

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

Question No: 209
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: Review of the GBRMPA Board probity and appointments
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 07 March 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

1. Why was the Abbot Point sea dumping permit granted before this review was concluded?
2. How are members (and employees) screened for impartiality and relevant scientific knowledge?
3. Has GBRMPA changed its screening processes since the scandal last year?

Answer:

1. The board is not involved in these decisions. Decisions on project and development approvals in the Marine Park are made by the agency's senior management, based on a technical risk assessment.
2. Board appointment processes are managed by the Department of the Environment. The Department would be best placed to respond to this question.

Within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, all SES employees are expected to comply with the APS Disclosure of Interest Policy due to their leadership and decision making role. This includes completing a Private Interests Declaration form annually. Other employees may be asked to complete a Private Interest Declaration form on a case by case basis as required, depending on their specific role.

Employees are assessed for relevant scientific knowledge through the recruitment process by ensuring position descriptions and selection criteria include reference to relevant knowledge and expertise as required.

3. No. The Probity and Governance Review conducted by Mr Robert Cornall AO found that board members had not acted improperly and recommended that the agency take no further action.