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Dear Mr Rao

I am writing to provide further information in reply to questions raised during discussions on the Great Barrier Reef with Dr Fanny Douvère (World Heritage Centre) and Mr Tim Badman (IUCN) on 17 and 20 January 2014.

A number of the questions raised in these discussions have been addressed in Australia's State Party Report, provided to the World Heritage Centre on 29 January 2014. The following information supplements that already provided and Australia is pleased to authorise the upload of this additional information to the World Heritage Centre's state of conservation website.

Our discussions in January focused on Australia's response to the World Heritage Committee's decisions on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage property since 2011. Australia is investing significant resources and has made considerable progress on a range of measures to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Great Barrier Reef is the central element within its protection and management system. As described in the State Party Report, Australia's approach includes:

- the strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef and resulting Reef 2050 — Long-Term Sustainability Plan for the Great Barrier Reef (to be completed by June 2015 as requested by the World Heritage Committee)
- the Independent Review of environmental management arrangements of the Port of Gladstone, which supported establishment of a Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership as the way forward. The Partnership was launched in November 2013 and is currently working on a pilot report card
- continuing delivery of existing commitments to maximise the water quality outcomes for the reef including ongoing commitment to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan
- continuing strict protection under national environment laws including the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)*, the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, and the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981*.

Draft Queensland Ports Strategy

During our discussion, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN asked for clarification of the commitments made in the draft Queensland Ports Strategy.

When finalised, the Queensland Ports Strategy will maintain and build on the Queensland Government's existing commitment to restrict significant port development, within and

adjoining the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, to within existing port limits until 2022 (see the draft Great Barrier Reef Ports Strategy at

<http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/resources/plan/great-barrier-reef-ports-strategy.pdf>). The Queensland Government has built on this commitment in the draft Queensland Ports Strategy by proposing that dredging for port developments be restricted to only five Priority Port Development Areas (PPDAs), of which four are within or adjoining the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (Gladstone, Hay Point/Mackay, Abbot Point and Townsville).

More specifically, the draft strategy outlines the Queensland Government's vision for the next ten years and commits to:

- Creation of five PPDAs to consolidate development covering the six existing trading ports at Brisbane, Gladstone, Hay Point/Mackay, Abbot Point and Townsville.
- Prohibition of capital dredging for the development of additional deep water port facilities outside of these five PPDAs for a period of ten years, until 2024. This is to encourage consolidation of future development within the PPDAs and ensure protection of the balance of the Queensland coastline from capital dredging projects.
- Introduction of port master plans for PPDAs and encouraged for non-PPDA ports. This is to ensure port operators think strategically about their future operations and developments in relation to both economic certainty and environmental protection.
- Development of a new statutory port master planning guideline to ensure master plans cover a range of matters. This guideline will include a requirement for master plans to have an Environmental Management Framework (EMF) that will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts and offsets. The EMFs for PPDAs will be required to meet both Queensland and Australian government environmental standards.
- A review to assess the adequacy of the current port governance model for Queensland ports and identify optimum governance model for the future.

The port limits of the five PPDAs are maritime boundaries defined by legislation including the *Queensland Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* and the *Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Regulation 2005* (See

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/T/TranstInfPorR05.pdf>). See <http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Shipping/Port-limits-in-Queensland.aspx> for individual port limits.

The maritime boundaries of these PPDAs will be contained within existing port limits:

- Port of Brisbane PPDA – contained within the port limits of Brisbane
- Port of Gladstone PPDA – contained within the port limits of Gladstone
- Port of Mackay/Port of Hay Point PPDA – two separate zones, contained within the port limits of Mackay and Hay Point respectively
- Port of Abbot Point PPDA – contained within the port limits of Abbot Point
- Port of Townsville PPDA – contained within the port limits of Townsville.

The Fitzroy Delta/Keppel Bay area north of Gladstone will not be declared a PPDA.

Where other port limits are adjacent to a PPDA's port limits (for example the port limits of Rockhampton are adjacent to the port limits of Gladstone), these port limits will not be considered part of the PPDA.

During public consultation on the draft Queensland Ports Strategy, respondents sought clarification of the terms 'capital dredging' and 'deep water' with regard to the prohibition of capital dredging for the development of additional deep water facilities outside of the five PPDA's. These terms will be refined in the final Queensland Ports Strategy to reduce confusion and to ensure that the prohibition reflects the government's commitment to protect greenfield areas from the impacts of port development. The commitment will be enshrined in the legislation that establishes PPDA's. The ten year assurance aligns with standard legislative review timeframes. The legislation is required to be reviewed within ten years. The review will determine whether the commitment is extended by the Queensland Government.

The draft Queensland Ports Strategy does not seek to retrospectively prohibit projects that have been previously approved or proposals that have begun the environmental assessment and approval process. If proponents wish to continue with the development of these projects, such as the Fitzroy Terminal proposal and the Wongai proposal, they will need to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which describes the current environment; project's environmental impacts and ways of avoiding, mitigating or offsetting these impacts.

The EIS must provide sufficient information to enable the Queensland Government to come to an informed view on the project's potential impacts and ways of managing those impacts. Impacts include direct, indirect and cumulative impacts resulting from the construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning of the project. Projects may then be approved, approved subject to conditions, or not approved based on the evidence provided. Developments will also continue to be subject to rigorous environmental assessment by the Australian Government.

As indicated in Appendix 7 of the State Party Report (page 82), the proponents of the Balaclava Island proposal have withdrawn the project from the EIS process. This proposal (and any similar proposal) is therefore prohibited by the Queensland Ports Strategy and cannot recommence the approvals process.

Attached to this letter is a table outlining the application of both the best practice principles identified by the Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone, and Outstanding Universal Value, as part of the decision-making relating to the four projects at Abbot Point and the Port of Gladstone approved in December 2013. Considerable detail of these projects is already included in the 2014 State Party Report (Chapter 4.3 and Appendix 9). The attached table seeks to more specifically address the questions raised during our January discussions.

Future planning

The comprehensive strategic assessment Australia is undertaking in response to the World Heritage Committee's request will assist future planning for conservation of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The strategic assessment takes a systems approach, looking at the respective planning, governance and decision making arrangements of both the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Government. Rather than one single map, a suite of numerous mapping tools across all levels of government is already

available for proponents to use in conjunction with the program under the strategic assessment. Some examples follow:

Government Level	URL for mapping tools	Description of mapping tool
National	http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/about-us/legislation/environment-protection-and-biodiversity-conservation-act-1999/protected	Mapping tool to help determine whether matters protected by the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> are likely to occur in an area of interest
National	http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/zoning-permits-and-plans/zoning/zoning-maps	2003 zoning plan of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
State	http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/marine-parks/gbr_coast_marine_park.html	Complementary state zoning plan for coastal waters of the Great Barrier Reef
State	http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/about-planning/spp-mapping-online-system.html	SPP Interactive Mapping System - Mapping tool showing matters of State environmental significance that are required to be appropriately integrated into a local government planning scheme or used by local government in development assessment
State	http://sara.dsdip.esriaustraliaonline.com.au/saraviewer/	SARA online mapping system – Mapping tool showing matters

		of interest to the state that require assessment by or referral to the Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP)
State	http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/development-applications/mydas.html	MyDAS - New online tool to lodge or refer development applications to DSDIP as an assessment or referral agency (where a matter of interest to the state is affected)
State	http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/development-applications/development-assessment-online-smart-eda.html	eDA system - Online tool to submit development application to local governments (where a matter of interest to the state is not affected)
Local	http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/local-area-planning/local-government-planning-schemes.html	Local government planning schemes

'One stop shop' for environmental approvals

As indicated on page 45 of the State Party Report, the Australian Government is committed to delivering a 'one stop shop' for environmental approvals that will accredit state planning systems under national environmental law, to create a single environmental assessment and approval process. The strategic assessment and one stop shop processes are complementary as both simplify approval processes while maintaining high environmental standards and improving Australia's investment climate by providing business with greater certainty. A set of standards has been developed, outlining the requirements of national law and policy that are essential for the Australian Government to be satisfied that high environmental standards will be maintained by the States. The July 2012 *Draft Framework*

of *Standards for Accreditation of Environmental Approvals* can be found on the Department of the Environment's website <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/draft-framework-standards-accreditation-and-statement-environmental-and-assurance-outcomes>. In addition to the standards, the Australian Government is developing an Assurance Framework, which will include a series of checks and balances, to ensure the agreements with States are implemented effectively and are delivering on intended outcomes.

The 2011, 2012 and 2013 decisions of the World Heritage Committee request a suite of long-term strategic changes to Australia's environmental policy framework and specific limits to coastal and port development. Australia is responding with a substantial investment of resources committed to the health of the Great Barrier Reef to both reform our policy framework and limit the potential individual or cumulative impacts of coastal and port development on the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the World Heritage property. This continues our strong record of management and reflects the commencement of a further decade-long reform effort to protect the world's largest coral reef ecosystem and one of its most beloved natural icons.

I trust this supplementary information, and that already provided in the State Party Report, fulfils your requirements. If you require any further information, please contact Dr Kate Feros, Director, International Heritage, Kate.Feros@environment.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Carolyn W Cameron

Carolyn Cameron
Assistant Secretary
GBR Taskforce

17 February 2014



	Application of the Best practice principles identified by the Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone	Application of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
Abbot Point Terminal 0	- All of the approval conditions for EPBC 2011/6194 (http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=6194) relate, directly or indirectly, to the OUV of the World Heritage Area. - The assessment took into account the cumulative impact assessment of Abbot Point that was undertaken by an industry consortium, including Adani, in 2012. Assessment documentation was made available to the public for comment and the Department of the Environment's recommendation report is publicly available (http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=6194). - Terminal 0 will be developed at the existing Port of Abbot Point and will utilise some common infrastructure. Construction will take place within a State Development Area and is consistent with the long term planning for that area. - Environmental, economic and social considerations formed the basis for the assessment of the proposal under national environmental law. - The environmental offsets must be measurable and result in a net environmental gain through a Turtle Plan to reduce feral animal	- All of the approval conditions for EPBC 2011/6194 (http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=6194) relate, directly or indirectly, to the OUV of the World Heritage Area. More specifically: - Conditions 3-9 relate to the protection of listed and migratory marine species. - Under conditions 10-17 the approval holder is required to develop and implement a marine and shipping management plan to ensure any impacts on the OUV of the GBRWHA, including all aspects of shipping through the GBR, are appropriately managed. - Conditions 18-24 require the approval holder to develop and implement a terrestrial management plan that must include actions to protect listed ecological communities, listed migratory bird species as well as downstream water quality to the Caley Valley Wetland and GBRWHA. - Conditions 25-27 relate to Indigenous consultation and heritage management. - Conditions 28-35 require the approval holder to develop and implement a marine offset strategy to achieve a net benefit to the OUV of the GBRWHA. It is to be funded through an annual

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	predation on turtle nests and a Marine Plan that targets natural resource management priorities (developed in consultation with relevant natural resource management bodies, the Department of the Environment and GBRMPA) to improve the integrity and resilience of the World Heritage Area. • Post-approval management and monitoring is built around adaptive management, including through the application of trigger thresholds. • The approval holder must report on compliance with the proposed conditions regularly and publicly and there are provisions for audits of compliance, in addition to self reporting by the approval holder.	contribution of \$450,000 (adjusted for Consumer Price Index) over the life of the approval (40 years). • The marine offset strategy must include an annual program to reduce the level of feral animal predation on green turtle and flatback turtle species nests and to enhance the marine habitat, as well as a marine plan to reflect the most appropriate natural resource management priorities relating to the potential impacts on the OUV of the GBRWHA. • Conditions 36-53 relate to the submission and publication of plans and strategies to give effect to the approval conditions, provision for their independent review; provisions for audit of compliance with the conditions and the Minister's reserve powers to request revisions or changes to plans and strategies submitted by the approval holder.
Abbot Point Capital Dredging	• Appendix 9 of the State Party Report (pages 88-89) outlines the approval conditions for the Abbot Point Capital Dredging Project (EPBC 2011/6213), which took into account the principles of the Gladstone Review principles on the future planning and operations of ports within the GBRWHA. Specifically: • All of the approval conditions (http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=6213)	• All of the approval conditions for EPBC 2011/6213 (http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=6213) relate, directly or indirectly, to the OUV of the World Heritage Area. More specifically: • Conditions 27-30 relate to the protection of listed and migratory marine species.

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	relate, directly or indirectly, to the OUV of the World Heritage Area. • The Department of the Environment's recommendation report is publicly available (http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=6213) • The dredging proposal will be undertaken at a long-established major port area (the Port of Abbot Point), identified in the draft Queensland Ports Strategy. • The proposal included the capital dredging required for three coal terminals at the Port of Abbot Point so that the dredging impacts could be assessed and managed cumulatively. The assessment also took into account the cumulative impact assessment of Abbot Point that was undertaken by an industry consortium, including the proponent, in 2012. Assessment documentation was made available to the public for comment. • The proponent must offset the amount of fine sediments released into the environment by 150 per cent by funding onshore sediment reduction activities in the Great Barrier Reef catchment. This will result in a long term net reduction of fine sediments entering the Great Barrier Reef from land based sources, well beyond the life of this project. • Three major management plans are required to further protect the environment:	• Conditions 31-32 relate to offsetting the amount of fine sediments released into the environment by 150 per cent by funding onshore sediment reduction activities in the Great Barrier Reef catchment. This will result in a long term net reduction of fine sediments entering the Great Barrier Reef from land based sources, well beyond the life of this project. Improvement of water quality will benefit those OUV of the GBRWHA that are impacted by the decline in water quality.

	Application of the Best practice principles identified by the Independent Review of the Port of Gladstone	Application of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
	• a dredge and spoil disposal management plan will minimise impacts on matters of national environmental significance, water quality and ecosystem health • an Abbot Point ecosystem research and monitoring program will put in place ongoing real time monitoring and analysis of impacts on sensitive receptors (such as seagrass), and • a disposal site analysis plan that will identify alternative disposal sites for further analysis. • An independent dredging technical advice panel, including at least two independent scientific experts with expertise in water quality and marine ecology, will oversee the design and review of these management plans before each dredging campaign. This will ensure continuous improvement in dredging activities and minimise any potential impacts. • The approval holder must report on compliance with the proposed conditions regularly and publicly and there are provisions for audits of compliance, in addition to self reporting by the approval holder.	
Arrow LNG Facility and pipeline	• The EPBC Act assessments of the Arrow LNG Facility and related pipeline (EPBC 2009/5007 and EPBC 2009/5008) were separate, with the assessment process for each specifically considering relevant principles and findings of the Independent Review of Gladstone. Reflecting the different nature of the two related	• All of the approval conditions for EPBC 2009/5007 (http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/notices/assessments/2009/5007/2009-5007-approval-decision.pdf) relate, directly or indirectly, to the OUV of the World Heritage Area. • Conditions 3 to 25 relate to the protection of listed threatened

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	projects, different conditions of approval and assessment considerations apply to each. - As a general principle, the Independent Review provides that data collected in response to regulatory requirements should be made freely available. The conditions of approval for both the LNG facility and the pipeline require the regular, public reporting of compliance with the conditions of approval and where management plans, reports or strategies are required, these must be published on the proponent's website (for example, the Water Mouse Management Plan required as part of the LNG facility conditions, condition 32). Audits of compliance are facilitated by the conditions, in addition to self reporting by the approval holder. - The conditions of approval reflect the importance of integrated monitoring and management. The environmental monitoring and management required by the conditions must be aligned with the monitoring, research and management with other proponents of the three earlier approved LNG facilities where this is relevant (e.g. Water Mouse Management Plan and Long-term Marine Turtle management). The Dredge Management Plan and Shipping Activity Management Plan must be aligned with, and contribute to any current and or future integrated monitoring program or framework, such as the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership. - The proponent must provide an indirect offset of \$200,000 per annum on commencement of the proposed action, with an	species and communities. - Conditions 22 to 25 require the proponent to contribute to a Long-term Turtle Management Plan, with an initial contribution of \$150,000. - Conditions 26 to 28 relate to the protection of marine migratory fauna and the GBRWHA from dredging (disposal is not included within this action). - Under conditions 29 and 30 the approval holder is required to develop a Shipping Activity Management Plan, to ensure any impacts on the OUV of the GBRWHA are appropriately managed. - Conditions 34 and 35 require a GBR Offset Strategy, including a direct offset of 1400 hectares on Curtis Island and 80 hectares of habitat that supports the water mouse. In addition, the proponent must secure national park status for a minimum of 1400 hectares of land on Curtis Island, and actively reduce pests and weeds within this parcel of land to improve management and protection arrangements in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. - Condition 34(b) includes a water quality offset for dredging if the project impacts on water quality above identified thresholds. To ensure a net environmental benefit outcome, the proponent must achieve an equivalent 150% reduction in sediments entering the marine environment upstream.

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	additional \$100,000 per annum for each operating LNG train, toward management of the GBRWHA to improve water quality in the GBRWHA and to fund other priority areas for the Port of Gladstone. The proponent must consider how funds will contribute and align with broader strategies and programs for the Great Barrier Reef, including the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership and the Reef Trust set up under the Reef 2050 Plan. To ensure a net environmental benefit outcome, the proponent must offset any dredging impacts above water quality triggers identified in the Dredge Management Plan. This requires the proponent to invest in activities in the Great Barrier Reef catchment that will achieve an equivalent 150% reduction in the load of fine sediments entering the marine environment and available for re-suspension. This will ensure the project's contribution to cumulative impacts is addressed.	- The approval holder will pay at least \$200 000 per annum, with an additional \$100 000 per annum for each operating liquefied natural gas train, for fifteen years to improve management of the world heritage area. - Conditions 36-44 relate to the submission and publication of plans and strategies to give effect to the approval conditions, provision for their independent review; provisions for audit of compliance with the conditions and the Minister's reserve powers to request revisions or changes to plans and strategies submitted by the approval holder. - The approval conditions for EPBC2009/5008 (http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/notices/assessments/2009/5008/2009-5008-approval-decision.pdf) relate to the OUV of the GBR WHA and provide for the protection of listed migratory species (conditions 1 to 3). - Conditions 4 to 9 relate to giving effect to the approval conditions, provision for their independent review; provisions for audit of compliance with the conditions and the Minister's reserve powers.