

6.1 NOOSA RIVER STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY REPORT

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Index	Waterways/ Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee/ 63.08/ 22419832
Attachments	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the achievements of the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee during its two-year term from April 2021 to March 2023, and sets out a path forward for completion of a Noosa River Catchment Management Plan, which is recognised as a signature project in Noosa Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2026.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee Summary Report by the Principal Environment Officer – River Strategy and Engagement to the Planning and Environment Committee Meeting dated 6 June 2023, and:

- A. Note the achievements and outcomes of the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Maritime Safety Queensland, as well as next steps for Noosa River planning; and
 - B. Request that a Thank You letter be sent to Committee members from the Mayor.
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REPORT

At the 7 July 2020 Planning & Environment Committee meeting a Council resolution was carried to, "Establish a Noosa River Stakeholder Reference Group to provide strategic input, local knowledge and expertise into river management initiatives, initially providing input into the Shellfish Restoration project and more broadly into finalisation and implementation of the Noosa River Plan."

An expression of interest (EOI) process was conducted to invite representatives from a range of sectors including commercial and recreational fishing, commercial and recreational boating, conservation and natural resource management, commercial operators on the river, tourism operators, and Traditional Owners/Indigenous community (Kabi Kabi).

Representatives from all sectors apart from the Kabi Kabi submitted EOIs, and the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee (NRSAC) was subsequently established with its first meeting held on 14 April 2021. The Committee was co-chaired by Noosa Council's CEO and the General Manager of Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ).

The Committee was united on a request for MSQ to implement an overall vessel reduction strategy by implementing a 28-day limit in any financial year on anchoring in the Noosa River.

After several rounds of consultation with the Committee, MSQ presented a proposed approach and released this for broad public consultation throughout December 2022 and January 2023.

More than 800 submissions were received across the State and MSQ is now considering the feedback with hopes to implement broad-ranging reforms before the end of 2023. The legislative mechanism proposed to bring about these reforms is an amendment to the Noosa River Marine Zone, Schedule 5 of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016.

Achievements

At its first meeting, of the NRSAC, MSQ noted that management of the Noosa River was now, “a key focus of MSQ”. This included delivering on a range of current initiatives including:

- Appointment of a dedicated Noosa River Patrol Officer and dedicated MSQ office.
- Speeding in the Noosa River including collecting and analysing speeding data and addressing behaviour.
- Promotion of an education brochure “Know your Waterway”.
- Updates to navigation aids including beacons and buoys.
- War on Wrecks program – removal of multiple abandoned vessels from the Noosa River.
- Boat ramp education signage.
- Regulations governing “liveaboard” vessels, limitations and management options including anchoring restrictions.

At subsequent meetings, Committee members alongside Council and MSQ presented various material to assist with joint initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Discussion papers and recommendations on anchoring and mooring.
- Proposed river strategy and management frameworks.
- Noosa River datasets including vessel and trailer numbers.
- Advice on speed limits.
- Advice on the Environmental Values and Water Quality Objectives for the Noosa River system.
- A project plan to support clean up and removal of unlawful structures and stored vessels, and rehabilitation along the North Shore of the river next to Frying Pan Track.
- A Seagrass Distribution Study.
- An Options Paper, proposed management plan and maps for review of Noosa River regulations.
- A vessel audit to assist with the proposed management plan.
- Noosa River Estuary Assessment of Urban Land-Use Pressures.

The significant voluntary contribution of NRSAC members throughout the Committee’s two-year term, and MSQ’s efforts, are noted and appreciated.

Noosa River Planning - next steps

Following community feedback on the draft Noosa River Plan in 2019, the plan was put on hold to allow for the creation of a river stakeholder committee to provide advice on the priorities of the final plan. The NRSAC provided important feedback on a range of matters with specific focus on anchoring and mooring reforms via MSQ.

An audit of all actions outlined in the 2019 draft Noosa River Plan has been completed and is being reviewed and refined. It is intended that an updated plan be developed to provide a clear plan and framework for all stakeholders with an interest in contributing to the health, safety and amenity of the river and broader catchment.

A report on an updated draft Noosa River Catchment Management Plan will be brought to a future meeting of Council in the coming months and will outline resource requirements for implementation of the plan.

Link to Corporate Plan

Theme No 1. - Environment

- **Objective 1.1:** Maintain and improve water quality and the health of waterways, wetlands and catchments
- **Objective 1.2:** Partner with landowners and community groups to manage, protect and regenerate natural environment assets, improve resilience, and incorporate Indigenous knowledge.
- **Objective 1.5:** Deliver expanded vegetation networks, rehabilitation and habitat across the Shire and advocate to the State and Federal Government to assist funding environmental action.

Previous Council Consideration

While there is a long history of Council consideration of Noosa River management options, the following resolutions relate to the NRSAC.

Ordinary Meeting Minutes 16 July 2020, Item 8, Page 8 (Oyster Reef Restoration)

That Council note the report by the Environmental Services Manager to the Planning & Environment Committee meeting dated 7 July 2020 and:

- A. Approve the Project Management Plan (provided as Attachment 1 to the report) as meeting the requirement of the Project Implementation Plan outlined in the Alliance & Funding Agreement subject to Council appointing an independent scientific expert to provide a review of the project's Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Plan. The review is to include an assessment of the effectiveness of the methodology, project's goals, measures, outputs and outcomes within the context of ecological restoration and the terms of the three year contract, and recommendations (if any) for improvement to be included in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; and
- B. Note the Terms of Reference of the Noosa River Oyster Restoration Project Technical Advisory Group (provided as Attachment 2 to the report); and
- C. Establish a Noosa River Stakeholder Reference Group to provide strategic input, local knowledge and expertise into River Management initiatives, initially providing input into this Shellfish Restoration project and more broadly into finalisation and implementation of the Noosa River Plan, and
- D. Delegate to the CEO to determine the Terms of Reference and undertake a process to establish the Noosa River Stakeholder Reference Group together with the appropriate role for Councillor representation on that Group.

Ordinary Meeting Minutes 21 January 2021, Item 8, Page 6

That Council note the report by the Environment Services Manager and Environment Officer (Rivers and Coast) to the General Committee Meeting dated 18 January 2021 and:

- A. Note the consultation reports for the two periods of public consultation on the Noosa River Plan, from 20 July to 26 August 2018 and 02 December to 10 January 2020.
- B. Note the Draft Terms of Reference for the joint Noosa Shire Council and Maritime Safety Queensland Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee and
 1. Request Maritime Safety Queensland to agree to amend the draft terms of reference to increase the number of committee members up to 12; and
 2. Further note that the Draft Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee at its first meeting.

- C. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee in consultation with Maritime Safety Queensland following any feedback from the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee.
- D. Request the CEO to report back to Council in March 2021 on the proposed membership of the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee and further, request Maritime Safety Queensland to work with Council to ensure that the first meeting of the committee occurs within one month of the finalisation of the committee membership.
- E. Appoint Councillor Stewart to be an observer at meetings of the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee.
- F. Acknowledge and welcome the permanent presence of Maritime Safety Queensland in Noosa and resolve that, while MSQ maintains an active presence, Noosa Shire Council no longer seeks to take over management of anchoring, mooring and living on board on the Noosa River.

Ordinary Meeting Minutes 18 March 2021, Item 9, Page 24

That Council note the report by the Environmental Services Manager to the Ordinary Meeting dated 18 March 2021 about the outcome of the Expression of Interest process for the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee; and

- A. Request that MSQ agree to add to the Committee the 2 highest scoring shortlisted women, Agnes Reed and Jo-Anne Daley, to ensure better gender balance on the Committee; and
- B. Request that MSQ agree to amend the Terms of Reference to allow for 14 members on the Committee.

Planning & Environment Committee Meeting Minutes 10 August 2021, Item 6, Page 24

That Council note the report by the Principal Environment Officer to the Planning & Environment Committee Meeting dated 10 August 2021 providing an update on outcomes of the recently formed Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

Finance

Funding has been sought through the 2023/24 budget to progress priority actions for the Noosa River and this forms part of budget deliberations. External funding opportunities will also be actively pursued.

Risk & Opportunities

A key opportunity now exists to finalise the Noosa River Catchment plan, as authorised in Council's Corporate Plan, to provide a clear blueprint for management activities and priorities in the new financial year.

Council will also continue to seek opportunities to involve Kabi Kabi representatives in river management and cultural awareness activities.

Consultation

External Consultation - Community & Stakeholder

The Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee provided useful input and advice on river related management issues and were instrumental in driving MSQ the draft anchoring and mooring reforms.

The Committee completed its two year term as set out in the Terms of Reference and Council will

continue to explore future opportunities for stakeholders input as part of the finalising of the Noosa River Catchment Management Plan.

Internal Consultation

Consultation with relevant departments and officers has been ongoing. Internal consultation with all departments will be held in the lead up to the Councillor workshop.

Departments/Sections Consulted:

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