

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

Background

1. The Policy on Moorings (moorings policy) in the Great Barrier Reef provides a framework for the management and use of public moorings and private tourism and recreational vessel moorings, to support ecologically sustainable access in the Great Barrier Reef while preventing environmental harm to sensitive environments. This information sheet provides background information to assist in policy interpretation and does not in itself create additional policy nor does it extend the jurisdiction of the managing agencies.
2. The Great Barrier Reef was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1981 on the basis of its natural outstanding universal value. It is recognised for its natural beauty and phenomena; its representation of major stages in the Earth's evolutionary history, including man's interaction with the environment; its ecological and biological processes; and its habitat for the conservation of biodiversity.
3. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority manages the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth). The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service manages the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland).
4. Under the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement signed in 2009, an integrated and collaborative approach is taken by the Australian and Queensland governments to manage marine and land environments within and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
5. Under these complementary management arrangements, a Field Management Program is operated and this provides for, among other management activities, the installation and maintenance of public moorings, by or for the managing agencies.
6. For the Great Barrier Reef, a complementary management arrangement exists where the managing agencies often jointly assess permissions for access to areas within Commonwealth jurisdiction, specifically the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and areas within Queensland jurisdiction, specifically the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. This policy applies to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park excluding the internal waters of Queensland.
7. The managing agencies work in partnership with Traditional Owners, the tourism industry, the fishing industry, scientists, local government and community groups to conserve the environment, biodiversity and heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef and promote ecologically sustainable use.
8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef area, and there are about 70 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner clan groups whose customary estates include land and sea country within the Great Barrier Reef. The managing agencies acknowledge the continuing sea country management and custodianship of the Great Barrier Reef by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.
9. The Australian Government has an international responsibility to protect, conserve, present and transmit the outstanding universal value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area to future generations. The managing agencies acknowledge that tourism operators provide the primary vehicle for the presentation of the World Heritage Area to visitors.
10. The benefits of moorings for a wide range of Reef users are well recognised and the spatial distribution of public and private moorings throughout the Great Barrier Reef is concentrated near major population and tourism centres, such as offshore Cairns and the Whitsundays.
11. The policy promotes equity of public access, for example through public moorings, in multiple-use areas. There is generally limited demand for public moorings in remote parts of the Great Barrier Reef or in areas of minimal public use and it is not economically practical to maintain public

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

moorings in these remote areas. Public moorings are therefore more abundant in high use areas, particularly the Whitsundays Planning Area where they will be used and are easily accessed for maintenance.

12. Any private mooring installed and operated in the Great Barrier Reef requires a written permission, which is usually a joint permission issued by the managing agencies.
13. It may be beneficial for the managing agencies to grant a permission for commercial or non-commercial private moorings to be installed in the Great Barrier Reef where:
 - a) There is a demonstrated need for regular or guaranteed access to a specific location by a particular user, or group of users, primarily for reef protection, appreciation and presentation purposes (for example at a preferred dive site).
 - b) There is a demonstrated need for a secure mooring facility for a vessel in a resort area or close to a vessel owner's residence.
 - c) The mooring is to be used by an ancillary vessel of a permitted beach hire operation or a permitted pontoon operation (for example a glass-bottom boat).
14. Historically, the managing agencies have encouraged and permitted regular Reef users (predominantly site-dedicated permittees of tourist programs) to install private moorings at the sites most regularly visited. When considering whether to grant permissions for new moorings in the Great Barrier Reef, and in accordance the Regulations, the managing agencies must consider equity of access for all Reef users. The granting of permissions for private moorings in multiple-use areas may displace other existing users at that site or impact on amenity of an area. Therefore, it may be more appropriate for the managing agencies to install public moorings at certain locations.
15. For many commercial tourism operations, the need for regular access to particular sites in the Great Barrier Reef is an essential component of their businesses. Private moorings offer business certainty, can help to reduce environmental damage in and adjacent to sensitive habitats which may be caused by anchoring, and can promote a sense of stewardship and reef protection at mooring sites.
16. Private moorings in resort areas and close to residences can also greatly assist vessel owners by providing longer-term berthing for vessels. Likewise, moorings for ancillary vessels, such as glass-bottom boats, provide an alternative to using anchors or removing vessels from the water each day.
17. The Plans of Management set limits on the number of private moorings at most locations in the Planning Areas. Some site-specific management arrangements also set limits on the number of private moorings outside the Planning Area. The number and location of private moorings is generally not limited elsewhere in the Great Barrier Reef under the current management arrangements.

General principles (paragraphs 28–35 of the policy)

18. The policy promotes a Great Barrier Reef wide approach to moorings management, clarifies the managing agencies current mooring permission practices and how moorings management is intended to be improved into the future. It is explicit about the use of public and private moorings and provides clear, transparent information for a person applying for a permission to install and operate a mooring in the Great Barrier Reef. Additionally, the policy assists the managing agencies' delegates in considering applications for private mooring permissions in the Great Barrier Reef.
19. The policy is intended to ensure consistency between the managing agencies when managing and regulating moorings in the Great Barrier Reef. The policy is not intended to extend the

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

- jurisdiction of the managing agencies and must be read subject to the Acts, the Regulations and other legislative instruments.
20. Public moorings are installed and maintained in the Great Barrier Reef by or for the managing agencies, especially in popular locations such as the Whitsundays. Public moorings provide for ecologically sustainable access in high use areas while reducing the need for vessels to drop anchor in and adjacent to sensitive habitats.
 21. Private moorings can provide regular access to a site, as well as security and may be installed as part of another permitted operation such as a tourist program.
 22. Moorings will have a local environmental impact at the site they are installed, and may impact on amenity and limit access by others to that site. Although most moorings installed in the Great Barrier Reef are single point moorings (i.e. a mooring with only one point for vessel attachment), there is growing interest in the use of fore and aft mooring systems, which offer improved security, stability and convenience for mooring users.
 23. A fore and aft mooring system comprises two or three separate moorings used simultaneously, allowing a vessel to occupy less physical space than when using a single point mooring. There is generally one fore mooring, for the bow of the vessel, and one or two aft moorings, for the stern of the vessel. This type of mooring is beneficial at locations where there is limited space available, as a fore and aft mooring system may reduce displacement of other Reef users by limiting swing room. The policy is to be applied to single point moorings, and fore and aft moorings in the same manner.
 24. The policy does not apply to moorings that are a structural component of a pontoon or other marine facility or temporary cyclone moorings for ships. Applications for such moorings are assessed in accordance with the Regulations and with policies such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Structures Policy.
 25. The private mooring tackle, float and structure fixing the mooring to the sea-bed are privately owned (generally by the mooring permittee). In providing permission for a private mooring, the managing agencies do not infer that the permittee has any property rights over the area where the mooring is installed. At the direction of the managing agencies, a private mooring may be required to be maintained, relocated or removed.
 26. The policy focuses on promoting best practice mooring design, installation and maintenance while providing direction for the future management of moorings to minimise environmental impacts and promote compliance with management arrangements.

Best practice moorings management (paragraphs 36-38 of the policy)

27. Best practices in design, installation, operation and maintenance of moorings in the Great Barrier Reef are promoted through moorings management arrangements and the policy. Private moorings should remain compliant with the managing agencies' moorings management arrangements, permission conditions and meet operational standards. The policy aims to promote best practice mooring design and appropriate maintenance of private moorings. In doing so, compliance by the public and permittees with mooring management arrangements may be improved.
28. Private moorings should meet best practice design for the location of installation. Poorly designed and maintained moorings, or those used beyond their intended use, can lead to breakage or dragging of the mooring resulting in damage to the environment, damage to the vessel attached to the mooring or other vessels in proximity.
29. Information relating to best practice general use of moorings is available on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's website under Responsible Reef Practices.

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

30. The practice of “rafting-up” to moorings, where at least one vessel attaches to another vessel which is already attached to the mooring, is recognised by the managing agencies as an ongoing issue in the Great Barrier Reef. Rafting-up to public moorings constitutes a misuse offence under the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations. The practice of rafting-up raises issues of safety, amenity, displacement of other users and it is inconsistent with the structural capacity of most moorings. It may result in moorings being damaged, dragged from the original position and can cause environmental harm, particularly when the mooring is located adjacent to a reef or other sensitive area. Permittees of private moorings should not allow vessels to raft-up on their moorings and may elect to display the structural capacity of the mooring on the mooring buoy or mooring tag.

Specific principles

Site-specific management (paragraphs 39–40 of the policy)

31. Site-specific management includes localised site plans which are developed pursuant to the Plans of Management or site management arrangements for areas elsewhere in the Great Barrier Reef. Site-specific management recognises and protects cultural and natural values, provides for equitable access and multiple-use while separating competing uses and establishing appropriate areas for tourist facilities including moorings.
32. Site-specific management provides an easily interpreted, more strategic context for the cumulative impacts on the local environment to be considered by the managing agencies when assessing individual mooring applications. Inappropriate placement of a number of individual moorings can limit access by others, create conflict of use, impact on the amenity of an area or cause environmental harm. Site-specific management provides a way of reducing these issues when the managing agencies’ delegates assess individual applications for private moorings.
33. A number of site plans have been developed by the managing agencies for parts of the Great Barrier Reef, particularly in the Cairns and the Whitsundays Planning Areas where tourism use is high. Site plans have been developed, under the Plans of Management, in consultation with local stakeholders and have been effective in minimising conflicts of use and promoting the conservation of environmental values.
34. Site-specific management for high use or sensitive sites considers issues such as reef anchorages, fish habitat areas and spawning aggregation sites, and establishes mooring numbers and locations to prevent displacement of different Reef users. The managing agencies’ assessment of new applications for private mooring permissions takes these considerations into account where site-specific management applies.
35. Where moorings have historically been installed in the Great Barrier Reef and later found to compromise the conservation of natural, cultural or scientific values; restrict public access; displace or adversely affect other existing users, site plans and site-specific management arrangements can identify these moorings for relocation within, or removal from, the Great Barrier Reef.
36. Providing protection around private mooring sites is an incentive for mooring permittees to take responsibility for managing the use of the mooring site. It has been identified that restricting anchoring near mooring sites, pursuant to the relevant Plan of Management, encourages stewardship and provides certainty for site specific permittees. For example, the Cairns Area Plan of Management requires a specified radius comprising a no anchoring area in the vicinity of mooring sites and around permitted pontoon sites. This approach has not been adopted in the Plans of Management for the Whitsundays or Hinchinbrook Planning Areas as the number of private moorings in those Planning Areas is much lower than in the Cairns Planning Area.

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

Public moorings (paragraphs 41–48 of the policy)

37. Public moorings have been installed by or for the managing agencies and designated no-anchoring areas have been implemented in all Planning Areas to protect the local environment and promote ecologically sustainable public use and access.
38. Over 120 public moorings have been installed in the Great Barrier Reef by or for the managing agencies. The majority of these are located in the Whitsundays, as tourism permittees and non-commercial Reef users based in the Whitsundays have historically preferred a more roving style of operation accessing sheltered bays around the islands. Public moorings have been installed to meet the increased level of use in certain areas and to protect corals from anchor damage. Reef users should be considerate of others by accessing the moorings in the order that the vessels arrive and following the time limits on the mooring buoy or tag.
39. In designing public moorings, the managing agencies have implemented a safety factor to ensure moorings are secure for all types of vessels, up to the specified structural capacity of the mooring. The structural capacity of moorings must not be exceeded because mooring failure jeopardises public safety and may also result in environmental harm, damage to the mooring, damage to the moored vessel or damage to other vessels.
40. The public mooring buoy is of a standard shape, size, material and colour. Each public mooring carries a colour-coded band on the upper half of the mooring buoy, which reflects the class of public mooring. For ease of identification there are five classes of public moorings to cater for various vessel types and sizes with information relating to structural capacity and the conditions of use displayed on the mooring buoy and tag. Public moorings are largely single point moorings with screw-pin anchors as this design tends to have minimal impact on the environment and can be installed in most substrates.

Public moorings classes

Colour-coded band	Class of mooring	Maximum wind strength	Maximum length (monohulls)	Maximum length (multihulls)
Brown	Tender	24 knots	6 metres	6 metres
Yellow	Class A	24 knots	10 metres	9 metres
Green	Class B	34 knots	20 metres	18 metres
Blue	Class C	34 knots	25 metres	22 metres
Red	Class D	34 knots	35 metres	30 metres

41. In the Whitsundays particularly, there are public moorings at popular locations which may be accessed by all Reef users. In order to promote equitable access for public moorings, there are time limits of two or four hours between 7.00am and 5.00pm. In accordance with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations, these time limits must be adhered to with at least one hour between dropping the mooring and re-attaching the same vessel to the mooring and failure to do so is an offence. When identified on the mooring tag, exceptions to these time limits may apply for overnight use and vessels can remain moored for any length of time between 5.00pm and 7.00am. An example of this would be a vessel picks up a mooring with a two hour limit at 3.00pm then it can stay overnight until 9.00am the following morning.
42. In order to protect the environment, promote equal use and minimise maintenance costs to the managing agencies due to damage, it is important that public moorings are used within their structural capacity, as stated in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations and under any conditions that are on the mooring buoy or tag. These Regulations specify that a person must not remove, misuse or damage a public mooring installed in the Great Barrier Reef. These

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

Regulations also specify that a person must not remove, misuse or damage other public infrastructure, such as reef protection markers or signs. An example of misuse of public infrastructure may include attaching a vessel to public infrastructure that is not intended for the attachment of a vessel, for example a reef protection marker. These types of misuse can cause environmental harm, may damage the mooring or infrastructure and may jeopardise public safety. An infringement notice penalty may be issued in accordance with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations to any person who commits an offence relating to public moorings or public infrastructure.

43. While public moorings are openly available to vessels as they arrive, the managing agencies may investigate options to fund the installation of additional public moorings in certain areas of the Great Barrier Reef. Such options may include funding the public mooring system through dedicating the use of those moorings, once installed, to a particular user or group of users for a specified period during the day. This would give Reef users, who financially contribute to the installation and maintenance of those public moorings, partial right to the use of those public moorings.
44. Currently, the Field Management Program installs and maintains public moorings. As the number of public moorings increases to meet management and public needs for ecologically sustainable access, the Field Management Program's ability to deliver the installation and maintenance of public moorings may be reduced. It may therefore be necessary for the managing agencies to arrange for the installation and maintenance of public moorings to be undertaken by external providers. The managing agencies will require Part 5 notifications for the installation, maintenance and management of public moorings, consistent with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Zoning Plan.

Private moorings (paragraphs 49–50 of the policy)

45. Private moorings are generally designed to accommodate a maximum load and are installed by permittees who are regular users of an area, including permittees of tourist programs and local residents. Historically the managing agencies have permitted private moorings where dedicated use of a site was required as doing so would protect and present the values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
46. It is preferable for all users to pick up a mooring, where possible, rather than anchoring on or near coral and the managing agencies encourage a sharing arrangement for private moorings through its responsible reef practices and the operation of the moorings register. In order for other users to pick up a private mooring, permission from the mooring permittee is required as the mooring buoy and tackle are private property of the mooring permittee. If the permittee has allowed their private mooring to be used by others, any issues with that use is a civil matter between the permittee and the other user.
47. Damage to the environment and the mooring can occur if moorings are dragged from their original position or a vessel runs aground because the mooring does not have the structural capacity to safely restrain the vessel. Seeking permission from the mooring owner allows a vessel operator to identify the structural capacity of that mooring, making it more likely that the private mooring is used within its structural capacity. Advertising the structural capacity on a private mooring reduces the risk of the mooring being misused, however in turn increases the likelihood of users picking up a mooring without seeking prior permission from the mooring permittee.
48. The conditions of a permission for a private mooring in the Great Barrier Reef requires the permittee to take out and maintain an appropriate level of public liability insurance to protect the permittee and the managing agencies against third party claims of damage, loss or injury. Permittees, particularly commercial permittees, should investigate public liability insurance options prior to the installation of a private mooring in the Great Barrier Reef.

Supporting information to the ***Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef***

(Revision 0)

Moorings register (paragraphs 51–52 of the policy)

49. The policy requires the managing agencies to keep, and make publicly available, a moorings register.
50. In accordance with the policy, this register provides some limited details of private mooring permissions, information on mooring locations and the name of mooring permittees. The moorings register promotes flexibility for Reef users by allowing them to contact mooring permittees to make arrangements for use of any private mooring.
51. Permittees are required, through a condition of their permissions, to provide the managing agencies with the Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) locations of private moorings installed in the Great Barrier Reef. These specific locations are included in the moorings register to enable individual moorings to be precisely located by authorised persons or other Reef users as needed.
52. The locations of all public moorings are included in maps that are available on the moorings page of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website. In addition to this information, it may be beneficial for the managing agencies to include the exact DGPS locations of all public moorings in a publicly available database such as the moorings register. Updating the moorings register to include these details will depend on resource availability.

Uninstalled moorings (paragraphs 53–54 of the policy)

53. There are a number of instances where moorings have not been installed in the Great Barrier Reef, despite permissions being granted for their installation and operation. While uninstalled moorings do not pose an environmental risk, they can inadvertently influence management arrangements at particular sites and displace other Reef users who may be interested in installing private moorings at those locations.
54. While timely installation of moorings is desirable, there may be instances where additional time is required to install a mooring, perhaps due to weather constraints, financial or logistical arrangements. Under normal circumstances private moorings will be installed within six months of the permission being granted, however, extensions of this timeframe may be considered at the discretion of the managing agencies.

Mooring design and identification (paragraphs 55–56 of the policy)

55. The policy promotes best practice moorings design for private moorings and the managing agencies intend to reflect these design principles when installing public moorings in the Great Barrier Reef.
56. Moorings are designed to ensure that the structural capacity can withstand certain environmental conditions for the intended vessels. Inadequate mooring design can result in failure of the mooring which is a public safety issue and has the capacity to cause environmental harm. Additionally when a mooring fails, damage to the mooring and moored vessel may result as well as damage to other vessels in proximity to the damaged mooring.
57. Mooring design continues to improve through advances in technology and innovation. As applications for mooring permissions should demonstrate certain design standards, particularly in sensitive locations, new technology is expected to offer more alternatives for environmentally friendly mooring design for private moorings. The managing agencies employ best practice design for public moorings.
58. To ensure moorings installed in the Great Barrier Reef are appropriately designed and to minimise the risk of environmental damage, a design drawing approved or certified by a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland is preferred.

Supporting information to the ***Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef***

(Revision 0)

59. In limited circumstances, a schematic drawing of the mooring may be accepted by the managing agencies instead. This will be at the discretion of the managing agencies and may include considerations such as:
- a) the mooring is pre-existing to this policy
 - b) the vessel parameters (length, hull configuration, commercial or non-commercial)
 - c) the mooring is not in a sensitive location and poses low risk to the environment, other users or surrounding infrastructure, from mooring failure
 - d) the maximum operating conditions (wind and weather) and operating parameters (single point or fore and aft mooring system)
 - e) the applicant has a response plan for extreme weather conditions.
60. Mooring buoys attached to private moorings can vary in colour, shape and size depending on the preference of the mooring owner. As a minimum, and in accordance with conditions of the private mooring permission, the mooring reference number will be displayed so the mooring can be easily identified by the managing agencies or other Reef users as needed. Recognising that mooring buoys may be difficult to permanently label, where it is not possible to mark the buoy then the mooring reference number may be displayed on the mooring tag with the managing agencies approval. In either case, the mooring reference number must be maintained so as to be visible and legible at all times. This ensures that an authorised person can easily identify the mooring upon inspection and assists with compliance activities.
61. Mooring permittees are encouraged to use standardised mooring buoyage on all their permitted moorings. The managing agencies preferred standards for the buoys are that they are white, not less than 250 mm or greater than 800 mm in greatest dimension, UV stabilised and of a robust construction, designed specifically for use as a buoy in the marine environment, either generally spherical, 'teardrop' shaped, or the shape of two cones joined at their bases.
62. In some areas of the Great Barrier Reef private moorings are installed in accordance with requirements under Maritime Safety Queensland's *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* (Qld) and *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulations 2004*. These requirements are acceptable to the managing agencies. Where mooring identification meets these requirements, the managing agencies mooring notification approval will reflect this and the conditions of the permission granted by the managing agencies relating to mooring identification will be automatically satisfied.

Mooring installation, operation and removal (paragraphs 57-59 of the policy)

63. The permission for a private mooring, granted by the managing agencies, specifies certain conditions relating to the installation and operation of, and works to, a private mooring which the permittee is required to comply with.
64. Generally, new private moorings will be installed in the presence of an authorised person unless prior arrangements are made between the managing agencies and the permittee. The role of the authorised person is to make an onsite assessment and agree on the best location for the installation of the mooring. This may be required where the desktop assessment for the permission may not have accurately identified the most appropriate placement, to minimise environmental damage and/or conflict of use. The authorised person may also record the DGPS position of the mooring, once installed, for inclusion on the moorings register and the mooring notification approval. Where the managing agencies have allowed a mooring to be installed without an authorised person being present, the permittee will be required to record and supply the DGPS location of the installed mooring to the managing agencies, in accordance with the conditions of the permission.

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

65. Private moorings must be installed, used and maintained in accordance with the approved design drawings or schematic drawings.
66. Regular inspections of private moorings allow permittees to identify and repair any damage and adequately maintain their moorings. In addition, well maintained moorings are less likely to fail in severe weather events. To ensure moorings remain at the best operational standard and do not pose a risk to the environment under normal circumstances, permitted moorings should be inspected by an appropriately experienced person at least once per year and that this person declares in a compliance certificate that the mooring is in good working order and has been appropriately maintained in accordance with the design drawing or schematic drawing.
67. It is a standard condition of each permission that a permittee must produce a compliance certificate on request by the managing agencies. Failure to supply a compliance certificate to the managing agencies upon request, or with an application for continuation or transfer of a private mooring, may result in the managing agencies requiring a permittee to de-tackle the mooring or suspending and/or revoking the permission or not renewing or transferring the permission for the mooring.
68. Unsupervised works may result in environmental damage, may impact on other users or may not repair the mooring to operational standard. The policy therefore clarifies the types of mooring works that the managing agencies are likely to require an authorised officer to supervise.
69. During routine inspections by the mooring permittee or an appropriately experienced person, it may be identified that maintenance works such as cleaning, or works to repair damage such as replacing floats, tackle and shackles are required. Generally the managing agencies would not require supervision by an authorised person for such works.
70. Alternatively a mooring may need replacing or relocating due to the mooring being damaged, causing environmental harm or displacing other users. The managing agencies are likely to require an authorised person to be present for the supervision of works that have the potential to cause damage to the environment. In all cases where works are required to a private mooring, an appropriately experienced person will be required to undertake such works.
71. As with works to a private mooring, site supervision by an authorised person will generally be required by the managing agencies for the relocation of a private mooring. This will allow the mooring to be installed in the most appropriate location to ensure that environmental harm does not occur.
72. In some instances a private mooring may be removed from the Great Barrier Reef. Such circumstances may be the result of permit suspension, revocation, expiration or upon surrender of the mooring by the permittee. In most cases the managing agencies will require the removal of a mooring to be supervised by an authorised person.

Moorings de-tackling (paragraphs 60-61 of the policy)

73. A permittee may need to permanently relocate a private mooring due to operational changes or following a severe environmental incident. An application to relocate a private mooring would be assessed in accordance with the mandatory and discretionary considerations under the Regulations.
74. Where a permission is surrendered or revoked, the managing agencies may require the permittee to de-tackle or remove the mooring, to the satisfaction of the managing agencies, at the permittee's expense.
75. A permittee may apply to temporarily relocate a mooring. For example, the Marine Tourism Contingency Plan for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Marine Tourism Contingency Plan) provides for the relocation of moorings in the case where a mooring site has been impacted by a severe environmental incident and the permittee is unable to operate to that site while it recovers. If

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

the permittee de-tackles a mooring due to environmental or operational reasons and intends to return to the site, temporarily de-tackling the mooring may be a cost effective, business focused approach for the permittee to consider. Generally the temporary de-tackling of a mooring would be allowed for a period of up to two years and in some instances, this period of time may be extended.

Compliance matters (paragraphs 62-66 of the policy)

76. The managing agencies compliance priorities and activities, predominantly undertaken through the Field Management Program are largely based on risk to the environment, and therefore compliance actions such as those associated with illegal activities relating to shipping incidents and commercial fishing are prioritised over tourism facilities and moorings.
77. There are a range of compliance issues relating to moorings. For example, some moorings which have been historically installed are not permitted under the Zoning Plan. Additionally, some private moorings are not compliant with conditions of permissions, such as: the mooring is not maintained; the mooring has been dragged or moved intentionally to a location which does not align with DGPS details held by the managing agencies; or the mooring reference number is not displayed on the mooring buoy or tag thus making it difficult for the managing agencies to identify the mooring. The methods available under the Regulations for the managing agencies to deal with these compliance risks ranges from an advisory letter, issue of an infringement notice, suspension of a permission, revocation of a permission and an order to remove the mooring. To increase compliance for private moorings and ensure the most efficient use of compliance resources, the managing agencies may develop and implement a compliance plan or audit regime specifically for moorings.
78. Permittees, as stewards of the Great Barrier Reef, must ensure that private moorings remain compliant with permit conditions and management arrangements, including best practice design, installation and maintenance.
79. The managing agencies will continue to monitor compliance with permission conditions and manage unpermitted moorings. Where non-compliant private moorings or unpermitted moorings are identified, appropriate action may be taken by the managing agencies to remove these moorings.
80. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations identify the process that is required to remove non-compliant or unpermitted moorings from the Great Barrier Reef. The managing agencies may investigate the possibility of streamlining the processes, including changes to the Regulations, to prioritise and efficiently remove unpermitted or non-compliant moorings, particularly where there is risk of environmental harm, impacts to amenity or displacement of other Reef users.

Matters relating to mooring permissions (paragraphs 67–71 of the policy)

81. The policy describes general permit matters relating to private moorings for consideration by applicants and the delegate assessing applications for private mooring permissions.
82. Applications for permissions will generally be assessed by the managing agencies in the order they are received provided all relevant information is received at the time of application. Where possible, the managing agencies may give priority for assessment to applications received under the Marine Tourism Contingency Plan following a severe environmental incident, over other routine permission applications.
83. The managing agencies have regard to mandatory and discretionary considerations in accordance with the Regulations when assessing permit applications for the installation and operation of moorings in the Great Barrier Reef. In addition to these considerations, the managing agencies will take into account any additional requirements and limits in relation to

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

moorings pursuant to the Plans of Management, relevant site-specific management and will consider matters of national environmental significance, including the outstanding universal value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

84. A permission for a mooring opportunity, the number or location of which has been limited or restricted by the relevant Plan of Management, is considered to be a special permission. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations identify the allocation process applicable to the granting of special permissions. This process requires the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to invite expressions of interest and rank valid applications against specific selection criteria. Any invitation for expressions of interest for special permissions is advertised on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's website and in relevant regional media.
85. It is a condition of a mooring permission that the permittee obtains a compliance certificate on an annual basis and provides it to the managing agencies on request. This demonstrates that a private mooring has been installed and maintained at the permitted location and in accordance with the design drawings or schematic drawings. When applying to continue an existing permission for a private mooring, the permittee is required to provide the current compliance certificate.
86. A permission for the installation and operation of a private mooring is a chargeable permission and may be transferred from one legal entity to another, subject to the approval of the managing agencies. A permittee of a private mooring will need to demonstrate that any installed mooring proposed to be transferred has been maintained in accordance with the design drawings or schematic drawings and at the permitted location. This is done by providing a compliance certificate with any application to transfer a mooring permission.
87. The Cairns Area Plan of Management allows the grant of an additional mooring for weather that is an alternate mooring associated with an existing permitted mooring. These two moorings cannot be split and transferred separately as that could result in doubling of use at that site rather than providing for alternate use for weather.
88. Generally, the standard term for any permission granted by the managing agencies is six years or in the case of a new permittee, who has never held a permission to operate in the Great Barrier Reef, a new permission granted will be for a one year term. The managing agencies have determined that where a mooring is used in conjunction with a high standard tourism operator's certified tourism program, and is included on the joint permission for that program, the managing agencies may grant the permission for a period of 15 years provided certification is maintained.

Mooring related fees and charges (paragraphs 72–74 of the policy)

89. An application for a permission to conduct any commercial activity in the Great Barrier Reef requires assessment by the managing agencies. A permit application assessment fee is payable by an applicant of a permission. The fee is calculated in accordance with the Regulations based on the nature and scale of the proposed conduct. In the instance where only a minimal assessment is required, these fees may be waived. These fees may be subject to a review by the managing agencies and may be updated from time-to-time in accordance with the consumer price index.
90. The permit application assessment fee is not intended to cover the costs of site assessments, public advertising or site supervision. It does not cover the costs of any ongoing assessment or relocation/removal of installed moorings. Any such costs are payable by the applicant or permittee and, if incurred by the managing agencies, may be recovered in accordance with Commonwealth Government cost recovery policies and permission conditions.
91. In accordance with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations, holders of chargeable permissions, which include permissions to install and conduct a private mooring, are liable to pay

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

the Environmental Management Charge. The prescribed cost of the Environmental Management Charge for moorings is determined in accordance with these Regulations.

92. Site planning associated with site-specific management arrangements requires significant staff resource commitment from the managing agencies including travel, the facilitation of public meetings, assessments, monitoring and review.
93. The costs associated with the installation, maintenance and removal of private moorings in the Great Barrier Reef will fall on the mooring permittee. The permittee should be aware that these costs include the regular compliance inspections and any works required to ensure moorings remain compliant with the managing agencies' requirements.

Definitions

Acts means the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth) and the *Marine Parks Act 2004* (Qld) as amended from time-to-time.

Ancillary vessel means a small vessel, other than the primary vessel, which provides services to the passengers of the primary vessel and is only operated within three nautical miles of the primary vessel.

Appropriately experienced person means a person who holds appropriate public indemnity insurance and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a) a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland; or
- b) a moorings contractor with relevant experience in the installation and maintenance of moorings; or
- c) complies with the Occupational Diving Work Code of Practice 2005, as amended from time to time, (relating to Divemaster (PADI) or Dive Controller (SSI) qualifications or higher) and approved by the managing agencies as having demonstrated competencies in mooring maintenance, or
- d) approved by the managing agencies as having demonstrated competencies in mooring maintenance. This last criterion would only apply to low-risk private moorings (generally non-commercial).

Authorised person means an officer of the managing agencies, or a person acting on behalf of the managing agencies.

Certified tourism product means a nature-based tour or accommodation which has been certified as being ecologically, culturally and socially sustainable by an independent body, whose certification scheme is recognised by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Operators with certified tourism products may join the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority high standard tourism program.

Compliance certificate means a certificate of compliance for a permitted mooring system approved by a appropriately experienced person, which demonstrates that the mooring has been installed and maintained in accordance with the approved design drawing or approved schematic drawing.

Design drawing means a technical drawing of a mooring system approved or certified by a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ).

De-tackling means the temporary removal of all the mooring tackle including chains, shackles, ropes and buoys from the structure fixing the mooring to the seabed.

Field Management Program is a joint program conducted by the managing agencies under the Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement 2009. The Field Management Program is responsible for planning and executing field management and operations in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth) and Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (Queensland), Commonwealth islands and Queensland island national parks in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Fore and aft mooring system means two or three moorings installed in close proximity to each other to provide stability for the moored vessel. A fore and aft system comprises one mooring for the bow of the vessel and one or two moorings for the stern of the vessel. For the purpose of all provisions in this policy a fore and aft mooring system is considered as a single mooring.

Great Barrier Reef for the purpose of the policy means the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park excluding the internal waters of Queensland.

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park means the Queensland Marine Park established pursuant to the *Marine Parks Act 2004* (Qld) as amended from time-to-time.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park means the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park established by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth) as amended from time to time.

Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area refers to the area as defined in Schedule 1 of the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth).

High standard tourism operators means permittees of a tourism program that has been certified by an independent certification scheme recognised by the managing agencies who contributes to Great Barrier Reef resilience and presents the values of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area to a high standard.

Internal waters of Queensland means waters of Queensland on the landward side of the territorial sea baseline.

Managing agencies refers to the principal partner agencies in the management of the Great Barrier Reef, being the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Matters of national environmental significance are those matters defined in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Mooring means a permanently located facility that is designed solely for mooring a vessel and may include a floating buoy, tag, tackle and a structure fixing the mooring to the seabed.

Mooring buoy means a surface float attached to the mooring to assist in locating and identifying the mooring.

Mooring notification approval is a written approval from the managing agencies that contains mooring details including: the mooring reference number; the DGPS location and datum; the design; the type; the status; and particulars of the design drawing or schematic drawing.

Mooring reference number means the unique number prescribed for each mooring by the managing agencies.

Moorings register means a publicly available database of private moorings, which are installed in the Great Barrier Reef.

Permission means a document issued by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and/or the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service which details the permission(s) granted by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to which Part 2A of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 (Cth) applies and/or any Queensland permission(s) granted by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service under the Marine Parks Act 2004 (Qld).

Permittee means a person, company or entity issued a permission by the managing agencies.

Planning Area means an area of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park for which a Plan of Management has been developed.

Plans of Management has the meaning given by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth).

Private mooring has the same meaning as permitted mooring defined in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations.

Public mooring has the meaning given in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations.

Queensland Marine Park means the marine park established pursuant to the *Marine Parks Act 2004* (Qld) and Marine Parks Regulation 2006 (Qld).

Reef users mean users of the Great Barrier Reef.

Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland means an engineer certified under the *Professional Engineers Act 2002* (Qld), as amended from time-to-time, or someone acting under the direct supervision of a registered professional engineer.

Regulations means the Great Barrier Reef Marine Regulations 1983 (Cth) and the Queensland Marine Parks Regulations 2006 (Qld).

Schematic drawing means a drawing of the mooring system which shows the main elements of the mooring system including (as relevant), the block/screw-pin/anchor, shackles, riser line, tackle, subsurface buoy, and materials from which each component will be constructed.

Supporting information to the *Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef*

(Revision 0)

Severe environmental incident means an incident, or series of incidents, which degrades an area in the Great Barrier Reef to such a degree that it significantly affects the ability of the permittee to conduct the original permitted tourist program at that site. Examples include extreme cases of: coral bleaching, coral disease outbreaks, crown-of-thorns starfish infestations, cyclones, storm surges, extreme flood events, oil and chemical spills and vessel groundings. A severe environmental incident does not include changes to Great Barrier Reef ecosystems that are transitory or ephemeral in nature, such as the movement of sand cays and fluctuations in migratory animal populations.

Site management arrangements are localised plans for use of a particular site outside a Planning Area. They identify significant values of the specific site and describe current management arrangements for these sites concentrating on specific use issues and cumulative impacts at the site. For Queensland legislation, site management arrangements also include the legislative requirements of declared Fish Habitat Areas (FHA) as prescribed under the *Fisheries Act 1994* (Qld). Note that these include a prohibition on the installation of private moorings in declared FHA “A” management areas and significant limitations in “B” management areas.

Site plans are localised plans for use of a particular site within a Planning Area. They identify significant values of the specific site and describe current management arrangements for these sites concentrating on specific use issues and cumulative impacts at the site.

Special permission has the meaning given by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 (Cth).

Structural capacity means the maximum vessel length and maximum wind speed that a mooring can safely withstand.

Vessel has the meaning given in the Acts.

Zone has the meaning given in the Acts.

Zoning Plan has the meaning given in the Acts.

Document Control Information

Approved by:	MPA - Decision 2014-235-8	Approved date:	3-Dec-14
Last reviewed:	3-Dec-14		
Next review:	3-Dec-18		
Created:	2002		
Document custodian:	Director, Tourism and Stewardship (PN192)		
Replaces:	Policy on Moorings in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (approved 2005)		