



Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef,
Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts

Our Ref: CTS 08058/19
Your Ref: A431179

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26 APR 2019

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

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2019 regarding Parliamentary Petition Nos. 3074-19 and 3105-19 concerning potential changes to zoning in Baffle Creek, within the Great Sandy Marine Park.

The Department of Environment and Science (the department) is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the Great Sandy Marine Park (GSMP), the first since it was established in August 2006. The purpose of the review is to support a contemporary management approach that is based on the latest available science, best practice marine park management principles, enhanced partnership with Traditional Owners and community input. The Zoning Plan review process seeks to ensure that the GSMP continues to provide for a range of commercial and recreational activities while balancing the need to conserve the marine environment.

A key component of the Zoning Plan review was the release of the *Great Sandy Marine Park discussion paper – Zoning Plan opportunities* (the Discussion Paper) for public consultation from 14 January to 25 February 2019. The associated online survey has closed, and therefore removing the question about Baffle Creek will have no effect. The Discussion Paper provided information on the environmental, social and cultural values of the GSMP, issues that have been identified since it was established and sought feedback on potential options to amend zoning and management arrangements. The options presented in the Discussion Paper were suggestions to gauge the level of support for various options and to seek feedback and information from local communities and stakeholder groups.

Baffle Creek was highlighted in the Discussion Paper as a regionally important estuarine system due to its size, extensive wetlands and flow regime that is not impacted by dams or weirs. Recreational fishing, and commercial net fishing and crabbing were acknowledged as occurring in Baffle Creek. Opportunities were presented in the Discussion Paper that aim to ensure the long term conservation of this environmentally important waterway. One of the ways that this could be achieved is by amending the zoning in some parts of Baffle Creek.

Written submissions received for Baffle Creek have raised concerns about the socio-economic impacts to the local community if large areas of the Baffle Creek system were to be rezoned to a Marine National Park (green) Zone. Responses to the online survey and written submissions yielded a mix of support and opposition to the establishment of a green zone. The Creek is currently zoned as a Conservation Park (yellow) Zone which is overlain by the designated Great Sandy Area. This designated area allows for the continuation of commercial netting and recreational line fishing in a yellow zone that would otherwise prohibit or restrict these activities.

Since the release of the Discussion Paper, the community around Baffle Creek has elected representatives to provide an efficient means of contact between the community and the department. Departmental staff continue to liaise with the community through these representatives to discuss marine park management options with a view to ensuring an appropriate balance between conservation and use.

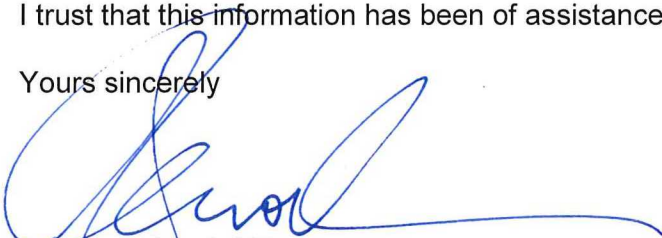
No decisions have been made about possible zoning changes for the GSMP including any affecting all or part of Baffle Creek.

Information and submissions received on the Discussion Paper are being considered in combination with the latest scientific information, socio-economic data and best practice marine park management principles to prepare a draft revised Zoning Plan. Any proposed changes to the current zoning will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and local communities, such as Baffle Creek, and will be subject to further public consultation when the draft revised Zoning Plan is released later this year. The draft revised Zoning Plan will be accompanied by a Regulatory Impact Statement that outlines the costs and benefits of any proposed changes to the current Zoning Plan.

I would be pleased if you would arrange for the tabling of this letter in response to the Petitions in accordance with Standing Order 31.

I trust that this information has been of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



Leeanne Enoch MP

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