

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

**Question No:** 351  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Agency  
**Program:** Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority  
**Topic:** Maintenance dredging framework  
**Hansard Page:** 38  
**Question Date:** 17 October 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator WATERS, Larissa asked:**

**Senator Waters:** Are there any moves within that maintenance dredging framework to place quantitative limits on how much maintenance dredging can be done?

**Mr Elliot:** They were examined as part of dealing with the framework, but I would have to take on notice what the final outcome of that was.

**Senator WATERS:** Was GBRMPA asked to take a position on whether that was a good idea, and if so what was your position?

**Mr Elliot:** It is probably on the record, but in the past we have advocated limits. A number of assessments were done by consultants who were engaged as part of the development of the maintenance framework, which identified some problems with the setting of limits, in terms of the management of limits, and so we accepted some of the rationales that were put forward in that. Our final position was that as long as they could manage in a way which had similar outcomes, we were reasonably satisfied. That is what we are looking for at the end of the process.

**Senator WATERS:** Does that mean there will not be limits in the framework?

**Mr Elliot:** From my memory—which is why I am happy to take the question on notice—there will not be quantitative limits in terms of volumes.

**Answer:**

The draft maintenance dredging strategy for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area did not include limits on dredging volumes and/or disposal volumes.

Development of a maintenance dredging strategy for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area ports is being led by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. The strategy was developed through a consultative process, with feedback provided from industry groups, Queensland and Australian Government regulators, and various environmental groups and experts.

The Technical Supporting Document (which underpins the strategy) reviewed a number of management options including:

- the creation of long-term maintenance dredging management plans
- avoiding the need for maintenance dredging
- placing limits on the amount of material dredged or placed at sea

- beneficial reuse
- at sea disposal
- dredging equipment and operational approaches
- environmental windows
- cumulative impacts
- offsets and providing net benefits.

While the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has advocated for limits on disposal volumes in the past, it accepted the assessment provided in the Technical Supporting Document that similar outcomes could potentially be better achieved through other management options.

We are advised by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads that the strategy is due to be released soon.