

Executive summary

On 4 March 2026, the Honourable Brent Mickelberg MP, Minister for Transport and Main Roads, introduced the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026 (the Bill) into the Queensland Parliament. The Bill was referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee (committee) for detailed consideration.

The Bill proposes to establish the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority (SCWA) as a statutory body that will be responsible for defined waterways from Pumicestone Passage in the south to the Noosa lakes in the north, including the Noosa, Maroochy and Mooloolah rivers. The Bill establishes a board for the SCWA as its governing body and provides for the appointment of a chief executive officer (CEO) and SCWA staff.

Proposed functions of the SCWA include to:

- strategically plan for the management of the Sunshine Coast waterways by developing a waterways management strategy and program for its delivery
- install, manage and maintain infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast waterways
- manage navigational access to, and within, the Sunshine Coast waterways
- monitor and manage sand and sediment movement in Sunshine Coast waterways and adjacent coastal waters and land.

The Bill also proposes to amend the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*, the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995*, the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*, and the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995* to confer certain powers on the SCWA.

The committee received and considered evidence including: 95 submissions, a written and oral briefing from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and heard evidence from key stakeholders at a public hearing in Caloundra.

Overall, the inquiry found broad stakeholder support for the establishment of the SCWA and its objectives, particularly in improving coordination within a complex regulatory environment, strengthening long-term planning, and enhancing operational effectiveness across the waterways. However, stakeholders also raised matters for the committee's consideration, primarily relating to the scope of the SCWA's functions and responsibilities, governance arrangements, and engagement mechanisms. Stakeholders emphasised that appropriate board expertise and genuine consultation would be critical to the SCWA's success.

Key issues raised by stakeholders included:

- the need for clarification concerning the SCWA's jurisdiction, for example, how the SCWA will co-ordinate its responsibilities across related entities
- the SCWA board's composition and governance arrangements
- proposals for environmental considerations to be embedded in legislation

- the importance of local consultation and establishing appropriate reference groups as part of the SCWA's operational model.

The committee has recommended that the Bill be passed.

Legislative compliance

The committee concluded that the Bill is compatible with the *Legislative Standards Act 1992* and the *Human Rights Act 2019*.