



JEFF SEENEY

Deputy Premier

Minister for State Development, Infrastructure & Planning



Member for Callide

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Abbot Point wetlands project means no dredge spoil on Reef

The Caley Valley Wetlands at Abbot Point Port will be protected and enhanced by the Queensland Government's Abbot Point Port and Wetlands Project.

Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Jeff Seeney has rejected today's scaremongering by the World Wildlife Fund calling for a delay to the project.

"This project enables the use of dredge material—which will otherwise be dumped in the Great Barrier Marine Park Area—to be used beneficially on land," Mr Seeney said.

"Any delay to this project puts it at risk, meaning the alternative, dumping the dredge material at sea, is once again a live option."

Attempts by environmentalists to further delay expansion of the Abbot Point port project by dismissing years of environmental studies also ignore the views of local residents who support the project.

The Deputy Premier urged environmental groups to join the State Government's efforts to protect the Great Barrier Reef or risk sabotaging a common sense solution put together with the cooperation of all other stakeholders.

Mr Seeney, who has spent the past two days in and around the Abbot Point area, said calls by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for yet another lengthy environmental investigation at Abbot Point were part of a wider campaign to stop mining projects in Queensland.

"At some point, the environmental movement has to stop playing games with the livelihoods of Queenslanders and communities like Bowen," he said.

"They have no consideration for the thousands of jobs affected or the economic impact.

"The Queensland Government already massively scaled back Labor's environmentally disastrous plan and has now put forward an alternative that could stop dredged material being placed in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park."

Mr Seeney said he rejected claims that an environmental impact assessment study at Abbot Point was needed.

"This area has been the subject of intensive scientific investigation and analysis over many years," he said.

“The Abbot Point Port and Wetland Strategy, referred to the Commonwealth last Friday for assessment under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*, has drawn on extensive environmental investigations.”

The two referral documents included more than 40 references to studies and reports on topics ranging from turtle population and wetland bird surveys to site geology and soil investigations.

Technical investigations on 16 different topics associated with dredged material were also used as the basis for the Strategy. These investigations included wetland hydrology and water quality investigations which looked at issues such as flooding and salinity.

Dredged material was screened and tested against national guidelines and found to be clear of contamination. The studies also found that no impacts from potential acid sulphate soils were anticipated, with rigorous monitoring and management plans to be in place as a precaution.

“Our proposal acknowledges the importance of the Abbot Point wetlands both as a wildlife habitat and to the long-term health of the reef,” he said.

“What we have proposed provides the best opportunity to protect important habitat and deliver much-needed rehabilitation of degraded areas.

“Rather than yet another spoiler tactic, I would invite WWF to get on board with us and the local community and help the wetlands and the reef.”

For more information on the project, or to provide feedback visit www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/wetlands or email www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/wetlands