Maintenance Dredging Project

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2024

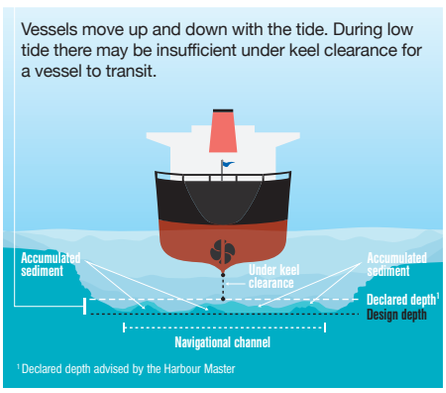
NQBP hold all the environmental approvals required to continue maintenance dredging at the Port of Hay Point. The permits were issued following a thorough consultation and assessment process.

The permits 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.



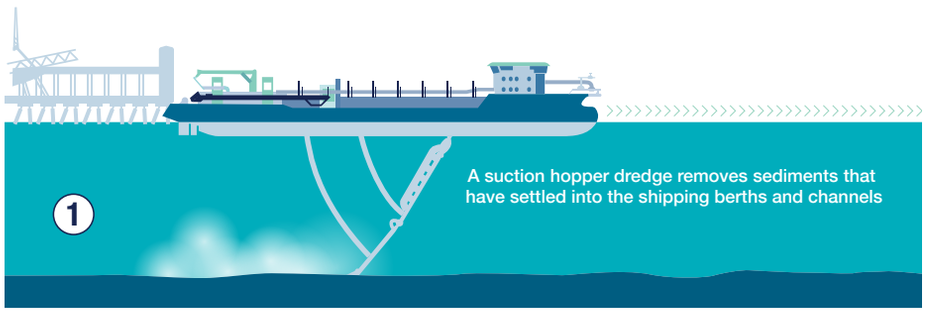
Q: How is it performed?

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.

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.



Trailing Suction Hopper Dredger undertaking maintenance dredging

Trailing Suction Hopper Dredger placing material

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 occurs over time.

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.

Q: How much material will be relocated?

Maintenance dredging at the Port of Hay Point is capped at 200,000m^3 for a single campaign. During this project NQBP are targeting and estimated removal of 180,000m^3.

Q: How long will the initial program take?

The maintenance dredging program is planned to be approximately 28 days from late August to mid-September 2024.

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

P 1300 129 255 | E communications@nqbp.com.au

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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.

In addition, siltation removal works at the public Half Tide Tug Harbour boat ramp will also take place during the project. There may be short-term temporary access restrictions while this work is underway.

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?

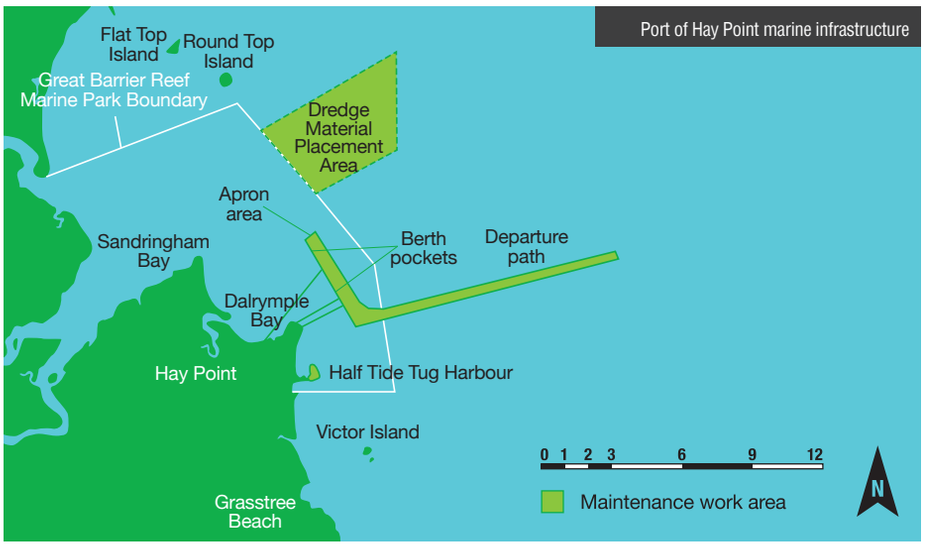
NQBP's assessment reports have found the risks to protected areas including the GBRWHA and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are predominantly low with some temporary, short-term impacts to benthic habitat possible.

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.

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