

Anchoring and mooring: Lizard Island to Innisfail

The Great Barrier Reef is a nautical paradise. As you navigate the waters from Lizard Island to Innisfail, please keep your ripple effect small by practising careful anchoring and mooring.

Doing so helps ensure the region remains enjoyable for everyone while protecting its delicate marine habitats, like coral reefs.

This guide provides vital information on anchoring and public moorings, along with key practices to safeguard this remarkable natural wonder for future generations.



Public moorings

Public moorings are available at popular locations throughout the region. These blue cone-shaped buoys have a colour-coded band indicating class (vessel length), time limits and wind strength limits.

	Colour code	Class	Max. vessel length		Max. wind speed
	Brown	T	6m tender only		24 knots
	Yellow	A	10m	9m	24 knots
	Green	B	20m	18m	34 knots
	Blue	C	25m	22m	34 knots
	Red	D	35m	30m	34 knots

Using moorings

- Moorings are first-come, first-served.
- Use the right mooring suited to your vessel and weather conditions.
- Only one vessel per public mooring; attach at front.
- Observe time limits (usually two hours, four hours or 24 hours).
- Vacate when your time is up; overnight stays are from 3 pm to 9 am.

Private moorings are also in the area and can be identified by colours such as white, fluorescent pink, orange or yellow. These require the owner's permission before use.

Responsible practices

- **Use suitable moorings** whenever possible. Approach moorings carefully and avoid damaged moorings.
- **Anchor in sand or mud**, away from coral, when moorings aren't available. Use only the necessary chain and line.
- **Avoid feeding fish** at moorings to help ensure a safe and sustainable environment for all.



No-anchoring areas

No-anchoring areas protect coral reefs from anchor damage and are indicated by reef protection markers—white pyramid-shaped buoys with a blue label. There are eight no-anchoring areas in this region, located at:

- Anchor Bay, Lizard Island
- Watsons Bay, Lizard Island
- Lizard Island Locality 1 (unmarked, see map on the following page)
- Cod Hole Locality (unmarked, see map on the following page)
- Low Islands
- Fitzroy Island
- Normanby Island
- Russell Island

Anchoring with care

- You may enter these areas; however, never anchor inside of markers.
- Anchoring is allowed on beaches if no tidal restrictions.
- Do not attach your vessel to reef protection markers; they are not designed for that purpose.

It is an offence to damage coral in the marine parks.

Further information

Learn more at reefauthority.gov.au/moorings-and-no-anchoring-areas

Please report any misused or damaged public moorings on 13 QGOV (13 74 68).



Scan for
more info and
digital maps

Anchoring near moorings

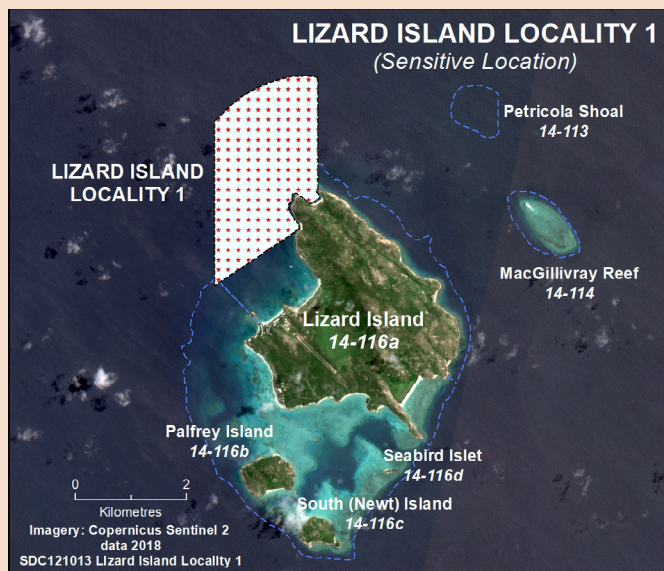
You cannot anchor within 50 metres of a mooring or 200 metres of a pontoon in the Cairns Area, except at the following locations:

- Lizard Island Locality 2 and 3
- Cape Tribulation Bay Locality 1
- East Hope Island Reef (15-065)
- Low Island Locality
- Green Island Reef Locality 1



Anchoring in Lizard Island Locality 1

Vessels more than seven meters cannot anchor in Locality 1. See map with boundary description.



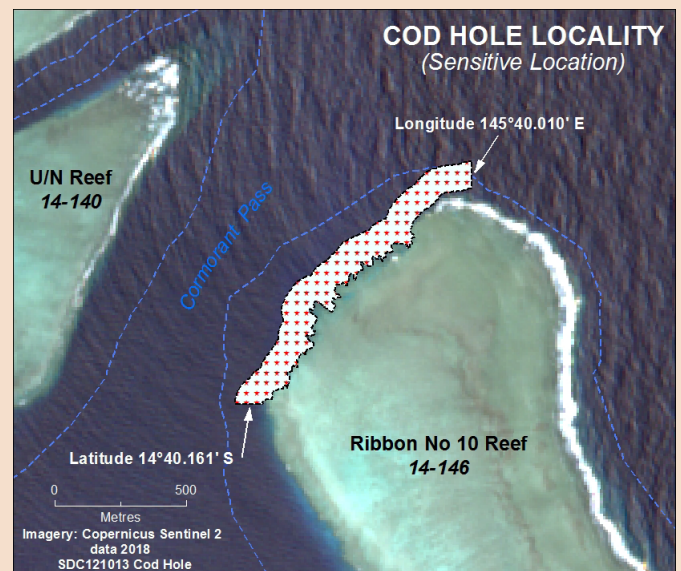
Boundary description

The area of the Lizard Island sector bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of the Lizard Island coastline at mean low water and the parallel 14°39.185'S (at or about 14°39.185'S, 145°27.041'E) then running progressively as described in the following:

1. South-westerly along the geodesic to 14°39.710'S, 145°26.264'E.
2. North along the meridian to the intersection of the coastal 1 500 metre line of Lizard Island (at or about 14°38.289'S, 145°26.264'E).
3. North-easterly along the coastal 1 500 metre line of Lizard Island to the intersection of the meridian 145°27.272'E (at or about 14°37.830'S, 145°27.272'E).
4. South along the meridian to the intersection of the Lizard Island coastline at mean low water (at or about 14°38.770'S, 145°27.272'E).
5. South-westerly along the Lizard Island coastline at mean low water to the point of commencement.

Anchoring in Cod Hole Locality

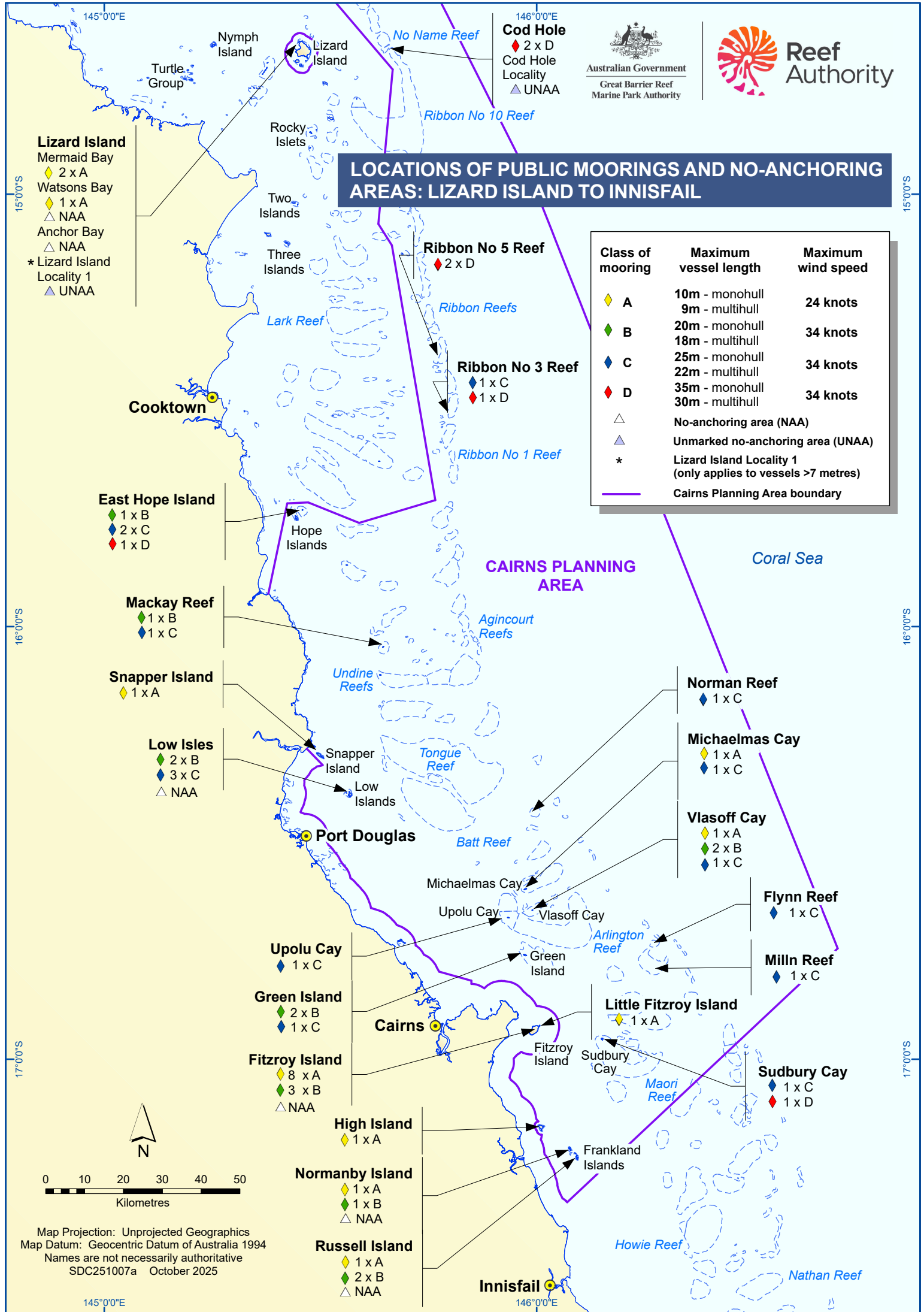
You cannot anchor in the Cod Hole Locality. See map with boundary description.



Boundary description

The area of the Ribbon Reefs Sector bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of the reef crest of Ribbon Reef No. 10 (at or about 14°40.161'S, 145°39.581'E) then running progressively as described in the following:

1. West along the parallel to the intersection of the 100 metre line of Ribbon Reef No. 10 (at or about 14°40.161'S, 145°39.524'E).
2. North-easterly along the 100 metre line of Ribbon Reef No. 10 to the intersection of the 100 metre line of Ribbon Reef No. 10 and the meridian 145°40.010'E (at or about 14°39.663'S, 145°40.010'E).
3. South along the meridian to the intersection of the reef crest of Ribbon Reef No. 10 (at or about 14°39.717'S, 145°40.010'E).
4. South-westerly along the reef crest of Ribbon Reef No. 10 to the point of commencement.



LOCATIONS OF PUBLIC MOORINGS AND NO-ANCHORING AREAS: LIZARD ISLAND TO INNISFAIL

Class of mooring	Maximum vessel length	Maximum wind speed
◆ A	10m - monohull 9m - multihull	24 knots
◆ B	20m - monohull 18m - multihull	34 knots
◆ C	25m - monohull 22m - multihull	34 knots
◆ D	35m - monohull 30m - multihull	34 knots
△	No-anchoring area (NAA)	
△	Unmarked no-anchoring area (UNAA)	
*	Lizard Island Locality 1 (only applies to vessels >7 metres)	
—	Cairns Planning Area boundary	

- Lizard Island**
Mermaid Bay
◆ 2 x A
Watsons Bay
◆ 1 x A
△ NAA
Anchor Bay
△ NAA
* Lizard Island Locality 1
△ UNAA

- East Hope Island**
◆ 1 x B
◆ 2 x C
◆ 1 x D

- Mackay Reef**
◆ 1 x B
◆ 1 x C

- Snapper Island**
◆ 1 x A

- Low Isles**
◆ 2 x B
◆ 3 x C
△ NAA

- Upolu Cay**
◆ 1 x C

- Green Island**
◆ 2 x B
◆ 1 x C

- Fitzroy Island**
◆ 8 x A
◆ 3 x B
△ NAA

- High Island**
◆ 1 x A

- Normanby Island**
◆ 1 x A
◆ 1 x B
△ NAA

- Russell Island**
◆ 1 x A
◆ 2 x B
△ NAA

- Ribbon No 5 Reef**
◆ 2 x D

- Ribbon No 3 Reef**
◆ 1 x C
◆ 1 x D

- Norman Reef**
◆ 1 x C

- Michaelmas Cay**
◆ 1 x A
◆ 1 x C

- Vlasoff Cay**
◆ 1 x A
◆ 2 x B
◆ 1 x C

- Flynn Reef**
◆ 1 x C

- Milln Reef**
◆ 1 x C

- Little Fitzroy Island**
◆ 1 x A

- Sudbury Cay**
◆ 1 x C
◆ 1 x D

Location	Mooring class	Max. vessel length	Installed latitude GDA94 ddm	Installed longitude GDA94 ddm
Cod Hole	D	35m	14° 39.784' S	145° 39.886' E
	D	35m	14° 39.871' S	145° 39.792' E
East Hope Island	B	20m	15° 43.738' S	145° 27.392' E
	C	25m	15° 43.796' S	145° 27.341' E
	C	25m	15° 43.844' S	145° 27.380' E
	D	35m	15° 43.740' S	145° 27.336' E
Fitzroy Island	A	10m	16° 55.393' S	145° 59.529' E
	A	10m	16° 55.412' S	145° 59.618' E
	A	10m	16° 55.377' S	145° 59.782' E
	A	10m	16° 55.914' S	145° 59.160' E
	A	10m	16° 55.941' S	145° 59.120' E
	A	10m	16° 56.046' S	145° 58.979' E
	A	10m	16° 55.783' S	145° 59.296' E
	B	20m	16° 55.749' S	145° 59.297' E
	B	20m	16° 55.712' S	145° 59.306' E
	B	20m	16° 55.757' S	145° 59.258' E
Flynn Reef	C	25m	16° 44.053' S	146° 15.907' E
Green Island	B	20m	16° 45.145' S	145° 58.321' E
	B	20m	16° 45.144' S	145° 58.365' E
	C	25m	16° 45.317' S	145° 57.981' E
High Island	A	10m	17° 09.182' S	146° 00.244' E
Little Fitzroy Island	A	10m	16° 55.321' S	146° 00.314' E
Lizard Island - Mermaid Bay	A	10m	14° 38.759' S	145° 27.218' E
	A	10m	14° 38.846' S	145° 27.253' E
Lizard Island - Watsons Bay	A	10m	14° 39.768' S	145° 27.056' E
Low Isles	B	20m	16° 22.883' S	145° 33.579' E
	B	20m	16° 22.892' S	145° 33.532' E
	C	25m	16° 22.864' S	145° 33.848' E
	C	25m	16° 22.937' S	145° 33.836' E
	C	25m	16° 22.906' S	145° 33.840' E
Mackay Reef	B	20m	16° 02.611' S	145° 38.693' E
	C	25m	16° 02.603' S	145° 38.632' E
Michaelmas Cay	A	10m	16° 36.289' S	145° 58.433' E
	C	25m	16° 36.271' S	145° 58.421' E
Milln Reef	C	25m	16° 47.310' S	146° 15.961' E
Norman Reef	C	25m	16° 25.894' S	145° 59.218' E
Normanby Island	A	10m	17° 12.556' S	146° 04.429' E
	B	20m	17° 12.241' S	146° 04.434' E
Ribbon No 3 Reef	C	25m	15° 30.468' S	145° 47.869' E
	D	35m	15° 30.289' S	145° 47.953' E
Ribbon No 5 Reef	D	35m	15° 22.745' S	145° 46.488' E
	D	35m	15° 22.831' S	145° 46.589' E
Russell Island	A	10m	17° 13.550' S	146° 05.398' E
	B	20m	17° 13.508' S	146° 05.372' E
	B	20m	17° 13.454' S	146° 05.374' E
Snapper Island	A	10m	16° 17.540' S	145° 29.464' E
Sudbury Cay	C	25m	16° 56.984' S	146° 08.952' E
	D	35m	16° 57.043' S	146° 08.865' E
Upolu Cay	C	25m	16° 40.142' S	145° 56.019' E
Vlasoff Cay	A	10m	16° 39.228' S	145° 59.417' E
	B	20m	16° 39.109' S	145° 59.220' E
	B	20m	16° 39.287' S	145° 59.134' E
	C	25m	16° 39.010' S	145° 59.367' E

Disclaimer: The published positions are correct to the best of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's knowledge at October 2025. No guarantee is given that the moorings are in the location shown in the table. Vessel skippers should verify the mooring positions with their own GPS equipment prior to attempting to access the moorings. Particular care should be taken in accessing the moorings in poor weather, reduced visibility or at night.

Instructions to vessel masters:

1. Vessel masters are solely responsible for the safety of their vessel while using the public moorings.
2. A watch must be kept at all times while the vessel is on the mooring.
3. Be aware of changing weather and sea conditions and your proximity to obstacles, including coral and other vessels, and how these may be affected by mooring swing.
4. Refer to instructions specified or included on the tag or buoy.