



Hon Andrew McNamara MP

Member for Hervey Bay

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**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Sustainability,
Climate Change and Innovation**

14 APR 2008

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 14 February 2008 to The Hon Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, concerning Petition No. 993-08 regarding the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning plan review. As this matter falls within my portfolio, your letter has been forwarded to me for response.

The public submission period for the draft zoning plan for Moreton Bay Marine Park concluded on 7 March 2008. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received over 8,000 submissions on the draft zoning plan and is now recording and analysing all this information to produce a final zoning plan.

The overarching aim of the draft zoning plan which was released for public comment is to protect Moreton Bay Marine Park's unique biodiversity and values – while allowing for its sustainable use by all groups, now and into the future.

The draft zoning plan was prepared with the utmost technical and scientific rigour. The EPA engaged an independent Expert Advisory Panel at the outset of the review process to ensure its scientific integrity. This Panel provided a series of recommendations to the EPA to guide development of the draft zoning plan, including a series of 13 Scientific Guiding Principles and an endorsed method for analysing all available information. One of the key guiding principles provided by the Panel was to protect a minimum of 10 percent of each of the marine park's 16 different habitat types in green "no take" zones.

The draft zoning plan proposes a network of integrated zones and zone types which together provide a holistic plan for managing the marine park over the next decade. It is important to note that green zones, the equivalent of national parks on water, can be enjoyed for a range of recreational and commercial activities such as boating and camping. However, all extractive uses are prohibited in green zones. This includes fishing, as well as development, mining and other works.

The EPA has considered an extensive amount of data and consulted widely throughout the review process to ensure that the draft zoning plan has minimised, as much as possible, the impact on the wide range of people who use and value Moreton Bay Marine Park.

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The data gathered by the EPA identified Coombabah Lake (MNP33), the proposed green zone to which this petition refers, as an area of high environmental and cultural significance. The proposed green zone seeks to preserve the very natural beauty and wildlife for which Coombabah Lake is renowned and popular among residents and visitors alike. The zoning recognises the crucial role the area plays in the overall ecosystem functioning of Moreton Bay Marine Park. It also recognises the need to sustainably manage its increasing use and protect it from encroaching development, in light of rapid population growth in the region.

Coombah Lake was formed around 6,000 years ago and is culturally significant for the area's Traditional Owners. It is a relatively pristine example of estuarine habitat in Moreton Bay Marine Park and is internationally recognised as a Ramsar wetlands site for migratory shorebirds and adjoins the Ivan Gibbs Wetlands Conservation Park. The lake also provides important habitat for invertebrates and fish species. Much of the area is already a declared Fish Habitat Area under the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) and is therefore currently closed to fishing.

To limit the potential impacts of this proposed zone on those who use the area for fishing, the green zone was placed to directly overlay the existing DPI&F fisheries closure. The majority of additional area outside this existing closure which has been included in the proposed green zone is mangrove or intertidal habitat, which is unsuitable for fishing. It must also be highlighted that the zone was not extended further east to the mouth of Coombabah Creek to specifically avoid the many popular shore- and boat-based recreational fishing locations in that area.

The EPA is now considering all submissions, including those specifically related to the proposed green zone at Coombabah Lake, in line with the 13 Scientific Guiding Principles being followed for the design of the zoning plan. All this information will be analysed to produce a zoning plan which ensures the ongoing health of Moreton Bay Marine Park for all of us to enjoy and use sustainably – now and well into the future.

I hope the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew McNamara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrew" and last name "McNamara" clearly distinguishable.

Andrew McNamara MP
Minister for Sustainability,
Climate Change and Innovation