

CRUISE SHIP OPERATORS

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) released the Hinchinbrook Plan of Management 2004 (the Plan) on 15 April 2004. The Plan is designed to protect the outstanding natural values of the Hinchinbrook region and to provide for the long-term sustainable use of this world famous area.

The Plan applies only to Commonwealth waters, which do not include the Hinchinbrook Channel. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is currently finalising a complementary management plan that will cover waters within the State Marine Park such as the Hinchinbrook Channel and intertidal waters.

This Information Sheet provides a brief overview of the concepts and strategies contained in the Plan, relating to cruise ships. You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the relevant aspects of the Plan that relate to your activities or style of operation. This may be done by referring to the Plan or one of the specific Information Sheets listed below:

- AIRCRAFT OPERATORS (RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PILOTS)
- CRUISE SHIP OPERATORS
- GENERAL TOURISM OPERATORS
- BAREBOAT AND HIRE OPERATORS
- PASSENGER TRANSPORT AND SUPPORT SERVICE OPERATORS
- GUIDED TOUR OPERATORS (vessels less than 6 metres)
- MOTORISED WATER SPORTS
- HINCHINBROOK MAPS

Access Arrangements for cruise ships

For the past few years, the issuing of permits for conduct of tourism activities in the Hinchinbrook Planning Area was bound by 'Interim Arrangements' agreed by the Australian and Queensland governments. Amongst other things, these arrangements prevented most cruise ships from accessing the Area. With the introduction of the Plan, these Interim Arrangements no longer apply.

The Hinchinbrook area provides a unique, natural experience for passengers on cruise ships (tourist vessels greater than 70 metres in length). The Plan provides for a managed increase in cruise ship visitation to allow visitors to experience the distinctive qualities of the Hinchinbrook Area.

Cruise ship operations are split into **Limited Tour Operations** and **Open Tour Operations**.

Limited Tour Operations

- All new permitted cruise ship operations, will be classed as Limited Tour Operations.
- Existing permitted cruise ship operations with no more than 50-days access to the Hinchinbrook Planning Area are also classed as Limited Tour Operations.
- One cruise ship Limited Tour Operator a day may visit the Hinchinbrook Planning Area.
- Cruise ship Limited Tour Operations must make a prior booking:
 - to visit the Hinchinbrook Planning Area; and
 - to anchor in one of the two Cruise Ship Anchorages.
- A cruise ship operation may transit the Hinchinbrook Planning Area without making a booking, providing they do not transit through any designated Locations.

Transiting means to travel by the most direct and reasonable route without deviating or stopping



- A cruise ship operation may not access any designated Location. Maps showing Locations and management settings are available in the HINCHINBROOK MAPS Information Sheet.
- There is no limit on the total number of cruise ship operations per year, however if more than 12 cruise ship Limited Tour Operation bookings are made in a year, management agencies, in collaboration with the industry will review management strategies concerning cruise ships in the Planning Area

Open Tour Operations

The Plan acknowledges historical use and therefore some existing cruise ship tour operators may be eligible for exemptions to some of the above-mentioned provisions of the Plan. In September 2004, the GBRMPA in conjunction with the QPWS will commence an eligibility determination process to identify those operators who have a history of operating in the Area.

If you have a permit that allows more than 50-days access to the Hinchinbrook Planning Area, you should continue operating in accordance with your permit until you are invited to apply for exemptions and a decision is made on your application. Operators who meet these requirements will be classed as **Open Tour Operators**, operators who do not, will be classed as Limited Tour Operators.

Anchoring

On a visit to the Hinchinbrook Planning Area, you may anchor at one of two designated anchorages or outside any of the designated Locations. Maps showing Locations and management settings are available in the HINCHINBROOK MAPS Information Sheet.

Both the Cape Richards and the Hecate Point anchorages have been identified as safe and appropriate positions for cruise ships to anchor (refer to Map 1).

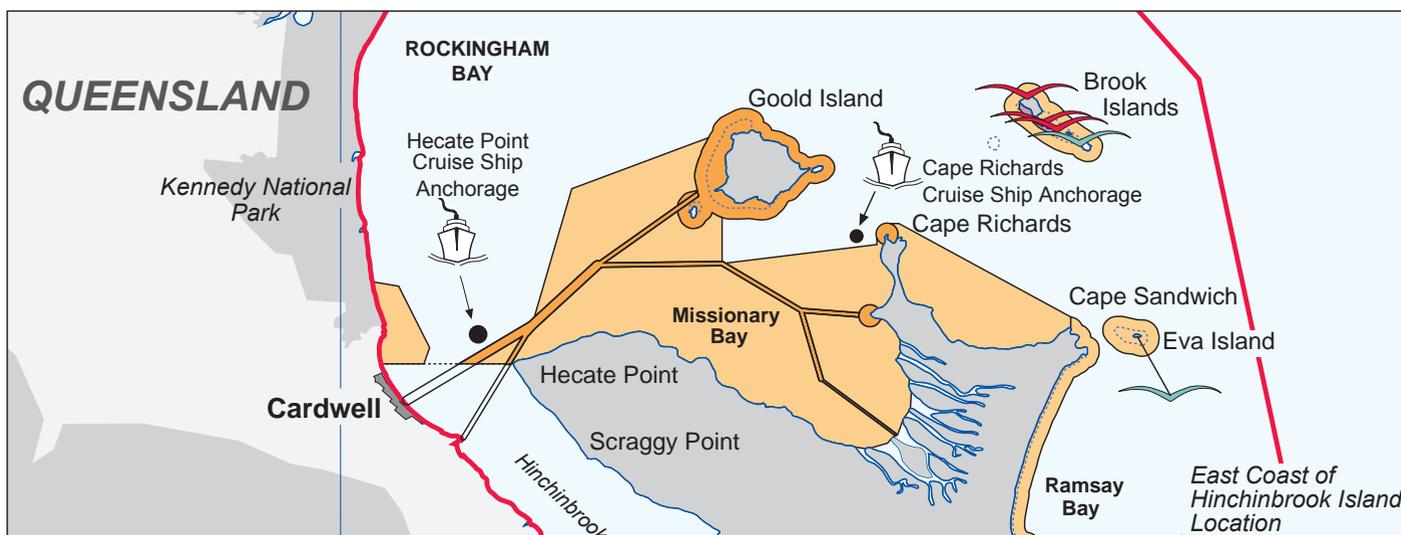
Cape Richards Cruise Ship Anchorage:

Within a 250 metre radius around the point 18° 11.70'S, 146° 12.70' E.

Hecate Point Cruise Ship Anchorage:

Within a 500 metre radius around the point 18° 14.00'S, 146° 3.50'E.

MAP 1: LOCATIONS OF CRUISE SHIP ANCHORAGES



Two other cruise ship anchorages were proposed in the draft management plans that are no longer in the final management plans:

- due to insufficient depth, the proposed position for the **Dunk Island** anchorage was moved westerly, resulting in its new position falling outside the Hinchinbrook Planning Area. Operators may still apply to access this anchorage as part of a reef wide permit; and
- the proposed position of **Goold Island** anchorage underwent an environmental assessment and was deemed not suitable due to the presence of seagrass meadows in the vicinity.



Bookings

To make a booking please email the GBRMPA at cruise.bookings@gbrmpa.gov.au or phone **(07) 4750 0775**.

Tenders

You may only use tenders as part of a tourism operation to transport passengers between the cruise ship and a place outside the Planning Area (e.g. an island or the mainland not including the intertidal area) **or** a tourist facility in the Planning Area (e.g. a jetty). Local operators are available to conduct any additional tourist activities.

Commercial access to National Parks adjacent to the Planning Area (eg Lumholtz National Park, Hichinbrook Island National Park) requires a Commercial Activity Permit from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Further Information

The Plan and Information Sheets can be downloaded free from the GBRMPA web site at www.gbrmpa.gov.au. Alternatively, you may obtain a copy of the Plan (\$10 charge will apply) or any Information Sheet (no charge) by contacting the GBRMPA or the Rainforest and Reef Information Centre in Cardwell (07 4066 8601).

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

2-68 Flinders Street

PO Box 1379

TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

Phone: (07) 4750 0700

Fax: (07) 4772 6093

www.gbrmpa.gov.au



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
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