

Environmental Protection (Water) Amendment Policy (No. 1) 2014

Explanatory notes for SL 2014 No. 283

made under the

Environmental Protection Act 1994

General outline

Short title

Environmental Protection (Water) Amendment Policy (No. 1) 2014

Authorising law

Sections 26 and 33 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (the Act)

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The objective of the *Environmental Protection (Water) Amendment Policy (No. 1) 2014* (Amendment Policy) is to amend the *Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009* (Environmental Protection Water Policy) to establish environmental values and water quality objectives for the waters of the Barron River, Boyne River, Calliope River, Curtis Island, Daintree River, Herbert River, Hinchinbrook Island, Johnstone River, Mossman River, Mulgrave River, Murray River, Russell River, Shoalwater Creek, Styx River, Tully River and Water Park Creek basins and adjacent Great Barrier Reef coastal waters.

Achievement of policy objectives

The Environmental Protection Water Policy provides a framework for identifying environmental values and water quality objectives for specific waters through the development of documents which are listed in schedule 1 of the Environmental Protection Water Policy.

The Amendment Policy achieves the objective of establishing environmental values and water quality objectives for waters of the Barron River, Boyne River, Calliope River, Curtis Island, Daintree River, Herbert River, Hinchinbrook Island, Johnstone River, Mossman River, Mulgrave River, Murray River, Russell River, Shoalwater Creek, Styx River, Tully River and Water Park Creek basins and adjacent Great Barrier Reef coastal waters by listing these documents in schedule 1 of the Environmental Protection Water Policy.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

The Amendment Policy is consistent with the objectives of the Act. The Amendment Policy helps to achieve the objectives of the Act by establishing environmental values and water quality objectives to enhance or protect the environmental values for waters in Queensland.

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

The Amendment Policy is consistent with the policy objectives of other legislation.

Benefits and costs of implementation

The Environmental Protection Water Policy sets goals and objectives but does not include any regulatory provisions for not meeting the objectives. However, management of water quality with a goal of achieving the water quality objectives would provide ecosystem health and socio-economic benefits; for example protecting aquatic ecosystems, protection of water quality for primary industries and fisheries, protecting primary and secondary recreation and aesthetic amenity and cultural and spiritual values.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The Amendment Policy is consistent with fundamental legislative principles.

Consultation

In identifying local environmental values and water quality objectives, extensive industry, community and government consultation was undertaken with Wet Tropics (Mossman to Ingham) and Capricorn (Rockhampton and Yeppoon) and Curtis Coasts (Gladstone and Calliope) local communities. Consultation was undertaken over three rounds from April 2011 to September 2014.

The process included a series of stakeholder and community workshops and meetings across each region. The draft values and objectives, associated technical reports and a socio-economic assessment report were also released for public review and submissions.

There was general support for the development of environmental values and water quality objectives to inform the future management of the waters of the Wet Tropics and Capricorn and Curtis Coasts catchments and adjacent Great Barrier Reef coastal waters. All issues raised in submissions were considered and addressed where relevant.

In response to submissions, the environmental values and water quality objectives were amended for a number of catchments and coastal waters, including Gladstone Harbour and estuaries, to reflect stakeholder comments and the results of further analysis of additional water quality monitoring data provided by local stakeholders.