

Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Wednesday 12 May 2021, 5pm to 7pm

These minutes were confirmed at the NRSAC meeting on the 23 June 2021

Minutes

Location: Coast Guard Station, Munna Point, Noosaville

Attendance:

Joint Chairs: Brett de Chastel: Chief Executive Officer, Noosa Council (NSC) and Angus Mitchell: General Manager, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)

Committee Members: Ben Broadfoot, Joanne Daley, Bruce Davidson, Michael Gloster, Jane Harris, Nick Hluszko, Richard Howard, Peter Hunnam, Chris Massoud, Phillip Moran, , Agnes Reed, Lachlan Stevens, David Stielow

Apologies: Noel Playford

Observers: Clare Stewart Noosa Mayor was in attendance. Sandy Bolton, MP, had provided her apologies due to sitting of parliament

Committee Support: Susan Codi King, MSQ and Shaun Walsh and Craig Doolan, Noosa Council

1. Welcome by Chairs

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm

Welcome by Brett de Chastel on behalf of the Chairs

Brett de Chastel acknowledged the Noosa River and catchment as home of the Kabi Kabi as the Traditional Custodians, whose lands and waters we all now share.

Brett welcomed committee member David Stielow, and asked him to introduce himself as he was an apology at the previous meeting. David noted he operated the Noosa River Ferry, and his extensive background in the Whitsundays waterways, including membership on similar stakeholder committees established by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

2. Conflict of Interest Declarations

Brett asked for specific conflict of interests, noting proposal for "Register of Interests" as outlined in draft Terms of Reference was a separate agenda item. There was general discussion on the application of conflict of interest for members to gain a better understanding. No specific conflicts were raised by members concerning Agenda matters for this meeting.

3. Presentation on responsibilities and initiatives by Noosa Council

Brett provided a presentation on responsibilities and initiatives by Noosa Council including

- Land management based focus not on water regulation but including policy and strategy, leadership and advocacy and community funding and education
- Initiatives including riparian land purchase, conservation agreements and funding for Keep it in Kin Kin, Oyster restoration project and NICA river monitoring
- Opportunities and challenges including marine zone proposals, bathing reserves and stormwater management and littering

- Council adopting a formal position that it does not wish to have a role in “on river” enforcement given the role that MSQ is now undertaking in that regard.

There was discussion on:

- the need for improvement in interrelationship between Council compliance officers and Queensland Government compliance officers when dealing with one site issues. Some examples of both good and poor practice were mentioned, and the need to make the process seamless
- the interrelationship between Council and Queensland Government powers
- the active role Council plays in Noosa River mouth erosion management
- the interrelationship with Sunshine Coast Council for Lake Weyba management, with Brett noting that positive conversation lines had opened up recently with the appointment of the new Sunshine Coast Council CEO.

4. Discussion on sub-group findings on Anchoring, Mooring and Beaching and LOBs Issues

Nick Hluszko introduced the material prepared by the sub-group and distributed with the Agenda. He noted that it would be helpful if the discussion focused on anchoring time limits, as this represented a significant component of the vessel management issues on the river.

Angus Mitchell responded on behalf of a MSQ and noted his career background in implementing similar controls on waterways elsewhere in Australia. He committed to consider the proposals in detail and progress with government through established protocols. He noted key considerations by government would include:

- Whether improved controls would need regulatory review, or could be implemented administratively
- Consideration of displacement of existing vessels on anchor and possible need for more moorings,
- Process for retrieval of any abandoned vessels
- Better management of anchoring using booking systems, possible use of coloured buoys and other mechanisms
- Ongoing monitoring and enforcement of new anchoring limits, and having sufficient resources

There was discussion arising from questions from the committee on:

- the gestation period for the preparation of the current proposal: it was noted that whilst there had been views developed by some committee members in recent months (prior to the formal formation of the committee), the discussion had actually been ongoing for 20 years, including in previous committees formed by Noosa Council since 2004
- application of learnings from other waterways in other states
- opportunity to implement a trial (notionally 2 years) to commission and fine tune new anchoring time limits
- need for time limits to be relaxed in the event of inclement weather and unsafe crossing of the bar
- fees and charges for anchoring being appropriate for cost recovery.
- Desirability of moving ahead with the anchoring and moorings controls due to the obvious imperative, whilst needing to in parallel commence work on river strategy

There was considerable focused discussion on implementation programming on new anchoring controls including:

- implementation of controls in current election cycle, while we had supportive local and state government members, and not being disrupted by elections
- development of comprehensive community consultation and education program with quality public messages and well thought out implementation program
- timeframe prior to implementation of between 6 to 12 months to allow appropriate consideration by government
- opportunity to package up a suite of proposed controls into identifiable and understandable components, that will ease the process of implementation
- possibility of extending the “War on Wrecks” funding to assist in removal of abandoned vessels
- physical assistance by Council / MSQ to assist in removal of vessels when required by specific vessels owners
- opportunity to update existing data on number, condition and location of vessels to support implementation of new anchoring limits

The Co-Chair Brett de Chastel noted that proposing a focused outcome that was easy to comprehend increased likelihood of success, rather than developing a complex and tailored solution, whilst attempting to solve all issues, which would more than likely be caught up in longer and more complex regulatory review processes.

The Co-Chair Angus Mitchell committed to considering the anchoring proposal in more detail in time for the next NRSAC meeting, as well as considering the process through government.

Action: Co-Chair Angus Mitchell to assess proposals concerning anchoring and mooring management and provide advice at next NRSAC meeting

There was ongoing discussion in the committee of various topics including:

- grounding of vessels at interface with the foreshore an issue for MSQ and Council to explore together
- vessels on the foreshore impacting both riverside ecology and amenity, access and safety for river foreshore users
- possible use of Bathing Reserves required more exploration by Council
- possibility of a moratorium on any new large vessels entering the river through Council controlling access at Hilton Esplanade and Moorindil Street
- the need for further exploration of river “use” areas for all commonly understood river users
- The democracy of river access, noting that the removal of some vessels will provide possibly more capacity for casual users (including locals) to visit and access river areas currently occupied by unattended vessels
- Insurance obligation for vessels

The Co-Chair Angus Mitchell agreed that a workshop session with available committee members on river use areas including desirable and undesirable anchoring areas, would be a useful first step in appreciating river use outcomes, with the general idea of using a large chart on the table to “draw” up those ideas for further considerations

Action: MSQ Officers to invite NRSAC members to a river use workshop session to draw up desirable and undesirable river use areas as a first step for further evaluation

Nick Hluszko, on behalf of the committee, acknowledged the initial positive response from MSQ and thanked him for his commitment to explore the proposals.

5. Discussion on Additional Working groups on other topics

The co-chair Brett de Chastel sought committee thoughts on whether to focus on Anchoring / Mooring in the first instance, or whether other subgroups could be formed to focus on other topics

Following discussion the committee thought the following topics needed to start being explored, noting that would be a different speeds and in parallel to Anchoring / Mooring focus.

Longer Term Strategy

Discussion included:

- Preparation of holistic principals and strategies
- Suitable management framework
- Including transport opportunities by using the river to reduce cars on road

Peter Hunnam volunteered to make further representations / distributions to the whole committee about the desired strategic approach to facilitate further discussions at the NRSAC meeting. Others in the meeting also volunteered to distribute material as well.

Action: Peter Hunnam with others to distribute information about river strategy and management framework to facilitate ongoing discussions about next steps

River Health Monitoring and Data sets

Discussion included

- Existing data sets and what's missing
- Use of good data to assist decision making
- Transparency and accessibility of data
- Need for more understanding of sediment management
- Need for understanding about anchored and moored vessels and unseaworthy vessels

Shaun Walsh noted that he was already working with Jake Hennessey and Richard Howard to update vessel number data (previously collected in 2006/07) as this would be valuable in supporting anchor and mooring controls. It was suggested that they could compile a presentation on existing data sets available on the Noosa River and present to next NRSAC to assist determination of next steps.

Action: Shaun Walsh to work with Jake Hennessey and Richard Howard to compile a presentation for next NRSAC meeting on current Noosa River data sets

Safety at the Noosa River Bridges

Discussion included:

- Opportunity for the engineering design for Garth Prowd Bridge (Noosa Parade) upgrade to help prevent undesirable
- Key entry to Noosa visitor experience and opportunity to turn the bridge into a positive experience
- Need for precinct approach for Hastings Street

It was determined that next steps would for committee members who have specific concerns for bridge safety issues to meet and discuss, and then for a contingent to meet Council officers on site to discuss specific concerns for the Garth Prowd Bridge

Action: Shaun Walsh to coordinate bridge safety discussion with interested committee members, and the facilitate meeting with Council design team for the Garth Prowd Bridge

**Note postscript to meeting: discussion with NRSAC committee members has indicated that the process for formation of additional subgroup composition is unclear, and requires further discussion and decision at the next NRSAC meeting, and reflection in the TOR including tenure, scope and leadership. The work noted in actions above is considered formative to assist the NRSAC committee in determining next steps.*

6. Discussion on Terms of Reference

Committee discussion noted:

- whilst further redrafting had occurred the TORS was still a work in progress and additional review and comments are sought by committee members
- the need for involvement of other government departments as issues re-focused on other river management topics
- the idea of a “register of interests” to manage transparency in discussions and avoid conflicts of interest
- the need to weave general community education messages into the media releases
- the desire for an independent media voice speaking on behalf of NRSAC, rather than just local and State government representatives

In relation to the last dot point it was agreed that there should be a joint approach to media messages, and already a joint conversation occurs between Council and MSQ to prepare media statements. While the TOR are continuing to be refined, it was determined that Council would also liaise with Nick Hluszko (subgroup spokesperson Anchoring and Mooring) to prepare joint media statement on behalf of the committee.

Action: Council / MSQ to liaise with Nick Hluszko to prepare joint media statement for NRSAC meeting.

7. Internal Communication Protocol on queries to Noosa Council and MSQ

Shaun Walsh sought committee members to use the nrsac@noosa.qld.go.au email for technical queries to Council and MSQ to avoid duplication and unnecessary communication. Shaun would acknowledge and log queries, and arrange co-ordinated response.

8. Media Statements – General Protocol and specific statement from this meeting.

The approach to prepare joint media statements is as noted above. Ideally it was considered that media releases should focus on practical river use and river health issues and outcomes to have resonance to the general public and to take the community on the journey for this committee.

9. General Business (if time available)

The following items were raised:

- Reminder for RSVP for proposed boat tour next week
- Ideal timing for river use workshop (see relevant action above) ideally in a fortnights time
- Council’s consideration of inappropriate uses and structures in the Frying Pan.

In regard to the last item, the Co-Chair Brett de Chastel committed that Council would prepare an update on the circumstances of the Frying Pan at the next meeting

Action: Council to prepare a presentation on the circumstance of vessels and structures at the Frying Pan at the next NRSAC meeting

10. Meeting Closed

The meeting was closed by the Chairs at 6.50pm.

Whilst not noted at the meeting, the next scheduled meeting date is the 9th June 2021

Post script MSQ have requested amended meeting date of 23 June 2021

Summary of NRSAC Meeting Actions 12 May 2021

Action	Meeting Date	Status
1. <i>Committee members to provide feedback on MSQ initiatives including the speed signs and brochures and other initiatives. (please email to Susan Codi King)</i>	14 April 2021	Complete
2. <i>Shaun Walsh to prepare Noosa River Issue and Option Analysis template to provide a common framework for members and sub-groups to explore topics</i>	14 April 2021	Complete
3. <i>Nick Hluszko to chair the subgroup focusing on vessel management and Council initiatives and convene discussions in the coming week.</i>	14 April 2021	Complete (see subsequent action below)
4. <i>Committee members to provide feedback on NRSAC terms of reference in preparation for discussion at next meeting. (Please email to Shaun Walsh)</i>	14 April 2021	Ongoing
5. <i>Action: Co-Chair Angus Mitchell to assess proposals concerning anchoring and mooring management and provide advice at next NRSAC meeting.</i>	12 May 2021	New
6. <i>Action: MSQ Officers to invite NRSAC members to a river use workshop session to draw up desirable and undesirable river use areas as a first step for further evaluation.</i>	12 May 2021	New
7. <i>Action: Peter Hunnam with others to distribute information about river strategy and management framework to facilitate ongoing discussions about next steps.</i>	12 May 2021	New
8. <i>Action: Shaun Walsh to work with Jake Hennessey and Richard Howard to compile a presentation for next NRSAC meeting on current Noosa River data sets</i>	12 May 2021	New
9. <i>Action: Shaun Walsh to coordinate bridge safety discussion with interested committee members, and the facilitate meeting with Council design team for the Garth Prowd Bridge.</i>	12 May 2021	New
10. <i>Action: Council / MSQ to liaise with Nick Hluszko to prepare joint media statement for NRSAC meeting.</i>	12 May 2021	New
11. <i>Action: Council to prepare a presentation on the circumstance of vessels and structures at the Frying Pan at the next NRSAC meeting</i>	12 May 2021	New