

Vehicles on Beaches Policy

1 Purpose

Beaches and dunal ecosystems are highly valued by the local community and the many visitors to the Coffs Harbour region. Additionally, they:

1. Are integral to the lifestyle of Coffs Harbour
2. Are a significant driver of tourism
3. Support a diverse range of recreational activities
4. Contribute to the overall amenity and visual appeal of the region
5. Are vital ecological resources, providing habitat to a variety of native flora and fauna as well as protecting terrestrial areas from coastal erosion processes
6. Are, north of the Harbour, part of the Solitary Islands Marine Park

Improper use can compromise this valuable resource. Projected population increase in the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area will place increased pressures on our beaches, with higher levels of competing use and greater potential for conflict between users.

This document establish a policy that applies to vehicle use on Coffs Harbour Local Government Area (LGA) beaches, with the aim of:

- a) Establishing a consistent approach to regulating beach access by vehicles on beaches
- b) Protecting the coastal environment
- c) Ensuring the safety of all beach users
- d) Allowing for sustainable and equitable recreational use of the beaches

The Policy includes requirements that provide restrictions on which beaches access is permitted and how users must conduct themselves on these permitted beaches.

2 Background and Legislative Requirements

The following details the background and legislative requirements of this policy:

1. This policy applies to all beaches within the City of Coffs Harbour (City) Local Government area including those adjacent to National Parks
2. Notwithstanding this policy, use of beaches by vehicles is still subject to all the normal road rules and enforcements that apply on public roads
3. City will regulate access to the beaches under Section 632 of the *Local Government Act 1993* via designated access points and in accordance with the terms of the regulatory signage and this policy
4. City will, in implementing this policy liaise with the NSW Police, Department of Primary Industry - Fisheries, Department of Industry - Crown Lands, Solitary Islands Marine Park, Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service) and the Aboriginal Land Council to ensure the effective management of vehicles on beaches

3 Policy

3.1 Recreational Beach Access

1. 4WD Vehicles are permitted on beaches within the Coffs Harbour LGA, as defined by way of maps in Section 9 to this Policy.

2. All Vehicles, other than those with a fishing license are prohibited at all times on:
 - a) Any beach, or part thereof, not specifically identified as being accessible by vehicle under this policy as defined in Section 9 to this policy.
 - b) Any dune or beach area that is vegetated.
 - c) Areas of endangered species habitat or nesting areas, as marked by NPWS or Crown Lands.
 - d) Any closed beach.
 - e) 2WD and all other forms of motor vehicles are prohibited from all beaches with the exception of those vehicles covered by the provisions of Section 3.2 and to launch boats.
 - f) Vehicles must access via designated access points and abide by the Requirements for 4WD Users on Beaches in Section 3.7 of this policy.
 - g) ATV's displaying a Transport for NSW mobility parking permit (for people with a disability) are permitted on beaches defined in Section 9 to this policy.

3.2 Exemptions

This Policy applies to all vehicles accessing beaches other than:

1. Emergency Services personnel during rescues, patrols or exercises authorised by the City.
2. Authorised servants of Local, State and Commonwealth Governments in performance of their duties.
3. Note that exempt vehicles under this section are still required to abide by the Requirements for 4WD Users on Beaches in Section 3.7 of this policy.

3.3 Commercial Fishers

1. 4WD Vehicles are permitted on beaches within the Coffs Harbour LGA, as defined by way of maps in Section 9 to this Policy.
2. Commercial Fishers are permitted to access beaches in accordance with the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and Regulations, and the management rules of the Solitary Islands Marine Park.
3. Vehicles must access via designated access points and abide by the Requirements for 4WD Users on Beaches in Section 3.7 of this policy.

3.4 Special Occasional Use

1. City may give consideration to the organisers of sporting, cultural or other special events to take nominated vehicles onto beaches not permitted in Section 9, with City's prior written approval. A marine park permit from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) – Fisheries, is also required for activities within the Solitary Islands Marine Park.
2. Applications for special occasional beach usage must be made to City in writing at least 21 days prior to the time of the requested beach access. Applications will be considered on merit having regard for the public interest.
3. Vehicles must access via designated access points and abide by the Requirements for 4WD Users on Beaches in Section 3.7 of this policy.

3.5 Filming on Beaches

1. Where approval is provided for filming activities on Beaches, approval may be granted for vehicles other than 4WD vehicles to access the beach. A marine park permit from

Department of Primary Industries Fisheries is also required for activities within the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

2. Vehicles used in association with approved filming must abide by the Requirements for 4WD Users on Beaches in Section 3.7 of this policy, and the conditions of City's approval for the filming activity. In the event of an inconsistency, the terms of the filming approval will prevail.

3.6 Closure of 4WD Vehicle Access

1. City and other government agencies may close 4WD vehicle access to beaches in carrying out functions such as beach management, emergency management, monitoring of wildlife, safety and general operations as required.
2. The City also reserves the right to close a beach when there are known sea turtle nests or bird nests where vehicles may impact the nests.

3.7 Requirements for 4WD Users on Beaches

1. Vehicles must use officially constructed beach access tracks when entering and exiting the beach.
2. Vehicles are to drive below the high tide mark whenever possible and, during high tide, drive as close to the high tide mark as possible.
3. Driving on dunal areas is strictly prohibited.
4. The maximum vehicle speed is 25 km/h within 100 meters of pedestrians and beach users and 50 km/h at other times.
5. Vehicles accessing beaches must be registered and their drivers must hold a valid driver's licence. Laws relating to drug and alcohol use on NSW roads are applicable to beaches in the Coffs Harbour LGA.
6. Vehicles using designated beaches must park responsibly away from dunes, vegetation or threatened species areas.
7. Enquiries regarding vehicle access on non-designated beaches for a special purpose should be directed to the City, in writing. Commercial fishing access on non-designated beaches is as their designated permit conditions.
8. Ultra-light aircraft and motorised hang gliders are prohibited on all beaches within Coffs Harbour LGA and offenders will be subject to on the spot fines.

4 Enforcement

The following persons are authorised to enforce this Policy:

1. Officers of the NSW Police Force
2. Authorised Officers of the City
3. NPWS Officers where the beach is in a National Park

5 Definitions

4 Wheel Drive (4WD): is a form of drivetrain capable of providing power to all wheels of a 2 axle vehicle simultaneously and includes all wheel drive motor vehicles.

ATV: is a three or 4-wheel vehicle that travels on low-pressure tires, with a seat that is straddled by the operator, along with handlebars for steering control.

Beach: means the non-vegetated area below the fore dune extending to the waterline.

Beach Access: means the access provided to the beach by way of public road or land under the

control of City, or another public land management authority.

Commercial Fisher: means a person who holds a commercial fishing licence under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* authorised to operate in the Ocean Hauling or Estuary General hand gathering share managed fisheries.

DPI: means NSW Government Department of Primary Industries which includes Fisheries.

Dunal Area: means the vegetated area comprising the fore and hind dunes.

Emergency Services: refers to any recognised government or community group providing disaster relief, including, but not limited to Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Police, Ambulance, NPWS, Marine Rescue, Surf Life Saving Service and the like.

Motor Vehicle: has the same meaning as motor vehicle under the Road Transport Act.

NPWS: means the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Registered: is a motor vehicle duly registered by the road authority for that vehicle’s state of origin.

6 Key Responsibilities

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead Councillors in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and related procedure.
General Manager	Executive	To lead staff (either directly or through delegated financial authority) in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and procedures.
Directors	All Directorates	To communicate, implement and comply with this policy
Group Leader Transport and Open Space Services	Sustainable Infrastructure	To facilitate review of this Policy, the development and implementation of the Beach Access Improvements Program, ensuring community is informed through media releases and City’s website and advise relevant City officers about changes to this Policy and related procedure.
Section Leader Transport Services	Sustainable Infrastructure	Beach access maintenance
Section Leader Compliance Regulatory Enforcement	Sustainable Communities	Enforcement of policy and related procedure requirements

7 References

- *Local Government Act 1993* and Regulations
- *Crown Lands Act 1989* and Regulations
- *Roads Act 1993*
- *Road Transport Act 2013*
- *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* and Regulations
- *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and Regulations
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*

8 Details of Approval and revision

- **Approval date:** 23/03/2023
- **Responsible Group:** Transport and Open Space Services
- **Responsible Section:** Asset Strategies
- **Superseded policies/procedures:** N/A
- **Next review date:** 28/08/2025

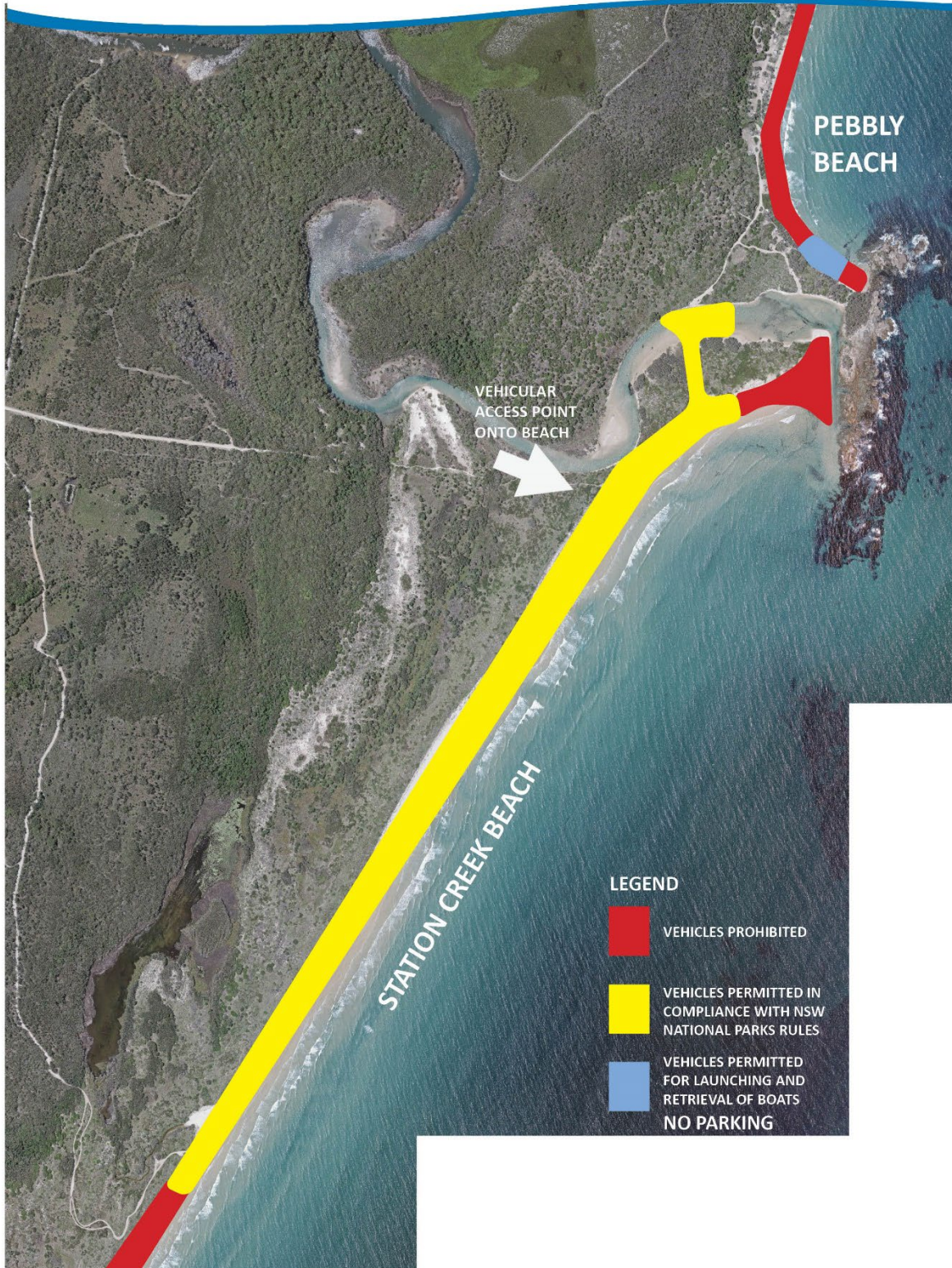
Table of amendments

Amendment	Authoriser	Approval ref	Date
Minor amendments and update to references to the City of Coffs Harbour.	Council	2023/45	23/03/23

9 Appendices - Maps of permitted driving areas

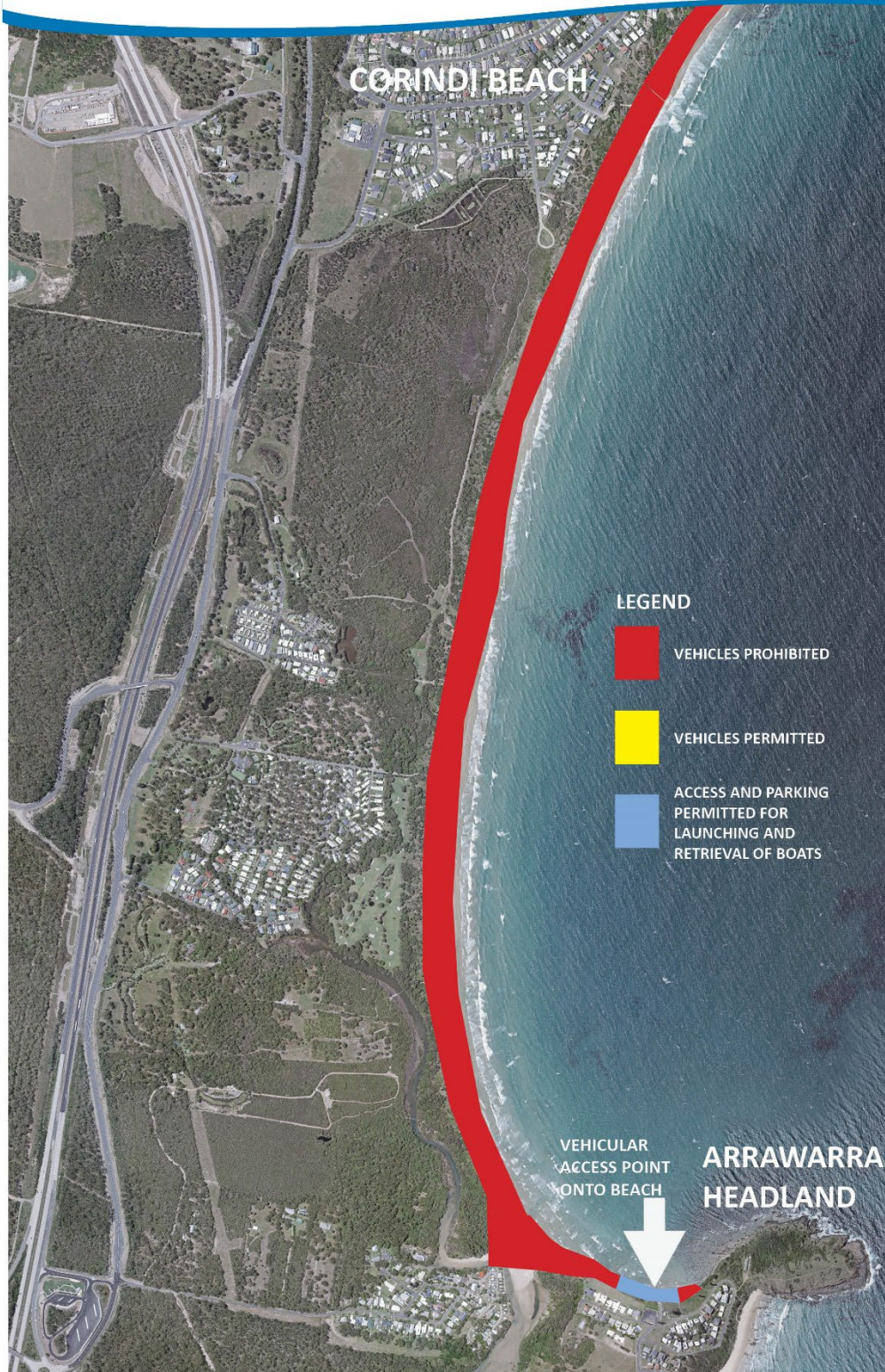
9.1 Station Creek

Station Creek



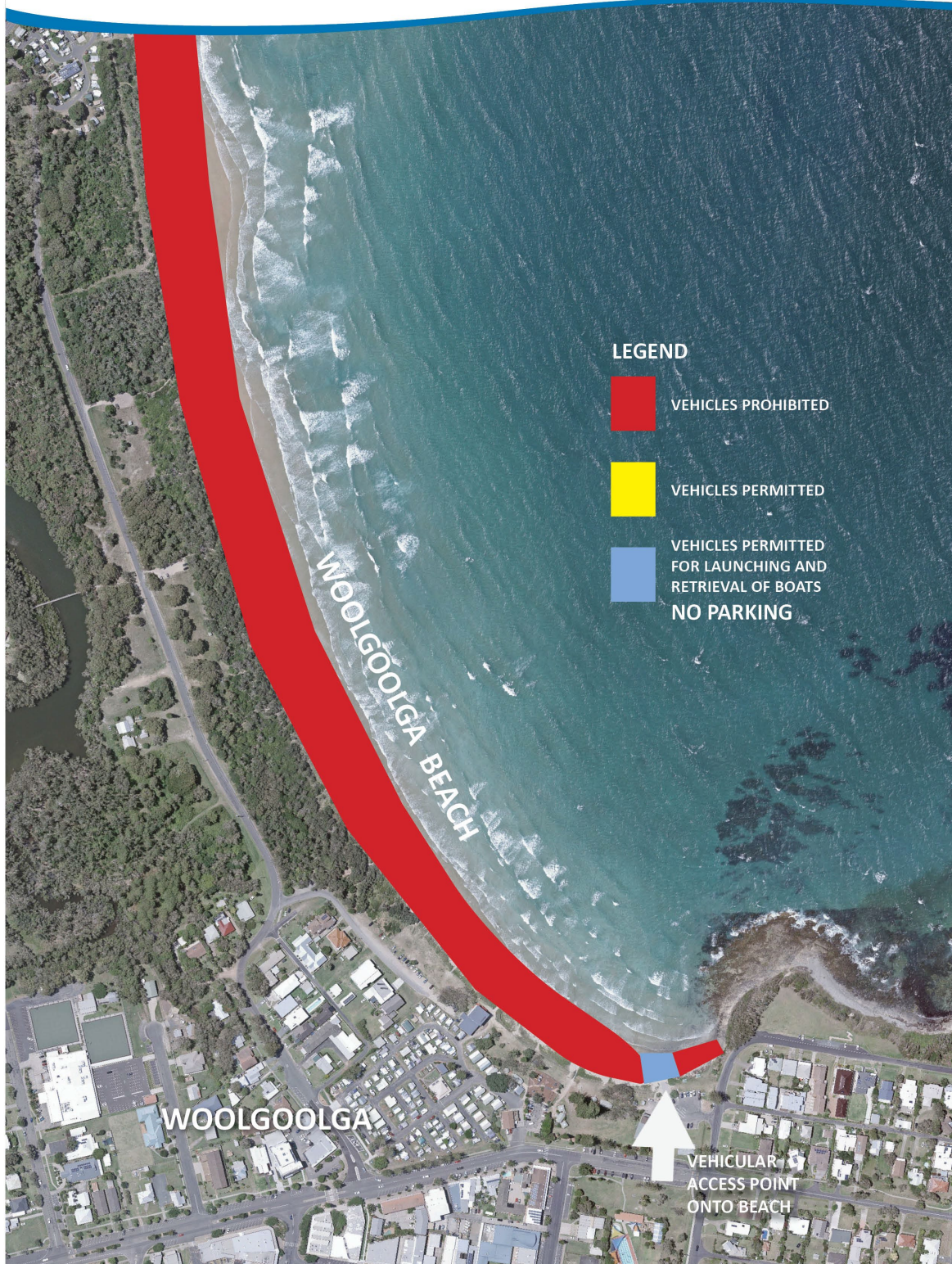
9.2 Arrawarra Beach

Arrawarra Beach



9.3 Woolgoolga Beach

Woolgoolga Beach



9.4 Woolgoolga Back Beach

Woolgoolga Back Beach



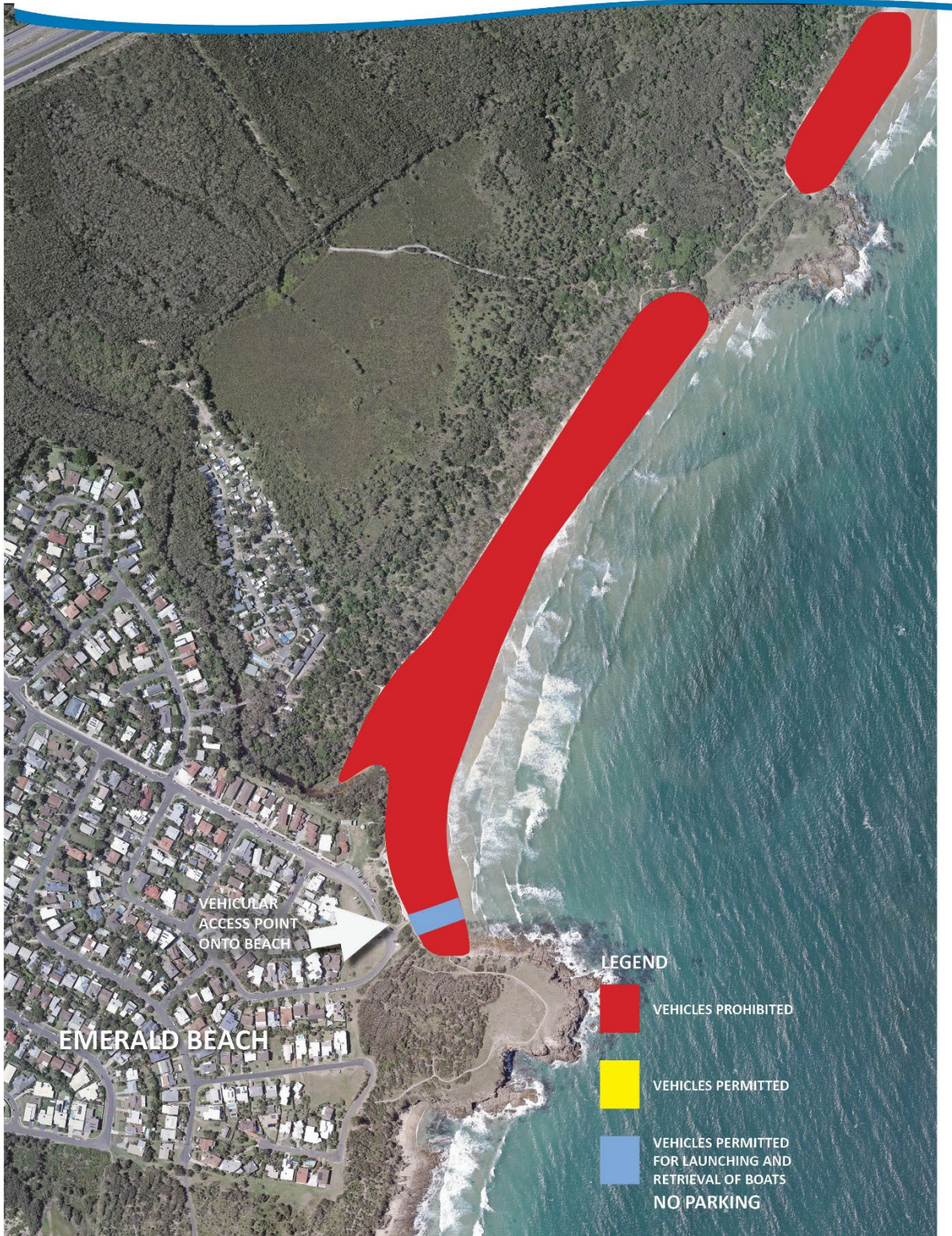
9.5 Sandy Beach

Sandy Beach



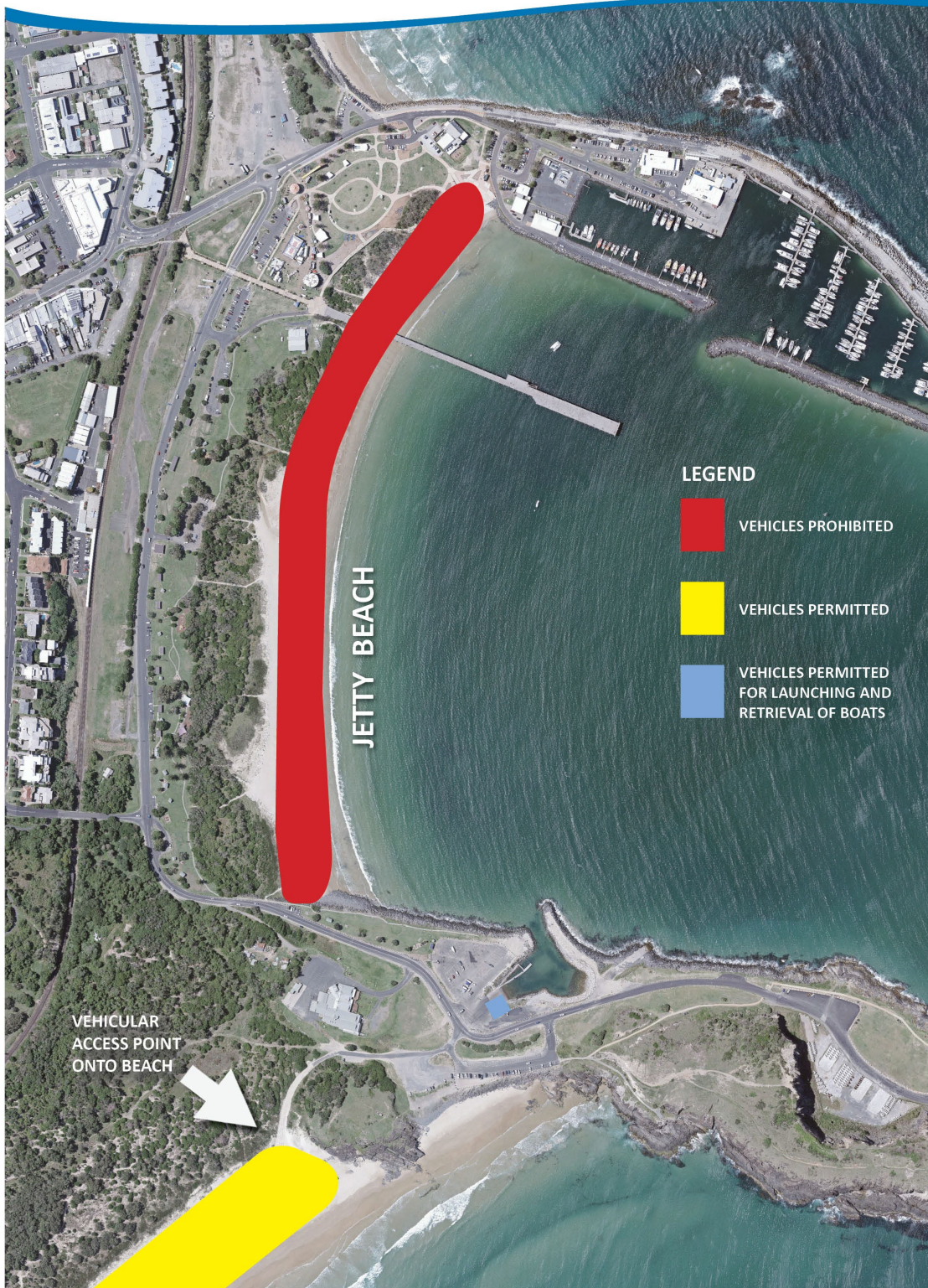
9.6 Emerald Beach

Emerald Beach



9.7 Jetty Beach

Jetty Beach



9.8 Boambee Beach

Boambee Beach



9.9 Sawtell Beach

Sawtell Beach



9.10 North Beach

North Beach

