

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Additional Budget Estimates, February 2013

**Program: Division or Agency:** GBRMPA **Question No:** 111  
**Topic:** Proposed sea dumping fee system  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:** Written

**Senator Waters asked:**

Please provide an update on the status of the proposed sea dumping fee system?

**Answer:**

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has not been asked to update or give any advice on the dredge spoil policy since March 2012.

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<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	GBRMPA	<b>Question No:</b>	213
<b>Topic:</b>	GBRMPA – North Queensland Bulk Ports		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	100 (11/2/13)		

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: Did you provide any advice to North Queensland Bulk Ports on any preferred disposal sites as opposed to this new proposed dumping site?

Mr Skeat: I would have to check in detail, but, no, we would not be in a position of providing advice at this stage on a preferred site. Our staff may have consulted with North Queensland Bulk Ports' consultants at some point. If they had sought information about some of the habitats around Abbott Point, that could be possible, but I am not aware of consulting on actual location.

Senator WATERS: Okay, if you can take that on notice and check your records.

**Answer:**

No. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) provided advice in regards to potential impacts from dredging and disposal and advised that in preparing a Public Environment Report for the T0, T2, T3 capital dredging project the proponent must consider alternatives to the existing offshore disposal site, including land based options. GBRMPA staff participated in a Multi Criteria Analysis Workshop in March 2012.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** GBRMPA **Question No:** 214  
**Topic:** GBRMPA – dumping of dredge spoil  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 100  
**or Written Question:** (11/2/13)

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: If you could take my final question on notice, how you are going to go through that process of weighing up local impacts versus potential benefits in a completely different location? That may only be a monetary contribution. And, particularly in the context of the seagrass offsets announcement that was made recently

**Answer:**

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) does not currently establish offsets under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, rather they are provided for under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, which is administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

Through the development of the draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2012, the GBRMPA has identified seagrass meadows to be a habitat *at risk* due to their exposure to multiple pressures including climate change, declining water quality and coastal development.

Approaches to valuing seagrass are still being developed. A study by Dr Peter Macreadie from the School of the Environment at the University of Technology in Sydney establishes a value of seagrass meadows, largely on their ability to store carbon.

At this stage the GBRMPA's view is that any offsets for loss of seagrass should consider the full range of ecosystem and other benefits including a source of primary production, nursery and breeding sites for many species, filtering of suspended sediments and carbon sequestration.

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<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	GBRMPA	<b>Question No:</b>	215
<b>Topic:</b>	GBRMPA – multi-criteria analysis workshops March 2012		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	100 and written (11/2/13)		

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: ...I understand there were some multi-criteria analysis workshops held in March 2012 at which GBRMPA staff attended. If you could table any notes that were made. There were criteria that were discussed; if you can table anything about the ratings of those criteria and any other reports or documents, that would be great.

**Answer:**

A Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Workshop for Abbot Point Terminals 0, 2 and 3 capital dredging was held on the 27 and 28 March 2012 in Brisbane. Two Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority staff attended the MCA Workshop: Manager Water Quality Assessments and Project Manager Ports and Shipping. The day before the meeting a Supporting Manual for the Workshop was sent out to the meeting participants (**Attachment A**). On 31 May 2012, the summary of the outcomes of the MCA Workshop was sent out to participants (**Attachment B**).

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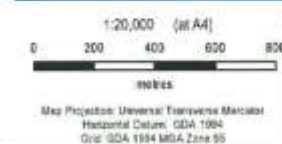
**Program: Division or Agency:** GBRMPA **Question No:** 216  
**Topic:** GBRMPA – tributyltin concentrations  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:** Written

**Senator Waters asked:**

Is GBRMPA satisfied with the use of "mean concentrations" to describe tributyltin concentrations found in sediments at Abbot Point where dredging is proposed to be undertaken for three new coal terminals?

**Answer:**

Yes, as it complies with the current Commonwealth Government's policy titled National Assessment Guidelines for Dredging 2009 (NAGD 2009). A total of 69 locations were sampled within the proposed dredge area. At least 136 individual sediment samples were analysed for tributyltin (TBT) concentrations from these locations (**Attachment A**). Of these 136 samples, only two samples were above the NAGD 2009 screening level TBT concentration.



**LEGEND**

- Sediment Sampling Locations
- Bathymetric Contour
- Great Barrier Reef
- Marine Park Boundary
- Randomly Selected Sample Cell
- Proposed Survey Grid
- Dredge Area
- Existing T1 Infrastructure

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**NORTH QUEENSLAND BULK PORTS CORPORATION**

North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation Limited  
T0, T2 and T3, Abbot Point, QLD.  
Capital Dredging, Public Environment Report

Job Number: 41-24541  
Revision: B  
Date: 13 Dec 2012

SAP Implementation Program  
Sampling Locations (GHD 2012c)

Figure 3-11

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© 2012. Whilst every care has been taken to prepare this map, GHD, Hancock Adams and NQBP make no representations or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and cannot accept liability and responsibility of any kind (whether in contract, tort or otherwise) for any expenses, losses, damages and/or costs (including indirect or consequential damage) which are or may be incurred by any party as a result of the map being inaccurate, incomplete or unsuitable in any way and for any reason.  
Data source: GBRMP/2011, NQBP, Dredge Area/2011, GHD Survey Grid, Survey Site/2011. Created: JVC, AL  
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**Program: Division or Agency:** GBRMPA **Question No:** 217  
**Topic:** GBRMPA – state party report  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

Does GBRMPA have any concerns about the contents of the State Party Report? And any concerns about UNESCO listing as World Heritage In Danger?

**Answer:**

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) was consulted as the State Party Report was being prepared. GBRMPA officers offered technical advice, particularly on the ongoing management actions being undertaken and the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property. The report was finalised by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and approved by the Minister as Australia's official response to the World Heritage Committee.

In relation to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, it is not appropriate to comment on speculative propositions. GBRMPA's focus will remain on the proactive and professional management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** GBRMPA **Question 218**  
**Topic:** GBRMPA – data available to Gladstone Harbour Review Panel **No:**  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. Can GBRMPA reflect on the amount and quality of scientific data available to the Gladstone Independent Panel recently announced by Minister Burke to do its assessment?
2. The community is concerned there is inadequate quality data (particularly as baseline work not done) – what additional work does GBRMPA think needs doing to give the community assurance that quality science is underpinning decisions about the harbour?

**Answer:**

1. There is a wealth of historic and contemporary environmental information available to the Gladstone Independent Review Panel to assist it with its assessment. The panel will also be able to obtain further independent scientific information to support the review if they determine it is required.
2. The independent review has been commissioned to address this question.



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**Program: Division or Agency:** GBRMPA **Question 219**  
**No:**

**Topic:** GBRMPA – Abbot Point dredging

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. The Public Environment Report for dredging and dumping at Abbot Point recommends dumping of at least 3 million cubic metres of dredge spoil in a new offshore site. North Queensland Bulk Ports indicates in the PER that at arriving at this position they have had consultation with a number of agencies. Has NQBP consulted with GBRMPA regarding disposal of Abbot Point dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef?
2. When were these consultations held?
3. Who from GBRMPA attended?
4. Did GBRMPA endorse the current sea dumping proposal in the PER?
5. What is the comparative cost of land treatment compared to disposal in the GBR? What is the percentage of disposal costs compared to the overall value and costs to the whole T0 T2 and T3 expansion costs?
6. Did GBRMPA provide advice to NQBP on preferred disposal sites at sea?
7. What advice was provided?
8. According to the PER two GBRMPA staff attended the Multi Criteria Analysis workshop held on 26 and 27 March 2012, which formed the basis for selecting the preferred dumping location. Is this correct?
9. Who from GBRMPA attended?
10. Did they participate in the development of the criteria used by NQBP for assessing disposal options?
11. Did they support the selection of the preferred dumping location?
12. All participants were asked to rate and weight various criteria in arriving at a preferred location. Did the GBRMPA staff participate in those exercises?
13. Do the criteria that were developed and used in arriving at a preferred dumping site accurately reflect the requirements of the Sea Dumping Act? Did NQBP follow the correct procedures for the hierarchy of preferences for dump site selection under that Act?
14. Did GBRMPA attendees provide a written report on the workshop, positions taken and conclusions arrived to senior GBRMPA staff?

15. Did GBRMPA independently model the dredge spoil plume or simply rely on NQBP's modelling?
16. Did GBRMPA consider the effects of the dredge plume on Holbourne National Park and Creal and Old Reefs?
17. Did GBRMPA consider the effects of resuspension of dredge spoil given NQBP describes the waters around Abbot Point as "hydrodynamic"?

**Answer:**

1. Yes.
2. On 27-28 March 2012 two GBRMPA representatives attended a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) workshop. On 8 May 2012 GBRMPA met with consultants working on the North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP) T0-T3 dredging project. NQBP briefed GBRMPA on the progress of the Public Environment Report (PER) on 17 August 2012.
3. The MCA workshop was attended by the Manager Water Quality Assessments and the Project Manager, Ports and Shipping. The meeting in Townsville was attended by the Manager Water Quality Assessments, Manager Ports and Shipping and Project Manager Ports and Shipping.
4. No.
5. The Abbot Point draft PER indicates that the overall cost of unconfined ocean disposal of three million cubic metres of dredge material is \$30 million. The projected overall cost of onshore disposal of the dredge material within the rail yard and adjacent port land and is estimated to be \$350 million. The overall values and cost of the T0, T2, and T3 expansion in total was not provided.
6. Yes.
7. GBRMPA provided verbal advice on the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* assessment process as well as the potential impacts of dredging and spoil disposal on the inshore Great Barrier Reef. It also brought to the proponent's attention the assessment framework within the National Assessment Guidelines for Dredging 2009 which requires the proponent to demonstrate that all alternatives to ocean disposal have been evaluated. No advice was provided on specific sites.
8. Yes.
9. Manager Water Quality Assessments and Project Manager Ports and Shipping.
10. No.
11. The MCA workshop did not identify a preferred offshore disposal location. The MCA workshop identified that four options would be investigated further, including one land based option.
12. Yes.
13. Yes.
14. No.

15. An independent peer review of the dredge spoil plume modelling was included in the PER Terms of Reference and the draft PER at the request of GBRMPA.
16. Yes, noting that the assessment is ongoing.
17. Yes, noting that the assessment is ongoing.