

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

Question No: 218

Hearing: Budget Estimates

Outcome: Agency

Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Topic: Dumping of maintenance dredge spoil

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Question Date: 25 May 2015

Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: Moving quickly to the proposed dumping ban, which has not yet taken effect, it obviously does not apply to dumping of maintenance dredge spoil. I am interested in whether the department has provided any advice to government on the impacts of dumping maintenance dredge spoil in the marine park?

Mr Thompson: I do not know that we have officers at the table to answer that. I will take that on notice, if I can.

Senator WATERS: That is a shame because I think I am asking it in the right section. It is 1.4, is it not?

Mr Thompson: The dredging itself was dealt with primarily under the GBRMPA evidence yesterday and then your question is rightly to the department. I do not think it is in this program area. I will have to check on that at some stage.

Senator WATERS: Do I have a chance to ask it later or is the chance gone? I am keen to get an answer as quickly as possible.

Answer:

The Regulation Impact Statement - Banning the disposal of capital dredge spoil material in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park explicitly excluded maintenance dredging activities as well as the disposal of maintenance dredge material.

Longer-term, impacts from the disposal of maintenance dredge spoil material will be addressed through other actions, including the development of a maintenance dredging framework as outlined in the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

Impacts from maintenance dredging activities will continue to be addressed through the strict environmental regulatory assessment processes already in place.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority provides environmental advice through existing established regulatory assessment process for individual projects referred under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and has been delegated matters by the Minister under the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981*.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as part of the release of the Dredge Synthesis Report in March 2015 briefed the Minister for the Environment on the contents of this report.