

Impact Analysis Statement

Summary IAS

Details

Lead department	Department of Transport and Main Roads
Name of the proposal	Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026
Submission type	Summary Impact Analysis Statement (IAS)
Title of related legislative or regulatory instrument	Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026
Date of issue	March 2026

Proposal type	Details
Regulatory proposals where no RIA is required	<p>The Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026 (the Bill) provides for the establishment of a new statutory authority called the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority (SCWA) and outlines its administrative and governance framework.</p> <p>It also amends the <i>Transport Infrastructure Act 1994</i> (TIA), the <i>Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994</i> (TOMSA), and the <i>Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995</i> (TOMPA), to provide certain existing powers to the SCWA.</p> <p>This Summary IAS outlines the overarching policy objectives. Some aspects of the policy will be implemented through amendments to subordinate legislation, rather than progressed through the Bill.</p> <p>An amendment Regulation will be prepared to amend the relevant subordinate legislation, to implement the remainder of the SCWA policy and make consequential amendments to recognise the new entity and its workforce. A separate Summary IAS will be prepared for that amendment Regulation.</p> <p>As the Bill concerns the internal management of the public sector, no regulatory impact analysis is required under the Better Regulation Policy.</p> <p>The SCWA will provide a structured mechanism to enhance community engagement on waterways management and improve coordination across relevant State agencies and local governments. The SCWA will assume defined functions currently undertaken by Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ), with functions delineated to minimise duplication.</p> <p>MSQ is a statutory authority under the <i>Maritime Safety Queensland Act 2002</i> with statewide responsibility for marine safety and ship-sourced pollution standards and response, investigating marine incidents, managing unseaworthy and abandoned/stranded/sunk/wrecked ships, and overseeing recreational ship registration and licensing. MSQ has general responsibilities to monitor and manage the movements, activities and operations of ships in Queensland waters. MSQ also sets up and maintains aids to navigation, manages 8 out of 10 State boat harbours, and is responsible for overall control of marine pollution response in Queensland.</p> <p>MSQ will be responsible for all vessel interactions including compliance and enforcement.</p>

Problem identification

Establishment of SCWA

Establishment of a SCWA is an election commitment of the Queensland Government.

The waterways and foreshores of the Sunshine Coast are vital to the State's lifestyle, economy, and environmental health. These environments play a critical role in supporting natural ecosystems, while contributing to the local economy through tourism, marine industries, and waterfront businesses. In these waterways, locals and tourists enjoy cultural and aquatic leisure activities, including boating, fishing, and water sports.

Waterways use at the Sunshine Coast is expected to grow in line with population growth. By 2046 it is projected up to 200,000 additional people will settle on the Sunshine Coast. Growth pressures need to be balanced with a range of amenity and environmental considerations to ensure that the Sunshine Coast's waterways continue to support a range of important economic and social activities on the Sunshine Coast.

There is no single community sector, organisation or peak body that represents the range of community, industry or tourism interests associated with waterways, nor one that provides waterways management for marine industries, commercial and recreational fisheries, or enabling tourism to grow in the region.

In the lead-up to the 2024 election, the local community raised concerns about a perceived piecemeal approach to waterways management by different councils and State government agencies. The media reported frustration within the community about multiple layers of bureaucracy and aspirations for the sustainable use of waterways, local involvement in decisions, transparency of decisions, ensuring certainty for local businesses and promoting eco-tourism and fishing.

Policy objectives

The policy objectives of establishing the SCWA are 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 the sustainable use of waterways.

How the policy objectives are met

The Bill defines the SCWA's functions, which includes development of a waterways management strategy in consultation with local government and the community. In doing so, the SCWA will meet the policy objective of better listening to the local needs of the community on the sustainable use of the Sunshine Coast's waterways.

This strategy is not a regulatory instrument. It is a means to articulate the community's vision of how waterways are to be used and managed, and outline in general terms how sometimes competing interests are to be balanced. For example, the priority for one area within a waterway might be waterskiing and jet-ski freestyling, another area might be for quiet enjoyment of natural scenery, and another area might be primarily used for buoy moorings, anchorages or marine industries. Waterside activities would also be considered in the strategy including public open space, waterfront businesses and residences.

The SCWA will work with existing agencies, including the State's marine regulator MSQ, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Department of Environment, Tourism Science and Innovation, and local government, to implement the strategy through existing mechanisms under various legislation and planning instruments

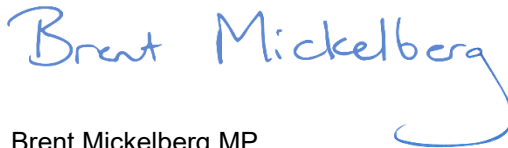
	<p>administered by those agencies. In this way, the SCWA will achieve the policy objective of ensuring cooperation and coordination between the State and local governments around the sustainable use of waterways.</p> <p>The SCWA will provide existing maritime services including providing and maintaining public marine facilities, aids to navigation and other public foreshore infrastructure, and approving permits and approvals for waterway use such as buoy mooring authorities. The SCWA will also manage navigational access and monitor and manage sand and sediment movement (e.g. through dredging and coastal engineering works) to the extent that the State government is currently responsible for these matters (noting local government also carries out these activities in their area of responsibility). As these are existing functions, currently performed by MSQ, they will not add any regulatory burden to individuals or businesses.</p> <p>The SCWA will be a new statutory body, controlled by a Board reporting to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, with a Chief Executive Officer. The Board will include seven appointed members (one of whom will be Chair of the Board) with diverse local stakeholder representation. The Board composition will contribute to meeting the policy objective of better listening to the needs of the local community in the sustainable use of waterways. This provides an opportunity for locals with the appropriate expertise to directly participate in decision-making on waterways management.</p> <p>The SCWA will focus on strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, waterway permits and approvals, waterways infrastructure, and dredging projects. The SCWA will not have an on-water compliance and enforcement role, avoiding any duplication or overlap with the responsibilities of MSQ, as the statewide maritime regulator, and partner agencies (the Queensland Water Police, and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol).</p> <p>The SCWA will not deal with abandoned and derelict vessels – this will remain the role of MSQ using existing powers under the TIA, the TOMSA and the TOMPA.</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>The Bill requires the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to review, after three years, the way and the extent to which the SCWA has performed its functions, and whether the functions of the SCWA remain appropriate for giving effect to the purposes of the establishing Act.</p>
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Signed



Sally Stannard
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 Department of Transport and Main Roads

Date: 23/02/2026



Brent Mickelberg MP
 Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Date: 25/02/2026