

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

Question No: 204
Hearing: Additional Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: Technical Advice Panel
Hansard Page: 95
Question Date: 24 February 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: How often will the technical advice panel and management response group meet? What is their schedule? What is their relationship with the authority?

Mr Elliot: I would have to take on notice what their schedule is. Their relationship with the authority is that we must approve the membership of the technical advisory panel, but they do not work for us. We also need to approve the membership of the management response group. We have also dictated who some of those members will be—not the individuals but, for example, we require industry and community representatives.

Answer:

The Technical Advice Panel (TAP) is an approval condition of both the EPBC approval and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park permission.

The Management Response Group (MRG) is an approval condition of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park permission.

The exact governance structure of the two groups and how they will interact will be determined in discussion with the proponents. The membership of both groups requires written approval from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The membership of the TAP must include at least two independent scientific experts with expertise in water quality and marine ecology. Written approval is also required from the department prior to the development and submission of the Dredging and Spoil Disposal Management Plan, the Abbot Point Ecosystem Research and Monitoring Plan and the Offset Plan. The TAP must also be established prior to and for the duration of dredging operations.

The schedule of meetings is yet to be established.