

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

Question No: 62
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Environment Assessment and Compliance Division
Topic: REEF PLAN 2050 AND WHC RECOMMENDATIONS
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Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

1. Why does the draft Reef 2050 Plan not specifically address or adopt the wording that the WH Committee specifically requested from Australia in its various decisions; for example:
 - a. "Identify planned and potential future developments that could impact the OUV" (decision WHC 35 COM 7B.10 (Clause 3) – there seems no spatial indication of where developments might occur, but more importantly where they should not occur
 - b. "Ensure that development is not permitted if it would impact individually or cumulatively on the OUV of the property" (decision WHC 36 COM 7B.8 (Clause 5);
 - c. "Ensure ... developments within Port Developments areas do not impact individually or cumulatively on the OUV of the property" (decision WHC 38 COM 7B.63 (Clause 8b);
 - d. "Develop and adopt clearly defined and scientifically-justified targets for improving its State of Conservation" (decision WHC 36 COM 7B.8 (Clause 8) – while there are many targets in the draft plan, many of them are not clearly defined, and none seems to be scientifically-justified (if so, who were the scientists?)

2. In relation to 1(a) above, are there any plans to identify no go zones for development in the future?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government is categorically addressing all concerns raised by the World Heritage Committee. Several of the World Heritage Committee's concerns require careful planning and consultation. The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan builds on the comprehensive Strategic Assessment and is informed by the findings of Outlook 2014.
- The Strategic Assessment examined the status and trends of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area's environmental values, including its Outstanding Universal Value, and identified how we can strengthen our approach to protecting the Reef's environmental values. The Outlook Report highlighted key priorities for action. The Long-Term Sustainability Plan will deliver the actions that must be taken now to protect the Reef for the next 35 years to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations.
- A highly collaborative approach has been taken to the development of the Plan. This has included working closely with members of a Partnership Group. The membership of this group includes CEOs of peak environmental non-government organisations, industry bodies, community groups and representatives of the Indigenous community.

2. In addition, we have undertaken detailed and ongoing consultation with a number of key World Heritage stakeholders, including members of IUCN and key advisers to the World Heritage Committee. Most recently, discussions were held with representatives from IUCN and the World Heritage Committee during the World Parks Congress.
 - The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan specifies the development of new, or the expansion of existing port facilities will be concentrated to five Priority Port Development Areas (four of which are in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area) for the next ten years. The Great Barrier Reef Coastal Zone strategic assessment identified 32 per cent of the adjacent coastal zone is currently within terrestrial conservation areas.
 - Following the public consultation process the Department is updating the *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan* to incorporate more content and direction from all parties.