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NEW HORIZONS

IN MARINE MANAGEMENT



GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

November, 1994

Foreword by the Premier and the Minister for the Environment

Western Australia's coast is big in every sense of the word. Stretching 12 500 km, it encompasses a rich diversity of marine environments from ancient river deltas to mangroves, coral reefs, islands, sandy beaches and sheer cliffs. Our coast is habitat for a range of plant and animal life that challenges the imagination.

Most Western Australians live or work near the coast. Nearly all of us spend at least some part of our holidays enjoying its beauty. Western Australians treasure our coast and the bounty it holds. Our marine environment also is a major part of our tourism industry, attracting many thousands of visitors from elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

But as well as the amazingly beautiful and diverse natural landscapes and life forms, parts of our coast are rich in natural resources such as petroleum, minerals and fish which contribute to our economic growth and well-being.

The Government's guiding principle is the wise use of resources. We are committed to the conservation of our environment and the ecologically sustainable use of our natural resources.

In July 1994, the Government released the State's first comprehensive strategy for conserving the marine environment. It lays the foundation for an exceptional level of protection for our sensitive marine ecosystems. As a demonstration of the Government's commitment, the strategy expressly excludes drilling in Ningaloo Marine Park for petroleum exploration and production.

The strategy strikes a balance which:

- ❖ Reinforces Western Australia's high environmental protection and management standards.
- ❖ Provides clear access guidelines for the exploration industries.
- ❖ Removes uncertainty and minimises the potential for conflict between conservation and resources development.

The strategy enables us to have development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising future generations' enjoyment of the unique features of our marine environment.

In particular, the strategy reinforces the concept of multiple use of our marine environment.

Western Australia is blessed with some of the world's best coastal and marine environments. We have a responsibility to conserve it if we are to continue to enjoy all the benefits it offers.

New Horizons in Marine Management is a step in meeting that responsibility.

'The strategy enables us to have development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising future generations' enjoyment of the unique features of our marine environment.'



Richard Court
PREMIER

Kevin Minson
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A most remarkable coast

NEW HORIZONS IN MARINE MANAGEMENT

The key elements:

A Marine Parks Authority in which marine conservation reserves will be vested.

A three-tiered approach to marine conservation reserve categories.

Access guidelines for petroleum explorers and developers in marine conservation reserves.

No drilling for petroleum in Ningaloo Marine Park.

Release of a report on a comprehensive marine reserve system for Western Australia.



Western Australia's coastline, extending 12 500 km from the Kimberley to the Great Australian Bight, is a myriad of habitats and landscapes. It is home for a remarkable array of marine fauna such as corals, crocodiles, dugong, turtles, migratory whales, sealions, penguins and great white sharks. The flora includes the world's biggest seagrass meadows. Most of the marine life is virtually untouched. It may harbour compounds of untold benefit to humankind. Marine features such as the stromatolites in Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve in Shark Bay are of international significance.

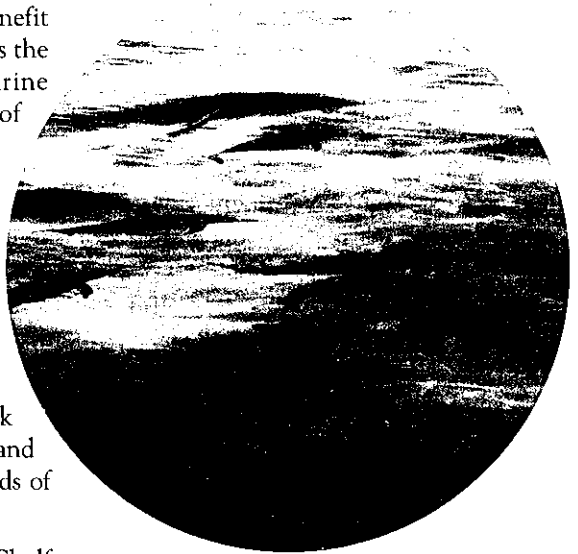
The seas are rich in natural living resources such as lobsters, scallops, prawns and fish that are the economic base of many coastal communities. The giant whale sharks off North West Cape, the friendly dolphins at Monkey Mia in Shark Bay, and migrating humpback and southern right whales off Perth and our south coast attract many thousands of tourists each year.

The seabeds under the North West Shelf have been found to contain rich deposits of petroleum, which includes crude oil and natural gas. More recently, in the Kimberley, diamonds are being found in offshore sediments.

Our tropical marine life belongs to a huge region stretching from the east coast of Africa to Polynesia in the central Pacific, and from Japan to the northern Australian coasts.

The temperate marine environment is part of the Southern Australian Region extending across the continent's south coast.

WA's marine richness is enhanced by a stretch of coastline between North West Cape and Cape Leeuwin that marks the transition between these two distinct marine environments. The warm Leeuwin Current, sourced from the tropics, is another distinct feature of the WA coast and brings tropical species well south, such as the corals growing around the Abrolhos Islands and Rottnest Island.



More expertise, more resources

A key part of the New Horizons in Marine Management strategy will be the new Marine Parks Authority. It will open the way for more specialised management of our marine conservation areas.

The expected increase in the number of marine conservation reserves warrants a separate vesting authority whose members are experienced in marine issues.

The new authority will have representation from a wide range of interest groups. These include:

- ❖ Conservation
- ❖ Commercial fishing
- ❖ Recreational fishing
- ❖ Other water-based recreation groups
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ Marine science
- ❖ The petroleum industry
- ❖ Community representatives
- ❖ State Government

The Conservation and Land Management Act is being amended to give legal backing to the new authority.

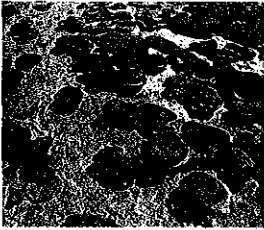
Good science

The Government will appoint a special scientific advisory committee to advise the Marine Parks Authority. It will comprise marine scientists from the non-government sector, research institutions, the WA Museum, Fisheries Department and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

CALM will set up a specialist Marine Branch - to include marine scientists - to support the new authority. CALM will continue to be responsible for overall management of marine conservation reserves.



A conservation system for many uses



'Expanding the system of marine conservation reserves is part of the Government's aim to ensure there is a balance among the various uses of marine areas.'

The marine conservation reserve system has two primary aims:

- ❖ To preserve representative ecosystems; and
- ❖ To provide for management of the various uses of marine reserves.

A major part of the New Horizons in Marine Management strategy is to develop a marine conservation system so that the management of biological and recreational resources takes into account the essential and occasionally competitive activities of commercial and recreational fishing, tourism, passive recreation, scientific study and petroleum exploration and production.

Expanding the system of marine conservation reserves is part of the Government's aim to ensure there is a balance among the various uses of marine areas.

The major change is the creation of a new category of marine conservation reserve to be called a Marine Management Area.

The existing marine nature reserves and marine parks categories will continue. As a result, the categories will be:

MARINE NATURE RESERVES

These reserves are created for conservation and scientific research. Although low-impact tourism may be permitted, no fishing (recreational and commercial) nor petroleum drilling or production will be allowed. Currently there is only one Marine Nature Reserve in WA - Hamelin Pool in Shark Bay which has among the finest examples of stromatolites or "living fossils" found anywhere on Earth.

MARINE PARKS

Western Australia has six Marine Parks - Ningaloo, Marmion, Shoalwater Islands, Rowley Shoals, Swan Estuary and Shark Bay. As well, the waters around Rottnest Island are reserved under the Rottnest Island Authority Act. Parks such as these will continue to be created to protect natural features and aesthetic values while at the same time enabling public recreation. Commercial and recreational fishing also will be permitted.

Under the Marine Parks system, four zones will be created:

- ❖ **Sanctuary Zones** are "look but don't take" areas managed solely for nature conservation and low-impact tourism.
- ❖ **Recreation Zones** provide for recreation including recreational fishing (subject to bag limits and other conservation measures).
- ❖ **Special Purpose Zones** are managed for a particular priority use or issue. This could be protection of habitat, a seasonal event such as whale-watching or a particular type of commercial fishing. All uses compatible with the priority use or seasonal event will be allowed in these zones.

❖ **General Use Zones** make up the rest of Marine Parks not included in sanctuary, recreation or special purpose zones. Conservation of natural resources in General Use Zones still remains the priority but activities such as sustainable commercial fishing and petroleum exploration and production are allowed where they will not affect sensitive marine habitats.

Petroleum drilling will be excluded from marine nature reserves and from sanctuary and recreation zones in marine parks, but will be provided for elsewhere in marine parks in appropriate zones, subject to Environmental Protection Authority assessment.

MARINE MANAGEMENT AREAS

These areas will be selected primarily on the basis of their biological and recreational values but will recognise their potential for supporting commercial activities such as petroleum production and commercial fishing - subject to environmental impact assessments for activities referable under the Environmental Protection Act.

Another Government initiative is to create Fish Habitat Protection Areas under the Fish Resources Management Act to protect fish in specific areas.

However, the principal thrust of the marine conservation effort will be to have one comprehensive system under the Conservation and Land Management Act.

A blueprint for the future

The New Horizons in Marine Management strategy embraces a commitment to a high level of public participation in determining future marine conservation areas.

As part of that public consultation process, the Government has released a report of a scientific working group into a representative marine reserve system for Western Australia.

The working group was chaired by the former Director of Nature Conservation with CALM, Dr Barry Wilson, and included some of the State's most eminent marine scientists. They spent seven years considering the State's 12 500 km of coastline from the Kimberley to the Great Australian Bight. The report is the most significant marine conservation reserves document released in Australia.

The working group has identified about 70 areas that represent the distinct coastal types around WA's coastline. The working group has listed these as areas to be considered for incorporation into the marine reserves network. Further assessment of the biological, recreational and commercial values of these areas will be part of the process in setting aside future marine conservation areas.

In line with its policy for conservation of the environment and sustainable economic development, the Government is seeking public comment on the report over the next few months. As part of that process, a series of meetings will be held to brief and receive comment from local communities and a range of user, interest and industry groups.

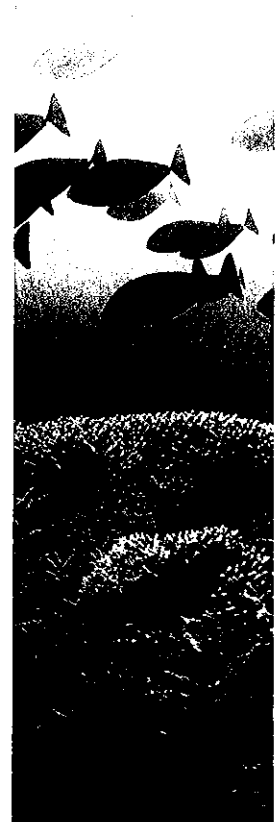
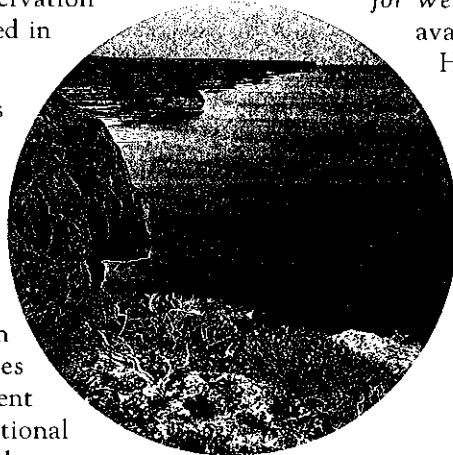
The Government is further committed to full and open consultation before an area is dedicated as any one of the three categories of marine conservation reserve. Before additional marine conservation reserves are created, a biological, mineral and petroleum resource assessment for the areas will be carried out under a time frame

agreed between the Ministers for the Environment and Mines. The assessments will be completed before a reserve category is declared. Proposed Marine Management Areas will not be subject to this requirement.

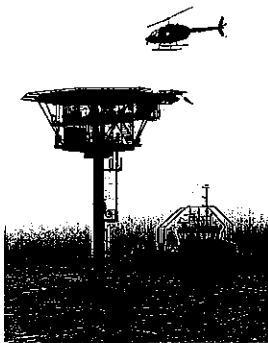
All marine conservation reserve proposals will be subject to a two-month public comment period before a final decision by Government. The decision in each case will be up to both Houses of Parliament. Further, zoning for marine parks will continue to be developed as part of the management planning process and will include a public review period.

Copies of the working group report - *A Representative Marine Reserve System for Western Australia* - are available from CALM, Hayman Road, Como, phone (09) 334 0333 and CALM Regional and District Offices.

'The Government is further committed to full and open consultation before an area is dedicated as any one of the three categories of marine conservation reserve.'



Achieving a balance for natural resources



The New Horizons in Marine Management strategy is a balanced approach for conservation of the marine environment while encouraging commercial activities such as petroleum exploration and production, as well as fishing and tourism.

PETROLEUM

This balanced approach means that some areas are set aside purely for nature conservation from which drilling for petroleum is expressly excluded. Petroleum drilling and production may be permitted in multiple-use zones so long as these activities are approved through the assessment processes under the Environmental Protection Act.

The chart shows the various levels of petroleum activity allowed in each of the categories of marine conservation reserves.

The Government's policy on petroleum exploration and development in marine conservation reserves is:

- ❖ Petroleum drilling and production will be prohibited in Marine Nature Reserves, both Sanctuary and Recreation Zones of Marine Parks and in Special Purpose Zones of Marine Parks where such activity would be incompatible with the conservation purpose of the Zone.
- ❖ Petroleum drilling and production will be permitted in parts of General Use and Special Purpose Zones of Marine Parks subject to assessment by the Environmental Protection Act process.
- ❖ Petroleum drilling and production can be undertaken in Marine Management Areas subject to the Environmental Protection Act process.
- ❖ Before the Minister for the Environment creates any marine reserve or management zone within a reserve that would preclude petroleum exploration and development activities, he will obtain the consent of the Minister for Mines.
- ❖ A depth limit of 200 metres below the seabed will apply to all marine conservation reserves.



GRANTING TENEMENTS

Petroleum tenements may be granted to overlap existing marine conservation reserves or proposed marine conservation reserves endorsed by State Cabinet. However, petroleum drilling in these reserves will be allowed only in Marine Management Areas or in General Use and Special Purpose Zones of Marine Parks.

SEISMIC SURVEYS

Marine Management Areas and Marine Parks will be accessible for low-impact seismic surveys subject to environmental impact assessment processes agreed by the Environment Protection Authority in consultation with the Fisheries Department, and operational constraints imposed by CALM.

Seismic surveys may be permitted to extend into marine conservation reserve areas that are not available for drilling, to complete data collection for resource targets that are either outside or accessible from outside the reserve.

MINERALS

The Government has established a process to prepare guidelines for access for mineral exploration and development in marine conservation reserves.

FISHING

In line with the Government's multiple-use policy in marine conservation reserves, commercial and recreational fishing will be provided for in Marine Management Areas and in Marine Parks in General Use Zones, and in Special Purpose Zones where they are compatible with the purpose of the zone.

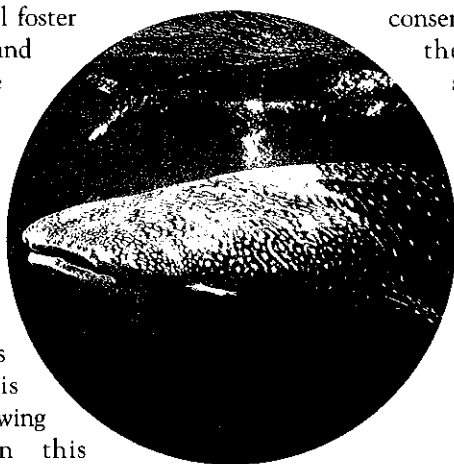
Commercial fishing will not be permitted in Recreation Zones of Marine Parks and no fishing will be permitted in Marine Nature Reserves and in Sanctuary Zones of Marine Parks. Fishing in marine conservation reserves will continue to be managed under fisheries legislation.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES IN MARINE CONSERVATION RESERVES					
Marine Management Area	Marine Park				Marine Nature Reserve
	General Use Zone	Special Purpose Zone	Recreation Zone	Sanctuary Zone	
Petroleum Drilling and Production					
Commercial Fishing					
Recreational Fishing					
Tourism					

TOURISM

The Government recognises that tourism, particularly nature-based tourism, is a rapidly developing industry. Nature-based tourism will make a major contribution to protecting the State's unique ecosystems, especially those found along our coastline. Providing high quality experiences of the environment will foster greater understanding and sympathy for the environment.

To this end, the Government has released a discussion paper - *Towards a Nature Based Tourism Strategy for Western Australia* - as part of its commitment to this emerging industry. Following public comment on this discussion paper and consultation with industry and other interested people, a strategy will be finalised which will put Western Australia's nature-based tourism industry on a firm footing to compete in the competitive international tourism market. Copies of the discussion paper are available from the WA Tourism Commission, phone (09) 220 1700.



The New Horizons in Marine Management strategy recognises the relationship between the marine conservation reserve system and the tourism industry. Appropriate tourism development will be encouraged to maximise the opportunity for visitors to enjoy marine conservation reserves while at the same time ensuring such development does not threaten the highest conservation values or conflict with other uses in particular zones.

NINGALOO REEF - A STATE ICON

The Ningaloo Reef is as spectacular as it is ancient. The coral formations making up the reef have created an underwater wonderland habitat for more than 460 species of fish and marine mammals.

Among them is the massive whale shark, up to 18 metres long and weighing up to 40 tonnes. Ningaloo is one of the few places in the world where visitors can swim alongside these giants. Marine mammals such as dolphins, humpback whales and dugong also inhabit the reef.

The reef has long been popular with holidaymakers and recreational fishers but as its popularity grows, so too does the pressure on this fragile environment.

Ningaloo Marine Park was created to protect this remarkable marine environment. The Park stretches from Bundegi Reef in Exmouth Gulf, around North West Cape then 260 km southwards to incorporate Ningaloo Reef. In all, it covers 2240 square km of the State's tropical waters.

The Government's commitment to the conservation of this unique marine environment under the New Horizons in Marine Management strategy means that drilling and production of petroleum is not allowed in Ningaloo Marine Park.

The role of Government agencies



MARINE PARKS AUTHORITY

All marine conservation reserves will be vested in the Marine Parks Authority which will be established under the Conservation and Land Management Act.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

CALM will manage all marine conservation reserves vested in the Marine Parks Authority. The Department also is responsible for preparing and implementing management plans for each conservation reserve.

CALM's responsibilities include nature conservation, recreation and nature-based tourism, management planning, wildlife research and management, information and education programs in conservation and recreation, and liaison with interest groups including local and international organisations. CALM will ensure integrated management of marine reserves with adjoining mainland and island conservation reserves.

FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

Fishing and aquaculture are under the jurisdiction of the Fisheries Department. In the case of any conflict between the purposes of a Marine Park and provisions within the Fisheries Act relating to commercial or recreational fishing, the Fisheries Act has precedence.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

The Transport Department is responsible for all boating regulations including licensing, safety standards, marker buoys, moorings and jetties.

DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY

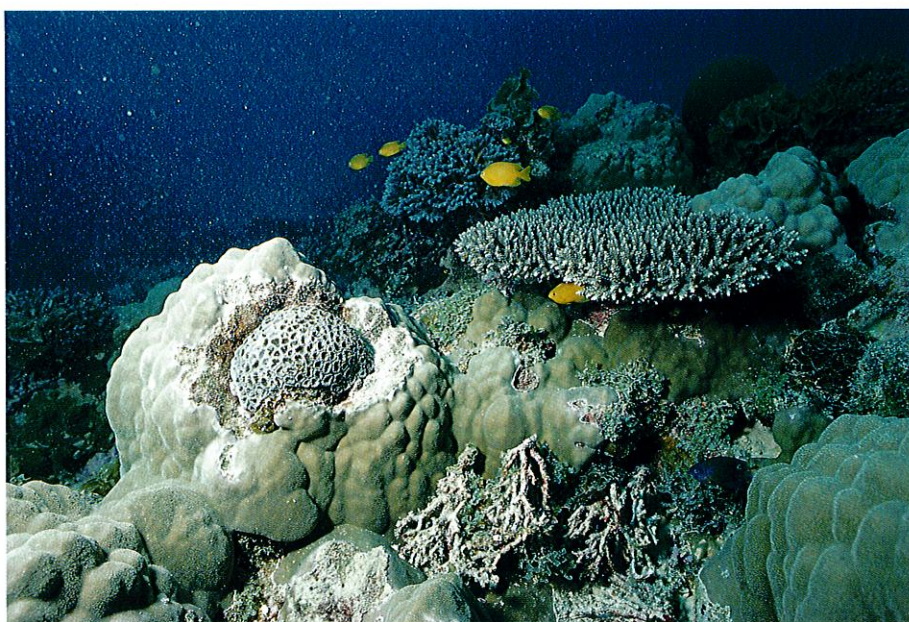
Mining and petroleum exploration is carried out under several Acts administered by the Department of Minerals and Energy. The Minister for the Environment also must obtain the consent of the Minister for Mines before creating any marine reserve or management zone within a reserve that

would exclude mineral and petroleum exploration and development.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY

The Environmental Protection Act sets out specific guidelines for assessing mineral and petroleum exploration and production and for other developments such as tourist resorts. The EPA process must be followed before any exploration, production or development begins. The EPA is assisted by the Department of Environmental Protection in administering this process.





Department of Conservation and Land Management



FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



DEPARTMENT OF
MINERALS AND ENERGY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



DEPARTMENT OF
RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT