



POSITION STATEMENT

Managing access to the Restricted Access Special Management Areas surrounding Raine Island, Moulter Cay and MacLennan Cay

Raine Island, Moulter Cay and MacLennan Cay collectively make up the Raine Island National Park (Scientific). The Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) manages this area. The management intent of the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) is to allow for the following activities:

- a.) research that cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere and which has a direct benefit to the Raine Island National Park (Scientific); or
- b.) commercial photography/filming which is in keeping with the management principles of the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) and where the advantages to the National Park (Scientific) and the public outweigh any potential disturbance.

The waters surrounding Raine Island, Moulter Cay and MacLennan Cay are declared Restricted Access Special Management Areas (RA-SMA)¹ under both the Queensland's *Great Barrier Reef (Coast) Marine Park Zoning Plan 2004* and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)'s *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan 2003*.

The reason the two RA-SMAs were declared was to ensure the management of the waters surrounding the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) complements the management required for protection of the values of the National Park (Scientific), and in particular the seabirds and green turtles that nest on the cays². The surrounding waters also have high values as feeding grounds for turtles and seabirds, interesting habitat for the breeding turtles, and for other marine animals that congregate in the area.

In recognition of the critical importance of this area and the vulnerability of the species that rely on it, the GBRMPA and the EPA are working together to ensure that necessary management strategies are put in place to protect these values. The need to protect the unique values of the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) (RINP(S)) and the RA-SMAs will be paramount in any decisions made in relation to applications to access the area.

Management Intent of the RA-SMAs

Both the EPA's and the GBRMPA's management intent for their respective RA-SMAs is in keeping with that listed for the RINP(S). In addition, the GBRMPA would also consider benefits and advantages to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park RA-SMA. The joint management position allows:

- a.) research projects that cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere and which have a direct benefit to the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) and/or the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park RA-SMA; or
- b.) commercial photography, filming or sound recording that cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere and where the advantages to the National Park (Scientific) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park RA-SMA outweigh any potential disturbance; or
- c.) any other program that operates in support of (a) or (b) above.

¹ RA-SMAs are designed to restrict activities in a way that zoning could not achieve.

² For more information about seabirds and marine turtles in this area, see:

1. Batianoff, G. and Cornelius, J. 2005, Birds of Raine Island: Population trends, breeding behaviour & nesting habitats, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland, 112, 1-29.
2. Limpus, C.J., Miller, J.D., Limpus, C.J. and Parmenter, C.J. 2003. The green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, population of Raine Island and the northern Great Barrier Reef: 1843-2001, Memoirs of the Queensland Museum, 49(1), 349-440.

There are a limited number of existing tourism, research and filming activities that have been permitted to access these waters for a number of years and which are allowed to continue until 2008. The GBRMPA and the EPA will hold discussions with those permittees with regard to the most appropriate future access for those operations, taking into account all relevant management arrangements (e.g. guidelines, a strategic environmental assessment, relevant published research).

Considerations

In assessing applications to access the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park RA-SMA, consideration will be given to:

- guidelines outlining more specifically the types of research projects and commercial photography, filming or sound recording activities that will benefit the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) and the Marine Park RA-SMA; and
- the experience and expertise of the personnel involved to conduct the proposed activity.

Any permits granted for access to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park RA-SMA will be for limited periods, generally not exceeding three years.

For further information:

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