

Subject Toondah Harbour proposal impact on and Moreton Bay Marine Park and Ramsar site

POINTS OF RELEVANCE

- The Department of Environment and Science (DES) is not aware of any developments in Australia, located within a Ramsar site that impact on the values of the site.
- Approximately 50 hectares of the Priority Development Area declared for the Toondah Harbour project in 2013 under the *Economic Development Act 2012* (ED Act) is within the Moreton Bay Marine Park (MBMP) and the internationally important Moreton Bay Ramsar site.
- In July 2018, the Australian Government declared the proposed development to be a controlled action requiring assessment and Commonwealth Ministerial approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- The Australian Government is currently assessing the proposed development for likely and potential impacts on listed threatened species and communities, migratory species, and wetlands of international significance.
- The Queensland Government has not received an application for the proposed development.
- Any application made to the Queensland Government would need to weigh up economic, social, cultural, and environmental costs and benefits.
- The Australian and Queensland Governments' assessment processes involve opportunities for the public to comment on the proposal and it would be inappropriate to pre-empt the assessment of any proposal.

BACKGROUND

- The Toondah Harbour project by Walker Group Holdings Pty Ltd (the Walker Group) is proposed in a Priority Development Area, which was declared at the request of the Redland City Council under the ED Act.
- The \$1.4 billion proposal includes an upgrade to the Cleveland ferry terminal, dredging and reclamation of tidal land for the construction of a new marina, commercial and tourism development and up to 3600 residential dwellings.
- Depending on the outcome from the Commonwealth's assessment process, the Queensland Government may also require an environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess the proposed development.
- The proposed development would require several planning, development and environmental assessments and approvals by the Queensland and Australian Governments before it could proceed.
- These processes would include assessing the impacts of the development on the MBMP, Moreton Bay Ramsar Wetland, migratory bird habitat and wetlands.
- While the Australian Government is assessing the application in relation to the Ramsar site, the Queensland Government nominated the site for listing and is responsible for maintaining the Ecological Character of the site. Any development within the site should only occur if it is in the 'urgent national interest'.
- There are no other examples of developments within Ramsar sites in Australia of the magnitude proposed at Toondah. A residential development in the Port Philip Bay Ramsar site was approved in 2003 but this was in a non-wetland site and did not affect the values of the site. Existing development, including an airport already existed in this site.
- Internationally, there are very few examples of development within Ramsar sites being approved without them being in the "urgent national interest". A residential development in a Ramsar site in Malaysia in 2014 did not go through an EIA process and was reported to the Ramsar Conference of Parties in 2018.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: DES - OFFICIAL
DOT POINT BRIEFING NOTE – MINISTER

CONSULTATION

- The Wetlands Unit in DES and the Australian Government were consulted on Ramsar sites impacted by development.

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