

Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 011
Submission By: Sunshine Coast Regional Council - Officer Level Submission
Publication: Making the submission and your name public

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Our reference: D2025/1256667

16 December 2025

Attention: Health, Environment and Innovation Committee

Light pollution: an emerging environmental challenge

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an officer level submission on the *Inquiry into the Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*. I acknowledge the intent of the Bill to streamline environmental regulation and strengthen recognition of significant environmental values.

In this context, I am recommending that light pollution is acknowledged and included as an emerging environmental challenge, beyond its current designation as nuisance. Light pollution is increasing in Southeast Queensland at rates higher than global averages, with urban growth and infrastructure development demonstrating growing impacts on:

- Biodiversity – impacts on nocturnal wildlife, migratory species, and ecological processes.
- Amenity – loss of natural nightscapes.
- Cultural values – diminished visibility of dark skies, which hold cultural, scientific, and tourism significance.
- Community health and wellbeing – disruption of sleep patterns and circadian rhythm.

Sunshine Coast Council through its [Environment and Liveability Strategy \(2023 edn\)](#) - a long term Regional Strategy focused on the natural environment and liveability - recognises that as the population continues to grow, proactively managing night skies by reducing light pollution is a priority. The Strategy incorporates a clear policy position to recognise, protect, and celebrate dark skies:

Policy position

1.1: *The distinctive and diverse landscape is preserved to maintain the beauty of the area:*
e) *Dark skies are recognised, protected and celebrated.*

Recommendations:

1. Recognise light-sensitive areas

- Include light-sensitive areas within environmental planning and assessment frameworks, such as:
 - Wildlife habitats and conservation areas.
 - Designated dark sky places.
 - Areas of cultural significance.

2. Develop codes for responsible outdoor lighting

- Introduce code-based standards for lighting design and operation, aligned with international and national principles (e.g. [DarkSky International](#) and [National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife](#)):
 1. Useful – use light only where and when needed, considering impacts on wildlife.
 2. Targeted – direct lighting so it falls only where required, using shielding and careful aiming.
 3. Low level – ensure lighting is no brighter than necessary.
 4. Controlled – apply controls such as timers, motion sensors, dimming, or switching off when not needed.
 5. Warm coloured – use warmer coloured lights where possible to reduce ecological and human health impacts.

3. Dark skies as an environmental value

- The inclusion of dark skies/natural night environments as part of Queensland's environmental values, aligning with the Bill's objectives to protect significant ecological and cultural assets.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Smith

A/MANAGER, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY BRANCH