

Submission from Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network

Independent Review of The Port of Gladstone

20th March 2013

Ms Anthea Tinney,

Chair,

Independent Review of Port of Gladstone

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities,

Canberra ACT

Dear Ms Tinney

The Gladstone Regional Environmental Advisory Network (GREAN) is a community organization of concerned individuals, some with a scientific background, but all with the love of the natural environment and its sustainability. GREAN was formed in response to community concerns and now sits as part of the Gladstone Regional Council's (GRC) Community Plan. <http://www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/web/guest/grean1> . Part of its charter is to make community recommendations to the Council on environmental issues within the Gladstone Region and to advocate to other levels of government on matters pertaining to the natural environment.

In response to your review, we offer the following points for your consideration:-

- Local government and the community have the right to comment on draft decisions and proposals including Environmental Impact Statements. However, neither the community nor Local Government is involved in the discussions such as desired planning outcomes prior to the release of the documents of these proposals. Community consultation for the Gladstone Port Corporation Limited (GPCL) is to hold meetings to tell the public what is being planned or done.
- When projects prepare their Environmental Impact Statements, they are not required to consider the cumulative and synergistic impacts of their project in relation to other pre-existing projects and industries.
- There is a real perception that monitoring being done on the Gladstone Harbour to test for water quality, seabed life and air quality is not independent because it is being done under contract to industry. Some of the raw data and results are not available for public scrutiny.
- In reference to the dredging, the community has concerns over the dumping of spoil on the outer reaches of the harbour. Satellite imagery shows extensive plumes going beyond the boundary of the harbour and onto fishing grounds along the east coast of Curtis Island. Commercial fishermen report diseased fish being caught in this area and blame the plume from the dumping.
- Within the harbour, members of GREAN cited that the impact of dredging could have been significantly reduced had GPCL had improved dredging methods such as skirts around bucket dredges and had built a more effective bund wall in the Western Basin.
- Community has concerns that the compliance regime for monitoring of the environmental conditions of the project approvals has been lacking and there appear to be conflicts between levels of government as to who should be the regulator, enforcer, and auditor.
- Concerns were raised that the proponents have also been tasked with oversight of undertaking conditions including compliance reporting.

These issues have been raised by the community and members of GREAN. Should you wish clarification or expansion of any of these points, our members would be prepared to meet with your panel when you next visit Gladstone.

Cr Colin Chapman

Chair,

Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network