

Roebuck Bay - a place of many values

Roebuck Bay means many things to many people. To some it is an ancestral home with continuing responsibilities, and a place to hunt, fish and collect shellfish.

To others its value lies in its international significance as a Ramsar wetland for migratory shorebirds, or for its dugongs and snubfin dolphins.

Whilst for others, it is a bay from which to earn a living, from pearl farming, shipping, fishing and hovercraft tours. For many however, it is simply a favourite place to relax and recreate.

As pressures on Roebuck Bay increase, good management is needed to protect its many assets while allowing people to continue to use and enjoy it.

The Roebuck Bay Working Group (RBWG) is developing a community based management plan to protect Roebuck Bay and its values into the future.

In the interim, the RBWG, with input from the community and government agencies, has agreed on eight principles to guide the conservation and wise use of Roebuck Bay.

By supporting these eight principles you can help ensure Roebuck Bay is looked after for generations to come. These interim principles will form the basis for a community based management plan for Roebuck Bay.



Membership of Roebuck Bay Working Group

- Australia's North West Tourism
- Australasian Wader Studies Group
- Broome Bird Observatory
- Broome Fishing Club
- Broome Community Seagrass Monitoring Project
- Broome Port Authority
- Broome Visitor's Centre
- Broome Fishing Club
- Broome Shire Council
- Community volunteers
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Department of Agriculture and Food
- Department of Environment and Conservation
- Department of Fisheries
- Department of Planning
- Department of Transport
- Environs Kimberley
- Global Flyway Network
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- Kimberley Land Council
- Kimberley Professional Fishermen's Association
- Pearl Producers Association
- Research scientists
- Thangoo Station
- Water Corporation
- West Kimberley

Contact

If you wish to provide comment or seek further information about the Interim Management Guidelines or Roebuck Bay Working Group, please contact the RBWG Project Officer.

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Roebuck Bay

Interim Management Guidelines

A step towards a community based management plan



Roebuck Bay Working Group

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Interim Management Guidelines

1. Maintain the cultural, spiritual, sustenance and economic values of Roebuck Bay for Yawuru Traditional Owners.

Some recommended actions:

- Yawuru Traditional Owners continue to have an active role in the RBWG and Ranger program in Minyirr Park.
- Vehicle points for coastal access e.g. boat launching, are planned in consultation with Yawuru Traditional Owners.
- To better manage human impacts, signage and barriers are erected to protect the natural and cultural values of Roebuck Bay.



2. Minimise activities likely to cause disturbance to shorebirds and other species important to the ecological and cultural values of Roebuck Bay.

Some recommended actions:

- Ensure no developments occur along Crab Creek Road or between Broome Port and Dampier Creek that interfere with shorebird roosts.
- Protect shorebird roosts from disturbance by vehicles and helicopters.
- Protect dolphins, dugongs and turtles from boat injuries, with boat speed less than five knots around creeks, mangroves, seagrass and shallow turbid water.



3. Minimise loss of habitat significant to shorebirds and other species in Roebuck Bay; maintain and restore the biodiversity in the area.

Some recommended actions:

- Establish community based monitoring programs for a range of key plant and animal species i.e. benthos, dolphins, dugongs, mangroves, seagrass, shorebirds and turtles.
- Monitor fish and dugong stocks and impacts from fishing/hunting to record baseline data.
- Undertake studies of habitats for key species to gain a greater understanding of the ecosystem requirements.



4. Maintain and restore water quality across Roebuck Bay.

Some recommended actions:

- Water discharged into Roebuck Bay to meet National Water Quality Standards.
- Develop and implement stormwater and drainage management guidelines.
- Implement a Lyngbya Contingency Plan to include regular monitoring and toxicity testing to avoid harm to people and the environment.



5. Ensure that natural surface and groundwater flows are maintained as far as possible.

Some recommended actions:

- Research links between groundwater quality and the biodiversity of mudflats and dependent ecosystems.
- Undertake a review of the Broome groundwater management plan.
- Monitor bores installed around areas where waste water is used, stored or likely to infiltrate.



6. Prevent the introduction of invasive plants and animals into Roebuck Bay; contain and/or eradicate invasive species where infestations have occurred.

Some recommended actions:

- Undertake a baseline study of water quality, species present and environmental conditions at Broome Port and Gantheaume Point.
- Implement increased quarantine vigilance on all vessels to prevent introduction of diseases and invasive species.
- Regular water monitoring at Broome Port and Gantheaume Point for early detection and eradication of pests e.g. black-striped mussels and harmful aquatic weeds.



7. Promote environmentally sustainable economic uses of Roebuck Bay.

Some recommended actions:

- Assess possible impacts on groundwater from any new development.
- All development in accord with setback guidelines outlined in the State Coastal Planning Policy (SPP No, 2.6), to protect people and property against severe storms, shoreline movement, sea level rise and fluctuations in coastal processes.
- Emergency response plans are regularly revised for pollutant and oil spills in the bay and catchment areas and ongoing collaboration to identify high risk areas.

8. Increased human use and visitation should not be permitted to damage the natural and cultural values of Roebuck Bay.

Some recommended actions:

- Prevent vehicle access to beaches except at designated boat launching ramps.
- Ensure there are no new vehicle access points onto Simpson's Beach.
- Raise public awareness about the natural and cultural values of Roebuck Bay by implementing a communication plan incorporating media and community events.

