

Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

Submission No: 057

Submission By: Noosa Integrated Catchment Assoc Inc

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The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority
State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee
Qld Government
Brisbane Qld

Submission for the Proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill

Established in 1996, the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association, Inc (NICA) is a community-based not-for-profit organisation formed to coordinate and align natural resource management activities in the Noosa River catchment. NICA was responsible for developing the original Noosa River Catchment Strategy and has since undertaken numerous terrestrial and on-water programs and initiatives to fulfil its aims.

Today, NICA is the largest active-participation community organisation in the region specifically dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of the catchment. Learn more about NICA's strategic goals, and current and past programs.

We would like to raise the following concerns with regards to the proposed Bill.

1. Managing Ecological Risk

To ensure that the management actions of the SCWA are in alignment with the 'sustainable use' part of its main purpose, it must be ensured that actions improve ecological health, or at the very minimum maintain current baselines without degradation, and that cumulative impacts are considered. The Bill must be amended to include.

- Ecological risk assessment must be undertaken prior to commencement of management activities.
- Cumulative impacts The Bill must be amended to require that the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority consider and assess the cumulative environmental impacts of dredging, infrastructure development, navigation works, and other waterway activities when preparing the waterways management strategy and management program.
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning Section 18 on development of Management Plans must also include; Use of appropriate and robust Indicators of ecological health of coastal waters, waterways and adjacent land must be required along with a robust and transparent monitoring, evaluation, mitigation and reporting framework.

2. Local input into Management Plan

The explanatory notes(p1) for the Bill state that the Bill is 'enabling greater local input into their management' and will deliver 'a more holistic approach'. To ensure that there is greater local input, the Bill must be amended to include:

- Sections 15 and 19 must list required consultation with Catchment Management Groups, and Traditional Custodians.
- A requirement to form sub-committees for each Catchment with representatives from Catchment Groups and other key stakeholders
- How does the Bill consider integrated Catchment Management Plans?
- The provision of funding for Catchment groups to enable the continuation of their on- ground monitoring and restoration projects. This would bring local expertise, data continuity and volunteer labour. For example, River Watch, Water Watch and Shorebird Monitoring of the Noosa River.

3. Clarity on Jurisdiction

- State and Local Overlaps: The Bill appears to cover both local and state waters, which may result in conflicts over decision-making authority and funding responsibilities. It does not define upper limits of each waterway. For example, it is unclear if it extends past weirs and who would determine the need for and fund dredging in canals like those on the Mooloolah River, Pelican Waters and Twin Waters.
- Clarity around formation of Marine Zones

4. Board Composition

Section 25 on Board Composition must be amended to prescribe the inclusion of:

- 4 ex officio appointments; Noosa Council, Sunshine Coast Council, Kabi Kabi People, University of Sunshine Coast.

5. Clarification of Boundaries of Authority.

The intertidal zones of the Noosa River include the fragile and vulnerable wetlands, saltmarshes, saltpans, sand spits, sea grass beds and islands which are critical habitat for marine, wildlife and bird life. We believe that it is in the best interest of these habitats that Noosa Council retain responsibility for riverine lands above the Low Tide Mean Annual Average level.

Yours faithfully

Jill Campbell
President