



# How to protect areas on your land and sea under the Protected Areas Act 2010 (Solomon Islands)

## What are protected areas?

Protected areas are mainly set up to conserve nature and wildlife. They can also help support the sustainable use of resources to meet the livelihood needs of local communities and customary owners. Legally protected areas can help to support the traditional system, especially for serious infringements (when people break the rules of a protected area), and can provide a tool to formalise and enforce rules and community rights.

A protected area is one way communities can manage their land and sea for food and livelihoods. To create a larger protected area under national law, communities can network with their neighbouring communities to secure a bigger area to be protected. Another way to formally protect community areas is through the Fisheries Act or Provincial Ordinance.

## How will my community benefit from a protected area?

Establishing a legal Protected Area can help a community protect areas of their land and sea, for current and future generations:



Allow traditional rules to be enforced under the law



Improve food security for the local community



Protect attractive habitats and species, which may increase tourism



Help to maintain traditional knowledge about managing land and sea



Give plants and animals the opportunity to recover from past unsustainable activities



Formalise the rules that apply in the area, and help enforce serious infringements



SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT



**SPREP**  
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional  
Environment Programme

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# The Protected Areas Act (2000)

A protected area can also be formally set up under law. The Protected Areas Act is a new national law that gives the Minister of Environment the mandate to declare land or sea area as protected areas. Some Provinces also have Provincial Ordinances which allow protected areas to be set up.

There is flexibility with how you can protect your area – different communities can make a protected area with different rules and objectives, depending on what they want for their land and sea.



The Protected Areas Act allows the minister for environment to establish legally protected areas. If the customary owners of land or sea want to establish a legally protected area under that act, they need to follow this process:

## Step 1: Community Consultations

The community that intends to apply for a protected area holds consultations with its members and with neighbouring communities to reach agreement.



## Step 2: Management Committee and Management Plan

The Environment Advisory Committee for the Solomon Islands Government appoints the Management Committee, which prepares the Management Plan.



## Step 3: Application to the Director

The community submits an application form, the Management Plan, a map of the Protected Area, and the agreement with the neighbouring communities.



## Step 4: Director's consultations and investigations

The customary rights of the area are verified, the Government is consulted, the area's environmental value is assessed, and a notice is put out in the newspaper about the Protected Area.



## Step 5: Letters of objection and support

People have 30 days from the date of the newspaper notice to send a letter to the Director either to support the declaration of the Protected Area or object it.

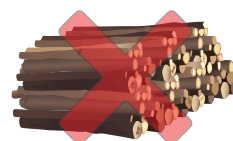
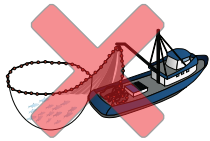


## Step 6: Declaration of Protected Area

The decision lies with the Director and Minister for Environment.

# What can people do in a Protected Area and what can't they do?

Activities that may damage the environment such as large-scale logging and mining, dragging nets on the sea floor, are prohibited in all protected areas. Discharging waste or pollution into marine protected areas is also prohibited.



Other activities are prohibited unless they are authorised in the management plan or by the management committee. These include agriculture, hunting, taking firewood, removing live coral, and building. In some Protected Areas, sustainable use of resources by landowners is allowed.

The management plan will include rules about what activities are restricted in the protected area, and what penalties will apply. The types of activities that are prohibited in a management plan will depend on why the community wants to set up the protected area.



In some protected areas sustainable extraction of resources by customary landowners is permitted. Sustainable extraction allows communities to meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



## Key points about the Protected Areas Act

- 🌿 Areas of land and sea can only be formally protected if landowners agree to it.
- 🌿 Setting up a Protected Area does not affect land ownership – the customary owners remain the same.
- 🌿 A Management Committee, which can include community members, sets the rules for the Protected Area in consultation with the community and manages the area.
- 🌿 A Protected Area may change how the community uses the area – it depends on the rules set in the management plan and in the Act.
- 🌿 Some activities that are particularly damaging to land and sea, such as large-scale logging and mining, and dragging nets on the sea floor, are prohibited inside Protected Areas.
- 🌿 The Act gives community members some enforcement powers if they are appointed as rangers.

## How are the rules enforced?

Once a protected area is established, inspectors and rangers can be appointed to enforce the rules in the management plan. The police can help with some offences, but they cannot help enforce the rules of a management plan.

- 1) Inspectors can do a range of things, such as assisting in management and protection, and issuing infringement notices.
- 2) Rangers need to be over 18 and must be a member of the local community or tribe or working for a non-government organisation that is assisting the community to manage the area. They can do things such as: board and search vessels; seize specimens or equipment used in an offence; require a person to rectify a minor breach of the Act or a permit; and order a person to stop doing an activity.



## Where can I get help and more information?

**Ministry of Environment, Climate Change  
Disaster Management and Meteorology**  
PO Box 12  
Honiara  
Phone: +677 23032/23031

Or the **Land owners Advocacy and Legal Support Unit**  
PO Box 553  
1st Floor, Place Makers Building  
Honiara,  
Phone: +677 28404/22348

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