

Question on Notice

No. 750

Asked on 16 August 2022

MS F SIMPSON ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to communications regarding the dangerous Mooloolaba Harbour entrance dated 6 May 2022, 13 May 2022, 17 May 2022, 8 June 2022, 22 June 2022 and 8 July 2022, that have not been answered by the Minister—

Will the Minister (a) advise the timeline and process for establishing the reference group and public consultation into the solution for making the harbour entrance safe and reliable, (b) confirm the funding allocated for undertaking the implementation for a more permanent solution and (c) confirm in the interim if Maritime Safety Queensland will undertake a more aggressive dredging program to ensure the harbour entrance is safe and reliable until a permanent solution is put in place?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question.

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) continues to monitor the channel depths and advise mariners of changes to conditions via the latest *Notice to Mariners* published at www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brisbane-notices-to-mariners. It must be noted, as conditions and depths frequently change, mariners are always strongly encouraged to exercise caution when entering river channels.

I can assure the Member that MSQ has been working hard to get the channel cleared, as well as working towards progressing a long-term solution. This is a complex area involving multi-variable hydrographical matters which, by their nature, are difficult to resolve. If there was a simple solution, MSQ would have implemented it.

I am advised that the Member has been in regular contact with the General Manager (MSQ) to discuss concerns in relation to the entrance of the harbour and the complexities associated with a longer-term solution. I am also advised that MSQ met with the Member on 15 June 2022 to discuss a number of MSQ projects, including the Mooloolaba Harbour entrance matter. The Member was also provided with a copy of correspondence on 30 June 2022 on the same matter and further correspondence on 13 September 2022.

- (a) On 17 August 2022, MSQ sent out invitations to be on the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) to identified stakeholders that represent diverse interests in the long-term solution. This includes representatives from the local Coast Guard, commercial and recreational fishing groups, harbour business owners, residents and community groups. SRG meetings will be held once memberships are confirmed. Wider community engagement will be undertaken after the formation of the SRG.
- (b) MSQ has an initial allocation of \$400,000 in 2022–23 towards maintenance dredging of the Mooloolaba Harbour entrance. Additional funds will be added as required, depending on the shoaling frequency. In 2022–23, \$450,000 has been allocated for stakeholder and community consultation on a long-term solution and environmental investigations.

- (c) MSQ continues to actively manage access to the Mooloolaba Harbour to ensure a safe and accessible waterway for all users. When weather and wave conditions allow, MSQ's dredging contractor clears the entrance channel to its design depth of 2.5 metres below the lowest astronomical tide. MSQ then instructs the contractor to continue dredging in and around the entrance channel to deeper depths to allow for any further infill.