

**SEPT 2001 – THE OFFICIAL DECLARATION OF THE FISH HABITAT PROTECTION AREA AT LEIGHTON & COTTESLOE BY THE MINISTER FOR FISHERIES, HON. MINISTER KIM CHANCE,**

**Press release by Ken Macintyre  
PRESIDENT OF THE COTTESLOE MARINE PROTECTION GROUP**

Most members of the community are pleased that we now have a hard-won Fish Habitat Protection Area at Cottesloe. It has taken a lot of hard work and effort especially on the part of the Cottesloe Marine Protection Group Inc. and its MANY members who have volunteered their expertise over the past three years to make this protective legislation a reality. There is an old saying that you can't please everyone and nowhere is this more apparent than in the cause of protecting the marine environment. Yes, in an ideal world we should be able to set aside marine areas where everything is protected even from swimmers, snorkelers and divers, but Cottesloe being on the doorstep of our capital city and a highly popular beach for all types of recreational activities makes it difficult to achieve legislation that effectively bans everything. After three years of hard work of community awareness-raising through public meetings, workshops, film nights, school visits, *Reefwatch* seminars, nutrient-reduction community campaigns such as our much publicised *'The Sea begins in Our Streets and Gardens'*, and the popular Seadragon Festivals and *Reefwise* Concerts that we arranged every year at Cottesloe Beach, the Cottesloe Marine Protection Group Inc. has finally succeeded in gaining some legislative protection for the marine habitat of Cottesloe and Mosman Park. Ken Macintyre, group president, said "We have achieved legislation that helps to protect our marine environment from collecting (except for crayfish in season), anchoring, spearfishing and jet skis. The advantage of the Fish Habitat Protection Model is that it is flexible and can be amended if, for example the community can show that there are adverse effects on the marine environment arising from existing practices. When the CMPG started its educational campaign in December 1998, community attitudes towards the marine environment were somewhat negative compared to what they are today. Things have changed. It is a fact that once people know how to protect a marine environment and what is in it, they are reluctant to destroy it and they will do everything possible to preserve it. This has been the case at Cottesloe. Try walking down the beach now with a spear gun or gidgee and see what reaction you get from the local community. Yet three years ago spear guns were a relatively common sight. Let's ensure that a sense of community stewardship of the Cottesloe marine environment is sustained into the future by encouraging community participation and involvement in the recognition of the natural value and cultural heritage of this unique marine environment. Increased scientific data, improved local knowledge and community-generated information regarding trends in fish populations and other marine life forms must be encouraged involving marine science students from local universities. The coordination and collation of information to form a scientific database to be held within the local community will help to ensure an effective on-going management of the newly established Fish Habitat Protection Area.