

## Cedar Bay Update 2011/12

There has been trouble in paradise. Some things have changed as far as access into Cedar Bay is concerned. National Parks has never recommended the popular access route into Cedar Bay through the private property of Auravale in the south and has instead suggested visitors travel via the private property of Home Rule at the northern end. The Home Rule track is a very scenic walk but it's a long one and the walk out is steep and strenuous. Subsequently the Auravale track has unofficially remained popular and word-of-mouth and some websites and publications have ensured this has remained the case.

However, to make things tricky, the Dept of Environment and Resource Management has declared the Rattlesnake Point area, at the southern end of the bay, to be a Restricted Access Area. This also happens to take in the track from Auravale over the back of the headland and into the bay. Quoting the department's website - *Entry to Rattlesnake Point (Marbaymba) in Cedar Bay National Park is restricted to protect significant cultural resources. The restriction enables Eastern Kuku Yalanji people to protect and manage the cultural features and attributes of the area. This is a joint initiative between the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A person, other than an acknowledged member of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji, must not enter or remain in this area without a permit or written approval from the EPA.*

It says on the spot fines may apply. Now I haven't yet attempted to see what is involved in obtaining a permit to enter the area but I don't imagine it would be too straightforward. Meanwhile, Tony Croft, the owner of Auravale does not have a problem with people passing through his property, given due respect. Realizing visitors to Cedar Bay may not want to walk in and out the same long track from Home Rule or disrespect indigenous rights, National Parks have provided an alternative. This is the Gap Creek track referred to on the dept's website and depicted on their on-line national park map. At the time of writing this access is a work in progress and has been for a while. The commencement of the track is ill-defined, the track itself is not very well defined and there really isn't anywhere appropriate to park your car. It's a pretty steep climb up from the road and a steeper drop down to the bay. Anyone planning on using this route please check with the dept in Mossman about the status of this track before you make definite plans.



Now some good news. There is another way into Cedar Bay. John Duncan at Ayton runs a water taxi from the Bloomfield River. He will pick up and / or drop off up to 8 people into Cedar. Some consideration needs to be put into where you leave your car and how you pick it up if you go for a one-way trip on the boat. Give him a call on 4060 8252. Permits to camp must now be obtained (only) by calling the Atherton DERM office - 4095 7021. More interesting news. John can also do transfers out to East Hope Island - off the coast from Cedar Bay. East Hope is a small coral atoll with some designated camp sites, picnic tables and toilet. It has a beautiful fringing reef, extensive reef flats and incredible birdlife. A great place for a couple of nights! Camping permits available only on-line at <http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/parks/hope-islands/index.html>

