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# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Who'd pay for spoil dumping in the Marine Park?**

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) is calling on the Federal Minister for the Environment to confirm that taxpayers would not pay to 'make good' any damage resulting from his decision to allow 3 million cubic metres of dredge spoil from the Abbot Point port expansion to be dumped in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The call follows various media reports on the issue.

In December last year the Minister issued North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP) with an approval for the dredging and dumping. The approval included the condition that NQBP 'offset' the expected damage to water quality at Abbot Point by reducing river sediment inputs into the Marine Park. The reduction would need to be 150% of the sedimentation produced by the dredging and dumping associated with the proposed port expansion.

The dredging would enable the development of coal export terminals by Adani and GVK Hancock Coal.

Documents obtained by NQCC show that NQBP offered only \$2 million to meet the 'offset' requirement. GBRMPA staff put the cost at 'more like \$100 million', saying 'the proponents may have a very different view (much cheaper) of the scale and costs of offsets'.

"Since then, other experts have suggested that the costs could be many times GBRMPA's estimate", said Jeremy Tager of NQCC.

"But, regardless of the amount, NQCC is calling on the Minister to confirm that no taxpayer money would be used to pay for any damage caused by the proposed expansion of the port at Abbot Point.

"Given that the proponent of the government-approved expansion, NQBP, is state-owned, it is important that the Federal Minister makes it very clear that neither

Federal nor State funds would be used to pay to 'make good' any damage associated with the controversial expansion.

"We are asking for an unequivocal statement that taxpayers would not be paying in any way for dumping and dredging that is going to further damage the GBR" Tager said.

NQCC is challenging in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal the decision to permit the dumping of the dredge spoil from the Abbot Point development in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

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