

REPORT ON ADMINISTRATION OF THE *MARINE PARKS ACT 2004*

(reporting period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025)

Prepared by: The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

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October 2025

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Introduction

The *Marine Parks Act 2004* (MP Act) provides for the conservation of Queensland's marine environment by implementing a comprehensive and integrated strategy that includes the declaration of marine parks, and the establishment of zones and designated areas including highly protected areas within the parks. These management arrangements are formalised through the gazettal of zoning plans and the development of management plans.

Public authorities and other interested groups, including First Nations peoples and local governments, are encouraged to assist in managing marine parks and to further the public's appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the marine environment.

The MP Act aims to achieve a coordinated and integrated approach with other environmental conservation legislation, and recognises the cultural, economic, environmental, and social relationships between marine parks and their adjacent lands and waters.

Australia's international responsibilities and intergovernmental agreements are important considerations in park management. Marine parks extend across areas adjacent to the Queensland coast which are under the control of both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. Both Governments have agreed that as far as practicable, in managing marine parks, State legislation will be consistent with the relevant Commonwealth legislation.

Marine parks in Queensland are multiple use areas providing for a range of activities and visitor opportunities. The zoning plans prescribed under the MP Act detail the types of uses and management measures applied to achieve an appropriate balance between conservation and use of the marine environment.

Three marine parks have been declared under the MP Act with corresponding zoning plans established: Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, Great Sandy Marine Park, and Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The Plans and Regulations that support the MP Act are:

- Marine Parks (Declaration) Regulation 2006
- Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004
- Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2024
- Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019
- Marine Parks Regulation 2017

Amendments

Marine Parks Act 2004

There were no amendments made to the MP Act in the 2024–25 financial year.

Marine Parks (Declaration) Regulation 2006

There were no amendments made to the Marine Parks (Declaration) Regulation 2006 in 2024–25.

Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004

There were no amendments made to the Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004 in 2024–25.

Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2024

The Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2024 was amended in 2024–25 as follows.

Amending legislation	Notified	Commenced	Amendment details
Safety in Recreational Water Activities Regulation 2024 (SL No. 100 of 2024)	28 June 2024	1 August 2024	Consequential amendment to section 41(4) of the Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2024 to update the definition of a recreational dive training organisation.

Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019

The Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019 was amended in 2024–25 as follows.

Amending legislation	Notified	Commenced	Amendment details
Safety in Recreational Water Activities Regulation 2024 (SL No. 100 of 2024)	28 June 2024	1 August 2024	Consequential amendment to section 41(4) of the Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2024 to update the definition of a recreational dive training organisation.

Marine Parks Regulation 2017

The Marine Parks Regulation 2017 was amended in 2024–25 as follows:

Amending legislation	Notified	Commenced	Amendment details
State Penalties Enforcement and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2024	6 September 2024	22 September 2024	Consequential amendment to section 52(3)(a) of the Marine Parks Regulation 2017, to update the reference to the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2024

Funding

In 2024–25, the Queensland Government contributed \$19,218,069 to the Great Barrier Reef Joint Field Management Program. Together with the Australian Government's contribution and other revenue, the total revenue for the Program in 2024–25 was \$40,126,720. The Program operates across the (Commonwealth) Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the (State) Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park, island national parks of Queensland and Commonwealth islands within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. As such, only a portion of the Program's funds are spent on the (State) Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. The total expenditure (excluding depreciation) for the joint Program in 2024–25 was \$40,128,416.

The combined operational costs (operating (excluding depreciation) and capital) for the Great Sandy and Moreton Bay Marine Parks in 2024–25 totalled \$6,571,267 including \$1,124,920 which contributes to the overall cost of \$2,054,920 to replace the 12-metre patrol vessel C.H. Thompson for the Great Sandy Marine Park.

Management plans

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships employs a Values-Based Management Framework to guide protected area management. The Framework prioritises management undertaken on parks in line with the key values of the park and incorporates steps for monitoring progress, evaluating performance, and reporting on the effectiveness of management actions over time. The Framework is the approved process for management of protected areas across Queensland under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NC Act).

Marine parks adjacent to mainland or island national parks may share values and management issues. To ensure seamless management, areas of marine parks that adjoin national parks may be included in the management planning process for national parks resulting in a joint MP Act and NC Act management plan.

During 2024–25, there were no new management plans for marine park areas approved.

Authorities

The MP Act provides for activities to be undertaken on marine parks under an authority (permits and commercial activity agreements) for varying periods. A 'permit' can include several 'permissions' for the conduct of different activities as prescribed in a relevant marine park zoning plan. The Marine Parks Regulation 2017 outlines the administrative matters relating to the grant, amendment, suspension, cancellation, surrender and replacement of relevant authorities and the requirements applying to carrying out activities under a relevant authority provided for by the MP Act.

A summary of authorities granted, suspended, or cancelled, applications refused in 2024–25, and related information is outlined in **Table A**.

Offences and enforcement

In 2024–25, a total of 69 marine park penalty infringement notices were issued under the MP Act or subordinate legislation.

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the department) finalised one prosecution in 2024–25 with a conviction by a court, resulting in fines of \$2,500 and \$351.40 in costs.

A summary of offences and prosecutions are provided in **Table B** and **Table C**.

Accreditations

Accreditations are a form of approval that removes the need for organisations and individuals to obtain a permit to carry out activities.

Accreditations can be issued under the Marine Parks Regulation 2017 for a number of different activities such as research and aquaculture. A Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement is one form of accreditation. These formal agreements are developed by First Nations groups and accredited by the department and, if the agreement covers the Great Barrier Reef region, also by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements describe how First Nations groups work in partnership with the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments to manage traditional use activities on their sea Country.

A summary of accreditations that are in place is provided in **Table D**.

Other legislative provisions

Other legislative provisions under Part 6 of the Marine Park Regulation 2017 that manage marine park activities include the declaration of special activities and restricted access areas, and erection or display of regulatory notices.

Table E outlines the Part 6 legislative provisions in place for each marine park.

Tables

Table A – Permissions¹ and authorities granted, refused, and suspended or cancelled during 2024–25

The number of permissions includes all current permissions some of which may have been issued in previous reporting periods.

Category	Number current as at 30/06/2025	Number issued	Number refused, suspended or cancelled
State-Commonwealth joint² Marine Park permissions¹			
Aquaculture	2	0	0
Taking animals or plants posing a threat ³	118	15	0
Collecting ⁴	0	0	0
Educational program	118	27	4
Exploration/mining ⁵	0	0	0
Harvest fishery ⁶	107	16	0
Media activity (film, photography) ⁷	16	3	0
Operate a facility ⁸	898	37	0
Operating/navigating vessels and aircraft ⁹	40	0	0
Research	259	78	0
Ship and managed vessel operation ¹⁰	93	2	0
Tourist program	1,774	167	24

¹ A permit may include a number of individual permissions for different activities. Table A includes the total number of individual permissions.

² 'Joint' Marine Park permissions relate to the Great Barrier Reef area where permissions are issued jointly by the State (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) and GBRMPA to cover activities occurring in both the State and Commonwealth Marine Park respectively.

³ Provides authority to carry out a program for taking a plant, animal or marine resource that poses a threat to human life and safety (e.g., mosquito control, shark control program), marine park ecosystems (e.g. toxic algae, Crown of Thorns Starfish), or to the use/amenity of an area or adjacent marine park (e.g. mangrove trimming).

⁴ Collecting can include non-commercial collecting (e.g. shell clubs) or commercial collecting of species that are not part of a harvest fishery (e.g. oysters).

⁵ Exploration/mining includes exploring or mining for minerals, exploring or producing petroleum and carrying out geothermal exploration.

⁶ Harvest fishery includes commercial collecting of coral, shell, and aquarium fish.

⁷ An authority may be considered necessary if, for example, pyrotechnics are involved or exclusive access is required.

⁸ Operate a facility can include buildings, vessels, or structures (e.g. pontoons, jetties, barge landings, pipelines, aircraft landing areas, and moorings (Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (GBRCMP) only), as well as constructing, building, assembling, fixing in position, discharging waste, operating, maintaining or decommissioning the facility.

⁹ Operating/navigating vessels and aircraft includes anchoring.

¹⁰ Operating/navigating ships, includes anchoring. Managed vessel types include hovercraft, wing in ground effect craft, hydrofoils and airboats.

Category	Number current as at 30/06/2025	Number issued	Number refused, suspended or cancelled
Vessel or aircraft charter operation ¹¹	1,181	147	25
Works ¹²	15	0	0
Other ¹³	41	4	1
State-only¹⁴ Marine Park authorities (permits¹ and agreements)			
Permits ¹ under the Marine Parks Regulation 2017			
Aquaculture	0	0	0
Taking animals or plants posing a threat ³	7	5	0
Collecting ⁴	7	3	0
Educational program	23	7	0
Exploration/ mining ⁵	0	0	0
Harvest fishery ⁶	16	12	0
Media activity (film, photography) ⁷	1	0	0
Operate a facility ⁸	42	11	0
Operating/navigating vessels & aircraft ⁹	11	6	0
Research	88	33	0
Ship and managed vessel operation ¹⁰	25	7	0
Tourist program	227	112	0
Vessel or aircraft charter operation ¹¹	139	85	0
Works ¹²	122	42	0
Other ¹³	20	9	0

¹¹ Vessel charter includes skippered and bare boat charters.

¹² Works includes coastal works such as beach nourishment, buoy and pile moorings (excl. GBRCMP), maintenance dredging (GBRCMP only), capital dredging (Moreton Bay Marine Park (MBMP) and Great Sandy Marine Park (GSMP) only), spoil disposal, foreshore protection, access structures (e.g. pontoons, jetties, boat ramps), marinas, reclamation, sand extraction and submarine pipelines. Major works that involve large scale coastal works (MBMP only) may require declaration of a works area.

¹³ Other includes activities such as conducting a developmental fishery program, traditional use of marine resources, operating a fishing industry service vessel, aquatic events, sporting events, fireworks display, and taking of broodstock.

¹⁴ State-only permissions relate to the GBRCMP, GSMP and MBMP.

Category	Number current as at 30/06/2025	Number issued	Number refused, suspended or cancelled
Commercial Activity Agreements under section 52 of the Marine Parks Regulation 2017			
Tourism ¹⁵ (excluding whale watching)	5	1	0
Whale watching	22	22	0
Other (e.g. filming, competitive & corporate events)	5	4	0

¹⁵ Includes commercial tour operations within the ex-HMAS Tobruk Area of the GSMP which are a prescribed commercial activity under section 126 of the Marine Parks Regulation 2017.

Table B – Enforcement activity under the MP Act and related subordinate legislation during 2024–25

Category		Number
Penalty infringement notices	Number issued	69
	Number withdrawn	1
	Number of court elects	4
	Number of reviews	5
Formal investigations	Number completed	0
Prosecutions	Number progressed in 2024–25	1
	Number of matters finalised in 2024–25	1

Table C – Prosecutions finalised with conviction by a court¹⁶ under the MP Act and related subordinate legislation during 2024–25

Party	Statute	Marine Park	Description	Court result		
				Court date	Penalty	Costs (legal and investigative)
Individual	Section 135(1)(a) of the Marine Parks Regulation 2017	Moreton Bay Marine Park	Unlawfully entered and used a zoned marine park for a prohibited purpose by taking a natural resource (fishing) in the Tripcony Bight-Long Island Marine National Park Zone near Bribie Island.	23/07/2024	\$2,500 fine	\$250 legal costs \$101.40 court costs

¹⁶ Prosecutions under the *Marine Parks Act 2004*, Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004, Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2024, Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2019, and Marine Parks Regulation 2017.

Table D – Summary of accreditations¹⁷ in place over State marine parks during 2024–25

Marine Park	Party or instrument accredited	Purpose	Date issued	Expiry date ¹⁸
Moreton Bay Marine Park	Oyster Industry Plan for Moreton Bay Marine Park (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)	Oyster industry	22/04/2016	N/A
Great Sandy Marine Park	Great Sandy Regional Marine Aquaculture Plan (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)	Aquaculture	23/01/2012	N/A
Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park	Whitsundays Plan of Management 1998	Protection and conservation of identified values	18/09/2020	N/A
	Woppaburra TUMRA (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	30/06/2014	29/06/2025 ¹⁹
	Yirrganydji TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	29/04/2014	30/04/2027
	Lama Lama TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	01/08/2013	30/09/2025
	Yuku-Baja-Muliku TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	16/08/2013	30/09/2025
	Gunggandji TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	28/06/2016	30/06/2025 ¹⁹
	Wuthathi TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	25/06/2008	30/09/2025
	Darumbal TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	29/11/2021	31/01/2037
	Port Curtis Coral Coast TUMRA ²⁰ (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	02/04/2019	02/04/2029
	Girringun TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	06/11/2019	31/10/2029
	Mandubarra TUMRA (QPWS/GBRMPA)	Traditional Use of Marine Resources	04/04/2018	04/04/2028
	The University of Queensland	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A
	Australian Museum	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A
	The Queensland Museum	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A
	Central Queensland University	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A

¹⁷ State-only and joint State-Commonwealth accreditations.

¹⁸ There is no requirement to specify an expiry date for accreditations (other than TUMRAs), however, an accreditation requires review if a new zoning plan for the marine park, to which it applies, is made.

¹⁹ This TUMRA is a continuation of a previous agreement as an extension to the original expiry date has been granted. An application for a new TUMRA is currently under assessment. The TUMRA continues to remain in effect until a new TUMRA with the traditional owners is executed.

²⁰ TUMRA extends into the Great Sandy Marine Park.

Marine Park	Party or instrument accredited	Purpose	Date issued	Expiry date ¹⁸
	University of Sydney	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A
	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Qld)	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A
	James Cook University	Limited impact research	10/02/2006	N/A
	The University of Technology, Sydney	Limited impact research	04/08/2006	N/A

Table E – Summary of other legislative provisions²¹ in place over State marine parks during 2024–25

Marine Park	Provision	Location	Activity regulated
Moreton Bay Marine Park	Special activity notice	Harry Atkinson Artificial Reef	Scuba diving, surface supplied air diving, snorkelling, spearfishing, commercial fishing.
		North Moreton Artificial Reef	Scuba diving, surface supplied air diving, commercial fishing.
		South Stradbroke Artificial Reef	Scuba diving, surface supplied air diving, commercial fishing.
		West Peel Artificial Reef	Scuba diving, surface supplied air diving, spearfishing, commercial fishing.
		Wild Banks Artificial Reef	Scuba diving, supplied air diving, commercial fishing, anchoring, spearfishing deeper than 12 metres.
		East Coochie Artificial Reef	Scuba diving, surface supplied air diving, spearfishing, commercial fishing.
		Tangalooma Island Resort	Participating in dolphin feeding in the authorised dolphin feeding activity.
	Regulatory notice	Redland Bay Claypan	Unauthorised motor vehicles are prohibited from tidal lands and waters.
		Bullock Creek	Unauthorised motor vehicles are prohibited from tidal lands and waters.
		Flinders Reef and Flat Rock	Limiting vessel capacity for use of public moorings.
Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park	Regulatory notice	Whitsunday area - Nelly Bay and Jonah Bay	Prohibited from bringing a vehicle, a domestic animal, lighting a fire and using generator, compressor, or motor.
		Byfield area - Five Rocks Beach	Vehicle access north of the vehicle beach access without a permit.
		Lady Musgrave Island and lagoon	Operating a vessel at planing speed or speed that could reasonably be expected to strike a turtle, anchoring in the no anchoring area or access channel, swimming or snorkelling in the access channel, lighting a fire on the island, beach or in the lagoon.
		Magnetic Island – West Point to Cockle Bay	Vehicles on tidal lands including beaches, salt pans and mudflats.
	Special activity notice	North West Island reef and surrounding waters	Human behaviours which attract sharks including processing fish product, dumping of fish scraps, and cleaning of fish processing equipment.

²¹ State-only and joint State-Commonwealth.