

Tourism Bulletin | **2008 amendments to the Cairns Area and Whitsundays Plans of Management**

December 2008

The amended Plans of Management for the Whitsundays and Cairns Areas are now in effect, and a number of changes have been made to opportunities for tourism operators. Public consultation for these amendments was undertaken in 2007.

BOTH PLANS OF MANAGEMENT

Calculating group size

Operators no longer need to include children under four when tallying group size. Crew numbers must still be included.

CAIRNS

Increased group size limits allowed at Flynn and Pellowe Reefs

Operators visiting Flynn and Pellowe Reefs may now take up to 100 people, if operating to a mooring or pontoon (subject to permit requirements).

Alternate moorings for weather

Operators with an existing mooring may now apply to install another mooring for northerly winds at the same or an adjacent site. The new application may require public advertising to ensure the mooring's placement will continue to allow public access.

New moorings and heli-pontoon to be made available

In the Cairns Area, there is now provision for 20 new moorings and one heli-pontoon, subject to an allocation process (to be announced).

Access for Regional Tour Operators running day fishing charters

Operators who have 365-day access to the Cairns Planning Area and run day fishing charters are able to apply for a permit variation for daily access to Locations within General Use (light blue), Habitat Protection (dark blue) and Conservation Park (yellow) zones (except those that fall within a Public Appreciation Special Management Area).

WHITSUNDAYS

New Designated Water Sports Area west of North Molle Island

Interested operators will need to apply for a permit variation to access the new water sports area.

Greater access for large vessels at Hardy Reef

Operators with vessels up to 70 metres in length may access Hardy Reef, if operating to a mooring or pontoon. This change will be applied to all new permits, however existing permittees will need to apply for a variation to their permits.

Manta Ray Bay No Anchoring Area extended

The boundary has now been altered to line up with a prominent landmark and protect a coral reef previously not included. This will increase ease of identification of the area.

Two-way conversion of bareboats

Conversion between bareboats and crewed vessels to a maximum number of ten is now permitted. Operators must apply if wishing to convert their existing permit.

Set limits for Setting 5 areas

The following limits now apply for all Setting 5 areas:

- Maximum vessel length – 20 metres
- Maximum group size – 15 people

This applies only to operators who have the appropriate endorsements on their permits allowing access to Setting 5 areas.

For further information please contact the GBRMPA on 07 4750 0700 or visit www.gbrmpa.gov.au under Latest News/Updates.



MOORINGS

Moorings permit update - information required for renewals and transfers.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Environmental Protection Agency have increased their focus on moorings compliance since 2002 when the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* (the moorings policy) was introduced.

In addition to the current on-water audits, a new compliance process will be implemented as of 1 February 2009 as part of mooring permit renewals and transfers. The new administrative process will:

- assist with the recognition of non-permitted moorings
- update information on the Moorings Register and
- ensure existing moorings in the Marine Park are not damaging coral.

From 1 February 2009, mooring permit holders renewing or transferring their permit will be asked to provide the following information as part of the permit application process:

- **Copy of approved drawing.** The approved drawing is a technical drawing of the mooring system, certified by a marine engineer or naval architect as adequate for the intended purposes.
A schematic drawing may be accepted in certain circumstances*.
- **Copy of latest mooring maintenance certificate.** The certificate should attest the mooring has been maintained in accordance with the approved drawing or schematic drawing, and be signed by an appropriately qualified person.

- **Exact mooring location.** Where possible, coordinates should be given by Differential GPS in WGS 84 or GDA 94 datum.
- **Proof the correct Mooring Reference Number is legibly displayed on the mooring(s).**

This information is already required as part of the current mooring permit conditions and/or the moorings policy. A copy of the moorings policy can be found on the GBRMPA website at www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/about_us/policies.

For more information, contact the Environmental Assessment and Management Group on (07) 4750 0700 or fax (07) 4772 5289.

* This includes if the mooring is for occasional use of small vessels and has a regular inspection and maintenance program in place with a response plan for extreme weather conditions. Full details are included in the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park* available on www.gbrmpa.gov.au