

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

Question No: 278
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: ABBOT POINT APPROVAL
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 17 June 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

Mr Elliot held concerns that the proponent had seriously underestimated the costs of offsets. Does GBRMPA still hold that position?

Answer:

As part of the proponent's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) approval, condition 31 requires the proponent to develop an Offsets Plan. As part of developing the Offsets Plan the proponent must provide it to the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) for review. A Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority representative will attend the TAP in an advisory role.

During the assessment of the proposal, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority reviewed the proponent's initial proposed method of calculating the volume of fine sediments that would be used to calculate offsets. In the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's view, this method did not include all fine sediments that would potentially be available for re-suspension. The proponent's cost estimates also appeared below published literature for sediment offsets in reef catchments and did not account for administrative start-up/implementation costs. As a result, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority was of the view that the proponent had potentially underestimated the cost of the offsets at that time.

Since the approval of the dredging and disposal proposal pursuant to the EPBC Act, the proponent has been developing the various plans required relating to approval conditions, and has been liaising with the Department of the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The Offsets Plan relating to condition 31 of the EPBC Act approval is yet to be completed and submitted.