



Hon Andrew McNamara MP
Member for Hervey Bay



**Queensland
Government**

Ref: Petition No. 1049-08
SU/08/4079

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

23 SEP 2008

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil,*

Thank you for your letter of 28 August 2008 concerning a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly (No. 1049-08) relating to the closure of two beaches to vehicles on Moreton Island National Park.

In April 2007, following significant public consultation, the Queensland Government released the Moreton Island Management Plan which had over 100 management strategies for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement to provide improved management of the Moreton Island National Park.

Among the new management strategies was the establishment of two new Beach Safety Zones adjacent to the Comboyuro Point and North Point Campgrounds, where vehicles are not permitted on the beach. The purpose of these areas is to provide enhanced safety and unique visitor experiences for more than 200,000 campers and four wheel drive users who visit Moreton Island each year.

I appreciate that the establishment of Beach Safety Zones at Moreton Island is a controversial topic, with some regular users of the National Park opposed to them. In response to the concerns that have been raised, I have personally inspected the areas of beach affected at both Comboyuro Point and North Point, and have also met with the petition's author to discuss their concerns in person. I have also taken time to reflect on the likely benefits of the Beach Safety Zones to Moreton Island's varied and diverse stakeholders.

I believe it is important for a range of camping experiences to be provided for the large variety of stakeholders that visit Moreton Island, and that vehicle-free beaches are part of this package. While I can appreciate that they may cause some minor inconvenience to frequent users who are accustomed to driving through these areas, their benefit to the safety of beach pedestrians and, in particular, camping families is very important. There are many Moreton Island visitors that highly value the Beach Safety Zones and seek them out as part of their Moreton Island experience.

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With the vast majority of Moreton Island's beaches remaining open to four wheel drive access, I believe the EPA has got the balance right between convenience of access, safety and visitor experiences. The Beach Safety Zones affect only two percent of Moreton Island's beaches, with the overwhelming majority of beaches still available for vehicle use. I therefore remain committed to their continued implementation.

The EPA has carried out a variety of actions to minimise any inconvenience arising from the Beach Safety Zones to regular users of Moreton Island. These include the installation of new directional signs and the upgrade of the bypass road for Comboyuro Point (specifically the Tailor Bight track and sections of the Bulwer-North Point Road). While there may be some time of adjustment for frequent users of the area, I am confident that their ongoing implementation will be successful and appreciated by the majority of visitors to Moreton Island National Park.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Miles Yeates of the EPA on telephone (07) 3821 9003.

Yours sincerely



Andrew McNamara MP
Minister for Sustainability,
Climate Change and Innovation