

**PULU KEELING NATIONAL PARK COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
(PKNPCMC)**

Meeting Minutes Wednesday 27 July 2022

5:15 - 6:05pm – Home Island Council Chambers

6.30 - 7:50pm Seafront Restaurant, Home Island

Members	Declaration of Interest	Contact
Azlah Mihan (Pak Azriel)	Parks elected member	██████████
Isa Minkom (Pak Adi)	Shire elected member	██████████
Zabidi Abedin	Parks elected member	██████████
Riadi Feyrel (Nek Nazif)	Shire elected member	██████████
Thomas Battcher (Pak Tama)	Parks elected member	██████████
Kerrie Bennison	Park Manager, Pulu Keeling National Park	██████████
Jamil Ibram (Pak Qoid)	Parks elected member	██████████
Jan Young (Shire presentation only)	Shire Councillor	
Observers		
Trish Flores (Chair and minute taker)	A/g Chief Ranger, Pulu Keeling National Park	██████████
Siddiq Juljali	Ranger, Pulu Keeling National Park	██████████
Apologies		
David McKinney	Parks elected member	██████████
Ratma Anthoney (Nek Umar)	Shire elected member	██████████
Azima Bat (Mak Ayub)	Parks elected member	██████████

AGENDA

No.	AGENDA ITEM
1	General business - Apologies
	<p>5.15 - 6:05pm Home Island Council Chambers</p> <p>Meeting opened at 5.15pm outside the Council Chambers as the Shire were inside conducting a Council meeting.</p> <p>Apologies from Dave McKinney. Nek Umar and Mak Ayub are off island.</p>

Minutes of the previous meeting 11 May, 2022 plus a briefing paper on options of future recreational fishing permits, were distributed prior to the meeting. It was decided to discuss the briefing paper as the first agenda item, and vote on the permit options without delay.

TF read out the four recreational fishing permit options for the committee that were outlined in the briefing paper and members were asked to vote on the four options. Options below:

1. Go back to the weekend only permit issue
2. Have the weekend only permit issue (or 1-2 days during the week) for the Doldrums Nov-May and a six month permit for the remaining months.
3. Have the weekend only permit issue (or 1-2 days during the week) for the months outside Doldrums, and a Doldrums Nov-May six month permit.
4. Have a Nov-May six month permit, renewable for another six months.

There were 2 votes for Option 1 and 4 votes for Option 2. Other members that were absent at the vote will be asked to vote via email. Once they are received, the Committee will be notified of the outcome.

There was a discussion about how best to notify the community about the impending changes to fishing permit length. Clarification that the fish catch data returns were not linked to “policing a person’s catch” should be included. It was suggested that an Atoll article and an email to the fishing community should be done. It was also suggested that a short video clip could be made (like the bio-control wasp clip done for the Christmas Island community) to visually explain *why* the fish catch data is important to return to Parks. A short explanation translated in Malay delivered by Nek Nazif was put forward.

Action: Parks develop an Atoll article to explain the new fishing permit arrangement and the new survey monkey link to make the return of fish catch data easier.

Action: Approach Media team (or Marine Parks) in Canberra for assistance with video info clip to explain importance of returning fish catch data.

A fishing competition hosted by Parks was suggested as a goodwill gesture, but this would warrant further discussion.

At 5.25pm the Committee and Parks staff were asked inside the Council Chambers. TF introduced the Committee and staff members to the new CEO Mr Frank Mills and the new Councillors Cr Liu and Cr Young. TF presented both these Councillors with a PKNP Plan of Management.

TF delivered a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the role of Parks Australia on Cocos, the natural and cultural features of Pulu Keeling and the work that has been done by Parks in and outside of the Park over the last year.

Questions from the Councillors:

1. Re: the closing of the lagoon. Are the birds still able to feed/drink from the lagoon now that it is closed?
TF: “It is unclear what the impacts of the lagoon closing are on seabirds, however seabirds can still find seawater to drink in the lagoon but also in the open ocean”.
2. Re: the red footed booby harvest proposal. Have any community groups/other organisations approached Parks to act as a proponent for a legal harvest?
TF : “No”.

At 6.05pm the Committee took a break for prayers.

2	Adoption of minutes from previous meeting 11 May 2022 and review actions from meeting
	<p>6.30 – 7.50pm Seafront Restaurant</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting on 11 May 2022 had been previously circulated to the committee and members had been asked to make any changes if necessary. No changes were received.</p> <p>TF gave an update on the four outstanding actions from the previous meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Approach new members and ask to do a profile for the Atoll.</u> <p>Pending. Profiles almost complete and will feature in the coming week’s Atoll (Friday 29 July).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>2. Contact IT team in Canberra regarding getting fish catch data automated online - app on phones or website.</u> <p>Initial talks were had in June in Canberra and more recently with Parks Internal Communications Team this week. Option is to have a feedback link to a survey using the Survey Monkey platform asking a few simple questions on what fish was caught, weight etc. General agreement was that it would not take much to set up. The survey can be permanently open and will generate a spreadsheet with pre-filled data from the fish catch returns.</p> <p>Action: Parks team will have a go at setting up a survey in the next few weeks and have it ready to use before the start of the Doldrums in November this year.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>3. Approach CMC about getting PKNP fish catch data returns included in their fish reporting</u> <p>Completed. IM had raised this at a CMC meeting. Shak Keegan from Cocos Marine Care said he was happy to include Pulu Keeling in the “location” section of his fish catch form. It was suggested Parks make a formal request in writing to CMC to present at their next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Parks make a formal request in writing to the CMC to include “North Keeling” as a tick box in the location options.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>4. ACTION: Have a vote at the next meeting regarding the length of the recreational fishing permits</u> <p>Item addressed at Agenda item 1.</p>
3	Lagoon project
	<p>TF tabled the draft Interim report from the University of New South Wales who had been contracted by Parks to assess the hydrological functions of the lagoon. The report is preliminary with the final report expected early next year when more data from the temperature and water loggers was available.</p> <p>TF summarised the Interim report with the main points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The report documents that the ecological drivers of the lagoon are evaporation and rainfall. In the drier months the lagoon dynamics (ie water level, temperature and salinity) are driven more by evaporation and in wetter months driven more by rainfall. The small amount of saltwater entering the lagoon underground is unlikely to have a significant effect. The old entrance is unlikely to reopen naturally and is now in a stable state.

	<p>3. Although there may be some “losers” due to the lagoon closing (loss of sea grass and fish), there are also some winners ie numbers of nesting masked booby birds have increased. As seen in other systems, there are sometimes only losers.</p> <p>4. The reef shelf outside the lagoon entrance could be the reason that the water was entering and remaining in the lagoon, as it created a holding area for the sea water.</p>
4	<p>Oral History Update</p>
	<p>SJ gave a summary of his recent trip to WA Museum and the museum archives including the Cocos collection. It was suggested that SJ should interview Nek Nazif next. IM added that the interviews held by the Shire will be collated by subject eg copra industry and held electronically at the Shire museum so users can search for a topic and get a list of all the interviews that contain that topic.</p> <p>Action: SJ to organise an oral history interview with Nek Nazif. Action: SJ to talk with Adim about the next steps to consolidate the oral history collection.</p>
5	<p>Knowledge gaps and Management Plan audit</p>
	<p>TF explained that the PKNP management plan will expire in 2025. A technical audit will be done by a consultant, which will assess whether the actions in the Plan have been delivered.</p> <p>Prior to this process, Parks would like to talk with the PKNP committee about what outstanding actions they would like to see prioritised.</p> <p>TF asked the committee if they had any research ideas for PKNP. IM asked whether there was any seagrass in PKNP as the Cocos Marine Care were looking long term into a sea grass restoration project for the southern lagoon. A sea grass survey could be considered either by walking/snorkelling or by using a drone. IM mentioned that there might be some NASA images of the lagoon and thought it may show seagrass and wondered if there might be similar images for PKNP.</p> <p>TB suggested a large scale collection (500) of Pisonia and other plant species from PKNP and seeds/seedlings could be propagated in the Shire nursery.</p> <p>KB suggested Parks could do an apex predator survey so that there was less reliance of the fish catch data from local fisherpeople.</p> <p>Jamil suggested a survey of all the plants and animals and TF explained the concept of the Island Wide Survey (IWS) that Parks had done in PK in 2009, 2012 and 2017. The IWS however is focused on invasive species. KB and TF added that a “Bush Blitz” for PKNP was being considered in the next two years as this would survey for all terrestrial (land) species.</p> <p>TF tabled the PKNP literature review and explained it had identified the key values of PKNP and the knowledge and research gaps.</p> <p>The committee were asked whether they could attend a day workshop (instead of a standard meeting) to discuss the audit of outstanding actions in the Management Plan. There would be other meeting agenda items also to discuss. The committee were supportive of a day workshop indicating Saturday might be easier. However, as it was hoped that Kerrie and the Parks Branch Head Barbara Musso would attend, the workshop would be better during the week. Parks would pay the members for their time.</p>

	<p>Action: Work with IM to investigate whether there is any fine scale NASA imagery for PKNP that detects sea grass.</p> <p>Action: Parks to organise a paid day workshop with committee members to audit the actions in the Management Plan</p>
6	Other business - PKNPCMC members
	<p>TF asked the committee if there was any other business.</p> <p>TB asked if there were likely to be any more Parks staff positions. TF explained there was a cap in Australian Public Service jobs and the number of Parks positions on Cocos was regulated by this cap. The change in government may or may not change this. Under Mike and Allyn's team, a Marine Parks Officer role will be created and this would hopefully be advertised early next year. KB mentioned that both the current Parks positions are having the work-level reviewed and both are in the process of being advertised and filled.</p> <p>TB asked about the red footed booby harvest process and whether it would be allowed and when. IM asked whether Parks had talked to anyone in the community about it and TF replied only Haji Adam and the Shire Council. It was added that it would need someone to champion the idea of a legal harvest and then approach Shire to be the proponent to manage the harvest proposal.</p> <p>KB explained that the new Marine Park was still in the planning stage with a Management Plan to be written over the next two years. It is still unclear whether PKNP would be absorbed into the new Marine Park Plan or whether it would have its own Management Plan. Some committee members stated that they would prefer PKNP to be kept as a separate entity with its own management plan.</p>
7	Next meeting
	<p>The next meeting was scheduled for November and will be a day workshop to audit the actions in the Management Plan. There was also a discussion of a January day trip to PKNP for the committee members and perhaps even an overnight stay.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 7.45pm</p>
ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING	
1	Parks to put the new committee members profile in the upcoming edition of the Atoll.
2	Parks will have a go at setting up survey monkey for the fish catch data returns in the next few weeks and have it ready to use before the start of the Doldrums in November this year.
3	Parks develop an Atoll article to explain the new fishing permit arrangement and the new survey monkey link to make the return of fish catch data easier.
4	Approach Media team (or Marine Parks) in Canberra for assistance with video info clip to explain importance of returning fish catch data.

5	Parks make a formal request in writing to the CMC to include “North Keeling” as a tick box in the location options in their fish return form.
6	SJ to organise an oral history interview with Nek Nazif.
7	SJ to talk with Adim about next steps with the oral history interviews
8	Parks to organise a paid day workshop with committee members to audit the actions in the Management Plan