



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove

Ref: CTS 03147/11

21 MAR 2011

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 17 February 2011 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1608-11 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The fishing huts referred to in the petition are currently located on three different tenures of public land; National Park under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, unallocated State land which is intended to be added to the protected area estate, and Recreation Reserves under the trusteeship of the Hinchinbrook Shire Council.

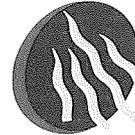
The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has given careful and due consideration to all of the issues associated with the fishing huts located on public land.

DERM has advised me that they are illegal and they also:

- reduce amenity and general public access to the area.
- create potential liability issues for the State
- have major impacts on coastal processes including increased erosion surrounding the structures
- increase the destruction of marine plants and have lead to other unlawful coastal activities such as excavations, and
- can help to create the view that such unauthorised occupation is acceptable and can be undertaken without regard for the law and the use of these areas by other members of the community

However, I also recognise that many of these structures have existed for some time and that there is a strong cultural affinity with them by some members of the local community.

Also, the council has expressed concerns regarding the removal of the huts on their Reserve.



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Environment
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I understand that Cyclone Yasi caused considerable destruction in the Halifax Bay area and this led to a delay in the department's action to commence the process for the removal of the structures.

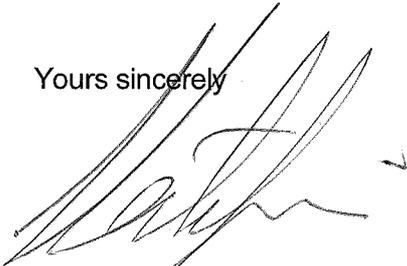
Given the circumstances, I am willing to postpone the removal of the huts from all tenures for a period of 12 months, whilst further discussion takes place between my department and the council.

However, I am committed to protecting the environmental values of the National Park and the transfer of unallocated State land to protected estate. I also believe that the Council has the opportunity to open their Reserves for fishing, camping and other lawful recreational activities to the benefit and enjoyment of all members of the community and I encourage them to do so.

The department's Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service will be working with the council over the coming months on the future management arrangements for the National Park (including land to be transferred to National Park) and the Recreation Reserves with the aim of ensuring appropriate community access, camping and day use facilities are available to all members of the community.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Kev Allan, Regional Manager, Land Services of the department on telephone 4222 5588.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Jones', written over the 'Yours sincerely' text.

Kate Jones MP
Minister for Environment and Resource Management