

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

Question No: 51
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 5
Programme: Environment Assessment and Compliance Division
Topic: Yabulu - Nickel Refinery
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 07 March 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

1. Are you aware that the environmental authority given by the Queensland State government in late 2013 includes standards for the quality of water released that are less stringent than those of the previous authority, and identifies two creek mouths on the north Queensland coast from which wastewater disposal can occur?
2. If this is the situation, how does that sit with the Environment Department's commitment to improve water quality in the GBRWHA?

Answer:

1. The Department is aware that on 21 November 2013 the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection advised the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) that a new Environmental Authority had been issued to Queensland Nickel. This Environmental Authority sets out new containment limits for discharge both to the marine park (through the existing pipe) and to the coastal wetlands which flow directly into the marine park.
2. The Department will continue to monitor the project to ensure that Queensland Nickel Pty Ltd remain compliant with their Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act conditions of approval. As part of this monitoring, and consistent with the Department's approach to post approval monitoring, the Department will regularly liaise with GBRMPA and the Queensland Government to ensure that it is aware of all relevant information relating to the project.