

## Community Jury Report – supporting explanations for recommendations

Compiled by a working group of 3 jurors on December 18, 2015

***Each supporting explanation relates to jury discussions about a specific recommendation stated in the Noosa River Community Jury Final Report, December 2015. Each is numbered according to how each appears in the report.***

1. *Review, update and implement the Noosa River Plan in a new framework and have it ratified with a formal status to ensure it has authority (recognising that is not currently a legal document). Ensure the Plan is clearly linked to relevant cultural, social and, transport strategies and plans.*
  - The jury discussed that they wanted the Noosa River Management Plan to be a document that the community was involved in on an ongoing basis
  - The main focus was that the jury wanted the community to continue to have a say on The Noosa River Plan with a community engagement process like Council currently undertakes when developing any of its major plans such as the Local Economic Plan, the Social Strategy etc. And adopted as an official Council document that informs other Council plans and strategies.
2. *Undertake effective monitoring and facilitation of waste removal/disposal, for example through use of rebates for compliance or outsourcing to a third party on a user pays basis.*
  - We have had guest speakers present who suggested that illegal dumping from boats occurs on the river
  - One of the jurors confirmed that one of his friends did it (illegal discharge of waste from a vessel in the river)
  - Anecdotal evidence that illegal dumping does take place
  - A third party to be employed to carry out the removal of waste from vessels was discussed
  - The discussion was that perhaps the current facilities are too hard/inconvenient to use by vessel owners
  - Concerns about revenue- raising prompted a discussion about raising the LOB fees. It was suggested that a rebate could be awarded to vessel owners *if they fully complied* with all regulations - specifically being able to present receipts/log book as evidence of pump –outs.
3. *Establish an effective duty of care (as per Cultural Heritage Act) with respect to sites of cultural heritage and ensure a specific policy or strategy on cultural matters including effective indigenous engagement on all aspects of river management.*
  - Guest speakers advised that there is not currently a process in place for consultation with cultural leaders about cultural heritage sites (Kabi elders) on the river
  - The jury felt that these groups should be included in the determination of location of moorings/anchorings/jetties and other works such as boat ramps and any other developments that may impact on these sites

4. *Implement a role similar to a park ranger (for example a national park model) with authority on the river around compliance and monitoring.*

- The jury saw that such a ranger role had existed in the past but they also discussed how this role did not have any authority and that is why they wanted a role similar to a park ranger – someone with authority

6. *Review fees for moorings and anchoring noting the Jury's support for Council to levy rates for commercial jetties.*

- The jury supports that Council is now able to rate commercial jetties
- The jury thought that there was room for a user-pays system, similar to the commercial jetty rate payments, for mooring and anchoring. The principle is that people should pay for the value they receive when anchoring and mooring on the river. Some rate payers felt that they should not have to pay for something that only the vessel owners received.
- Others thought that everyone received value from the river so that they did not mind that ratepayers contributed.
- If there are new zones for anchoring or temporary moorings developed, then cultural heritage groups should be consulted (Kabi elders)

7. *Lead the establishment of a Noosa River Management Coordination Committee to be chaired by an independent river management specialist to monitor and oversight river management.*

- The term “management” came from the Noosa River Management Plan.
- The feeling was that this group would operate in an advisory capacity and would be comprised of a group of stakeholders rather than have any operational/management role
- Stakeholder involvement was a key element of discussions in any future local management of the river using The Noosa River Management Plan as a guiding document
- We had a lot of discussion about key business people/clubs/social groups etc who should be on such an advisory committee
- The “independent river management specialist” was discussed in relation to a River Ranger who would provide reports to the advisory committee in addition to whichever entity he/she was employed by. The “chaired” is probably an erroneous word and was taken down by the scribe as their interpretation of what was actually meant. The River Ranger was discussed as someone who had “powers” like a park ranger and be appropriately qualified. This person would have the best opportunity to report back the reality of what was really happening on the river.

8. *Pursue legal authority to remove (following appropriate notification and legal requirements) abandoned, unattended, unauthorised, derelict and unsafe vessels from the river to an impound area, noting that there would then be an opportunity to auction unclaimed vessels.*

- The jury was not sure how a vessel was currently deemed abandoned/derelict and what steps were then taken to remove a vessel

- The jury felt that Council could investigate further how they could ensure that vessels that were derelict were removed
- There was a lack of understanding as to the legal process of vessel removal
- The discussion about auctioning unclaimed vessels arose because the jury was trying to come up with ways to defray the high cost of vessel removal
- The impound area was suggested as a gesture of goodwill to vessel owners to give them a chance to rectify the situation and avoid Council having to pay the removal costs. The actual impound area location was not discussed and it was thought that only if this was practical and did not cost too much.
- The impound area was also suggested so that offending vessels were taken out of the public eye and Council would be seen as solving the problem.

*9. Review mooring and anchor locations and type of moorings to take account of all relevant cultural and environmental factors, with new locations to be assessed against these factors on a rolling basis and made more environmentally friendly.*

- This was discussed as a process of consultation with relevant stakeholders rather than a scientific survey or high cost exercise for every anchoring and mooring location.
- The intention was a practical process rather than an onerous technical exercise

*10. Pursue options to implement lighting and marker options for boats and beacons to address safety issues, noting relevant environmental and legal (national and international) parameters which must be considered*

- The concept of illuminated channel markers for improved safety for vessels had been discussed and it related to The Noosa River becoming a Category 1 river and derelict boats posing a navigation safety issue.
- The jury thought that even if the state authorities did not act then perhaps Council could develop lighting for the river that complied with national and international marine laws.
- This came up during discussion of river users and safety for users at night given some vessels were not lit
- This led to a recommendation that Council consider undertaking this as an initiative

*11. Implement stricter management of acceptable commercial uses of river and assume control of commercial leases/uses on river including all recreational rentals, house boat rentals etc.*

- This discussion arose because the jury felt that there should be control of people who had leases for an “acceptable commercial use” and who were then subletting to other people/ businesses for commercial uses unrelated to the original lease
- The jury thought that there should be clearly defined areas with physical markers to define physical areas of jetty lease commercial operations. This was to demonstrate where commercial operations area encroaching on public land, to make it easier to police.
- The jury thought that much stricter of control of where these businesses operate was required.

*12. Determine a cap and locations (based on the Noosa River Plan evidence base) for live-a-boards allowing them to continue as long as they comply with guidelines, permits and operate on a user pays basis noting that failure to comply to result in lease being terminated.*

- The jury thought that many of the current LOBs were not complying with legislation and they thought that this should be rectified.
- There were jurors who thought that some LOBs contributed to the local economy
- There was discussion about the eyesore nature of the LOBs and that moving them to where they were less visible and away from busy, prime locations , was a possibility – creation of specific zones for LOBs.
- The jury were clear that non-compliance with regulations would result in the removal of a permit. This example may make other LOB owners improve their compliance