

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

**Question No:** 46

**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates

**Outcome:** Outcome 5

**Programme:** Environment Assessment and Compliance Division

**Topic:** Western Dredging and Disposal Project

**Hansard Page:** 20

**Question Date:** 18 November 2013

**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: .....I want to move to the Western Basin Dredging and Disposal Project. What checks did the department do to make sure that the EIS that was prepared by the Gladstone Ports Corporation took into account all known information about the state of the local environment?

Mr Knudson: It would seem that we are going to have to take that one on notice just because it is the bit of a dated project for us; so we are going to have to dig into our files and come back to you on that specific question.

**Answer:**

As required by national environment law, when the Minister is satisfied that the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) has followed the guidelines set by the department, the proponent must publish it for a public comment period.

Once that public comment period closes, the proponent must address any relevant concerns raised through the public consultation before submitting a final EIS to the department.

The assessment method for the Western Basin Dredging and Disposal Project was determined to be undertaken in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 (Qld)*.

The EIS published for public comment by Gladstone Ports Corporation, received a number of comments from government agencies, non-government organisations and private individuals. A Supplementary Information Document (SID) to the EIS which addressed these comments was approved by the Queensland Coordinator General for release. Further comments were received on the SID from both government agencies and non-government organisations. These comments were considered when drafting the recommendation report.

In addition to the EIS, the SID, and taking into account the Queensland Coordinator General's report and conditions, the department sought further information from Gladstone Ports Corporation in relation to:

- additional analysis of alternative options for the disposal of dredge spoil to reduce the area and height of the proposed land reclamation;
- additional information and modelling to demonstrate the available dredging scenarios and their respective impacts in relation to dredge operations;
- additional information and modelling in relation to impacts from disposal of dredge spoil in the existing Port of Gladstone East Banks disposal ground;

- options for collecting additional baseline data, ongoing scientific monitoring and integration of monitoring results into adaptive management to improve impacts over the life of the proposal; and
- further details regarding offsets for impacts to matters of national environmental significance.

The Department's final assessment also took into account advice received from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the former Department for Resources, Energy and Tourism and findings of an independent review conducted by Golders Associates, on a comparative review of the "Western Basin Dredging and Disposal Project" proposal against best practice dredging and mitigation.