

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 99
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Turtle and marine plan - Abbot Point
Hansard Page: 94
Question Date: 22 May 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: Why hasn't the turtle plan and the marine plan been done? You said the plans have not been done but there was a variation.

Mr Cahill: The vehicle for delivering the offset is now the Reef Trust. The Reef Trust has its own governance arrangements in terms of ensuring that the outcomes it is trying to produce are governed. They go through an expert committee. They will do consultation and a range of other things. Through that vehicle, they will produce the plans to ensure that the offsets are delivered. The requirement is that they are only to be put in place before a commencement of any mining. Our expectation is that there are superior outcomes from this approach not only because of the better targeting; there is an independent advisory panel or other arrangements to ensure that the quality of the offsets delivered by the Reef Trust are in a much better condition.

Senator URQUHART: I understood that previously the minister was to approve the plans. Does this condition change mean that they will not? So does the trust then seek ministerial approval?

Mr Cahill: Any revision of a management plan or anything will be reviewed by the department and would not necessarily be informed to the minister or his or her delegate.

Senator URQUHART: But not approval, as was previously the case. You just said 'informed'. I am just trying to clarify that.

Mr Cahill: I would have to take that on notice to be accurate.

Answer:

Under the original conditions of approval, Adani was required to prepare a Turtle Plan and a Marine Plan which would identify the projects to be implemented by Adani as marine offsets. These plans are no longer required following the variation to conditions approved by the Minister's delegate on 10 May 2017.

The offsets for this project will now be developed and approved under Reef Trust arrangements. The offset projects delivered by the Reef Trust for the Adani coal export terminal, as for any other project, will be targeted to ensure the activities address the relevant potential impacts. This includes offsets directly assisting turtles as well as offsets, such as improved water quality, that benefit the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area more generally.

Reef Trust projects are designed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and receive expert scientific advice from the Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel. The projects are then approved by the Minister for the Environment and Energy and delivered by Reef Trust.