



19 March 2026

To: Queensland Parliament Committees RE: Inquiry into *Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026 (SCWAB)*

To whom it may concern,

Noosa Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association (NSRRA) is a volunteer, not-for-profit community organisation operating for the benefit of residents and ratepayers in Noosa Shire. NSRRA has a proud history of advocating on behalf of the community, hosting public forums, petitioning, and lodging submissions on matters of importance to members and residents.

Executive Summary

Whilst the NSRRA doesn't necessarily object to establishment of a Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority, we do have concerns that creating a quasi-independent government funded organisation to manage waterways may be overly bureaucratic, and top heavy in management. This could absorb funding which may compromise work on the ground already taking place to improve management of the Noosa River system.

NSRRA has the following specific concerns:

1. Aside from a CEO and Board members, the *SCWAB* lacks detail on staff numbers and how many of these staff members would be specifically allocated to managing Noosa's waterways. The NSRRA is also concerned there's no requirement to mandate at least one representative from Noosa on a 7-member Board with responsibility for navigation, management of sand movement, installation and maintenance of infrastructure, and developing waterways management strategies for the Noosa River system.
2. Considering the complexity and broad geographical area of waterways the Authority will be required to cover, we have concerns the \$36 million dollar budget allocation is insufficient, particularly during the establishment phase of a new bureaucracy.
3. In recent years, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) has been relatively successful in working with all sectors of the Noosa community to develop an excellent Noosa River Management Plan (NRMP). The NRMP is widely supported by the community, Council and our State MP Sandy Bolton.

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With the NRMP only being partially implemented, we have concerns establishment of another level of bureaucracy may slow or compromise aspects of this long-awaited progress.

4. The Noosa River system is geographically separate from waterways of the southern Sunshine Coast region. It's well documented how the Noosa River, lakes and wetlands have unique conservation/biodiversity values that must be protected. For example, Noosa boasts one of only two everglade systems in the world – the other being Florida's everglades. As South-East Queensland's least polluted river system, the Noosa river's environmental values are not only significant for regional and national biodiversity but are vitally important to our world-renowned tourism brand. Its ongoing protection is top of mind in our community.
5. A large tranche of local knowledge on how to best protect Noosa's river and lakes system has been accumulated over time. Therefore, local input and effective consultation are crucial in maintaining these values. Recent improvements in management developed specifically for Noosa's river and lake systems (following earlier community consultation) must be ongoing. Particularly regarding riverine compliance enforcement, which has been historically lacking. Should the Noosa river system be managed externally, we question how the community can hold decision makers to account when issues such as resourcing and distribution of funds inevitably arise.
6. The NSRRA has concerns Noosa was included in the SCWAB without any prior community engagement. This suggests there's little understanding of the depth and quality of local knowledge accumulated by generations of people who genuinely care about Noosa's river and lakes. Having an entirely new external management model imposed on the community (without a Noosa representative) has raised fears over how decisions on river management will be made, including assurances regarding the future of the dedicated team of locally stationed MSQ officers.
7. It remains unclear how a new \$36 million dollar bureaucracy will provide tangible benefits on the ground when simply providing more funding to existing agencies (including MSQ) would most likely achieve better outcomes. With \$2.5 million already allocated by the State government to provide upgrades for Noosa's boating infrastructure, we have questions over the impact of a new authority on these existing arrangements. Particularly when the MSQ is already collaborating with Noosa Council to finalise plans for these improvements.

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The Noosa Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association Inc (NSRRA) thanks the State Government for this important opportunity to provide feedback regarding the *Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026* and looks forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Secretary

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