

Changes to the zoning plan for Solitary Islands Marine Park

Frequently asked questions

Why has the zoning plan for Solitary Islands Marine Park changed?

The NSW Government has abolished the new zoning plan for Solitary Islands Marine Park made by the former government on 1 March 2011, due to concerns about the consultation process and pending the outcomes of an independent scientific audit of marine park zoning arrangements.

What are the rules now?

The zoning plan for Solitary Islands Marine Park as implemented in 2002 has been restored as of 26 May 2011. This means the rules that have been in place since 2002 now apply.

How have these changes been made?

The *Marine Parks (Zoning Plans) Amendment (Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay Marine Parks) Regulation 2011* was disallowed by the Legislative Assembly of NSW Parliament on 26 May 2011.

This immediately restored the former zoning plan for Solitary Islands Marine Park.

What is being done to make sure marine park users know about the changes?

Zoning plan user guides will be distributed to the usual outlets as soon as possible. Up-to-date maps and information are on the marine parks website at www.mpa.nsw.gov.au. Signs and boundary markers will be updated as soon as practical and public notices will appear in the local papers to inform the broader community. Marine parks staff will be out and about in the parks informing park users of the changes.

What happens next?

The Government will consider the findings of the upcoming independent scientific audit of marine park zoning arrangements and will undertake thorough community consultation before making any future zoning changes. The independent scientific audit will occur in the second half of 2011.

When will a new zoning plan be finalised?

Any future changes to the zoning plan will be made following the recommendations of the scientific audit and the outcomes of thorough public consultation.

What happens to the proposed commercial fishing buy out?

The buy out of commercial fishing entitlements associated with the former zoning plan will no longer occur. For further information regarding the buy out please call 1300 303 763.

Does this mean changes made in March under the *Fisheries Management Act* to protect Grey Nurse Sharks at North and South Solitary Islands are also affected?

Yes. Recent changes to recreational fishing closures implemented at North Solitary Island and South Solitary Island have also been revoked, but existing protections under the 2002 zoning plan continue to apply. The closure relating to certain commercial fishing methods remains in place.

Can I still fish in the area opened in March 2011 at Bare Bluff, Groper Island or Minnie Water Back Beach?

No, the zoning plan has been restored in its entirety including the sanctuary zones at these locations. It is important to check the current zoning plan prior to fishing in the vicinity of these areas.

Can commercial beach haul fishers access areas opened in March at Arrawarra Beach, Station Creek Beach and Hearn's Lake Beach South?

No, the 2002 zoning plan has been restored in its entirety including the previous restrictions on beach hauling in these areas. It is important to check the current zoning plan prior to fishing in the vicinity of these areas.

Does this affect the \$150,000 tourism and marketing campaign focused on the Woolli and Minnie Water local areas?

No, the Government will honour the commitment to fund promotion and enhancement of visitor experiences in the Woolli and Minnie Water area in partnership with Clarence River Tourism and the community. This is consistent with other initiatives to improve nature-based tourism and will yield benefits regardless of zoning plan changes.

How will marine park and fisheries officers enforce the zoning plan?

Marine park rangers and fisheries officers will be focused on raising awareness that the 2002 zoning plan has been restored. As the zoning plan was previously in place between 2002 and early 2011, it is anticipated that marine park users will be reasonably familiar with it. Importantly, in areas where the zoning arrangements have been continuous since 2002, for example in areas that have been sanctuary zones, breaking zoning plan laws will result in enforcement action.

Where can I get more information?

Please visit the marine parks website at www.mpa.nsw.gov.au for more information or contact Solitary Islands Marine Park on (02) 6652 0900 or by email to solitary.islands@mpa.nsw.gov.au.