

Summary of the Whitsundays Plan of Management Amendments 2008

The following information is a summary of the amendments to the *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998* (including *Amendment 2008 (No.1)*) (the Plan) that came into force on 18 December 2008.

Consultation on the amendments was conducted in February-March 2007 and all submissions received were considered in the preparation of the amended Plan. Further information can be accessed through the GBRMPA website (www.gbrmpa.gov.au) or by contacting (07) 4750 0700

Summary of amendments:

Core amendments

- *Allow vessels that have an overall length of no more than 70 metres to Hardy Reef, if the vessel is operating to a mooring or pontoon.*
Previously access was restricted to vessels less than 35 metres. This amendment accommodates the trend in improving vessel design towards larger vessels.
- *Designated Water Sports Area on western side of North Molle Island*
The amended Plan expands the area available for activities like parasailing, waterskiing and other activities as defined.
- *Setting 5 areas now have a maximum vessel length of 20 metres and maximum group size of 15 people. This applies to both recreational and tourism activities.*
Site plans have been developed for Setting 5 areas and the amendment implements the recommendations from those site plans.
- *No Anchoring Area at Manta Ray Bay has been extended.*
The new boundary description will increase ease of compliance and extend protection of coral currently outside the No Anchoring Area.

Editorial and technical corrections.

- Part 1 has been re-written to more clearly explain the intent of the Plan and update or remove out-of-date information. The Foreword has also been re-drafted to link review and subsequent amendment of the Plan to the five-yearly *Outlook Report*. The intent of the Plan is now clearer, out-of-date information has been updated or removed where no longer relevant, and there is greater consistency between this Plan, the *Cairns Area Plan of Management 1998* and the *Hinchinbrook Plan of Management 2004*.
- Group size limits have been clarified, with children under four no longer included in group size limits.
- The Bareboat provisions have been updated in line with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Bareboat Policy. The Bareboat Policy provides for limited two-way conversion between bareboats and crewed vessels.
- All enforcement provisions that relate to whales have been removed from the Plan and will now be located in the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983*.
- Exemption to the 50 day limit and booking requirement for Bowen operations has now been clarified in Part 2.

- Consistency with *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003* and the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* has been maintained.
- The datum for the Plan has been changed from AGD66 to GDA94, in line with Commonwealth requirements.

Summary of proposed changes which were not progressed:

- *Allow vessels up to 50 metres in length access to the Setting 2 area in southern Whitehaven Beach.*
The GBRMPA has decided not to progress this as there was significant opposition to the proposal from respondents, on the grounds that it would affect amenity for other users, it might cause an undesirable increase in visitation to the area, insufficient infrastructure exists to support the proposal, and there is a desire to see the area's natural and aesthetic values preserved.