

Appendix 3 Site Characteristics and Issues Matrix - Maret Islands

Terrestrial Biophysical Attributes	Extent and Condition	Level of Confidence High: from site visit /survey, good map based knowledge, Medium: inferred from other good information sets, Low: limited information.	Relative Potential for Significant Risk / Hazard and Impact of Development At This Site	Rating Relative significance of the issue
Visual Landscape Significance	Visual Landscape Significance Assessment	Level of Confidence	Potential significance of Landscape impacts from development of the site	
Landscape character of hub site and broader context	<p>Landscape Region: The Kimberley Character type: Kimberley Plateau Landscape context: This sub-type is an extremely complex and ancient dissected sandstone plateaux with undulating hills, well defined escarpments and laterite capped mesas with a predominant savannah grasslands and woodland land cover. A deeply dissected coastline features include headlands, cliffs and many off-shore islands with fringing mangroves, tidal mudflats and estuaries. Seasonal water courses flow into gulfs, swamps, deltas, mudflats of the Indian Ocean and Timor Sea. The visual effect is generally dramatic and rugged. Pastoral and mining leases occur in this sub-type and Aboriginal people use the area, however there is little evident alteration from the naturally established landscape character. View character of this development node: The island landscape is characterised by a rugged rocky plateau with rocky terrain, a dramatic cliff perimeter and a sense of remoteness and naturalness. Diverse vegetation patterns result from mixed herblands, rock outcropping and shrubby savannah. Landscape Character Rating: High Comments: The dramatic landform and location of the Maret Islands ensure that they are a focal landscape of immense importance as viewed from marine viewer positions. Significant alteration to the visual character of the island would collectively impact on the perceived and actual character of the broader North Kimberley coastal landscape.</p>	Low to moderate	<p><i>Suitability rating:</i> Low <i>Absorption Capability:</i> Low <i>Analysis (+ positive and - negative):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - remote, high expectation of naturalness - proximity to marine tour boat routes and focal attractions - established marine user patterns 	
Degree of evident alteration or change from the 'naturally established' landscape character based on levels of 'naturalness'	<p>Degree of evident change from naturally established character: Low, no evident alterations exist in the naturally established landscape. Naturalness rating: High.</p>			
Degree and sensitivity of views and seen areas from travel routes and use areas (duration, frequency, position in landscape, number of viewers, distance)	<p>Viewer position: A relatively small number of very sensitive visitors on tour and cruise boats - often with a special focus on scenic assets and expert interpretation of bio-physical and landscape values and features. Some craft circumnavigate this Island. Distance zone: Foreground, middleground and background. Duration of view: Variable but long duration views provided by some operators. Viewer position: Generally level, but can be 'below' as one approaches the shoreline of the Island. Sensitivity level: Level 1 - seasonally variable. Visitor expectation of naturalness high. Implications: Development of any of the islands of the Maret group would significantly alter the natural image of a large sector of the North Kimberley coast. It is projected that the impacts on the Island and regional landscape would be perceived and assessed as unacceptably negative by most viewers in tour boats. A large area of the north Kimberley coast currently valued for its naturalness, ruggedness and diversity would be visually compromised by development of even a small component of the whole landscape. Development on any prominent point or island would become an alien focal point as viewed by clients on tour boat that pass on their journey along the shoreline of the Kimberley region. While industrial development can be perceived as a 'feature' in some urban and semi-urban settings, the assessment of most viewers is likely to highly negative where a high degree of naturalness is anticipated.</p>			
Special features and focal points within view of the hub site	North and South Maret Islands, Bigge Island, Berthier Island			