

Final Plan of Management for the Lancelin Island Lagoon Fish Habitat Protection Area

Fisheries WA

**Australian Marine Conservation Society
Friends of Lancelin Island**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 General

Lancelin Island is an emergent limestone feature of the coastal marine environment of the mid-west coast of Western Australia (see Map 1). The island is located at 31°00' 30" S and 115°18' 55" E, approximately 110 km north of Perth and 800 m offshore from the Lancelin town site. It is linked by intertidal and sub-tidal reef platforms to Edward Island to its south.

Both Edward Island and Lancelin Island are gazetted as an A class reserve (Reserve No. 24979) managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) for the conservation of flora and fauna. This vesting extends to the Low Water Mark of the islands.

The Lancelin Island Lagoon is a small area of reef habitat on the western side of Lancelin Island and a popular snorkelling and diving destination. Water depth ranges from less than 0.3 m on the intertidal reefs to less than 3 m on the sand or seagrass-covered bottom. The area has a diverse array of benthic marine habitat.

During a marine survey of the area, over 200 flora and fauna species were positively identified, with many more remaining unidentified due to the diversity of species supported in this marine environment. The survey, which was facilitated by direct observations and photographs, also identified 13 large corals that are a feature of the lagoon's environment.

Lancelin Island Lagoon is accessible to divers and swimmers only during low swell, as a strong current develops from wave energy converging over the outside reefs. The peak use period of the lagoon coincides with low summer/autumn swells, making it a popular destination for holidaymakers.

The deeper areas of the lagoon are currently accessible by boat, but a conflict of use exists between boats, divers and swimmers, due to the lagoon's small area. Extensive fishing and spearfishing has resulted in the local extinction of many larger edible species, with smaller fish now being targeted.

The Lancelin Island Lagoon Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA) is established pursuant to Section 115 of the *Fisheries Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA 1994)*. This plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of Part II, Division 1 of the Act and:

- contains a description of the area;
- outlines the purpose for which the area is to be set aside; and
- lists strategies which relate to the management of the proposed FHPA.

1.2 Boundary of the Lancelin Island Lagoon FHPA

The Lancelin Island Lagoon FHPA encompasses the waters of the Indian Ocean to the west of the northern and southernmost points of Lancelin Island and extending to the seaward edge of the intertidal/sub-tidal reef platforms. The Low Water Mark of the island nature reserve provides the eastern boundary (see Map 2).

1.3 Purposes of the Lancelin Island Lagoon FHPA

The purposes for which the Lancelin Island Lagoon FHPA is to be established are:

- (i) the conservation and protection of fish, fish breeding areas, fish fossils or the aquatic ecosystem;
- (ii) the management of fish and activities relating to the appreciation or observation of fish*.

*NOTE: "fish" under the FRMA 1994 covers all marine life including shellfish, crustaceans, corals etc.

1.4 Development of the Plan of Management

The draft Plan of Management was prepared by the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) and the Friends of Lancelin Island (FLI), with the assistance and guidance of Fisheries WA. The draft Plan of Management was developed following consultation with the local community of Lancelin, involving displays and workshops (see Appendix 1).

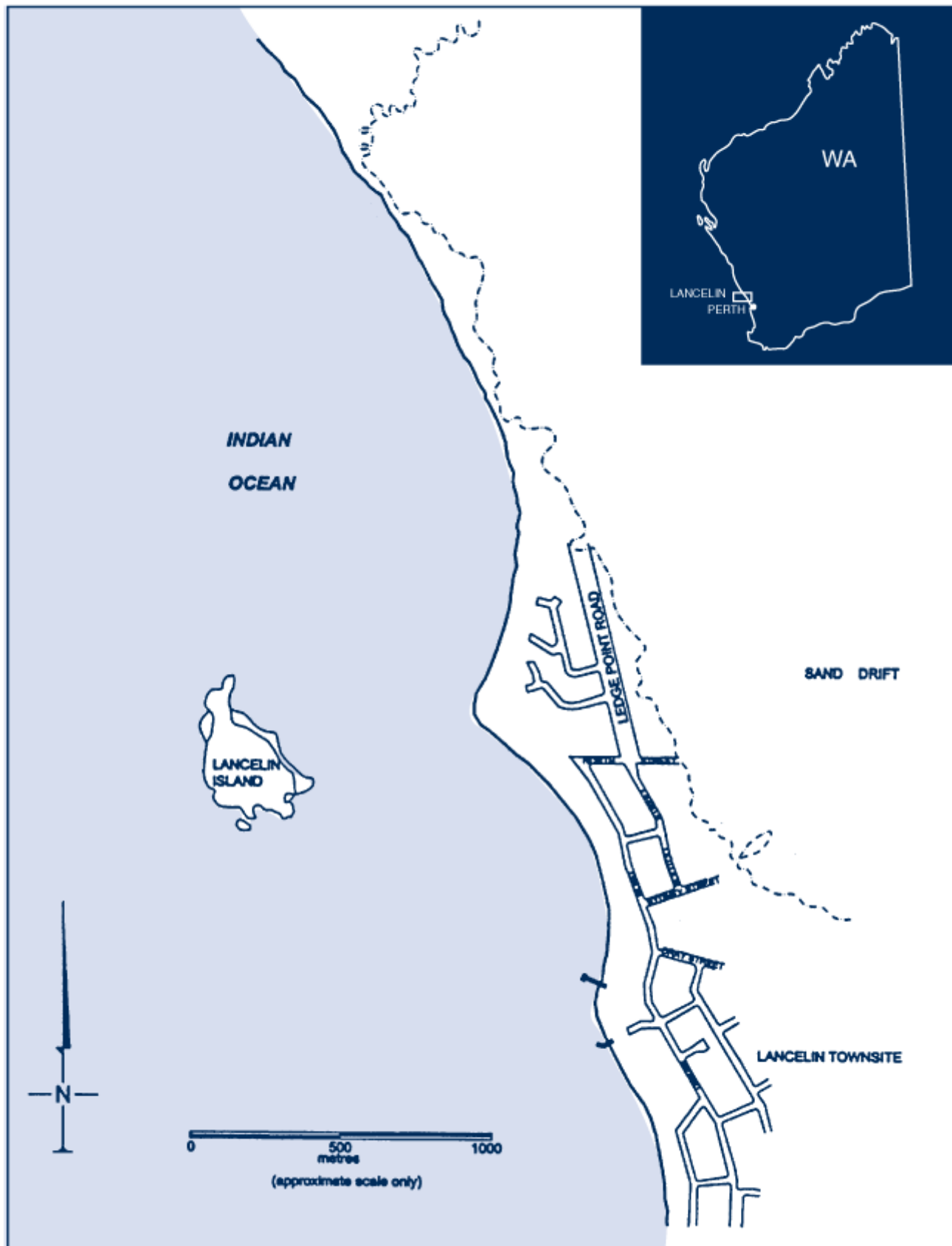
The draft plan was submitted to Fisheries WA for consideration in March 1999. To gauge the degree of support from the wider community of Western Australia, Fisheries WA advertised the release of the draft Plan of Management for public comment in *The West Australian* and local newspapers. A two-month period for comment was provided.

The public comments received indicated general support for the creation of the FHPA. Following consideration of public comments, a revised draft Plan of Management for the area was prepared by Fisheries WA in consultation with the FLI and the AMCS.

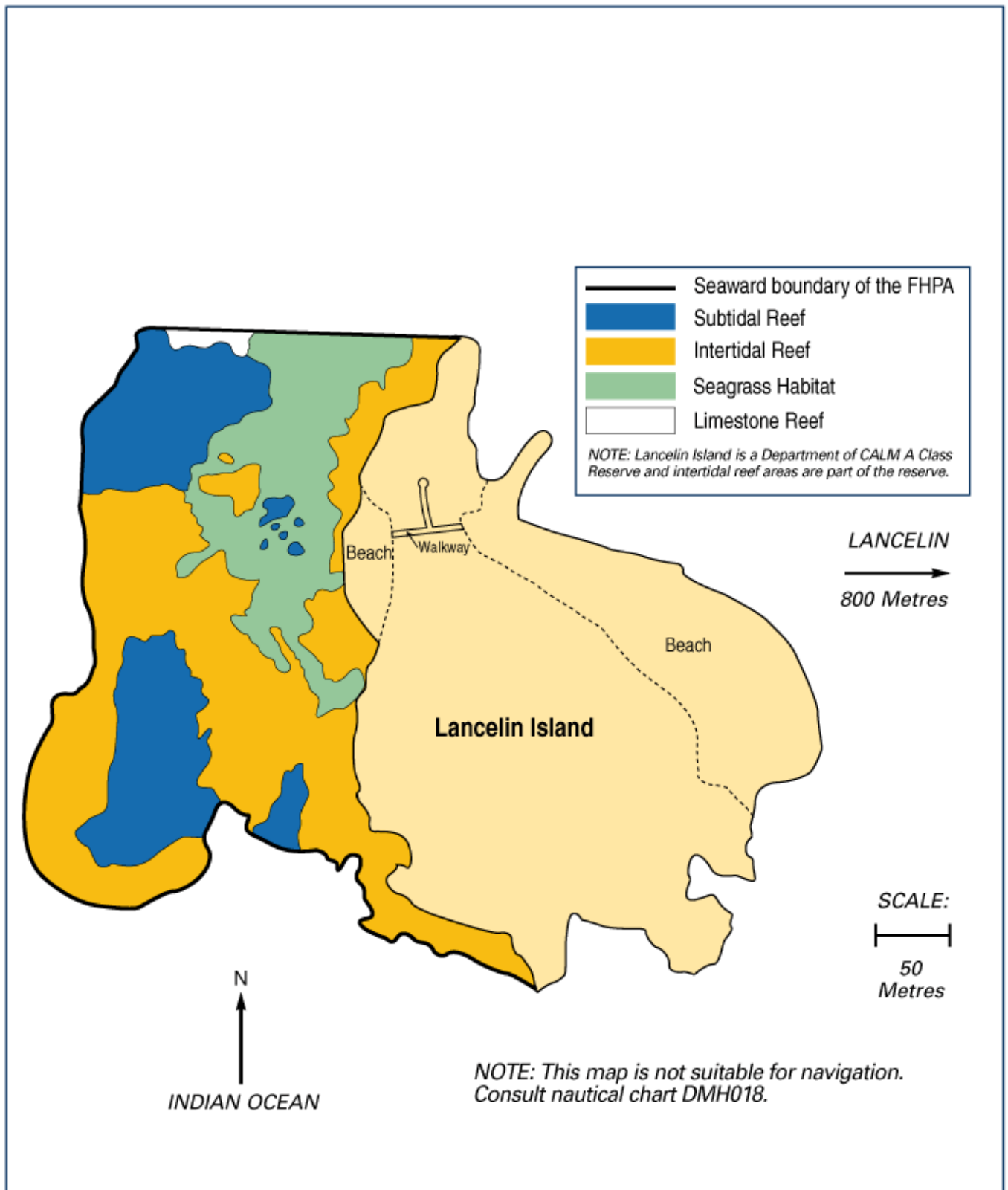
The revised draft Plan of Management was approved by the (then) Minister for Fisheries and notice of intention to gazette the FHPA, in accordance with the draft Plan of Management, was published on 18 November 2000. No submissions were received during the period provided.

Formal gazettal of the FHPA will occur during March 2001.

Map 1: Location of Lancelin Island



Map 2: Boundary and Habitats of the Lancelin Island Lagoon Fish Habitat Protection Area



2.0 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE LANCELIN ISLAND LAGOON FHPA

A holistic approach to the management of the Lancelin Island Lagoon has been adopted, which incorporates strategies relating to marine conservation, community involvement, recreational and commercial collecting, ecotourism, diving, boating, moorings and anchorages, mining and exploration, enforcement and monitoring.

The management strategy for the lagoon is as follows:

2.1 Marine Conservation

- Declare the waters designated in Section 1.2 of this plan as a FHPA vested with the Minister for Fisheries under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* (FWA).
- Recognise and promote the FHPA as an area of high conservation value (AMCS, FLI, FWA).
- Implement this Plan of Management for the FHPA (AMCS, FLI, FWA).
- Manage all activities to maintain and enhance intrinsic and ecological values of the FHPA (FLI, FWA).
- Promote research and monitoring to develop an understanding of the ecology of the aquatic ecosystem (AMCS, FWA).
- Maintain and develop the cooperation of the public and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) to ensure that an integrated and effective approach to planning, management and tenure continues to be implemented, and, where necessary, improved (FWA, CALM).
- Encourage research by outside bodies and individual researchers (AMCS, FWA).
- Collate and make available research findings to all interested persons (AMCS, FWA).
- Promote the FHPA as a 'Reef Observation Area' (FWA).

2.2 Information, Interpretation and Community Involvement

- Seek funding to develop an information package for distribution to all user and interest groups (AMCS, FLI, FWA).
- Promote community involvement in decision-making concerning the FHPA (FWA).
- Seek funding to develop shore-based interpretative signage at boat launching points and on the island to promote the values and regulations of the FHPA (AMCS, FLI).

- Promote community use of the area for direct observation of marine life using dive trails, etc. (FWA, FLI).

2.3 Recreational Fishing and Collecting

- Prohibit all recreational fishing and collecting in the FHPA (FWA).
- Prohibit the undertaking of manipulative experiments and the collection of flora and fauna within the FHPA, with the exception of the collection of specimens for the purpose of species identification (FWA).

2.4 Commercial Fishing

- Prohibit all commercial fishing within the FHPA (FWA).

2.5 Aquaculture

- Prohibit aquaculture within the FHPA (FWA).

2.6 Ecotourism

- Develop a management plan for environmentally sensitive ecotourism, including policies and operating guidelines (AMCS, FLI, FWA).
- Develop a working relationship with CALM so as to integrate land-based and marine-based ecotourism (FWA, CALM).
- Investigate the feasibility of developing application guidelines and performance criteria for venture proponents, along with a procedure to aid assessment of a proponent's proposal and ability to perform (FWA, CALM, AMCS, FLI).

2.7 Diving

- Encourage industry to develop a code of conduct for dive charter operators (AMCS, FLI, FWA).
- Promote diving and snorkelling as passive recreational activities within the FHPA (FWA).
- Seek funding to prepare information for the public about diving in the FHPA (FWA, AMCS, FLI).

2.8 Boating

- Boating within the FHPA will be permitted, however boats are not permitted to land on the beach (CALM).
- Exclude the use of personal powered watercraft within the FHPA (FWA, Department of Transport).
- Install a northern boundary (lagoon entrance) buoy to mark the start of the FHPA. Deploy floating signage on this buoy indicating that anchoring and beach landing are prohibited inside the boundary. The boundary mooring will be designed in an environmentally sensitive manner and suitable for small boat attachment (FWA, Department of Transport).

2.9 Boat Mooring and Anchorage

- Remove the existing mooring within the FHPA (Department of Transport, FWA).
- Seek funding to install two environmentally sensitive moorings within the area, one of which will lie on the northern boundary of the FHPA area (see Section 2.7) and a second over the sandy outlet channel within the boundary. Mooring access arrangements would give priority to organised ecotourism activities, but also be available to private users when otherwise vacant (FWA, FLI, AMCS).
- Prohibit boat anchorage within the FHPA (FWA, Department of Transport).
- Consider the feasibility of delineating the boundary of the FHPA with appropriate navigational markers (Fisheries WA, Department of Transport).

2.10 Mining and Exploration

- Investigate the means to prohibit mining and exploration within the FHPA and in adjacent areas where the environmental values of the FHPA may be compromised (FWA).

2.11 Resourcing, Surveillance and Enforcement

- Provide information to visitors on the values of the FHPA, its wise use and the applicable regulations (FLI, AMCS, FWA).
- Encourage the community to report undesirable activities to Fisheries Officers (FLI, FWA, CALM)
- Ensure enforcement activities are coordinated between Fisheries WA, CALM and Department of Transport (FWA).

- Develop an implementation strategy for the Lancelin Island Lagoon FHPA (AMCS, FWA).
- Actively seek resources for implementing the FHPA Plan of Management (FWA, AMCS, FLI).

2.12 Fish and Environmental Monitoring

- Seek funding to undertake research and monitoring of marine habitats within the FHPA to determine the flora and fauna present (AMCS, FLI, FWA, Charter operators).
- Seek funding to undertake research and monitoring of marine habitats to determine health, and quantify the effects of human impacts (AMCS, FLI, FWA, Charter operators).
- Seek funding to monitor the abundance of commercially and recreationally targeted fish species, including the Western Rock Lobster, within the FHPA (FWA, AMCS, FLI).
- Seek funding to monitor the intensity of diving in the FHPA and any effect divers may be having on the environment (FWA, AMCS, FLI, Charter operators).

3.0 RELATED READING

Australian Marine Conservation Society (WA) (1998) *Lancelin Island – Management Implications* (unpublished report)

CALM (1997) *Lancelin and Edward Islands Nature Reserve, Interim Guidelines for Management*, Moora District (unpublished report)

Green B.J. (1999) *Results of a Marine Biological Survey of Lancelin Island Lagoon - a proposed Fish Habitat Protection Area* (in progress)

Hutchins B. (1994) *A survey of the Nearshore Reef Fish Fauna of Western Australia's West and South Coasts – The Leeuwin Province*, Records of the Western Australian Museum Supplement No. 46

Keighery G.G. & Alford J.J. (date unknown) Extract from unpublished report by the Department of Conservation and Land Management

Pearson D.J. & Jones B. (1997) *Draft Lancelin Island Skink Recovery Plan*, Department of Conservation and Land Management

APPENDIX 1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

Sunday 24 January 1999

Community consultation was considered an essential part of the development of this plan. While the Australian Marine Conservation Society (WA) and the Friends of Lancelin Island are active community voices, it was important that this proposal receive as wide an airing as possible before the proposal was put forward to Fisheries WA.

Leading up to the community consultation evening, members of these two groups were discussing the idea of the Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA) with the community of Lancelin, so as to promote further discussion within the community. A display was set up at the Lancelin Amateur Angling Club (LAAC) over the Australia Day long weekend, with the display also being erected at the town's shopping centre during lunch-time trading hours.

Facilitators also interacted with LAAC members during a social evening to investigate community attitude. We believe that the community has been given full opportunity to become involved in the consultation process. Further discussion will no doubt take place with the release of this *draft* plan.

The following is an analysis of the community consultation evening which was run as a discussion workshop, with participants being asked to answer specific questions. Participants were separated into three groups to undertake their discussions, with a spokesperson from each group then presenting the associated group's answers and conclusions. The evening meeting was considered a positive and fair process by all in attendance.

1. What do you consider to be the most important values of Lancelin Island and its marine environment?

- Natural diversity of flora and fauna.
- Surfing.
- Snorkelling/diving.
- Safe environment.
- Bird watching.
- Recreational fishing.
- Bird nesting.
- Endemic habitat of the Lancelin Island skink.
- Sea lions.
- Pristine reef.
- Freedom to do what you want.

All participants agreed that these values are represented by:

- Environmental values.
- Recreational values.
- Aesthetic values.

- Educational values.

What are your feelings about Lancelin Island being gazetted as an A class reserve for the conservation of flora and fauna?

- It's a good idea – it means there is some control of activities.
- Perhaps conservation should be given a higher priority than recreation.
- Good idea.

2. What are your feelings about the proposal for Lancelin Island Lagoon to be gazetted as a Fish Habitat Protection Area (given the objectives of Section 115 of the *FRMA 1994*)?

- Good idea.
- Compliance may be a problem.
- Allows for community ownership.
- Education should be a component of the plan.
- People may think because its special there will be more to take.
- May stop people from fishing who have traditionally fished in the lagoon.

4. Do you see any benefits in having a Fish Habitat Protection Area adjacent to the island?

- It will compliment terrestrial management of the island.
- The area is highly accessible to people.
- It seems a natural progression, given the new management strategies being implemented on the island.
- It will be wonderful to snorkel in a conservation area.
- It will be a great attraction for visitors to Lancelin.
- None.

5. Do you see any disadvantages in having a Fish Habitat Protection Area adjacent to the island?

- No, but an appropriate management plan will be needed.
- Given the amount of reef area still available for free recreation, putting this area aside is no problem.
- Having both protected areas and 'open areas' still provides a freedom of choice for recreational activities.
- An 'out of bounds' fishing area may be a cause of resentment for some who will not adhere to regulations.
- There could be a problem of enforcing regulations when lines on a map aren't evident out in the environment.
- More rules to follow.

6. Given the objectives of Section 115 of the FRMA 1994, what activities do you think should be allowed to occur in a Fish Habitat Protection Area?

- Fish observation.
- Surfing.
- Scuba diving/snorkelling.
- Dive and snorkel charters.
- Coral observation.
- Surf skiing.
- Body boarding.
- Marine research/monitoring.
- Swimming.
- Reef walking.

7. Given the objectives of Section 115 of the FRMA 1994, what activities do you think should NOT be allowed to occur in a Fish Habitat Protection Area?

- Coral collection.
- Spearfishing.
- Boat fishing.
- Anchoring.
- Reef fishing.
- Shore fishing.
- Net fishing.
- Lobster fishing.
- Gidgie fishing.
- Aquarium collection.
- Bait collection.
- Abalone collection.
- Shore mooring.
- Fish collection.
- Jet skiing.
- Water skiing.
- Sailing.
- Mining.
- Aquaculture.
- Shell collecting.
- Algae harvesting.

8. If you were to choose the boundaries for the Fish Habitat Protection Area for Lancelin Island Lagoon, where would they extend?

All participants were given a marine habitat map of the island and were asked to delineate a boundary for the FHPA.

The diagrams provided overleaf are the areas which were chosen by participants. The evening concluded with all participants agreeing that the boundary should extend from the

northern tip of the island to the southern tip, encompassing the intertidal and subtidal reef systems in between.

Some discussion occurred as to delineation of line boundaries. It was suggested that the boundaries should follow the morphology of the reef platform to seaward of the island, so that the FHPA was clearly designated by an immovable and easily seen boundary. The majority of participants agreed this would be the best approach. One participant opposed the choosing of any boundaries for a FHPA.

Participants of the Community Consultation Evening

Sunday 24 January 1999

Name	Address	Affiliation (if any)
Anita Jarvis Arthur Jarvis	Lancelin	Lancelin Island Skink Planning Team. Gingin councillor
C. Thomas	Lancelin	
J. Smith	Lancelin	
Belinda Bennett James Bennett Katherine Bennett Alana Bennett	Mosman Park	AMCS
Pat Bennett Tony Bennett	Darlington	Birds Australia
Lyn Robinson	Lancelin	Commodore – Lancelin Amateur Angling Club (LAAC)
Jo Bunting	Victoria Park	Fisheries WA, AMCS
Brian Manson Denise Manson	Lancelin	LAAC
Wes Manson	Lancelin	
Ashley Edgar Mrs Edgar	Lancelin	
Peter Babarskas	Lancelin	LAAC
Leon Babarskas	Lancelin	LAAC
Taylor Mickle Tom Mickle	Mosman Park	
Caroline Diss	Mt Hawthorn	AMCS

The evening was facilitated by Barb Green, Dr. Nic Dunlop and Dennis Beros of the Australian Marine Conservation Society, and the Friends of Lancelin Island.