

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee

Communiqué

Meeting 7 20 September 2016

The seventh meeting for the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee was held in Carnarvon on the 20 September 2016. The Committee discussed the following issues.

Planning Activities

The Committee discussed a range of planning initiatives in and adjacent to the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area (NCWHA), that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value for which the World Heritage Area was listed.

1. Exmouth Shire's Local Planning Strategy 2016 (LPS1) and Local Planning Scheme #4 (LPS4) released for public comment on Thursday, 2 June 2016. The committee agreed to make a submission.
2. Seascapes planning project (Department of Parks and Wildlife). The Committee plans to make a submission on this proposal.
3. Planning for the Ningaloo Coast (Department of Parks and Wildlife, Carnarvon Shire). The Committee will receive updates on this process at future meetings.

Fisheries Matters

The Committee was briefed by the Department of Fisheries on the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification review of the Exmouth Gulf Prawn Trawl Fishery. The Committee had made an earlier submission to the first review in 2015. The Committee agreed to make a further submission concerning possible effects on the NCWHA from fishery operations in the north-west corner of the Exmouth Gulf.

The Committee decided to continue to make recommendations to the Department of Fisheries and to Recfishwest concerning bag limits for recreational fishing and to encourage research into "shark bite-offs" affecting recreational line fishers.

The Committee was informed about a current PhD research project that is documenting the experiences of recreational fishers with "shark bite-offs" in Ningaloo Marine Park.

Introduced Animals and Plants

The Committee discussed the potential impact that introduced fish species (such as guppies) may have on cave dwelling species (stygo fauna), one of the key values of the NCWHA.

Water Management

The Committee received a comprehensive briefing from the Department of Water on the management of water resources in the Exmouth region. The briefing emphasised the potential effects of groundwater pollution on some of the values of the NCWHA, particularly the anchialine cave systems and associated stygo fauna within the Cape Range Karst System.

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Oil and Gas Industry

The Committee noted the many proposals for seismic surveys outside although adjacent to the NCWHA, and the potential for adverse impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the area. The Committee agreed to make a submission to the PGS Rollo Seismic Survey amended proposal – due 28 October 2016. In addition, the Committee agreed to make a submission to the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority on processes for stakeholder engagement by titleholders and seismic consultants.

The Committee also discussed oil spill contingency planning by industry and decided to make this a particular focus for its next meeting. Invitations would be extended to oil and gas industry representatives to brief the Committee on industry preparedness.

Research

Parks and Wildlife briefed the Committee on research being undertaken in the NCWHA and in particular recent analyses of data concerning the status and trends for Spangled Emperor populations within the Ningaloo Marine Park.

Joint Meeting with Shark Bay World Heritage Advisory Committee

The Committee met for the first time with the members of the Shark Bay World Heritage Advisory Committee. Matters of mutual interest were discussed including the effects of climate change on the two World Heritage areas, fisheries issues, website development, “wilderness” definitions, funding and support for the Committees.

Further Information:

If you require further information on any of the above topics please contact Tegan Gourlay, Executive Officer, Ningaloo World Heritage Advisory Committee tegan.gourlay@dbca.wa.gov.au or (08) 9947 8023

Alternatively please contact one of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee members listed below:

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* Ningaloo World Heritage Advisory Committee – Membership as at August 2017