

Proposed lease to Coffs Harbour Fishermen's Co-operative—changes to public access

The working waterfront at Coffs Harbour is Crown land reserved for port facilities and services. It contains a range of commercial, tourism and visitor facilities and has long been a destination for locals and visitors to enjoy.

NSW Department of Industry is undertaking community consultation regarding a proposal to issue new leases to the Coffs Harbour Fishermen's Co-op and International Marina that would restrict public access to areas of the working waterfront of Coffs Harbour in the interests of public safety. Following are answers to frequently asked questions about the proposal.

Why is this being considered?

Public safety is a priority and the Work Health and Safety Act (2011) requires every employer to provide a safe work place and observe safe work practices. Safe Work Australia has published a General Guide for Workplace Traffic Management (www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/traffic-management-general-guide) that recommends a co-ordinated approach to risk management, including separating vehicles and pedestrians.

SafeWork NSW has notified the Coffs Harbour Fishermen's Co-operative that the operation of forklifts and the movement of supply vehicles on and near the loading wharves is a hazard and that public access to the waterfront should be restricted to avoid the risk of serious injury.

Consultation between SafeWork NSW, the Co-op, Marina and the department has identified that the most logical management arrangement, given the traffic movements generated by Co-op and commercial fisher activities, is for the Co-op to control the working waterfront.

Under the new lease, the Co-op will have the authority to restrict public access during business hours (7 am–5 pm Monday to Friday) in the interests of public safety. The Co-op will build a fence and gate to control access once the new lease is granted.

How did the proposed Co-op lease come about?

The NSW Government is committed to a business reform package for fishermen's co-operatives to assist them to manage changes to the regulation of commercial fisheries. Part of the reform package is a new standard long-term lease for fishermen's co-operatives that occupy Crown land.

Talks between the department, the Co-op and the adjoining Coffs Harbour International Marina have considered the hazards associated with the operations on the waterfront and options to reduce public risk. Because a single tenant is better able to control, mitigate and manage hazards along the waterfront, changes to the lease boundaries to give effect to this are being proposed.

When will the fence and gate be erected?

Following the public consultation period and subject to review of responses, the department expects to finalise a new lease with the Co-op in March 2019, which would authorise their occupation of the area. The Co-op intends to install the fence and gate as soon as possible after the lease is signed.

Will the public still be able to use the site?

Yes, the public will be able to use the site outside of normal business hours. The general public will not be able to enter the site from 7 am to 5 pm weekdays.

The Co-op will make every effort to accommodate access by organised groups during business hours, for example for school sports activities (fishing) and to tour groups to observe the unloading of tuna and prawns in peak times.

What does the proposed new lease for International Marina include?

The proposed new lease for the International Marina includes wider access to the marina boardwalk and vessel-loading pontoon. This will have no impact on public access.

The boardwalk facility will still be open to the public, and will only be closed during storms or in other situations where public safety is a concern.

How can I provide feedback on this proposal?

Consultation on this proposal is open until 31 January. We welcome feedback through the following channels:

- Visit the project web page at industry.nsw.gov.au/coffs-co-op and leave comments via the 'have your say' section.
- Send an email to cl.enquiries@crowland.nsw.gov.au and include in the title the words 'Coffs Harbour Co-op'.
- Call 1300 886 235 to arrange an appointment to speak with a departmental officer.

Project team members will be attending the area around the co-op and marina area on the afternoon of **Friday December 14** and the morning of **Saturday December 15** to discuss the proposal and receive feedback.