



Speech By
Hon. Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2025

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sunshine Coast, Waterways

 **Hon. BA MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.28 pm): Tragically, the Sunshine Coast community recently experienced the loss of our charter boat skipper Robert ‘Smithy’ Smith who lost his life crossing the Mooloolah River bar on the morning of 27 August this year. Our thoughts go out to his family, including his wife, Jules, and son, Joel. They, like the rest of our tight-knit community, want answers about what went wrong that day. The matter remains under investigation by relevant authorities, so it would be inappropriate for me to make further comment about the specifics of that particular incident.

However, I can say that the dynamic and challenging nature of that bar crossing has been understood for many years. I want to acknowledge the work done by Maritime Safety Queensland to try to manage those risks. I would also like to acknowledge the members of the stakeholder reference group that was established to provide guidance to MSQ.

That group helped develop and has endorsed the Western Channel Trial to dredge the bar to provide safer deepwater access from the western side of the channel entrance. Targeted dredging of the Mooloolah River bar was recently completed, in June this year, and follow-up surveys were undertaken in July and August of this year. Warnings have also regularly been provided by MSQ to mariners as required. However, after discussing the matter with my Sunshine Coast colleagues the Deputy Premier, the member for Kawana, and the member for Maroochydore, who have been strong advocates for more action for many years, I believe it is appropriate to have a fresh look at these issues. That is why I have asked my department to commission an expert independent review to investigate the shoaling events at the Mooloolah River bar. Short- and long-term recommendations will be developed, taking into account varying stakeholder views, to help prevent and/or mitigate shoaling events. When evaluating possible interventions, the impacts on community, tourism operators, recreational users like surfers and maritime users must be considered.

The Crisafulli government is also committed to establishing the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority. It is a commitment that we made before the last election and it is a commitment that we will deliver. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority is about giving local people on the Sunshine Coast a greater say in the way their waterways are managed. It is an example of how the Crisafulli government is delivering for the people of the Sunshine Coast. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will have a longer term responsibility for managing the Mooloolah River bar and any ongoing recommendations from the review.

All members know that the sea is a dangerous place, and there is a family on the Sunshine Coast that today knows that all too well. While there is no solution for the Mooloolah River that will ever completely eliminate the risks, we owe it to all of the people who use the area to make sure we have done all that is reasonably practical to address those concerns. The Crisafulli government is about delivering practical outcomes and we believe in listening to locals. This review and the establishment of the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will ensure we deliver.