

Operational policy

Visitor management

Visitor use of Cedar Bay National Park and the adjoining Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Resource Management, (incorporating the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service). Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Purpose

This operational policy provides guidance to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) delegates deciding permit applications for visitor access to Cedar Bay National Park and the adjoining intertidal area of the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. It regulates camping and commercial tourism numbers in Cedar Bay to protect natural and cultural values and maintain the remote experience for small groups of walkers and campers.

Background

Cedar Bay National Park is approximately 5630 hectares in area and is situated at the northern end of Queensland's Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Wet Tropics Management Authority has classified Cedar Bay National Park as Zone A, having "high ecological integrity and (being) remote from disturbances associated with modern technological society". Cedar Bay offers some of the most scenic and undeveloped coastal scenery in the Wet Tropics. Its landscape classification setting of 2.5 reflects its highly natural character, modified by some post-European impacts including evidence of pest plants and animals and occasional, distant aircraft and marine vessels. QPWS infrastructure is limited to minor regulatory signs and basic walking tracks; subsequently, the camping area at Cedar Bay has no facilities. Visitor numbers are low as no roads access Cedar Bay and walking and boat access is difficult. Limited and difficult access also prevents regular site inspection and monitoring.

Cedar Bay National Park is managed by QPWS under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. It adjoins Queensland's Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park at high water and the Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park at mean low water. The area is classified as Conservation Park Zone under the *Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004*. There is currently no management plan under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* for Cedar Bay National Park or approved marine park management plan under the *Marine Parks Act 2004* for the adjacent area. The Rattlesnake Point (Marbaymba) area south of Cedar Bay has been declared a Restricted Access Area for cultural purposes under the *Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2006*.

The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people's Native Title over the Cedar Bay National Park was recognised by the Federal Court in 2007. Under the 2007 Eastern Yalanji Indigenous Land Use Agreements, Cedar Bay National Park will be included within a new, larger national park to be co-operatively managed by QPWS and the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people. This policy will be reviewed after declaration of the new national park.

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Cedar Bay is accessed by foot on rough tracks from Home Rule (7-9 hours) or the Bloomfield Road (4-6 hours). Boat-based visitation is by small, private vessels and prevailing south-easterly winds and poor anchorage often hinder access.

Access to the State and Commonwealth waters (including the intertidal area) is regulated through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and QPWS joint marine parks permit system. This policy guides permit assessment for:

- bushwalkers not camping at Cedar Bay, including boat transport to and from walking tracks
- campers, including boat transport to and from Cedar Bay camping area
- commercial day tours to Cedar Bay.

Policy statement

QPWS will provide for low-impact nature-based recreational opportunities on Cedar Bay National Park and the adjoining Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park.

Limited commercial operations to Cedar Bay (including the intertidal area and adjacent camping area) will be permitted based on the following conditions.

1. The operation is low-impact, nature-based and self-reliant.

Bushwalking

2. Walking access will be allowed on the walking tracks from Home Rule and the Bloomfield Road on either a free and independent or group activity permit basis.
3. Boat-based commercial operations for the sole purpose of transporting walkers to or from the walking tracks will be permitted to access Cedar Bay.
4. Where QPWS receives a commercial activity permit application to conduct guided walks to Cedar Bay, it will consult with traditional owners and consider the impacts on natural and cultural values and the remote visitor experience for small groups of walkers and campers before making a decision on the application.

Camping

5. A maximum of 5 groups per day or 20 people at any one time (PAOT) with a maximum stay of 7 nights are permitted to camp at the Cedar Bay camping area. One group will be on a commercial tour and four groups will be free and independent PAOT. Individual camping group sizes may not exceed 4 people PAOT.
6. Boat-based commercial operations for the sole purpose of transporting campers to or from the camping area will be permitted to access Cedar Bay, subject to the above maximum numbers.
7. Campers must hold appropriate camping permits for Cedar Bay National Park. Operators providing transport for campers must ensure those campers have a current camping permit for Cedar Bay National Park.
8. No facilities will be provided at the Cedar Bay beach camping area. Toilets, picnic tables or camping poles will not be available. Structures (tents) are not to be attached to trees.
9. All rubbish must be carried away from the site on departure and human waste will either be buried no less than 100 metres from the general camping area and watercourses or water bodies, or removed from the area.
10. Campers must be self-sufficient bringing in water, food, camping equipment and first-aid supplies.

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11. Water can be replenished in freshwater creeks at either the northern or southern ends of Cedar Bay, above the tidal influence, but caution should be used due to possible water contamination or presence of crocodiles.
12. Gas and other fuel burners are preferred for cooking purposes.

Commercial day tours

13. This policy does not permit commercial tourism activities at Cedar Bay, unless associated with transporting walkers or campers as outlined above. If other types of low-impact commercial activities are proposed, QPWS will consult with traditional owners and consider the impacts on natural and cultural values and the remote visitor experience for small groups of walkers and campers. If such commercial activities are considered suitable, QPWS will call for expressions of interest.
14. Traditional owner and other approved indigenous owned and/or operated ventures will be considered for the operations of commercial tours in this area.

Authorities

Nature Conservation Act 1992

Nature Conservation (Protected Area Management) Regulation 2006

Marine Parks (Great Barrier Reef Coast) Zoning Plan 2004

Marine Parks Regulation 2006

Disclaimer:

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Approved by

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Signature

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Date

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