

Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

Submission No: 043

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Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name

Submission to Qld Govt regarding proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority.

My comments relate to the Noosa River only.

A new Waterways Authority would be beneficial as the current management of Noosa is haphazard and unprofessional. The current managers - MSQ and Noosa Council decision making is skewed by lobby groups including the local boating lobby and local environmentalists.

The Noosa River needs professional management focussed on decision making that follows "due process".

This has not happened on the Noosa River for the past 6 years.

Up until 2020 we had a good plan - Noosa Council and MSQ formed a steering committee called the "Noosa River Stakeholders Advisory Committee" that was made up of 12 to 14 local representatives. They collected submissions and came out with a plan to remove the old boats moored illegally on the Noosa River and to reduce boat speeds to 6 knots from the yacht club to the river mouth. MSQ then undertook their own boat speed review in late 2019 and with much publicity the general manager of MSQ recommended that the old boats would be removed and boat speeds would be permanently reduced to 6 knots from Thomas Street - the boat launching area and the river mouth.

The local community expected that this official recommendation would be set in law as so much work and consultation had gone into it and we were assured via telephone calls that this would happen by the senior management of MSQ on the Sunshine Coast.

Very sadly it did not happen and so we now still have firstly a very dangerous waterway for those many who enjoy passive recreation and we have serious environmental destruction happening on our shore banks and pontoons.

I request that this new Authority review MSQ's decision making over this boat speed issue and make law the recommendation of the Noosa River Stakeholders Advisory Committee. That is why governments have steering committees. That is to enforce the 6 knot speed limit from the yacht club to the river mouth. The majority of Noosa residents want this to happen and until it does there will be much conflict in Noosa. The local boating lobby will tell the Govt that they represent the people of Noosa - I can assure the Govt that this is far from the truth.

As such I recommend the new Authority be very careful in selecting a local Noosa resident. I would recommend a person more attuned to managing the Noosa River as an incredible natural river for all to enjoy rather than a person that sees the river as a boating highway which it is not.

While on this topic I recommend that the new Authority includes in its goals and top focus - protection of the environment. Each waterway on the Sunshine Coast is different and as such needs its own focus and plans.

My last topic is surveillance. I note on the Gold Coast the order is 1. Water Police, 2. Fisheries and 3. MSQ.

Currently our order on the Noosa River is haphazard. It looks like 1. MSQ, 2. Water Police (occasionally) and 3. Fisheries.

From my viewpoint - I do not see any fining of boat skippers for speeding or breaking distance off laws or wash laws. MSQ looks like it only focuses on checking life jackets and licences.

This obviously needs to change under the new Authority. Dangerous and environmentally destructive speeding is our biggest problem on the Noosa River and it has not been properly policed by any of these surveillance groups particularly MSQ.

The new Authority must focus on this speeding issue particularly if it is to facilitate more boats on the Noosa River.

The QLD is also wasting money on this current poor level of surveillance with so many govt departments involved, many working on the same days - for a poor outcome.

A permanent 6 knot speed limit from the yacht club to the river mouth would of course assist like it does at Mooloolaba. Speed cameras would obviously be a cheaper alternative.

In closing the residents of Noosa would appreciate the benefits of a new more coordinated authority as proposed.