



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Committee Secretary
Transport and Public Works Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
E: tpwc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Submission to the Queensland Parliamentary inquiry into a sustainable Queensland intrastate shipping industry

The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef ecosystem and an Australian and international icon. The diverse range of habitat types and extraordinary biodiversity make the Great Barrier Reef one of the richest, most complex natural systems on earth. The area has significant environmental as well as social, economic and cultural values and plays an important role in the local, regional and national economies.

The Commonwealth and Queensland governments have for over 40 years demonstrated their commitment to working collaboratively for the long-term protection and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef. The 2015 Great Barrier Reef Intergovernmental Agreement¹ recognises the Great Barrier Reef comprises a complex network of bioregions that interconnect with the adjacent onshore coastal and catchment ecosystems. These transcend jurisdictional boundaries and encompass overlapping areas of responsibility.

The Australian and Queensland government's Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan-July 2018² details threats to the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem health, foundational programs and activities to treat those threats. The threats posed by shipping include groundings and spills (oil, chemical etc.). The treatments identified as foundational are activities under the North-East Shipping Management Plan³ and the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies⁴. The treatments for the threats posed by shipping have two approaches:

Firstly, prevention through vessel and navigation standards. This includes early intervention during potential shipping incidents, including collision avoidance, pilotage requirements and adherence to designated shipping areas. Interventions are largely facilitated through the live monitoring of vessel traffic, these strategies are detailed in the North-East Shipping Management Plan.



Secondly, minimising harm through rapid response and the investigation of shipping incidents. The National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies maintains a national framework for the effective response to pollution incidents in the marine environment. The National Plan is supported by the Queensland Coastal Contingency Action Plan⁵ which outlines the prevention, preparation, response and recovery arrangements for a maritime casualty and/or marine pollution incident in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's 2014 Outlook Report⁶ (next report due to be released in 2019) details the emerging evidence of consequential impacts from shipping. These include the leaching of biocides from ships antifouling coatings, vessel noise effect on marine animals and the disturbance and resuspension of sediments from vessel wakes or vessel interactions with the sea floor.

It is the submission of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority that an increase in shipping traffic volume within the Great Barrier Reef as a result in growth of intrastate shipping is likely to increase the need for measures to prevent and respond to shipping incidents. These measures need to be appropriately resourced. This includes resources for ship monitoring and vessel traffic services designed and proven to prevent shipping incidents, along with the capability to mount an appropriate and rapid incident response to minimise environmental harm following a shipping incident.

Management of the potential increases in consequential impacts of shipping may require an evaluation of current environmental monitoring regimes and the physical management of shipping in Great Barrier Reef waters to mitigate environmental harm.

Such measures are important in maintaining the International Maritime Organisations declaration of the Great Barrier Reef as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Banks".

Dr Simon Banks
General Manager, Reef Protection

18 January 2019

1. www.environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/protecting-the-reef/intergovernmental-agreement
2. www.environment.gov.au/marine/gbr/long-term-sustainability-plan
3. www.amsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/amsa439-north-east-shipping-management-plan.pdf
4. www.amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/national-plan-maritime-environmental-emergencies/national-plan-maritime
5. www.msq.qld.gov.au/Marine-pollution/Contingency-plans
6. www.gbrmpa.gov.au/cdn/2014/GBRMPA-Outlook-Report-2014/