

Routine Tourism and Charter Permit

Effective from 25 September 2019

About this permit

The Managing Agencies (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority together with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service), have introduced a routine tourism and charter permit for access to the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Queensland Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (the Marine Parks), which includes the following permissions subject to certain conditions:

- **conducting a tourist program; and**
- **conducting a vessel or aircraft charter operation.**

The routine tourism and charter permit is a fully standardised permit, meaning the Managing Agencies have conducted a risk assessment for all the permitted activities which have been determined as low risk. In addition, standard conditions have been developed to protect the Marine Parks from potential impacts. This provides a more efficient application processing time so it is a great introductory permit for new operators or operators conducting low risk activities in the Marine Parks.

Applicants should carefully read the [example routine tourism and charter permit](#) to understand the conditions and check that all planned activities are allowed. In addition, applicants must meet certain requirements as detailed in the *Eligibility* and *Applicant suitability* sections of this information sheet. Please keep a copy of this Information sheet with your permit for future reference.

Key features of this permit

Some of the key features of the routine tourism and charter permit include longer permit terms, a wide range of access to most areas of the Marine Parks, a range of activities including whale watching, craftless operations and no restrictions on the number of vessels or aircraft that may be used. Details are provided below.

1. Permit Terms

The following permit terms are offered under the routine tourism and charter permit:

- High Standard Tourism Operators – **20 years**
- All other applicants – **eight (8) years**.

2. Permitted vessels and aircraft

There is no restriction on the number of vessels or aircraft that may be used under this permit provided the following conditions are met:

- Vessels must not exceed 35 metres in overall length.
- Aircraft must meet the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation classification of *small aeroplane* or *normal category rotorcraft*.

3. Permitted Zones and Locations:

General access

Visiting and anchoring is allowed in most locations in the Marine Parks for up to two (2) visits in any seven (7) consecutive day period at each location outside a Planning Area, with limitations specified in the permit conditions (see Table below).

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Access to Preservation Zones, Restricted Access Special Management Areas and other sensitive areas is only allowed when providing charter services to non-tourists who are legally allowed to enter that zone or location (for example, Management Agency staff, permitted research projects or for approved salvage of a sunken vessel).

Note: Additional limitations are enforced through [Plans of Management](#), [State Management Plans or Statements](#) and [Special Management Areas](#).

Access to Planning Areas

As a guide, the following access is allowed in the Planning Areas under the tourist program. Refer to the relevant [Plan of Management](#) for specific access details including: restrictions around accessing significant bird sites; booking requirements; setting limits and definitions of terms used below.

Access to the Planning Areas	Cairns Planning Area (Cairns Plan of Management)	Hinchinbrook Planning Area (Hinchinbrook Plan of Management)	Whitsundays Planning Area (Whitsundays Plan of Management)
<i>Vessel access (with each vessel)</i>	50 days per year with a booking unless: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Operating to a mooring* or pontoon except if those facilities are in a Sensitive Location other than Cod Hole Locality or Lizard Island Locality 1. ii. Conducting a camper transport operation. iii. If operating primarily for the purposes of gamefishing. *excluding public moorings <i>Note: Sensitive Locations bookings apply</i>	50 days per year with a booking – unless conducting a passenger transport operation or a guided interpretive tour operation.	50 days per year with a booking – unless conducting a passenger transport operation (to Setting 1 areas only).
<i>Vessel group size restrictions (group sizes include crew and access to abutting intertidal areas)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. No more than 60 people into a moderate use Location. ii. No more than 15 people into a low use Location. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. No more than 30 people into a moderate use setting Location. ii. No more than 15 people into a low use setting Location. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. No more than 40 people into a Setting 3 area. ii. No more than 15 people into a Setting 4 area. iii. No access to Setting 5 areas.
<i>Aircraft access (with each aircraft)</i>	50 days per year with a booking unless: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Operating to a mooring* or pontoon. ii. Conducting a scenic flight above 500 feet. iii. If operating primarily for the purpose of gamefishing. No access to a Sensitive Location. *excluding public moorings	50 days per year with a booking.	50 days per year with a booking requirement. No more than 2 in 7 consecutive days in a Location except to land or take off from Hamilton Island Airport, Lindeman Island airstrip, Whitsunday airstrip or a regular aircraft landing area within the Location. Scenic flights above 1000 feet only. Daily access for passenger transport operation (to Setting 1 areas only). No access to a Setting 5 area or an abutting intertidal area.

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<i>Access to conduct game fishing (vessel and aircraft)</i>	Up to 30 days in any 60 day period for gamefishing between 1 September and 31 December each year, without a booking – provided any one location is not visited more than 50 days per year.		
<i>Craftless operation</i>	Up to daily access to the Planning area and 50 days per year access to a Sensitive Location without a booking - subject to the same access and activity conditions as the permitted vessel or aircraft that is being used.	Up to daily access without a booking - subject to the same access and activity conditions as the permitted vessel or aircraft that is being used.	

4. Tourist program:

A tourist program is a commercial activity that provides transport, accommodation or services to people who are visiting the Marine Parks mainly for recreation and enjoyment. Tourists may be local residents, from within Australia or international visitors.

Permitted activities associated with the primary vessel and/or aircraft may include:

1. Aircraft landing
2. Coral viewing
3. Fishing
4. Guided tours including guided interpretive tours
5. Helmet diving
6. Motorised water sports
7. Non-motorised water sports
8. Overnight accommodation - including motherships[#] and live aboard vessels[^]
9. Passenger transport
10. Photography, filming and sound recording
11. Sailing and sail training
12. Scenic flights
13. Snorkelling
14. Swimming
15. SCUBA diving
16. Whale watching

[#]Motherships are large vessels which provide accommodation and services to a fleet of smaller vessels; and

[^]Live aboard vessels offer guests to stay on board for one or more nights, generally for SCUBA diving trips, unlike a day boat operation.

The permit allows motorised and non-motorised watersports activities involving the use of the motorised and non-motorised equipment specified in Table 1 .

Table 1. Non-motorised and motorised equipment specifically permitted under the tourist program

Non-motorised equipment	Motorised equipment (and non-motorised equipment used in conjunction with a vessel)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayak, canoe, surf ski, raft and other sit-on-top craft excluding aqua-bike • Stand-up paddleboard • Kitesurf equipment • Windsurfer • Surfboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal watercraft • water propelled flying board • motorised canoe • powered surfboard • aquatic devices (for example seabobs) • inflatable or boom net (towed behind vessel) • water-ski or wakeboard (towed behind vessel) • parasail or parakite (towed behind vessel).

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This permit also allows for craftless operations that do not use a vessel or aircraft but must use, as part of the operation, vessels or aircraft of other operations.

5. Vessel or Aircraft Charter Operation:

A vessel or aircraft charter operation involves business activity that allows a company to charge a fee for the charter of their vessel or aircraft to non-tourists.

The activities under this permission include provision of transport, accommodation and services to non-tourists who are using the vessel or aircraft for management activities, work, research or study purposes. This may include aerial or vessel support for workers, researchers or film crews, or the transport of persons, goods and equipment within the Marine Parks.

Examples

A vessel/aircraft that is chartered to inspect or conduct maintenance on a mooring (the owner of the mooring will require a separate permission to install the mooring).

A vessel/aircraft that is chartered to a commercial filming activity (the film crew may require a separate permission unless considered a low impact activity).

Serving as platform for research (the researchers may require a separate permission to conduct research in the Marine Parks).

Transporting workers to an island resort (any construction or maintenance conducted within the Marine Parks generally requires a separate permission).

Fees

A fee is charged to cover the costs of processing and assessing applications for Marine Parks permits. The fee is calculated based on the maximum number of passengers and updated annually to account for inflation. Find the latest [fees information](#) on the GBRMPA website.

Environmental Management Charge

The Environmental Management Charge (EMC) is a charge associated with most commercial activities that take place in the Marine Park. The permit will identify the number of vessels and aircraft, each of which will need to be reported against (or a NIL return submitted) for EMC purposes. In addition, when applying for this permit it is important to identify any glass bottom boats or semi-submersible vessels in the application. The information will ensure appropriate reporting requirements are met. Anyone holding a routine tourism and charter permit must collect EMC from customers and remit this charge to GBRMPA. More information about [managing EMC obligations](#), including specific guidance on the charges, is available on the GBRMPA website.

Eligibility and Applicant Suitability

This permit is available to any applicant whose activities and suitability meet the below requirements, even current permit holders. If all requirements are met, the permit will be issued within the shortest timeframe possible as outlined in the [permission system service charter](#).

Eligibility: Only low risk activities specified in the routine tourism and charter permit will be eligible under this application. Applicants must determine whether or not their planned activities can be conducted under this permit. Applicants are responsible for reading the [example routine tourism and charter permit](#) to be sure the activities are allowed. If required, contact GBRMPA for further information.

The following requirements must be met in order for an application to be eligible.

1. All the activities that the applicant wishes to conduct are identified on this information sheet and example permit.
2. Any vessels used will be no greater than 35 metres in length.
3. Any aircraft used will meet the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation *small aeroplane* or *normal category rotorcraft* class.
4. Visitation or anchoring in any single location is not required more than twice per week.

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5. Only 50 days per year of access into Planning Areas will be required with vessels or aircraft.

Applicant Suitability: Any applicant for this permit must make a lawful declaration relating to their suitability to hold this permission. The following elements are included in the declaration:

1. The applicant is able to comply with the conditions on the routine tourism and charter permit, including the insurance and indemnity conditions.
2. The applicant has no charges for breaking any law, and has not been found guilty of, pleaded guilty to, or been convicted by a court of any offences in Australia or any other nation. There are no pending legal proceedings, under Australian law or internationally, which may be relevant to this application.
3. The applicant has not had a Marine Parks permit or relevant authority suspended, cancelled or revoked in the past three (3) years.
4. The applicant does not currently have any charge, collected amount or penalty amount that is overdue; or any late payment penalty amount that is payable or any bond amount that is outstanding under a current Marine Parks permission (whether the permission is valid or not).
5. There are no other matters which may be relevant to this application.
6. If this application is being made on behalf of a body corporate – the body corporate is not under external administration.

Note: for body corporates – an applicant includes the body corporate, its executive officers, its parent body, and the parent body's executive officers.

If the applicant cannot make the declaration they may still apply for a Marine Parks permit but the application will be assessed under a different assessment approach and longer permission system service charter timeframes will apply (refer to [Application Guidelines](#) for further information about assessment approaches).

Further information

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

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