

Moorings in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a mooring plan and licence system being developed for the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park?

As vessel ownership continues to increase across Western Australia's marine parks and reserves, the Department of Biodiversity and Conservation (DBCA) is working to manage the increasing demand for private moorings to minimise impacts on the environment and manage safety. A licence system provides a transparent and equitable process for private mooring owners to obtain authority for their existing mooring or apply for a new mooring.

What is a private mooring?

A private mooring means a mooring that is owned by a private individual or organisation for private use. It is not a public or rental mooring.

Where will private moorings be allowed?

Private moorings will be permitted in Mooring Licence Areas (MLAs). Two MLA's are proposed for the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park:

- The Proposed Port Kennedy Mooring Licence Area and
- The Proposed Carlisle Street Mooring Licence Area.

Refer to the *Shoalwater Islands Marine Park Draft Mooring Plan* or the information sheet for maps of the MLAs available at <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/haveyoursay>

Any application for a mooring located outside a MLA will generally not be approved. However, there may be exceptions for public/community benefit, such as community organisations or public amenities. The MLAs have been selected to meet current and future demand for moorings, while balancing the demand for other recreational activities and protecting the natural environment.

How much will a private mooring cost?

An annual fee will be charged for each private mooring site, aligned with the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure (DTMI) mooring licence fees [Swing mooring licences | Transport WA](#)ⁱ. Licence fees will contribute to administration and ongoing costs associated with the implementation of the MLAs including assessments and compliance activities. Licence fees will be reviewed periodically and the latest information on fees will be available on DBCA's website.

Can I have a say on the proposed plan?

Yes. Community input is an important part of this process and you're invited to share your views on the draft plan by:

- Visiting <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/haveyoursay> to view the draft mooring plan and fill in the online survey (preferred)

- emailing your comments to moorings@dbca.wa.gov.au
- posting a written submission to the Marine and Riverpark Coordinator at: Attn DBCA, 14 Capo D'Orlando Drive, South Fremantle 6162.

All feedback received during the comment period will be reviewed and will help shape the final plan.

The draft mooring plan may be amended if a submission:

- provides additional information of direct relevance to management,
- indicates a change in (or clarifies) government legislation or management policy,
- proposes strategies that would better achieve management objectives, and/or
- indicates omissions, inaccuracies or a lack of clarity.

The public comment period is open from Friday 27 February 2026 to Friday 1 May 2026.

When will the licence system come into effect?

It is anticipated that the MLAs will be designated towards the end of 2026. Once the MLAs have been designated, the licence system will come into effect. You will have 12 months to ensure your mooring is licensed with DBCA. Notification of the requirement to license your mooring will be given and any moorings remaining in the marine park which are not licensed after 12 months will be removed.

How will I know when the MLAs have been designated and the licence system will come into effect?

If you provide your contact details via the online survey, email or by post we will notify you directly when the MLAs have been designated and the licence system is in place. We will also tag moorings in the marine park to notify existing mooring users and install signage and provide information on DBCA's website [Moorings | Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#)ⁱⁱ.

I already have a mooring. What benefit will there be to existing mooring holders by issuing mooring licences?

A mooring licence grants authority to own and use a mooring within a marine park. Currently there is nothing in law that prevents another person moving your mooring and installing their own in its place.

How do I apply for a licence for an existing mooring?

To apply for a licence for an existing mooring, you will need to complete an application form. Details of how to apply will be kept up to date here: [Moorings | Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#)ⁱⁱ



How do I apply for a licence for a new mooring?

To apply for a licence for a new mooring, you will need to complete an application form. Details of how to apply will be kept up to date here: [Moorings | Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#) ⁱⁱ

Is there an application fee?

An application fee will be charged to cover administrative costs, which will be aligned with the DTMI mooring licence application fee [Swing mooring licences | Transport WA](#) ⁱ. Licence application fees will be reviewed periodically and the latest information on fees will be available on DBCA's website.

What happens when the MLAs reach capacity, is there a waitlist?

Should the relevant MLA be at capacity you may be placed on a waitlist until a suitable mooring site becomes available. A non-refundable application fee is required before your application is added to the waitlist.

Will holders of existing moorings get priority over new licence applications?

DBCA will license all existing moorings, providing that a licence application is received from the owner and the mooring is compliant. Once the MLA is at capacity, new applicants will be placed on a waitlist until a suitable mooring site becomes available.

What happens if I have a mooring but don't want to license it?

All permanent moorings in marine parks must be licensed to be lawful. Existing moorings that are not licensed will need to be removed by the owner. After a reasonable period, ¹ unlicensed moorings that have not been claimed and licensed will be identified and removed by Parks and Wildlife Service.

Does the mooring plan impact me if my mooring was installed before the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park was declared?

Any mooring owner that has not received lawful authority to install a mooring in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park will be required to apply for a mooring licence and provide proof of ownership and history of that mooring (for example, date of installation or history of use). DBCA will process the application and advise the applicant of the outcome within a reasonable period of time.

Until a mooring licence is granted, the mooring will be able to remain in the park. It should be noted that any mooring installed prior to the gazettal of a Marine Park, or prior to the commencement of the CALM Regulations in 2002, was not installed unlawfully if it was installed with approval under written law. However, few moorings in Marine Parks are known to be installed pursuant to written law (e.g., under a DTMI mooring licence).



I am a Commercial Tour Operator, do I need a mooring licence as well as my commercial operator's licence?

If you are a licensed commercial operator, authority to install, own and/or use a mooring should already be incorporated into your commercial operations licence.

Commercial fishers and all other commercial vessels who do not hold a mooring licence under written law (e.g., DTMI), need to complete a mooring licence application.

Can I still anchor in the marine park?

Yes, you can continue to anchor wherever it is safe to do so in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Parks, including MLAs, provided your vessel:

- is at least 50m from any mooring;
- does not obstruct or interfere with access to a mooring, vessel launching facilities, channel, fairway, passage or leading lines; and
- is outside any no-boating or no-anchoring areas.

Anchoring is not permitted within 150m of the HMAS Swan Dive Wreck. Moorings are not permitted outside of the MLA.

DBCA encourages all vessel owners to anchor in areas of sand and not seagrass or reef, to avoid damage to the marine environment and seagrass habitat.

Who can install the hardware for a new private mooring?

The installation of a new mooring must be done by an approved mooring contractor and with the approval of DBCA. This ensures that the hardware is fit for the purpose it is intended to perform. A list of approved mooring contractors can be obtained on DTMI's website [Maintenance of swing moorings | Transport WA](#)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Can I do the servicing of the mooring myself?

You may inspect the mooring for wear and damage and clean the mooring hardware. However, it is a requirement of a mooring licence that all maintenance work and formal inspections must be performed by an approved mooring contractor. A list of approved mooring contractors can be obtained on DTMI's website [Maintenance of swing moorings | Transport WA](#)ⁱⁱⁱ

Who can lawfully maintain an existing or old mooring?

The maintenance of private moorings, including those that were originally installed by amateur or non-approved mooring contractors, must be carried out by an approved mooring contractor. An inspection report of the mooring by an approved contractor will be required every two years. If an existing or old mooring is located in a sensitive seabed environment such as seagrass meadows or coral communities, an approved Environmentally Friendly Mooring (EFM) design, will be required to replace the existing or old mooring within a three year period. A list of approved mooring contractors can be obtained on DTMI's website [Maintenance of swing moorings | Transport WA](#)ⁱⁱⁱ

What should I do if I don't want or need my mooring anymore?

Mooring ownership isn't transferable so you will be required to notify DBCA and you must remove the hardware when the mooring is no longer required. Penalties may apply to owners of mooring hardware that is left abandoned.

Can I sell a private mooring licence?

No. A private mooring licence is not transferable and cannot be sold. The mooring licence can only be issued to the owner of the primary vessel which will be using the mooring. It is not possible for a third party to act as a 'broker' for private moorings. If you no longer wish to own a private mooring licence, you will need to provide notice in writing to DBCA. Please contact the Swan Region office on 08 9206 4795.

Are there any areas that have vessel speed restrictions due to the presence of moorings?

Yes, you must not exceed 8 knots within 45m of a moored vessel. This is an existing rule for all waters of WA. Other speed restrictions apply and are managed by DTMI, please refer to the boating guide for the area published by DTMI [South Metropolitan Boating Guide](#)^{iv}.

What do I do if I arrive at my licensed mooring and a vessel is using it without my permission?

In most cases a polite request for an unauthorised mooring-user to vacate the mooring will probably be all that is required to move along the vessel. If the vessel is unattended, *you must not try to relocate the vessel* but should contact Parks and Wildlife Service for guidance. In the event of a dispute or problem, contact Parks and Wildlife Service. It is an offence under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* to use a private mooring without written consent of the owner.

How will the moorings be policed?

Rangers will monitor the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park for compliance. Notification will be provided to unlawful mooring holders if their mooring is not compliant and adequate time will be given to ensure their mooring is lawful. After a reasonable period, unlicensed moorings that have not been claimed and licensed will be identified and removed by Parks and Wildlife Service.

ⁱ <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/marine/boating-facilities/swing-moorings/swing-mooring-licences>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/licences-and-permits/moorings>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/marine/boating-facilities/swing-moorings/maintenance>

^{iv} https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/getmedia/a070eaa6-6b25-4af5-8c93-4bd547caee03/mac_g_boating_south_metro.pdf