

Family Islands National Park

Management Plan

2000

Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment and Science**

© State of Queensland, 2023

The Department of Environment and Science acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

This management plan does not intend to affect, diminish or extinguish native title or associated rights.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms. You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

For more information on this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

The Family Islands National Park Management Plan 2000 has been extended in 2023, in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the plan's original management intent and direction.

If you need to access this document in a language other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone Library Services on +61 7 3170 5470.

This publication can be made available in an alternative format (e.g. large print or audiotape) on request for people with vision impairment; phone +61 7 3170 5470 or email <library@des.qld.gov.au>.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Background to the Family Islands	4
1.2 Planning in the Family Islands area	5
2. Management directions and purposes.....	5
2.1 Directions.....	5
2.2 Purposes.....	7
3. Basis for management	7
3.1 Regional context.....	7
3.2 Planning area	7
3.3 Planning process	7
3.4 Management obligations	8
3.4.1 Legislation	8
3.4.2 World Heritage status	8
3.4.3 Native title	8
3.4.4 Leases and agreements	8
3.5 Values.....	8
3.5.1 Natural resource values	8
3.5.2 Cultural values	10
3.5.3 Recreation and tourism	10
3.5.4 Educational and scientific values	11
4. Management strategies.....	11
4.1 Natural Resource Management	11
4.1.1 Landscape	11
4.1.2 Plants and animals	12
4.1.3 Native title	13
4.1.4 Fire management	13
4.2 Native title.....	14
4.3 Cultural heritage conservation.....	14
4.4 Recreation, tourism and visitor use	15
4.4.1 Permits	15
4.4.2 Dunk Island (excluding the Spit area)	15
4.4.3 Dunk Island Spit	16
4.4.4 Purtaboi Island	17
4.4.5 Kumboola and Mung-Um-Gnackum Islands	18
4.4.6 Wheeler Island	18

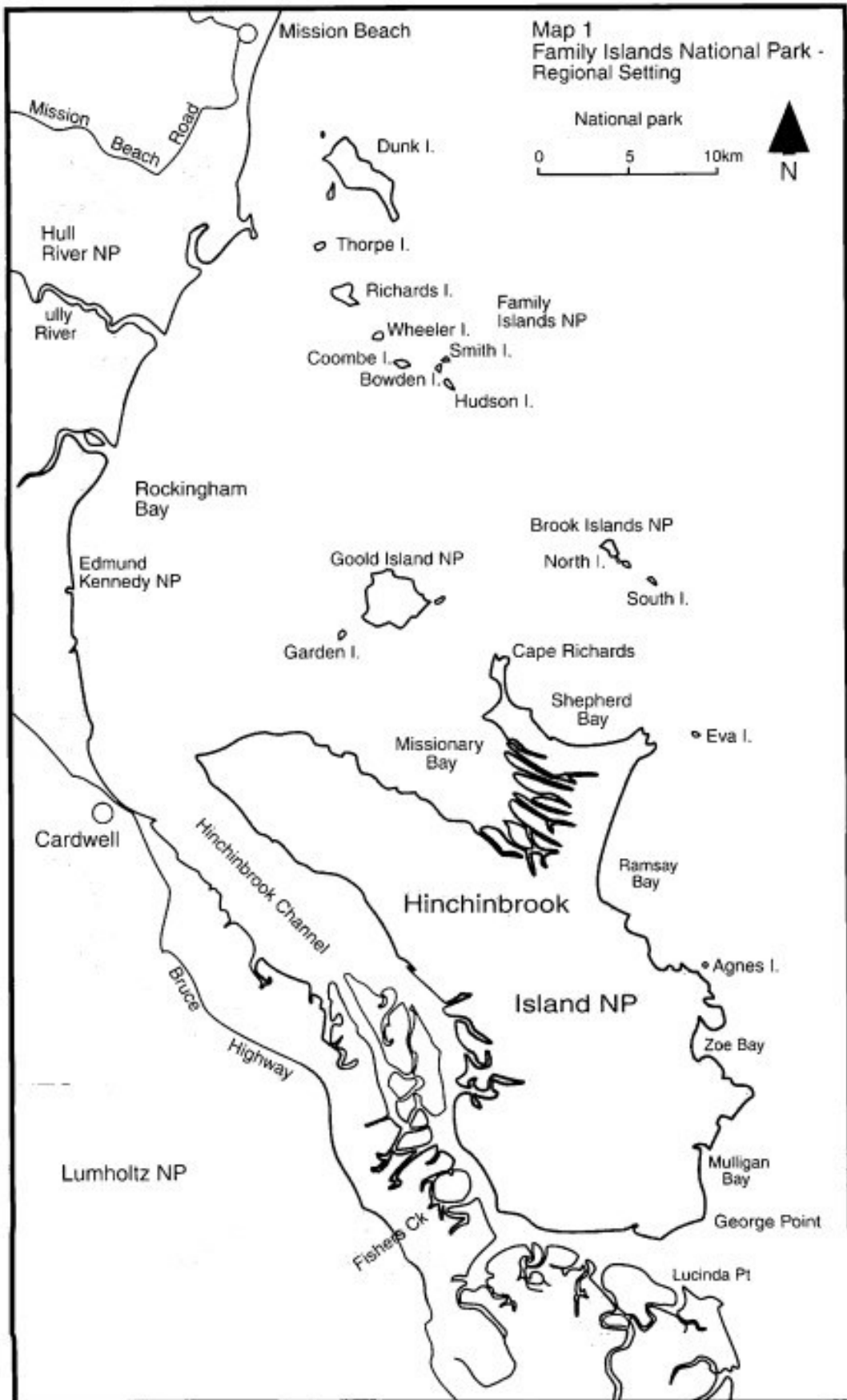
4.4.7 Coombe Island	19
4.5 Education and interpretation	20
4.6 Research and monitoring	21
4.7 Additions to the Family Islands National Park	21
4.8 Park management	22
5. Complementary management of the adjacent marine park	22

Summary

This management plan provides the framework and guidelines on how Family Islands National Park will be managed. It sets out the considerations, outcomes and strategies that proposed to form the basis on which day-to-day management decisions are made.

This plan was prepared in October 1999, in accordance with s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Act). In 2023 the plan was extended, in keeping with s120G of the Act. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Department of Environment and Science at ParkManagementPlans@des.qld.gov.au.

This management plan was prepared by Department of Environment and Science staff. Thanks are due to those groups and individuals who made submissions in response to the draft plan.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Family Islands

This document contains a management plan for the Family Islands National Park. Together with the other islands of Rockingham Bay - the Brook Islands, Goold Island and Hinchinbrook Island - these island national parks provide both an important recreational resource and a vital area for conservation of natural and cultural resources. Management of this resource requires some co-ordination of these different national parks and of the surrounding waters.

Wheeler, Coombe, Smith, Bowden and Hudson Islands were first declared national parks in 1936, Kumboola Island in 1939, Mung-Um-Gnackum and Purtaboi (Mound) Islands in 1954 and Dunk Island in 1960. In 1994, these national park islands in the Family Group were amalgamated to form the Family Islands National Park. The Family Islands National Park consists of nine islands, most of them small and all consisting of granitic rock. The park is subdivided into the southern Family Islands comprising Wheeler, Coombe, Hudson, Bowden and Smith Islands and the northern Family Islands, comprising Dunk and its satellite islands - Purtaboi, Mung-Um-Gnackum and Kumboola Islands.

Bedarra and Thorpe Islands are privately owned and this plan does not address them. In addition to private residences, Bedarra Island has two resorts. Historically, Wheeler Island has been a popular picnicking destination for guests from these resorts.

Dunk Island is by far the largest island covering 970ha, of which 730ha is national park and the balance freehold. There is a large resort on the freehold part of Dunk Island and private residences on a separate freehold portion. The national park consists of two parts and they are separated by freehold land. The smaller part comprises the sand spit and a section of this is leased to Cardwell Shire Council with part of this lease sub-leased to the resort. A public jetty is located adjacent to the sub-leased area.

Management of this sub-leased area is subject to a management committee, which includes representatives of the Shire, the Dunk Island Resort and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). Two documents, the Dunk Island Spit Master Plan (October 1995) and the Dunk Island Spit Sub-Lease Operations Agreement (December 1998) have been endorsed by the management committee to guide management of the sub-leased area. These documents provide for the sub-lease to be managed for day use, by resort guests and the public, and for camping.

The highest peak in the park is Mt Kootaloo on Dunk Island, which is 271 m above sea level. Dunk Island has a varied topography including sandy beaches and rocky shores on the leeward side, slightly undulating slopes, foothills and steeper semi-rugged terrain. A sand spit and beaches are located on the western side, and there are also sand beaches on the south western end of the island. At least two creeks have water for most of the year. Dunk Island has a circuit walking track via Mount Kootaloo and Coconut Beach.

In the southern Family Islands, Coombe Island is 49ha, Wheeler 31 ha, Hudson 20ha, Smith and Bowden, each covering 10ha are less than half a kilometre across at their widest points. All five islands rise to rocky peaks no more than 100m above sea level. All have steep escarpments on the north-easterly and south-easterly aspects, distinctive boulder formations and, with the exception of Smith Island, have shelving spits of coarse sand or coral rubble on the north-west corners, and these provide sheltered access points. The only permanent fresh water occurs at a small spring on the northern side of Wheeler Island. Wheeler Island has picnic tables and a toilet, but there are no facilities on the other southern Family Islands.

In the northern Family islands, Kumboola Island covers 12ha, Mung-Um-Gnackum Island covers 2ha and Purtaboi Island covers 6ha. None of these islands have facilities.

Significant seabird breeding occurs on Dunk, Purtaboi and Woln-Garin Islands, and Battleship Rock (Pee-Rahm-Ah Island), the latter two islands being unallocated State land (USL).

Management in the past has allowed camping in the Family Islands. Camping is currently permitted on Wheeler, Coombe and Dunk Islands. All the southern Family Islands, except Smith Island, are suitable for recreation. Picnic and day visitor facilities are available at Wheeler and Dunk Islands, while Coombe, Hudson and Bowden are also used for picnicking, although facilities are not provided.

The Family Islands were an area of cultural and spiritual significance for the original inhabitants, and this undoubtedly is true for their descendants today. There are reports of rock art and middens on Dunk Island while all the Family Islands have Aboriginal names and stories that relate to them.

The islands' locations, natural features and their accessibility combine to offer opportunities for a peaceful, near-natural, island experience with open sea views to adjacent islands and to the majestic peaks of Hinchinbrook Island to the south.

The Family Islands National Park is part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and this places an obligation on QPWS to manage the area with World Heritage values to the forefront.

1.2 Planning in the Family Islands area

Management plans for Hinchinbrook Island National Park, Brook Islands National Park and Gool Island National Park have been developed concurrently as is the Cardwell/Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Management Plan (under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*). Plans of Management for the Commonwealth and State marine park areas adjacent to these national parks are also being prepared in association with the Cardwell/Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Management Plan. Combined, this series of plans will provide both strategic direction for the area and management of particular sites at a finer scale. In the preparation of this series of plans, consistency across jurisdictional boundaries has been a focus, ensuring complementary management of the marine park and national parks of the area.

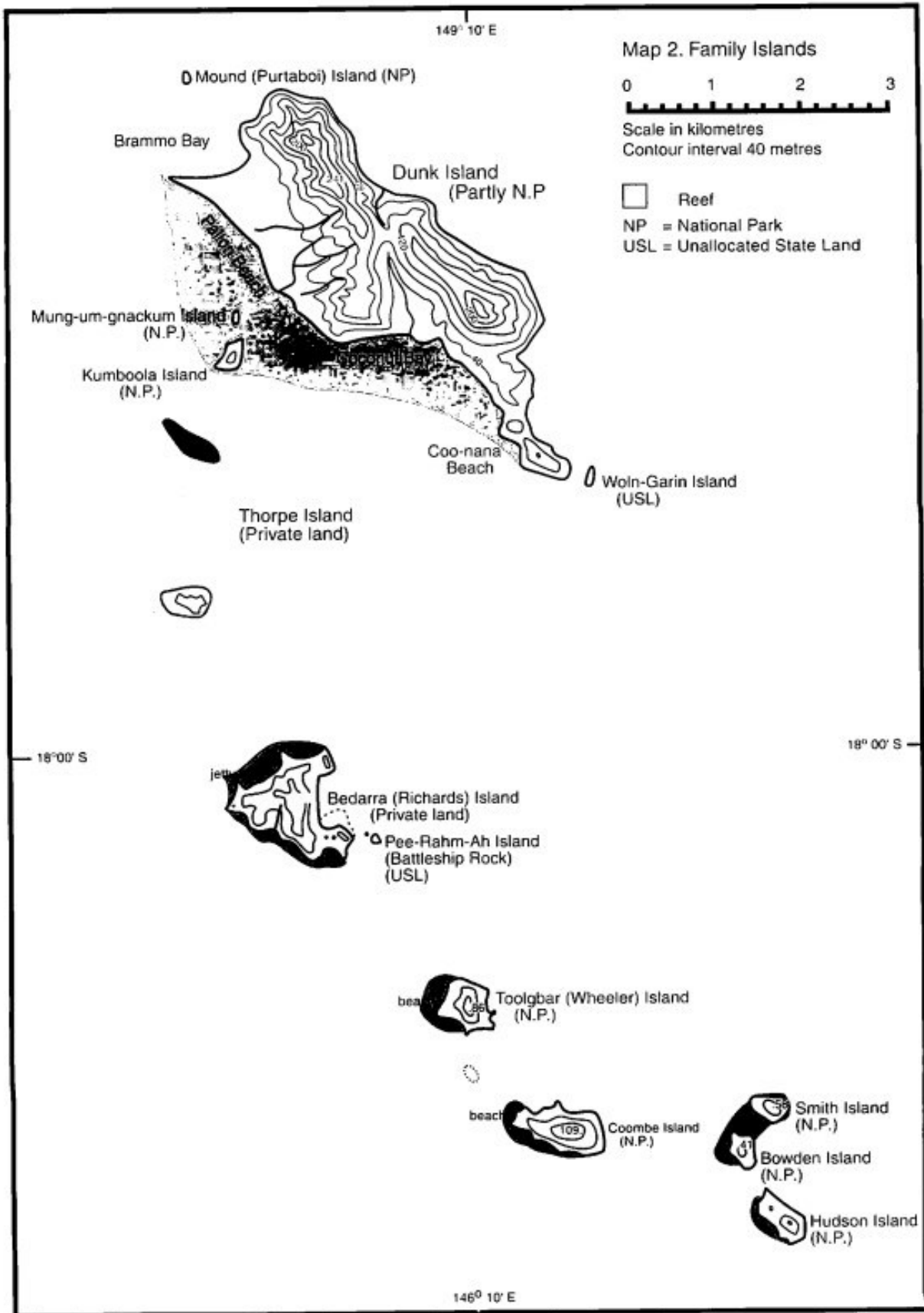
The Interim Guidelines which were released for public comment in August 1996, included consideration of the fringing reefs and other marine issues and consideration of only the southern part of the Family Islands National Park. While this plan includes some suggestions on marine issues in a section on complementary management, these are not binding. Marine areas which are not part of a protected area, are not included in this plan and will be covered in the marine park planning process already underway.

2. Management directions and purposes

2.1 Directions

The Family Islands National Park will be a place where the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the islands, which have resulted in their inclusion in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, have high priority. This will be balanced by sustainable recreational use. Preservation of the distinctive landscape will be a major consideration in managing the area. The area will be promoted for its natural values. No visitor facilities, which conflict with the natural experience of visitors, will be provided, except at Dunk Island Spit. Generally, visitor use will be kept to levels which have low impact on the natural experience of fellow users and on the environment, with the exception of the dedicated walking track system on Dunk Island and the developed area on Dunk Island Spit, which will be developed and maintained to withstand the impacts of large numbers of visitors. Opportunities for nature-based recreation and for appreciating and learning about the environment of the Family Islands will be provided. At Dunk Island Spit recreation and access to the island will be priorities, but necessary facilities will be designed to cause as little visual impact as possible.

Opportunities will be provided for Aboriginal people and others in the community to be involved in, and consulted about, the management of the Family Islands National Park.



2.2 Purposes

The purposes of management for the national park and marine park planning area will be to ensure that:

- natural processes continue undisturbed over most of the Family Islands National Park
- the natural landscapes of the Family Islands remain intact to the greatest possible extent, particularly in the southern Family Islands
- research and monitoring, which provides information useful or potentially useful, for management of the islands' natural communities and cultural resources, and is of low impact, is encouraged
- the cultural and spiritual values of the Family Islands are not damaged or destroyed, and appropriate Aboriginal groups have an input into decisions affecting their particular interests
- cultural resources are preserved and, with the support of traditional custodians, explained to the public
- opportunities for nature-based, sustainable recreational experiences in settings ranging from developed to undisturbed, are provided; and
- access and intensive recreational activities at Dunk Island Spit are permitted, while maintaining the sand spit ecosystem as far as possible and ensuring that erosion is not accelerated.

3. Basis for management

3.1 Regional context

The Family Islands National Park includes a group of nine continental islands with the closest island (Dunk Island) located about 4 km offshore from Mission Beach. Along with the Brook Islands, the Family Islands form an arc of islands enclosing the semi-sheltered waters of Rockingham Bay. The Family Islands National Park includes islands with very different levels of use, from heavily used, i.e. Dunk Island to largely untouched, i.e. Smith Island.

3.2 Planning area

The planning area comprises the Family Islands National Park which includes Hudson, Bowden, Smith, Coombe, Wheeler, Dunk, Mung-Um-Gnackum, Kumboola and Purtaboi Islands. Bedarra and Thorpe Islands are privately owned and are not addressed in this plan. Woln-Garin and Pee-Rahm-Ah Islands are unallocated State land.

3.3 Planning process

Interim Guidelines for the management of the southern Family Islands were released for public comment in August 1996 along with the draft management plans for Brook Islands and Goold Island National Parks. These guidelines included consideration of the fringing reefs and other marine issues which are not covered by the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. They did not constitute a plan for the whole national park as they omitted the northern islands, therefore they have no legal standing under that Act.

This management plan has been developed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The management plan's purpose is to propose clear directions for management of the Family Islands National Park. To do this, detailed management actions are set out where necessary.

In accord with s 115 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, advertisements giving notice of the publication of the draft plan were published on 5 May 1999 inviting public comment. Twelve submissions were received from a variety of individuals and interest groups. These submissions were used in preparing this plan.

This final plan is given effect under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Under s 125, the plan must be reviewed within 10 years.

3.4 Management obligations

3.4.1 Legislation

The management plan must comply with all relevant State and Commonwealth legislation.

Of particular significance are the management principles for national parks in s 17 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* which states that a national park is to be managed to:

- (a) provide, to the greatest extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and protection of the area's cultural resources and values
- (b) present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- (c) ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.

The Act further states that (a) is the "cardinal principle for the management of national parks".

3.4.2 World Heritage status

The Family Islands lie within the Great Barrier Reef Region which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981. Listing obliges managers to "protect conserve, present, rehabilitate and transmit to future generations the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, within the meaning of the World Heritage Convention".

3.4.3 Native title

At the time of writing this plan, it was not clear whether native title rights exist over Family Islands National Park, however it is possible that such rights do exist. The *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993* provides for the recognition and protection of native title. This plan does not intend to affect, diminish or extinguish any native title rights.

3.4.4 Leases and agreements

A lease has been issued to Cardwell Shire Council over part of the sand spit section of the national park, and a sub-lease to the resort has been granted over a smaller part of the leased area. The sublease area is being managed subject to the lease and sub-lease conditions, the Dunk Island Spit Master Plan, Dunk Island Spit Sub-lease Operations Agreement, and to a management committee comprising QPWS, the Cardwell Shire Council and the Dunk Island Resort. All of this imposes obligations on the Service.

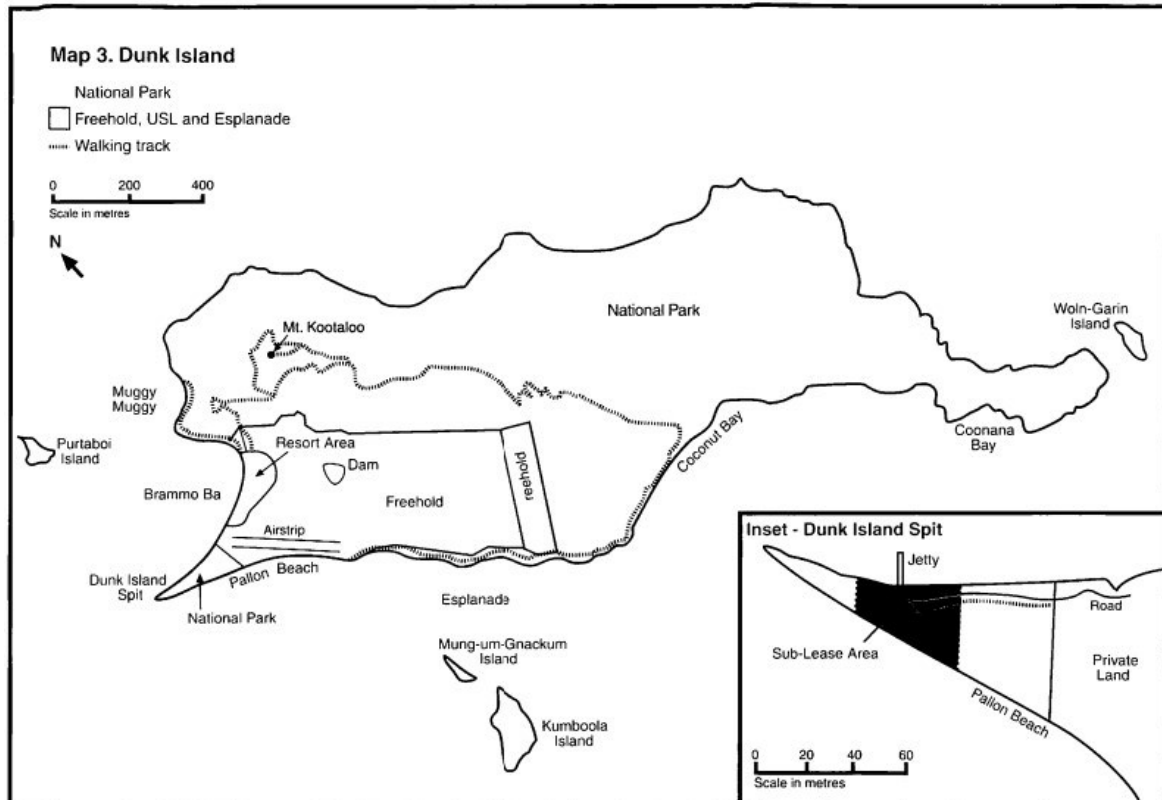
3.5 Values

3.5.1 Natural resource values

World heritage values

Although the Family Islands are only part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, they meet most of the four criteria of outstanding universal value, as set out in the World Heritage Convention:

- an example of a major stage of the earth's evolutionary history;
- an outstanding example of geological processes, biological evolution and peoples' interaction with their natural environment;
- a place with unique, rare and superlative natural phenomena; and
- a place which provides habitats for rare and endangered species of plants and animals.



These values will be described in more detail below.

Island landscapes

The habitats in the higher parts of the islands in the Family Group are relatively undisturbed. However, all the sand spit areas have had heavy use over many years, and all show some evidence of removal of vegetation and erosion.

The Family Islands along with Hinchinbrook Island, Goold Island and the Brook Islands are an integral part of the landscape of Rockingham Bay. Their small size, lush tropical vegetation, sculptured granite boulders, undisturbed appearance and sandy beaches fringed with dense vegetation combine to create a landscape of regionally significant appeal.

Fauna

Detailed fauna surveys have not been conducted in the Family Islands National Park, except for annual monitoring of breeding seabirds. In addition, there are incidental reports of various species. White-bellied sea-eagles and ospreys use the islands as nesting sites. The beach stone-curlew, once a common bird, is now classed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and might well be reduced to less than 1000 individuals Australia-wide. The beach stone-curlew and the sooty oystercatcher (classed as rare under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*) have been reported on Purtaboi and Dunk Islands. Wheeler Island and Battleship Rock are two of the few recorded nesting places of the white-rumped swiftlet (also classed as rare) which nests, between September and February, in caves amongst the granite rocks.

Increased human presence has affected the occurrence of breeding colonies of seabirds throughout the Family Islands National Park, particularly the ground or beach nesting species. For example, the bridled tern nests among rocks and under vegetation away from the beaches, and as a result breeding activities have not been subjected to the same level of human disturbance. In the past, black-naped terns have nested on all of the Family Islands, while nesting of roseate and bridled terns has occurred on all but Wheeler and Coombe Islands. Other seabird species that have been recorded breeding in the Family Islands National Park include crested and lesser crested terns. Of significance is the little tern,

classed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, and endangered under the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*, which has nested on the sand spits of Dunk, Bowden and Smith Islands. In recent years, regular breeding of ground nesting seabirds has been recorded at Purtaboi, Dunk, Woln-Garin Islands and Battleship Rock. Although monitoring has concentrated on the more significant seabird breeding locations in the Family Islands, it is likely that colonies also nest on Kumboola and Mung-Um-Gnackum Islands which receive comparatively little use.

Little is known of the terrestrial fauna species of the Family Islands. Numerous bird species are present and various species of monitors, geckos, skinks and snakes. Small mammals and butterfly species including the Ulysses and Cairns birdwing are present on Dunk Island. Fish are present in the freshwater creeks on Dunk Island. Jungle perch and various other species are likely to be present, including rainbow fish, Pacific blue-eye, snakehead gudgeon, speckled and spot fin gobies, and long finned eels.

Vegetation

The southern Family Islands support rainforest species including the rare palm *Arenga australasica*. Coombe and Wheeler Islands support rainforest and transitional forests with eucalypts. Dunk Island supports a mosaic of rainforest (mostly complex mesophyll vine forest), and transitional forest types with eucalypt emergents and rainforest understorey in more exposed areas. Mangrove communities are present on the south side of the island where there is protection from the prevailing winds, while an area of wind-sheared heath is present on the northeastern headland of the island. Mung-Um-Gnackum and Kumboola Islands support rainforest and transitional forests with eucalyptus emergents. Fringing communities also support mangrove and pandanus species.

The vegetation is not particularly well-known and other rare or threatened species may be present.

3.5.2 Cultural values

There is evidence of Aboriginal use of the Family Islands. Using bark canoes, Aborigines were regular visitors to the islands. In addition to the physical evidence of Aboriginal use including middens and cave paintings, these islands, in common with many other areas, were of cultural and spiritual significance to the Aboriginal people of the area and undoubtedly retain this significance today. The primary creation story of the local Aboriginal people concerns Girrugar the 'surveyor' who was half man and half eel, and who visited and named places on the land and sea. Aboriginal people are often named for places and events which occur in these stories. The Aboriginal names of the Family Islands are known, indicating a strong Aboriginal presence.

The European history of the Family Islands is well documented due to the writings of E.J. Banfield who lived on Dunk Island at the turn of the century and wrote four books documenting much detail on the natural history and the indigenous people of the area. There are few tangible remains of the Banfield settlement, which was on the site of the present Dunk Island Resort.

3.5.3 Recreation and tourism

The Family Islands National Park offers visitors recreational experiences ranging from resort activities to near wilderness experiences. Dunk Island offers resort style activities including water sports and luxury accommodation. The southern Family Islands offer camping and day trips in a relatively undisturbed environment which features isolated small island settings. There are limited opportunities for snorkelling adjacent to Dunk, Hudson and Bowden Islands. A number of commercial operators also run regular trips to Dunk, Wheeler, Bowden and Hudson Islands. Commercial sea kayaking, sailing, fast catamarans, large cruising vessels, ferry and water taxi services offer a range of opportunities for tourists wishing to experience the Family Islands. However, the focus has been on maintaining nature-based activities.

3.5.4 Educational and scientific values

Little scientific research has been conducted at Family Islands National Park and there is a need for baseline information on the flora and fauna in this area. The presence of the resort on Dunk Island makes it a valuable focal point for education and interpretation. Commercial operators run trips to Dunk, Wheeler, Hudson and Bowden Islands offering opportunities for education and interpretation.

4. Management strategies

4.1 Natural Resource Management

4.1.1 Landscape

Background information

The Family Islands National Park consists of small, undeveloped islands with the exception of the larger Dunk Island, which has a large resort and private residences on sections of freehold land. The small area of national park located at the sand spit also consists of leased and sub-leased areas.

Apart from the Dunk Island Spit and resort area, these islands have a largely unaltered visual appeal. Facilities and structures such as buildings, transmission towers and pontoons would detract from the natural values of island landscapes.

The Spit area at Dunk Island has been highly modified. It supports a jetty, cafe, water sports centre and campground, and an airport and large resort are nearby. Dunk Island, with its jetty, and close proximity to the mainland, attracts many commercial operators who operate regular trips to the Spit including a water taxi service. With such high use, the Spit has a highly modified landscape. However, Dunk Island also has sandy beaches with rainforest covered mountain backdrops, and spectacular seascapes, making it attractive to the visitor. These attributes, along with coconut palms, represent the popular conception of a tropical island. The guidelines for the management of the Spit on Dunk Island are outlined in the Dunk Island Spit Master Plan which is an agreement between the Cardwell Shire Council, Dunk Island Resort and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

The southern Family Islands are small isolated islands with a largely unaltered visual appeal. The only non-natural element in the landscape is a resort development on Bedarra Island and this is not intrusive when viewed from the southern Family Group. The major appeal of the southern Family Islands' landscape lies in the small size and undeveloped nature of the islands and the feeling of isolation. Facilities and structures such as buildings and transmission towers would detract from the natural values of the landscape.

Desired outcomes

- The natural landscape values of all the national park areas, other than the Dunk Island Spit, remain intact.
- The recreational setting of the Dunk Island Spit is maintained, with natural landscape values retained as far as possible.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- infrastructure necessary for access to Dunk Island and for recreational activities will be permitted on Dunk Island Spit in a designated area. Buildings must be of low profile and should be screened with appropriate native shrubs. Any new buildings must also be modular and constructed in a manner that allows for their easy relocation should they be threatened by erosion.
- Existing natural landscape values of the Spit will be preserved.
- On all locations other than the Dunk Island Spit, any buildings or facilities must be constructed or located so that they are not visible from more than 100 m offshore.
- No infrastructure will be constructed on the southern Family Islands except for necessary toilet facilities.

4.1.2 Plants and animals

Background information

The small islands are susceptible to invasion by weeds and feral animals. The islands' vegetation cover, particularly on the sand spits, is susceptible to damage by bad weather and uncontrolled human use. Coconut trees are present on Hudson, Bowden, Coombe, Wheeler and Dunk Islands, however, they are not present on Smith Island. The size of existing trees and references in early explorers' journals suggest that they are very recent arrivals. Coconuts have the capacity to alter the appearance and ecology of the sand spits of the islands. In many areas coconuts are now accepted by the local population and are a much-loved feature of the landscape.

There has been little research or inventory work carried out on the flora and fauna of the Family Islands National Park.

While bridled terns continue to breed throughout the Family Islands, Purtaboi, Dunk, Wain-Garin Islands and Battleship Rock support the most regular breeding of ground nesting seabird species. Purtaboi Island supports small, but important, breeding colonies of seabirds including black-naped terns, lesser crested terns, crested terns, roseate terns, and bridled terns. These species, except the lesser crested tern, have also nested on Dunk Island (on the sand spit west of the developed area). The little tern, which as mentioned, is classed as rare under Queensland legislation and endangered under Commonwealth legislation, has nested recently on Dunk Island.

Feral pigs and cane toads have been recorded for a number of years at Dunk Island. Weed species present within the national park at Dunk Island include lantana and sensitive plant. Singapore daisy is present in the freehold land adjacent to the national park and has the potential to move into the national park, where it could become a major problem. Weed species are also present on the other islands of the Family Group but in minor occurrences. Most weeds are removed as part of routine island maintenance.

Desired outcomes

- The composition, distribution and condition of the islands' natural terrestrial ecosystems are maintained. No new weeds or feral animals are introduced.
- Introduced plants and animals are not having a significant effect on the natural ecosystems of the Family Islands National Park.
- The nesting population of seabirds is maintained at least at current levels.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- The causes of any significant changes to the islands' natural ecosystems will be identified through monitoring. Any change attributable to human causes will be addressed by changes to permitted use levels, increased patrols or other actions considered necessary.
- No fires for recreational purposes will be permitted. This will be achieved by regulatory notices and through camping permits.
- Access to Purtaboi Island and areas of the western extremity of the Dunk Island Spit will be prohibited during the bird nesting season, 1 October - 31 March. At Purtaboi Island a regulatory sign conveying this information will be permanently installed. Areas of the western extremity of the spit identified as nesting sites will be seasonally demarcated by a system of temporary barriers and signs.
- Introduced non-native species will be removed where feasible and measures taken to prevent any introductions. Particular attention will be given to the removal of feral pigs from Dunk Island.
- Planting or revegetation work will use species that are native to the island.
- Co-ordinated management of airspace over the marine and national parks will be developed so that aircraft are restricted to above 1500 feet. Methods of achieving this include amending the *Nature Conservation Regulation 1994* and ensuring that tourist program permits under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* exclude flights below 1500 feet. This will not be done in a way which interferes with normal air traffic on Dunk Island.
- Existing coconut trees will be permitted to remain. However, no planting will be permitted and no coconuts will be permitted to establish on any beaches where adult trees have not been present previously.

4.1.3 Native title

Background information

The Spit area at Dunk Island has a documented history of erosion and accretion over the last 100 years and this will continue to be a factor in the future. Heavy use by people and vehicle traffic has probably accelerated this process.

There is the potential for the sand spits on the islands of the southern Family Group to experience some accelerated erosion if excessive numbers of visitors use these areas.

Desired outcomes

- Natural processes of erosion and accretion will be permitted to continue. Erosion caused by human use is controlled and eroded areas are rehabilitated.
- No new structures of a permanent nature are placed in areas where they are likely to be threatened by erosion.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Approved methods to control erosion include planting with species native to each island, relocation of infrastructure, provision of dune ladders and fencing as required, closure of affected areas, reduction in the number of visitors to the site.
- Beach erosion will not be dealt with by means of hard revetments (e.g. rock walls or retaining walls) under any circumstances. Infrastructure threatened by erosion will be moved.
- Importation of sand may be permitted at Dunk Island Spit subject to QPWS approval, however this should not be used as a long-term solution to problems caused by erosion.
- A monitoring program will be implemented to measure beach erosion at active sites.
- No permission will be granted for new permanent infrastructure to be placed at sites prone to erosion.

4.1.4 Fire management

Background information

There is evidence that the vegetation of Dunk Island has changed over the last century with open forests being replaced by rainforests. This is likely to be due to a combination of the cessation of Aboriginal fire management and the effects of destructive cyclones. Due to the presence of rainforest, and predominance of rainforest species in other forest types on Dunk Island, the vegetation in most areas would now carry a fire only in extremely dry conditions or after a damaging cyclone, when a fire would be most destructive to the environment and would endanger private and park infrastructure.

Due to the present lush nature of the vegetation on Dunk Island and its inability to carry a fire in normal conditions, it is now considered unlikely that wildfires will threaten people and infrastructure there. A prescribed burning program is not considered possible or necessary given the predominance of rainforest on Dunk Island.

Wheeler and Coombe Islands both have eucalypts in their forests, perhaps indicative of past cyclonic events which have caused severe forest damage. However the islands are too small and the vegetation too lush, to make a controlled fire management program necessary or feasible.

These observations have not been made as part of a scientific fire assessment and one should be carried out in the future.

Desired outcomes

- The vegetation of Dunk and the other islands continues to develop in the absence of fire until there is scientific evidence on the importance of fire and an informed decision can be made.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Research on the importance of fire to the ecosystems of Dunk, Wheeler and Coombe Islands will be encouraged.

- Unless research provides evidence to the contrary, there will be no controlled burning program on any of the islands of the Family Islands National Park.
- No fires for recreational purposes will be permitted. This will be achieved by regulatory notices and through camping permits.

4.2 Native title

Background information

At the time of writing this plan, it was not clear whether native title rights exist over Family Islands National Park, however it is possible that such rights do exist.

Desired outcomes

- Any native title rights which may exist over this national park are not adversely affected by this management plan.
- Aboriginal people with a particular interest in the area are involved in decision making concerning matters in which they have an interest.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Consult with relevant Aboriginal people to establish principles and guidelines to co-operative management of native title, cultural heritage and other issues.
- Work programs and management activities will consider the requirements of native title legislation to ensure native title rights are not compromised.

4.3 Cultural heritage conservation

Background information

There have been no detailed cultural resource surveys of the islands, however the writings of Banfield and, in particular, his recording of numerous Aboriginal names for places on Dunk Island and the southern Family Islands, indicates a strong Aboriginal presence. While heavy use over more than 100 years is likely to have damaged or destroyed some sites, intact cultural resources may be present in areas which have received little, if any use. It is believed that rock art is present on Dunk Island. The transition from open eucalypt to closed forest in some areas suggests that the vegetation was originally controlled by Aboriginal fire management practices which have now ceased.

The cultural and spiritual values of the islands held particular significance to local indigenous people and these values remain important to their descendants.

While the islands have a strong historical context through the writings of E.J. Banfield, there are no physical relics of this time on the national park, although Banfield's grave located on private land near the park boundary is a well known landmark.

There was a radar installation from World War II present on Mt Kootaloo, Dunk Island, but all that now remains are the foundations and a small piece of machinery which has been set in concrete to prevent its removal.

Desired outcomes

- Places of cultural heritage significance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal origin are protected from accidental or deliberate disturbance or destruction and are conserved for future generations consistent with the wishes of traditional custodians and the principles established in the Burra Charter.
- Aboriginal interests are recognised and reflected in the management of the park's cultural heritage issues.
- The Mt Kootaloo site is not damaged by visitors and visitors understand the significance of relics.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Develop cultural resource management plans and programs for any identified sites, if necessary, in consultation with those Aboriginal people with links to the area and with other relevant users.
- Interpret the islands' cultural heritage in culturally sensitive ways and take into account the latest research information. This should be undertaken in association with appropriate representative Aboriginal groups.
- Train staff to recognise sites and to understand the culture of Aboriginal people.
- Monitor the condition of cultural heritage places and act to address unexpected or undesirable changes.
- Encourage research into the islands' cultural heritage.
- An interpretive sign will be placed on Mt Kootaloo site explaining its war time significance.

4.4 Recreation, tourism and visitor use

4.4.1 Permits

Background information

Within permit or licence systems an area's level of actual use or effort is commonly much lower than that allocated. Whether intentional or unintentional, this locks out commercial operators wishing to expand operations or start new ones.

This situation currently applies in the Family Islands National Park. A number of commercial activity permits under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* are issued for commercial day use and camping in the Family Islands National Park. A high level of latency exists within these permits, with the amount of actual use being significantly lower than that permitted. Existing operators wishing to increase use of the area and new operators seeking permits for the first time have been refused permits because the level of use that could be achieved by current permit holders is at or about the desirable level for the park.

Commercial activity permits are issued to operators for periods no longer than 3 years. At this time applications for permit renewal must be made.

The permits of a number of current operators specify use of particular locations on particular days at particular times. This appears to restrict use of the area, as operators often find it hard to establish trips, particularly given weather conditions, at these times.

Desired outcomes

- Commercial activity permits for the Family Islands National Park facilitate actual tourism use of the area, within identified desired maximum use levels for particular locations.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- In assessing renewal applications for commercial activity permits, steps will be taken to remove any significant latent capacity. However, to facilitate growth of an operation, due consideration will be given to the need for some latent capacity to exist within regularly used permits.

4.4.2 Dunk Island (excluding the Spit area)

Background information

Available recreation opportunities range from resort style activities to a wilderness experience. Due to the accessibility and the presence of the resort and other facilities, Dunk Island experiences a high level of visitor use. There is a well-used graded track system on the western part of the island.

A number of Commercial Activity Permits are issued for operators wishing to gain access to the walking tracks of Dunk Island via the Dunk Island Spit. In addition, permits allowing use of other areas of Dunk Island (other than the Spit and walking track) include:

- access (motor vessel) four days per week for groups of 20 to Coonana Beach
- access (sea kayak) each day for groups of 14 to Coonana Beach; and
- access (jetskis) five days per week to Coonana Beach.

No camping (private or commercial) will be permitted at Coonana, Coconut or Muggy Muggy Beaches, or anywhere else on Dunk Island National Park, other than at designated areas on the Dunk Island Spit.

Desired outcomes

- Recreational settings are maintained to enable visitors to experience nature-based activities in a natural environment, with moderate evidence of previous users and with moderate contact with others.
- The track system on Dunk Island is accessible to both resort guests and visitors who are not resort guests.
- Visitor use at Coonana Beach is not causing significant impact on the natural ecosystems.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- No new development will be permitted, except planned walking tracks and signs.
- A maximum group size of 15 people per group (including guides) will be permitted on walking tracks. Large commercial groups must organise into smaller groups and be staggered at intervals along the tracks.
- Negotiations will be held with the Resort and the Cardwell Shire Council to ensure that the walking track along the esplanade south of Pallan Beach is maintained to a standard compatible with the track on the national park.
- New walking tracks may be developed subject to impact assessments if suitable locations are discovered.
- Only quiet, non-motorised, nature-based commercial activities will be permitted at Coconut and Muggy Muggy Beaches. A maximum of two operators will be permitted and the maximum group size will be 15.
- Visitor groups sizes to areas of Dunk Island National Park adjacent to beaches will be restricted to no more than 30 per group.
- No more than one commercial operator per day should visit any location (e.g. Coonana Beach).
- Commercial visits will be managed so that no more than 7 visits per week occur at Coonana Beach.
- Adjustments to the level of commercial use detailed above will be made if monitoring reveals unacceptable impact.

4.4.3 Dunk Island Spit

Background information

The Dunk Island Spit is the most heavily used area on the park. The national park area on the Spit is leased to the Cardwell Shire Council, and a smaller area has been sub-leased to the Dunk Island Resort. The sub-lease is issued to facilitate day use and camping in the area. Under the sub-lease provisions, the resort is required to carry out day-to-day management of the sub-lease area and is also responsible for certain management actions on the whole Spit area. Responsibility for planning and co-ordination of management is vested with the Dunk Island Spit Management Committee, convened by QPWS with representatives also from the Cardwell Shire Council and the Dunk Island Resort.

The two documents that guide management of the Spit are the Dunk Island Spit Management Plan (October 1995) and the Dunk Island Spit Sub-Lease Operations Agreement (December 1998). The Dunk Island Spit Master Plan sets the desired maximum carrying capacity for the Spit at 250 day visitors and 54 campers at one time. The Dunk Island Spit Master Plan states, "This carrying capacity is not intended as a daily limit and considerably more can pass through the area as long as it is possible to keep the flow of people moving. The limit should be seen as a management goal to be aimed at, and not as an absolute, strictly enforced limit."

The Dunk Island Spit Sub-Lease Operations Agreement requires that commercial operators using the Spit hold a Spit Access Permission, issued by the Dunk Island Resort, which is endorsed by the Dunk Island Spit Management Committee. The issue of a Spit Access Permission is in accordance with provisions of the Dunk Island Spit Master Plan. In this regard, the Dunk Island Spit Master Plan recommends that "no additional regular operations, which might significantly increase the visitation to the island, be approved."

Desired outcomes

- Access to the resort, freehold land and national park is provided with the least possible impact on the natural values of the Spit.
- Managed recreational activities are occurring in a pleasant recreational setting which has been highly modified but retains natural values over part of the area.
- Necessary infrastructure blends in with the natural landscapes of the Spit as far as possible.
- Visitors receive a positive first impression of Dunk Island.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Manage the number of visitors to the Spit in accordance with guidelines established in the Dunk Island Spit Master Plan. Measures will be taken if monitoring reveals that more than 250 day visitors are using the Spit on a regular basis.
- The currently permitted level of commercial visitors will not increase and may need to be reviewed if the guidelines for Spit use are regularly exceeded. Commercial day visitor activities will be allowed only between 6.30 am and 6.00 pm.
- The level of commercial use of the Spit will be managed through Spit Access Permissions granted by the Dunk Island Resort, in accordance with the Dunk Island Sub-Lease Operations Agreement.
- Activities such as guided tours to other parts of the island, which help to disperse visitors from the developed part of the Spit will be encouraged.
- Appropriate orientation and natural history information will be available to users.
- Existing natural values (including landscape) will be preserved.
- During seabird nesting season, 1 October - 31 March, access to nesting sites may be restricted. This could be achieved with the use of temporary barriers and/or regulatory notices.
- Clashes between different user groups will be minimised - in particular, the following uses will be separated as far as practicable:
 - campers and day visitors
 - pedestrians and vehicles
 - barge unloading operations and visitors.
- Camping will be permitted for a maximum stay of 5 nights with a maximum group size of 6 persons at each site. No commercial camping will be permitted.

4.4.4 Purtaboi Island

Background information

Due to its close proximity to Dunk Island Spit, Purtaboi Island is heavily used by visitors. Purtaboi Island is a small island and heavy recreational use would cause problems. For several years this island has been closed seasonally during the seabird breeding season from 1 October – 31 March.

The island is small and there is concern over the impact of visitors on the island's vegetation. For this reason the island is not suited to commercial use or camping.

Desired outcomes

- Visitor use at Purtaboi Island is not causing significant impact on the natural ecosystems.
- Seabird breeding continues with no disturbance from visitors

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Commercial operators will not be permitted to use Purtaboi Island.
- Purtaboi Island is not suitable for camping and permits for this activity will not be issued.

Purtaboi Island will continue to be closed to all visitors during the seabird breeding season from 1 October to 31 March of each year, or for a shorter period at the discretion of QPWS staff, based on actual nesting activities in that year.

- Other than necessary signs, no structures or development will be permitted.
- Purtaboi Island will be monitored to detect any impacts from visitors.

4.4.5 Kumboola and Mung-Um-Gnackum Islands

Background information

These islands are in close proximity to Mission Beach and Dunk Island and, as such, receive some use. Access to Mung-Um-Gnackum is possible by foot from Dunk Island when tides are suitable. Access by boat is difficult as coastlines are shallow with many rocks, and landing areas are limited. The Dunk Island Resort does not permit equipment hired from their water sports centre to be used in the vicinity of Kumboola and Mung-Um-Gnackum Islands which effectively reduces the use of these areas.

Desired outcomes

- Visitor use at Kumboola and Mung-Um-Gnackum Islands is not causing significant impact on the natural ecosystems.
- Seabird breeding continues with no disturbance.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- No commercial operations will be permitted at Kumboola and Mung-Um-Gnackum Islands.
- No structures or development will be permitted on both islands other than necessary signs.
- No camping will be permitted.

4.4.6 Wheeler Island

Background information

This island has had a long history of use by visitors from private vessels. There has been an increase in use of the area by commercial operators and by resort guests. This might be displacing private users to more remote destinations. A relatively large beach area and the close proximity of Bedarra Island make Wheeler Island suitable for moderate levels of camping and day use. Wheeler Island has the only permanent (or almost so) source of fresh water in the southern Family Islands. However access to it is awkward and water is unlikely to be present in sufficient quantity to be of use in the camping area.

Some picnic tables are present and a hybrid system toilet is currently being installed.

A site plan has been prepared for the future development of the beach and adjacent area.

Seven commercial operators, ranging from cruise-type vessels to sea kayak tours, are currently permitted to access Wheeler Island on a regular basis (although not daily). The maximum permitted group size of any permit is currently 40. Most operations permit groups of about 15 people.

The allocation of these permits has been based on maintaining only one operator at the location at any one time. While a number of operators may visit the island on the same day, generally only one operator is present at any given time. Differences in the types of operations have helped achieve this.

Some operators have requested a variation to permits to allow more freedom of access. While figures on actual use would suggest this is possible, a significant amount of latency exists in permits issued for Wheeler Island and the area's potential use is high. As referred to in section 4.4.1, a reduction in latency is highly desirable and would help facilitate greater actual use of this location.

Desired outcomes

- Recreational settings are maintained to enable visitors to experience nature-based activities, including camping, in a natural environment with little evidence of previous users and with moderate contact with others.
- Visitor use at Wheeler Island is not causing significant impact on the natural ecosystems.
- No conflict is occurring between different types of users.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Visitor use (private camping, commercial and private sea kayak camping, commercial day visits and private visits from Bedarra Island and elsewhere) will be permitted on Wheeler Island.
- Development of the camping area will generally follow the provisions of the site plan.
- Camping numbers will be a maximum of 16 commercial sea kayakers plus 10 private campers at one time. When commercial sea kayakers are not present, a maximum of 15 private campers will be permitted at one time.
- Commercial day visitors will be limited to five days a week excluding Fridays and Sundays.
- Maximum group size for commercial day visitors or other group activities will be 30 except for existing permit holders. Adjustments to this level of commercial use will be made if monitoring reveals unacceptable impact.
- Commercial visits will be managed so that no more than 7 visits per week occur at Wheeler Island.
- Camping by commercial sea kayaking operations may be conducted at Wheeler Island for a total of 3 nights per week.
- Generally there should be no more than one commercial operator present at any one time at Wheeler Island. If monitoring reveals significant use above this guideline, appropriate measures will be taken.

4.4.7 Coombe Island

Background information

This island has had a long history of use by visitors from private vessels. Any increase in use by commercial operators might displace private users to other destinations. The island's beach is not big enough for large groups of visitors. Clearly, demand is likely to exceed supply for the opportunity to use the beach.

Desired outcomes

- Recreational settings are maintained to enable visitors to experience nature-based activities in a natural environment, with little evidence of previous users and with moderate contact with others.
- Visitor use at Coombe Island is not causing significant impact on the natural ecosystems.
- No conflict is occurring between different types of users.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- No commercial day trips will be permitted.
- No commercial camping will be permitted.
- Camping use will be permitted for one group at one time with a maximum group size of 8 people. The maximum stay will be 4 nights.

4.4.8 Hudson, Bowden and Smith Islands

Background information

The isolated island atmosphere is the major attraction of this area. Hudson and Bowden Islands have had a long history of use by visitors from private vessels and, in the last ten years, by commercial operators. Private users may be seeking other destinations due to this heavy commercial use. Hudson and Bowden Islands have a limited area for recreation on sand spits, which are fragile areas showing signs of possible overuse.

Due to access problems, Smith Island has had very little recreational use and it provides an ideal opportunity for conserving an island ecosystem free from human impact.

Small reefs adjacent to Hudson and Bowden Islands attract visitors as these are the only coral reefs in the Family Group suitable for recreational snorkelling. Most of these visitors also land on the islands.

Commercial activity currently allows access to these islands for 7 commercial operators. Thirty is the maximum permitted group size for one of the operations, with others allowing groups of around 15. Areas used by commercial operators have different exposure to weather conditions and a number of

operators are allowed to access different islands, dependant on wind direction. This increases the permitted level of access that has been granted for these islands.

Desired outcomes

- Recreational settings are maintained which enable visitors to experience nature-based activities in a natural environment, with little evidence of previous users and with moderate contact with others.
- Visitor use is not causing significant impact on the natural ecosystems of these islands.
- No conflict is occurring between different types of users.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Hudson and Bowden Islands will be managed as locations for commercial and private day use only.
- Commercial day visitors will be limited to five days a week excluding Fridays and Sundays.
- Smith Island will be managed as a no-use area. While no restrictions on public access are proposed, nothing will be done to encourage use in any way; permits for recreational use of the island will not be issued.
- Commercial operators will not be permitted at Smith Island.
- No camping will be permitted on Hudson, Bowden or Smith Island.
- No facilities will be provided on Hudson and Bowden Islands other than necessary signs. Visitors will be permitted to use the sand spit areas, but use of the elevated parts of the islands will be discouraged.
- Maximum group size for commercial day visitors at Hudson Island and Bowden Island will be 15 except for existing permit holders. Adjustments to this level of commercial use will be negotiated if monitoring reveals unacceptable impact.
- Commercial visits will be managed so that regular commercial operators do not visit Hudson Island more than 5 times per week.
- Commercial visits will be managed so that regular commercial operators do not visit Bowden Island more than 5 times per week.

4.5 Education and interpretation

Background information

The natural values and close proximity to the coast and to Dunk and Bedarra Island resorts makes the Family Islands a popular site for local residents, resort guests, commercial day visitors, commercial sea kayakers and campers. The popularity of the area makes it an important site for providing natural history information and management messages designed to minimise potential impacts.

Efforts will need to be made to provide education and information to commercial operators and to the public before they visit the islands. Opportunities exist for providing pre-visit material at Cardwell and Mission Beach Information Centres and Hinchinbrook Island, Bedarra Island and Dunk Island resorts. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have prepared a Great Barrier Reef Public Education Strategy which identifies interpretive messages for the entire Great Barrier Reef. Requirements for public education are identified in this strategy.

Desired outcomes

- Information that promotes responsible use of the area and helps the public understand and enjoy the area's natural values, is provided.
- Visitors are aware of their obligations with respect to the national park.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Interpretation and education will be provided on-site at the Dunk Island Spit area and also off-site by publications and other means.

- The regional (marine) public education plan will cover the following:
 - pre-visit material in the form of a Brooks, Family and Gould Islands visitor information sheet
 - information to local tourism centres including Mission Beach Information Centre, Dunk Island and Bedarra Island resorts and Rainforest and Reef Centre at Cardwell
 - a Cairns-Townsville Island resource booklet for cruise vessel operators
 - management information for Service, local, state and national publications
 - information on the islands' resources for commercial operators; and
 - tour operator training courses are provided with information on the potential impacts of their clients.
- Tour operators will receive the Island Care code of conduct through the permit system.
- Ensure tour operators receive the reef and island users guide being developed by GBRMPA and QPWS listing best environmental practices for all users of marine and national parks.

4.6 Research and monitoring

Background information

While research is clearly important to managing the islands and reefs, the areas involved are small and heavily used. Research itself might cause unacceptable impact particularly in small systems such as these. There will be a continuing need to monitor the impact of the use levels proposed in this plan. Monitoring techniques will need to be simple and readily repeatable.

Preliminary surveys indicate that the vegetation is of interest scientifically and there is a possibility that rare and threatened species might be present.

Desired outcomes

- Opportunities for low-impact research which contributes to baseline information on the resources of the park and park management, are provided.
- A monitoring plan which measures significant changes to island ecosystems and identifies the causes of these changes, is established.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Encourage and support a thorough flora and fauna survey of all the Family Islands.
- Develop simple and rapid techniques for monitoring the sand spit vegetation.
- The impact of major research projects will be monitored by means such as fixed point photography or surveys involving transects.
- Carry out social surveys to determine visitor expectations and satisfaction.

4.7 Additions to the Family Islands National Park

Background information

Two small islands off the coast of Dunk and Bedarra Islands are currently unallocated State land and are not included in the Family Islands National Park. These are Waln-Garin Island (Forty Foot Rock) and Pee-Rahm-Ah Island (Battleship Rock). Waln-Garin Island is a nesting site for the black-naped tern, bridled tern, crested tern and roseate tern. At Battleship Rock, nesting by the bridled tern, black-naped tern and the crested tern has been recorded. The natural values of these islands should be protected. If they were to be added to the national park, care should be taken not to impair any existing native title.

Desired outcomes

- Woln-Garin Island (Forty Foot Rock) and Pee-Rahm-Ah Island (Battleship Rock) are managed as part of the Family Islands National Park.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- The necessary steps will be taken to add these areas to the Family Islands National Park.

4.8 Park management

Background information

The Family Islands National Park consists of Dunk Island, a high-use area with significant park infrastructure, and a series of low-use islands with limited visitor infrastructure. Dunk Island provides a focus for resort operations and activities such as bush walking and camping. Consequently, a high management presence has been required at this island. The walking tracks on Dunk Island and the campsites require regular maintenance.

From the perspective of maintaining park infrastructure, the remainder of the islands in the Family Island National Park require relatively low management presence. However, more emphasis needs to be placed on the assessment and monitoring of natural and cultural resources on the entire Family Island National Park, particularly the impact of visitors.

Access to the Family Islands National Park is by vessel and is weather-dependent. For this reason, and because of the level of infrastructure at Dunk Island, management of the Family Islands National Park is demanding on resources.

As local populations and visits from tourists increase, it is likely that extra resources will be required to manage the national park and adjacent waters. In a heavily used area such as this, regular weekly patrols are desirable. Provision of some form of staff accommodation on Dunk Island may be useful in the future, as access from Cardwell increases the cost of management and does not allow for fast response.

Desired outcomes

- The facilities and popular sites are maintained to Service standards.
- Weed infestations and feral animals that are threatening natural processes are eradicated.
- A management presence is provided that assists in education and enforcement.

Proposed guidelines and actions

- Ensure that staff are adequately trained in interpretation and enforcement procedures.
- Conduct an inventory of the facilities provided on the islands and maintain as required.
- Schedule regular patrols to the Family Islands that cover several issues such as weed eradication, public contact, enforcement and walking track maintenance.
- Negotiate with resort over the possibility of obtaining accommodation for staff on Dunk Island.

5. Complementary management of the adjacent marine park

Background information

Management of the islands comprising the Family Islands National Park and the adjacent waters in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the State Marine Park is the responsibility of QPWS. Management of both terrestrial and marine areas are closely linked, particularly with respect to management of recreation, tourism and visitor use, as most visitors to the national park enter through the marine park. Often the best method of managing terrestrial use is by control of anchoring and other marine access issues. Facilities and structures such as pontoons in the southern Family Group would detract from the natural values of the landscape as would mooring sites for large vessels or activities such as paraflaying, waterskiing and jetskiing.

The waters surrounding Dunk Island and Bedarra (Richards) Island are zoned Marine National Park A Zone, while the remainder of the waters surrounding the Family Islands are General Use B Zone in the GBRMP Central Section Zoning Plan.

As this is a plan under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* for the Family Islands National Park only, the guidelines and actions set out below for adjacent waters have no legal standing. They are intended as an indication of the directions management of adjacent waters should take. Most will probably be incorporated into other plans currently under development.

Desired outcomes

- The national park and adjacent marine park are managed under their respective legislation in a co-ordinated and complementary manner.
- The national park islands are managed to low water in a manner consistent with the management of the State Marine Park.
- Where appropriate, impacts on the adjacent Family Islands National Park are considered when assessing requests for access through the adjacent marine park.

Proposed guidelines and actions

General

- Encourage ongoing liaison within QPWS and between QPWS and other agencies to promote co-ordinated and complementary management, particularly with regard to:
 - development and revision of policies, zoning and management plans
 - visitor management and permit issue arrangements; and
 - public contact and information.
- Development of plans of management under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act* and the *(Queensland) Marine Parks Act* for waters surrounding the Family Islands National Park is recommended to control anchoring of all vessels.
- The cause of any significant changes identified by monitoring of the reef will be determined. Any change attributable to human causes will be addressed by changes to permitted use levels, increased patrols, installation of no anchoring areas and/or moorings or other actions considered necessary.

Specific

- No permits for new operations will be issued for motorised water sports such as jetskiing, water skiing or paraflying in waters adjacent to the Family Islands, except for areas north and south of the Dunk Island Spit.
- Management plans under marine parks legislation will consider the appropriateness of motorised water sports (parasailing, jetskiing, waterskiing) in waters adjacent to the Family Islands, with a view to restricting use to the Dunk Island Spit area.
- No commercial use of Dunk Island will be permitted from Muggy Muggy Beach (north-western tip) along the north-eastern coast down to the southern tip of the island.
- No commercial trips via the marine park will be permitted to Coconut Beach.
- Seaplane access will be permitted in defined areas near the Dunk Island Spit only.
- Water sports activities operating from the Spit Area (or elsewhere) will be required to stay at least 50 metres from the perimeter of Purtaboi Island during the seabird nesting season.
- Permits will not be issued for jetties, pontoons, permanently moored vessels or private moorings in the vicinity of the islands other than at the Dunk Island Spit, and Bedarra and Thorpe Islands. Consideration will take place through normal assessment processes.
- The anchorage off the beach at Wheeler Island is not considered suitable as an overnight anchorage for chartered vessels due to the heavy public use proposed for this site.
- Permits for new operations will not be issued for vessels longer than 35m to anchor in the vicinity of Wheeler, Coombe, Bowden, Hudson and Smith Islands. Appropriate passenger limits for vessels accessing waters adjacent to these islands are 30 for Wheeler and 15 for Coombe, Bowden and Hudson.
- Permission will not be issued for large vessels (longer than 35m or able to carry more than 30 people) to access islands other than at Dunk Island Spit.
- In the vicinity of Wheeler, Coombe, Hudson, Bowden and Smith Islands, any plan of management for the marine parks should aim to:
 - limit commercial operations to no more than one, or possibly two, smaller vessels in an area at one time; and
 - maintain at least two days each week (Friday and Sunday) free from commercial users and available for private visitors only.
- Commercial and private use will be monitored and number limits reviewed accordingly.
- Tour operators will receive the reef and island users guide for best environmental practices.