

## OFFICIAL

Claire Ross – August 2025 Marine heatwave symposia

Title: Impacts of the 2024/25 marine heatwave to coral communities in the Montebello and Barrow Islands and Exmouth Gulf

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### Summary

DBCA conducts long-term monitoring of coral communities across Western Australia's network of marine parks. Aerial and in-water surveys were carried out in March and April 2025 at sites in the Montebello and Barrow Islands and Exmouth Gulf. These surveys revealed high levels of coral bleaching and mortality in response to the 2024/25 marine heatwave, which was characterised by unprecedented thermal stress and the highest ever recorded Degree Heating Weeks for these regions. This presentation offers a snapshot of those findings and highlights the importance of historical and ongoing long-term monitoring for detecting ecological change following disturbances such as marine heatwaves.