

Exmouth Gulf Taskforce Communique

Meeting 9, 23 August 2024

Latest news

The ninth meeting of the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce (the Taskforce) was held in Exmouth on 23 August 2024. The meeting was chaired by Mr David McFerran, Taskforce Chair.

The Taskforce discussed a range of topics, including:

- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: World Heritage and National Heritage listings, nomination process and the Cape Range Subterranean Waterways
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority: governance arrangements, structure and key learnings
- Cockburn Sound Management Council: governance arrangements, structure and key learnings
- Dr Capri Jolliffe, Technical Director, JASCO, Exmouth Gulf marine soundscape baseline study
- Dr Jenny Shaw, Research Director, Western Australian Marine Science Institution: Investment Plan update
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Exmouth Gulf marine park planning update

On 22 August, Taskforce Members received presentations on the unique birdlife of Exmouth Gulf and the karst system. Members also visited potential Water Corporation sites for groundwater expansion and desalination options, as well as visiting Defence sites.

The Taskforce also hosted a Community Information Forum in Exmouth on 21 August 2024, with 46 people attending. The Forum covered: an overview of the 2021 Environmental Protection Authority strategic advice and government's response; Exmouth Gulf Taskforce establishment and Terms of Reference; Taskforce current work and next steps and DBCA's Plan for Parks activities in the Gulf region and next steps for the 2021 government commitments for the Exmouth Gulf Marine Park (southern and eastern Gulf).

The Taskforce was pleased with the attendance along the level of knowledge and understanding demonstrated by the attendees. The Taskforce noted the attendees views on the extent and level of protection for an Exmouth Gulf Marine Park.

Who is on the Taskforce?

The Taskforce comprises representatives of member organisations appointed by the Hon Reece Whitby, MLA, Minister for Environment. Membership includes:

- Independent Chair;
- Commonwealth Department of Defence;
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions;
- Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation;
- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage;
- Department of Transport;
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation;
- Gascoyne Development Commission (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development);
- Fisheries (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development);

- Shire of Exmouth;
- Shire of Ashburton;
- Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation;
- Sea Harvest;
- Recfishwest;
- Cape Conservation Group / Protect Ningaloo Campaign; and
- Community members.

Background

The Exmouth Gulf Taskforce was established under section 25 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Secretariat support is provided by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

What is next?

The next meeting of the Taskforce is planned for 3 December 2024 in Perth.

More information

The Terms of Reference describes the role of the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce and can be found at:

[Exmouth Gulf Taskforce | Western Australian Government \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/committees-and-panels/exmouth-gulf-taskforce)

If you would like to contact the Taskforce, please email: exmouthtaskforce@dwer.wa.gov.au