



Hon Andrew McNamara MP
Member for Hervey Bay



29 MAY 2008

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

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

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 16 April 2008 concerning Petition Numbers 1011-08, 1033-08, 1039-08, 1040-08 regarding the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning plan review.

Public consultation on the draft zoning plan for Moreton Bay Marine Park concluded on 7 March 2008. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received more than 8,000 submissions on the draft plan, the majority of which support the Government's efforts to better protect the area's natural beauty and safeguard the industries, lifestyles and communities which depend on a healthy and sustainable marine park.

To ensure the scientific integrity of the review process, the draft zoning plan was prepared using a series of 13 Scientific Guiding Principles provided by an independent Expert Advisory Panel. One of these key guiding principles was to protect a minimum of 10 percent of each of the marine park's different broad-scale habitat types in green "no take" zones. Another key principle was to ensure that the draft zoning plan minimised to the greatest possible extent the impact of re-zoning on the wide range of different user groups within Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The EPA has considered an extensive range of data and consulted widely with the community, key stakeholders, councils and other groups to actively minimise the impacts of the re-zoning on users. To develop the draft zoning plan, the EPA convened a Stakeholder Reference Group which included more than 30 representatives across tourism, diving, boating, councils, conservation, Traditional Owners, State Government and recreational and commercial fishing groups. Four members of the Moreton Bay Access Alliance (MBAA) represented a range of interests including the commercial fishing sector on this group and provided input into the draft zoning plan on the industry's behalf. The Queensland Seafood Industry Association was also represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group.

In reference to Petition Number 1039-08, the area surrounding Pannikin Island (MNP27) was proposed as a green zone because it is the only example of inshore mangrove habitat connected to the mainland on the western foreshore of Moreton Bay. It also provides important feeding grounds for dugong and protects a representative sample of both intertidal and sandy habitat; two of the marine park's 16 habitat types. To limit the potential impacts of this proposed zone, it was specifically placed to avoid the main channels east of Pannikin Island which are known to be important for both commercial and recreational fishing.

Level 17
160 Ann Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15155 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3336 8032
Facsimile +61 7 3227 6309
Email sustainability@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

The MBAA proposed reducing this zone to encompass only the limits of Pannikin Island; which would provide protection for just one of the two identified habitat types in this area. The EPA has also received a number of submissions proposing another alternative of extending the proposed zone east to encompass both Pannikin and Long islands, to ensure that both habitat types in this area are afforded protection. All submissions will be considered during development of the final zoning plan later this year.

The EPA has also received a number of submissions relating to the proposed "go slow" designated areas in the southern Moreton Bay area, as detailed in Petition Number 1040-08. These new "go slow" areas were proposed to specifically address the issue of boat strike of dugong in the marine park, by limiting the speed of vessels longer than eight metres to six knots. These proposed areas were based on investigations of dugong carcasses in this area, which showed that their injuries were consistent with high speed and/or shallow water strikes from larger vessels. I understand the community's concerns about how these proposed areas might impact transport systems to the southern Bay islands. I can assure residents that the EPA is working with ferry operators and Queensland Transport in consideration of these matters.

I hope the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew McNamara MP
Minister for Sustainability,
Climate Change and Innovation**