

Maintenance Dredging Project

Why the need for maintenance dredging?

March 2019



North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP) is removing naturally occurring built-up sediment and relocating it, to maintain navigational depths and for operational efficiency of the Port.

NQBP's assessment reports have found the risks to sensitive marine environments including the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) and GBR Marine Park and sensitive habitats are predominantly low.

The natural build-up of seafloor sediment within port navigation areas has occurred over time and was exacerbated by Tropical Cyclone (TC) Debbie in 2017. Sudden depth loss from cyclones is a significant risk to the efficiency of the Port. The level of sediment build-up can interfere with the way vessels are able to use the Port of Hay Point, including causing loading delays.

Maintenance dredging will only be undertaken as appropriate to maintain navigational depths and operational efficiency.

Maintenance dredging has only been carried out at the Port twice in the past 10 years, in 2008 and 2010. By 2016, approximately 205,800 m³ of material had accumulated in the port's navigation areas. In 2017, TC Debbie significantly added to the accumulation of sediment contributing almost half of the total sediment build-up of 356,553 m³.

NQBP studies have shown that there is currently no feasible alternative to maintenance dredging.

What if maintenance dredging wasn't undertaken?

Maintenance dredging at the Port of Hay Point is critical for maintaining port infrastructure. Just like roads, shipping channels require maintenance to keep ports operating effectively.

Queensland ports are essential to Australia's economy and financial security. They handled approximately \$47.8 billion of exports during 2015-16. Major commodity ports within the GBRWHA account for 81% of total Queensland tonnage throughput.*



Low risk
to marine environments



Critical
for port infrastructure



\$47.8b
exports in 2015-16



Prevent \$170.2m
losses / yr



Real time
data available on website

If maintenance dredging is not undertaken, the capacity of the two terminals at the Port of Hay Point will decrease. There will be delays in the loading and unloading of ships, resulting in reduced export earnings and higher costs associated with those delays.

Without maintenance dredging, there would be a significant impact on jobs and the economy. There will be flow-on, indirect negative impacts on other industries, particularly coal supply chain industries. The indirect impacts will also flow through to the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (MIW) regions and Queensland economies. The income losses by residents affect their spending on goods and services.

An economic review found that without maintenance dredging over a 16-year period, the MIW Region economy is projected to reduce by a cumulative total of \$2.7 billion.

In other words, without maintenance dredging, the region is predicted to experience average economic losses of \$170.2 million per year.

What is maintenance dredging?

Maintenance dredging involves relocating sediment which travels along the coast and naturally accumulates over the years where our shipping operation occurs.

* Maintenance Dredging Strategy, Transport and Main Roads, November 2016

For more about this maintenance dredging program contact: North Queensland Bulk Ports

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