



Commercial jet ski operations around Magnetic Island

(Revision 0) September 2004

Our goal is to provide for the protection, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the Great Barrier Reef in perpetuity through the care and development of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Throughout Australia, the use of jet skis invokes a range of public responses, primarily based on differing perceptions about their environmental and social impacts. The GBRMPA has received a number of public comments and enquiries about jet skis around Magnetic Island.

This guideline outlines the current situation with regard to jet skis around Magnetic Island and our intended response to any future applications to increase commercial jet ski activity.

Magnetic Island

Magnetic Island is a continental island, 8 kilometres off shore from the city of Townsville in north Queensland. It has a small resident population (approx. 3 000) and is an important regional tourism destination.

The waters surrounding Magnetic Island are part of the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. There are fringing coral reefs in many of the bays, extensive mangrove communities and seagrass beds. Threatened species such as dugongs, whales and turtles are regularly sighted around the Island.

As well as supporting a small marine tourism industry, the Island waters are very popular for recreational use – both by local residents and visitors from Townsville and neighbouring communities. There is also a range of other activities in the wider area, including commercial fishing, research, shipping and defence training.

Jet Ski Use around Magnetic Island

Jet skis are operated by commercial tourism operations in the vicinity of the Island as well as being operated by private individuals for recreation. The commercial tourism operations are permitted to undertake jet ski hire at specific locations (i.e. Horseshoe Bay, Nelly Bay and Picnic Bay) and guided jet ski tours (around the Island).

Managing Commercial Jet Ski Use

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority encourages all commercial jet ski operators to adopt Best Environmental Practices when operating in the Marine Park.

All commercial operators must comply with relevant legislation and regulations and are required to have a Marine Parks permit. This permit specifies the areas where the operations can be undertaken and any conditions that are necessary to ensure a sustainable balance between protection, use and the enjoyment of visitors.

For jet ski tour operations around Magnetic Island, these conditions include:

- Exclusion of access to all Marine National Park (Green) Zones;
- exclusion of access to all bays except Horseshoe, Nelly and Picnic Bays and West Point when transiting to and from the beach;
- a four knot speed limit when operating within 100 metres of highest astronomical tide;
- a requirement that activities in Horseshoe Bay be conducted to the east of Endeavour Creek;
- the maximum numbers of jet skis to be used for each operation; and

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- other conditions as may be required on a case-by-case basis.

Jet ski hire operations have been permitted in Horseshoe Bay, Nelly Bay and Picnic Bay, with permit conditions relevant to the site of operation, including:

- activities to be conducted in identified specific locations within relevant bays;
- a speed limit when operating within 100 metres of highest astronomical tide;
- the maximum numbers of jet skis to be used for each operation; and
- other conditions as may be required on a case-by-case basis.

All current permits and applications can be viewed by searching our up-to-date [permits database](#).

Future Applications

As of 16 September 2004, applications for new or increased jet ski operations at Magnetic Island will be publicly advertised with an invitation for interested persons to make comment. Any comments received will be taken into account prior to a decision on the application. This process may lead to additional management arrangements at specific sites.

[Relevant permit application fees](#).

Related Links

Maritime Safety Queensland <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Personal-watercraft> provides important information about courtesy and general safety when operating a jet ski.

Further information

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

280 Flinders Street
PO Box 1379
Townsville Qld 4810
Australia

Phone: + 61 7 4750 0700
Fax: + 61 7 4722 6093
Email: info@gbmpa.gov.au
www.gbrmpa.gov.au

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