

## MEDIA STATEMENT

16 January 2024

### MSQ getting on with the job on Noosa River

- Following extensive public consultation of the management of the Noosa River, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ), has developed a number of strategies including new speed zones, anchoring rules and other initiatives to ensure safety and equity of access for all the users of the Noosa river.
- In September 2023, in time for the school holidays, MSQ initiated new speed zones in the river, which have been well received by the community based upon feedback to date.
- In preparation for the next steps in the future management of the river, MSQ has been assessing the safety of anchored vessels and auditing them for compliance of pollution prevention requirements, to address safety and environmental concerns on the Noosa River.
- MSQ's priority focus is to ensure vessels are adequately prepared for the coming storm season and are protecting the river's environmental values.
- Longer term, MSQ is also progressing legislation to effect further waterway management reforms, including anchoring limitations, following public consultation.

Maritime Safety Queensland is progressing priority initiatives on the Noosa River to improve safety and environmental outcomes, while working on legislative reforms for better long-term management of boating.

MSQ, as the State's maritime regulator, has surveyed vessels anchored in the river to assess how they can best be managed in the event of storms or flood over the coming summer.

MSQ has also undertaken an audit of anchored and liveaboard vessels to ensure compliance of marine pollution prevention requirements, to protect the river's environmental integrity.

These activities follow MSQ's introduction of new, lowered speed limits for vessels before the September school holiday period and its subsequent enforcement compliance campaign.

MSQ enforcement officers conducted compliance inspections of 180 vessels during the September school holiday period, handing out 50 infringement notices, mainly for offences against safety requirements (mostly lifejackets), speeding and "distance off" rules.

Further, MSQ Maritime enforcement teams have undertaken a number of compliance activities over the last 2 months, which will continue over the summer months.

There are heavy penalties for non-compliance, with speeding, anti-social behaviour (hooning), lack of required safety equipment (including lifejackets) and licensing some of the main areas of non-compliance to date.

Education and communication with the community will be a priority for MSQ as the process of implementing the reforms is progressed.

The Noosa River is home to a range of activities and users and, in acknowledgement of the role the river plays in the lives of locals, the Queensland Government through our MSQ officers will be reaching out to stakeholders in a supportive manner.

The continued and equitable use of the river in a safe and sustainable way, by all, will continue to be a priority for the government.

If you are looking for more about the management of vessels on Noosa River, check for updated information on <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au>.

**Quotes attributable to Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager Kell Dillon:**

“The Noosa River is one of Queensland’s busiest waterways, treasured by Noosa residents, the boating community and local businesses alike.

“MSQ has worked closely with the Noosa Council, Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the public to make sure the river’s very popularity does not compromise its future safety or environmental values.

“The Government approved an informed waterways management plan for vessels developed by MSQ following its public consultation over proposed anchoring and speed limit changes.

“That plan will address safety, access and environmental issues and will include anchoring restrictions to better manage congestion on the river and along its shoreline.

“Legislative changes will be required and education and communication with the community, including with impacted vessel owners, will be a priority for the implementation of the reforms.

“In the meantime, MSQ is getting on with the job, assessing how to manage any safety or pollution concerns among the vessels currently anchored, and striving to improve safe boating practices.

“Rest assured that as we continue through the busy summer holiday season, MSQ will redouble its on-water education and compliance efforts to ensure boaties understand the rules and comply with speed limits and all of their other safety obligations.”