

Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

Submission No: 052

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I am a Noosa resident and a recreational user of the Noosa River. I am writing to provide feedback on the proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority (SCWA).

Board Composition:

The SCWA Board must reflect an even representation of the eligible members i.e. no more than one of each criterion in order to ensure the Board is not stacked with one industry sector or another. I would like to see the Board have one member of an NRM or Land Conservation Management group to ensure that there is a holistic environmental management plan. I would ask that the Board must include a Noosa representative with genuine, lived knowledge of our river system. Board membership should reflect the full range of river users — recreational, commercial, boating, paddling, fishing, environmental and tourism. Their insight would ensure decisions reflect the realities of the Noosa River, not just regional policy.

Genuine Consultation

I ask that current integrated catchment management plans are taken into consideration and organisations are consulted before any decisions are made within the catchments. Specifically, Noosa Council, Sunshine Coast Council, Resilient Rivers, Healthy Land and Water, Noosa Integrated Catchment Association and Noosa and District Landcare Group.

Inclusion of Environmental Protection Act as a relevant piece of legislation.

Clarity Around Marine Parks Legislation

The community has raised concerns about how the SCWA will interact with Marine Parks legislation, particularly the Marine Parks Act 2004.

Clear guidance is needed so residents understand how equitable use of the Noosa River will be protected for all user groups

Investment and Active Management

The Authority must commit to practical investment in boat ramps, access points and active management of sand movement. These issues directly affect safety, usability and environmental outcomes for all users.

Clarity on Governance, Costs and Responsibilities

Several key issues require clear explanation before the proposal proceeds:

Whether operational costs will fall on councils, and if so, how these costs will be funded;

What is meant by "transfer of assets" and exactly which assets are proposed to be transferred;

How conflicts between the SCWA and local councils would be resolved, particularly where local policy and regional priorities differ

How the proposal aligns with existing plans, including the Resilient Rivers Catchment Plan;

Appointment of CEO: wary of the Minister having the "Captain's Call" on the selection of the CEO

These matters go directly to governance, accountability and community confidence.

The Noosa River must remain accessible to all users. Management should balance environmental values with recreation, tourism and commercial activity in a fair and transparent way.