

Marine Authority officially launched



Marine Parks and Reserves Authority members, from left to right, Dr Barry Wilson (Chairman), Ms Edvina Davies Ward, Mr Ian Finlay, Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes, Dr Diana Walker, Mr David Hayes, and Mr Angus Horwood. (Missing from photograph is Deputy Chairman Mr Michael Hardy.) Photo by Craig Stewart

WESTERN Australia's Marine Parks and Reserves Authority is now a reality.

Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes said the Authority, in which marine conservation reserves would be included, was one of the central elements in the Acts Amendment (Marine Reserves) Act 1997 that came into operation recently.

The new legislation would provide the basis on which to build a comprehensive world-class marine conservation network around the State's 12,500 km coastline.

Key roles

Mrs Edwardes said the authority would also have a key role in advising the Minister, developing policies on conservation and management of marine fauna and flora, and marine and estuarine environments.

It will oversee the development of reserve management plans, and monitor the implementation of the management

plans and the management of marine conservation reserves by CALM.

She said the creation of the new Authority opened the way for more specialised management of the State's marine environment.

"It's a focal point for community interest in marine conservation areas—and their diverse wildlife and habitats—and provides the necessary overview of managing the many uses and benefits available from the marine environment," she said.

The seven members are:

- Dr Barry Wilson, managing director of Murex Consultants and a former Director of Nature Conservation with CALM.
- Michael Hardy, barrister and Chairman of the Abrolhos Islands Management Advisory Committee, who has extensive experience in environmental and planning law.
- David Hayes, executive chairman, Frontier Petrol-

eum NL, who has 31 years experience in the international petroleum exploration and production industry.

- Dr Diana Walker, Associate Professor, University of WA, an expert on seagrasses and marine ecology and deputy head of the University's Botany Department.
- Ian Finlay, a former professional fisherman who has been involved in the fishing industry for 34 years.
- Edvina Davies Ward, coordinator of the Marine and Coastal Community Network.
- Angus Horwood, farmer and company director, a former member of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, and a keen recreational fisherman.

Mrs Edwardes said the membership meant that the Authority had a broad range of expertise in using and managing the marine environment.

"I'm particularly pleased Dr Wilson accepted my invitation to chair the new organisation," she said.

"Dr Wilson headed the scientific working group that investigated a representative marine reserve system for Western Australia.

Significant document

Its report was one of the most significant marine conservation documents released anywhere in Australia.

"It was the result of seven years' work in which the working group considered the State's 12,500 km of coastline from the Kimberley to Eucla and identified about 70 areas that it recommended be investigated further for their marine conservation values and possible dedication as conservation reserves.

"I'll be asking the Authority to consider areas nominated in the report. Already a community-based group has been set up as part of the process of examining the proposal to cre-

ate a marine conservation reserve in the waters off Jurien."

Mrs Edwardes paid tribute to the members of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority who, she said, had done an admirable job in administering the marine parks and nature reserves that had been set aside in the past 12 years.

Dr Wilson said he looked forward to working with his fellow Authority members to ensure the sound management of the State's six existing marine parks and one marine nature reserve, and the future enhancement of the marine conservation reserve system in consultation with the full range of stakeholders.

A Scientific Advisory Committee has also been set up to assist the Authority.

It is chaired by Dr Chris Simpson, manager of CALM's Marine Conservation Branch. Other members are Dr Iva Stejskal from Apache Energy, Dr James Penn from Fisheries

Department; Dr Patrick Berry of WA Museum; Dr Andrew Heyward from the Australian Institute of Marine Science; Dr Louis Evans of Curtin University and Dr Jacqueline Alder from Edith Cowan University.

Mrs Edwardes said other key elements of the Government's marine reserves legislation were:

The adoption of a three-tiered approach to marine conservation reserve categories—Marine Nature Reserves, Marine Parks and Marine Management Areas.

Specific guidelines for access by fishing, aquaculture, pearling and petroleum and mining interests in relation to the various categories of marine conservation reserves and the zones within marine parks.

CALM will continue to be responsible for overall management of marine conservation reserves and will provide the secretariat for the new authority.



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