

31st August 2014

Mr Daryl Hitzman
CEO
Moreton Bay Regional Council
PO Box 159
Caboolture Qld 4510



www.biepa.org
Bribie Island Environmental
Protection Association Inc

Dear Mr Hitzman

BIEPA Submission re DRAFT - 2014 MBRC Planning Scheme

Please find attached BIEPA's addendum to the Submission made by the Moreton Bay Eco-Alliance (MBEA) who submitted on behalf of member groups across the Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC) region. This alliance of groups is collaborating to protect and conserve what remains of the region's natural assets in order to ensure a safe and healthy lifestyle for all residents, not only in the present but into the future.

BIEPA members have engaged MBRC staff to explain some aspects of the Draft and have endeavoured to navigate the huge document to be able to make specific comments and recommendations which reflect BIEPA's mandate and past experience with government policies and legislation and their interpretation and implementation which often varies between the community as well as by different MBRC departmental staff.

BIEPA was disappointed that MBRC did not consider extending the consultation period; due date for submissions (by two months); and BIEPA's suggestions for a more appropriate, fair and comprehensive public consultation process - that should aim to engage all residents of the region, so that the communities' true values and aspirations for the future of the region can be reflected fully in the Planning Scheme.

We trust that the next round of public consultation on the Draft will provide for more engagement of the public.

BIEPA respectfully thanks you for this opportunity to make comment.

Yours sincerely

Diane Oxenford
Secretary
for BIEPA Management Committee

cc. MBEA

DRAFT - 2014 MBRC Planning Scheme**SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS****by****BRIBIE ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ASSOCIATION INC.**

The Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association (BIEPA) has been actively promoting the concept of Bribie Island as a fauna and flora sanctuary and working to protect the fragile ecosystems upon which this depends, for thirty-six (36) years. That is: *Caring for our special habitat and its residents*. BIEPA enjoys a credible reputation with its membership and other organizations that spreads beyond Bribie Island and Australia as well as agencies within all levels of government.

BIEPA recognizes the pressures of development on the Island. However, Bribie Island is a sand island with fresh water aquifers which sustain unique vegetation and wildlife.

Bribie Island is the only island in Moreton Bay connected to the mainland by a bridge. This increased accessibility exposes the uniqueness and fragility of the Island to the degrading effects of untempered and inappropriate development and untempered and inappropriate recreational activities.

Much of Bribie Island's fragile ecosystems, marine and terrestrial, are protected by The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (migratory birds and their habitat); The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) (including the endangered migratory marine turtles and habitat); the designation of Moreton Bay Marine Park of which the Pumicestone Passage is a part; and National Park status. There is also Federal and State government legislation and policy to ensure that these natural assets remain in tact for present and future generations. It appears that the Draft Planning Scheme does not reference these protective treaties and legislations. And, by not referencing them, any development or activity proposed for Bribie Island's protected natural assets, would not consider options for protecting and conserving these assets. (One example BIEPA notes is the Banksia Beach borefields, where normal environmental assessments and base line studies were not carried out before the project proceeded. ~\$70 million was wasted and the surrounding aquifer systems were exposed to possible long term degradation which would have negatively impacted the dependent fragile flora and fauna.)

Bribie's Island's marine turtles are listed Number 1 in the MBRC's Priority Species List. Without policies to protect the endangered nesting turtles and their habitat, extreme degradation of the habitat has already occurred. It appears, in the past, on-ground staff and their directors were ignorant of the protections and so made no reference to them before bulldozing turtle nesting habitat - sometimes during the nesting season. It is important that all these protections are included in appropriate sections of the Planning Scheme, so that they can be referenced when anything is proposed which would impact protected flora and fauna - in this instance, Bribie Island's endangered nesting turtles.

BIEPA recommends abolishing policy allowing for dogs to be off-leash on Bribie Island's Ramsar and CMS protected foreshore. At present off-leash dogs are allowed from Red Beach to Woorim - some of that is in a Conservation Park. The MBRC Planning Scheme must include zoning of dedicated, fenced areas for dog recreation and socialization.

Similarly, resident and migratory birds from the Arctic and their habitat are protected and must be protected from dogs and citizens entering their habitat while on Bribie Island.

There appears to be no budget planned to ensure council staff are available to ensure citizens do not interfere with protected flora and fauna species.

Bribie Island still has some of the last remaining pockets of Wallum heath in SE Queensland, which is habitat for threatened and endangered frog species and other wildlife. Again, there is no policy nor budget to protect these diminishing natural assets. Indeed changes are made to zoning and legislation at political whims without consultation with the public.

Similarly, the Moreton Bay region has fast diminishing melaleuca (paperbark) forests being cleared for development. These coastal paperbarks filter water before it reaches the sea. Already Moreton Bay and Pumicestone Passage are failing the Healthy Waterways annual Report Card.

Bribie Island, geologically and geographically remains apart from the mainland and any Planning Scheme must take into account the unique and fragile ecosystems that ensure the Island's stability.

The MBRC 2014 Planning Scheme must ensure that all environmental protections, included in international treaties, federal and state legislation, are referenced when any development is being considered on Bribie Island.

It is important that the Woorim foreshore and associated Declared Erosion Control Zones be changed from "Recreation and Open Space" to "Environmental Management and Conservation". Unless this is done, there will be continued degradation of this foreshore that is protected under the international conventions. Bribie Island's eastern dune system and erosion control zones must be protected from pedestrian traffic to maintain stability and integrity of this system that is a protection against sea inundation. Until this is included in the Planning Scheme, some community members and some council staff will continue to encourage recreation on and clearing of the protective dune system.

BIEPA recommends that MBRC departments employ the expertise of the council's Environment Department so that any policy specific to environmental issues, must be referenced.

Finally, in the 21st Century, it is not prudent for governments to be promoting population growth and planning to accommodate population growth. MBRC's Draft Planning Scheme predicts the region will continue as the fastest growing in Australia. It would be more visionary to update the plan to curtail this predicted growth and rather protect, maintain and invest in existing infrastructure, natural assets and community values.