted in the MPA Infrastructure Register.²⁰⁶ A meeting communiqué referencing ongoing monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure in Geographe Marine Park was also identified.²⁰⁷

However, no evidence of infrastructure delivery was identified for other marine parks within the South-west Network.

Evidence from engagement:

Most stakeholders were not aware of activities taken to implement infrastructure delivery across the South-west network. Among those who were aware, their knowledge was primarily limited to the delivery of signage, with little awareness of other infrastructure, such as moorings.

As outlined in A7 in Chapter 4, stakeholder views on signage provision varied. While some acknowledged the presence of signage, most felt that signage across the South-west Network remained limited. Stakeholders specifically expressed a desire for additional signage near coastal highways/ roads where marine parks were situated offshore, as well as signage that highlights marine park values and provides compliance-related information.

Parks Australia staff, however, did not consider the limited infrastructure to be a significant issue, attributing this to the offshore nature of many parks within the South-west network which posed significant logistical challenges for the installation of infrastructure, such as moorings and signage.

Action	Completion status
A51. Collaborate with and support other agencies that undertake invasive and protected species management and marine debris removal (e.g., biosecurity assessments, research, removal of ghost nets)	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed, with evidence of some collaboration with First Nations partners and agencies in protected species management and removal of debris. However, there was no evidence of invasive species management. Stakeholders were generally positive about the success of this action, however felt there should be an increase in collaboration activities, and increased visibility of such activities. Evidence from desktop review: The previously referenced AMP-wide Ghost Nets Initiative and associated grant program (see A48 above) indicated that some collaboration had occurred to support marine debris removal at the AMP level.	

²⁰⁶ Marine Protected Area Register of Infrastructure: Internal document

²⁰⁷ SWMPAC Communiqué 5: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/acf5092fec12895c12f13da8adc580c7/amp-document-swmpac-communique-5-june22-2021.pdf>

The following evidence was identified of collaborative programs to support protected species management:

- Evidence in an internal self-assessment by Parks Australia referencing a number of collaborations conducted to support protected species management and marine debris removal, including:²⁰⁸
 - A collaboration with South Australia's Department for Environment and Water (DEW) to manage strict seasonal closures in the Great Australian Bight Marine Park to protect calving southern right whales and sensitive Australian sea lion colonies (2022).
 - Contract with the University of Western Australia (UWA) to support Geopraphe Marine Park monitoring (2024) and funding and support to DBCA for management in Geopraphe Marine Park including whale disentanglement (2023—2025).
 - Financial support of DEW and WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) towards whale disentanglement and stranding training for staff.

As per A35, there was no evidence identified of collaboration to support effective invasive species monitoring.²⁰⁹ However, it also noted that no outbreaks of marine pests had been identified over the course of the plan.

Evidence from engagement:

One stakeholder cited the whale disentanglement funding and training as an example of strong collaboration between Parks Australia and state-based agencies. However, other stakeholders expressed appetite for greater collaboration between state-based agencies and Parks Australia to monitor marine parks and their vulnerability to invasive species.

Action	Completion status
A52. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies to respond to environmental incidents and accidents	 Ongoing
Evidence	
This action was assessed as ongoing . The desktop review provided evidence that relevant agencies were prepared to respond as appropriate and in accordance with the ‘Network-wide AMP Environmental Incident and Emergency Response Strategy’. ²¹⁰	

²⁰⁸ South-west self-assessment review: Internal document.
²⁰⁹ South-west internal self-assessment: Internal document
²¹⁰ Australian Marine Parks -Strategy Environmental Incident and Emergency Response Strategy:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/4d3102f2098731e86292992d9f15b739/amp-document-mpa-environmental-incident-and-emergency-response-strategy.pdf>

Evidence from desktop review:

Nationally, joint incident responses were actioned in collaboration with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies when appropriate, as evidenced by 'AMP-wide Incident and Exercise Register'.²¹¹

Evidence from engagement:

Stakeholder feedback regarding this action was limited. However, a few stakeholders expressed concerns about their general lack of awareness surrounding processes or protocols to manage potential environmental incidents and accidents within the South-west Marine Parks Network. These stakeholders suggested that greater focus could be given to improving awareness and communication about incident management procedures in the region.

Action	Completion status
A53. Collaborate with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups to undertake management actions	 Partially completed or implemented

Evidence

This action was assessed as **partially completed**. Evidence indicated collaboration with Traditional Owner and Indigenous Ranger groups to undertake management activities. However, stakeholder feedback in relation to this action was mixed.

Evidence from desktop review:

The desktop review identified substantial activity conducted to collaborate with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups to undertake management actions, as outlined in response to A23 and A24 (above).

Evidence from engagement:

As outlined in Chapter 6, mixed feedback was received from Traditional Owners and First Nations partners regarding the establishment of management collaboration with First Nations peoples. Concerns were raised about the extent to which all Traditional Owner groups and communities had been engaged. It was suggested that more genuine co-management approaches should be adopted, ensuring early and inclusive engagement with all relevant Traditional Owners.

²¹¹ AMP Incident and Exercise Register: Internal document.

10. Findings: Compliance Program

*This chapter presents assessments of the implementation of the **Compliance Program** of the South-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan.*

10.1. Overall findings about the efficacy of program implementation

Grade
 Good with some concerns Overall, the grade for the actions in the Compliance Program was assessed as 'good with some concerns'. The outcomes of the management program were assessed to be 'partially met', 'fully met' or 'substantially met'. Of the six planned actions, four were assessed as 'completed' or 'ongoing' and two were assessed as 'partially completed'. Positive stakeholder feedback was also provided.

Strengths and achievements

The evaluation identified a range of strengths and achievements in relation to the Compliance Program, including:

- Use of new technologies to support compliance – including the implementation of Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for all commercial vessels operating in or transiting through Australian Marine Parks (AMPs), which stakeholders reported had been effective in supporting compliance among commercial marine park users. In addition, the trial and subsequent use of 'Bluebottles' (i.e. autonomous vessels used to detect illegal fishing activity) was felt to present a promising opportunity for the use of innovative technologies to support compliance across the network.
- Effective collaborations with other Commonwealth agencies to support compliance – with stakeholders reporting that collaborations with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) and the Australian Border Force had been particularly effective in monitoring and enforcing instances of non-compliance across the South-west Network.

Barriers, challenges and limiting factors

However, some challenges and barriers were also identified by stakeholders, including:

- Challenges of enforcement in offshore parks – the remote and expansive nature of many of the marine parks in the South-west Network was found to create practical challenges for compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities. Large geographic distances, limited on-water presence, and resource constraints could reduce the visibility of non-compliant activities and limit Parks Australia's ability to consistently monitor park usage.^{212 213}

²¹² Australian Government Civil Maritime Security Strategy, 2021: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/nat-security/files/australian-government-civil-maritime-security-strategy.pdf>

²¹³ Guide to Australian Maritime Security Arrangements, 2020: <https://www.abf.gov.au/what-we-do-subsite/files/gamsa-2020.pdf>

- Limited available data to measure some intended outcomes – there was limited evidence of data collection and analysis to support measurement of outcomes related to awareness of marine park rules, levels of voluntary compliance and a decrease in non-compliance over the more recent years of the plan.
- For Parks Australia staff, linkages between the Compliance Program and other programs (e.g. the Communication, Education and Awareness Program) were found to pose a challenge, as there was cross-over in responsibilities/ potential responsibilities for some actions (e.g. those to do with communicating marine park zones and rules). However, strong links between Parks Australia teams had enabled collaboration on actions such the delivery of signage.
- The range of government departments and agencies responsible for marine compliance – Parks Australia staff noted that Parks Australia was not solely or primarily responsible for some elements of compliance and enforcement in marine parks. For example, deterrence and penalties for illegal foreign fishing were noted as being the responsibility of the Australian Border Force (ABF) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). As such, it was felt that achievement of some outcomes in this management program area was not possible for Parks Australia to achieve alone.

10.2. Outcome effectiveness

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O12. Improved user awareness of marine park rules	 Partially met	 Trend stable
Evidence		
Based on the available evidence, the evaluation assessed this outcome as being partially met. A range of compliance related communication and education activities were identified through the desktop review and stakeholder consultations. However, the evaluation was unable to identify any data to assess the effectiveness of these activities or any associated changes in user awareness of marine park rules. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified a number of communication and engagement activities undertaken by Parks Australia to promote understanding of marine park rules and how to comply, as outlined in A57 (below). While these should go some way to improving user awareness of marine park rules, ultimately the desktop review did not identify any data which evaluated the effectiveness of these communication activities or measured changes in user awareness over time. Evidence from engagement: Stakeholders expressed mixed sentiments in relation to this outcome, with many unsure. Some felt awareness had improved as a result of activities undertaken by Parks Australia, with one stakeholder providing an example of email communication between Parks Australia and commercial fishing groups that could have supported awareness. However, stakeholders also reported that the lack of data collected on awareness of marine park rules among users made this outcome difficult to assess, and some felt that low overall awareness of AMPs among recreational users was likely indicative of similarly low awareness of AMP rules among these users.		

Parks Australia staff reported that, while they felt user awareness of marine park rules had increased over the course of the management plan, this improvement varied across stakeholder groups. Awareness was felt to be higher among user groups directly affected by the rules, such as commercial fishers, but was felt to remain lower among the broader public and some recreational users.

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O13. Increased levels of voluntary compliance and self-regulation by marine park users	 Substantially met	 Trend stable
Evidence Based on the available evidence, the evaluation assessed this outcome as substantially met. This was based on the low numbers of non-compliance incidents identified in the desktop review and generally positive feedback from stakeholders. Evidence from desktop review: The review identified high overall levels of compliance by marine park users, as outlined further in O14 (below). While this likely suggests that voluntary compliance was therefore high over the course of the management plan, the review was unable to identify any data which specifically measured or tracked levels of voluntary compliance and self-regulation by park users over time. Evidence from engagement: Stakeholders felt there were generally high levels of voluntary compliance among marine park users. This perception was attributed to the role of VMS in maintaining compliance among commercial fishers and the value recreational fishers placed on the marine environment, which was seen as incentivising compliance. Additionally, the presence of 'Bluebottles' was considered a deterrent, contributing to high overall levels of compliance. However, some stakeholders, including Parks Australia staff, noted that accurately assessing this outcome was challenging. It was felt to be difficult or impossible to measure the number of marine park users who chose not to undertake illegal activities or those who were non-compliant but remained undetected.		

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O14. High overall levels of compliance with the rules by marine park users	 Fully met	 Trend stable
Evidence		
The evaluation assessed this outcome as fully met based on desktop review evidence of low non-compliance and positive stakeholder feedback. Evidence from desktop review: The review identified evidence of relatively low levels of non-compliance across the marine park network when compared with other networks, including in: - Published AMP compliance reports which demonstrated consistently low to moderate levels of non-compliance incidents in the South-west Network.²¹⁴ - The 2022–2024 ‘<i>Treatment Progression Register</i>’, which provides comprehensive documentation of compliance activities undertaken across all marine park networks.²¹⁵ - Parks Australia incident data. Evidence from engagement: Most stakeholders reported that, based on what they knew and had seen, overall compliance with marine park rules was high. This was particularly noted among commercial fisher stakeholders, who highlighted their own high levels of compliance, particularly when supported by clear information about the management plan and relevant rules and requirements. However, one stakeholder noted that the lack of visibility of surveillance and monitoring activities (which was attributed to resourcing constraints given the size and scope of the network) made it difficult to accurately measure or know levels of compliance.		

Outcome	Outcome effectiveness	Trend rating
O15. A decrease in the number of non-compliances	 Partially met	 Trend stable
Evidence		
Based on the identified evidence, the evaluation assessed this outcome as partially met. Many stakeholders were unsure about the completion of this outcome, but a decrease was not identified in the available data.		

²¹⁴ Compliance program: webpage.

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/programs/compliance-program/>

²¹⁵ 2022–2024 FY Treatment Progression Register: Internal document

Evidence from desktop review:

As discussed in O14 (above), the evaluation found that there were low to moderate numbers of non-compliance incidents in the South-west Network across the course of the management plan. However, a small increase in the average number of non-compliances was identified over the latter years of the management plan.²¹⁶

Evidence from engagement:

In the absence of data, most stakeholders were also unsure about the completion of this outcome. However, some Parks Australia staff raised concerns about the validity of the outcome measure, highlighting that a reduction in recorded non-compliances does not necessarily indicate improved compliance. Instead, it could reflect less effective monitoring and enforcement efforts. For example, an increase in identified non-compliance incidents may result from enhanced surveillance and detection activities, rather than an actual rise in non-compliant behaviour.

10.3. Specific management plan actions

The tables below present the completion status and supporting evidence collected during the evaluation for each management plan action within the Compliance program.

Action	Completion status
A54. Apply a risk-based approach to compliance planning, targeted enforcement and compliance auditing	 Ongoing
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as ongoing. Considerable documentary evidence of the development and application of a risk-based approach to compliance planning, enforcement and auditing was identified. However, scope for improvement was identified in relation to the timeliness and consistency of activities under this program. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified a number of activities undertaken over the course of the management plan to achieve this action. These suggest that a risk-based approach to compliance planning, consultation and data-informed compliance plans had been undertaken throughout the life of the plan. However, the evaluation also found that the consistency of published compliance reporting could be enhanced to support compliance measurement and transparency throughout the plan period. More specifically, the desktop review identified the following evidence of the development of a risk-based approach to compliance and use of this approach in compliance planning: The 2024 internal document '<i>Australian Marine Parks Internal procedure: Compliance Risk Assessments (Marine)</i>' which outlines the methodology for compliance risk assessments and evaluation. In particular, this document provides a detailed outline of the intended	

²¹⁶ Compliance program: webpage.

<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/programs/compliance-program/>

methodology for applying risk analysis to compliance activities. Additionally, outlining the process for compliance evaluation is likely to support in compliance auditing activities.²¹⁷

- The 2024 internal document '*Australian Marine Parks Internal Procedure: Marine Compliance Operations Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*', which consolidates all marine park compliance procedures, including guidance on how to deal with specific compliance issues or tasks.²¹⁸
- The '*Australian Marine Park Enforcement Guidelines*' (2025), which outline the process for assessing, investigating and responding to reported non-compliance incidents.²¹⁹ These enforcement guidelines aim to assist in the decision-making process for the Authorisations and Compliance Section of the Marine and Island Parks Branch (MIPB) in responding to reported contraventions.
- The internal document '*Director of National Parks Internal Procedure - Appointing Wardens and Rangers (Marine and Terrestrial)*' which outlines the expected regulatory capabilities of Wardens and Rangers and minimum required qualifications to ensure they are able to meet these capabilities.²²⁰

The desktop review also identified the following evidence of a risk-based approach being applied in targeted enforcement activities:

- The establishment of a telephone hotline and email address to enable marine park users to report suspicious or illegal activity, thereby supporting targeted enforcement in response to these reports.²²¹
- The 2022–2024 RA Treatment Progression Register, which provides comprehensive documentation of compliance treatments undertaken across all marine park networks.²²²

However, it should be noted that, unlike in other networks, no evidence of tailoring compliance activities to the South-west Network context was identified (e.g. similar to the Temperate East Marine Parks Network Compliance Plan).

²¹⁷ Australian Marine Parks Internal procedure - Compliance Risk Assessments (Marine) 2024: Internal document

²¹⁸ Australian Marine Parks Internal Procedure - Marine Compliance Operations Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 2024: Internal document

²¹⁹ Australian Marine Park Enforcement Guidelines 2025: Internal document

²²⁰ Director of National Parks Internal Procedure - Appointing Wardens and Rangers (Marine and Terrestrial): Internal document

²²¹ Compliance program: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/management/programs/compliance-program/>

²²² 2022-2024 FY Treatment Progression Register: Internal document

Action	Completion status
A55. Collaborate with Australian, state and territory government agencies by sharing assets and information	 Ongoing
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as ongoing. Clear documentary evidence of timely and consistent collaborations was identified, and feedback from stakeholders was broadly positive. Evidence from desktop review: Overall, the desktop review identified adequate evidence of collaborations with Australian, state and territory organisations to share assets and information in support of compliance. Commencement of these activities in the first few years of the management plan (i.e. as early as 2020) and evidence of continuing agreements also showed that these activities have been completed in a timely and consistent manner. More specifically, the desktop review identified the following contracts or agreements with Australian, state and territory government agencies: • A signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Director of National Parks (the Director) and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) regarding the provision of aircraft to support incident monitoring and compliance surveillance in AMPs.²²³ • An activities schedule under the MOU between Parks Australia and AFMA to provide a range of services to support compliance in AMPs, including the VMS.²²⁴ • A signed contract with Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) to conduct compliance patrol services for the collaborative management of the South-west marine parks.²²⁵ • A signed contract between Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA DPIRD) for compliance activities in the South-west and North-west networks.²²⁶ • Treatment Progression Register (2022–2024) that details treatments that have been completed in the South-west Network.²²⁷ • Communication between the Bureau of Meteorology and Parks Australia regarding permit confirmation of an agreement for ships entering into the North, South-west and North-west Networks, ensuring compliance regulations are followed.²²⁸	

²²³ Memorandum of understanding about the provision of aircraft on an opportunity basis with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (2020): Internal document

²²⁴ AFMA VMS MoU Activity Schedule for 2024/25 and 2025/26 FYs: Internal document

²²⁵ Contract for collaborative management of the South-west and South-west Networks with PIRSA (2024-26): Internal document

²²⁶ Contract for compliance activities in the South-west and North-west Networks with WA DPIRD (2024-26): Internal document

²²⁷ South-west Network Treatment Compliance Register (2022-2024 FY): Internal document

²²⁸ Internal email chain provided to ORIMA Research

- Communication with the Australian Defence Force regarding permits for the Australian Hydro scheme 2026 surveys across the marine parks.²²⁹

Evidence from engagement:

Overall, stakeholder feedback in relation to this action was broadly positive. In particular, stakeholders from government agencies spoke positively about knowledge sharing activities with Parks Australia, including:

- Knowledge sharing efforts at the inception of the AMPs
- Biennial risk assessment planning activities with government agencies
- ‘On the ground’ discussions with Parks Australia as required
- Parks Australia participation in agency compliance patrols across marine parks in the South-west Network, and
- Funding for equipment (e.g. binoculars, iPads, cameras) to support compliance activities in marine parks.

Further, stakeholders commended collaboration with Commonwealth agencies such as Border Force to support compliance monitoring efforts, particularly given the limited resources available to Parks Australia.

Action	Completion status
A56. Investigate the use of new technologies and warning systems to assist in the detection of potential illegal activities	 Completed
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as completed, as the desktop review identified considerable evidence of new technologies and warning systems being investigated over the course of the plan. No stakeholder satisfaction metrics were required for this action. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review showed that new technologies and warning systems had been investigated, trialled or implemented consistently over the course of the plan, with activities largely taking place between 2021 and 2024. Specifically, the following evidence was identified: • Implementation of the VMS, which is now required to be installed on all commercial fishing vessels and communicates via satellite networks to land-based receiving stations. The unit transmits data on vessel location, course and speed, providing real time information on commercial fishing activities to vessels, fishery managers and marine park compliance teams. From 1 July 2024, VMS were mandatory for all commercial vessels.²³⁰	

²²⁹ Internal email chain provided to ORIMA Research

²³⁰ VMS system monitoring: <https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/access-use/commercial-approvals/commercial-fishing/mandatory-vessel-monitoring-systems-vms-commercial-fishers-australian-marine-parks/>

- Implementation of an alert service in partnership with AFMA. This alert service is a free service tool that will send an alert via email to an onboard computer and/or an SMS message to a nominated phone.²³¹
- A trial of 'Bluebottles' – autonomous vessels that use day/ night infrared cameras, radar and satellite communication, to monitor marine park areas for non-compliant activities.²³² These vessels were subsequently implemented to support compliance.
- A trial of acoustic recorders/ sound traps to monitor marine park areas for non-compliant activities.²³³
- A trial of Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), a type of drone, to monitor marine park areas for non-compliant activities.^{234 235}

Action	Completion status
A57. Work with marine park users to promote understanding of the rules for activities and how to comply	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. While some documentary evidence of communication to promote understanding of rules and desired compliance behaviours was identified, stakeholder feedback indicated that this had not been provided consistently over the course of the management plan. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review identified some activities undertaken to promote marine park rules and understanding of how to comply among marine park users, which were shown to be undertaken from the start of the management plan. Specifically, these included: • A factsheet published by Parks Australia about the South-west Network Management Plan in 2018, including an overview of the rules for various activities with links directing readers to more detailed further information.²³⁶	

²³¹ Alert service in partnership with Australian Fisheries Management Authority:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/alert-service/>

²³² 'Bluebottles to sting illegal fishers in Australian Marine Parks' (2021):
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/news/bluebottles-sting-illegal-fishers-australian-marine-parks/>

²³³ 'New technology to monitor Australian marine parks' (2022): <https://minister.dcceew.gov.au/plibersek/media-releases/new-technology-monitor-australian-marine-parks>

²³⁴ Australian Marine Parks drone trial project plan (2021): internal document

²³⁵ 'Australian Marine Park Surveillance RPAS' (2023): <https://hoveruav.com.au/resource-centre/australian-marine-park-surveillance/>

²³⁶ South-west Network factsheet:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/8b6971a7bd97ef028a59634e94b579cc/amp-document-factsheet-south-west-management-plan.pdf>

- Evidence of a mass SMS message sent to recreational boat fishing licence holders in Two Rocks Marine Parks.²³⁷
- A factsheet about AMPs and permitted activities for commercial fishers developed by Parks Australia.²³⁸
- A document published in 2020 outlining permitted petroleum activities in Australian Marine Parks, prepared by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) in collaboration with Parks Australia.²³⁹

Evidence from engagement:

Stakeholder feedback in relation to this action was mixed. A few stakeholders were aware of communication activities to promote awareness of marine park rules, such as signage in relevant locations (e.g. the Great Australian Bight). However, some other stakeholders (particularly recreational fishers) had limited awareness of activities to promote marine park rules and/ or felt that they had not been frequent or consistent enough over the course of the management plan.

More specifically, one stakeholder cited Geographe Bay and Perth Canyon as examples of marine parks that had limited communication about rules and values, making compliance more challenging for park users.

Action	Completion status
A58. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, particularly where parks adjoin state or territory marine parks, in compliance planning, including implementing actions to deter illegal activities and encourage voluntary compliance	 Ongoing
Evidence	
Overall, this action was assessed as ongoing. The desktop review identified a range of evidence to support this action and stakeholder sentiment was broadly positive. Evidence from desktop review: The desktop review found evidence of collaboration with other Commonwealth and state government agencies, as detailed in the desktop review evidence for A55. Evidence from engagement: As evidenced in A55 (above), stakeholder feedback in relation to collaborative compliance activities was broadly positive.	

²³⁷ Internal email chain provided to ORIMA Research

²³⁸ Commercial fishing in Australian Marine Parks factsheet:
<https://australianmarineparks.gov.au/static/2c26f0c718876001f2d2cab11834e537/amp-document-commercial-fishing-factsheet.pdf>

²³⁹ Petroleum activities and Australian Marine Parks guidance note:
<https://www.nopsema.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-03/A620236.pdf>

Action	Completion status
A59. Collaborate with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies in surveillance, including water and aerial patrols	 Partially completed or implemented
Evidence Overall, this action was assessed as partially completed. The desktop review and stakeholder engagement identified evidence of collaboration to support surveillance activities, although these activities were not felt to be comprehensive. Evidence from desktop review: In addition to the collaborative compliance activities identified in support of A55 and A58 (above), the desktop review identified additional evidence of consistent and timely joint surveillance actions, including: • A range of compliance reports with data regarding how many aerial, surface and vessel patrols were completed across each AMP between 2023–2025.^{240 241 242} • A range of ‘<i>Australian Marine Parks Information Reports</i>’ detailing vessels found to not be complying with regulations that were identified during compliance patrols.²⁴³ • Documented evidence of aerial and surface patrols that had been undertaken in the South-west Network between 2019–2026.²⁴⁴ Evidence from engagement: Stakeholders identified positive collaboration efforts, particularly via Park Australia’s collaboration with Border Force and PIRSA for aerial and water-based patrol activities. However, a few stakeholders felt monitoring efforts in marine parks should be increased through the use of: • Innovative technologies like drones, remote cameras, and social media – while some of these technologies had been trialled, limited awareness among stakeholders of these activities was noted through the evaluation. • Industry stakeholders leveraging their physical presence in marine parks i.e. commercial fishers.	

²⁴⁰ *Quarterly Compliance Report July, August and September 2023: Internal document*

²⁴¹ *2024/2025 Compliance Operations Annual Summary’: Internal document*

²⁴² *Monthly Compliance Report November 2025: Internal document*

²⁴³ *Parks Australia email correspondence: Internal document*

²⁴⁴ *South-west surveillance and patrol log: Internal document*

11. Conclusion

The evaluation of the South-west Network Management Plan highlighted **notable progress in implementing actions and achieving intended outcomes** across its seven management programs. **Strengths** included the development of robust frameworks and policies, significant ecological and some social and economic baseline data collection, and the use of technologies to support marine science activities. Collaborations with some stakeholders, including the science community and government agencies, were also identified as key drivers of success. However, **limitations** were also noted, such as the remote nature of parks, inconsistent engagement with First Nations peoples, and challenges with stakeholder engagement and communication in relation to management activities.

More specifically, the evaluation established the following grades for management programs within the South-west Network Management Plan:

- **‘Good’** – assigned to the ‘Assessments and Authorisations’ Management Program. These strong outcomes were supported by the development of a comprehensive suite of policies, processes, and procedures designed to enhance and guide management activities effectively.
- **‘Good with some concerns’** – assigned to all other management programs. While each of these programs had key strengths that supported effective implementation of many of the planned actions and outcomes, barriers, challenges and/ or other limiting factors were identified for each which should be considered when designing and implementing future management plans.

Of the five Australian marine parks included in this evaluation, the South-west Network was identified as the most consistently high-performing network, being the only one where all management programs received a rating of either ‘Good’ or ‘Good with some concerns’. This strong performance reflects consistent investment in management efforts and significant progress across all program areas throughout the life of the plan.

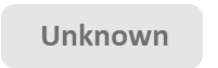
Nonetheless, a range of **key learnings and recommendations for the development of the future South-west Network Management Plan have been identified** and should be considered in the Management Plan Review Process. These are detailed in Chapter 3 of this report. Additionally, specific findings **regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each management program area** offer valuable insights into maximising the effectiveness of implementation for the next South-west Network Management Plan and should also be considered. These findings are outlined in Chapters 4–10 of this report.

APPENDIX A: Performance assessment tools

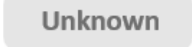
Completion status categories (at the individual action level)

Completed	Ongoing	Implemented with modifications	Partially completed or implemented	Not commenced
 Completed	 Ongoing	 Implemented with modifications	 Partially completed or implemented	 Not commenced
Action was specific and has been fully implemented as described.	Action is an ongoing requirement that has been consistently implemented as described.	Action has been fully implemented, but in a way other than was described in the plan.	Action has been partially implemented but is not yet complete as per the description in the plan.	No progress has been made against the action.

Implementation effectiveness rating categories at the management program level

Grade	Threshold
 Good	Management actions and outcomes have been largely delivered as planned, with no significant gaps; or Management is efficient and effective due to adequate enabling services being in place; and Targets for at least three-quarters of stakeholder feedback performance measures have been fully or substantially met.
 Good with some concerns	Most management actions and outcomes have been delivered as planned but some important actions were not delivered; or Some management activities are not adequate, leading to decreased efficiency or effectiveness; and Targets for at least half of stakeholder feedback performance measures have been fully or substantially met.
 Significant concerns	Some aspects of management plan actions and outcomes have been adequately delivered, but many important actions have not been fully delivered; or Some enabling management activities are adequate, yet many are not, leading to substantially reduced efficiency or effectiveness; and/or Targets for between a quarter and a half of stakeholder feedback performance measures have been fully or substantially met.
 Critical	Failure to deliver most planned management actions and outcomes; or Many management actions are not adequate, leading to greatly reduced efficiency or effectiveness; and/or Targets for less than a quarter of stakeholder feedback performance measures have been fully or substantially met.
 Unknown	There is insufficient information or data available to make a judgement.

Outcome effectiveness rating categories

Grade	Result
 Fully met	All of the success measures/targets were fully met.
 Substantially met	All of the success measures/targets were fully or substantially met.
 Partially met	Half of the success measures/targets were fully or substantially met or most/all of the measures/targets were at least partially met.
 Not met	At best, half or less than half of the success measures/targets were partially met.
 Unknown	There is insufficient information or data available to make a judgement.

Trend rating categories (outcomes)

Trend	Threshold
 Trend stable	There has been no change in the status of this matter over the life of this plan.
 Trend getting worse	There has been a negative trend in the status of this matter over the life of this plan.
 Trend getting better	There has been a positive trend in the status of the matter over the life of this plan.

Stakeholder engagement metrics

Stakeholder engagement metrics are proposed as a key measurement to determine performance against management plan actions and outcomes.

The ORIMA team will produce a stakeholder engagement plan and collect qualitative feedback from a range of relevant stakeholders about the extent to which actions and outcomes have been implemented or achieved. Stakeholder responses will be aggregated, with the approximate proportion of stakeholders who consider key outputs or outcomes to have been effectively implemented or achieved summarised as shown below.



Most – More than three quarters of stakeholders consulted



Many – More than half of the stakeholders consulted



Some – Around a third of the stakeholders consulted



A few – Less than a quarter of stakeholders consulted

APPENDIX B: Performance Information Matrix

Performance Information Matrix – South-west Marine Parks Network

Type (action or outcome)	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Target/ measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)
	<i>Management Plan Actions and Outcomes</i>	<i>Outputs to achieve actions</i>	<i>Criteria for success</i>	<i>Evidence of success</i>	<i>Data sources for measuring indicators</i>
Management program – Communication, Education and Awareness					
Management Plan Actions	A1. Develop a marketing and communication strategy for Australian marine parks to raise awareness and understanding of marine park values and the contribution marine parks make to enhancing Australia's wellbeing	- Marketing and communication strategy developed. - Communication products developed in accordance with strategy. - Communication activities/ initiatives undertaken in accordance with strategy.	- Completion of outputs in a timely manner. - Most key stakeholders assess that marketing and communication has been effective in increasing awareness and understanding of marine parks and their values among key audiences.	- Documentary evidence of development and implementation of communication strategy. - Key stakeholder feedback concerning the effectiveness of marketing and communication.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A2. Develop online information resources to facilitate awareness of marine park values, management arrangements and visitor opportunities	Online information resources developed that address: awareness of marine park values; management arrangements; and visitor opportunities.	- Completion of outputs in a timely manner. - Most stakeholders assess that online information resources have been effective in addressing key information components.	- Documentary evidence that the developed information resources cover the key information components. - Key stakeholder feedback concerning the effectiveness of online information resources.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

Type (action or outcome)	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Target/ measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)
	A3. Maximise the use of new technologies and partnerships (including with schools, universities, museums and non-government organisations) to inspire people of all ages to become involved in marine park management and protection	- Education partnerships with schools, universities, museums and non-government organisations. - Use of new technologies in partnerships.	- Whether partnerships have been established. - New technologies have been integrated into partnership opportunities where possible. - Most stakeholders assess that partnerships and use of technology have been effective in inspiring people of all ages to become involved in marine park management and protection.	- Documentary evidence that partnerships have been established. - Documentary evidence of the adoption/ use of new technologies. - Key stakeholder feedback concerning the effectiveness of partnerships and use of technology.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A4. Establish network advisory committees to ensure users and interested stakeholders have ongoing input into the management of Australian Marine Parks (to be assessed together with Activity 8 below – same assessment criteria)	- Establishment and operation of the South-west Marine Parks Advisory Committee (SWMPAC). - Effective operation of the SWMPAC.	- Timely establishment of the Australian Marine Parks Advisory Committee (AMPAC). - Most AMPAC members express that they have had ongoing input into the management of the marine park. - Most AMPAC members and Parks Australia staff express	- Documentary evidence to show establishment and operation of AMPAC. - Feedback from AMPAC members and Parks Australia staff.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

Type (action or outcome)	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Target/ measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)
			satisfaction with the AMPAC's effectiveness in supporting the implementation of the management plan.		
	A5. Develop a customer focussed approach to tracking the aspirations and concerns of stakeholders in relation to marine parks	Strategy developed for tracking aspirations and concerns of stakeholders in relation to marine parks.	- Whether strategy development is complete and tracking is in place. - Most stakeholders express that their aspirations and concerns have been considered over the course of the plan.	- Documentary evidence of strategy development and ongoing tracking. - Key stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A6. Develop information on marine parks to encourage increased awareness and understanding of values and management arrangements (to be evaluated together with Activities 1 and 2 above)	- Information developed with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of marine park values and management arrangements. - Viewership or readership of media outputs.	- Completion of outputs in a timely manner. - Most stakeholders consider that information has been effective in increasing awareness and understanding of marine park values and management arrangements.	- Documentary evidence of information developed. - Key stakeholder feedback concerning the effectiveness of outputs in encouraging increased awareness and understanding of marine park values and management arrangements.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

Type (action or outcome)	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Target/ measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)
	A7. Provide infrastructure in and adjacent to the Network, such as signs and marker buoys, to increase understanding of marine park values and rules, particularly at sites that are regularly visited	Infrastructure developed with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of marine park values and rules, particularly at regularly visited sites.	- Infrastructure has been installed in regularly visited sites. - Most stakeholders assess infrastructure as being effective in increasing understanding of marine park values and rules.	- Documentary evidence to show extent of infrastructure provision in and adjacent to the marine park. - Documentary evidence that infrastructure has been installed in regularly visited areas. - Key stakeholder feedback concerning the effectiveness of new infrastructure in increasing understanding of marine park values and rules.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A8. Establish a South-west Network Advisory Committee to support and collaborate with the Director in management (To be evaluated together with Activity 4 above – same assessment criteria)	Establishment and operation of the SWMPAC.	- Timely establishment of the AMPAC. - Most AMPAC members consider that they have had ongoing input into the management of the marine park.	- Documentary evidence to show establishment and operation of AMPAC. - Feedback from AMPAC members and Parks Australia staff.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

Management Plan Outcomes	O1. Increased awareness, understanding and support for marine parks	N/A	- Survey-based metrics show an increase in public awareness, understanding and support for the plan. - Most stakeholders report that awareness, understanding and support for the marine park has increased within their networks/ organisations/ interest groups.	- Relevant survey questions addressing awareness, understanding and support. - Key stakeholder feedback.	- National Environmental Science Program (NESP) 2021 boat ramp surveys (awareness of AMPs) and more recent surveys (repeat survey currently in field). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
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	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)/ collection method(s)
Management program – Tourism and visitor experience					
Management Plan Actions	A9. Develop a sustainable tourism and visitor experience strategy for Australian Marine Parks	Sustainable tourism and visitor experience strategy developed.	Completion of strategy in a timely manner.	Documentary evidence of strategy development.	Administrative data/ desktop review.
	A10. Work with national, state and local tourism authorities and operators to maximise the value of sustainable ecotourism opportunities associated with marine parks.	Partnership arrangements and collaboration initiatives established with tourism authorities and operators to maximise sustainable ecotourism opportunities.	- Completion of outputs in a timely manner. - Most key stakeholders feel there has been an increase in the value of sustainable ecotourism experiences over the life of the plan.	- Documentary evidence of working with national/ state/ local authorities and operators. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)/ collection method(s)
	A11. Develop a commercial tourism authorisation system to encourage best-practice and eco-accredited businesses operating in Australian Marine Parks	- Commercial tourism authorisation system developed. - Authorisations granted to operators in accordance with system.	- Completion of system in a timely manner. - Most stakeholders feel the system encourages best-practice and eco-accredited businesses operating in Australian Marine parks.	- Documentary evidence of the commercial tourism authorisation system. - Stakeholder feedback.	Administrative data/ desktop review (system documentation and authorisation records).
	A12. Work with Tourism Australia and state and regional tourism authorities and the fishing industry to market and promote Australian Marine Parks, including opportunities to promote locally and sustainably caught seafood	- Delivery of marketing assets showcasing and promoting Australian Marine parks and locally and sustainably caught seafood. - Collaborations with Tourism Australia and state and regional tourism authorities and the fishing industry.	- Outputs delivered in a timely and consistent manner. - Most stakeholders feel marketing assets have been effective in promoting marine parks and locally and sustainably caught seafood.	- Documentary evidence of production of marketing assets relating to marine parks and locally and sustainably caught seafood (including reach of these). - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (marketing/ promotion analytics and data.) - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A13. Monitor visitor trends and levels of satisfaction with marine park experiences and products	- Visitor trends monitoring implemented. - Levels of satisfaction with marine park experiences and products monitored.	Ongoing and comprehensive monitoring undertaken regarding visitor trends and satisfaction with marine park experiences and products.	- Documentary evidence of visitor numbers being recorded over time. - Visitor satisfaction trends of experiences and products recorded (either quantitatively and/ or qualitatively).	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. tourism authorisation holder logbooks for levels of access to the Marine Parks).

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)/ collection method(s)
	A14. Promote culturally sensitive tourism by encouraging tourism operators to liaise with Traditional Owners	Actions taken to encourage tourism operators to liaise with Traditional Owners to promote culturally sensitive tourism.	- Outputs delivered. - Most operators feel they have been appropriately encouraged to engage with Traditional Owners. - Most First Nations partners feel Parks Australia has taken appropriate steps to encourage tourism operators to liaise with Traditional Owners.	- Documentary evidence of actions taken to encourage tourism operators to liaise with Traditional Owners to promote culturally sensitive tourism. - Feedback from Traditional Owners and tourism operators.	Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA (with tourism operators/ Traditional Owners).
	A15. Work with tourism operators and First Nations peoples to recognise and promote cultural values and cultural tourism opportunities	Collaboration with tourism operators and First Nations peoples to promote cultural tourism opportunities.	- Most First Nations partners and Tourism industry stakeholders feel Parks Australia has taken appropriate and effective steps to recognise and promote cultural values and cultural tourism opportunities.	- Documentary evidence of collaboration with tourism operators and First Nations peoples to promote cultural tourism opportunities. - Feedback from First Nations partners and tourism operators.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA (with First Nations peoples/ Traditional Owners and other tourism operators).
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A16. Promote visitor experiences that foster curiosity and appreciation of natural and heritage values in the Network	Promotion of visitor experiences that foster curiosity and	Visitor experiences relating to natural and heritage values of	Documentary evidence of promotion of visitor	Administrative data/ desktop review (including visitor

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)/ collection method(s)
		appreciation of natural and heritage values in the marine park. Promotional content relates to the natural and heritage value of the marine park.	marine parks are promoted. Most key stakeholders assess that this promotion is fostering curiosity and appreciation of natural and heritage values.	experiences relating to natural and heritage values of marine parks. Feedback from stakeholders.	surveys, tourism analytics, website and social metrics). Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A17. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, and the tourism industry to support tourism initiatives, events and attractions that promote visitor experiences in marine parks	Partnerships and collaborations with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies and the tourism industry to support tourism initiatives in the marine park.	- There has been an increase in initiatives, events and attractions that promote visitor experiences in the marine park. - Most stakeholders assess that effective support has been provided for these initiatives, events and attractions.	- Documentary evidence of partnerships and collaborations with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies and the tourism industry to support tourism. - Feedback from key stakeholders.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (including visitor surveys, tourism datasets, website and social metrics). - Stakeholder engagement (with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies and the tourism industry) conducted by ORIMA.
	A18. Facilitate partnerships between First Nations peoples and tourism operators	Partnerships between First Nations peoples and tourism operators.	- Documentary evidence of partnerships being facilitated. - Most stakeholders assess that partnerships between First Nations peoples and tourism	- Documentary evidence. - Feedback from key stakeholders (including First Nations partners).	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source(s)/ collection method(s)
			operators have been facilitated.		

Management Plan Outcomes	O2. High-quality visitor experiences that are appealing, engaging and raise awareness of the natural and cultural values of marine parks	N/A	- Visitors to the marine park report high-quality experiences. - Visitors report an increased awareness of the natural and cultural values of marine parks. - Most relevant stakeholders report that visitor experiences delivered are appealing, engaging and raise awareness of the natural and cultural values of marine parks.	- Experience and satisfaction ratings from visitors to marine parks. - Feedback from stakeholders.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (including visitor surveys, tourism datasets). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	O3. Increased visitation to marine parks	N/A	Year-on-year increase in visitation.	Documentary evidence of visitor numbers (compared annually).	Administrative data/ desktop review (including visitor monitoring indicators, tourism analytics).
	O4. Social and economic benefits from the contribution of marine parks to Australia's visitor economy	N/A	- Increased economic contribution of marine park tourism. - Most stakeholders perceive social and	Documentary evidence of economic contribution of marine park tourism.	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. economic impact analysis/ tourism datasets).

			economic benefits from the contribution of marine parks to Australia's visitor economy.	Feedback from key stakeholders.	Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
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	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
Management program – Indigenous Engagement					
Management Plan Actions	A19. Develop an Australian Marine parks First Nations engagement and cultural heritage strategy, to improve understanding of cultural heritage, link management with Sea Country plans and maximise employment and enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners	- First Nations engagement and cultural heritage strategy developed and implemented. - Activities/ initiatives undertaken in accordance with strategy to improve understanding of cultural heritage, link management with Sea Country plans and maximise employment and enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners.	- Strategy delivered in a timely manner. - Most First Nations partners feel strategy is aligned with Sea Country plans. - Most First Nations partners feel strategy has increased understanding of cultural heritage and employment and enterprise opportunities.	- Documentary evidence of strategy completion and implementation. - Feedback from Traditional Owners.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. economic impact analysis/ tourism datasets, grant program information). - First Nations engagement (with Traditional Owners) conducted by ORIMA.
	A20. Develop agreements to support First Nation Ranger programs to deliver management in marine parks	Agreements established to support Indigenous Ranger programs in marine parks.	- Agreements in place in timely manner. - Increasing Indigenous Ranger representation in the management of marine parks.	- Documentary evidence of agreements to support Indigenous Ranger programs in marine parks. - Feedback from First Nations partners.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - First Nations engagement (with Indigenous Rangers, community and Traditional Owners) conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
	A21. Provide information to Indigenous peoples about marine park management	Information developed and shared with First Nations peoples about marine park management (e.g. newsletters, workshops, briefings).	- Completion of outputs in a timely manner. - Most First Nations partners report information has been provided in an appropriate way.	- Documentary evidence of information provision. - Feedback from First Nations partners.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - First Nations engagement (with Indigenous Rangers, First Nations community and Traditional Owners) conducted by ORIMA).
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A22. Collaborate with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups and relevant partners to undertake marine park management such as surveillance, monitoring and threat mitigation including marine debris removal, and implement actions identified in Sea Country plans where applicable	- Collaborative management activities delivered with First Nations partners (Traditional Owners, Indigenous Ranger groups, relevant partners). - Implement actions identified in Sea Country plans where applicable.	- Outputs delivered in a timely manner. - Most First Nations partners feel appropriate and effective collaboration has occurred.	- Documentary evidence of collaborative management activities. - Feedback from Traditional Owners, Indigenous Ranger groups and relevant partners.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - First Nations engagement (with Traditional Owners, Indigenous Ranger groups and relevant partners) conducted by ORIMA.
	A23. Identify opportunities and mechanisms to engage Traditional Owners and Indigenous Rangers in the management of marine parks	Formal identification of partnership opportunities and mechanisms for engagement of Traditional Owners and Indigenous Rangers in marine park management.	- Completion of outputs in a timely manner. - First Nations partners feel appropriate and adequate efforts have been made to identify opportunities and mechanisms to engage Traditional Owners and	- Documentary Evidence of formal identification of partnership opportunities (including the provision of grants). - Feedback from Traditional Owners, Indigenous Rangers	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - First Nations engagement (with Indigenous Rangers, First Nations community and Traditional Owners) conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
			Indigenous Rangers in the management of the marine park.	and the First Nations community.	
	A24. Partnerships with Traditional Owners and First Nations groups to manage Sea Country in marine parks	Traditional Owners and First Nations Groups have been engaged in partnerships in relevant marine park management.	- Delivery of partnerships in a timely manner. - First Nations partners feel appropriate and adequate efforts have been made to partner in management of Sea Country.	- Documentary evidence of partnerships (including the provision of grants). - Feedback from Traditional Owners and First Nations groups.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - First Nations engagement (with Traditional Owners and First Nations groups) conducted by ORIMA.
	A25. Implement cultural awareness training for Parks Australia staff in association with Traditional Owners	Cultural awareness training delivered to Parks Australia staff in collaboration with Traditional Owners.	- Output delivered in a timely manner. - Traditional Owners feel they were appropriately involved in training.	- Documentary evidence of proportion of staff who received training. - Feedback from Traditional Owners and Parks Australia Staff.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. training attendance data). - First Nations engagement (with Traditional Owners) and engagement with Parks Australia staff conducted by ORIMA.
	A26. Establish protocols for researchers working with Parks Australia to guide engagement with Traditional Owners	Protocols developed and implemented to guide researchers working with Parks Australia in engaging with Traditional Owners.	Output delivered in a timely manner.	Documentary evidence of protocol development.	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. training attendance data).
Management Plan Outcomes	O5. Marine Park management contributes to social, cultural and economic benefits for Traditional Owners	N/A	Documentary evidence that the management plan	Documentary evidence.	Administrative data/ desktop review.

			contributes to social, cultural and economic benefits for Traditional Owners. • Most First Nations partners feel social/ cultural/ economic benefits have been achieved from marine park management.	• Feedback from Traditional Owners.	• Engagement with Traditional Owners conducted by ORIMA.
	O6. Increase understanding of traditional knowledge, map cultural values and manage significant sites	• N/A	• Documentary evidence of initiatives to increase traditional knowledge, map cultural values and manage significant sites. • Most First Nations partners feel efforts to increase traditional knowledge, map cultural values and manage significant sites have been sufficient.	• Documentary evidence. • Feedback from First Nations partners.	• Administrative data/ desktop review. • Engagement with Traditional Owners and First Nations partners conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
Management program – Marine science					
Management Plan Actions	A27. Establish ecological, social and economic baselines to support evidence-based decision-making and adaptive management	• Baseline datasets established (ecological, social, economic).	• Outputs delivered in a timely manner. • Evidence of baselines utilisation in decision-making to support	• Documentary evidence of baseline datasets/ reports. • Evidence of use of datasets – including	• Administrative data/ desktop review. • Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
			adaptive management.	references to baseline data in decision-making.	
	A28. Develop an Australian Marine Parks science strategy to prioritise and encourage research and monitoring of park values, pressures and management effectiveness, and foster science communication and knowledge uptake	- Science strategy developed. - Activities/ initiatives undertaken in accordance with strategy to prioritise and encourage research and monitoring of park values, pressures and management effectiveness. - Activities/ initiatives undertaken in accordance with strategy to foster science communication and knowledge uptake.	- Outputs delivered in a timely manner. - Strategy has been implemented over the course of the plan to prioritise research and monitoring activities across key areas. - Most stakeholders consider that research priorities align with the strategy, and that science communication and knowledge uptake have been fostered.	- Documentary evidence of marine parks science strategy. - Feedback from key stakeholders.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A29. Encourage and facilitate knowledge brokering to support collaboration and partnerships with the science community, private enterprise, citizen science organisations and other Commonwealth, state and territory agencies	- Knowledge brokering activities delivered. - Collaborations and partnerships with the science community, private enterprise, citizen science organisations and other Commonwealth, state and territory agencies.	- Outputs delivered consistently over the course of the plan. - Most stakeholders feel effective knowledge brokering has taken place.	Documentary evidence that partnerships have been established (e.g. collaborative knowledge sharing activities with the science community, private enterprise, citizen science organisations and	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement (with science community, private enterprise, citizen science organisations and other Commonwealth, state and territory

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
				other Commonwealth, state and territory agencies.) Feedback from key stakeholders.	agencies) conducted by ORIMA.
	A30. Establish an authorisation system for scientific research and monitoring by third parties and encourage data to be made publicly available through appropriate information portals such as the Australian Ocean Data Network	- Research authorisation system developed and operational. - Data-sharing arrangements established.	- Output delivered in a timely manner. - Increased number of research projects made public.	- Documentary evidence of research authorisation system. - Documentary evidence of research projects made public.	Administrative data/ desktop review.
	A31. Collaborate with the science community (including through the National Marine Science Plan Committee and National Environmental Science Program) and other marine park users to assist in improving the understanding of marine park values, pressures and management effectiveness	Joint science initiatives and research collaborations delivered to assist in improving the understanding of marine park values, pressures and management effectiveness.	- Outputs delivered over the course of the plan. - Most stakeholders feel collaborations with the science community have assisted in improving the understanding of marine park values, pressures and management effectiveness.	- Documentary evidence of joint science initiatives and research collaborations. - Feedback from stakeholders (science community).	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. via research project reports). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A32. Collaborate with the science community and other government agencies to increase the use of innovative and effective technology and systems including sensor technology	Collaborations with the scientific community and government agencies to support the use of innovative and effective technology	Most stakeholders feel collaborations with the science community have increased use of innovative and effective technologies	Documentary evidence of joint initiatives to increase the use of innovative and effective technology and systems including sensor technology.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
		and systems including sensor technology.	and systems over the course of the plan. • Evidence of increased use of innovative and effective technologies and systems over the course of the plan.	• Feedback from key stakeholders (science community).	
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A33. Monitor social and economic uses and their benefits and impacts on marine parks in the Network	- Social and economic monitoring being conducted. - Analysis conducted on benefits and impacts.	• Output delivered in a timely and consistent manner.	• Documentary evidence of social/economic impact monitoring.	• Administrative data/ desktop review.
	A34. Monitor the condition of important habitats and their vulnerability to climate change	• Monitoring of important habitats conducted, with attention to vulnerabilities to climate change.	• Output delivered in a timely and consistent manner.	• Documentary evidence of habitat monitoring.	• Administrative data/ desktop review.
	A35. Monitor the impact of invasive species on marine park values and the effectiveness of management	• Impact of invasive species on marine park values and the effectiveness of management monitored.	• Output delivered in a timely and consistent manner.	• Documentary evidence of invasive species monitoring.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A36. Collaborate with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, marine park users and the science sector to support long-term monitoring. For example, monitoring of coral reefs, protected species and the effects of fishing on marine parks	• Long-term monitoring partnerships and programs with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, marine park users and	- Outputs delivered and maintained over life of plan. - Most relevant stakeholders agree that collaborative long-term monitoring programs have been	- Documentary evidence of monitoring partnerships. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement (with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, marine park users and

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
		the science sector delivered.	supported and sustained.		the science sector) conducted by ORIMA.
	A37. Investigate opportunities to extend citizen science programs	Expanded or new citizen science programs considered.	Output delivered.	Documentary evidence of investigations to extend citizen science programs.	Administrative data/ desktop review.

Management Plan Outcomes	O7. Increase understanding of marine park values, pressures and adequacy of responses	N/A	- Survey-based metrics show an increase in understanding of marine park values, pressures and adequacy of responses. - Most stakeholders report that awareness, understanding of marine park values, pressures and adequacy of responses has increased within their networks/ organisations/ interest groups.	- Relevant survey questions addressing understanding of marine park values, pressures and adequacy of responses. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Park user surveys - National Environmental Science Program (NESP) 2021 boat ramp surveys and more recent surveys (repeat survey currently in field). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	O8. Improve understanding of the effectiveness of marine park management in protecting park values	N/A	Survey-based metrics show improved understanding of the effectiveness of marine park	Relevant survey addressing understanding of the effectiveness of marine park	- Park user surveys. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

			management in protecting park values. Most stakeholders report an improved understanding of the effectiveness of marine park management in protecting park values within their networks/ organisations/ interest groups.	management in protecting park values. Stakeholder feedback.	
	O9. Informed decision-making and improved evidence-based decisions	N/A	Most stakeholders report informed decision-making and improved evidence-based decisions.	Stakeholder feedback.	Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
Management program – Assessments and Authorisations					
Management Plan Actions	A38. Develop and apply best-practice approaches to regulation and decision-making in the authorisation of activities within marine parks. This includes developing policy to ensure assessment and authorisation requirements are clearly articulated and that decision making is robust, consistently applied, and transparent to all marine park users	- Regulatory policy and procedural guidance developed and implemented based on best-practice approaches. - Clear decision-making criteria established and applied (e.g. robust, consistent, transparent).	- Output delivered in a timely manner. - Most stakeholders report that decisions are robust, consistent and transparent.	- Documentary evidence of development and application of best-practice approaches to regulation and decision-making. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. regulatory policy documentation). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
	A39. Collaborate with industry to investigate innovative technologies and systems (including vessel monitoring systems) that can assist businesses and individuals to comply with regulatory requirements	- Investigations of innovative compliance technologies and systems to assist businesses and individuals to comply with regulatory requirements. - Collaboration initiatives with industry in relation to compliance technologies and systems.	- Outputs delivered over course of the plan. - Most stakeholders agree there has been adequate action taken to investigate innovative technologies and systems (including vessel monitoring systems) that can assist businesses and individuals to comply with regulatory requirements.	- Documentary evidence of collaborations. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. compliance data). - Stakeholder engagement (with businesses and individuals) conducted by ORIMA.
	A40. Develop an effective and efficient process to assess new technologies and gear types to allow for the use of new equipment during the life of this plan if appropriate	Process and criteria developed for assessment of new gear/ technology to be used.	- Output delivered in a timely manner. - Most stakeholders express the process is effective and efficient in assessing new technologies and gear types to allow for the use of new equipment during the life of this plan.	- Documentary evidence of process. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A41. Develop a guarantee of service for the regulated community that includes a commitment to work with key marine park users and interest groups whose interests are likely to be affected by regulatory decisions	Service guarantee developed and publicly available.	- Output delivered in a timely manner. - Most key marine park users and interest groups agree that	Documentary evidence of service guarantee publication.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement (marine park users and

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
			they have been appropriately consulted regarding regulatory decisions.	Key stakeholder feedback.	interest groups) conducted by ORIMA.
	A42. Develop a customer focused online authorisation system for marine park users that includes publishing authorisations issued by Parks Australia on its website	- Online authorisation system developed and operational. - Authorisations published online.	- Output delivered in a timely manner. - Transparent publication of all authorisations.	- Documentary evidence of system development. - Documentary evidence of authorisations published.	Administrative data/ desktop review.
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A43. Issue authorisations—a permit, class approval, activity licence or lease—for activities in the marine park assessed as acceptable either by the Director or another government or industry policy, plan or program accepted by the Director	Authorisations issued for activities in the marine park that are assessed as acceptable by the Director or align with an approved government or industry policy, plan or program accepted by the Director.	Outputs delivered in a timely manner.	- Documentary evidence. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. evidence of authorisations: permits, class approvals, activity licences or lease). - Stakeholder engagement (marine park users and interest groups) conducted by ORIMA.
	A44. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies to improve experiences and consistency of approaches for people seeking authorisations	Collaboration with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies to improve experiences of people seeking authorisations.	- Output delivered. - Most relevant stakeholders believe consistency of experiences has increased.	- Documentary evidence of alignment with relevant government agency authorisation processes. - Stakeholder feedback.	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. evidence of collaboration to increase consistency of authorisation processes).

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
		Consistent approaches achieved for authorisations.			Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

Management Plan Outcomes	O10. Assessments and authorisations ensure ongoing protection of marine park values through the management of activities in marine parks	N/A	Most stakeholders feel assessments and authorisations have ensured ongoing protection of marine park values through the management of activities in marine parks.	Stakeholder feedback.	Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
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	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
Management program – Parks protection and management					
Management Plan Actions	A45. Apply a risk-based assessment process to prioritise park protection and management actions	Risk-based assessment process developed and applied to prioritise park protection and management actions.	Output delivered in a timely manner.	Documentary evidence of framework development.	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. risk assessment reports).
	A46. Develop an Australian Marine Parks critical incident strategy in collaboration with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and other responsible agencies to respond to critical incidents	- Critical incident strategy developed and implemented. - Collaboration with AMSA and relevant agencies established.	Output delivered in a timely manner.	Documentary evidence of strategy completion.	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. strategy documentation and incident response reports).
	A47. Develop a mooring and anchoring strategy to protect marine park values and improve visitor experience	Mooring and anchoring strategy developed and implemented in consideration of	Output delivered in a timely manner.	Documentary evidence of strategy completion.	Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. strategy documentation).

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
		marine park values and visitor experience.			
	A48. Support the removal of marine debris and ghost nets from marine parks through partnerships with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies and other organisations involved in the management of marine debris	Marine debris partnerships and removal programs delivered.	- Outputs delivered in a timely manner. - Most stakeholders believe effective collaboration achieved to support removal of marine debris and/ or ghost nets.	- Documentary evidence of collaborative initiatives or programs to support the removal of marine debris and ghost nets. - Feedback from stakeholders.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. debris removal data, evidence of partnerships). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A49. Contribute to actions, where appropriate, that support Australia's obligations under international agreements and national environmental law (e.g., World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, recovery plans, wildlife conservation plans and threat abatement plans)	Actions that support Australia's obligations under international agreements and national environmental law.	- Outputs delivered. - Most stakeholders feel appropriate actions have been taken to support Australia's obligations under international agreements and national environmental law.	- Documentary evidence of actions taken to support Australia's obligations under international agreements and national environmental law. - Feedback from stakeholders.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. International/ national reporting documentation). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A50. Enable infrastructure such as moorings to protect coral reefs and enhance visitor safety	Infrastructure (e.g., moorings) established and maintained.	- Outputs delivered at key visitor sites. - Most stakeholders report improvements to reef protection and/ or visitor safety.	- Documentary evidence of infrastructure delivered. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. infrastructure records). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
	A51. Collaborate with and support other agencies that undertake invasive and protected species management and marine debris removal (e.g., biosecurity assessments, research, removal of ghost nets)	• Collaborations to support other agencies that undertake invasive and protected species management and marine debris removal.	• Outputs delivered in a timely manner. • Most stakeholders express there have been effective joint programs concerning invasive and protected species management and marine debris removal.	• Documentary evidence of collaborative programs. • Key stakeholder feedback.	• Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. program documentation). • Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A52. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies to respond to environmental incidents and accidents	• Joint incident responses.	• Outputs delivered in a timely manner. • Most stakeholders feel effective collaboration has taken place to respond to environmental incidents and accidents.	• Documentary evidence of joint incidence responses. • Key stakeholder feedback.	• Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. incident reports). • Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A53. Collaborate with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups to undertake management actions	• Collaborative management activities implemented with Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups.	• Outputs delivered. • Most Traditional Owner and Indigenous Ranger partners report adequate involvement in management actions.	• Documentary evidence of collaborative management actions. • Feedback from Traditional Owners and Indigenous Ranger groups.	• Administrative data/ desktop review. • First Nations engagement conducted by ORIMA.
Management Plan Outcomes	O11. Impact of pressures on marine park values are minimised as far as reasonably practicable	• N/A	• Documentary evidence of minimisation of	• Documentary evidence.	• Administrative data/ desktop review.

			pressures on marine park values. • Most stakeholders feel the impact of pressures on marine park values has been minimised as far as reasonably practicable.	• Stakeholder feedback.	• Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
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	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
Management program – Compliance					
Management Plan Actions	A54. Apply a risk-based approach to compliance planning, targeted enforcement and compliance auditing	• Risk-based compliance approach developed and applied.	• Output delivered in a timely manner.	• Documentary evidence of risk-based compliance planning, enforcement and auditing.	• Administrative data/ desktop review.
	A55. Collaborate with Australian, state and territory government agencies by sharing assets and information	• Collaborations with Australian, state and territory government agencies by sharing assets and information.	• Outputs delivered in a timely and consistent manner. • Most stakeholders report effective collaboration has occurred.	• Documentary evidence of sharing of assets and information with other government agencies (Australian and state/ territory). • Stakeholder feedback.	• Administrative data/ desktop review. • Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	A56. Investigate the use of new technologies and warning systems to assist in the detection of potential illegal activities	• New technologies assessed, trialled or implemented to assist in the detection of potential illegal activities.	• Outputs delivered consistently.	• Documentary evidence of assessment, trialling or implementation of new technologies to assist in the detection	• Administrative data/ desktop review.

	Actions/ Outcomes	Output(s)	Measure of success	Indicator(s)	Data source
				of potential illegal activities.	
	A57. Work with marine park users to promote understanding of the rules for activities and how to comply	Promotion of rules and activities relating to how to comply.	- Outputs delivered consistently. - Most relevant stakeholders feel they have been adequately engaged regarding marine park rules and how to comply.	- Documentary evidence of efforts to work with marine park users to promote understanding of the rules for activities and how to comply. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	Actions specific to the South-west Network				
	A58. Work with other Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies, particularly where parks adjoin state or territory marine parks, in compliance planning, including implementing actions to deter illegal activities and encourage voluntary compliance	- Joint compliance planning undertaken with focus on deterring illegal activities and encouraging voluntary compliance. - Actions Implemented towards this end.	- Outputs delivered in a timely and consistent manner. - Most stakeholders consider joint compliance planning to be effective.	- Documentary evidence of shared compliance planning. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/ desktop review. - Stakeholder engagement (with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies) conducted by ORIMA.
	A59. Collaborate with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies in surveillance, including water and aerial patrols	Joint surveillance actions, including water and aerial patrols.	- Outputs delivered in a timely and consistent manner. - Most stakeholders consider joint surveillance actions to be effective.	Documentary evidence of joint surveillance actions, including water and aerial patrols.	- Administrative data/ desktop review (e.g. patrol logs Surveillance collaboration actions/ reports/ evidence). - Stakeholder engagement (with Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies) conducted by ORIMA.

Management Plan Outcomes	O12. Improved user awareness of marine park rules	N/A	- Survey-based metrics show an increase in awareness of marine park rules. - Most stakeholders report that awareness of marine park rules has improved.	- Relevant survey responses addressing awareness of marine park rules. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Park user surveys - National Environmental Science Program (NESP) 2021 boat ramp surveys and more recent surveys (repeat survey currently in field). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	O13. Increased levels of voluntary compliance and self-regulation by marine park users	N/A	- Evidence of increased voluntary compliance and self-regulation by users of marine parks. - Most stakeholders perceive voluntary compliance to have increased.	- Survey based metrics of voluntary compliance attitudes and behaviours (including self-regulation). - Documentary evidence of self-regulation. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Park user surveys. - Administrative data/desktop review (e.g. compliance monitoring records/audits). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.
	O14. High overall levels of compliance with the rules by marine park users	N/A	- High levels of compliance over course of plan. - Most stakeholders perceive compliance with the rules to be high.	- Survey based metrics of compliance attitudes and behaviours. - Documentary records of rates of compliance/ non-compliance (e.g. investigations).	- Park user surveys. - Administrative data/desktop review (e.g. compliance monitoring records/audits). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.

				Stakeholder feedback.	
	O15. A decrease in the number of non-compliances	N/A	- Decreasing trend in non-compliance incidents over the course of the plan. - Most stakeholders consider non-compliance to be decreasing.	- Documentary records of number of non-compliances throughout the life of the plan. - Stakeholder feedback.	- Administrative data/desktop review (e.g. compliance monitoring records/audits). - Stakeholder engagement conducted by ORIMA.