

WA Marine Tour Operator

Best Practice Standards



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For the latest version of this document please visit www.tourismcouncilwa.com.au.

Background

The Western Australian (WA) Marine Tour Operators Best Practice Standards - Kimberley have been produced for the benefit of all current and future WA marine tour operators, with a particular focus on the Kimberley region due to its status as a world class marine environment. The Standards will assist marine tourism operators to deliver quality tourism experiences, while meeting regulatory requirements and minimising negative environmental impacts.

The development of the Best Practice Standards is part of the **State Government's Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy (May, 2011-present)**. The Best Practice Standards have been developed by Tourism Council WA for the Department of Fisheries, working closely with other government departments and the WA and Kimberley marine tourism industry.

These Standards form the basis of a marine-focused module of the Quality Tourism Framework (QTF), creating streamlined accreditation for the marine tourism sector. Templates and sample documents are provided through the online process to assist businesses to meet the Marine Tour Operators Best Practice Standards and become Marine Accredited Tourism Businesses. For further information on Marine Tourism Accreditation please email accreditation@tourismcouncilwa.com.au or visit www.tourismcouncilwa.com.au.

MARINE TOUR OPERATORS BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS - KIMBERLEY

Guidelines for WA Marine Tour Operators

Kimberley-focused sections

Covers:

- Registrations, Insurances and Licencing
- Compliance with Risk Management and Safety Standards
- Customer Service
- Sound Environmental Practices
- Social and Cultural Sustainability



MARINE TOURISM ACCREDITATION (QTF MODULE)

Accreditation for Marine Tour Operators

Covers:

- **MARINE TOUR OPERATORS BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS - KIMBERLEY**
- Streamlined accreditation for Marine Tourism Sector with all requirements, templates and examples marine focused

Acknowledgements

The following organisations have provided input into the development of these Best Practice Standards;

Department of Fisheries WA

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions WA- Parks and Wildlife Service

Department of Transport WA

Kimberley Land Council

Kimberley Marine Tourism Association

Kimberley Tourism Businesses

Leave No Trace

Marine Tourism Association WA

Recfishwest

Tourism WA

WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council

WA Marine Tourism Independent Businesses

Business Operations

Registration, Insurances and Licensing

WA Marine Tourism Businesses must be appropriately licenced and insured, adhering to both Federal and State requirements.

Registered Trading Name

- A business must register the company and trading name that they trade under through [ASIC](#).

Business Insurance

- Information on the types of insurance a business requires can be found on the Australian Government [business.gov.au](#) site.
- A business must obtain a minimum \$10 million Public Liability Insurance coverage. If operating outside the vessel such as swimming, snorkeling or walking on land, an extra policy covering these activities will also be required.
- Workers Compensation is required if a business employs staff.
- Sufficient Vessel/marine hull, Vehicle and Equipment Insurance is required.

Operating Licences

The [Australian Maritime Safety Authority \(AMSA\)](#) is responsible for the regulation of commercial vessel survey, vessel operations, crews and issue of certificates of competency, certificates of survey and certificates of operation. All commercial vessel survey, operations and marine qualification information may be found on the [AMSA website](#).

[Certificate of Survey](#) - AMSA

Vessels operating as Domestic Commercial Vessels (DCV) in Australia, require a Certificate of Survey if carrying passengers. The Certificate of Survey is issued when the vessel satisfactorily complies with specified requirements relating to its hull, machinery and equipment and crew.

[Certificate of Operation](#) - AMSA

All commercial vessels operating as Domestic Commercial Vessels in Australia must have a Certificate of Operation.

Fishing Tour Licences – Department of Fisheries

Charter Boat Operators require a licence from the Department of Fisheries if they run any fishing tour activity which affects fish stocks. There are two kinds of fishing tour licences:

- The **Fishing Tour Operator Licence** (FTOL) permits charter boat-based fishing activities where fish can be taken home at the end of the tour.
- The focus of the **Restricted Fishing Tour Operators Licence** (RFTOL) is on eco-type activities, such as snorkelling or scuba diving, with limited fishing activity allowing only for fish to be caught and eaten as a meal during the course of the tour.

Omnibus Licence – Department of Transport

Required if a business carries paying passengers in a vehicle.

Commercial Operations Licence – Department of Parks and Wildlife

Required by anyone operating a tourism or recreation business or offering educational services for private benefit (profit) in areas managed by Department of Parks and Wildlife (Parks and Wildlife).

Wildlife Interaction Licence - Department of Parks and Wildlife

Anyone wishing to conduct tours which involve interactions with wildlife including dolphin and whale watching require a wildlife interaction licence. These licences apply for all WA waters. Please email wildlifelicencing@dbca.wa.gov.au.

Marine Qualifications

Individuals will need to obtain a [Certificate of Competency](#) prior to working on any Domestic Commercial Vessel in Australia.

The [National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part D](#) outlines skills and knowledge required for Certificates of Competency.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has a list of [Approved Training Organisations](#).

Marine Operations

Compliance with Risk Management and Safety Standards

Requirements of Risk Management and Safety Standards are addressed under the new regulatory framework known as the National System for Commercial Vessel Safety, administered by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

The national system consists of regulations and marine orders to adopt:

- [National Standard for Commercial Vessels \(NSCV\)](#), and
- Regulatory Plan (for vessel and crew treatment).

Safety Management System

As a result of legislation (*Marine Order 504 (Certificates of Operation-national law) 2013*, and the *Marine Order 504 Conditions Determination 2013*), all Class 1 and Class 4 vessel operations are required to have a Safety Management System in place by 1 July 2015, to meet the [National Standard for Commercial Vessels \(NSCV\)](#).

Businesses must develop, document and implement a **Safety Management System (SMS)** as part of their Certificate of Operation licensing requirements. Guidelines of compliance and how to write a SMS are provided on the [AMSA website](#).

Sample Safety Management System Documents are available on the AMSA website that can be used as guidelines. These include sample;

- Risk Registers
- Training and Development Forms
- Induction Training Checklists
- Emergency Plans and Passenger Briefings
- Maintenance Checklists and Schedules
- Passenger Manifests

[Sample Safety Management System Document](#) - Class 1 Operation – complex operation

[Sample Safety Management System Document](#) - Class 1 Operation – less complex operation

[Sample Safety Management System Document](#) - Class 3B Operation

The local delegate office in Western Australia is the Commercial Vessels Safety Branch, contact number **1300 723 226** or Email cvs_operations@transport.wa.gov.au.

Periodical Maintenance

Vessel maintenance needs to be undertaken to meet survey and SMS requirements.

Periodical vessel maintenance checklists should include the following where applicable:

- Certificates and documentation for personnel
- Certificates, documentation and manuals for vessel
- Radio installation
- Flag administration
- Lifesaving equipment
- Navigation equipment
- Firefighting equipment
- Marine pollution prevention items
- Boat structure
- Hull items
- Motor/Engine items
- Plumbing items
- Machinery items
- Electrical items
- Battery items
- Crew responsibilities and workspaces

Emergency Procedures

- Emergency procedures must be developed and documented as part of the SMS so that personnel both onboard and shore based are aware of what to do. Scheduled drills must be carried out for the following:
 - Fire
 - Vessel Evacuation
 - Man overboard/Search and Rescue
 - Spillage of fuel/cargo/oil/other chemicals
 - Serious injury/Medical emergency
- Procedures should also be in place for but not limited to, the following:
 - Authorised spokesperson for the organisation
 - Panic control
 - Medical evacuations
 - Radio failure
 - Engine failure
 - Vessel taking on water
 - Radio reporting of emergencies
 - Animal strike/incident/whale entangled
- Procedures should be in place in the event of sighting a foreign vessel.
- The owner or master of a domestic commercial vessel that is involved in an incident, must let the local [Marine Safety Agency](#) know as soon as possible. Definitions of an incident and reporting requirements are detailed by [AMSA - Domestic incident reporting](#).

Further references:

[What to do in an emergency](#) – Department of Transport – Marine Safety

[Code of Practice – Man overboard: prevention and response \(2010\)](#) – WA Department of Commerce

Severe Weather (Cyclone) Contingency Plan

- Each vessel must have a severe weather contingency plan for activation in the case of inclement weather.
- Vessels that travel into cyclone-prone areas must have a cyclone contingency plan which contains the following:
 - Company policy and responsibilities of owners, masters and crew.
 - Technical information regarding cyclone classification, marine warning and forecasts.
 - List of anchorages and shelter areas and information relating to their use.
 - Shore-based liaison and contact details.
 - Crew training for cyclone/severe weather procedures.
- Cyclone season in the North West of WA is November 1 – April 30.
- The Department of Transport is responsible for the provision of cyclone contingency plans for its maritime facilities located in cyclone prone areas.

Record Keeping

- Record Keeping is a requirement of the SMS. Records must be legible, identifiable and traceable to the activity involved and available at all relevant locations. They must be readily retrievable and protected against damage, deterioration and loss. Record keeping should include:
 - Vessel Log Book
 - Crew Details
 - Passenger Log
 - Incident Reporting/OH&S log
 - Engineering Record Book
 - Emergency Drills
 - Spotting of marine/wildlife/incident log
 - Maintenance log
 - Permits and licenses

First Aid and Safety

- Records must be kept to ensure first aid training qualifications are kept up to date.
 - Senior First Aid qualifications are compulsory for all Masters, Mates and Engineers. It is a Parks and Wildlife requirement to have at least one trained person on board with passengers.
 - Vessels involved in specific or remote areas should undertake regular refresher courses for accidents or illnesses that could occur, such as handling poisonous fish, decompression sickness/illness, oxygen provisions, medical care for masters, substance abuse, fractures and burns.
 - Basic first aid is required for Deckhands.

- Charter vessels conducting diving with compressed gases must carry oxygen onboard and have appropriately trained persons to administer it.
- A welcome and safety presentation should be delivered prior to every tour, which includes points of evacuation and location of life jackets/potential dangers in remote areas.

Docking and Departure Procedures

- A policy for safe departing and docking the vessel should be developed and recognized by all crew members. This should cover:
 - Provision and control of access ways for boarding and exiting
 - Safe embarkation and disembarkation procedures
 - Rope handling
 - Procedures for passing mooring lines between vessel and wharf

Pre-departure Checks

- On arrival at the vessel, crew should implement the following procedures:
 - Staff liaison (confirm program/re-affirm responsibilities for the charter)
 - Confirmation of adequate supply of fuel, food, water and safety equipment
 - Physical inspection of vessel (steering, bilge, lights, hatches, ropes, anchors and clear prop)
 - Engine checks prior to start up
 - Engine checks following start up
 - Obtain weather update/check tidal data
 - Electronic checks (radio, radar, sounder, GPS, satellite phone and EPIRB)
 - Lodge charter program with relevant rescue authorities and owner/operator

Embarkation/Disembarkation Checks and Procedures

- Safe access and egress should be provided for passengers and crew between land and vessel, eg. provide a secure gang plank with crew assistance from vessel to land.
- Ensure there is a head count of passengers every time there is embarking and disembarking.
- Once boarding is complete, a safety induction for passengers must be conducted prior to departure. This should cover the following:
 - Introduction of staff and their responsibilities
 - Onboard orientation (location of exits, life jackets, toilets, other facilities)
 - Overview of emergency management (vessel, medical etc.)
 - Location and use of safety equipment
 - Acceptable and unacceptable behavior
 - Use of sunscreen and sun-protection clothing to minimize UV exposure during daytime voyages
 - Advice on positively identifying potentially dangerous marine life (guests should be warned against handling any marine animal they are not familiar with)

- Advice on legislative considerations eg. catch, marine parks, integration

Food and Refreshments

- If offering food and refreshments to passengers, the vessel must meet health and safety regulations regarding the serving and storage of food and refreshments and comply with any requirements of the Food Act 2008 and Liquor Control Act 1988.
- Businesses must contact their local shire for an application for food premises registration.
- Crew must be trained in hygienic food handling and should have completed an approved Responsible Service of Alcohol course before serving alcohol to passengers.
- There must be adequate supply of potable water for passengers.
- Storage of passengers catch on fishing charters must be separate from food storage and refrigerated / frozen at safe food storage temperatures.

Further references:

[Department of Health - Food](#)

[Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor - Liquor](#)

Sound Environmental Practices

Businesses must make every endeavour to minimise their impact on the environment.

Mooring

- Always use a mooring where available and appropriate. Both private and public moorings can be found in Marine Parks. Note that public moorings are limited in some marine parks and reserves and may require booking in advance, such as the Rowley Shoals Marine Park (Clerke and Imperieuse Reefs) and Mermaid Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve.
- When entering a lagoon or bay to take up an available mooring, contact any of the tour vessels that may be present as local knowledge regarding the location and availability of moorings is invaluable.
- For public moorings, ensure use of a mooring is within the limits specified on the tag attached to the pick-up line. Check to ensure that the mooring is suitable for the size of vessel being tied to it.
- When approaching a mooring, take care to motor into the wind or the tide (whichever is strongest) towards the buoy and avoid running over the pick-up line.
- Using a boat hook, retrieve the pick-up line, and attach the eye of the pick-up line to a cleat or strong point on the bow of the vessel.
- Do not attach another line to the pick-up line; this will increase the swing circle of the vessel and may lead to vessel or reef damage.

Kimberley Specific

- All vessels planning a trip to the Rowley Shoals Marine Park and/or Mermaid Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve must first enquire with the Department of Parks and Wildlife

Broome office (Ph 08 9195 5500 or rsmp@dpaw.wa.gov.au) to book a mooring well in advance of visiting and ensure availability.

- Damaged moorings should be reported to the Parks and Wildlife office in Broome as soon as possible (Ph 08 9195 5500).
- Except where prior arrangements have been made, the Kimberley Marine Tourism Association (KMTA) advocates a 'first in line' system to mooring allocation.

Anchoring

- Where anchoring is permitted check the area carefully before anchoring. Aim to anchor in sand or sea grass to prevent coral damage and always use the appropriate type of anchor.
- When anchoring, be aware of the significant tides, currents and winds that affect the region, and always be sure to:
 - Lay the anchor chain into the wind to minimise sideways drag.
 - When setting the anchor, be aware of the significant tidal rise and fall and ensure you have a long enough anchor line out.
 - Always motor towards the anchor when hauling it in.

Kimberley Specific

- Following the installation of public moorings at each of the three reefs of the Rowley Shoals (Imperieuse, Clerke and Mermaid), anchoring is not permitted within the Marine Park/Reserve.
- Designated emergency anchorage areas have been identified within the lagoons at Clerke and Mermaid Reefs. GPS positions for the boundaries of these emergency anchorage areas are publicised on the [Department of Parks and Wildlife website](#).

Waste Management

- To prevent pollution of the sea by garbage, Australian laws impose strict controls and provide heavy fines for polluters. These laws complement international laws. The garbage regulations are based on the [International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships](#) (known as MARPOL) and apply to all vessels including dinghies, yachts and fishing vessels as well as large international trading ships.
- All vessels should have a 'Nothing Overboard' policy that is clearly communicated to all staff and guests.
- No oil or noxious substances are to be released anywhere.
- When refuelling dinghies, take appropriate action to not spill oil or fuel into the water. If possible, refuel dinghies when they are on the deck of the primary vessel.
- When bleeding air compressor lines (on dive boats) collect waste into a waste oil container and return to mainland disposal points. This will avoid the illegal disposal of noxious waste into the marine environment.

Further references:

Kimberley Specific

- There is to be no release of any sewage in the lagoons at the Rowley Shoals or within 1nm of the reef edge. Monitor your vessel's waste management and sullage systems closely when operating within this area.
- There is to be no release of any refuse of any kind (including food scraps) in the lagoons at the Rowley Shoals Marine Park or within 3nm of the reef edge.
- When in the Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve (MRMNNR) there is to be no release of sewage or refuse of any kind (including food scraps) anywhere within the reserve.
- The KMTA encourages the use of phosphate-free and biodegradable cleaning products. Please ask your guests to bring along similarly eco-friendly toiletries.
- The KMTA encourages the use of dinghies powered by 4 stroke outboards.

Further references:

[Kimberley Region Skills & Ethics](#) – Leave No Trace Australia

Marine Pests

- Aquatic pests and diseases are a significant threat to Western Australia's oceans and rivers. They can damage aquatic ecosystems, the economy, and social assets. Aquatic pests can be transported by vessels, and by escaping or being released into rivers and dams.
- To avoid transporting marine pests, prevention is the best policy. Minimize the risk of your vessel carrying pests by proactively managing it for biofouling. For example:
 - Apply and maintain suitable antifouling coating (AFC),
 - Regularly dry dock or slip the vessel,
 - Reduce marine growth in internal seawater systems by using a marine growth prevention system (MGPS), or a regular manual treatment regime,
 - Remove all sediment from the anchor by dipping in seawater before stowing on deck, and check engine propellers for weed. This will help reduce the likelihood of transferring marine pests between regions.
 - Note: Reducing biofouling will also significantly reduce fuel costs.
- Ensure you meet the Department of Fisheries' guidance on in-water treatment, before in-water cleaning. This guidance sets the standard treatment systems must meet to ensure marine pests and AFC toxins are not released into the water during treatment.
- Keep a sharp eye out for marine pests e.g. in the environment, on moorings and immersible equipment, and on marine debris such as drift nets, fishing buoys and line, flotsam. If you see an unusual fish, seaweed, mussel, worm, crab or other invertebrate that you think might be a pest species, please report it to the Department of Fisheries using these steps:
 - make a note of when and where you saw it,
 - include GPS readings and photographs if possible, and

- Report it via FishWatch on 1800 815 507, or through the WA [PestWatch](#) mobile app or web page.

Further references:

[Aquatic biosecurity](#) - Department of Fisheries WA

[WA PestWatch](#) - Department of Fisheries WA

[Introduced Marine Species](#) - Department of Fisheries WA

[In-water treatment](#) – Department of Fisheries WA

Fishing

- As a recreational fisher on a fishing tour the same [recreational fishing rules](#), including possession, bag and size limits, apply as they do to other recreational fishers.
- A variety of fisheries management tools are used to control the overall catch and protect fish breeding populations and habitats. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Bag limit
 - Size limit
 - Possession limit
 - Transporting fish
 - Boat limits
 - Filleting at sea
- Recreational fishing rules apply to the individual clients on fishing tours and operators are responsible for ensuring participants comply with these rules. These rules can be found in the state wide [Recreational Fishing Guide](#).
- The following publications detail recommended fishing practices;
 - [Catch Care – Tips for Recreational Fishers](#) - Department of Fisheries WA
Practical tips for looking after your catch and a way of ensuring there are fish for future generations.
 - [Fish Welfare Code of Conduct](#) - Recfishwest
 - Promote awareness of best practice methods to maintain fish welfare
 - Ensure the welfare of fish to be released
 - Ensure the welfare of fish to be held alive
 - Ensure humane dispatch of fish to be kept
 - [National Code of Practice for Recreational and Sport Fishing](#) – Recfish Australia
 - Treating fish humanely
 - Looking after our fisheries
 - Protecting the environment
 - Respecting the rights of others
- Protected species found in WA must be released immediately. The Department of Fisheries maintains an updated list of [protected species](#) on their website.
- Support tagging programs by reporting the finding of any tagged fish to the appropriate agency indicated on the tag.
- Report any illegal fishing practice to the Department of Fisheries on the [FishWatch](#) number – 1800-815-507.

Kimberley Specific

- Marine Parks are comprised of multiple-use zoning schemes and contain different zoned areas and subsequent permitted uses. The zone boundaries and permitted activities are listed in marine park brochures and management plans which are available off the [Parks & Wildlife website](#).
- Marine Park zoning schemes apply to all visitors. Fishing by charter operators in marine parks and reserves is the same as for other recreational anglers.
- Fishing is not permitted in sanctuary zones.
- Further specific fishing restrictions may apply in some Marine Parks to help protect fish and fish habitats, and preserve representative ecosystems. Up to date information can be found at the [Department of Parks and Wildlife website](#). For example, there are specific fishing restrictions for the Rowley Shoals Marine Park, including; all cods, groper and wrasses, including potato cod, rock cod and related species, hump-head Maori wrasse, Queensland groper, coral trout, molluscs and corals are fully protected within the Rowley Shoals Marine Park.
- The KMTA recommends a minimum fishing line class of 15kg (or 33lbs). This reduces the frequency of fishing line breakages and subsequent marine debris, and also reduces unnecessary stress to fish.
- [Rowley Shoals Marine Park Information Guide](#) provides information on the management zones, where you can fish within the Marine Park and caring for the marine environment.
- [Code of Conduct for Recreational Fishing in the Kimberley](#) and [Code of Conduct for Recreational Fishing in the Pilbara](#) are handy region specific guides.

Diving & Snorkelling

- Dive operators should provide thorough assessment of diver abilities and training as required to ensure proper weighting and efficient buoyancy control when diving. Diver assessment and training should take place in the designated anchorage areas where damage to coral will be minimised, or in other areas of sandy bottom.
- Be aware of the significant tides and currents that affect an area and act with care to avoid collisions with the reef.
- Practice 'no touch' diving practices. Do not rest or stand on coral. Take care to avoid kicking and damaging anything with your fins. Gauges and other hanging diving gear should be secured to prevent them dragging over reef.
- A dive flag (International Code Flag "A") must be clearly displayed when conducting diving and snorkeling activities. At night, the appropriate lights must also be displayed.
- It is not good practice to chase, grab or block the path of free-swimming animals and it is illegal for some species. Allow them to continue their natural behaviours for future visitors to enjoy.
- It is an offence to damage, interfere with or remove any part of historic shipwrecks.
- Dive operators are encouraged to fit their dive tenders with prop guards.
- Tour operators need to be aware of potential dangerous species, such as sharks, crocodiles and blue bottle jellyfish. Know how to minimize the risk of encountering them and have documented emergency procedures in place in case an incident occurs.

- Tour operators are encouraged to involve their guests in marine education and monitoring activities.

Further references:

[OSH newsletter for employers in the recreational diving industry](#) - Worksafe

[Recreational Scuba Diving & Snorkelling Safety in Australia](#) – Royal Life Saving

[WAAAS Recreational Scuba Diving](#) – Outdoors WA

Wildlife Interaction

- Commercial operators are required to hold a wildlife interaction licence in order to interact with turtles (land-based only), whale sharks or marine mammals, including whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions and dugongs.
- Licences are issued under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 and strict conditions apply to how interactions can occur.
- Chasing or blocking the path of whales or dolphins is illegal.
- If you come across whales, take care to comply with the Australian Guidelines for Whale Watching as outlined in the [Parks and Wildlife Whale Watching Rules & Tips](#).
- Report any sick, injured or stranded wildlife (including whales, dolphins, turtles and seabirds) to Parks and Wildlife or the 24 hour Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055.

Kimberley Specific

- When visiting Bedwell Island at Clerke Reef within the Rowley Shoals Marine Park, take care not to disturb the resident colony of red-tailed tropic birds which roost and nest amongst driftwood and rubble on the island. Approach carefully and quietly in groups of no more than six people, maintain a distance of at least 10 metres from the birds and take care not to walk on camouflaged eggs or chicks which may be exposed out on open sand areas.
- The westward movement of cane toads through the Northern Territory towards WA threatens the biodiversity of the state, with the Kimberley at the forefront of invasion. Therefore, operators should check vehicles when entering parks and vessels when entering WA waters to ensure cane toads have not made their way into personal belongings or vehicles.
- Crocodiles inhabit a wide variety of inland and coastal waterways and water bodies across northern Australia, both fresh and saltwater, including estuaries, tidal rivers, river pools, creeks and the waters around offshore islands. Crocodiles have the ability to, and in some areas frequently enter freshwater pools above the high tide. Visitors are urged to [Be CROCWISE](#) .
- Please be aware of the risk of tropical marine stingers if planning on swimming in Kimberley waters.
- Report any sick, injured or stranded wildlife (including whales, dolphins, saltwater crocodiles, turtles and seabirds) to the Department of Parks and Wildlife Office in Broome Ph: 08 9195 5500 or the 24 hour Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055.

Further references:

[Australian Guidelines for Whale & Dolphin Watching](#) – Department of Environment

Collecting and Souveniring

- Rules around specimen shell collecting apply. Check the molluscs and other invertebrates section of the state wide [Recreational Fishing Guide](#).
- Operators will need to carefully manage guests to ensure they do not impact culture and heritage values. Visitors may not be aware but many stone arrangements on land and along the shore have important significance to traditional owners. 'Souveniring' rocks is not appropriate as this may unknowingly disturb Aboriginal artefacts from sacred heritage and cultural sites.

Island and Lagoon Activities

- Attempt to stagger visitation to islands, lagoons and bays if more than one vessel is present.
- Remove all that you take with you when visiting islands and bays, plus any other rubbish you might find there. Tour operators are encouraged to record any marine debris seen and/or collected.
- No fires are to be lit on islands.
- Reef walking is not encouraged, due to the impact on reef organisms and the reef structure, as well as risk to visitor safety.
- It is highly recommended that all vessel masters and dinghy skippers wear polarised sunglasses for easier spotting of coral bommies, shallow water and divers at the surface.

Visitor Education

- Visitor education is an important part of the visitor experience. All tour operators should make appropriate educational and interpretive materials about the areas they visit available to their guests.

Kimberley Specific

- Given the remoteness of the Kimberley, tour operators play a crucial role in providing information and educational material to customers about the uniqueness of the region.
- Where culturally appropriate, tour operators should raise awareness and knowledge of visitors to the region about Aboriginal connections with the marine and coastal environment and areas of cultural significance.
- 'Saltwater Tales – Stories from the Kimberley', is an app created to educate Kimberley charter operators and visitors to the region about the natural and cultural values of the Kimberley's wild marine environment. Featuring overviews of key destinations, various habitat types, uses and management, marine life, ocean processes and cultural information, the content has been developed to appeal to the consumer, taking complex ideas and presenting them in an easy to understand manner. Contact [Department of Fisheries](#) for more information.
- There are numerous island Nature Reserves in the Kimberley that are protected for the conservation of flora and fauna. These include Lacepede Islands, Adele Island, Browse Island

and Sandy Islet at Scott Reef, amongst others. Please contact the Department of Parks & Wildlife Broome Office ahead of any proposed visitation to any of these island areas (08 9195 5500 or broome@dbca.wa.gov.au). In particular, operators wishing to visit the Lacepede Islands Nature Reserve must be licenced for this Reserve and book visitation in advance of any trips through the Broome Office contact above.

Customer Operations

Professional Customer Service

Businesses should have documented policies and procedures ensuring professional customer service.

Receiving and Managing Bookings

- Policies and procedures for receiving, recording and managing bookings must be kept. All guest groups receive written confirmation of their booking by email or letter stipulating;
 - date, time and departure point of tour
 - Incidentals required eg. Hat, sunscreen, bathers
 - bad weather policy
 - parking and access to departure point of tour
 - cancellation / refund policy
 - company contact details if a guest is unable to show

Cancellation Policy

- A Cancellation Policy is clearly communicated to guests on the website, brochures and/or included in the booking confirmation information.
- For occurrences that cannot be controlled by the operator but affect product delivery, such as unfavorable weather conditions or lack of wildlife sightings, a 'no-refund' or 'alternate tour offering' should be communicated to the guest at time of booking.

Handling Customer Feedback and Complaints

- A documented procedure for receiving and handling customer feedback is kept.
- Customer feedback is sought within 2 weeks of a tour.
- All negative customer feedback is responded to within 7 days.
- The business keeps a record of all feedback for a period of 12 months to track trends and issues.

Answering correspondence and enquiries

- A documented procedure for answering correspondence and enquiries is kept, including phone, email and mail.
- A contact name, the business name and contact details is provided in all correspondence.
- All enquiries are responded to within 48 hours.

Truth in advertising

- All marketing and advertising material reflects an honest and accurate portrayal of the business.

Staff training

- All staff must have individual staff files that include qualifications and training records.

- All staff must have written job descriptions that clearly outlines their role and responsibilities.
- All staff must receive 12 month reviews with feedback on performance.
- All staff must be appropriately trained, including:
 - Induction training covering company procedures and policies, use of equipment, emergency and other special drills, responsibility and authority.
 - Customer service training.
 - Emergency evacuation training.
 - Delivery of interpretive and educational information.

Assisting guests

- Guests should be assisted when embarking and disembarking on vessels at all times, as addressed in an embarking and disembarking procedure. (detailed later in the document)
- Crew should observe passengers constantly to ensure they are not placing themselves or others at risk.
- All staff should wear neat and well-presented uniforms with name tags.

Social and Cultural Sustainability

Country and Culture

Respect traditional owners' cultural values and assets. Local and indigenous communities should be considered in business planning and operations, with the aim to provide support, encourage involvement and respect cultural heritage.

Local and Indigenous Community Support and Involvement

Businesses should generate ongoing support to local and Indigenous communities and minimise negative impacts by encouraging community involvement in business planning and operation where possible. This is a key theme in the State Government's Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy.

Further references:

[Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy](#) – Government of WA

[Indigenous Participation in Tourism](#) – Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

[International Centre for Responsible Tourism](#)

Respect for Cultural Heritage

- Businesses should be sensitive to the value of interpretation and embrace and respect the cultural aspects of the surrounding areas.
- The [Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council \(WAITOC\)](#) provides information on;
 - Cultural Protocols
 - Welcome to Country
 - Aboriginal History and Languages

- Land and Sea Councils
- WA Experiences
- Aboriginal Experiences
- Travel Information
- Leave No Trace (LNT) Australia emphasize the “Three R’s” of being welcomed in Indigenous communities including:
 - Relationship
 - Responsibility
 - Respect
- LNT also suggest that visitors (and operators) maintain a cooperative spirit in Indigenous communities and use an “Always Ask First” approach.
- The Department of Aboriginal Affairs provides [“Ten Top Tips for Travellers”](#) for visitors and operators travelling through Aboriginal lands.
- It should not be assumed that all Aboriginal communities are the same. They vary in cultural practices, language groups, population, facilities available, etc.

Further references:

[Kimberley Region Skills and Ethics](#) – Leave No Trace

[Guidelines for Interpreting Australian and Torres Strait Islander Culture and Country](#) - Interpreting Culture and Country

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols](#) – Oxfam Australia

Permits / Permission to Visit

- Entry permits are required for entry onto or through those Aboriginal Lands Trust reserves that are subject to Part III of the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*. For a map indicating which reserves come under Part III click ([here](#)).
- Before you apply for a permit **you must read the information below:**
 - [About entry permits](#)
 - [Travel information](#)
- Permits are granted for a period of time sufficient to allow travel through the reserve by the most direct route. Permission can also be obtained from the resident Aboriginal communities for applications who want to travel off the main road.
- For more information contact the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) on +61 8 6551 8004 or visit their [website](#).

Kimberley Specific

- Out of the nine Indigenous Protected Areas in Western Australia (under the National Reserve System), there are 4 Indigenous Protected Areas which are relevant to marine tourism by being located in the Kimberley region and comprising of vast coastline and the potential for marine-based tourist experiences. These areas conserve the healthy ecosystem that sustain human life and are managed by Indigenous communities.
- These include:
 - Balangarra Indigenous Protected Area
 - Bardi Jawa Indigenous Protected Area
 - Unguu Indigenous Protected Area
 - Dambimangari Indigenous Protected Area

Further references:

[Department of Aboriginal Affairs \(DAA\)](#)

[Kimberley Land Council](#)

[Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council \(WAITOC\)](#)

Contacts

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

State Office

3rd Floor, 3 Cantonment Street, Fremantle WA 6959

PH: (02) 6279 5000

EMAIL: enquiries@amsa.gov.au

WEB: www.amsa.gov.au

Department of Fisheries

Head Office

Gordon Stephenson House, 140 William Street, Perth WA 6000

PH: (08) 6551 4444

EMAIL: customerservice@fish.wa.gov.au

WEB: www.fish.wa.gov.au

Broome District Office

Port of Pearls House, 401 Port Drive, Broome WA 6725

PH: (08) 9193 8600

Kununurra District Office

Durack Drive, Kununurra WA 6743

PH: (08) 9166 4000

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Head Office

17 Dick Perry Avenue, Technology Park, Western Precinct Kensington WA 6151

PH: (08) 9219 9000

EMAIL: enquiries@dbca.wa.gov.au

WEB:

www.dpaw.wa.gov.au

Kununurra (Regional Headquarters)

Lot 248 Ivanhoe Road, Kununurra WA 6743

PH: (08)9168 4200

Broome Work Centre

111 Herbert Street, Broome WA 6725

PH: (08) 9195 5500

Department of Transport WA

1 Marine House, 1 Essex Street, Fremantle WA 6160

PH: 1300 863 308

EMAIL: marine.safety@transport.wa.gov.au

WEB:

www.transport.wa.gov.au

PH: 08 9435 7500

Kimberley Land Council

11 Gregory Street, Broome WA 6725

PH: (08) 9194 0100

EMAIL: klc@klc.org.au

WEB: www.klc.org.au

Kimberley Marine Tourism Association

Secretariat

EMAIL: escape@greatescape.net.au

Leave No Trace

PH (08) 9384 9062

EMAIL: info@lnt.org.au

WEB: www.lnt.org.au

Marine Tourism WA

PH: (08) 9227 7899

EMAIL: marinetourismwa@gmail.com

WEB:

www.marinetourismwa.com.au

Recfishwest

3/ 45 Northside Drive, Hillarys WA 6025

PH: (08) 9246 3366

Email: recfish@recfishwest.org.au

WEB:

www.recfishwest.org.au

Tourism Council WA

1 Resort Drive, Burswood WA 6100

PH: (08) 9416 0700

EMAIL: accreditation@tourismcouncilwa.com.au WEB:

www.tourismcouncilwa.com.au

TourismWA

Level 9, 2 Mill Street, Perth WA 6000

PH: (08) 9262 1700

EMAIL: info@westernaustralia.com.

WEB:

www.tourism.wa.gov.au

WAITOC

206 Adelaide Tce, Perth WA 6000

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EMAIL: info@waitoc.com

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Contact for Document Updating

This document has been developed with the input from numerous stakeholders. To ensure it remains up to date and relevant to WA Marine Tour Operators in the Kimberley please email Tourism Council WA on accreditation@tourismcouncilwa.com.au with any recommended updates or changes.



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