Marine Parks **factsheet**

Case study 1: Ocean Eyre

Background

Connecting to the environment

Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, is home to nine marine parks including Thorny Passage Marine Park and the Sir Joseph Banks Marine Park. In 2014, a community project began on the Eyre Peninsula titled "Marine Parks: creating a lasting connection with the ocean", referred to as Ocean Eyre. The aim was to connect school students with their coastal environment through teaching them about local threats to the environment and the tools used to provide protection, such as marine parks and sanctuary zones.

This case study highlights the Ocean Eyre project, the links with marine park management plan strategies, and the ecological and socio-economic outcomes as a result of both marine park management plans.

The project

The students from three Eyre Peninsula schools went on expeditions to Wreck Beach near Sleaford Bay Sanctuary Zone in Thorny Passage Marine Park (2014), and Point Bolingbroke Sanctuary Zone in Sir Joseph Banks Group Marine Park (2015), where they were involved in both Aboriginal and western scientific activities. The project aimed to use science, connection and experiences to create advocacy. Students were involved in Barngarla cultural sessions, where they learnt about connection to Country, how Barngarla people used Aboriginal science such as fish traps and astronomy, as well as learning about language, art and making traditional food.

The students were also involved in beach BioBlitzes, which included beach profile surveys, as well as coastal vegetation and bird surveys. The beach profile survey was based on a citizen science program designed to train students in a Rapid Assessment Method to help assess life on beaches. As traditional beach life survey methods are time consuming and most of the animals and plants that live at the beach actually live in the sand, they are difficult to find and monitor. This method provides a way to predict biodiversity levels by measuring such things as the width and slope of the beach, and sand grain size. The Assessment results were then incorporated into the marine parks monitoring, evaluation and reporting program.

Students came away with a sense of pride and empowerment, inspired to help to protect this amazing natural environment. To find out more watch this video at **https://youtu.be/djZM3WM2T7w**

Management plan strategies

Strategies addressed					
5	**7**	**8**	**9**	**11**	**14**
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Strategies 5, 7 and 8: Conducting collaborative research and communicating results will aid in increasing public appreciation, and understanding. The project increased the students understanding of plants and animals living in their coastal environment.

Strategies 9 and 14: The project connected students to the local Barngarla people, creating a greater awareness of how this group use and value the plants and animals in the local area. This was achieved by students hearing stories and people speaking in the Barngarla language, and learning about using traditional fish traps and other traditional activities.

Strategy 11: The project also successfully formed a partnership that supports the implementation of the MER Program by involving community members in the management and monitoring of the marine park. It is expected that this program model could be implemented across South Australia in other marine park sanctuary zones.

Students learning from the Barngarla people

Ecological outcomes

Specific evaluation questions addressed:

✓ What biodiversity is included within the marine parks network?

The results from this project made a positive contribution to the marine parks monitoring, evaluation and reporting program by providing baseline information about the coastal flora and fauna within the marine park. Collecting baseline information is important in order to be able to assess changes within marine parks over time.

Socio-economic outcomes

Specific evaluation questions addressed:

✓ Have local businesses and communities changed due to marine park management plans?

The students experienced how people such as scientists, natural resource management officers, and local Aboriginals connected with and protecting the local environment. These experiences ensured that they created their own unique connection with the natural environment. Creating a lasting connection to the environment during childhood is important to ensure they become advocates for the environment as adults. This work gave the students a variety of opportunities to learn about their local coastal environment and the plants and animals that live there. Understanding the environment is an important step in creating positive changes in community attitudes towards the coastal and broader environment.

Students learning how to survey birds and coastal biodiversity

Students monitoring in marine parks

Students learning from the Barngarla people