

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

9.16 The committee recommends that, in light of the precautionary principle, no further approvals should be given under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* or the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* for the disposal of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area until the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Australian Institute of Marine Science Dredge Panel work is finalised.

Recommendation 2

9.17 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment examine whether a cap or a ban should be introduced on the disposal of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Recommendation 3

9.21 The committee recommends that the Department of the Environment ensure that conditions of approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* are stringently worded, monitored and enforced.

Recommendation 4

9.22 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment ensure that funding for, and resourcing and staffing levels within, the Department of the Environment are sufficient to ensure adequate capacity to monitor and enforce conditions of approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Recommendation 5

9.29 The committee recommends that the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan be drafted and finalised, subject to full community consultation, as a matter of high priority.

Recommendation 6

9.30 The committee recommends that the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan bring together all existing strategies, plans and reports in relation to the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 7

9.31 The committee recommends that the Australian and Queensland Governments ensure that the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan contains concrete targets and actions to improve the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 8

9.32 The committee recommends that the Australian and Queensland Governments ensure that the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan adequately addresses the cumulative impacts of all activities on the Great Barrier Reef Region and its world heritage values.

Recommendation 9

9.36 The committee recommends that funding for, and staffing for the Australian Institute of Marine Science be maintained, and wherever possible, increased, in order to ensure that they can continue to conduct the important research work needed to support management and decision-making in relation to the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 10

9.40 The committee recommends that the Australian National Audit Office expand its proposed and current audits relating to the Great Barrier Reef to include an audit of the performance of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Recommendation 11

9.42 The committee recommends that funding and staffing of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority be maintained in order to ensure that it can concentrate on providing independent, world-class management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Recommendation 12

9.44 The committee recommends that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority create a single, searchable database of all relevant reports and publications relating to the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 13

9.46 The committee recommends that the Australian Government take strong action, and an international leadership role, on the issue of climate change.

Recommendation 14

9.51 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment examine the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan to identify explicit load reduction targets as well as management strategies to achieve these targets.

Recommendation 15

9.61 The committee recommends that research funding be directed towards improving farming technologies, such as fertilisers, to make them more cost effective and less likely to negatively impact on the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 16

9.62 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment commission a scientific review of the impacts on water quality of farm-related products. In undertaking such a review, the committee recommends that an assessment be undertaken of:

- the potential benefits of new farming technologies, including use of new types of fertiliser; and
- mechanisms to decrease the use of pesticides.

Recommendation 17

9.63 The committee recommends that the Australian Government work closely with stakeholders to deliver enhanced environmental outcomes through the Reef Trust Programme and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

Recommendation 18

9.66 The committee recommends that there should be a strict adherence to the precautionary principle when assessing the potential impact of the development of Northern Australia, especially in previously undeveloped areas in catchments of the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 19

9.70 The committee recommends that the Queensland Government provide funding to local government authorities to assist with the upgrade of sewage treatment plants in the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas.

Recommendation 20

9.73 The committee recommends that the Queensland Government improve the enforcement of the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995* and associated regulations prohibiting the discharge of sewage from vessels into the waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

9.74 Further, the committee recommends that the Queensland Government provide funding for improved facilities at ports for the effective treatment and disposal of sewage originating from vessels in and around the Great Barrier Reef.

Recommendation 21

9.78 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment afford higher levels of environmental protection to areas on, or adjacent to, the Great Barrier Reef, including the Fitzroy River Delta and the Bathurst Bay Region.

Recommendation 22

9.80 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment examine measures to reduce coal particulate pollution in the Great Barrier Reef Region.

Recommendation 23

9.85 The committee recommends that the relevant Minister(s) examine whether the Australian Government should adopt the International Maritime Organization's *Guidelines for the Reduction of Underwater Noise from Commercial Shipping to Address Adverse Impacts on Marine Life*.

Recommendation 24

9.86 The committee recommends that the relevant Minister(s) ensure that further consultation be undertaken in relation to the draft North-East Shipping Management Plan.

Recommendation 25

9.91 The committee recommends that the Australian Government not accredit Queensland development approval processes under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Recommendation 26

9.92 The committee recommends that the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Bilateral Agreement Implementation) Bill 2014 not be passed.

Recommendation 27

9.94 The committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, conduct a review to examine ways to improve the rigour and independence of the environmental assessment process under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Recommendation 28

9.97 The committee recommends that the Department of the Environment develop a separate offsets policy in relation to the marine environment.

Recommendation 29

9.98 The committee recommends that the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Environmental Offsets Policy* be revised to provide greater guidance on developments in which offsets are unacceptable, such as a list of 'red flag' areas, including within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.