

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4002

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February 2003 enclosing a copy of an e-petition regarding Sun Aqua's proposed sea cage aquaculture development in Moreton Bay.

The Queensland Government has a firm commitment to the principles of ecologically sustainable development and seeks to integrate both short and long-term economic, social and environmental effects into the decision making process. Queensland's regulatory environment embraces measures to ensure developments are environmentally sound and to protect the rights of the public.

The Coordinator-General has declared this proposal a "significant project" under the provisions of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. The Act provides the Coordinator-General with the head of power to coordinate government departments and agencies to ensure proper account is taken of environmental effects associated with proposed developments. The Coordinator-General may call for information on the environmental, social and economic effects of a proposed development through provision of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The proponent is currently preparing the EIS which will include a detailed description of the proposal, a description of the existing environment, assessment of impacts of the project on the environment including social and economic impacts, health and safety issues and proposed safeguards, mitigation measures, environmental management and monitoring. This will allow the Government to make an informed and balanced assessment of the proposed development.

On completion, the EIS will be made publicly available for a period of at least 28 days and submissions will be invited.

The Coordinator-General will evaluate the EIS, considering all properly made submissions and prepare a report on the proposed action in accordance with s.35 of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. A copy of the Coordinator-General's report will be provided to the proponent and to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, and will also be made publicly available. The Commonwealth Environment Minister is required to make a decision following the completion of the State EIS assessment process.

All relevant state government agencies are involved in the assessment process as required by the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. The Coordinator-General will manage the public review process and coordinate agency submissions to provide a streamlined assessment process.

The Department of State Development does not issue any licenses or permits for proposed developments. On completion of the EIS, all applications for licenses and permits will be assessed and issued under their respective Acts. This development requires approval under the *Marine Parks Act 1982* for use and operation of the facility in a marine park, *Environmental Protection Act 1994* for operating an aquaculture facility and an aquaculture license under the *Fisheries Act 1994*.

I trust this information has addressed your concerns.

Yours sincerely

TOM BARTON MP
Minister for State Development

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