

Pulu Keeling National Park Community Management Committee (PKNPCMC)

Meeting Minutes

Tropika Restaurant, Wednesday 24 February 2021

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Members	Declaration of Interest	Contact
Dave McKinney	Parks elected member	(08) 9162 7587
Jamil Ibram (Pak Qoid)	Shire Councilor/elected member	(08) 9162 7536
Azima Bat (Mak Ayub)	Parks elected member	(08) 9162 7530
Ratma Anthoney (Nek Umar)	Shire elected member	(08) 9162 7512
Rik Soderlund	Parks elected member	(08) 9162 6777
Observers		
Trish Flores (Chair)	A/g Chief Ranger, Pulu Keeling National Park	(08) 9162 6678
Siddiq Juljali (minutes)	Ranger, Pulu Keeling National Park	(08) 9162 6678
Thomas Battcher (Pak Tama)	Shire elected member	
Apologies		
Wesan Rasa (Pak Alfin)	Shire elected Member	(08) 9162 7784
Riadi Feyrel (Nek Nazif)	Shire elected member	(08) 9162 7519
Kerrie Bennison	Park Manager, Pulu Keeling National Park	(08) 9164 8700
Larissa Powell	Parks elected member	(08) 9162 7683
Special guests		
Mike Misso	Marine Parks Branch, Hobart	
Allyn White	Marine Parks Branch, Hobart	0430 130 812

AGENDA

No.	AGENDA ITEM
1.0	General Business
1.1	Meeting opened at 6.15pm. Mike and Allyn from Marine Parks were introduced. It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to have Mike and Allyn present the concept of marine parks in the Indian Ocean Territories and what this might mean for the Cocos Keeling Islands. After the presentation there would be a Q & A session. After the prayer break, the members were welcome to bring up any PKNP related issues.
1.2	Pak Quoid confirmed that Thomas's nomination had been endorsed by the Shire. Thomas was welcomed to the committee. Until formal notification from the Shire, Thomas would observe at the current meeting.
1.3	Previous meeting minutes from August 19, 2020 were sent out to all members with the meeting invite (24.2.21) and would be confirmed through email in the coming week.
2.0	Marine Parks concept
	Mike and Allyn explained the reason for the visit was to collect comments from the community and other key

stakeholders on the marine park concept and why the Cocos waters are important to locals. They will collate all the comments and produce a report. Following this, they will work with the community on drafting up areas for marine park zones which can allow certain activities e.g. fishing, tourism, or mining. It was stressed that Mike and Allyn were not from WA Fisheries and the marine park did not mean Parks Australia would impose bag or size limits or restrictions to exportation of fish off island as this isn't Parks Australia's role. It was reinforced that a Marine Park needed community support for it to work.

The benefits of marine parks were explained and an example was that community groups can apply for grants in a marine park or to do targeted research. One such project might be to assess seagrass and changes within the lagoon over time. Another benefit is that a marine park can be good for tourism as the concept of visiting a marine park can be attractive to tourists. See attached.

The steps to establishing a marine park was explained by referring to a diagram (attached). There would be a fairly lengthy public consultation phase.

The committee were then asked if they had any questions or concerns.

Nek Umar would like to see hands-on input from the community throughout the whole process.

Rik suggested benefits needed to be clearly explained to the community. He added that the local community had "consultation fatigue" and work needed to be done on ways to better engage with the Home Island community; local perspective must be valued in the process; must be engagement throughout the whole process not just the beginning, and be able to adapt with changes in local perspective as it evolves.

Mike suggested the zoning configuration can be a staged approach. For example, zones that are applied when the parks are established can potentially be varied through future management plans, which are prepared every 10 years.

Dave would like to see an understanding of culturally significant places, times and species represented in the zoning, although this could be a clash of culture vs conservation in some cases. For example, green fish come together to breed. This is also when they are the easiest to catch and most commonly taken, but this is also when the species is the most vulnerable. The Marine Park Plan will have to recognise both perspectives.

NU said it would be good to have some other case studies or evidence where a marine park has worked elsewhere and what it meant for the community. Perhaps we could get some advice from where it has worked in the past.

Thomas said there are some cases in New Zealand parks where seabirds are taken only for special occasions. Sometimes it's more about having the permit to do so, rather than to harvest it. Having cultural recognition is very important.

There was a group discussion on the sea turtles on Cocos. Over the years local people have seen an increase in turtles throughout the lagoon and seen larger, adult turtles moving into the lagoon, where historically they were mainly seen outside. In recent times, more tiger sharks are also moving into the lagoon (maybe to feed on turtles). In the last two years there has been a dugong observed south of Home Island where the larger dugong Kat, was always in deeper waters near Direction Island.

Mike mentioned that there is a community driven shark tagging/monitoring program for the Galapagos shark on Lord Howe Island and asked whether they thought there would be community interest for something similar on the tiger sharks in the Cocos lagoon. Allyn asked whether the community would like to be involved in hands-on monitoring programs. It was agreed there would be more interest in the actual building of the marine park,

	<p>zoning etc.</p> <p>TF commented that the turtles will reach a point of equilibrium and the increase will slow down and stabilise at some point. The seagrass habitat on West Island has been reduced due to the dredging for the Rumah Baru project as the sand has smothered the seagrass. Turtles might have been forced over to South Island into the fish nursery areas now because their habitat in other areas has now been reduced. Jamil has noticed a change in current direction south of the jetty, over the last few years since the sand dredging at Rumah Baru.</p> <p>TF asked if whether having a marine park in place might affect a red footed booby bird harvest proposal. Allyn said if a proposal was in place the marine park would not affect the proposal. Allyn had spoken to team members that would assess a proposal and could provide contact names and numbers if people needed more information about wildlife proposals in a marine park. It was explained that Parks were waiting on a population estimate of red foots which would help with a proposal. This is the second time that Parks Australia had funded a consultant to provide this information. There had been delays in receiving the population estimate from Monash University due to the COVID 19 shut down in Victoria. TF explained that it takes some time to stitch all the drone footage together and to accurately count the birds. This estimate would be provided to any proponent on Cocos that wished to pursue the option of a legal harvest of red foots outside PKNP.</p> <p>It was concluded that the discussions held at this meeting were very valuable and members were thanked for coming. Mike and Allyn advised they would aim to be back on Cocos in early April to conduct community workshops to develop draft marine zones.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>The dinner meeting closed at 8:10pm. The date for the next meeting was not set.</p>