



Q&A: Final Kenbi Open Area Declaration

1. What areas can I access?

The Northern Land Council has published a map which clearly explains where the public can and cannot go. This map is available on the Northern Land Council's website (www.nlc.org.au/visiting-aboriginal-land/kenbi).

2. Why do the 2016 and 2018 maps differ?

The Northern Land Council released an interim map in 2016. This map has been refined following extensive consultations by Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA, an Authority of the Northern Territory Government) and Northern Land Council with Traditional Owners and custodians.

3. What is a sacred site?

Sacred sites are places within the landscape that have a special meaning or significance under Aboriginal tradition. Hills, rocks, waterholes, trees, plains, lakes, billabongs and other natural features can be sacred sites. In coastal and sea areas, sacred sites may include features which lie both and above the water.

Sacred sites derive their status from their association with particular aspects of Aboriginal social and cultural tradition. This body of tradition is mainly concerned with the activities of ancestral beings, collectively known as 'Dreamings' whose travels across the land and sea created the physical and social world that people now inhabit.

Aboriginal sacred sites are recognised and protected as an integral part of the Northern Territory's and Australia's cultural heritage, under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act) 1989*.

4. How are sacred sites protected?

All sacred sites, whether or not they have been recorded or registered in the Northern Territory, are protected by the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. The Act has a number of protections for sacred sites. These include protection from unauthorised entry and damage. The Act also gives the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority the power to prosecute people and organisations that damage sacred sites.

5. Why are sacred sites protected?

Sacred sites are important to the cultural fabric and heritage of the Northern Territory. They are important to all Australians. They are an intrinsic part of a continuing body of practices and beliefs emanating from Aboriginal laws and traditions. Sacred sites give meaning to the natural landscape. They anchor cultural values and spiritual and kin-based relationships in the land.

6. Why can't I access Quail and 'Djajalbit Islet?

Quail Island and Djajalbit Islet are important sacred sites that are subject to traditional restrictions on access and other traditional sanctions that are observed by traditional owners. Quail Island contains an important traditional burial area, and both islands are focal sacred sites associated with important dreaming ancestors. Traditional owners and custodians ask people to respect these sacred sites by observing these restrictions.

7. Why can't I access the northern beach of Indian Island?

This area is an important focal sacred site associated with one of the key dreaming ancestors in this area. Burials are also present in this area. Traditional owners and custodians ask people to respect this sacred site and burial area by observing these restrictions.

8. Why can't I access the coastal creeks along the northern Cox Peninsula?

Access to coastal creeks are restricted to protect a number of important sacred sites that are subject to traditional sanctions and gender restrictions. Traditional Owners and custodians believe that any unauthorised activity or damage in these areas could have serious repercussions for them under their traditional law. Traditional Owners and custodians ask people to respect these sacred sites for their safety and also the safety of visitors to this area by observing these restrictions.

9. Why are there sacred sites on non-Aboriginal land?

Sacred sites predate European settlement. Therefore they can occur on any tenure type. All sacred sites in the Northern Territory are protected under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

Although the northern coastline of Cox Peninsula is not Aboriginal land, it is land that will be held by the Kenbi Land Trust which will be established under the *Kenbi Land Trust Act 2011 (NT)*. It is designed to work similarly to Aboriginal land granted under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* and it will be private land.