

Maintenance Dredging Project Frequently Asked Questions

March 2019

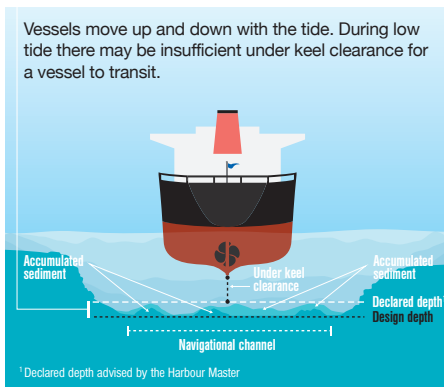


In January 2019, NQBP was granted Commonwealth permits allowing continued maintenance dredging at the Port of Hay Point following a thorough consultation and assessment process.

The 10-year permits, issued by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, carry conditions that protect the marine environment.

Q: What is maintenance dredging?

Maintenance dredging removes naturally accumulated sediment in existing navigation areas to ensure vessels move safely and efficiently through our ports.

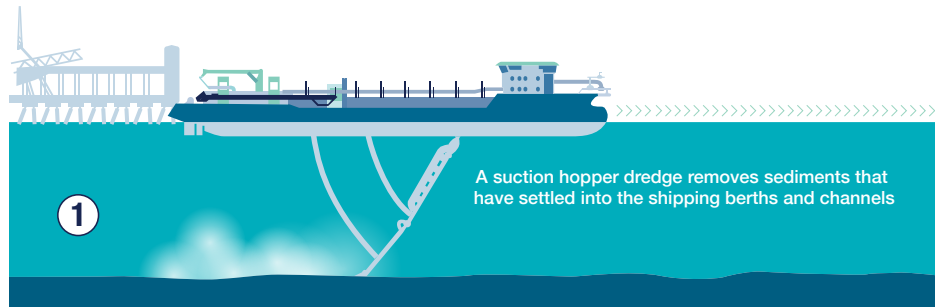


Maintenance dredging activities involve detailed regulatory approval processes under international conventions, and national and state legislation including periods of consultation and public submissions.

Q: How is it performed?

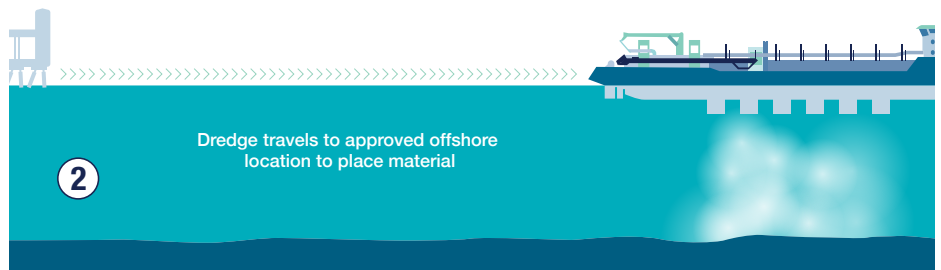
For the Port of Hay Point, NQBP uses a specially designed vessel, the Trailing Suction Hopper Dredger (TSHD) to undertake maintenance dredging.

The vessel acts like an underwater vacuum cleaner and is mainly used for dredging loose and soft material such as sand, gravel, silt or clay. The diagram (top right) illustrates this more clearly.



A suction hopper dredge removes sediments that have settled into the shipping berths and channels

Trailing Suction Hopper Dredger undertaking maintenance dredging



Dredge travels to approved offshore location to place material

Trailing Suction Hopper Dredger placing material

This vessel is crewed by highly experienced people, with equipment and technology designed to reduce impacts to the environment.

The vessel has features such as under keel discharge, green-valve technology and turtle deflectors to minimise the risk of harm to marine life.

Q: Why is maintenance dredging needed?

NQBP is removing 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 protected areas including the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are predominantly low with some temporary, short-term impacts to benthic habitat possible close to the dredging and relocation areas.

The natural build-up of seafloor sediment within port navigation areas has occurred over time and has been exacerbated by Tropical Cyclone Debbie in 2017.

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.

Q: What happens if the work isn't undertaken?

If sediment accumulation is not managed at the Port of Hay Point it is projected that there would be a significant reduction in jobs and economic loss as a result of increased shipping delays and reduced efficiency at the Port.

If left unmanaged, the loss of water depth over a 16-year period at Port of Hay Point is projected to decrease the size of the economy in the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Region by a cumulative total of \$2.7 billion.

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.

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Q: How much material will be relocated?

NQBP is permitted to dredge up to 756,553 m³ over a series of dredging programs during the 10-year permit period. There is an additional 200,000 m³ contingency permitted for severe weather events.

An environmental risk assessment report concluded that maintenance dredging and placement activities are unlikely to alter water clarity above naturally occurring ranges, unless maintenance dredging volumes in a single maintenance dredging program are above 800,000 m³.

This volume of maintenance dredge material in a single program is double what NQBP is proposing in any single maintenance dredging program during the 10-year period of the permit.

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, Tropical Cyclone Debbie significantly added to the accumulation of sediment contributing almost half of the total sediment build-up of 356,553 m³.

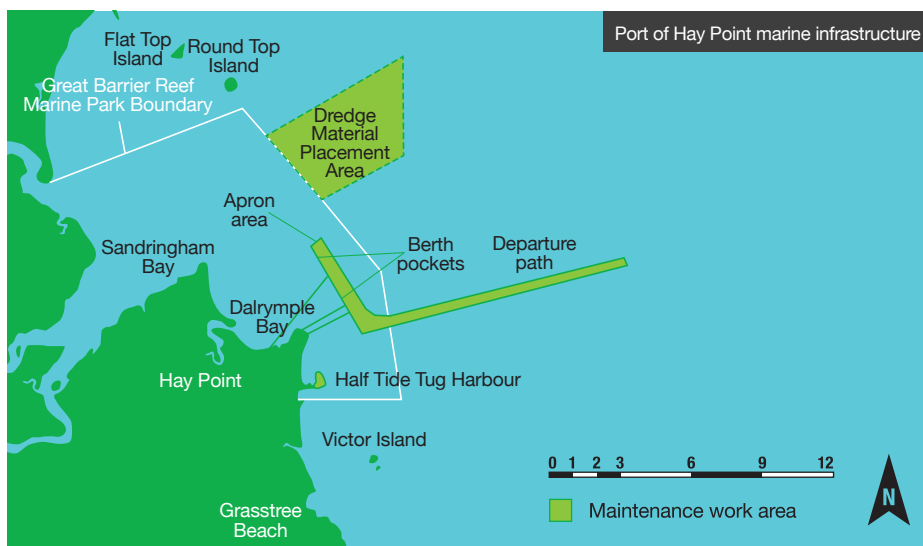
Q: How long will the initial program take?

The initial maintenance dredging program is planned to be approximately 40 days from late March 2019.

Q: Will there be any restrictions on boats using the local marine waters?

Maritime Safety Queensland has issued a Notice to Mariners advising that unauthorised ships are prohibited from anchoring, berthing, mooring or operating within the water declared within the approved material relocation area during the works.

Any further impacts will be minimal and NQBP will communicate any changes regarding the use of the marine area during the maintenance dredge program.



All current marine laws and rules will apply. There may be some minor delays to recreational boating at the Half Tide Tug Harbour while the dredger is within the harbour.

Q: Where will the material be placed?

The approved Dredge Material Placement Area (DMPA) is located approximately 6km north of the Port and within defined port limits.

The DMPA is mostly in the general use zone of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park with a small portion of the northern part of the DMPA within the Habitat Protection Zone. This DMPA has been used for this purpose by the Port since 2006.

Q: Who will be monitoring the program and making sure it is undertaken responsibly?

NQBP's assessment reports have found the risks to protected areas including the GBRWHA and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are predominantly low with some temporary, short-term impacts to benthic habitat possible.

NQBP will continue its extensive ongoing best practice monitoring programs and also adopt

new leading monitoring initiatives around periods of maintenance dredging, to ensure any unpredicted changes to water quality are appropriately managed.

Q: Where can I access reports and further information?

Industry-leading research, as well as technical studies, have informed NQBP's approach to the proposed maintenance dredging – the approach has been designed to minimise impacts to the environment.

For more detailed information on any aspect of this assessment please visit NQBP's website.

Q: Where can I get updates on the initial dredge program?

To learn more about NQBP's maintenance dredging program at the Port of Hay Point visit nqbp.com.au.

You can also access real-time water quality information on a live dashboard on our website.

Information is gathered from water logger sites at Round Top Island, Victor Island, Slade Island and Freshwater Point.