

I am delighted to provide the foreword to this important contribution that provides new insights through summarising the advances in our knowledge of the distribution of southern seagrasses. It is a beautiful book.

Since Professor Cornelis den Hartog's 1970 The sea-grasses of the world, many more researchers have explored deeper waters, both on SCUBA and by remote sensing, than were envisaged when den Hartog first relied on intertidal collections of drift material to infer distributions. Southern Australia's seagrasses have also benefitted from major taxonomic work by the late Professor Bryan Womersley and Enid Robertson in Adelaide, where Professor Michelle Waycott is now based, and from the detailed anatomical considerations by Emeritus Professor John Kuo, at The University of Western Australia in Perth. Emeritus Professor Arthur McComb, also at UWA and Murdoch University, played a vital role in training the present generations of seagrass biologists and ecologists in southern Australia, including the authors of this book.

The significance of seagrasses as real flowering plants has developed as our ability to study them underwater has also developed. Advances in molecular biology have also led to a clearer evolutionary picture of how the different plants are related.

Increasing awareness of seagrasses as important habitats is vital, as seagrasses are on the front line of rising sea levels and increased storminess associated with climate change. We are losing these 'coastal canaries' at an alarming rate. Maintenance of healthy seagrass beds into the future will rely on us developing that awareness, and this book will certainly help.

*Emeritus Winthrop Professor Diana I Walker
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