

Question on Notice

No. 938

Asked on 23 August 2023

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the expiry of the Transport Infrastructure (Waterways Management) Regulation 2012 (TIWMR) on 1 September 2023 and 'War on Wrecks Taskforce' recommendation for a statewide review of vessel waters management, which includes the issue of abandoned boats—

Will the Minister advise (a) the status of this review and (b) what action will the government take to investigate and implement better regulations and policies to prevent illegal liveaboards, and solutions for abandoned and badly secured boats that are slipping anchor and causing boating, property and environmental risks?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question.

- a) The Department of Transport and Main Roads' Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) branch is coordinating the remake of the Transport Infrastructure (Waterways Management) Regulation 2012, which has been extended and is now due to expire on 31 August 2024. The War on Wrecks program resulted in 1226 fewer derelict vessels in Queensland waters as of 31 August 2023. Of these, 726 vessels were removed by MSQ and its compliance partners. A further 500 have been removed or resolved by owners or others as a direct result of the War on Wrecks program.

The ongoing preventative program of work involves investigating the Taskforce's 11 recommendations and developing policy and legislative solutions for public consultation before implementing any proposed reforms. MSQ is prioritising potential improvements to vessel registration and identification, as these are considered key foundational and regulatory mechanisms to identify vessel ownership through its lifecycle and vessels occupying Queensland's waterways.

- b) Vessels which have run aground, anchored vessels—including unoccupied vessels left at anchor—and those living aboard vessels which are in poor condition present an unacceptably high impact on safety and the environment. MSQ is working to address the way vessels are managed on our busy waterways and has developed a trial waterways management plan to improve accessibility and safety of the Noosa River.

The plan will address issues around living aboard vessels, and the way vessels are stored, anchored, and moored. Following public consultation, an informed vessel waterways management plan has been developed, underpinned by the guiding principles of marine safety, equity of access and protection of the environment. The plan addresses issues around anchoring and shoreline access and provides evidence to inform longer-term legislative changes.

Waterways management is complex and solutions to problems in one waterway may have unintended impacts on other waterways. The approach applied to the Noosa River will inform future pilots across the state's waterways.