

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 401
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: GBRMPA input on Abbot Point referrals
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014

Question Type: written

Senator Waters asked:

Was GBRMPA consulted on the recent referrals made in relation to the Abbot Point onshore dredge spoil disposal proposal?

- a. Was that consultation undertaken by phone, email, or face to face?
- b. Did GBRMPA provide advice or input in relation to the decision to assess those referrals on preliminary documents?
- c. Did GBRMPA provide any general advice in relation to the importance of the Caley Valley wetlands to the GBR?

Answer:

Yes, GBRMPA was consulted on the recent referrals made in relation to the two Abbot Point onshore dredge spoil disposal proposals.

- a. A number of phone conversations between relevant officers of the Department of the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority took place in October 2014.
- b. GBRMPA staff also participated in a visit with officers of the Department of the Environment to the proposed site in October 2014.
- c. GBRMPA provided two advice letters to the Department of the Environment. The basis of the advice focussed on the potential impacts on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area as a Matter of National Environmental Significance. The advice did not contain input in relation to how the proposals should be assessed.
- d. The advice letter for EPBC2014- 7355 (Abbot Point Port and Wetland Project) highlighted the potential impacts from the project; specifically artificial barriers to flow, modifying supporting terrestrial habitats and complete removal of supporting terrestrial habitat for migratory shorebirds. The advice from GBRMPA to the Department of the Environment states that more information on the proposed management of land environmental values, specifically wetland hydrology and ecosystem function would be needed to allow for an assessment of potential impacts to be conducted.