

Development Watch Inc.

Objection to Application MCU25/0028 and OPW25/0044-Transport depot on Rural land.

30 September 2025

1.0 Background

Development Watch Inc. (DW) is a volunteer community group whose primary focus is advocating respect for the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme in relation to the Coolum and Northshore areas. Our constructive input has been provided freely, in consultation with our extensive membership and supporter base, to the various levels of government on specific projects and policy matters. Also, when the need has arisen, DW has objected, on behalf of its membership, to inappropriate development that would conflict with the planning scheme or negatively impact on the community generally.

In this regard we thank Sunshine Coast Council for the opportunity to comment on the application (MCU25/0028 and OPW25/0044) made by the applicant to seek retrospective approval to establish and expand a crane storage and maintenance facility at 252 Yandina Coolum Road Coolum Beach (RPD 100 SP161821).

It should be noted that the DW committee and its membership base, although not professional Town Planners, have had extensive experience in planning matters, community engagement and advocacy as well as policy development and implementation. On behalf of DW's membership base, we strenuously object to the application.

2.0 Executive Summary

DW strenuously objects to the application on several grounds including but not limited to: -

Inappropriate land use (in conflict with Sunshine Coast PS 2014 and Strategic Framework)

Insufficient demonstrated of need

Built form impact

Stormwater quality and quantity issues

Traffic impact and future site access

Landscaping deficiencies

Amenity and visual impacts.

DW requests that Council reject the application outright. It is not an approval that can be conditioned and still meet the intent of the Sunshine Coast Strategic Framework

Specific Comments for Council and its officers to consider: -

3.0 Location and zoning of the site.

3.1 Location

Coolum Beach and surrounding areas embrace the vision that the Sunshine Coast is a “Community of Communities” each having their own distinct character and ambition. The Planning Scheme-2014 embraces this concept, and we strongly applaud this approach.

The site at 252 Yandina Coolum Road is part of a larger area in the rural zone that can be considered the “Gateway” to Coolum Beach and offers significant visual benefits and amenity to residents and visitors alike as they travel along the Sunshine Coast Motorway and Yandina Coolum Road, through the rural and blue heart areas of the region and into an urban footprint east of the motorway.

The benefit of this to the community now and into the future is significant and its importance should not be understated. Any loss of this amenity should not be contemplated and indeed opportunities exist to enhance this visual amenity over time through cooperation between TMR and Council as realignments occur in the vicinity of the current Coolum roundabout. The future intent of the site (the subject of the application) remaining rural is also highlighted in the proposed 2025 Planning Scheme (PS). This reinforces the recent consultation undertaken with the community as part of the 2025 PS formulation and further underpins the community's current and future aspirations and expectations for the area as a whole.

DW strongly recommends that the site remain part of a larger Gateway area to Coolum Beach with the visual amenity retained and overtime enhanced. The positioning of a crane/transport and maintenance facility in this area is clearly not in accord with this vision.

3.2 Zoning.

The current PS-2014 zones the site as Rural. This is by design and is strongly supported by the community. The site is outside the urban footprint and can only be used for rural and associated activities. The application in question is for a Transport Depot and as such is NOT a consistent land use in a Rural zoning.

Although the applicant has a right to make an application for a material change of use over the site, DW contests that the applicant has failed in demonstrating why a change should be considered.

It is acknowledged that the site is strategically located but DW contests that the site should be for rural purposes only. Such purposes are capture in the 2014 PS-2014 (Part 3 Strategic Framework).

In a recent Planning and Environment Court appeal hearing (*Paradise Holdings (Qld) Pty Ltd v Sunshine Coast regional Council & Ors (2025) QPEC 21*) – Appeal stemming from Council's rejection of an impact accessible application for a mixed-use commercial development on land in the Rural zone, His Honour Judge Williamson KC DCJ dismissed the case. He drew upon amongst other things, the weight of the Strategic Framework and associated outcomes including community identity, character and social inclusion, protection of scenic routes and importance to protect views and vistas. It is strongly suggested that Council in the assessment of the current application reflect on the

observations and findings made by His Honour Judge Williamson in the above mentioned case.

3.3 Need

The applicant has suggested that there is a need for crane storage and maintenance facilities to support the construction industry in SEQ as well supporting such projects as the Olympics. DW strongly believes there are other opportunities within the Sunshine Coast and indeed in the wider SEQ region for a crane storage area to be established. The applicant has not demonstrated a need relevant to the site in question, particularly as it is rural zoned land, abutting the blue heart initiative and at the gateway to Coolum Beach.

It is unclear from DW's read of the documentation including the report prepared by Urban Economics that there is a demonstrated economic need. It is also unclear as to what level and volume of crane storage would be utilised for storing the crane apparatus and associated materials on site. Can it be anticipated that the site would be principally vacant or indeed over utilised depending on crane demand? Would the site be utilised by the crane operator solely over time or subleased out to other parties for other building storage activities (crane or other) in the future? All this goes to the scope, impact and frequency of movement in and out of the site. Note: - the site is neither in the urban footprint or the economic corridor.

It is also important to note that "need" should not be viewed only through the prism of an owner, individual business or sector. A higher order issue is the "need" as envisaged by the community. These requirements are clearly identified in the Strategic Framework of the PS-2014 and when viewed from the aspect of a rural zoning, it is critical that the landscape values and visual amenity be maintained.

3.4 Built Form

The applicant is seeking retrospective approval for existing structures/improvements and approval to undertake further works including filling and construction of buildings reaching over 6.5 metres in height. The plans attaching to the submission shows this height as measured from a designated fill height and one can only assume the building height above natural ground is approximately 7.5 to 8 metres.

This build would again impact on visual amenity. The proposed depot will not maintain or enhance significant scenic and landscape values and as such is in conflict with the Strategic Framework, PO1 and outcome (a) of the Scenic Amenity Overlay code.

Furthermore, no building or earthworks should have been undertaken on the site without approval, and any subsequent approval should not reward or better place the current application or the applicant.

3.5 Flooding and Stormwater Management

It is believed the application does not comply with the Flood Hazard Overlay Code. The site is part of the Maroochy River flood plain and is in close proximity to the Blue Heart initiative. With the recognition of climate change by governments and Council's own supported policies such as CHAS, any proposed development having an undue or negative impact on flood retention capabilities in this area should be rejected outright (refer PO9- Flood Hazard Overlay Code).

It is acknowledged by DW that it does not have hydraulic engineering capabilities and will leave detailed assessment of stormwater management systems (flow, quality and quantity) to Council staff. However, DW remains concerned that filling the site and redirecting stormwater flow has clear potential for adverse impacts on surrounding areas.

3.6 Traffic Impacts

The site maintaining its current Rural zoning should ensure it has a minimal impact on traffic flow and conditions along Yandina Coolum Road. The establishment of a transport depot and maintenance facility would obviously increase traffic entering and exiting the site particularly the use of long and wide low loaders. Council will obviously assess this in detail, but DW remains concerned that the area is already underserved by road infrastructure and possibly will be so for some time to come as the community awaits the upgrade of the Coolum roundabout, flyover and associated works.

The Coolum roundabout has a history of motor accidents and heavy transport feeding onto the roundabout from a transport depot would likely increase traffic risks.

3.7 TMR Approval is Not Valid

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has approved access to the subject site from the State-controlled Yandina Coolum Road. TMR Decision Notice of 25 July 2025 refers. DW believes this a serious error and approval should not have been given.

TMR has proposed duplication of the Sunshine Motorway from the Pacific Paradise interchange to just north of its intersection with Yandina Coolum Road.

Public consultation for this project has concluded and is now in the Business Case stage. A detailed map of this duplication, in three sections, is attached as Annexure A

The third section of the plan shows, among other things, a realignment of Yandina Coolum Road (shown in green) where it exits the proposed interchange. This places the subject site to the east of Yandina Coolum Road, whereas the approval shows the subject site to the west.

DW respectively suggests that the TMR approval be withdrawn.

3.8 Subject Site is Contaminated

DW has received anecdotal evidence that the subject site is contaminated, and an ERA (Environmentally Relevant Activity) has been applied. According to a (then) employee of Maroochy Shire Council, the owner of the subject site facilitated the burial of a large amount of building construction waste including asbestos. When the waste was later discovered, Council took legal action against the owner.

DW strongly suggests that Council examines this claim.

3.9 Landscaping Deficiencies.

Landscaping plans viewed by DW suggest that the applicant is proposing the removal of approximately 30 mature trees currently on site and then undertaking additional “landscaping” using tube stock. Clearly tube stock will take significant time to mature and is totally unsatisfactory as a landscaping measure to shield crane storage and maintenance facilities from surrounding areas, road users and the community generally. The visual amenity of the area will be substantially reduced if the application is approved.

3.10 Visual Amenity

As mentioned above the purpose of the rural zoning in the planning scheme is to, amongst other things, to maintain and enhance the visual amenity of the area. The site is zoned rural and should embrace these requirements. There is clear potential for the site if the application was approved, for the development to detract from the visual appeal of the area and become somewhat of an eyesore at the “Gateway” to Coolum.

4 Recommendation

DW requests that Council reject the application made (as outlined in MCU25/0025 and OPW25/0044) and that the applicant desists from crane storage operations currently undertaken on site.

DW recommends that the applicant investigate other more suitable locations such as the Quanda Industrial Estate or other industrially based precincts across the Sunshine Coast or in the wider SEQ region.

See Annexure A attached – Sunshine Coast Motorway duplication and road works

END