

YOUR REF: Aquaculture Review
OUR REF: D#427562

28 August 2014

Aquaculture Review
Queensland Competition Authority
GPO BOX 2257
BRISBANE QLD 4001

aquaculture@qca.org.au

Attention Alex Dobes

Dear Sir / Madam

**SUBMISSION ON QCA DRAFT REPORT
AQUACULTURE REGULATION IN QUEENSLAND**

Douglas Shire Council takes this opportunity to lodge the following submission in respect to the Authority's Draft Report, Aquaculture Regulation in Queensland. Council considered the report at its Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 26 August 2014.

The Douglas Shire is an environmentally unique Shire embracing two World Heritage Areas. Approximately 85% of the Shire is included in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area or National Park and a significant part of the Shire's coastline and offshore Islands are contained in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The Shire's economic base has significant reliance on the tourism industry focussed around the natural World Heritage Areas and the use of rural land for sugar cane production.

The Douglas Shire Planning Scheme 2006 includes the roads and adjacent waterways and regulates the development of Aquaculture in the Shire. The Scheme defines aquaculture as the following.

"Aquaculture

Means cultivating or holding marine, estuarine or freshwater organisms, other than molluscs, in ponds or enclosures and, being:

- . Aquaculture (minor) where activities involve fresh water Aquaculture in tanks or ponds with a production area less than 5 hectares and no offsite discharge to natural waters;*
- or*
- . Aquaculture (major) where activities are other than defined as minor."*

The Planning Scheme divides the shire into six Localities and these are further mapped into Planning Areas (zones). In all Localities, except the Settlement Areas North of the Daintree River (SANDR) Locality and the Rural Area and Rural Settlement Locality, the development of Aquaculture is an impact assessable (inconsistent) development.

An impact assessable (inconsistent) development is a use identified by the Scheme that is not considered to be consistent with achieving ecological sustainability or the Desired environmental Outcomes for the Shire in that particular Planning Area and Locality.

In the Settlement Areas North of the Daintree River (SANDR) Locality and the Rural Area and Rural Settlement Locality the Scheme also identifies that the use is impact assessable (inconsistent) in all Planning Areas of these two localities except for the Rural Planning Area. In the SANDR Locality anywhere other than in the Degarra / Bloomfield area the use is also impact assessable (inconsistent).

The majority of the Shire's coastline is buffered from the Rural Planning Area by Conservation Planning Area and should therefore be protected from aquaculture developments. Some river systems, such as the southern banks of the Daintree River, the Mossman and Mowbray Rivers and part of Hartley's Creek have frontage to Rural Planning Area or Esplanade for which aquaculture could be developed. While the use remains as assessable development under the Planning Scheme Council can in due course consider and approve developments subject to conditions that consider environmental impacts.

Concern would be raised should the State seek to make certain aquaculture exempt development exempt under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 or regulate solely via a State Code under the Sustainable Planning Regulation that does not adequately take into account Council's unique environmental concerns. Provided the State maintains consultation with local government for the development of local codes and local aquaculture areas these considerations should be sufficient. Council needs to remain vigilant to this issue and stay abreast of issues raised by the State agencies and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park agency.

There would also need for regard to be given to the impact of future areas identified for aquaculture that may impact on the extent of land under cane production and the subsequent productivity of the local agricultural industry.

Should you require further assistance on this matter please contact Jenny Elphinstone by telephone on (07) 4099 9482 or by email on jenny.elphinstone@douglas.qld.gov.au .

Yours faithfully



Linda Cardew
Chief Executive Officer