

# Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

**Submission No:** 053

**Submission By:** [REDACTED]

**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name

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SUBMISSION To: State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee Re: Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

From [REDACTED], (individual)

Date: 19/03/2026

Personal Details

Name: [REDACTED],

Address: [REDACTED]

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Email: [REDACTED]

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My Interest in This Bill

I am a Noosa resident and have used the Noosa River for many years for recreation / fishing / boating/swimming, etc. I am a member of the Noosa Boating & Fishing Alliance, which represents over 3,000 local residents, ratepayers, and business owners who depend on healthy, accessible, and ideally well-managed waterways. I am also a member of the Noosa Houseboat Community, membership of 321,

I make this submission because the management of the Noosa River directly affects me and because I have serious

concerns about ensuring balanced representation in any new governance structure. Social media page Fb)

### My Position

I SUPPORT the establishment of the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority, but with specific conditions regarding board composition, c

### Reasons for the position.

#### The Current System Is Fragmented and Ineffective

1. For too long, management of the Noosa River has fallen between the cracks of multiple agencies. Council points to the state. The state points to another agency. Everyone points elsewhere, and problems persist.

We have seen this most clearly with dumped vessels in the river – an issue our community has raised for two decades. The fundamental reason for inaction was always the same: "too many layers of government involved" and "it's all too hard."

The SCWA offers one body accountable for coordinating the work that currently falls through cracks. This is not "another layer of bureaucracy." It is one less layer of excuses.

2. The Marine Park Threat Remains Real In 2023, our community defeated a proposal to declare a Conservation Park over the Noosa River and lakes. This move would have devastated local businesses and locked out recreational users. That proposal was initiated and driven by a well established and organised local conservationist group. The SCWA bill, as currently drafted, does not prevent a future Marine Park declaration. That power remains with the Environment Minister under separate legislation. However, a well-functioning SCWA with a board that genuinely represents recreational and commercial users creates a powerful political safeguard. No Environment Minister will easily override a popular, professionally-run Authority trusted by locals. But this depends entirely on who is appointed to the board. If the board is captured by narrow interests, the river remains at risk.

3. Board Composition Must Reflect All Users I note concerns that the bill does not guarantee a Noosa representative on the seven member board. While I understand that the board is intended to represent waterways interests rather than postcodes, I strongly urge the Committee to ensure that the appointment process delivers genuine balance. The board must include members who:

- Understand the needs of recreational boaters and fishers
- Represent tourism operators and small businesses
- Bring local knowledge of the Noosa River system
- Can balance environmental

protection with public access The 2023 Conservation Park push demonstrated what happens when decision-making is captured by a single agenda. That must not ever be repeated.

4. Public Consultation Must Be Genuine and Ongoing The bill mandates public consultation on the waterways management strategy. I

- Genuine – not tick-box exercises
- Accessible – held at times and places that allow working people to attend
- Ongoing – not a one-off event
- Representative – actively reaching out to user groups, not just waiting for submissions

The Noosa Boating & Fishing Alliance represents thousands of locals who use this river every week. We expect to be at that table.

Additionally, in respects to the Noosa River Management Plan that, was rolled out in stages, (starting from, 2023) and a new regulation has come about, 1<sup>st</sup>, January, 2026 – Rule, 197

Vessels over 5m are restricted to a total of 28 days anchoring per financial year.

The consultation Process used for this management plan for, Noosa River, (Noosa River Public Consultation Results, 2023 Department of Transport and Main Road, Queensland Government),.

showed the consultation report (to be flawed and bias, with no idea of who made the final decisions to change regulation.

As said above the committee must ensure a proper, unbiased, Fair, and just, and including a strong representation of the

population in the locality of Noosa River and the Sunshine Coast.

The Houseboat Community members, Facebook chat group, sent a letter, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, January 2026, a Submission, was emailed to parties, Marine Safety Queensland (MSQ), Noosa Shire, Hon.Sandy Bolton, and MSQ Brisbane, Attached is the response from, the Executive Director (Maritime Safety Queensland), Bernadette McNevin. We argued that the new regulation was restrictive and affected this community group in an excessive manner, this shows with the lack of fair and just public consultation process can fail, when not being steered by one, dedicated authority.

On starting out to write the submission for Houseboats Community, I found trying to locate the actual authority that has the powers, it turned out to be Transport Marine Registration, MSQ can enforce this action, very difficult process, to follow.

By having the Committee (SCWA) one Authority making decision's therefore, a reduction in, bureaucratic layers to sift through.

Section 197 of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016.

Published in the Gazette

This regulation is part of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 framework aimed at maintaining safety on Queensland waterways.

5. The \$36 Million Investment Must Deliver Local Benefits I support funding for professional waterway management. Hydrologists, navigational experts, environmental scientists, and infrastructure planners are exactly what our river needs – people who will actually do the work, not just study it. But this investment must deliver tangible outcomes for Noosa: • Functional, well-maintained boat ramps • Clear, properly placed navigation markers • Active management of sand movement • Coordinated response to wrecks and hazards • Dredging when the bar closes, not after years of studies The community will be watching closely to ensure this funding translates into on-water results. Specific Recommendations

1. Board Appointments: The Committee recommend the appointment process actively seek candidates who represent recreational and commercial waterway users, with demonstrated local knowledge and a track record of balanced decision-making.

2. Noosa Representation: That the Committee note the importance of Noosa's unique character being understood within the SCWA, and encourages the Minister to ensure Noosa voices are included in the board's composition. 3.

Public Consultation: That the waterways management

strategy consultation be required to include targeted engagement with recognised user groups, including the Noosa Boating & Fishing Alliance.

4. Accountability: That the three-yearly reviews of the SCWA include public reporting on how community input has been incorporated into decision-making.

5. Marine Park Interface: That the Committee seek clarification on how the SCWA's role interacts with the Marine Parks Act 2004, and whether any mechanism

Conclusion I support the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority because I believe professional, coordinated management is the best path forward for our river. But support is not unconditional. It depends on:

- A board that genuinely represents all users
- Consultation that is real, not performative
- Accountability that is transparent and ongoing
- A clear understanding that the 2023 Conservation Park threat must never succeed

The Noosa River is in very good health. The science proves it. Our job now is to keep it that way – accessible, sustainable, and managed by people who understand that a healthy river and an accessible river are the same thing. Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours

faithfully,



Our ref: 110/00353

Department of  
**Transport and Main Roads**

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 27 January 2026 to the Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) Sunshine Coast Office, requesting an independent review of the Noosa River consultation process.

In your submission, you raise some matters which are outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Those matters largely relate to the Noosa River Catchment Management Plan, which was developed by Noosa Shire Council.

The documentation you have provided contains some criticisms of the Noosa River public consultation for the Noosa River Catchment Management Plan but in doing so, refers to the 28-day anchoring restriction which is within TMR's purview, as part of MSQ's Noosa River Management Plan (Noosa River Plan). Details of MSQ's Noosa River Plan, including the commencement date of each stage and the changes introduced are available on the MSQ website at: <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/about-us/news-and-stories/changes-for-boating-on-noosa-river>.

As there appears to be some confusion around the two management plans and given the 28-day anchoring restriction was specifically raised in your submission, I will provide a response as it relates to the public consultation process for MSQ's Noosa River Plan.

Congestion on the Noosa River due to the large number of diverse users contributed to safety, amenity and environmental issues and made the management of anchoring, mooring and navigation of vessels challenging. In response, MSQ sought to engage the community to develop a plan for better management of boating on the waterway. The proposed changes for the Noosa River resulted from a detailed and holistic process which commenced in 2021.

MSQ worked with Noosa Shire Council and the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee (NRSAC), a local community stakeholder group, to develop potential solutions to the issues associated with congestion in Noosa River. The NRSAC was co-chaired by the General Manager, Maritime Safety Queensland and the Chief Executive Officer, Noosa Shire Council. Membership of the NRSAC included representatives across sectors of river use including recreational boating, commercial operators, fishing, tourism and the environment.

Following a comprehensive options development process, the NRSAC endorsed MSQ's proposed reforms which were then submitted for public consultation during December 2022 and January 2023. The consultation was undertaken over a six-week period to ensure that stakeholders and the community were provided the opportunity to submit their views on the proposed changes. Respondents provided feedback through a Queensland Government Get Involved survey, or by emailing a submission.

The public consultation was publicised through media, social media and direct emails to stakeholders. Information flyers were also made available at MSQ's Noosa office and the Noosa Council office. Face to face consultation events were held at the busy Noosaville boat ramp. The purpose of these events was to engage with the community and river users, with MSQ officers providing information and answering questions about the proposed changes and informing people about how they could have their say.

Feedback was collected from over 1,000 sources, including 858 online survey responses and over 60 email submissions. The respondents were very locally based with 83 percent of respondents living in Noosa Shire and a further 9.4 percent living in other parts of the Sunshine Coast.

The results of the public consultation informed the development of the Noosa River Plan. The consultation results are publicly available via [this link](#).

Thank you for your interest in this matter and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



**Bernadette McNevin**  
**Executive Director (Maritime Safety Queensland)**