



# Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy

## *Consultation Report*

December 2016

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# Abbreviations

<b>AMC</b>	<b>Australian Maritime College (University of Tasmania)</b>
<b>GCWA</b>	<b>Gold Coast Waterways Authority</b>
<b>MP(s)</b>	<b>Member of Parliament (Queensland)</b>
<b>MSQ</b>	<b>Maritime Safety Queensland</b>
<b>PWC</b>	<b>Personal water craft</b>
<b>QBFP</b>	<b>Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol</b>
<b>QPS</b>	<b>Queensland Police Service</b>
<b>SBMS</b>	<b>Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy (also “Strategy”)</b>
<b>TOMSA</b>	<b>Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act</b>
<b>TMR</b>	<b>Department of Transport and Main Roads</b>

# Executive Summary

This report documents the public response to GCWA's invitation to provide comments on the draft Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy. The Strategy was prepared in response to the Speed Limits Review consultation undertaken in 2014. Accordingly, it's not surprising that many of the views represented here reflect those put forward in 2014, whether in agreement with components of the Strategy or offering alternatives considered in preparing the Strategy. Overall, both the content and relative degrees of agreement, and disagreement, are similar to the 2014 outcome and, indeed, to the 2007 review conducted by MSQ. However, as the Strategy did propose some fundamental changes that weren't put forward in 2014 (but were to some extent in 2007), the outcomes also expand the previous results in some dimensions.

Collectively, this report and the one prepared in 2014 include the views of over 2,200 individuals, a very impressive outcome. This is due in part to a relatively low overlap between the two exercises, with about 2/3 of the respondents to this consultation 'new' to the process. The areas of strongest consensus from this consultation are:

- Keep it simple – Retain a 3-zone system (80%)
- Focus on user behaviour (76%) – varying opinions about the role of Education vs. Enforcement
- Promote a wash focus (70%)
- Remove unnecessary 6-knot areas (59%)
- Do something – Get on with it

The last point wasn't a survey question, thus the lack of a rating, but it was nevertheless abundantly evident in the comments, as was the view that there isn't a need for change – leave things alone. The survey results can be considered 'robust' in the sense that there is good representation of a spectrum of views, reflecting both the diversity within the community and their appreciation for the complexity of the issue. The challenge is perhaps best summed up by one of the 2,000+ comments submitted:

*"Unfortunately, an irresponsible minority creates the need for objective speed limits rather than subjective wash limitations. Accordingly, given the options I support enforceable speed based restrictions in areas of congestion and proximity to property and moored vessels even though this results in sub-optimal outcomes in some circumstances."*

The Speed Limits Review examined how speed limits had been used as a tool historically to manage Gold Coast waterways. The Strategy proposed some changes, based on the public consultation, as well as consideration of GCWA's purpose under its Act and the translation of that document into the Waterways Management Strategy. The quote above reflects the importance of behaviour to waterways management outcomes. The comments in the appendices reflect a community appreciation of the complexities of wash, including vessel design, operation and environmental conditions, as well as issues related to skill, compliance and enforcement. There is overwhelming support for a simple system, but that means a potentially crude fit given the diverse nature of Gold Coast waterways.

The pages that follow present the consultation results, summarising both the online survey outcomes and the considerable narrative comments provided by respondents. The appendices provide a complete record of both the detailed survey response and the comments, as well as other submissions received by email, etc., along with responses that offer clarification and/or explanation of various matters related to the Strategy and to alternatives proposed by correspondents.

While there are some areas of agreement, as noted above, a lot of the results reflect nearly evenly divided community opinions. Introducing more complex rules, that cater for different local circumstances, might improve consensus, but at the expense of violation the largest area of consensus – KISS. In addition, this consensus is well founded in an awareness that clarity is integral to compliance and all the more important in our waterways given their popularity as a tourism destination.

This report does not, and is not intended to, provide an 'answer'. Rather, it documents GCWA's efforts to consult the community and the considerable response that generated. This report will support and guide GCWA's subsequent decision making process.

# Community engagement

Consultation for the Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy ([Appendix A](#)) included:

- Launched 21 October (email ~2,500 subscribers – see [Appendix B](#))
- Consultation web-page hosting relevant documents and links to survey and interactive map
- Online survey
- Interactive map
- Focused emails to Councillors, MPs, groups, asking them to help spread the word
- Email reminder 7 November (travel time stats)
- Email reminder 16 November (interactive map video)
- Email reminder 29 November (Silent majority – only sent to stakeholders that had not done a survey)
- Facebook – 4 posts
- Advertisement - GC Sun
- Coverage in GC Bulletin, Channel 7 + 9 local news
- Consultation formally closed 04 December following advice to the GCWA Board (~45-days)

The survey response by 1,267 individuals ([Appendix C](#)) is ~10% below the unprecedented success of the 2014 Speed Limits Review survey, but this is still excellent relative to other previous consultation exercises. The Interactive Map had a very low participation rate, only ~10% of the respondents contributing to the 2014 interactive map. This is disappointing, as the map included a number of improvements.

The reasons for the low response rates relative to 2014, on both the survey and the map, are not clear. Direct email notification was used for both projects, but in 2014 there were only ~700 registered subscribers, compared to ~2,500 for this review. In 2014 the timing did allow for promotion at the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show; advertisements were placed in the Gold Coast Bulletin, rather than the Gold Coast Sun; and some FaceBook advertising was purchased.

An interesting statistic from the survey results is that more than half of the respondents are ‘new’ – not registered stakeholders and did not respond to the 2014 review. So, the low response is attributable to inaction by registered stakeholders. Despite this, the consultation effort successfully reached a broad audience, leading to input from ~2,200 individuals across both consultations on this topic.

## Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy

The 20-page Strategy provided a relatively concise presentation of principles and actions that were developed in response to the 2014 Speed Limits Review. This document was initially prepared as a “Proposed Response”, but release was delayed, initially because an election was declared, with subsequent delays related to the independent review of the Labrador Channel Extension project. Among the actions were a number of changes to existing speed limits, which were summarised on a series of maps (with more detail available through the interactive map). About 65% of the survey respondents indicate they had read the Strategy.

## Australian Maritime College Report

The Strategy was supported by a *Vessel Wave Wake Report* prepared for GCWA by the Australian Maritime College (AMC). The report provides data on the modelled wash characteristics of a number of different vessel types. The report confirms that there is a reasonable evidentiary basis for the changes proposed in the Strategy to the variable speed limit, notably a reduced vessel length (from 8.0m to 6.5m).

## Survey

The on-line survey included a series of questions based on the Strategy. The survey was constructed so that participants did not have to have read the Strategy. Key elements of the Strategy were summarised on the survey ‘pages’ to provide essential information. The questions were organised in a series of pages

that were titled with the following themes:

1. Introduction
2. Speed limit zones
3. Vessel wake and wash
4. Broadwater – Two-channel strategy
5. Managing the impacts of changes to the Yellow zone
6. Managing activities designed to enhance wash
7. Proposed mapped changes to speed limits
8. Consultation and decision-making process

On average, participants took ~22 minutes to complete the survey; the median time was ~16 minutes. The attrition rate was slightly higher than it was in 2014, with 72% of those that began the survey completing it, compared to 81% in 2014. Of those who didn't complete the survey, about 1/3 (9%) only completed the first page. It is hard to imagine why respondents would have stopped at this stage. However, there was a similar effect in 2014, with ~11%, half of those that didn't complete the full survey, dropping out after page 2 (demographics).

About one-half completed the first three pages, but not page four. This page had a question where respondents had to rate all of the statements in a list. Three stakeholders contacted GCWA during the consultation to report that they were unable to move past this page. All three confirmed that the issue was that they had not understood the instruction to answer all of the statements and they had no issues finishing the survey once they had responded appropriately to that question. This may be the reason for the relatively large component of attrition at this page on the survey. There were reports from three users – lower response rates on questions later in the survey – most people completed the entire survey.

The survey pages included 12 opportunities for respondents to leave narrative comments and, as in 2014, the community provided a robust response. The analysis in the main body of this report includes consideration of the comments received and the full comments are provided in [Appendix D](#).

## Interactive map

In 2014 the Interactive map was a relatively novel attempt to provide a more collaborative consultation experience. In 2016 there was still relatively few examples of this application of GIS (geographic information systems), but progress was evident in the form of a “Crowd Source Polling” template, which was utilised for this project. Enhancements in the revised map included touch-screen access, allowing use on mobile phones and tablets. This was a desirable feature in 2014, but the vendor was unable to deliver. The current map app also included a sign-in function, tied to GCWA's new email manager database, but also with options to use existing Gmail or Microsoft credentials. In 2014 a different ‘silent’ method – IP logging – was used to log the identify of participants so as to avoid ‘ballot box stuffing’. The addition of a sign-in function was a desirable upgrade in terms of providing a more secure way of ensuring one-vote per user, but it may, or may not have been a barrier that contributed to the low participation rate. As participation was also low on the online survey, despite a relatively higher effort to solicit comments, there are probably other factors, such as possibly ‘consultation fatigue’ or time of year (Oct/Nov versus May).

The few comments received will be of some value and it is possible that a much higher number of people looked at the map to get more information on the proposed changes – they just didn't sign-in and leave comments. There was certainly very positive feedback received about the quality of the map app and its value as a tool. The initiative will be useful for communicating speed limits, including any proposed changes, supporting the educational components of the Strategy. The development work also supports the GCWA ‘SWIM’ project (Smart Waterways Information Management). However, the relatively low response through the map means the information is of limited value in terms of gauging public reaction to the proposed changes. Fortunately, the survey included questions on the major changes, so there is data available to support an analysis. The map results will be considered in further planning and refinement of any changes that may be implemented but due to the relatively low response, this report does not provide any further discussion of the responses received through the map.

## Advertisements and outlets

As discussed above, a combination of approaches was used to reach the community, including advertisements in the Gold Coast Sun, electronic direct mail, the GCWA website and FaceBook page, emails to key organisations and elected members, and the provision of hard copies of the Strategy and survey either by post or over the counter, upon request. Over 50 individuals initiated contact with GCWA by email, phone, post or in person and all of these received individual responses. The queries and responses, absent identifying information as appropriate, are provided in [Appendix E](#).

## Response demographics

The 2014 survey included a number of questions (1-15) requesting demographic information, mirroring the Waterways Management Strategy survey consultation. The online survey for the Strategy did not include demographic questions, in part to reduce the length of the survey and time required to complete, but also on the assumption that the respondents were likely to be mainly 'existing' stakeholders, allowing the use of previously collected demographic information, as necessary. As discussed above, this was not the case, with an unexpected majority of respondents being 'new' stakeholders. As such, demographic profiling is not possible. However, there is nothing to suggest that the response is in any way skewed by disproportionate representation of any demographic.

This is perhaps most evident in the results of the question regarding proposed changes in the Clear Island Waters area. This proposal attracted concern from local residents, who reached out to the local Councillor and MP and generated local TV and newspaper coverage. However, there is a relatively low survey response opposing this proposal, so the enhanced interest does not appear to have generated a large response by local residents, or, if it did, the response was not sufficient to skew the results in opposition to the proposal. It should be noted that one resident did contact GCWA supporting the proposal, so this outcome may also reflect divided community views or less opposition than might be suggested by the media coverage and political interest.

# Response to key themes

The survey included a total of 31 questions, significantly shorter than the 2014 survey (63 questions, although 15 of those were concerned with demographics). As noted above, the questions were organised on 8 pages, each focused on a different theme. The discussion that follows uses this organisation).

Each question only appears once, in a single theme. For convenience, the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” scores have been combined below into “Agree” – similarly for the “Disagree”. The more complete breakdown for each question can be accessed in the [Appendix C](#). The individual question numbers are provided beneath each theme sub-headings for convenient cross-referencing.

Respondents provided a number of comments. As appropriate the analysis that follows summarises key themes from the comments. The complete comments are included in the [Appendix D](#). Some comments address multiple issues. Generally, comments are included with the most relevant theme, but in some cases they may be included in multiple themes.

Queries and comments were also received by email and other channels besides the online survey. These are provided in [Appendix E](#) and are considered as part of the process of preparing the analysis that follows. All of the comments in the appendices are unedited, except as necessary to remove identifying information such as a name or phone number.

## Introduction

(Questions: 1-5)

As noted above, this survey did not request demographic information consistent with the 2014 review and the 2013 consultation on the Waterways Management Strategy. However, the questions on this page were included to characterise the relative familiarity of respondents with previous initiatives and information related to this consultation, as reflected below.

Yes	No	Unsure	Question
63%	31%	6%	Have you read the Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy ("Strategy")?
28%	57%	15%	Did you respond to the 2014 survey for the Speed Limits Review?
40%	48%	12%	Did you read the Consultation Report that was produced from that survey?
40%	51%	8%	Have you read the Australian Maritime College (AMC) report for the Strategy?
--	--	--	Please provide a valid email address

Most of the respondents indicated they had read the Strategy. No attempt was made on the main web page for the consultation, or in the initial email invitation, to summarise the elements of the Strategy. However, the survey did include background information on key points such that it would be possible to answer the survey without having read the Strategy and this information was provided in the email invitation and at the beginning of the online survey.

While it is encouraging that most respondents read the Strategy, the relatively low involvement in the 2014 review is noteworthy. This is consistent with the discussion earlier about the majority of respondents being 'new'. This gives rise to at least two key issues.

One is the low response from those that have previously shown an interest in this issue. One suggested reason is 'consultation fatigue' – that the lack of action/outcomes from previous consultation that they contributed to has led to frustration and/or apathy. This is a concern for GCWA and highlights a need to progress this consultation to the outcome stage.

The second is that the relatively high influx of new stakeholders is encouraging in terms of GCWA's ability to grow the audience, but is also challenging strategically. A rapidly shifting stakeholder base is a potential concern in terms of communication, continuity, etc. This is a potentially relevant factor in the context of Speed and Behaviour, notably in regards to both the need for ongoing education and the challenges in maintain a connection to the right audience.

Respondents were required to provide a valid email address, to help ensure we only got one response per person. There were ~25 incidents of duplicate email addresses. In all case there were only two repetitions, so this does not appear to be any concerted attempt at 'ballot box stuffing'. A quick scan did not indicate a high incidence of 'suspect' email addresses. As users were only able to provide one response per device (e.g. computer, phone, etc.) it would have been difficult to try to vote multiple times by making up random email addresses. The results that follow include all responses, with no attempt to filter out the few duplicates or potentially invalid email addresses.

## Speed limit zones

(Questions: 6-12)

The first four rows of the table below are sorted by relative consensus (high to low). The final rows, for the last two questions, are presented separately as they did not utilise the agree/disagree format, so the aggregate values have different column values.

Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Question
80%	16%	4%	Retain a 3-zone approach (as opposed to introducing a fourth or fifth speed zone)
59%	32%	9%	Remove existing 6-knot (Red) areas if safety concerns arising from natural characteristics of the waterway aren't evident, such as sharp bends, shoaling, rock bars and/or narrow channels.
50%	43%	7%	Reduce the vessel length in the Yellow (variable) zone
44%	49%	7%	Reduce the maximum speed in the Yellow (variable) zone
<8m	8m	Other	
49%	30%	21%	The 'right' vessel length for the Yellow zone is
<40 k	40 knots	Other	
62%	32%	7%	The 'right' speed for shorter vessels in the Yellow zone is

There was very strong support for retaining a 3-zone system, 'keeping it simple'. This was anticipated, as the Strategy adopts this approach based on the 2014 community response.

There is relatively strong support for removing "unnecessary" 6-knot areas. This result is perhaps a bit lower than anticipated, however, the "Strongly Agree" response is substantial, double the 'Strongly Disagree'. A few comments were received during the consultation criticising the phrasing of this question, with two suggestions that there was a 'double negative'. While the wording could be improved, it does not present a double negative. However, simpler, clearer wording may have provided a higher level of agreement, consistent with expectations arising from the 2014 consultation.

Regarding a reduced vessel length in the Yellow zone, more people agree than disagree, but the margin is relatively small. However, less than 1/3 of the respondents to the follow-up question nominated the current length of 8m as the right or preferred length. Of the 21% in the 'other' category, most of these supported a single speed for all vessels (comprising 15% of overall respondents). The remainder left narrative comments (see appendix). The 66 comments included the following suggestions:

- Various lengths from 3.2 – 12m
- Variable based on location, e.g. 4m in Clear Island Waters
- Based on number of vessels – target the largest concentration of vessels that produce wake
- Based on hull configuration, e.g. exclude pontoon boats
- Based on wash, e.g. <200mm stern wash
- Based on vessel mass
- Consider manoeuvrability as well as wake
- Let the skipper decide / be responsible
- If the length is reduced, then also prohibit activities such as wake boarding and water skiing
- No change – keep the current system
- Remove the variable zone – it is too confusing
- Allow small boats, e.g. <4.5m, to go faster in Red zones (6-knot areas)
- Restrict by activity, e.g. free styling, wake surfing, etc. (on plane or no wash)
- Develop and deploy a 'dangerous wash' indicator buoy to give operators immediate feedback.

The question of a reduced speed in the yellow zone had similar results, except that the majority disagreed. Despite this reversal, the follow up question had the same result, with only 1/3 supporting the current 40-knot speed. The key difference here is a higher level of support (62%) for speeds less than 40-

knots. So, this question would appear to provide relatively clearer direction. However, while you might anticipate a preference towards a speed slower than 40, but faster than 25, there was actually a very strong support for a speed slower than 25-knots (23%). There were 82 narrative comments provided for this question, which included these suggestions:

- 5, 6, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 knots
- Slow or fast determined by whether the vessel can produce 'no wash' (*minimum wash?*)
- No damaging wash (including, wildlife, passive watercraft, foreshores)
- Skipper's discretion
- Unlimited <3m (5m) / 3-6.5m 25-knots (*presumably 6-knots for over 6.5m*)
- Variable based on conditions (*e.g. congestion?*)
- No change – keep the current system
- Doesn't matter as nobody complies
- Enforce based on wash and noise
- Need a different speed for ski zones to allow barefoot skiing

In addition to the two opportunities discussed above to leave comments about the 'right' speed and/or vessel length in the Yellow zone, there was a separate opportunity at the conclusion of this page to provide any additional feedback regarding speed limit zones. This attracted 468 comments, the single largest set of comments for the survey. Highlights include:

#### *Behaviour / Compliance / Enforcement*

- Non-compliance is an issue / Need more enforcement, cameras, signage etc.
- Over-use of 6-knot areas has bred disrespect and non-compliance
- Most boat drivers don't know what 6-knots is
- Big boats should require different licensing/training – like a B-double on the road

#### *Issues / Vessels / Activities*

- Congestion is the issue – slower limits reduce approach speed, increase reaction time
- Lack of judgement is the issue
- Night time is an issue – beacons/lights need an upgrade – City lights, cars at Spit, obscure
- Kids in tinnies are an issue / Should need a licence
- PWCs and IRBs make less wash, but are more prone to hoon
- Jet skis – Ban them / classify as over 8m / separate speed limits / 40-knots and above only
- Jet pleasure boat only in channels / ban them
- More water skiing zones (e.g. Clarence River) / Exclude wake boats
- Surfers in the Seaway are a problem
- Waterways normally not congested and low incident rate – what's the problem?
- Tourism industry is important, don't impact it
- Compensation for – Boat owners 6.5-8m / Residents subject to erosion
- Some boats can't be controlled at slow speeds

#### *Regulatory approaches*

- Same speed for all vessels; too confusing
- Time-based speed limits, e.g. 6-knots from 7am to 7pm
- Speed based on proximity to shore
- Boats under 4 / 4.5 / 5m should be able to go 20-knots in 6-knot areas
- 6-knots for safety / "No wash" in other areas – some vessels should be 4-knots
- Bow wave height should be restricted; 6-knots is too fast for some boats
- Restrict wash size as well as speed
- Restrict wash for vessels over 4T
- 6-knots at marinas, etc., otherwise planning or 4-knots, e.g. Hawkesbury River
- "Wake-rate" all vessels (require manufacturers to provide) – Don't penalise efficient designs
- 20-knots everywhere for boats <4m / As is for boats <8m
- Deregulate
- Post hard copies of the new laws to all boat owners in the Gold Coast and Brisbane

### Places

- Crab Island 6-knot area – should be weekends only – stupid rule, get rid of it
- Remove more 6-knot areas and keep the Nerang 40-knots
- Make the channels around Chevron Island one-way
- Need to keep 6-knots in the Coomera as people aren't responsible (could work if they were)
- Make main eastern route (Tiplers / Canaipa) Yellow; Big boats use west route (Main Channel)
- No anchoring in channels
- Yellow zone changes could affect boat ramp parking
- 6-knots in/at/for/near:
  - The Marine Stadium – it's an anchorage
  - South of Wave Break to Sundale Bridge (alt. 8 knots over 8m)
  - Tallebudgera Creek
  - Coomera River above the Santa Barbara boat ramp
  - The Nerang River
  - All waterways surrounded by houses
  - All GC waterways
  - Passive water craft
  - Sensitive shorelines, parks, boat ramps, wildlife
  - People in water – swimmers, snorkelers, divers, etc.
  - Near fishermen (within 100m of lines)
  - All vessels over 8.0m / 10m / 12m /15m
  - public amenity, e.g. noise, property damage, moored vessels

Overall, the comments reflect a good understanding of the complexities regarding the management of wash, including behaviour, vessel characteristics environmental considerations and the challenges related to regulation and enforcement.

However, less evident is an understanding of the rationale for a reduced speed. A number of commenters correctly observed that wash will typically improve with speed (for most vessels). The proposed speed reduction is aimed at addressing the limitations associated with having only two speeds – not as a way to improve or optimise wash. The analogy of trying to operate a road system with only two speeds – 10 and 75 km/h (~6/40-knots) – is illustrative. Having a medium speed of 45 km/h (~25-knots) provides greater flexibility to respond to concerns such as those present in the relatively developed and confined waterways of the Gold Coast. Reducing the speed from 40-knots to 25-knots doesn't improve travel times, but if that change allows some 6-knot areas, such as the Coomera River, to be changed to variable zones, then the travel times are improved – for most vessels (under 6.5m based on the proposal).

An interesting theme was the suggestion that very small vessels (under 3-4m) should be allowed to go faster than 6-knots in the currently designated red areas. The suggestion has merit, but is relatively disruptive in the sense that this designation arises from a statewide gazette that all canals are 6-knots. This sort of change would require either different rules for some/all of the canals on the Gold Coast or a change to the statewide rules.

From the highlights above – which necessarily exclude a number of suggestions regarding particular places and other issues – it should be evident that the respondents hold diverse and often conflicting views. There is no 'one-size fits all', silver bullet solution. The issue is complex and any solution is imperfect. While not captured above explicitly, it should be noted that the comments included support for the proposed changes, often in part and at least occasionally in their entirety.

## Vessel wake and wash

(Questions: 13-14)

Question 13 asked respondents to rate eight different statements regarding vessel wash (agree, unsure, disagree). For each of the three wash messages (No, Optimal, Courteous) there were two questions, one of which was about whether the message promoted good seamanship. The other varied, but was generally aimed at whether the message conveyed the intent/outcome. In the case of “Optimal” wash, the alternative term “Reduce” wash was tested. In the table below these statement and the results have been aggregated for simplicity (full results in [Appendix C](#)). There was also a final question about whether a focus on wash was likely to be effective, as shown below.

Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Question
70%	20%	10%	“Courteous wash” promotes situational awareness / seamanship
70%	20%	10%	“No wash” is commonly understood / promotes seamanship
51%	22%	26%	“Optimal wash” describes planning vessel / seamanship
44%	23%	33%	Promoting a wash focus, while appropriate, isn’t likely to help much

“Courteous wash” and “No wash” got a similar response – a very high level of agreement, a solid minority disagreeing and a relatively low level of uncertainty. “Optimal wash”, associated with the variable speed (Yellow) zone, did achieve majority agreement and a similar level of disagreement as the first two statements, but a much higher level of uncertainty. “No wash” got much better agreement than “Reduce wash”. There were very mixed views regarding the question of whether promoting a wash focus was likely to be effective.

The other question for this topic was an open-ended invitation to provide feedback regarding wash messaging and aligning it to speed limit zones. At 377 responses it was the second highest set of comments. Highlights include:

### *Behaviour/Education*

- Licensing reforms needed – harder, more
- Not enough education
- Cultural values – courtesy, responsibility – aren’t what they used to be
- Lack of concern, awareness (don’t look behind), understanding
- Current rules aren’t understood, despite long history / Change will just create confusion
- Develop a wash ‘pictogram’ – attach to licence, rego, insurance
- Vessels don’t maintain the 30/60m safe distance from other craft, skiers, etc.
- The message is good, but needs education. Little seamanship and courtesy on GC waterways
- An expectation of courtesy and competence on the part of power boaters is unrealistic

### *Complexities*

- Vessel dependent
- My 7.4m boat will make more wash at reduced speeds in Yellow zones than now, on the plane
- Not enforced / High non-compliance / Inadequate penalties
- Some large vessels, but not all, are incapable of producing courteous wash
- Subjective measures not enforceable
- Reducing the speed to 6-knots often has the opposite effect, creating more wash
- We make far more wash at slow speed going in to the tide than planning in a small vessel
- A speed focus doesn’t communicate the possible need to go slower in some instances
- Speed limits reference land, so 6-knots in a 4-knot tide (e.g. Coomera) means 10-knots & wash
- VMR response times and operation will be impacted by proposed Yellow zones in Marne Park
- People don’t understand the impact they have as the wash impact occurs after they have passed
- The faster the boat the smaller the wash
- The other key thing to think about is the start and stopping points of zones.
- Speed may decrease wash, but increase noises, particularly from PWCs and 2-stroke "tinnies"

### *Regulatory approaches*

- Don't call it "Wash", just put up a speed sign instead
- Wash is a better management approach than speed - supports better outcomes
- Wash or speed – Mixing speed and wash messages allows drivers to choose -- problematic
- I live on 6-knot zone and would prefer <8m vessels to plane as this reduces wash and damage
- Rules should be based on speed and wash
- Wash is subjective and hard to measure; Speed is measurable and can be controlled
- Vessels should have a specified "wake height output" at slow and fast speeds
- Accompany the wash tiers with wake measurements to make it enforceable
- Maximum stern wash height 200mm / Use massive signs to measure visible from 200m
- Consider a "size guide", rather than wash message – e.g. "under 1 foot" or "under 2 feet" etc.
- If the wake breaks like a wave it is unacceptable; OK if it rolls – Can photograph and enforce
- Be proactive and tackle "wake rating" with boat builders and retailers creating an industry first
- PWCs <3.5M should be allowed to run just fast enough to plane, but not faster than 12 knots
- No limit on small boats / large boats no wash (over 7, 8m)
- The model of "over 8 metres - under 6 knots seems to work well in other areas.
- Show knots and km on signs – many instruments show km
- The current limits regarding distances is sufficient
- Travel times irrelevant; use shoreline sensitivity and effects on residential revetment walls.

### *Alternative messages*

- "No wash" is the only message
- Instead of "Courteous", how about 'Minimal, minimum or minimise'?
- Replace 6-knot areas with "No wash"
- Boat owners aren't focused enough to analyse optimal and courteous wash
- Maybe change Optimal Wash to Planning Wash and Courteous wash to Reduce wash
- Optimal is unclear. Minimize wash is a better word. Boaties know how to do that.
- Trim boat to minimise wake
- Strong focus/education about achieving and maintaining optimum/appropriate boat trim

While question 13 reflected a high level of agreement about the wash messages – all consistent with seamanship – the comments from question 14 reflect the complexity of the issue, with polar views regarding the pragmatic alternatives and obstacles associated with managing vessel wash. So, there is a relatively clear consensus that vessel wash is relevant (notwithstanding some disagreement, as well as distinctions), but outright disagreement about what to do, including whether to do anything.

It is worth noting that there is considerable support for the use of 6-knots, or slower speeds, or "no wash" more broadly to address issues, notwithstanding agreement about non-compliance, as well as the view that enforcement is the best and only answer. A fundamental component of the Strategy is the observation that this historical approach is problematic and, therefore, alternatives should be considered. As noted in the previous section, there is also support for the approach taken by the Strategy and in some ways that support is more evident in this section, however, there is perhaps also less agreement regarding whether the approach will be effective.

## Broadwater – Two-channel strategy

(Questions: 15-18)

A separate page of the survey was devoted to proposed changes in the Broadwater and this was the first page of the survey to deal with specific geographic changes – how the proposed changes might be applied to the waterways. The separate focus on the Broadwater was driven in part by the lack of understanding, the need for more information, evident in the 2014 survey and the subsequent Independent Review of the Labrador Channel project. The questions sought to measure understanding as well as community views on the merit of the strategy – would it work – and alternatives.

Agree	Disagree	'Unsure'	Question
69%	12%	19%	I (understand) / (don't understand) / (have questions) about the proposal
56%	29%	15%	The proposal will reduce congestion, encourage separation of small/large vessels (probably + maybe) / (unlikely + not) / (unsure)
44%	32%	23%	Implement Option 1 (wider)
22%	43%	34%	Implement Option 2 (narrower)
39%	43%	18%	No change
35%	33%	32%	More discussion needed
31%	31%	39%	Almost right, but needs minor tweaking

The is good evidence that the Strategy and/or presentation in the survey has had the desirable effect of clearing up confusion about the intent of the two-channel strategy. A lot of the confusion/concern from 2014 stemmed from a fear that it meant 6-knot areas through more/most/all of the Broadwater. At this time, there was no concrete proposal about how traffic might be separated. The proposed changes to the variable speed limit and examples of how this might be applied in the Broadwater provided a basis for understanding.

Surprisingly, there is reasonably strong agreement that it might actually work. The strongest view was “maybe”, but “probably” was a close second. “Definitely not” had the lowest response (see [Appendix C](#)).

Perhaps more surprisingly was the strong preference for Option 1, which has a wider footprint that includes the Marine Stadium and the South Channel along Moondarewa Spit. On the option of “No change” the views were more evenly divided and overall the differences between the two options and no change are marginal. So, if there is to be a change, Option 1 is preferred, but the high level of “Unsure” associated with Option 2 needs to be noted.

The community is very divided about the concept of more discussion or whether the concept is almost right, but needs tweaking. This arguably reflects a preference for “getting on with things” – either do something or decide to leave things alone. The complexities that contribute to uncertainty may support this view – if you can't be sure if anything will work, then there is merit in either doing nothing or trying something.

There were 45 comments left on Q.15 (do you understand) and 238 comments for Q.18, which was an open-ended invitation for feedback about the proposal. The summary below draws from comments from both of these questions.

- Need proper signage/markers, publicity, education
- Signage would need to be drastically improved for this to have any effect
- Multiple-use areas not adequately addressed – power craft should be restricted to 6-knots
- Shifting traffic west will affect environment, residents, passive craft
- Would be good to see moorings and 6-knot areas removed
- Vessels >8m should have to go slower in the whole Broadwater
- Speed in the Yellow area should be 10-knots max
- No accommodation to anchor up and enjoy the Broadwater without constant small craft traffic
- Remove anchored vessels from the Marine Stadium so it can be used
- Enforcement / Education

- Main channels should be 40-knots
- No protection for South Stradbroke and campground – Need a Yellow zone near Currigee
- Maps aren't detailed enough to decide
- Start with a limited trial
- Ban noisy craft
- Dedicate an area for water skiing/wake boarding – North of Wave Break Island or near Sea World
- Need peak period restrictions for large vessels
- Need more discussion, workshops – not sure what 'transportation efficiency' means
- Need the 6-knot zone near Marine Pde to control noise effects on residents
- Need the 6-knot zone near Marine Pde to protect feeding shorebirds
- Will be confusing for visitors
- Big boats and small boats are a problem – Broadwater is dangerous for small boats
- Plan a study to compare use, wash and turbidity in East and West with new regulations
- Will require a significant on water presence to educate and enforce
- It's not broken
- Dredge holes for anchorages to provide shelter from wash
- Concept good but let small vessels go 40-knots
- Need a better area for tourist jet boats as they can be unpredictable
- Extend the Yellow area to north of the Seaway – this is the busiest part of the Broadwater
- Just do it
- Concern over the speed issue is likely to bias responses
- It doesn't matter what you do the big boats and jetskis will still drive all over the smaller boats
- Many vessels don't have speedometers -- How will they know what 25-knots means?
- Transitioning on/off the plane by large vessels will be a problem in the area near the Seaway
- Keep the western 6-knot zone and extend it to Loders Creek to protect passive craft
- Safety is not adequately addressed – separate hoons and passive craft
- Jet skis 6-knots in yellow zones
- The Broadwater needs areas where power boats are banned
- Fine the way it is
- Need an overall 'Master Plan' for the Spit / Waterways / Southport and Main Beach connectivity
- 6-knots in all Gold Coast waterways / No speed limits
- Get big boats out of the Broadwater
- Yellow zone near the Seaway restricts access by commercial vessels to the Seaway
- Yellow zone should extend from the Seaway to Marina Mirage
- The licencing laws need to change. Education is the key.
- Dredging – need more, regularly

One area of residual confusion evident in the comments is the status of the western channels. The West Crab Island Channel is established – has been dredged and is marked by navigation aids – from the Crossover (north of Wave Break Island) to the Coomera River, although there are shoaling issues at the northern end of Sovereign Island, reflected by the 6-knot zone. The Labrador Channel is also established – has been dredged and is marked by navigation aids – from the Crossover to Parrot Rock, about where the old boat ramp was near the aquatic centre, where it dead ends. The 'missing link' is from there to the Sundale Bridge.

The design profiles for these two channels are 2.0m deep for the Labrador Channel and 2.5m deep for the West Crab Island Channel (both 40m wide). The West Crab Island Channel has been dredged to the design profile, except for the area north of the Sovereign Island Bridge. The Labrador Channel has been dredged, but it was not possible to achieve the design depth due to the presence of hard material. One option is to accept a reduced profile, around 1-1.5m. Most vessels need less than 1m of water and with another 1m+ of tide regularly available, even a 1m profile provides substantial small craft access. At those depths, dredging is not required to establish the 'missing link' – it is deep enough, so removal of the remaining moorings and navigation aids are the only requirements. It is true that the closer you get to the Sundale Bridge, the smaller the distance between the two channels. However, if the western channel doesn't require dredging, then the cost is small. Indeed, there isn't even a need to establish navigation aids. Simply shifting the moorings creates an alternative.

One potential option with the revised variable speed zone, as discussed in the Strategy, is to remove some of the existing 6-knot area where this 'missing link' would be established, allowing smaller vessels

faster access through this area. Regarding the comment that the meaning of 'transportation efficiency' is unclear, the intent was to reflect the ability of the waterways to facilitate transport -- to go places. Speed limits are a big part of that, with slower speeds being worse and faster speeds being better, in terms of transportation efficiency. Other factors such as anchored vessels, wash, shoals, etc., can also have an effect, which was the purpose of using a potentially unclear term like transportation efficiency.

The degree of support for the proposal and/or the need for a solution of this sort is noteworthy in the comments on this topic. As mentioned in previous sections, the comments do include support, but the summaries are more focused on alternative proposals and constructive criticism. In this case, there is a relatively higher level of enthusiasm/agreement in this section. This is not say there is not disagreement and criticism – that is present as well, as it is in previous sections.

# Managing the impacts of changes to the Yellow zone

(Questions: 19-21)

The three questions in this section addressed the three potential “allowances” discussed in the Strategy, each aimed at potential user groups that would be particularly impacted by the proposed changes – owners of vessels between 6.5m and 8.0m; commercial operators; and tow-behind sports. For these questions respondents could select any of several statements that reflected their views and/or leave a brief comment. Each of these allowances is discussed separately below.

## “Grandfathering” allowance

Agree	Statement
64%	This would be complicated, confusing and/or costly
28%	Any allowance needs to consider all vessels, not just Gold Coast registered vessels
25%	Allowances should only be made for vessels that can get on the plane (consistent with "optimal" wash")
12%	A lifetime allowance should be made for all Gold Coast registered vessels
6%	A limited (e.g., 2-years) allowance should be made for all Gold Coast registered vessels

The largest consensus, a solid majority, was that this would be complicated, confusing and/or costly. Respondents weren't asked to say whether they flat out agreed or disagreed, but they were presented with some alternative approaches. All of these had fairly low levels of support, as reflected above. There were 138 comments for this question (see [Appendix D](#), summarised below).

- A limited transition period may be the fairest approach (2, 5 years)
- Completely disagree with a transition. Make the change, set a date and everyone works to it.
- Although unfortunate for existing vessel owners a hard and fast rule is the only approach
- People invest a lot in a vessel to render it unfit for it's intended use is criminal.
- I made an investment based on long standing rules
- Boat companies have exploited the 8.0m rule with no regard to damage to the waterways
- Consider two owners, boats from the same mould, one registered earlier, different speed limits?
- Grandfathering is just weakness----giving in once again.
- Not a great idea but if it was going to apply would need boats to be clearly marked
- Grandfathering is one of the most abused systems of bureaucratic nonsense as can be imagined.
- How would the police or spectators know which particular vessel is grand-fathered?
- I think GCWA just needs to bite the bullet and set the new limit at 6.5m
- If I had a performance car and speed limits were reduced I wouldn't expect grandfathering
- Owners should be able to pay for a wake assessment and get a certificate if they pass
- Stop listening to few whinging hone owners who want everyone doing 6-knots past their place
- It is the current large vessels causing problems
- Nil allowance. Only a grace period of education
- Other <6.5 metre vessels will see this and be confused – Monkey see, monkey do
- One rule for everyone is absolutely essential
- Rescue Vessels need special allowance for life
- Concessions and allowances don't apply on our roads
- Simplicity and clear qualification will minimise "misunderstandings" and achieve full compliance
- It would be like changing to driving on the other side of the road, but allowing some to remain
- The proposal should be based around marine safety - it either is or it isn't
- Wash is at least in part a safety issue, so no allowance should be made for any vessel.

Collectively, the comments mostly reflect the results above, with lots of reasons why the idea is not workable and a minority acknowledging the impact and possible need to try to address it. There are also a number of comments supporting retention of an 8.0m length.

## Commercial allowance

Agree	Statement
41%	I don't support the proposed allowance
32%	I generally support the allowance, if managed consistent with the principle of "optimal wash"
18%	I support this proposed allowance
13%	I support this allowance, but more consultation is required regarding the parameters

The largest response was against the proposed allowance. However, if the “generally support” and “support” responses are combined, about ~50% of respondents are supportive and the final statement could also be considered to be an expression of support. There were 92 comments for this question, summarised below.

- One rule for all
- Damaging wash and shoreline stability should be the deciding factors
- As with road traffic a public transport bus is required to comply with the roads signed speed limit
- Based on assumed greater responsibility and understanding of their vessels wash
- Changing rules will have a large impact tourism – Gold Coast’s main business
- Commercial vessel operators are some of the worst offenders on the Broadwater
- Commercial water transport exemption should be allowed ... we need more public transport
- Compliance in relation to wash is rarely successful. How many people have been prosecuted?
- These guys advertise their companies on the side of their boats which is self policing
- It could (will) create an us & them mentality..
- If it can't get on the plane in the yellow zone the speed needs to be reduced
- More consultation with commercial operators required
- No ""Commercial Allowance"" - Manage risk by allocation of areas (zones).
- Same restrictions should apply to all as they are for environmental and social reasons
- See noise comments earlier as commercial vessels are a major contributor to this pollution
- some of the commercial vessels have the worst wash
- This would encourage other vessels to do the same speed
- VMR rescue vessels over 6.5 meters should be included in "commercial" allowance
- Why make rules and then demand only some people follow them?
- You don't see main roads allowing Taxis to do 150kmph
- You will get endless complaints from property owners that don't understand the rules

Overall, the comments are consistent with the comments for the previous question, favouring a simpler, one rule for all system. A number of the comments focused on particular vessels, generally negatively. While there is some recognition of ‘good’ operators, exhibiting a higher degree of professionalism, the opposite view is unfortunately well represented.

## “Water-skiing” allowance

Agree	Statement
37%	I support this proposed allowance
33%	I don't support the proposed allowance
21%	I generally support the principle, but more consultation is required regarding the details
15%	This would be complicated, confusing and/or costly

Support is marginally higher than those opposed and adding those in that generally support the proposal provides majority support. While there is a minority concern about the potential complication, confusion and/or cost, presumably the limited geographic scope of this allowance, as well as the more visible evidence of whether someone is skiing, mitigate the higher level of concern arising from grandfathering. There were 115 comments for this topic, summarised below.

- A busy channel/ navigation area is not a suitable safe location to be towing a biscuit
- A vessel over 6.5 should not be used for water skiing
- A vessel towing creates larger (sub-optimal) wash. Designated ski areas could solve this conflict.
- Need dedicated ski areas – no anchoring – e.g. near Paradise Point and Charis to Lands End
- As a water skier, it is unnecessary to tow faster than 25 knots particularly in a boat over 6.5 m
- One rule for all
- Only in designated ski areas
- Narrow areas on the Coomera River where skiing is allowed should be changed
- Consider properties in a previously restricted that will now be subjected to wash
- Clearly defined ski zones can have specific rules
- Definitely not. The ones who want to speed will just tow a toy even if it is not being used.
- If you are towing a skier/boarder surfer the boat must be on the plane
- I don't see this as very relevant as very few ski boats are longer than 6.5 metres
- I support this allowance without location (except 6knot zones) and time restrictions
- The same amount of wash is given out whether they are engaged in towing or not
- Ballast tanks and slow speeds are an issue
- Ideal - this is simple and easy to enforce
- Send the wake boats out into the ocean
- If you are going to allow exemptions then you might as well not have the speed limits
- Inland lake systems such as Clear Island Waters would be ideal for waterskiing
- It might be time to consider banning wake boats from some sections designated for water skiing
- Its not safe to speed, unless you add greater complication and danger, then it becomes safer?
- Marine stadium should be a ski area not a anchoring area
- No water skiing or tow situation at all
- Only in certain areas at certain times, away from others
- Open to abuse.
- Ski boats 6.5-8m are the type/size boat that needs to be targeted to reduce unnecessary wash
- Subject to, tidal conditions, moored vessel locations, high density traffic and main channels
- This is both restraining and promoting tow sports/wash in congested areas. Need more research.
- Water skiing is a huge part of the Gold Coast's history and should be preserved at all cost
- Water skiing is fine but wake boarding with vessels with ballast tanks are a nuisance
- Water skiing is inconsistent with global times
- Water skiing should be limited to water skiing zones
- Water Skiing should not be restricted
- Noise pollution is another issue with tow boats - many have modified and noisy exhaust.

Identical comments are evident in this and previous sections. This is not an error in the report preparation – these were received on different surveys and alphabetical sorting of the comments makes it transparent. While this could be one individual having multiple votes, it is more likely the result of a 'campaign', an organised effort to get like-minded enthusiasts to champion a cause. The numbers are not overwhelmingly high and it is worth noting that in this case they are supportive of tow-behind sports, whereas in previous sections there were comments from passive craft enthusiasts, generally critical of motorised sports. So, overall there is a bit of 'balance'.

Overall, the comments reflect a strong level of support for water skiing, mixed with concerns about wash, both in the context of the principles proposed regarding "optimal" wash, and in relation to particular boats/activities. There is a reasonably high level of acceptance for the concept of dedicated areas, which could have different rules. But there are also strong views that 6.5m is big enough and the changes can be made and still allow for most people and vessels to water ski, making allowance unnecessary.

## Managing activities designed to enhance wash

(Question: 22)

Similar to Q.13, about wash messaging, this question asked respondents to rate a series of six statements. In the table below "Agree" includes strongly agree and agree and the same applies to "Disagree" (full results in [Appendix C](#)).

Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Question
76%	15%	9%	Operator behaviour is the main issue, not the activity or vessel type
62%	26%	12%	Activities intended to enhance wash should be prohibited in Yellow zones
30%	53%	17%	I'd support a prohibition at peak times (e.g. weekends, holidays)
37%	45%	18%	The prohibition should include water-skiing and all tow-behind sports
45%	43%	12%	Wake-boarding and similar activities are not a problem
31%	26%	43%	The main issue is which areas are made Yellow - I can't decide 'on principle'

There was a very high level of agreement that behaviour, rather than activity or vessel type, was the main issue, consistent with feedback in 2014. There was also a reasonably high level of support for banning activities intended to enhance wash in Yellow zones, consistent with the comments in the previous section regarding a consistent application of the principle of managing wash. Prohibitions at peak times had reasonably strong opposition, as did a blanket ban on all tow-behind sports. There were evenly divided views on whether wake boarding was a problem. The basis of the response to the final question is unclear. There were 165 comments provided for this topic, summarised below.

- A prohibition at all times / all Gold Coast waterways
- Dedicated areas
- Based on wash performance only
- Getting on the plane makes wash, inconsistent with sensitive shorelines
- Any proposal to prohibit certain activity needs alternatives
- Low speed for all vessels in narrow Inland waterways
- Ban wakesurfing in yellow areas! Retain wakeboarding and water skiing. They are all different.
- Boats designed to create a bigger wash should not be used in low wash areas
- Common sense and distance rules should dictate activities during peak times, not regulation
- Complete ban on "Superyacht Surfing" is essential
- Defined ski areas for high wash activities are a good idea
- Depends on the reasons. Is it safety, erosion or consideration
- I don't think all yellow areas can be considered equal in terms of impact of wash
- Don't copy NSW they got it wrong now its all about speed cameras
- When used respectfully there are no problems the current rules have it covered
- Having timed prohibitions just becomes messy to follow and enforce
- I bought on the river to ski. Don't live here if you don't like it. There aren't enough ski zones.
- I would rather peak times than 6 - 8am any day
- Water skiing seems to produce minimal wash while wakeboarding wash has much more energy
- Restrictions should not be introduced because a few residents did not think before purchasing
- Need more detail - as with most proposals, the devil is in the detail
- Most if not all yellow zones need to prohibit Jet Ski "freestyling"
- The more water area the less wash and noise. Water front owners shouldn't have a say
- Enforcement is prescriptive. Subjective culture change needs to happen at the same time.
- The watersport is not the differentiator. My 18ft outboard ski boat hardly generates any wake
- The waterways are the peoples and should be available to everyone anytime without restrictions
- There needs to be dedicated zones for activities with use limitations like in NSW
- These activities need to be in the green zone, probably in designated areas
- Wake boarding and skiing are not an issue however those kite surfers are a mess to navigate
- The ski area adjacent to Sovereign Island bridge is not a suitable location for Wake Boats
- Wake boats are not suitable for Carrara or similar river bank environments

- Wake boarding wash damage and erosion between Sanctuary Cove and Gold Coast City Marina
- Wakeboard and sking in the Nerang river in Benowa should stop
- Wakeboard boats should be banned from areas where jetties are involved
- Wakeboards can be towed behind any ski boat, many make little wash
- Wave energy enhancement defeats the goals of this strategy
- It is possible to wakeboard without wake enhancement
- Yellow zones need to be for vessels that can plane, not larger vessels that plough through water
- You forgot jet skis and the Rivera crowd
- Water skiing requires minimal wash and wake boarding requires maximum wash
- Zone areas for use to ensure safety

The comments reflect support again for the principle of using Yellow zones to improve the management of wash as well as the concept of dedicated areas for certain sports. There is also a general thrust to not lump activities – that wash should be the determining factor and that is dependent on a lot of factors, not the activity.

## Proposed mapped changes to speed limits

(Questions: 23-28)

This page of the survey included questions about the proposed changes to particular areas, corresponding to maps presented in the Strategy. Each of area is presented separately below.

### Coomera River and Coombabah Creek

The changes proposed for both of these areas consisted of the transition of Red, 6-knot areas to the modified Yellow, variable speed zone, which includes a lower speed (40 to 25-knots) and shorter length (8 to 6.5m) for the maximum size vessel eligible to travel at that speed (larger vessels are restricted to 6-knots).

Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Question
60%	21%	19%	Proposed changes for the Coomera River are appropriate if the Yellow zone is modified to promote "optimal wash"
56%	21%	23%	Proposed changes to Coombabah Creek are appropriate if the Yellow zone is modified to promote "optimal wash"

Changes to both areas were generally supported, with a minority disagreeing. A relatively large number of people were "unsure" for both, with the marginally lower support for the changes to Coombabah Creek reflecting larger uncertainty, rather than larger disagreement. These questions did not provide an opportunity for comments, but a few people left comments on the following question that were clearly related to this areas, so they are summarised below

- Need a third ski zone on the Coomera River above the highway
- The proposed changes may have devastating consequences for wildlife in Coombah Creek
- 4 knots is inappropriate for maintaining steerage in Coomera River currents – maintain 6-knots
- Relaxing 6-knot areas may shift some of the congestion away from Santa Barbara
- Changes to the Red zones to Yellow, but don't change the speed/length for Yellow zones
- Most small boats on the Coomera River already travel on the plane – changes make sense

### Nerang River

Proposed map changes to the Nerang River are relatively modest – two new 6-knots areas and shortening of a few of the existing 6-knot areas. However, as the variable speed limit applies to most of the Nerang River, the proposed changes to this speed limit will potentially affect all vessels under 8m (reduced speed) capable of travelling faster than 25-knots. Vessels between 6.5 and 8m will be affected the most, with speeds reduced from 40 to 6-knots. One of the email campaigns (see [Appendix B](#) provided estimates of the effect on the proposed travel times on vessels of various sizes along the Coomera and Nerang rivers. Respondents were given several statements regarding the proposed changes and select the one that best represented their views.

Agree	Statement
44%	I generally agree with the proposed changes
15%	I don't support the speed reduction (40-knots reduced to 25-knots)
12%	I don't support any changes
11%	I don't support the speed or length reductions
10%	I don't support the reduced vessel length (8.0m reduced to 6.5m)
8%	More of the Nerang River should be Red

The largest cohort generally agrees with the proposed changes and the smallest cohort favours changes that would slow all vessel s to 6-knots. Those objecting to the speed reduction are the second largest cohort, so if the proposed changes modified length, but not speed, this might produce majority support (~60%), assuming this doesn't create disagreement from some of those that generally support the proposed changes. A similar percentage object to any changes (leave things the way they are) or to

changes to speed or length (change the 6-knot areas, but nothing else). Comments, summarised below, were provided by 79 respondents.

- 10-knots in the Yellow zones and 6-knots in all other areas
- 6-knots in all Gold Coast waterways
- 8m should be reduced to 6m – that extra 0.5m makes quite a difference in overall size
- 8.0m to 6.5m – perfect
- Reduce the vessel length but keep the speed at 40-knots – Common sense dictates when to slow
- Appears to revert to a similar zoning from 10-years ago, which was better
- Closed waters with dwellings incompatible with crazy boating, which only comes with speed
- Commercial vessels, including future ferries, need an exemption, or some way to go faster
- Need greater enforcement of distance off and collision regulations
- Potential noise impact of increased speed on residents requires consideration/consultation
- Getting onto the plane is important for all vessels, especially against tide/wind
- Need dedicated areas for tow-behind sports
- How is anyone going to measure “optimal wash”
- Jet skis are different – let them go faster as their wash is minimal
- Don’t support 25-knots – I travel open areas at speeds above 30-knots safely, with minimal wash
- Restricting speeds diverts operators attention from their surroundings and will increase incidents
- Main river should have less restrictions – Should be faster and easier to get the Broadwater
- I don’t know the area well enough to comment
- Shortening of red area on west side of Cronin illogical – Eastern side does make some sense
- 200mm stern wash and on the plane or 6-knots
- Less than 7m is appropriate for the Yellow zone
- More of the river should be Yellow
- More of the Nerang should be no wash
- No wash, not jet skis, no wake board boats
- Changes near Monaco street appropriate and safe
- Optimal wash should mean the speed the skipper selects to produce optimal wash
- Should be wash related, not speed
- Why is dredging required on the Nerang River?
- Regulations not enforced on River (near Sorrento)
- Southport to the Seaway should be 6-knots
- The 40 to 25 knot wake difference is negligible the impact is unacceptable!
- The Nerang River is being choked with 6-knot areas that have little or no safety benefit
- Don’t support the 6-knot zone at the top of the Nerang – I won’t be able to ski from my property
- Need an information program about wash
- There should only be 2 speed limits as many boats don’t have speedometers (on or off plane)
- Water skiing was huge on this river and here are no areas available to ski currently
- We need enforcement of the existing rules, not new rules
- Match speed limit to waterway width, ie bank to bank – Slower in narrow areas
- You made the rules we bought a boat based on those rules

There were a number of comments objecting to being forced to select an answer to Q.25 when they had little knowledge of the Nerang River. Otherwise, the majority of the comments reflect previously expressed concerns or suggestions about proposed changes to the Yellow zone. Overall the comments don’t add much additional clarification or suggest corrections to the numerical responses above.

### **Nerang River – Water skiing**

Water skiing is currently prohibited anywhere on the Nerang River (and its tributaries), except in designated areas. While there are other areas of the state with prohibitions, this is the only area on the Gold Coast. Some people incorrectly refer to these as designated water skiing areas. In a sense they are that, but only by virtue of the prohibition in other areas of the Nerang. The designation also limits skiing to daylight hours – a distinction that doesn’t apply anywhere else on the Gold Coast.

The Strategy proposed water skiing areas, not just on the Nerang, but also on the Coomera, in part to allow larger boats and faster speeds (up to 8m and 40-knots). The Strategy also suggested removing the prohibition on skiing in other parts of the Nerang River. The current prohibition, issued by MSQ, is based

on safety concerns. GCWA would need to seek MSQ support for removing the prohibition, based on the reduced danger resulting from slower speeds (40 to 25-knots) and smaller vessels (8 to 6.5m). It should be noted that this change was also influenced by suggestions that the prohibitions created congestion by concentrating users in fewer areas, potentially increasing risk. So, there is also an argument that the relaxation itself will mitigate some risk by allowing users to use other areas. Question 26 asked respondents to pick one statement that best represented their views.

Agree	Statement
34%	I support this proposal (allowing skiing – 6.5m, 25-knots – in the currently prohibited areas of the Nerang)
30%	Keep the existing prohibitions
15%	I support expansion of the existing areas, but only in some places
10%	I support this proposal, but am concerned about wake-boarding in some areas
10%	Water-skiing should be completely banned in the Nerang River

A small minority of respondents support a complete ban on skiing in the Nerang River. About 1/3 of the respondents support the proposal; a slightly smaller number favour retention of the current prohibitions. However, if the concerns of those that indicated qualified support can be addressed then 60% of respondents support the changes. There were 73 comments provided, summarised below.

- 6.5m vessels traveling at 25knots will create a large amount of wash
- Dedicated areas for wakeboarders, water skiers & tow behinds & jet skis
- Need a strong police presence in ski areas
- Promote water sports activities in suitable areas
- Due to the mentality of many drivers and ad hoc enforcement, keep the existing restrictions
- Lift the prohibition, but boat speeds should be 40 and length
- Speed should stay at 40
- Deregulate the entire river
- Don't know the area well enough to comment.
- Everyone bought on the River knowing of the activities
- Extending the ski areas might work, but not with speeding tinnies and jet skis
- Skiing should be expanded, but still need areas to accommodate wake enhancing vessels
- I don't support prohibition of any water sports, expansion of water ski areas is welcomed
- I live near a no skiing zone but boaties and jet skis and wake boats tow skiers almost daily
- Increase speed and water skiing on Clear Island Waters is completely outrageous
- Many, but not all, are show offs and trouble makers who break rules more than they obey them
- No board riding boats with washes exceeding 200mm on the plane or 6 knots
- Not enough water ski zones as it is. Need more ski zones for safety.
- Should be banned east of Bundall Rd
- Should be wash related, not activity.
- Ski area in Marine Stadium
- Increase speeds to 45 knots increase areas and you will spread the load on all banks
- The associated noise with skiing and jet skis is unliveable – at least limit t to ~6 hours (e.g. 9–3)
- The current areas is a good balance of use, providing something for most people
- The restriction of the speed does not necessarily equate to less wash.
- There is a fair amount of wash observed when boats turn at speed
- There is really nowhere else on the Nerang that has the room to safely turn with a skier in tow
- Tournament water skiing ( small boat, low wash) is conducted at close to 30 knots
- 25 knots is not fast enough to ski, especially barefooting. Keep 40 knots for boats under 6.5m
- Very concerned by the low speed increase wash in "wakeboard" boats
- Vessels under 7.5m
- The majority of wake-boarding and water skiing are done by jet skiers and tinnys, minimal wash
- 6.5m is too small for most ski boats.
- 25 knots eliminates a lot of skiing activities as it is too slow for slalom skiing
- Water skiing should only where the waterway is wide enough for traffic in both directions
- Water skiing should only be permitted well up river where it is wide and quiet

### Clear Island Waters

This area is a relatively wide and deep body of water that is bounded on one side by Robina Parkway, with residence along the other side. It is controlled by a lock and does not have a boat ramp, so access is limited to residents. The proposed speed change itself would not allow water skiing, as this area is a tributary of the Nerang River and, therefore, subject to the prohibition above. But, lifting of the prohibition, along with the change to speed limits, would allow water skiing, albeit still limited to residents unless public access infrastructure was built. The Strategy also indicated a possible water ski area designation here, which could allow for different rules, such as larger vessels and faster speeds while towing, or restrictions, such as time of day.

Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Question
50%	11%	39%	The proposed Yellow designation for Clear Island Waters is appropriate

As above, there was no provision for comments on this question, but some respondents left comments on the following question, which are summarised below.

- Clear Island Waters should have the speed limit increased as the waterways are very wide and would provide a safe environment for people to enjoy water sports
- For Clear Island Waters lake, the changes should only benefit residents with their own water access. A boat ramp should not be allowed.
- I live in Clear Island Waters and the area proposed for an increase in the speed limit is perfect and safe. It is ideal for the kids to enjoy watersports. It is the vocal minority who do not even own watercraft that oppose the proposal.
- It is very encouraging that you have listened to Clear Island Waters residents and proposed changing the large lake to a yellow zone. Well done.

### Moreton Bay Marine Park changes

Respondents were asked to rate (agree, disagree, unsure) changes to seven areas in the Moreton Bay Marine Park, mostly Green (40-knots) to Yellow (variable), but also a few areas where the proposed change was Red (6-knots) to Yellow.

Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Question
52%	23%	25%	Millionaire's Row from Red to Yellow
52%	23%	25%	Tiger Mullet from Red to Yellow
51%	21%	27%	McKenzies Channel from Red to Yellow
49%	15%	37%	Northerly extension of Yellow areas above Calypso Bay
35%	24%	42%	McCoys Creek from Red to Yellow
42%	29%	29%	Channel into The Bedrooms, from Green to Yellow
36%	28%	36%	E/W channels connection Main Channel and Canaipa Passage, Green to Yellow

The majority of respondents expressed support for all of the proposed changes. The only exception, McCoys Creek, still had higher support than disagreement – but the largest group of respondents were “unsure”. There were 58 comments for this question, summarised below.

- 10 knots only in the yellow zones. 6 knots all other zoned areas
- 40 knots for all vessels <6.5m, slower 6.5-15m; 6 knots for vessels >15m except for open waters
- Wake board boats don't travel fast however create the biggest wash
- Area adjacent to Dux anchorage must be made Red (also anchorage area at Paradise Point)
- As nav channel runs through the anchoring area it should remain Red (move channel west?)
- At 6-knot my bass boat generates maximum wash
- Change signs from "6 knots" to "6 knots within 30m of moored vessels (60m PWC)"
- Don't know anything about this area
- Driver behaviour and not speed is the issue. No more 6-knots please!

- More cost more policing little or no result, let people live don't over regulate
- For safety Speed limits should be 6 knots .
- Get the anchored boats out of Jacob Wells channel, You can only do 6 knots as there isn't 30m between vessels.
- hardly anyone keeps to the 6 knots at Millionaire`s Row anyway..
- I am not au fait with these areas so do not feel qualified to comment further
- I do not know the area well enough
- I do not support 40 to 25 knots anywhere. What is the real motivation - it's not wake
- I do not support reduction of green zones and welcome the removal of red zones
- I think there should be no changes in these areas
- Industry feedback and advice to BIA has not commented on MBMP. See earlier comments.
- Just change them all to green 40 knots zones
- KISS ... keep 6 knots & 25 knots .. & dedicated areas for special sports.
- Less speed better and safer boating
- Many vessels 6.5-8m such as party pontoons don't create much wake
- McKenzies is quite narrow and the area near the Bedrooms is a major intersection for vessels
- Millionaire row and tiger mullet are anchorages. Mackenzie's is too confined.
- Narrow channels such as Tiger mullet and Mackenzies should be 6-knots
- Deepen Fishermans channel so there is low tide access from Main Channel to Canaipa Passage
- Not game to go near the Bedrooms it is so shallow!
- People will speed and not get caught, because the cops aren't around – changes are pointless
- Please don't take away this great area for higher speed boating.
- Slow the big boats down, promote safe courteous seamanship
- The difference between 25 and 40kts is realistically not going to be enforced.
- There are anchorages in these areas so why increase the speed
- These are not my areas, local residents need to make the decisions
- 40 knots and skipper's responsibility to not create damaging wash when other boats are around
- Decisions should be based on bank stability assessments for sensitivity index compliance
- These need to be absolute no wash zones irrespective of speed
- Enforce strict speed limits in these areas. Non-compliance "Millionaire's Row" starts 4:30 Sun AM
- Region north of Jacobs Well referred to as "above Calypso Bay" is nowhere near Calypso Bay

The comments include concern about increasing speed near anchorages. There are distance off provisions that mandate 6-knots within 30m of anchored vessels. The argument of non-compliance is present above, but that potential applies to 6-knot areas as easily as it applies to distance off provisions (although the latter may require more skill/knowledge). If the anchorage were always full, it wouldn't matter, but if there are few anchored boats most of the time, then a blanket 6-knot provision is inefficient relative to reliance on the distance off provisions.

## Consultation and decision-making process

(Questions: 29-31)

The final page of the survey included questions related to the consultation process. Regarding possible community drop-in sessions, the majority (43%) were not interested, but ~38% said they would be interested. At this stage, they have not been organised, but respondents will be notified if a decision is made to consult further at the local level regarding refinement of any changes or to explain changes. The responses below relate to respondents opinion of the Strategy and consultation.

Agree	Statement
60%	Overall, this survey makes me feel that GCWA is interested in what the community thinks
22%	Overall, the SBMS meets my expectations of how GCWA should manage the Gold Coast waterways
22%	I am cynical because nothing seems to change or change takes too long
22%	I received an email directly from GCWA about this consultation
19%	Someone told me about this consultation
15%	I will probably have a look at the interactive map tool
12%	I heard about the consultation on Facebook

A majority of the respondents did feel that the survey indicated GCWA was interested in what the community thought. However, a minority felt that the Strategy met their expectations of how GCWA should manage the Gold Coast waterways and a similar percentage of respondents were cynical due to the lack of, or long time required for change. A very similar percentage report having been notified directly, so it is reasonable to assume that most of these people were involved in the 2014 consultation and perhaps reaching that it has been ~2.5 years and we are still discussing, rather than having taken action.

While it is disappointing to have a relatively low participation rate from currently registered stakeholders, the substantial response from 'new' stakeholders does mean that the views of ~2,200 people are collectively represented in the combined response to the Speed Limits Review Discussion Paper and the result of that consultation process, the Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy. About 60% of the new participants asked to be added to the list of registered stakeholders.

Respondents had one final opportunity to leave comments and 174 of them did. These comments are summarised below and provided in full in [Appendix D](#).

- Suggest a separate licence endorsement allowing operators discretion to manage wash/speed
- My motor-sailor only does 6-7 knots which I find relaxing until some moron flies past at speed
- 30 days notice without any public notifications or advertising other than email not good enough
- KISS - slow for safety (not residences) and fast elsewhere. If I had to choose, I'd support 6/25k
- A very confusing survey!
- Many of the changes have nothing to do with issues – It's all about the skipper. More police.
- All boaters operate their boats flat out because they can. Need enforcement.
- Would like to have a "your say" about the Currumbin Creek and the Tallebudgera Creek.
- If - as usual - nothing is done to enforce the new rules it will have been a complete waste of time
- All craft should have to stay well clear of beaches - jet ski and wind board riders harass people
- Our liberties as boaters and sports minded people are being eroded for the sake of the few
- I have grave concerns for their safety with the wave making vessels outside our residence
- Water police have too few resources to even address complaints, eg Currumbin Creek
- At the end of the day it is all about enforcement and that is where the failure occurs.
- Big boats need to respect smaller boats. Small boats need to respect people and private property
- Concerned how the GC waterways are becoming a Nanna zone
- Wash concepts will get debate but qualitative regulation beats nonsense quantitative regulation.
- Consider strategies to make jetski use safer and more respectful

- Broadwater should be a PWC transit only zone only
- Define boat length - Length Overall (LoA) or Waterline Length (WLL)
- Doesn't look like anyone running this survey actually owns a vessel
- Dont clog our waterways with slow moving vesels struggling against the tide /wind
- Dredging is the number one issue within the GCWA
- Education plays the biggest part in any process. A license does not make you competent.
- Enforcement, dredging and noise are my concerns within the Nerang River
- Excellent idea, and well thought out changes. I fully support the proposed changes. Good work!
- Speed and inappropriate behaviour is a major issue. Need policing and heavier penalties.
- The "Two Channel Strategy" fails to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders
- Get on with it and show leadership for the waterways being used as transport corridors
- Get rid of the old boats over staying there mooring time limits!
- Large cruisers at speed are as dangerous as a tank or monster truck on the roads
- Kites and sailboarders move through areas hundreds of times
- The 2016 incident data reports don't reflect a need for radical change
- Fisherman throw their hooks at boats moored in the Coomera River and generally act badly.
- I am confused about what is proposed and why it is proposed.
- I AM cynical about this process. I believe that the GCWA is controlled by local business interests
- I am cynical and believe the hidden agenda is to restrict and minimise boating
- I am cynical because of over regulation without evidence of real issues
- I get told that my issues are policing issues then get told the reverse by the Water Police
- I am happy the vocal minority view that Clear Island Waters should be Red has been ignored
- The two channel strategy directs big 22 knot cruisers to the west and 40 knot jet skis east
- Please don't stop people enjoying our waterways by over regulating everything
- insufficient emphasis on jet skis and effect on areas of ecological significance
- I don't believe GCWA will discuss alternatives to the 2 Channel Strategy with the public
- I got an email from my Councillor.
- I feel the GCWA is being brow beaten by lobby groups, e.g. Jet Ski and wake board associations
- We need large vessel restrictions on speed during peak periods such as weekends and holidays
- I have read the report and used the interactive map.. I feel this consultation was well handled.
- Hoons in control – Police suggest photos, but then don't enforce and hoons target residents
- I hope GCWA gets funding or powers to implement the proposed changes proposed
- I hope you succeed with creating a workable and safe solution which is clear to implement.
- I hope in the future the GCWA can open its mind and support the possibilities of 'Living On Water'
- Please add a water skiing and or wakeboarding zone in the Broadwater
- I like the idea of a two speed area in the Broadwater
- I note that the GCCC did not contribute to your budget. They should.
- I only heard about this through a retailer sending me the link.
- I operate a commercial vessel and private big recreational boat owners are the worst offenders
- Need more policing of deserted trash boats and illegal mooring and live aboards
- Large boats traveling at ~8-15 knots are the biggest issue for wash damage
- Rowers and kayaks who train early morning (clubs) need to have lights
- Commercial jet boats operating on the Broadwater are dangerous to other waterway users
- Open Mudgeerabah creek (behind the robina stadium) for barefoot waterskiing.
- Reduce night time speed in the Broadwater. Driving a boat at 40 knots in darkness is insane.
- If this wasn't in the news I wouldn't have known about it....
- I am concerned about dredging and habitat loss for a western passageway in the Broadwater
- The most important considerations should be Keep It Simple and enforce the regulations.
- Getting support from influential people would be a good starting point
- It all comes down to the operator and enforcement
- Consultation is focussed on the symptoms not cause – need cameras and radar
- It is certainly a vexed issue with many different views
- Let's not forget the economic benefits from waterskiing
- Real issues: too many people using water, thinking only about themselves, too little enforcement
- Red zones are very time consuming for south Stradbroke island residents. Changes are logical.
- More need to remove moored boats on the GCWA
- More police to stop kids spraying jetties, I hope we don't have to wait until some kid is killed.
- More responsibility needs to be given to the skippers to do the right thing

- My concern is that a strategy might be agreed upon, but then council decides on something else.
- We need enforcement of the existing rules, not more/new rules
- Not an easy solution to a vast problem.
- Nothing needs to change as this will only complicate things
- Need "Local Wardens" - skilled Locals who have authority to stop a vessel & educate the Skipper
- People swim and sail and play on the west side of the Broadwater. Keep all the fast traffic east.
- People need to consider how speed and wash affect the anchored fishing vessels
- Please do something quickly to make the waterways safe for all users!!
- Please dredge some key holes to create new anchorages
- Please provide moorings soon. I have been waiting years
- Please remember the passive crafters
- Danger of collision in new yellow areas due to traffic, poor understanding of regulations, moorings
- Lack of courtesy by may jet ski operators outweighs survey concerns about water skiing
- Loud PWCs or boats with modified exhausts should be banned
- The Singapore government encourages courtesy and tolerance – it works. Adopt this for boating.
- Exempt Fast Cat ferries – road traffic is killing the Gold Coast
- Need info re reporting of inappropriate behaviours. Appreciate the data around speed and wash.
- Study canal speed limits as 6 knots , no wash is an excessive in many canals. Suggest 4-knots.
- Some thought should be given to restricting nighttime activities on the Nerang river
- Consider speed limits in anchorages and near moored vessels -- the current laws are ineffective
- The biggest danger is to Surfers paddling at Currumbin and the Seawall
- Any existing or proposed change requires thorough and relentless education and enforcement
- Most common excuse is " I did not know" – skipper should be required to do a refresher course
- Queensland is the only state that has a lifetime licence
- Strategy ignores the fact that wash is a result of the number of wash creating vessels
- The strategy does not appear to encompass Sea Eagle Lagoon, which must be 6 knots
- Tallebudgera Creek not in survey. Holidays are very busy. 40-knots unsafe with shoals.
- This came up up a couple of years back and then an election was called and this all got sidelined
- Multi-use areas not adequately addressed - some operators, including commercial, irresponsible
- This proposal does not make our waterways better, just more over governed
- Too many slow zones from Marina Mirage up the Nerang river. In 1995 there was only 2.
- Irresponsible minority mandates objective speed limits rather than subjective wash limitations
- Little or nothing seems to happen. In the meantime, I face a \$10,000 plus bill to repair damages.
- Remove long term anchored vessels. Check the emptying of bilge tanks on live-on vessels.
- With some tweaking this may be a workable, simpler solution to many threats and frustrations
- You won't be able to please everybody, but thanks for trying

# Appendix A – Speed and Behaviour Management Strategy



# Appendix B – Emailed invitations and reminders



# Appendix C – Survey results



# Appendix D – Survey comments



# Appendix E – Additional comments (email, post)

*Note: The comments that follow have been edited to remove personal information such as email or street addresses, names and phone numbers.*

