

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

Question No: 392
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
Topic: DRAFT REEF 2050 PLAN – WATER QUALITY
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

Is anyone in GBRMPA or within the Commonwealth government on track to establish explicit load reduction target?

- a. Does GBRMPA know of anyone at all who is on track to establish explicit load reduction targets? Please give a rough timeframe.

Answer:

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority recommended to the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Council load reduction water quality targets in its Great Barrier Reef Catchment Water Quality Action Plan in 2001. With the subsequent development and implementation of the joint Australian and Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan) in 2003 the Australian Government funded the development of a number of catchment and regional Water Quality Improvement Plans. These plans identified the priority load reduction targets for pollutants in their area. In 2009, the review of Reef Plan led to the documenting of explicit Reef-wide targets for all the key pollutant loads entering the Great Barrier Reef from broadscale agriculture activities. All six Natural Resource Management Regions in the Great Barrier Reef catchment have been funded over the last two years to review and revise their regional pollutant targets and three of these regional Water Quality Improvement Plans (for the Wet Tropics, Mackay Whitsunday and Burnett Mary regions) are to be released publically shortly. Work has begun on the other three Water Quality Improvement Plans (for Cape York, Burdekin and Fitzroy regions) and these should be finalised in 2015. These second generation Water quality Improvement Plans are developing explicit ecologically based targets. Reef Plan was revised again in 2013 and has an action to update its targets, based on the review of these regional plans in 2016 and the implementation of a Reef-wide receiving water model.