



Speech By
Hon. Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2026

SUNSHINE COAST WATERWAYS AUTHORITY BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. BA MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (7.56 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

SUNSHINE COAST WATERWAYS AUTHORITY BILL 2026

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, DR JEANNETTE ROSITA YOUNG AC PSM, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act to establish the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority, and to amend this Act, the Public Sector Act 2022, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 04 March 2026

Tabled paper: Message, dated 4 March 2026, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026 [273](#).

Introduction

Hon. BA MICKELBERG (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (7.56 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority, and to amend this act, the Public Sector Act 2022, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026 [274](#).

Tabled paper: Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026, explanatory notes [275](#).

Tabled paper: Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026, statement of compatibility with human rights [276](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026. The Sunshine Coast is a place of unrivalled lifestyle with Australia's best beaches—despite what the Premier and some of the Gold Coast members might say—and a stunning natural environment. It is also a place that has been neglected under Labor's decade of decline, which is best demonstrated by the failure to look after our Sunshine Coast waterways.

The bill that I introduce tonight delivers the Crisafulli government's election commitment to establish the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority. This represents our commitment to the sustainable management of local waterways, enabling greater local input into waterway management and taking another step to address Labor's neglect of the Sunshine Coast during their decade of decline.

The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority is being created as there is no single community sector organisation or peak body that represents the range of community, industry or tourism interests associated with waterways. In the lead-up to the 2024 election the Sunshine Coast community was concerned about the piecemeal management of waterways by different councils and state government agencies. The community was frustrated about the management of the Bribie Island breakthrough, perceiving that multiple layers of bureaucracy were buck-passing the issue—all too common a refrain under the former Labor state government.

This bill is for a new act—the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Act 2026—which will establish the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority as a statutory body reporting to me as the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. This new act will: outline at a high level the purpose of the act and functions of the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority; set out the framework for a waterways management strategy and program; provide general corporate powers necessary to run a statutory body; provide board appointment criteria and meeting arrangements; establish the position of chief executive officer and provide for staff; provide for transfer notices and information-sharing agreements so that assets and information can be easily transferred between the authority, my department and other agencies; and state the relationship of the new act with other laws.

Once operational, the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will contribute to the government's objectives for the community of 'A plan for Queensland's future' and 'A better lifestyle through a stronger economy'. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will do this by providing holistic waterway management for marine industries and commercial and recreational fisheries, enabling world-class tourism to grow, and by improving and promoting the sustainable use of the Sunshine Coast's iconic waterways.

The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be responsible for defined waterways from Pumicestone Passage in the south to the Noosa lakes in the north. It includes the Noosa, Maroochy and Mooloolah rivers. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be required to develop a waterways management strategy through engagement with the public and in consultation with Maritime Safety Queensland and the Moreton Bay, Noosa and Sunshine Coast local governments. This allows for consideration of views from all stakeholders including individuals, businesses, community groups and other government agencies.

The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be responsible for public marine facilities such as boat ramps and the Mooloolaba state managed boat harbour, aids to navigation, and the maintenance of designated channels for navigational access to public marine facilities, including state managed boat harbours. The authority's responsibilities for navigational access, as well as the monitoring and managing of sand and sediment movement, will complement rather than replace similar activities currently carried out by local governments. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will also designate buoy mooring areas, approve buoy moorings and aquatic events, and be a referral agency for tidal works. It will design marine zones and work with Maritime Safety Queensland, which will legislate and enforce them.

Many of the responsibilities I have just mentioned are framed in existing acts and regulations and currently held by Maritime Safety Queensland. The bill amends the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 to confer certain powers on the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority. Under the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be the default manager of new public marine facilities in Sunshine Coast waters. The existing public marine facilities will continue to be managed by local councils and may also be appointed as manager of new facilities.

A key amendment to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 in relation to the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority provides the authority with the power to set up an aid to navigation with approval from Maritime Safety Queensland. Also, under the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 the Maritime Safety Queensland harbourmaster will be required to consult, to the extent reasonably practicable, with the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority when exercising a harbourmaster power that may affect the authority's functions.

Under the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be able to provide, or direct someone else to provide, waste reception facilities for ship-sourced pollution. This could include, for example, sewage pump-out facilities and receptacles to collect oily waste and garbage.

The bill includes amendments to acts only. An amendment regulation is being prepared to implement components of the policy in relevant subordinate legislation. This includes: public marine facilities, including the Mooloolaba state managed boat harbour; buoy mooring and aquatic event approvals; and tidal works development assessment.

I will now outline how the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be structured and governed. These arrangements were developed in accordance with the Public Interest Map policy for Queensland government bodies. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be a statutory body led by a board of seven, one of whom will be the chair. The bill sets out selection and disqualification criteria for appointed members, and the government is working to identify suitable candidates who will represent the community and different waterways interests. These are significant appointments and will therefore be exercised in accordance with the Cabinet Handbook. The chief executive officer is a significant appointment and will be employed under the act establishing the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority. The bill provides that Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority staff, other than the chief executive officer, will be Public Service officers employed under the Public Sector Act 2022.

The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be accountable to me, as the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, and to the people of Queensland through comprehensive governance arrangements. The authority will operate within the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982.

Consistent with the Public Interest Map policy for newly established government bodies, the bill requires that the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority be reviewed three years after its establishment and every three years thereafter. The review will cover the way and extent to which the authority has performed its functions and whether those functions remain appropriate.

As a public sector entity, the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be subject to the Auditor-General Act 2009 providing for annual financial statement audits and performance audits at the Auditor-General's discretion. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will be required to report quarterly to me as minister on its activities and to publish an annual report that complies with the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019.

I reiterate that establishment of the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority is a Crisafulli government election commitment, and this government has committed \$35.6 million over three years to deliver it. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority is intended to better listen to the needs of the Sunshine Coast community and ensure there is cooperation and coordination, not duplication, between the state and local governments around waterways management.

Maritime Safety Queensland will continue to be the statewide maritime regulator responsible for ship safety in Queensland waters, marine speed limits, life jackets, licensing, registration, seaworthiness, state marine pollution control and ship-sourced marine pollution compliance, marine safety directions through MSQ's harbourmasters and general manager powers, and emergency management. While the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will decide where and under what conditions various waterways activities are permitted, Maritime Safety Queensland and its enforcement partners will be the on-water presence, monitoring compliance and taking enforcement action. This is consistent with Maritime Safety Queensland's compliance and enforcement role throughout the state, minimising confusion for the boating public.

The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will work closely with Maritime Safety Queensland and local government to develop and implement their waterways management strategies and programs. The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will also maintain working relationships with other government agencies, including the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, to facilitate consistent delivery of strategic outcomes. In this way, the policy objective will ensure cooperation and coordination between the state and local governments around the sustainable use of Sunshine Coast waterways. The Department of Transport and Main Roads will always be the lead agency, and any proposed policy change must be initiated by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Ports and pilotage will continue to be operationally regulated by Maritime Safety Queensland, and international shipping will continue to be regulated under Commonwealth legislation and by Maritime Safety Queensland's regional harbourmasters in declared ports and coastal waters. Domestic commercial vessel safety will continue to be regulated at a national level by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. Queensland recreational vessel licensing, safety standards and registration will continue to be regulated by Maritime Safety Queensland. National parks and marine parks will remain within the environment portfolio and fisheries within the primary industries portfolio.

A core part of the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority's mission will be consultation on its waterways management strategy and engagement with the Sunshine Coast community and stakeholders. Any strategies involving new regulatory requirements will adhere to the Queensland government Better Regulation Policy.

In conclusion, Sunshine Coast waterways are vital to the state's lifestyle, economy and environmental health. These natural assets play a critical role in supporting the environment and the lifestyle that Sunshine Coast locals expect, while contributing to the Sunshine Coast economy through tourism, marine industries and waterfront businesses. The new Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority will deliver a fresh start for the Sunshine Coast and work seamlessly with other local and state government bodies to protect and manage our waterways for the benefit of locals and visitors alike. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. BA MICKELBERG (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (8.08 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee