

Land Management

Cox Peninsula Restricted Use Area

The Cox Peninsula Restricted Use Area (RUA) was declared under the *Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act 1969* in 1983 to protect areas adjacent to Imaluk and Wagait Beach from damage caused by illegal mining, vegetation clearing and vehicular use. The RUA is approximately 47ha and extends over two parcels of Crown land; Section 104 and part Section 242 Hundred of Bray.

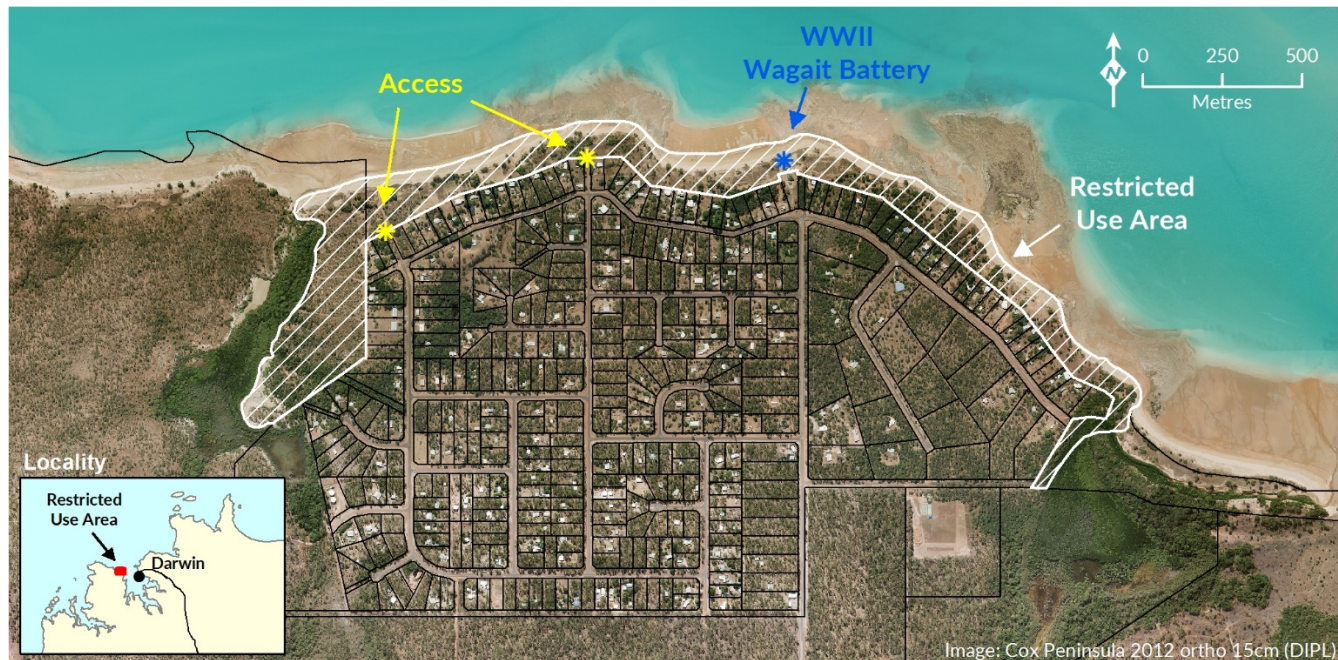


Figure 1. Cox Peninsula Restricted Use Area

Benefits of the Restricted Use Area

The purpose of the RUA is to protect the sensitive coastal dune system from impacts that may damage dunes and the vegetation that protects and stabilises the dune system.

Some of the benefits of protecting the RUA include providing:

- a protective buffer against the effects of storm surge, wind and wave action
- a natural buffer between the foreshore and adjoining private land
- public space for passive recreational activities (e.g. walking on the beach, fishing from the beach or rocks, birdwatching and wildlife spotting), and
- protection of cultural, ecological, environmental and heritage values.

Threats and vulnerability

Shoreline movement is a natural process caused by coastal, climatic and oceanographic processes. Stable sand dunes play an important role in protecting against wave action and the natural cycle of dune and foreshore migration. However, dunes are vulnerable to vegetation clearing and vehicle trafficking. This includes driving cars and recreational vehicles such as ATVs and quad bikes on the beach and over dunes.

Clearing of vegetation (including grasses) can result in destabilisation of the foreshore and dunes resulting in accelerated erosion and a reduction in resilience to storm activity. Vehicle activity can also impact turtle habitat and movement.

Dune stabilising flora

Specialised plants that can survive salt spray, sandblast and strong winds, and which have strong root systems, are needed to stabilise dunes. *Spinifex longifolius* (Beach Spinifex) (Figure 2) and *Ipomoea pes-caprae* (Figure 3) are two common plants found on dunes with stabilising properties. It is important that these plants, and other coastal species, are protected and not damaged; as this may result in accelerated erosion and costly or irreversible damage to the beach, native wildlife habitat and surrounding areas.



Figure 2. *Spinifex longifolius*

Grass species are vital for stabilising beach dune systems.



Figure 3. *Ipomoea pes-caprae*

Prostrate perennial vine common in coastal areas. Attractive, pink bell shaped flower.



Figure 4. *Carnavalia rosea*

Groundcover vine similar in form to *Ipomoea pes-caprae* with pink/purple pea flower.



Figure 5. *Pandanus spiralis*

Pandanus provides habitat for many species including frogs, mammals, reptiles and nesting birds.

Turtles

Wagait Beach is included in a community awareness program, run by Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, to protect marine turtles and improve nesting success. During the Dry season, marine turtles come ashore to lay eggs.

The main species is the flatback turtle (*Natator depressus*). It feeds on soft bodied animals such as jellyfish and sea cucumbers. The flatback turtle is regarded as 'vulnerable' nationally and disturbance of breeding sites is one of the main threats for this species. Sand compaction and tyre ruts left in the sand can impact vegetative growth and also impede a turtle hatchling's journey to the ocean, making it vulnerable to predators.



Figure 6. *Natator depressus*

Further information: www.nt.gov.au/environment/animals/wildlife-in-nt/marine-turtles

Heritage values

Remnants of World War II gun emplacements and associated infrastructure are located within the RUA.

During World War II the Wagait Battery was considered of strategic importance in the protection of the anti-submarine boom net and the harbour itself. The surviving remains of the Wagait gun emplacements collectively form a small precinct demonstrating the layout and construction of a coastal artillery battery of the time and is a significant part of the Northern Territory's history.

Further information: www.northernterritory.com/darwin-and-surrounds/destinations/wagait-beach

Protecting the Restricted Use Area

There are a number of ways to protect the RUA, coastal vegetation and reduce erosion, including:

- Beach Access - access the beach from designated access points e.g. the end of Erikson Crescent (vehicles and pedestrians) and Baluria Road (pedestrians only)
- Camping - camping is not recommended as activities associated with camping may damage vegetation
- Boat Launching - only use designated boat ramps. Do not park vehicles or trailers in the RUA
- Vegetation - removing or damaging any vegetation (including grasses) within the RUA is not permitted, unless written permission has been received from the Department. Management activities such as mowing or slashing should be carefully considered (and consent sought) as these activities may impede vegetation diversity and species recruitment
- Drainage - altering, obstructing or installing drains, pipes or culverts within the RUA is not permitted
- Vehicle Use - vehicles should only access the beach from the designated access point (i.e. end of Erikson Crescent) and should not be driven above the High Water Mark or over sand dunes
- Pedestrian use - be aware of and avoid turtle and shorebird nesting areas above the High Water Mark and 20m from the base of the dunes
- Fire management - lighting fires in the RUA is not recommended and any activity that may result in fire impacting the area should be avoided
- Weed management - weeds can impact the RUA by reducing biodiversity and threatening local plant and animal species; and disrupting ecosystem processes. For example, weeds may increase the frequency or intensity of fire which may reduce vegetative cover that can contribute to erosion, resulting in altered and unstable dunes.

Restricted uses

Under Section 20C of the *Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act 1969*, it is an offence to undertake the following activities within the RUA:

- possess or use a motor vehicle (including cars, motorbikes and ATVs e.g. quadbikes, side-by-sides etc.)
- remove or damage any vegetation (including grasses) by mowing, burning and/or spraying
- take or remove any sand, gravel, rock, clay or earth
- interfere with any erosion prevention works
- cause water or other fluid to be drained or to flow over the area.

Penalties and fines may apply.

Residents and the public are encouraged to report breaches to the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security as soon as possible.

What can you do to minimise weeds and weed seed spread?

- on adjoining land, control weeds prior to them producing seed
- avoid walking through weed infestations.

Further information: www.nt.gov.au/environment/weeds

Contact and information resources

For further information, please contact the Land Management Unit, **Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security**. To view the Restricted Use Area, please visit NR Maps.

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (Land Management Unit)	
Telephone	(08) 8999 4572
Email	developmentassessment.depws@nt.gov.au
Website	www.nt.gov.au/environment/swoil-land-vegetation
NR Maps	http://nrmaps.nt.gov.au/nrmaps.html

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (Crown Land Estate)	
Telephone	(08) 8999 6886
Email	Crown.Land.Estate@nt.gov.au
Website	https://nt.gov.au/property/land/crown-land-management

Wagait Shire Council	
Telephone	(08) 8978 5185
Email	council@wagait.nt.gov.au
Website	http://wagait.nt.gov.au

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (Bushfires NT)	
Telephone	Cox Peninsula Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Mobile: 0419 049 165 Bushfires NT (Darwin and Arnhem): (08) 8922 0844 Emergency: 000
Email	BushfiresNT.Compliance@nt.gov.au
Website	https://denr.nt.gov.au/land-resource-management/bushfire-information-and-management

Heritage Branch	
Telephone	(08) 8999 5055
Email	heritage@nt.gov.au
Website	https://northernterritory.com/darwin-and-surrounds/destinations/wagait-beach