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Further information

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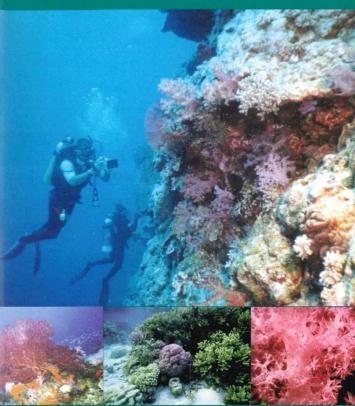
Website: www.naturebase.net

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YOUR GUIDE TO

ROWLEY SHOALS Marine Park



Entrusted to the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation, in partnership with other State and Commonwealth agencies and users, on behalf of all Australians.





Rowley Shoals Marine Park

The Rowley Shoals Marine Park was first gazetted in 1990.

The park was substantially increased in size and the zoning scheme amended in December 2004. The park now encompasses an area of approximately 87,632 ha.

The Rowley Shoals are Australia's best example of shelf edge coral atolls.

The shoals are located over 300 km off the Kimberley coast, and consist of three reefs: Imperieuse Reef, Clerke Reef and Mermaid Reef. Imperieuse Reef and Clerke Reef and their surrounding State Waters make up the Rowley Shoals Marine Park. Mermaid Reef is a Marine National Nature Reserve under Commonwealth legislation. The Rowley Shoals are home to an exceptionally rich and diverse array of oceanic coral reef flora and fauna typical of the Indo-West Pacific region. The area is a premier diving and nature-based tourism destination and also provides world class sports fishing in the deeper waters around Imperieuse Reef and Clerke Reef.

Managing the marine environment

The State Government is committed to the conservation of the State's marine biodiversity and the sustainable use of our coastal resources. A major strategy to achieve these objectives is to establish a network of marine conservation reserves along our coast. The WA system of marine reserves is part of Australia's National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas.

Other complementary ways of conserving and managing our marine environment include pollution control, environmental impact assessment of development proposals, fisheries management, wildlife protection, oil spill response capability and maritime safety regulations.

The conservation and sustainable use of WA's marine environment is everyone's responsibility. By working together to promote wise use we can ensure that future generations enjoy the same opportunities that exist today.

What are marine parks?

The Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (CALM Act) specifies that State Waters can be declared as one of three types of marine reserve — marine nature reserves, marine parks or marine management areas. The Rowley Shoals have been declared as a marine park.

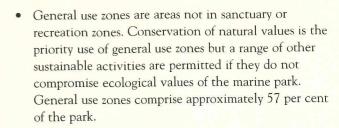
Marine parks are created to provide for the conservation of the marine environment and any features of particular archaeological, historical or scientific interest. A 'multiple-use' approach is used, in which opportunities for recreational and commercial activities that do not compromise the primary conservation goals are permitted.

Zoning is an important part of the management framework in multiple-use parks and is used to protect marine biodiversity and to manage human uses in an equitable and sustainable way.

Rowley Shoals Marine Park zones

The Rowley Shoals Marine Park has sanctuary, recreation and general use zones.

- Sanctuary zones are 'look but don't take' areas which
 provide a high level of protection to plants, animals
 and habitats while allowing passive recreation and
 tourism activities, nature appreciation, scientific study
 and education. Sanctuary zones within State waters
 comprise approximately 24 perc ent of the Park.
- Recreation zones provide for nature conservation and recreation, including recreational fishing, where this is compatible with conservation values. Recreation zones comprise approximately 19 per cent of the park.



How can I use and enjoy the park?

While many existing activities can continue, there are specific restrictions on activities in some zones. In respect to the major commercial and recreational activities in the area:

- access by boats is generally permitted throughout the marine park although localised restrictions may apply to protect corals;
- fishing is not permitted in sanctuary zones;
- recreational fishing is permitted in recreation and general use zones with additional restrictions on netting, spearfishing and the species that can be taken; and
- fisheries legislation restricts the 'take' of some species such as serranids (cods, groupers and coral trout), wrasses (specifically Maori wrasse), tuskfish, humphead parrotfish, live molluscs and live coral.
- Boat owners are encouraged to moor in designated anchoring areas or use moorings when available, and avoid mooring in or adjacent to coral areas. Localised restrictions may apply to protect corals, including the current requirement to anchor in the Clerke Reef designated anchorage area only. Maps and coordinates of localised restrictions that may apply are available from the West Kimberley District Office. For further guidance on anchoring and mooring areas please contact the West Kimberley Office before leaving for the Rowley Shoals.

Before engaging in activities in the marine park, users should refer to the permitted activities table and map in this brochure and check with the Department of Fisheries for fishing regulations that apply.

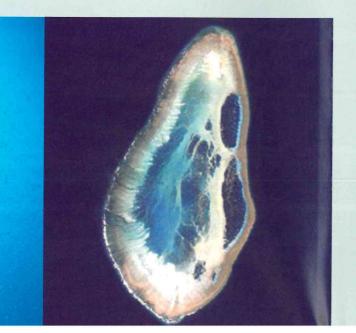


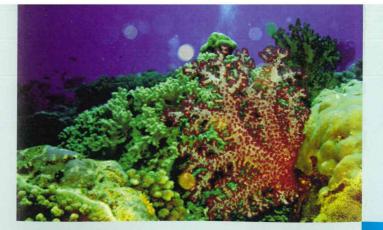
PROTECTING THE KEY VALUES

Ecological values

The coral reef communities of the Rowley Shoals Marine Park are exceptionally rich and diverse, representing oceanic coral reef communities typical of the Indo-West Pacific. Lying in the clear, outer waters of the Rowley Shelf, the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is home to many species not typically found in the relatively turbid, inshore waters of northern tropical WA and contributes to the conservation of WA's marine biodiversity.

Along with Seringapatam Reef and Scott Reef further north, the Rowley Shoals form part of a series of ecological 'stepping stones' linking WA and south-east Asian waters. The larvae of many coral reef species, whose origins are in Indonesian waters, are transported southward by currents flowing from the Pacific Ocean to the northern Indian Ocean, stopping off at reef systems in the current's path. The Rowley Shoals are believed to be an important upstream source of fish and coral larvae for reefs further south in WA.





The Rowley Shoals are an exceptional geological example of shelf-edge atolls on the Australian continental shelf, with the three reefs representing three distinct stages of atoll formation and providing insights into the historical development of such atolls.

The Rowley Shoals contain some of the most spectacular coral reefs in the world. In addition to a rich diversity of corals, fish, molluscs and other invertebrates, a number of which are unique to Australia, the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is home to sea turtles. It is the second largest breeding colony of the rare red-tailed tropic bird, and at least 13 species of marine mammals visit the area. The deep waters adjacent to the atolls support abundant populations of large, pelagic species such as sharks, marlin and sailfish.

Social values

The relative isolation of the Rowley Shoals means the marine park is renowned for its unspoilt coral gardens, giant clams, lumbering potato cods and other abundant reef and game fish. The spectacular seascapes combining islands, lagoons, steep 'drop-offs' and oceanic waters, as well as the sense of wilderness, are attracting an increasing number of visitors to the area, from both Australia and overseas. Most visitors arrive on commercial tour boats and enjoy SCUBA diving and snorkelling, fishing, boating, swimming and beach walking. Nature-based tourism is a growing industry. Commercial fishing is prohibited in the marine park.

The scientific value of the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is considerable. Because of its relatively undisturbed condition, the Rowley Shoals Marine Park is an important domestic and international scientific reference location against which the 'health' of intensively used reefs of WA and the Indo-West Pacific can be compared. Such comparisons are essential to our understanding of the effects of human activities on coral reef communities.





How will the Rowley Shoals Marine Park be managed?

Effective management of the marine park depends on the support, cooperation and participation of the major commercial and recreational user groups. Visitors need to acknowledge, understand and support the objectives of the reserves.

Rowley Shoals Marine Park is vested (legally entrusted) to the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority, a community-based body established by the State Government to oversee the statewide system of marine conservation reserves.

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is the primary day-to-day manager of the marine park, in partnership with other State and Commonwealth Government agencies, particularly the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and major user groups. The DoF will continue to manage recreational fishing in the marine park in close cooperation with DEC. The detailed management arrangements for the marine park are outlined in the Rowley Shoals Marine Park Management Plan 2007-2017. A Memorandum of Understanding outlines cooperative arrangements between DEC, DEH and DoF.

The primary focus of management will be the implementation and enforcement of the zoning scheme and the establishment of education, public participation, research and monitoring programs. Ongoing user group involvement in the day to day management of the park will be vital.

Education and public participation programs help to raise community awareness, understanding and support for the marine park and promote community cooperation and involvement in management. Research programs aim to develop an understanding of the natural and social environment of the marine park, provide baseline information for monitoring programs and information to assist management.

Monitoring programs detect changes in the environment and provide the information to trigger management action before undesirable impacts occur.



What can you do to care for the Rowley Shoals Marine Park?

KNOW your park, the boundaries, the regulations, the zones and what you can do, and where.

BE AWARE THAT your activities may affect the marine park.

LOOK AFTER YOUR PARK BY:

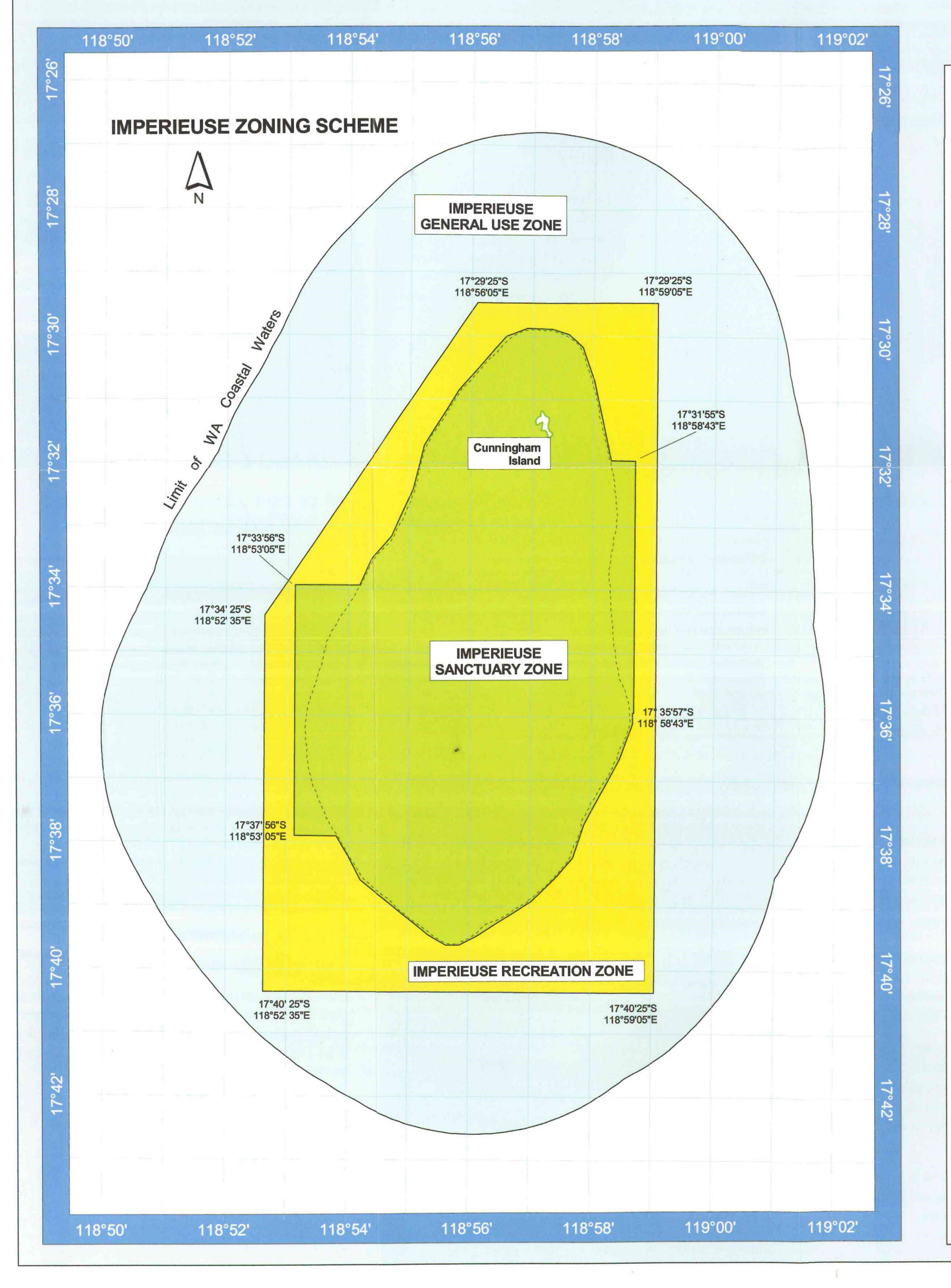
- involving yourself and others in caring for the marine park:
- taking your litter home with you when you leave;
- avoiding disturbance to or feeding of marine wildlife such as birds or fish; and
- observing fishing restrictions, bag limits and size limits.

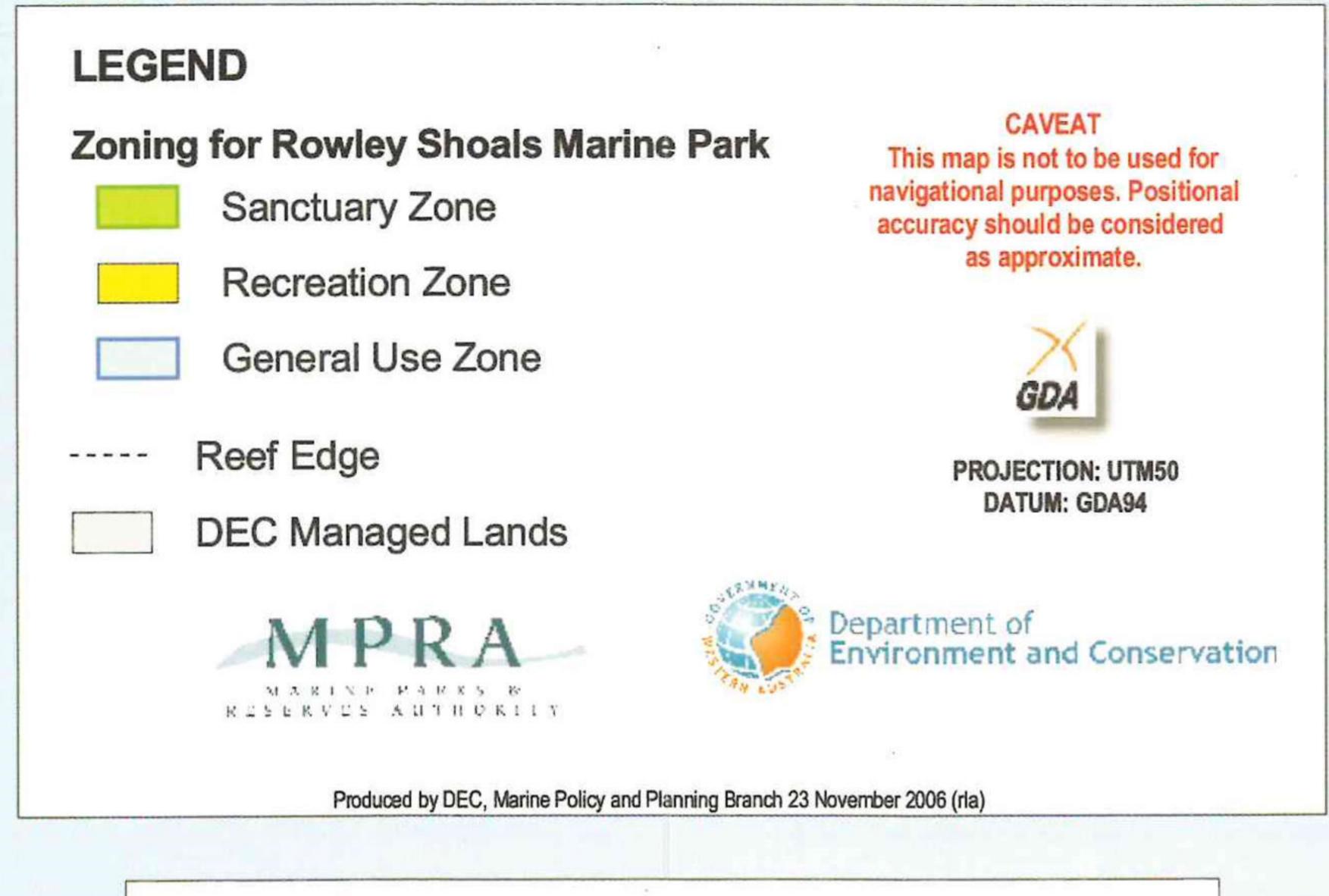
The Management Advisory Committee

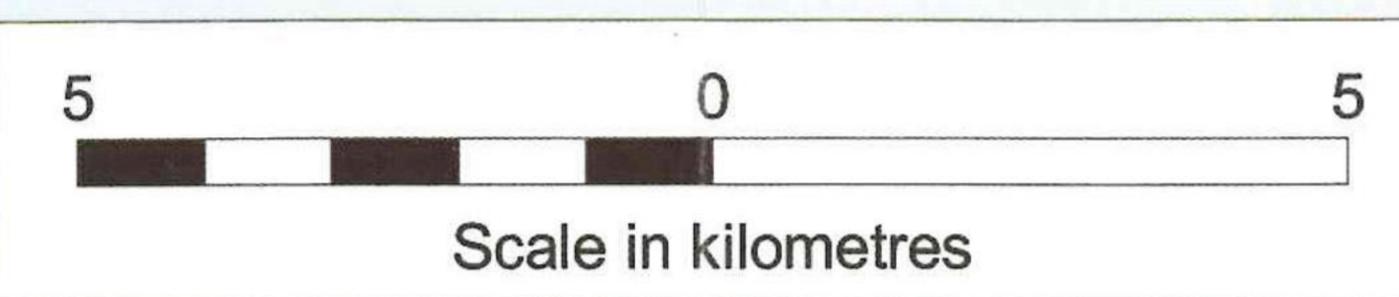
Industry, local users and the community will be able to contribute to the ongoing management of the marine park through a Management Advisory Committee that helps DEC manage the marine reserves. (Contact DEC for details.)

Remember if we all work together we can protect and enjoy this magnificent environment!

ZONING SCHEME for the ROWLEY SHOALS MARINE PARK







USES PERMITTED IN EACH ZONE OF THE ROWLEY SHOALS MARINE PARK

Anchoring may be restricted in specific areas to protect fragile subtidal coral reef communities. However, these restrictions would not apply to a situation where life and property is threatened. Subject to the EP Act.		Rowley Shoals Marine Park		
Boating may be restricted during the life of this plan in specific areas where there is a demonstrated need to do so (i.e. due to environmental or social impacts) Take of protected fish species is not permitted throughout the Park. Spearfishing is not permitted in the Clerke Lagoon Recreation Zone. pecial Proposals for moorings will be considered in accordance with the moorings plan, and assessed by the DPI (for safety considerations) and DEC (for environmental, recreational and equity considerations). assess Proposal will be assessed by relevant agencies in accordance with standard procedures.	Sanctuary Zone	Recreation Zone	General Use Zone	
ACTIVITY				
COMMERCIAL				
Commercial fishing b	No	No	No	
Commercial specimen collecting	No	No	No	
Aquaculture and pearling b	No	No	Assess	
Charter vessels - fishing d	No	Yes	Yes	
Charter vessels - other c	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Other tourism activities (e.g. sea planes) a,d	Assess	Assess	Assess	
Wildlife interaction ^c	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Mineral and petroleum drilling f and development	No	No	Assess	
Mineral and petroleum exploration (seismic) f	Assess	Assess	Assess	
RECREATION				
Recreational line fishing b,h	No	Yes	Yes	
Recreational netting h	No	No	Yes	
Spearfishing b,h	No	Yesi	Yes	
Spearfishing on compressed air h	No	No	Yes	
Recreational specimen collecting	No	No	No	
Diving and snorkelling	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Boating (motor and non-motorised boating) a,g	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Anchoring	Yese	Yese	Yes	
Surface water sports a,g	Yes	Yes	Yes	
OTHER ACTIVITIES				
Research d	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Petroleum pipelines ^f (including dredging for pipelines)	No	No	Assess	
Dredging and dredge spoil dumping ^f for shipping activities	No	No	Assess	
	Chanial	Special	Yes	
Moorings d	Special	Opecial	100	

