

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to determine the recreational marine usage of the Shoalwater Bay and the adjacent waters. The study used quantitative research methods which included the secondary analysis of existing data sets, mail surveys of registered recreational boat owners and recreational club members, the use of self selection surveys with the general public, and mail surveys of commercial operators as well as the use of expert opinion through the use of a modified delphi technique. These methods collected a variety of data sets. There were some constraints, biases and limitations associated with the various data sets and any use of the findings in this report must acknowledge those constraints, biases and limitations.

In generalising the trends evident in the data sets, the local recreational users during June 1995 to July 1996 were drawn primarily from Yeppoon and Rockhampton, were men mostly aged 45 - 49 years of age, were employed as skilled workers or service industry employees or professionals and had lived in the study area in the main between 1 - 10 years and accessed the study area directly via their own vessels or by their own vehicular transport. Those who accessed the area by vessels usually departed from Rosslyn Bay. The key areas of use were Port Clinton, Island Head Creek, Corio Bay, Five Rocks area and the northern section of Shoalwater Bay including Stanage Bay. Smaller vessels utilised the Shoalwater Bay area and open water vessels accessed the outer coastal areas. Sail powered vessels used the outer coastal areas in preference to Shoalwater Bay itself.

Shoalwater Bay and the adjacent waters were used by local recreationalists because of the quality of the fish stocks, the amenity of the area, the proximity of the study area to the users' residences as well as the provision of safe anchorages in various sections of the study area. The primary activities conducted within the study area were recreational fishing, boating, sightseeing, camping and tourist activities with recreational fishing being the dominant recreational activity.

The local recreationalists visited the area on weekends, week days and holiday periods with holiday periods being preferred by sail driven vessels due to the time needed to access the area. The minimum usage of the area by recreationalists was once or twice a year with the mode being 3 - 4 visits per year, and some users expressing a monthly usage pattern. (Two respondents reported fishing daily in the study period.) Most users had visited the area in the last three months of the study period and were generally accompanied by friends and family. The local recreationalists also considered non-recreational fishing extractive activities as inappropriate for Shoalwater Bay and the adjacent waters. Recreationalists also expressed concern about the need to protect the recreational setting of Shoalwater Bay and adjacent waters.