

Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

Submission No: 059

Submission By: Pelican Boat Hire / Noosa River Slipway

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I make this submission on behalf of my company, Pelican Boat Hire, which is the largest marine business in the Noosa region. We operate a fleet of hire/drive, charter and recreational vessels and run the region's primary marine repair facility. We are the only company with two separate Crown leases for commercial activity on and beside the Noosa River. I have personally lived on the banks of the Noosa River for 25 years.

I strongly support the establishment of the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority (SCWA) as a means of providing consistent, professional and well-resourced governance of major waterways across the region. In my view, the Noosa River forms a natural and integral part of this system and should be included within the Authority's scope.

The management of a complex and heavily utilised waterway such as the Noosa River requires coordinated involvement from multiple State agencies, specialist maritime expertise, and long-term funding capacity. A centralised authority model offers the opportunity to deliver consistency in safety standards, infrastructure planning, environmental protection and access arrangements across adjoining waterways. We note that fragmentation of governance arrangements may lead to inconsistency, uncertainty for waterway users, and inefficiencies in planning and enforcement. Inclusion of the Noosa River within the SCWA would support integrated strategic planning and help ensure that environmental outcomes, navigational safety and community access are appropriately balanced.

I believe that a State-level waterways authority is best placed to deliver professional, impartial and sustainable management of this important State asset, consistent with the approach taken in other regions. I strongly encourage the Government to show leadership and focus and maintain a consistent governance framework and ensure that the Noosa River is included within the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority.

As a leading member of the Noosa Commercial Marine Operators, we strongly oppose the Noosa Council having any influence or power over the Noosa River beyond general community consultation. We have already suffered enough from decades of Council's inaction and poor planning which has been driven exclusively by inappropriate environmental ideologies and disregarded and disrespected the community's great love of recreational and commercial activity on the Noosa River. Council has failed to deliver any comprehensive river plans and cannot be seen to have suitable expertise or capacity to now do so.

We find it important to recognise that Noosa Council has never owned a boat nor has any staff with any marine qualifications or experience. I strongly oppose them now getting any authority or influence over the greater efforts of the Authority as it can only be driven by ideology rather than experience and skill.

As the largest marine business in the region, I commend the development of the Authority; encourage appointments to its Board being based purely on skills rather than any postcode; and ask that the State consult with Council like all relevant stakeholders but give no authority or opportunity to Council to inappropriately exercise its enduring ambitions to lock up the river.