



## CONFIRMED MINUTES

### Meeting of the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) of the Shire of Christmas Island held at the George Fam Centre on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

#### 1 Declaration of Opening of Meeting / Announcement of Visitors

The Chair, Gordon THOMSON declared the meeting opened at 4.25 pm.

#### 2 Record of Attendance/Apologies/Leave of Absence/Declarations of Financial, Proximity or Impartiality Interest

##### 2.1 Record of Attendance

###### Community Consultative Committee

President-SOCI	Gordon THOMSON
Shire CEO	David PRICE
Council Representative	Morgan SOH
Council Representative	Hafiz MASLI
CI Neighbourhood Centre	Oliver LINES
Union of Christmas Island Workers	Kelvin LEE
Islamic Council	Greg MCINTOSH
CI Phosphates	Joy WICKENDEN
Malay Club	Azmi YON

###### Shire of Christmas Island Councillors

Councillor	Farzian ZAINAL
Councillor	FOO Kee Heng

###### Fishery Management Committee (FMC)

Mark ROCHFORD  
Kelana ARSHAD

###### National Parks Australia

Michael MISSO  
Alleyn WHITE

##### 2.2 Apologies

Chinese Literary Association	Gee FOO
CI Women's Association	Nora KOH
Poon Saan Club	Jackie TEH
FMC member	Shazmin ROSLI
FMC member	Jauhar JAMIL
FMC member	Eijas RAZAK

### **3 Agenda Business**

#### **3.1 Presentation on Proposed Marine Park, Michael MISSO and Allyn WHITE**

1. Gordon THOMSON introduces Michael MISSO and Allyn WHITE from National Parks. States that Cocos and Christmas are the last two territories without a Marine Park in Australia. Shire President has had initial conversations with the Australian Marine Conservation Society representative Christine MITCHELL on the nature of Marine Parks in Australia.
2. Michael MISSO explains that the Australian Government has a policy on creating Marine Parks in Australian waters to conserve habitats. This meeting with CCC will be the first in a series with Christmas Island people.

Provides hand out – *Process to Establish Australian Marine Parks (attached)*.

3. MISSO states that once a Marine Park is declared, it triggers more involvement from Border Force to patrol the area. Fishing pressure is a global problem that affects local fish catches also.
4. MISSO explains that the proposed Marine Park aims to protect seafloor characteristics on the sea floor being Sea Mounts and similar features. It is in these areas that fish tend to live.

MISSO put forward that this is different from WA State Fishing Regulations. A Marine Park does not seek to protect any one species of fish, as what a Fishing Regulation may. It seeks to protect a habitat zone to conserve on the eco-system level.

5. A Marine Park has multiple coloured zones. Green means a no fish take zone. Yellow is a fish take zone. Blue is commercial and mining activities on the sea floor.
6. MISSO said there would be another meeting at the Malay Club tonight.
7. Cr Farzian ZAINAL asked if the zoning areas had been finalised?
8. MISSO responded that they had not been finalised yet. National Parks had two principles at this point; minimize impact on local fisherpeople and to leave out the Flying Fish Cove harbour from the Marine Park.
9. Joy WICKENDEN asked who will be managing the Marine Park?
10. MISSO confirmed it will be Parks Australia, with options of co-operative management with the community. A 'Marine Park Community Advisory Committee' is a feature of Marine Park management for Parks Australia.
11. Kelvin LEE asked where might the zones be located in the Marine Park? And where might the Marine Park start?
12. MISSO confirmed that these things were not finalised yet. National Parks did not want to establish significant Green No Fish Take Zones near community fishing areas. Their goal is to protect the offshore areas.
13. Gordon THOMSON confirmed that Marine Parks are planned to protect significant underwater sea characteristics to provide protection on an eco-system level rather than control fishing..

14. MISSO stated that one of Border Force's roles is to patrol Marine Parks. Put forward that a designated Marine Park zone would give Border Force more reason to be out in the water regularly around Christmas Island.

MISSO wanted to learn more about where people fish near shore and avoid those locations for Marine Park inclusion.

15. Cr ZAINAL asked what was the review period for Marine Parks?
16. MISSO stated that a Management Plan is ten years in length. It is delegated legislation in Parliament and created after the Marine Park is created.
17. Discussion around how Green, Yellow and Blue Zones inside a Marine Park can be updated and changed within the Management Plan. MISSO confirms that these zones can be changed inside the ten year plan through a process. Gordon THOMSON observed that this would be presumably an exhausting and difficult process to go through to do – Zones would be set for the purposes of conservation and National Parks would be reticent to change it.
18. MISSO says that there is legal advice from Parks stating that it was possible. Gordon THOMSON requested a copy of the legal advice for the CCC. MISSO confirmed that it won't be possible to change the boundaries of the Marine Park, but usage zones within can be changed.
19. Gordon THOMSON stated that the practicality of changing Zones within a Marine Park would be very difficult. Asked if there are any examples of this having happened in other Marine Parks in Australia? The CCC would like to see where this has happened.
20. MISSO provided that they can get those Proclamation Documents to confirm previous examples of this.

Once zoning is established, it is arduous to change. One may 'tweak it' but to change it dramatically would require National Parks to start a formal consultation process again.

21. The meeting discussed the Blue Zone, for mining extraction. Gordon THOMSON summarised that the region should be protected from mining extraction of the sea floor. We want to achieve an unchangeable map from the beginning in this respect. The conservation values in place have to reflect wishes in this respect.

The consultation is to set the conservation objectives in conjunction with the community. Gordon THOMSON said that if the Zones change, the community needs to be the party that signs off on that; Gordon THOMSON referred to the Native Title Act.

22. Meeting discussed the proximity to the shore that the Marine Park may start at, understanding its goal of protecting seafloor characteristics.

Mark ROCHFORD confirms that 12 nautical miles from shore is the distance that licensed fisherpeople like him may catch.

23. Greg MCINTOSH queried if there was availability of scientific data around fish populations.

24. MISSO advised that in 2009 the CSIRO Interceptor Research Vessel mapped the underwater habitats in the region. This documented the shape of the sea terrain and it was based on this scientific research that the Marine Parks would be informed by.

Actual counting of populations of species is not conducted.

25. Joy WICKENDEN asked if the CSIRO reports could be made available. Michael MISSO confirmed this was possible, wanting to conduct the process differently and separately to the WA Fisheries method.
26. Meeting confirmed that the 'big picture conservation' was the goal of a Marine Park. Put forward that Islanders should be the custodians of the water.
27. Kelana ARSHAD asked how might a Marine Park affect a licensed fisherperson's ability to catch within the licensed 12 nautical miles off shore? Discussion followed on capabilities of local licensed vessels to presently be able to extract fish further than 2 nautical miles. CCC discussion led to position that Licensed Fisher people should be compensated if their legal rights to 12 nautical miles are infringed by any Green No Take Marine Park Zone.
28. Oliver LINES raised the presence of foreign vessels in the region as a concern.  
  
Chris SU passed out '6 month snapshot of fishing in the Indian Ocean' provided by the Australian Marine Conservation Society.
29. Alleyn WHITE informed the meeting that there had been an incursion in the Coral Sea of foreign fishing vessels obtaining sea cucumbers.
30. Meeting affirmed the need to protect the Exclusive Economic Zone for the Island. Noted that the north east end of the EEZ is flat as a necessity against the Indonesian EEZ.
31. 17:35 Cr Farzian ZAINAL leaves.
32. Alleyn WHITE informed the meeting that the CSIRO 'Investigator' is coming mid-2021 to further map and explore the waters of the Indian Ocean Territories.  
  
It won't be able to provide data on fish counts; its scientific instruments rather map the underwater sea features in a habitat mapping exercise.  
  
Alleyn WHITE puts forward that a Marine Park is there to protect representative slices of habitat.
33. Michael MISSO says that in-shore Zones with multiple uses will be developed with the community.
34. Meeting reaffirms that the existing 12 nautical mile permission granted under WA applied legislation to licensed CI fisherpeople must remain. The Governance arrangements must affirm Community Ownership. The structure of governance will be a community representative structure; the CCC put forward that the community should have a sign-off on the process and monitoring responsibilities.
35. Michael MISSO noted the CCC's position and said that he would return to the Island in months to come to continue discussions.

**5 General Business**

**6 Closure of Meeting**

6.1 Meeting ended at 1755.

**7 Date of Next Meeting**

7.1 The date of the next meeting is to be advised.

	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>CCC Meeting</b>	<b>Follow up</b>
1.	Legal Advice regarding ability for Zones within a Marine Park to be able to be adjusted within a 10 Year Management Plan period.	17.2.2021	Michael Misso Gordon Thomson
2.	CSIRO research on CI waters to be provided to the CCC	17.2.2021	Michael Misso Joy Wickendon