Dear Sir / Madam

Submission on the draft Marine-based Industry Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the abovementioned Marine-based Industry Policy. Council provides the following comments for your consideration.

As you would be aware, the White Paper for a new planning system for NSW was recently released and placed on exhibition. This draft policy should consider the context of the new planning system. The objectives of the draft Marine-based Industry Policy should have been incorporated into the new planning system, or incorporate the objectives of the White Paper into the policy.

Recently the State Government withdrew the NSW Sea Level Rise Policy Statement. As identified in the Marine-based Industry Policy, the policy aims to ensure that the hazards associated with climate change and sea level rise are taken into account. Therefore there is a contradiction; and the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DOPI) need to clarify their stance and amend the draft policy accordingly.

It is of concern that the policy allows ancillary dwellings for security or a manager’s quarters. Stringent controls and standards are needed to regulate the amount of ancillary dwellings and quarters that can establish along the local waterways. There are a number of concerns regarding the impact of living along waterways, including risks from flooding, effluent disposal and climate change.

As identified in the policy, marine based industry is to utilise the Working Waterfront (IN4) and Working Waterway (W3) zones of the Standard Instrument LEP. It is unclear how these recommendations fit into the proposed White Paper zone changes. DOPI should provide an explanation to councils about how the policy is to be applied within the new planning system.

It would be appreciated if DOPI could advise as to whether there is any funding available for councils to undertake the strategic planning exercise mentioned in the policy. Due to the existing workload, Council would have limited staff resources available to make the Development Control Plan (DCP) and Local Environment Plan (LEP) amendments and undertake the planning exercise. As you would understand, preparing DCPs with suitable
local controls for marine-based industry involves a considerable amount of work. Ideally this strategic planning exercise would be undertaken by DOPI. The exercise would then identify all of the suitable areas along the Far North Coast and Mid North Coast in one document. This would allow prospective industry to choose an area most suited for their business, and the document would be a ‘one stop shop’ per se.

Further clarification is sought as to why marine-based industry should not occur on sites that contain any heritage item identified in a LEP. By imposing this restriction, the adaptive reuse of existing waterfront heritage items (e.g. wharfs, slipways) will be restricted. In some instances, foreshore areas are being revitalised by use of private marinas and this restriction may influence whether foreshore areas with heritage items continue to be revitalised.

A number of minor amendments are required to Appendix 1 of the policy, under the Manning River (Harrington entrance) section. The changes include correcting the spelling of Farquhar and consulting with Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) staff as to the location of the upper navigation limit of the Manning River. Finally, Council agrees that marine-based industry should be clustered to contain environmental impacts.

Again, thank you for providing Council with the opportunity to comment on the draft policy. We hope that in finalising the Marine-based Industry Policy you will take into consideration our concerns and suggestions for regional NSW and the Greater Taree local government area.

Yours faithfully

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