



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove



**Queensland
Government**

Ref: CTS 04162/11

**Minister for Environment
and Resource Management**

06 APR 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 11 March 2011 to the Honourable Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Energy and Water Utilities enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1648-11 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. I am pleased to respond to this Petition as the matter raised falls within my portfolio responsibilities and I refer to my response to previous Petition No. 1608-11.

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 led 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.

Level 13
400 George Street Brisbane Qld 4000
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3239 0844
Facsimile +61 7 3227 6309
Email derm@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.derm.qld.gov.au

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 that 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



Kate Jones MP
Minister for Environment and Resource Management