



Note: Information in this document may now be superseded. This includes the 2017 amendments to the *Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998* such as updates to boundary descriptions to coordinate based descriptions.

Haslewood and Lupton Islands

(Prepared August 2007)

1. Background

1.1 Rationale

Site plans are an important management tool used jointly by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). They identify the significant values and management arrangements at a particular site, concentrating on the specific use issues and cumulative impacts.

The waters surrounding Haslewood and Lupton islands (20-078) have been assigned to a Protected Setting in the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 (WPOM). Due to their protected setting, the WPOM requires that this site plan be developed to ensure protection of the natural, cultural and heritage values of the area and to determine group size and vessel length limits.

1.2 Location

Haslewood and Lupton Islands are situated approximately 32 kilometres east of Shutehaven, on the seaward side of Whitsunday Island. Although they are separate islands, they are joined by fringing reef that dries at low tide. The islands are part of the Whitsunday Islands National Park, managed by the QPWS. For more information, refer to the Environmental Protection Agency website.

2. Natural, cultural and heritage values

The values described below are not exhaustive, but are indicative of the significance of the area covered by this site plan.

2.1 Seagrass and marine turtles

Seagrasses are an important nursery habitat for many prawn and fish species and meadows provide an essential food source for threatened species such as dugong and green turtles. Widespread seagrass loss can result from natural causes such as cyclones or human causes such as pollution (Campbell et. al, 2002).

The seagrass meadows and sandy beaches around the islands provide important feeding and nesting habitat for marine turtles. Both green turtles *Chelonia mydas* and hawksbill turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* occur in the area. Green turtles in particular are frequently sighted around the islands, where they feed on the seagrass beds. Between October and February

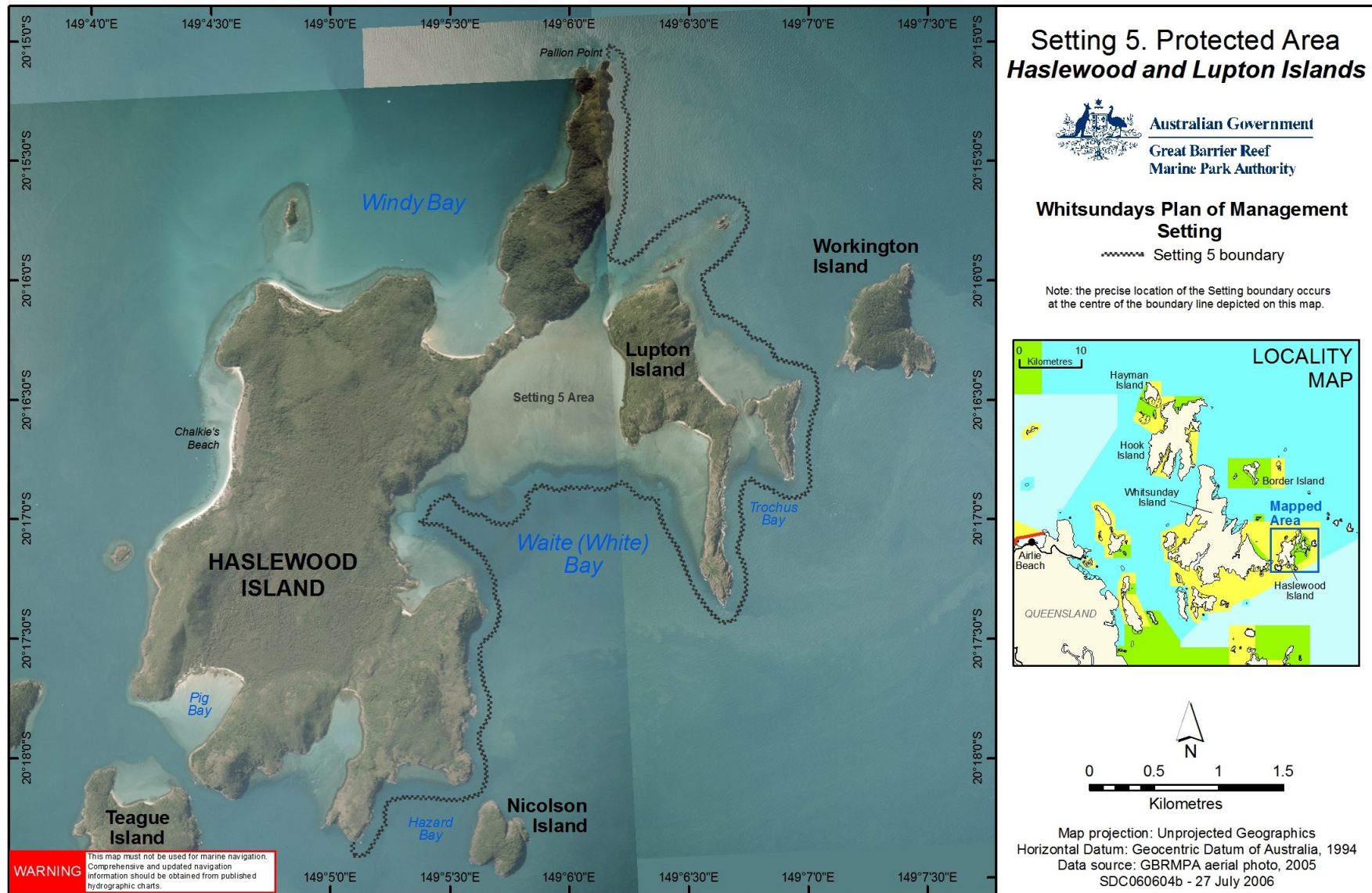


Figure 1: Location of Haslewood Island and Lupton Island

female green turtles come ashore to lay clutches of eggs on the sandy beaches (Colfelt, 1995).

2.2 Seabirds

Birds are an integral part of the Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and the Whitsundays are recognised internationally as an important stopover for migratory birds. Like many of the Whitsunday Islands, Haslewood and Lupton Islands provide important roosting habitat for a variety of seabirds.

2.3 Fringing reef, deepwater bommies and source reef

An extensive fringing reef joins Haslewood and Lupton Islands, forming Waite Bay (also known as White Bay). The reef is thought to be a source reef for surrounding areas, meaning it produces larval coral recruits which then disperse and colonise other reefs (Colfelt, 2004). The reef dries extensively at low tide. To the south of the reef are numerous deepwater coral bommies. The local community actively discourage anchoring on the coral, however, given the increasing number of recreational visitors to the Whitsundays, community members have expressed concern about the potential for visitors who are unfamiliar with the area to cause anchor damage to the corals in Waite Bay.

2.4 Traditional Owners

The islands and surrounding areas are culturally significant to the Ngaro Aboriginal Traditional Owner Group. The islands, reefs and surrounding waters are part of the cultural landscape and are still the focus for traditional access and use of available resources. Spiritual connections are often associated with the natural and cultural resources.

The Central Queensland Land Council Aboriginal Corporation is the representative body for Traditional Owners whose estates are located in the Whitsunday region.

3. Current Use

Colfelt (2004) notes that there are a number of anchorages around Haslewood and Lupton Islands. These allow recreational visitors to take advantage of the snorkelling opportunities and sandy beaches in a range of weather and tidal conditions.

Commercial tour operations regularly visit the waters surrounding the islands. The annual Environmental Management Charge (EMC) reporting indicates that the level of visitation is variable, probably due to variation in the weather. Over the past 3 years the average number of tourists reported is approximately 7,300 per year.

4. Management strategies

4.1 Current management

4.1.1 Zoning

The area covered by this site plan is within a Marine National Park (Green) Zone under both State and Commonwealth Zoning Plans. Marine Park Zoning Map 10 shows the zoning at Haslewood and Lupton Islands. The Marine National Park Zone is a 'no-take' area and extractive activities like fishing or collecting are not allowed without the written permission of the GBRMPA. For more information on what activities are allowed in the waters surrounding Haslewood and Lupton Islands, refer to the Activities Guide.

The Zoning Plan is one of a range of management tools for the Haslewood and Lupton Islands. Other management tools include the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998, the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983*.

4.1.2 Permits and the Whitsundays Plan of Management

A number of activities in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, including tourist operations, require a Marine Parks permit. Permits help the GBRMPA and the QPWS to manage impacts on sensitive areas, amongst other things. Further information on permits can be obtained on the GBRMPA website.

When the Whitsundays Plan of Management came into effect in 1998, permits allowing access to all Setting 5 areas were capped.

Clause 2.12 of Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 prohibits damaging coral, unless the damage is caused by anchoring with a reef pick and the person who anchors takes reasonable care to avoid damaging the coral.

4.1.3 Whitsunday and Mackay Islands Visitor Management Strategy

The draft Whitsunday and Mackay Islands Visitor Management Strategy is a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service initiative that will provide a framework for sustainable tourism and visitor use into the future for the islands and their beaches. Assessment by the QPWS suggests that both Haslewood and Lupton Islands should be included within a protected setting as they are a part of a natural area that has been set aside for conservation. The islands are managed by the QPWS for nil to minimal use by visitors.

NB: The Southern end of Stockyard Beach (also known as Chalkies Beach – see Figure 1) on the western side of Haslewood Island has been assessed as a potential moderate use site, however, it is not adjacent to the Setting 5 area covered by this site plan.

4.2 Proposed management

4.2.1 Permits

The number of permits allowing commercial tour operators to access the Setting 5 area will be maintained at the current level. If existing permits are revoked, surrendered or expire, they may be re-allocated in accordance with the GBRMPA's policy for Managing Tourism Permissions to Operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (including Allocation, Latency and Tenure).

Access to the Setting 5 area will be allowed for cultural tours run by, or in collaboration with, Traditional Owners if the permittee has been granted a Commercial Activities Permit issued by the QPWS to access immediately adjacent sites on Haslewood and Lupton Islands on the adjacent national park.

4.2.2 Group size and vessel length limits

Group sizes will be limited to a maximum of 15 people (including crew) and vessel length will be limited to 20 metres. This will apply to recreational Marine Park users. Commercial access will continue to be determined by existing permissions. If an existing permission allows the operator to exceed the group size and vessel length limits, the operator will maintain their current permitted capacity.

An amendment to the Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998 will be required in order to bring these group size and vessel length limits into effect.

4.2.3 Reef protection in Waite Bay

In consultation with the community, the Authority will investigate the feasibility of installing reef protection markers in Waite Bay and designating the area as a No-anchoring Area.

5. Community Engagement

This site plan was developed in consultation with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Whitsunday Local Marine Advisory Committee, the Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee, Traditional Owners and local users of the Marine Park. The site plan was available for public consultation from 14 February 2007 to 19 March 2007 and comments were incorporated prior to the site plan being finalised. For further information, please contact the Authority on (07) 4750 0700 or email policyandplanning@qbrmpa.gov.au.

6. References

Campbell, S.J., Roder, C.A., McKenzie, L.J. and Lee Long, W.J. (2002). *Seagrass Resources in the Whitsunday Region 1999 and 2000*. DPI Information Series QI02043 (DPI, Cairns).

Colfelt, D. (1995). *The Whitsundays Book*. Windward Publications.

Colfelt, D. (2004). *100 Magic Miles of the Great Barrier Reef – the Whitsunday Islands*. Windward Publications.