



Submission:

Noosa River & Speed Limits

ISSUE: PROPOSED NEW 6-KNOT ZONE - NOOSA RIVER

SUBJECT: Boating Industry Association feedback

INTRODUCTION:

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) has opened a period of consultation in response to safety concerns raised by user groups and the broader community, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is proposing to gazette a 6-knot speed limit on the lower reach of the Noosa River from Thomas Street to the Noosa River mouth. This is a distance of approximately 1.8 nautical miles (3.3 km) and will apply to all vessels. The proposed 6-knot speed limit area can be found on a map on the last page of this document.

The lower reach of the Noosa River is currently subject to a gazetted 20 knot speed limit. During the Christmas and Easter holiday periods a seasonal 6 knot speed limit applies. The Noosa River seasonal 6 knot speed limit applies to an area between the port lateral mark adjacent to the intersection of Weyba Road and Gympie Terrace, and the river mouth.

The proposal would permanently apply the current seasonal 6 knot speed limit and extend the area approximately 600m upstream.

MSQ would like to receive input from you or your organisation and request the following questions are answered from you or your organisations point of view.

If you or your organisation are interested in providing feedback to MSQ, please answer the following questions and return by email within 30 days of receipt of this letter.

At the end of the 30-day consultation period, the responses will be evaluated to determine if the speed limits changes will be implemented at this time. Please send your replies to the following e/mail address:

Department of
Transport and Main Roads
MSQNoosa@tmr.qld.gov.au



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SUBMISSION

The Boating Industry Association Ltd (BIA) is the peak body in Australia that represents the interests of recreational and light commercial boating which includes boat manufacturers, importers, yacht and boat clubs, brokers, insurers, retailers, charters, marinas, events, designers, surveyors and trades from boat builders to riggers, and more. The BIA is an advocate for boaters and the boating lifestyle, and it supports safe, responsible, and enjoyable boating.

The boating economy generates significant benefits through employment. In 2021 the industry reported a national turnover figure of \$8.835 billion, and directly employed more than 27,630 people with an additional 10,000 plus contractors. Seventy-five per cent are employed in small, family businesses which employ local people and contribute significantly to their local communities.

With more than 85 per cent of the Australian population living within 50km of the coast, it is little wonder that almost 1 in 5 households own a boat or watercraft. People of all ages, gender and ability can participate in boating across paddle, sail and power for leisure and sport. It is estimated that some 2 million people go boating each year in our State.

Boating however is more than numbers, it is a way of life for many Queensland families with most vessels being family runabouts, small paddle boats, and sail craft.

Boating has also proven to be a standout choice of leisure activity through the pandemic. The combination of no international travel, the staycation phenomenon, flexible work practices, and the need to be COVID Safe, have seen the interest in boating ramp up significantly.

A boat is like a moveable island where you choose where to go, when and who with, and it supports compliance with social distancing. It is also proven to be good for your body and mind. Work in social science has shown that when we are on a boat, feel-good hormones like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin go up, while cortisol (stress) goes down.

It is with this background in mind that the BIA provides the following responses to questions put by MSQ:

1. Do you agree with the proposed 6 knot zone being gazetted on the Noosa River (see the map at the bottom of the page);

Not supported

2. If not, please advise your reason(s) why



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BIA supports education before regulation. New or amended legislative change, including local rules with social impact, should be founded on the following:

1. Supported by:
 - relevant and appropriate long-term data
 - Application of objective analysis
 - A clearly defined public benefit
 - A clearly defined need
2. Only after consideration of:
 - stakeholder impacts such as economic, environmental, cultural and social implications
 - alternatives to legislative measures such as education and, where appropriate, compliance and enforcement
3. Consultation

BIA would suggest that the appropriate data is currently not presented to support such change. That objective analysis is not evident. Furthermore, alternatives such as a 'sustained and funded' education, compliance and enforcement program have not been run. Such a program should promote awareness of existing rules for safe and responsible boating including safe speed, proper lookout and safe distance (eg., from people, the shore and other vessels).

Too often it is the behaviour of a few who spoil it, or impact liberty, for the majority.

There is also a probability that some existing complaints have come from what is effectively permanent liveaboards on vessels anchored across the lower reaches. BIA is troubled by the practice of permanent liveaboards who are able to anchor virtually where and when they like for as long as they like with little to no requirement to comply with fundamentals no discharge of human waste, seaworthiness of vessels, no identification of vessels eg., a HIN to help track owners when abandoned, wrecked etc. Therefore, BIA would welcome seeing the complaints data especially if it breaks down and identifies whether the complaint comes from people living on boats at anchor.



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3. If not, please advise an alternate option that may be considered;

As mentioned in #2 above, before new rules are applied, there should be a sustained and funded education, compliance and enforcement program of current rules for safe and responsible boating. For example, the War on Wrecks interim report made clear the opportunity to promote Responsible Boat Ownership and such a campaign should cover responsible boat operation. This should be run alongside an appropriate long-term data collection effort and supporting robust analysis.

4. If yes, please advise your reason(s) why;

NA

5. In the interests of safety of persons and vessels on the Noosa River, do you think that this proposal is the most appropriate;

No, the most appropriate is a sustained and funded program of education, compliance and enforcement. This is the most appropriate way to support a culture of safer boating.

6. If not, please state your reason(s);

See above.

7. Please advise any other considerations you think may be appropriate.

The BIA supports MSQ in its broader efforts to manage safe, responsible and enjoyable boating, and to deliver new and improved infrastructure for boating in Queensland.

BIA also supports MSQ in its considerations of moving to hypothecated funding to ensure there is a secure and sustainable funding base from which to deliver improved outcomes in boating management at Noosa and other waterways in the State.

BIA supports the deployment of a Responsible Boat Ownership campaign to capture behaviours and also matters such as vessel ownership which captures care, maintenance and sustainable practices.

BIA is willing to collaborate with MSQ in programs to support and promote a culture of safer boating in Queensland. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Neil Patchett, Co General Manager, e. neil@bia.org.au or m. 0418 279 465 on this matter.



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The BIA commend MSQ for the opportunity to provide our input.

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