



Parks Australia Cocos (Keeling) Islands Community Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

1. Background

Parks Australia manages two Commonwealth parks at Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Pulu Keeling National Park (PKNP) and Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park (CKIMP). Park Management Plans provide for the establishment of community-based committees to advise on park management.

This Terms of Reference supports the establishment and operation of a single committee to advise Parks Australia on the management of both parks and provides detail on the purpose and functions of the committee.

Pulu Keeling National Park (PKNP)

PKNP was established in 1995 and covers the entire land mass of North Keeling Island, as well as a small surrounding marine area. The park protects the last remnant of Cocos (Keeling) Islands original vegetation, significant populations of nesting seabirds, the endemic and endangered Cocos buff-banded rail and coral reef habitats. Because of its natural values, it is listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention. The park is also locally and nationally important for its cultural and historical values and is leased by the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council to the Commonwealth. Amongst other conditions, the lease requires Parks Australia to:

- establish a committee of 10 members to advise on the management of the park (with six positions nominated by the Shire) – this underpins the committee requirement in the PKNP management plan.
- regularly consult with and consider the views of the advisory committee in relation to the management of the park, including on matters associated with park management plans.

Cocos (Keeling) Island's Marine Park (CKIMP)

CKIMP was co-designed with the local community and established in 2022 and adjoins the waters of PKNP. It protects 467,054 square kilometres of ocean and a range of marine habitats and species, including deep sea ridges and plains, seamounts and inshore coral reef and lagoon habitats, which support endangered green and hawksbill turtles, and over 600 fish species including several endemic species. The local community maintains strong cultural and socio-economic connections to the islands' inshore waters – most of which are part of the marine park – particularly through traditional and subsistence fishing and other cultural uses, recreational activities and small-scale commercial businesses (e.g. marine tourism).

2. Purpose and functions of the committee

Purpose

- To provide advice and recommendations to Parks Australia to support the management of Pulu Keeling National Park (PKNP) and Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park (CKIMP).

Functions

- Provide advice on:
 - implementing park management plans, including management priorities, programs, actions and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
 - community and stakeholder views, knowledge and needs.
 - other matters associated with the management of the parks.
- Facilitate two-way information flow between Parks Australia and the local community.
- Provide views for the preparation of a new management plan for Pulu Keeling National Park, in accordance with the lease.

3. Membership

Parks Australia will appoint a committee membership comprising:

- At-least 6 Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council nominees, 2 of which are to be members of Cocos Marine Care.
- At-least 3 Parks Australia nominees, one of which is to be a member of Cocos Marine Care, with the other 2 positions appointed through an expression of interest process.
- 2 Parks Australia members, including the Chair.

The Commonwealth Territories portfolio will receive a standing invitation for a representative to attend meetings of the Committee as an observer.

Relevant Parks Australia staff may attend meetings as observers and, through the Chair, other people/organisations may also be invited as observers.

An overall membership aiming for a diversity of people and expertise across the various groups and interests within the Cocos (Keeling) Islands will be sought.

The Shire and Parks Australia shall notify each other of their nominees and any change of nominees. The Shire and Parks Australia will consult the Chair of CMC in relation to their CMC nominees.

Members are unpaid volunteers and may vacate their position at any time.

Members are required to:

- Make reasonable efforts to prepare for and attend meetings.
- Be courteous and respectful towards other members and participants, and members of the community when discussing any park related matters.
- Declare any real or perceived conflict of interest in relation to committee discussions.

4. Term

Members will be appointed for a 3-year term and may renominate for following terms.

5. Chair

A Parks Australia member will chair the Committee. Chair duties include:

- Coordinate and chair Committee meetings.
- Develop an agenda for each meeting in consultation with members.
- Encourage broad and open participation from members.
- Ensure adequate time is devoted to both terrestrial and marine park issues.
- Seek to establish a consensus view from the Committee on matters under discussion.
- Ensure meeting minutes are finalised and sent to the Shire Council once confirmed and that follow up actions are addressed.
- Report key meeting outcomes and items to senior Parks Australia staff.

6. Secretariat

Parks Australia will provide secretariat support to the Committee. This will include recording meeting minutes, providing the committee with documents and reports on the implementation of management plans and other material as appropriate, to ensure the committee has the information necessary to fulfil its functions.

Once finalised, the minutes will be provided to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council.

7. Meetings

At-least two meetings will be scheduled each year and in general it is expected that meetings will run for up to two hours.

Occasionally, the Committee may be asked to consider a matter outside of a scheduled meeting. In such cases, Parks Australia will circulate relevant information via email.

8. Conflict of interest

Actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be declared by all Committee members prior to and following their appointment.

A record of such interests will be maintained by the secretariat and Committee members must regularly consider and update their declaration via the secretariat. An opportunity to update information about conflicts will be provided at each meeting of the Committee.

9. Terms of Reference review

These Terms of Reference (ToR) may be reviewed and amended by Parks Australia in consultation with the Shire Council, noting that the ToR must always be consistent with the lease for PKNP and the PKNP and CKIMP management plans.

10. Reference documents

Attorney General's Department (1995). The Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council and the Commonwealth of Australia Lease, North Keeling Island. Reference 93023359/TM.

Director of National Parks (2015) Pulu Keeling National Park Management Plan

Director of National Parks (2024) Cocos (Keeling) Islands Marine Park Management Plan.