

# **MARINE PARKS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

## **A MISSION-BASED COMPACT**

**(A brief discussion paper from Greg James)**

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**Lower Yorke Peninsula Marine Park (proposed)**  
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## **Background - Why a Compact?**

This brief paper is designed to facilitate development of a broad State-wide Plan (compact) needed for the effective introduction, implementation and strategic management of the Marine Parks in South Australia. Above all, it seeks to advocate for a Marine Parks Compact to ensure the full and total engagement with the general public, the government and the non-government sectors with the new Marine Parks system of South Australia (SA).

It also should be noted that as these discussions are underway, the Australian Federal Government (through the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) has three (3) proposed Commonwealth Marine Reserves about to be introduced, namely:

- Great Australian Bight (extension) Commonwealth Marine Reserve
- Western Eyre Commonwealth Marine Reserve
- Western Kangaroo Island Commonwealth Marine Reserve

The current proposed State Marine Park network in SA will amount to coverage of 44% of the State's waters (three (3) nautical miles from shore) - an area of approximately 27,000 square kilometres. The Sanctuary Zones will prevent all forms of fishing initially in 10% of the State's waters.

In reality, there are two (2) important and somewhat controversial events occurring:

1. The general population losing access to and having to accept imposed zero fishing activities within the State's waters.,
2. Non negotiable massive change. Thought and consideration needs to be given to managing that change, initially by improving the communication processes so people can participate in the process and feel much more empowered than presently is the case.

This paper is not about the rights and wrongs of such change, but seeks to outline how a Marine Park Compact can use environmental governance, marine science and an agreement with our community to participate in and enjoy a unique and shared resource. It also raises the issue of community compensation for the loss of aforesaid activities and access.

## **Purpose and Effect**

The purpose of the Marine Parks Compact would be to provide a key strategic framework which enables a clear and functional relationship to exist between the State Government of SA and the Public of SA. It would set out specific details on how the State's Corporate Mission aligns with the education, research, innovation and management objectives for the SA Marine Parks network and would also include general information on funding to be provided by the State and Federal Governments.

A Marine Park Compact is an agreement between the State Government of SA and the General Public that:

1. Describes in detail how the Marine Parks will individually and collectively contribute to the agreed goals of marine conservation within SA
2. Identifies and enhances the linkages between the Federal Government's Marine Park Reserves and the SA Marine Park networks
3. Describes and provides solutions to issues that will arise in the implementation phase and the effect of change that is brought about by the advent of the Marine Parks (eg management of change)
4. Outlines the responsibilities and commitments from State and Local Government necessary for a successful Marine Parks network
5. Detail specific processes for dispute resolution and a comprehensive complaints handling procedure
6. Sets out a comprehensive and fully consulted 25 year SA Marine Parks Strategic Plan with 3-5 year underpinning Marine Park Operational Plans for each of the nineteen (19) Marine Parks
7. Evaluates the establishment of a new tri-partite SA Marine Parks Agency to be the instrumentality to promote, protect, conserve, develop and utilise this new and impressive asset
8. Identifies ways in which the private sector can and may participate and contribute to the enhancement of the SA Marine Parks network

## **Functions Needed for Marine Parks Management and Governance**

The Marine Parks of SA are not only about the science. The major benefit to Marine Parks brought about by the scientific data is that it (the data) allows our marine reserves to tell us their stories, their secrets and their most amazing attributes. Hopefully that will be a never-ending novel and one most likely to educate, enthrall and tantalise us for a millennium. However, it will be in the human values connection to this program where the effort will need to be strategized, focussed and immensely robust. Unfortunately, the chains and perhaps disparate pathways between our society and our new Marine Parks will be only as strong and effective as the sector that is the least committed....

A Marine Park Compact should only serve to formalise, re-enforce and ultimately strengthen that commitment.

We must collectively perform a wide range of functions well, including:

- design and enactment of sophisticated environmental governance matters such as:
  - identified, planned and relevant scientific research
  - analysis and reporting of scientific data
  - an agreed process for marine park consensus across government and private sector interests
  - ensuring marine science is a pillar and cornerstone of all/any marine parks program(s)
  - a fair and reasonable allocation of the State's wealth and resources to the marine park network
  - setting of State social, environmental and economic priorities for the individual marine parks and as part of a greater whole
- open and improve community access, understanding and benefit
- develop accredited education, training and awareness programs
- institute regional marketing and product development plans and programs
- effect impact identification and appropriate compensation procedures
- establish effective organisational structures for all bodies authorised to participate in the SA Marine Parks network activities

The forthcoming rounds of new Marine Park legislation and subsequent changes to existing regulations (eg *Fisheries Management Act 2007*) should be undertaken in the parent field of guidance created by the Australian Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR). One of the key recommendations from OBPR is that a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) be prepared in advance of the formal changes being put forward, consulted and then gazetted through the normal processes of government legislative change.

It is recognised that these initiatives are part of a Federal system, but there are a number of quality benefits that can be achieved through adopting this process, at least in part.

### **Compensation – a public obligation, a constitutional must**

The Marine Parks Compact will demonstrate a shared and mutual commitment to provide South Australians with a world class opportunity not yet afforded nor experienced, much less understood. The State Government needs to demonstrate to the public of SA that certain sacrifices (that) they are being asked to make in establishing our Marine Parks network can and will be recognised and, indeed recompensed in the form of a compensation package that includes a shared boundary of both indigenous and non-indigenous citizens and cultures – in the forms of:

1. Guaranteed structural and continuously improved access for both shore and boat positioned anglers (*details available from Greg James*)
2. Guaranteed availability and reasonable pricing of selected fishing commodities (*details available from Greg James*)
3. 25 year “Fishing in Your Marine Park” plans which encourage responsible recreational anglers – in practice and application (*further details available from Greg James*)

4. Guaranteed consultation standards for any proposed changes to the current Marine Park networks
5. Provision of accredited education, training and awareness programs
6. Establishment of a Marine Parks Ombudsman
7. Nomination of an indigenous Marine Parks of SA advisory committee
8. Local compacts with regional district councils which share shore-based boundaries with Marine Parks

**GREG JAMES**

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## APPENDICES

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